

A Christmas Spectacular

Saturday 29th Nov 7pm



WELCOME TO A CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

A Christmas Spectacular brings together an extraordinary collaboration between Orchestra Nova, Lyric Soprano Jade Riordan, internationally renowned Tenor Paul Tabone, and the vibrant Waratah Girls Choir to create a unique and magical experience for the Newcastle and Hunter community this festive season. Inspired by the grand tradition of Christmas concerts across Europe and the UK, this event unites diverse musical voices and artistic styles in a shimmering celebration of joy, artistry, and community spirit.

A full year of planning, along with an abundance of dedicated practice and rehearsals has gone into bringing this vision to life, and seeing it grow from our very first meeting to finally standing before an audience is nothing short of amazing. With so many beautiful carols and Christmas songs to choose from, selecting the repertoire proved a delightful yet difficult task, but we believe we have chosen some of the very best and created a program we know you will all love.

This Spectacular represents a shared commitment to strengthening our local performing arts scene; individual ensembles joining forces, blending their talents, and building a richer cultural tapestry for all to enjoy. Merry Christmas to you all!

George Ellis – Concert Host



George Ellis is an Australian conductor, composer and orchestrator. He works across a variety of styles including symphonic music, choral, opera, musical theatre, jazz and pop, and has presented concerts conducting in Paris, London, Amsterdam, Brussels, New York, Boston Philadelphia, Washington DC, Los Angeles, Athens, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta and performed in every capital city in Australia.

Classically trained at the doctoral level in Australia and the USA, and experienced in performing pop/rock music, George Ellis has made a career of combining symphony orchestras with popular artists. George's career has included Olympic opening ceremonies, Arts and cultural Festivals, opening nights, ARIA Awards, and sporting finals such as the NRL & Davis Cup. But there's more to George Ellis than his work on the big stage – he also loves working in conducting, composition and film, orchestrating and arranging, music theatre and opera, education concerts, and with the George Ellis Orchestra.

Paul Ettore Tabone



Paul Tabone began performing from the age of 9 and throughout his education attained extraordinary grades in piano, voice and music theory. He was given the honour of the prestigious 'Most Promising Voice for Music Theatre Award', both in 2007 & 2009 at the Central Queensland Conservatorium of Music.

In 2009 Paul graduated with a Bachelor of Music Theatre from CQ University's Conservatorium of Music and it proved to be a pinnacle year. He made his solo opera debut in Opera Queensland's world premiere production of *The Dirty Apple*. In 2011 Paul was engaged in Andrew Lloyd Webber's sequel to the acclaimed *The Phantom of The Opera*, *Love Never Dies* in the supporting principal role of 'Squelch'. In the same year he also performed in Vision Australia's *Carols by Candlelight* in Melbourne.

Paul moved to Italy in 2012 where he was engaged as a soloist in Puccini's renowned opera *Turandot* in Florence. In September that year he performed at the New York City Centre, Teatro Menotti and then Teatro Duse in Bologna with the Luciano Pavarotti Heritage Concert. In 2014, Paul made his professional operatic debut as Duca di Mantova in Verdi's *Rigoletto* at the Opera Națională București. In April Paul performed as Tony in Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* for the Teatro Carlo Felice and also in 2014 he made his debut as B.F Pinkerton in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* at the Teatro dei Gigli in collaboration with the Puccini Foundation of Italy under the direction of Massimo Morelli. Paul was a second prize winner at the 2013 International Vocal Competition Rinaldo Pellizoni and won the Public Choice Award at the 2014 Canto Festival at Teatro La Fenice (FM). 2015 proved to be another great year for the young tenor from Ingham, Queensland when he returned to the Opera Națională București for further performances as Duca Di Mantova in Stephen Barlow's production of *Rigoletto*. And in the same year Paul was also invited to reprise the role of 'Squelch' in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Love Never Dies* at the Stage Operettenhaus in Hamburg (Germany) called, *Liebe Stirbt Nie - Phantom II*. Paul continues to tour internationally with three shows called "Viva Pavarotti - An homage to the greatest tenor of our time", "Show Stoppers - Rock, Pop, Opera" and "The Musicals of The Night - International Tribute to the Music of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber". Lauded as "Australia's answer to Andrea Bocelli," he brings a world-class tenor presence to every performance.



