

Director's Report – AGM 2015

Confidence:- Self assurance or a belief in your ability to succeed; faith in somebody to do right; a relationship based on trust.

This year has been about finding ourselves. Learning about our own abilities so that we can believe in them and trust that we are improving and on the right path.

After a disappointing result at contest in 2014 it has taken many months to figure out how to find the right path for our progression and our journey. It has taken some naval gazing to determine what 'success' is, how do we achieve and/or measure it? What does it take to 'earn' success without feeling entitled to it?

For me, success comes from being prepared. It comes from being confident. It is achieved when we trust ourselves and trust each other.

In order to create an environment of trust, the music team having been developing and working on opportunities for members to learn and be coached through:-

- Bunch of Keys

Stephanie's brainchild, along with assistance from Doris has allowed chorus members additional opportunities to rehearse and perform in small group settings. Repertoire includes current and older chorus material suitable for performing at different functions and events. Chorus members and music team members benefit from a variety of songs and the enjoyment of performing in small groups.

- Small group rehearsals have been provided when possible to help members learn and practice the contest repertoire.
- Section rehearsals help to develop section unity and greater accuracy in each voice part.
- Visual rehearsals help individuals recognise the need for incorporating their performance into the unit look of the chorus.
- Music Team meetings have focussed on addressing the musical and visual needs of all the chorus members and providing team coaching to recognise and strive for the same level/results from their sections.

A different take on our previous years' assessment regime has been to perform in an octet and be assessed 'live' while performing the contest songs. As much as this has been challenging for all involved, I have found that singers who have trust in themselves will sing and perform with freedom and energy. This is something that I want to continue to foster so that it becomes easier for every singer to believe in herself and to be confident that she will succeed.

Of course, this takes personal preparation to know when there might be errors to correct, areas of weakness that need to be strengthened. This is why riser recordings are still very important. Your section leader can provide appropriate feedback to help you to correct note errors or problems with breathing, timing, unit approach to vowel sounds etc. The music team (which includes the visual team) have been providing assistance to those members who need it and are available if you have any concerns or need help.

I do not know if all members will have the time or focus to find that level of confidence before we get to contest. You have to trust yourself before you can ask others to trust you too. This is why decisions regarding the final numbers on the contest stage will be made with the best interest of 'The Chorus' in mind, not the individual. When I have allowed members who were not prepared enough to compete with the chorus, I have learned that they cannot and will not sing with confidence, they will be slightly behind the others and create sync errors, they cannot be 'incorporated into the unit' and they will affect the contest results. Sure, the member will feel happy she was not excluded but the whole chorus will be hurt by achieving a result that is not what the chorus 'could' have scored if every singer went out there confident in her own ability. The price paid for the individual member to feel included will be a penalty for the whole of the chorus for the rest of the year. I think there is enough time between now and contest to get every singer confident in her performance and, for that reason, will delay making my decision until the very last moment to give everyone a chance.

The desire of every member bring her "A Game" is very exciting. I am encouraged by your eagerness to work with your section leaders and visual team at every opportunity. I really believe we are a different chorus to the one that went to contest last year. We may be smaller but our spirit is true and strong. This is Circular Keys Chorus.