

## **Review of United in Song I & II**

Conductor: Wendy Smith

Organist: John Nicholls

Trumpeter: Michael Bird.

Technical Production: Mike Kontor (Undated)

### **A brief outline of its contents**

A compilation of hymns from Together in Song (Australian Hymn Book II) selected and sung by members of the congregations of Buninyong, Mt Pleasant, Sebastopol and Skipton Street Uniting Churches, the former Ballarat South Parish.

The two CD's contain 29 and 31 hymns respectively, all sung by a combined choir and all using organ music. On the second CD a trumpeter is added with good effect on some hymns (especially 96, 155, 161 and 569) and the choir has been enlarged. I think the trumpet would have sounded nice on 376 as well.

### **The Purpose of the project**

There is no indication on the printed matter or CDs why the members of these congregations made these CDs. This is unfortunate as it would have helped in appreciating and evaluating their efforts.

If these CDs were made as a commercial endeavour, you would have to criticise the similarity of the sound on most of the hymns. I can't imagine many people popping these CDs into their car and listening to them from beginning to end. There are no soloists and no other instruments used.

On the other hand, if these CDs were made to teach others some of the lesser known tunes from Together in Song (especially CD1) and more importantly, to help smaller groups to sing along to well known ones (especially CD2) when they might not have an organist or pianist (as I suspect), these CDs will be a huge help. They are ideal to play and sing along to in worship if you don't have a musician. On all the hymns all verses are sung, adding to this usefulness. Unfortunately there is no indication on the cover or the disk inviting this use.

Some tracks are above the rest, such as 10, 467, 531 and 670. It would have been nice too if they used some young people on some of the hymns. Or maybe use a piano on some (such as 162 and 666)?

All in all this is a useful pair of CDs for the worship leader who wants to teach a group more hymns and for those needing accompaniment in their worship.

Chris Crause