

CANTICUM
Brisbane • Australia

Luminescence

Choral works shining from the 20th & 21st centuries

Emily Cox, music director



Luminescence

Canticum Chamber Choir

Choral works shining from the 20th and 21st centuries

- 1** Ubi Caritas (Ola Gjeilo) 3'28"
- 2** Sure on this Shining Night (Morten Lauridsen) 5'20"
- 3** Stars (Ēriks Ešenvalds) 5'35"
- 4** Only the Light (Phillip Gearing) 3'55"
- 5** Ubi Caritas (Paul Mealor) 3'13"
- 6** The Waking (Giselle Wyers) 3'15"
- 7** The Fleeing Child is Jesus (Fredrik Sixten) 3'25"
- 8** Ubi Caritas (Joseph Twist) 4'42"
- 9** Choose Something Like a Star (Randall Thompson) 7'05"

Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen (Arvo Pärt)

- 10** O Weisheit 1'34"
- 11** O Adonai 2'12"
- 12** O Sproß aus Isais Wurzel 0'51"
- 13** O Schlüssel Davids 1'56"
- 14** O Morgenstern 1'39"
- 15** O König aller Völker 1'26"
- 16** O Immanuel 2'15"
- 17** Ecce Beatam Lucem (David Hamilton) 2'54"
- 18** Light (Keren Terpstra) 6'10"

Recorded at St Peter's Lutheran
College, Brisbane, 2016

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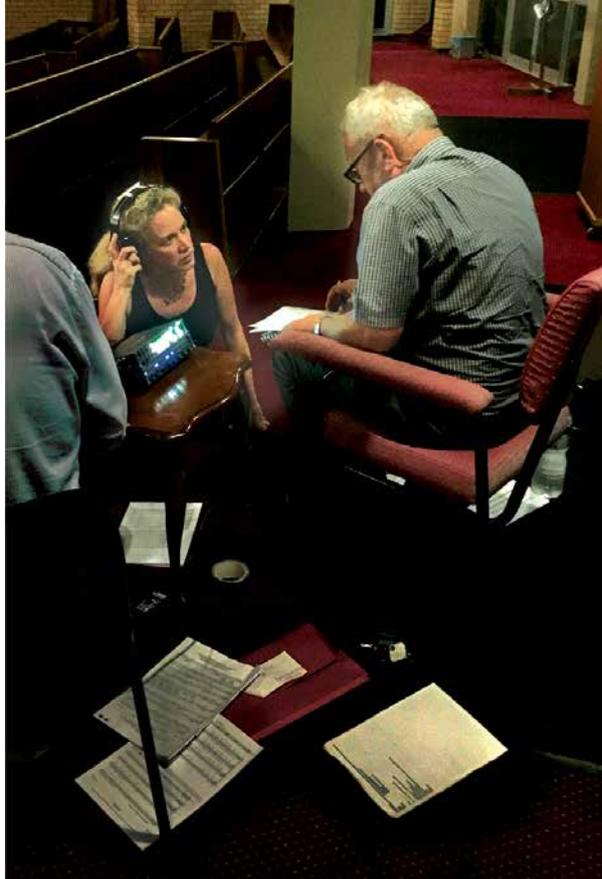
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Light is integral to colour, and musical sonority is often described in terms of its colour or luminescence.

In creating this collection to celebrate Canticum's 21st birthday year, I sought composers whose music reflects a particular sensitivity to the versatility of the choral instrument, and which celebrates beautiful text. This collection of 20th and 21st century music includes works from Australia and New Zealand, Europe and the United States. Although Canticum's repertoire stretches from the renaissance to the present day, it is composers of our time who captured my desire early on to explore musical light and shade. We are fortunate to have talented composers associated with the ensemble, and are proud to present their music here. We have also included composers who are far-off colleagues, or who have been a significant part of Canticum's musical journey.

While the broad categories of sacred and secular music are represented in this recording, to me, these borders easily blur – all the music is deeply spiritual, whether in a religious or liturgical sense, or in a more humanistic sense. Nature, emotion, the life cycle, and the journey of the human spirit are integral to the music in this collection, as are the extremely tender and colourful settings of exquisite text.

