

MEDIA RELEASE



Polding Centre
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27 November 2019

MELBOURNE CHOIR TEACHER WINS INAUGURAL PRIZE FOR NEW COMPOSERS

A young Melbourne choir teacher has won the inaugural Archbishop's Prize for New Composers after composing a piece of music using lyrics from a popular poem by the late Australian poet Les Murray.

Budding composers from around Australia were invited to enter the competition, which stipulated they use the lyrics from the poem, *Animal Nativity*, and were asked to compose a piece of choral music less than five minutes in length.

More than 20 young men and women entered.

Judges awarded First Prize to 23-year-old Timothy Mallis, who teaches singers in the Australian Boys Choir, and is a choir director and organist at St Bartholomew's Anglican Church in Burnley.

He will now have the opportunity to work with St Mary's Cathedral's Director of Music, Mr Thomas Wilson to prepare his composition for public performance at two Christmas concerts at St Mary's Cathedral on Friday 13 December.

Mr Mallis said he was greatly honoured to receive the award, saying it would enhance his career as a young composer.

"What attracted me to the competition was the quintessentially Australian poem of Les Murray, capturing an Australian Christmas and to have your work performed at a venue on the scale of St Mary's Cathedral is also a great honour for a young composer", he said.

Mr Mallis will receive a \$2500 prize after the judges reviewed entries from 20 young composers aged between 18 and 35. As an interstate winner, his flights are also covered so that he can personally accept his prize.

Second prize was awarded to 24 year old Lachlan McDonald, who is also a teacher with the Australian Boys Choir and is Director of Music at St John's Anglican parish in East Malvern in Melbourne. He will receive a \$1000 prize.

"I was very surprised and this will definitely help encourage me to keep composing," he said. "It's a great encouragement to receive recognition like this, so early into my career."

The third prize of \$500 was awarded to 25 year old violin and philosophy teacher, Robert Van Gend from Picton in south-western Sydney.

He was inspired to enter the competition after first nurturing a love of Les Murray's poetry as a student at the liberal arts college, Campion College.

"I particularly liked Les Murray's work, *Animal Nativity*, because it honours the gift of creation in rural Australia and then recognises that the whole source of life is ultimately found in the Christ child", Mr Van Gend said.

"This prize has now given me the confidence to start composing Christmas carols for my parish choir - St Anthony's Catholic parish at Tarmour."

One of the judges, St Mary's Cathedral's Director of Music, Mr Thomas Wilson, said there was a very high standard of entrants in the competition.

"It was wonderful to see the way so many composers responded to Les Murray's evocative text, and the variety of modes of expression the text inspired," he said.

"Amongst many strong contenders, the prize-winners are to be commended for their clear demonstration of compositional craft and elegance."

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