



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNUAL REPORT – 1 January to 31 December 2019

This report includes comments on:

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1. OUR PEOPLE

2019 saw the passing of two of our Life Members Di Lenihan (on 12 April) and Dr Guy Jansen (27 May).

Di was held in the highest esteem by her colleagues all around New Zealand and occupied a key position in NZ choral music for several decades. The inaugural Chair of NZCF Southland, Di held that position for 28 years, stepping down in 2013 but remaining on the committee as Coordinator of The Big Sing for the Southland region. She was also on the NZCF Governance Board for 6 years and held the portfolios for The Big Sing, The Kids Sing and SingFest. Her funeral in Invercargill was attended by the NZCF CE and a number of regional representatives, and at the conclusion of the service, Di's coffin was carried out of the church to a rousing standing ovation from the hundreds of people present whose lives she had touched.

Guy was a pioneer and visionary whose achievements included the establishment of the New Zealand Youth Choir, the New Zealand Secondary Students Choir, and the secondary schools choral competitions which would ultimately develop into The Big Sing. Guy was an inaugural member of the Governance Board of NZCF and chaired the Board from 2010 to 2012. During his tenure as Chair he was the driving force behind the establishment of the Association of Choral Directors (ACD) and NZCF's biennial Choral Connect conventions. After retiring from the NZCF Board in 2013, Guy devoted much of his time to writing a history of choral music in Aotearoa New Zealand. A celebration of Guy's life was held in Wellington on 15 June and was attended by a large number of NZCF members from around the country. Guy's book, *Sing New Zealand* was published by Massey University Press in November 2019.

a) Patron: Dame Patsy Reddy GNZM QSO DStJ

NZCF is delighted that the current Governor-General of New Zealand, Dame Patsy Reddy, continues to serve as Patron for our organisation.

b) Officers and staff

Governance Board

The New Zealand Choral Federation is especially grateful to the members of the Governance Board, who devote a significant amount of time and energy to the promotion of choral music in our country.

Juliet Dreaver	Chair (+ WSCM portfolio)
Michael Littlewood	Vice-Chair (Finance, WSCM)
Toby Gee	(Legal & Constitutional, Diversity & Reach)
Warwick Harvey	(Governance processes)
Shona McIntyre-Bull	(Regional liaison, The Kids Sing)
David Squire	(Association of Choral Directors, Diversity & Reach)
Rosemary Turnbull	(Regional liaison, SingFest, The Big Sing)
Robert Wiremu	(The Big Sing, Diversity & Reach)

Juliet Dreaver has worked tirelessly on general NZCF matters, as well as putting in a huge number of voluntary hours as chair of the WSCM2020 Admin Committee.

Staff in 2019

Christine Argyle	Chief Executive
Cathryn Wyllie	Operations Manager
Steffan Sinclair	National Accountant
Bea Selwood	Membership & Database Administrator (Feb - July)
Jenni Prentice	Accounts & Membership Manager (from August)

Emma Billings (formerly Operations Manager with Choirs Aotearoa) was interviewed and appointed in November 2019 to take up the role of Events Manager from February 2020.

NZCF regional committees in 2019

A new NZCF region, Nelson/Marlborough, was formally established in May 2019. There had long been a Nelson/Marlborough region for The Big Sing, but until 2019, NZCF member choirs from the upper South Island came under the auspices of NZCF Canterbury/West Coast. We were delighted that local Nelson musician Lucy Rainey agreed to take on the role of Chair of the region and to form a local committee of choral supporters.

The NZCF Chairs and committee members from the ten regions are crucial to the Federation delivering its busy programme and services, and the Board and National office are hugely indebted to the work of our dedicated volunteers around the country. The Chairs of each region are also members of the NZCF National Advisory Committee.

NZCF Auckland

Penny Christiansen (Chair), Jessica Wells (Secretary), Rowena Janes-Post (Treasurer), Vanessa Felix, Amelia Giles, Eveline Harvey, Rachel Young.

