

ChoirWorks

presents



Meditations

Sunday, 20 July 2025, 3.00pm

St Andrew's Uniting Church
cnr Creek and Ann Streets, Brisbane



choirworks.au

Meditations

ChoirWorks

Acting Director of Music - **Brett Gordon**

Piano - **John Woods**

Violin

Rebekah Hall
Quianna Morgan
Jenny Vandenberg
Lydia Hwang

Viola

Ash Abul
Liam Mallinson

Cello

Stirling Hall
Henry Jarvela

ChoirWorks, formerly known as Brisbane Concert Choir, has been a popular part of the Brisbane musical landscape for almost 30 years. Each year the choir presents a variety of concerts, performing a cappella or with piano accompaniment, as well as working with ensembles and orchestras. We also regularly combine forces with other choirs around the city to present larger works.

ChoirWorks Members

Rehearsal Accompanist: **John Woods**

Soprano: Celine Bowman, Annette Corkhill, Bronwyn Cox, Kellie Corbett, Barbara Crellin, Jane Deighton, Helen Fredericks, Stephanye Guzman, Amy Lun, Dianne Mandeville, Judy Neal, Lucinda Porter, Louise Strasser, Liesl Taylor, Linda von Nida, Liz Yee, Monique Yun, Grace Zhang.

Alto: Milly Blakeley, Christine Campbell, Amanda Dee, Sannie Dragani, Sue Gray, Grete Hindsberger, Jan Hungerford, Melissa Hutchinson, Stella Jenks, Barbara Lamb, Barbara Maenhaut, Lynne Maurer, Maithili Mehta, Lisa Monsen, Sophie Mortensen, Jane Oliver, Kathy Teakle.

Tenor: Simon Burgess, Ian Clarkson, Lourens Feuth, Chris Ho, Paul Kennedy, Neil Mason, David McNeven, Eric von Nida.

Bass: Robert Bray, Joel Corney, Ben Leong, Mervyn Long, Murray Massey, Ian Maurer, Ross Salomon, Tim Smetham, Michael Strasser, Rick Valenta.

Program

O Virtus Sapientiae Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179)

Soloists: Jane Deighton, Stephanye Guzman, Liesl Taylor

Nada Te Turbe Arr. Jacques Berthier (1923-1994)

Words by St Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)

Soloists: Neil Mason, Melissa Hutchinson, Liesl Taylor, Tim Smetham

O Nata Lux Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)

Five Hebrew Love Songs Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

Words by Hila Plitmann (b. 1973)

I. Temuná

II. Kalá kallá

III. Lárov

IV. Éyze shéleg! *Soloists: Celine Bowman (spoken text)*

Jane Deighton, Stephanye Guzman

V. Rakút

The Lamb John Tavener (1944-2013)

Words by William Blake (1757-1827)

Salve Regina Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)

Dreamweaver Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)

Words by Charles Anthony Silvestri (b. 1965)

1. Prologue

2. Dreamsong *Soloists: Jane Deighton, Stephanye Guzman, Liesl Taylor*

3. The Bridge *Soloist: Bronwyn Cox*

4. Intermezzo

5. Paradise *Soloists: Bronwyn Cox, Jane Deighton, Stephanye Guzman*

6. Dominion

7. Epilogue

Program Notes

by Brett Gordon, Acting Director of Music

Welcome to Season 2 for 2025 – *Meditations*.

There is an inward tone, a quiet reverence, and a stillness that permeates the music in this concert. Across this season of singing, I wanted to explore how composers use repetition and minimal ideas to create a sense of ritual, contemplation, and spiritual introspection.

We begin with the ancient world of Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179). Her antiphon features a single melodic line from the soloists, drawn from a limited set of pitches within the modal scale. The choir sustains a drone beneath, evoking a timeless, monastic atmosphere.

In the Taizé community in France, meditative singing is central to worship. Short songs, repeated again and again, allow worshippers to gradually internalise their meaning until the song itself becomes a form of prayer. *Nada te Turbe* uses a simple four-bar melody, harmonised in hymn style and sung as a mantra, while the soloists and strings introduce ever-changing musical ideas to provide subtle contrast.

