



February 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to a new year of Young Voices of Melbourne

After a couple of months off for the summer holidays, it is always a treat to get back into singing! Welcome back to our old friends and a special welcome to those joining us for the first time this year. We hope that you settle in quickly and enjoy the rehearsals, camps, concerts, tours and special events that are part of the YVM experience

New year, New director

After 35 years as Director of YVM, we celebrated Mark O'Leary's legacy at our big Recital Centre Concert in December last year. Congratulations to all who were involved in what was a very special evening! Mark has had an enormous positive impact on many singers' lives through this choir and will continue to do so through his role as co-conductor of Exaudi and Tour Manager for YVM's Europe tour this year.

It is now my pleasure to step into the role as the new Director of Young Voices of Melbourne. This organisation has been a part of my life for the past 25 years, first as a singer and then as a staff member since 2016. I bring to the role not just a love of this particular organisation, but years of experience as a classroom music teacher, choral director, composer and singer. I have also spent the last three weeks on a study trip in New York and Cuba, funded by the Sydney Symposium Choral Foundation Conducting Scholarship, where I witnessed and was involved in some very inspiring music-making, and am now excited to kick off the new year back at home!

First Rehearsals of the Year

(All rehearsals at St Catherine's School, Toorak)

Main Choir and YVMen:

Thursday 6 February, 6:15 - 8:15pm (no small groups on the first day).

Small groups start February 13 (**new small group arrangements for 2025. See below)

Beginning Training Choir and Junior Training Choir

Monday 10 February, 4:30 - 5:30pm

Senior Training Choir

Monday 10 February, 5:30 - 7:00pm

Information for new members of YVM

Venue: all rehearsals are held at St Catherine's School, Heyington Place, Toorak.

Tuition Fees: you will be invoiced for these soon. They are not due for payment until late February so new members can try out a few sessions before making a commitment.

Fees for 2025 are:

Beginning and Junior Training Choir: \$450 per half year (semester)

Senior Training Choir: \$650 for first semester (includes camp*) and \$450 for second semester

Main Choir and YVMen: \$690 for first semester (includes camp*) and \$495 for second semester

*The full semester amount must be paid, even if your child cannot be at camp for the whole time

Uniform: Uniform is not worn at rehearsals and you don't need to do anything about this until closer to your first performance.

Music: Sheet music and a folder will be provided at your first rehearsal. Please bring pencils to add to your folder

Performance Dates are noted on the attached calendar. If you are unable to attend any performance or other choir activity let us know ASAP

Groups and Staffing updates

With Mark's departure and Lib's upcoming maternity leave, the new year brings the following staffing changes:

Beginning Training Choir and Junior Training Choir

These two groups will rehearse sometimes together and sometimes separately for Terms 1 and 2. **Marion Stafford** and **Lib O'Leary** will team-teach for a few weeks in Term 1 until Lib's maternity leave, and then **Juliana** will step in to cover Lib's leave. By Semester 2, we expect to split this cohort back into two separate groups, with Beginning Training Choir led by Marion and Junior Training Choir led by Lib.

Tutors: Amelia Alder and Juliana Kay

Senior Training Choir

Lib O'Leary will start the year with the group, and will be replaced by **Marion Stafford** for the rest of Semester 1.

Tutors: Amelia Alder and Juliana Kay

Main Choir and YVMen

Juliana Kay will direct YVM, and **Amelia Alder** will continue with YVMen.

This year we are also excited to welcome **Julia Pigginn** as rehearsal accompanist and small-group musicianship tutor. Julia has a long history playing piano in concert for YVM and brings a wealth of experience as a classroom music teacher. We are excited to have her now work more closely and regularly with our Thursday singers.

Main Choir and YVMen Camp: 7-9th February

Senior Training Choir Camp: 21-23 March

Our annual rehearsal camp is a compulsory and important part of our program, where singers develop their skills, learn new repertoire, learn to work together and get to know each other. All choir members are expected to attend, and we assume that your child will be there unless we hear from you well in advance of the camp. Information about the Main Choir/YVMen camp was in the December Newsletter, and an updated copy has been attached separately for the relevant families.

A Senior Training Choir camp notice will be sent out in February.

Parent Help Required for Camps

We still need parent helpers for both the Choir/YVMen and Senior Training Choir camps to assist with general supervision and meal times. Let us know if you can help.

Thursday Small Groups changes

For the past three years, singers in Main Choir/YVMen have chosen whether to be in an Early Group musicianship skills session (5:30 - 6:00pm) or Late Group (8:30 - 9:00pm). This arrangement helped us build back sight-reading and aural skills after the pandemic, but we are now in a position to take a more deliberate approach to skill development to better cater to the different levels and needs within the choir.