NZCF Waikato-Bay of Plenty

Jayne Tankersley (Chair & Secretary), Maria Colvin (Treasurer), Elizabeth Murray & Jeremy Whimster (Big Sing Coordinators), Sean Kelly, Hannah Bryant, Elizabeth Pilaar, Ann-Elise Miles, John Mullon.

NZCF East Coast

Alison Thomson (Chair), Pam Kesby (Secretary), Glenys Kempshall (Treasurer & The Big Sing Coordinator), Ngaire Shand (Kids Sing Coordinator), Georgina Cole, Barbara Morris, Kathleen Rowe, Joanne Stevens.

NZCF Manawatu-Whanganui

Roy Tankersley (Chair), Stanley Barnes (Treasurer), Guy Donaldson (Secretary), Carrol Donoghue, Anne-Marie Gray, Barbara McCullough, Faye Roberts, Stephen Rowley, Dr Gillian White.

NZCF Taranaki

Colin Bright (Chair & Treasurer), Carol Chapman, Jenny Duggan (TBS Coordinator), Beth Hockey, Jeff Grange, Jenny Sorensen (Secretary), Tim Steedman, Judy Tulloch, Juliet Woller.

NZCF Wellington

Elizabeth Crayford (Chair, acting Secretary), Heather Armishaw (Membership Secretary), Shawn Condon, Patrick Geddes, Lynda Hunter, Katie Macfarlane, Greg Maxted (Treasurer), John Shrapnell, Monika Smith., Kenneth Trass.

NZCF Nelson-Marlborough

Lucy Rainey (Chair), Stephanie Trevana (Secretary), Anne Tucker (Treasurer), Robin Randall (The Big Sing), Hilary Sinclair (ACD rep), Rosemary Shaw, Christianna Stewart (TBS), Sarah Moulder.

NZCF Canterbury-West Coast

Rosemary Fisher (Chair), Caitlin Godfrey (Treasurer), Christine Brennan (Secretary), Helen Charlton (ACD rep), Georgina Rees-Stevenson (Web Admin), Lois Chick, Jeanette McGrath.

NZCF Otago

Carole Randall (Chair), Rhys Thorn (Secretary), John Buchanan (Treasurer), Aimee Hazlett, Beth Scarlett, Rosemary Tarbotton.

NZCF Southland

Christine McLeod (Chair), Sarah Rae (Secretary), Jan Baird (Treasurer), Alan Menzies (Big Sing Coordinator), Michael Buick, Michael Forde, Shona Thompson.

As ever, the organisation continues to operate at a high level through the tremendous goodwill of many hundreds of volunteers.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The total number of Personal members of NZCF (including ACD members) rose to 505 (compared with 447 in 2018). This upward trend builds on the total of 394 Personal & ACD members in 2017. The vast majority of new individual members joined as members of the Association of Choral Directors and we are delighted to see the increase in recognition of the benefits of joining this professional body within NZCF. Numbers of member choirs have remained relatively static, with 202 choirs in 2019, compared with 205 in 2018. Those choirs that dropped off were choirs that wound up during 2018/2019.

3. FINANCES

In 2019 NZCF returned a consolidated surplus of \$2,425. A deficit of \$61,299 from the NZCF National office was offset by a surplus of \$46,818 from Symposium 2020 Limited and a combined surplus of \$16,906 from the NZCF regional branches.

Reasons for the \$61,299 deficit for NZCF National were, in large part, the result of mounting three Cadenza festivals in 2019. Precise costs of running Cadenza were hard to predict, given that these festivals were the first of their kind, and certain hidden or unexpected costs resulted in expenditure exceeding income for the event overall. It was decided that NZCF's surpluses of \$75,067 in 2017 and \$71,095 in 2018 provided sufficient buffer to proceed with the three Cadenza festivals, even if that meant an overall loss in 2019, and that the benefits of proceeding with all three were, on balance, worth the financial risk.

