



Saturday 19 November 2022 at 7.30pm
Verbruggen Hall, Sydney Conservatorium of Music

Sydney Chamber Choir acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we rehearse and perform. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Light & Shade

Sydney Chamber Choir

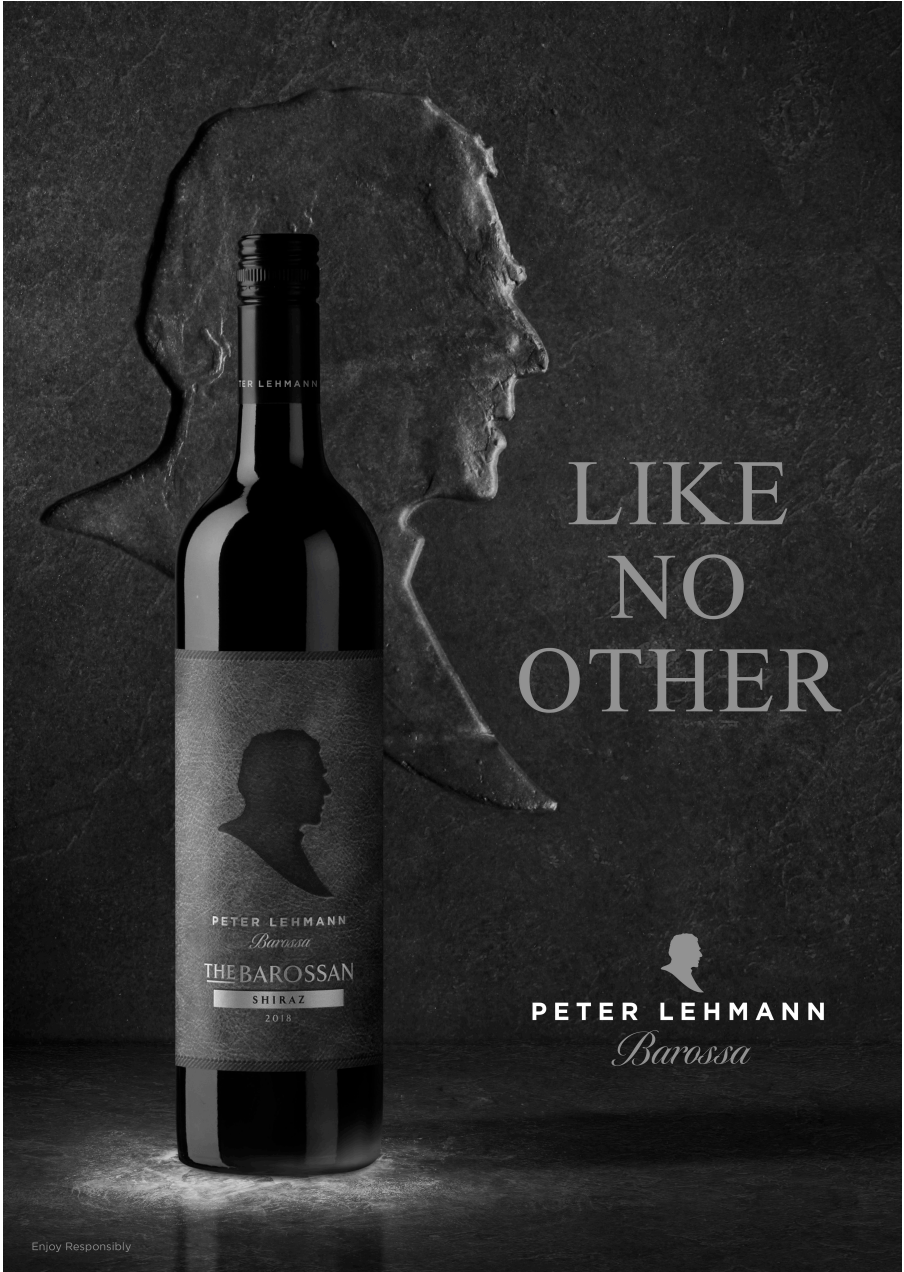
The Muffat Collective

Sam Allchurch *conductor*



Sydney Chamber Choir's 2022 season is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.

As a mark of respect to this wonderful music, Sydney Chamber Choir would appreciate it if audience members would turn off all sound-emitting devices. Thank you.



Enjoy Responsibly

Program

1. **Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott
(A Strong Fortress Is Our God)** Franz Tunder
1614–1667; Germany

2. **Musikalische Exequien
(Musical Funeral Rites)** Heinrich Schütz
1585–1672; Germany
 - I. Concerto in the form of a
German burial mass
 - II. Motet: Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe
(Lord, if I have only you)
 - III. Song of Simeon: Herr, nun lässest du
deinen Diener (Lord, now you let your
servant depart in peace)

3. **La bella pastora
(The Fair Shepherdess)** Johann Heinrich Schmelzer
The Muffat Collective
1620–1680; Austria

4. **Praise the Lord** Brooke Shelley
b.1975; Australia

5. **Hymn to the Creator of Light** John Rutter
born 1945; UK

6. **Heavenly Father** Brooke Shelley
WORLD PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

7. **Lobet den Herrn (Praise the Lord)** Johann Sebastian Bach
1685–1750; Germany

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Sam Allchurch *conductor and Artistic Director*

Pedro Greig



Sam Allchurch took up his appointment as Artistic Director of the Sydney Chamber Choir at the beginning of 2019. Since then, he has directed the choir in a wide range of concerts and collaborations, including Handel's *Messiah* in 2020, *Cycles* for the 2021 Sydney Festival and the premiere of Joseph Twist's *An Australian Song Cycle*.

