



# ACROSS THE DARK

**7:30 pm SATURDAY**

**6 AUGUST 2016**

**ELDER HALL**

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

NORTH TERRACE, ADELAIDE

**grads**  
GRADUATE SINGERS

## The Performers

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### Conductor

Karl Geiger

### Piano

Michael Ierace

## Aurora Strings

### Violin

Sarah McCarthy

### Violin

Emma McMurray

### Viola

Natalie Maegraith

### Cello

Briohny Taylor

## Graduate Singers

### Soprano

Nicky Bevan

Susan Brooke-Smith

Lisa Catinari

Alison Day

Alison Fleming

Nadia Gencarelli

Amelia Holds

Erin Holmes

Frances Nettle

Sarah O'Brien

Carmen Wouters

### Alto

Corinna Bennett

Linda Brugman

Riana Chakravarti

Annie Douglas

Ashleigh Geiger

Ali Hansen

Susan Marshall

Rijke Mellor

Susan Murdoch

Stephanie Neale

Mel Pike

Rachel Seager

Genevieve Spalding

Deb Tranter

Madeline Turnbull

Karen Watson

### Tenor

Ilan Holland

Lou McGee

Jo Pike

Mark Sales

Christopher Simpson

Jonathon Waetford

Graham Yuile

### Bass

Patrick Carrig

Robert Cox

Jack de la Lande

Paul Henning

Greg John

Andrew Moschou

Timothy Pietsch

Neil Piggott

Mark Roberts

David Rohrsheim

David Shields

Chris Steketee

Peter Watt

Matt Winefield

## The Program

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### GRADUATE SINGERS

**The Seal Lullaby** (2010)..... Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

**There will be rest** (2004)..... Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)

*Tonight's performance of this work is dedicated to the memory of our past conductor and friend Timothy Marks (1971–2016)*

**Nocturnes** (2007) ..... Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)

Sa nuit d'été

Soneto de la noche

Sure on this shining night

Epilogue—Voici le soir

**Luminous Night of the Soul** (2012)..... Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)

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### INTERVAL

Wine is available for purchase in the foyer @ \$5/glass  
graciously donated by Top Note.

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**We Beheld Once Again the Stars** (2013)..... Z. Randall Stroope (b. 1953)

### AURORA STRINGS

**Gymnopedie No. 1** (1888) ..... Eric Satie (1866–1925)

**Andante Festivo** (1960)..... Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)

### GRADUATE SINGERS

**Sure on this Shining Night** (1994) ..... Samuel Barber (1910–1981)

**Across the Dark** (2008) ..... Ben van Tienen (1983)

The Moron's Bark

Lonely Mother Earth

Us

A Big White Duck

## Program notes

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In Western history, light and darkness have often been seen as symbolising positive and negative, hope and fear, good and evil. Although this time of superstition has now passed, such ideas are still deeply embedded in our language and concepts. But as the composers of this program show us, darkness is also a time of peace, contemplation and renewal – and it is through the darkness that we often come to better appreciate the light.

Opening tonight's program is Eric Whitacre's **Seal Lullaby**, a setting of a poem by Rudyard Kipling (author of *The Jungle Book*) composed for a film that never came to fruition. Whitacre was immediately charmed by Kipling's poetry, saying of the compositional process, "The Seal Lullaby is a beautiful story, classic Kipling, dark and rich... I was struck so deeply by those first beautiful words, and a simple, sweet Disney-esque song just came gushing out of me".

American composer Frank Ticheli has a clear fondness for the work of American lyric poet Sara Teasdale (1884–1933), having set a further three of her poems since writing **There Will Be Rest**. Teasdale was haunted by depression in her later years, taking her own life at the age of 48. On this, Ticheli writes, "Many of [Teasdale's] poems address the pain that tormented her spirit, but to the end she seemed to draw strength and hope from the stars and their permanent radiance. 'There Will Be Rest' ... is a perfect summary of her lifelong concern for the stars and their ancient promise of peace. This choral setting is designed to capture the poem's purity of spirit and delicate lyricism".

The poems that Morten Lauridsen chose for his four **Nocturnes** address contrasting elements of the theme of night and his affection for the subject is clear. "For Rilke's impassioned and atmospheric '*Sa nuit d'été*' (*Its summer night*), several melodic themes are supported by dense, colourful harmonies in both the choral and piano parts... Pablo Neruda's '*Soneto de la noche*' (*Sonnet of the night*) ... has long been my favourite love poem and speaks eloquently of an everlasting, eternal love that transcends death while reaffirming life" (Lauridsen). The third work in the cycle is a sublime choral setting of James Agee's '*Sure on this shining night*', dramatic in its lyricism and resplendent with warm and open harmonies. The Epilogue '*Voici le soir*' (*Night has come*) was written several years after the first three movements, for a performance by the Los Angeles Master Chorale. Lauridsen writes, "I could not resist Rilke's beautiful little poem which is set against the rich, jazz-tinged modal harmonies and bell sounds which began the cycle and which now bring the Nocturnes to a quiet end as darkness arrived".

Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo took words by both contemporary poet Charles Anthony Silvestri and 16th century Spanish Catholic mystic St. John of the Cross to form his work **Luminous Night of the Soul**. Scored for chorus, piano and string quartet, the work is a companion piece to his earlier composition '*Dark Night of the Soul*'. In setting these texts, Gjeilo sought to "feature the piano more heavily in choral music ... [and] find ways to compose lush, warm, symphonic-sounding music, while still only scoring for five instruments, in addition to the choir."

Z. Randall Stroope's **We Beheld Once Again the Stars** also draws on an ancient text, Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* (from *Inferno, Canto XXXIV*). Exemplifying the theme of light contrasting and conquering the dark, Stroope sets the poem for double choir, the inherent 'call and response' effect of this technique allowing the listener to palpably experience Dante's metaphorical journey—it is night, and he has seen and experienced everything in the realm of evil (the Inferno), so he must quickly rise to safety (the stars of heaven) or remain forever in sin and death. Realising he has finally found the Way through his struggles to the 'supreme light', he rises to behold once again the stars.

**Gymnopédie No.1**, composed in 1988, is almost irrefutably French composer Erik Satie's best-known work. Written originally for solo piano and famously orchestrated by Debussy, this work is reflective and melancholy in nature—sparsely harmonised and never truly developed, it gives the impression of time standing still in its luminance. In contrast, Jean Sibelius' majestic and lush **Andante Festivo** (which was written to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Säynätsalo sawmills) is full-throated and hymn-like, broad chords portraying a hushed solemnity.

Lauridsen was not the only composer to be inspired by the poetry of James Agee—Samuel Barber composed **Sure on this shining night** for solo voice and piano in 1938, and it would become one of his most famous and oft-performed art songs before he arranged it for choir thirty years later. Barber treats the text reverently with his setting, which, in the words of choral conductor Lee Wright, "evokes both the tenderness and the expansiveness of the universe beheld in the summer night sky by a lone wanderer".

Australian cartoonist, artist, writer and poet Michael Leunig is perhaps best known for his piercingly accurate social and political commentary, published regularly in the Melbourne Age and the Sydney Morning Herald newspapers. Sydney-born composer Ben van Tienen perfectly captures the ethos of four of his poems in his 2008 song-cycle **Across The Dark**, from the sultry yet satirical political tango that is 'The Moron's Bark' to the weary and despairing 'Lonely Mother Earth', and from the searching and regretful 'Us' to the nearly absurd hopefulness of 'A Big White Duck' (which instructs us to climb aboard and sail away across the dark, towards a tiny star), van Tienen allows Leunig's texts to leap off the page in search of a light out of the darkness.

## Translations

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Nocturnes (2007) .....Morten Lauridsen

### *Sa nuit d'été*

Si je pourrais avec mes mains brûlantes  
fondre ton corps autour ton coeur d'arnante,  
ah que la nuit deviendrait transparente  
le prenant pour un astre attardé  
qui toujours dès le premier temps des mondes  
était perdu et qui commence sa ronde  
et tâtonnant de la lumière blonde  
sa première nuit, sa nuit, sa nuit d'été.

— Rainer Maria Rilke

### *Soneto de la noche*

Cuando yo muero quiero tus manes en mis ojos:  
quiero la luz y el trigo de hls manes amadas  
pasar una vez más sobre mi su frescura:  
sentir la suavidad que cambió mi destine.

Quiero que vivas mientras yo, dormido, te espero,  
quiero que tus oídos sigan oyendo el viento,  
que huelas el aroma del mar que amamos juntos  
y que sigas pisando la arena que pisamos.

Quiero que lo que amo siga vivo  
y a ti te amé y canté sobre todas las cosas,  
por eso sigue tú floreciendo, florida,

para que alcances todo lo que mi amor te ordena,  
para que se pasee mi sombra por tu pelo,  
para que así conozcan la razón de mi canto.

—Pablo Neruda

### *Epilogue—Voici le soir*

Voici le soir;  
pendant tout un jour encore je vous ai beaucoup  
aimées, collines émues.  
C'est beau de voir,  
Mais: de sentir à la doublure des paupières fermées  
La douceur d'avoir vu ...

