



Cacophony

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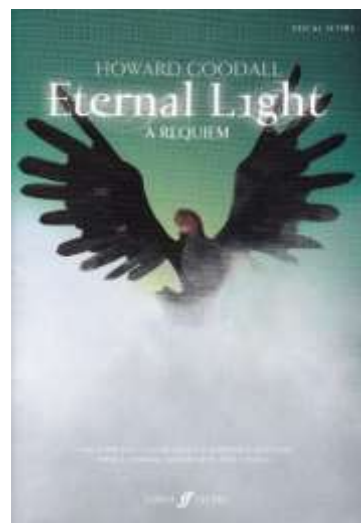
On Sunday afternoon, 21 May 2023 at 2:30 pm the Newcastle University Choir (NUC) will perform Howard Goodall's *Eternal Light, A Requiem* at the University of Newcastle Great Hall. Included in the program will be a selection of English Romantic Partsongs.

Tickets are \$40 adult, \$35 Concession, and \$20 Student. They can be obtained from www.TryBooking.com or at the door. We cannot accept ticket orders by telephone.



Howard Goodall (born 1958) is a contemporary English composer, with many awards to his name. He writes for television and radio, as well choral pieces. He is particularly popular on the BBC. Born in Bromley, he has extensive education in classical choral music. Other musical compositions include *The Hired Man* (1984); *A Winter's Tale* (2005); *Love Story* (2010); and *Bend It Like Beckham The Musical* (2015).

The University Choir last sang *Eternal Light* in April 2009. At that time, it was the first performance of the Requiem in Australia. Since then, it has been a popular work to sing across the world. Along with the Choir, two soloists (Soprano Anna Sandstrom and Baritone Nicholas Geddes) will contribute to the story. The choral music will be accompanied by piano, organ and harp. The work combines elements of a traditional Latin Requiem, offering prayers for salvation for departed souls, with English poems focussed on death and loss from WWI.



Eternal Light was published in June 2008. In the introductory comments, Goodall states: “For me, a modern Requiem acknowledges the unbearable loss and emptiness the accompanies the death of loved ones...” *Eternal Light* addresses the suffering of the living as well as acknowledging the contributions of those who died.

The score is divided into 10 sections. Latin components, such as Kyrie, Lacrymosa, Dies Irae, Recordare and Agnus Dei, are interspersed with English descriptions. Particularly beautiful and moving is *In Flanders Fields* a poem by John McCrae, combined with Dies Irae. This describes the Dead from war, their former relationship with the living, and the impacts on lives. Particularly important are the rows on rows of poppies growing over the graves.

Familiar to many will be the Hymn *Lead Kindly Light*, with words by John Henry Newman. This is a prayer for the Lord to guide the living through the days of dark and gloom after loss of loved ones, to the light. It recognises the need for support, with “one step enough for me.”

The Baritone solo, *Do not stand at my grave and weep*, is combined with Lacrymosa. The words are attributed to May Elizabeth Frye. Here, the occupant of the grave describes the environment of the surroundings: the softly falling snow; the morning hush; the thousand winds that blow; the starshine of the night. The plea is for the living to move on from grief, because “I am not there, I did not die”, but live on in memory.

The Choir will also present five works by Romantic period English composers. These short, a cappella works are very typical of the quality work by composers who might not be household names but whose works are both beautiful and extremely well written.

The composers are Thomas Walmsley, Robert Pearsall, Arthur Sullivan (of Gilbert and Sullivan fame) Charles Villiers Stanford and Charles Wood. Stanford (1852 – 1924) was of Irish birth and became professor on composition at the Royal College of Music in London in 1883. As a teacher he greatly influenced the next generation of British composers with Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst among his students. Stanford was a composer of orchestral works including 7 symphonies and many choral works. The choir will sing *The Blue Bird*, which is a wonderful piece of British Impressionism with rich harmonies and a floating, ethereal Soprano melody.

Charles Wood (1866–1926) is primarily known as a church music composer (those who have sung in an Anglican tradition might be familiar with his work). His *Full Fathom Five* (words by Shakespeare) is bright and rich with a bell-like motif. He was also the teacher of Ralph Vaughan Williams when that composer was at Cambridge. Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900) is best known for his work with the librettist W.S. Gilbert and the satirical operatic works they produced. His output also included choral works of which the beautiful and sentimental *The Long Day Closes* will be heard.

Who Shall Have my Lady Fair? by Robert Pearsall (1795-1856) is an example of the madrigal like works Pearsall wrote as a means of reviving Renaissance period styles. Very polyphonic in style it shows a great interweaving of vocal lines. Thomas Walmsley (1783–1866) composed music for the church and the choral form known as a Glee. The choir will sing *Music, all Powerful* a work in many sections which extols the virtues of the art of Music.

Howard Bridgman, Editor
Dr Christopher Allan, Music Director
(References: Wikipedia sites for brief background descriptions)