

28 October 2012  
Edition 3

## B-A-C-H - STAGE NEWS & SOUNDS

### Bach in Australia

Dear friends and Bach enthusiasts,

Several years ago, a kind soul introduced me to the previous Bach Festivals in Melbourne, which were held at Christ Church in South Yarra by its Director of Music, Leonard Fullard. As I was recently leafing through the programs and notes again from the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Bach Festival in October 1971, I couldn't stop admiring Leonard Fullard for his courage, enthusiasm and vision in initiating these Bach Festivals all the way back in 1949, only a few years after the end of WWII. By the way, the Patron of the 1971 Bach Festival was The Most Rev. Frank Woods, Archbishop of Melbourne and Primate of Australia.

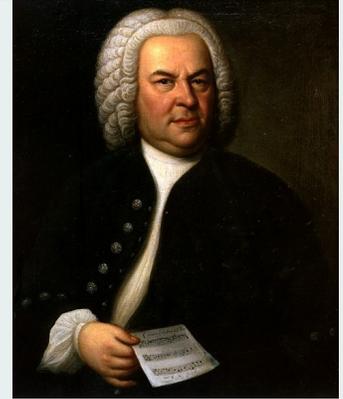
Fast forward to October 2012 and the installation of Dr. Andreas Loewe as Dean of Melbourne in St. Paul's Cathedral – an eminent Bach scholar who is just about to launch a ground-breaking monograph about J.S. Bach's St. John Passion. Congratulations to you, Andreas, and God's blessing for your new office.

I would also like to extend my sincere congratulations to Australia's own Brett Dean. As part of its 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary festivities, St. Thomas Leipzig has commissioned Brett Dean to compose a new work (Festmusik) for the Thomanerchor, which will be premiered at St. Thomas on Christmas Day 2012. What an achievement!

As Bach@Trinity 2012 is drawing to a close I would like to thank you, dear readers, for your patronage during the various events held this year. The Australian Bach Society will continue its mission in 2013 and beyond in a slightly modified format. Please stay in touch as we will do.

*Hans Schroeder*

President Australian Bach Society Inc.



#### **THIS NEWSLETTER AND WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT**

CONCERTS, OTHER EVENTS & NEWS ABOUT BACH AND HIS MOTHER COUNTRY

#### **WHO IS INVITED?**

EVERYONE: NEWCOMERS & BACH ENTHUSIASTS

#### **WHY SHOULD YOU COME?**

LISTEN TO THE GENIUS' MUSIC, NETWORK, LEARN AND HAVE FUN

#### **WHERE?**

NEXT EVENT: 3/10 NOVEMBER, 3PM, GERMAN TRINITY CHURCH, ALL SIX MOTETS AND TWO CELLO SUITES

#### **RECENT EVENTS/ HIGHLIGHTS:**

WOLFRAM LATTKE WAS IN TOWN FOR THE MAGNIFICAT AT TRINITY COLLEGE, PARKSVILLE

#### **BACH TIMELESS**

CD TIPS

## ‘SACRED AND SPINE-CHILLING’ - BACH MOTETS IN AN AUTHENTIC SETTING WITH THE AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER CHOIR

On 3 and 10 November 2012 at 3:00 p.m., the Australian Chamber Choir will perform all six Bach Motets over two consecutive Saturdays under the leadership of Douglas Lawrence. Presented by the Australian Bach Society, the concerts at the German Church in East Melbourne will also feature the first two Bach Cello Suites played by Rebecca Humphrey Diederich. Tickets cost \$35 (concession \$25) and are available from [www.trybooking.com](http://www.trybooking.com) (3 Nov: [www.trybooking.com/BPFK](http://www.trybooking.com/BPFK), 10 Nov: [www.trybooking.com/BPFL](http://www.trybooking.com/BPFL)) or at the door.

