

*new*

# choral works



2018

Saturday 3 March 2018, 8pm  
Sheung Wan Civic Centre Lecture Hall

music by Hong Kong composers

*Bethan Clarke | Peter Clarke | Ross Furmedge | Sam Hilton  
Cheryl Hui | Vanessa Law | Joe Travers | Phil Tudor*



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# LAMENTATIONS

A concert of Renaissance vocal music for Holy Week

Music by Tallis, Byrd, Purcell, Gibbons,  
Victoria, A. Lobo, Gesualdo, Lassus and Monteverdi

**25 MAR 2018 (SUN) 6PM**

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# Programme

## Invictus

music: Ross Furmedge

text: W. E. Henley

## The Gift of Idle Hours

music: Peter Clarke

text: Robert Frost

## After

music: Sam Hilton

text: Amy Eisner

## Suscipe, Domine

music: Joe Travers

text: St. Ignatius Loyola

## The Ugly Truth

music: Cheryl Hui

## I. That's A Hat

## III. The Lonely Prince

## II. B612

## IV. The Prince's Rose

text: Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

## Animal Farm

music: Vanessa Law

## III. No Question Now. All Animals Are Equal

text: George Orwell

## Last Night

music: Bethan Clark

text: Aileen Wuornos & Nick Broomfield

## Another Lullaby for Insomniacs

music: Phil Tudor

text: A. E. Stallings

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## Ross Furmedge – Invictus

**Ross Furmedge** was born in the Netherlands, moving to the UK at 5. His musical education began at Holy Trinity Church in Southport and later with the National Youth Choir of Great Britain and Anglia Polytechnic University, singing with Manchester Chamber Choir and Manchester Consort, Northern Spirit Singers and Chantage after graduating. Since moving to Hong Kong 3 years ago, Ross was in musical hiding until being coaxed out for the New Choral Works 2017 project; the lure of singing about Crystal Meth and Blade Runner convinced him it was time to rejoin the musical world.

**about the piece:** Invictus was born from a trip to visit Robben Island in June 2017, the spaces there remain eerie and echo with the souls interred there. Our tour guide (a former inmate) had a booming voice which brought a powerful resonance to each cell as he described his former life on the island as a victim of Apartheid. I imagined myself there, and thought about the poem I knew Nelson Mandela had a love for and considered its use as an affirmation. I wanted to explore the peace that a well-placed moment can bring the soul, giving strength in the hardest of times.

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## Peter Clarke – The Gift Of Idle Hours

Throughout his career in science and engineering, **Peter Clarke** has pursued a keen interest in music making, as a composer, pianist, percussionist, saxophonist and choral singer. Previously performed works include several orchestral tone poems, a piano concerto, a double bass sonata, and a range of chamber works and sacred music. Born and educated in the UK, Peter has been based in Hong Kong since 2003 and works as an engineering consultant.



**about the piece:** Robert Frost's poem *Mowing* (1913) explores the idea that, far from being a chore and a curse, work is a pleasure and an important aspect of a healthy, balanced life. The particular kind of work explored here is a solitary harvester cutting wheat with a scythe, a type of large, long-handled knife. As the scythe slices through the stalks, the whispering sound it makes is uttering secrets about the contentment of work. An honest, fulfilling day's manual labour under the New England sun is depicted in a lazy jazz style, with indulgent snatches of melody, like a love-song hummed to oneself in the open air, and downward chromatic slides as the worker lies back in the hay for a well-earned rest.

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## Sam Hilton – After

**Sam Hilton** has been a choral singer for over 25 years, in groups of all sizes and musical styles. Based in Hong Kong, he is a founding member and chief arranger of the contemporary a cappella group Eight Five Tunes, and is also a current member of the Renaissance group Tallis Vocalis and of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus. He was previously the music director of the Hong Kong-based contemporary group Il Coro, and was the founding director of the Hanoi International Choir. Sam graduated with a degree in music from Harvard College, where he was a member of the Harvard Glee Club and was the vocal director of several musical theater productions.

**about the piece:** For our inaugural concert of choral new works in 2017, I asked my university classmate Amy Eisner, a poet, if she had any texts I might be able to use. She sent me a collection of her work, and I selected and set to music "A Certain Attention." When this composer's group decided to hold another concert of new works this year, I selected another of her poems, "After", as the next in an "Eisner Suite."