Other factors contributing to NZCF National's deficit in 2019 were:

- Higher Board and National Advisory Committee meeting costs in 2019 due to 5 board meetings instead of the usual 4; the cost of flying board members and regional chairs to Dunedin for The Big Sing Finale/ board & NAC meetings (costlier than the other TBS Finale centres; the re-scheduling of a board meeting (and resultant increase in flight costs) as a result of the funeral of the NZCF's former Chair Guy Jansen.
- Higher personnel costs due to increased staffing support in 2019. NZCF has undergone a period of significant growth and, as a result, the previous staffing levels are no longer sustainable. This became obvious when the new CE was appointed and the board resolved to reassess our staffing capabilities in order to continue to grow our offerings in line with our strategic plan.
- Higher than budgeted website maintenance and IT costs, due to changeover from PayStation payment portal to Stripe (in response to security issues with PayStation).
- An unbudgeted contribution made to the production of the late Guy Jansen's book *Sing New Zealand: The story of choral music in Aotearoa*.

Further details can be found in the audited accounts and the document titled Notes to Annual Accounts.

4. FUNDING AND SPONSORSHIP

a) Creative New Zealand Kahikatea funding

NZCF received a grant of \$166,088 from our primary funder, Creative New Zealand (CNZ) in 2019, in accordance with our three-year recurrent funding agreement under the Kahikatea programme. On top of this, NZCF also received a \$3,000 Digital Capability grant from CNZ towards the production of a series of videos for the ACD.

In May 2019, NZCF successfully applied to join CNZ's Tōtara Investment Programme and has secured a 6-year funding agreement with a 34% increase in the annual funding level. Funding for 2020-22 has been confirmed at \$679,000 (in total over three years) and is expected to be similar for the period 2023-2025.

The letter of agreement from CNZ stated: "Your inclusion in this [Tōtara] programme reflects the Arts Council's high regard for your significant contribution to the artistic life of our nation.

b) Ministry of Youth Development funding

MYD increased its funding at the start of 2018 to \$60,000 per annum (up \$25,000 from 2017), with a contract through to the end of 2020. In 2019, the funding was increased further to \$62,250 as a result of the government's Wellbeing package. At the beginning of 2020 we learned that the contract will roll over to the end of 2021.

As part of our MYD contract requirements, student participants in The Big Sing regionals took part in a Ministry of Youth Development survey regarding their levels of satisfaction with the event and what impact participation in the event had on their confidence, self-esteem and resilience. Results showed 92% of respondents were 'very happy' or 'happy' with the event, 89% were 'very happy' or 'happy' with the people running the event and 93% indicated they had increased their capability and/or resilience across a range of 12 different areas that included feeling more confident, communicating with others, feeling good about themselves and managing themselves.

c) Tour Time sponsorship

Tour Time continues as our major TBS sponsor, with an increased contribution in 2019 of \$15,000 to The Big Sing (including \$3,000 for the new Cadenza festivals). NZCF is most grateful to Brent Imrie and his team for their generous, ongoing support.

d) Funders and supporters of The Big Sing Finale 2019

The following organisations contributed to the cost of running the 2019 TBS Finale in Dunedin: Creative New Zealand, Ministry of Youth Development, Tour Time, Trinity College London, Otago Community Trust, The Lion Foundation, The New Zealand Community Trust, The Southern Trust, Bendigo Valley Foundation, SOUNZ Centre for New Zealand Music.

5. IFCM WORLD SYMPOSIUM ON CHORAL MUSIC 2020

Milestones

By the end of 2018, 24 choirs and 39 presenters had been selected to perform at the July 2020 Symposium in Auckland. Focus then shifted to the complex task of setting the various registration fees and preparing to 'go live'. The WSCM2020 programme was launched on Tuesday 19 February in Auckland to an audience of stakeholders, partners and members of the wider choral community, before being declared open to the world the following day via email and through social media.

