



# Ostinato Wangaratta Inc.

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## NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2006

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### *"Choir Thoughts for the Day -*

*Argue with the conductor about change in choral direction. Repeatedly say "Well we did it like that last time!!"*

*Repeatedly stick at your previous markings and then chunter when you are over-ruled.*

*Add to stress levels of both the conductor and stage manager by giving last minute information re availability/non-availability for concerts.*

*Purposely sit on the platform so as to create a clearly jagged line between men and women sections. Look away when someone in your approximate direction is asked to move to another row. They can't possibly mean you!*

Seriously now – **Welcome to our new members** who have joined our choir this past year. It is great to see a good number of new faces. Our choir is healthy as it grows. (Well even if some of us have been ill).

**Westward Ho the Wagons!** – FAREWELL MARITA & FAMILY – they have gone out west after the setting sun. THANK YOU Marita Hansen for the work you did and for your singing and participation in the choir.

We shall miss you!

**CHRISTMAS CONCERT: Sunday 3 December 06.** St John's Hall, 2.30pm. Tickets \$5.00.

Singers to supply shortbreads or fruit cake for afternoon tea.

**Sunday 19 November 06 and Sunday 26 November** - Members of the choir who are able to attend, are to sing, providing background music at an "Open Garden Fundraiser" at Oxley. Address, times and music to be notified.

**Friday 24 November 06** – choir members have been asked to sing at the Max Parkinson Lodge in Sadler Street. Details to be supplied.

**JAZZ MASS:** Our choir members have been invited to join in with other singers at the Cathedral for the Jazz Mass, 10.00 am, Sunday 5 November 06, in the Holy Trinity Cathedral.

Turn up for 2 rehearsals at the Cathedral – Saturday 21 October 06 and 4 November 06 – 10.00am to 12.00 midday.

Sunday 5 November arrive at 9.00 am in white top and black bottom. Contact Margaret Brickhill ah 5721 6523.

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*"MUSIC - is a complex organisation of sounds that is set down by the composer, incorrectly interpreted by the conductor, who is ignored by the musicians, the result of which is ignored by the audience."*

Information on the carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas" from a Moyhu Community Newsletter via Margaret Abblitt. (Thank you Margaret).

This carol was written down during the Tudor period in England. It uses some pre-Christian stories and symbols and contemporary military references to translate Christian beliefs and traditions. At that time in England, Roman Catholics were persecuted and couldn't openly profess their faith (Anti Roman Catholic laws were repealed in 1826). In France it was the Protestants who were being persecuted but one could openly be Roman Catholic, hence the reference to the Three Graces as French Hens. The Pipers and Drummers probably feature because of the constant state of war between the two nations, and differences in religion as an excuse for war is still not unusual. The "colly bird" is probably a reference to a religious sect from Arabia who were early converts to Christianity called the "Collyridians" whose main contribution to Christian ritual is the ancient tradition of offering bread and wine at the altar. The Partridge because of its hobbling dance was once representative of the sun king who dies (with sore feet) and is resurrected as the new year. The Pear Tree or "Once" (pronounced without W) was the name in middle Europe of Athene, the mother of sacred kings in Greek mythology, she who is "in the beginning" as it were. Interestingly "Once upon a time" is the traditional beginning to many an old European story.

The partridge in a pear tree – Jesus in his mother's arms.

The two turtledoves – Old and New Testaments.

Three French Hens – Faith, Hope and Charity (love).

The four colly birds – Four Gospels.

The five gold rings – recall the Torah (law). The first five books of the Old Testament.

The six geese a-laying – six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming – the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit.

The eight maids a-milking – the eight beatitudes.

Nine ladies dancing – nine fruits of the spirit.

The ten pipers piping – the Ten Commandments.

Eleven drummers drumming – the eleven faithful disciples.

Twelve lords a-leaping – the twelve points of belief in the Apostolic Creed.

