



You, me and the wide open sky

Music evoking the wide open feeling of our
Australian landscape

Conductor Dr Christopher Allan

Flute Sally Walker

Piano Erin Sweetman

Christ Church Cathedral

Newcastle

3pm Saturday 17 August 2019



Program

You, Me and the Wide Open Sky	<i>Dan Walker</i>
Three Australian Bush Songs	<i>Iain Grandage</i>
Phonograph	<i>Dan Walker</i>
Monday to Friday (Wednesday II)	<i>Cyrus Merant</i>
Blue Silence	<i>Elena Kats-Chernin</i>
Roadtrip	<i>Sally Whitwell</i>
Songs No Longer Sung	<i>Juliana Kay</i>
Orestias	<i>Dan Walker</i>
INTERVAL	INTERVAL
Zeny Giles talks about Magic Voices and creative processes	
Magic Voices	<i>Elena Kats-Chernin</i>
Shall We Dream?	<i>Michael Atherton</i>
Tides of Ocean	<i>Matthew Orlovich</i>
Eliza's Aria (from 'Wild Swans')	<i>Elena Kats-Chernin</i>
Green Leaf Prelude (from 'Wild Swans')	<i>Elena Kats-Chernin</i>
Chatterbox Rag	<i>Elena Kats-Chernin</i>
The Owl and the Pussycat	<i>Iain Grandage</i>
Waltzing Matilda (A new version)	<i>Ruth McCall</i>

Program notes

This is the first all Australian program that the Newcastle University Choir has presented for some time. In the last twenty years or so, there has been a proliferation of new choral works by young Australian composers which have captured a feeling of the landscape of our country. The program is designed to present a selection of these evocative and exciting works.

Now resident in Canberra, Dan Walker is a singer as well as a composer and conductor who contributes solidly to choral repertoire with many new compositions, often being commissioned by groups such as Gondwana Voices. Dan has a gift for both melody writing and for interesting piano accompaniments, as you will hear in the three works of his we will perform. I approached Dan to see if he was happy for us to use the title of one of the works - *You, me and the wide open sky* - as the title for our concert, and he willingly agreed. It's fitting, therefore, that we open the concert with this beautiful piece. We will soon follow with two more songs by Dan, *Phonograph* for two soprano parts and altos, and *Orestias* for SATB forces.

Orestias was an ancient Greek settlement near the border of modern day Turkey. The song text refers to the legend of Icarus, son of Daedalus, who flew on wings made of feathers held together by wax. He flies higher 'where the gods hear me!' to where he reaches the 'roof of the world'. *Phonograph* is a beautiful description of the joys of the old style record player. After a slightly discordant start, we hear a nostalgic tune and then, eventually, the 'sticking' of a few bars as the record hits a scratch.

Iain Grandage is a West Australian based composer who is currently the director of the Perth Festival. We perform two works, firstly his *3 Australian Bush Songs*. These are wonderfully evocative of both the 'space' of Australia and descriptive of bird songs, sunrise and sunset. His imaginative use of colour and chord spacing gives us a real sense of the wide open spaces, the harshness of the Australian sun and the beauty of the red sunset. The bird song speaks for itself! Rhythmically interesting, the songs provide the choir with lots of opportunities to literally paint pictures in sound. Later in the program we will perform his setting of the fantastic poem by Edward Lear - *The Owl and the Pussycat*. He uses a very virtuoso piano accompaniment which begins in a quasi impressionistic style. Listen out for the tango as the Owl and Pussycat dance.

Juliana Kay's short piece *Songs No Longer Sung* is slightly different in tone from the others we will present today. She draws on the text found in many hundreds of songs associated with a backdrop of hunger, death and despair. The song, however, gives us a real sense of hope and survival.

