



Light fantastic: The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra's artistic director, Paul Dyer

Pulling a Latin cracker

Christmas is coming. Time to check out this year's Noël! Noël! concert.

For many music lovers the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra's Christmas concert, now in its 11th year, is as much a part of the festive season as decorating the tree.

"A lot of people have said that it really feels like Christmas once the Noël! Noël! program has arrived," says Paul Dyer, artistic director of the Brandenburg, our leading period instrument orchestra.

Performed in churches and at City Recital Hall, Noël! Noël! invariably attracts full houses.

Several concerts in this year's tour (which begins in Newcastle's Christ Church Cathedral on December 12) are sold out but tickets are left for Newcastle, Pymble, Parramatta and Angel Place.

Performed with the Brandenburg Choir and guest soprano Mina Kanaridis, the program features sacred songs of Latin America plus a few traditional European carols.

It's the Brandenburg's first real

foray into Latin American repertoire. Describing himself as "a musical detective", Dyer has unearthed a divine selection of highly passionate, colourful music from countries including Bolivia, Peru and Mexico. Written in the baroque era, the sublime sounds are influ-

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enced heavily by Spanish and Portuguese styles. The choir will sing in Latin, Spanish, English and two indigenous languages.

"Basically, I've taken pure classical music and infused it with some folk, which kind of hits you in the soul, so you have these very strong Spanish flavours where rhythms are important and these very distinctive languages," Dyer says.

"It's baroque music but I've infused it with a kind of 21st century now-ness. I've spent my life being

pure (musically) and I decided I wanted to infuse a little bit of my father's influence."

Dyer's father Bill died three months ago. A drummer who played popular music, his influence will be even more strongly felt in the Brandenburg's exciting new CD, *Baroque Tapas*, due for release in March, in which Dyer gives 17th-century music a pop, swing and boogie remix.

Noël! Noël! caps off a big year for the Brandenburg, including winning their fourth ARIA Award for Best Classical Album for their recording of Handel's *Concerti Grossi, Opus 6* (ABC Classics).

Dyer believes that Noël! Noël! will end the year on a special note, taking audiences on "an emotional journey towards Christmas" which will have them tapping their feet and laughing, then moved to tears.

■ Noël! Noël!, City Recital Hall, December 19. Bookings: 8256 2222. Church concerts: 9328 7581. Information: brandenburg.com.au