

THE MUSIC AND MUSICIANS OF ST STEPHEN'S CATHEDRAL:

The First Sixty years.

7 October 1987 , Fr Neil J.Byrne

On Pentecost Sunday 1921 James Duhig blessed our pipe organ. For seven years the Protestant choir director, Leonard Francis, and the cathedral organist, Lilian Clancy, had pressed for an instrument capable of meeting the Archbishop's high expectations and worthy of the sacred art with which they and the forty voice mixed choir of St Stephen's had been entrusted. When some of the worshippers murmured at the organ's £1150 price tag, they were silenced by one of the Archbishop's characteristic appeals to higher culture: Was not music the only eternal art?

Architecture would not be required to mould or painting to embellish the vaults of heaven, but the angelic choirs would never cease to sing the praises of God.⁽¹⁾

Presumably they all hoped one day to join those angelic choirs and he was doing his duty as a pastor by ensuring that they knew some of the eternal repertoire before their divine audition. He had now provided for them an excellent pipe organ and an even better music director. Leonard Francis had been a choirboy at Exeter Cathedral, a concert baritone in London and had proved himself as a conductor by turning the Blackstone-Ipswich Cambrian choir into undisputed champions.⁽²⁾ Two years after the installation of the new pipe organ, the music of St Stephen's was further adorned by the virtuosity of an outstanding young Brisbane organist, Kitty Slack. She would remain at her post until the early 1970's. She saw Hugh Gilroy succeed Francis in 1951 and helped him give the choir an even higher profile through concerts in the Tivoli

Theatre and hour-long sacred Music recitals on 4 QG.⁽³⁾ Much of this recent history is familiar to us including the sad demise of the choir during the confused days of the mid-sixties and its resurrection in an all male form by Fr Barry Copely and Jack Stevens in the early 1970's. In the interim, Fr Ted Stapleton's Seminary Choir sang at the major cathedral liturgies.

In 1914 Leonard Francis had been asked to redirect the cathedral's music along the lines laid down in Pius X's Motu Proprio on sacred music which had appeared a decade earlier. This meant a return to plainsong, sixteenth-century polyphony and the contemporary Cecilian School whose restrained and sombre style was approved by Rome.⁽⁴⁾ By 1921 the new course was well established. On Pentecost Sunday morning, the programme was almost entirely Cecilian. The choir sang an 'Ecce Sacerdos Magnus' by John Wiegand, the Jubilee Mass of Paolo Giorza and the Introit, Gradual and Communion of the quasi-Gregorian composer, A.E.Tozer.⁽⁵⁾ However, in the afternoon the mood became more festive. At the blessing of the pipe organ the choir was permitted one last extravaganza and they sang those old nostalgic favourites which recalled sixty years of choral endeavour at St Stephen's. They sang the 'Gloria' from Mozart's so-called 'Twelfth Mass' which their forbears had sung under the blazing sun on that December day in 1863,⁽⁶⁾ when Bishop Quinn blessed the foundation stone of the present cathedral. The 'Twelfth Mass' was heard again eleven years later when the new St Stephen's was finally opened.⁽⁷⁾ The 'Laudate Pueri Dominum' of Nicola Zingarelli reminded some of another great cathedral celebration in March 1882 when the diocese welcomed its new bishop elect, Robert Dunne.⁽⁸⁾ Even more evocative of the choral tradition was the choice of a piece by Alexandre Guilmant. His 'Ave Maria' was a tribute to another organist born in the same French city in the same year: Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1837. Her name was Georgina Mullaney but Brisbane remembered her as Mother Claver from All Hallows. She was one of St Stephen's pioneering musicians whose arrival in Brisbane coincided with that of our first pipe organ in 1873 and she died just one day before the blessing of our second organ in 1921.⁽⁹⁾ The repertoire of that Pentecost afternoon honoured the three major formative influences on the music of St Stephen's, namely, the German influence of Ferdinand Rosenstengel, the Italian influence of Fr Domenico Carmusci, and the French influence of Georgina Mullaney.

Mullaney's blood was Irish but her musicianship was French as a result of her education in that northern seaport near the Belgian border. She taught French and Music at All Hallows,⁽¹⁰⁾ but found time to play that modest three manual pipe organ which James Quinn had brought back from Europe and had just installed in the old St Stephen's.⁽¹¹⁾ For many years she would walk down from All Hallows to accompany the choir on that small organ. Perhaps she knows what finally happened to it! Georgina Mullaney was St Stephen's first woman conductor and, on at least one occasion,

conducted both choir and orchestra in the cathedral.⁽¹²⁾ Georgina's real gift was for interpreting Gregorian chant. During the first half of the nineteenth century, her adopted France had been the scene of a great liturgical revival led by Dom Prosper Guéranger and the monks of Solesmes. Their revisions of the chant had become standard in every French diocese by 1875 and helped choirs to rediscover the beauty of the church's most ancient musical heritage. Georgina dragooned boys from St Stephen's School to form a plainsong choir which was used during the cathedral's Easter ceremonies.⁽¹³⁾ By 1883 she was working with an English priest, Francis Dunham, to train the St Kilian's boys who chanted Sunday Vespers in the cathedral.⁽¹⁴⁾ In the meantime, she had been developing the proficiency of her own sisters at All Hallows. When they sang the 'Veni Creator Spiritus', 'O Gloriosa' and various other psalms and hymns during a profession of novices in the cathedral on Easter Tuesday 1880, the press described their renditions as exquisite.⁽¹⁵⁾

