



I WAS
GLAD
CATHEDRAL CLASSICS

SYDNEY
PHILHARMONIA
CHOIRS
CONDUCTOR &
MUSIC DIRECTOR
BRETT WEYMARK

VOICE
ENERGY
JOY



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SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

ARTISTIC & MUSIC DIRECTOR BRETT WEYMARK OAM

I WAS GLAD CATHEDRAL CLASSICS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

DEBORAH CHEETHAM FRAILLON
and MATTHEW DOYLE

HUBERT PARRY

JOHN IRELAND

JOANNA FORBES L'ESTRANGE**

WILLIAM HENRY MONK

HENRY BALFOUR GARDINER

ROXANNA PANUFNIK

GERALD FINZI

Tarimi Nulay – Long time living here[†]

I was glad when they said unto me

Greater love hath no man

A Season to Sing* – A choral re-imagining
of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*:

A Time to Dance

Spring

Abide with me[‡]

Evening Hymn

Coronation Sanctus

Lo, the full, final sacrifice

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

EDWARD BAIRSTOW

HOWARD GOODALL

CECILIA MCDOWALL

WILLIAM HARRIS

JOANNA FORBES L'ESTRANGE**

EDGAR BAINTON

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

HUBERT PARRY

Blessed City, heavenly Salem

The Lord is my Shepherd (Psalm 23)

Celebration (organ solo)

Bring us, O Lord God

A Season to Sing:* Summer

And I saw a new heaven

The Old Hundredth Psalm Tune[‡]

Blest Pair of Sirens

Brett Weymark conductor

** **Joanna Forbes L'Estrange** conductor (Sydney)

Symphony Chorus | **David Drury** organ

Tue 1 April 2025 | 7pm
Sydney Opera House
Concert Hall

Sat 5 April 2025 | 2pm
All Saints Cathedral,
Bathurst

Sat 12 April 2025 | 2pm
St Peter & Paul's Old
Cathedral, Goulburn

[†]100 Minutes of New Australian Music 2020 commission

* Australian premiere of an international co-commission from 55 choirs, including SPC.

[‡] With audience participation – please join us in song!

The concert will conclude at approximately 9:05pm (Sydney) and 4:05pm (Bathurst, Goulburn)

Pre-concert talk (Sydney): Nina Fudala in conversation with Joanna Forbes L'Estrange
at 6:15pm in the Northern Foyer, supported by 2MBS Fine Music

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Saturday 7 – Sunday 8 June 2025



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Welcome

I can think of no better way to open our 2025 season than with a celebration of our Symphony Chorus – our largest auditioned choir and the backbone of the organisation – in a concert where nothing sits between their glorious sound and you in the audience.

This concert explores English cathedral music from evensongs to coronations, and three major works underpin the program: Parry's *I Was Glad* and *Blessed Pair of Sirens*, and Finzi's rarely heard masterpiece *Lo, the full, final sacrifice*. These works are of symphonic proportion and complexity – a thrill to sing and a joy to hear. Alongside them are pieces I've enjoyed hearing in evensong at places like St Paul's Cathedral, London, where this choir performed in 2010. For our first performance, this music will fill that cathedral-of-sound, our home, the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, after which we're excited to be visiting two great cathedrals of NSW.

We're also featuring familiar music in a new guise – Joanna Forbes L'Estrange's choral setting of the Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* entitled *A Season to Sing* – and we're thrilled the composer is with us in Sydney to conduct *Spring* and *Summer*. (In August, our Chamber Singers will perform *Autumn* and *Winter* at White Bay Power Station.)

Central to the concert is long-time collaborator David Drury, one of Australia's



PHOTO: KETH SAUNDERS

best organists. You'll often see him at the chamber organ for *Messiah* or a Bach passion, but in this program he harnesses the power of the mighty Sydney Opera House Grand Organ, before travelling with the choir to perform on the great organs in Bathurst's All Saints Cathedral and St Peter & Paul's Old Cathedral in Goulburn.

Finally, no showcase of cathedral classics would be complete without some communal singing, and we invite you to join us in song for *Abide with me* and 'The Old Hundredth'.