For 800 years, visitors have flocked to Leipzig to hear the Saturday Motets at Bach’s home church of St. Thomas. On 3 and 10 November 2012, Melbourne audience members will have a rare opportunity to be a part of this tradition thanks to the Australian Chamber Choir. Founded in 2007 by its current director, Douglas Lawrence, the celebrated choir has a special interest in the unaccompanied Motets of J.S. Bach and is one of the few Australian ensembles to have performed at St. Thomas, where Bach was director of music for 27 years. That gives it a unique ability to interpret Bach’s music as he would have intended it. Facilitated by the Australian Bach Society, the recital in 2011 was so well received that the choir has been invited back to Leipzig in 2013. “A piece of music in several parts with words” is the precise definition of a motet. That hardly does justice to the Australian Chamber Choir’s celebrated Bach performances. Clive O’Connell’s rave review in *The Age* comes closer with its title “Sacred and Spine-Chilling” (August 24, 2010), while Anna McAlister from the *Herald Sun* writes: “Many of the singers featured as soloists and all were stunning. With such individual standards, no wonder the ensemble sounds so impressive” (September 23, 2012).



© Australian Chamber Choir

Each of the concerts at the historic German Church will feature three Motets and one of the first two Bach Cello Suites in a performance by Rebecca Humphrey Diederich. The American cellist has received much acclaim for her work with the Washington Bach Consort and the Handel Singers of Baltimore. She was also the principle cellist of the Kammerensemble Luzern and Capriccio Basel before moving to Melbourne in 2009. After the concerts, audience members are invited to join the performers for refreshments and a chat in the Church Hall. Vouchers for discounted parking at Wilsons Park Hyatt will also be available on the day.

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## GETTING A BUZZ FROM BACH

***The Australian Chamber Choir is busily rehearsing all six Bach Motets for its recitals on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> at the German Church in East Melbourne. We offer you a glimpse behind the scenes courtesy of Elizabeth Anderson, the renowned harpsichordist, alto and choir manager.***

**Elizabeth, tell us a bit about your background. What brought you to music?**

When I was two, my parents immigrated to Australia as “ten pound Poms”. I attended primary school in Launceston and for some reason a lot of the kids there went to Sunday school. I wanted to join in, so my parents took me to the Congregational Church in Launceston. I sang in the church choir from the age of six and started learning piano soon after that. My family wasn’t particularly musical but I always had a feeling for it. On the advice of my wonderful piano teacher, I moved to Melbourne for university and picked up harpsichord as a second instrument. I’ve never looked back.

**Your husband Douglas Lawrence founded the Australian Chamber Choir in 2007 and you've since earned great acclaim both at home and abroad. Is it easy working together?**

By default we're together the whole time – doing admin for the choir, playing four-hands organ, discussing programs, thinking about bits of music and arguing about how to interpret Bach. There's always a fantastic to-ing and fro-ing of ideas. Douglas' secret is that he plays the choir like an instrument. He expects to produce expression in the same way as he does when he plays an organ solo, so he's able to put across ideas and even subtle changes in tempo with great spontaneity. That's the magic.



© Elizabeth Anderson

**And how are the rehearsals going for the Bach Motets?**

Really well. Our choir is typically made up of 18 highly trained singers and we rehearse once a week in the six weeks leading up to a concert. Douglas likes to keep the rehearsals short because he's very aware that singers can fatigue. People come in after a long day at work and go out feeling energised. It's very full-on and intense.

**Do you find the German texts easy to learn?**

The German sung in Bach's Leipzig is the sound that we hope to make as a choir. I'm always careful to corner singers who are native German speakers and go through the texts with them. Thanks to the Australian Bach Society, we recently performed at the St. Thomas Church in Leipzig. We stayed with members of the congregation and had the opportunity to become part of the culture that Bach lived in. It was really meaningful for all of us and has even inspired some of our members to enrol in German courses.

**Your performances of Bach have been widely praised. Can you describe what Bach means to you?**

He's one of the most interesting composers to study and I never tire of his work. I don't know how many times I've played the Goldberg Variations but it always feels like an old friend and I discover new things every time. In the choir, too, it's good to come back to Bach in a rehearsal. The harmony and polyphony are amazing and people really get a buzz from it. Any one voice has the difficulty level of a complicated solo and the breathing is a fantastic exercise in teamwork.

