

3pm Sunday 30 October
St Mark's Church, Fitzroy

(3)

Michael Bertram
MASS

Riccardo Vaglini
AGNUS DEI

Reger, Liszt, Stravinsky
Mendelssohn

Linda Kent *organ*
The Astra Choir and soloists

This is the final concert in Astra's 'October in Fitzroy' series, in which a range of new works for choir, solo voices and instruments have been presented in their first performances. Following the focus of the previous two concerts, on science and the natural world (Martin Friedel, in his 60th year) and on poetry (Helen Gifford in her 70th), today's programme turns to religious texts and their musical exploration, with the new Mass setting by Michael Bertram, also celebrating his 70th year – and a previously unperformed *Agnus Dei* by the Italian composer Riccardo Vaglini in his 40th year.

Removed from its liturgical context, and even from its system of belief, religious music still carries a sense of ancient and newer forms of expression resonating within each other. It also reflects a vast scale of experience from the most personal to the most collective or ritualistic. The texts and form of the Mass offer these qualities in abundance, explored by composers since the Renaissance as a vehicle for musical ideas extending across several movements. This concert also moves to the unusual and experimental worlds of late Liszt and late Reger, where shorter religious texts become radical musical moments looking forward to new styles.

Michael Bertram (b.1935) brings diverse elements of his musical background to the new Mass composition. He was a fulltime chorister at Lichfield Cathedral between the ages of eight and thirteen; after emigrating to Australia in 1952 he continued his piano studies in Perth and later with Roy Shepherd in Melbourne, performing and broadcasting as a solo pianist for some years. He studied composition with Felix Werder and Peter Tahourdin, and since the 1970s has produced music performed among others by Keith Humble, Margaret Haggart and Michael Kieran Harvey. His previous choral music includes canticle settings for the Ormond College Choir, and he is currently working on a chamber opera after Ionesco's *Le Roi se Meurt*.

The five movements of the Mass *ordinary* (the liturgical segments in every Mass independent of the day or season) form an accidental group of texts, diverse in poetic character, yet strong in potential symmetries and contrasts around the central Credo, (itself centred on the narrative of incarnation). Michael Bertram's Mass creates a broad and varied theatre for unaccompanied choir, the heartland of the work's expression, from which other passages for solo voices and the two instruments also emerge.

Max Reger (1873-1916) produced many organ and choral works among the large output of his short life, in which he was also famous as a pianist and conductor. His very late works for solo voice and organ are radically simple, mostly based on early texts from the era of the Lutheran chorale. Their musical settings take the simple chorale into an *ars nouveau* territory of continuous flux in dynamics and harmony. **Franz Liszt** (1811–1886) also went towards the edges of musical expression in his late religious works, which were largely uncomprehended (and unpublished) in his own time. The Psalm 130 'Out of the depths have I cried' for solo bass moves between tonal assurance, an austere modal sound approaching atonality, and the boundary of meditative silence. The three other brief Liszt works on today's programme take a single sentence of text and translate it into a musical action or mystical moment. The musical depiction of the prophet Ezekiel's valley of bones requires two players at the organ, heaping up chords outside the rules of 19th century harmony. **Igor Stravinsky** (1882–1971) wrote his short canticles as Russian choral chants, later transferred to Latin, conjuring equally an ancient past and a neo-classic modernism.

The organ sonatas of **Felix Mendelssohn** (1809-1847), Liszt's contemporary until his early death, show a variety and originality of form and expression, combining elements of the instrument's base in earlier church-music with the modern secular sonata. In the **Sonata No.3** different styles of organ sound are heard, chordal and contrapuntal, and a Lisztian tenor voice that emerges as a solo figure. A frame is formed by bright major-key music, related in mysterious ways to the dark pedal melody heard during the central fugue – Luther's chorale version of Psalm 130 'Out of the depths have I cried'. The unusual two-movement form is accentuated by the brevity of the concluding Andante – not a full movement but a single melody whose coda phrase (a distant echo of the chorale motive) expands to fill half its length.

