

**A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols; held by the STC OBA NSW/ACT  
All Saints Anglican Church North Parramatta.  
Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 6:30 PM**

*By David Sansoni*

The Apostle Paul wrote:

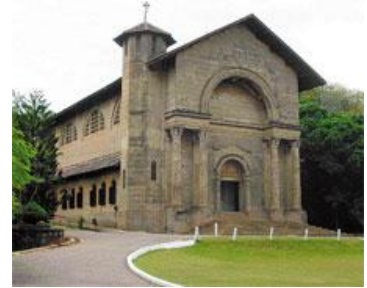
“I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. <sup>23</sup> I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings.”

1 Corinthians 9:22-23



King's College Chapel, photographed on 16 November 2006.

In some ways, the Director Of Music and the organisers of this well-loved, Advent service, live out Paul's dictum, as they prayerfully and imaginatively frame it. The “form” is a ‘given’. King's College Cambridge / STC Mt. Lavinia – Yin 1947. The “Story” is “history” and must be faithfully re-told. The principal Carols are ‘ever-green’ and not to be tampered with. Commence with “Once, In Royal David's City”. Conclude with “O Come, All Ye Faithful”. “Hark! The Herald-Angels Sing” is compulsory. “While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night” has its place. “Away In A Manger” or a similar ballad, must be sung ... etc ...



The happy challenge then, is to be innovative with a view to keeping the occasion ever-fresh and new. And the D.O.M. and Committee, by investing ten or more months in the project, met and overcame that challenge with aplomb!



Through judicious placement of Carols old and new; and clever mixing of feel, genre, language, ‘accompanied’ and ‘acapela’, Maestro Vasantha Weerakoon (in his 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive Carol Service) and the Choir, delivered “**the best ever!**”



Around the core – the Nine Lessons and Carols – the Carol Service Committee, headed by Eksath Perera, fashioned a **Historic event!**



What then, gives 2016 such pride of place? The answer; **many things**. Innumerable acts of kindness; gestures of philanthropy; high-level hospitality; the selfless service of an army of volunteers; skilful management of a myriad demanding tasks and activities; organisational nous and technical capabilities that would be the envy of Corporate Australia(!); Musical ingenuity of the highest international standards. One could go on.



The greatest gifts to this service of worship in 2016 were:

- Kanishka Raffel (Dean of Sydney) – St. Andrew's Cathedral; Old Thomian; Chief Guest and Preacher
- Godelieve Ghavalas – Organist



Dean Raffel spoke with great clarity and winsome simplicity; relating the ancient text (Isaiah – 750 years before the birth of Jesus, who's Nativity we gathered to celebrate) to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and beyond.





Drawing on his own conversion from Buddhism to Christianity and the experiences of life lived in the U.K., Sri Lanka and Australia, Kanishka spoke an inclusive and gentle message. A message of **joy** – in the face of despair: of **light** – in the midst of darkness.

Godelieve's organ artistry was stupendous! She lifted the choir to heights celestial! She is a gentle soul; humble, cheerful and utterly selfless in



service. We are privileged to have enjoyed the blessing of her ministry with us this year.

And the **Choir!** From the first strains of "Once in Royal", sung as a duet by two 'Angels'; to the last dramatic chord of "O Come, All Ye faithful"; we and they were transported heavenward, on wings of song.

To Jessica Sibrava, who gave much to the training of the voices, particularly in the demanding "For Unto Us A



Child Is Born"; we are deeply indebted.

To all(!) – creatures great and small; the STC OBA NSW/ACT says a heartfelt and hearty "thank you", adding – from our motto: "Esto Perpetua; pro Deo et Ecclesia".



**Sopranos:** Anusha Jebanasam, Dhāmi Chanmugam, Dilhara Harendran, Jessica Sibrava, Luckshila Chelliah, Margot Koch, Naomi Mather, Rapti Canagasingham, Ruth Jansen, Sharon Sampath, Tarisha Gunaratnam, Trish Wilcox, Yasmin Abayasekara

**Altos:** Nimeka Ramanayake, Patricia Weerakoon, Shanti Kurukulasuriya, Sudharshini Duraisamy, Sulochana Joseph, Suvendri Abayasekara, Wei Hua Chen

**Tenors:** Alex Richards, Dilo Harichandran, Maitri Kurukulasuriya, Phillip Chapman, Sathia Thuraijasingham, Wayne Newton

**Basses:** Anton Massillamany, Christopher Massillamany, David Sansoni, Geoffrey de Kretser, Jerome Gasperson, Kamal Weerakoon, Kevin Chan, Nirupan Richards

**Sinhala Carol:** Trained by Yasmin Abayasekara **Tamil Carol:** Trained by Sudharshini Duraisamy

**Organist:** Godelieve Ghavalas

**Choir Master:** Vasantha Weerakoon, assisted by Jessica Sibrava

Click here for [Photographs](#) & [Video](#) of the Carol Service