

ASTRA CONCERTS 2004

5pm Sunday 19 December

Clifton Arts Centre
Church Street, Richmond

Heinrich von Herzogenberg CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

Wolfgang Hufschmidt
ET IN TERRA PAX
(Bertolt Brecht)

Matthias Schlothfeldt
WHERE CHILDREN DIE
(Nelly Sachs)

The Astra Choir
soloists and ensemble

Fiona Todd *speaker*
Kristy Swift *soprano*, **Catrina Seiffert** *soprano*
Hana Crisp *mezzo soprano*, **Tim Drylie** *tenor*
Charlie Kedmenec *baritone*, **Jerzy Kozlowski** *bass*

Miwako Abe *violin*, **Rachael Hunt** *violin*, **Ceridwen Davies** *viola*
Rosanne Hunt *cello*, **Shannon Birchall** *double bass*
Vicki Philipson *oboe*
Jamie Lawson *trumpet*, **Phillipa Edwards** *trumpet*
Charles MacInnes *trombone*, **Glenn Bardwell** *bass trombone*
William Thompson *guitar*, **Timothy Phillips** *percussion*
Kim Bastin *organ & piano*
Calvin Bowman *organ*

The Astra Choir

soprano

Marie Finne, Irene McGinnigle, Kristy Swift, Gina McWilliam,
Yvonne Turner, Maree Macmillan, Diane Peters, Catrina Seiffert, Kim Tan

alto

Pen Alexander, Amy Boland, Marie Bongiorno, Hana Crisp, Anna Gifford,
Beverley Bencina, Frances McKinnon, Toni Robson, Lisel Thomas

tenor

John Clarke, Stephen Creese, Tim Drylie, Wally Gunn,
Simon Johnson, William Thompson, Nicholas Tolhurst

bass

Robert Franzke, James Harland, Charlie Kedmenec, Piers Bray,
Andrew Ferguson, Jerzy Kozlowski, Chris Smith, John Terrell

ensemble soloists

Christmas Oratorio:

Lisel Thomas, Nicholas Tolhurst, Robert Franzke

Where Children Die:

Kristy Swift, Irene McGinnigle, Catrina Seiffert,
Hana Crisp, Lisel Thomas, Anna Gifford, Toni Robson

conducted by **John McCaughey**

Recording Engineer: Michael Hewes
Astra Manager: Bobbie Hodge

PROGRAMME

Heinrich von Herzogenberg
DIE GEBURT CHRISTI – THE BIRTH OF CHRIST Op.90 (1894)

PART I.
Die Verheissung – The Promise

PART II.
Die Erfüllung – Fulfilment
(i) The Angel and Mary

Wolfgang Hufschmidt
ET IN TERRA PAX

Pieces from a Christmas Tryptych (1977-80) with texts by Brecht

1. Mary
2. Music of the Child
3. Many Spoke of War
4. Cradle Song of a Proletarian Mother

(ii) Birth in Bethlehem
(iii) The Angel and the Shepherds

I N T E R V A L

Matthias Schlothfeldt
IMMER DORT WO KINDER STERBEN – WHERE CHILDREN DIE
Song for seven female voices (2003) on a poem by Nelly Sachs

PART III.
Die Anbetung – Adoration

Paul Dessau / Wolfgang Hufschmidt
Petitions of the Children (Paul Dessau)
Mother Courage's Final Verse (Dessau/Hufschmidt)

Heinrich von Herzogenberg
DIE GEBURT CHRISTI – THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

PART I.

Die Verheissung – The Promise

1. Organ-Prelude and Chorale

*Dies ist der Tag, den Gott gemacht,
Sein werd' in aller Welt gedacht,
Ihn preise, was durch Jesum Christ
Im Himmel und auf Erden ist.*

*Die Völker haben dich geharrt
Bis dass die Zeit erfüllet ward,
Da sandte Gott von seinen Thron
Das Heil der Welt, dich, seinen Sohn*

*This is the day the Lord has made
let him be known in all the world,
give praise for all that through his son
In heaven and on earth was done.*

*The peoples waited for you long
until the time of fulfilment came;
then God sent forth from his own throne
the world's salvation, you, his son.*

– Christian F. Gellert, 1757

2. Solo quartet and Choir

O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf...

Ich harre des Herrn, meine Seele harret,
Und ich hoffe auf sein Wort, meine Seele wartet
auf den Herrn von einer Morgenwache bis zur andern.