His programs champion the music of Australian composers such as Paul Stanhope, Joseph Twist, Clare Maclean, Brenda Gifford and Brooke Shelley. In 2022, he will conduct the premiere of new works by Ella Macens and Brooke Shelley and make a studio recording of Paul Stanhope's Requiem with the Sydney Chamber Choir. In 2019, Sam conducted the choir in Holcombe Waller's *Requiem Mass: A Queer Divine Rite*, presented as part of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras arts festival.

Sam is the Director of Music at Christ Church St Laurence, where he conducts the choir which dates back to 1845. This choir sings music of the Anglican choral tradition within the services offered each week at the historic church, including High Mass and Evensong every Sunday and for festivals of the church's year. He is also Associate Artistic Director at Gondwana Choirs, where he works closely with Lyn Williams AM and played a key role in presenting the Gondwana World Choral Festival in 2019.

Sam holds a Bachelor of Music from the University of Melbourne and a Master in Music (Choral Studies) from the University of Cambridge. His studies in Cambridge with Stephen Layton were supported by a scholarship from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The Muffat Collective

The Muffat Collective are a classical music quartet that live, eat and breath 'period music' – that is the incredible music of the 17th and 18th centuries. Each with an impressive solo career at the top of the industry in Australia, Anton Baba, Anthony Abouhamad, Matthew Greco and Rafael Font-Viera join forces to take you back to a historical era full of passion, electrifying vitality and artistic excellence.

The Collective was formed by the chance meeting of these four musicians studying at the same time in The Netherlands. They are currently a part of the musical community at Christ Church St Laurence, Sydney, where they present their yearly concert series. They appear as guests for Musica Viva Australia, Sydney Chamber Choir and Music in the Regions, and are excited to be releasing their first ABC Classic album in 2023.

With period instruments dating from nearly 300 years ago and talents from today, The Collective's goal is to enjoy an enriched understanding and connection in modern Australia to the emotions, historical context and beauty of Baroque music.

The Collective are very pleased to join forces with guest continuo player and organist Kiseok Kim for this evening's presentation of Light & Shade.

Playing in this evening's concert:

Matthew Greco
violin

Rafael Font-Viera
violin

Marianne Yeomans
viola

Anton Baba
cello

Kiseok Kim
organ



Sydney Chamber Choir

Artistic Director – Sam Allchurch

Sydney Chamber Choir is passionate about choral music and its unique ability to celebrate and reflect upon the stories of our past, present and future.

We love to travel deep inside the music to meet the composers and bring their vision alive in sound. We reach back to explore the masterpieces of the Baroque, Renaissance and beyond, while also championing the music of our own time and place, regularly commissioning and premiering works by established and emerging Australian composers.

Sydney Chamber Choir has toured extensively, singing in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the UK, and in 2009 was a prizewinner in the Tolosa International Choral Competition in Spain. We also tour regularly in regional NSW, most recently for Musica Viva, visiting Armidale, Grafton and Coffs Harbour with a program titled *The Art of Choral Harmony*, showcasing choral works from the 12th to the 21st century.

We have also been honoured to work with such guest conductors as Roland Peelman, Brett Weymark, Carl Crossin and Liz Scott, as well as our three previous directors Nicholas Routley, Paul Stanhope and the late Richard Gill AO.

We collaborate with leading Australian instrumentalists and ensembles including the Australian Haydn Ensemble, Synergy Percussion, the Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra, Joseph Tawadros, Slava Grigoryan, Orchestra of the Antipodes, the Muffat Collective and Continuum Sax. We also enjoy more unconventional partnerships, such as concerts with The Idea of North, the Hilltop Hoods and the Sydney Mardi Gras Community Choir. Committed to inspiring future generations of choral singers, we are proud to work regularly with youth ensembles such as the NSW Public Schools Singers.

Our performances have been broadcast across the country on ABC Classic and on Fine Music 102.5, and our CD recordings are available on the ABC Classic and Tall Poppies labels. Our most recent album, *Lux Aeterna*, featuring music of Paul Stanhope, has been acclaimed as ‘worthy of the highest accolade’ (*Fine Music*).

