



Beethoven's Missa Solemnis at the Cathedral

## *Missa Solemnis and More*

Dean Andreas

"We are an Easter people, and Hallelujah is our song", the great theologian Augustine of Hippo knew. As the fifty days of Easter-tide come to an end, on the feast of Pentecost, this is a good opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of our Cathedral Musicians in furthering our ministry of music.

During the past six weeks, our Acting Director of Music, Will Fellows, has been at the conductor's stand, to enable our Director of Music, Philip Nicholls, to enjoy his well-earned long service leave. Will has settled into the new responsibilities quickly and well, and has worked with the girls' and boys' voices, and lay clerks of the choir to extend our choral repertoire, and to polish our existing repertoire. The Easter season has not only seen new repertoire, but also new members join our choir: Will auditioned new probationers to join the boys' and girls' voices, who will soon embark on their journey of music making at St Paul's, acquiring the necessary skills to share in music leadership at the Cathedral, such as improving their ability to read music by sight, to lead psalms set to Anglican chant, or to sing a solo. It has been wonderful that so many choristers have chosen to remain with us as lay clerks as they come to the end of their schooling at our choir schools: enabling young

people to share in life-long music making, and modelling pathways into professional singing, is very much part of the mission of St Paul's Cathedral.

With that in mind, I was pleased that senior school-age members of our choir were invited to participate in two musical highlights in Melbourne this season: the performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* at St Paul's on the 200th anniversary of the first performance of the work, and the performance, at St John's Lutheran Church Southgate, of Bach's *Ascension Oratorio*. Lay clerk Niki Ebacioni reflects on the experience of performing with a cohort of St Paul's singers in both works, and Will Fellows reflects on his plans for the remainder of the term, including preparation for our performance of Handel's *Messiah* in September.

None of these milestones could have been reached without the generous support of you, our donors. As the financial year comes to its close, I hope that you will once more make a generous contribution to the \$250,000 fundraising target the Trustees have set to meet the costs of the Cathedral's music program. I am proud of the work of the Music Foundation in resourcing the Cathedral's song in Easter-tide and all year round—whether in large-scale orchestral works, such as Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, or in our weekday Evensongs. It is your gift that enables us to share the joy of life transformed we know in the risen Christ Jesus through the gift of music with our city. Thank you!

# St Paul's Cathedral

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# Musical Collaboration in the Cathedral Choir

By Lay Clerk Niki Ebacioni

During April and May, several members of the cathedral choir were fortunate to be involved in liturgical presentations of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* in the Cathedral with the Orchestra Project, directed by Dr Peter Tregear, and Bach's *Ascension Oratorio* at St John's Lutheran Church, Southgate directed by Dr Graham Lieschke, in their ongoing Bach Cantata Program. The invitations to participate were extended to some of our most engaged younger choir members to join the lay clerks of the choir. Altos Jimmy Hilton and Sam Shaw and treble Max Lydon were given a unique opportunity to experience the joy of high-level music making within a liturgical framework and to perform with an orchestra, seeing first-hand how this passion for music can evolve into a lifelong pursuit.

The involvement of our younger singers underscored the dual role of our adult lay clerks: not only as vocalists to present the regular services at our cathedral, but as informal mentors fostering the same enthusiasm and potential we had as young singers. Adult lay clerks play a pivotal role in this process, encouraging and nurturing the young singers, sharing the joy and fulfilment we discovered at a similar age that was encouraged by the older singers in our lives. During the Beethoven rehearsal process we were all tested in our musicality and stamina, and the Bach presentation

with Baroque instruments was a catalyst for many questions and enjoyable musical conversations. These opportunities are crucial. They demonstrate to young choristers that the love for choral music can be sustained and developed into adulthood, either as a professional musician or as a fulfilling pursuit alongside another professional career.