— Rainer Maria Rilke

### *Its summer night*

If, with my burning hands, I could melt  
the body surrounding your lover's heart,  
ah! how the night would become translucent,  
taking it for a late star,  
which, from the first moments of the world,  
was forever lost, and which begins its course with its  
blonde light, trying to reach out towards its first night,  
its night, its summer night.

(Translated by Byron Adams)

### *Sonnet of the night*

When I die, I want your hands upon my eyes:  
I want the light and the wheat of your beloved hands  
to pass their freshness over me one more time:  
I want to feel the gentleness that changed my destiny.

I want you to live while I wait for you, asleep,  
I want your ears to still hear the wind,  
I want you to smell the scent of the sea we both loved,  
and to continue walking on the sand we walked on.

I want all that I love to keep on living,  
and you whom I loved and sang above all things  
to keep flowering into full bloom,

so that you can touch all that my love provides you,  
so that my shadow may pass over your hair,  
so that all may know the reason for my song.

(Translated by Nicholas Lauridsen)

### *Night has come*

Night has come;  
for one whole day again I've loved you so much,  
stirring hills.  
It's beautiful to see,  
But: to feel in the lining of closed eyelids  
the sweetness of having seen ...

(Translated by Morten Lauridsen)

**We Beheld Once Again the Stars (2013).....Z. Randall Stroope**

Ma la notte risurge  
Oramai é da partir  
Ché tutto veduto  
Ritornar!  
Vexilla Regis prodeunt inferni!

Ma la notte risurge  
Salimmo sù, tanto ch'í vidi  
De le cose belle che porta 'l  
Ciel, per un pertugio tondo.  
Quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle

But soon it will be night and we must rise to the stars.  
Now is the time to depart this place  
for we have seen and experienced it all.  
Keep moving! Return to paradise.  
The wings of hell's monarch are heard nearby.  
We must leave quickly,

but soon it will be night. I climbed toward paradise  
with no thought of looking back.  
I passed through a small opening  
and finally saw heaven and the supreme light  
and beheld once again the stars.



## **Proud supporters of Graduate Singers**

As any singer knows, the secret to reaching those top notes is support. **Top Note** is pleased to be supporting today's performance.

We have donated a selection of our premium wines for purchase during the interval.

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## Graduate Singers

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Graduate Singers, or 'Grads', is Adelaide's leading medium-sized choir and has been a dynamic member of the vibrant local choral music scene for almost 40 years. Grads has received critical acclaim as an exponent of fine choral music and enjoys a reputation for high standards of excellence throughout every aspect of presentation and performance.

Grads is committed to presenting high quality, accessible and diverse concerts, keeping the choral tradition alive and fresh. Grads prides itself on its versatility, being equally at home with large-scale choral standards as with intimate chamber works.

With strong ties to the local music community, Grads regularly collaborates with organisations and artists both established and emerging. Grads consists of some of Adelaide's most experienced choral singers, many of whom frequently sing in the Adelaide Symphony Chorus and other major choral productions.

In addition to presenting its own concert series, Grads maintains a busy schedule of freelance engagements. Recent highlights include a sold-out Lunchtimes at Elder Hall Anzac Day Concert (2014); the Doctor Who Symphonic Spectacular with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (January 2015); The Last Night of the Proms with the Elder Conservatorium Chorale and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (July 2016); and a Musica Viva Choral Masterclass with Stephen Layton, Director of the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge (July 2016).

Past directors include the late conductor and vocalist Timothy Marks, founder and director of Adelaide Chamber Singers Carl Crossin OAM, and conductor and ABC Classic FM presenter Graham Abbott.

### Karl Geiger conductor

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Karl Geiger is a pianist, organist, accompanist and conductor. A graduate of both the University of Melbourne and the Elder Conservatorium of Music (University of Adelaide), he has been involved in choral music his whole musical life, having sung in and played for many choirs.

An active accompanist, Karl was the inaugural winner of the Diana Harris Prize for Accompanying and was the winner of the 2010 Geoffrey Parsons Award for Accompaniment. He has had considerable experience as a vocal accompanist and orchestral continuo player (harpsichord and organ).

In addition to his position as Director of Music of Graduate Singers, Karl is the accompanist for the two classical choirs of the Elder Conservatorium of Music (The Elder Conservatorium Chorale and Bella Voce), the First Concert Choir of Young Adelaide Voices, as well as regularly working with the Adelaide Chamber Singers and the Adelaide Symphony Chorus.