

Johanna McBride

received her musical training at the Vienna Musikhochschule, where she worked as accompanist and director of stage music for a number of Music Theatre projects, touring Austria and Italy.

In 1979 she emigrated to Australia with her husband Max McBride. In Sydney she began conducting choirs and continued her work as accompanist and répétiteur with many singers, appearing in performances for the Sydney Schubert Society with Colin Forbes and with the Song Company under Charles Coleman. She was also Musical Director for a production of Mozart's *Magic Flute* directed by Alan Light from the Australian Opera which toured regional New South Wales.

After moving to Canberra in 1992 she completed two years of Choral Conducting with Michéal MacCarthaigh at the Canberra School of Music. From 1993 – 2001 Johanna was conductor of the Canberra Boys' Choir. In 1997 Johanna was appointed Musical Director of the Canberra Youth Choir. In 1998 she was instrumental in organizing the first Canberra Youth Choral Festival held in the Llewellyn Hall of the Canberra School of Music. This involved liaising with Canberra and interstate Youth Choirs, coordinating the program and conducting a massed choir of more than 300 young singers. Since then Johanna has continued her work as accompanist and choral conductor. She has performed in piano and vocal recitals with Colin Forbes, violinist Rowan Harvey-Martin and soprano Louise Page.

Johanna has worked as a conductor with the Canberra Boys Choir, Canberra Youth Choir, the Llewellyn Choir and most recently the ANU Choral Society who she conducted in their second concert in 2013. Since August 2013 she has been Musical Director of the Cyrenes, a Canberra women's choir.

In March 2003, Johanna became a founding member of A Chorus of Women, when 150 Canberra women gathered in the Australian Parliament to sing a Lament for the people of Iraq on the day the Australian Prime Minister announced Australia's participation in the war. Her involvement with A Chorus of Women has brought together her life's passions – interest in people, community, society, politics, drama and music. She began improvising with other members, and started writing music. Since 2004 Johanna has written and arranged numerous songs for the group, has directed and accompanied A Chorus of Women in performances in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane as well as in Bulgaria, where the group was invited to be Artists in Residence for a Symposium on Archaeomythology. Johanna conducted the music for the group's first CD which was launched in December 2006. In December 2009 a second CD was launched, featuring the premiere performances of Glenda Cloughley's mythic story song, *The Gifts of the Furies*.

In September 2010 Johanna was Musical Director for a season of three performances of a revised version of *The Gifts of the Furies*. The performances were booked out before the premiere and involved a cast of around 80 choristers, instrumentalists and soloists, which A Chorus of Women staged as part of Canberra's Floriade Festival with support from artsACT in partnership with the Museum of Australian Democracy. In this project more than any other before, Johanna worked with a range of different musical groupings, from large choruses, to small ensembles of more experienced singers, to professional soloists and instrumentalists.

Since then Johanna has kept up a busy performance schedule with A Chorus of Women. In 2013 she directed the group's 10th anniversary at Australian Parliament House and has taken part in many centenary events. Since 2014 Johanna has been working with Glenda Cloughley and the Chorus on their big new project, *A Passion for Peace*, directing a work-in-progress performance on 11 November 2014. The premiere performances will be held as part of the inaugural Festival for Peace at Albert Hall in April / May and will feature a cast of about 100 performers. See www.chorusofwomen.org for further detail.