

CANDLELIGHT VOX PRESENTS



NOVEMBER 1ST AND 2ND

AT THE MISSION TO SEAFARER'S NORLA DOME.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE
TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF
THE LAND ON WHICH OUR
CONCERTS TAKE PLACE. WE PAY
OUR RESPECTS TO THEIR ELDERS,
PAST AND PRESENT, AND THE
ABORIGINAL ELDERS OF OTHER
COMMUNITIES WHO MAY BE HERE
TODAY.

SOVEREIGNTY WAS NEVER CEDED.

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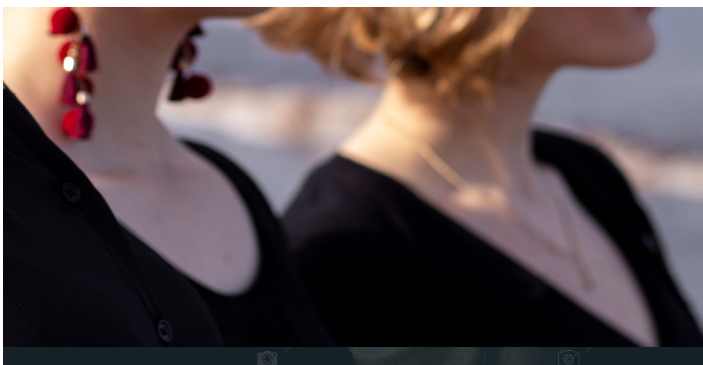
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o-Artistic Director's Welcome

Candlelight VOX has had the most fantastic year! We kicked off rehearsing for Ascension – for which Aidan and I conducted our first multi-movement works (see below). Sustaining energy across multiple highly-involved textures and complex musical ideas proved to be a hugely rewarding learning curve for all involved.

In September, VOX and some members from our expanded community returned to St Carmel to record two of last semester's pieces. This semester, a number of our choristers have also been working closely with Nicole Marshall on workshopping new compositions by Robert McIntyre and Claire Higgins, which feature in this program.

Contrasting with the high and sometimes frantic energy of Ascension, the PAUSE program focuses on stillness and meditation. We wanted to create an environment that quite literally hits “pause” on the busyness of everyday life, and allows you to breathe in time and come into the present. It’s not often that you see 4’33” programmed, either; the temptation of including it given the intention behind the programming seemed too great to resist.

For a significant amount of the program, we’ve chosen pieces where the harmonic pull and direction are not the driving focus of the work. Instead, much of the programming takes advantage of the contemporary “diatonic cluster” idea, whereby adjacent notes of the scale are stacked directly on top of each other, often without harmonic pressure to resolve (a lot of added 9ths or 11ths expressed as 2nds or 4ths, for example). We’ve chosen the stunning Norla Dome for its haunting acoustic. The density of the echo extends the effect of the dissonances and celebrates the choir’s and soloists’ radiant tone colours.

Of particular note, this program features two interludes for vibraphone, composed by our very own George Cox and expertly performed by Bridget Bourne. George and Bridget have been working together to make the most of the vibraphone’s resonating qualities following the brief for this program. I’m also delighted to welcome the Storage Room Quartet, who have been a pleasure to work with and always bring such a sense of curiosity and play to the rehearsal space.

It’s been incredibly fun preparing this program for you! We sincerely hope that this music helps you find some stillness and serenity, and that we leave you feeling refreshed and invigorated.

Best,

Grace Gallur - Co-Artistic Director



CANDLELIGHT VOX

Conductor: Grace Gallur

Sopranos:

- Samantha Cook
- Emily Singleton
- Brianna Ekberg
- Charlotte Waters
- Carlia Van Hoorn

Tenors:

- John Rice-Whetton
- Matt Shackleton
- Riley Brooks
- Chris Robinson

Altos:

- Amelia Sheppard
- Anna Keightley
- Lisha Ooi

Basses:

- Michael Ng
- Keelan Murphy
- George Cox
- Aragorn Keuken

Choristers for Mallee Dust and Crystallised Rivers:

Conductor: Nicole Marshall

Sopranos:

- Rebecca Lynch-Wells
- Bridgette Kelsey
- Amanda Hargreaves

(1 concert)

- Samantha Cook

Tenors

- John Rye-Sweatin
- Riley Brooks

Altos:

- Lisha Ooi
- Sussanna Kable
- Max McConnell

Basses

- Aragorn Keuken
- Keelan J Murphy

Welcoming soloists: Jessie Eastwood, Lisette Boldton, Rebecca Lynch-Wells, Bridget Bourne (vibraphone) and Storage Room Quartet.

