

Tune in... to Noosa Chorale

The Newsletter of Noosa Chorale Inc
Volume 9, Number 3, March 2015

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From the President

Dear Singers and Friends,

At the recent AGM, we were able to publically acknowledge our deep appreciation to retiring members of the Management Committee—Julie Simpson who has served so faithfully as our Treasurer for many years, and Jane Tillson who elevated our publicity efforts to a whole new level.

May I congratulate our other members who are continuing on the committee and extend a very warm welcome to the new members. It will be excellent to have some new faces and fresh ideas at our meetings. The members of the new committee are listed on page 4 of this newsletter.

Over the next month, the Chorale will be completely engrossed rehearsing and preparing for our Anzac concert, as well as events on Anzac Day itself.

John Davies, President.

A most memorable experience

Former war correspondent and Fleet Street journalist Peter Mason is now living in Noosa. Here he relives the Chorale's performance of "The Armed Man" three years ago and reflects on the upcoming Anzac Centenary concert.

I closed my eyes and let my mind drift upwards. For one brief, ecstatic, moment I was transported to another place.....the Sydney Opera House; the Royal Albert Hall; the New York Metropolitan, perhaps.

I could have been in any one of these magical concert halls, such was the purity of the music, the quality of the singing, the depth of the interpretation. The sounds rose and fell, soared and swooped, filled my mind with images so real I could almost reach out and touch them.

But I was not in a grand opera house or a magnificent concert hall. I was in the Bicentennial Hall, Noosa, and this was not one of the world's renowned choirs accompanied by a great 72-piece orchestra but our very own Noosa Chorale; the work being performed - Karl Jenkins' moving, thought-provoking and, at times, harrowing, war

requiem - or, to put a finer point on it, ANTI-war requiem - The Armed Man.

I had seen this powerful and compelling "Mass for Peace," as Jenkins subtitled it, performed on a far grander scale in far grander surroundings, and listened to it on numerous occasions.

Never before, however, had I been so moved by the intensity of the music and the passion of the singing, the piece performed by the choir's 86 singers accompanied by the 48-member Noosa Sinfonia, the whole set against a video backdrop of moving images invoking the sights and sounds of war. So professional is the Noosa Chorale that, for a moment, it made me completely forget where I was.



The futility of war. Five Australians, members of a field artillery brigade, passing along a duckboard track over mud and water among gaunt bare tree trunks in the devastated Chateau Wood, a portion of one of the battlegrounds in the Ypres salient. (Australian War Museum Collection—Photo E01220)

That was three years ago. Next month, by unprecedented popular demand, The Armed Man is back, with two Anzac Centenary performances planned for Saturday and Sunday April 18 and 19 at the Chorale's new venue, The J.

If you were unlucky enough to miss it last time around, don't make the same mistake again. I urge you **to be part of one of the most memorable experiences of all time** and commemorate one of the most horrific and futile wartime expeditions ever.

Put it at the very top of your "must-do" list for 2015. I have.

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Armed Man solos for Debbie & Talluah

Thoughts of her father who served in the Light Horse Brigade and later in the RAAF in World War 2 will be with Debbie Boyles, Noosa Chorale soloist in the choir's April 18 and 19 concerts to commemorate the centenary of the Gallipoli Landing.

"Other family and friends served in the First World War and memories of them as well will have special significance for me."

Debbie is excited about singing the mezzo solo parts again.

"When I sang the solo part in 2012, I was so nervous I couldn't think too much about the text I was singing. I don't know if anybody was watching me shake on stage or if all eyes were on the screen."

"This time I will remember how my Dad and my family were involved and this will encourage me to sing with strength, allowing the text to penetrate the listener in the softest of moments."

Debbie will share solo spots with choir soprano, Talluah Harper. For Talluah the chance to sing The Armed Man again is equally thrilling.

"The Armed Man is unlike any other piece of music I've sung. It is powerful, evocative, challenging and beautifully different, and very aptly embodies the spirit of Anzac remembrance with its message highlighting the atrocity of war and hope for peace."

"Debbie and I enjoy very much the opportunity to sing together. It's a great privilege."