Brett Weymark OAM
Artistic and Music Director

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, upon whose Country we rehearse, sing and work, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. Our voices bring to life the songs of many cultures and countries, from across the ages, in a spirit of sharing, learning and understanding. The ancient customs and cultures of this land inspire us to create harmony – in music and in our society.

Cathedral Classics

You can't see what Roxanna Panufnik has written at the top of Coronation Sanctus, but you will surely hear it: 'With awe and wonderment – angels! And at the close, 'Ecstatically'. This music – composed for the coronation of King Charles III and barely two years old – may be too new to be a 'classic', but it embodies the qualities that have ensured the place of sacred choral music in the hearts of so many.

Even as church attendance in Australia declines, those churches and cathedrals with flourishing choral evensong traditions are experiencing a surge. Evensong offers time for reflection, the experience of ritual and a sense of sanctuary, but these spiritual elements are underpinned and empowered by transcendent music. As St Augustine is supposed to have said: 'He who sings prays twice.'

The cathedral music repertoire includes anthems and motets – works to challenge choirs and enrich listeners. Thoughtful texts by great poets, brought to life by composers steeped in rich tradition, create a space for prayer or even just the quieting of the mind. The experience is a passive one that is nonetheless intensely emotional, especially in an extended work such as Gerald Finzi's festival anthem, *Lo, the full, final sacrifice* – the musical equivalent of swirling incense. John Ireland's *Greater love hath no man* – a cantata in miniature – is another meditation on sacrifice, a theme that resonated when, two years after its creation, World War I broke out.

But for a congregation, the 'praying twice' occurs during the hymns, when all sing together as one. Two such hymns are Henry Monk's *Abide with me*, one of the best-loved tunes in the hymnal, and Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Old Hundredth Psalm Tune*, his setting of 'All people that on earth

do dwell', made for the coronation of Elizabeth II. *The Old Hundredth* is notable for its use of both choir and 'the people' to powerful effect, as well as its ingenious nod to an earlier Elizabethan age with a quotation from John Dowland in verse 4. (Edward Bairstow's *Blessed City, heavenly Salem* also introduces Elizabethan, and plainsong, elements, blending them with a romantic language suggestive of Brahms.)

With the Vaughan Williams we also enter the realm of occasional music – in many ways the opposite of the evensong. The coronation, the royal wedding or jubilee thanksgiving is about pageantry – pomp and ceremony on a lavish scale. There are bells and smells, vestments and 'choreography', and chosen composers bringing their inspiration to the display.

We begin the program with the greatest of these occasional commissions: Hubert Parry's anthem *I Was Glad*, composed for the coronation of Edward VII in 1902, expanded to thrilling effect for George V in 1911, and now a beloved fixture in British coronations and other royal events.

Parry also concludes the concert, with his solemn setting of Milton's ode, *Blest Pair of Sirens*, commissioned on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. This is one of the few works in the program not to have received its first performance in a cathedral, and its structure is in keeping with the secular concert hall setting. It can be heard as a kind of Baroque concerto, with a recurring instrumental idea and contrasting choral sections. Stylistically, the music reveals the influence of Brahms and Wagner. Meanwhile, Milton's text describes the rapturous experience of voices 'singing everlastingly' and the sounds of instruments: 'Where the bright Seraphim in burning row, their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow, and

the Cherubic host in thousand quires touch their immortal harps of golden wires...'

There are no harps or trumpets today, but they will not be missed. At the heart of every cathedral – sacred or secular – is the organ, the king of instruments. And when, for example, Vaughan Williams calls for 'all available trumpets' in his *Old Hundredth*, David Drury will be literally pulling out the stops for a splendid effect.

After interval, the organ has its moment in the spotlight, with Cecilia McDowall's *Celebration*, composed as a graduation piece on receiving an honorary doctorate from Portsmouth University. You can hear how she relishes the organ's 'colour, power, delicacy and texture' while evoking the excitement and joy of new graduates. In a nice pairing, *Celebration* is followed by the only *a cappella* work on the program, William Harris's motet *Bring us, O Lord God* – setting a prayer by John Donne.

The influence of the English cathedral tradition extends well beyond Britain, and today the Australian connection comes from Edgar Bainton, who was director of the Sydney Conservatorium (1934–46).