Two days later, the Symposium team travelled to Kansas City, Missouri to promote WSCM2020 at the American Choral Directors Association National Conference, a biennial extravaganza attended by over 6,000 conductors and administrators. This offered a key opportunity to engage with potential delegates, exhibitors and international choral organisations, as well as to meet many of the choirs and presenters selected for Auckland. WSCM2020 and IFCM co-hosted a hugely successful evening reception for 100 choral influencers at the Kansas City Marriott, featuring iconic NZ food and six stunning banners by Kiwi artist Johnson Witehira. The day after the conference, a Symposium planning session was held with members of the administrative and artistic panels and the rest of the IFCM executive committee.

In April, the Artistic Director and Festival Manager attended the Australian National Choral Association's biennial Choralfest in Fremantle, the last of five overseas festivals that had been identified as key in marketing the Symposium to the world. Through a booth in the expo hall and at a presentation in the conference's closing concert, the Australian choral sector learned about WSCM2020 and were encouraged to sign up.

Not to neglect Aotearoa, the WSCM2020 roadshow, complete with videos, banners and leaflets, travelled to presentations in the Auckland and Manawatū-Whanganui regions in May and to ACD's Choral Connect in Wellington in July. From there it carried on to all three Cadenza Festivals (Timaru, Whanganui and Rotorua) and the Dunedin Finale in August.

Earlybird pricing closed on 31 July 2019, but with many enquiries arriving in the days before the deadline, it was decided to extend by two weeks. At the end of the extension 440 registrations had been received, more than three times the number received by the 2017 Barcelona Symposium at their earlybird deadline. Delegates from over 30 countries had registered.

In the final months of the year, the Symposium programme was finalised and placed into the various performance venues and presentation rooms across eight days and many time slots. Concert ticket packages were put on sale. Registrations slowed somewhat towards the end of the year, but at 31 December WSCM2020's 'Advance' numbers were still tracking well ahead of other recent Symposia.

Artistic

Artistic programming continued through 2019, with the 24 choirs and eventually 46 presenters divided, as mandated, between the two Symposium halves. Details were announced publicly in early July. World-renowned UK classical ensemble VOCES8 was engaged to 'headline' the first half of the Symposium, and later in the year the popular Australian jazz quintet The Idea of North was hired to perform in the second half. Further elements were added to the presenter programme, including an 'Admin Café' for choir managers and support people. Meetings began with fêted director Mike Mizrahi to work on a special, theatrical opening to WSCM2020.

The Surround Sounds fringe festival was developed as a series of lunchtime concerts in the lovely surroundings and acoustics of St Matthew-in-the-City, to showcase further top choirs from NZ and around the world. The international choirs would each then go on to perform in a different North Island regional centre.

Discussions continued through the year with both the Auckland Philharmonia and New Zealand Symphony (on behalf of the National Youth Orchestra) as to how either or both orchestras might be involved in the Symposium. Plans to bring together the NYO and the NZ Youth Choir to perform Ēriks Ešņvalds' exciting *Volcanic Symphony* were eventually dropped for cost reasons, but after lengthy negotiations a collaboration involving the APO and an 'NZ Symposium Choir' was agreed on, that would see Haydn's *Creation* – appropriately for our theme People and the Land | He tangata, he whenua' – sung as the final act of WSCM2020.

A hui was held early in September with iwi representatives to begin a kōrero about the Symposium as a whole, as well as the opening and closing concerts, opportunities to showcase Māori and Pasifika performance, and a proposed Matariki-themed collaborative composition for the middle (Wednesday) concert – this would involve several top NZ composers and several leading NZ choirs in a celebration of the nine stars of the Matariki cluster that herald the Māori new year. The WSCM2020 team then met with Matariki Festival Director Ataahua Papa, who was sufficiently enthusiastic to programme the work as a pou (pillar) of the 2020 Festival and its final event!

