

## A mass for peace in troubled times by CALWEBB

Fifteenth century France must have been an exciting time as Europe was emerging from the Middle Ages into the Renaissance.

But the troubles of war were never far from people's thoughts, and fears abounded that the Ottoman empire would spread its military domination further west across Europe after the fall of Constantinople.

Little wonder that a folk song about "the armed man" became so popular. It was being sung everywhere as a warning to be afraid of the armed man, "l'homme armé", dressed in a coat of steel, and ready for war.

This secular song became the basis of a musical tradition of "Armed Man" masses at the time. Renaissance composers wrote many settings in Latin of the "the Armed Man" based on the unmistakable melody of this secular song, with its relentless militaristic marching rhythm.

Six centuries later, Sir Karl Jenkins (CBE) chose the song to begin his

commissioned work, "The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace", which he was in the midst of writing at a time when the tragedy of Kosovo was unfolding.

The mass premiered in 2000 at London's Royal Albert Hall, but the first recording of the mass was released the day before the shocking terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 rocked the world. On the 10th anniversary of that horrifying event, Karl Jenkins conducted a performance of the work in New York.

When Noosa Chorale presents the mass at the end of May, the massed choir will include many who performed the piece with the choir in 2012, and again in 2015 to commemorate the Anzac centenary.

Just as on both those occasions, the performance will be accompanied by an orchestra of talented musicians, and a film projected on large screens depicting the ravages of war and the relief and celebration when peace finally comes.

The film's confronting images are ones that are familiar from old newsreels and media reports, no less horrifying for their familiarity, and no less shocking for their reminders of the brutality of war.

Yet also, the film's images of the joyful celebrations when war is ended remind us of the hope and goodwill at the heart of our shared humanity, no matter where in the world, no matter what religion or spiritual belief.

The May concert also includes some sublime choral and orchestral pieces, including the Albinoni Adagio in G minor for strings, Samuel Barber's Agnus Dei, and Miserere mei Deus, all speaking to the theme of peace.

**Friday 30 May at 7pm**

**Saturday 31 May at 2pm**

Tickets (\$45) are now on sale

The J Theatre, [www.thej.com.au](http://www.thej.com.au)

Ph: 07 5329 6560

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**Noosa Chorale PRESENTS**

**KARL JENKINS'**

# The Armed Man

## A Mass for Peace

Kim Kirkman conducts choir and orchestra performing the Mass for Peace and other works

Friday 30 May, 7pm | Saturday 31 May, 2pm

The J Noosa

Tickets \$45

Bookings 07 5329 6560 | [www.thej.com.au](http://www.thej.com.au)

## Drawn to Noosa Chorale by love of music by ANGIE OAKLEY

Introducing two of our newest choir members – Kerry Gilfillan and Margie Cosgrave. And despite their different life experiences, they both have been drawn to the Chorale by their lifelong love of music.

Kerry grew up in Sydney in a family that loves music, and introduced her to classical concerts and the ballet from an early age.

School continued to nurture her musical inclinations, and as well as learning piano, Kerry was fortunate to be part of the choir run by an 'inspirational head music teacher.'

A career in nursing and a shared love of the outdoors with her husband and children took Kerry far from home. The family spent time in Europe, and the US, where they spent many happy years – mostly centred around beautiful Lake Tahoe - skiing, hiking and travelling around in their RV.



Kerry in the cooler climes of Lake Tahoe

But they've always maintained a connection with Noosa, and now are back to be close to her mother, and to continue their love affair with the great outdoors.

And music has always been there in the mix. Kerry loves group performances like Pub Choir, and had their own family experience when their daughter was part of 'the absolute magic of a huge group of children getting together and really making music at Sydney Opera House.'

It seems the family had earned their moment of fame having endured their daughter's 'scratchy Twinkle Twinkle

practices' while learning Suzuki violin. A few of us can relate to that!

