

*Serendipity*  
the choir

with Music Director Kerith Fowles OAM presents

*A December*  
*to*  
*Remember*

Sunday 3 December 2023, 4pm

*Bowral Uniting Church*

Sunday 10 December 2023, 4pm

*Bundanoon Soldiers Memorial Hall*



# THE MUSIC



<b>Christmas Bush for His Adorning</b>	Wheeler/James
<b>The North Wind</b>	Wheeler/James
<b>Somewhere in My Memory</b>	Bricusse/Williams arr. Snyder
<b>A Flower Remembered</b>	Rutter (words & music) translated Helbig
<b>Mary Did You Know</b>	Lowry & Greene (words & music) arr. McDonald
<b>Come On, Sing Halleluia</b>	Spevacek (words & music)
<b>As Time Goes By</b> soloists: Lorelei Tait & Anton Baggerman	Hupfeld (words & music) arr. Althouse
<b>Remember Love</b> soloist: Fiona Schubert	Martin/Nix
<b>Baby It's Cold Outside</b> from " <i>Neptune's Daughter</i> "	Loesser (words & music) arr. Kerr



*~ Interval with Refreshments ~*





# THE MUSIC<sub>(cont.)</sub>



**Velvet Shoes**

Wylie/Thomson arr. Clipsham

**Christmastime**

Smith & Carlson (words & music)  
arr. Martin

**Snow On Snow**

Beck (words & music)

**O Little Town of Bethlehem**

Brooks/Redner arr. Ballard

**White Winter Hymnal**

recorded by *Fleet Foxes*

Pecknold (words & music) arr. Emerson

**Try to Remember**

from: *The Fantastics*

soloists: Cathy Hughes & Fiona Schubert

Jones/Schmidt arr. Althouse

**Jingle Bells**

arr. Charles

**Too Darn Hot**

from: *Kiss Me Kate*

Porter (words & music) arr. Hayes





## PROGRAMME NOTES

As a concert theme 'A December to Remember' has proven to be a winner, providing ample material for a varied and balanced programme. And possibly too much inspiration for your writer of programme notes.

For simplicity's sake I have approached the writing of these notes by dividing the works into three clearly defined groups. The first of these is Christmas, an absolute 'must' in any December programme. *Christmas bush for His adorning* and *The north wind* both come from a collection of original, Australian-themed carols. The texts are unmistakably descriptive of traditional Christmas ideas, but presented in an Australian context. Indigenous birds and flowers are used to express the joy of nature in celebrating the birth of Jesus.

*Mary, did you know* has been criticised by Baptist theologian Michael Frost, who suggested that it was the "most sexist Christmas song ever written... it treats her like a clueless child", and asks: "Could you imagine a song asking Abraham 17 times if he knew he'd be the father of a great nation?" There's food for thought. But despite controversy, this lovely song has established itself as a great favourite of audiences world-wide.

Linda Spevacek, composer of *Come on, sing hallelujah*, is unusual in that she writes only choral music. This piece, one of the over a thousand composed thus far, is an original modern spiritual, with all the hallmarks of the traditional spiritual; strong, spirited music and memorable lyrics. In his arrangement of *Christmastime* Joseph Martin follows what has become something of a hallmark in American choral music, by including references to the old carol 'Ding Dong Merrily on High'.

The words for *O little town of Bethlehem* were written by the Rev. Phillip Brooks in 1865, following his pilgrimage to Bethlehem on Christmas eve. This beautiful modern setting of the music by Redner includes a very noticeable reference to the original, and has an angelic semi-chorus adding encouragement (as if we needed such) to "Sing Noël". The final Christmas offering is the inimitable arrangement of *Jingle bells* by American jazz musician Ray Charles. It has a zing and pizzazz which make it a typical toe-tapper. But please, don't.





Having dealt with the Christmas portion of the programme we come to the “Remember” bit. Here we are on dangerous ground, as evidenced in rehearsals by choristers taking particular phrases from pieces and using them to make pointed comments about memorisation. Composed by John Williams, *Somewhere in my memory* comes from the film “Home Alone”, a 1990 American Christmas comedy. The film’s signature tune, *Somewhere*, was nominated for many awards, and is a typically heart-wrenching composition which brings many listeners to tears.

*A flower remembered* is a tender piece which John Rutter composed in memory of the victims of Fukushima in 2011. It is both reflective and heartfelt, with a simple, appealing melody, rich harmonies, and a flowing accompaniment. Hermann Hupfeld wrote the jazz style *As Time Goes By* for the Broadway Musical ‘Everybody’s Welcome’ which opened on October 31, 1931. It had only modest success until it was featured in the 1942 film ‘Casablanca’, in which it was used as a recurring simple musical motif throughout the film.

