

# COMPOSER'S PROFILE

## ROGER TRIGG

In the third in the series of emerging Salvation Army composers who have come to the fore over the last few years, this month SA Bandsman profiles Roger Trigg.

**SAB:** Roger, can you tell us about your upbringing as a Salvationist musician?

RT: I was born in Melbourne, Australia while my parents were training to become officers in The Salvation Army. Like many others, my first musical training in the SA was playing cornet in the YP Band and singing in the Singing Company. I became a Senior Soldier during a memorable three years living in Western Australia and I officially became a Senior Corps musician when I joined the trombone section of the Floreat Park Corps Band.

In 1990, my family moved back to Melbourne and we soldiered at the Box Hill Corps. I joined the band as a pretty 'green' 18-year-old under the leadership of Bandmaster Colin Woods, who was also Bandmaster of the Melbourne Staff Band. With Colin at the helm and seven staff bandsmen in the corps band, standards were

high and these guys set a great example for young Salvo musicians like me.

In 1991, I joined another SA music group called 'Crossroads Big Band'. It was a traditional big band ensemble, except no saxophones (I guess the Salvos didn't know enough sax players!). The bandleader was Salvationist and freelance jazz pianist/composer, Michael Harding, who also arranged most of the group's repertoire. The music was more relevant to me than other SA music I'd previously experienced - it was musically and harmonically adventurous.

In 1993, I joined the Melbourne Staff Band and remained in the band until 1997 when I had the opportunity to move to New York to work for the SA. During my five years there I was privileged to be a member of the New York Staff Band. The experience of playing in both staff bands has proved invaluable. Not only did I learn a lot musically, but I also learned how music, and in particular brass bands, can be effectively used in the wider mission of the SA.

In 2001, I returned to Melbourne and commenced work as Director of the Creative Ministries Department for the Melbourne Central Division. During that tenure, I also enjoyed a rewarding time as Bandmaster of

the Preston Citadel Band, Melbourne (2002-2005). My family and I currently attend the Sydenham Corps, Belfast, Northern Ireland where I am a member of the corps band.

**SAB:** When did you begin writing music and what inspired you to start?

RT: During high school, I began writing (some pretty average) rock/pop songs with a schoolmate who had a home recording studio. In rebellion to the 'big hair' bands of the late 1980s, I retreated from the musical mainstream and began to develop a broader musical palette. I loved listening to and analysing the varied styles and harmonies of The Beatles music and as such, I can draw inspiration from the songs of Lennon and McCartney.

In the SA, I started writing brass parts for contemporary groups for use in worship services, but my first foray into composition for bands was while I was working as Assistant Divisional Music Director in the Greater New York Division in the late 1990s. At the time my real inspiration was the challenge of seeing whether I could write and sustain ideas on a larger scale.

**SAB:** Which composers do you gain inspiration from?

RT: The SA has such a rich musical heritage and this is a difficult question for me to answer fairly - there is much to learn from so many. In my late teens, I enjoyed playing and listening to a more contemporary style of brass band music by composers such as James Curnow, Stephen Bulla, Barrie Gott and William Himes (OF). On reflection, this music probably kept me interested in banding long enough for my faith to develop in the context of a church fellowship.

Since then, both my experience of and appreciation for the SA Brass repertoire has increased. I draw inspiration from, and have huge admiration for, many other composers including Brenton Broadstock, Bruce Broughton, Morley Calvert, Leslie Condon, Peter Graham, Wilfred Heaton, Kevin Norbury, Robert Redhead, Thomas Rive and Ray Steadman-Allen.

**SAB:** What, if anything, are you writing at the moment?

RT: I have recently completed a commission for Ken Waterworth and the Melbourne Staff Band which the band will premiere later this month in Canberra, Australia. The piece was written to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the Japanese naval ship, *Montevideo Maru*, which claimed the lives of over 1,000 Australian military



personnel, among them 16 Australian Salvation Army bandmen. These bandmen were members of the 2/22nd Battalion Band and the bandmaster was Arthur Gullidge, whose music will be familiar to many SA Bandsman readers. My grandfather, Wilfred Trigg, was also a member and was Deputy Bandmaster of the band. I feel privileged to be asked to write music to mark this occasion and the composition has special significance for me.