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Ubi Caritas (2001) - Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978):

Ola Gjeilo's setting of *Ubi Caritas* has become one of this highly sought-after and prolific composer's most performed works. Norwegian-born, but based in the USA, Gjeilo has reflected that his early admiration of Maurice Duruflé's *Ubi Caritas* influenced the composition of his own setting of the text. Whilst not using any known existing Gregorian chant, Gjeilo's modern expression pays homage to the origin of this ancient musical form and text.

Sure on This Shining Night (2005) -

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943): Morten Lauridsen is considered to be the most widely-performed American composer of his time. His setting of James Agee's beloved poem is from a set of choral songs entitled *Nocturnes*. *Sure on This Shining Night* is described as one of the composer's most well-known works, amidst an oeuvre known for its spiritual depth and beauty.

Stars (2011) - Ēriks Ešvalds (b. 1977):

Latvian composer Ēriks Ešvalds' *Stars*, his setting of poet Sara Teasdale's evocative poem by the same name, describes the majesty of the heavens through rich homophonic choral textures, enhanced with the accompaniment of tuned glasses and Tibetan bowls. Ešvalds is one of the most sought-after choral composers working today, with a busy commission schedule and performances of his music around the world. *Stars*, with its unique combination of forces, is loved by choirs and audiences alike.

Only the Light (2016) - Phillip Gearing (b.

1960): Brisbane-based musician Phillip Gearing is well known as an organist, collaborative pianist, choral director, music educator and, increasingly, as a composer. Taking a text of English-born Mexican artist

and writer Leonora Carrington (1917-2011), his work *Only the Light*, written for Canticum, depicts the hushed expectation and eventual luminous flowering of the dawn.

Ubi Caritas (2011) - Paul Mealor (b. 1975): Another contemporary acknowledgement of the beauty and power of ancient chant can be found in Paul Mealor's *Ubi Caritas*. Mealor received a commission to compose this piece for the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton. The Welsh-born composer has said of the piece that his aim was to blend the ancient Gregorian chant "with 21st century harmony to create a work that, I hope, is both new and reflective of the past."

The Waking (2008) - Giselle Wyers (b. 1969): Conductor-composer Giselle Wyers is currently on faculty at the University of Washington. Her many choral works are published and performed internationally. *The Waking* is a lilting setting of Theodore Roethke's evocative poem about the wonders of nature as experienced on a summer morning stroll.

The Fleeing Child is Jesus (2015) - Fredrik Sixten (b. 1962): Swedish composer Fredrik Sixten is sought-after worldwide for his choral music and larger scale works. He was inspired to compose *The*

Fleeing Child is Jesus by the massive influx of refugees into Europe in 2015, asking himself "can we celebrate Christmas as if nothing is happening?" For the text, Sixten turned to Norwegian author Emil Skartveit, who developed the theme that Jesus and his family were themselves refugees. Running parallel to Skartveit's compelling text is the ancient hymn *Veni, veni Emmanuel*.

Ubi Caritas (2015) - Joseph Twist (b. 1982): Australian-born, US-based composer and arranger Joseph Twist is a versatile and eclectic musician, straddling a wide range of genres and styles. He writes of his setting of *Ubi Caritas*, "'Where charity and love are, God is there' has for me a few significant dimensions; the warmth of Christ's love, the mystery of the Holy Spirit, and the idea of 'inclusive, universal' celebration. My setting reflects this through contrasts in harmonic language, and is influenced by modal harmonies from Eastern Europe and Africa. The calm, sparse music which bookends the work is countered with rhythmic, syncopated music in a kind of ritualistic exultation."

Choose Something Like a Star (1959) - Randall Thompson (1899-1984): Randall Thompson's beloved song cycle *Frostiana*, from which *Choose Something Like a*

Star is taken, carries the trademarks of his style: a deep sensitivity to the flow and meaning of text. Before Lauridsen, Thompson was considered the most performed American composer ever, and his music was widely embraced, even by the poet Robert Frost, who never really liked hearing his own poetry put to music! Thompson sets Frost's poem mostly homophonically, to emphasise the text, except when he allows the soprano line in the opening bars to represent the star above.

