

RING OUT THE OLD, RING IN THE NEW

Saturday 5 June, 7.30pm
Federation Concert Hall, Hobart

June Tyzack conductor
Elinor Lea violin
Martin Penicka cello
Jennifer Marten-Smith piano
TSO Chorus

HØYBYE Psalm 151 (15')
BARNUM The Stars Stand Up In The Air (6')
TWIST Lament (8')
FORREST The Sun Never Says (5')
GJEILO The Ground (4')
DOVE Ring Out, Wild Bells (7')

Danish composer, conductor and arranger John Høybye (born 1939) is a major figure in the Scandinavian choral world. His original compositions include liturgical works, carols and madrigals. Psalm 151, on lyrics by Edward Broadbridge, has been described as a miniature, un-staged, theatrical play. For four-part choir and solo violin, it sets up a dialogue between God and humanity with the solo violin representing the voice of God. The soprano solo in this performance is sung by Carolyn Seelen.

The Stars Stand Up In The Air, which is for four-part choir and piano, is by American composer Eric William Barnum (born 1979). A setting of a poem by Irish nationalist and poet Thomas MacDonagh – who was executed following his role in the Easter Rising of 1916 – The Stars Stand Up In The Air is a lover's lament. Two lines in the middle of the poem sum up the whole: Three things through love I see – Sorrow and sin and death.

Lament, by Australian composer Joseph Twist (born 1982), is for five-part choir and solo cello. Composed in 2006, it takes its Latin words from one of the earliest oratorios ever written, Giacomo Carissimi's Jephthe of 1649. Based upon an episode from the Book of Judges, the oratorio concerns the military commander Jephthe and his vow to sacrifice the first person he encounters upon returning to his homeland should God grant him victory in battle. Tragically, he is greeted by his daughter. It is her voice that we hear in Lament: Plorate filii Israel/Weep, you children of Israel.

The Sun Never Says, for choir and solo cello, is by American composer Dan Forrest (born 1978). Forrest has a particular interest in writing for voices, having composed ambitious works for chorus and orchestra as well as less challenging pieces for church and community use. The Sun Never Says is a setting of a brief poem by American poet Daniel Ladinsky (born 1948) inspired, in part, by 14th-century Persian poet Hafez.

Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo (born 1978) has lived and worked in the United States since 2001. His wide-ranging musical interests include jazz, pop and folk styles and he credits America with inspiring his 'lush' and 'cinematic' sound. The Ground is based upon a chorale from the last movement of his Sunrise Mass of 2008.

Jonathan Dove (born 1959), who was made a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in 2019, is probably best known for the opera Flight, which was commissioned by Glyndebourne in 1998. Ring Out, Wild Bells, which is for double chorus and piano, is the closing movement of The Passing of the Year, a seven-movement choral cycle dedicated to the memory of the composer's mother. Dove takes his text from quintessential Victorian poet Alfred Tennyson ('In Memoriam', slightly abridged). The brilliant piano part includes wonderful 'bell' effects.

Robert Gibson, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, © 2021

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