I have in the pipeline a new Christmas arrangement for the award-winning Bones Apart trombone quartet. It is a fantastic group of players and I'm delighted to be asked to work with them again.

**SAB: What factors would you say have been the most important in your development as a writer?**

RT: I am indebted to a number of people who have given freely of their time and gifts to patiently critique, teach and encourage me. They include Harold Burgmayer, Kenneth Downie, Kevin Norbury, Col. Robert Redhead and Colin Woods. In most cases this may be 20 minutes 'snatched' here or there, but it has proved invaluable and I am fortunate to have benefited from their vast knowledge and experience.

Of course, I must acknowledge the support and encouragement I have received from Bandmaster Ken Waterworth and the MSB

and being asked to write a number of pieces for the band over the past ten years has been really important for my development as a composer.

Having the opportunity to listen to music I've written, whether on a recording or a live performance, has been so important in the learning process, in making adjustments and learning what works and what doesn't. I have also found score study to be an invaluable learning tool. Having music published in SA journals has been a great source of encouragement too.

Writing music is usually quite an anti-social pastime, so I thank God for a gracious and supportive wife in Cheryl. As a bonus, she also has a musically critical ear and good ideas!

**SAB: How would you like to see the SA supporting emerging composers in the future?**

RT: I know some SA territories and regions hold composers' symposiums that are very well received by delegates. This is a good initiative, and I'm sure many composers signpost these as 'watershed' moments in their own development.

I would like to see the SA offering an ongoing support or mentoring programme which would complement these larger scale events.

I believe there is an onus on corps officers



and music leaders to give opportunities and support to emerging composers and arrangers within their own congregations. Such visible encouragement of today's musicians could be all it takes to inspire the next generation of aspiring composers!

**SAB: Stylistically, where do you see SA music going and how can it remain relevant without losing its substance?**

RT: I would like to see the SA positively support and encourage contemporary Army songwriters. Many SA congregations are singing contemporary Christian songs in worship, but few of the songs are by SA songwriters. I think a more deliberate approach may unearth new SA songwriters whose songs could also directly benefit the repertoire of the more established SA musical forces.

The SA has a long tradition of producing quality Christian music for brass groups and choirs. There seems to be a good mix of music being used in the SA at the moment that also acknowledges and reflects regional and geographical differences. There appears to be an increasing openness to a greater variety of styles and music media which is encouraging.

Most SA worship communities are multi-generational and often multi-cultural. Our choice of music and songs in corporate worship should reflect this. Where possible, there should be a little bit of something for everyone. It's important to reflect the times in which we live, but it's equally important to ensure that the latest 'fashion' in music can sit comfortably alongside The Salvation Army's values and theology so that it retains its unique identity.

### Published/Recorded Pieces by Roger Trigg

#### PUBLISHED:

##### Unity Series

Once in Royal David's City (June 2008)

I Saw Three Ships (June 2009)

##### American Band Journal

Christmas Prelude (Issue 63)

The Father's Love (Issue 66)

##### Judd Street

Battle Ready (March 2011)

Atonement (March 2013)

#### RECORDED:

##### Almighty (Prelude on 'Lobe den Herren')

Recorded by Camberwell Citadel Band on 'Equilibrium'

##### Atonement

Recorded by Melbourne Staff Band (MSB) on 'Chronicles' and 'ISB120 Staff Bands in Concert' CD/DVD

##### Battle Ready

Recorded by MSB on 'Battle Ready' and Enfield Citadel Band on 'Enfield Connections'

##### Rejoice (Trombone Solo)

Recorded by MSB and Paul Smith on 'Battle Ready' and to be recorded by Enfield Citadel Band on Autumn release (title TBC) and Andrew Justice

##### The Father's Love

Recorded by MSB on 'Live Praise'

##### Worthy is the Lamb

Recorded by MSB on 'Let Everything Praise' and 'A Celebration of Faithfulness'