One work in today's concert has entered the pantheon of cathedral classics by the vestry door. Howard Goodall's setting of Psalm 23 was written as the theme for *The Vicar of Dibley* but has since taken on a life of its own. It's 'humbling', writes Goodall, to realise that for many people under 50 in the UK and Australia 'it is the only tune for "The Lord is my Shepherd" they now know.'

Composers such as Bainton and Goodall offer a reminder that not all composers of cathedral classics are church musicians, or even necessarily Christian believers. But the nature of sacred choral music – giving voice to profound spiritual instincts – is such that it's firmly embedded in our wider cultural heritage. For that we can be glad.

Yvonne Frindle © 2025

JOANNA FORBES L'ESTRANGE

A Season to Sing

In the relatively short time since its rediscovery in the 1950s, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* has become one of the most famous musical works ever written. This is no surprise – in the 18th-century it was already the equivalent of a chart-topper, as evidenced by the number of arrangements that circulated. The *Spring* concerto was the most fertile: the first movement turned up in Vivaldi's own operas *Dorilla in Tempe* and *Farnace*; J.S. Bach borrowed from it for his Cantata No.27. In 1765, Michel Corrette transformed the entire concerto for his motet *Laudate Dominum* using Psalm 148 as his text. Jumping to 1972, Ward Swingle made a wordless arrangement of, yes, *Spring!* Composers for the voice have been unable to resist the siren call of these concertos, and when, as a young girl, Joanna Forbes L'Estrange thought Vivaldi's melodies so good they deserved to be sung, she was joining a long and noble tradition. Now, 300 years since the first publication of *The Four Seasons*, that instinct has come to fruition.

Sourcing the texts – a mix of poems, hymn texts and Bible passages – was an integral part of her process. 'It mattered to me,' she says, 'that the words might sound as if they could have inspired the music, even though it was the other way round.' Equally important, for a composer who sings contemporary and avant-garde music, was exploring beyond the range of 'conventional' singing. Listen for the whistling 'birds' and the nasal drone of 'bagpipes'; watch too, as things get physical for a dramatic summer storm.

This work is an homage to Vivaldi's inspiring music, and in the opening prelude we hear Forbes L'Estrange's own voice in a quasi-baroque setting of timeless words from Ecclesiastes. 'I offer a deep bow,' she says, to this extraordinary music that 'sounds as fresh today as it must have done 300 years ago'.

The Words

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

CHEETHAM FRAILLON *Tarimi Nulay – Long time living here*

Tarimi nulay ngalawa yura
garrabarra baraya yagu barrabugu
ngyiningi ngara
ngyiningi berong

*Long time here live the people
dancing and singing today and tomorrow,
your way of knowing
your way of belonging*

Words by Deborah Cheetham Fraillon, translated into Gadigal by Matthew Doyle

PARRY *I was glad when they said unto me*

I was glad when they said unto me:
We will go into the house of the Lord.
Our feet shall stand in thy gates:
 O Jerusalem
Jerusalem is builded as a city:
That is at unity in itself.

O pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
They shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls:
And plenteousness within thy palaces

Psalm 122: 1–3, 6, 7

IRELAND *Greater love hath no man*

Many waters cannot quench love, neither
can the floods drown it.
Love is strong as death.
Greater love hath no man than this, that a
man lay down his life for his friends.
Who his own self bare our sins in his own
body on the tree,
That we, being dead to sins, should live
unto righteousness.

Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are
justified in the name of the Lord Jesus;

Ye are a chosen generation, a royal
priesthood, a holy nation, that ye should
shew forth the praises of him
who hath called you out of darkness into
his marvellous light.
I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of
God, that ye present your bodies, a living
sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which
is your reasonable service.

*Song of Solomon 8: 7, 6; John 15: 13;
1 Peter 2: 24; 1 Corinthians 6: 11; 1 Peter 2: 9;
Romans 12: 1*

FORBES L'ESTRANGE *A Season to Sing*

1. *A Time to Dance*

To ev'rything there is a season and a time
 to ev'ry purpose under Heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to pluck up
 that which is planted,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to break down and
 a time to build up.
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance!

