

The background of the cover is a light cream color. On the left side, there is a large, curved, harp-like structure made of thin vertical lines. A blue circle is positioned near the top of this structure, and a series of musical notes are scattered along its length. In the top right corner, there are several overlapping circles in shades of blue and purple. The title 'Music and Community' is written in a large, black, sans-serif font, with 'Music and' on the first line and 'Community' on the second line.

# MUSIC AND COMMUNITY

BARRIER REEF ORCHESTRA  
AT TWENTY

JEAN DARTNALL

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## BARRIER REEF ORCHESTRA AT TWENTY

JEAN DARTNALL



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## **Author's Foreword**

In preparing this book, I have been given much support and encouragement by members of the Committee of the Barrier Reef Orchestra. Many other people were also of great assistance and they are mentioned in the acknowledgements at the end of this book. I hope that my mistakes and omissions will be forgiven and no blame attached to my helpers.

It is not possible in a book which aims at readability to mention every musician, administrator, concert, or piece played. I have tried to concentrate on a range of each of these as facts, giving a reasonable idea of the scope of the work of this amazing orchestra and the way it operates. For extra details on more concerts, I refer readers to the Orchestra's web site [www.ngorchestra.com.au](http://www.ngorchestra.com.au)

**Jean Dartnall**



## **Barrier Reef Orchestra 20 Year History**

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Townsville has a rich history of excellence in the arts and culture.

The Barrier Reef Orchestra has been an integral part of that significant achievement.

Over two decades, it has provided a valuable showcase for high-calibre local talent, as well as world-class visiting musicians and conductors, to the delight of audiences from across our region and beyond.

The nurturing of musical talent in our region has been and remains an important part of its mission and its success.

A tremendous amount of hard work, dedication and commitment had been invested to make all this possible, by on-stage performers and those behind the scenes like volunteers, stage hands and committee members.

We are greatly in the debt of these people and their current-day equivalents.

A debt of gratitude is also owed to Jean Dartnall for her labour of love in recording this story with such skill and passion.

I am very proud indeed to be associated with the Barrier Reef Orchestra and hope it will be nurturing talent and delighting and enriching audiences for many, many years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Tweddell'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Bill Tweddell

**Patron**



## **Mayor's Foreword**

### **Barrier Reef Orchestra 20 Year History**

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The Townsville region has a proud history of arts and culture, with a significant collective of talented artists and an even greater audience. The Barrier Reef Orchestra is one such collection of talent that has provided 20 years of high calibre orchestral experience.

As Mayor of Townsville, it has been a pleasure to be totally immersed by the performances of the Barrier Reef Orchestra throughout their 20-year history. At Townsville City Council we're extremely proud to have provided support since the beginning.

This community orchestra is proof that a combination of Townsville musicians, arts workers and arts lovers alike could combine their passion to develop an orchestra of such high calibre.

For two decades the Barrier Reef Orchestra has been conducting world-class concerts in our city. But it is also the orchestra's role in promoting the arts that has been a catalyst for the growth of musical talent in our community and a major contributor to the Townsville region being known as the arts and culture capital of North Australia.

As a regional city, we're incredibly lucky to be able to say we have our very own orchestra, and at council we're proud to continue to support the Barrier Reef Orchestra into the future.

To the whole ensemble, conductors, volunteers and committee members, thank you for your dedication and continuing contribution to our community.

I look forward to another 20 years of incredible performances by the Barrier Reef Orchestra.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Hill', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

**Cr Jenny Hill**  
**Mayor of Townsville**



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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

We are proud to be able to present this publication to mark two decades in the history of our Barrier Reef Orchestra. When we commissioned Jean Dartnall to write it for us there was no inkling of the trauma that would envelope the world in our twentieth birthday year and we have no idea what the world will be like when we emerge.

Unfortunately the Arts and Cultural Sectors have been hugely affected and many adjustments will have to be made. It is perhaps timely that we have paused to make this review.

We decided against a routine timeline and exhaustive listing of events and chose to take a more socially based approach and tell the story of the myriad details and activities that are needed to keep an orchestra running for two decades. The titles of the chapters attempt to bring these functions together. The more inclusive details can be found on our website and in the tables at the end.

We are deeply indebted to the huge number of individuals and groups who have willingly assisted and supported us on our journey and where names are not mentioned in the text or photographs included; it is because space simply does not allow it. We are most grateful to you everyone who has assisted in putting together this document.

The whole exercise has made us aware of the many aspects not formally recorded, particularly in the early years and there has been much delving into the past to collect the details needed.

Townsville remains desperately short of performance place for theatre and music. The Civic Theatre will be back in full swing post COVID-19, but the future of Riverway is still in doubt. Hopefully the recent Council announcement of a North Australia Concert Hall and Arts Precinct being shovel ready will come to fruition.

Sincerely

Judy Hunter

President, North Queensland Ensembles

May 2020



**Logistically, Beethoven's 9th  
Symphony is very demanding  
and is rarely played outside  
metropolitan centres and even  
more rarely played by community  
orchestras.**

**— Simon McConnell**

# **BEETHOVEN'S 9TH SYMPHONY**



PHOTOGRAPH BY: MICHAEL REEF ORCHESTRA AT TWENTY

**Imagine this: a full house, a standing ovation, 170 musicians on the stage — the musicians are ecstatic about the music and the reception, management is ecstatic about the music and the ticket sales, the volunteers are ecstatic about the music and the chance to rest, and the 970 audience members are ecstatic about the music.**

The Barrier Reef Orchestra (BRO) reached a new high on Tuesday 16 August 2011 with the successful production of this challenging major work. In addition to the 62 orchestra members, the performance involved the Spirit of the Voice choirs, including adults and children. In describing this event, Simon McConnell, who was president of the BRO at that time, wrote:

Logistically, the Beethoven's 9th Symphony is very demanding and is rarely played outside metropolitan centres and even more rarely played by community orchestras. This challenge involved drawing musicians from other centres (Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra and Sydney), retaining a conductor from England, and engaging four vocal soloists (Mackay, Brisbane).

This was a very special orchestral and choral event for Townsville. I'm told it is most musicians' ambition to perform the 9th Symphony and to enable this took approximately 15,000 volunteer hours in practice, rehearsal, organisation and promotion. It was a great triumph for all involved and a rare opportunity for audience members to hear this great work live in a regional city.

## **HOW IT CAME TO BE**

Kerry Rehn believes she and David Lawrence may have been the spark that ignited this wonderful firework display. David Lawrence is an English conductor with a formidable CV and reputation. He has visited Australia on many occasions, usually working with choirs, particularly choirs of young people.

*(Opposite page)*

Conductor David Lawrence,  
Beethoven's 9th Symphony.  
Photo: Chrissy Maguire, 2011.

*(Next page)*

Beethoven's 9th Symphony, David  
Lawrence conducting.  
Photo: Chrissy Maguire, 2011.