Kerry has had friends who are in choirs and always thought she would like to join a choir but have been too nomadic to stay and join until now. She tells us she is thrilled to join Noosa Chorale and can be found happily walking around most of the time humming the alto part of 'Agnus Dei.'



Kerry Gilfillan (left) and Margie Cosgrave

Another welcome addition to the Chorale is Margie Cosgrave, who also moved around a bit before landing in Noosa. Born and raised in 'semi-rural' Brisbane on a 25-acre farm, Margie has lived in Geelong, Canberra and Melbourne before returning to Queensland in 1993. She lived in Brisbane until 1998, and has been on the Sunshine Coast ever since.

She also was in a family that encouraged musical activity, and recalls: 'The best part of our musical family life, when two of my brothers became pretty handy with a guitar, was singalongs at any opportunity, particularly around the campfire when we went bush for holidays. It still happens occasionally!'

Once again, an inspirational teacher was part of her journey: 'Our chapel choirmaster at school was a peculiar man, but he had a gift for drawing the absolute best out of us. He had us singing psalms as naturally as breathing. I respected him!'

Margie herself can boast many musical accomplishments. She studied piano in Queensland then continued at boarding school in Victoria, passing it as an HSC Year 12 subject.

As well she has more than forty years of involvement in choral music: school

chapel choir, then, while at Uni in Canberra she was part of the Canberra School of Music Community Choir.

Then it was Brisbane Chorale; then a private singing group in Brisbane for over twenty years, Insingc (contemporary choir), and now Noosa Chorale – lucky us!

She has also had a range of 'day jobs.' She began as a secretary after university, and has been in administration work in charitable/non-profit organisations; aquaculture farming; was a teacher's aide briefly; now is a professional freelance copyeditor and proofreader and loves to work locally whenever possible.

Margie has many other interests: language, travel and any new horizons, reading, nature, walking, swimming, dancing (not often enough!), family, friends, singalongs, performing arts, cuddling babies.



Margie at home amongst the flowers

But she tells us that of all the things she loves, 'music itself is the magnet for me. I love sound broadly, including sounds in nature and people's speaking voices'. And while she doesn't consider herself creative – she has a great appreciation of others' creativity.

As with Kerry, we're delighted to welcome Margie to our Chorale, and it seems the feeling is reciprocated, as she tells us 'Noosa Chorale is the most organised choir I've ever been in, and the most warm and welcoming – thank you!'



## Award for Chorale's man of letters and song by CAL WEBB

As a young reporter on assignment in Hollywood in the late 1960s for Sir Frank Packer's *Women's Weekly* and *Everybody's*, Jim Fagan was rubbing shoulders with the entertainment royalty of the day, coaxing stories out of people like John Wayne, Kirk Douglas, Sonny and Cher, and Dean Martin.

Not bad for a kid whose working life began as a 16 year-old copy boy at the Glasgow Evening News. Roll on more than a few decades and he's still at it. He can't help himself it seems. If a good story is within cooee, he'll seek it out and pull the words together to bring the story to life for his readers.



Jim Fagan interviews Dean Martin in Hollywood in the late 1960s.

Not content with being the author of thousands of news articles throughout his long history as a journalist, this "man of letters" has also written several books, including the steamily titled "Sex at the Cinema" as well as "The Hell Raisers" (with Jim Oram) in the late 1960s, giving voice to his fascination with the worlds of cinema and jazz music.



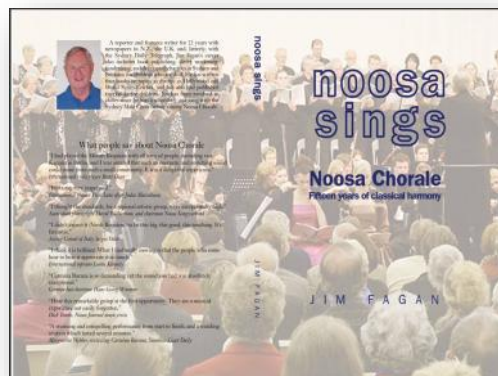
But his book published in 2009 is very close to the heart of his favourite choir—Noosa Chorale.