An approach from Tim Sharp, Director of ACDA and a member of the Symposium Artistic Committee, led to NZ being offered the full March 2020 edition of the American Choral Journal as a 'WSCM2020 focus issue'. Articles on the NZ choral and kapa haka scene were solicited from Christine Argyle, Karen Grylls, Keriatā Royal-Taeao, Peter Walls, Peter Watts and Robert Wiremu, with John Rosser as guest editor.

Logistics, Marketing, Relationships

Early in the year, EventsAIR was selected as our platform to manage registrations and to house the Symposium app. The Trade Expo booth package details were confirmed in late June and registrations opened in the first week of July. With the assistance of MBIE, a longstanding concern over cumbersome and potentially expensive immigration requirements for Symposium choirs, presenters and delegates was clarified.

In June, a Leverage & Legacy Committee was established and included representation from Symposium 2020 Ltd, NZCF, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, NZ Major Events, ATEED, Creative New Zealand and Auckland Live. The Committee, chaired by Warwick Harvey, held several meetings through the following months and a Leverage & Legacy plan was developed.

Backchat Media was engaged in July to create and manage a digital advertising campaign, which achieved very high engagement right around the globe. Siobhan Waterhouse from Mr Fahrenheit Publicity was appointed in August as the Marketing and Communications Manager. WSCM2020 instigated and ATEED funded a promotional video, released in late October, featuring Lucy Lawless and Moses Mackay.

A hotel and a hostel (Waldorf St Martins and King's Institute) were secured to accommodate the choirs and Four Points by Sheraton, across from the Auckland Town Hall, was chosen to house the presenters and IFCM officeholders. Several Auckland hotels close to the Symposium venues also agreed to provide special rates for delegates.

Friendly negotiations continued with Auckland Live through 2019 as the Symposium's specific venue requirements firmed up. In October they agreed to become the official venue partner.

Funding

At the end of April, an application was submitted to Foundation North for money towards the delivery of Symposium and the Surround Sounds fringe festival. A grant of \$20,000 was received. In September an application was made to Creative New Zealand for an Arts Grant, focusing on how the Symposium would add to the resilience of the choral sector by allowing NZ practitioners to 'build capacity and capability', thereby ensuring long-term career sustainability. The maximum amount of \$75,000 was granted.

An initiative to approach private benefactors for contributions to bridge the budgeted shortfall was developed later in the year, and a brochure was designed that included glowing testimonials from 15 international NZ singers and composers who had received their start in choirs. It was decided to roll this out in the new year, after the summer break.

Personnel

In May, Warwick Webb was appointed to the Symposium 2020 Ltd Board, alongside existing governors Michael Littlewood and John Rosser, and was invited to assume the role of Chair.

By the end of 2019, the management team was John Rosser (Artistic Director), Kylie Sealy (Festival Manager), Juliet Dreaver (Relationships Manager), Siobhan Waterhouse (Marketing Manager) and Phil Evans (Operations Manager). Candice de Villiers left the marketing role in the middle of the year to have a baby, Amy Mansfield assisted with Surround Sounds, Cathryn Wyllie continued to provide logistical support, and Christine Argyle contributed regularly as NZCF Chief Executive.

Afterword

Nobody reading this Symposium report in May 2020 will need to wait for the 2021 AGM to know how it ended. Following a recommendation by the directors of Symposium 2020 Ltd, the NZCF Governance Board on Sunday 14 March made the decision to cancel the 12th World Symposium on Choral Music, as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It perhaps goes without saying that the organisers are devastated at the loss of five years' creative work, and that both NZCF and the whole New Zealand choral community have suffered a real blow. Messages of disappointment but also genuine understanding and sympathy have flooded in, not only from the selected choirs and presenters but also from delegates all over the world.

