



West Australian  
Symphony Orchestra



WASO Chorus Sings

# Music for a While

Sun 21 March 2pm | St Mary's Cathedral, Perth

Henry PURCELL arr. A FOOTE *Music for a While*

Andrea GABRIELI *Magnificat a 12*

Franz BIEBL *Ave Maria*

Francis POULENC *Litanies à la Vierge Noire*

Giovanni PALESTRINA *Magnificat Primi Toni a 8*

Francis POULENC *Quatre Petites Prières de Saint*

*François d'Assise* (selections)

Antonio LOTTI *Crucifixus a 10*

Josef RHEINBERGER *Abendlied*

Gustav HOLST *Nunc dimittis*

Frederic WEATHERLEY arr. A FOOTE *Londonderry Air*

Dr Andrew Foote conductor

WASO Chorus

Jacinta Jakovcevic organ

*This concert has no interval.*

**SOPRANO**

Lisa Barrett  
Anna Borner  
Alinta Carroll  
Penelope Colgan  
Clara Connor  
Ceridwen Dumergue  
Bronwyn Elliott  
Marion Funke  
Kath Goodman  
Ro Gorell  
Diane Hawkins  
Sue Hingston  
Deborah Jackson-  
Porteous  
Michelle John  
Elena Mavrofridis  
Brooke McKnight

Elysia Murphy  
Sheila Price  
Jane Royle  
Lucy Sheppard  
Sarah Shneier  
Kate Sugars  
Carol Unkovich  
Alicia Walter  
Margo Warburton

**ALTO**

Marian Agombar  
Janet Baxter  
Llewela Benn  
Patsy Brown  
Sue Coleson  
Jeanette Collins  
Catherine Dunn

Kaye Fairbairn  
Jenny Fay  
Susanna Fleck  
Dianne Graves  
Louise Hayes  
Jill Jones  
Mathilda Joubert  
Kate Lewis  
Diana MacCallum  
Robyn Main  
Tina McDonald  
Lynne Naylor  
Deborah Pearson  
Deborah Piesse  
Fiona Robson  
Neb Ryland  
Louise Sutton  
Olga Ward

Moira Westmore  
Jacquie Wright

**TENOR**

David Collings  
Matthew Flood  
Allan Griffiths  
John Murphy  
Jay Reso  
Chris Ryland  
Simon Taylor  
Arthur Tideswell  
Stephen Turley

**BASS**

Tom Allan  
Justin Audcent  
Charlie Bond

Paul Brayshaw  
Bertel Bulten  
Tony Errington  
Ken Gasmier  
Mark Gummer  
Stephen Hastings  
Benjamin Lee  
Andrew Lynch  
Tony Marrison  
Peter Ormond  
Jim Rhoads  
Mark Richardson  
Steve Sherwood  
Chris Smith  
Mark Wiklund

## Program Notes

Choral works from the high-Baroque and Romantic periods, which form a staple of the modern concert platform repertoire, are predominantly set in a standard format for four voice parts; Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass (SATB). However, when looking back to the Renaissance we hear that this was rarely the case, and that more vocal parts was more usual. In this afternoon's eclectic mix of predominantly a *cappella* choral works, we present one, two, and three choirs, and in combinations of 3-, 4-, 5-, 6-, 7-, 8-, 10, and 12-parts. Each work is chosen to complement the acoustics and reverberation of St Mary's Cathedral, and showcases disparate elements of choral writing across four hundred years.

*Music for a while* (1692) was composed as a solo song as incidental music to the John Dryden and Nathaniel Lee play *Oedipus*. In this 5-part arrangement, Purcell's relentless ground-bass—a repeating bass-line which is split between the basses and tenors as virtual pizzicato double basses—underpins the ominous story that music can beguile the listener, and even charm Alecto (a Medusa-like deity) so that “the snakes fall from her head and the whip from out her hands”.

Written a hundred years earlier, Andrea Gabrieli's setting of the *Magnificat* (1587) celebrates the acoustic and spaces in St Mark's Venice. In an example of Venetian polychoral style, Gabrieli employs three distinct choirs—4-part female (SSAA), 4-part mixed (SATB), and 4-part male (TTBB) voices—which we have located throughout the building to highlight the echoing, answering, or imitating that each choir carries out. We repeat this approach later with Palestrina's setting of *Magnificat* (1591) for two equal SATB choirs.

Franz Biebl is often referred to as a “one-hit-wonder”, as his *Ave Maria* (1959) is the only work widely known by this German composer. In this setting for 3-part women and 4-part men, Biebl eschews the more angular and atonal writing employed by so many of his contemporaries of the mid-twentieth century, and employs antiphonal writing similar to Gabrieli and Palestrina with quasi-plainsong, simple scales, and hints of more modern harmonies.

In 1936, Francis Poulenc travelled to southern France to visit the shrine of Our Lady of Rocamadour, which houses a statue of a black Madonna and child. His *Litanies to the Black Madonna* for 3-part women's voices followed soon after, and contains both elements of plainsong that one may hear from an Abbey, and an organ part that is occasionally discordant and typical of French compositions of the period. In contrast, his *Prayers of St Francis of Assisi* (1948) for male voices are all *a cappella*, and demonstrate a rich variety of the number of vocal parts, often unexpected harmonies, and both a sweetness and gentleness.

Antonio Lotti set at least three versions of the *Crucifixus* for 6-, 8-voices. In this c.1719 version for 10-voices (SSSAATTTBB)—taken from his standalone *Credo in D minor*—Lotti employs a number of techniques to underpin the text: extended harmonic dissonance by each vocal entry to invoke the pain of “crucified”; three mini-trios (“crucified for us”), an extended sequence of imitative entries, perhaps to imitate the crowd mumbling “sub Pontio Pilato” (under Pontius Pilate); a sequence of mini-duets that cry out “passus” (died); and a final series of dissonances upon “passus et sepultus est” (died and was buried) that eventually resolve into acceptance and peace.

The prolific Josef Rheinberger is a largely unknown late-nineteenth-century composer of choral and organ works. His charming *Evening Song* (1855) for 6-voices (SAATTB) is a simple prayer to “Abide with us, for evening shadows darken, and the day will soon be over.”

Written a year before his most well-known work *The Planets*, Gustav Holst's *Nunc dimittis* (1935) for 8-voices (SSAATTTBB) employs a multitude of styles and effects, starting with slow-moving layered chords (similar to Lotti), antiphonal effects and imitation (like Gabrieli), while maintaining the conventions of the late-Romantic period (such as Rheinberger).

The simple charm of our 7-part version of *Londonderry Air* (Danny Boy)—arranged specifically for this concert—tells of the bitter-sweetness of friends parting and hoping for renewed acquaintance.