Sieben Magnificat-Antiphonen (1988/1991) - Arvo Pärt (b. 1935): Arvo Pärt's output of sacred music is unique and prolific, and his transcendent and mystical works have had an immeasurable influence on music of the contemporary era. Estonian, but residing in Berlin from 1982, he composed the *Seven Magnificat Antiphons* for the RIAS Kammerchor. Sung in German, they are diverse and evocative settings of the O Antiphons, liturgical texts set for the seven days leading up to Christmas, showing many of Pärt's characteristic compositional styles.

Ecce Beatam Lucem (2012) - David Hamilton (b. 1955): David Hamilton is known widely as a composer, music educator and choral director. His compositions are popular in his native

New Zealand and around the world. The text of his *Ecce Beatam Lucem* comes from the 40-part motet of the same name by Renaissance musician Alessandro Striggio, whose work was the likely inspiration for Tallis' better-known 40-part motet *Spem in alium*. It is believed that Striggio wrote the text himself. *Ecce Beatam Lucem* is a hymn of praise to the sun and to all of creation, and by analogy to the power of God.

Light (2015) - Keren Terpstra (b. 1978):

Light was written for Canticum, and premiered at St John's Cathedral, Brisbane. Terpstra, who studied composition with Anne Boyd, Ian Shanahan and Ross Edwards, is an Anglican Priest. She writes of *Light* "Taking the story of the transfiguration of Jesus, it describes the descent of the cloud, which begins to glow brightly, before clearing to reveal the central mystery of glorious transformation, before gradually dimming again. The piece is a palindrome, invoking mirroring, and particularly, transformation into our true selves."

CANTICUM CHAMBER CHOIR was founded by Emily Cox to explore wide-ranging and significant choral repertoire. Its aim is to present choral music from the Renaissance through to the present day at the highest standard. World, Australian and Queensland premieres have been



hallmarks of the ensemble's repertoire since its formation in 1995, and Canticum particularly values working with local composers. Canticum's members share a passion for the musical aims of the ensemble and bring to it a high level of musical experience, expertise and diversity. With an ever-expanding world of music to explore, Canticum strives to offer compelling choral performances in Brisbane and further afield, providing audiences with inspiring musical experiences.

Soprano: Amanda Acutt, Christina Adams, Sally Camuglia-May, Tina Carter, Leanne Coombe, Rhelma Evans, Katherine Fellows, Anastasia Hobbs-Brown, Valérie McCool, Libby Schmidt, Anne Tanner, Keren Terpstra **Alto:** Bronwen Arthur, Rebecca Axelson, Sheena Brockman, Celia Canning, Sarah Daly, Susan Dowrie, Katherine Munro, Rosie Perkins, Nicola Pullan **Tenor:** Richard Clegg, Paul Kennedy, Greg Scanlan, Jeremy Thomson, James Tranter **Bass:** Mike Bernays, Josh Blake, Michael Cooke, Phillip Gearing, Ian Graham, Peter Kennedy, David Murree-Allen, Liam Nolan, David Webster



Emily Cox, Music Director: One of Australia’s most respected choral conductors, Emily Cox is founding Music Director of Canticum Chamber Choir and Music Director of the acclaimed symphonic

choir, Brisbane Chorale. Known for her innovative programming, she embraces a challenging and broad repertoire. Compelling performances mark her career, with choral/orchestral works and choral chamber music at the heart of her repertoire. American-born and educated, Emily later studied at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University and has enjoyed further training overseas, working closely with numerous renowned conductors. Her work as a conductor, chorus master, and educator places her in demand by professional arts companies and festivals, as does her reputation as a creative musical collaborator.



Christopher Wrench, Piano Accompanist: An internationally acclaimed, Brisbane-based organist, Christopher is equally at home in the varied roles of soloist, liturgical

musician, accompanist, continuo and chamber player. Christopher is a graduate of the Queensland Conservatorium (majoring in piano), Vienna Conservatorium, the Vienna University of Music, and winner of numerous awards, including 1st prize at the Odense International Organ Competition (1992). Director of Music at Christ Church Anglican Church, St Lucia and principal organist (casual) with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Christopher performs internationally as a recitalist, and is in demand as a choral accompanist and ensemble musician. He has worked closely with Canticum since its inception. christopherwrench.com

Acknowledgements: Canticum would like to thank St Peter’s Lutheran College (in particular Christine Taylor, Head of Choirs) for assistance and hospitality when using the School Chapel as our recording venue, and Recording Engineer David Starr for his guidance and support.

