

Sacred Arias

Alleluia! Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Comfort Ye George Frideric Handel
Every Valley Shall Be Exalted G. F. Handel

Quia respexit Johann Sebastian Bach
Tecum principium G. F. Handel
Laudate Dominum W. A. Mozart

He that Dwelleth in Heaven...

Thou Shalt Break Them G. F. Handel
If God be For Us G. F. Handel
Rejoice Greatly G. F. Handel
I Know that My Redeemer Liveth G. F. Handel

— Interval —

Preist der Erlösers Güte Ludwig Van Beethoven
If with All Your Hearts Felix Mendelssohn
Hear Ye, Israel Felix Mendelssohn
The Lord's Prayer/Lascia ch'io pianga G. F. Handel, arr J. Ward

Five Mystical Songs Ralph Vaughan Williams

Easter

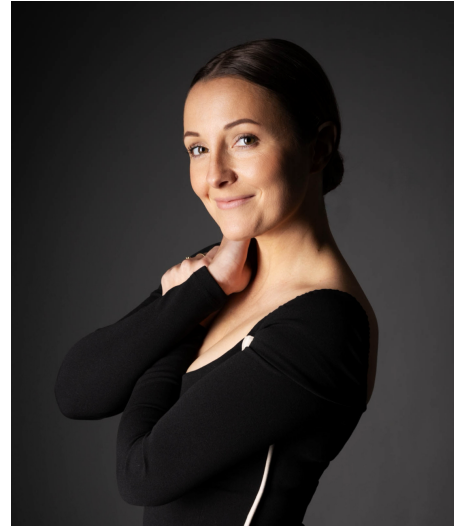
I Got Me Flowers

Love Bade Me Welcome

The Call

Antiphon

Jacqueline Ward is an soprano specialising in concert performance. She has performed with orchestras and choirs, and in solo recital along the east coast of Australia, delighting audiences here and overseas with a voice described as “honey sliding down crystal” (The Courier Mail). During her masters research at Sydney Conservatorium, Jacqueline recorded from a historic songbook for The Museum of Sydney’s exhibition Songs of Home. Also a composer, she has received commissions for the National Maritime Museum’s 150th Anniversary, Hourglass Ensemble, and a number of choirs, and has won the Australian Songwriting Contest.



Jacqueline has presented research at the Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing (ANATS) and international symposium Correct but not Beautiful Performance (Sydney Conservatorium of Music). She is presently leading a research team in the field of voice science. Jacqueline was elated to officially return to the stage in 2023, following a three-year hiatus with major spinal, chest, and leg injuries. She wowed audiences with her “formidable musicianship” in recital for acclaimed Tasmanian orchestra Van Diemen’s Band, and weeks later received a handful of awards at the Hobart



Eisteddfod. She now resides in Northwest Tasmania with her family, has become a supporter of the Amy Sherwin Fund in Hobart, and is anticipating the relaunch of her teaching studio in 2025.

Robb Dennis is a tenor, conductor, and educator. He has given acclaimed performances as principal tenor with the Repertory Opera of Los Angeles, West Coast Opera Theatre, and Australia’s Opera Hunter. He has appeared in the Mormon Tabernacle

with the Oratorio Society of Utah, with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and Riverside Master Chorale. With a Doctor of Musical Arts in vocal performance, he has shared his experience as a senior lecturer in voice at Claremont Graduate University and San Bernardino Valley College.

Applying his voice expertise in an ensemble setting, Robb has worked with critically acclaimed choirs. His Sydney-based chamber choir Aurora Choralis won the Sydney and National Eisteddfods, and was actively involved in ensemble collaborations. He has led ensembles from high school through to professional, and has prepared choirs for Maestri Carlo Ponti and Jon Robertson. Robb has conducted a number of orchestras including the San Bernardino Symphony and Riverside Youth Symphony. In 2022, Robb relocated to Tasmania with his family, where he now conducts the Cradle Coast Orchestra, plays French horn, and continues to perform as a soloist.

Karen Smithies is a soloist pianist, accompanist, and educator. Following her Bachelor of Music in piano performance and accompaniment at Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where she was awarded the Mollie Neal Scholarship for Excellence in Accompaniment, Karen moved to Tasmania. She completed her Master's in Music Performance at the University of Tasmania in 2003, where from 2011 she has been a lecturer in Piano Accompaniment.