Höre, mein Volk, mein Wort,
neiget eure Ohren zu der Rede meines Mundes,
ich will meinen Mund auftun zu Sprüchen
und alte Geschichten aussprechen,
die wir gehört haben und wissen,
die unsere Väter uns erzählt haben,
dass wir es nicht verhalten ihren Kindern.

Erhalte mich durch dein Wort, dass ich lebe,
und lass mich nicht zu Schanden werden
über meiner Hoffnung!

O Saviour, tear open the skies...

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and I hope for his word; my soul looks for the Lord
from one morning watch to the other.

– Psalm 130

Hear ye, my people, my word,
incline your ears to the speech of my mouth;
I will open my mouth in parables
and utter ancient stories
which we have heard and known,
which our fathers told to us,
so that we conceal nothing from their children.

– Psalm 78

Uphold me through your word, that I may live
and let me not be put to shame
because of my hope!

– Psalm 119

3. Baritone, Bass and Choir

So sprach der Herr zur Schlange:
'Ich will Feindschaft setzen zwischen dir und dem Weibe,
zwischen deinem Samen und ihrem Samen;
der selbe soll dir den Kopf zertreten,
und du wirst ihn in die Ferse stechen.'

*Hier leiden wir die grösste Not,
Vor Augen steht der bittere Tod;
Ach komm, führ uns mit starker Hand,
Vom Elend in das Vaterland!*

Then the Lord said to the serpent:
'I will put enmity between you and the woman,
between your brood and hers.
They shall tread upon your head,
And you shall strike at their heel.'

– Genesis 4

*Here we suffer great distress;
before our eyes is bitter death.
O come, lead us with steadfast hand
from misery to our fathers' land.*

– Friedrich von Spee 1623

4. Baritone, Bass and Choir

So saget der Hörer göttlicher Rede:
'Ich werde ihn sehen, aber jetzt nicht;
ich werde ihn schauen, aber nicht von Nahem.
Es wird ein Stern aufgehen,
Und ein Szepter aus Israel aufkommen.'

*O klares Licht, O schöner Stern!
Dich sähen wir von Herzen gern!
Komm, Sonne, ohne deren Schein
In Finsternis wir müssen sein.*

So speaks the one who hears the words of God:
'I will see him, but not now;
I will look upon him, but not near.
A star will rise up,
And a sceptre will come forth from Israel.'

– Numbers 24

*O you clear light, O star so fair!
We long to see you from our heart.
Come up, you sun, without whose shine
in darkness here we must remain.*

– Friedrich von Spee 1623

5. Baritone, Soprano and Choir

So sprach der Knecht des Herrn:
'Es wird eine Rute aufgehn von dem Stamme Isai,
und ein Zweig aus seiner Wurzel Frucht bringen.'

*O Erd, schlag aus, schlag aus, O Erd!
Dass Berg und Tal erneuert werd,
O Erd, hervor dies Blümlein bring,
O Heiland, aus der Erd entspring!*

So spoke the servant of the Lord:
'A shoot shall grow from the stock of Jesse
And a branch shall spring from his roots.'

– Isaiah 11

*O earth burst out, burst out O earth!
that hills and valleys be made new;
O earth bring forth this gentle flower
O saviour, from the earth spring out!*

– Friedrich von Spee 1623

6. Solo Quartet

Solches verheisst der Eifer des Herrn Zebaoth:
'Das Volk, so im Finstern wandelt,
siehet ein grosses Licht, und über die
da wohnen im finstern Lande, scheint es helle.
Denn uns ist ein Kind geboren, ein Sohn ist uns gegeben,
Welches Herrschaft ist auf seiner Schulter;
Und er heisst: Wunderbar, Rat, Kraft, Held,
Ewig Vater, Friedefürst,
auf dass seine Herrschaft gross werde
und des Friedens kein Ende auf dem Stuhl Davids
und seinem Königreiche.'

Thus promises the zeal of the Lord of hosts:
'The people that walked in darkness
sees a great light; and on them,
dwellers in a dark land, it shines brightly.
For a child is born for us, a son is given to us,
who bears dominion on his shoulder;
and his name is: Wonderful, Wise, Strong Champion,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace,
so that his dominion shall grow great
and there shall be boundless peace bestowed
on the throne of David and his kingdom.'