There are some beacons in the gloom. The profile of Aotearoa NZ in the choral world has been raised immensely, we have become close colleagues of and even friends with many top international practitioners, and IFCM is undoubtedly well-disposed towards us. The Symposium's engagement with tangata whenua has sparked relationships between NZCF and Te Matatini and with Auckland's Matariki Festival, with whom we still hope to develop the exciting work mentioned above, but in 2021. Moreover, we as an organisation have now developed the necessary skills to mount a festival of truly international scale. Because of an avalanche beyond our control we didn't get the views from the top, but the long climb was still hugely worthwhile!

6. THE BIG SING (TBS) AND NZCF/SOUNZ AWARDS

The Big Sing continues to be a major highlight of the NZCF year across all regions, with a total of 8187 participants in the ten regional festivals held throughout the country in 2019, a total of 987 singers at the three area Cadenza festivals, and 834 singers at the Finale. The Finale Gala Concert was compèred by TV One presenter Hilary Barry in the Dunedin Town Hall. Video footage from TBS Finale was featured on the 'Hilary Helps' segment of TVNZ's Seven Sharp. The live stream of the Finale attracted a total of 69,918 views/plays (over 3 days) via the NZCF Facebook page, the RNZ Concert Facebook page and JX Live's online video platform.

The 2019 regional adjudicators were Andrew Withington, David Birchall, Jono Palmer and Robert Wiremu, and Cheryl Camm adjudicated the SOUNZ-NZCF Composition Competition.

A total of thirty-five choirs from 34 schools competed in the three Cadenza festivals, held in Timaru, Whanganui and Rotorua. The Adjudicators for Cadenza were Australian conductor Christie Anderson (South Island and Lower North Island) and Tim Sharp, the Executive Director of the American Choral Directors Association (Upper North Island).

Twenty-four choirs from 22 schools competed in The Big Sing 2019 Finale, the adjudicators for which were Tim Sharp, Madeleine Pierard, James Tibbles and Maramena Tuna (Auahi Kore adjudicator).

Sincere thanks go to Elizabeth Crayford (National TBS Coordinator), The Big Sing national committee (Director John Rosser, Peter Watts, Robert Wiremu, Rosemary Turnbull and Elizabeth Crayford); the ten regional coordinators (listed below) and their committees; National Cadenza Coordinator John Buchanan and the coordinators of the three Cadenza festivals (listed below) and their committees; Dunedin's Finale Host Committee, led by Carole Randall; and Finale social media coordinator Anna Tarbotton.

The Big Sing 2019 Regional Coordinators

National Coordinator	Elizabeth Crayford
Auckland	Shirley Harvey
Waikato/BOP	Elizabeth Murray/Jeremy Whimster
East Coast	Glenys Kempshall
Taranaki	Jenny Duggan
Manawatu/Whanganui	John Love
Wellington	Elizabeth Crayford
Nelson/Marlborough	Nigel Weeks
Canterbury/West Coast	Rosemary Fisher
Otago/South Canterbury	Rosemary Tarbotton
Southland	Alan Menzies

The Big Sing 2019 Cadenza Coordinators

National Coordinator	John Buchanan
South Island Coordinator	Lucy Dillon
Lower North Island Coordinator	Edwyna McDonald
Upper North Island Coordinators	Elizabeth Pilaar & Ann-Elise Miles

The Big Sing 2019 Finale

Coordinator	Carole Randall
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7. THE KIDS SING

Seven regions presented The Kids Sing festivals in 2019: Auckland, East Coast, Manawatu-Whanganui, Waikato-Bay of Plenty, Taranaki, Nelson/Marlborough and Wellington. The newly-formed Nelson/Marlborough region ran a pilot TKS festival in Motueka, and this performance opportunity was taken up enthusiastically by local primary school choirs.

A total of 3,848 singers from 95 choirs took part, compared with 3,409 singers from 82 choirs in 2018 and 2,867 singers from 76 choirs in 2017. It is pleasing to see continued growth in this event.

