

# Tune in... to Noosa Chorale

The Newsletter of Noosa Chorale Inc  
Volume 9, Number 11, November 2015

## "I'm dreaming of a French Christmas"

If Bing Crosby was crooning with Noosa Chorale this year, he'd be dreaming of a "French Christmas" instead of his timeless "White Christmas" theme song that rings out in shopping malls and supermarkets all over the world at this time of the year.

The Chorale is performing the Christmas Mass "Messe de Minuit de Noel," by Frenchman Marc-Antoine Charpentier and is so enthused by the work's ethereal beauty that it is decorating The J with a classic French flavour for this year's *Wassail* (Christmas Cheer Concert).

And there's a guarantee it will be so delightfully français that partygoers will say, "Ooh la la, très magnifique!" when they come along on December 18-19. Soprano Talluah Harper is our *Wassail* organiser. As she told Tune In: "Joyeux Noël to all... This year we are turning The J into a French Christmas wonderland with the gentle glow of candles, the smell of pine and the classic soft colours of France setting the mood."

Eight years ago the staid utility known as the Bicentennial Hall at Sunshine Beach was transformed for the first *Wassail* into a giant winter fairyland with a 4-metre tall tree studded with pine cones painted white, and huge stars on the walls and on the stage screen. The décor theme was "stars" but there were other stars that first night on December 22, 2007—the Noosa partygoers who came along to sing carols with the Chorale.

Finding themselves in a Christmas atmosphere, the like of which they—and Noosa—had never experienced before, they stood with their word sheets and let their voices fill the Bicentennial Hall, the joyful sound wafting through the louvre windows and outside to the bottlebrushes and gums of the Noosa bush.

The Chorale loved the idea of its audience sitting at tables, drinking punch and wine, eating mince pies and other Christmas fare as well as singing carols and festive songs. Choir members moved among the revellers, handing out drinks and nibbles and singing like angels.

Noosa loved it, too, as the two nights of the *Wassail* were sold out, with

door patrons somehow being squeezed onto already full tables. The feeling among those there was that the *Wassail* is a unique experience and each year since then this impression is reinforced as the choir brings something new to entertain and involve the audience.

At previous *Wassails*, we've had a different imaginative theme each year: "poinsettias", "snowdrops", "bells, bows, holly and berries", "seaside Noosa", and "angels". This year it's "French" with laughter and fun all the way. So whip out your beret and join us to celebrate Christmas in style... *Wassail* style!

**Music note: Book now. Tickets are selling très vite!**

[www.thej.com.au](http://www.thej.com.au)

(Noosa Chorale is dedicating Mark-Antoine Charpentier's Christmas Mass to the victims of the terrorist attack in Paris this month.)



Singers Jonathan Anstock, Gai Ramsay, Jenny Jackson, & Ian Jobling getting into the French mood as they rehearse for the *Wassail*.

### Christmas Cheer with a French flavour!

Charpentier's "Messe de Minuit pour Noël"  
plus carols sing-a-long with the choir

Conducted by Adrian King

7pm Friday 18 December 2015

7pm Saturday 19 December 2015

Tickets \$35

(includes gourmet cheese platter & sweets  
Bar available for drinks purchase)

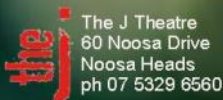







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# A Christmas Tail

"Ee's at eet again. I do wish ee'd stop zis dogger...er,,,,caterwauling."

Our little Aussie poodle, Ollie, eyed his French mate, Johnnee Walker. "The boss is practising for his choir's Christmas Wassail concert. He's a bass. He can't help it. It's what he's given to sing."

"Quelle horreur. What ees ee growling about?"

"It's music by a French bloke called Mark Carpenter."

"Mark Carp.....eet does not sound très Français."

"His real name is Marc-Antoine Charpentier but that's a bit of a gobful. He wrote this Christmas Mass 300 years ago and it's so ripper bonzer people have been singing it every year since. Adrian King says it's 'hauntingly beautiful' and he should know. He's connected a few choral crotchets in his day."

Johnnee Walker scratched his ear. "Can't ee not



Jim with Johnnee Walker and Ollie.  
Photo interference: Cal Webb

seeng 'Deeng Dong Merrily on High' instead of ze noise ee's making en ce moment?"

