**CHORUSOZ** 

# THE ARMED MAN

A MASS FOR PEACE



SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

ARTISTIC & MUSIC DIRECTOR BRETT WEYMARK ((A)

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# SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

ARTISTIC & MUSIC DIRECTOR BRETT WEYMARK DAM

# CHORUS OZ THE ARMED MAN

**JEAN SIBELIUS** 

**Finlandia** 

with choral hymn finale

KATIE NOONAN and ANDREW O'CONNOR

An Instrument of Peace<sup>†</sup>

orchestrated by Steve Newcomb

WORLD PREMIERE

KARL JENKINS

The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace

HUBERT PARRY

Jerusalem

orchestrated by Edward Elgar

Brett Weymark conductor

AVÉ (Australian Vocal Ensemble):

Katie Noonan soprano | Fiona Campbell mezzo-soprano Louis Hurley tenor | Andrew O'Connor bass-baritone

Sahil Ahmad Malik muezzin

ChorusOz 2024 Sydney Philharmonia Orchestra

Saturday 9 June 2024 at 5pm Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

Estimated durations: 8 minutes, 8 minutes, 63 minutes, 4 minutes The concert will conclude at approximately 6:40pm

This performance of *The Armed Man* is given by permission of Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd, exclusive agent for Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers of London.



This concert is being broadcast live by ABC Classic.
Presented by Genevieve Lang.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>†</sup> Commissioned by Sydney Philharmonia Choirs



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# Welcome

This is a very special concert: on stage a choir of people from across Australia, and the world, who came together for the first time yesterday afternoon. You are witness to the remarkable achievements possible in such a short period of time.

ChorusOz was inspired by the combinedschools experiences I enjoyed as a student. We'd work for months in our individual schools, learning demanding choral repertoire – music like Mozart's Requiem or *Carmina Burana* – before coming together in the Sydney Opera House with a full orchestra to perform for family and friends. Music that had seemed difficult became easy as a group.

Choirs are microcosms of society in which everyone has a part to play: some have great voices, others terrific music reading skills, while others are brilliant at languages. In a huge melting pot of potential, one person's strength lifts up another person's weakness and we experience the power of many voices coming together as one.

We know that music, and in particular singing, develops our brains and our imaginations in unique ways. And music education at an early age is complementary to maths, English, language acquisition and even physical coordination. But music can and should remain a vital part of our lives – from 'womb to tomb'. to use a line from



Bernstein's classic *West Side Story* – and this concert is evidence of that.

On stage today is a choir that will sing in tune, in several different languages and about cultures that are different to our own, performing music ranging from centuries old to works still wet on the page.

I believe singing — especially singing in choirs — is one of the greatest gifts we have as human beings, and ChorusOz is a celebration of that remarkable gift. In a small way, it is also a sign of peace and unity in a divisive world. Today we come together to celebrate creativity, harmony and understanding — a mass for peace on so many levels.

### **Brett Weymark OAM**Artistic and Music Director

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, upon whose Country we rehearse, sing and work, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. Our voices bring to life the songs of many cultures and countries, from across the ages, in a spirit of sharing, learning and understanding. The ancient customs and cultures of this land inspire us to create harmony – in music and in our society.

## About the Music

This year's ChorusOz sees a performance of one of the most popular choral works of our time: The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace by Karl Jenkins. Premiered in 2000, this moving reflection on the horror of war and its consequences has been performed more than 3,000 times worldwide, with notable events including a performance in New York on the 10th anniversary of September 11, and another in Berlin with 2,000 choristers from 30 countries to commemorate 100 years since the end of World War I.

We've framed The Armed Man with three shorter pieces that reflect on its themes in different ways. The Finlandia hymn has acquired the status of an unofficial national anthem in Finland, Jerusalem has similarly acquired 'national anthem' status in England. This is the kind of music that has been known to inspire listeners to leap to their feet and join in. When we sing Jerusalem, we hope you'll do exactly that. Meanwhile, the texts convey a hopeful patriotism that looks to peace rather than war. Rounding out the program is a new work, commissioned specifically for this concert, that offers an overt expression of peace, based on the prayer of St Francis.

#### **Finlandia**

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865-1957)

In Australia, at least, *Finlandia* is best known as a concert work for orchestra. It's easy to forget that its origins were in the theatre and that its hymnlike finale was given words and sung early in its history.

