

'TIS THE SEASON

The Christmas season in Australia means many things to many people. For some, the idea of a sun-drenched Christmas spent on a beach sipping champagne and eating prawns is a sharp contrast to the 'traditional' Christmas where cooks and turkeys roast in the heat of a kitchen and oven – respectively, of course! To schoolchildren, Christmas is the prospect of toys and long, hot summer holidays spent playing whilst the shrill sounds of cicadas assault the ears. Just as the season encompasses many things, so too does this programme, the second concert series for *Serendipity: the choir*.

Summertime is a popular season for many, regardless of where you experience it. One of the earliest recorded songs in the English language is 'Summer is a-coming in', a hymn to all the good things we associate with the season. George Gershwin captured the laziness of summer in 'Summertime' from the opera 'Porgy and Bess' and here we present it in a special five-part arrangement. More recently, the season has been associated with 'Summer Lovin'', made famous in the film 'Grease'. Here, it is teamed with an ABBA classic, 'Money, Money, Money' – something we all think about in the run up to Christmas!

Traditional songs have not been forgotten, and Christmas is remembered in the lively spiritual 'Mary had a Baby', set by conductor Malcolm Sargent. More introspective is 'Deep River', a sumptuous choral arrangement of the spiritual made famous by Paul Robeson, while 'My Lord, What a Morning' captures the beauty of a crisp, new day. We also present 'Ose Shalom', a traditional Israeli song of peace for this season of peace and goodwill.

No concert in this season would be complete without some Christmas Carols. In this concert we present a mixture of favourites (some with audience participation please!) and others which will delight. Christina Rossetti's famous poem 'In the Bleak Midwinter' has most often been associated with Harold Darke's setting, so that Gustav Holst's more intimate setting is often overlooked. Today, we redress that balance. While perhaps not a Christmas Carol, the winter theme is continued in a setting of 'Jingle Bells' by Ray Charles – fun is guaranteed! Similarly joyful is the Spanish carol 'Riu, Riu Chiu', a festive carol for the Festive Season. We will also present the 'Coventry Carol', written in 1591 for Coventry's Pageant of Shearmen and Tailors in which the Christmas narrative was retold. A moving carol, it is a reminder that Christmas can, for some, be filled with sorrow.

We also present three works by the English composer, John Rutter. The first is one of his earliest Christmas carols, 'The Shepherd's Pipe Carol', an upbeat and challenging take on the appearance of the angels to shepherds on that first Christmas night. In a reminder that Christmas is a special time for families, we present the little performed 'Home Is A Special Kind Of Feeling', first written for a musical version of the children's classic 'Wind in the Willows' and a great expression of what home is, expressed through that literary homebody, Mole. Also in our selection of Rutter pieces is his setting of Cecil Frances Alexander's 'All Things Bright and Beautiful', words which conjure up many images of wherever we call home.

Christmas is a time, too, for animals – the first worshippers at Christmas. While our selection of animals may not have been at the stable that night, we are sure they have an important message to deliver. Our ‘*Caterpillar of Society*’ will extol the virtues of eating our greens (not to be forgotten alongside the Christmas ham and turkey!), while ‘*Chick, Chick, Chicken*’ will praise those farmyard fowls and their produce. Summer wouldn’t be complete in Australia without ‘*Mosquitoes*’, and tonight we reveal a little known artistic side of the mosquito character. Finally, everyone’s favourite animal will not be forgotten – join us as we serenade our cuddly ursine friends as they embark on their ‘*Teddy Bears’ Picnic*’.

PROGRAMME REPERTOIRE

13th century English

Spiritual

Spiritual arr. Averre

Rutter arr. Fowles

Gershwin arr. Clipsham

Bliss

Clawson arr. Fowles

Traditional carol

Holst

Leavitt arr. Fowles

16th century Spanish

Wesley-Smith

Spiritual arr. Luboff

Rutter

Silver arr. Clipsham

Rutter arr. Fowles

Bratton arr. Carter/Fowles

Traditional English

Traditional carol

arr. Charles

Holt, McGhee & King

arr. Clipsham

Summer Is A-Comin’ In

Mary Had A Baby

My Lord, What A Morning

All Things Bright And Beautiful

Summertime

Mosquitoes

The First Nowell & Pachelbel’s Canon

Deck The Hall

In The Bleak Midwinter

Ose Shalom

Riu Riu Chiu

A Caterpillar Of Society

Deep River

Shepherd’s Pipe Carol

The Twelve Days After Christmas

Home Is A Special Kind Of Feeling

The Teddy Bears’ Picnic

Coventry Carol

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Jingle Bells

Chick, Chick, Chicken!

Money Money/Summer Nights