The Kids Sing Coordinators 2019

Auckland	Rhondda Garland
East Coast	Ngairé Shand
Manawatu/Whanganui	Roy Tankersley
Nelson/Marlborough	Lucy Rainey
Taranaki	Jenny Duggan
Waikato/BOP	Jayne Tankersley
Wellington	Anya Nazaruk

8. SINGFEST

Six regions presented SingFests in 2019, involving a total of 1,512 singers. These festivals took place in Hastings (March), Wellington (May Workshop), Christchurch (August), Hamilton, Rotorua, Tauranga & Thames (September), New Plymouth (September) and Invercargill (November). The format varied from region to region, with some SingFests presenting individual choirs performing separate programmes for adjudication or commentary, while others brought singers together from multiple choirs to perform en masse.

Wellington's May workshop saw an ad hoc choir performing Gounod's St. Cecilia Mass, conducted by Mark Dorrell. The Christchurch SingFest involved approximately 600 singers from multiple choirs, with audiences (in various locations around the city over two days) estimated at 2,500. Waikato-Bay of Plenty's *Sing Creation* saw a total of 170 singers performing in four centres in the region to a total audience of 795.

9. THE ASSOCIATION OF CHORAL DIRECTORS (ACD)

a) Committee

Two long-serving committee members, Peter Watts and Rosemary Russell, stepped down from the ACD Committee during 2019, having served 10 years since the formation of the ACD. Their contribution to the ACD over this period is highly appreciated.

The remaining committee members are David Squire (Chair), Karen Grylls, Helen Charlton, Sue Densem, Jayne Tankersley, Christine Argyle (CE) and Cathryn Wyllie (Operations Manager). The committee will look to co-opt two more members in 2020.

b) Fine Tuning

Fine Tuning workshops were held in May 2019 in Dunedin and Timaru. These professional development opportunities for choirs and musical directors taking part in The Big Sing were run by Andrew Withington, who worked with a total of 6 school choirs, spending 90 minutes working with each choir. 142 students participated, along with 6 conductors. Aspects worked on included vocal placement and projection, voice matching, stylistic interpretation, and communication of the text. Workshops had also been planned for two schools in Invercargill but were cancelled due to the last-minute unavailability of Andrew Withington.

c) Choral Connect

The ACD Choral Connect '19 convention attracted 79 delegates from all around the country, as well as 11 presenters and tutors, including international guest presenter Elise Bradley from Canada. Among the delegates were 6 secondary students: 3 young conductors and 3 pianists, who were offered full fee scholarships, meaning they could take part in all aspects of the conference at no charge.

Karen Grylls was Artistic Director and she and Artistic Programme Coordinator Jono Palmer assembled a rich array of presentations and topics for the 4-day conference, including daily vocal pedagogy sessions; presentations on the importance of a choral sound concept, the Kodaly method, the art of the collaborative pianist, engaging rehearsal strategies, and building a musical foundation from birth; conducting tutor groups; masterclasses; open rehearsals; repertoire reading sessions; and rehearsals of the work performed by the delegate choir at the final concert: Bob Chilcott's *Canticles of Light*.

Three public concerts were held over the course of the four conference days: the first provided a performance opportunity for three children's choirs from Wellington, the second featured three adult chamber choirs from Wellington and the final concert showcased our two resident choirs for the convention: the New Zealand Secondary Students Choir (directed by Sue Densem) and the internationally acclaimed Toronto Children's Chorus (directed by Elise Bradley). These concerts drew capacity audiences, with a total of 950 audience members across all three, and were a great way of opening the convention up to the wider community.

Special thanks go to the wonderful Wellington host committee, led by Rosemary Russell, and to our venue hosts, St Mark's Church School.

d) ACD video channel

Thanks to a Creative New Zealand grant, we were able to capture many of the Choral Connect presentations on video and made three of these available to our Association of Choral Directors members in 2019, with a further three to be released in 2020. These videos are a valuable addition to the ACD video channel.

e) ACD closed Facebook group

In September 2019 a new closed ACD Facebook group was launched to provide a forum for ACD members to discuss repertoire, accompanists, concerts, professional development, workshops and other events, and generally support one another. Since its establishment, the page has been very active with conductors (many of them TBS directors) sharing articles and seeking each other's advice.