**And finally, what should our audience listen for during the Motets?**

I think the chorales are the most beautiful part. They are the simplest music in the entire program. After all that incredible complexity, it's so refreshing to return to a gloriously simple four-part hymn tune that most of the audience members probably recognise.

## UPCOMING EVENTS NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

**Saturday, NOVEMBER 3 + 10 at 3 p.m.**

**German Trinity Church, East Melbourne**

**The Australian Chamber Choir**

Directed by Douglas Lawrence

(and Rebecca Humphrey Diederich – violoncello)

**All Six Motets by J.S. Bach and Two Cello Suites**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)

### **PROGRAMME ONE—Saturday November 3 at 3 p.m.**

Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf

*The Spirit helps us in our weakness* - Motet for double choir – BWV 226

Komm, Jesu, komm

*Come Jesus, come* - Motet for double choir – BWV 229

Suite for unaccompanied cello no 1 in G major – BWV 1007

Prelude – Allemande – Courante – Sarabande - Menuetto 1 and 2 - Gigue

Fürchte Dich nicht, ich bin bei Dir

*Be not afraid, I am with you* – Motet for double choir – BWV 228

Tickets: \$ 35 and \$ 25 (concession) – Booking: [www.trybooking.com/BPFK](http://www.trybooking.com/BPFK)

### **PROGRAMME TWO—Saturday November 10 at 3 p.m.**

Lobe den Herren alle Heiden

*Praise the Lord, all you heathen* – Motet for four-part choir – BWV 230

Jesu, meine Freude

*Jesus my joy* – Motet for 5 part choir – BWV 227

Suite for unaccompanied cello no 2 in D minor – BWV 1008

Prelude – Allemande – Courante – Sarabande - Menuetto 1 and 2 - Gigue

Singet dem Herren ein neues Lied

*Sing to the Lord a new song* – Motet for double choir – BWV 225

Tickets: \$ 35 and \$ 25 (concession) – Booking: [www.trybooking.com/BPFL](http://www.trybooking.com/BPFL)

### **Sunday, December 9 at 3 p.m., Trinity Church**

#### **J.S. Bach's Weihnachtsoratorium (Christmas Oratorium), Part 1**

Like Händel's Messiah in Australia, Bach's Christmas Oratorium is a must in German Christmas tradition. We invite you to join us to watch this sensational video recording from the baroque church in Tading near Munich (2005), featuring the Munich Bach Choir and the Bach Collegium, Martin Petzold (tenor), and other soloists including the legendary Peter Schreier as conductor and – for the last time – as evangelist.

Free admission – Donations welcome – Please register at [www.trybooking.com/BPFM](http://www.trybooking.com/BPFM)

## Bach Cello Suites Nos. 1 and 2

Bach's Suites for Solo Cello are considered the 'Bible' for all cellists as they are some of the most frequently performed works for solo string instrument. They were initially perceived as academic works, mechanical, without warmth. "How could anyone think of them as being cold, when a whole radiance of space and poetry pours forth from them," wrote Pablo Casals, who found an old copy of the Suites in a Barcelona music shop when he was 13. Casals practiced the Suites almost every day over the next 13 years of his life before he performed them in public for the first time.



© Wikipedia

The Suites are ideally suited to exploring all the countless colours and harmonic possibilities of the cello. They include amazing Preludes and Allemandes, rapid Courantes, grave Sara-

bandes, graceful Minuets and lively Gigues. We don't know much about the origin of the masterpiece as no autographed manuscript has survived. We don't even know if the Suites were originally composed for the baroque version of the modern cello – the viola da gamba. Some researchers suggest that Bach composed the Suites for an instrument that was not played between the legs - da gamba - but like a violin - da spalla (see photo). Countless transcripts for numerous instruments exist, including such famous ones as marimba and ukulele. The only remaining challenge seems to be to create a version for didgeridoo. Maybe it's a project for the Australian Bach Society?

HZ

**Suite No. 1 in G major:** Mainly consisting of arpeggiated chords, the Prelude is probably the best known movement from the entire set of Suites and is regularly heard on television and in films. Most students begin with this Suite as it is assumed to be easier to play than the others in terms of the technique required.