Sopranos

Ria Andriani
Kristen Butchatsky
Louisa Coussens
Megan Cronin
Amanda Durham
Wei Jiang
Liana Papantoniou
Josie Ryan
Rose Trevelyan

Altos

Allison Blake
Bronwyn Cleworth
Alison Keene
Alison Lockhart
Sarah Penn
Natalie Shea

Tenors

Matthew Flood
Rob Hughes
Michael Iglesias
Malcolm O'Brien
Christopher Othen
Murray-Luke Peard
Richard Sanchez
Toby Wong

Basses

David Cervi
Wei-Ju Chang
Christopher Matthies
Sébastien Maury
Sam Merrick
Sam Piper
Ed Suttle
Jesse van Proctor

Pedro Greig



ABOUT THE MUSIC

1. FRANZ TUNDER **Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott**

We begin our concert in the north of Germany, in the city of Lübeck, around 40 years before the birth of J.S. Bach. Franz Tunder was the organist and treasurer/administrator at the city's main church the Marienkirche (Church of St Mary); there, in addition to his liturgical duties, he instigated a series of *Abendmusik* concerts (literally, Evening Music, though they began as entertainment for the wealthy merchants who gathered in the church to await the opening of the stock exchange at noon on Thursdays) which continued until 1810.

About 30 works by Tunder survive; about half of them are music is for the organ, the rest is for voices, and roughly half of those are for choir accompanied by string ensemble. *Ein' feste Burg* is a setting of one of the most famous of Lutheran chorales: with both the words and the melody penned by Luther himself in the late 1520s, the hymn is a supremely confident declaration of the power of Christ to triumph over all evil and adversity. (It is sometimes known as the Battle Hymn of the Reformation.)

Tunder's setting opens with a slow, languid instrumental *sinfonia* before bursting into a dance-like triple time. For the first verse, we hear the chorale tune presented by a single voice, but even here Tunder plays with the tempo and rhythm: this is far from the four-square kind of treatment you would expect from a hymnal!

The second verse starts out with the voices in chorale-style four-part harmony, but that lasts all of one bar before Tunder starts to play around with the material, emphasising individual words and phrases, and painting little scenes with the music – you can practically hear the clashing of swords and the sounding of trumpets as the consonants jostle around in his energetic setting of the words 'es streitet für uns' (he is fighting for us). Sometimes the tune is clear; sometimes it becomes a mere contour, or a trellis for virtuosic flights of fancy. But throughout the work, there is a sense of utter self-assurance, joy and satisfaction; it is surely no coincidence that this music was written in a time of great prosperity in one of the strongest trading ports in Europe.

Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott,
ein' gute Wehr und Waffen;
er hilft uns frei aus aller Not,
die uns jetzt hat betroffen.
Der alte böse Feind,
mit Ernst er's jetzt meint,
groß Macht und viel List
sein' grausam' Rüstung ist,
auf Erd'n ist nicht sein's Gleichen.

Mit unsrer Macht ist nichts getan,
wir sind gar bald verloren;
es streitet für uns der rechte Mann,
den Gott hat selbst erkoren.
Fragest du, wer der ist?
Er heißt Jesus Christ,
der Herr Zebaoth,
und ist kein anderer Gott!
Das Feld muß er behalten!

Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär'
und wollten uns gar verschlingen,
so fürchten wir uns doch nicht so
sehr,
es soll uns doch gelingen.
Der Fürste dieser Welt,
wie sau'r er sich stellt,
tut er uns doch nicht;
das macht, er ist gericht't;
ein Wörtlein kann ihn fällen.

Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn,
und keinen Dank dazu haben:
er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Plan
mit seinem Geist und Gaben.
Nehmen sie uns den Leib,
Gut, Ehr', Kind und Weib:
laß fahren dahin;
sie haben's kein Gewinn,
das Reich Gott's muß uns bleiben.

*A strong fortress is our God,
a good defence and weapon.
Freely he helps us out of any distress
that has now befallen us.
The old evil foe
is utterly determined.
Great might and much cunning
are his fearsome armour;
on earth he has no equal.*

*We can achieve nothing through our
own strength, we would soon be
utterly lost. We have fighting for us
the true Man, chosen by God himself.
Do you ask, who is he?
His name is Jesus Christ,
the Lord of Hosts,
he is no other god than this!
He must triumph in the battle.*

*And if the world were full of devils
and sought to swallow us up
completely, we would not be overcome
by fear:
no, success will be ours.
However grim the prince of this world
may seem,
he can do nothing to us,
for judgement is upon him,
one little word can bring him down.*

*The Word shall remain standing,
no thanks to them!
He is truly on our side,
with his Spirit and his gifts.
Though they take our bodies,
our goods, our honour, our wives and
children, let them all go:
they gain nothing by it. for the
kingdom of heaven will still be ours.*

2. HEINRICH SCHÜTZ *Musikalische Exequien*

Schütz was a contemporary and friend of Schein. It was harsh and bloody time to be alive: in 1577, eight years before Schütz was born, in the town of Weissenfels in Saxony, where Schütz would spend several years of his youth and where Schein worked for a while in the early 1610s, 660 people died of plague – almost a third of the town's population. Plague struck again in 1585 (596 dead), 1599 (492) and 1610 (more than 900 people dead). Enough men were left standing to fight, however: the Thirty Years War which raged throughout central Europe from 1618 was in Germany effectively a civil war which saw thousands die of starvation, let alone the tens of thousands cut down in battle by musket fire or cannon. Everyone knew what death looked like, and those who could made their preparations early.