An examination of the surviving St Stephen's choir books reveals that Georgina Mullaney's musical interest was not restricted to the correct interpretation and performance of plainsong. She introduced to the cathedral the works of a Belgian Jesuit, Louis Lambillotte, who was not only a Gregorian specialist but composed many cantiques, motets, short oratorios and four part masses. Three of these masses were sung at St Stephen's plus his 'Salve Regina', 'Regina Coeli', 'Tantum Ergo' and 'O Cor Amoris'.⁽¹⁶⁾ Perhaps Georgina was also not immune to the attractions of the French operatic style for by 1876 the choir was already singing a chorus from Charles Gounod's oratorio, 'Redemption' and a 'Sancta Maria' of Giacomo Meyerbeer. The French tradition continued on not only in the cathedral's repertoire but in the performances of various French musicians, for example, that of the concert pianist, Madame Mallalieu, who accompanied the Vespers on opening day 1874;⁽¹⁷⁾ the baritone, M. Eugarde, who was a soloist with the choir in the late 1880's;⁽¹⁸⁾ and the violinist Madame de Laplato who led the cathedral orchestra in 1907.⁽¹⁹⁾ Before leaving the French tradition, I must refer to a set of anonymous French pieces in the early repertoire bearing titles such as 'La Nativité de la Ste Vierge', 'L'immaculée conception' and 'Le Rosaire'.⁽²⁰⁾ Of course the most natural source for these would be Georgina Mullaney but the crude military spirit of some of the melodies argues against a borrowing from the All Hallows' repertoire. I wonder could they have come from those French missionaries, the Augustinians of the Assumption, who worked in Queensland during its earliest days? Let's listen to this reconstructed chorus of a two part song called 'L'Assomption'⁽²¹⁾ which is found in this same intriguing set.

Let us consider now that more pronounced and durable German tradition begun by the Brisbane pianist and music teacher, Ferdinand Rosenstengel, whose association with the cathedral choir began in 1863 and spanned a quarter of a century. Ferdinand was born into a military family. His father was Captain John Rosenstengel of the 23rd

Prussian Regiment of Infantry.⁽²²⁾ The legacy from such a childhood was a lifelong love of band music and a military precision in his conducting. When he died in 1890, the procession to Toowong cemetery was headed by a volunteer brass band made up of friends and admirers.⁽²³⁾ It was obviously the way he had always dreamed of going. Rosenstengel was a Queensland Immigration Society migrant who, in 1863, opened a studio at Maximillian House, Anne Street. His reputation spread so quickly that he was approached by the city's leading musician, Sylvester Diggles, to conduct his newly founded Philharmonic Society.⁽²⁴⁾ Rosenstengel later formed his own German Glee Club which sang at many civic concerts and receptions.⁽²⁵⁾ In 1868 the organisers of the royal visit to Brisbane invited Rosenstengel to conduct a combined children's choir. The idea was that when the Duke of Edinburgh passed the Royal Hotel in Queen's Street, the children would greet him with the National Anthem. When they began, a group of over-loyal Protestants decided to storm the platform and tear down some 'offensively Catholic' banners held by Irish children. Catholic reinforcements soon flowed out of the nearby public bar and pandemonium resulted. In the meantime, Rosenstengel never missed a beat and saw the anthem through till the last measure.⁽²⁶⁾

This resolute Prussian spirit led to Rosenstengel's unofficial appointment as the general of a small army of German Catholic laymen who fought for the recognition of their rights in a predominantly Irish church. The campaign lasted seventeen years and annoyed Bishop Quinn immensely.⁽²⁷⁾ If Rosenstengel made little headway with the bishop on this broader front, he certainly established German supremacy within his own territory. The choral repertoire at St Stephen's would remain predominantly German until the turn of the century. Rosenstengel favoured the First, Second and Seventh Masses of Haydn, Mozart's First Mass in C, the Seventh in B flat the Requiem, and the disputed 'Twelfth Mass'. He taught his choir to sing Carl Maria von Weber's Mass in G as well as the masses of the contemporary Munich composer, Carl Grieth.⁽²⁸⁾ Among the German masses is a three part work by Joseph Winter written for London's German Catholic congregation. This mass may well have been the favourite of Fr Francis Xavier Kaercher who had worked in that community before James Quinn gave in to pressure from Rosenstengel and appointed him chaplain to Brisbane's German community in 1871. In addition to the masses, Rosenstengel's repertoire for Vespers and Benediction was built around the works of Haydn, Mozart, Hummel, Beethoven, Schweitzer, Schulthe and, of course, included Handel's "Halleluia Chorus".⁽³⁰⁾

