

# OSTINATO WANGARATTA INC

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## NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER, 2004

*"Why don't they know where Mozart is buried?"*

- *"Because he's Haydn!"*

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Carols by Candlelight, December - *"No Go for us this year"* decided Ostinato Committee. We shall NOT take part this year but would consider it next year if particular conditions can be met.

RAFFLE TICKETS: 33 books sold - \$660 made.

MUSIC SUGGESTION SHEETS have been handed in, in dribs and drabs. Marita has not colated them as yet. We may know the results of everyone's preferences next month.

THANK YOU TO RUTH for making her home "Olive Lodge" available as the venue for our first social BBQ. Those who attended had a great day. The setting was picturesque with the 1860's home, the weather was kind. There was plenty of food and we were very comfortable.

A fun day to be repeated perhaps at Christmas at Evelyn Canavan's home and in February at Bronwyn Pearce's home. (Swimming pool available there for water fun in the heat).

ACCOMPANIST - Georgina Wills is happy and willing to accompany our singing playing on the piano between quarter to 8 and suppertime. Thank you Georgina, we greatly appreciate your generous offer of help.

We have (\$2,307.50 in the "KITTY".



*"What's musical and handy in a supermarket?"*  
- A Chopin Liszt.

*"What do you call a male quartet?"*  
- Three men and a tenor.

OSTINATO AT "THE CENTRE" - Ostinato's performance at "The Centre", Chisholm Street, went very well. There were a number of complimentary remarks passed on to our singers. Ruth was very pleased indeed. She has been bouncing around even more than usual!

TALKING ABOUT RUTH OUR CONDUCTOR 

A wonderful contribution composed by one of our special talented members of Ostinato - ANN VAN ROOYEN -

"AMEN!!!"

*To be our conductor  
one needs to be strong.  
She stands there for hours  
when she guides us along.  
She dances and prances  
and begs us to "look!"  
Yet, what do you think? ... ..  
With our eyes on the book  
We stutter and stumble  
and don't keep in time.  
Still, Ruth keeps on hoping  
for sounds most sublime.  
Ah, she has to be patient  
again and again.  
ONE DAY we'll sing glorious  
till the final "AMEN"!*

Ann van Rooyen. 2004.

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UNIFORM FOR CONCERTS: To be black pants with varied solid colour tops with long sleeves.

NOVEMBER CONCERT: It has been confirmed that Jan Wagner will accompany us on piano for the performance.

21 OCTOBER 2004, 1.00 PM - CWA Birthday Celebration - Two handfuls of us may be available to perform at the hall. This is to be confirmed later.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP: We have 42 registered members to date, plus 2 new ones as yet not registered. A couple of members are on sick leave.



Strange  
False

Rumours

have been drifting about in some quarters regarding the former exit of various of our *Ostinato* members from the Wangaratta Choristers. It has opened our mouths in astonishment. They must be "nipped in the bud".

Ruth has not "spat the dummy!!"



She does still love us, and is full of energy and bounce.

Ex Wangaratta Choristers certainly did not leave because they wouldn't help pay for the organ!!!

"OSTINATO" is progressing in a vibrant manner -

"Halleluiaah brother!"

Our Committee has rejected the offer to buy the old concert stands from the Wangaratta Choristers. They are much too heavy and unwieldy for us (& besides, a number of members have paid for them before).

HISTORICAL ANTIQUITY ("History of Singing" ... Continued)  
The major early cultures that were sources for Western music each had distinguishing musical characteristics that related, in some degree, to their respective languages. Experts recognise that a culture's spoken language and its musical expression influence each other, but the relationship is very complex and not well understood. That modern French woodwind players produce a distinctive timbre, that 6/8 metrics are nonexistent in Hungarian folksong, and that Western classical vocal technique developed in an Italian-speaking region are examples of the relationship.

It is not known when or where art music — as distinct from folk music — began, but there is evidence the various Mesopotamian cultures that thrived from 3,500 to 500 bc already considered music an art, and their writings mention both professional musicians and liturgical music. It is a song, the Sumerian *Hymn to Creation* dated before 800BC which is the oldest notated music extant.

Egyptian musical culture existed by the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC and music was prominent in the social and religious life of the Old Kingdom. Egyptian instruments changed significantly as the New Kingdom era (1700-1500 BC) began. The change, which may have reflected foreign influence, was from delicate timbre instruments to louder ones and was surely followed by similar changes in singing tone for, over time, a culture's instrumental timbres and vocal tone always tend to match. There are many drawings extant showing that large choruses and orchestras existed in the New Kingdom.

Grecian culture had a highly developed art music that showed signs of both a folk music origin and some Egyptian influence. The poetry of Sappho (600BC) and others was often sung in contests, with melodies and rhythms based on the poetic meters. Singing was associated with all forms of literature and with dance. The ode, the dithyramb (a choral tribute to Bacchus and the forerunner of tragedy), and drama all employed singers who moved to the rhythm of the music. By 500BC, ventriloquism had been described, and both choruses and solo voices were being used in drama. Greek philosophers attached great value to music and to its cultural purposes. The PYTHAGOREAN SCALE and a complex theory of music were developed.

The Judaic culture has preserved some melodies that may go back to 500BC. The Psalms of David and the Song of Solomon were sung, and we know of an early presence of professional musicians. Both responsorial (a soloist answered by the congregation) and antiphonal (alternating congregational groups) styles were used in singing the Psalms. After the destruction of the Second Temple, in 70AD, Jewish music became exclusively vocal. As the dispersed and transient Jews would learn, the human voice is a readily portable instrument, and communal singing serves to bond its participants in both form and purpose. Like the Egyptians, Jewish singers may have shared musical directions and reminders with hand-signs (CHEIRONOMY). Cantillation, the intoning of sacred texts using ancient melodic formulae, written with symbols called *ta'amim*, was an important musical format. Jewish prayer chants, which were based on ancient melodic lines and often highly ornamented, would have a considerable influence on Christian plainchant.

What little we know of Roman music shows it to have been derived from the Greeks but primarily instrumental and military in nature. Still, Seneca (4E 64AD) wrote of being disturbed late one night by loud sounds coming from a group of singers practicing vocal exercises.

Singing was such an important part of early Christian worship that its ritual and music developed together and became almost inseparable. It borrowed music from other religions and from existing secular tunes and slowly developed a form of liturgical chant. It was a style based on sinuous melodies of limited range, expressed in free, unmetred rhythms. These were sung as solos or in unison by unaccompanied male voices. The various scale formats in which they developed were eventually refined into a complex theoretical system of so-called church modes. As the Christian church became organised it tried to suppress secularism and secular singing while advancing both itself and its chosen musical style — plainchant. As a result, little evidence remains of the secular musical activity during the early centuries AD and we can more easily follow the evolution of singing as it is reflected in the development of sacred music, specifically that of the Latin-speaking Roman Church.