A few years ago, for our 40th Anniversary, I suggested that we commission a work from a prominent Australian composer. Elena Kats-Chernin accepted our commission. For a couple of reasons, Elena's very busy schedule and suitability of poetry, the commission took a little while to get going. However, one of the long time members of the choir, Zeny Giles, came to the rescue with a short poem she wrote about the magic that occurs as the choir discovers the wonder and joy in a piece of music as it comes together in rehearsal. The poem excited Elena's creative spirit and our new work *Magic Voices* is the result. We are thrilled that Zeny was able to provide the words to this work and equally thrilled that Elena was able to write it for us. We hope you enjoy it.

Michael Atherton's short work for two soprano and alto voices *Shall We Dream* shows the effective nature of imitation in vocal writing. One tune is given in imitation firstly in two parts, and then three, the simple tune becoming more complicated as more parts are added.

One of the pieces that we've enjoyed learning (despite its complexity!) is Matthew Orlovich's evocative work *Tides of Ocean*. Depicting the Southern Ocean and the appearance of the Southern Cross as a ship approaches Australia, it is an ultimately joyous and rhythmical work complete with wave noises and the splashing of fish as they leap out of the ocean.

We conclude our part of the program with a 'new version' of *Waltzing Matilda* by Australian composer, arranger and singer Ruth McCall. Ruth has a real gift for arranging, and as a member of the Song Company for many years, really knows how to use vocal forces well. In this work Ruth combines a number of elements: A chant like melody set to indigenous words in common usage* (names of plants, places and trees) evoking the original inhabitants of this land, fragments of the two well-known tunes of *Waltzing Matilda* plus a some new music of her own. The result is an exciting and rhythmically complex work of great fun and intensity.

* the indigenous words used in the chant Ruth found as names for trees in the Botanic Gardens in Perth. She has not yet been able to trace the language(s) from whence they came.

Sally Walker (flute) will play a selection of works by Australian composers Cyrus Meurant, Sally Whitwell and Elena Kats-Chernin. She plays 'Wednesday II' from Meurant's work *Monday to Friday*. This work contains a number of pieces for various instrumental groupings for each day of the week and was composed for those suffering from dementia. The work has recently been nominated for 'Innovation of the Year - Dementia Solution'. Sally Whitwell's piece *Roadtrip* was written while Sally was travelling between Sydney (where she lives) and Newcastle (where she was working at the University Conservatorium). Sally Walker made the original ABC Classics recording with the composer on her album 'I Was Flying'. The Elena Kats-Chernin works Sally will play include the well-known piece *Eliza's Aria* together with *Green Leaf Prelude* from the ballet score *The Wild Swans*. *Blue Silence* is a quite mesmerising work, using fragmented melodies and hypnotic repeated chordal passages, and *Chatterbox Rag* is simply fun, written originally for a student of Sally Walker. These works are a cross section of the output of Elena Kats-Chernin and show her use of melody, repeated motives and simple but sometimes additive harmonies which make her music very accessible and successful.

Christopher Allan

August 2019

Dr Christopher Allan Conductor

Chris has recently retired as senior lecturer in Voice at the University of Newcastle, NSW where he worked with singers and lectured in academic music courses. He is well known as a baritone soloist with many choral institutions such as Sydney Philharmonia Choir, Newcastle University Choir, Willoughby Choir and Coro Innominata. Chris appeared as guest artist with The Song Company for many years in concert and radio broadcasts and appeared with Opera Australia as understudy and chorus member. He also toured extensively for Musica Viva with the Song Company and the early music ensemble Sounds Baroque.

Chris held the post of Artistic and Musical Director of the Newcastle University Choir from 1999-2004 and was reappointed to the position of Musical Director from 2011. With the University Choir he directed performances of major works of the choral literature including the JS Bach *Magnificat*, John Rutter's *Magnificat*, Vittoria's *Requiem*, Haydn's *Mass in Time of War* and Mozart's *Requiem*. In late 2013 the Choir's first commercial CD (Encore) was released. In 2016 the Choir, under Chris' direction, performed Bach's *St Matthew Passion* to an enthusiastic audience. The Choir continues to present a range of musical genres working with outstanding musicians and ensembles, including (in the last 18 months) performances of Orff's *Carmina Burana* with University of Newcastle Chamber Choir (Echology), Faure's *Requiem* and Britten's *St Nicolas* for the Newcastle Music Festival and Haydn's masterpiece *The Creation* as a culmination of the choir's 40th anniversary year in December 2017.