Jim first joined the choir in 2002 and his rich bass voice has crooned and purred and warbled its way through almost every concert that the choir has performed ever since.

He wrote "Noosa Sings: Fifteen Years of Classical Harmony" as a labour of love to record the history of the choir from its inception in 1994 through to 2009.

Spurred on by the enthusiasm for the project of then Chorale president John Woodlock, Jim's research had the whole-hearted support of singers who provided him with the stories and insights into the choir's history and characters that make the book so appealingly readable.

He served on the choir's Management Committee for 16 years, bringing his strong publicity and marketing background to the fore and helping to secure grants and sponsorships for the choir over the years.



Requiem with 120 singers (in combination with our sister choir, Sunshine Coast Choral Society) at our usual venue at The J Theatre whose stage could only accommodate half this number?

Well of course! Jim's answer was simple if a little unusual. We would stage the performance at the Noosa Leisure Centre's basketball courts. And a grand sell-out event did indeed ensue, thanks in good measure to Jim's thinking outside the box.

In 2015, he was the lynchpin of the blossoming relationship between the Chorale and the Noosa Heads Jazz Club.



Celebrating Jim's award of Noosa Chorale Life Membership. *From left:* Anne Jobling, Cal Webb, Jim, Ian Jobling and Jo Fagan.

With a level of charm, sophistication and fancy footwork redolent of Errol Flynn's "Gentleman Jim" in the 1942 film of the same name, Jim has secured excellent relationships for the choir with many local organisations and community groups.

And good fortune has come to the choir through his lateral thinking on the Committee. How, for example, could we possibly undertake to sing Verdi's

His friendship with Jazz Club president Richard Stevens sparked an ongoing series of jazz concerts combining stellar jazz musicians with the voices of a full choir to create an innovative concert event marking the start of each year's Noosa Jazz Festival.

And without Jim's energetic efforts, the Chorale's 30-year anniversary in 2024

*(continued next page...)*



## Singers tune up for a big season

*(Continued from page 3...)*

may have passed by with hardly a blip on the radar.

Instead, as a result of his drive, and his respect for and appreciation of the local arts community, the year was celebrated in style by a trio of 30-year old organisations: the Chorale, the Jazz Club, and the Tinbeerwah Art Group.

Jim's promotion of the choir and its concerts in the local press, and in this, the choir's long-running newsletter, has been immensely significant in elevating the choir's reputation and visibility.

In recognition of Jim's outstanding and sustained contributions to Noosa Chorale, he has been awarded Life Membership, and will be presented with a certificate at the end of the May 31 "Armed Man" concert.

The certificate acknowledges the multiple roles Jim has played to advance the choir's development including as historian author, fundraiser, publicist, journalist, media scout, and committee member.

When Jim agreed to my writing this piece, he implored me to avoid making a big deal of him. He did not want to be the centre of attention, and sought no accolades for his efforts. Sorry Jim! Not possible. There is no hyperbole here. The man is simply a living treasure!!!

(Limited copies of Jim's book "Noosa Sings" are available on request.)



Jim Fagan



The new rehearsal season kicked off in February with a welcome to all singers, and especially to new members, with a delightful spread of tasty tucker and conviviality.



From left: Bass John Davies, Music Director Kim Kirkman, and President Donald Grant.



The Altos belt it out at rehearsal.



## Wassail memories by JOAN MURRAY

A recent sorting out of the Chorale's store of decorations from past Christmas Cheer concerts revealed a nostalgic surprise for Joan Murray, a founding member of the choir who, some thirty years on, is still singing with the Chorale. From 2007 to 2019, the Christmas concert was a Wassail-styled event introduced by then Music Director Adrian King.

Happy memories were brought back to me on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March this year, about our very first Wassail back in December 2007 and done cabaret style.

We all took part in the preparations by making dozens of mince pies, Christmas cakes, cheese platters and the men were on punch duty ( and what a punch it was!). Raffles were organised as we still do today. During the concert we waited on tables in between singing.