**Suite No. 2 in D minor:** The Prelude consists of two parts, the first of which has a strong recurring theme that is immediately introduced at the beginning. The second part is a scale-based cadenza movement that leads to the final, powerful chords. The subsequent Allemande contains short cadenzas that stray away from this otherwise very strict dance form. The first Minuet includes demanding chord shifts and string crossings.

Source: Wikipedia



'Die Thomaner - Leipzig 1727', Source: Ausstellung 2012 Bach Archiv Leipzig

## “THE GREATEST OF ALL THE HOLIDAY GATHERINGS”: HOW THE ST. MATTHEW PASSION CAME TO AUSTRALIA

AN ACADEMIC SYMPOSIUM ON THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN PERFORMANCES OF J. S. BACH’S ST MATTHEW PASSION, INITIATED BY THE AUSTRALIAN BACH SOCIETY INC., WAS AN EVENT LONG WISHED FOR BY THE MUSICOLOGISTS DRs JANICE STOCKIGT AND SAMANTHA OWENS.



Dr Andreas Loewe

© Hans Schroeder

On 15 September 2012, several leading early music scholars gave a fascinating insight into the first Australian performances of Bach’s St. Matthew Passion. Dr Andreas Loewe (photo), Chaplain of Trinity College, asked an audience of some 50 people “What happened to lead to a Melbourne performance of this previously unknown work being labelled ‘the greatest of all the holiday gatherings’ in 1875?” According to Dr Janice Stockigt from The University of Melbourne, Mendelssohn’s resurrection of Bach, together with reports published in *The Musical Times*, had sparked British interest, which in turn influenced Australia. “The concert illustrates the rapidity with which Melbourne society emulated what was seen to be in vogue in England,” added Stockigt.

The first full performance of the St. Matthew Passion in the Southern Hemisphere took place at the Melbourne Town Hall in 1875. Conducted by Joseph Summers, it was described in *The Argus* as “not in that condition of preparedness in which it should have been when such a grand audience was met together to be present at the first performance of it.”

Dr Julia Szuster from The University of Adelaide painted a vivid picture of the first Adelaide performance on 28 May 1903. In Brisbane, as reported by Dr Samantha Owens from The University of Queensland, parts of the St. Matthew Passion were performed as early as 1874. However, the next Brisbane recital was not for nearly 50 years, partially due to the prevailing anti-German sentiment during the First World War. The instrumentation of the early performances is fascinating. In Melbourne, Joseph Summers added massed brass and percussion instruments to the score. The ensemble in Adelaide included two string orchestras and an organ but no wind players, while the 1874 performance in Brisbane featured a double quartet of strings.

In her insightful response, Professor Stephanie Trigg from the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions focused on how Australian settlers perceived this “extraordinary music about death and passion.” Professor Kerry Murphy, Head of Musicology at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, gave the closing remarks: “Today’s Symposium once again illustrates that while it is easy to view geographical and cultural isolation as a problem, in fact it can be a great advantage since it could lead to startlingly fresh understandings of mainstream European repertoire, with audience’s gaps in knowledge enabling them to receive works relatively free from preconceptions.”

After the Symposium, the guests were treated to a performance of Bach’s Cantata “Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele” (BWV 180) at Trinity College Chapel. Professor Graham Lieschke gave a lively introduction to the recital, which featured the Early Voices and the Baroque Ensemble of the Early Music Studio, Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, under the baton of Greg Dikmans. The results of the Symposium will be presented at next year’s Bach Network UK meeting in Warsaw. Thank you to all those involved for a fascinating and memorable afternoon!

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## HIGHLIGHTS DURING BACH@ TRINITY 2012

### J. S BACH MAGNIFICAT

On 11 August 2012 at 7:30 p.m. the time had come: The most important concert of our Bach@Trinity 2012 series, organised by the Australian Bach Society in cooperation with Trinity College, could finally begin.



Wolfram Lattke performing down under

© Silke Zurlinden

In the run-up to the concert, we had to overcome some challenges: Most importantly, the originally appointed tenor, Martin Petzold, had to cancel his journey to Australia due to illness. Hans Schroeder was responsible for setting the telephone wires between Leipzig and Melbourne aglow until he was finally able to appoint Wolfram Lattke, who proved to be more than just a substitute tenor.