Jayne Tankersley and David Squire have been the key drivers, and it was Jayne's initiative to run live Q&A chat sessions on the page, to give people the opportunity to tap into local and international expertise. The first of these Q&A sessions took place in November 2019 with NZ Youth Choir director David Squire. This live chat session attracted 106 viewers who posted 70 comments/questions during the one-hour session.

10. DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

a) Social media

The management of NZCF's three Facebook pages - NZCF, TBS and ACD – was taken over by the CE at the end of 2018. In 2019, NZCF received CNZ-funded digital capability training with Vicki Allpress-Hill and Katharine Witten-Hannah of The Audience Connection. Christine, Juliet and Cathryn all benefitted from these sessions, and as a by-product of this training, NZCF was given a \$3,000 grant from Creative New Zealand towards the production of the video recordings from Choral Connect.

Social media coordinator Anna Tarbotton was engaged for The Big Sing Finale and did a great job of engaging with the students taking part and getting the live sessions out to tens of thousands of viewers on Facebook.

b) eBreve

NZCF's communications are almost entirely via digital means and, as at December 2019, there were approximately 2,450 subscribers to *eBreve*, which is sent out monthly using MailChimp.

Pauline Logger worked on a contract basis throughout 2019 to format and deploy *eBreve*, and also provided support with updating the NZCF website.

c) Online and other resources

Our online resources include the website, with numerous downloadable articles, *eBreve*, *Ictus* and ACD videos. In addition, there is advice on accompanists, advertising, APRA, NZCF's Constitution, copyright, some educational downloads, information on where to look for funding, our health and safety policy, insurance policy details, contact information for some organisations, and where to look for repertoire and rules around making recordings.

Our primary school choir resource, "Hear our Voices" (by Megan Flint, Mary Cornish and Maria Winder) continued to sell well in 2019.

11. PARLIAMENTARY CHOIR

In October-December 2019, NZCF CE Christine Argyle, Chair Juliet Dreaver, and Brent Stewart (Orpheus Choir Director), worked with 'The Crossbenchers', Parliament's cross-party MP vocal group, to help them rehearse for their annual charity fundraising event "Harmony in the House" in the Grand Hall at Parliament. It is hoped that a regular Parliamentary choir will emerge in 2020 from this initiative.

12. CONCLUDING REMARKS

2019 was a year of significant growth in terms of our regions (with the addition of Nelson-Marlborough), our activities (with the introduction of three Cadenza festivals), and our staffing (with the hiring of 1½ new positions going into 2020). It was also an extremely busy year in terms of planning and preparation for the hosting of the 12th World Symposium on Choral Music in Auckland in 2020.

At the end of the 2019, the sense of excitement and optimism for 2020 was enormous and the organisation was well-equipped to host an international showcase of the world's top-ranking choirs and choral leaders. No-one could have foreseen that a worldwide pandemic would rob us of this unique opportunity and would also see thousands of high school students deprived of the chance to perform at the festival which is for many the highlight of their school year, The Big Sing.

I want to pay tribute to John Rosser and Juliet Dreaver for the many hours they invested in the preparations for WSCM2020, and to John, in particular, for his visionary artistic leadership. Although the event will not be held in our country this year, the legacy of WSCM2020 will be long-lasting and the place of New Zealand choral music in the international landscape has been firmly cemented.

NZCF and our member choirs around the country have demonstrated a high level of resilience and a strong sense of community in troubling and uncertain times. 2020 will be a year of growth in very different ways, and I am confident that NZCF will emerge with a renewed sense of the value of our artform, both in challenging times and in the brighter days to come.



Christine Argyle

Chief Executive

New Zealand Choral Federation

Te Kotahitanga Manu Reo o Aotearoa