In 1890. Sibelius returned home from musical studies in Berlin and Vienna to find Finland in ferment, fiercely resisting Russian cultural and political domination. In 1899, Nicholas II of Russia issued the 'February Manifesto', which aimed to further restrict the autonomy of the Grand Duchy of Finland. Newspapers were censored and closed. Finns rallied with a festival in honour of the Finnish press. Sibelius's contribution was his Press Celebrations Music, written to accompany a series of dramatic tableaux culminating in Finland Awakes. That final movement – turbulent but optimistic – quickly took on a life of its own as Finlandia. It became associated with the aspirations and sentiments of Finnish nationalism, and fervent melodies and dramatic orchestral colour became the language of the nationalist style.

The success of what he considered a 'relatively insignificant piece' seems to have caught Sibelius by surprise, and he was bemused by the widespread desire to sing the finale: 'It is not intended to be sung. It is written for an orchestra. But if the world wants to sing it, it can't be helped.' Indeed it couldn't, and the tune entered the hymn books with various texts. In 1937. Sibelius himself relented with an arrangement of the hymn for male choir, for use by the Freemasons, using a text by the tenor Wäinö Sola. Three years later he consented to performances of Finlandia with the patriotic text by poet Veikko Antero Koskenniemi that we sing today.

#### An Instrument of Peace

## KATIE NOONAN and ANDREW O'CONNOR orchestrated by Steve Newcomb

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs has commissioned numerous works in its history, but today's commission is especially notable: it is the first work composed specifically for ChorusOz. It's also distinctive for a classical commission in that its music represents a collaboration. Katie Noonan composed the opening section, featuring the four singers of AVÉ (Australian Vocal Ensemble), while Andrew O'Connor composed the second section, drawing on his extensive knowledge of choral writing, and the resulting work was orchestrated by jazz-influenced pianist and composer Steve Newcomb.

The text begins with the *Agnus Dei* from the Latin mass (Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace), and later O'Connor incorporates the traditional Gregorian chant associated with these words. But the main lyrics are adapted from the well-known Peace Prayer of St Francis of Assisi.

#### Katie Noonan writes...

It has been deeply upsetting and difficult to observe the various tragedies unfolding in the world of late. Ruminating on this commission, I felt a meditation on peace might bring a panacea of sorts to my heart and hopefully to the hearts of our choir and orchestra.

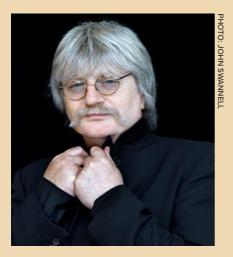
The words of Italian poet and mystic Saint Francis of Assisi have always brought me succour, and he is also regarded as a patron saint of animals – so his words seemed a suitable choice to go alongside Karl Jenkins' *Armed Man* and its reference in the ninth movement to the Hindu *Mahabharata* reflection on animals of war.

As time went on, however, I realised this piece was in fact a song for my dear dad Brian. Dad was one of the kindest and loveliest gentlemen to grace this earth and he managed his long illness with incredible dignity and grace. Our family gathered around his bed on his final evening in March this year, and these notes actually ended up being the last notes of music he heard before we prayed together and he peacefully joined his maker. Although not planned, in that moment I realised this piece was for a man of peace, kindness and love – Brian Noonan (1933–2024).

## The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace KARL JENKINS (born 1944)

The Armed Man was commissioned by the Royal Armouries – the UK's national museum of arms and armour, with a history dating back to the mid-15th century. (It's no accident to find a 15th-century tune and a 15th-century text in the work.) Completed in 1999, The Armed Man was intended to mark the transition from one millennium to another, and it reflects on the passing of 'the most war-torn and destructive century in human history' while looking forward in hope to a more peaceful future. It is dedicated to the victims of the Kosovo conflict, whose tragedy was unfolding as it was being composed.

The texts were chosen by Karl Jenkins and Guy Wilson, then Master of the Royal Armouries. It has been compared to Britten's *War Requiem* with its anti-war message and the use of the Catholic Mass as a framework. But, as Stuart Brown writes, what makes *The Armed Man* distinctive is its cosmopolitan character, with 'lyrics drawn from many parts of the world and from diverse religions and cultures' and a diversity of musical styles.



SIR KARL JENKINS CBE is one of the most frequently performed living composers. The son of an organist and choirmaster, he grew up on the Gower Peninsula in Wales, and studied music at Cardiff University and the Royal Academy of Music, later earning a doctorate from the University of Wales. Originally an oboist, he took to the saxophone and established himself early on as a jazz musician.