Heinrich Posthumus Reuss the younger (1572-1635), prince of Gera, Schleiz and Lobenstein, was not a particularly great political power, but he was a studious and highly cultured man who, as Philippe Herreweghe puts it, 'nourished his melancholy nature with religious music'. It is recorded that even his servants were hired primarily for their musical abilities, and only secondarily for their domestic skills. In 1634 he began making the material preparations for his funeral: working on the curriculum vitae which was to read out at the service, choosing the texts for the funeral and burial sermons and selecting the chorales to be sung. He had a coffin constructed, with a series of biblical and chorale verses engraved on the sides and the lid. And he spoke to Schütz about a musical setting of these texts, to be performed at the burial service.

The work is in three sections. The first, and by far the longest, is headed 'Concerto in the form of a German burial mass'. We hear the equivalent of a Kyrie as passages from the book of Job and from the New Testament epistles are punctuated by a threefold exhortation to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to have mercy. For the remainder of this movement, biblical passages sung by small ensembles of solo voices alternate with chorale verses sung by the full six-part choir (the 'capella') to explore themes of forgiveness, the resurrection, the misery of life on earth and the joys that await in heaven.

The second movement sets the biblical text that Prince Heinrich had chosen to be the subject of the homily at his funeral. Here the texture shifts to a double-choir format that recalls the sonorities of Gabrieli

and St Mark's Basilica, with the two choirs answering one another back and forth.

The third part of these 'musical exequies' juxtaposes an angelic solo trio against the full chorus: even for us the effect is dramatic, but for its original hearers it would have been potent beyond anything we can imagine. The prince's embalmed body had lain in state in the castle chapel for two months; it was now transferred to the parish church where the family vault was located. The casket, which was probably still open, would have been on display in the church, directly below the pulpit.

The chorus sings a text from St Luke's gospel, the words of the old man Simeon, who had been told that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah: on seeing the Christ child and realising that he has now with his own eyes seen the salvation God had promised to his people, he is at last free to find peace in death.

The solo trio sings a verse from the book of Revelation: 'Blessed are the dead who have died in the Lord.' The two sopranos in the trio obviously represent angels; it was common at that time to have boy sopranos representing seraphic figures. But the third member of the trio is a bass. Prince Heinrich had himself possessed a fine bass voice, and, as his curriculum vitae notes, sang in many motets and anthems. Schütz (who had been to Italy and studied with Gabrieli in Venice) specified that the trio was to be located at some distance from the main choir; he may have even placed them so that they were not visible to the congregation, an effect that we know Schütz had considered as early as 1623. Schütz even suggested that the trio be duplicated, with 'copies' scattered around the church. The congregation would have heard in this disembodied trio the voice of the Prince himself, now free of sin in the presence of God.

The physical presence of the Prince's dead body was concrete evidence that death was a reality, and resurrection only a promise. The text of the Song of Simeon is the petition of a mortal to God, mindful of that promise; the solo trio offers a response from the soul who has passed through death and can testify first hand that the promised resurrection is true. In the words of Gregory S. Johnston, 'In the end, the congregation could rest assured that only an empty vessel had been interred, for its members had just heard the living spirit singing from above in the heavenly company of angels.'

Part 1: Concert in the form of a German burial mass

Intonation:

Nacket bin ich von Mutterleibe
kommen,

*Naked I came from my mother's
womb,*

Soli:

nacket werde ich wiederum
dahinfahren.

naked I shall return.

Der Herr hat's gegeben,
der Herr hat's genommen,
der Name des Herren sei gelobet.

*The Lord gave,
the Lord has taken away.
Blessed be the name of the Lord.*

(Job 1: 21b)

Capella:

Herr Gott, Vater im Himmel,
erbarm dich über uns.

*Lord God, Father in heaven,
have mercy on us.*

Soli:

Christus ist mein Leben,
Sterben ist mein Gewinn.
Siehe, das ist Gottes Lamm,
das der Welt Sünde trägt.

*For me, to live is Christ,
and to die is gain. (Philippians 1: 21)
Behold, this is the Lamb of God
who carries the sins of the world.*

(John 1: 29b)

Capella:

Jesu Christe, Gottes Sohn,
erbarm dich über uns.

*Jesus Christ, Son of God,
have mercy on us.*

Soli:

Leben wir, so leben wir dem Herren.
Sterben wir, so sterben wir dem
Herren,

*If we live, we live for the Lord.
If we die, we die for the Lord.*

darum wir leben oder sterben,
so sind wir des Herren.

*So whether we live or die,
we belong to the Lord.*

(Romans 14:8)

Capella:

Herr Gott, Heiliger Geist,
erbarm dich über uns.

*Lord God, Holy Spirit,
have mercy on us.*

Intonatio:

Also hat Gott die Welt geliebet,
daß er seinen eingebornen Sohn gab,

*God so loved the world
that he gave his only-begotten son,*

Soli:

auf daß alle, die an ihn gläuben,
nicht verloren werden,
sondern das ewige Lebe haben.

*so that all who believe in him
should not be lost,
but should have eternal life.*

(John 3: 16)

Capella:

Er sprach zu seinem lieben Sohn:
die Zeit ist hie zu erbarmen,
fahr hin, meins Herzens werthe Kron
und sei das Heil der Armen,
und hilf ihn aus der Sünden Not,
erwürg für sie den bitteren Tod
und laß sie mit dir leben.

