

Happy Woolly Cosy Week to you all,

It has been a long time since an 'acabellas' newsletter has wound it's way to your inbox and this is a general info and update page. I imagine it best served with a cuppa and biscuit should you have the time.

Community Singing Groups

The five regular singing groups continue to power along keeping us vocally and emotionally fit.

Each group has it's own wonderfully unique personality, phases, stages, quirks and wonders. The Ocean Grove singers have recently moved venues and performed beautifully at the Festival of the Sea. VIVA has performed at Pako this year, Festival of the Sea and just last week at Geelong After Dark with YouTube clips of performance soon to be published. Thursday night singers are rocking along with some old friends back to play of late – we are enjoying such a warm sound in the group. Friday mornings have been bumper in Autumn with more than 50 people on several weeks and still an intimacy, a great connection, fun and excellent singing. The Fellas and I are undertaking a review to hone the schedule because ...I don't know about you...but I find it really hard to be consistently ANYWHERE on the weekend these days, but we will nut it out and see a 7th year of Fellas Singing continue to unite those rich tones.

Talking about why singing is good for us is really preaching to the converted, I know. Some people have been coming along for 15 years to these groups and I am so thrilled that singing in a circle can still be engaging, challenging and heartwarming. I am committed to keeping things fresh and take heart that we will never run out of books to read, thoughts to think, feelings to feel or songs to sing. No matter how regularly or irregularly you come to singing – know you are always welcome or..... welcome back.

For those who are not aware – these are the regular singing groups and a little detail:

Tuesdays Ocean Grove 6:30pm-8:00pm in our new home at St Peter's Anglican Church Hall in Draper Street, Ocean Grove. We run in cycles of 5 weeks and bookings are required for 5 week blocks.

Wednesdays VIVA Geelong West by invitation or application. The group has a long history of detailed repertoire and we perform about 6 times a year.



Thursdays Geelong West 7:00-8:30pm at Geelong West Community Hub 89 Autumn Street Geelong West. We run in cycles of 5 weeks and bookings are required for 5 week blocks.

Fridays Geelong West 9:00am -10:00am at Geelong West Community Hub 89 Autumn Street Geelong West. CASUAL attendance – all welcome

Saturdays monthly MEN ONLY (dates vary) at Geelong West Community Hub 89 Autumn Street Geelong West. All men welcome but do join the email list to be updated with dates.

We do: welcome anyone who wants to sing, use lyrics sheets, sing to a guitar, sing it 3,4,5 or more part harmony, enjoy a healthy humour, change repertoire regularly to keep us alive.

We do not: sight read music, hold auditions, laugh at mistakes unless it is irresistible and even then with kindness, wear uniforms or namebadges.

Singing Workshops

Our singing voices change as we change. Our voices can bring us great pleasure and help us to express many states of being. Using the voice in a healthy way can help us sing easily, prevent discomfort, bring joy to ourselves and others and even help prevent snoring! I encourage everyone who enjoys singing to consider a workshop as a fun activity, as an earnest pursuit, as a regular activity or as an exercise in personal development. Delivering workshops is a great joy for me and I feel privileged to work intimately and honestly with individual voices with discernment, discretion and care.

Why is everyone talking about workshops? What are they? What happens?

I offer 2.5 hour vocal workshops in which 8 participants learn about techniques and receive feedback, inspiration and knowledge about singing for the aim of enjoying it more. Below I have answered some common questions or comments.

“I have never had a singing lesson – I don’t think I could come to a singing workshop.”

Singing workshops are singing lessons on steroids. All the elements of a 1:1 singing lesson are woven in to the session and you get to participate as both student as observer as you watch other people work with constructive feedback. Perfect for beginners and for experienced singers.



"What would I have to do in a singing workshop?"

You don't HAVE to do anything. You are asked to sing some exercises, sing some songs you probably already know and asked to try new ways of singing that will help you feel better about your voice.

"What would be the point of coming to a singing workshop?"

People who attend workshops report they have greater confidence in their sound. They have a better idea of what parts and what songs suit them. They learn where their strengths lie and what they can work on to feel even more confident. They learn a lot about singing and ...inevitably..when we work on our voice we also make discoveries about ourselves and this brings greater confidence and personal security.

"I would prefer to have a one on one singing lesson - I would be too embarrassed to sing in front of other people."

Nah! I have taught 1:1 for 20 years now and I think this format offers so much more. Singing and learning in front of 8 other people simulates the "real scary world" a lot better and helps bring up AND QUASH some of those nerve related factors that can undermine the optimal sound. Most importantly, group lessons allow for so much fascinating observation and reflection.

"Aren't they expensive?"

No. These days singing teachers with my qualifications and experience (Grade 8 Singing, Grade 6 Music Theory, 20 years etc etc) charge \$60 per hour. Per week. Workshops are \$85 for 2.5 hours and you can book as little as one. One will deliver great benefit. Many people attend several a year as part of their musical, personal or professional development.

"I don't know which singing workshop will suit me. What do I do?"