As a composer, he resists categorisation. transcends musical boundaries and draws on different cultures from around the globe. After a period as a media composer, his return to the music mainstream was marked by the widespread success of the Adiemus project (1995), which combined a classical base with ethnic vocal sounds. ethnic percussion and an invented language. Both Adiemus and The Armed Man (1999) were pivotal to his subsequent work, developing ideas of peace and multiculturalism. His most recent work is One World, which received its concert premiere at the Brucknerhaus in Linz in November 2023 with more than 700 singers from around the world.

In 2015 he was awarded a Knighthood in the Queen's Birthday Honours for 'services to composing and crossing musical genres', and last year his music was played at the Coronation of King Charles III. Guy Wilson writes...

The Mass begins with a marching army and the beat of military drums, the orchestra gradually building to the choir's entrance, singing the 15th-century theme tune - The Armed Man. After the scene is set, the style and pace changes and we are prepared for reflection by first the Muslim Call to Prayer (Adhaan) and then the Kyrie, which pays homage to the past by quoting (in the 'Christe eleison') from Palestrina's setting of L'Homme Armé. Next, to a plainsong setting, we hear words from the Psalms asking for God's help against our enemies (Save Me from Bloody Men). The Sanctus that follows is full of menace, and has a primeval, tribal character that adds to its power. The menace grows in the next movement as Kipling's Hymn Before Action builds to its final devastating line: 'Lord, grant us strength to die.'

War is now inevitable. **Charge** opens with a seductive paean to martial glory, which is followed by the inevitable consequence – war in all its uncontrolled cacophony of destruction, then the eerie silence of the battlefield after the battle and, finally, the burial of the dead.

Surely nothing can be worse than this? But think again. At the very centre of the work is **Angry Flames**, an excerpt from a poem about the horrors of the atom bomb attack on Hiroshima written by a poet who was there at the time and died in 1953 of leukemia brought on by exposure to radiation. But if we think that the obscenity of this mass destruction is new to our consciousness, we must reconsider as we listen (in **Torches**) to the eerily similar passage from the ancient Indian epic *The Mahàbharàta*.

From the horror of mass destruction the work turns to remember that one death is one too many, that each human life is sacred and unique. First the **Agnus Dei**, with its lyrical chorale theme, reminds us of Christ's ultimate sacrifice and this is

followed by an elegiac setting of some lines I wrote (to accompany one of the dramatic interpretations we use in the museum) about the feelings of loss and guilt that so many of the survivors of the First World War felt when they came home but their friends did not.

Even the survivors can be hurt to destruction by war. The **Benedictus** heals those wounds in its slow and stately affirmation of faith and leads us to the final, positive, climax of the work, Better is Peace. This begins back where we started, in the 15th-century, with Lancelot and Guinevere's declaration, born of bitter experience, that peace is better than war. The menace of the 'Armed Man' theme returns and vies for a time with Malory's desire for peace. But time moves on and we come to our moment of commitment. Do we want the new millennium to be like the last? Or do we join with Tennyson when he tells us to 'Ring out the thousand wars of old, Ring in the thousand years of peace'? It may seem an impossible dream, we may not have begun too well, but the Mass ends with the affirmation from Revelation that change is possible, that sorrow, pain and death can be overcome. Dona nobis pacem.

Guy Wilson is the former Master of the Royal Amouries

#### **Jerusalem**

HUBERT PARRY (1848–1918) orchestrated by Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

Jerusalem – with audience participation – has been a fixture of the BBC Proms for more than 70 years. But it was already a much-loved hymn, and something of an alternative British national anthem, when Malcolm Sargent introduced it to the Last Night of the Proms in 1953. Hubert Parry's setting of William Blake's stanzas was composed for a patriotic Fight for Right rally in 1916. His brief – superbly met – was for something simple 'that an audience could take up and join in'. The song was promptly adopted by the suffragettes, and the tune soon entered the hymn books. In 1922, Edward Elgar gave Parry's rousing tune a large and sumptuous orchestration that has become standard. As Anthony Burton describes it, 'the flashing ascent through the strings that represents Blake's "arrows of desire" has become almost as essential a component of the piece as Parry's magnificent melody itself'.