Composed as a church anthem, *Remember Love* surrounds the listener with the message of God’s mercy and love. Contrasting word couplets are enhanced by an expressive melody and restrained harmonies. *Try to remember* is a nostalgic song from the musical, *The Fantastics* (1960). It opens the show, apparently making up in music what the stage set lacked in detail. The musical ran off-Broadway for 17,162 performances, making it the world’s longest running musical.

And so to the third component part of our programme. The weather. That best-left-alone conversation topic at dinner parties. December’s weather presents such vivid contrasts, depending in which hemisphere you happen to be. Despite it being unlikely that a song in this vein could be composed today, *Baby it’s cold outside*, from ‘Neptune’s Daughter’, draws from a northern hemisphere situation to provide a dialogue between boy and girl. Loesser wrote it in 1944 to sing with his wife, Lynn Garland, at their housewarming party in New York City. Apparently they sang the song to indicate to guests that it was time to leave. Not very subtle.

The very beautiful *Velvet Shoes*, performed by the choirs’ women, was originally a solo song by American composer Randall Thomson. Our version has been arranged by our pianist, Ann. Another delicate but stunning work is *Snow on Snow*, with both poem and music by American Andy Beck.



Of an entirely different ilk is *White Winter Hymnal* from the Fleet Foxes, an indie band that formed in Seattle Washington. Controversy rages over the meaning of the words. Here are some, condensed, opinions. The writer, Robin Pecknold, said that the lyrics to this song are "fairly meaningless", and that the song is more focused on the vocal harmonies rather than the lyrics. Others suggest a type of (fairly gruesome) fairy tale. Yet others see a link to a resistance group that wore red scarves, and yet more to the French Revolution. It has certainly created controversy within Serendipity ranks.

*Too darn hot* in all likelihood echoes the sentiments of many Australians during our summers, when we do battle with flies, burned offerings on the barbeque, and burned bodies on beaches. The song, from 'Kiss Me, Kate', a musical version of Shakespeare's 'Taming of the Shrew', (and according to critics contributing nothing to the plot) was inspired by the on-stage/off-stage battles of a husband and wife actor couple during their 1935 production of the play. Cole Porter's inimitable jazz-based style really brings this number to life.

And, as they say, that's your lot. Something for everyone, we hope. Happy Christmas to you all.

Kerith Fowles

## Carols

### THE NORTH WIND

The North Wind is tossing the leaves  
The red dust is over the town  
The sparrows are under the eaves  
And the grass in the paddock is brown  
As we lift up our voices and sing  
To the Christ-child, the heavenly king

The tree-ferns in green gullies sway  
The cool stream flows silently by  
The joy-bells are greeting the day  
And the chimes are adrift in the sky  
As we lift up our voices and sing  
To the Christ-child, the heavenly king

### CHRISTMAS BUSH...

All the bells are gaily ringing  
Birds in ev'ry tree are singing.  
Let us in this golden weather,  
Gather Christmas bush together.

Christ is born! The angels thunder  
Thro' the heavens their tale of wonder,  
While we pick for His adorning,  
Christmas bush this hallow'd morning.

Onward with triumphant chorus,  
Following the road before us,  
Singing thro' the golden weather,  
Gath'ring Christmas bush together.



# THE PERFORMERS



Kerith Fowles OAM      Conductor  
Ann Clipsham          Pianist

## SINGERS

Amanda Ryan	Ian O'Farrell
Anton Baggerman ŵ	Jane Irwin
Brian Goodes	Jean de Hosson
Cathy Hughes ŵ	Karen Granger ŵ
Christine Evans	Lorelei Tait ŵ
Desley O'Farrell ŵ	Louise Cassidy ŵ
Eric Conley	Meg Herbert
Fiona Schubert ŵ	Maureen Veness
Fran Bosly-Craft	Richard Bosly-Craft
Georgie Hurba ŵ	Rose Conley ŵ
Graeme Whisker ŵ	Sue Reid ŵ
Graham Warner ŵ	Stuart Reid ŵ
Heather Bone	

Ŵ Performing in White Winter Hymnal



♪ acknowledges with thanks ♪

**Bowral Uniting Church - Ian Prior**

**Alan Weston - banner**

**Brian Haydon – Highlands FM**

**Lighting/Sound – Stuart Reid**

**Refreshments**

**Bundanoon Memorial Hall - Leanne Tyler-Olsen**

**2ST radio**

**Southern Highlands Tourism**

**Front-of-House – Karen Whisker**

Bowral: Friends of Serendipity

Bundanoon: Exeter CWA

To be kept informed of *Serendipity* events, please email us at:

[info@serendipitythechoir.com](mailto:info@serendipitythechoir.com)

## YOUR 2024 DIARY DATES



Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May      Bundanoon Memorial Hall      3.00pm

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May      Bowral Uniting Church      3.00pm

S.H. Serendipity Choir Inc. is a member of the Australian National Choral Associati