

1 150 Psalms

A Mirror for Today's Society

Sat 29 Feb 2020, 12pm, St Peter's Cathedral

Netherlands Chamber Choir
Peter Dijkstra, conductor
Anthony Hunt, organ

Introduction by Rebecca Huntley

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| Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) | Psalm 117, <i>Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden</i> |
| Mohammed Fairouz (b. 1985) | Psalm 14, <i>Diversions</i> (Australian premiere) |
| Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612) | Psalm 1, <i>Beatus vir qui non abiit</i> |
| Helen Bowater (b. 1952) | Psalm 15, <i>Adonai mi yagur be'aholecha</i> (World premiere) |
| Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672) | Psalm 119, <i>Wohl denen, die ohne Wandel leben</i> |
| Lodovico da Viadana (1564-1627) | Psalm 33, <i>Exsultate iusti</i> |
| Giammateo Asola (1532-1609) | Psalm 148, <i>Laudate Dominum de caelis</i> |
| Samuel Wesley (1766-1837) | Psalm 114, <i>In exitu Israel</i> |
| Michel van der Aa (b. 1970) | Psalm 5, <i>Shelter</i> (Australian premiere) |
| Bo Hansson (b. 1950) | Psalm 90 |
| Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) | Psalm 147, <i>Lauda Jerusalem Dominum</i> |

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Rebecca Huntley, speaker

Rebecca Huntley is a researcher, writer and broadcaster. She presents *The History Listen* on Radio National. She is on the board of The Whitlam Institute and The Bell Shakespeare Company. Her next book is on climate change and emotion, to be published by Murdoch Books in June 2020.

Programme note by Oek de Jong

History is like a lesson. A lesson for society, a lesson to help you find and follow the right path. Not only then, but most emphatically now. Gerard Swüste: 'This path is referred to particularly in the Torah, the Ten Words. No strict commandments, but signposts: if you live like this, you will be happy. At first sight this path is often directly opposed to what people find attractive, and yet - it is the path to happiness.'

It goes without saying that a psalms project should start with a setting by **Johann Sebastian Bach**, and this first programme concludes with **Monteverdi**. Two masters on opposite sides of the Baroque. In the area of vocal polyphony an example to many. Though his main Venetian mentor was Gabrieli, Bach's forebear **Heinrich Schütz** also met and studied with Monteverdi in 1628 and his Psalm 119 dates from that year. You will hear only the first part of this massive 22 verse setting. Schütz is credited with importing the Italian style to Germany but older compatriot **Hans Hassler** was the real pioneer. While in Venice he may well have encountered early experiments with figured bass by **Viadana** and **Asola**, whose more Palestrina-like works feature here.

Between Bach and Monteverdi, we find

three premières of Psalms, of which the ink is still wet! The first is by **Mohammed Fairouz**, an American of Arabic descent who despite his youth has an impressive oeuvre to his name, including orchestral and choral works, operas and chamber music. **Helen Bowater**, one of New Zealand's most respected and widely performed composers, has throughout her career also been an active member of choirs, rock bands and a gamelan orchestra. Netherlands based **Michel Van der Aa** is internationally renowned for his hybrid film/theatre/music compositions (such as *Eight*, also at the 2020 Adelaide festival), but this is his first *a cappella* choral work. The other 21st century work is a contemplative setting of Psalm 90 is by Swedish jazz guitarist turned choral composer **Bo Hansson** (not to be confused with the celebrated 1970's prog-rock artist of the same name.)

In this selection of Psalms, the ecstatic urge to praise and to give thanks to Creation is tempered by insecurity about the fragility of life, despair at the ubiquity of deceit and corruption, and a creeping sense of dread about the wicked things rattling at our gates.

A mirror for our times, indeed.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) Psalm 117, *Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden*

1. Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden,
und preiset ihn, alle Volker!

2. Denn seine Gnade und Wahrheit
waltet über uns in Ewigkeit.

Alleluja.

1. Praise the Lord, all you nations;
laud Him, all you peoples.

2. For His loving-kindness toward us is great,
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for
ever.

Hallelujah.

Mohammed Fairouz (b. 1985) Psalm 14, *Diversions* (Australian premiere)

I Memento

Fresh corpses line the boulevard
as the streetlights do
and thrushes sing a requiem
for the old man who
lights a white candle each morning.

(text: *Michael A. Bembenek*)

II The Shoulders of Giants

'If I have seen further it is by standing on the
shoulders of giants.'

'I do not know what I may appear to the world,
but to myself I seem to have been only like a
boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting
myself in now and then finding a smoother
pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst
the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered
before me.'