William Blake's idealistic text has yielded other striking catchphrases: 'England's green and pleasant land', 'these dark Satanic mills' and one that inspired a movie title, 'chariot of fire'. It forms part of the preface to his two-book poem, Milton (1804) and was inspired by a legend that Jesus had been brought to England as a boy. The phrase 'dark Satanic mills' - an allusion to repressive factories and mines - marks Blake's poem as a product of the Industrial Revolution. By 1916, that revolution had made England a world power; culturally, she was shaking off her reputation as 'The land without music'. Elgar was a leading light, and he in turn had described Parry as 'the head of our art in this country'.

Program notes by Yvonne Frindle © 2024

### The Words

#### **FINLANDIA**

Oi Suomi, katso, sinun päiväs koittaa Yön uhka karkoitettu on jo pois Ja aamun kiuru kirkkaudessa soittaa Kuin itse taivahan kansi sois Yön vallat aamun valkeus jo voittaa Sun päiväs koittaa, Oi synnyinmaa

Oi nouse Suomi, nosta korkealle Pääs seppelöimä suurten muistojen Oi nouse Suomi, näytit maailmalle Sä että karkoitit orjuuden Ja ettet taipunut sä sorron alle On aamus alkanut, Oi Synnyinmaa

Veikko Antero Koskenniemi (1885–1962) from Latua lumessa Finland, behold, thy daylight now is dawning, the threat of night has now been driven away. The skylark calls across the light of morning, the blue of heaven lets it have its sound, and now the day the powers of night is scorning: thy daylight dawns, O Finland of ours!

Finland, arise, and raise towards the highest thy head now crowned with mighty memory. Finland, arise, for to the world thou criest that thou hast thrown off thy slavery, beneath oppression's yoke thou never liest. Thy morning's come, O Finland of ours!

Translation by Keith Bosley

#### AN INSTRUMENT OF PEACE

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

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

Lord make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, let me sow faith; where there is despair, let's sow hope. where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born into eternal life. Amen

Make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love, Where there is injury, your pardon, Where there is doubt, faith, faith, faith!

Make me an instrument of your peace. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi. Where there is despair, hope, Where there is darkness, light, light, light! And where there is sadness, joy, joy, joy!

Make me an instrument of your peace.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.
Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

After the Peace Prayer of St Francis of Assisi

#### THE ARMED MAN: A MASS FOR PEACE

#### 1. The Armed Man

L'homme, l'homme, l'homme armé, L'homme armé L'homme armé doit douter, doit douter. On a fait partout crier, Que chacun se viengne armer D'un haubregon de fer.

The armed man must be feared.

Everywhere it has been decreed that every man should arm himself with a coat of iron mail

#### 2. Call to Prayers

#### ADHAAN, THE MUSLIM CALL TO PRAYER

Allahu Akbar Ashhadu an la illaha illallah Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah

Hayya alas-Salah Hayya 'alal-Falah

Allahu Akbar La illaha illallah

God is great! I bear witness that there is no god except the One God. I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God. Hurry to prayer. Hurry to salvation. God is great! There is no god except the One God.

Sahil Ahmad Malik appears courtesy of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Australia.

#### 3. Kyrie

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.

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

#### 4. Save Me from Bloody Men

Be merciful unto me, O God:
For man would swallow me up.
He fighting daily oppresseth me
Mine enemies would daily swallow me up:
For they be many that fight against me.
O thou most high.
Defend me from them that rise up
against me.

Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, And save me from bloody men.

Psalms 56: 1, 59: 2

#### 5. Sanctus

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

Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

#### 6. Hymn Before Action

The earth is full of anger,
The seas are dark with wrath,
The Nations in their harness
Go up against our path:
Ere yet we loose the legions –
Ere yet we draw the blade,
Jehovah of the Thunders,
Lord God of Battles, aid!

High lust and froward bearing,
Proud heart, rebellious brow –
Deaf ear and soul uncaring,
We seek Thy mercy now!
The sinner that forswore Thee,
The fool that passed Thee by,
Our times are known before Thee –
Lord, grant us strength to die!

Rudyard Kipling

#### 7. Charge!

The trumpet's loud clangour Excites us to Arms, With shrill notes of anger and mortal alarms.

How blest is he who for his country dies,

The double double beat of the thund'ring drum

Cries Hark! the foes come;

Charge, 'tis too late, too late to retreat

How blest is he who for his country dies,

The double double beat of the thund'ring drum

Cries Hark! the foes come;

Charge, 'tis too late, too late to retreat.