With thanks to our choral deputies:

Amanda Hargreaves, Marjorie Butcher, Max McConnell, Ned Dixon.



‘...passionate about works
filled with colour, life and
vivacity...’

About Candlelight VOX

Candlelight VOX is a chamber choir devoted to performing the exciting sounds of the 21st Century. We love performing works by living composers - particularly works that are yet to be discovered by the Melbourne ear, and pairing them with contrasting works from the twentieth century. Our Artistic Directors Grace Gallur and Aidan McGartland are passionate about works filled with colour, life, and vivacity, and are thrilled to lead an ensemble of up-and-coming classical singers.

Grace and Aidan both study Classical Voice at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. They co-founded the choir at the end of their first year (2017) and have since been studying conducting under the tutelage of Pat Miller. In 2018, the choir performed two recitals in Trinity College Chapel: *ETHEREAL* and *From Darkness to Light*. In May of 2019, Candlelight VOX performed their first large-scale concert, *ASCENSION*, in Our Lady of Mount Carmel, for which Aidan conducted Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, and Grace conducted Paul Mealor's *Stabat Mater*.

With thanks to our committee:

Grace Gallur and Aidan McGartland (co-Artistic Directors), Amelia Sheppard (General Manager), George Cox (Secretary), Samantha Hargreaves (Operations), Anna Keightley (Marketing & Social Media), Emily Singleton (Membership Manager and Music Librarian), and Riley Brooks (acting Treasurer).

“Eliza’s Aria” (2002) – Elena Kats-Chernin (1957–)

Anna Keightley - Violin

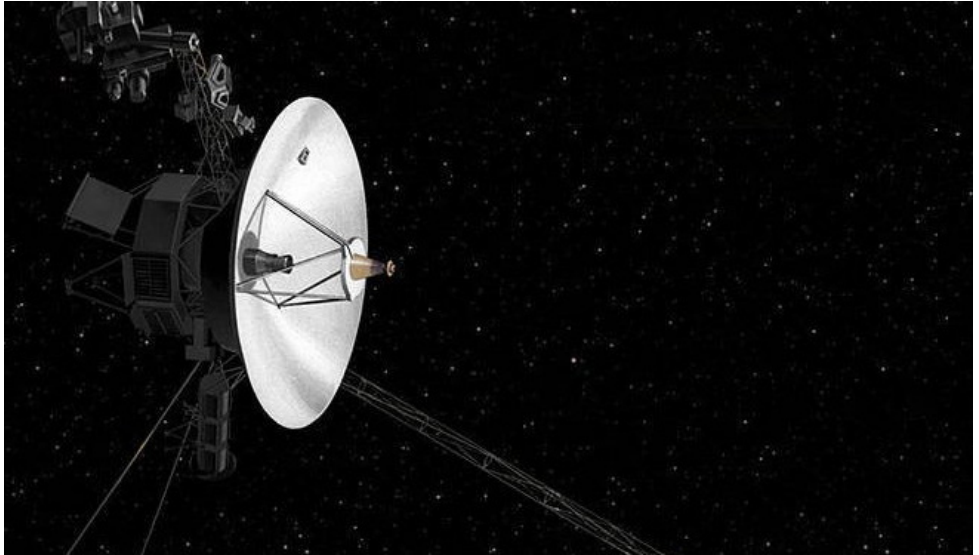
Jake Ryan Deans - Violin

Sarah Cheng - Viola

Carter Harris-Smith -Cello

Storage Room Quartet opens our concert with an arrangement for string quartet of “Eliza’s Aria,” the second movement of the Wild Swans Concert Suite, a suite of works from the ballet Wild Swans by Australian composer Elena Kats-Chernin. This piece was originally for solo soprano and orchestra: in that form, the soprano sings wordlessly, blending in with the delicate, upper register orchestration of strings and bells. Our colleagues at Storage Room will reinvent this popular large-scale work on an intimate level, which, for my part, is always how I’ve heard this piece: a large ensemble doing their best to quietly and reflectively develop several lyrical ideas, travelling in the grooves of the ballet’s dynamisme mécanique.