(quotes: *Isaac Newton*)

III

1. The fool hath said in his heart,
there is no God,
they are corrupt,
their works are repulsive,
there is none that doeth any good.

2. The Lord looked down from heaven

upon the children of man to see
if there was one who understood
and sought God.

3. But they gone aside.

They are all together become filthy,
there is none
that doeth any good.

4. Do all the foolish ones
know nothing?

They eat up My people
as they eat bread.

And call not upon the Lord.

5. They were great in fear
for God is in the generation of the righteous.

6. Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor
because the Lord is his refuge.

7. Oh that salvation for Israel
would emerge from Zion
when the Lord restores His people.
When the Lord restores His people
let Jacob and Israel rejoice.

(adaptation psalm text: *Mohammed Fairouz*)

Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612) Psalm 1, *Beatus vir qui non abiit*

1. Beatus vir qui non abiit

in consilio impiorum,

et in via peccatorum non stetit,

et in cathedra pestilentiae non sedit,

2. sed in lege Domini voluntas ejus,

et in lege ejus meditabitur die ac nocte.

1. Happy are they who have not walked
in the counsel of the wicked,

nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the seats of the scornful!

2. Their delight is in the law of the Lord,
and they meditate on His law day and night.

Helen Bowater (b. 1952) Psalm 15, *Adonai mi yagur be'aholecha* (World premiere)

Mizmor ledavidh

Adonai mi yagur be'aholecha mi yishkon behar kadeshecha

Holech tamim ufo'el tzedek vedobher emet bilbhabho;

Lo ragal al leshono lo asah lereehu ra'ah lo vecherpah nasa al kerobho, Nivzeh be'einav nimas ve'eth yirey Adonai yechabbed nishba lehara velo yamir

Kaspo lo natan beneshech veshochad al naki lo lakach oseh elleh lo yimmoth le'olam.

A Psalm of David.

The Lord, who shall stay in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell upon thy holy mountain?

He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart;

He who does not backbite with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his fellow, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour;

In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord; he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not;

He that putteth not out his money on interest nor taketh a bribe against the innocent.

He that does these things shall never be moved.

A note from the composer

Psalms were the hymn book of the Hebrew old testament, derived from Greek translations of the old testament. Psalm 15 is included in the first of 5 books of the Book of Psalms comprising 150 psalms. This psalm asks these questions of God: Who may stay in your tabernacle? Who may live on your holy mountain? then sets out 10 conditions relating to human morality to achieve this - essentially moral instructions to be kind to each other. The 10 conditions are underlined by a harmonic ascent which, to conclude, leads to a reiteration

of the questions posed at the start. I am drawn to the profound emotional expression and modal nature of synagogue chant, its ritual cantillation, melodic ornamentation and accompanying drones. Psalms sung or chanted in the synagogue were originally accompanied by ritual and drama, and communicate the rich, passionate, metaphorical language of hebrew poetry. This appreciation invited a musical setting in hebrew and a lyrical and dramatic response for this a cappella piece.



Helen Bowater

Helen Bowater studied composition with Jack Body and electroacoustic music with Ross Harris. She has been active in various choirs and ensembles as a singer, pianist and violinist, also in the Victoria University Gamelan Padhang Moncar. Following composer residencies at the Nelson School of Music in 1992 and at Otago University as Mozart Fellow in 1993, she was appointed Composer-in-Residence with the Auckland Philharmonia in 1994, Creative NZ/Jack C. Richards Composer- in-Residence at the New Zealand School of Music, Victoria University of Wellington from 2008 to 2009 and awarded an

Otago University, Wallace artist residency at the Pah Homestead, 2016.

Helen's solo, ensemble and orchestral works have been performed in concert in New Zealand and internationally, broadcast on radio, recorded to CD and published. Some compositional highlights have been participating as composer at the New York composition summer school June in Buffalo, the Asia-Pacific Asian Composer League festivals in Wellington, New Zealand, the festivals of New Zealand music in Scotland and composition festivals in Beijing and Jogja, Indonesia.

Most recent work includes a commission and performance by pianist, Stephen de Pledge for inclusion in his NZ Partita project at the Wellington Arts Festival, 2018, creating sound components for *Sculpture on the Gulf*, Waiheke Island, 2015 and 2017, the installation of the sonic ingredient relating to migration with Kazu Nakagawa's sculpture *Carving Water Painting Voice* at the Maritime Museum, Auckland, 2018, and at Pataka museum, 2019.

Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672) Psalm 119, *Wohl denen, die ohne Wandel leben*

Aleph

1. Wohl denen, die ohne Wandel leben,
die im Gesetze des Herrn wandeln!
2. Wohl denen, die seine Zeugnisse halten, die
ihn von ganzem Herzen suchen!
3. Denn welche auf seinen Wegen wandeln, die
tun kein Unrecht.
4. Du hast geboten, fleißig zu halten deine
Befehl.
5. O daß mein Leben deine Rechte mit ganzem
Ernst hielte!
6. Wenn ich schaue alleine auf deine Gebot, so
werde ich nicht zuschanden.
7. Ich danke dir von rechtem Herzen,
daß du mich lehrest die Rechte deiner
Gerechtigkeit.
8. Deine Rechte will ich halten;
verlaß mich nimmermehr!

Aleph

1. Happy are they whose way is blameless, who
walk in the law of the Lord!
2. Happy are they who observe His decrees and
seek Him with all their hearts!
3. Who never do any wrong,
but always walk in His ways.
4. You laid down Your commandments,
that we should fully keep them.
5. Oh, that my ways were made so direct
that I might keep Your statutes!
6. Then I should not be put to shame,
when I regard all Your commandments.
7. I will thank You with an unfeigned heart,
when I have learned Your righteous judgments.
8. I will keep Your statutes;
do not utterly forsake me.

Beth

9. Wie wird ein Jüngling seinen Weg unsträflich gehen?

Wenn er sich hält nach deinen Worten.

10. Ich suche dich von ganzem Herzen; laß mich nicht fehlen deiner Gebot!

11. Ich behalte dein Wort in meinem Herzen, auf daß ich nicht wider dich sündige.

12. Gelobet sei der Herr!
Lehre mich deine Rechte!

13. Ich will mit meinen Lippen erzählen alle Rechte deines Mundes.

14. Ich freue mich des Weges deiner Zeugnis als über allerlei Reichtum.

15. Ich rede, was du befohlen hast, und schaue auf deine Wege.

16. Ich habe Lust zu deinen Rechten und vergesse deiner Wort nicht.

Beth

9. How shall a young man cleanse his way?
By keeping to Your words.

10. With my whole heart I seek you;
let me not stray from Your commandments.

11. I treasure Your promise in my heart,
that I may not sin against You.

12. Blessed are You, O Lord;
instruct me in your statutes.

13. With my lips will I recite
all the judgments of Your mouth.

14. I have taken greater delight in the way of
Your decrees than in all manner of riches.

15. I will meditate on Your commandments
and give attention to Your ways.

16. My delight is in Your statutes;
I will not forget Your word.

Lodovico da Viadana (1564-1627) Psalm 33, *Exsultate iusti*

1. Exsultate iusti in Domino;
rectos decet collaudatio.

2. Confitemini Domino in cithara;
in psalterio decem chordarum
psallite illi.

3. Cantate ei canticum novum;
bene psallite ei in vociferatione.

1. Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous;
it is good for the just to sing praises.

2. Praise the Lord with the harp;
play to Him upon the psaltery and lyre.

3. Sing for Him a new song;
sound a fanfare with all your skill upon the
trumpet.

Giammateo Asola (1532-1609) Psalm 148, *Laudate Dominum de caelis*

1. Laudate Dominum de caelis,
laudate eum in excelsis.

2. Laudate eum, omnes angeli eius.
Laudate eum, omnes virtutes eius.

3. Laudate eum, sol et luna,
laudate eum, omnes stellæ et lumen.

4. Laudate eum, cæli caelorum,
et aquæ omnes quem super caelos sunt

5. laudent nomen Domini.

12. Iuvenes et virgines, senes cum iunioribus.

1. Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise Him in the heights.

2. Praise Him, all you angels of His;
praise Him, all His host.

3. Praise Him, sun and moon;
praise Him, all you shining stars.

4. Praise Him, heaven of heavens,
and you waters above the heavens.

5. Let them praise the Name of the Lord.

12. Young men and maidens, old and young
together.

150:1 Laudate Dominum in sanctis eius,
laudate eum in firmamento virtutis eius.
150:3 Laudate eum in sono tubæ,
laudate eum in psalterio et cythara.
150:4 Laudate eum in tympano et choro,
laudate eum in chordis et organo.
150:5 Laudate eum in cymbalis benesonantibus,
laudate eum in cymbalis jubilationis.
150:6 Omnis spiritus laudet Dominum.

150:1 Praise God in His holy temple;
praise Him in the firmament of His power.
150:3 Praise Him with the blast of the ram's-
horn; praise Him with lyre and harp.
150:4 Praise Him with timbre and dance;
praise Him with strings and pipe.
150:5 Praise Him with resounding cymbals;
praise Him with loud-clanging cymbals.
150:6 Let everything that has breath praise
the Lord.

