



Festival Singers of Wellington

Director: Ingrid Schoenfeld

Presents

POP Go the Festival Singers

**Popular songs from each decade
from the 1920s to today**

Accompanist: Jonathan Berkahn

7:00pm Saturday 1 November 2025
Island Bay Presbyterian Church
88 The Parade, Island Bay

&

2:30pm Saturday 8 November 2025
Otaki Waikanae Presbyterian Church,
3 Ngaio Road, Waikanae

About the concert

I have wanted to do a pop choir concert for years, and this has been, without a doubt, the most difficult Festival Singers concert I have had the joy to programme. My aim was to have music from every decade of the past century and to find arrangements that stayed true to the magic of the original songs, while still adding some kind of choral magic to the song – there's no point in sounding completely like the original! Then once the enormous repertoire of music was investigated and the perfect arrangements found, there was the sincere challenge of such a wide variety of music! Luckily, this exciting challenge is all within the scope of the phenomenal playing of Jonathan Berkahn. Without his deft ability to improvise and accompany in a myriad of diverse and difficult styles this would be an infinitely poorer concert, and I am as always grateful for his expertise, fluency, and dedicated collaboration.

We start in 1935 with “Summertime”, the best-known song from George Gershwin's jazz opera *Porgy and Bess*, a lullaby in the original opera that become a jazz standard.

The thirties and forties were the great age of the big bands, and we further celebrate this era with two of its most memorable hits: “In the mood”, a joyful, jiving party song, and “Chattanooga Choo-Choo”, a fun bop inspired by a cross-country train trip in the United States, full of references to other popular songs of the time. Both songs were made popular by Glenn Miller and his Orchestra and The Andrews Sisters. The style is recognizable for its “swung” rhythms, catchy tunes and close harmony.

The 1940s also saw the birth of New Zealand's own pop music industry, with “Blue smoke” the first locally composed, recorded, and produced hit single, which was

later performed by many overseas artists, including Dean Martin. The song was written on a troop-ship during World War Two and the “blue smoke” refers to the ship's exhaust, drifting back home.

Another song that found success with swinging crooners was “Beyond the Sea”, originally a 1946 French ode to the sea, then in the 1950s and 1960s in English an ode to a distant love. We sing a groovy a capella style arrangement.

Elvis Presley's undulating hips shocked a generation such that he could only be broadcast from the waist up, but he introduced the sounds of black early rock and roll to white teenagers around the world. “Hound Dog”, a song about a woman rejecting a man, was originally performed by blues singer Big Mama Thornton, inspiring dozens of cover, “response”, and parody recordings within months of its release, until eventually proving a huge success for Elvis.

Both The Beatles and The Beach Boys started in the early 1960s as straightforwardly popular teenage entertainment, but as they grew and matured they developed their own highly individual and creatively distinctive styles. We sing a barbershop arrangement of “Hey Jude”, a song originally written to John Lennon's son to support him in his parents' divorce. We follow this with a medley of some of The Beach Boys greatest hits, displaying their blend of close vocal harmony and surf-rock stylings transferred to a choral setting. Simon and Garfunkel added a folk sensibility to the mix, reworking traditional material alongside their own songs; we finish the first half with their anthem to friendship, “Bridge over troubled water”.

Then we move into the 1980s, when a booming music industry embraced advancing electronic technology and mixing genres to create some iconic music that continues to attract fans. We sing choral medleys capturing the disco-joy of ABBA and the catchy, operatic rock-god intensity of Queen, both groups renowned for their wide-ranging musical palates and ability to write hit after hit. We follow them with Journey's 1981 Top 10 Hit "Don't Stop Believin'" – possibly the "perfect" rock anthem, in another very cool a capella arrangement. Fun fact: South Detroit does not exist – South from Detroit is Canada.

The 1990s see us venturing into gentle territory, exploring the fantastic acoustic groove of New Zealand's very own rock stars Crowded House. We sing their "postcard from a dream" "Weather With You". Fun fact 2: there is no such street as "Mount Pleasant Street". Then Billy Joel's nostalgic hymn for a doomed love affair "And so it goes", in Bob Chilcott's luminous arrangement written for choral ensemble par excellence, The Kings Singers.

The songs from the 2000s and 2020s are so influenced by their past that they have almost a timeless quality – Coldplay's break-through hit "Yellow" was aesthetically inspired by folk-rock pioneer Neil Young, and propelled into stardom with an innovative music video (you'll have to imagine it), while Dance-Pop princess Dua Lipa's "Levitating" is pure 1970s disco, and modern pop-funk-neo-soul production dynamo Pharrell William's "Happy" takes a groove straight from soul and funk, and its undauntedly optimistic musical expression is the perfect way to sign off the day that Festival Singers went "pop"!

