

## Noosa Chorale triumphs IAN JOBLING



Photo: Travis Macfarlane

When patrons of the Noosa Chorale entered 'The J' for the "In Paradisum" concerts on the last weekend of May, they saw the Ukrainian flag with an overlay of a dove which paid tribute to the strength and courage of the people of that country.

The concert comprised two pieces: Gabriel Faure's *Requiem* and Sir Karl Jenkins' *Stabat Mater*.

Among the comments from the audience, Belinda Anstock of Doonan said, "The afternoon was exceptional. Fauré's *Requiem* was so moving, and the soloists were terrific.

"I thought Karl Jenkins's *Stabat Mater* was absolutely fabulous. His orchestration is unique, the Noosa Chorale Sinfonia played magnificently and Shirin Majd and the Chorale sang their hearts out."

"The performance of *In Paradisum* was stunning", Bronwyn Elliott from Doonan remarked. "The contrast between the traditional *Requiem* and the exhilarating yet sombre and exotic *Stabat Mater* highlighted the abilities and flexibility of all concerned."

Regular supporters of Noosa Chorale concerts, Alastair and Pam Boag from Brisbane commented, "Another Noosa Chorale triumph. Two diverse composers, wonderful orchestra and guest soloists. A very enjoyable concert".

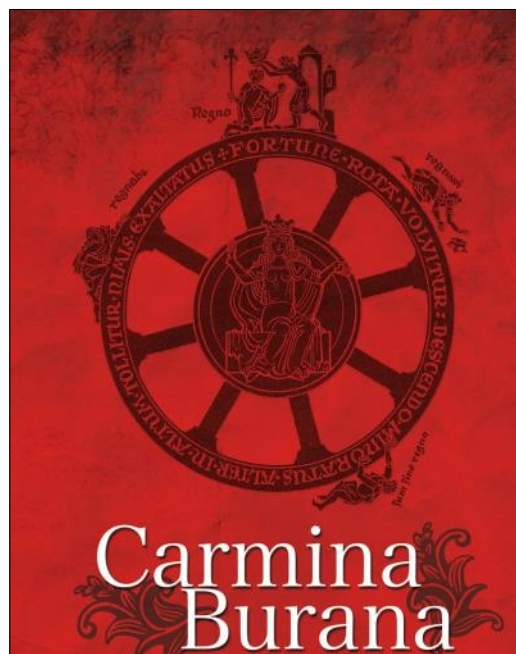
While travelling home to Witta from the concert, Laurie and Glenda Muller, and John Brown had a chance to discuss and reflect: "Three of us mountain folk travelled down from Maleny for "In Paradisum" and were enthralled. The Chorale was simply outstanding—wonderful disciplined singing and great presence. The Sinfonia also was superb in its playing and in creating a powerful musical atmosphere.

"Noosa Chorale could hold its head high in any of the capital city concert halls and The J Theatre provided unique intimacy for the besotted audience. The *Stabat Mater* was brilliant and Sir Karl Jenkins would have been as impressed as we were. Bravo Noosa Chorale and bravo Noosa."

(See review article next page, and more photos from the concert on pages 2 and 3.)

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Adrian King conducts his three musical societies in a grand combined finale to his term as their Music Director and Conductor

**Noosa Chorale  
Sunshine Coast Choral Society  
Sunshine Coast Symphony Orchestra**

present

**Carl Orff's thrilling Carmina Burana**

**Saturday 10 September 2pm**  
Venue 114, Bokarina

&

**Saturday 17 September 2pm**  
St Andrews Anglican College  
Peregian Springs

Tune In was delighted to receive this review from audience member Nick Aggs, a graduate of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music who regularly performs in the international jazz scene. Nick's review was published in the 3rd June edition of Noosa Today.

## Exquisite Sonorities in East meets West Performance NICK AGGS

The full house at 'The J' in Noosa were treated to a lavish and vital performance of Faure's Requiem and Karl Jenkins' Stabat Mater by the Noosa Chorale and the Noosa Chorale Sinfonia on 27 and 28 May.

Under the baton of Adrian King, the performance featured mezzo-soprano Shirin Majd, soprano Annika Hinrichs and baritone Leon Warnock, who weaved their melodic brilliance through a rich tapestry of rhythmic intrigue, harmonic sonorities and haunting textures.

The acoustics and production aesthetics of The J provided the perfect backdrop to two of Europe's most treasured and celebrated sacred works.

Faure's Requiem is a profoundly spiritual work texturally sparse and glued together by two organs that provide a rich backdrop to a gentle and warm

bottom end, supported by sustained horns and silvery melodies.

King sculpted a perfect blend of orchestra and voices, while Hinrichs and Warnock extracted the intended beauty of the text with their exquisite interpretations. The audience appreciated the meditative and reflective space conjured by the collaborative performance.

Jenkins' Stabat Mater was in stark contrast to the Requiem. The ensemble abandoned organs, and the orthodox classical pillars of harmony, rhythm and melody found in most sacred works to take us on a journey to the Middle East.