The poem's subject matter is sobering and challenging. Overall, I took a programmatic approach to the material, for example with the shape of the vocal line reflecting the text "the stones in their arc falling toward a woman." The percussion line suggests the sound of stones striking flesh, at an irregular pace and dynamic, and with increasing intensity as the theme is fully realized. The male voices conclude with a reprise of the opening melody and text: whether this is a reinforcement of the opening sequence, or an ironic commentary, is ambiguous.

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## Joe Travers – Suscipe, Domine

**Joe Travers** arrived in Hong Kong in 2010 and is currently the Head of Music at Island School. He read Music at the University of York studying piano, singing and composition. He is an experienced choral singer who joined the English Chamber Choir upon graduating. As a composer and arranger, Joe has worked with the English Chamber Choir, the Chimera Ensemble, Majestic Brass, and the Wimbledon Symphony Orchestra. In Hong Kong, Joe has enjoyed singing with Tallis Vocalis, the Hong Kong Bach Choir, Celtic Connections and Kassia Choirs.

**about the piece:** A good friend of mine, who is the Director of Music at a school in London, asked me to write a new piece for his choir. He suggested the text 'Suscipe, Domine' which is a Latin translation of the prayer of St. Ignatius, a prayer about generosity and compassion.

The piece is designed to be sung in a resonant church acoustic and features slow-moving, scrunchy harmonies. The staggered choir entries on the words 'Suscipe, Domine' create a gentle percussive effect which recurs in the piece. The piece ends with an ethereal soprano solo which bridges across the rest of the choir.

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## Cheryl Hui – The Ugly Truth

**Cheryl Hui** obtained Master of Arts in Music and BA(Hons) from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong respectively, studying percussion and timpani performance with James Boznos, (Principal Timpani, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra). As an active performer, Hui has performed with the SAR Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong New Music Ensemble, the Medical Association Orchestra and the Pro Arte Orchestra of Hong Kong. Most recently she performed as part of Trey Lee's residency at HKU. Specializing in contemporary music, Hui has premiered works by Dr. Anthony Cheng, Dr. Joyce Tang, Dr. Austin Yip, Gordon Fung, Yip Chi Chung and John Luther Adams. As a composer, she studied with Dr. Joshua Chan. Hui's current interest lies in electroacoustic and world music. Hui and her ensemble, Quadrasonic won first prize in the Hong Kong Percussion Competition 2016 with her original composition, The Distant Sound.

**about the piece:** The Ugly Truth is based on the French novella, The Little Prince. When little prince came to the earth, he made several observations about life and human nature. The relationship between the little prince, the fox and the rose is highlighted in this piece.

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## Vanessa Law – Animal Farm

Hong Kong born **Vanessa Law** began her studies at Hong Kong Baptist University in 2004 as a piano major, studying with Chinese composer Mr. Cui Shiguang. After graduating Vanessa turned her focus towards electroacoustic music composition during her stay at Ball State University, Indiana, majoring in voice and music composition. She was the winner of the regional (Indiana) audition of the National Association of Teachers of Singing in US in 2008.

Vanissa obtained her PhD in 2016 under the supervision of Prof. Christopher Keyes. Vanissa's pieces and installations have been premiered and exhibited internationally at events and festivals including the 13th International Conference on New Interfaces for Musical Expression (Seoul, Korea), Society of Composers (SCI) Region VI Conference (Texas, US), University of Central Missouri New Music Festival (Missouri, US), the soundSCAPE festival (Italy), 2013 International Workshop on Computer Music and Audio Technology (Taipei) and Hong Kong Arts Festival. Vanissa was granted the Fulbright Research Award in 2014-15 and was sponsored to do a 10-month research at Louisiana Digital Media Center.

**about the piece:** Animal Farm is meant to be a piece to bear the core idea of local social movement inspired music. As one of the most significant works by George Orwell, Animal Farm reflects the the events leading up to the Russian revolution and the Stalinist era followed.

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## Bethan Clark – Last Night

Founder of Katterwall, **Bethan** has been making music in Hong Kong since 1999. Highlights include establishing the well-known Kassia choirs, singing the national anthems at the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens for seven years, being invited to direct FOBISIA's choral festival in Jeju, Korea, being invited to bring singers to perform at New York's Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall, and directing the critically-acclaimed Hong Kong premiere of Jason Robert Brown's *Songs for a New World*. She is currently spending her time composing, drawing, painting and generally enjoying life and family.