Talluah Harper (left) and Debbie Boyles

Patriotic and popular war-time songs

Possibly the most well-known patriotic song at the time of Australia's entry into the First World War in 1914 was "Australia will be There", written by Walter Skipper Francis. Sung by the Expeditionary Forces to rally troops as they marched away from home, the song celebrates



A sing-song in the YMCA, Parliament Square kiosk. A female pianist plays for Australian soldiers. On the piano is sheet music for *Australia will be there*. London, England. 1918. (Australian War Museum Collection—Photo H01221)

our freedom and our loyalty to England and "those who have their backs against the wall".

*We soldiers of Australia
Rejoice in being free,
And not to fetter others
Do we go o'er the sea.
Old England gave us freedom,
And when she makes a start
To see that others get it,
We're there to take our part.*

(Verse 2, Australia Will Be There, 1915)

Other songs of the time had less of a patriotic flavour, with more catchy tunes and less solemn lyrics. With the advent of the gramophone, and a radio in most homes, Australians were singing much the same songs that were popular with war-time Britons, whether at home, on the frontlines, or at postings further afield—songs like, "Keep the Home Fires Burning", "Pack up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag", and "Roses of Picardy".

These catchier tunes lent themselves very well to parody, no doubt allowing the troops to have a well-earned laugh at the expense of their enemy, their commanders and the military establishment, and the deprivations they endured. Songs such as "The First Staff Officer Jumped Right Over the Second Staff Officer's Back" feature brilliantly in the 1969 satirical film "O What a Lovely War".

Some of these cheeky versions, including ones from the Second World War, may be even better remembered than the original tunes on which they were based. For example, to the tune of the popular marching song "Colonel Bogey" could be heard the very irreverent strains of:

*Hitler, has only got one ball,
Goering, has two but very small,
Himmler, has something similar,
But poor old Goebbels has no balls at all.*

"Stille Nacht", Christmas Day 1914

The following excerpt from the UK Observer, 19 December 2004 gives us a vivid and moving picture of a remarkable moment for the troops on both sides of the frontline:

The words drifted across the frozen battlefield: 'Stille Nacht. Heilige Nacht. Alles Schlaft, einsam wacht'. To the ears of the British troops peering over their trench, the lyrics may have been unfamiliar but the haunting tune was unmistakable. After the last note a lone German infantryman appeared holding a small tree glowing with light. 'Merry Christmas. We not shoot, you not shoot.'

It was just after dawn on a biting cold Christmas Day in 1914, ... and one of the most extraordinary incidents of the Great War was about to unfold. Weary men climbed hesitantly at first out of trenches and stumbled into no man's land. They shook hands, sang carols, lit

each other's cigarettes, swapped tunic buttons and addresses and, most famously, played football, kicking around empty bully-beef cans and using their caps or steel helmets as goalposts. The unauthorised Christmas truce spread across much of the 500-mile Western Front where more than a million men were encamped.

In contrast to the nostalgic irreverence of most of the Tunes from the Trenches medley, "Stille Nacht", sung in German, will give audiences at Noosa Chorale's Anzac Centenary concert pause for reflection on this poignant experience for the weary combatants at the frontlines of a war which left 31 million people dead, wounded, or missing.



British and German troops meeting in "no-man's land" during the unofficial truce (British troops from the Northumberland Hussars, 7th Division, Bridoux-Rouge Banc Sector)

Readers share their memories of war-time songs

In our last Tune In we asked if you had any particular wartime songs that evoked special memories for you. Some of our readers have answered the call with these reflections...

Tunes from the German blitz

JIM FAGAN

Songs like “The White Cliffs of Dover” and “We’ll Meet Again” always make me think of the time German bombers were blitzing Glasgow during the war. I lived near the shipbuilding yards on the River Clyde which were a target for the Junkers and Dorniers high overhead in the night sky.

The men in my street had all enlisted and, as there were no air raid shelters, the young women and their children would gather in a neighbour’s home and entertain each other (as Scots tend to do all over the world) by singing songs. My mother had a lovely soprano voice and usually everyone gathered in our place to join in singing with her. Kids and babies were squeezed under the table, although I don’t how effective it would have been with a direct hit.