Lauridsen's *O Nata Lux*, from *Lux Aeterna*, is a luminous and deeply introspective meditation on divine light and the mystery of the Incarnation. Gentle and spacious, the setting invites the listener inward, offering beauty through restraint and balance.

Whitacre's *Five Hebrew Love Songs* offer intimate snapshots of love, longing, and reflection. The fourth movement, *Eyze sheleg (What Snow!)*, is particularly meditative—built on just four descending notes that fall like snow, forming a delicate foundation over which the soloists and violin weave expressive flourishes.

With the music of Tavener and Arvo Pärt, we enter the realm of spiritual minimalism, where silence, repetition, and symmetry are as expressive as melody. Tavener's *The Lamb* carries a sense of fragility, purity, and innocence that belies the technical challenges of the melodic tone row. The piece is built from a seven-note motif, mirrored and inverted across the choral parts, creating an atmosphere of sacred stillness.

At the heart of our concert is Pärt's *Salve Regina* (2001), composed in his mature tintinnabuli style. The work begins with a chant-like melody and unfolds with bell-like triadic harmonies that slowly and reverently shape the

text. The celeste adds a delicate shimmer, while the strings maintain a hypnotic rhythmic pulse. Silence is used with purpose—moments for breath, for reflection, for prayer. For the choir, the sustained phrases require immense discipline and control, adding to the music's contemplative weight.

Finally, we arrive at Ola Gjeilo's *Dreamweaver*, a dramatic and visionary setting of the medieval Norwegian folk poem *Draumkvædet*. In this dream narrative, a man falls asleep on Christmas Eve and journeys through darkness and trial toward redemption. Gjeilo's score is richly cinematic—sweeping harmonies, rhythmic repetition, and luminous textures create a sense of suspended time and awe. In the third movement, *The Bridge*, a relentless 5/8 pulse conjures the terror of beasts and spiritual danger, while the choir soars above with intensity and hope. The result is a musical dreamscape—part vision, part prayer.

ChoirWorks: Our Strategic Vision

Our core goal is to create and promote harmony in music and society

ChoirWorks is a volunteer not-for-profit group seeking to encourage community-wide engagement through the exploration of a wide-ranging repertoire anchored in the classical genre. The singers own the choir and hire and work under a professional director of music with a professional accompanist. To help achieve our goals, and to enable us to present concerts with instrumental accompaniment at affordable ticket prices, ChoirWorks is grateful for any donations to its tax-deductible Gift Fund.

For more details follow the QR code link or go to choirworks.au/donations.



Make a tax-deductible gift to ChoirWorks.

Thank you to our generous donors
who have supported this concert!

O Virtus Sapientiae
Hildegard von Bingen

O Virtus Sapientiae,
quae circuiens circuisti comprehendendo
omnia in una via,
quae habet vitam,
tres alas habens,
quarum una in altum volat,
et altera de terra sudat,
et tertia undique volat.
Laus tibi sit, sicut te decet,
O Sapientia.

*O Strength of Wisdom
who, circling, circled,
enclosing all
in one lifegiving path,
three wings you have:
one soars to the heights,
one distils its essence upon the earth,
and the third is everywhere.
Praise to you, as is fitting,
O Wisdom.*

Nada Te Turbe
Arr. Jacques Berthier
Words by St Teresa of Avila

Nada te turbe, nada te espante.
Quien a Dios tiene nada le falta,
Nada te turbe, nada te espante.
Solo Dios basta.

*Let nothing trouble you, let nothing
frighten you,
He who loves God needs nothing.
Let nothing trouble you, let nothing
frighten you,
God alone suffices.*

Todo se pasa, Dios no se muda,
La paciencia todo lo alcanza.

*All things pass, God does not change,
With patience, everything is possible.*

En Cristo mi confianza,
y de Él solo mi asimiento;
en sus cansancios mi aliento,
y en su imitación mi holganza.

*My trust is in Christ,
And my affection is his alone;
My breath is present in his weariness
And my peace of mind is present in
imitating him.*

Aquí estriba mi firmeza,
aquí mi seguridad,
la prueba de mi verdad,
la muestra de mi firmeza.

*Here lies my steadfastness,
Here lies my safety,
Christ is the proof of my truth,
The evidence of my steadfastness.*

Ya no durmáis, no durmáis,
Pues que no hay paz en la tierra.
No hay a ningún cobarde,
aventuremos la vida.
No hay que temer, no durmáis,
aventuremos la vida.