The augmented orchestra and choir were in full flight over a percussive tapestry of hypnotic rhythms performed by the darbuka, tambourine, and assorted drums and they extracted the most out of the composer's immense

textural variations. Majd was exquisite as she delicately and angelically interpreted the melodic material composed by Jenkins. Stabat Mater deviates from equal temperament and is exotic in its microtonal melodies, transporting the listener from the West to the East.

The reviewer applauds the program for presenting two brilliant works that were so culturally diverse. The first half of the program paid homage to the sacred music of Christianity and the second half to the sacred music of Islam.

The Sinfonia and Noosa Chorale interpreted the works with great care, understanding and vitality. King conducted the works with finesse and created a sensitive and detailed bed for his soloists to shine. An amateur production with professional trimmings.



Maestro Adrian King in flight



Soloists Leon Warnock and Annika Hinrichs



Soloist Shirin Majd with Adrian King

*Photos: Travis Macfarlane*

(Below) Noosa Chorale and Noosa Chorale Sinfonia





# "In Paradisum" concert album

Photos: Ann Milland. Captions: Jo Fagan and Carmel Young



Wendy Ashley-Cooper and Emrys Jones



Robin and Ian Mitchell



Richard and Mary Gibberd



Helen Williams



Peter Bland



Margaret and Graeme Rickard



Brian and Ethel Green



Gwynne and Doug Dean



Bob Hill, Robert Van Wegen, and Margaret Hill



Belinda Anstock



Jenny Thompson



Gwenda and John Apel



Bronwyn Elliott



Kiarra Smith, Cecile and Philip Smith



Alistair and Pam Boag



(left) Margaret Bayles, Margaret Meyers, and Carol Hewitt



Maree and Rob Angus



Judy Wrigley



(left) Margaret Jorgensen, Susan Beaver, Bob Eames, and Laurie Cowler



(right) The Terrific Tenors: Elizabeth Henley, Donald Grant, Rita Malik, Ian Jobling, Babette Urban, Ian Lowe, and Dianne Robson



# Choirs and Covid—a Canadian perspective IAN JOBLING

My wife Anne and I are currently visiting our Canadian family and a few days ago we had coffee with our friend Valerie Bryce. During an extended sojourn in Ottawa many years ago, Valerie invited me to rehearse and perform in a Christmas concert with her choir, the Bytown Voices.



Anne and Ian Jobling with Valerie Bryce (right)

Since then Valerie and I have exchanged information about the activities of our respective choirs. A few days into our

holiday, Anne, Valerie and I had coffee together and we discussed how our choirs have been managing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

As the publicity person for the Bytown Voices, Valerie recently had an article included in their local monthly paper, the "Glebe Report", which we are pleased to reprint here. The problems they faced will no doubt be familiar to choir singers everywhere.

For us in Noosa Chorale, we confronted the problems with equal commitment. Like Bytown Voices, we ceased rehearsing when the pandemic hit in early 2020 and our concert plans for the year were dashed.

However, unlike our Canadian counterparts, our attempts to sing together using Zoom

were far from successful and rather quickly abandoned.

Then in 2021, we resurrected our concert plans, rehearsing with masks on and standing "socially distanced" from each other—an experience that was necessary but far from enjoyable.

We were very fortunate in being able, apart from a few disruptions, to undertake a full year of rehearsals, and perform our three main concerts of 2021, just managing to squeeze everything into the gaps between Covid restrictions and lockdowns.



Noosa Chorale masked rehearsal in 2021

16 *Glebe Report* April 15, 2022

MUSIC

## Choir singing in the time of COVID

By Valerie Bryce

Bytown Voices choir has survived through the pandemic, not only intact but with an increased membership. As one of the original members from the days of the Glebe Singers said, "Rehearsals on Zoom were not ideal, but it kept us in touch and in voice!"

Two years ago, the choir was busy practising for its 21st anniversary concert in April 2020 when rehearsals had to be suspended due to public health concerns about the spread of COVID-19. It soon became obvious that this special concert would have to be cancelled.

"Never mind," we thought, "we'll re-start rehearsing in September and include some of the anniversary music in the December concert." Well, that didn't happen, nor did any concerts in 2021.

So what has the choir been doing for the past two years?

First, we learned how to use Zoom and sang from our living rooms, bedrooms, cottages or wherever. Led by our dynamic and ever encouraging director of music, Joan Fearnley, the routine was familiar – physical and vocal warm-ups, then the sopranos, altos, tenors and basses learned their notes in breakout rooms, each section with its own musical teacher. A short plenary session completed the rehearsal with piano support.

"It's not the same," most of us muttered. No, it wasn't, but we were continuing to sing every Tuesday evening and were introduced to new music. We could also socialize with our fellow choristers in the 20 minutes or so allowed for this before the rehearsal began. Once we were familiar with the music and pressing the correct buttons on Zoom – "mute" being the most important! Joan announced that all those who were willing could record themselves, then submit their recording to our tech guru (a tenor) who would coordinate them all. He worked his magic, and the results of two efforts can be seen on YouTube (search for Bytown Voices).



