



# Festival Singers

## Starlit Night

**Director: Ingrid Schoenfeld**

**Accompanist: Jonathan Berkahn**

**Soprano: Rowena Simpson**

7.30pm Saturday 14 May 2022

St Peter's on Willis, 211 Willis Street, Wellington

### Programme

#### *The Heavens Are Telling*

*The Creation*

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

#### *Look at the Stars*

Jonathan Berkahn (1971-)

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#### *Nocturnes*

Morten Lauridsen (1943-)

- *Sa nuit d'été*

Rainer Maria Rilke, trans. Byron Adams

- *Soneto de la noche*

Pablo Neruda, trans. Nicholas Lauridsen

- *Sure on This Shining Night*

James Agee

- *Epilogue: Voici le soir*

Rainer Maria Rilke, trans. Morten Lauridsen

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#### *Song Cycles – Liederkreis*

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Trans. Lois Phillips, in "Lieder Line By Line" (OUP, 1996).

- *Schöne Fremde (Lovely Foreign Land)*

- *In der Fremde II (In a Foreign Land, no.2)*

- *Im Walde (In the Woods)*

- *Frühlingsnacht (Spring Night)*

#### *The Night is Departing*

*Lobesang / Hymn of Praise Op. 52*

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

#### *Night*

Jonathan Berkahn

from William Blake Songs of Innocence

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Interval

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#### *The Tyger*

Jonathan Berkahn

from William Blake Songs of Experience

#### *Evening Hymn*

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

#### *Abendlied*

Josef Rheinberger (1839-1901)

#### *Seek Him That Maketh The Seven Stars*

Jonathan Dove (1959-)

#### *Twinkle twinkle little star*

French melody. Arr. Daniel Elder (1986-)

#### *Only in Sleep*

Ēriks Ešņvalds (1977-)

Sara Teasdale (1884-1933)

Though my soul may set in darkness,  
it will rise in perfect light;  
I have loved the stars too fondly  
to be fearful of the night.  
Sarah Williams

## About this Concert

Aside from literal and figurative darkness, night is symbolic of many qualities – mystery, death, transition, stillness, and magic, to name just a few. The composers in tonight’s program interpret these ideas in diverse, frequently unexpected ways.

“The heavens are telling” from Haydn’s *Creation* opens the concert: three angels, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael, and all the hosts of heaven (a.k.a the Festival Singers) celebrate the first day and – equally – the first night.

“Look at the Stars” was written in 2020 as part of a residency in Carterton, in response to Stonehenge Aotearoa (the “ten thousand years” in verse one is a reference to the estimated age of Stonehenge in Salisbury.)

The Lauridsen *Nocturnes* are a rich reflection on love, life, and death, echoing a preoccupation throughout the concert with the idea of night as a point of connection with the eternal.

Rowena Simpson’s selections from Schumann’s *Liederkreis* are perhaps some of the most evocative depictions of the night in the German romantic repertoire – each a perfectly rendered miniature.

Mendelssohn’s chorus “The night is departing” comes from the dramatic core of his *Lobgesang* (“Hymn of Praise”). In answer to the anxious “Watchman, will the night soon pass?” it emerges with the force of an express train, forming the most exhilarating part of this trajectory from darkness to light.

On either side of the interval are two of a set from William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence* 2

and *Songs of Experience* that Jonathan Berkahn wrote for the Festival Singers in 2017, one featuring a benignant lion, the other a frankly terrifying tyger. Over the regular tread of a five bar ground bass, Purcell’s singer quietly prays and composes herself for sleep.

Rheinberger’s *Abendlied* casts a luminous glow around itself as it depicts the close of day, while Dove takes a more literal approach, using a repeated sparkling motif in the organ part to represent stars, before releasing the choir into an exultant celebration of the night “shining as the day.”

Ešenvalds depicts sleep and dreaming as a kind of portal to old friends, making us feel that nothing is lost forever; no one can be completely forgotten, and the magic of night is always close by.

Ingrid Schoenfeld  
& Jonathan Berkahn



Photo: Celia Walmsley

## Rowena Simpson

Rowena is a soprano who performs in chamber music and opera, a singing teacher, and a performer-producer. She studied and worked in The Netherlands from 1997-2006 and since her return has sung with many groups including New Zealand Opera, Pinchgut Opera in Sydney, Voices New Zealand, New Zealand Barok, and Hammers & Horsehair.

## The Heavens are telling

The Heavens are telling the glory of God,  
The wonder of his work displays the firmament.

How day unto day is speaking his praise,  
While night unto night his glory proclaims.

In all the lands resounds the word,  
Never unperceived, ever understood.

## Look at the Stars

Look! Look up! Look up to the sky!  
Look at the stars tonight, look at the stars tonight!

Above us and below us, around us and about us,  
Wheeling and turning through millions and billions  
of years:

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Look! Look up! Look up to the sky!  
Look at the stars tonight, look at the stars tonight!