When, in the late 1880's, Rosenstengel sensed that his beat was beginning to falter, he ensured that the baton was passed to another German. Herr Raimond Pechotsch was a violinist who would rely also on his wife's soprano voice to help maintain the German tone of St Stephen's. He was a composer as well. At the Easter Sunday mass of 1889, after a smorgasbord of Mozart, Weber and Hummel, the congregation heard for the first time his beautiful Magnificat in D flat,⁽³²⁾ which, sadly, now seems to be

lost. In more recent times the German tradition has been kept alive through the presents of German, or German trained, instrumentalists and vocalists. In the St Stephen's orchestra we come across names like Eckstein and Kaesar, and Peter Valley who played in the orchestra of the German Liedertafel Society during the 1890's⁽³³⁾. The conductor of that society in 1914 was Les Edye whose fine baritone voice was often heard at St Stephen's.⁽³⁴⁾ He was later one of the founding fathers of the Queensland Conservatorium. By Pentecost 1921, the terminus of our considerations tonight, there were at least two Germans still prominent among the cathedral's soloists, the tenor W.E. Muller and the soprano Violet Dilger.⁽³⁵⁾ She chose that day to sing the 'Inflamatus' from Rossini's 'Stabat Mater' and in so doing honoured that third Italian note of the cathedral triad first sounded by Domenico Carmusci half a century earlier.

Fr Carmusci spent only a few years in Brisbane, probably from 1871 to 1974, but it was long enough to establish an Italian repertoire of sufficient size to seriously threaten the German sovereignty.⁽³⁶⁾ Domenico Carmusci had been discovered by James Quinn in Rome and invited to come to the antipodes for the sake of his health, but it meant giving up a career as Professor of Music at the Sistine Chapel in favour of that of 'master of music and singing at St James' School, Brisbane'.⁽³⁵⁾ To one who knew nothing of Queensland apart from Quinn's glowing descriptions, the enormity of such a shift may not have been apparent. It soon became so after Carmusci's first encounter with the nuggetty colonials in Brisbane's first Catholic Grammar School. The fact that he spoke almost no English would not have helped. There was an even greater communication breakdown at the cathedral. It seems that the bishop may have promised St Stephen's to Carmusci without bothering to inform the present incumbent. Rosenstengel refused to budge and appeals to Quinn proved useless. The final indignity for Carmusci was the rejection of a Mass which he had composed specially for the opening of the new cathedral in 1874.⁽³⁸⁾ Rosenstengel insisted on Mozart's 'Twelfth Mass' but was banished to the harmonium for his sins. Quinn solved the conducting problem by giving the baton to a Protestant outsider, R.T. Jefferies of the Brisbane Musical Union. W.G. Broadhurst of Sydney's Pitt Street Congregational Church was brought up to play the pipe organ.⁽³⁹⁾

As a musician, Carmusci had one foot in the Roman school of chant and sixteenth century polyphony and the other in the Neapolitan operatic tradition. By the time of his departure, he had given Brisbane a taste of both styles. He taught the choir to sing Palestrina's 'Tantum Ergo', 'O Salutaris' and 'Popule Meus' (the Good Friday Reproaches).⁽⁴⁰⁾ He also introduced them to works by Nicola Zingarelli who had been a Sistine Chapel choirmaster but turned his hand to opera and didn't stop until he had written the last bar of his thirty-seventh. One of the best loved pieces of the choir became Zingarelli's 'Laudate pueri Dominum' for tenor solo and chorus which

survived at least until 1921. Less durable were several works by pupils of Zingarelli, the 'O Salutaris' of Vincenzo Bellini and a Mass in B flat by Saviero Mercadante. In the same operatic style was Giovanni Rossi's 'Tantum Ergo' and the chorus 'La Speranza' by Rossini which was sung in Italian and glorified salvific hope in a way that was only marginally connected with the Christian virtue. Rossini was generally thought to be the most extreme of the Italian operatic church composers. In 1921, when Violet Dilger and the choir sang the finale from his 'Stabat Mater', they must have known that this work in particular was on the Cecilian hit list, having been condemned as 'a gross travesty of the religious sentiment of the hymn'⁽⁴¹⁾. The composer was showing off by writing in the soprano part a series of ascending shakes and a succession of shrieks on the highest note attainable by the human voice. Even if we accept the criticism of the Cecilians we must take our hats off to Violet Dilger.