– Isaiah 9

7. Choir

*Kommst du, kommst du, Licht der Heiden?
Ja, du kommst und säumest nicht,
Weil du weisst, was uns gebricht;
O, du starker Trost im Leiden,
Jesus, meines Herzens Tür
Steht dir offen, komm zu mir!*

*Will you come, O light of the Gentiles?
yes, you come and will not fail,
for you know what cares we have;
O you comfort in all suffering,
Jesus, the door of my heart
now stands open, come to me*

– Ernst Christoph Homburg 1659

8. Chorale

*Ich lag in schweren Banden,
Du kommst und machst mich los;
Ich stand in Spott und Schanden,
Du kommst und machst mich gross;
Und hebst mich hoch zu Ehren
Und schenkst mir grosses Gut,
Das sich nicht lässt verzehren,
Wie irdisch Reichtum tut.*

*I lay in heavy shackles,
you come and loose my bonds;
I stood in shame, derided,
you come and make me strong;
and raise me to high honours
and grant to me great goods,
such as will never perish
as earthly richness does.*

– Paul Gerhardt 1653

PART II. Die Erfüllung – Fulfilment

9. Recitative: Evangelist, the Angel Gabriel, Mary

Der Engel Gabriel ward gesandt von Gott
in eine Stadt in Galiläa, die heisst Nazareth,
zu einer Jungfrau, die vertrauet war
einem Manne mit Namen Joseph vom Hause David;
und die Jungfrau hiess Maria.
Und der Engel kam zur ihr herein und sprach:
'Gegrüsset seist du, Holdselige; der Herr ist mit dir,
du Gebenedeite unter den Weibern!'
Da sie ihn aber sahe, erschrak sie über seiner Rede
und gedachte: 'Welch' ein Gruss ist das?'
Und der Engel sprach:
'Fürchte dich nicht, Maria, du hast Gnade bei Gott gefunden.
Siehe, du wirst einen Sohn gebären,
dess' Nam' sollst du Jesus heissen...'

The angel Gabriel was sent from God
to a town in Galilee which is called Nazareth.
to a girl who was betrothed to a man
whose name was Joseph, of the the house of David;
and the girl was called Mary.
And the angel went in to her place and said:
'Greetings to you, gracious one; the Lord is with you,
most blessed of all women!'
But when she saw him, she took fright at his speech,
and thought: 'What kind of greeting is this?'
And the angel said:
'Fear not, Mary, you have found favour with God.
Behold, you will bear a son
whose name you shall call Jesus...'

– Luke 1

10. Choir

*Jesus ist ein süsßer Nam',
Den rufen wir armen Sünder an,
Dadurch wir Huld erlangen,
Um all' unser Sünd' vergangen.
Genad' Herr, um all
unser Sünd und Missetat!*

*Jesus is a name so sweet
which we poor sinners call upon
that we might attain grace
for all our sins committed..
Mercy, Lord, for all
our sin and misdeeds.*

11. Recitative: the Angel Gabriel

‘...Der wird gross sein, und ein Sohn des Höchsten
genannt werden, und Gott, der Herr,
wird ihm den Stuhl seines Vaters David geben,
und er wird König sein über das Haus Jakobs ewiglich,
und seines Königreichs wird kein Ende sein.’

‘...He will be great, and will be called
Son of the Most High, and God, the Lord,
will give him the throne of his father David,
and he will be king over the house of Jacob forever
and of his kingdom there will be no end.’

– Luke 1

12. Choir

*Sei gesegnet, teures Reich,
Das ein solcher Herr besitzt,
Dem kein Herr auf Erden gleich,
Der das Recht mit Nachdruck schützt.
Schwinge dich in stetem Flor,
Gross an Frieden, reich an Freuden,
Unter Juden, unter Heiden,
Mit vermehrtem Glanz empor!
Sei gesegnet teures Reich.*

*Blessed be you, such a realm
that possesses such a ruler
unlike any lord on earth,
who protects all that is just.
Blossom forth in bounteous flower,
great in peace and rich in joy
for the Jews and for the Gentiles;
flowering forth in brilliant gleam,
blessed be you, such a realm.*

13. Recitative: Evangelist, Mary

Maria aber sprach:
‘Siehe, ich bin des Herren Magd,
mir geschehe, wie du gesagt hast.’
Und der Engel schied von ihr.

And Mary said:
‘Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord;
let it be for me as you have said.’
And the angel departed from her.

