

# Musical Performer

**Charles (G.) VERN-BARNETT** lived on the corner of Whitton and Crichton Sts in Chatswood. George was an organist, choir master and accompanist. He was an important figure in the musical and cultural life of Sydney for many years in the early twentieth century. Barnett studied music under Edward Sykes and Edward Goll and became prominent on the Sydney musical scene as 'the boy wonder pianist'. Due to poor health he was rejected for service in World War I, but expressed his patriotism by writing a popular song entitled 'War 1914'.

He was choir master and organist at Sydney many churches and gave performances on the Sydney Town Hall Grand Organ from the age of eighteen. As an organist, Barnett was held in the highest regard. His expertise was such that he was often asked to advise on and test new and rebuilt organs throughout New South Wales.

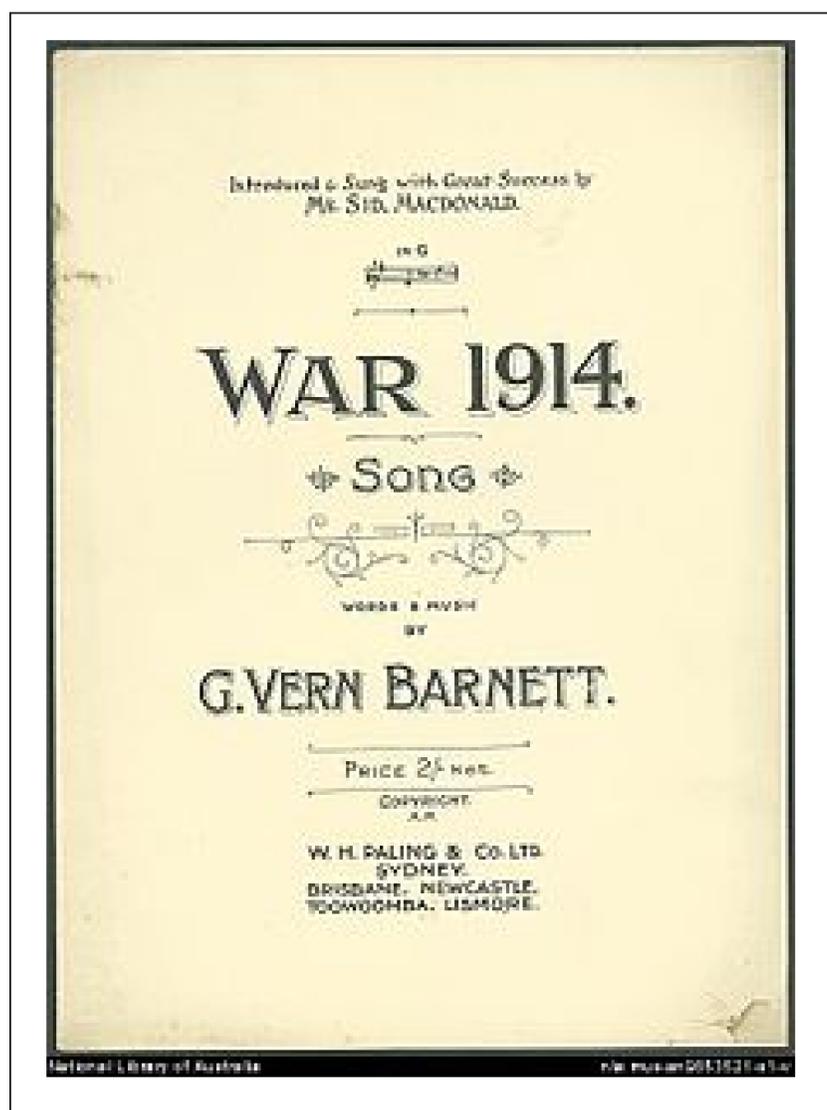
Barnett was also accompanist. He worked and local artists including Verbrugghen, Florence Dame Nellie Melba. that she wanted him to go permanent accompanist, Australia

In the 1920s Barnett of radio, becoming the station 2BL in 1925 and director from 1927. In the Australian (ABC), the station became Barnett also became Instrumental Trio and Dinner Orchestra. In 1932 ABC, Barnett established and remained its

Barnett was deputy Philharmonic Society of

and 1936 to 1939, and conductor from 1939 to 1946. He also prepared choirs for visiting conductors such as Sir Malcolm Sargent, Sir Hamilton Harty, and Sir Richard Runciman Terry. Sargent in particular expressed his appreciation and admiration for Barnett's preparation of a 250-voice choir in three weeks for a performance of Verdi's Requiem in 1936. The choristers were drawn from the Sydney Radio Choir, Conservatorium Select Choir, Royal Philharmonic Society, Sydney Male Choir and Hurlstone Park Choral Society. Sargent considered the choir 'very fine indeed', adding that 'I would be glad to have it at my disposal in any part of the world'.

Throughout his career, Barnett was invited to adjudicate at vocal and choral competitions and Eisteddfods around Australia and New Zealand, including the prestigious The Sun Aria competition. He also taught piano and voice at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music for many years, and was at various times pianist of the Royal Apollo Club, organist and accompanist of the Welsh Choral Society, the Madrigal Society, and the Presbyterian Combined Choirs



celebrated as an with many great overseas Andrew Black, Henri Austral, Elsa Stralia and Melba was so impressed back to England as her but he preferred to stay in

embraced the new medium official pianist at radio the station's musical 1932, on the formation of Broadcasting Commission part of their network, and leader of the Broadcasters director of the Broadcasters under the auspices of the the Sydney Radio Choir conductor for 6 years.

conductor of the Royal Sydney from 1915 to 1926