Riccardo Vaglini (b.1965) lives in Tuscany where he is active in contemporary music events and with the publishing/recording collective **ars publica**. He is also partly based in Venice, as professor of composition at the Conservatorium there. His music draws on wide cultural and political reference, frequently distilled into players' actions that combine sounding simplicity and performative skill. Elements of early music and modern sound interact in his *Agnus Dei* for two female singers and organ, written in 1999. Singers and organ share a common material, the ancient sound of the 'perfect fourth' moving in a continuous circle through the modern chromatic scale. In the manner of the 14th-century *ars nova*, however, the paths of the two layers are quite heterogeneous. The repeated organ phrase is heard in ever-expanding lengths, changing character as it grows in the time-ratios 1:2:3:4:5. Against this enveloping background, the singers develop an overlaid combined song reminiscent of late-mediaeval Italian vocal music. – JMcC

PROGRAMME

Michael Bertram MASS (2002)

choir, solo singers, organ, violoncello

first performance

- I. Kyrie
 - II. Gloria
 - III. Credo
 - IV. Sanctus
 - V. Agnus Dei
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I n t e r v a l

Max Reger PRAYER FOR A BLESSED DEATH Op.137 No.1 (1914)

two sopranos, female choir, organ

Franz Liszt PSALM 130: DE PROFUNDIS (1881)

solo bass, organ

Max Reger THY WILL BE DONE! Op.137 No.2 (1914)

mezzo-soprano, choir, organ

Franz Liszt OSSA ARIDA – YE DRY BONES (1879)

male choir, organ four-hands

Igor Stravinsky PATER NOSTER (1949)

choir

Max Reger GRAVE SONG Op.137 No.7 (1914)

choir, organ

Franz Liszt QUI SEMINANT IN LACRIMIS (1884)

choir, organ

Igor Stravinsky AVE MARIA

choir

Franz Liszt QUI MARIAM ABSOLVISTI (1885)

solo bass, choir, organ

Felix Mendelssohn SONATA FOR ORGAN NO.3 (1844)

I. Con moto maestoso II. Andante tranquillo

Riccardo Vaglini AGNUS DEI (1999)

two female voices and organ

first performance

Max Reger THE AGNUS DEI Op.138 No.6 (1914)

choir

Linda Kent organ **Rosanne Hunt** cello

Jessica Aszodi soprano **Catrina Seiffert** soprano

Hana Crisp mezzo-soprano

Jerzy Kozlowski bass

Kim Bastin organ

The Astra Choir conducted by **John McCaughey**

Michael Bertram, MASS (2002) *first performance*

I. KYRIE

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

II. GLORIA

Gloria in excelsis Deo
et in terra pax hominibus. bonae voluntatis

Glory to God in the highest
and on earth peace to people of good will.

Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te,
glorificamus te, gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam

We praise you, we bless you, we adore you,
we glorify you, we give thanks to you
for your great glory.

Domine Deus, rex coelestis,
Deus pater omnipotens

Lord God, celestial king,
God the father omnipotent,

Domine fili unigenite, Jesu Christe,

Lord the only begotten son, Jesus Christ,

Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, filius patris,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram
qui sedes ad dexteram patris,
miserere nobis.

Lord God, lamb of God, son of the father,
you who take away the sins of the world
have mercy on us,
who take away the sins of the world
give heed to our prayer,
who sit at the right hand of God
have mercy on us.

Quoniam tu solus sanctus,
tu solus Dominus
tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe,
cum Sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei patris. Amen.

For you alone are holy,
you alone are the Lord
you alone the most high, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit
in glory with God the father. Amen.

III. CREDO

Credo in unum Deum,
Patrem omnipotentem, factorem caeli et terrae,
visibilem omnium et invisibilem;

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

Et in unum Dominum, Iesum Christum,
filium Dei unigenitum,
et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula;

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages;

Deum de Deo, Lumen de Lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
genitum non factum,
consubstantialem Patri,
per quem omnia facta sunt;

God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one substance with the Father;
through whom all things were made.

Qui propter nos homines
et propter nostram salutem
descendit de caelis

Who for us humans
and for our salvation
descended from the heavens,

et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est;

and was made flesh by the Holy Spirit
of the Virgin Mary, and was made man;

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato,
passus et sepultus est;
et resurrexit tertia die,
secundum Scripturas;
et ascendit in caelum,

He was also crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
suffered, and was buried;
and rose again on the third day
according to the Scriptures;
and ascended into heaven,

sedet ad dexteram Patris;
et iterum venturus est cum gloria,
iudicare vivos et mortuos,
cuius regni non erit finis;

and sits at the right hand of the Father;
and shall come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead,
of whose kingdom there shall be no end;

Et in Spiritum Sanctum,
Dominum et vivificantem,
qui ex Patri Filioque procedit;
qui cum Patre et Filio
simul adoratur et conglorificatur;
qui locutus est per prophetas;
Et unam sanctam catholicam
et apostolicam Ecclesiam.
Confiteor unum baptisma

And in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and Giver of Life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
Who, together with the Father and the Son,
is adored and glorified;
Who has spoken through the Prophets.
And in one holy, catholic
and apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism

in remissionem peccatorum,
et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum,
et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

for the remission of sins,
and I await the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the age to come. Amen.