Chris is also an accomplished pianist and accompanist and has appeared on many occasions with performers such as Sally Walker (Flute) and in recital with his daughter, soprano Miriam Allan.

In 2011 he successfully completed his doctoral thesis looking at the use of modal voice as a catalyst in encouraging a classical vocal sound in developing singers. He has presented papers on aspects of vocal technique and singing teaching at international and local conferences and enjoys facilitating workshop sessions with choral groups focusing on all aspects of performance. He has presented workshops on vocal technique as well as workshops with a combination of voice and somatic body work with Feldenkrais practitioner Georgi Laney.

Sally Walker Flute

Sally Walker is Lecturer in Classical Woodwind at the Australian National University. She performs on modern flutes and piccolo as well as historical flutes and recorders. She is regular Guest Principal with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Principal Flautist with the Omega Ensemble and Artistic Director of the Twilight Musical Dialogues Chamber Music Series. She has appeared in the London Proms, Salzburg, Lucerne, Tanglewood and Edinburgh Festivals.

She was Grand-finalist in the Leonardo de Lorenzo International Flute Competition (Italy), won 2nd Prize in the Friedrich Kuhlau International Flute Competition (Germany) and was awarded prizes from the German Academic Exchange Service, Ian Potter Cultural Fund and the Queen's Trust.

She has toured and recorded with the Berlin Philharmonic and Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestras, is a former Principal Flute of the Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss, was a member of Kölner Kammerorchester and has performed as Guest Principal Flute and concerto soloist with orchestras in England, Wales, Germany, Italy and Australia.

Sally devotes herself to both Early and Contemporary Music, having performed with Early Music ensembles such as Das Neue Orchester Köln, Neues Bachisches Collegium

Musicum and the Leipziger Kammerorchester as well as Contemporary Music ensembles such as Halcyon. She is deeply committed to chamber music and has collaborated with colleagues across various art forms and styles. She has recorded three CDs with Pianist Philip Mayers, was featured on Sally Whitwell's Aria-nominated CD, "I was Flying", Cyrus Meurant's CD "Monday to Friday" and on recordings with Halycon, Australian Chamber Orchestra and other orchestras.

She enjoys collaborating with composers and has premiered works by Australian composers: David Banney, Marian Budos, Andrew Chubb, Andrew Ford, Sally Greenaway, Daniel Rojas, Paul Stanhope as well as Coco Nelegatti (Argentina) and Knut Müller (Germany). In 2015 she commissioned Elena Kats-Chernin to write her a flute concerto. With assistance from the Australia Council, "Night and Now" Flute Concerto was premiered with the Darwin Symphony conducted by Matthew Wood

As an academic Sally has presented at the Performing Wellness and Musicological Society of Australia conferences, given pre concert talks for the Australian Chamber Orchestra and Musica Viva and worked as a German translator/interpreter.

Born in Canberra, Sally began her earliest musical training on recorder and singing. She has a Bachelor of Music from the University of Sydney and a Masters degree from the Munich Hochschule für Musik und Theater. She is undertaking a Doctor of Musical Arts at the University of Sydney, exploring a modern Flautist's Perspective on the Process of Learning Early Flutes and their Literature.

Erin Sweetman

Erin Sweetman completed a Bachelor of Music from the Newcastle Conservatorium with First Class Honours. She studied under Ann O'Hearn and Natalia Ricci, and has achieved the Licentiate and Associate Diploma of Music in both Piano and Clarinet with distinction.

As a soloist, Erin toured to China in 2006 and performed Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue with the Newcastle Wind Orchestra. She has made regular appearances on Banney's Baton Banter and has performed in the Newcastle Art Gallery Concert Series.

