

Lights out at Sydney Opera House as students perform in the dark

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700 children stood motionless as the lights of the Sydney Opera House turned off mid performance.



700 talented students sung their hearts out, accompanied by pianist, Rachel Kelly. Photograph: Performing Arts Unit NSW

The sounds of hundreds of voices flooded the Opera House. A myriad of colours lit the stage, illuminating the faces of every child joyfully singing. Melodious notes threaded themselves into the music produced by the waving of bows and fingers. The conductor stood in the midst of it all, gesticulating with his hand, when the lights suddenly blacked out. No longer able to see the music in front of them let alone the conductor, the symphony was forced to stop playing, however, cloaked in pitch blackness, the choir sang on. No screams or whispers could be heard when the Opera House went dark, instead, the 700 strong choir regained their balance, as they sang their way through the

remainder of 'Danny Boy'. As they neared the end in impenetrable darkness, the lights came back, flooding the Opera House and sending the audience gave a standing ovation.

On the 28th October, 2015, Haberfield Public School's Senior Choir had the privilege of performing in the Sydney Opera House alongside 700 other talented performers from schools across NSW. They performed a succession of 11 different songs of which three songs were especially dedicated to World War 1 (WWI).

Prior to the 'Festival of Choral Music' commencing, Haberfield Public School's Senior Choir had to endure three hours of intense training with the other 700 students and their conductors. They repeated song after song until their feet were numb. Perspiration trickled down the conductors, as their faces scrunched up with concentration. "It was a tedious and long session but at the end it was totally worth it!" Kaija, one of the talented singers, later stated.



5 excited girls ready for the performance of their lives. Photograph: Mrs Martin

After a well-deserved dinner break with their adoring families, the real "show" began. Dressed smartly in black T-shirts with a picture of three owls standing on a branch against a bright moon, Haberfield sang proudly. They made the audience feel the pressure and sadness of war. "I thought that the whole performance was very moving and the sound of all the 700 students singing together was truly magnificent," said Mrs Martin after the show. Clapping along, the audience joined the Choir in 'Putting on the Ritz'.

By the end, the choir's throats were parched and the symphony's hands were sore. With a last outburst of energy they finished with a bang, as confetti shot up from all sides leaving the audience gripping their seats with amazement.

The students were tired but what really mattered was that they kept on going, doing Haberfield proud, even in the midst of darkness! "I was very happy with the way the choir coped with the unexpected, when the lights went out. Overall the singing was very good," Said Mr Collins White, a hard working conductor for our Haberfield School Senior Choir.