– Luke 1

Wolfgang Hufschmidt ET IN TERRA PAX

Pieces from a Christmas Tryptych (1977-80) with texts by Bertolt Brecht

1. MARY

Text by Bertolt Brecht (1922) not included for copyright reasons

2. MUSIC OF THE CHILD

*Er liegt dort elend, nackt und bloss
In einem Krippelein...*

*He lies there wretched, naked, bare
in a little manger...*

– Nikolaus Hermann 1554

3. MANY SPOKE OF WAR

Text by Bertolt Brecht (1945) not included for copyright reasons

4. CRADLE SONG OF A PROLETARIAN MOTHER

Text by Bertolt Brecht (1932) not included for copyright reasons

15. Recitative: Evangelist

Es begab sich aber zu der Zeit, dass ein Gebot vom Kaiser
Augustus ausging, dass alle Welt geschätzt würde.
Und jedermann ging, dass er sich schätzen liesse,
ein jeglicher in seine Stadt. Da machte sich auch auf Joseph
aus Galiläa, aus der Stadt Nazareth, in das jüdische Land
zur Stadt Davids, die da heisset Bethlehem, darum,
dass er von dem Haus und Geschlecht Davids war, auf dass
er sich schätzen liesse mit Maria, seinem vertrauten Weibe,

It happened in those days that a decree went out
from Augustus Caesar, that all the world be enrolled.
And everyone went to be enrolled, each to their own city.
And Joseph also went up from Galilee,
from the city of Nazareth, to Judea,
to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem,
because he was of the house and lineage of David, so
that he could be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed wife,

und die war schwanger. Und da sie daselbst waren,
kam die Zeit, dass sie gebären sollte.
Und sie gebar ihren ersten Sohn und wickelte ihn in Windeln
und legte ihn in eine Krippe, denn sie hatten
sonst keinen Raum in der Herberge.

– Luke 1

and she was pregnant. And while they were there,
the time came for her to give birth.
And she gave birth to her first son, and wrapped him
in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because
there was no other room for them in the inn.

16. Choir

*Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen,
aus einer Wurzel zart,
wie uns die Alten sangen,
von Jesse kam die Art,
und hat ein Blümlein bracht
mitten im kalten Winter
wohl zu der halben Nacht.*

*Das Röslein, das ich meine,
davon Jesaias sagt,
hat uns gebracht alleine,
Maria, die reine Magd;
aus Gottes ew'gem Rath
hat sie ein Kind geboren
wohl zu der halben Nacht.*

*A rose has sprouted forth
out from a tender root,
as the ancients sang to us,
from Jesse's stem it came;
brought out a gentle flower
in midst of the cold winter
right in the depth of night.*

*The fair rose that I mean,
of which Isaiah spoke,
was brought to us alone
by Mary, the pure maid;
from God's eternal wisdom
she gave birth to a child
right in the depth of night.*

– Cologne 15th C.

17. Interlude: Violoncello and Organ

18. Duet: Mary and Joseph

‘Joseph, lieber Joseph mein,
hilf mir wiegen mein Kindelein!’
‘Will es wiegen und singen ein:
nun schlaf' in Ruh, die Äuglein zu, o Jesu!’
O gebenedeite Nacht, o heilige Nacht, da in die Welt
Christ, das Heil der Sünder, sich hat eingestellt!
Eia! lass uns wiegen das Kindelein, o Joseph!
Schaut herab ihr Sternelein, aus dunkler Nacht,
scheinet, dass das Kindlein süß im Traume lacht.

Joseph, lieber Joseph mein,
Hülle mir ein mein Kindelein!
Will es schützen und decken fein,
Dass nicht der Wind versehr dein Kind, Maria!
Lob und Preis dem reichen Gott, der seinen Sohn
Zu uns Armen hat gewandt vom Himmelsthron!
Eia! Lass uns wiegen das Kindelein, Maria!
Kommt herab ihr Engelein, zum finstern Stall,
Grüsst das Kind mit Psalmen und mit süßem Schall!

– trad. folksong 14th C.

‘Joseph, dearest Joseph mine,
help me cradle my little child,’
‘Cradle I will, and sing to sleep,
now sleep in peace and close your eyes, O Jesus!’
O blessed night, O holy night, when in the world
Christ, the Saviour has taken abode!
‘Eia! Cradle we now the child to sleep, O Joseph.’
Look down sweet stars, from the dark night,
shine here, so that the little child laughs in dreams.

