



Arts Centre Melbourne presents as part of
the New Hamer Hall Opening Season

Raising the Roof

Hosted by Julia Zemiro
Featuring The Bombay Royale

30 September

*Sing, stomp and
clap in a grand scale
music making celebration
for all ages*

Devised by
Graeme Leak and Patrick Cronin

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Interview with director Graeme Leak for Jetstar in-flight magazine, September 2012

Q: How was Raising the Roof conceptualised? (Who came up with the idea and what was the creative process like?)
The idea began as a conversation between myself, creative producer Patrick Cronin and Arts Centre Melbourne. They asked the question ‘how can we make an event that gets everyone involved, and gets the whole audience singing to celebrate the re-opening of Hamer Hall?’ We tossed around some ideas and drafted an imaginary event description that proved popular in various Arts Centre meeting rooms...

Q: How did you pick the various vocal and instrumental ensembles across Victoria to make up the group?
Patrick and I have been dropping in on groups that rehearse each week in church halls, school halls, bowls clubs and pubs. We have unearthed some hidden treasures. We’ve also teamed up with Community Music Victoria who connected us to an amazing network of regional singers and we’re bussing in about 200 of them for the event. They are all regular music-makers who get together because they love it.

Q: 1) Why make this an audience participatory performance? 2) What are the challenges in including this element?
1) To include participation was the original impulse for the event from the first conversation. To just sit and listen to a concert is passive, but actually making music is active and engaging, and we wanted to give an audience a chance to experience this on a grand scale!
2) The difficulty is that as soon the words ‘audience participation’ are mentioned most people want to run for the exits. I have a pretty broad definition of music that includes ordinary sounds like laughing and flapping a piece of paper, and in the trials we’ve done so far nobody finds this too uncomfortable – in fact they seem to really enjoy it. And with host Julia Zemiro on the Audience’s team it should be a hoot.

Q: Tell us about the community workshops that you’re leading...
The workshops involve over 200 singers from Melbourne and the regions, the general public and Arts Centre staff. With the singers I’m working on materials for the show, and with Arts Centre Staff I’m working, along with choreographer Bec Reid, on some backstage video vignettes, to be screened on the day. And I’ve been trying out audience ideas with the general public whenever I get the chance. I need to know that it’s going to work!