Ecclesiastes 3:1–4 (JKV)

SPRING

2. Welcome Spring

The spring clad all in gladness
doth laugh at winter's sadness

Fa la la...

The flow'rs from earth are springing,
and now the birds are singing,
they're singing to welcome spring.
We welcome spring and so we sing:
The flow'rs from earth...

Ask the Lord for rain,
for the springtime rain,
Thunderstorms and rain,
Showers of rain swell the grain;
Ask the Lord for springtime rain.

The flow'rs from earth...

Arise my love, my fair one,
come away, come away...
For lo, the winter is past,
and spring is come at last
Fa la la...

The flow'rs from earth...

*Thomas Morley, 'Now is the month of
Maying'; madrigal based on Orazio Vecchi;
Joanna Forbes L'Estrange, based on
Zechariah 10: 1 (NIV) and Song of Solomon
2: 11–13 (KJV)*

3. Music, Sweet Music

Music, sweet music,
Sounds over all the Earth;
One glad choral song
Greets the primrose's birth;
The lark soars above,
With its shrill matin strain;
The shepherd boy tunes
His reed pipe on the plain.

Music, sweet music,
Cheers meadow and lea;—
In the song of the blackbird,
The hum of the bee;

The loud happy laughter
Of children at play
Proclaim how they worship
Spring's beautiful day.

Eliza Cook (1818–1889), 'Spring'; verses 2–3

4. To the Bagpipe's Sound

To the bagpipe's sound
the nymphs tread out their ground,
Fa la la...

Fie then why sit we musing
youth's delight refusing?
Fa la la...

To the bagpipe's sound...

*Thomas Morley, 'Now is the month of
Maying'; madrigal based on Orazio Vecchi*

MONK Abide with me

1. Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens;

Lord, with me abide.

When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away.
Change and decay in all around I see.
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

6. I need thy presence every passing hour.

What but thy grace can foil
the tempter's power?

Who like thyself my guide and
strength can be?

Through cloud and sunshine,
O abide with me.

7. I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless,
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting?

Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

8. Hold thou thy cross before
my closing eyes.
Shine through the gloom and
point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks and
earth's vain shadows flee;
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Henry Francis Lyte (1847)

GARDINER Evening Hymn

Te lucis ante terminum,
Rerum Creator, poscimus,
Ut pro tua clementia,
sis praesul et custodia.

Procul recedant somnia
Et noctium phantasmata
Hos temque nostrum comprime
Ne pollutur corpora.

Praesta, Pater piissime,
Patrique compar unice,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito
Regnans per omne Saeculum.
Amen.

*Compline hymn, 8th century,
revised Pope Urban VIII*

TRANSLATION:

*Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world, we pray
That, with Thy wonted favour, Thou
Wouldst be our Guard and Keeper now.*

*From all ill dreams defend our eyes,
From nightly fears and fantasies;
Tread under foot our ghostly foe,
That no pollution we may know.*

*O Father, that we ask be done,
Through Jesus Christ, thine only Son,
Who, with the Holy Ghost and thee,
Doth live and reign eternally.
Amen*

Translation: John Mason Neale (1818–1866)

R PANUFNIK Coronation Sanctus

Sanctus. Holy, holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Glory be to thee, O Lord most high.

Book of Common Prayer (1662)

FINZI Lo, the full, final sacrifice

Lo, the full, final sacrifice
On which all figures fix'd their eyes,
The ransom'd Isaac, and his ram;
The Manna, and the Paschal lamb.
Jesu Master, just and true!
Our Food, and faithful Shepherd too!

O let that love which thus makes thee
Mix with our low Mortality,
Lift our lean Souls, and set us up
Convictors of thine own full cup,
Coheirs of Saints. That so all may
Drink the same wine; and the same way.

Nor change the Pasture, but the Place
To feed of Thee in thine own Face.
O dear Memorial of that Death
Which lives still, and allows us breath!
Rich, Royal food! Bountiful Bread!
Whose use denies us to the dead!