Erin has been accompanying the Hunter Singers since 2012. In that time, she has toured internationally to USA, China and the UK performing at the World Choir Games in Cincinnati during 2012 and the Llangollen Eisteddfod in 2016. She has also accompanied the choir during national tours to Brisbane, Melbourne and Canberra and performed with the choir for Classic FM Live. Throughout her work with the choir, Erin has had the privilege of playing for premieres and workshoping repertoire with composers such as Paul Jarman, Stephen Leek, Sally Whitwell, Dan Walker and David Banney.

Erin has accompanied many esteemed performers such as Margery Smith, Anthea Scott-Mitchell, Christopher Allan, Michael Leighton Jones, Miriam Allan, William Barton, Christ Church Camerata Quartet, David Banney, Deborah Humble, Jennifer Barnes, Paul Bevan and Waxing Lyrical.

In 2016, Erin attended the Music Director Intensive at Goodspeed Opera House in New York and has recently recorded with Cellist, Anthea Scott-Mitchell which will be released in the coming months.

Erin is currently working at Newcastle Grammar School where she teaches High School music. In this role, Erin has a number of private piano students and also tutors woodwind players in the NGS Symphony Orchestra. She accompanies HSC students and the Chamber Choir while enjoying her role as the Music Director in the annual musical production.

Newcastle University Choir

Soprano

Diana Bridgman, Kirsten Busby, Michelle Cheng, Georgie Cooper, Sukanya Daniels, Judith Dark, Joanna Davies, Kerri-Ann Dorahy, Sherrie-Lee Evans, Joy Fitness, Allison Hayes, Caroline Hill, Georgina Hoddle, Jasmine Horrocks, Melanie Hunt, Georgi Laney, Liz Langford, Barbara Lyle, Diane Maddock, Josephine Maher, Rosalind Manley, Christine McIntosh, Jackie O'Neill, Margaret Parsons, Daphne Princehorn, Olga Reeder, Lyn Schlaeger, Penny Spencer, Christine Starling, Penny Worrall

Alto

Julie Barnaby, Jane Bellemore, Catherine Brown, Judy Buchhorn, Sandra Christie, Victoria Clay, Penny Cummins, Thea den Hollander, Roslyn Evans, Wendy Gray, Ann Harben, Jessica Haxen, Sarah Hellmirich, Paige Li, Christine Lucas, Trudy Mills-Evers, Pat Moore, Ruth Newman, Nancy O'Connor, Elizabeth O'Keefe, Tracey Raymond, Barbara Royle, Rhonda Sessions, Elizabeth Seysener, Deb Sherwood, Valerie Shevels, Anne Stephens, Carolyn Syme, Asiya Verachia, Sue Walkom, Jenny Whalley, Bridget Whitehead, Chelsey Zuiderwyk

Tenor

Anita Berghout, Bob Berghout, Howard Bridgman, Jack Christie, Chris Grice, Sheila Keane, Richard Kearney, Ria Leonard, Jim MacDougall, Valerie Tamblyn-Mills

Bass

Thomas Behrendt, Trevor Burndred, Tom Davison, Joe Divjak, Winston James, Greg Kerr, Greg Markham, John Mills, Ross Newman, Chris Page, Ian Parr, John Rostas, Bruce Rowland, Ben Starling, Robert White

Raffle

The raffle will be drawn at the end of the interval and the winning tickets displayed on the notice board at the back of the cathedral. Please check your ticket as you leave to claim your prize. Unclaimed prizes will be donated to a good cause.

Next concert

The Newcastle University Choir will be joined by The Samaritans for the Christmas concert at the University of Newcastle Great Hall on Sunday 8th December. Information about joining the choir and about future concerts can be found on the choir website www.newcastleuniversitychoir.org

Thanks

The presentation of a choral concert such as this is a significant undertaking. We are grateful to all those who have volunteered their time to make this performance possible and thank the organisations that support the choir in material ways. The Choir would not be able to stage concerts without this assistance. Particular thanks to Christchurch Cathedral and Peter Guy for facilitating the concert venue. If you are interested in supporting the choir through sponsorship or donations please contact the President, Ruth Newman on 02 4944 7010.