"He's going to," Ollie woofed, tail wagging happily. "The choir will sing Christmas carols and songs and the audience, when they're not wolfing mince pies, cheese and biscuits and drinking wine, will join in."

"Oo la la. I weesh I was going. We could seeng 'Jeengle Bells.'"

"Yeah, mate. Let's give our leader a chorus or two just to show 'im what he's missin'," said Ollie.

What followed was a disturbing sight, Ollie and Johnnee Walker prancing and dancing together in happy circles, paws waving gaily in the air and belting out "Dashing through the snow" in French and Aussie.

I reached for the French champagne and a bientoed out of it.

Jim Fagan

Wassail, 2007



Wassail, 2011



Wassail, 2008



Wassail, 2012



Adrian King—  
decorated in 2011,  
still full of cheer  
in 2014.

Wassail, 2009



Wassail, 2013



Wassail, 2010



Wassail, 2014





## Why Noosa Chorale? Straight from the singers' mouths...

*Tune In has had a fantastic response to our survey asking Noosa Chorale singers what they enjoyed about singing in the choir. We will bring you a full picture of the results in our next issue, but we thought we'd share two of them with you now. The first is from alto Angie Oakley who, on joining the Chorale in 2014, wrote an entry about it in her blog (<http://spryandretiring.wordpress.com/>) and has kindly allowed us to digest some thoughts from it to share with readers. The second is from soprano Jacky Martin who, along with husband, bass Jeremy Martin, joined the Chorale five years ago.*

## Spin-offs are legion, says Angie

Last year I absolutely outdid myself with my DIY gift. And it really is one that keeps on giving. I now have a head-full of music, courtesy of the wonderful Noosa Chorale.

It's the only thing I've actually joined since my husband and I moved to our little seaside town... talk about beginner's luck! For a start they let you just rock up and sit amid 70-odd people who've left families unminded, dinner uneaten, and whatever's on the telly on a Tuesday night, because they all love the music.

I look around to see if anyone has realised that I don't know a dotted crotchet from a minim and it soon becomes evident that I'll need to pay attention. Most of the others sight read and know what they're doing. Nevertheless they're extremely helpful to this newbie.

And the audition process is simple. The choir director demands glorious music to be sung at a very high standard.

He is wonderful - a remarkable musician and musicologist whose calm admonishments are softened by a Lincolnshire burr, and a droll turn of phrase. But make no mistake, we will do it over and over and over until it approximates some very high bar he has in mind

But the rewards! There are moments when we altos are ooh-ing and crooning in our particular range that, while deeply satisfying, isn't going to get us on *Australian Idol*, then suddenly the sopranos soar over us, lifting us to a perfect spot between them and the soulful bases.

If you haven't done it, you should. It puts you in a place that makes the day you've had, the draughty hall, even the fact that your too tight jeans are extremely uncomfortable, fall right away. And afterwards we all walk out into the night smiling and humming and slowly connecting back with the mundaneness of Tuesday.

And as if that wasn't lovely enough, there's more!

All those mindless chores? Done. Because I have to spend so many hours listening, the house is spotless (well, nearly) and I've even done the ironing.

Walking in the National Park with an earful of splendid music is nothing short of sublime.

This year we're again singing carols in Hastings Street. Last year we were upstaged somewhat by some screechy kids, and maybe Santa's helpers in their tiny red fur-trimmed skirts drew the focus a little, but we were troupers!

Belonging! Find a black dress, pin on the scarf thingy and join the line and you become part of something...you look the part, and all you have to do is not muck it up.

Lovely, lovely music for this year's Wassail, and so much to learn...some of it in French! My aged brain is really getting a workout.

The spin-offs from simply joining the Chorale have been legion!

**Angie Oakley**



## How Jacky forgets her blues

When we first arrived in Noosa five years ago Jeremy and I went to a Noosa Chorale concert at the Bicentennial Hall which we enjoyed.

The programme stated that the choir was looking for new members AND -big plus for me- it was a community choir with NO auditions.

As we have both been involved in various choirs throughout our lives we went along to a rehearsal. We found everybody to be so friendly and welcoming that we signed up with no hesitation.

Jeremy has a lovely voice and has done lots of solo work in his life. My voice isn't great, but I think it's OK for chorale singing when blended in with other good voices.

