

Choir's large 'stocking' of Christmas goodies



The Llewellyn Choir, Anthony Smith, accompanist, and Rowan Harvey-Martin conducting. Photo: Len Power

*Music / Krismas! Peace To The World, Llewellyn Choir, conducted by Rowan Harvey-Martin. At Holy Cross Anglican Church, Hackett, December 7. Reviewed by **LEN POWER**.*

Like a Christmas stocking stuffed with goodies, the Llewellyn Choir presented a large and wide-ranging program of Christmas treats for the festive season.

In addition to the singing of the choir with Anthony Smith as accompanist and Rowan Harvey-Martin conducting, there were performances from the Pentecostal International Worship Centre Choir, the PNG Peroveta Singers and the To e Talatalanoa Uniting Church Choir.

There were also performances by Canberra musicians Dante Costa, flute; Jojo Yuen, piano; Emily Thornton, flute, and Alex Monroe, harp.

The program's international flavour included works by Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Gounod, Dvořák, Rutter, Jiangzhong, Schütz and Nordqvist as well as traditional works from Tonga, Papua New Guinea and Africa.

The Llewellyn Choir presented the first item, The Many Moods of Christmas, Suite 4, an arrangement of Christmas Carols by the Americans, Robert Shaw and Robert Russell Bennett. Nicely sung, it was the perfect opening for the concert.

The Pentecostal International Worship Centre Choir then presented an enjoyable selection of songs with a fusion of Afro-praise interwoven with Caribbean and Christian contemporary music.

Solo pianist, Jojo Yuen played the transcription by Wang Jianzhong of the atmospheric Silver Clouds Chasing the Moon. Her expert playing of this work was deeply visual.



PNG Peroveta Singers. Photo: Len Power

Five Songs from Papua New Guinea, three of them Peroveta songs and two sene or ancient folksongs, were performed by the PNG Peroveta Singers. This group of singers with their bright and colourful dress sang skilfully and with such obvious joy that they were a highlight of the concert.

The Shepherd's Farewell from The Entrance of Christ by Berlioz was sung with great sensitivity by the Llewellyn Choir and it was followed by the Trio for Two

Flutes and a Harp from the same work by Berlioz. Dante Costa, flute, Emily Thornton, flute, and Alex Monro, harp, performed it with skill and great appeal.

The to e Talatalanoa Uniting Church Choir gave a warm and sincere performance of a selection of Christmas-themed hymns from the traditional Tongan hymn book and Dante Costa, flute, and Jojo Yuen, piano, performed Dvořák's Sonatina for Flute and Piano, a melodic, reflective work beautifully played.

There were so many works pleasingly presented in this concert and the final work presented by the Llewellyn Choir – Nordqvist's Wonderful Peace – was quietly powerful and movingly sung.

This charming and varied concert concluded with an opportunity for the audience to join with the choirs and sing along to the well-known carols, Away in a Manger and Joy to The World.