



FROM DIRECTOR HELEN SWAN

The inspiration for performing *Dreamweaver* came when a number of Resonants members had the opportunity to perform in a choral festival in New York in February 2019 and heard another choir perform this wonderful piece, with Ola Gjeilo himself at the piano. It is an honour for us, in The Resonants, along with our valued colleagues in the Forrest National Chamber Orchestra (FNCO) to bring you this astonishing work. We believe this performance is a Canberra premiere of *Dreamweaver*.

When it came to planning the rest of the concert, we wanted to take advantage of our collaboration with FNCO and share some wonderful orchestral music. We are very happy to welcome FNCO to perform the famous Corelli *La Folia* variations and the glorious *Kol Nidrei* by Max Bruch.

Having been preparing *Dreamweaver* for some time, I felt the singers needed an additional challenge. *Hope, faith, life, love* by Eric Whitacre and *If Music Be the Food of Love* by David Dickau are both a fitting complement to the concepts expressed in *Dreamweaver*.

When choosing the remaining repertoire for the concert, such serious music seemed to call for a complete contrast, and the fun jazz *Songs and Sonnets* by George Shearing are ideally suited for this purpose.

I very much hope you enjoy this concert, one of the most special in our history.

PROGRAM

VARIATIONS ON LA FOLIA

Arcangelo Corelli

The melody known as "La Folia" has a long history. The melody and chord structure are thought to have developed from the folk music of Portugal in the late 15th century. The name "folly" or "madness" in Italian, refers to the frenzied way in which the peasants danced. Across the centuries, the melody became the slower and more dignified version that was then used as a basis by many Baroque composers. Even Bach and Handel used the melody for some of their work.

Corelli was one of the foremost composers of the late Baroque era. The famous set of variations on the popular *Folia* theme which we will hear today, was published by Corelli in 1700. We first hear the *Folia* theme, presented simply, with a small amount of characteristic Baroque ornamentation, which leads on to the violin weaving through 23 ever more complex variations on the theme. We hope you enjoy this performance today.

DREAMWEAVER

Ola Gjeilo,

Words by Charles Anthony Silvestri

With Caleb Campbell, piano and Sophie Green, soprano

The publisher writes about *Dreamweaver*:

"The text for *Dreamweaver* is based on parts of the Norwegian medieval folk poem *Draumkvædet*, an epic ballad that has a lot in common with Dante's *The Divine Comedy*. The protagonist, Olav Asteson, falls asleep on Christmas Eve and sleeps for thirteen days. He wakes and rides to church to describe his dreams to the congregation about his brave, beautiful, terrifying and ultimately redeeming journey through the afterlife."

The work was premiered by the Manhattan Chorale at Carnegie Hall in 2014. *Dreamweaver* is beautiful and strange and challenging, both in music and text, and we invite you to enter with us into this experience of awe and mystery.

1. PROLOGUE

The work opens calmly, with a steady beat and homophonic texture. The E minor tonality gives the opening a rather mysterious mood as the protagonist invites singers and audience into a tale woven of the "warp and weft of wandering".

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
We wove into his tale.*

2. DREAMSONG

This movement is scored for only the female voices of the choir and the soprano soloist, accompanied by orchestra, giving an ethereal, dreamlike quality, which is enhanced by the static vocal parts, slightly clashing harmony and soft and gentle dynamics. At the same time, the moving orchestral parts bring a sense of being pulled onwards.

And this was his dreamsong:

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

3. THE BRIDGE

This movement is a scary adventure! The driving rhythm in 5/8 time feels unsettled and menacing, an effect magnified by the low "Beasts there were" at the very bottom of the bass voice range. The singers sing the frightening words about "monster's claws" and "piercing eyes" in a strong, single layer of sound leading to the running rhythm representing fleeing across a sea of ice. It is a relief to reach the more peaceful section in which we are listening for "the sacred vision of the All Wise Wanderer, the Weaver of Dreams".

*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 traveled 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 wed
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 hired 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

Gjeilo continues to weave the dreamlike atmosphere with the familiar melodies from the Prologue in an orchestral interlude.

5. PARADISE

In this beautiful, flowing movement, the gentle accompaniment rhythm and major tonality invoke the cold winds blowing us to paradise, to the "very throne of God" where sorrow is unknown and "sins" are known and freely forgiven.

*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

We now have a sense of excitement, brightness and grandeur, created by the 6/4 meter and the strong unison texture. This effect is enhanced by the way in which the melody is constructed from major chords as we sing of angels beyond number, of St Michael, of the Christ wreathed in light and of burning love and grace which create a newly forged soul.

*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

The calm and mysterious atmosphere of the prologue returns, as we sing the melodies and harmonies from the opening, closing with a beautiful prayer of grace, peace and redemption.

*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.*

INTERVAL

HOPE, FAITH, LIFE, LOVE

Eric Whitacre,

Words by E. E. Cummings

This piece is the middle of a set of three pieces, *Three Songs of Faith*, commissioned by Northern Arizona University for their 1999 Centennial Celebration. Whitacre describes the way in which, in setting this Cummings poem, he chose the first four words of the poem (hope, faith, life, love) and the last four (dream, joy, truth, soul) and set each word as a repeating meditation.

