



MEDIA RELEASE

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BELCONNEN ARTS CENTRE

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Bush Bells

An Australian Folk Christmas at Belconnen Arts Centre

Presented by: Michael Sollis and Belconnen Arts Centre Inc.
Featuring: Canberra Boys Choir and Canberra Mandolin Orchestra
Date & Time: Sunday 13 December, 3:00pm.
Tickets: \$10 Adult, \$5 Child, \$25 Family at the door

Belconnen Arts Centre kicks off the festive season with *Bush Bells*, a celebration of Australian heritage and the Christmas spirit. This is a family concert featuring music performed by two local community-based music groups: the Canberra Mandolin Orchestra and Canberra Boys Choir.

The concert features favourite carols performed by the orchestra and choir, including Australian Bush Christmas carols by William Garnet James and John Wheeler, plus the World Premiere of three songs about Australian life by Canberran composer Michael Sollis. The songs include stories about the Bushranger Ben Hall and life for Diggers in the 2nd World War. Also programmed are a diverse range of celebratory favourites from popular groups such as The Beatles.

Formed in 2003, the Canberra Mandolin Orchestra brings together players of mandolin, mandola, mandocello, mandobass, guitar, & double bass. Under the musical direction of Michael Sollis, the CMO's repertoire includes ritzy tunes from the dawn of the jazz age, light classics, Italian or Greek numbers, Irish and Australian folk tunes and popular music.

The Canberra Boys Choir was established in 1981 with a view to training and using boys' treble voices to their fullest. Today the Choir continues to aim for musical excellence, providing the boys with vocal and choral training by professional musicians, the experience of practising and performing with other boys who enjoy singing, and also offering the boys an exposure to a wide range of secular and sacred music.

Michael Sollis is an Australian born composer specialising in writing chamber music, music for amateur ensembles, and musical theatre. He is founder and artistic director of The Griffyn Ensemble, he has been Composer in Residence for The Australian Voices and Music For Everyone, and has also written for diverse ensembles such as dominantSEVEN, Tucana Flute Quartet and the Queensland Conservatorium Brass Band. Michael also established the SoundACT program which saw over 1000 school students premiere new works. He is currently ACT Manager for Musica Viva Australia, Director of the Young Music Society's Summer School, and a member of the ACT Cultural Council.

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