Karen performs regularly with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (TSO) as a chamber musician, performing in their Woolmer's Concert Series this year and upcoming in 2025. She also performs as an orchestral, rehearsal, and audition pianist with the TSO, including their Australian Conducting Programs. As repetiteur for the TSO Chorus, she has recently worked with renowned English Choral Conductors Simon Halsey and Stephen Layton.



Karen is also involved with the University College Pathways (UCP) programs across the state, supporting and engaging with college students. Her work as a repetiteur and accompanist of undergraduates, postgraduates, and artists visiting the Conservatorium keeps her busy. Karen is an AMEB (Australian Music Examination Board) examiner and a state board member. She has recently been appointed to the AMEB's international examining team, allowing her the opportunity to travel and examine in Southeast Asia. Karen has adjudicated for a number of eisteddfods, including in Burnie and Devonport, along with the Central Coast eisteddfod in NSW.

Alleluia, *Exsultate, jubilate!* K. 165, W. A. Mozart (1756 - 1791)

Text: traditional

The Latin phrase Exsultate, Jubilate translates to "Rejoice, Be Glad" and this is the theme of the 1773 motet by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The piece is known for its joyful expression, which is inspired by the exhortation from Psalm 100 to make a joyful noise. The most well-known and challenging section of the motet is the Alleluia.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Comfort Ye My People, *Messiah*, HWV 56, G. F. Handel

Text: Charles Jennens

On Messiah:

George Frideric Handel composed Messiah in 1741, astoundingly over a period of just 24 days. Handel had been depressed when he locked himself in his house in London, where the German composer resided at the time. He composed prolifically to the libretto by Charles Jennens, which is based entirely on Biblical texts, and by the time Handel had completed the work his depression had ceased. Messiah is most certainly the most famous oratorio in the world today, with the most well-known movement being the 'Hallelujah' chorus. This work differs from Handel's other oratorios, which tell linear stories, in that it presents reflections on the Messiah (meaning 'Chosen

One'), Jesus. The oratorio is in three parts, suitably symbolising Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection.

The tenor aria 'Comfort Ye, My People' is the second movement of *Messiah* after the Overture, making it the first solo and first text delivery. Handel chose to open the whole oratorio with a message of comfort. The text is taken from Isaiah 40:1-3 and appears in two distinct sections. The A section describes that humanity is no longer at war with God, as Jesus has come in peace to reconcile humanity back to God. The B section describes the prophecy fulfilled by John the Baptist, who carried out preparatory work before Jesus commenced his ministry. A pronouncement that God is about to come to deliver humanity, it is a perfect opening for the oratorio. This flows directly into 'Every Valley Shall be Exalted', depicting levelling out an easy path which would be done before the passage of a king.

'Comfort ye, comfort ye My people,'
saith your God.

'Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,
and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished,
that her iniquity is pardoned.'

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness:

'Prepare ye the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway
for our God.'

Every Valley Shall Be Exalted, *Messiah*, G. F. Handel

Every valley,
Every valley shall be exalted,
Shall be exalted!
And every mountain and hill made low;
The crooked straight,
And the rough places plain,

The crooked straight,
And the rough places plain.

Quia respexit, Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248, J. S. Bach (1685 - 1750)

Text: Unknown

The Christmas Oratorio (German: Weihnachtsoratorium) is generally considered an oratorio, composed by Johann Sebastian Bach. It is, in fact, a collection of six cantatas intended for separate performance throughout the Christmas season. The entire work is around three hours long, and is often divided into two parts for performance. The text in this movement is from Luke 1:48, in which Mary, a virgin and newly expectant mother, reflects on the revelation from an angel that she is to be the mother of Jesus; 'God with us', the Saviour of humanity.

*Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae,
ecce enim ex hoc beatam,
me dicent omnes generationes.*

For he has regarded the lowliness of his maidservant;
for behold, from henceforth,
all generations will call me blessed.

Tecum principium, Dixit Dominus, HWV 232, G. F. Handel (1685 - 1759)

Text: Psalm 110

Dixit Dominus is a Latin setting of Psalm 110, a psalm about the promised Messiah. Handel composed the work during his residence in Italy and it remains his earliest surviving autograph.

*Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae.
In splendoribus sanctorum,
ex utero ante luciferum genui te.*

Power is with you on the day of your might.

In the splendour of holy ones,
from the womb comes the bringer of light.