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

IV. SANCTUS
Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord, God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

V. AGNUS DEI
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.

I n t e r v a l

Max Reger

PRAYER FOR A BLESSED DEATH (1914)

Sacred Songs Op.137 No.1

Wenn mein Stündlein fürhanden ist,
und soll hinfahrn mein' Strassen,
so g'leit du mich, Herr Jesu Christ,
mit Hilf mich nicht verlasse;
mein' Seel' an meinem letzten End'
befehl ich dir in deine Händ',
du wollst sie mir bewahren.

When my hour lies at hand
and I must take my road from here,
so be my guide, Lord Jesus Christ,
do not desert me with your aid.
My soul unto my final end
I do commit into your hands,
be pleased to guard it for me.

Mein' Sünd' mich werden kränken sehr,
mein G'wissen wird mich nagen,
denn ihr'r sind viel' wie Sand am Meer,
doch will ich nicht verzagen;
gedenken will ich an dein' Tod,
Herr Jesu, und dein' Wunden rot,
die werden mich erhalten.

All my faults will then offend,
my conscience will gnaw at me,
my sins are many as the ocean sands,
yet will I not lose courage;
I will reflect upon your death,
Lord Jesus, and your pain and wounds,
they surely will sustain me.

– Nicolaus Hermann (1480-1561)

Franz Liszt

PSALM 130: DE PROFUNDIS (1881)

solo bass, organ

De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine:
Domine, exaudi vocem meam.
Fiant aures tuae intendentes:
in vocem deprecationis meae.
Si iniquitates observaveris,
Domine: quis sustinebit?
Quia apud te propitiatio est:
et propter legem tuam sustinuite, Domine.
Sustinuit anima mea in verbo ejus,
speravit anima mea in Domino,
a custodia matutina usque ad noctem.
Speret Israel in Domino.
Quia apud Dominum misericordia
et copiosa apud eum redemptio.
Et ipse redimet Israel
ex omnibus iniquitatibus ejus.

Out of the depths I have cried to you, O Lord:
Lord, hear my voice.
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplication.
If you will mark iniquities:
O Lord, who shall stand it?
For with you there is merciful forgiveness:
and because of your law, I have waited for you, Lord.
My soul has relied on his word:
my soul has hoped in the Lord.
From the morning watch even until night,
let Israel hope in the Lord.
Because with the Lord there is mercy:
and with him plentiful redemption.
And he shall redeem Israel
from all his iniquities.

Max Reger

THY WILL BE DONE! (1914)

Sacred Songs Op.137 No.2

Dein Wille, Herr, geschehe!
Verdunkelt schweigt das Land,
Im Zug der Wetter sehe
ich schauernd deine Hand.
O mit uns Sündern gehe
erbarmend ins Gericht!
Ich beug im tiefsten Wehe
zum Staub mein Angesicht.
Dein Wille, Herr, geschehe!

– Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857)

Thy will, O Lord, be done!
darkened now the land is mute,
In the approaching storm I see
and tremble at your hand.
O go with us sinners
mercifully into judgement!
I bow in deepest sorrow
my face into the dust.
Thy will, O Lord, be done!

Franz Liszt

OSSA ARIDA (1879)

organ four-hands and male choir

“Ossa arida audite verbum Domini.”

– *Ezekiel 37*

“Ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.”

Igor Stravinsky

PATER NOSTER (1949)

choir

Pater noster, qui es in coelis:
Sanctificetur nomen tuum:
Adveniat regnum tuum:
Fiat voluntas tua,
sicut in coelo, et in terra.

Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie:
Et dimitte nobis debita nostra,
sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris,
Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.
Sed libera nos a malo. Amen.

– *Matthew 6*

Our Father, who art in heaven:
Hallowed be your name:
Your kingdom come:
Your will be done,
as in heaven, so also on earth.

Give our daily bread to us this day:
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors,
And lead us not into temptation,
but free us from evil. Amen.