Joseph, dearest Joseph mine,
cover up close my little child!’
‘I will protect and wrap him fine,
So the wind never hurts your child, O Mary.’
praise to God so rich in all, who sent his son
to us, the poor, from heaven's throne!
‘Eia! Cradle we now the child to sleep, O Joseph.’
Come down, O angels, to the dark stall,
greet the child with psalms and gentle sounds.

19. Choir of Angels

O heiliges Kind, wir grüssen dich,
mit Harfenklang und Lobgesang,
Du liegst in Ruh, du heiliges Kind,
wir halten Wacht in dunkler Nacht.

O holy child, we give you greeting
with sound of harps and song of praise
you lie in peace, you holy child,
and we keep watch in the dark night.

20. Recitative

Und es waren Hirten in der selbigen Gegend
auf dem Felde bei den Hürden, die hüteten des Nachts
ihre Herde. Und siehe, des Herrn Engel trat zu ihnen,
und die Klarheit des Herrn leuchtete um sie;
und sie fürchteten sich sehr.
Und der Engel sprach zu ihnen:
‘Fürchtet euch nicht! Siehe, ich verkündige euch
grosse Freude, die allem Volk widerfahren wird,
denn euch ist heute der Heiland geboren, welcher

And there were shepherds in the same region,
in the fields at the sheep-pens, keeping watch at night
over their flocks. And behold, the angel came to them
and the radiance of the Lord shone round about them,
and they were very afraid.
And the angel said to them:
‘Do not be afraid! Behold, I bring you news
of great joy, which will come to all people,
for to you is born today the saviour, who is

ist Christus, der Herr, in der Stadt Davids;
und das habt zum Zeichen: Ihr werdet finden das Kind
in Windeln gewickelt und in einer Krippe liegend.
Und alsobald war da bei dem Engel
die Menge der himmlischen Heerscharen,
die lobeten Gott und sprachen:

Christ the Lord, in the city of David;
and take this as a sign: you will find the child
wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.
And all at once there was with the angel
the multitude of heavenly hosts
praising God and saying:

21. Choir of Angels

‘Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe und Friede auf Erde
und den Menschen ein Wohlgefallen.’

‘Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth,
and to humankind good will.’

– Luke 2

22. Organ Prelude and Chorale

*Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr
Und Dank für seine Gnade,
Darum, dass nun und nimmermehr
Uns rühren kann kein Schade;
Ein Wohlgefall'n Gott an uns hat,
Nun ist gross Fried' ohn' Unterlass,
All Fehd' hat nun ein Ende.*

*To God on high alone be praise
and thanks for his great mercy,
since now and henceforth ever more
no detriment can touch us;
a gracious will God has in us
now peace is given that will not cease,
all feuds have now their ending.*

– Nikolaus Decius 1522

INTERVAL

Matthias Schlothfeldt IMMER DORT WO KINDER STERBEN Song for seven female voices

Text by Nelly Sachs, from *Eclipse of Stars* 1949, not included for copyright reasons

PART III.

Die Anbetung – The Adoration

25. Recitative and Chorus: Evangelist and Shepherds

Und da die Engel von ihnen gen Himmel fuhren,
sprachen die Hirten zu einander:
‘Lasst uns nun gehen gen Bethlehem
und die Geschichte sehen, die da geschehen ist,
die uns der Herr kundgetan hat.’

And when the angels went away from them into
heaven, the shepherds said to each other:
‘Let us now go over to Bethlehem
and see this thing that has happened.
that the Lord has made known to us.’

– Luke 2

26. Choir of Shepherds

Kommet, ihr Hirten, ihr Männer und Fraun,
Kommet, das liebliche Kindlein zu schau'n!
Christus, der Herr, ist heute geboren,
Den Gott zum Heiland euch hat erkoren:
Fürchtet euch nicht.

Come all you shepherds, you women and men,
come all, to gaze on the sweet little child.
Christ the Lord today here is born,
chosen by God as saviour for you:
be not afraid.

Lasset uns sehen in Bethlehem's Stall,
Was uns verheissen der himmlische Schall.
Was wir dort finden,
Lasset uns künden,
Lasset uns preisen
In frommen Weisen. Halleluja!

Let us all see now in Bethlehem's stall,
what they had promised, the heavenly choirs.
Let us make known
all that we find,
let us give praise
in fervent songs. Halleluja!