It took weeks to prepare but it was fun and the friendships that developed were greater still.

What started my trip down memory lane was seeing a box of white fir cones recently, with red cord attached for hanging. These had been painted by my late husband,



Joan Murray

Paddy, and I had tied the red cord on them all. It took weeks as he hand painted them with an artist paint brush. A spray can could not get the paint into all the cracks and crevices of the cones.

I can still see Valerie Cozens and Adrian King tying the cones on the Christmas tree and when the lights went on it looked beautiful.

There were a lot of people who worked so hard, too many to mention, but I do have to say thank you to Helen King who introduced the Wassail and Yvonne and John Woodlock for their help.

Thanks to Jenny Jackson who has now taken the box of fir cones home. Who knows, we might see them in use again one day.

Thanks for the memories.

Joan Murray



The white fir cone- adorned Christmas tree at the 2011 Wassail at Bicentennial Hall.

## Chorale intones Gregorian chant at May concert

The wonderful "Missa de Angelis" is as old as the hills, along with innumerable other melodies that were chanted as part of the Roman Catholic Church musical tradition, and collected and codified around the 6th or 7th century by the popes of the day.

These chants were "plainsong", a form of unaccompanied church music sung in unison in medieval modes and in free rhythm, and written down in plainsong notation which uses a four-line staff (instead of the modern five-line staff) and a system of note shapes called neumes to represent the melody.

Neumes convey the general melodic contour and rhythm, but specific pitches and rhythms are often interpreted based on tradition and context.

Fortunately for the Chorale, maestro Kim Kirkman will discreetly conduct as we sing the chant at our May concert, although you could still allow yourself to be lulled into a reverie, transported to the simple serene monastic life of a 6th century monk if the mood takes you.

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK TICKETS FOR THE MAY CONCERT](#)

VI  
A - gnus De- i, \* qui tol- lis peccá- ta mun- di: mi- se-  
ré- re no- bis. Agnus De- i, \* qui tol- lis peccá- ta  
mun- di: mi- se- ré- re no- bis. Agnus De- i, \* qui tol- lis  
peccá- ta mun- di: dona no- bis pa- cem.

"Missa de Angelis" in plainsong notation



## Occasional choir's "Joyful Noise"

Nigh on two years ago Andrew Lloyd Webber, the English composer who created the scores for blockbuster musicals like *Cats*, *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Evita*, was invited by the then Prince Charles to write an anthem for his Coronation Service at Westminster Abbey.

Webber chose to adapt Psalm 98, a piece of music that encourages singers to make a "joyful noise."

Noosa Chorale tenor Ian Jobling heard it sung during the televised service of the coronation in May 2023 and thought "Make A Joyful Noise" would be ideal for the Occasional Choir – a group of singers who have for the last 12 years taken part in services at Easter, Christmas and the like in his local St Andrews Church in Bicentennial Drive, Sunshine Beach.

After reading in a press release that Webber would make the music freely available so that choirs and congregations

around the world could sing his new anthem, Ian obtained the sheet music.

The Occasional Choir comprises parishioners who love to sing from the congregations of the Anglican Church of Noosa at St Andrews College Peregian Springs, St Mary's, Tewantin, as well as his own congregation at St Andrews.

It is also strongly supported by Chorale singers and on a rainy Sunday last month, a large contingent from Noosa Chorale turned up to sing the anthem, with Chorale Librarian Pam Sage

conducting and soprano Debbie Boyles playing the accompaniment.

The Chorale singers were sopranos Jenny Jackson, Jutta Rathgeber, Marianne Seldon, Eleanor MacDonald, Fran Pennay, Joan Trusler, alto Wilma Barnes, tenors Des Storer and Ian Jobling, and bass Jim Fagan.

Anglican Church of Noosa minister, the Rev Chris Johnston, later said, "The Occasional Choir makes our services very special. This one was a beauty!"