Jade Riordan

Born and raised in Sydney, Jade began her music studies in voice and piano at the tender age of 8 years old. She completed her AMEB grade exams for Piano and started her singing exams with Trinity College of London towards the end of Highschool when it was apparent that her voice type was headed towards Opera studies, which was to be her forte.

She was selected to be member of the selective Sydney Singers choir conducted by AM George Torbay, which she was a member of for 10 years. Being a member of this choir led to many opportunities such as several solo performances at the Sydney Opera House, The Sydney Town Hall, School Spectacular core choir, as well as invitation performances on the Sydney Olympic Committee Dinner, Australia Day Ceremonies, and annual NSW Choral Concerts.

In 2000 she was selected to perform as a backing vocalist for the Sydney Olympic Games Opening and Closing ceremony beginning her journey on the professional stage. She went on to perform in several Musical productions including West Side Story and Pirates of Penzance. While studying for her AmusA in piano, she completed her A.Mus.A and L.Mus.A of Music in Singing with Trinity College London receiving Distinction and received a Performers Certificate for obtaining the highest score in NSW in singing. She completed her Bachelor of Music in Music & Performance at UWS in 2016. It was during this time she found a passion for teaching and sharing her love of music.

In 2015 Jade was selected to become a member of “The Ten Sopranos” formed by acclaimed Opera singer Penny Pavlakis and has been touring Australia for the past 10 years. Moving to the Hunter Valley in 2019 to enjoy a tree change with her young family Jade started a Music Studio at home teaching piano and singing. In July 2023, Jade expanded her studio to Branxton’s very first Music School to cater for her growing waitlist. Her classical training and regional influence bring a strong solo voice to this programme, combining professionalism with the community spirit of the region.



Kevin Young Musical Director

Kevin Young is a veteran music educator, conductor, composer, and arranger with nearly four decades of experience.

A graduate of the Newcastle Conservatorium of Music, Kevin began his teaching career at Dubbo South High School, where he directed a wide range of ensembles that gained strong recognition across the Central West. His dedication to music education earned him the Citizen of the Year award in 2000.

For the past 22 years, he served as Director of Music Performance at Newcastle Grammar School, leading ensembles such as the award-winning NGS Symphony Orchestra and directing major productions including *Annie*, *Wicked*, and *Anastasia*. Though he stepped down from this role in 2023, classroom teaching and ensemble direction remain central to his career.

Kevin's compositional journey began with *Peregrini Tortum*, premiered on the NGS Symphony Orchestra's U.S. tour in 2013. Recognized for his melodic innovation and rhythmic complexity, Kevin has continued to compose for student ensembles, earning praise from renowned conductor George Ellis. He has collaborated with some of Australia's leading musicians and composers and has directed ensembles in national and international tours.

Now semi-retired, Kevin remains actively involved in music education teaching casually around Newcastle, as a guest conductor and tutor with the Newcastle Youth Orchestra, and as Musical Director of Orchestra Nova. His focus today lies in composition, mentorship, and fostering musical growth in the community.



Stephen Aveling-Rowe

Assistant Conductor

Stephen Aveling-Rowe is an emerging organist, conductor, and cellist.

He holds an A.Mus.A. in Pipe Organ (2014) and an L.Mus.A. with Distinction in Pipe Organ (2019) from Sydney, as well as a BA with a specialization in Music from Avondale Conservatorium (2019). His musical journey began early; at 16, he started a BMus at the University of New England before transferring to Avondale Conservatorium in 2016.

Stephen has performed internationally, including concert tours in the Netherlands and the UK, study tours throughout Europe, and completed an intensive in liturgical and choral music at Cambridge.

For five years, he was principal cellist with the Newcastle Youth Orchestra, and now leads as principle cellist with the Fernleigh Orchestra, where he collaborates with Dr. Ian Cook in an informal mentorship as an occasional conductor. Having studied organ under Philip Swanton, Stephen continues to refine his musical skills. Since 2021, he has lectured in photography at Avondale University, blending his love for the arts and humanities. After pausing a Masters in Ministry, he plans to pursue a Masters in Theology, exploring the intersection of the musical arts and sacramental theology.



Orchestra Nova

Founded in 1991 as the Novocastrian Arts Orchestra, with a name change in 1999, Orchestra Nova is the only symphony orchestra in the Newcastle and Hunter region to have rehearsed and performed continuously to the present time. A mix of amateur and semi-professional musicians, and a wide range of ages are represented. Many members are also involved in local musical theatre groups, choirs and community bands.