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“Luminescence” – recorded by Canticum Chamber Choir at St Peter’s Lutheran College Chapel, Indooroopilly, Brisbane, 2016.

Recording, editing and mastering by David Starr, Lodestar Recordings Pty Ltd
Emily Cox, Music Director
Christopher Wrench, Piano Accompanist
CD Production: Move Records
Cover image designed by Margaret Cox, 1994.

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Ubi Caritas (Gjeilo, Mealar, Twist)
French medieval hymn, c. 10th century

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.
Exsultemus, et in ipso jucundemur.
Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum.
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.
Amen.

Where charity and love are, God is there.
Christ's love has gathered us into one.
Let us rejoice and be pleased in Him.
Let us fear, and let us love the living God.
And may we love each other with a sincere heart.
Amen

Sure on this shining night (Morten Lauridsen)
Extract from "Descriptions of Elysium"
by James Agee

Sure on this shining night
Of star made shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.
The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.
Sure on this shining night I weep for wonder
wand'ring far alone
Of shadows on the stars.

Stars (Eriks Eöenvalds)
Poem by Sara Teasdale

Alone in the night
On a dark hill
With pines around me
Spicy and still,

And a heaven full of stars
Over my head
White and topaz
And misty red;

Myriads with beating
Hearts of fire
That aeons
Cannot vex or tire;

Up the dome of heaven
Like a great hill,
I watch them marching
Stately and still.

And I know that I
Am honoured to be
Witness
Of so much majesty.

Only the Light (Phillip Gearing)
Poem by Leonora Carrington

We went down into the silent garden.
Dawn is the time when nothing breathes, the
hour of silence.
Everything is transfixed, only the light moves.

The Waking (Giselle Wyers)

Poem by Theodore Roethke

I strolled across
An open field;
The sun was out;
Heat was happy.

This way! This way!
The wren's throat shimmered,
Either to other,
The blossoms sang.

The stones sang,
The little ones did,
And flowers jumped
Like small goats.

A ragged fringe
Of daisies waved;
I wasn't alone
In a grove of apples.

Far in the wood
A nestling sighed;
The dew loosened
Its morning smells.

I came where the river
Ran over stones:
My ears knew
An early joy.

And all the waters
Of all the streams
Sang in my veins
That summer day.

The Fleeting Child is Jesus (Frederik Sixten)

Text by Emil Skartveit

and paraphrase of Sixth "O Antiphon"

(The two texts are sung parallel to one another)

The child who is naked, fleeing, is Jesus, God's only Son.
Fear in the eyes of a sister becomes Lord's prayer to everyone.
To comfort your fellow-being so evil will not prevail.
Open, don't close your heart, compassion will never fail.

Veni, veni Emmanuel!

Captivum solve Israel!

Qui gemit in exilio, Privatus Dei Filio,

Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel

Nascetur pro te, Israel.

O come, O come, Emmanuel,

And ransom captive Israel,

That mourns in lonely exile here,

Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

The child who is naked, fleeing, is Jesus, God's only Son.
Open the door for suffering, a Hope, no dream; love has won.
This child will depend on his Joseph, protects from iniquity
And helpless is Jesus lacking an adult like you and me.

Veni, veni oriens!

Solare nos adveniens,

Noctis despelle nebulas,

Dirasque mortis tenebras.

Gaude, gaude,

Emmanuel nascetur pro te, Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high,

And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,

And death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Choose Something like a Star

(Randall Thompson)

Poem by Robert Frost

O Star (the fairest one in sight),
We grant your loftiness the right
To some obscurity of cloud —
It will not do to say of night
Since dark is what brings out your light.
Some mystery becomes the proud.
But to be wholly taciturn
In your reserve is not allowed.
Say something to us we can learn
By heart and when alone repeat.
Say something! And it says "I burn".
But say with what degree of heat.
Talk Fahrenheit, talk Centigrade.
Use language we can comprehend.
Tell us what elements you blend.
It gives us strangely little aid,
But does tell something in the end.
And steadfast as Keats' Eremite,
Not even stooping from its sphere,
It asks a little of us here.
It asks of us a certain height,
So when at times the mob is swayed
To carry praise or blame too far,
We may choose something like a star
To stay our minds on and be staid.