Ten thousand years we've turned our faces to the  
skies, we've raised our eyes into the heavens:

From age to age we've traced the passage of  
the stars, and we have gazed, and gazed, and  
gazed...

We journey through the endless ocean of the  
stars, our ship this tiny, tiny sphere:

Looking back toward the point from which we  
came, and still we gaze, and gaze, and gaze...

## Nocturnes

### Sa nuit d'été

Si je pourrais avec mes mains brûlantes  
fondre ton corps autour ton cœur d'amante,  
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.

### Soneto de la noche

Cuando yo muera quiero tus manos en mis ojos:  
quiero la luz y el trigo de tus manos amadas  
pasar una vez más sobre mí su frescura:  
sentir la suavidad que cambió mi destino.

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

### 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.

### 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.

## **Sure on This Shining Night**

Sure on this shining night  
Of starmade shadows round  
Kindness must watch for me  
This side the ground

The late year lies down the north  
All is healed, all is health  
High summer holds the earth  
Hearts all whole

## **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 sentire à la doublure  
Des paupières fermées  
La douceur d'avoir vu...

Sure on this shining night  
I weep for wonder  
Wandering far alone  
Of shadows on the stars

## **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 ...

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## **Song Cycles – Liederkreis**

### **Schöne Fremde**

Es rauschen die Wipfel und schauern,  
Is machten zu dieser Stund'  
um die halb versunkenen Mauern  
die alten Götter die Rund'.

Hier hinter den Myrtenbäumen  
in heimlich dämmernder Pracht,  
was sprichst du wirr, wie in Träumen,  
zu mir, phantastische Nacht?

Es funkeln auf mich alle Sterne  
mit glühendem Liebesblick,  
es redet trunken die Ferne  
wie von künftigem großen Glück!

### **In der Fremde II**

Ich hör die Bächlein rauschen im  
Walde her und hin,  
im Walde in dem Rauschen  
ich weiß nicht, wo ich bin.

### **Lovely Foreign Land**

The tree-tops rustle and shiver,  
as if at this very hour  
the ancient gods were making their round  
of the half-ruined walls.

Here behind the myrtles,  
in the secret splendour of dusk,  
what are you saying to me, confused,  
as in a dream, O fantastic night?

All the stars look down on me,  
twinkling and glowing with love,  
and speak in ecstasy  
from afar of great joy to come!

### **In a Foreign Land, no.2**

I hear the little streams rushing  
in the woods all around;  
in the woods with the rushing,  
I hardly know where I am.

Die Nachtigallen schlagen  
hier in der Einsamkeit,  
als wollten sie was sagen  
von der alten schönen Zeit.

Die Mondesschimmer fliegen,  
als säh ich unter mir  
das Schloß im Tale liegen,  
und ist doch so weit von hier!

Als müßte in dem Garten  
voll Rosen weiß und rot,  
meine Liebste auf mich warten,  
und ist doch so lange tot.

### **Im Walde**

Es zog eine Hochzeit den Berg entlang,  
ich hörte die Vögel schlagen,  
da blitzten viel Reiter, das Waldhorn klang,  
das war ein lustiges Jagen!

Und eh' ich's gedacht, war alles verhallt,  
die Nacht bedekket die Runde,  
nur von den Bergen noch rauschet der Wald,  
und mich schauert's im Herzensgrunde.

### **Frühlingsnacht**

Überm Garten durch die Lüfte  
hört' ich Wandervögel zieh'n,  
das bedeutet Frühlingsdüfte,  
unten fängt's schon an zu blüh'n.

Jauchzen möcht'ich, möchte weinen,  
ist mir's doch, als könnt's nicht sein!  
Alte Wunder wieder scheinen  
mit dem Mondesglanz herein.

Und der Mond, die Sterne sagen's,  
und im Traume rauscht's der Hain,  
Und die Nachtigallen schlagen's:  
"Sie ist deine, sie ist dein!"

Here in this solitude  
the nightingales sing,  
as if they would tell  
of times long ago.

In the shimmer of moon-beams,  
I seemed to see  
the castle below in the valley,  
yet it is far from here.

As if in the garden  
full of white and red roses,  
my dear love was waiting –  
yet she died long ago.

### **In the Woods**

A wedding party passed below  
the mountain slopes, I heard the birds singing.  
Many riders flashed by, the horn sounded  
it was a merry hunt.

Before I had time to think, it had all faded from  
sight, night enfolded the company.  
Now only the woods rustle on the mountains,  
and my heart is filled with foreboding.

### **Spring Night**

I heard the birds of passage flying  
over the garden on the breeze,  
heralds of spring's fragrance;  
below already it begins to bloom.

I want to shout with joy, and weep –  
I can hardly believe it is true!  
Old miracles appear again  
in the shining splendour of the moon.

And the moon and the stars all say it,  
and the dreaming forest whispers it,  
and the nightingales are calling forth:  
"She is yours, she is yours!"

