

Early Arts Update

The Newsletter of the Early Arts Guild of Victoria

Edition – March/May 2012

NOYES' HIGHWAYMAN AND THE MAGIC OF GESTURE

The opening performance of this year's Early Music in the very Round will take place at Trinity Uniting Church in Black St., Brighton at 2.15 p.m. on Sunday, April 1.

It will feature Alfred Noyes' famous poem, *The Highwayman*, presented with historic gesture, by actress Annabel Green.

Although a modern poet, Noyes (1880-1958) wrote on classical and romantic themes. His account of *The Highwayman* is a tragic work of great beauty that will be an ideal vehicle for Annabel Green's gesture skills.

Excerpts from Shakespeare, with the gesture of the Bard's era, will also be presented – ensuring that this is a program of special interest for Drama and Theatre Studies students.

The Early Music Consort of Melbourne, Rippon Lea Baroque Dancers and vocalist Caitlin Nobel will also participate – making up the same team which presented *The Lady of Shalott* last year.

Given the seemingly endless demand for repeats of that program, we urge enthusiasts to experience *The Highwayman* at either Brighton or Warragul while there is opportunity to do so. (See column 2)

Annabel Green's limited availability, and the retirement after this program of Faye Donlevy, Lynne Craven and Jan Turner from the Rippon Lea Baroque Dancers, will preclude repeat performances.

Bookings are not required at Brighton but early arrival is recommended. Information 9699 8417.

WHAT PRICE EARLY MUSIC?

To help meet rising costs and to provide better payments to artists, an entrance fee of **\$8 per concert** will be introduced for Early Music in the Very Round performances this year. We hope our supporters will agree that the series is still good value for money.

WARRAGUL IS BASE FOR NEW REGIONAL PROJECT

The First, third and sixth concerts of Early Music in the Very Round at Brighton in 2012 will be repeated in a three-concert satellite series in Warragul – 100 kms east of Melbourne.

The project will open on Sunday, March 25, with *Shakespeare and the Highwayman*, the program that will commence the Brighton concerts one week later.

Noted recorder exponent Ryan Williams, lutenist Samantha Cohen and soprano Kari Lyon will present *Wild Melancholy* on May 13, and the Early Music Consort, Rippon Lea Dancers and vocalist Caitlin Nobel will follow with *The Dancing Priest of Langres* on July 22.

The move to Warragul follows audience requests for more early music presentations following the Rippon Lea Dancers and Consort performance there last July. The new project, which has no sponsor, will test the viability of a self-supporting regional concert series.

Programs will commence at 2.15 p.m. at Wesley of Warragul in Victoria St. Admission \$20, 15 conc, 10 student, 40 family. Season tickets are available- \$45, 35 conc, 25 student, 90 family. **Bookings 9699 8417.**

HEAVENLY MUSIC IN A SPLENDID CATHEDRAL

Vocalist Kari Lyon's memorable program *Of Praise and Lamentations*, presented in Brighton last May, will be repeated in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo, at 2.15 p.m. on Sunday, March 25.

She will be accompanied by fellow international performer, organist David Macfarlane, in works by Monteverdi, Carissimi and Vivaldi. Excerpts from Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* will highlight the program.

The Early Arts Guild is delighted to join Sacred Heart Cathedral in staging this event. Admission is \$10, \$20 family, students free. Information 5443 4400.

FINE PROGRAM TO FOLLOW RECORD START TO SEASON

With performances at Bendigo and Warragul on March 25, and Brighton on April 1, the Guild is about to have its busiest season opening for many years.

And there is much more to come – starting with the second Early Music in the Very Round program on May 6. It will be highlighted by the first appearance at Brighton of Ryan Williams, one of Australia's most gifted and innovative recorder players,

He will be joined by lutenist Samantha Cohen and soprano Kari Lyon for *Wild Melancholy* – a title which points the way to new musical landscapes that will include works by Sandrin and Ciprian de Rore.

Kari Lyon, who performed at Brighton last May, has recently returned from the United States. Samantha Cohen, who has also made previous visits to Brighton, will play lute, theorbo and baroque guitar.

The brilliant trio has been invited to repeat *Wild Melancholy* on Sunday, May 13, as part of the new Renaissance Warragul series.

Bookings are not required for the Brighton concert which will be at St Cuthbert's Presbyterian Church in Wilson St. at 2.15 p.m. Information 9699 8417.

SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS

The old saying has it that what you lose on the one you gain on the other – and that's how it has been with Guild artists this summer.

To the delight of Early Music Consort members, Michael Noble has returned to the fold. The father of vocalist Caitlin Noble, he has been working with BHP Billiton in Perth and Singapore since 2003.

Also back in action is long-term renaissance dancer, Liz Mackie, who has been teaching indigenous children at a special school in Alice Springs.

The loss of its three senior performers will not see the end of the Rippon Lea Baroque Dancers.

Present member, Yoko Murakoshi, will be joined by renaissance dancer, Vera Tarascova, and newcomer, Margaret Cass - who studied dance at the Victorian College of the Arts.

Baroque steps, patterns and notation will keep the two new members' busy for some months to come.

BAROQUE DANCE GROUP TO LOSE FOUNDING MEMBERS

Lynne Craven, Fay Donlevy and Jan Turner are about to retire from the Rippon Lea Baroque Dancers. Their final performances will be in the coming presentations of *Shakespeare and the Highwayman* at Warragul and Brighton.

Like some other Guild projects, baroque dance arrived through distant influences and odd circumstances.

This time it was a request from Anthony Rooley and Emma Kirkby in London for Helga Hill to provide as-original choreography for an early opera performance at the Festival of Flanders in Bruges in 1983.

The production was so successful that re-constructed choreography was ordered for a new opera in Europe each year until 1997. Back in Melbourne, this amounted to a pile of fully researched baroque-style dances – all awaiting a local airing.

In 1992, Lynne Craven, Fay Donlevy and Jan Turner took up the challenge of learning the steps, patterns and complex notation for baroque dance. For a time, this was additional to their role as long-term members of the Rippon Lea Renaissance Dancers.

Initially baroque dance was blended with renaissance dance performances to provide a colorful but valuable extra for Christmas Pageants and such memorable programs as *Dancing Through the Ages*, which concluded the 2002 Melbourne Early Music Festival.

But the ensemble's vital contribution to early dance was best reflected in such stand-alone programs as *Brilliant Baroque* at Labassa in 2002 and the more recent *Lady of Shalott* performances at Brighton.

And, perhaps, most significant of all was the 2001 presentation *Chance Discovery*. This was one of the first performances anywhere to be based on the dance notebook of Kellom Tomlinson (1735), which had been discovered shortly beforehand in New Zealand.

The influence of the Baroque Dancers was not confined to Australia. Between 1994 and 1997, Fay Donlevy and Lynne Craven were appointed assistants to Helga Hill at the Dartington International Summer School (UK), working on such operas as *Don Quixote* (Purcell/Eccles) and *Albion and Albanus* (Grabu).

The Early Arts Guild of Victoria and its followers are greatly indebted to **Lynne Craven, Fay Donlevy and Jan Turner**. Their contribution to historic dance is of immeasurable value and has given great joy to many.