*Stay awake, keep watch,
there is no peace on the earth.
Nothing can frighten those who make
the journey and seek God.
Nothing can frighten those who make
the journey and seek God.*

O nata lux

Morten Lauridsen

O nata lux de lumine,
Jesu redemptor saeculi,
Dignare clemens supplicum
Laudes preces que sumere.

Qui carne quondam contegi
Dignatus es pro perditis.
Nos membra confer effici,
Tui beati corporis.

*O Light born of Light,
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
with loving-kindness deign to receive
supplicant praise and prayer.*

*Thou who once deigned to be clothed in flesh
for the sake of the lost,
grant us to be members
of thy blessed body.*

Five Hebrew Love Songs

Eric Whitacre

Words by Hila Plitmann

I. Temuná

Temuná belibí charutá;
Nodédet beyn ór uveyñ ófel;
Min dmamá shekazó et guféch kach otá.
Usaréch al paná'ich kach nófel

II. Kalá kallá

Kalá kallá Kulá shelí,
La la la la ...
U'veka lút Tishák hí lí!
Kalá kallá Kulá shelí, la la la ...

III. Lárov

“Laróv,” amár gag la'shama'im,
“Hamerchák shebeynéynu hu ad;
Ach lifnéy zman alu lechán shna'im,
Uveynéynu nishár sentiméter echad.”

IV. Éyze shéleg!

Bong
Éyze shéleg!
Kmo chalamót ktaním
Noflím mehashamáim.

V. Rakút

Tum tum ...
Hu hayá malé rakút;
Hi haytá kashá.
Vechól káma shenistá lehishaér kach.
Pashút, uvlí sibá tová,
Lakách otá el toch atzmó,
Veheníach Bamakóm hachí rach.

I. A picture

*A picture is engraved in my heart;
Moving between light and darkness:
A sort of silence envelops your body,
And your hair falls upon your face just so.*

II. Light bride

*Light bride
She is all mine,
And lightly
She will kiss me!*

III. Mostly

*“Mostly,” said the roof to the sky,
“the distance between you and I is endlessness;
But a while ago two came up here,
And only one centimetre was left between us.”*

IV. What snow!

*Bong
What snow!
Like little dreams
Falling from the sky.*

V. Tenderness

*He was full of tenderness;
She was very hard.
And as much as she tried to stay thus,
Simply, and with no good reason,
He took her into himself,
And set her down
In the softest, softest place.*

The Lamb

John Tavener

Words by William Blake (1757-1827)

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice!
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb.
He is meek and he is mild;
He became a little child.
I, a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

Salve Regina

Arvo Pärt

Salve, Regina, mater misericordiae,
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.

Ad te clamamus exsules filii Evae.

Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
in hac lacrimarum valle.

Eia, ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos
misericordes oculos ad nos converte.

Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.

O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

*Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life,
our sweetness, and our hope.*

*To thee do we cry, poor banished
children of Eve;*

*To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning
and weeping in this valley of tears.*

*Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine
eyes of mercy toward us;*

*And after this our exile, show unto us the
blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.*

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Dreamweaver

Ola Gjeilo

Words by Charles Anthony Silvestri

1. Prologue

Listen!

I sing the sacred vision
Of the All-Wise Wanderer,
The Weaver of Dreams.

On Christmas Eve he fell asleep,
So deep, so deep,
And woke upon Epiphany
With tales to tell.

He hurried to the holy Mass
And stood upon the threshold;
The warp and weft of wandering
He wove into his tale.

2. Dreamsong

And this was his dreamsong:

My journey began
In a rugged land,
Hard and fast
And unforgiving.
I made my way.

3. The Bridge

Beasts there were,
And wilder things,
And shades of night
Were in that land;
I was afraid.

The monster's claws
Tore at my cloak;
With piercing eyes
They saw my soul.
I ran away.

For many leagues
I travelled west
Until at last –
My journey's end –
I saw the Bridge!

Stretching out
Across the sky,
The way was barred
To all but wise.
I went across.

This bridge was spanned
across a sea of ice –
A silver band, a way to Paradise.
A fair wide land did open up at last;
I stopped to stand where Future
reckons Past.