Our mothers sang “A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square” and “I Never Said Thanks for that Lovely Weekend” and other war favourites like “We’ll Gather Lilacs.” Robbie Burns occasionally got a mention with “My Love Is Like a Red, Red Rose.”

What I particularly remember is the eerie screaming of the falling bombs and the loud explosions which rattled the windows criss-crossed with brown masking tape to prevent glass flying everywhere.

Some of the bombs were extremely close. One morning my mother took me by the hand and we walked about 200 metres to where a brick three-storey office building had once stood. It was just a mass of rubble heaped into a huge hole in the ground.

I often think how lucky I am to have the wife and family I have, lived the life I’ve lived, met the wonderful people I’ve met, seen the sights I’ve seen, and be in Noosa to rumble with the basses on a Tuesday night. If that Luftwaffe bomb-aimer had moved his thumb a moment sooner, who knows...!

“Boogie Woogie Bugle Girl”

KATHLEEN SLINN

Dad went to war when I was a young child in Scotland and the times I most remember with great joy was singing with my mother. We sang songs like “Chattanooga Choo Choo” and “You Can’t Be True, Dear” and “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy.”

Mum taught me how to harmonise which I just loved. I’ve always loved singing. I sang in school and church choirs and I was with a Concert Party in Glasgow before going to New Zealand in 1957 to live in Dunedin. I was too busy raising a family and working as a secretary to do much singing, although there are some lovely choirs there.

In 1972 we moved to Tauranga where I joined the Operatic and Choral Society, and sang roles in shows like “Annie” and “Jesus Christ Superstar.”

I remember when I arrived in Noosa and joined the Chorale in 2001, we were practising the Verdi Requiem. They were short of sopranos and asked me if I’d have a go, so after years as an alto, I turned into a soprano. I hadn’t sung music by composers like Brahms, Beethoven and Puccini before, but since then singing with the choir has opened up a whole new world for me. I have made a lot of new friends and I love the challenge of the great classical works we do.

Still, I have to admit I’m looking forward to our Gallipoli Centenary concert next month. We’re singing “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy” and rehearsing it has brought back some very happy memories. I just hope that I don’t accidentally start harmonising when we are doing the Tunes from the Trenches numbers.

Recollections of “war”

IAN JOBLING

I am the youngest of seven children; my oldest brother returned from his RAAF service in New Guinea a stranger to me as a four-year old. I missed “Nasho” (National Service) when about 18; and “won” the lottery when my “marble” was not drawn out for the Vietnam War. What, then, is a poignant personal “recollection of war”?

When members of our APT Tour alighted from the bus at Anzac Cove in Turkey in September 2010 there was silence. Anzac Cove, bathed in sunshine, was silent; the Gallipoli Peninsula was windless and silent; and we pilgrims were silent.

Of course, my wife Anne and I knew of the events in that place that occurred in 1915. We had heard the stories from teachers in school annually; attended ANZAC Dawn Services; read epic and heroic accounts of both young Privates and other senior military personnel; and seen Peter Weir’s film “Gallipoli”. Alas, what we knew did not prepare us for the heartfelt emotion of “being there”.

As I wandered along the pebbled beach, a gentle lapping of the waves interrupted the silence. Then, when I looked upward to the adjacent cliffs, the silence was shattered – shattered by my sobs, tears, and heaving heart. All that I read, heard, discussed, and thought hurt so much.

Later, I reverently perused the names of the fallen Anzacs and Turks in the cemeteries, and shared my emotions with other members of the group as we ambled and scrambled beyond the beach and cove. But much of the time I was alone. It was during those times a recurring musical theme pervaded my mind.

Albinoni’s “Adagio in G Minor” prevailed in everything I saw or thought.

There was much silence on that day in Gallipoli; but fortunately for me there was solace and hope in prayer and music.



Ian’s photo of Lone Pine Cemetery, Anzac Cove, September 2010

“A long way to Tipperary”

CAL WEBB

Amongst my earliest and fondest childhood memories, I remember visiting my grandparents, and being bounced by my grandfather on his knee whilst he sang “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary”.