- program note by George Cox



Voyager One (2018) – Amanda Cole

Candlelight VOX and guests. No conductor.

VOYAGER ONE 'sings' the stars as they rose and set over the Cape Canaveral Airforce Station on the 5th of September 1977, the time and place NASA's Voyager One Space Probe was launched. Marking the period of time it took the shuttle to leave Earth, the choral work contemplates the moment humanity launched its most ambitious scientific exploration into the vast expanses of space. Composed for 24 voices, VOYAGER ONE is an ethereal and meditative celebration of the cosmos, reflection on the awe and wonder with which humanity has always regarded the stars.

- program note by Amanda Cole

The Spheres (2008) – Ola Gjeilo (1978–)

Candlelight VOX and guests. Conducted by Grace Gallur.

The Spheres is also the name of the first movement (Kyrie) from my 2008 Mass for choir and string orchestra, called Sunrise Mass. The piece you are listening to today is the a cappella version of that movement, and will be the only a cappella piece derived from this Mass.

A lot of people have asked me why I used an English, seemingly unrelated, title for this setting of the Kyrie. Apart from the fact that I generally prefer to assign English titles to pieces with Latin text these days, it has to do with the initial idea behind the Sunrise Mass.

I wanted the musical evolution of the Mass to go from the most transparent and spacey, to something earthy and grounded; from heaven to earth, so to speak. So in The Spheres, I used a kind of overlapping fade-in/fade-out effect, to give a sense of floating in space, in darkness and relative silence, surrounded by stars and planets light-years away. However, I don't follow this idea throughout the entire movement, since it eventually gathers into a big crescendo and ends with a clear, chorale version of the theme presented very slowly and muddled in the first part. So, in a way this movement is also a microcosm of the entire Mass, which also ends with a larger chorale, in The Ground (Sanctus & Agnus Dei).

This a cappella version of The Spheres was premiered by the 2009 CDA College Honour Chamber Choir with conductor Gary Graden in Oklahoma City, and the piece is dedicated to Mr Graden.

Kyrie eleison,	Lord have mercy,
Christe eleison,	Christ have mercy,
Kyrie eleison.	Lord have mercy.

- program note by Ola Gjeilo

Mallee Dust (2019) – Claire Higgins

Conducted by Nicole Marshall.

Mallee Dust is a piece that reflects on some aspects of the landscape in the Victorian Mallee; but also on family ties to the region. It talks of how that landscape was part of my father's identity, having spent the early part of his childhood there. The piece uses only a handful of text, but explores those words and phrases to emphasise their importance.

Dust
under a Mallee sky
floating deep in your soul
pink salt water
flowing into you
Mallee dust, Mallee sky.

- program note by Claire Higgins

Five or Six Different Lines (2019) – George Cox (1997–)

Soloist: Bridget Bourne.

This is just a suggestion of what is to come; the percussionist employs hard, green mallets, refusing the concession to luxury inherent in metal's embrace of purely 'felt' yielding. George Cox's compositional ethos approximates an approach to pure Difference. It, and he, is hesitant in the face of structuring Repetition. This piece, entitled Five or Six Different Lines, consists of five or six different lines which co-here only at the 'formal' request of the Other. But don't be a disciplined audience in carrying out this task: make-believe that Bridget Bourne is improvising and forget this piece ever wrestled its way into existence on a computer screen. Trying to count the lines will be like trying to count how many objects there are in the room.

- program note by George Cox

Pēteris Vasks – String Quartet No. 3: I. Moderato

Storage Room Quartet

Pēteris Vasks elicits a scene of Latvian Christmas in his third quartet for strings. For Australian/Southern Hemisphere ears it becomes the sonic antonym to what we know as Christmas, with our plus 40-degree temperatures and beating UV rays. Instead, it tells of a Christmas of untouched snow drifting endlessly into a night that spills like tar across a village to the infinity of a tundra. The work features spikes of movement, lights flickering on and off, villagers preparing for Ziemassvētki mass. The stillness is disrupted by hymns being sung behind stone walls. The singing is joined by individual voices one by one before everyone participating in a Latvian Christmas carol. The subtitle to this piece is 'Christmas – Peace on Earth'. Imagine solemnity and tranquillity while listening.