Max Reger

GRAVE-SONG (1914)

Sacred Songs Op.137 No.7

Geht nun hin und grabt mein Grab,
denn ich bin des Wanderns müde!
Von der Erde scheid ich ab,
denn mir ruft des Himmels Friede,
denn mir ruft die süße Ruh
von den Engeln droben zu,
Denn mir ruft die süße Ruh.

Was soll ich hienieden noch
In dem dunkeln Thale machen?
Denn wie mächtig stolz und hoch
Wir auch stellen unsre Sachen,
Muss es doch wie Sand zergehn,
Wann die Winde drüber wehn.
Muss es doch wie Sand zergehn.

Darum letzte gute Nacht!
Sonn und Mond und liebe Sterne,
fahret wohl mit eurer Pracht!
Denn ich reis in weite Ferne,
reise hin zum jenem Glanz,
worin ihr verschwindet ganz,
reise hin zum jenem Glanz.

– Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860)

Go now hence and dig my grave,
for my wanderings have made me weary!
From the earth I now depart,
for I'm called by heaven's peace,
for I'm called by sweetest rest
by the angels high above,
for I'm called by sweetest rest.

What should I still have to seek
Here below in the dark valley?
For however proud and high
we may place our worldly things,
all of this must pass like sand
when the wind across it blows.
All of this must pass like sand.

Therefore now a last Good Night!
Sun and moon and stars so gentle,
farewell in your rich array!
For I journey far and distant,
journey to that radiance
where you all will disappear,
journey to that radiance.

Franz Liszt

QUI SEMINANT IN LACRIMIS (1884)

choir, organ

Qui seminant in lacrimis
in exultatione metent.

– *Psalm 125*

They that sowed in tears
shall reap in joy.

Igor Stravinsky

AVE MARIA (1949)

choir

Ave Maria gratia plena
Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus
Et benedictus fructus ventris tuae, Jesus.

Sancta Maria, Mater Dei ,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus
Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God
pray for us sinners
now and in the hour of our death. Amen.

Franz Liszt

QUI MARIAM ABSOLVISTI (1885)

solo bass, choir, organ

Qui Mariam absolvisti,
et latronem exaudisti,
mihi quoque spem dedisti.

– from *Dies Irae*, Thomas of Celano (c. 1200-1270)

You who pardoned Magdalene
and heard the bandit's plea,
to me too you have given hope.

Felix Mendelssohn

SONATA FOR ORGAN NO.3 (1844)

after the chorale 'Out of the depths'

I. Con moto maestoso II. Andante tranquillo

Riccardo Vaglini

AGNUS DEI (1999)

two female voices and organ

first performance

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.

Max Reger

THE AGNUS DEI (1914)

choir

O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig
Am Stamm des Kreuzes geschlachtet,
Allzeit gefunden geduldig,
Wiewohl du wurdest verachtet:
All' Sünd' hast du getragen,
Sonst müßten wir verzagen.
Erbarm dich unser, gib uns dein' Frieden.

- Nikolaus Decius (1485-1546), after the Latin Mass

O Lamb of God, innocently
slaughtered on the tree of the cross,
at all times found to be patient:
However much you were despised,
all sins you bore,
or else we must lose courage.
Have mercy on us, give us your peace.

The Astra Choir:

soprano

**Jessica Aszodi, Irene McGinnigle, Catrina Seiffert, Yvonne Turner,
Larissa Cox, Maree Macmillan, Susannah Provan, Kim Tan**

alto

**Pen Alexander, Amy Boland, Hana Crisp, Anna Gifford,
Beverley Bencina, Bidy Connor, Frances McKinnon,
Joan Pollock, Lisel Thomas**

tenor

**Wally Gunn, Kevin March, Justin Thomas,
Nicholas Tolhurst Phillip Villani**

bass

**Robert Franzke, James Harland, Andrew Ferguson,
Jerzy Kozlowski, Chris Smith, John Terrell**

accompanist

Kim Bastin

Recording Engineer: Michael Hewes

ASTRA PUBLICATIONS – NEW:

Keith Humble, EIGHT CABARET SONGS, voice and piano

Keith Humble, SONATA No.3, piano solo

copied and edited with critical notes by Kim Bastin

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Australian piano compositions by James Anderson, Andrew Byrne, Stuart Campbell,
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from Humble's last recital, at La Trobe University in 1993.
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Merlyn Quaife (soprano), Tyrone Landau (tenor), William Henderson (reciter),
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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.
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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 email: astra@connexus.net.au web: www.astramusic.org.au