Samuel Wesley (1766-1837) Psalm 114, *In exitu Israel*

1. In exitu Israel de Aegypto,
domus Jacob
de populo barbaro,
2. facta est Judaea sanctificatio ejus.
Israel potestas ejus.
3. Mare vidit et fugit
Jordanis conversus est retrorsum.

1. When Israel came out of Egypt,
the house of Jacob
from a people of strange speech,
2. Judah became God's sanctuary
and Israel his dominion.
3. The sea beheld it and fled;
Jordan turned and went back.

Michel van der Aa (b.1970) Psalm 5, *Shelter* (Australian premiere)

9. Consider my meditation; lead me.
Make Your way straight before me.
10. For there is no sincerity in their mouth;
their is malice in their heart;
their throat is an open grave;

they flatter with their tongue.
13. All who take refuge
shelter them
encompass them with will like a shield.

Bo Hansson (b. 1950) Psalm 90

1. Herre, du har varit vår tillflykt
från släkte till släkte.
2. Du fanns innan bergen föddes,
innan jorden och världen blev till.
Du är Gud från evighet till evighet.
3. Du låter människan bli mull igen,
du säger: Bli vad du en gång var!
4. Tusen år är i dina ögon
som den dag som förgick i går,
som en av nattens timmar.
5. Människorna sveper du bort,
de är som morgonsönnen.
De förgås som gräset.

1. Lord, You have been our refuge
from one generation to another.
2. Before the mountains were brought forth,
or the land and the earth were born,
from age to age You are God.
3. You turn us back to the dust and say,
'Go back, O child of earth.'
4. For a thousand years in Your sight
are like yesterday when it is past
and like a watch in the night.
5. You sweep us away like a dream;
we fade away suddenly
like the grass.

6. Fast det frodas om morgonen är det förgängligt:

mot kvällen vissnar det och torkar bort.

7. Din harm förtär oss,
vi slås av skräck när du vredgas.

8. Du granskar våra synder,
allt vi dolt ligger
öppet för din blick.

9. Våra dagar rinner bort under din vrede,
våra år försvinner som en suck.

10. Sjuttio år varar vårt liv,
åttio, om krafterna står bi.
De flyende åren är möda och slit,
snart är allt förbi, och vi är borta.

11. Vem känner styrkan i din vrede,
vem inser hur tungt den drabbar?

12. Lär oss hur få våra dagar är,
då vinner vårt hjärta vishet.

6. In the morning it is green and flourishes;
in the evening it is dried up and withered.

7. For we consume away in Your displeasure;
we are afraid because of Your wrathful indignation.

8. Our iniquities You have set before You,
and our secret sins
in the light of Your countenance.

9. When You are angry, all our days are gone;
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

10. The span of our life is seventy years,
perhaps in strength even eighty;
yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow,
for they pass away quickly and we are gone.

11. Who regards the power of Your wrath?
Who rightly fears Your indignation?

12. So teach us to number our days
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) Psalm 147, *Lauda Jerusalem Dominum*

12. Lauda Jerusalem Dominum:
lauda Deum tuum, Sion.

13. Quoniam confortavit seras portarum
tuarum:
benedixit filiis tuis in te.

14. Qui posuit fines tuos pacem:
et adipe frumenti satiat te.

15. Qui emittit eloquium suum terræ:
velociter currit sermo ejus.

16. Qui dat nivem sicut lanam:
nebulam sicut cinerem spargit.

17. Mittit crystallum suam sicut buccellas:
ante faciem frigoris ejus quis sustinebit?

18. Emittet verbum suum, et liquefaciet ea:
flabit spiritus ejus, et fluent aquæ.

19. Qui adnunciate verbum suum Jacob:
justitias et judicia sua Israël.

20. Non fecit taliter omni nationi:
et judicia sua non manifestavit eis.

12. Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem;
praise your God, O Zion.

13. For He has strengthened the bars of your
gates;
He has blessed your children within you.

14. He has established peace on your borders;
He satisfies you with the finest wheat.

15. He sends out His command to the earth,
and His word runs very swiftly.

16. He gives snow like wool;
He scatters hoarfrost like ashes.

17. He scatters his hail like breadcrumbs;
who can stand against his cold?

18. He sends forth His word and melts them;
He blows with His wind, and the waters flow.

19. He declares His word to Jacob,
His statutes and His judgments to Israel.

20. He has not done so to any other nation;
to them He has not revealed His judgments.

doxology

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper,
et in sæcula sæculorum.

Amen.

Glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy
Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever.

Amen.