Over the years Orchestra Nova has featured the talents of instrumental and vocal soloists (both emerging and established) from Newcastle and Hunter regions and has also premiered new works by composition students and established composers. Orchestra Nova has collaborated successfully with a variety of musicians and groups resulting in novel and enjoyable concert programmes. From classical music through the ages to jazz, folk, rock, pop, film music, musical theatre and beyond, Orchestra Nova aims to introduce and broaden the appeal of symphonic music to audiences of all ages.



Waratah Girls Choir

Conductor Lindy Connett

Founded in 1982, the Waratah Girls Choir has spent more than four decades inspiring audiences with vibrant, expressive choral music. As a non-auditioned choir open to girls and young women aged 8 to 30, we are proud to offer an inclusive space where singers of all backgrounds can grow in confidence, musicianship, and community.

Bringing together young voices from across the region, the choir is built on a tradition of musical excellence, teamwork, and the joy of shared performance. Over the years, we have celebrated many memorable achievements, including performing for Pope Benedict XVI at St Peter's Basilica, winning the title of Australian National Champions in the National Choral Eisteddfodd, and being invited twice to sing at Carnegie Hall in New York. These milestones reflect the dedication, passion, and commitment of our singers.

PROGRAMME

1. Polar Express Concert Suite - From the film Polar Express

(Alan Silvestri & Glen Ballard; arr. Jerry Brubaker)

Performed by Orchestra Nôva & Waratahi Girls Choir

2. Carol of the Bells (Traditional Ukrainian song; arr. Dorothy Horn)

Performed by Orchestra Nôva & Waratahi Girls Choir, Stephen Aveling-Rowe on Organ

3. Candlelight Carol (John Rutter)

Performed by Orchestra Nôva, Waratahi Girls Choir & Stephen Aveling-Rowe (Organist)

4. Believe - From the film Polar Express (Alan Silvestri & Glen Ballard)

Performed by Tenor Paul Tabone, Orchestra Nôva & Waratahi Girls Choir

5. God Bless Us Everyone (Alan Silvestri & Glen Ballard; arr. Joseph M. Martin)

Performed by Tenor Paul Tabone, Orchestra Nôva & Waratahi Girls Choir (Soloist Gabrielle Connett)

6. Grown Up Christmas List (David Foster & Linda Thompson-Jenner; arr. Mark Hayes)

Performed by Tenor Paul Tabone, Orchestra Nôva & Waratahi Girls Choir

7. Somewhere in My Memory from the film Home Alone

(Leslie Bricusse & John Williams; arr. Mark Hayes)

Performed by Waratahi Girls Choir & Orchestra Nôva

8. Ding Dong Merrily on High (arr. Douglas Mears)

Performed by Soprano Jade Riordan, Orchestra Nôva & Waratahi Girls Choir

9. Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas from the film Meet me in St Louis

(Hugh Martin & Ralph Blane; arr. Kevin Young)

Performed by Soprano Jade Riordan, Orchestra Nôva & Waratahi Girls Choir

10. O Holy Night (Adolphe Adam; arr. Dana Graybeal)

Performed by Tenor Paul Tabone, Soprano Jade Riordan, Orchestra Nôva

II. The First Noël - Traditional

Performed by Tenor Paul Tabone, Soprano Jade Riordan, Orchestra Nôva, Waratahi Girls Choir & Stephen Aveling-Rowe (Organist)

PROGRAMME

Intermission

12. Christmas Rocks at the Pops (Ralph Ford)

Performed by Orchestra Nôva

13. Sussex Carol (arr. Bob Chilcott)

Performed by Waratah Girls Choir

14. The Holy City (Michael Maybrick & Frederick Edward Weatherly; arr. Daryl McKenzie)

Performed by Tenor Paul Tabone, Orchestra Nôva & Waratah Girls Choir

15. You Raise Me Up (Brendan Graham & Rolf Løvland)

Performed by Tenor Paul Tabone, Orchestra Nôva & Waratah Girls Choir

16. Deck the Halls / Joy to the World (arr. Kevin Young)

Performed by Soprano Jade Riordan, Orchestra Nôva & Waratah Girls Choir

17. Silent Night (Franz Gruber; arr. Kevin Young)

Performed by Soprano Jade Riordan & Orchestra Nôva

18. The Greatest Gift (Stephan Moccio, Jonas Myrin & Amy Wadge; arr. Kevin Young)

Performed by Tenor Paul Tabone, Orchestra Nôva & Waratah Girls Choir

19. The Prayer from the film Quest for Camelot

(David Foster & Carole Bayer Sager; arr. Mark Hayes)