– trad. Bohemian / Karl Riedel 1870

27. Recitative: Evangelist

Und sie kamen eilend und fanden beide,
Mariam und Joseph, dazu das Kind in der Krippe liegend.

And they came with haste and found both Mary and
Joseph, and with them the child, lying in a manger.

– Luke 2

28. Solo-Quartet und Choir

*Nun singet und seid froh,
Jauchzt alle und sagt so:
Unsres Herzen Wonne
Liegt in der Krippe bloss
Und leuchtet als die Sonne
In seiner Mutter Schoss.
Du bist A und O!*

*Now sing out and be glad,
rejoicing all, and say:
our heart's deepest bliss
lies in a manger bare
and sparkles like the sun
upon his mother's lap.
Alpha es et O!*

*Wo ist der Freudenort?
Wohl nirgend mehr denn dort,
Da die Engel singen
Mit den Heil'gen all,
Und die Psalmen klingen
Im hohen Himmelssaal;
Eia, wär'n wir da.*

*Where is the place of joy?
Nowhere more than there
where the angels sing
with all the saints
and psalms resound
in Heaven's high hall;
Ah, were we but there.*

– trad. 14th C. carol / Hanover 1646

29. Recitative: Evangelist

Da sie es aber gesehen hatten, breiteten sie das Wort aus,
welches zu ihnen von diesem Kinde gesagt war.
Und alle, vor die es kam, verwunderten sich der Rede,
die ihnen die Hirten gesagt hatten.

When they had seen him, they spread the word
of what they had been told about this child.
And all who heard it were astonished at
what the shepherds told them.

– Luke 2

30. Solo Soprano and Tenor with Choir of Shepherds

Da ich bei meinen Schafen wacht',
Ein Engel mir die Botschaft bracht,
Des bin ich froh,
Singet dem Herrn Gloria!

When I was watching o'er my sheep
an angel brought a message sweet,
of this I'm glad,
sing to the Lord Gloria!

Er sagt, ein Kind läg da im Stall,
Und sollt die Welt erlösen all,
Des bin ich froh,
Singet dem Herrn Gloria!

He said, a child lay in a stall
who was to redeem the world and all
of this I'm glad,
sing to the Lord Gloria!

Das Kind zu mir sein Äuglein wandt,
Mein Herz gab ich in seine Hand,
Des bin ich froh,
Singet dem Herrn Gloria!

The child turned his sweet eye to me
my heart I gave him willingly,
of this I'm glad,
sing to the Lord Gloria!

– trad. 17th C.

31. Recitative: Evangelist

Maria aber behielt alle diese Worte und bewegete sie
in ihrem Herzen. Und die Hirten kehrten wieder um,
preiseten und lobten Gott um alles, das sie gehört
und gesehen hatten, wie denn zu ihnen gesagt war.

But Mary kept all these words and pondered
them in her heart. And the shepherds returned,
praising and glorifying God for all that they
had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

– Luke 2

32. Solo Voices and Choir

Gelobet sei der Herr, der Gott Israels,
denn er hat besucht und erlöset sein Volk.
Halleluja.
Und hat uns aufgerichtet ein Horn des Heils
im Hause seines Dieners David.
Halleluja.
Dass er die Barmherzigkeit erzeugte unseren Vätern
und gedächte an seinen heiligen Bund.

Blessed be the Lord god of Israel
for he has visited and redeemed his people.
Halleluja.
And has raised up for us a cup of salvation
in the house of his servant David.
Halleluja.
For he has shown mercy to our forebears
and remembered his holy covenant.

Halleluja.
Dass wir, erlöset aus der Hand unsrer Feinde,
ihm dienen ohne Furcht unser Leben lang.
Halleluja.

Durch die herzliche Barmherzigkeit Gottes,
durch welche uns besucht hat der Aufgang aus der Höhe,
auf dass er erscheine denen, die da sitzen in Finsternis
und Schatten des Todes,
und richte unsre Füße auf den Weg des Friedens.

Halleluja.
That we, redeemed from the hand of our enemies
might serve him without fear for all our lives.
Halleluja.

Through the tender mercy of God,
through which came to us the visit from on high
so that he might appear to them who sit in darkness
and the shadow of death,
and guide our feet in the way of peace.

– Luke 1

33. Double-Chorus with Chorale

Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt,
dass er seinen eingeborenen Sohn gab,
auf dass alle, die an ihn glauben, nicht verloren werden,
sondern das ewige Leben haben.