Soli:

Das Blut Jesu Christi, des Sohnes
Gottes,
machet uns rein von allen Sünden.

Capella:

Durch ihn ist uns vergeben
die Sünd, geschenkt das Leben,
im Himmel solln wir haben,
o Gott, wie große Gaben.

Soli:

Unser Wandel ist im Himmel,
von dannen wir auch warten
des Heilandes Jesu Christi, des
Herren,
welcher unsern nichtigen Leib
verklären wird,
daß er ähnlich werde
seinem verklärten Leibe.

Capella:

Es ist allhier ein Jammertal,
Angst, Not und Trübsal überall,
des Bleibes ist ein kleine Zeit
voller Mühseligkeit,
und wer's bedenkt,
ist immer im Streit.

Soli:

Wenn eure Sünde gleich blutrot
wäre,
so soll sie doch schneeweiß werden.
Wenn sie gleich ist wie rosinfarb,
soll sie doch wie Wolle werden.

*He spoke to his beloved Son:
the time has come to have mercy.
Go forth, precious crown of my heart,
and be the salvation of the poor,
and help them be free of the misery of
sin, destroy bitter death for them
and let them live with you.*

(Martin Luther)

*The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of
God,
makes us clean from all sin.*

(1 John 1: 7b)

*Through him our sins are forgiven
and life is given to us as a gift.
In Heaven, oh God, how great
shall be the gifts we are given.*

(Ludwig Helmbold)

*Our transformation is in heaven;
and from there we await
the saviour Jesus Christ, the
Lord,
who will transfigure our
wretched bodies,
so that they become just like
his transfigured body.*

(Philippians 3:20-21)

*Here we dwell in a vale of tears,
fear, misery and distress everywhere.
Our time here is short
and full of toil,
and whoever reflects on it
is in constant strife.*

(Johann Leon)

*Though your sins were red as
blood,
yet they shall become white as snow.
If they are red as crimson,
yet they shall become white as wool.*

(Isaiah 1: 18b)

Capella:

Sein Wort, sein Tauf, sein
Nachtmahl
dient wider allen Unfall,
der heilige Geist im Glauben
lehrt uns darauf vertrauen.

*His word, his baptism, his
communion
are sufficient against any misfortune.
Belief in the Holy Spirit
teaches us to put our trust in them.*

(Ludwig Helmbold)

Solo:

Gehe hin, mein Volk, in eine
Kammer
und schließ die Tür nach dir zu.
Verbirge dich einen kleinen
Augblick,
bis der Zorn vorrübergehe.

*Leave here, my people, go into a
chamber
and shut the door behind you.
Hide yourselves for a little
while
until the wrath has passed by.*

(Isaiah 26: 20)

Soli:

Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes
Hand
und keine Qual rühret sie an.
Für den Unverständigen werden sie
angesehen, als stürben sie,
und ihr Abschied wird für eine Pein
gerechnet
und ihr Hinfairen für Verderben,
aber sie sind in Frieden.

*The souls of the righteous are in the
hand of God,
and no torment shall trouble them.
To those who do not understand, it
seems as if they have died,
and their departure is counted as
suffering,
and their leaving us, as disaster.
but they are at peace.*

(Wisdom 3:1-3)

Solo:

Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe,
so frage ich nichts nach Himmel und
Erden.

*Lord, if I have nothing but you,
I ask for nothing else in heaven and
earth.*

Soli:

Wenn mir gleich Leib und Seele
verschmacht,
so bist du Gott allzeit
meines Herzens Trost und mein Teil.

*Though I languish in body and
soul,
yet you, God, are forever
my heart's comfort and my portion.*

(Psalm 73:25-26)

Capella:

Er ist das Heil und selig Licht
für die Heiden,
zu erleuchten, die dich kennen nicht
und zu weiden.
Er ist seines Volks Israel
der Preis, Ehr, Freud und Wonne.

*He is salvation and blessed light
to the heathen,
to enlighten those who do not know
you, and to give them nourishment.
To his people Israel
he is their glory, honour, joy and
delight.*

(Martin Luther)

Soli:

Unser Leben währet siebenzig Jahr,
und wenn's hoch kömmt, so sind's
achtzig Jahr,
und wenn es köstlich gewesen ist,
so ist es Müh und Arbet gewesen.

*Our life lasts seventy years,
eighty at the most,*

*and though it be pleasant,
yet it is toil and labour.*

(Psalm 90:10)

Capella:

Ach, wie elend ist unser Zeit
allhier aur dieser Erden,
gar bald der Mensch darnieder leit,
wir müssen alle sterben.
Allhier in diesem Jammertal,
ist Müh und Arbeit überall,
auch wenn dir's wohl gelinget.

*Oh, how wretched is our time
here on this earth.*

Mortals are soon laid low.

We must all die.

Here in this vale of tears,

all is toil and labour,

even if things go well for you.

(Johannes Gigas)

Solo:

Ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt,
und er wird mich hernach
aus der Erden auferwecken,
und werde darnach mit dieser
meiner Haut umgeben werden,
und werde in meinem Fleisch Gott
sehen.