Charge – Ah...

John Dryden (A Song for St Cecilia's Day) and Jonathan Swift ('How blest is he')

#### 8. Angry Flames

Pushing up through smoke From a world half darkened by overhanging cloud. The shroud that mushroomed out And struck the dome of the sky, Black, red, blue. Dance in the air. Merge, scatter glittering sparks already tower over the whole city. Quivering like seaweed The mass of flames spurts forward. Popping up in the dense smoke, Crawling out wreathed in fire, Countless human beings on all fours, In a heap of embers that erupt and subside, Hair rent. Rigid in death,

Sankichi Tōge, a Hiroshima survivor who died of radiation exposure in 1953

There smoulders a curse.

#### 9. Torches

The animals scattered in all directions screaming terrible screams. Many were burning others were burnt. All were shattered and scattered mindlessly, their eyes bulging. Some hugged their sons, others their fathers and mothers. unable to let them go, and so they died, and so they died. Others leapt up in their thousands, faces disfigured and were consumed by the fire. Everywhere were bodies squirming on the ground, wings, eyes and paws all burning. They breathed their last as living torches.

From The Mahàbhàrata, epic poem begun 6th century BCE

#### 10. Agnus Dei

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, grant us peace.

#### 11. Now the Guns have Stopped

Silent, so silent now,
Now the guns have stopped.
I have survived all,
I who knew I would not.
But now you are not here.
I shall go home alone;
And must try to live life as before
And hide my grief.
For you, my dearest friend,
who should be with me now,
Not cold too soon,
And in your grave,
Alone.

Guy Wilson, Master of the Royal Armouries

#### 12. Benedictus

Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

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

#### 13. Better is Peace

[Lancelot:] Better is peace than always war, [Guinevere:] And better is peace than evermore war, and better and better is peace.

L'homme armé doit on douter.

Better is peace than always war

Ring, ring, ring, ring, Ring, ring, ring, ring! Ring out the thousand wars of old. Ring in the thousand years of peace. Ring out the old, ring in the new, Ring happy bells across the snow. The year is going, let him go, The year is going, let him go. Ring out the false, ring in the new, Ring out old shapes of foul disease. Ring out the narrowing lust of gold; Ring out the thousand wars of old, Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free, The larger heart, the kindlier hand. Ring out the darkness of the land, Ring in the Christ that is to be.

The year is going; let him go.
The year is going; let him go.
Ring out the false, ring in the true.
Ring, ring, ring,
Ring, ring, ring,

God shall wipe away all tears
And there shall be no more death,
Neither sorrow nor crying,
Neither shall there be any more pain.
Praise the Lord.

Sir Thomas Malory (Le Morte d'Arthur), Alfred Lord Tennyson (In Memoriam), Revelation 24:1

No.6 Hymn Before Action – The words of Rudyard Kipling are set to music and reproduced by permission of AP Watt Ltd on behalf of the National Trust for Places of Historical Interest or Natural Beauty. No.9 Torches – Translation from the Sanskrit © The Trustees of the Armouries, 2000

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#### **JERUSALEM**

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine Shine forth upon our clouded hills? And was Jerusalem builded here Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold! Bring me my Arrows of desire! Bring me my Spear! O clouds, unfold! Bring me my Chariot of fire!

I will not cease from Mental Fight Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand Till we have built Jerusalem In England's green and pleasant Land!

William Blake (1757-1827)

# About the Artists

#### **Brett Weymark** conductor

One of Australia's foremost choral conductors, Brett Weymark OAM was appointed Artistic and Music Director in 2003, and he has conducted the Choirs throughout Australia as well as internationally. He has also conducted the Sydney, Adelaide, Queensland, West Australian and Tasmanian symphony orchestras, Orchestra of the Antipodes, Sydney Youth Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and Hong Kong Philharmonic, as well as productions for WAAPA, Pacific Opera and OzOpera, and he has performed with Opera Australia, Pinchgut Opera, Australian Chamber Orchestra, The Song Company and Musica Viva.

He studied singing and conducting at the University of Sydney and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, continuing his conducting studies with Simon Halsey, Vance George, Daniel Barenboim and John Eliot Gardiner, amongst others.

