

Candlelight VOX Chamber Choir

Début: Ethereal

7:30pm Saturday 26th May 2018

Trinity College Chapel





Program

***The Spheres* (2008), Ola Gjeilo (1978 -)**

Ola Gjeilo is an Norwegian choral composer. This is an a cappella arrangement of the first movement of his *Sunrise Mass*. Gjeilo often uses English titles for his settings of traditional texts to add another dimension of poetic meaning. He writes: "I wanted the musical evolution of the Mass to go from the most transparent and spacey, to something completely earthy and grounded; from heaven to earth, so to speak". The piece utilises diatonic clusters to create a wash of sound and a "sense of floating in space".

***Glow* (2013), Eric Whitacre (1970 -), words by Edward Esch**

Glow was composed by the well-known American choral composer, Eric Whitacre. He is famous for his Virtual Choir on YouTube, in which he combines videos of thousands of singers globally to form online performances of his work. *Glow* was written for the Walt Disney's World of Color - Winter Dreams show. The piece is supported by gently arpeggiated piano chords in the upper register that mimic the "softly falling snow".

***The Lamb* (1982), John Tavener (1944 - 2013), words by William Blake**

John Tavener was a prominent choral composer of the 20th and 21st Century. He is distantly related to the



Renaissance composer of the same name. The text is a poem from William Blake's *Songs of Innocence*. As typical of Tavener's minimalist style, the opening phrase is developed using both 20th century and traditional chorale techniques.

***Sea of Berries* (2001), Paul Jarman (1971 -)**

Written by contemporary Australian choral composer, Paul Jarman. This piece is about a "lonely ship" on the Sargasso Sea in the Atlantic Ocean, named so for the purple, berry-like seaweed which grows there. The slight syncopation due to the displacement of the quavers mimics the gentle rocking of the boat on the waves.

***Northern Lights* (2008), Ola Gjeilo (1978 -)**

Our second Gjeilo piece, *Northern Lights* was written by the composer whilst looking out from an attic window and across a starlit lake in winter. He writes "I was thinking about this 'terrible' beauty is so profoundly reflected in the northern lights, or *aurora borealis*...[which] has such a powerful, electric quality that must have been both mesmerizing and terrifying to people in the past". The text is taken from the Song of Solomon, and reflects this dichotomy of beauty and terror; "thou art beautiful, o my love" is contrasted against "terrible as an army set in array". The piece has an ABA' structure; the material in the A sections representing awe and wonder, and the B section representing awe and terror.

"An den wassern zu babel saßen wir und weinten" (1976 / 1984), Arvo Pärt (1935 -)

Estonian minimalist composer, Arvo Pärt is one of the most prominent composers of our time. The title is from Psalm 137, and translates to "by the waters of Babylon, we lay down and wept". However, no text is used within the piece. Pärt instead is inspired by the text-driven pulse and lack of bar lines in plainchant to evoke the 'weeping' within the Psalm.

***The Surfer* (2018), Aidan McGartland (1998 -), words by Judith Wright**

This piece was written for Candlelight VOX by MCM composition student, Aidan McGartland. It is designed to evoke the vivid Australian coastal landscape described by Judith Wright. Musical influences include French composers Debussy and Ravel and American minimalism. The wave-like contour of the sextuplets in the piano part imitate the waves of the ocean, alluding to Ravel's *Une Barque Sur L'Océan*.

***Lux Aurumque* (2000), Eric Whitacre (1970 -), words by Edward Esch (Latin translation by Charles Anthony Silverstri)**

Our second Whitacre piece, *Lux Aurumque*, was inspired by Edward Esch's poem, which reads: "Light/warm and heavy as pure gold/and the angels sing softly/to the newborn babe". Whitacre then had the poem translated into Latin for his composition. This piece is one of the most commonly referenced contemporary choral pieces for its use of diatonic clusters and use of divisi.

***Towards Infinity* (2007), Paul Jarman (1971 -), words by Phil Voysey**

Our second Jarman piece tells the story of adventurer Andrew McAuley, who was kayaking across the Tasman sea from Australia to New Zealand. His kayak was discovered upturned the evening he was expected to make land. Jarman's piece tributes his journey "beyond these waves, towards infinity".

***Past Life Melodies* (1991), Sarah Hopkins (1958 -)**

Sarah Hopkins is an Australian composer. Her much-loved *Past Life Melodies* is not notated, as the rest of the works are, for SATB, but rather assigns numbers to singers to communicate when singers leave their drone note to join the chant. The conclusion of the piece features Mongolian throat singing; members of the choir manipulate the shape of their vocal tract to accentuate the upper harmonic overtones.

About the Choir:

Candlelight VOX is a 18-voice chamber choir based in Melbourne, Australia. We were founded by Grace Gallur and Aidan McGartland in 2017 for the purpose of performing works by living composers.

Candlelight VOX hopes to fill the gap in the Melbourne choral scene for "new music". There is an array of stunning new compositions that barely get performed, in favour of programming the much-loved standard repertoire. We believe this is partly due to the negative connotations surrounding "new music" – the belief that it is inaccessible. This is simply not the case. Much of the choral music we explore is stylistically innovative, but more importantly, deeply moving.

Candlelight VOX is comprised of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music voice students, instrumentalists, and singers from the wider University of Melbourne.

Conductors:

Grace Gallur, Aidan McGartland

Choir:

Soprano: Brianna Ekberg, Lirica Fujimoto, Grace Gallur, Samantha Hargreaves*, Stella Joseph-Jarecki, Emily Singleton

Alto: Tatjana Brandson, Lily Ekins, Syrah Torii, Emma Warburton

Tenor: Jack Jordan*, Michael Ng, Yi Tong, Jed Wheaton, Nyan Win

Bass: George Cox, Tiernan McLaren, Aidan McGartland, Eamonn Shorter

Associate Artists:

Organ: James Earl*

Piano: George Cox, Louis Nicoll*

*denotes guest

We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Kulin nation, and their elders past, present and emerging.