

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC,
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA AT A RECEPTION TO MARK THE
20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE
TASMANIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CHORUS,
FRIDAY 15TH JUNE 2012.**

A very big welcome to the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra Chorus from everybody at Government House. I say from everybody at Government because you have performed here in the Ballroom so often and eaten supper in the staff common room so many times that everyone here now regards you as part of the Government House team.

Your 20th anniversary is a good opportunity for me and Frances to say thank you for all the beautiful music that you have brought to our receptions & Open Days. It is one of the duties of a Governor to provide appropriate support and encouragement throughout the community, and in particular to community groups and organisations. So as well as getting about the community to meet all these people, we also hold receptions to recognise and celebrate the good work that they do. In addition, it is part of a Governor's duty to hold receptions to welcome on behalf of all Tasmanians visiting groups and organisations that have come to Tasmania for their meetings and conventions. It was Frances' idea that we have music at these receptions and her insistence that the music that we have must be of the finest quality. In consequence of that idea we have had the privilege of listening to the TSO Chorus on quite a number of occasions. In fact you have been singing here as long as we have been at Government House - since 2nd April 2008 when you sang

Faure's Requiem at my swearing in ceremony - and I want you to know that the status of the Office of Governor has been greatly enhanced by all your performances. Without exception our guests who have had the privilege of listening to you have appreciated the fine extra dimension that you have added to the receptions and they have frequently said so by subsequent letter and email. Their appreciation of your music reflects goodwill onto the Office of Governor and adds value to the warmth of the welcome that Frances and I wish to convey. We are in your debt for that. I say "Frances and I" because this part of the work of a Governor is a complete team effort between the two of us. I would not be able to do this part of my job without her inspiration and hard work so, as Frances is also a member of the TSO Chorus, I would like to use this occasion to thank her too.

Now for this evening I am indebted to Di O'Toole for she has given me a brilliant summary of some highlights of the TSO Chorus over the last 20 years. It is so good that I urge her to make sure it is kept so that at your 50th anniversary (at which I am unlikely to be either host or guest) you will have clear memories of the beginning, which occurred on Thursday 27th February 1992 at the Odeon Theatre when the Chorus then comprising 40 voices, 10 soprano, 10 alto, 10 tenor and 10 bass, sang Verdi's La Traviata - in Italian and from memory. In those days the Chorus was under its founding Director, Paul Oxley, who I understand is here this evening.

Di O'Toole's fascinating history of the Chorus has some interesting factual information like:-

- 290 + singers have performed with the TSO Chorus;
- the Chorus has been directed by 37 conductors in 75 publicly performed programs;
- Works by 70 composers (not including those best-known, Trad and Anon) have been performed.
- The Chorus has sung in English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Russian and Spanish – and works in Finnish and Hungarian are in the pipeline for later this year; and
- The Chorus has sung at many venues as well as at the Concert Hall, and the ABC Odeon. They include the Hobart City Hall, and Town Hall; St David's and St Mary's Cathedrals, TMAG Bond Store, Government House, Wrest Point, the Royal Tennis Court, Princes Wharf No 1, Franklin Palais, Longford Town Hall, the Albert Hall, Tolosa Park and Port Arthur Historic site.
- It has also performed at the Perth Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House, Adelaide Entertainment Centre, and venues in Frankston, Kyneton, Bendigo, Swan Hill and Griffith.

But I think perhaps the most significant development in the 20-year history occurred when the Chorus made the change from being an occasional Chorus for the odd TSO performance to a very professional – albeit without salary – Chorus that now demands its members undergo regular auditions to meet high standards and rehearses most weeks of the year to reach a high level of sustained

development and cohesion greatly increasing the number of performances.

I understand that this year, the Chorus has 5 concerts (4 programs) with the TSO and a number of other performance opportunities, either a cappella or with piano. So I look forward to the day when June Tyzack will be able to say say to Simon Rogers, "No we just can't fit any more in this year, but thank you!!"

To all of you in the Chorus and its administrative team I say well done and happy anniversary. To Andrew Bainbridge who became Assistant Chorus Master three years ago I say thank you for the great contribution that you have made to the musical development of the Chorus and lastly, but most importantly I say thank you to June Tyzack. You have directed the development of the TSO Chorus since you took up the post of Chorus Master in 2001. You have done a wonderful job. I just love watching you silently but eloquently and very successfully communicating with each and all of your choristers, encouraging them to reach a very high standard of choral musicality.

Now you will notice that there is no music tonight because there is none to compare with the superb TSO Chorus. However, if you would like to celebrate with an impromptu celebratory Hallelujah Chorus from the floor I invite you to do so because I would love to hear it".