This year we are re-introducing Senior Solfege, which will be an advanced group from 8:30 - 9:00pm for singers in Years 11, 12 and post-school, and some Year 10s by invitation. All other singers in Years 6 to 10 will be in one of two groups at the early time (5:30 - 6:00pm).

I recognise that this will affect scheduling and logistics for some families, so please let me know if this is impossible for you and we will see what we can work out.

Parent information evenings and open rehearsals - 24 & 27 Feb

Want to know what happens in a YVM rehearsal? Wondering what a post-Mark YVM will look like? On Monday 24 Feb and Thursday 27 Feb, we invite parents into the rehearsal room for a portion of each rehearsal, followed by a presentation to families about the YVM experience and expectations for the year. This will take place during your child's usual rehearsal time. New families **and** returning families are encouraged to attend.

Calendar on next page...

Calendar

PLEASE NOTE: All choir members are expected to attend all choir concerts. If it is impossible for you to attend please make a written apology, at least one month prior to the concert. This is essential for our concert planning, as missing persons may necessitate us changing the repertoire for concerts, arranging replacement singers etc.

CHOIR = Main Choir (trebles)
BTC = Beginning Training Choir
JTC = Junior Training Choir
STC = Senior Training Choir

Banking details: Young Voices of Melbourne Inc BSB: 013355 Account: 308027832

2025

Thursday 6 February	Main Choir/YVMen rehearsals begin (no small groups)	CHOIR YVMen
7 - 9 February	Main Choir + YVMen camp, Candlebark Farm	CHOIR YVMen
Monday 10 February	Training choirs rehearsals begin	BTC JTC STC
Monday 24 February	Training choirs open rehearsal and information evening - during normal rehearsal time	BTC JTC STC
Thursday 27 February	Main Choir/YVMen open rehearsal and information evening - during normal rehearsal time	CHOIR YVMen
Monday 3 March	Training Choirs Bring-a-Friend Day Have a friend who also likes to sing? Bring them along this week! Details to follow	BTC JTC STC
21-23 March	Senior Training Choir Camp, Candlebark Farm	STC
Tuesday 1 April	Deadline for final tour payment of \$3700	CHOIR YVMen
Sunday 22 June	YVM Winter Concert Rehearsals from 1:30pm Concert 3:00 - 4:15pm James Tatoulis Auditorium, MLC, Kew	everyone
July 5-22	YVM Europe Tour (itinerary below)	CHOIR YVMen
Sunday 7 September	Training Choirs Concert, St Johns Southgate Rehearsals from 2pm Concert 3-4pm	BTC JTC STC
Sunday 7 December (TBC)	Christmas/end-of year concert (TBC)	everyone

YVM Europe Tour Update ITINERARY SUMMARY

Saturday 5th July

Fly Melbourne - London 1.25pm (Malaysian Airlines)

We are staying at the Streatley-on-Thames Youth Hostel in the UK

We will be singing with the Oxford Youth Choirs in Oxford, and the Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School choir in London.

Thursday 10th July

Fly London - Bologna 10.05am (Ryanair)

We are attending the Verona Garda International Choral Festival where we will perform in several concerts in the Verona region and staying at the Best Western Soave Hotel in San Bonifacio (near Verona)

Wednesday 16th July

Verona - Vienna coach trip

We are attending the World Peace Choral Festival in Vienna, Austria and staying at the B&B Hotel St Marx in Vienna.

Monday 21st July

Vienna - Paris - Melbourne 6.30am from Vienna and then 11.25am from Paris (Air France and Malaysian Airlines)

Arrive in Melbourne Tuesday 7.15pm.

All details are subject to change.

Tour Payment Schedule Reminder

First payment \$500 - completed

Second payment \$2,000 due 1st December

Final Payment \$3,700 due 1st April

Travel Insurance

As different singers have different insurance needs, parents need to arrange their own travel insurance for the tour. We recommend you do this before you have made the December payment.

Performances

All details of performances will be advised as details are confirmed.

Can New Choir and YVMen Members join the tour?

Yes, as long as there are flights and accommodation still available.

We need to start the organisation of major tours like this many months before we leave, so that we can secure the flights and accommodation we need. This does make it tricky for new people to know whether they would like to join. The short answer is yes, and the cost will depend on the current rate for flights. Please email Mark (Tour Manager) on mark@yvm.com.au and Juliana (juliana@yvm.au) if you would like to discuss this further, or would like to sign up.