Laudate Dominum, Vesperae solennes (de confessore), K. 339, W. A. Mozart (1756 - 1791)

Text: traditional

‘Solemn Vespers’ is a six-movement sacred choral work composed for liturgical use in Salzburg Cathedral, Austria. The soprano solo features a choral interlude and is followed by the final movement, Magnificat.

*Laudate Dominum omnes gentes
omnes populi;
Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia eius,
et veritas Domini manet in æternum.*

Praise the Lord, all you nations,
praise him, all you peoples.
For his loving kindness has been bestowed upon us,
and the truth of the Lord endures for eternity.

From *Messiah*, G. F. Handel (1685 - 1759):

He that Dwelleth in Heaven... Thou Shalt Break Them

With texts quoting from Psalm 2, a song of David, we can know who is referred to as ‘them’ in this recitative and aria. Psalm 2 is one of the prophetic psalms that revealed the circumstances of the Messiah. ‘They’ are the political leaders of the world that rise up against God and against his anointed one, referring not to a nation but, as specified, his Son, the Chosen One or ‘Messiah’.

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn;
the Lord shall have them in derision.

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

If God Be For Us

Although often excluded from abbreviated performances of Messiah, this is the final solo aria in the oratorio. There are different edits by Handel and various editors that shift the emphasis onto different words in the first phrase, changing the underlying meaning: 'If GOD be for us', 'If God be FOR us', 'If God be for US'. The text is taken from Romans 8:31-34.

If God be for us, who can be against us?
Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?
It is God that justifieth.
Who is he that condemneth?
It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again,
who is at the right hand of God,
who makes intercession for us.

Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion

This florid, virtuosic aria quotes from Zechariah 9:9-10, and is well loved all over the world as a key solo from Messiah. In fact, it is often performed as a stand-alone piece. Handel wrote several versions of the aria, with the most prominent being a secondary version in 4/4 time. It was his rewrite in 1743, two years after he composed the oratorio, and he never reverted to the original. The version featured in the program today is the original in 12/8 time, which gives it more of a lilting, dancing feel. It still gets occasionally performed, making this a rare experience.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion;
shout, O daughter of Jerusalem:
behold, thy King cometh unto thee:
he is the righteous Saviour,

and he shall speak peace unto the heathen.

Rejoice greatly...

I Know that My Redeemer Liveth

This aria and Rejoice Greatly are undoubtedly the most outstanding soprano arias from Messiah. It is considered one of history's most theologically rich arias, summarising the Good News of salvation. But maybe it's even richer than previously realised. Despite quoting from two sources (Job 19:25-26 and 1 Corinthians 15:20), the lyrical text is a chiasm, which is a biblical poetic form. In a chiasm, the punch-line is in the middle, the first and last lines match, the second and penultimate lines match and so on. In this text, the point of emphasis is in the middle of the song, at which point the music simplifies and becomes very direct.

I know that my Redeemer liveth,

and that he shall stand

at the latter day upon the earth.

And though worms destroy this body,

yet in my flesh shall I see God.

For now is

Christ risen from the dead,

the first fruits of them that sleep.

Flesh and *body* are synonyms so the lines in bold above are poetic matches and the climax of the chiasm. *Now* and *latter day* are poetic matches because they are both about time. *Stand* and *rise* are poetic matches as synonyms. *Sleep* meaning 'dead' and *liveth* are opposites, which are also poetic matches. *Firstfruits* and *Redeemer* are also matches because Christ was called a firstfruit offering that redeemed us.

**Preist des Erlösers Güte, *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, Op. 85, L. V.
Beethoven**

Text: Franz Xaver Huber

Christus am Ölberg (German) is Ludwig Van Beethoven's sole oratorio. It depicts the turmoil of Jesus as he is praying in the olive grove, anticipating the betrayal of Judas and giving himself as a sacrifice to humanity. The soprano part is an angel who comes to encourage Jesus in his time of distress. The recitative and aria are the second movement, following the introduction with Jesus' crying out to his Father. The recitative (not included in this program) describes the Father letting go of Jesus in respect of his choice, and the sorrow Jesus now feels at the separation. The angel calls for the world to observe him, how he is prepared to give his life in bitter death to save humanity eternally. The aria then calls people to praise him because of his goodness, love, and salvation.

Preist des Erlösers Güte

Preist, Menschen, seine Huld!

*Er stirbt für euch aus Liebe, für euch aus Liebe
sein Blut, sein Blut tilgt eure Schuld.*

O Heil euch ihr Erlösten!