Program note by Jake Ryan Deans

As One Who Has Slept (1996) – John Tavener (1944–2013)

-Candlelight VOX and Storage Room Quartet. Conducted by Grace Gallur.

This setting of an anonymous liturgical text about the resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday makes use of a subtle bitonal effect. While one group of singers repeats a familiar chorale texture, singing the text in a simple polyphonic style reminiscent of many tonal hymns, another group of singers, and our string quartet, quietly perform a drone on the first chord of each section, first a minor triad, then a major triad. However, many of the chorale phrases end on different triads, so at several key moments at the ends of phrases you will hear an expressive tension between the main group of singers, who resolve to a major triad, and the drone, who insist on a very quiet minor triad that hovers seemingly around the chorale at all times. Perhaps it would not be going too far to think of the drone as a kind of shroud out of which the chorale arises, saved by the transformations of the flesh.

As one who has slept, He has risen, and rising He has saved us. Alleluia.

- program note by George Cox

Pater Noster (2000) – Pētēris Vasks (1946–)

Candlelight VOX. Storage Room Quartet. Conducted by Grace Gallur.

Vasks is a Latvian composer, closely connected to some of the Holy Minimalists of Eastern Europe in the late twentieth century. In this work he sets the Lord's Prayer in Latin: the title means Our Father, to whom this text addresses itself in supplication. Certainly the Lord's Prayer is very familiar to many of us, and yet in this piece it is rendered anew with an affective charge that can confront and challenge. The setting is largely tonal and reminiscent of the chorale or hymnal textures that characterise most liturgical music. But consider its dissonant high points: about halfway through, on the last syllable of the word "tentionem" (lead us not into "temptation"), the loudest phrase concludes on an augmented Ab triad with a major seventh. It is a stunning dissonance, in a sense characterised by the greatest yearning possible: if an Ab augmented triad were made any wider, it would become a different, more stable triad, and likewise a major seventh made any wider would simply become a consonant octave. There is a brief inhalation before we can think of asking "sed libera, sed libera nos a malo" ("but free, but free us from evil"). This is an intense dramatization of the supplicant subject position: this is not a prayer learned by rote, but instead asking for that thing which we most absolutely need.

Pater noster, que es in caelis, sanctificetur nomen tuum. Adveniat regnum tuum. Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in caelo et in terra. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie, et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem, sed libera nos a malo. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

- program note by George Cox

Es sang vor langen Jahren (1984) – Arvo Pärt (1935–)

Storage Room Quartet. Soloist: Jessie Eastwood.

Arvo Pärt's musical career started with highs and lows – notes, that is: his family's piano was damaged and didn't have a middle register. Perhaps this absent centre endures in his later minimalist works. Pärt is an Estonian composer who developed a style based on the slow modulation of sounds such as those produced by bells and pure voice tones. His major works include *Tabula Rasa* (1977), *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977), and *The Beatitudes* (1991). He also writes film scores, and his pieces have featured in films of all kinds, including *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015), *There Will Be Blood* (2007), *About Time* (2013) and 102 others. One of his teachers once said that "he just seemed to shake his sleeves and notes would fall out." This piece was written in 1984 for a radio competition to set a poem by Clemens Brentano. It is one of the only times that Pärt set a non-liturgical text. *Es sang vor langen Jahren* was premiered in Hanover University by his students.

Long years ago indeed, as no
There sang the nightingale;
The sound was truly sweet;
Then, we were together.

I sing and cannot weep,
And thus, alone, I spin
The bright, clean threads
As long as the moon shines.

When we were together,
Then sang the nightingale;
Now her sound reminds me
That you are gone from me.

Es sang vor langen Jahren
Wohl auch die Nachtigall
Das war wohl süßer Schall,
Da wir zusammen waren.

Ich sing' und kann nicht weinen,
Und spinne so allein,
Den Faden klar und rein
So lang' der Mond wird scheinen.

Da wir zusammen waren,
Da sang die Nachtigall;
Nun mahnet] mich ihr Schall,
Daß du von mir gefahren.

However often the moon shines,
I think on you alone;
My heart is bright and clean;
God grant we be united!