Performed by Soprano Jade Riordan, Tenor Paul Tabone & Orchestra Nôva

20. I Believe (Éric Lévi / Yvan Cassar / Russell Watson)

Performed by Tenor Paul Tabone, Orchestra Nôva & Waratah Girls Choir

21. Hark the Herald Angels Sing (Charles Wesley, Felix Mendelssohn)

Performed by Soprano Jade Riordan, Tenor Paul Tabone, Orchestra Nôva, Waratah Girls Choir & Stephen Aveling-Rowe (Organist)

Waratah Girls Members

Choir Master - Lindy Connett

Sopranos 1

Meg Arnold
Tori Healey
Leila Wishney
Abbie Elliott
Jessica Peel

Altos 1

Hanna Karbowskiak
Olivia Clarke
Rose Harrison
Charis Hawes
Stella Sinclair

Sopranos 2

Abbey Trappel
Rachel Bryan
Mackenzie O'Keefe
Tima-Rose Ali
Isla Douglas
Nina Burns
Charlize Bromhead
Susie Penfold

Altos 2

Gabrielle Connett
Millie Kennedy
Ruby Laut
Brianna Lynch
Tilly Bevin

Interested in joining Waratah Girls choir? Visit www.waratahgirlschoir.com.au

Orchestra Nova Members

Violin I

Philip Hazell *†

Leala Darby *

Van de Groot *

Zara Lynch

Jacinta O'Brien

Sue Pickett

Eliezer Sanchez-Lasaballett

Tamara Uson

Violin II

Gordon Slattery

Indy Brock

Daniella Cahill *

Karen Drury

Josephine Gallop

Dylan Gonçalves-Sear

Ash Hannah

Veikko Kunkel

Audi Sanjaya

David Vardeh

Viola

Laura Bedoya

Miles Bore

Carolyn Mather*

Patricia Roberts

Cello

Christine Kearns

Stephen Aveling-Rowe *

Susan Bone

Juno Folpp

Maryann Gauci

Nancy Hoskings

Helen Palmer

Maureen Slattery

Jonathon Spencer

Double Bass

Linda Alford

Alexis Bronkhorst

John Wallace

Flute

Meldi Arkinstall

Alyssa Ayling *

Vanessa Lynch

Carolyn Wilson *

Piccolo

Alyssa Ayling *

Oboe

Stan Chen

Georgia Hore

Clarinet

Chantal Balman

Oona Sullivan

Ryan Ambrose

Bass Clarinet

Ryan Ambrose

Bassoon

Alana de Malmanche

Lynda Body

French Horn

Margaret Ellicott

Jillian de Malmanche

Scott Thompson

Trumpet

Bryn Wilson-Kellaway

Andrew Cahill

Meredith Wilson

Trombone

Andrew Hocquard *

Hannah Gibbons

Stephen Townsend

Tuba

Peter Barlow

Paul Mather

Percussion

Jennifer Gibbons

Heather Walker

Christine Johnson

Isaac Hill

Ben Alford

Piano

Anita Zielonka

Keyboard

Judy Chen

Acoustic Guitar

Dylan Gonçalves-Sear

Bass Guitar

John Wallace

* Committee Member

† Concert Master

Special Thanks

Sound & Lighting
Scion Events

Concert Venue
Christ Church Cathedral

Orchestra Nova Patrons
Ross Fiddes
John Kellaway

Food & Beverage
Mercer Wines

We are deeply grateful to our incredible players, choir and soloists tonight, both new and returning, for their dedication and enthusiasm this concert. To our hardworking committee, thank you for managing the many unseen tasks that make each season possible. And to our wonderful supporters who travel from near and far, your presence and encouragement make an immeasurable difference. Together, we look forward to many more successful years ahead.

Are you or someone you know interested in playing with us? We are always excited to welcome new members. To learn more about applying or to keep up with the latest news,

Visit our webpage: www.orchestranova.org.au

Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/orchestranovaaus/

Contact our Secretary via email: secretary@orchestranova.org.au