It is true that Carmusci was snubbed at the opening of the new cathedral but he was vindicated half a century later when Zingarelli's 'Laudate' and an aria from the oratorio 'Eli', written by that composer's pupil, Costa, were included in the Pentecost programme⁽⁴²⁾. If Rosenstengel was appalled by Carmusci's syrupy harmonies, the music lovers of Brisbane were not. They demanded to hear his 'Grand Mass' and other sacred works at a public concert which took place in the School of Arts hall on 30 September 1874 with Carmusci conducting a voluntary choir of friends and admirers. His first mass had been performed at St Stephen's two years earlier and had been applauded by many Protestants who had come to hear it. Again in his 'Grand Mass' they recognised Carmusci's debt to Palestrina but he had lightened the mood by means of lyrical vocal solos and frothy orchestration. For example, the 'Christe Eleison' was written for a single soprano with a running arpeggio accompanist on the concertina. By way of contrast, the 'Gloria' was massive and bore a striking similarity to the Islander's Chorus in Meyerbeer's opera, 'L'Africaine' (1865). In the 'Laudamus' the voices mingled and intertwined melodically as in Italian opera and the 'Quisedes' was pure Verdi⁽⁴³⁾. In general, the audience approved of Carmusci's innovations and found them a refreshing change from Rosenstengel's German School with its studious and weighty elaborations. As a result of the concert, Carmusci was hailed as one of the top six musicians of the city along with his adversary Rosenstengel, R.T. Jefferies, Sylvester Diggles, the bandmaster Andrew Seal, and the organist Paul Atkinson⁽⁴⁴⁾. Such accolades were not sufficient to keep him in Brisbane or in Australia.

Though Carmusci may have returned to Rome, his music stayed on. The choir liked to sing his 'O Salutaris' and 'Tantum Ergo' written for soprano and chorus; his 'Miserere' and 'Litany' both written for three voices, his 'Salve Regina' and 'Ave Maria' and his two settings of the 'Veni Creator Spiritus'. This version written for three voices in F major I have been able to reconstruct from the surviving choir books of 1876⁽⁴⁵⁾.

Other Italian musicians found Brisbane more welcoming than Carmusci. Rosina Carandini married and settled in Brisbane in 1860s⁽⁴⁶⁾. Her father, Count Carandini, had arrived in Sydney as a political refugee in 1845 and the following year produced Verdi's opera 'Attila'⁽⁴⁷⁾. One of the first Italian families in the cathedral were the Benvenuti. Senor Benvenuti was a violinist who played for the Brisbane Musical Union as well as a string quartet led by R.T. Jefferies⁽⁴⁸⁾. He was part of the orchestra which assisted in the performance of Mendelssohn's oratorio 'Elijah' which began the opening festivities at St Stephen's in 1874⁽⁴⁹⁾. By 1911, Benvenuti was still directing his own twelve member church orchestra at St Patrick's Fortitude Valley, though he continued to make frequent appearances at St Stephen's⁽⁵⁰⁾. Mention should also be made of the Truda family⁽⁵¹⁾. The flute of the father and the son's violin were the mainstays of the cathedral orchestra during the first decade of Australian federation.

Usually the least likely place to discover a musician is among the ranks of the diocesan clergy. Fortunately, this was not true in the early days of the Brisbane diocese. Enough of the priests were either Italian or Roman trained to see that the celebrant's role in the missa cantata was sung with grace and accuracy. The first bishop, James Quinn, had developed a 'clear, sweet voice'⁽⁵²⁾ during his days at the Irish College Rome and his chanting was especially appreciated at Midnight Mass each Christmas and during the Easter ceremonies when he called on the assistance of the Italian trio of Benedict Scortechini, Peter Capra and Joseph Canali.⁽⁵³⁾ Their rendition of the 'Lamentations' at the office of Tenebrae was particularly powerful and moving. The Administrator of the cathedral for many years was the Italian, John Cani, who would become the first bishop of Rockhampton in 1882. He was a singer and great supporter of the cathedral's music and was responsible for editing the choir books of 1876.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Archbishop Dunne lamented the fact that he had no voice for he was more musical than most of his colleagues.⁽⁵⁵⁾ He too trained in Rome where he developed a love for choral music and, as a young priest in Dublin, was among those daring clerics who concealed themselves in the wings of the Dublin Opera House during performances of Italian opera. His brother David had been preeminent in the founding of the Dublin Musical Society and had turned his brother into an avid reader of the Musical Times.⁽⁵⁶⁾ It was Dunne's concern that the music of St Stephen's be accessible to the other choirs in the diocese no matter how modest. For example, in 1884 Dunne, who read music, copied out an 'Agnus Dei' to send to Michael Burke and his choir at the Wambillalla Creek Railway Camp.⁽⁵⁷⁾

However, without any doubt, the outstanding musician among the priests was the Roman born Joseph Canali who owed not only his musicianship but his skill as an architect and civil engineer, to his training as an officer in the Austrian army prior to his emigration to Brisbane. He was ordained at St Stephen's by bishop Quinn in 1879 and for more than a quarter of a century would sing the 11.00 am Sunday Mass as well

as the 'Exultet' each Holy Saturday.⁽⁵⁸⁾ His days in Austria and knowledge of German made him a favourite of Rosenstengel who doubtless was more disposed to develop his musicianship than that of his Irish colleagues. I don't know if the singing lessons extended to German lieder but stranger anomalies were occurring elsewhere in the city.