CHORALE:

*Er ist auf Erden kommen arm,
Dass er unser sich erbarm
Und in dem Himmel mache reich
Und seinen lieben Englein gleich.
Halleluja!*

God so loved the world,
that he gave his only-born son,
so that all who believe in him should not be lost,
but have eternal life.

– John 3

*He has come to earth poor,
that he might have pity on us
and make us rich in heaven
as equals of his angels.
Halleluja!*

– Martin Luther 1524

34. Chorale and Organ Postlude

*Sei willekomm, du edler Gast,
Den Sünder nicht verschmähet hast,
Und kommst ins Elend her zu mir,
Wie soll ich immer danken dir!*

*Lob, Ehr sei Gott im höchsten Thron,
Der uns schenkt seinen ein'gen Sohn,
Des freuet sich der Engel Schar,
Und singen uns solch neues Jahr.*

*Be welcome here, you noble guest,
the sinners you did not disdain,
and come to me in misery.
How shall I ever render thanks?*

*Glory to God on highest throne
who gave to us his only son;
for this the angel hosts rejoice
and sing new year for all of us.*

– Martin Luther 1535

Paul Dessau BITTEN DER KINDER – PETITIONS OF THE CHILDREN

Text by Bertolt Brecht (1950) not included for copyright reasons

Wolfgang Hufschmidt (after Paul Dessau) THE DAY WILL COME (Mother Courage's final stanza)

– Choir Verses: Brecht, *Mother Courage and her Children* 1939
– Speaker's text: Brecht, concluding sentences from *The Mother* 1931

Text by Bertolt Brecht (1950) not included for copyright reasons

English translations: JMcC

By its nature, Christmas in its narrative and imagery produces contradictions in its surrounding celebrations – manifestly so in a year of war with uncounted victims, or in a country that imprisons children. The nativity story is told in a rich blend of cultural texts, from ancient Hebrew prophesy to the world of popular song, and music has become part of its telling, through its own capacity for variety of forms in giving shape to words. The ‘new’ oratorio by Herzogenberg in today’s concert reflects this multi-layered tradition, to which are added the voices of Bertolt Brecht and Nelly Sachs in more recent musical settings.

Although he is now largely forgotten, Heinrich von Herzogenberg (1843–1900) was a figure of significance in his time, a close friend of Brahms and an associate of the Bach biographer Philipp Spitta, with whom he founded the Bach Society in Leipzig in 1874. He subsequently took up teaching posts in Berlin, including the master class at the Academy of the Arts, later to be held by Busoni and Schoenberg. Chronic illness and the loss of his wife led to his withdrawal in his final years, producing several large choral works that still await wider re-discovery. The Christmas Oratorio is the last of these, with a text assembled by the Strassburg theologian Friedrich Spitta, brother of the musical scholar. It was premiered in Strassburg almost exactly 110 years ago, on December 23, 1894.

The three Parts of the oratorio in Spitta’s scenario present distinct characters as well as stages in the Christmas narrative, allowing for differing musical treatments

- Part I is coloured by the prophetic Old Testament texts, set among a set of choral variations on the Advent chorale ‘O Heiland reiss die Himmel auf’;
- Part II presents the three important episodes of Luke’s narrative – the Angel’s visitations to Mary and to the shepherds, framing the central birth in Bethlehem;
- Part III produces a series of set pieces as the shepherds come to Bethlehem and return to the world – folk-like celebrations are set alongside developed choral numbers such as a Bachian double-chorus with chorale cantus firmus.

Herzogenberg brings to this broadly popular setting a high musical craft imbued with the traditions of the waning 19th century – Mendelssohn and Brahms – together with the more recently discovered distant past of Bach. In his integration of many of the most famous Christmas melodies can also be heard an anticipation of the new century, as popular materials were about to affect the tone and substance of Mahler’s symphonic music.

Wolfgang Hufschmidt belongs to a contemporary tradition in German music flowing from the poetry and politics of Bertolt Brecht and associated musicians. Formerly Rector of the multi-discipline Folkwang Music School in the Ruhr, he has frequently collaborated in his work with other artists such as the writer Günter Grass. As President of the International Hanns Eisler Society he is engaged at the centre in an ongoing cultural discussion between east and west in post-reunification Germany. He is also subject of a recent film *Seven Brothers* widely distributed in Europe, in which he and his six brothers (there are no sisters in the family!) trace different generations of experience spanning from the Nazi period to the present.