And in that place
the Pilgrim Church did rise
Where, full of grace,
our Holy Mother wise
Bade me embrace
her heart of gold and red;
And o'er her face
a loving smile was spread.

I met a man,
whose coat was stained in blood,
All mired was he,
up to his knees in mud;
He held a frightened child under his arm,
And bitterly he wept for causing harm.

4. Intermezzo

5. Paradise

She spoke in gentle tone
and bade me go
Where every sin is known,
where cold winds blow,
Unto the very throne
of God to see
Where sorrow is unknown,
forgiveness, free.

6. Dominion

And through darkness appeared the Christ,
wreathed in light, flanked by saints and
angels beyond number, and crowned as King and
Judge over all the earth. The Deceiver turned in
fear, and fled from before the Glory of the Lord
and the Host of Heaven.

Among the souls
Who trembled there
Burdened down
With sin and fear,
I took my place.

To Christ the Judge
St. Michael spoke,
Defending us
Despite our shame.
I hung my head.

So one by one
We stood alone
Before our Maker
And our Judge.
He called my name.

His burning heart
Loved away my shame,
And forged my soul
Anew by Grace –
I was redeemed!

7. Epilogue

Cloaked all in lead another fell,
Laden with burdens heavy;
She lost her soul in fear of hell
In hope that she might be free.

Others there were by pain ensnared
By their grief and tribulation,
Hoping that they may yet be spared
And praying for salvation.

He forged their souls
Anew by Grace –
And all were redeemed.

Brett Gordon

Acting Director of Music - ChoirWorks

After graduating from the Queensland Conservatorium of Music with a major in piano and voice, Brett pursued a career in secondary music education, and in various school leadership roles. He is now a Director within the IT branch of Education Queensland.

Brett has extensive experience conducting and directing choirs in church and community settings, as well as within high schools – particularly male voice choirs. He has a strong passion for composition, orchestration, and choral arranging.

John Woods

Piano

John Woods' career in music and the arts began in the cold of the northern hemisphere. Born in Stirling in Scotland, he entered the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, studying piano and bassoon. This led to scholarships awarded by The Scottish Arts Council and The Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust, to specialise in piano accompaniment at The Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.

In 1992 John joined the staff of The Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, as an accompanist and vocal coach, work that involved preparing many of its operas, including the Australian premiere of Britten's *Billy Budd*, a feature of the 1993 Brisbane Biennial Festival. His work since then, accompanying singers and instrumentalists on the concert platform, and for radio and television broadcasts, has taken John on memorable journeys throughout Great Britain, Europe and Australia.

Among his most memorable experiences, John accompanied masterclasses given by distinguished singers such as Dame Joan Sutherland, Dame Janet Baker, Dame Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Sir Peter Pears and Luigi Alva, whom he has also accompanied in recital. John has been accompanying the choir in rehearsal and performances since 2006.

String Ensemble

The chamber ensemble formed for this concert features alumni and current students from the Queensland Conservatorium and University of Queensland. Many of these players have performed with the Australian Youth Orchestra, Camerata, Cadenza Chamber Players, Queensland Pops Orchestra and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

Violin

Rebekah Hall
Quianna Morgan
Jenny Vandenberg
Lydia Hwang

Viola

Ash Abul
Liam Mallinson

Cello

Stirling Hall
Henry Jarvela

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Our next concert here at St Andrew's: **Saturday, 20 September 2025, 3.00pm**

Mass Appeal

B
Kyrie
Agnus Dei
Credo
d
Gloria
Sanctus
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We invite you on a captivating journey through the ages as composers explore the Latin Mass as a profound vehicle of creative expression and spiritual reflection.

Featuring choir and glorious organ, the program is centred around Dvorák's Mass in D and surrounded by a rich tapestry of sacred works from across the centuries.

Come and experience this uplifting celebration of music, faith, and tradition.



Sunday, 7 December 2025

Venue - Lightspace, Fortitude Valley

Dr. Debra Shearer-Dirié will conduct ChoirWorks in a renewed version of this extremely popular Christmas event, accompanied by **Kelsey Giarola and her trio.**



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Program compiled by Janet Gilbert and Ian Maurer

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