Ask me. I'm happy to help. That said, I will always work to the 8 people in the room and varying levels of skill, confidence and experience makes for a rich experience for all. Choose a date that suits you and the content will be adapted for the people (except where there's a specific theme such as improvisation or men only.)



"I don't come to community singing but I would like to come to a singing workshop."

Of course! Lots of people this year have been attending the singing workshops from all parts of the world – not just from acabellas singing groups.

Upcoming Workshop Dates in 2018 are as follows:

May 19 (booked out) May 26 (booked out)

June 03 Improvisation and Vocal Style with Nadine Joy (4 places left)

June 23 Foundations of Singing 2 places left)

July 21 and Sep 01 Foundations of Singing (Open Now)

Aug 18 and Sep 15 Extending Your Singing (Open Now)

"Well I'm so glad I mustered up the courage to enrol in this wonderful workshop. Exploring my voice, with your neverending encouragement, coupled with the palpable energy and support from the other girls was not just an amazingly, positive experience, but downright fun too!" – a happy singer from 2 weeks ago.

The Wild World of Social Media

Marketing has never been my area of passion – I'd rather be writing new songs! I really do appreciate that the majority of wonderful people we sing with have arrived in our circles via word of mouth. Here are some places I am making some effort to make more news available. If you haven't connected to these places you might wish to so news comes across your feed – if that is your thing.



FACEBOOK www.facebook.com/acabellasgeelong

INSTAGRAM @mcardlebelinda

WEBSITE belindamcardle.com



Acabellas – what is the story?

Once upon a time, in 2004, I started acabellas. The name was a play on the words 'a cappella' (means singing without music - which we did back in the day) and the word 'belinda' (my name'). Then in 2005 I met the wonderful Lisa Singline and the beautiful Sue Hindle. These talented and driven women joined me for over a decade growing acabellas together. *We created ideas, songs, plans and more songs.*

Late in 2017 we recognised we had grown something so big, so beautiful and so rewarding we needed to gently tap it out of the pot and replant it in three bigger pots. We needed our shared business to grow its offshoots in the optimal conditions. Thus was born *SingLisa Music (Lisa Singline)* and *Sue Hindle 'Nurturing Wellness from Within.'*

Since our work had diversified broadly and beautifully we knew it would be better for us personally, for our professional identities and for our creative independence to strike out with three different names.

So, please visit the pages below to follow the news and updates of these two thriving businesses – the closest sisters to acabellas that there could be. I am so proud of this evolution and the incredible relationship we have all shared, continue to share and will share into evermore.

Lisa Singline : www.facebook.com/SingLisaMusic Strings and Things, Drumming, Music Lessons, Singing as Meditation

Sue Hindle : <https://www.facebook.com/suehindle.nurturingwellness/>

Singing and Meditation Retreat

Since 2016 Sue Hindle and I have been offering singing and meditation retreats. This is where about 25 women head away, to cosy locations to share a weekend of catered meals, singing workshops and/or meditation and nurture sessions, optional nature walks or physical endeavours, variety shows, lots of socialising and some absolutely excellent humour. Yes, it's real and not a dream.

Our 4th retreat will be in October 2018 and will book out fast so please look out for info and be ready to pounce. Accommodation is single or shared, prices are ridiculously less than most retreats out there and we think very reasonable and reviews of previous retreats are glowing.



Recommendations

Songkeepers is a movie currently on at Pivotionian you might enjoy.

The Missions Songs Project is a musical outfit coming to Anglesea in late May. You would all love it – check it out.

The Pipeline

Coming up in 2018/19 are a couple of potential projects. Behind the scenes work is being put into [Acabellas in the Pub](#) – where we have a very social, very relaxed semi regular sing.

A grant application currently sits with the [State Library of Victoria](#). I have co-applied with an excellent historian colleague to bring a fascinating diary from a lady in Geelong in the 1900s to life through song. History, singing and performance opportunities would abound so fingers crossed this grant application is successful. I apply for a few major grants per year...a huge task....sometimes it all works out....sometimes it doesn't. Hope.

[A CD](#). Even though modern cars don't even have Cd players anymore I was thinking I should release Breathe, I'll Try, Big Love, In Good Hands, Oceans of Love, I Want to Meet You, Bring on the Sun and a few more....so stay tuned.

A [winter flash sing](#) is coming....please pop August 05th in your diary and the location will be revealed in the sessions. 😊

Finally

Thankyou for being a part of acabellas community. If you have taken the time to read through this thankyou and I hope it was of interest. I don't imagine I will write a newsletter too often .. this took a week...but you never know...please let me know if you would like to be removed from the email list or if your details require updating. I try to answer messages but sometimes, these days, it takes longer than I'd like it to. It's not a job I can delegate so thanks for your patience and never feel it is a hassle to re-send something if you are waiting for a response. It's not a wonderful plan but it is a plan for now. I do love hearing from people and hearing your song suggestions.

[Have a wonderful weekend.](#)

My best wishes

Belinda

