

## Mr Christopher Lloyd Bowen

The title of Honorary Fellow of the University was conferred upon Christopher Lloyd Bowen by the Pro-Chancellor John McCarthy QC at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music graduation ceremony held at 2.00pm on 18 April 2008.



The Pro-Chancellor and Mr Bowen, *photo, copyright Memento Photography.*

### Citation

Pro Chancellor, I have the honour to present Christopher Lloyd Bowen for the conferring of the title of Honorary Fellow of the University.

Christopher Bowen makes a remarkable contribution to the musical life of the University of Sydney and of the broader community. He has held the position of Music Director of the Sydney University Graduate Choir with considerable distinction for 16 years now, and in that capacity has directed well over fifty concert performances in this very Hall. After each concert the choir receives high praise from music experts for his direction of the choir and orchestra. He receives such accolades for his inventive programming and his ability to attract soloists of the highest possible calibre, including renowned Australian soprano Joan Carden AO OBE. The repertoire has included some of his own original compositions and arrangements, as well as major orchestral and choral works from the 16th century to contemporary music.

Christopher Bowen is also the founder and Music Director of the Gosford Chorale and conducts the choir at St John's Uniting Church Wahroonga. For the City of Sydney he has conducted the annual Christmas in the Town Hall concert for many years and last year also directed a choir of 500 singers from across NSW in a superb performance of Handel's Messiah after only a few hours of rehearsal. Christopher Bowen is also strongly committed to adult education, teaching regularly at the Sydney Community College.

After completing his music studies at Melbourne University, Christopher Bowen spent seven years in Vienna, studying conducting, and teaching. Since returning to Australia, he held a teaching position at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music for a time and has worked with Opera Australia and Victoria State Opera. He was the Musician-in-Residence and Artistic Director of the Central Coast Conservatorium during 1991 and 1992.

His considerable body of original composition comprises orchestral and choral works, including works for children, instrumental and chamber music, a ballet, and works for the stage. In recent years, for example, major commissions have produced works such as *Triste, Triste* (set to a poem by Gwen Harwood), *Chorea - a ring of dances*, *Requiem* (dedicated to those who died fighting for East Timor's independence), the satirical *Démocratie* based on Arthur Rimbaud's prose-poem and *Tenebrae* (a series of liturgical chants associated with Holy Week in the Christian Calendar). The first performance of *Démocratie* formed part of the Choir's 2002 Golden Jubilee celebrations.

He has a particular interest in researching lesser known works and works not often performed. This has led,

for example, to Australian premieres of Beethoven's Cantata on the Death of Emperor Josef II, and Saint-Saëns' Le Déluge and Requiem being performed by the Sydney University Graduate Choir under his direction.

Christopher Bowen has raised the standard of the choir significantly, developing it into one of the outstanding choirs in New South Wales. It is often commented that 'every rehearsal is a singing lesson'. He can negotiate with ease the rhythmic complexities contained in many contemporary works such as those by Carl Orff, and he is a master at communicating his interpretations of the various emotions engendered by the music to the performers under his direction. In recent years he has established a small chamber choir of some 28 singers within the Grads which, thanks to his brilliant and inspired musical direction, was a State finalist in the ABC Choir of the Year Competition in 2006. The chamber choir, directed by Christopher Bowen, was delighted to be able to perform in this Hall at the inauguration ceremony for the Chancellor earlier this year, and at Spring Back to Sydney, a great occasion for alumni and their families in October.

Christopher Bowen plays a central role in adjudicating the annual Joan Carden Award: a monetary prize and opportunity to sing with the Choir offered to talented young Sydney Conservatorium singers since 2004. His leadership and mentoring, in conjunction with Joan Carden, has been very successful in discovering and encouraging some of Sydney's best young singers and providing them with opportunities to perform.

In short, Christopher Bowen is very generous to the University, the wider community, individuals, and to his choirs, contributing to the social as well as the cultural life of the choirs. He is to be congratulated for his original compositions, his inspiring choral direction, his conducting, and his passionate dedication to sharing his love and knowledge of music.

Pro Chancellor, I am pleased to present to you, for the conferring of the title of Honorary Fellow of the University, composer, choral music director, and conductor, Christopher Lloyd Bowen.