Ingrid Schoenfeld

Summertime

Words and music: George Gershwin

Arranger: Sylvain Lelievre

In the Mood

Music: Joe Garland

Arranger: Peter Gritton

Blue smoke

Words and Music: Ruru Karaitiana

Arranger: Jonathan Berkahn

Chattanooga Choo Choo

Words: Mack Gordon. Music: Harry Warren.

Arranger: Mac Huff

Hound Dog

Words and Music: Jerry Leiber, Mike Stoller

Arranger: Kirby Shaw

Beyond the Sea

Words and Music: Albert Lasry, Jack Lawrence, Charles

Trenet, Arranger: Natalie Goossens

Beach Boys Medley

Arranger: Steve Delahanty

(reset for SATB by Jonathan Berkahn)

Hey Jude

Words and Music: John Lennon, Paul McCartney

Arranger: Jay Dougherty

Bridge Over Troubled Water

Words and Music: Paul Simon

Arranger: Clyde Sechler

Abba Medley

Words and Music: Benny Andersson, Björn Ulvaeus, Stig

Anderson. Arranger: Mac Huff

- **Mamma Mia**
- **Dancing Queen**
- **Waterloo**

Don't Stop Believin'

Words and music: Steve Perry, Neal Schon, Jonathan Cain

Arranger: Kirby Shaw

A Tribute to Queen

Words and Music: Brian May / John Deacon / Freddie

Mercury. Arranger: Mark Brymer

- **We Will Rock You**
- **Another One Bites the Dust**
- **We are the Champions**
- **Bohemian Rhapsody**

Weather With You

Words and Music: Neil and Tim Finn

Arranger: Alex Van den Broek

And So it Goes

Words and Music: Billy Joel

Arranger: Bob Chilcott

Yellow

Words and Music: Jon Buckland, Will Champion, Chris

Martin, Guy Berryman. Arranger: Monique Nguyen

Levitating

Words and Music: Dua Lipa, Stephen Kozmeniuk, Clarence

Coffee Jnr, Sarah Hudson

Arranger: Mark Brymer

Happy

Words and Music: Pharrell Williams

Arranger: Mark Brymer

Festival Singers

Musical Director: Ingrid Schoenfeld

Accompanist: Jonathan Berkahn

Sopranos

Ngairé Bartlett, Andrea Blanchard,

Robyn Bridge, Yasmin Farahad,

Heather Garside^G, Janet Keilar^S, Jennifer Lillo^S,

Hilary Low, Anne Neal^S, Zoe Rothbaum^S,

Jo Rothbaum^S, Helen Willberg

Altos

Cathy Edge, Karen Espersen^S, Helen Jackman,

Kenda Kittelty, Adrienne Leuchars,

Margaret Seconi, Helen Tripp, Rita Urry

Tenors

Neville Carson, Joe Fecteau^{P, S},

Philippa Fletcher, Paul Kilford^S

Basses

Robert Easting, Philip Garside,

Timothy Hanlon^S, Alex Jeune, Ian Livingstone,

William McElwee^{GS}

^S Soloists and small group

^{GS} Guest singer

^G Guitar

^P Percussion

Festival Singers' Christmas Music performances

- **Community Carol Concert:** in support of **Wellington City Mission**, at St Christopher's Church, Cnr Forres and Ventnor Streets, Seatoun
– **7pm Friday 12 Dec 2025**
- **Carols at Johnsonville Shopping Mall**
– **1pm Saturday 13 Dec 2025**
- **Lessons and Carols with St James' Church Choir** at St James' Anglican Church, 71 Woburn Road, Lower Hutt
– **7pm Sunday 14 Dec 2025**

Sing with Festival Singers in 2026

We rehearse from
7:00-9:00pm on Monday nights
from February to early December
at Newlands Christian Assembly,
126 Newlands Road.

All singers welcome.

Learn a wide variety of sacred
& secular music and expand
your musical horizons.

Joining is easy. No formal audition is
required. Come to 3 rehearsals without
obligation, to try us out.

We're an affordable choir.

We know you will make new friends
in our supportive greater Wellington
community choir.

For more details contact:

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ingrid.s@outlook.co.nz, 027 240 6669

or

Philip Garside (Secretary)
books@pgpl.co.nz

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(2015) CD & Digital Album



(2007) CD & Digital Album



(2000) Digital Album

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