

Personal Memories – Serenata Singers

Past and current choir members were asked to share a comment on or memory of their experience as a member of the Serenata Singers. This page will be expanded as more memories and comments are received. Why not add yours? It can be as brief or extended as you wish. Just email us at serenatasingersthegap@gmail.com.

- I joined the choir in 2007, I am an alto, and I think my favourite song over the years has been “You raise me up”. - **Jenny Taylor**
- I joined the choir - I think - in 1998 with my daughter Lynette. Lynette left in 2000.

One of my earliest memories of the choir was performing at Keperra Sanctuary (it was my first or one of the first performances for me). In those times we often had people outside of the choir performing. This particular day we had a clown - he was really more of a children's clown. Our pianist had hurt her ankle the day before the concert and we had to find someone else to fill in. We had been learning Phantom of the Opera for the first time and our Conductor decided to give it an airing on this day. The combination of a different pianist and us not knowing the piece all that well was a bit of a disaster in the middle. We managed to pull it together and finish the piece. However, it was quite some time before we were asked to perform there again. When I got home my son asked if they threw flowers. My response - we were lucky they didn't throw rotten tomatoes! I must admit the other pieces in the concert were fine.

As for my favourite song - there has been way too many to pick one song. However, we performed a Christmas Cantata about the birth of Christ (which we had just learnt) at a retirement village, and had to do it without a conductor as she was sick and unable to attend. I think we did brilliantly - everyone had to concentrate more on their parts. – **Marilynn Reville**

- I didn't take up singing until my retirement (and had no formal engagement with music since I was in my high school band). I joined Serenata in 2015 on the recommendation of Ian Symes, whom I had met at an Opera Queensland workshop. The experience has been rewarding in many ways, I am learning about singing and music, I am performing for elderly people, bringing a little entertainment into their lives, and I am experiencing the pleasure of choral music. A song I particularly enjoyed was “The Beauty of the Earth” by John Rutter. – **John McCollow**
- My Serenata story begins back in the 1930s when my mother sang with the Queensland State and Municipal Choir which is now the Queensland Choir. She also sang at weddings but I didn't hear much of her lovely voice as I grew up. I sang in my primary school choir then choirs took a back seat for many years. About 1983 I, too, joined the Queensland Choir and the experience of singing major works in the Concert Hall and the City Hall was incredible and invaluable.

I'd heard of the Serenata Singers through Lyn Orchard and also because they sang at Aveo Newmarket which was mum's home for her later years. In 2010 it was time for me to check them out. I found a friendly group of people who thoroughly enjoy singing together – perfect! My home is with the Altos but I like tackling a few high notes too! I believe the challenge of learning our part is definitely good for the brain.

I've always loved the style and variety of music we sing, and I especially value the fact that we bring music to many people who are in care. We're understanding more and more the value of music, and particularly singing, to those in nursing homes, and also to ourselves. It's good for the soul. When all is going well we make a beautiful sound and it feels wonderful!

Our conductors and accompanists do an amazing job with us, coaching and cajoling. But never a night goes by when we don't enjoy a few laughs together. My time with the Serenatas has been a very happy and rewarding one; long may it continue. – **Desleigh Byrne**

- I joined The Gap and District Musical Society, as it was then called in either late 2004 or early 2005. My husband, Ian, was a member back in the very early days of the choir but with two small children it wasn't possible for both of us to join at the same time. He went on to join another choir which also met on a Monday night. My reason for joining when I did was that we'd gone through a very traumatic time with our daughter's very serious illness where we didn't know if she would survive or not. A friend who was a member at the time suggested I needed some "me time" and invited me to join.

In my earlier years I'd sung in the church choir back in Adelaide and also here at The Gap. I took up the invitation and have thoroughly enjoyed the friendship of members. There have been a few hiccups during the time but we have overcome these. I've been happy to use some of my gifts to undertake several roles within the choir. We have been fortunate over the years to have had very talented people lead us as conductors and accompanists and share their love of music with us.

One of my favourite songs would be "You Raise me Up" which still gives me goosebumps. At our 40th Anniversary on 30th October 2010 former members of the choir were invited to join us on stage to sing "You'll Never Walk Alone" – another special time. An interesting sing was when we sang carols in Bowman Park in Bardon. – **Lyn Orchard**, Soprano

- I joined the choir late in 2018 (only a few weeks before the Gala concert). I sing Tenor. My favourites include all songs from Phantom of the Opera.

Joining the choir is something in life that I am doing for myself. I thoroughly enjoy and look forward to every Monday night and every chance to take part in singing at all the concerts the choir has. I enjoy and take part in all the back and forth engagements between members on our practice nights. I would surely miss not being able to be a part of the choir. – **Ray Wiseman**

- My husband Peter and I joined the choir in 2007. I sang second soprano at first and then was moved into the first sopranos. I have met some wonderful people here over the years and the joy of singing with a group at the different venues never changes.

Special memories:

- Ed Lang singing "I met a man called Peter" as a tribute to our late tenor Peter Harris.
- We were at St Martins and one of the residents insisted on dancing with Barbara Hawkes as she was singing her solo. So she obliged.
- Margaret Crowe was an inspiration and her encouragement pushed Ann Woeller and I into our first trio with Barbara Hawkes.
- Ken Foley was president when we joined. He is the image of my father who had been dead for over ten years in 2007. He quite happily treated me as another daughter. We shared many happy moments.

As for a favourite song I find that one difficult. So many have given me those goosebumps over the years or brought back happy memories of my mother singing in the kitchen.

The kindness and understanding from the choir when life gets tough is treasured. – **Sharon Schinkel**

- I first joined the Choir in 1986. I went to help them in some Christmas music. They sat me near Barbara Anderson and I have been there ever since. I enjoyed the Choir then and I still do. I am a first Soprano.

The piece of music they were singing at the time was: 'Come to the fair in the morning'. I think the Conductor liked the choir singing it in ff. – **Beverley Crouch**