‘Magnificat’ was a huge success for the young Australian Bach Society. A full house, made up of around 200 Bach enthusiasts, was evidence of this.

And the audience was rewarded with a top performance. The program consisted of three Bach works, ‘Himmelskoenig sei willkommen’ (BWV 182), ‘Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen’ (BMV 51) and of course the great ‘Magnificat’.

Trinity College Choir under the baton of Michael Leighton Jones impressed with its rich sound. Ludovico’s Band, playing on historic instruments, provided us with fantastic insights into the original sound of Bach’s music. And of course the local soloists, Greta Bradman (soprano), Michelle Clark (soprano), Jenny George (alto) and Timothy Newton (bass) impressed the audience – as well as our ‘German import’, Wolfram Lattke.

Wolfram had already been touring Australia for three weeks with the vocal ensemble ‘Amarcord’. He obviously enjoyed his last evening down under – not only during the concert, but also at the reception afterwards. On the next day, he started his long journey back to Leipzig equipped with a didgeridoo and other souvenirs.

The Australian Bach Society would like to thank everyone who contributed to a trouble-free event. This concert was a milestone on our way to a higher profile and visibility in Melbourne, which will enable us to welcome many music lovers to our next concerts as well.

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© Hans Schroeder

### BACH FOR KIDS?

“Why not?” was our reaction when the German Church’s Youth Worker, Sabine Hillger, suggested a two-day workshop about ‘Papa Bach’. Hans Schroeder talked about Bach’s busy life at St. Thomas (photo below), Douglas Lawrence demonstrated the Rieger organ at Scots’ Church (photo left) and even invited the kids inside the organ to touch a few keys. It was a great event - to be continued.



© Hans Schroeder

## WHAT'S ON IN MELBOURNE AND SURROUNDINGS...

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### **10 November-2:30 PM and 7:30 PM, Collins Street Baptist Church:**

Melbourne Bach Choir Spring Concert: Bach - Jesu meine Freude (BWV 227), Kodaly—Missa Brevis

### **30 November-8:00 PM, The Chapel of the Holy Spirit, Newman College, Melbourne University:**

The Choir of Newman College accompanied by La Compañía: Weihnachten - Advent and Christmas repertoire of J.S. Bach's lifetime and of the preceding generations, including carols and motets by Buxtehude, Schütz and Praetorius.

### **22 December — 8:00 PM, Scots Church (Corner of Collins & Russell Streets Melbourne):**

Vivaldi — Gloria and Bach — Magnificat (more information to come under [www.scotschurch.com](http://www.scotschurch.com)).

### **23 December-9:00 AM, St Johns Southgate ([www.stjohnssouthgate.com.au](http://www.stjohnssouthgate.com.au)):**

St Johns Bach Choir and Orchestra: Bach Cantata Service, Advent/Christmas Festival Eucharist: Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ (BWV 91)

### **11 January to 20 January 2013—Organs of the Ballarat Goldfields - 18th Annual Festival**

11 January, 12 January (both concerts starting at **8:00 PM**), St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat: Christmas Oratorio J. S. Bach (11 January: Part 1-3, 12 January: Part 4-6). Gary Ekkel directs the Schola Cantorum of Melbourne and an orchestra drawn from Australia's leading Baroque musicians.

More info on the festival including various Bach events on [www.ballarat.com/organs](http://www.ballarat.com/organs)

## WHAT VISITORS AND MUSICIANS HAD TO SAY ABOUT RECENT EVENTS:



(Judith 23/8/2012)

*'The 'Magnificat' was one of the very best recitals I have heard in my life, unforgettable. It is such incredibly beautiful music and performed so well. Thank you so much for all the work you did to make it happen and for telling me about it*

(Natasha 12/8/12)

*'What a wonderful concert! So many of my friends commented on how they really enjoyed it. - In addition Rosie (cellist) told me how much she REALLY enjoyed the audience. She was surprised, seriously moved and quite thrilled. So well done!*

*"Who needs pills to lift the spirits when we have the six Bach motets, and Douglas Lawrence and the Australian Chamber Choir to sing them?"*