Since you have gone from me,
The nightingale sings constantly;
Her sound makes me think
How we were together.

God grant we be united
Where, so alone, I spin;
The moon shines bright and clean;
I sing, and would weep.

So oft der Mond mag scheinen,
Denk ich wohl dein allein.
Mein Herz ist klar und rein -
Gott wolle uns vereinen.

Seit du von mir gefahren,
Singt stets die Nachtigall;
Ich denk bei ihrem Schall,
Wie wir zusammen waren.

Gott wolle uns vereinen!
Hier spinn ich so allein.
Der Mond scheint klar und rein;
Ich sing und möchte weinen.

- program note by Jessie Eastwood

4'33" (1952) – John Cage (1912–1992)

4'33" is what we may call a piece of music. Its title – which can be read as “four minutes and thirty three seconds” – refers to the duration of the first performance. It is in three movements, and is scored for any combination of instruments. During each movement, the performer, or performers, are instructed to remain silent. However, this does not mean that the audience will not experience any sound during the performance. We are, at great personal expense, filling Norla Dome with people, instruments, pieces of paper, and sundry objects of all kinds, all of which have resonant properties, and some of which produce sound all by themselves. Sound is – troublingly? – inescapable, which is something John Cage realised when he stepped into the anechoic (completely non-reflective) chamber at Harvard University and realised he could still hear the two-part counterpoint of his nervous system and blood circulation.

What 4'33" does is draw your attention to the sounds of the universe, in both the literal and the fanciful senses of the word ‘universe.’ You are invited by Cage to frame your experience of ambient sound during this piece as aesthetic, as meaningful, and as full of structure as a Beethoven symphony, or a Beethoven piano sonata, or another work by, for example, Beethoven. And you are invited by Candlelight VOX and its guest artists to experience this time emotionally as well: think, reflect, and lean into the silence, which is to say, lean into the music.

- program note by George Cox



Vibravura (2019) – George Cox (1997–)

Soloist: Bridget Bourne

This longer and more difficult instrumental interlude is partly organised around one of the classic extended techniques for vibraphone: bowing against the edges of each vibrating bar with a double bass bow. This brings out several of the otherwise silent overtones produced by these acoustically rich blocks of aluminium.

There's a clear arch structure to this work, marked by mallet changes, which you can look out for:

- A: two bows – slow, ambient two-part counterpoint
- B: two mallets encircling one bow with new melodic material
- C: four mallets – intense chordal and rhythmic gestures
- Bl: a brief variation on the two mallets & one bow texture
- Al: lingering bowed dissonances and restful resolution

The central section of this work indulges in the 'melodic pluralism' typical of this composer's antenatal style. Both of this concert's solo interludes were workshopped on several occasions with Bridget Bourne – they draw on her multifaceted skills as a percussionist and are dedicated to her with thanks.

- program note by George Cox

CANDLELIGHT VOX - PAUSE

Drop, Drop, Slow Tears (2012) – Paul Mealor (1975–)

Candlelight VOX. Soloist: Rebecca Lynch-Wells. Conducted by Grace Gallur.

This work sets a poem by the Renaissance author Phineas Fletcher (1582–1650) which, although it doesn't refer explicitly to the Bible, seems to be drawing on a particular Gospel story as a key intertext. As our soloist, Rebecca Lynch-Wells, has pointed out, this text seems to address the "sinful woman" who anoints Jesus and is forgiven in Luke 7:36–50. There's an interesting ambiguity in the last stanza where the poem shifts into first person; it seems almost to align the narrator (and perhaps the reader) with the sinful woman. We could all be her: "nor let his eye see sin, but through my tears." Mealor reimagines this hymn text – well-known in its standard repertory setting by Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625) – using the complex cluster-inflected tonal language which is becoming increasingly central to twenty-first-century choral music, while preserving its iambic metre with phrases that pulse along the lines of speech rhythms. Many of the phrases somehow draw to a convincing and peaceful resolution even though they refuse to resolve one or more prominent clusters. However, in this work Mealor contrasts these unusual sonorities with dramatic re-voicings of the familiar major triad at key points: the high point of the soprano solo lands on an F major chord widely spaced out from low Fs in the bass part to the C 1/2 octaves above it, while the last instance of the word "tears" appears as a delicate, almost fragile closely spaced C major chord, with the altos emerging from silence to support the soloist's last note.