His repertoire at SPC has included Bach's Passions and Christmas Oratorio, the Mozart, Verdi, Duruflé and Fauré requiems, and Orff's Carmina Burana. He champions Australian composers, and has premiered works by Matthew Hindson, Elena Kats-Chernin, John Peterson, Daniel Walker, Rosalind Page, Peter Sculthorpe, Andrew Schultz and Ross Edwards. In 2011 he premiered his own work Brighton to Bondi with the Festival Chorus. He has also conducted musical theatre programs including Bernstein's Candide, which won multiple BroadwayWorld Sydney awards.



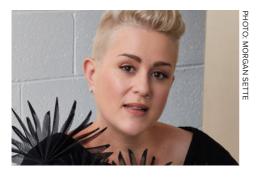
Under his direction, SPC received a Helpmann Award for *Oedipus Rex* and *Symphony of Psalms*, directed by Peter Sellars, and was nominated for a Limelight Award for Purcell's *King Arthur*.

He was chorus master for the Adelaide Festival productions of *Saul* (2017), *Hamlet* (2018) and *Requiem* (2020), and he has prepared choirs for Charles Mackerras, Zubin Mehta, Edo de Waart, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Simon Rattle. He has recorded for the ABC and conducted film scores for *Happy Feet, Mad Max Fury Road* and *Australia*.

Recent conducting highlights include Sweeney Todd (West Australian Opera), Jandamarra by Paul Stanhope and Steve Hawke (SSO), Michael Tippett's A Child Of Our Time (Adelaide Festival) and Carousel (State Opera South Australia).

In 2001 he was awarded an Australian Centenary Medal and in 2021 the Medal of the Order of Australia.

Brett Weymark is passionate about singing and the role music plays in both the wellbeing of individuals and the health and vitality of a community's culture. He believes music can transform lives and should be accessible to all.



# PHOTO: MORGAN SETTE

#### Fiona Campbell mezzo-soprano

#### Katie Noonan soprano

Over the past 20 years, five-time ARIA award-winning artist Katie Noonan has proven herself one of Australia's most hardworking, versatile and prolific artists. Named one of the greatest Australian singers of all time by the *Herald Sun*, she has produced 28 albums over her career, with seven times platinum record sales and 27 ARIA award nominations spanning diverse genres. She has performed for royalty and national and international leaders, and has blazed a trail for young female artists.

Katie Noonan is a rare singer-songwriter. Equally at home performing with a symphony orchestra as she is singing in a small jazz club, she can flourish in any genre – whether in gentle folk storytelling, the grandiosity of an operatic performance or the intimacy of vocal chamber music.

As Artistic Director and soprano of AVÉ (Australian Vocal Ensemble), her work with the ensemble highlights her commitment to celebrating Australian music and composers, both past and present, while providing a platform for collaborative projects that push the boundaries of contemporary vocal chamber music. (Read more about AVÉ on page 18.)

For Katie, music is a lifelong lesson, a generous act of giving, and a means to change the world.

Fiona Campbell OAM is renowned for her versatility and captivating performances. As a mother, producer, international performer, recitalist and recording artist, she holds several prestigious roles, including appearing as a guest ABC presenter. Previously the WA State Manager for Musica Viva, she is now Creative Director of the Perth Symphony Orchestra.

Her career took flight in 1994 after she won the Vocal category in the ABC Instrumental and Vocal Competition and the Australian Singing Competition's Opera Awards, which led to her working in the UK. Acclaimed for her dynamic performances and musicianship, in 2011 she won the Limelight Award for Best Solo Performance (Haunting Handel with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra).

She has sung with all the major Australian ensembles and orchestras, notably with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. Internationally, she has collaborated with Brodsky Quartet, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra and Opera North. She has shared the stage with José Carreras and Barbara Bonney, and featured in prominent festivals such as the Glyndebourne Festival Opera. Her operatic roles have garnered critical acclaim, with a Helpmann Award nomination for her portrayal of Cherubino in *The Marriage Figaro*.

Her discography includes the solo album Love & Loss and Baroque Duets (with countertenor David Walker), and she has appeared in several national broadcasts.



# PHOTO: JARED LIEBOWITZ

#### Louis Hurley tenor

Sydney-based tenor Louis Hurley is a passionate operatic and concert performer whose repertoire ranges from the Baroque to the 21st century. After completing a Bachelor of Music degree and a Graduate Diploma of Music at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), he furthered his studies, as a Hazell Scholar, with a Master of Music degree at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. While in London, he made soloist debuts at Wigmore Hall, and at the Barbican Hall with the London Symphony Orchestra.