*"The Cello Suites are amongst Bach's most popular works today – covering a wide emotional range."*

## J.S. BACH – TIMELESS? – YES! JAZZ, CHANSONNETTES AND MORE...— CD TIPS

### Bach in Jazz – He is the Strength of my Life

Following the motto Bach in Jazz, Martin Petzold and Stephan König and his jazz trio do just that: they translate Baroque music into elegant jazz miniatures. For the first time, arias from Johann Sebastian Bach's large-scale cantatas and passion settings have been arranged for the realisation of this vocal experiment. The Stephan-König-Trio offers new listening experiences full of inspiration in selected movements from the Italian Concerto and the Orchestral Suites. Two seeming opposites – a score-bound singer and improvising instrumentalists – approach Bach in a completely unheard-of fashion. But fear not: Bach remains Bach – even in Jazz.



© Rondeau Production

Premiered 4 September 2010 in Köthen – Available as Rondeau CD ROP 6048 in good music stores or via [www.rondeau.de](http://www.rondeau.de)

### CHANSONetteS MIT BACH - Songs with Bach

An entertaining story full of fun, in which two musical worlds meet... Just before the start of her evening concert, a devastated chansonette becomes aware that she has lost her pianist. He has called to say that he is elsewhere, perhaps in the arms of his new love.... In despair, she sends an SMS to heaven, and to her surprise, God helps! Nobody else than the best – the great Mr Johann Sebastian Bach himself – is sent back to earth to help the frustrated chansonette by playing the piano and singing with her. She believes it to be an illusion, while Mr Bach enthusiastically grabs the opportunity and seeks, in a typically baroque style, to endear himself to the singer. She has much fun with the interpretation of the Bachian themes – and the 'Director Musices' only needs a short period of familiarisation to adjust to songs of Edith Piaf, Kurt Weill and hits from The Beatles. But as they grow together in musical understanding, human feelings cannot be denied. One is left guessing whether Mr Bach wants to return after finishing his earthly mission as a musical angel, or if he'd perhaps prefer to continue his new partnership with the pretty chansonette on stage and ....



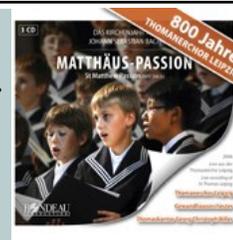
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© private

Presented by Ute Loeck, as Chansonette, and the current Leipzig Thomaskantor Georg Christoph Biller, as Mr Johann Sebastian Bach (see photo left) - Premiered 13 August 2006 in Melba Hall, The University of Melbourne.

**Bargain:** Sensational recording of the St. Matthew Passion with Thomanerchor Leipzig, Rondeau Limited Edition—3 CDs for 3.99 Euro available via [www.amazon.de](http://www.amazon.de)



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**BACH @ TRINITY 2012**



### **Australian Bach Society**

The Australian Bach Society was officially founded during an inaugural meeting at the German Lutheran Church East Melbourne on 8 November 2011. Board Committee members were appointed as follows:

President:  
Hans Schroeder  
Vice President:  
Frauke Tyrrell  
Treasurer:  
Peter Wabenhorst  
Secretary:  
Regina Gramer  
Other Board Members:  
Pastor Matthias Kunze  
Silke Zurlinden  
Dr. Hendrik Zurlinden

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ph. 03 9654 5743

### **PURPOSES OF THE AUSTRALIAN BACH SOCIETY ARE:**

- to increase the appreciation and knowledge of J.S. Bach and his music
- to arrange performances, concerts, lectures, or other activities to promote an interest and appreciation of J.S. Bach, other classical composers and organ and sacred music in Australia
- to encourage young musicians and young people with an interest in classical music without limitation, arranging of performance opportunities, assisting in musical education, and providing tickets for events and scholarships

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

#### **PRESIDENT:**

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[hansdschroeder@optusnet.com.au](mailto:hansdschroeder@optusnet.com.au)**

#### **MEDIA ENQUIRIES:**

**Adele Schonhardt, 0457 727 379,  
[adelemw@hotmail.com](mailto:adelemw@hotmail.com)**



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