*I know that my redeemer lives,
and later he will awaken me
up out of the earth,
and will clothe me
in this my skin,*

and in my own flesh I shall see

God.

(Job 19:25)

Capella:

Weil du vom Tod erstanden bist
werd ich im Grab nicht bleiben.
Mein höchster Trost dein Auffahrt
ist,

*Since you have risen from the dead,
I will not remain in the grave. Your
ascension to heaven is my greatest
consolation;*

Todsforcht kannst du vertreiben,
denn wo du bist, da komm ich hin,
daß ich stets bei dir leb und bin,
drum fahr ich hin mit Freuden.

you can drive away the fear of death.

For where you are, there I shall come,

and be with you and live with you

forever. Therefore I depart in joy.

(Nikolaus Herman)

Soli:

Herr ich lasse dich nicht,
du segnest mich denn.

*Lord, I shall not let you go
unless you bless me.*

(Genesis 32: 27)

Capella:

Er sprach zu mir: halt dich an mich,
es soll dir itzt gelingen,
ich geb mich selber ganz für dich,
da will ich für dich ringen,
den Tod verschlingt das Leben mein,
mein Unschuld trägt die Sünde dein,
da bist du selig worden.

*He spoke to me: Hold fast to me,
now you shall have what you seek.*

I give myself utterly for you,

I will fight for you.

My life will swallow up death,

my innocence will carry your sins,

and you shall be made blessed.

(Martin Luther)

Part II: Motet

Herr, wenn ich nur dich habe,
so frage ich nichts nach Himmel und
Erden.

Wenn mir gleich Leib und Seele
verschmacht,
so bist du doch, Gott, allezeit meines
Herzens Trost und mein Teil.

*Lord, if I have nothing but you,
I ask for nothing else in heaven and
earth.*

*Though I languish in body and
soul,
yet you, God, are forever my heart's
comfort and my inheritance.*

(Psalm 73:25-26)

Part III: Song of Simeon

Chorus I:

Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener
in Frieden fahren, wie du gesagt
hast.

Denn meine Augen
haben deinen Heiland gesehen,
welchen du bereitet hast für allen
Völkern,
ein Licht, zu erleuchten
die Heiden
und zum Preis deines Volks Israel.

*Lord, now you let your servant depart
in peace, just as you said it would
happen.*

*For I have seen with my own eyes
your salvation
which you have prepared for all
peoples:
a light to enlighten
those who do not know you, and to be
the glory of your people Israel.*

(Luke 2: 29-32)

Chorus II:

Selig sind die Toten,
die in dem Herren sterben.
Sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit
und ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.
Sie sind in der Hand des Herren
und keine Qual rühret sie.
Selig sind die Toten,
die in dem Herren sterben.

*Blessed are the dead
who die in the Lord.
They are at rest from their labours
and their good deeds go with them.
They are in the hand of God,
and no torment shall trouble them.
Blessed are the dead
who die in the Lord.*

(Revelation 14:13)

3. JOHANN HEINRICH SCHMELZER *La bella pastora*

Schmelzer spent his working life at the Habsburg court in Vienna, making this instrumental interlude something of a diversion from this mainly northern German program. He was the leading Austrian composer of his day and also one of the most important violinists of the period.

4. BROOKE SHELLEY **Praise the Lord**

Brooke Shelley holds a Bachelor of Music (Hons) in Composition from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and a Master of Music in Advanced Musical Studies, majoring in Historical Musicology, from Royal Holloway, University of London. In addition to her training on piano and harpsichord, she has extensive experience as a choral singer, and this is reflected in her composition portfolio which is dominated by choral works for the liturgy. She has been interviewed on a number of ABC Radio National programs, including *The Rhythm Divine*, and *The Spirit of Things*. Although classically trained, she has always loved popular music, particularly Scandinavian metal music. She formed the band Resonaxis as a way of combining metal and renaissance music with the improvisations of renowned Australian organist David Drury. (Resonaxis was perhaps the only band in the world with a classical organist.)

The composer writes:

Praise the Lord was commissioned by Associate Professor Michael Horsburgh AM, a parishioner and Parish Lay Reader at St James' Church, King Street Sydney. Having heard my other choral works, Michael approached me to see if I would compose a piece for his 80th birthday using the text from Psalm 147, verses 1 and 7. He gave me a selection of English translations of the text from which to choose, and I settled (unknowingly at the time) on his favourite version, that by Myles Coverdale (1488–1569). Michael asked for the composition to be joyful, since he thought it was rather a joyful and 'good thing' to be reaching 80 years of age!

I have heard many sermons, addresses and seminars presented by Michael, and I have always been struck by his understanding of text and ritual. His delivery of text is deliberate – words are not glossed over. I hoped my treatment of the text in this piece reflected his deliberate intention, and that the music adequately conveys the ecstatic joy (and relief) of reaching 80 years of age.

Praise the Lord, for it is a good thing
to sing praises unto our God.
Yea, a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful.
O sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving,
sing praises upon the harp unto our God.

