



Friends of the Auburn Tower Newsletter

Summer 2022

A Musical Journey: Wanderlust

Sunday 4th September was Fathers' Day and those of us who were able to enjoy the concert entitled "Wanderlust", which was held in the Auburn Uniting Church, received a magnificent treat.

Pianist Elyane Laussade is well known to many Australian music lovers and she did not disappoint with her dazzling performance of the Wanderer Fantasy in D opus 70 by Franz Schubert. Her mastery of this demanding piece was unparalleled, with her strong and delightful delivery, augmented by a very sensitive interpretation of the slow movement. Her performance even elicited a "bravo" from the enrapt audience.



Elyane Laussade and Luke Severn

Elyane also provided a perfect accompaniment in the songs. Effortlessly, she complemented the bass-baritone soloist, Luke Severn, with great sensitivity and skill.

The concert commenced with a song cycle by Ludwig van Beethoven entitled *An die ferne Geliebte* (To the distant beloved) opus 98. This was introduced by quietly spoken Luke and, although he was listed as a bass-baritone, we were all overwhelmed by the magnificent quality of his voice. A further song *Der Wanderer* by Franz Schubert was presented with clarity and sonorous musicality and this was followed by the piano solo.

After Elyane's virtuosic solo, Luke concluded the programme with the *Songs of Travel* by Ralph Vaughan Williams. This song cycle is seldom heard in its entirety, as many singers cherry-pick their favourites which are very well known to most of us, so it was most satisfying to hear the complete work.

It was a very special occasion and we were fortunate to hear such brilliant artists in such a great venue.

With thanks to Chris and Jacci Simpson

**Friends of the Auburn
Tower Inc**

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**The Committee of the Friends
of the Auburn Tower Inc.**

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Inside this Newsletter:

A Musical Journey 1

*A Master Organist and
Two Confident
Trumpeters* 2

*The Gothic and the
Modern* 3

AGM & Guest Speaker 4

*Thank you to our local
businesses for your
support* 4

A Master Organist and Two Confident Trumpeters



Above: Sam Fitzgerald (trumpet), Mark on the magnificent Fincham Organ and Graham Balderstone (trumpet)

Below: Dr June Nixon, Sam, Graham and Mark being thanked by the Friends' Secretary Alan Chuck



On Sunday afternoon, 16 October, a welcome musical program was held at Auburn Uniting Church. A grand organ with a masterly player, two very able and confident trumpeters and a varied program made for a most enjoyable afternoon. Mark Slavec began with Louis Vierne's Carillon de Westminster, demonstrating the organ's haunting tonal contrasts as it outlined the bell chimes of Big Ben in London.

Trumpet and organ together make a fine combination, clearly presented by trumpeters Graham Balderstone and Sam Fitzgerald in the performances of César Franck's Panis Angelicus followed by Ombra mai fù, better known perhaps as Handel's Largo. A varied group of organ works ensued, allowing us to experience the versatility of tone colours available on this fine instrument – The Swan (Saint-Saëns), a Psalm Prelude (Herbert Howells), the chorale melody Sleepers, wake! (Bach) and On a Ground (Stainer). J S Bach's fearsome but wonderful Fantasia and Fugue in G minor (the Great) is only to be attempted by master organists on the largest of instruments, requiring as it does a majestic grandeur for the Fantasia and a technique of utmost digital facility and mental and physical stamina for the sprightly Fugue, but here offered as a splendid tour-de-force by Mark.

The highlight of the program was undoubtedly the Australian première performance of Dr June Nixon's Intrada – St Anne for two trumpets and organ. With its crisp opening trumpet fanfares and dexterous organ flights, this finely-crafted work of great dramatic strength was clearly the product of a composer with fine musical imagination and skill.

With thanks to Graham Bartle



The Committee of the Friends of the Auburn Tower wishes all Friends, Associates and their families a very Happy Christmas season and a safe and successful New Year.

The Modern and the Gothic Create a Vibrant City Space and Preserve an Important Historic Precinct

The Wesley Church complex in central Melbourne is a substantial and complete collection of related mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth century ecclesiastical buildings. The principal group of 1858-59 buildings, all designed by architect Joseph Reed in the Gothic Revival style, are architecturally significant as the earliest intact church complex in Victoria. Together, these have been described as “one of the finest examples of intact neo-gothic architecture in Melbourne”.¹

The vision for the project was to conserve the Church and secure its future through a site-wide regeneration process. Works included construction of a new office tower designed by COX Architects for the east side of the site, and new landscaping by Oculus introduces an inviting green space to the CBD, re-engaging the city centre with this significant group of buildings.