Live ever Bread of loves, and be
My life, my soul, my surer self to me.
Help Lord, my Faith, my Hope increase;
And fill my portion in thy peace.
Give love for life; nor let my days
Grow, but in new powers to thy
name and praise.

Rise, Royal Sion! rise and sing
Thy soul's kind shepherd, thy heart's King.
Stretch all thy powers; call if you can
Harps of heaven to hands of man.
This sovereign subject sits above
The best ambition of thy love.

Lo the Bread of Life, this day's
Triumphant Text provokes thy praise.
The living and life-giving bread,
To the great twelve distributed
When Life, himself, at point to die
Of love, was his own Legacy.

O soft self-wounding Pelican!
Whose breast weeps Balm for
wounded man.
All this way bend thy benign flood
To a bleeding Heart that gasps for blood.
That blood, whose least drops
sovereign be
To wash my worlds of sins from me.

Come love! Come Lord! and that long day
For which I languish, come away.
When this dry soul those eyes shall see,
And drink the unseal'd source of thee.
When Glory's sun faith's shades
shall chase,
And for thy veil give me thy Face.
Amen.

*Text by Finzi, based on Richard Crashaw's
versions of the Hymns of St Thomas Aquinas,
Adoro Te and Lauda Sion Salvatore*

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

BAIRSTOW Blessed City, heavenly Salem

Blessed City, heav'nly Salem,
Vision dear of peace and love,
Who of living stones art builded,
In the height of heav'n above,
And by Angel hands apparell'd
As a bride doth earthward move.

Out of heav'n from God descending,
New and ready to be wed
To thy Lord, Whose love espous'd thee,
Fair adorn'd shalt thou be led;
All thy gates and all thy bulwarks
Of pure gold are fashioned.

Bright thy gates of pearl are shining,
They are open evermore;
And their well earned rest attaining,
Thither faithful souls do soar.
Who for Christ's dear Name in this world
Pain and tribulation bore.

Many a blow and biting sculpture
Polish'd well those stones elect,
In their places now compacted,
By the heav'nly Architect.
Nevermore to leave the Temple,
Which with them the Lord hath deck'd.

To this Temple, where we call Thee,
Come, O Lord of Hosts, today;
With Thy wonted loving kindness,
Hear Thy servants as they pray;
And Thy fullest benediction
Shed within its walls away.
Amen.

*Anonymous, 'Urbs beata Hierusalem',
translated by John Mason Neale*

GOODALL The Lord is my Shepherd

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want;
He maketh me to lie down in
green pastures:
He leadeth me besides the still waters.

Yea, though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
For you are with me, you will comfort me.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow
me all the days of my life:
And I will dwell in the house of
the Lord forever.

Psalms 23 (KJV)

HARRIS Bring us, O Lord God

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears or hopes, but one equal possession; no ends or beginnings, but one equal eternity, in the habitations of thy glory and dominion, world without end. Amen.

Prayer by John Donne (1572–1631)

FORBES L'ESTRANGE A Season to Sing

SUMMER

5. Sing Cuccu!

Summer moonlight,
All soft and still and fair.

Lhude singuccu, cuccu!
Wel singses thy, cuccu,
ne swik thu naver nu!

Summer moonlight,
Soft and still and fair.

Thunder! Lightning!
Very fright'ning!
Shepherd, you should run
and find shelter from the storm!

Emily Brontë, 'Moonlight, Summer Moonlight'

Anonymous, 'Sumer is icumen in'

Additional words by Forbes L'Estrange

6. Trees Lending Shelter

The solemn hour of midnight
Breathes sweet thoughts ev'rywhere.
But most where trees are sending
breezy boughs on high,
or stooping low are lending
shelter from the sky.

Emily Brontë, 'Moonlight, Summer Moonlight'

7. Summer Storm

The clouds poured out water,
the sky sent out sound,
The voice of thunder was in Heav'n,
the lightning lightened all the world.
Earth trembled and shook!

Psalm 77: 17–18 (NKJV)

BAINTON

And I saw a new heaven

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth:
for the first heaven and the first earth
were passed away;
and there was no more sea.