Even if I'm feeling a bit tired and out of sorts I find that after five minutes at a rehearsal all my troubles are forgotten and I feel happy again! I really enjoy Tuesday evenings.

The listening tapes are also a great help as I can't really sight read properly, but constant repetition helps me to keep the notes in my head (I hope!)

**Jacky Martin**



## You're invited... (All these events are free and open to the general public.)

- ◆ On Friday 27 November at 6.30pm, Noosa Chorale will be singing Christmas Carols at the lighting of the Christmas tree in Hastings Street, Noosa Heads.
- ◆ On Saturday 5 December at 6.30pm, the Chorale will be giving a preview performance of the Charpentier Christmas Mass (*Messe de Minuit pour Noël*) at the Tewantin Catholic Church, 5 Moorindil Street, Tewantin.
- ◆ On Australia Day, Tuesday 26 January 2015, the Chorale will be singing at Noosa Council's Australian Citizenship ceremony in the morning at Noosaville Lions Park.

## Sopranos sing lament for altos

Chorale sopranos Hettie van Wyk and Margaret Courtney had their Laguna Retirement Village audience in raptures last month with their song "The Alto's Lament."

The two sopranos first started singing together more than 20 years ago with Noosa Arts Theatre and the Chorale and, when they occasionally perform together now, the "Lament" is always popular.

The words, which we reproduce here, are sung to "The Battle Hymn of the Republic". Says Hettie: "I get to sing the extremely boring alto part. We found the poem somewhere, and I realised it fitted the tune. We added the chorus."

It's tough to be an Alto when you're singing with the choir,  
the Sopranos get the twiddly bits that every one admires,  
The basses boom like loud trombones, the tenors shout with glee,  
But the Alto part is on two notes or maybe even three!

### CHORUS

It's mighty tough to be an Alto,  
It's mighty tough to be an Alto,  
It's mighty tough to be an Alto,  
When you're singing with the choir!

And when we sing an anthem and we lift our hearts in praises,  
the men get all the juicy bits and telling little phrases  
Of course the trebles sing the tune-- they always come off best,  
The Altos only get three notes, and twenty-two bars rest!

We practice very hard each week from hymn book and the psalter,  
But when the conductor looks at us our voices start to falter,  
"Too high! Too low! Too fast!-----You held that note too long!"  
It doesn't matter what we do, it's certain to be wrong!

Oh shed a tear for Altos, they're the martyrs and they know  
In the ranks of choral singers they're considered very low,  
They are so very umble that a lot of folks forget 'em,  
They'd like to be Sopranos, but their vocal chords won't let 'em!

And when the final trumpet sounds, and we are wafted higher,  
Sopranos, Basses, Tenors,--They'll be in the heavenly choir,  
While they sing "Alleluia" to celestial flats and sharps,  
The Altos will be occupied with polishing the harps!



Hettie van Wyk (left) & Margaret Courtney singing the "Cat Duet" by Rossini at the choir's first public appearance, July 1994 at a Senior Citizens Week concert. Photo: Noosa Chorale, Fifteen Years of Classical Harmony. Jim Fagan, 2009.



All of the other reindeer *used* to laugh and call him names.

## 2016 program for your diary

19 January	Rehearsal for Australia Day sing
26 January	Australia Day sing Noosaville Lions Park
2 February	Term 1 rehearsals commence
23 February	Deadline for new singers to join
25 April	Anzac Day ceremonies
27 May	Extra rehearsal for Rossini concert
<b>28 May</b>	<b>Concert Performance</b> <b>Rossini's <i>Petite Messe Solennelle</i></b>
31 May	Term 2 rehearsals commence
14 June	Deadline for new singers to join
21 June	Deadline for returning singers to join
25 August	Extra rehearsal for Jazz concert
<b>26 August</b>	<b>Concert Performance</b>
<b>27 August</b>	<b>Concert Performance</b> <b><i>Jazz—New Orleans to The Met</i></b>
6 September	Term 3 rehearsals commence
20 September	Deadline for new singers to join
4 October	Deadline for returning singers to join
<b>16 December</b>	<b>Concert Performance</b>
<b>17 December</b>	<b>Concert Performance</b> <b><i>Wassail (Christmas Cheer)</i></b>

Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!  
Cal Webb and Jim Fagan (your Tune In editors)  
and John Davies (President Noosa Chorale)