Drop, drop, slow tears

and bathe those beauteous feet,

which brought from heaven

the news and Prince of Peace.

In your deep floods

drown all my faults and fears;

nor let his eye

see sin, but through my tears.

Cease not, wet eyes,

his mercies to entreat;

to cry for vengeance

sin doth never cease.

Crystallised Rivers (2019) – Robert McIntyre (1998–)

Conducted by Nicole Marshall.

Crystallised Rivers is a choral work for SATB centred on sustained sonorities, interpreting the set text through a more fluid re-arrangement of the poem. It aims to create one complete notion of how the water nymph in fact “year after year, [created] a river made of lime-stone, from bone.”

It is a more serene take on the melancholic poem by Oswald, creating a narrative where the nymph actually achieves the creation of a river, however it in turn is completely limestone.

Very small and damaged and quite dry,
a Roman water nymph made of bone
tries to summon a river out of limestone

Alice Oswald (1966–)

- program note by Robert McIntyre

Only in Sleep (2012) – Ēriks Ešenvalds (1977–)

Candlelight VOX. Soloist: Lisette Bolton. Conducted by Grace Gallur.

Ešenvalds, a latter-generation Latvian composer, sets in this work a poem with a much more familiar and welcoming diction than many of the other works on this program. Sara Teasdale (1884–1933) was an American poet who helped found and write for *The Potter's Wheel*, an art and literary magazine run entirely by women artists. "Only in Sleep," from her 1920 collection *Flame and Shadow*, seems to waver between melancholy and peace in its description of the operations of memory: childhood memories seem lost to waking thought and come to us in dreams, but in those moments "Time is forgotten" and the experience seems somehow permanent. It's also an experience that binds you to your childhood friends even in adulthood, in that they too might have these kinds of unchanging dreams. There's something perhaps unsettling about this text, but that may be because this is a type of emotion that we rarely struggle with in public, in poetry, or in choral music. You'll be able to feel the contrast between the almost-folksy declamation of our soloist, Lisette Bolton, and the slow and waltzing choral accompaniment, and we invite you to take the opportunity to acknowledge the sentiments that a work like this explores.

Only in sleep I see their faces,	The years had not sharpened their smooth round
Children I played with when I was a child,	faces,
Louise comes back with her brown hair braided,	I met their eyes and found them mild--
Annie with ringlets warm and wild.	Do they, too, dream of me, I wonder,
	And for them am I too a child?

Only in sleep Time is forgotten--
What may have come to them, who can know?
Yet we played last night as long ago,
And the doll-house stood at the turn of the stair.

- program note by George Cox

Lux Aurumque (2000) – Eric Whitacre (1970–)

Candlelight Vox and guests. Conducted by Grace Gallur.

I have to thank fellow bass Aragorn Keuken for bringing to our attention the somewhat open secret concerning the identity of “Edward Esch,” the purported author of the text of this work. There is no readily available information about this poet, who apparently wrote the following English text:

Light	Lux
warm and heavy as pure gold	calida gravisque pura velut aurum
and the angels sing softly	et canunt angeli molliter
to the newborn babe.	modo natum.

This text was translated into Latin by the American poet Charles Anthony Silvestri (1965–) whose existence is well attested. Silvestri’s website refers to Esch as “elusive,” but one can perhaps detect a certain irony in both Whitacre and Silvestri’s official pronouncements on the matter; consider Silvestri’s surely deliberate invocations of mystery in a phrase like “some have said that Esch died long ago.” Regardless, Lux Aurumque is a cornerstone of contemporary choral repertoire that makes the diatonic cluster a central component of its textural vocabulary. The density of programmatic effect and sensual description is perhaps mirrored by the density of these resonant and vibrant sonorities. The text itself seems to emphasise a cross-sensory equivalence between the visual and the tactile – light, but warm and heavy as gold – but the music goes further, representing this metaphorical pairing with a third sense, the auditory.

- program note by George Cox



Program text collated and edited by George Cox.

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Program design by Anna Keightley.

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With many thanks to the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and the IgniteLAB program.

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CANDLELIGHT VOX - PAUSE

THANK YOU