

Serendipity
the choir

Music Director Kerith Fowles OAM

Songs

from the

Heart



Saturday 13 May 2023, 3pm

Bundanoon Soldiers Memorial Hall

Sunday 21 May 2023, 3pm

Bowral Uniting Church



THE PERFORMERS



Kerith Fowles OAM Conductor
Ann Clipsham Pianist

SINGERS

Amanda Ryan	Heather Bone
Andrea Skrt	Ian O'Farrell [♪]
Ann Clipsham	Jane Irwin
Anton Baggerman	Jean de Hosson [♪]
Brian Goodes [♪]	Karen Granger
Cathy Hughes	Lorelei Tait
Christine Evans [♪]	Louise Cassidy [♪]
Desley O'Farrell [♪]	Meg Herbert
Eric Conley	Min Aistrope
Fiona Schubert [♪]	Richard Bosly-Craft
Fran Bosly-Craft	Rose Conley [♪]
Georgie Hurba	Sue Reid [♪]
Graham Warner [♪]	Stuart Reid

[♪] = madrigal "O Occhi . . ."

 **THE MUSIC** 

The Ground	Gjeilo
Ave Verum Corpus	13 th c. hymn, Mozart
The Lord's Prayer	Fanshaw
The Gartan Mother's Lullaby	trad. Irish arr. Ginsberg
Shenandoah	American folk arr. Spevacek
My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose	Burns (words) trad. arr. Quigley
Anthem	Anderson, Rice & Ulvaeus (words & music) arr. Purifoy
Through the Eyes of Love	Sager (words) & Hamlich (music)
Nessun Dorma	from "Turandot" Puccini arr. Synder

~ Interval with Refreshments ~

A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square	Maschwitz/Sherwin (words & music) arr. Billingsley
The Seal Lullaby	Kipling (words) Whitacre (music)
In Flanders Fields	McCrae (words) Jacobsen/Emerson (music)
Earth Song	Ticheli
O Occhi Manza Mia	di Lasso
God Only Knows	Wilson & Asher (words & music) arr. Lojensky
Love of My Life	Mercury arr. Goates
You Raise Me Up	Graham & Lovland (words & music) arr. Emerson



PROGRAMME NOTES

Greetings, and welcome to Serendipity:the choir's May concerts for 2023.

I have to begin by sharing something with you, a 'something' which in all likelihood you may not have yet encountered; but should you meet this 'something' in days to come, please heed my warning.

If you decide to ask people to contribute ideas for a specific event – in this case our current concert programme – be wary before committing yourself. I offered all the members of Serendipity the opportunity to suggest contributions appropriate to our series' title, '*Songs from the Heart*'. It was wonderful to receive ideas from 10 singers, and all of these contributors have one piece of their choosing in the programme. I hear you asking, "What's the problem?"

It is simply this – when you have to arrange the programme order, and then write programme notes about the pieces, the mix of styles included in the programme presents enormous challenges, when you haven't selected everything yourself. None of the Serendipians to whom I put the challenge - "How have I decided the programme order?" –attempted to work it out. Disappointing, to say the least. But I press on, putting pen to paper and trusting that you will follow my train of thought.

The first three pieces form a group of sacred works, all are very individual in style. *The Ground* is one of the 4 movements comprising "Sunrise Mass", composed by Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo in 2007. Its sumptuous harmonies and beautiful melodies are typical of the composer's writing. The setting of the 13thc. eucharistic chant, *Ave Verum Corpus* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, possibly his best known short piece for choir, strings and organ, is the epitome of restrained exaltation. And *The Lord's Prayer*, from British composer David Fanshawe's 'African Sanctus', is unique in that he uses a traditional choir, rock band and African tribal music, recorded during 4 years of wandering throughout Africa, recording and filming on location.

The next group of pieces are all in a folk idiom. *Gartan Mother's Lullaby* is a traditional Irish tune, and in presenting it, *Serendipity* has shown amazing foresight. You will have noticed, on your invitation to the recent coronation, that the image of the Green Man takes pride of place, and we have the self-same Green Man in this song! A rapid journey to the USA takes us to the world of *Shenandoah*, a celebrated Iroquois chief with a lovely daughter. One of the many locally-based fur traders – so the story goes – fell in love with her. The outcome was one of unrequited love. And then a swift transition to Scotland, land of the Bard, who wrote the poem for *My Love Is Like a Red, Red Rose*, and collaborated with an unknown musician to set his poem to traditional Scots song, "Low Down in the Broom"



There's no prize for guessing what links the following three pieces. All are from staged music, but of very diverse backgrounds. *Anthem*, a poignant outpouring of love of homeland; *Through the Eyes of Love*, the beautiful theme song from the film 'Ice Castles'; and of course, *Nessun Dorma*, every operatic tenor's (and not so operatic everyone else's) #1 choice for a great start to the day. Think Placido Domingo, Jose Carreras and of course, the inimitable, handkerchief waving Luciano Pavarotti. Puccini, composer of the opera 'Turandot', would have loved to hear his aria gracing the world stage for many decades.

For the next group I failed to find a suitable link, so let's just say that they epitomise love in varying ways. *A Nightingale Sang in Berkley Square* was written shortly before the outbreak of WW2, and became immensely popular not just in Britain, where it became the theme song for Dame Vera Lyn, but throughout the western world. It retains this popularity to the present day. *Seal Lullaby*, composed by American Eric Whitaker, presents a charming image of a mother seal lulling her 'flipperling' to sleep. *In Flanders Fields* is a setting of John Macrae's stirring poem of December 1915. Within months, this poem came to symbolize the sacrifices of all who were fighting for love of freedom in the First World War.

The last, and largest, group, is collected for their clear expressions of love in many different musical forms. *Earth Song*, written as the writer/composer Ticheli felt moved to do when the USA declared war on Iraq, expressing his despair but clinging to the power and beauty of music to bring good out of evil. *O Occhi*, a typically passionate offering in the form of a madrigal, composed by one of the great 16th century Flemish composers. The translation is a 'must read'. *God Only Knows*, a huge hit for the Beach Boys back in 1966 for their album, Pet Sounds. Wikipedia defines their writing style as Baroque rock, and avant-pop.

I have to begin a new paragraph for our next offering. A large print of Freddie Mercury in full flight hangs in my study, a gift from the choir once they realised that I had experienced a Damascus moment with regard to 'Queen'. Freddie wrote both words and music for *Love of My Life*, and his knowledge of traditional musical styles (listen for the Mozart moments) shines through. Ah, Freddie.

And finally, *You Raise Me Up*, originally composed by the Norwegian-Irish duo, Secret Garden, and first released in 2002. Despite a slow start, the song has now been covered 125 times, and it hit the top of the pops in, of all places, Austria, 54 times. That's even challenging The Sound of Music. Such is the power of love.

So, there you are, that's your lot, and I do hope you enjoy our offerings. If you do, please tell your friends, and bring them to our next concerts. If you don't, please tell me.

Kerith Fowles
Music Director