My mother tells the story of her father’s wish to enlist at the outbreak of the First World War, like so many young men at the time. Young Henry (who everyone called Harry) desperately wanted to join up but he was too young. His older brother Archie had enlisted in 1915 and within a few months was fighting on the battlefields of the Somme for which he was awarded the Military Medal.

By the time Harry was old enough to enlist, his hopes had been quashed by Archie’s letter from the front to their father saying “for God’s sake, don’t let Harry come over here—it’s hell”. Archie returned to Australia in 1919 and lived a long life, whereas unfortunately my grandfather died far too young in 1959.

My memory of his singing has always been a happy one. What I don’t remember is that, according to my mum, my grandfather had a terrible singing voice, was completely tone deaf, and seemed to know only that song and one other. Hopefully our rendition at the Anzac Centenary concert will be more tuneful for my mum who will be in the audience.

I’m so glad we’re also singing songs from the Second World War. My late father, who served in the Australian Air Force in that war, loved all that wonderful jazz and I can just imagine him tapping his toes to the “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boys” as we beat out that happy tune.

Meet our Chorale singers

Piet Sanders, who joined Noosa Chorale at the beginning of 2015, comes from a long line of singers. His grandfather and his grandfather's siblings sang in choirs in Holland, and visited other countries for choir festivals. His mother says these days that there will always be singing on any bus trip out from the Dutch retirement village where she lives.

Piet was conscripted into St Matthew's Passion as a tenor while studying at the Brisbane Conservatorium of Music, under the



Piet at Pomona Community House where he teaches music as a volunteer.

direction of the late Georg Tintner, of whom he says:

"He astounded me—there were only two tenors amidst mass choir and orchestra—by pointing at us and saying 'You're out of tune'. (Not me of course!) I didn't know such acute musical perception was possible, and he left me with a lifelong love of J S Bach."

As well as making up one third of the Bella Gaia Trio (with Susi and Debra who also sing with the Chorale), Piet writes music, teaches music as a volunteer at Pomona community house, plays flute, busks with his two dogs, sang bass with Spiritsong, and studied cello with Louise King in Eudlo, arriving there from his home near Kin Kin by bicycle, bus, and train!

Piet is an enthusiastic advocate for A432 tuning rather than the standard A440 and warns that "anyone brave enough to let me near their piano with a tuning spanner gets A=432 in Werckmeister temperament." Since discovering the cello, he confesses to also having fallen in love with open 5th tuning!

Piet's preference for choral singing is classical. "The Jenkins Mass makes a powerful statement beautifully, and I enjoy Adrian's happy directing style a lot."

On the beat

Celebrating Easter (Sunshine Coast Choral Society)

29 March, Caloundra Uniting Church
<http://suncoastchoral.org.au/>



Viennese Salon Music (Pacific Chamber Players)

2 May, Montville Hall
3 May, Coolum Catholic Church
30 May, 2Cooran Memorial Hall
31 May, Caloundra Uniting Church
<http://www.pacificchamberplayers.com/2015-season.html>



Balkan Gypsy Express (Concert 2 in Cello Dreaming 2015 season)

15 May, Eudlo Hall
<http://www.celldreaming.com.au/concerts/>



Tinalley String Quartet (Noosa Music Society season)

24 May, The Good Shepherd Lutheran Centre, Noosaville
<http://www.thej.com.au/whats-on/noosa-music-society>



Mozart's The Magic Flute Opera Australia

14 July, Noosa Leisure Centre
<http://www.noosalongweekend.com/>



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(Adrian King, Music Director, attends meetings)

Remaining meeting dates in 2015:

11 April
30 May
1 August
12 September
31 October

Tickets on sale now!



Marking 100 years since Gallipoli with Karl Jenkins' powerful work *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*. Plus tunes from the trenches and at home—the moving, the cheeky, the brave, the cheery...

Noosa
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Gallipoli remembered—
Anzac Centenary Concert



Saturday 18 April 2015 at 7.00pm
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