And I John saw the holy city,
new Jerusalem,
coming down from God out of heaven,
prepared as a bride adorned for
her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of
Heaven, saying,
Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men,
and he will dwell with them, and
they shall be his people,
and God himself shall be with them,
and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears
from their eyes;
and there shall be no more death,
neither sorrow, nor crying,
neither shall there be any more pain:
for the former things are passed away.

Revelation 21

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

The Old Hundredth Psalm Tune

1. All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
Him serve with fear, his praise forthtell;
Come ye before him and rejoice.

2. The Lord, ye know, is God indeed;
Without our aid he did us make;
We are his folk, he doth us feed,
And for his sheep he doth us take.

3. O enter then his gates with praise,
Approach with joy his courts unto;
Praise, laud, and bless his name always,
For it is seemly so to do.

4. For why? The Lord our God is good;
His mercy is forever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure.

5. To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
The God whom heaven and earth adore,
From men and from the angel host
Be praise and glory evermore.
Amen.

*From the Anglo-Genevan Psalter (1561),
attributed to William Kethe (d.1594)*

PARRY Blest Pair of Sirens

Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of
Heav'n's joy,
Sphere-born harmonious sisters,
Voice and Verse,
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed
pow'r employ,
Dead things with inbreathed sense
able to pierce;

And to our high-raised phantasy present
That undisturbed song of pure content,
Aye sung before the sapphire-
coloured throne
To Him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout, and solemn jubilee,
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row
Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow,
And the Cherubic host in thousand quires
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just Spirits that wear
victorious palms,

Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly:

That we on earth with undiscording voice
May rightly answer that melodious noise;
As once we did, till disproportioned sin
Jarred against nature's chime, and
with harsh din

Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love
their motion swayed

In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good.

O may we soon again renew that song,
And keep in tune with Heav'n,
till God ere long
To His celestial concert us unite,
To live with Him, and sing in endless
morn of light.

John Milton (1608–1674), 'At a solemn Musick'

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About the Artists

Brett Weymark conductor

One of Australia's foremost choral conductors, Brett Weymark OAM was appointed Artistic and Music Director in 2003, and he has conducted the Choirs throughout Australia as well as internationally. He has also conducted the Sydney, Adelaide, Queensland, West Australian and Tasmanian symphony orchestras, Orchestra of the Antipodes, Sydney Youth Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and Hong Kong Philharmonic, as well as productions for WAAPA, Pacific Opera and OzOpera, and he has performed with Opera Australia, Pinchgut Opera, Australian Chamber Orchestra, The Song Company and Musica Viva.

He studied singing and conducting at the University of Sydney and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, continuing his conducting studies with Simon Halsey, Vance George, Daniel Barenboim and John Eliot Gardiner, amongst others.

His repertoire at SPC has included Bach's Passions and Christmas Oratorio, the Mozart, Verdi, Duruflé and Fauré requiems, and Orff's *Carmina Burana*. He champions Australian composers, and has premiered works by Matthew Hindson, Elena Kats-Chernin, John Peterson, Daniel Walker, Rosalind Page, Peter Sculthorpe, Andrew Schultz and Ross Edwards. In 2011 he premiered his own work *Brighton to Bondi* with the Festival Chorus. He has also conducted musical theatre programs including Bernstein's *Candide*, which won multiple BroadwayWorld Sydney awards.



PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS

Under his direction, SPC received a Helpmann Award for *Oedipus Rex* and *Symphony of Psalms*, directed by Peter Sellars, and was nominated for a Limelight Award for Purcell's *King Arthur*.

He was chorus master for the Adelaide Festival productions of *Saul* (2017), *Hamlet* (2018) and *Requiem* (2020), and he has prepared choirs for Charles Mackerras, Zubin Mehta, Edo de Waart, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Simon Rattle. He has recorded for the ABC and conducted film scores for *Happy Feet*, *Mad Max Fury Road* and *Australia*.

Recent conducting highlights include Bernstein's *Candide* (Opera Australia), Joseph Twist's *Watershed: The Death of Dr Duncan* (Opera Australia), *Sweeney Todd* (West Australian Opera), *Jandamarra* by Paul Stanhope and Steve Hawke (SSO), Tippett's *A Child Of Our Time* (Adelaide Festival), and *Carousel* (State Opera South Australia).