Hufschmidt’s 70th birthday is marked in this concert with some short pieces from his Christmas Triptych *Et in terra pax*, first performed by the Astra Choir in 1981. A parallel concert is being performed today in the Ruhr city of Mülheim, with some of his more recent music.

The Christmas Triptych was originally a much larger multi-media work, composed with the late visual artist Wolfgang Pilz, in which three films run in parallel with music and speech performances. “In this work the tradition of the church chorale is dialectically confronted with another tradition – that of the songs of peasants and workers from the Peasant Wars of Luther’s time to the present day...” (WH) The short choral scenes heard in today’s concert place the Brecht poems among both secular and religious song cultures, including a large array of Christmas melodic fragments (many of them in common with the Herzogenberg oratorio).

Matthias Schlothfeldt a former student of Wolfgang Hufschmidt at the Folkwang School, represents a younger generation of German intellectuals placing musical composition into broader questions of culture and politics. He is based in Cologne, where his activities include music for theatre and performance as a guitarist, as well as being co-founder and editor of the journal *Klangform-Brief*, a forum for societal discussion of composition and analysis of music.

The setting of Nelly Sachs’ poem on the death of children, written for seven female voices, was a commission for the professional ensemble *Canta Filia* in Detmold. Somewhat in the tradition of Eisler’s choral Brecht-setting *Against War*, the piece forms a series of variations of a 12-tone tune across the verses of the poem. But here, dealing with the Nelly Sachs text, the music seems to slow right down and enter into the sounds of the words themselves and, through them, into the traumatic imagery of the text. Winner of the Nobel Prize in 1966, Nelly Sachs has been compared with her contemporary Paul Celan, as poets of Jewish suffering in the mid-20th century whose work resonates with elements of the Hebrew scriptures.

ASTRA COMPACT DISCS

available at this concert

- Astra CD 1: Michael Kieran Harvey, piano: *Threnody*.
Australian piano compositions by James Anderson, Andrew Byrne, Stuart Campbell,
Michael Kieran Harvey, Keith Humble, John McCaughey and Carl Vine.
- Astra CD 2: Keith Humble, piano: *Bagatelles*. Liszt, Bartok and Humble,
from Humble's last recital, at La Trobe University in 1993.
- Astra CD 3: Lawrence Whiffin, *murchitt a daydream*, with book by William Henderson.
Merlyn Quaife (soprano), Tyrone Landau (tenor), William Henderson (reciter),
instrumental ensemble and the Astra Choir, conducted by John McCaughey.
- Astra CD 4: Kim Bastin and Joan Pollock, pianos: *White and Black*.
Schoenberg, *Second Chamber Symphony* and other works for two pianos
by Schumann, Ravel and Debussy.
- Astra CD 5: Astra Concert Archive: "**Achilles falls...**"
The Astra Choir with soloists and ensemble
Stefan Wolpe, Webern, Beethoven, Brahms.
Choral works with song, melodrama, instrumental solo and chamber music
with soloists including Miwako Abe (violin), Tristram Williams (trumpet)
and instrumental ensembles, conducted by John McCaughey.
- Astra CD 6: Astra Concert Archive: "**first and last things...**"
The Astra Choir with soloists and ensemble
Bach, Busoni, Kagel, Hindemith, Martin Friedel, Wolfgang Hufschmidt, Paul Celan.
from Bach via chant, speech-chorus & poetry to Busoni's 2-piano *Art of Fugue* Fantasia
Kim Bastin & Joan Pollock, piano duo; Margaret Ricketts & William Henderson, speakers.

Thanks to

Rev. Dr Robert Hoskin, John Bainbridge, Dawn Phillips, Clifton Arts Centre;
Joan Pollock, Michael Ellis.

Astra concerts receive support from
the Commonwealth government through the Australia Council;
Arts Victoria, a division of the Department of Premier and Cabinet;
the William Angliss Trust; Diana Gibson, and private donors.

© ASTRA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY 2004

Chair: Anna Gifford Manager: Bobbie Hodge Musical Director: John McCaughey
PO Box 365, North Melbourne, Victoria 3051, Australia ABN 41 255 197 577

Tel: (3)9326 5424 Fax: (3)9329 2272 email: astra@connexus.net.au web: www.astramusic.org.au