

## *Royal Connections*

As the Queen's Birthday Holiday looms, it is particularly appropriate that we present a "Royal Connections" concert program, replete with forays and digressions down the highways and byways of those born to rule.

The concert begins with Mendelssohn's *Above All Praise and All Majesty*, a simple work that effectively conveys grandeur while reflecting on things sacred and majestic. Following that, some byways beckon. The first brings us to that colossus of 20th century popular music, Duke (already so known to his childhood friends) Ellington. We present two choral arrangements of the Duke's greatest jazz creations, *Don't Get Around Much Anymore* and – later in the program – *It Don't Mean a Thing (if it ain't got that swing)*. They're both guaranteed to get your toes tapping!

The *Skye Boat Song* (as arranged for the Last Night of the Proms in 2005 by Bob Chilcott) is possibly an unhappy juxtaposition here, given Bonnie Prince Charlie's defeat by another duke, George II's son the Duke of Cumberland. It recalls the Young Pretender's flight to Skye by rowing boat, as the waves lap at the gunwales (beautifully invoked in the piano accompaniment). And if that piques your interest in claimants to thrones, you won't have long to wait till we treat you to the woes of The Great Pretender, as recounted in a choral arrangement of the famous *Platters* song.

Some of the greatest sacred music ever written has been created for the English Chapel Royal. In the second half we sing *Hear the Voice and Prayer* by Thomas Tallis, a work of simple yet compelling beauty from the Tudor period. The coronation of James II in 1685 led to a decline in the importance of the Chapel Royal, so Henry Purcell, arguably England's greatest composer, turned to theatre as inspiration for composition. From his semi-opera "*King Arthur*" comes *Brave Souls*, a chorus that praises those who are about to be sacrificed to ensure a Saxon victory against Britain's legendary king.

Serendipity too turns to the musical theatre for several of our offerings at this concert. *Circle of Life* from "*The Lion King*" was penned by one of pop music's finest, Elton John. And who could forget the collection of lords and ladies in Lerner and Loewe's "*My Fair Lady*"? From that great musical comes *Ascot Gavotte* – everyone who should be here, is here! The musical "*Chess*", written by the unusual collaborative team of Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson (the

“Bs” of ABBA fame) with Tim Rice, was released as a concept album in 1984 and first performed on stage in 1986. We’ll be presenting its Anthem, a song that considers the notion of one’s mother country from the point of view of an exiled chess grand master. And while we have great popular music acts on our minds, who could go past the great Queen, and one of their best known songs, Killer Queen?

In the pantheon of royal occasions, the crowning moment is surely the coronation, and today we present two of the greatest works for choir ever associated with such events. While the text has had associations with English coronations since the year 973, so great was Handel’s setting of Zadok the Priest that it has become a staple of every coronation since it was first sung at the coronation of George II in 1727. Meanwhile, Parry’s I Was Glad, used at every coronation since 1902 (and some significant royal weddings too), is a firm favourite for singers and listeners alike, and a worthy inclusion.

A more modern English composer, one whose choral music is of consistently outstanding quality, is Ralph Vaughan Williams. His contributions to the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II are still popular choral works, but today our gentlemen will regale you with one of his many secular folksong settings, Down Among the Dead Men. Also based on folksongs, but from the French region of the Auvergne, is Le Baylère, a choral setting of Canteloube’s Bailèro specially written for The King’s Singers.

Even royal accommodations get a look in. From the hugely popular musical “Les Misérables” comes Castle on a Cloud, a wistful and naïve wish for better times imagined by the young orphan Cosette. Meanwhile, from another musical, “Ice Castles”, we offer Through the Eyes of Love by Marvin Hamlisch in a choral arrangement for ladies’ voices. And just to remind us that no castle is complete without its counting-house, J. Michael Diack serves up a Handelian arrangement of the nursery rhyme Sing a Song of Sixpence with our help – and a dozen or two blackbirds...

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# Royal Connections Repertoire

Above All Praise and All Majesty  
Don't Get Around Much Any More  
The Skye Boat Song  
Circle of Life (from 'The Lion King')  
It Don't Mean a Thing  
Brave Souls (from 'King Arthur')

Solo: Michele Nobbs

The Great Pretender  
Through the Eyes of Love (from 'Ice Castles')  
Killer Queen  
I Was Glad  
Ascot Gavotte (from 'My Fair Lady')  
Castle On a Cloud (from 'Les Misérables')  
Down Among the Dead Men  
Hear the Voice and Prayer  
Sing a Song of Sixpence  
Le Baylère  
Anthem (from 'Chess')  
Zadok the Priest

Mendelssohn  
Duke Ellington  
Scottish trad.arr.Chilcott  
John/Snyder/Clipsham  
Ellington arr.Clipsham  
Purcell

Ram arr.Clipsham  
Hamlisch/Marzuki/Clipsham  
Mercury  
C.Hubert H.Parry  
Loewe  
Schönberg  
att.Purcell arr.Vaughan Williams  
Tallis  
Diack (with apologies to Handel) arr.Clipsham  
trad.French (from the Auvergne) arr.Richards  
Andersson/Rice/Ulvaeus arr.Purifoy  
Handel

*Serendipity*  
the choir

## Royal Connections

Music Director - Kerith Fowles

**Saturday 7 May, 3pm**  
Chevalier College Burradoo  
- in association with the  
Sydney Male Choir

**Saturday 14 May, 3pm**  
Kiama Anglican Church

**Friday 20 May, 6pm**  
Bundanoon Memorial Hall

**Saturday 21 May, 3pm**  
Bundanoon Memorial Hall

Tickets \$15  
\*Burradoo \$20  
(including light refreshments)

available at  
The Brown Bookshop (Bowral)  
Todds Real Estate (Bundanoon)  
At the door

Doors open 30 minutes  
prior to performance

SH Serendipity Choir Inc.