(Psalm 147: 1, 7)

5. JOHN RUTTER **Hymn to the Creator of Light**

The British composer John Rutter has something of a reputation for writing ‘family friendly’ music, which has led many to dismiss his works as excessively singable and tuneful; he is probably best known for a large catalogue of Christmas carols. This work, however, reveals a less familiar side. Written for the dedication of a stained glass window which was installed in Gloucester Cathedral in memory of fellow British composer Herbert Howells in 1992, it begins in a profoundly mystical vein, with one choir chanting an unsettlingly chromatic melody spread out over multiple octaves while the other adds an overlay of equally unexpected chord progressions. An energetic central section in praise of the various books of the Bible is more familiar Rutter territory, but the work’s real coup is a breathtakingly beautiful transition into the choral tune *Schmücke dich* (best known as the melody to the hymn ‘Deck thyself, my soul in gladness’), here sung to poetry in praise of God as the light who brightens the world.

The striking text is from a book of private prayers, originally written in Latin, by the 17th-century English bishop Lancelot Andrewes: you probably don’t know his name but you will know his works, as he was the lead translator and general editor of the King James version of the bible, and also the author of the sermon quoted by T.S. Eliot at the beginning of his poem *The Journey of the Magi* (‘A cold coming we had of it...’)

Glory be to thee, O Lord, glory be to thee,
Creator of the visible light,
The sun’s ray, the flame of fire,
Creator also of the light invisible and intellectual,
That which is known of God, the light invisible.

Glory be to thee, O Lord, creator of the light,
For writings of the law,
For oracles of prophets,
For melody of psalms,
For wisdom of proverbs,
Experience of histories,
A light which never sets.
God is the Lord who has shewed us light.

Lancelot Andrewes (1555–1626)
translated by Alexander Whyte

Light, who dost my soul enlighten;
Sun who all my life dost brighten;
Joy, the sweetest man e'er knoweth;
Fount, whence all my being floweth.
From thy banquet let me measure,
Lord, how vast and deep its treasure;
Through the gifts thou here does give us,
As they guest in heav'n receive us.

Johann Franck (1618–1677)

translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827–1878)

6. BROOKE SHELLEY **Heavenly Father**

WORLD PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

Commissioned by Sydney Chamber Choir

This work was commissioned to be, in the first instance, a companion piece to the Schütz *Musikalische Exequien*, and composer Brooke Shelley has drawn inspiration from Schütz's work in a number of ways. Most obviously, there are numerous melodies borrowed from the *Musikalische Exequien*, starting with the first soprano melody in the opening passage. However, there are other, deeper connections between the two works. The composer writes:

'In a conversation with Sam Allchurch about what this commission would be, it was agreed that the sense of the work would be about the circle of life expressed in *Musikalische Exequien* rather than about death itself. It is because of this 'sense' that the end of *Heavenly Father* is reversed, illustrating a musical circle: the lower voices sing the *Herr Gott, Vater im Himmel* phrase backwards, and the upper voices sing the melodies backwards that were sung by the lower voices at the beginning.

'The companion text by Nicolaus Herman, whose poetry was set in *Musikalische Exequien*, was suggested by The Very Rev'd Dr Andreas Loewe, Dean of Melbourne, St Paul's Cathedral.

'Queen Elizabeth II died while this piece was being written, and her death inspired the music and text in the middle of the work. The section is meant to express the sadness of losing a loved one, but that it is all part of the circle of life – along with the circle of the seasons, which continue long after we have gone (hopefully!) – and that death comes to us all ('amber on the horizon').'

Herr Gott, Vater im Himmel

Lord God, Heavenly Father

Wenn uns jetzt geh'n die Augen zu,

When our eyes now close

Und unser Stund ist kommen,,

And our hour's come

Dann trägt man uns in Ruh-Bettlein,

They carry us to our resting bed

Darin gar sanft wir schlafen ein

Where we'll sleep softly

Bis uns der Herr erwecket.

Until the Lord awakens us.

After your last intake of breath

the world was hushed silent,

like an autumn gust carrying away the last amber leaves

and we stand bare and still.

Then tears on the ground give life to new green,

whispers grow to shouts of verdant joy,

and we begin again...

but with amber on the horizon

Der Tod uns nicht mehr halten mag

Death may no longer hold us back

Christ wird uns los machen.

Christ will set us free.

Amen.

Amen.

Trans. Dean Andreas Loewe

September 2022

7. JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH **Lobet den Herrn**

There is little to be said about Bach's *Lobet den Herrn* – not because the piece is in any way unworthy, but because hardly anything is known about it. The monumental *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis*, the authoritative catalogue of all Bach's works, confidently gives it a BWV number along with the rest of Bach's motets, but there is some doubt as to whether it should be considered a motet – and indeed, whether the piece is by Bach at all.

No copy survives in Bach's own handwriting, or in that of any of his usual copyists. The first publisher, Breitkopf & Härtel, claimed that their edition (1821) was based on Bach's autograph score, but that manuscript was lost well over a hundred years ago. Also, the vocal writing is unusual for Bach, highly instrumental in character, with many large leaps – this is clear from the opening notes, a fanfare which practically cries out for trumpets. It is, however, a work of Bach-like genius, and in the absence of any plausible alternative geniuses, it seems that the piece will retain its Bachian attribution.