In February 1881, a visiting Italian concert violinist, Ercole Ortori, agreed to give a charity concert in Brisbane to help raise money for improvements being made to the entrance of the cathedral. Rosenstengel was to be his accompanist and supporting acts would be provided by the cathedral choir and orchestra. Ortori delighted his audience with fantasias on airs from Italian and French operas. He must surely have raised his eyebrows when Signorina Stombuco stepped forward from the choir and began to sing her favourite solo 'Come back to Erin'. One can imagine Rosenstengel gritting his teeth throughout but dutifully following the baton of yet another German, Friedrich Siemens.⁽⁵⁹⁾ The signorina's choice was merely a realistic concession to an overwhelmingly Irish, English speaking Church which demanded to be recognised as such. While this may have been easy enough to do in the concert hall, it was much more difficult to achieve in church.

At the time of the Reformation in Britian (1534), not only the churches of Roman Catholics were reduced to rubble. Any tradition of high musical culture within them was also completely destroyed and could not be re-established until the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. Thus there had been no serious Catholic music in Britain for three hundred years. The English and Irish Catholic choirs of the mid-nineteenth century were forced to borrow almost all their choral repertoire with the possible exception of the works of the Embassy Chapel composers. The foreign embassies in London were the only places in the Empire where Catholic ritual was tolerated during the eighteenth century. Some of this tradition surfaced at St Stephen's in the masses and motets of Samuel Webbe senior, organist at the Sardinian Embassy, and in works by Vincent Novello of the Portugese Embassy who established his own publishing house in 1811. Most of the early printed repertoire of St Stephen's came from Novello & Co of London.⁽⁶⁰⁾

The Embassy tradition was highly derivative since those composers had to write for continental congregations. There was another more modest British tradition which emerged after Emancipation and found its way to St Stephen's. This was the English hymn tradition, borrowed from Anglicanism, and developed for Catholics by the Anglican convert, Fr Frederick William Faber. The Irish learnt to sing hymns like 'Faith of Our Fathers' and 'O Purest of Creatures'⁽⁶¹⁾ during Faber's parish missions in Dublin during the 1850's. Very few of Faber's English hymns met Rosenstengel's high standards at St Stephen's. Indeed many of them were wedded to trivial tunes. However, by 1876 the choir was singing his 'Jesus My Lord My God My All' perhaps

only because it was set to a contemporary German melody.

If the English and Irish had little to offer St Stephen's in the way of original composition during its first sixty years, they nevertheless provided some outstanding performers. Among them was the Atkinson family of Toowong. Paul Atkinson came from Bandon, Ireland, armed with such adventurous scores as Mozart's Requiem and Beethoven's oratorio 'Engendi'. He erected and played publicly for the first time Quinn's pipe organ in January 1873. The choir sang Mozart's First Mass in C in which Atkinson's wife and son were soloists.⁽⁶²⁾ Another great Irish voice heard in the old cathedral was that of Sr Cecilia McAuliffe of All Hallows. Her singing was responsible for the overcrowding at Sunday Vespers.⁽⁶³⁾ A voice not heard and an enormous talent denied to St Stephen's at this time was that of C B Lyons. Lyons had been a Professor of Music at Dublin's Catholic University and conducted the choir at James Quinn's episcopal ordination in the university chapel on 29 June 1859. He came out as bishop's secretary but the two men had such a stormy relationship that Lyons found little time for music before his departure to Sydney where he died in 1870.⁽⁶⁴⁾ During the 1880's, the Kelly and Farry families⁽⁶⁵⁾ provided organists and singers for St Stephen's and, at the end of that decade, came Austin Craven⁽⁶⁶⁾ an English concert tenor who had been a soloist at Manchester's Catholic cathedral for ten years.