Euch winket, euch winket Seligkeit,

wenn ihr getreu in Liebe, in Glaub' und Hoffnung seid.

*Doch weh! Die frech entehren das Blut, das für sie floss,
sie trifft der Fluch des Richters, Verdammung ist ihr Loos.*

Praise the Saviour's goodness;

All people, praise His graciousness.

He dies in loving kindness, in loving kindness

His blood, his blood to restore your fault.

O praise Him, praise Him you redeemed ones!

You are beckoned, you are beckoned into bliss,

if you are faithful in love, and live in trust and hope.

But alas! They boldly dishonour the blood that for them flows.
The diagnosis of the Judge falls on them, and they condemn themselves.

Ye People, Rend Your Hearts... If With All Your Heart, *Elijah*, Op. 70, Felix Mendelssohn

Text: William Bartholomew

The beautiful featured tenor aria in *Elijah* is not by the title character (a baritone role) but by Obadiah. It draws from several Biblical passages: “Therefore, the Lord says, ‘Even now if you turn to me with all your heart... with grief, and tear not your clothes but your heart... for God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and full of great kindness, and repent to him of your evil actions,’” Joel 2:12-13. “And from now on... you will find me, when you search for me with your whole heart,” Deuteronomy 4:29, as well as Jeremiah 29:13 and Job 23:3.

Mendelssohn’s working score was in German due to his limited English skills. He then had the libretto translated into English at the completion of the draft, and it premiered in English at the 1846 Birmingham Festival, England. It was showered with praise at the premiere, although later drew criticism for being too conservative (‘mid-Victorian’) in style.

Ye people rend your hearts,
rend your hearts and not your garments.
For your transgressions the prophet Elijah has sealed the heavens,
Through the word of God.
I therefore say to ye, forsake your idols;
Return to God, for He is slow to anger and merciful and kind and gracious,
and repenteth Him of the evil.

If with all your heart ye truly seek Me,
Ye shall ever surely find Me, thus saith our God.
Oh, that I knew where I might find Him,
That I might even come before His presence.

Hear ye, Israel, *Elijah*, Felix Mendelssohn

This iconic and demanding aria opens Part II of *Elijah*. It starts with a yearning, pleading melody and text, calling the people back to God. The two major sections of the aria are like two songs in one. The first is filled with grief and hope; the second, with a more energetic tempo, is the Lord encouraging his people with a certain strength and joy and faith. The aria also features a mid-song recitative; a unique use of the device which contributes to the two-in-one feeling. The message is a heartfelt, passionate pursuit by God and the aria is followed by a victorious choral anthem, singing, “Be not afraid, says the Lord God!”

Mendelssohn wrote this role with Swedish Nightingale Jenny Lind in mind, who was also ‘in mind’ in a romantic sense. But alas, nothing came of that connection and Mendelssohn sought out an Italian soprano friend to sing the premiere. However, she was unable to travel to England at that time and another soprano was chosen. Mendelssohn was extremely put off by her performance of the piece, privately calling it “cold-hearted coquetry”. Much information can be gained about how this piece was historically performed, and what the composer expected, by reading about these three sopranos, namely that the oft-considered treacherous high tessitura (bulk of where the range lies) was designed specifically to suit Lind’s voice.

Hear ye, Israel,
hear what the Lord speaketh:
“Oh, hadst thou heeded my commandments”
Hear ye, Israel,
hear what the Lord speaketh:
“Oh, hadst thou heeded my commandments”

Who hath believed our report?
To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?
To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?
Hear ye, Israel,

hear what the Lord speaketh:
“Oh, hadst thou heeded my commandments”

Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel,
and His Holy One to him oppressed by tyrants,
thus saith the Lord:

“I am He that comforteth.
Be not afraid, be not afraid for I am thy God!
I am He that comforteth.
Be not afraid, be not afraid for I am thy God!
I will strengthen thee!
I, thy God, will strengthen thee!

Say, who art thou?
Say who art thou, that thou art afraid of a man that shall die;
and forgettest the Lord,
the Lord thy Maker, who hath stretched forth the heavens,
and laid the earth’s foundations?
Say, who art thou?!

I am He that comforteth.
Be not afraid, be not afraid;
I am thy God!
Be not afraid, be not afraid;
for I thy God will strengthen thee!”