The Bytown Voices choir (formerly Glebe Singers) has found ways to sing in person while still following public health guidance. Its next concert will be in December. PHOTO: VALERIE BRYCE

As COVID levels and public health regulations changed, so did the ways we rehearsed. A hybrid model was devised whereby half the choristers could practise in person every other week, keeping the numbers down. On the weeks when not singing in person, Zoom provided continuity. Everyone had to be double vaccinated, sit two metres apart and complete health-screening forms before each gathering. Masks were compulsory for singing and many bought the special mask for singers designed by our director (see "Soprano creates mask made specially for singers," [CBC News]). The Zoom option was always available for those who chose not to sing in person for whatever reason.

Now the whole choir is singing together again in person, though full vaccination is still required, singers are still seated further apart than normal and still wearing masks. Hopefully by September, our Tuesday night practices will look and feel much like they did prior to March 2020.

It's been a lot of planning and a lot of Zoom meetings, but thanks to the positive energy of our director and her musical team plus the enthusiastic

commitment of choir members, Bytown Voices has survived the pandemic. As one member said, "When so many doors were closing around me due to COVID and my life became increasingly restricted, Bytown Voices was a wonderful antidote. I looked forward to our weekly choir practices, to connecting with my fellow choir members, to the stimulation of learning new repertoire and to singing my heart out. It was both energizing and healing."

Bytown Voices is one of the largest non-auditioned choirs in Ottawa, welcoming new singers while still keeping experienced singers on their toes. We tackle a variety of music styles from classical to contemporary and normally give two concerts a year.

Our next concert is scheduled for December 2022 – after a gap of almost three years, it will feel very special!

Valerie Bryce sings alto with Bytown Voices. Information about Bytown Voices can be found at [bytownvoices.com](http://bytownvoices.com).



# Welcome to singers for Carmina Burana rehearsals

JIM FAGAN

Still on a high at the rapturous reception Noosa audiences gave to their "In Paradisum" concert, Chorale singers celebrated with a small social gathering at the J last month before their first rehearsal for their next offering, Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*.

Organised by alto Wilma Barnes, bass John Davies and tenor Ian Jobling, the buzz was all about what reviewer Nick Aggs described in Noosa Today as a "lavish and vital performance."

It was great to welcome back foundation members, sopranos Hettie van Wyk and Jennifer Raynor, and say hello to new singers—sopranos Terri Giesen and Belinda Griffiths, plus tenor Mark Taylor.

Catering was done by the members and the social was such a success it has been decided to have several a year.

Much of the talk centred on *Carmina Burana* which will be performed on September 10 and 17.

It has been 14 years since it was staged by the Chorale at the Bicentennial Hall in May 2008 and it was the second classical work by new music director Adrian King after he took over from Leonard Spira on his retirement.

Reviewer Marguerite Webber described it thus at the time:

"A Musical Triumph. The music is mostly fast and loud, vigorous and energetic, making this one of the most popular works of the 20th century."

The September concerts will be sung in tandem with the Sunshine Coast Chorale Society, accompanied by the Sunshine Coast Symphony, both of whom also have Adrian as their music director.

It will be an occasion to remember with some sadness for both choirs as it will be the last time Adrian will conduct them in a classical work.

After 15 years with them and more than 50 years of leading choirs in England and Australia, Adrian has decided it is time to retire.

He has one more assignment with the Chorale—the Christmas

Cheer concert with audience singalong carols in December—before he passes on the baton.



(From left) Linda Bishop, Kay Carwright, Dianne Robson, John Whiteley, John Pennell, Angie Oakley, Eleanor MacDonald  
Photos: Ian Jobling



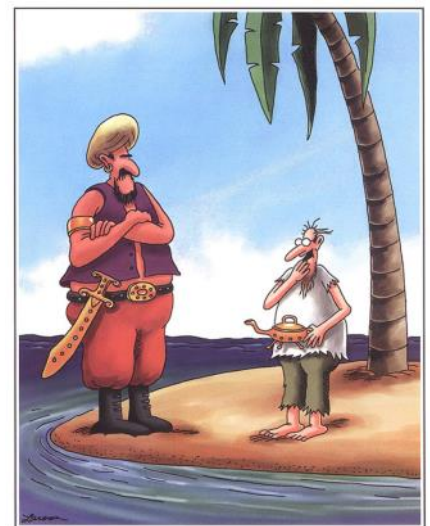
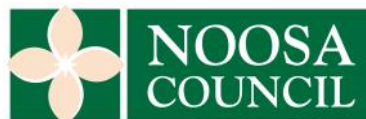
(From left) John Davies, Jim Fagan, Elizabeth Henley, Angie Oakley, Rita Malik, Ruth Jones

## Vocal development grant success

Noosa Chorale is over the moon about a RADF grant of \$4,545 it has been awarded by Noosa Council to provide a vocal development programme for singers.

The workshops will give the Chorale's singers opportunities to develop vocal skills which are known to be areas of weakness for the untrained singer, such as breath control and vocal tone and diction.

The Regional Arts Development Fund is a partnership between the Queensland Government and Noosa Council to support local arts and culture in regional Queensland.



"Well, let's see—so far, I've got rhythm and I've got music... Actually, who could ask for anything more?"



[www.noosachorale.org.au/concerts](http://www.noosachorale.org.au/concerts)

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