Sieben Magnificat Antiphonen

Arvo Pärt

O Antiphons

O Weisheit

O Weisheit, hervorgegangen aus dem Munde
des Höchsten, die Welt umspannst du von
einem Ende zu andern, in Kraft und Milde
ordnest du alles: O komm und offenbare uns
den Weg der Weisheit und der Einsicht

O Adonai

O Adonai, der Herr und Führer des Hauses
Israel, im flammender Dornbusch bist du dem
Moses erschienen, und hast ihm auf dem Berg
das Gesetz gegeben. O komm und befreie uns
mit deinem starken Arm.

O Sproß aus Isais Wurzel

O Sproß aus Isais Wurzel, gesetzt zum Zeichen
für die Völker, vor dir verstummen die
Herrscher der Erde, dich flehen an die Völker:
o komm und errette uns, erhebe dich, säume
nicht länger.

O Schlüssel Davids

O Schlüssel Davids, Zepter des Hauses Israel,
du öffnest, und niemand kann schließeln, du
schließt, und keine Macht vermag zu öffnen:
o komm und öffne den Kerker der Finsternis
und die Fessel des Todes.

O Wisdom

O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the
Most High, thou encirclest the world from one
end to the other, thou orderest all things with
might and mercy: O come and reveal to us the
way of wisdom and of understanding.

O Adonai

Adonai, Lord and leader of the house of Israel,
in the burning bush hast thou appeared unto
Moses and, upon the mountain, hast given
him the law: O come and deliver us with thy
powerful arm.

O Scion of Isaiah's Line

O Scion of Isaiah's line, predestined to be a
sign for the nations, the rulers of the earth fall
silent before thee, the nations cry unto thee:
O come and save us, rise up, delay no longer.

O David's Key

O David's key, sceptre of the house of Israel,
That which thou openest, none can secure,
That which thou securest, no power may open;
O come and unlock the prison of darkness and
the fetters of death.

O Morgenstern

O Morgenstern, Glanz des unversehrten
Lichtes: Der Gerechtigkeit strahlende Sonne:
o komm und erleuchte, die da sitzen in
Finsternis, und im Schatten des Todes

O König aller Völker

O König aller Völker, ihre Erwartung und
Sehnsucht, Schlufstein, der den Bau
zusammen hält, o komm und errette den
Menschen, den du aus Erde gebildet!

O Immanuel

O Immanuel, unser König und Lehrer, du
Hoffnung und Heiland der Völker: o komm, eile
und schaffe uns Hilfe, du unser Herr und unser
Gott.

Ecce beatam lucem (David Hamilton)

Text by Alessandro Striggio

Ecce beatam lucem;
Virtus alma et maiestas passim cernenda
adest.
Quantum decoris illustri in sole, quam venusta
es luna,
quam multo clarior honore sidera fulgent, quam
pulcra quaeque in orbe.
O quam perennis esca tam sanctas mentes
pascit!
O mel et dulce nectar, O fortunatam sedem!
Haec quies, haec voluptas, haec meta,
Nos hinc attrahunt recta in paradisum.

O Morning Star

O morning star, incandescence of pure light,
Radiant sun of righteousness; O come and
enlighten Those who sit there in darkness
And in the shadow of death.

O King of All Nations

O king of all nations, their expectation and
desire, Keystone, which holds all things
together: O come and save mankind, whom
thou hast formed from clay!

O Emmanuel

O Emmanuel, our king and counselor, Thou
hope and saviour of the nations: O come, make
haste to help us, Thou our Lord and our God.

Behold the blessed light,
Benign power and majesty are seen
everywhere.
The dazzling splendour of the sun is matched
by you, the moon,
And by the stars shining brightly in their great
glory.
O how such eternal nourishment feeds holy
minds!
O honey and sweet nectar, O blessed place!
This peace, this delight, this goal,
Draw us from here straight to Paradise.

Light (music and text Keren Terpstra)

Light of eternal light, shine on me;
until this mortal body burns with immortality.