In 2001 he was awarded an Australian Centenary Medal and in 2021 the Medal of the Order of Australia.

Brett Weymark is passionate about singing and the role music plays in both the wellbeing of individuals and the health and vitality of a community's culture. He believes music can transform lives and should be accessible to all.



David Drury organ

David Drury is well known as an organist, continuo player, choral conductor and composer of choral music, and has a reputation as one of Australia's most gifted liturgical organists. A graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, he is the only Australian to win the Tournemire Prize for Improvisation at the St Alban's International Organ Festival (1987).

He has been organist at Christ Church St Laurence, Director of Music at St James' King Street, and is Director of Music Emeritus at St Paul's College at Sydney University. In addition to organist and composer duties at St Paul's, he is organist at St Benedict's Church Broadway and Organist in Residence at Newcastle Cathedral. He also directs the David Jones Staff Christmas Choir.

As a soloist, he has given recitals in New Zealand, England, France, Germany, Canada, and the USA, and appeared with the Sydney, Adelaide and West Australian symphony orchestras, Opera Australia Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition to SPC, he plays with the SSO, Australian Baroque Brass and Camerata Antica. He has also toured internationally as an organist with the choirs of St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, the Pilgrim Church, Adelaide, and most recently, St Paul's College Chapel Choir, performing in major cathedrals in the UK and Paris.

For something completely different, he and his nephew Matthew Roberts form the Salisbury Institute, an electronic dance music collaboration, and have released their third EP.



Joanna Forbes L'Estrange conductor

Joanna Forbes L'Estrange (b. 1971) is a British composer, vocalist and conductor who receives engagements throughout the world. Born in North Wales, she grew up in Surrey, studying piano and cello and singing as a parish church chorister. After graduating with a Master of Arts degree in Music from Oxford University, she began her career with seven years at the helm of award-winning vocal group the Swingle Singers. This experience led to a busy diary as a cross-genre soloist with regular performances of works such as *Mass in Blue* by Will Todd, which she recorded for the Convivium record label. One of London's busiest session singers, she has sung on the soundtracks of over 300 films.

The international popularity of her choral compositions has been attributed to her mission to create a body of tuneful, singable, well-crafted music which any choir can sing. 'It's an integrity of purpose which infuses every musical phrase that Forbes L'Estrange writes', wrote *BBC Music* magazine. As a professional singer, she specialises in contemporary and avant-garde music, but it is her early chorister years that inform both her composing style and her belief that 'new music doesn't have to be difficult to be effective'.

She composed *The Mountains Shall Bring Peace* to mark the coronation of King Charles III. This and many more of her sacred and secular pieces have been recorded on two albums, *Heaven to Earth* and *Winter Light. A Season to Sing* is her largest composition to date.

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Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs presents the art of choral singing at the highest standard, and develops the talents of those with a passion for singing, in Sydney and beyond. Founded in 1920, it has become Australia's finest choral organisation and is a Resident Company of the Sydney Opera House.

Led by Artistic and Music Director Brett Weymark OAM and Associate Music Director Dr Elizabeth Scott, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs comprises three auditioned and three community choirs that perform repertoire from choral classics to musical theatre and commissions by Australian composers. SPC presents its own annual concert season as well as collaborating with leading conductors, soloists and orchestras in Australia and overseas. In 2002, SPC was the first Australian choir to sing at the BBC Proms (Mahler's Symphony No.8 under Sir Simon Rattle), returning again in 2010 to celebrate its 90th anniversary. The Choirs perform in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's season every year, as they have done for more than 80 years. SPC also presents community singing events – ChorusOz and singing workshops throughout Sydney and NSW.

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs' centenary in 2020 saw the realisation of an inspiring commissioning project – 100 Minutes of New Australian Music – featuring works by composers including Elena Kats-Chernin, Deborah Cheetham Fraillon and Brett Dean. In 2023 Brett Weymark celebrated his 20th anniversary as Artistic Director.

Highlights of the 2025 season include a rare performance of the Mendelssohn version of Bach's St Matthew Passion, the return of Eric Whitacre, a Chamber Singers concert in the historic White Bay Power Station and Michael Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*.

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