



A Chorus of Women

A Passion for Peace

Newsletter 1, February 2014

By now, many of you may have heard about A Chorus of Women's big project and choral work for 2015 called *A Passion for Peace*. This is the first of a series of newsletters that we will circulate to our friends and supporters with the latest news about the project and associated events. We also warmly invite you to an informal information session and afternoon tea:

INFORMATION SESSION

You are invited to join us to hear more about the remarkable Hague Congress of 1915, Glenda's plans for the choral work, our overall plans for the project and how you might be able to join in— either as a performer, helper or both!

Sunday 16 March, 1.30–3.00 pm, Uniting Church Hall, Denman Street, Yarralumla

Afternoon tea will be served and you are welcome to stay until 3.30 for informal chats.

RSVP to Janet (see below) by Friday 14th March.

Read on for further information about the project and how you can join in!

A Passion for Peace

A Passion for Peace is a community oratorio that A Chorus of Women is creating for premier performances by 100–200 singers in April 2015. It is inspired by 1300 women who travelled to The Hague from 12 warring and neutral nations for the **International Congress of Women**, from 27 April to 1 May 1915.

While the women dialogued harmoniously, generating visionary resolutions and an action plan to end World War I and establish permanent peace, Australian and New Zealand soldiers were in the first heartsick week of the eight-month Gallipoli campaign where more than 10,000 of them would die. War deaths were mounting towards the eventual loss of 20 million people in Europe and elsewhere.

'For three days we have met together, conscious of the bloodshed and desolation surrounding us ... and we spoke solemnly to each other of the great and eternal issues ... We have formulated our message and give it to the world to heed when it will, confident that at last the great Court of International Opinion will pass righteous judgment upon all human affairs.' From the closing speech of Jane Addams, president of the International Women's Congress, 1915.

The legacies of this 'forgotten congress' are indeed still reverberating in international affairs — such as through the first proposals for an International Court of Justice and what became the United Nations, which were among congress resolutions — and through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom which was founded at the congress and celebrates its centenary in April 2015.

A Passion for Peace will communicate a hopeful vision of humanity's heritage and potential. Like those attending the Congress, the singers will sound a political voice beyond the adversarial as they remember the past, reflect on what is happening *now*, and make a promise to the future inspired by a sacred purpose — the protection of generations. The main characters will be choruses of women and children, but there will also be a chorus of men ghosts from previous conflicts. Performers and audience alike will be invited to participate in the Citizen's Chorus.

The initiator of the *Passion* project is Canberra musician and Jungian analyst Dr Glenda Cloughley, who also conceived the Lament for the people of Iraq, sung by a chorus of 150 women in Parliament House in March

2003. Glenda's many songs for A Chorus of Women include the libretto and music for *The Gifts of the Furies*, the first major Australian artwork to recognise the mythic scale of the climate change crisis, which Chorus presented in 2010 with a cast of 80 and support from artsACT in partnership with the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House.

Musical direction for the *Passion* will be by Johanna McBride who has led most of A Chorus of Women's 150+ public performances, with Meg Rigby and Judith Clingan, AM assisting. The Street Theatre is providing dramaturgical support.

Stop press — mark these dates in your diaries!

We have booked the **Albert Hall from 26 April – 3 May 2015**. We plan to present 2 or 3 performances and a number of other associated events during that week. These dates coincide with an international conference of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in The Hague to celebrate the centenary of the 1915 Congress. We are hoping to be able to connect directly to the conference for some or all of one of our performances and to live stream the conference proceedings at other times.

During 2014, we will also hold a seminar and conversation series to raise community awareness about the 1915 Congress and their resolutions — which were incredibly far-sighted and prescient of current trends in international affairs — and the women's subsequent 'road trip' across war-torn Europe and the United States to visit heads of government, foreign ministers and other dignitaries.

Watch this space for more specific information, dates and times as plans unfold.

Help urgently needed

As we are a very small community group, we urgently need helpers to make these ambitious plans happen. Can you help us in any of these areas?

Funding — identifying and applying for grants, setting up a crowdsourcing project and other fundraising activities to cover the considerable costs of the project.

2014 seminar series — coordinating a seminar series (approximately 4 seminars or public conversations between March and December 2014) to promote public conversations about the 1915 Congress and its ongoing legacy.

Public relations — engaging with strategic 'champions,' raising awareness and building momentum for the 2015 event.

Media — developing and managing media opportunities (print, radio, TV).

Communications — writing, setting up a website, designing publicity materials, setting up social media (Facebook, Twitter, a blog)

Performance management — recruiting and managing singers and musicians, managing costumes and set, managing performance logistics.

Musical support — providing assistance for the musical directors (eg music clerks).

If you are interested in helping in any of the above ways (or any others that we have forgotten!), please contact Janet Salisbury as soon as possible and/or come along to our information session (see above).

Performers

We need to gather about 100–200 women for the main choruses, including women from many cultures, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island women, refugees and migrants. We also need choruses of children and a chorus of about 30 men. Although the main rehearsal period will be from early 2015, we hope to have 'work in progress' opportunities later in 2014 to get to know the work and each other.

If you are interested in singing with us, it is not too early to let us know, so please send your details to Johanna McBride as soon as possible and/or come along to our information session (see above).

For further information contact:

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Janet Salisbury (project manager): janetsalisbury25@gmail.com Mobile 0416 167 280

See also www.chorusofwomen.org