



Cacophony

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On Sunday afternoon, 24 September 2023 at 2:30 pm the Newcastle University Choir (NUC) will perform *From Broadway to the West End* at the University of Newcastle Great Hall, starting at 2:30 pm. Included in the program will be a wide range of selections from well-known music theatre productions across several decades. This newsletter provides some highlights.

The Guest Music Director will be Erin Sweetnam, known for her outstanding piano skills. The performance includes two well-known local music theatre performers, Marty Worrall and Rachelle Schmidt Adnum. Further support comes from a four-person band.

Tickets are \$38 adult, \$32 Concession, and \$20 Student. They can be obtained from www.TryBooking.com or at the door. We no longer can accept ticket orders by telephone.

Marty Worrall has been working full time in the music industry for over 20 years, performing all over Australia at various pubs, clubs, theatres, stages, and many other venues. On stage Marty has performed lead roles in NDAC's "Tick Tick Boom!" (2010), "Rent" (2011), played Judas in TNTC's "Jesus Christ Superstar" (2015), and Freddie Trumpter in "Chess" (2019) at the Civic Theatre.



Rachelle Schmidt Adnum's work in theatre spans more than 20 years. She has appeared in over 40 productions. Some of her favourite roles include The Lady of the Lake in "Spamalot", Donna Sheridan in "Mamma Mia" and Morticia in "The Addams Family." She is a three-time CONDA award winner.

What better place for the University Choir to begin its music theatre historical journey then "Pirates of Penzance" by Gilbert and Sullivan. This operetta, one of many, many spoofs on English Society, was first performed in 1879. We feature Pirates (men) vs Policemen (women) (*With Cat-like Tread*) and the women (schoolgirls) *Climbing over Rocky Mountains*.

Two choral versions of major ensembles come from huge blockbuster musicals first

performed in the 1980s. From “Phantom of the Opera” by Andrew Lloyd Webber is *Masquerade*. The cast and management of the onstage theatre are celebrating six months without the “ghost” who has been haunting every earlier production and rehearsal. The ensemble joyously sing about disguises and masked spectacles, until, at the end, the “ghost” reappears to ruin the party.

“Les Miserables”, by Schoenberg and Boublil, is the musical story about poverty and wretchedness in Paris and students who attempt revolution, based on the novel by Victor Hugo. *One Day More*, the final ensemble of the First Act, focusses on anticipation. The students expect the people to rise against the government and create a “new world”. Javier and his policemen plan to destroy the students. A love triangle is featured. The solo roles adapted for choral parts. The excitement builds in the music to a dramatic climax.

The Ballad of Sweeney Todd is the opening chorus of the musical by Stephen Sondheim produced in 1979. Todd is a barber who is wronged by a crooked judge and beadle. He returns to London to take revenge. This involves cutting the throats of customers. The Choir faithfully reproduces the awe, fear, and disgust of Todd in this chorus, sung by townspeople on stage.

More modern musicals are also a component of this concert. “Wicked”, created in the early 1990s by Stephen Schwartz, is the story of two remaining witches, in the time after the “Wizard of Oz”. Despite being opposites, Galinda, the good witch, and Elphaba, the wicked witch of the East, become friends. *For Good*, sung by soprano soloist and choir, describes the benefits of friendship, making each a better person.

“Dear Evan Hanson” by Pasik and Paul released in 2002, focusses on the

insecurity and social anxiety in a high school student. *You Will Be Found*, sung by baritone soloist and choir, highlights the need for seeking help when depression and mental illness is a problem. Positive aspects, such a sunshine, morning is breaking and all is new, a friend means a better life will be found. This topic is highly relevant in today’s society.

“tick, tick...Boom” by Jonathan Larson, debuted in 1990 in a workshop in New York. An aspiring composer is worried about his career choice, which could explode on him. *Louder Than Words* is the final chorus, which emphasises actions to be our best are much more meaningful (louder) than words in establishment cages. The concept expands to waking and shaking up the nation. I am reminded of the anti-war protest songs in the 1970s.

The newest musical represented is “Waitress”, written in 2017 by Barielles and Nelson. Jenna, who is a waitress in a local diner, is trying to escape an abusive husband. *Opening Up* begins the show, describing the hum-drum day-to-day working life in the diner.

Any concert targeting stage musical numbers, must include something from the 1990 stage sensation *Mamma Mia*. Based on the songs by the Swedish Pop Group sensation ABBA, compiled by Catherine Johnson, the story is about a daughter who wants to find which of three men is her father. This show is full of positive joyous music, *Dancing Queen*, is one of the most well-known numbers.

The mix of solos and choral arrangements in this concert promises a listening treat to the ears of the audience, and a lot of fun.

Howard Bridgman, Editor

(References: Wikipedia sites for brief background descriptions)