Since returning to Australia, he has performed with a number of Australia's leading opera companies and orchestras. On the concert platform he has appeared as a soloist with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Melbourne and Sydney symphony orchestras, Pinchgut Opera and Sydney Philharmonia Choirs (Jubilation, 2022).

On the opera stage, he has performed extensively with Pinchgut Opera, where he was the inaugural recipient of The Humanity Foundation Taryn Fiebig Scholarship, as well as with Melbourne Opera and West Australian Opera, and in the Adelaide Festival, with a show-stealing performance of Flute/Thisbe in Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream.

In addition to AVÉ, he has sung in some of Australia's premier vocal ensembles, including The Song Company, Cantillation, and the Castalia Vocal Consort.

#### Andrew O'Connor bass-baritone

For more than a decade, Perth-born Andrew O'Connor has maintained a busy freelance career encompassing opera, the concert platform, chamber music and the classroom, and he appears regularly with many of Australia's leading music organisations.

Formerly a member of The Song Company (2015–2019), he is a Lay Clerk at St Mary's Cathedral, was an Associate Artist with Pacific Opera in 2019, and in 2020 he won the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Prize. Internationally, he has worked with the VOCES8 Foundation and American Bach Soloists in San Francisco.

This season he makes important solo debut appearances with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (Messiah) and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (Katy Abbott's Hidden Thoughts III: Stories of Awe). Other projects include Pinchgut Opera's 2024 season, including Curio in Handel's Giulio Cesare; three projects with The Song Company for their 40th anniversary season; further touring, recording and creative development with AVE; and numerous projects with Bach Akademie Australia, Salut! Baroque and Moorambilla Voices.

Arranging and composition are new to his creative output. Having been involved, as a performer, in the creation of many new works, he was recently challenged by Katie Noonan to write for AVÉ's soon-to-be-released Gwen Harwood album, and this has since led to other works. He is grateful to SPC and Katie for sharing this commission, which marks the first time his work will be publicly performed.

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#### **AVÉ (Australian Vocal Ensemble)**

AVÉ comprises Katie Noonan (Artistic Director), Fiona Campbell, Louis Hurley and Andrew O'Connor.

Established in 2021, AVÉ showcases Australia's rich, diverse narratives by exploring and celebrating stories and languages from the oldest living culture, seamlessly intertwined with the contemporary sounds of Australia's finest living composers. The ensemble fosters a vibrant blend of tradition and innovation, acknowledging the origins of a cappella chamber music singing while championing 21st-century Australian vocal works and composers.

With a commitment to commissioning, creating, and collaborating, AVÉ has undertaken cross-art form collaborations with dance, film, and a spectrum of musical genres. Their approach to programming is refreshingly unique, placing contemporary voices at the forefront and reimagining classical works, all delivered with a warm, inclusive, and inviting demeanour.

## ChorusOz 2024

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James Barrow

#### TIMPANI

**Brian Nixon** 

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ΡΙΔΝΟ **Tim Cunniffe** 

**Bold** = Principal

# Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs presents the art of choral singing at the highest standard, and develops the talents of those with a passion for singing, in Sydney and beyond. Founded in 1920, it has become Australia's finest choral organisation and is a Resident Company of the Sydney Opera House.

Led by Artistic and Music Director Brett Weymark OAM and Associate Music Director Dr Elizabeth Scott, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs comprises three auditioned and three community choirs that perform repertoire from choral classics to musical theatre and commissions by Australian composers. SPC presents its own annual concert season as well as collaborating with leading conductors. soloists and orchestras in Australia and overseas. In 2002, SPC was the first Australian choir to sing at the BBC Proms (Mahler's Symphony No.8 under Sir Simon Rattle), returning again in 2010 to celebrate its 90th anniversary. The Choirs perform in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's season every year, as they have done for more than 80 years. SPC also presents community singing events - Chorus Oz and singing workshops throughout Sydney and NSW.

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs' centenary in 2020 saw the realisation of an inspiring commissioning project – 100 Minutes of New Australian Music – featuring works by composers including Elena Kats-Chernin, Deborah Cheetham Fraillon and Brett Dean. In 2023 Brett Weymark celebrated his 20th anniversary as Artistic Director.

The 2024 season includes performances of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Ethel Smyth's Mass in D major, Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil, and, with ChorusOz, Karl Jenkins' *Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* together with a commission by Katie Noonan and Andrew O'Connor.

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