The work is scored for four-part choir and basso continuo (a keyboard instrument – usually organ or harpsichord – with a cello to emphasise the bass line). This in itself is unusual among Bach’s motets, which, being written for special occasions, make use of a larger choir – eight parts, in most cases. The behaviour of the continuo is also strange for a motet: instead of simply playing along with the vocal parts, it has its own music fully written out, often playing independently of the choir. For these reasons, it has been suggested that the work is not really a motet, but rather part of a larger-scale work; perhaps the opening chorus of a cantata which was never completed, or has since been lost.

The text comes from the Old Testament: Psalm 117 (the shortest book in the bible, at just two verses). We have no idea of when this piece was written, nor for what occasion, but it seems clear that it must have been a happy one, as the music is exuberantly joyous. The piece is in three sections: the first, with its trumpet-like arpeggios, takes its cue from the first word, Lobet (praise), exhorting all who hear, far and wide, to join in praising God. The second section is much calmer, a musical expression of God’s grace and truth reigning for ever. The motet ends with an irrepressibly bright, dancing Alleluja.

Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden,
und preiset ihn, alle Völker!
Denn seine Gnade und Wahrheit
waltet über uns in Ewigkeit.
Alleluja.

*Praise the Lord, all you nations,
and extol him, all you peoples.
For his grace and truth
reign over us for ever.
Alleluia.*

(Psalm 117)

Program notes by Natalie Shea

Sydney Chamber Choir Supporters

*Sydney Chamber Choir gratefully acknowledges
the financial support of the following donors
who are supporting us in 2022/23:*

Leading Lights and Guiding Lights

\$5,000 – \$9,999

Iphygenia Kallinikos

\$1,000 – \$4,999

Helen Allchurch

Martha Birch-Rufle & Frank Rufle

Deirdre & Peter Bridgwood

Stephen & Annabelle Burley

Ewen & Catherine Crouch

Kate Friis & James O'Toole

Alison Lockhart & Bruce Watson

James & Simone Lockhart

Terence & Lorraine Minton

Dr Gaston Nguyen & Robert Veel

Paul O'Donnell

Othen Family

Colin & Margaret Prebble

Peter & Robin Shea

Pamela & Jonathan Summers

Ed & Jane Suttle

Doug & Nicolette Vass

\$500 – \$999

Greg & Annette Anderson

John Hughes

Rob Hughes & Robyn Bailey

Andrew Keene

John & Vanessa Mack

Jean-Pierre & Gillian Maury

Belinda Montgomery

Graham Parsons

Sally Ross

Valerie Tupper

Kay Vernon

Anonymous (1)

\$250 – \$499

David Cervi & Liz Strasser

Roz Cheney

Rina Chow

Ian Cleworth

Katherine Day

Robert Green

Ruth Jeremy

Wei Jiang

Malcolm McPherson

Sébastien Maury

Joshua Murray

Anonymous (1)

Donations

\$10,000 +

Anonymous (1)

\$1,000 – \$4,999

Rhae Hooper
Maria O'Donnell
Kate Reid
Maree Watts
Anonymous (5)

\$500 – \$999

Sandra Harrison & François
Helsen
Helen Johnston
Ms Robin King
In memoriam Annette McClure
Anonymous (3)

\$250 – \$499

Debra Batley
Kerin Brown
Amanda Durham
Cathie Hull
Anonymous (3)

Up to \$249

Catherine Baldwin
Sara Bennett
Peter Bergman
Peter Cassidy
Elaine Chia
Robert Daley
Jeanette Freeman
Mary Ann Gamutan
Cassandra Gunn
David Hoffman
Evelyne Jones
Andrew Lloyd-James
Alison McIntyre
Richard McIntyre
Jenny McNaughton
Frank Maio
Anne Makepeace
Barbara Matthies
Isabella Messina
Jonathan & Beverley Milford
Kurt & Vanessa Olofsson
William Somerville
Edward Theodore
Peter Wolfe
Anonymous (8)

Sydney Chamber Choir thanks

Australian Digital Concert Hall
Christ Church St Laurence
Nathan Cox • Owen Elsley • Liam Green • Wei Jiang
Alison Lockhart • Joshua Murray • Murray-Luke Peard
Natalie Shea • Sydney Conservatorium of Music
Sydney Grammar School • Thomas Wilson

Our publicist, Martin Portus

And our volunteer:
Inanna Sage



SYDNEY CHAMBER CHOIR Inc

PO Box 1151, Newtown NSW 2042
ph 1300 661 738

www.sydneychamberchoir.org
www.facebook.com/SydneyChamberChoir

Artistic Director: Sam Allchurch
President: Christopher Matthies
Vice-President: Alison Keene
Secretary: Rose Trevelyan
Treasurer: Wei-Ju Chang
Marketing: Amanda Durham

Artistic Advisor: Paul Stanhope
Rehearsal Pianist: Jem Harding

Librarian: Murray-Luke Peard
Philanthropy Coordinator: Alison Lockhart
Administrator: Stephen Bydder

Cover design by joshmurray.com.au