For in The Resonants, we have (mostly!) the working of the challenge of focusing on the slightly clashing, crunchy harmony and enjoying on shaping the sound through the meditative repetition of each word, culminating in the strong call of "truth" and finishing with the peaceful gentleness and harmonic resolution of the final "soul".

KOL NIDREI, OP 47

Max Bruch

With cello soloist Gordon McIntyre

Kol Nidrei, for cello and orchestra, is one of Bruch's most famous and frequently performed pieces. It was completed in Liverpool in 1880. Bruch described it as an "Adagio on 2 Hebrew Melodies". The first of these melodies is the Kol Nidre declaration, which is recited in the Synagogue by the cantor at the start of Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement. In this piece, the solo cello imitates the voice of the cantor. Bruch was a Protestant but was introduced to these melodies through his friendship with Abraham Jacob Lichtenstein, who was cantor in chief of Berlin, and supported Bruch's interest in Jewish folk music. Some Jewish commentators have criticized a lack of Jewishness in this piece, but Bruch himself never intended to write Jewish music, rather his intention was to bring awareness to the beauty of the melodies.

For this concert today, there is an interesting connection back to the final movement of *Dreamweaver*, in that the Kol Nidre declaration has a sense of an "invitation to outcasts" to come into forgiveness and redemption.

SONGS AND SONNETS

George Shearing,

Words by William Shakespeare

With Caleb Campbell, piano and Ben O'Loghlin, double bass

These fun, jazzy settings of Shakespeare's poetry, are a complete contrast in mood to the pieces from earlier in the concert. Commissioned by the Mostly Madrigal Singers in Illinois, the first performance in 1999 was conducted by John Rutter, accompanied by Shearing at the piano.

LIVE WITH ME AND BE MY LOVE

Sonnets to Sundry Notes of Music

In this setting, Shearing has the tenors and basses invite the sopranos and altos to join them in "a bed of roses"...an invitation which the sopranos and altos firmly reject! Listen out for the melody of the famous madrigal *Now is the month of maying* composed in 1595 by Thomas Morley.

WHEN DAFFODILS BEGIN TO PEER

The Winter's Tale, act 4, scene 2

A gentle swinging rhythm evokes the beauty and warmth of spring, the flowers, the birdsong and weather warm enough for outdoor fun.

IT WAS A LOVER AND HIS LASS

As You Like It, act 5, scene 3

Enjoy the exhortation to take the present time and the way Shearing repeats the melody of "In the springtime, the only pretty ring time, sweet lovers love the spring".

WHO IS SILVIA?

Two Gentlemen of Verona, act 4, scene 2

Some of our audience may be familiar with the very famous lied "An Sylvia" by Schubert. Shearing's setting uses the exact same rhythm as Schubert's melody. The melodic shape is also an invention of Schubert's. However, Shearing's setting has a contemporary jazzy flavour because of the syncopated accompaniment.

FIE ON SINFUL FANTASY

The merry wives of Windsor, act 5, scene 2

The D minor setting, unison voices and angry clashing chords are very appropriate for the call to the fairies to "pinch sinful fantasy".

HEY, HO, THE WIND AND THE RAIN

Twelfth Night, act 5, scene 2

Shearing has the tenors and basses reflect on the foolishness and difficulty of life, and how a swaggering attitude in marriage is a recipe for disaster! The minor tonality, repetition and straight rhythm emphasise the repetitiveness of the cycle of life, but the piece finishes with a cheerful commitment to pleasing everyone. We, The Resonants, hope that we have achieved that in our performance of these songs and sonnets.

IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE

David Dickau,

Words by Henry Heveningham

Conducted by Kylie Van Dijk

With Caleb Campbell, piano

We finish our concert with this lush and beautifully romantic song, co-commissioned in 2000 by the Minnesota Music Educators Association and the American Choral Directors Association of Minnesota. The first line is borrowed from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, with the remainder of the text by Henry Heveningham (1651–1700). Characterised by his contemporaries as a "tall thin-gutted mortal", Heveningham allegedly took this line and developed the text into an expression of love for a singer of his acquaintance. Our audience may be more familiar with a setting by Purcell. We hope that with this performance of the setting by American composer David Dickau, we send you on your way encouraged to "sing on" with dreams woven of hope, life and love.

HELEN SWAN

Helen is a notable Canberra choral conductor, musician, music educator and opera singer. She studied at the Canberra School of Music, gaining her Bachelor of Arts (Music), followed by a Diploma of Education. She has performed as a singer and conductor, singing leading roles with Canberra Opera as well as being Chorus Master for several productions.

Helen has also worked with Canberra Children's Choir, Canberra Choral Society, Oriana Choral and Canberra Youth Music choirs. After many years teaching at Canberra Grammar School, Helen now keeps busy with her private singing studio, The Resonants, and the Warrani Chorale, the ladies choir associated with the U3A in Canberra. Helen has attended many international music workshops, adding to her experience and further developing her consummate skills as a choir conductor.

