



## **Celebrating 20 years of Opera in the Kimberley (2012)**

In 1992 a handful of people with a passion for Opera thought it would be wonderful to bring Opera to Broome. Michele Nott (then owner of Chinatown Music), Mary-Attracta Connolly (an Opera Singer), Mick Connolly (from Troppo Sound and Mary-Attracta's brother) and, Karen Lewer, (a good friend of Michele's) met at a Troppo Sound Industry Night and from there the idea grew. They wanted to present an entertaining insight into the world of Opera in a relaxed and less formal setting that was accessible to everyone and especially to people who may not normally choose to see Opera.

In 1993 they made history when the first ever live performance of Opera above the 26th Parallel in Western Australia was presented to an audience of 250 at The Mangrove Resort Hotel where Lola and Ken Fitzgerald hosted the event until 2005. Michele and Karen left the group after the 1996 and 2005 performances respectively. The last performance at The Mangrove was in 2006. The event, having grown with increasing popularity, moved to the Cable Beach Amphitheatre – with the backdrop of the Indian Ocean where the audience over the years has become an enthusiastic mix of locals and visitors to Broome.

Extending its strong community focus, in 2004 Opera Under The Stars® initiated the annual 'Oper-Arte' Art Exhibition and Auction, that sees the total proceeds of the 'Oper-Arte' Auction of an original artwork, kindly donated by a visual artist each year, used to provide increased access to musical instruments / materials for the children of the West Kimberley. To date donations have totalled over \$54,500.00 in value.

Opera Under The Stars® enjoys a strong connection with the music of Broome with local songs, especially those of Jimmy Chi, of Bran Nue Dae and Corrugation Road fame, adding a special sense of place to the performance. A terrific crew of family, friends and volunteers, both local and from Australia-wide, also add much to the personal charm and success of the event each year. In our tiny, remote town of Broome we are so lucky to have people who have continued for 20 years to bring us the passion of Opera!

If you'd like to read more about this terrific event you can **visit [www.operaunderthestars.com.au](http://www.operaunderthestars.com.au)**. Due to circumstances we have not had Opera in Broome since 2013!