

KISSING FROGS  
PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

June, 1999

By Linda Gordon

## Sing From The Heart

It's not widely known but I'm a recording star. Well, maybe not a star, but I have made a recording in the USA. It sounds impressive doesn't it?

The reality is, that while travelling through Nashville we stopped off at a studio especially set up for tourists, and being an avid shower singer I couldn't resist the temptation. As I love big production numbers I also knew there was only one song for me - "New York, New York". So armed with a copy of the words I was ushered into the studio and it was then just a matter of singing along with a recording.

Due to the wonders of modern technology, when I got my tape, the "real singer's" voice was replaced by mine. Even if I say so myself the first few bars were quite impressive, especially with the big band backing. However it degenerated rapidly after that and at one stage I missed my cue and the "real singer" started belting out "New York, New York" before I was ready.



Consequently I missed the "new" and came in with a raucous "YOOOORK". I was assured they touched the tape up a bit so I thought, maybe it wouldn't be too bad. That was until I visited friends in New York who played it on their expensive sound system. Their only comment was, "Obviously they didn't touch it up enough!" So full of desire to sing but lacking any musical training, or it seems any real sense of timing, finding a group where I could sing without any auditions, sounded like the perfect solution. This frustrated 'star' certainly found it in the aptly named community choir, Sing From The Heart.

Started in February 1998 by Martin Meader, the acappella choir sings a range of music including blues, swing, jazz and gospel. However, the African songs with their strong rhythm and sense of joy were the numbers I really loved and the sound produced by this hundred plus choir was truly uplifting. And that's just how Martin describes the Sing From The Heart choir as being both uplifting and motivational.

Nikki, who has been with the choir since its inception, readily endorses that view. "The first time I got up to sing solo I was really nervous but I broke the barrier, which has had a really positive impact on my self esteem. It has given me much greater confidence," she said.

And many of the singers would add that it also makes them feel "energised". This energy combined with enthusiasm was amply displayed in two concerts Sing From The Heart performed at the Octagon Theatre last year.

"One of the greatest benefits of joyful singing is the relaxation and camaraderie, which helps counter the biggest of modern day evils - stress," said Martin. Of course, while you are singing you automatically stop worrying about the outside world because you are concentrating on the songs! And although there isn't much chance to talk during the sessions, the break mid way through for coffee and biscuits is the ideal time for a quick chat. For the more serious socialisers, there's always the after choir coffee in Northbridge and a karaoke night in June should provide a huge amount of fun and entertainment.

Another benefit of the choir is that those lacking in musical knowledge actually develop a better understanding of music. For the wavering singers like me, who follow the lead of the person singing loudest, help is at hand in the form of tapes, so you can practise at home.

Sing From The Heart Perth choir has an age range from early twenties to seventies with a majority of women. It meets on Tuesday nights. But some Tuesday nights you'll find this group 'giving' to the community, when they perform at places like Rowethorpe Village for the Aged or Shenton Park Rehabilitation Centre.



According to Martin the only pre-requisite for joining, is that people come with an open heart and be prepared to thoroughly enjoy themselves. These are selection criteria I can easily and gladly meet.