However, it was not until the early 1890's that the conductor's baton would be wielded by Anglo-Saxon hands. First came J.E.Hall⁽⁶⁷⁾ and after him Mr Nottingham⁽⁶⁸⁾ and Patrick Joseph Henry. Henry was a journalist who wrote a sports column for the Brisbane Courier and the musical notes in the Queenslander using the by-line 'Henricus'.⁽⁶⁹⁾ For a time he was also editor and proprietor of the Catholic paper, The Australian. His musicianship and fine bass voice were developed by the Christian Brothers at Gregory Terrace and St James' School.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Henry was a great advocate of voice training for children and, with the assistance of his organist Nellie Starkey, he established a junior choir at St Stephen's. By 1911 this choir was of sufficient standard to take responsibility for the 10.00a.m. Sunday mass.⁽⁷¹⁾ In his adult choir, Henry could rely on able soloists like the sopranos Bell, Skehan and Kelleher and the tenor Muller but he kept the bass solos for himself and had a particular passion for singing Gounod.⁽⁷²⁾

The 'Messe Solenelle' of Gounod had become the tour de force of Australian cathedral choirs and was being performed at St Stephen's from at least the mid-1890's.⁽⁷³⁾ Camille Saint Saens may have been dazzled, then charmed, then conquered by the luminous rays streaming forth from this mass, but it was making the hair of the Cecilian purists stand on end. Whatever its musical attraction or value, they thought this style of operatic writing was liturgically inappropriate. The 'Gloria' alone took nine minutes to perform. One of Gounod's opponents was Bishop Nicholas Donnelly,

President of the Irish Society of St Cecilia, who visited Australia in 1890 and noted with some distain the popularity of the 'Messe Solenelle'.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Providentially, the Brisbane flood waters prevented his exposure to our choir's blatantly operatic repertoire when he arrived here to visit an old Dublin friend, the wife of the Supreme Court Judge, Virgil Power.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Donnelly had received his grounding in the new Cecilian orthodoxy in the summer of 1875 when he studied under Fr Franz Haberl at the Ratisbon School of Sacred Music.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Ratisbon was the headquarters of the German Cecilian movement which pledged itself to the restoration of the chant and polyphony and the elimination of all sensuous, irreligious and frivolous music from Catholic worship.

Donnelly was not, however, the first Ratisbon purist to visit Brisbane. The oldest remaining choirbook at St Stephen's is a hand-written collection of harmonized chants for mass and vespers by W.A.Duncan and is dated Brisbane, 1856.⁽⁷⁷⁾ William Augustus Duncan was a Scottish convert who was educated in Ratisbon at the Scots Benedictine College. By 1846 he had become a customs collector at Moreton Bay where he remained until his move to Sydney in 1859.⁽⁷⁸⁾ During Duncan's student days in Ratisbon, the cathedral choirmaster was Dr Karl Proske, the father of that movement which later called itself Cecilian. Proske's polyphonic influence is obvious in Duncan's harmonisations. His accompaniment for the 'Lauda Sion Salvatorem' of Corpus Christi acknowledges its debt to Palestrina whose four part 'O Salutaris' also appears. When Duncan did not use his own harmonies, he relied on those of the Bavarian organist, Kasper Ett, who had become famous for his ability to compose in the polyphonic style of the sixteenth century.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Duncan's manuscript establishes the existence of a competent choir at the old St Stephen's at the time of, or very soon after, its opening in May 1850. In fact it would not suprise me if Duncan's harmonisation of the dedication hymn 'Coelistis urbs Jerusalem' was used at the opening and could therefore claim to be one of the first pieces of sacred music sung in that church. Moreover, it would have received the blessing of the Cecilian authorities.

By 1921, the Ratisbon chant was being sung again in the cathedral as a result of the editorial work of Fathers Haberl and Pustet. Celebrants used Pustet's versions of the Passion during Holy Week.⁽⁸⁰⁾ By then a new Cecelian polyphonic tradition had arrived at St Stephen's via America. In 1873 the Bavarian composer, John Baptist Singenberger, had been invited by the Archbishop of Milwaukee to reform the music of his diocese along the lines set by the Ratisbon Cecilians. Singenberger became president of the American Cecelian Society and also was a prolific composer in that style.⁽⁸¹⁾ Leonard Francis saw that his works were heard at St Stephen's, notably his Mass and we will discover that Singenberger had succeeded in severing all connection with the opera house.

Ever since Bishop Donnelly's visit in 1890, there had been a movement in Australia for the foundation of a Cecilian society. Articles began to appear in the Australasian Catholic Record, calling for the reform of Catholic music and recommending publications like Donnelly's translation of Haberl's *Choir-Master and Singenberger's Short Instructions in the Art of Singing Plain Chant*. Exact blueprints for the formation of a Cecilian society were also provided.⁽⁸²⁾ I have been unable to establish the existence of any such society in Brisbane but there were many committed to improving the standard of church music. Archbishop Dunne, while he always insisted that the cathedral choir should be a voluntary organisation, would not allow choir practice to become a social affair. He demanded that the choir director draw up rules of conduct and have them displayed publicly at all times along with a list of legitimate members. The rules were to touch on regularity and silence at rehearsal and performance as well as submission to the authority of the conductor.⁽⁸³⁾ Socialising could be left to the choir's annual picnic which was the only recompense for their efforts.⁽⁸⁵⁾