**The Lord’s Prayer/Lascia ch’io pianga, Rinaldo, G. F. Handel, arr
Jacqueline Ward**

Text: derived from Matthew 6:9-13

‘Lascia ch’io pianga’ is from one of Handel’s secular works; an opera titled *Rinaldo*. It is an aria with great emotional affect and is sorrowful with its original text. Jacqueline has set this iconic melody with the enduring text of

The Lord's Prayer, an example of how to pray that Jesus shared when his students asked for guidance. Millions of people today are familiar with this prayer, yet when it was first spoken it was revolutionary to call God one's own Father. While the text retains the traditional word 'hallowed' meaning holy, the remainder is in everyday English, reflecting the genuine candidness of conversation between a person and a personal God. 'Name' is symbolic of character, so the first phrase is an affirmation that God is good and right in character. The final phrase is the meaning of the Hebrew word 'amen', literally 'truly' or 'so be it'.

Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will on earth be done.
Your kingdom come, your kingdom come,
And your will on earth be done.
Provide for us, our daily needs;
Forgive us our wrongs, as we in turn forgive;

Lead us away, from temptation;
Deliver us from evil,
Deliver us, for your way is love.

Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will on earth be done.
Yours is the kingdom; kingdom of love,
and the power and glory thereof!
So let it always be; so let it always be
Forever and ever!
Amen

Five Mystical Songs, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958)

Text: George Herbert (1593 - 1633)

Ralph Vaughan Williams emerged in Britain's compositional revival, following Elgar. England had experienced a long period of decline in composition following the death of Purcell in 1695, and Vaughan Williams was one of the leading figures of the late nineteenth-century bloom. The Five Mystical Songs explore concepts of how an individual relates to Divine Love. The song cycle was written between 1906 and 1911. The work sets poems by Welsh poet and Anglican priest George Herbert (1593–1633), from his 1633 collection *The Temple: Sacred Poems*.

The work received its first performance on 14 September 1911, at the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester, England with Vaughan-Williams conducting. It draws upon early musical devices such as plain chant, with gentle and heartfelt movements contrasted with exuberant, rhythmic songs with dramatic piano octaves. Despite his early atheism, which developed into a 'cheerful agnosticism', the composer was inspired by church music and captures so beautifully the intimacy of genuine searching and learning to trust Love (God).

Easter

Rise heart; thy Lord is risen.
Sing his praise without delays,
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise
with him may'st rise;
that, as his death calcined thee to dust,
His life may make thee gold, and much more; Just.

Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part
With all thy art.
The cross taught all wood to resound his name
Who bore the same.
His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key
Is best to celebrate this most high day.

Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song
Pleasant and long:
Or since all music is but three parts vied,
And multiplied;
O let thy blessed Spirit bear a part,
And make up our defects with his sweet art.

I Got Me Flowers

I got me flowers to strew thy way;
I got me boughs off many a tree:
But thou wast up by break of day,
and brought'st thy sweets along with thee.

The Sun arising in the East,
though he give light, and the East perfume;
If they should offer to contest
with thy arising, they presume.

Can there be any day but this,
though many suns to shine endeavour?
We count three hundred, but we miss:
there is but one, and that one ever.

Love Bade Me Welcome

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
from my first entrance in,
drew nearer to me,
sweetly questioning if I lack'd anything.

A guest, I answered, "Worthy to be here."

Love said, "You shall be he."
"I, the unkind, ungrateful?
Ah, my dear, I cannot look on thee."
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
"Who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth, Lord, but I have marr'd them:
let my shame go where it doth deserve."
"And know you not," says Love, "who bore the blame?"
"My dear, then I will serve."
"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."
"So I did sit and eat."

The Call

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
Such a Way, as gives us breath:
Such a Truth, as ends all strife:
Such a Life, as killeth death.

Come, My Light, my Feast, my Strength:
Such a Light, as shows a feast:
Such a Feast, as mends in length:
Such a Strength, as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
Such a Joy, as none can move:
Such a Love, as none can part:
Such a Heart, as joys in love.

Antiphon

Let all the world in every corner sing,
my God and King!

The heavens are not too high,
His praise may thither fly:
the earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.

Let all the world in every corner sing,
my God and King!
The church with Psalms must shout;
no door can keep them out.
But above all, the heart
must bear the longest part.

Let all the world in every corner sing,
my God and King!

Thank-you for attending; we hope this has been a blessing to you!
We appreciate your continued support as we endeavour to nurture
exceptional music on the North Coast.

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Merry Christmas!