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### **The night is departing**

The night is departing, the day is approaching.  
Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness,  
and let us gird on the armour of light.  
The day is approaching, the night is departing.

## Night

The sun descending in the West,  
The evening star does shine;  
The birds are silent in their nest,  
And I must seek for mine.  
The moon, like a flower  
In heaven's high bower,  
With silent delight,  
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy groves,  
Where flocks have ta'en delight,  
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move  
The feet of angels bright;  
Unseen, they pour blessing,  
And joy without ceasing,  
On each bud and blossom,  
And each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest  
Where birds are covered warm;  
They visit caves of every beast,  
To keep them all from harm:  
If they see any weeping  
That should have been sleeping,  
They pour sleep on their head,  
And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey,  
They pitying stand and weep;  
Seeking to drive their thirst away,  
And keep them from the sheep.  
But, if they rush dreadful,  
The angels, most heedful,  
Receive each mild spirit,  
New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes  
Shall flow with tears of gold:  
And pitying the tender cries,  
And walking round the fold:  
Saying: 'Wrath by His meekness,  
And, by His health, sickness,  
Is driven away  
From our immortal day.'

'And now beside thee, bleating lamb,  
I can lie down and sleep,

Or think on Him who bore thy name,  
Graze after thee, and weep.  
For, washed in life's river,  
My bright mane for ever  
Shines like gold,  
As I guard o'er the fold.'

## The Tyger

Tyger, tyger, burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And, when thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? What the chain?  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? What dread grasp  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,  
And watered heaven with their tears,  
Did He smile His work to see?  
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

Tyger, tyger, burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

## Evening Hymn

Now that the sun hath veiled his light  
and bid the world goodnight,  
to the soft bed my body I dispose;  
But where shall my soul repose?  
Dear God, even in thy arms:  
And can there be any so sweet security?  
Then to thy rest, O my soul!  
And singing, praise the mercy that prolongs thy  
days. Hallelujah.

## Abendlied

Bleib bei uns,  
denn es will Abend werden  
Und der Tag hat sich geneiget

Abide with us:  
for it is toward evening,  
and the day is far spent.

## Seek Him That Maketh The Seven Stars

Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion  
And turneth the shadow of death into the morning  
Alleluia, yea, the darkness shineth as the day  
The night is light about me  
Amen.

## Twinkle twinkle little star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
How I wonder what you are!  
Up above the world so high,  
Like a diamond in the sky.

In the dark blue sky you keep,  
Often through my curtains peep  
For you never shut your eye,  
Till the sun is in the sky.

## Only in Sleep

Only in sleep I see their faces  
Children I played with when I was a child  
Louise comes back with her brown hair braided  
Annie with ringlets warm and wild

Only in sleep Time is forgotten –  
What may have come to them, who can know?  
Yet we played last night as long ago  
And the doll-house stood at the turn of the stair

The years had not sharpened their  
smooth round faces  
I met their eyes and found them mild –  
Do they, too, dream of me, I wonder  
And for them am I too a child?

## Festival Singers

**Musical Director:** Ingrid Schoenfeld

**Accompanist:** Jonathan Berkahn

**Sopranos:** Robyn Bridge, Heather Easting,  
Heather Garside, Christine Hudson,  
Anne Neal, Jo Rothbaum, Helen Willberg.

**Altos:** Cathy Edge, Karen Espersen,  
Margaret Seconi, Helen Tripp, Rita Urry.

**Tenors:** Joe Fecteau\*, Martin Haua, Paul Kilford.

**Basses:** Robert Easting, Philip Garside\*,  
Alex Jeune, Ian Livingstone, Brian Patchett.

\* Soloists

## Our Plans for the remainder of 2022

**Choral Smash Hits Concert**  
with the choir of St. Mary of the Angels,  
17 Boulcott Street – 27 August 2022

Programme will include: *Zadok the Priest*,  
Parry's *I Was Glad*, Allegri's *Miserere*, Stanford's  
*Three Latin Motets*, and a wide range of  
composers from Josquin to Britten.

### A mid-year workshop

**“Rewritten” concert. Oct/Nov 2022**

We'll sing music that's been used in one  
context and then rewritten for another,  
e.g. JS Bach's *Passion Chorale* that  
Paul Simon rewrote as *American Tune*.

### December 2022

We plan to sing at the Seatoun Carols event  
at St Christopher's that fundraises for the  
Wellington City Mission.

And, we may perform a Christmas concert

*This concert is dedicated to the memory of  
Diana Helen 1939–2022*

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We rehearse from  
7-9pm on Monday nights  
from February to early December  
at Newlands Christian Assembly,  
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(\$225 each for those in the same household).  
Full time students pay just \$100 for a full year.

We know you will make new friends  
in our supportive greater Wellington  
community choir.

For more details contact:

**Ingrid Schoenfeld** (Musical Director)  
ingrid.s@outlook.co.nz, 027 240 6669

or

**Philip Garside** (Secretary)  
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