The buildings and original landscape features have undergone major conservation works based on forensic investigation of the fabric and photographic material to reinstate, restore, and repair the original fabric.

The Australian Institute of Architects noted the “remarkable achievement in carefully conserving and preserving built heritage, for facilitating adaptive reuse and for revealing an exciting new public space to the City of Melbourne.”²

The project is a fine example of the restoration and regeneration of a historic precinct through incorporation of dynamic modern architecture and a valuable piece of Melbourne history without losing the original purpose of the Wesley Church itself.

The works were recognised at the Victorian Architecture Awards in June 2022 with the highest award in the heritage category, the John George Knight Award for Heritage.

*with thanks to the Heritage Council of Victoria and
the Australian Institute of Architects*

Photos of Wesley Place thanks to Trevor Mein



1. www.architecture.com.au/awards/2022-awards/national-shortlist/heritage-wesley-place-130-lonsdale
2. https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/2022/06/victorian_architecture_awards/

AGM and Guest Speaker

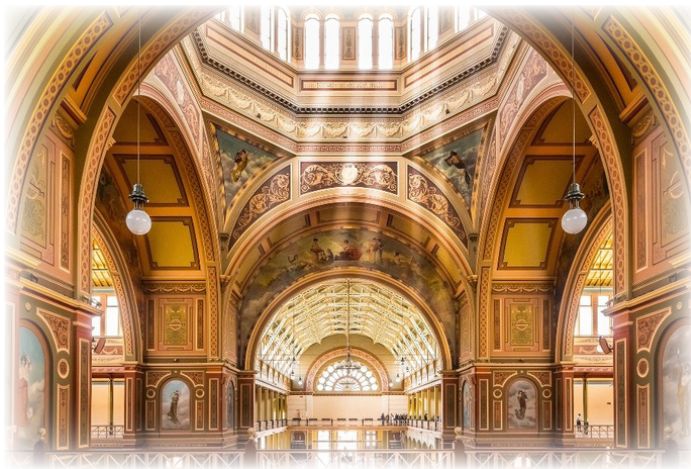
The 2022 Annual General Meeting of the Friends was held on Wednesday 26 October at 8pm. Twenty-one members and guests attended our first in-person AGM since 2019. With President John Herniman in the Chair, the AGM business was swiftly despatched and the annual report and accounts accepted. We noted with regret the retirement of Committee members Jane Gilchrist and Bruce Macrae. All other office bearers were re-elected unopposed:

President: John Herniman **Vice President:** Di Gillies
Secretary: Alan Chuck **Treasurer:** Jane Tisdall
Committee: Daphne Arthur, Pat Rogerson

The Committee will try to co-opt members to the two vacant positions in the new year – do get in touch if you would be willing to be co-opted.

Following the AGM, we were privileged to have an illustrated talk on Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Building by **Linton Lethlean OAM**, who has had a life-long association with the Building, from student examinations to Director during its most recent renovation. He noted the comparison with Paris's Eiffel Tower, the only two artefacts from 19th Century World Fairs still serving their original purpose. He described the recent re-opening of the Dome Promenade, allowing the public once again to experience one of the finest views in Melbourne. He lamented the tragic demise of the Fincham organ, and congratulated us on keeping ours intact and working.

Below: interior of the beautiful Dome of the Exhibition Building



Tower Open Days

The Open Day scheduled for Sunday 13 November was cancelled, due to lack of bookings and concern that a resurgence of COVID might have made it inadvisable. The next Open Day will be in Autumn 2023 – watch the website, Facebook or Twitter for the date.

Thank you to our local businesses for your support

We wish to thank Lawrie at **Action Printing in Auburn Road Hawthorn** for his continuing generous support of the Friends and their events. Get a quote from Lawrie rather than a big national print shop next time you want some copying or printing done and he will match or better the price if he can.



contact: Lawrie on 9882 8144 or
actionpr@bigpond.com

We also wish to thank Sandy at **Budz Florist Riversdale Road Hawthorn** for her continuing generous support of the Friends and their events. Support this small local business by getting your festive hampers and fresh flowers - lots of lovely blooms and goodies.



contact: Sandy on 98150054 or
budz.flowers@bigpond.com