GILLIAN BAILEY-GRAHAM OAM

Gillian Bailey-Graham is a graduate of the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts degree. She studied the violin from the age of six years culminating at Sydney Conservatorium of Music. She has performed with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Lane Cove Symphony Orchestra, the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and many choirs and freelance groups. Gillian has conducted since the 1970s and is currently directing the Forrest National Chamber Orchestra which she founded in 2007. She continues to teach the violin and viola and has produced over 30 performing musicians for this country. She was recently awarded an OAM for services to the performing arts.

CALEB CAMPBELL

Caleb Campbell has studied piano since he was five years old, and although he started his training in classical piano, he now predominantly plays jazz and contemporary styles. He has a wide range of musical experience and regularly gigs around Canberra with jazz and contemporary groups as well as a soloist. Caleb graduated with his Bachelor of Music in jazz piano from the Australian National University in 2022 and is now a full-time piano teacher. He has also been musical director or otherwise involved with many musicals around Canberra and regularly works in schools for their musicals and ensembles.

SOPHIE GREEN

Sophie is a Year 12 student who has been studying singing with Helen Swan for four years. She recently completed her Grade 8 AMEB classical voice examination and is studying Higher Level Music as part of her International Baccalaureate. Sophie hopes to continue singing and performing in the future.

GORDON MCINTYRE

Gordon began learning the cello at the age of six with Howard Penny, then studied with Jean Barrett and Lois Simpson. He has an Arts/Science degree from the Australian National University, with First Class Honours in Psychology. He has worked in a variety of government roles and enjoys playing his cello for relaxation.

BEN O'LOGHLIN

Ben is a Canberra based bassist and guitarist active in the local jazz scene.

FORREST NATIONAL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

FNCO was formed in 2007 by Gillian Bailey-Graham to provide experience for advanced string students in the string orchestra repertoire, and to assist in the development of the members' skills in string playing techniques. The FNCO also provides opportunities for leadership, solo performance and creative endeavour.

Sally McCourt (Concertmaster), Elisha Adams, James Hines, Maddie Nelson, Hyeonju Keon (Principal Second Violin), Jeremy Zhu, Remi Yojoyma, Clara Li, Lachlan Li, Paul Whitbread (Principal Viola), Matthew Lovett (Principal Cello), Tabita Hart

KYLIE VAN DIJK

Kylie feels privileged to have come from an extremely musical family. She has been singing in choirs all her life and was a founding member of The Resonants in 1990. Kylie holds a Bachelor of Music and a Master of Teaching and is currently a specialist primary school music teacher at Trinity Christian School, where in addition to teaching classroom music, she conducts a primary school choir and an infants choir, singing with over 150 young musicians each week. She is passionate about choral singing and the benefits it brings for individuals and communities.

THE RESONANTS

The Resonants is one of Canberra's foremost adult choirs and is delighted to be performing again after a belated 30th anniversary concert in 2022.

Formed in 1990 by Helen Swan, The Resonants has been crowned ABC Choir of the Year, performed as part of the Centenary of Canberra Celebration at Parks Place, recorded four CDs, participated in the Canberra International Music Festival, competed successfully in multiple Australian National Eisteddfods, and toured internationally to New York. Performing a variety of historic and contemporary choral music, with a focus on supporting Australian composers, The Resonants produce a beautiful, blended sound and perform with great artistic flair.

Soprano

Josephine Batten, Alison Bedloe, Fran Carter, Kate Champion, Amelia Garnett, Maia Hehir, Angela Lanspeary, Laura Lloyd Jones, Siwan Lovett, Allison Tryon, Leigh Wilton

Alto

Alice Battaglia, Bernie Bissett, Elizabeth Chalker, Chloe Chuah, Kirsten Duncan, Karinna Hall, Chris Stocks, Kylie Van Dijk, Peppi Wilson

Tenor

James Carter, Phil Keightly, Craig Mewett, Kelly Tsang, Eric Tsoi

Bass

Richard Burns, Aaron Chuah, Tom Clarke, Ben Cooper, Jon Nielsen, Brendon Palazzi

POSTER DESIGN & PROGRAM NOTES

Most of the music in this concert is modern settings of old texts, so it seemed fitting for the poster to also be a modern version of an historical artwork. Graphic designer Kirsten Duncan found and adapted the 1904 title page of *Draumkvædet* by Norwegian artist Gerhard Munthe, featuring the "bridge stretching out across the sky".

Program notes: Kylie Van Dijk.

STAY IN TOUCH

Thank you for joining us today!
We look forward to welcoming you to our next concert on

Saturday 18 November
at **Weston Creek Uniting Church**.

For more information about The Resonants, please visit www.resonants.org
Our website is updating and transferring to a new platform, so if you find it is not available, please try again in a few weeks, or in the meantime, contact us at resonants.cbr@gmail.com