A man who was at least a crypto-Cecilian was John Aloysius Hayes, a former cathedral altar boy present at the opening in 1874 who never lost his love for sacred music of a high quality.⁽⁸⁶⁾ Hayes became Mayor of Sandgate but by 1897 had found sufficient time to publish a series of tracts on church music which established him as somewhat of an expert both in Queensland and the southern states. Among his titles were, 'The Guide to the Latin Language as Applied to Church Music' and the 'After Elevation Musical Guide as Applied to Low Masses'.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Here Hayes recommended the use of plainsong and polyphony and the disuse of vernacular songs and any music which savoured of theatrical variations or reminiscences. He also called for some faith commitment on the part of church musicians. They should use their musical capabilities to enter into the spirit of the church and exult with her in her joys and weep with her in her sorrows. In doing this they would become church musicians in the true sense and not 'mere factors of music alone'.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Hayes claimed some success for his efforts. Children's choirs were beginning to blossom and the Sisters of Mercy through their school music programme were providing well trained choristers for the future.

However, progress was slow. When Leonard Francis arrived at St Stephen's in 1914, he found the choir press swarming with shoals of masses and sacred pieces by composers of minor fame but exceedingly major pretensions. The choir sang more than its fair share of jumping Kyries, savage roaring Credos, shrieking offertory solos and rude street marches which had begun to offend even the untrained ear. After Easter Sunday that year one member of the congregation had stormed home to write to the *Age*. The choir was charged with having completely ruined the liturgy. The sacrifice of the mass, the sermon, the sacred associations of the day itself, all had come 'a bad second' to Musical Vanity.⁽⁸⁹⁾ However, there is no evidence to suggest that the

deterioration had reached the level of Irish Catholic Chicago where an organist was heard to improvise on 'Yankee Doodle' during the Offertory and, in place of an Alleluia, one tenor rang out the sweet strains of 'Believe me if all those endearing young charms'.⁽⁹⁰⁾ Admittedly, it was St Patrick's Day, a day on which musical vanity knew no bounds. It would not take long for American innovations to find their way into Australian choir lofts but, as in the 1960s, music directors showed little ability to separate the best from the worst of that tradition. By 1922, one critic believed we had outstripped the Americans for bad taste and declared: Catholic Church music is probably at a lower level here than in any other part of the world'.⁽⁹¹⁾ That chorus has been sung loudly and often unfairly ever since.

This consideration of the first sixty years of music at St Stephen's Cathedral has not confirmed the myth of cultural aridity and lacklustre performance surrounding the Catholic cathedral choirs of Australia. Rather, the story of the St Stephen's choir has been one of sustained commitment, creativity and considerable skill. We have a choral tradition for which we do not have to apologise but which we must work to preserve. When John J. Donovan was attacking that great favourite of St Stephen's, Mozart's 'Twelfth Mass', he described it as nothing but a 'patchwork of airs from different operas'.⁽⁹²⁾ In Brisbane, we have never thought eclecticism a damnable thing. We have prided ourselves on our patchwork tradition which attempted to sew together the often conflicting styles of French, German and Italian music in the nineteenth century. It could be that the cathedral repertoire of our first sixty years provides a useful model for the contemporary church which struggles to blend high culture with multiculturalism and popular taste. To sing a patchwork from different operas is to be catholic in the truest sense, free from the restrictions of any particular nationality or any one limiting theology or ecclesiology.

ENDNOTES

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4. Mgr. Antonio Rella, 'A Brief Commentary on the Motu Proprio of Pius X' in *Proceedings of the Second Catholic Congress, 1904* Melbourne: Winter, 1905, pp.478-483
5. Programme for Pentecost Sunday, 1921, Brisbane Archdiocesan Archives
6. *Brisbane Courier*, 28.12.1863,p.2
7. BC 16.5.1874,p.1
8. *Australian* 25.3.1882
9. *Age* 21.5.1921,p.5