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*To change a light bulb -*

*How many tenors? One to change the bulb and all the rest to stand around explaining how they would have tackled the role if they had been given the opportunity.*

*How many sopranos? One - she holds the bulb and the world revolves around her.*

*How many altos? None - they can't get that high.*

*How many basses? None - they're so mellow they prefer to walk in the dark and bang their stuns.*

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EXCERPTS FROM "THE CHRONICLE OF JAZZ" by Mervyn Cooke

Alan Lomax said in 1950 – "JAZZ became many things – frenetic, destructive, hysterical, decadent, venal, alcoholic, saccharine, Lombardish, vapid. It has enriched stuffed bellies; it has traduced; but, everywhere and in all its forms, something jazz acquired at the moment of its origin has profoundly touched all its hearers. What was this thing that set folks dancing and smiling from the slums of New Orleans, to all the capitals of the earth?"

The extra ordinarily varied nature of jazz can only be understood by considering the exhilarating rapidity with which it has established itself at the forefront of the modern musical world.

Over the course of its first century of existence, (the first ragtime compositions were published in 1890's) jazz has adopted and transformed many of the technical innovations of earlier classical music with astonishing speed compressing four centuries of musical expertise into a dazzling array of styles and structures. The result is an audience appeal that ranges from the mass pop market to an intellectual cliquishness even more exclusive than that of the 1960's avant-garde in art. Jazz has managed to

summarize most of our instinctive feelings about music and reshape the art for the future.

The history of Jazz can be traced from its largely disreputable beginnings (with racial tensions) through the height of its popularity in the Swing Era to its gradual evolution into a serious art music capable of sustaining intellectual and emotional interest on a par with any other modern art form.

Slaves transported from West Africa to the New World took their musical traditions with them, and adapted their tribal work songs and dances to sustain them in their forced labours.

Fundamental elements of jazz were born when the dynamic rhythmic language and expressive pitch-bending of African vocal music became fused with structures and harmonies borrowed from the European music favoured by white slave owners. After emancipation in 1865, black religious music paved the way for the two genres that would directly lead to the early jazz style "Ragtime" and the "Blues", both of which appeared in the 1890's.

"Ragtime":- "White music played black" – derived from white dance forms such as the polka and march, and superimposed on syncopated rhythmic style reminiscent of black banjo music and plantation songs on simple harmonic structures built from western chords. Some composers borrowed elements from the "Blues" a vocal form characterised by a greater degree of improvisation and distinctive tonal colourings retained from African music. Ragtime began to disappear around 1920, although it had already influenced classical composers such as Debussy and Stravinsky. Its style formed the basis for later jazz piano playing.

"The Blues":- Continued to flourish in its own right and led both to the "boogie-woogie" style of piano playing and ultimately to rock'n'roll in the 1950's, it donated to jazz the universally popular twelve-bar harmonic progression, as well as a new emphasis on improvisation.

Jazz recordings first appeared in 1917 and began to proliferate after 1923.

The growing popularity of dances such as the Charleston led to the development of a livelier style in which the original march-like mood was abandoned in favour of headier tempos and snappier rhythms.

In spite of its growing intellectual respectability during the 1930's, jazz had still not quite succeeded in shedding its early links with sex and low living. Jazz seemed more respectable in Europe, which had not endured social problems of such magnitude as those in the US arising from slavery and racial disharmony. From 1930's, many American jazz musicians opted to emigrate to France, where greater social status and appreciative audiences made them welcome.

The growing commercial success of jazz ensured that it became the pop music of pre-war years. "Symphonic Jazz" cultivated by composers such as Gershwin and Copland fused highbrow and lowbrow into a cogent and enduring synthetic idiom.

Goodman's and Hammond's concerts at Carnegie Hall in 1938 proved jazz to be an art form worthy of appreciation by critics, scholars and audiences in full evening dress. Predominant in these years was the "Swing Band" with extended instrumentation exploiting the contrast between massed saxophones and brass sections as a background to exciting improvised passages performed by featured soloists.

"Be-bop" 1941:- Rebellious musicians began experimenting with a new style in which outmoded harmonic progressions were replaced by more startling chord sequences, and melodic improvisations became increasingly characterised by distortion, fragmentation and metrical ambiguity. Traditionalists lamented the alarmingly esoteric and abstract nature of bop. Larkin, (poet and jazz critic), said "bloodless note patterns". Ellington likened it to "playing scrabble with all the vowels missing".



and  
our littlest  
performer?