Beyond the performances, the young singers had the chance to meet informally over meals with professional soloists, such as Sally-Anne Russell and Timothy Reynolds, who shared their expertise with vocal techniques for teenagers and exam repertoire. They also had the chance to work with noted choral directors Peter Tregear and Michael Leighton Jones, who introduced insights and practical skills they can bring back to the choir stalls of our cathedral. By connecting with experienced musicians, the young choristers gained a glimpse into the professional music world, opening doors within the wider Melbourne music community.

Seeing the enthusiasm and dedication of these young singers was a rewarding experience for all involved. It rekindled memories of our own early days in choral music and reinforced the importance of nurturing the next generations. The energy and passion of our young choristers serve as a reminder of why we continue to cherish and contribute to the vibrant world of cathedral music. The hope we hold is that collaborations like these result in not only enriching our own liturgical offerings but also ensuring our cathedral choir will continue to thrive, inspiring future generations of musicians.







**Above:** Max Lydon, Jimmy Hilton, Niki Ebacioni, Deborah Summerbel, and Peter Campbell at St John's Lutheran Church

**Below, left:**

Members of the Cathedral Choir that participated in the performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*.

*Back row:* Sally Watt; Simon Colvin; Andreas Loewe; Niki Ebacioni; Jimmy Hilton; Daniel Griffiths; Tim Bell

*Front row:* Peter Campbell; Sue Hawley; Deborah Summerbell; Emma Warburton; Jane Standish; Sophie Clapperton; Sam Shaw

## *From the Music Department*

*By Acting Director of Music Will Fellows*

Stepping in for Philip Nicholls, who is on a well-deserved long service leave, has been a great pleasure so far this term.

All the choirs have learnt new repertoire, with more new repertoire to come in June. The girl choristers have performed well at important services such as the Easter Carol Service and the Launch of the Australian Hymn Association. They are also due to be making a world premiere of a commission by international composer, Katherine Parton in June. The boys have stepped up to the challenge of learning a handful of new pieces, including music by Elgar, Gibbons, and Wesley.

The lay clerks, too, have been working hard, exemplified by their Ascension Day Evensong. They sung Leighton's Magdalene Service beautifully and took on the challenging double-choir anthem by Peter Philips, *Ecce venit Leo*. We are very much looking forward to being joined by singers from the wider Province for our Patronal Festival and Provincial Choral Evensong on 30 June. It promises to be a rousing service.

Looking forward to next term, the Cathedral Choir will be joining forces with Genesis Baroque in a performance of Handel's *Messiah*, directed by our own Director of Music, Philip Nicholls. Genesis Baroque, Melbourne's dynamic

period ensemble, has had great success performing and recording across Australia, since their formation in 2017. Stella Horvath, a former chorister at the cathedral, will return as a soloist along with the wonderful Jennifer George (contralto), Timothy Reynolds (tenor), and Christian Smith (bass). Philip is very excited to work with this exciting group of musicians. The performance takes place on Friday 6 September at 7pm. Be sure to tell your friends and family, and to book your tickets online ([www.trybooking.com/cpkge](http://www.trybooking.com/cpkge)), or by phone (03 9653 4333).

Thank you to everyone who so generously supports the music at St Paul's Cathedral.



# St Paul's Cathedral

Together transforming our City and Diocese



## George Frideric Handel's MESSIAH

FRIDAY 6 SEPTEMBER, 7PM

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

cnr Swanston & Flinders Streets

The Choir of St Paul's Cathedral  
performing with **Genesis Baroque**

**Stella Horvath, soprano**

**Jennifer George, contralto**

**Timothy Reynolds, tenor**

**Christian Smith, bass**

Directed by Philip Nicholls

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1, 2, 3: Christmas 2023 at St Paul's Cathedral  
4: Opening of the Legal Year, 29 January 2024  
5, 6: Easter Day 2024

*Photos: Ming Zhou*

**Trustees of St Paul's Cathedral Music Foundation:**

The Very Revd Dr Andreas Loewe, Miss Rowena Armstrong AO KC,  
Mrs Sally Petty, Professor Peter Sherlock, Mr Michael Leighton Jones, Mr Neil Farbridge-Currie.

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**St Paul's Cathedral Music Foundation**

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