10. Sr Jean-Marie Mahoney, Dieu et Devoir: The story of All Hallows School, Brisbane 1861-1981, Brisbane: Boolarong, 1985, p.29
11. Sydney Freeman's Journal, 8.2.1873 p.6; BC 24.1.1873 p.4
12. Fr Denis Fouhy to Sr Claver Mullaney 16.6.1887 BAA
13. Sr Jean-Marie Mahoney, op.cit. pp.29-30
14. Fr F A Dunham to Fr Denis Fouhy 18.9.1883 BAA
15. Australian 3.4.1880, p.16
16. St Stephen's Cathedral Choir Books 1876, BAA
17. BC 18.5.1874
18. Australian 24.3.1888, pp.14-15
19. BC 31.3.1907
20. Choir Books, op.cit.
21. 'L' Assomption' was reconstructed from the hand written parts in the Choir Books by Fr Neil J. Byrne and recorded by the Pius XII Seminary Choir under his direction.
22. BC 26.3.1879, Marriage notice
23. BC 27.2.1890, p.4
24. C G Austin, 'Early History of Music in Queensland' in JRHSQ, 6,4, (1961-2) p.1054
25. 'The German Glee Club', John Oxley Library
26. BC 26.2.1868, pp.4-5; 27.2.1868, p.2
27. Y M McLay, James Quinn: First Catholic Bishop of Brisbane, Armadale: Graphic Books, 1979, p.86
28. Choir Books op.cit.
29. Fr F X Kaercher to Eminenza 18.3.1882 SC Vol.14, f.152 SCPFA
30. Choir Books op.cit.
31. Fr Denis Fouhy to Raimond Peckotsch, Professor of Music, 4.3.1889 BAA
32. Australian 27.4.1889, p.16
33. BC 24.3.1913, p.8; SFJ 23.7.1898, p.23
34. Age 18.4.1914, p.10
35. Programme for the Inauguration of the New Pipe Organ, Pentecost Sunday, 15 May 1921, BAA
36. Choir Books op.cit.
37. T J Linane (ed.) 'From Abel to Zundolovich', Torquay: Footprints, n.d., No.C28
38. BC 24.9.1874
39. BC 18.5.1874
40. Choir Books op.cit.
41. John J Donovan, 'On Church Music' in Proceedings of the First Australasian Catholic Congress, Sydney: Brooks & Co. 1900, p.819
42. Programme for the Inauguration op.cit.
43. BC 1.10.1874
44. Toowoomba Chronicle 7.11.1874, p.3
45. Originally written for three treble voices, this motet has been reconstructed from the choir books and arranged for male voices by Fr Neil J. Byrne. It is unclear whether or not the motet was to be accompanied by the organ.
46. G C Austin op.cit. p.1061
47. G Cresciani, The Italians, Sydney: ABC, 1985, p.32

48. G C Austin op.cit.p.1055
49. BC 18.5.1874
50. Advocate 30.12.1911,p.16
51. BC 31.3.1907
52. Australian 27.12.1879,p.12:Onanotheroccasion, hewas praised for his 'capacity and endurance'. (Australian 3.4.1880,p.16)
53. Australian 19.4.1879,p.598
54. The Choir Books of 1876 bear his name.
55. In 1890,Dunne said to Mother Vincent Whitty: 'I am sorry I am no singer...However,one must be content,and I suppose I'll be somehow furnished with the requisites if I have ever the luck to join the choirs in heaven'.(Dunne to Mother Vincent 19.6.1890)
56. Tablet 16.1.1892,pp.97-8:Dunne to Maria Dunne 26.1.1886 BAA
57. Dunne to Michael Burke 20.11.1884 BAA
58. Advocate 30.12.1911,p.16: Dunne to Fr Fortune 6.11.1882 BAA
59. BC 11.2.1881,p.1
60. Masses and Motets of Samuel Webbe, London:Novello &Co.,n.d. BAA
61. Choir Books op.cit.
62. SFJ 8.2.1873,p.6
63. Sr M. Xaverius O'Donoghue, Beyond Our Dreams, Brisbane: Jacaranda,1961,p.21
64. C.B. Lyons to Tobias Kirby 1.1.1861 Irish College Archives, Rome
65. Australian 7.4.1888,pp.13-14; BC 24.3.1894
66. Australian 27.4.1889,p.16
67. BC 5.4.1896
68. SFJ 11.1.1896
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72. BC 31.3.1907
73. BC 5.4.1896
74. Nicholas Donnelly to William Walsh 8.1.1890 Dublin Diocesan Archives
75. Robert Dunne to Eliza Dunne 11.2.1890 BAA
76. Nicholas Donnelly to Tobias Kirby 22.9.1875 ICAR
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82. G A Robinson, 'Catholic Church Music in Australia and its Reform', Australasian Catholic Record(1896)p.437
83. Robert Dunne's Memorandum concerning the choir in response to Sr M.Evangelist's note of 21.8.1878, BAA
84. Australian 19.4.1879,p.598

85. Dunne to Mother M Potter 5.3.1885 BAA: 'no remuneration of any sort was paid to the members of the choir'
86. Age 9.8.1924,p.15
87. SFJ 13.11.1897,p.19
88. Ibid.
89. 'An observant and thoughtful Catholic' in Age 18.4.1914,p.1
90. W.F.P. Stockley, 'Church Music and Popular Taste' in New Ireland Review,XV,1,(March 1901) p.294
91. 'Gregorius', Sing Ye Wisely, Sydney: Marist Brothers, 1925 & 1954, p.14
92. John J Donovan, 'On Church Music' paper presented at the First Australasian Catholic Congress held at Sydney,1900. Proceedings,op.cit.p.818

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