**about the piece:** Aileen Wuornos had been dead for a year when Nick Broomfield released his documentary *Aileen: Life and Death of a Serial Killer*. The film followed the final months of her life, up to her execution for the murder of seven men. The last interview between Broomfield and Wuornos, filmed the night before her execution, stopped me in my tracks and left me in no doubt that it would form the basis of my next composition. Even though she knew that this was to be her last night on earth, Wuornos' voice was remarkably rhythmic and melodic, and her use of language arresting in its blend of reality and fantasy. However, her thought processes were so skewed and her patience worn so thin that it would require subtle and empathetic interviewing to elicit a meaningful valediction....

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## Phil Tudor – Another Lullaby for Insomniacs

**Phil Tudor** studied Music at the universities of Bath Spa and Keele, graduating from the latter with an MPhil in Composition. The first decade of his career involved much freelance work as a composer in the UK. He worked on several community outreach programmes collaborating with the Halle Orchestra, and the London Sinfonietta and working with composers including James Macmillan, Bill Connor and Frazer Trainer.

Phil's music has been performed by the Halle Orchestra, as part of the Norwich and Norfolk Music Festival and has been broadcast nationally on BBC Radio 3. Since arriving in Hong Kong in 2000, Phil has taught Music at ESF's Island School. His first large choral commission "Survive the Night" was for Kassia Women's Choir in 2005 (available on iTunes). More recently he has composed for Scottish Opera's lead soprano, Gloria Ellis.

**about the piece:** Another Lullaby for Insomniacs is a setting of the 2004 poem of the same name by the American poet A. E. Stallings (born 1966). Her work is associated with New Formalism - a late 20th- and early 21st-century movement in American poetry that has promoted a return to metrical and rhymed verse.

In this text, sleep is personified as a cruel temptress who denies you your yearning for peace and slumber. In setting it, I aim to create a mood that is tranquil, dark and somewhat unsettling. The musical ideas are limited but move freely from voice to voice. The melody lines descend slowly and are nursery-rhyme-like in their simplicity. The use of clashes and suspensions create an insidious undertone, and the accompaniment is a blend of cradle-rocking repeated notes and broad pedals. In the final verse a lone Soprano gradually sings out. Whilst this solo soon grows to be the loudest and highest material of the work, it fades just as quickly, to join the remaining music.

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## Texts

### Invictus

text: William Ernest Henley

music: Ross Furmedge

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.<sup>[1]</sup>

### The Gift of Idle Hours

text: Robert Frost

music: Peter Clarke

Whisper to the ground.  
There was never a sound beside the wood but one,  
And that was my long scythe, whispering to the ground.  
What was it it whispered? I know not well myself;  
Perhaps it was something about the heat of the sun,  
Something perhaps about the lack of sound,  
And that was why it whispered and did not speak.

It was not a dream of the gift of idle hours,  
Or easy gold at the hand of fate or self;  
Anything more than the truth would have seemed too weak  
To the earnest love that laid the wheat in rows.  
The fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows.  
My long scythe whispered to the ground  
And left the hay to make.

## After

text: Amy Eisner

music: Sam Hilton

There will never be  
a time of turmoil  
like this   like that

However mild the murder  
deliberate the rape  
exact the sentence

the stones in their arc  
falling toward a woman  
already wrapped

and partly buried  
not standing but propped  
an earthwork

pressed for air  
the time must be considered  
normal from now on



# Suscipe, Domine

text: St. Ignatius Loyola

music: Joe Travers

Suscipe, Domine, universam meam libertatem.  
Accipe memoriam, intellectum, atque voluntatem omnem.  
Quidquid habeo vel possideo mihi largitus es; id tibi totum restituo,  
ac tuae prorsus voluntati trado gubernandum.  
Amorem tui solum cum gratia tua mihi dones,  
et dives sum satis, nec aliud quidquam ultra posco.

*Receive, O Lord, all my liberty.  
Take my memory, my understanding, and my entire will.  
Whatever I have or hold, You have given me;  
I give it all back to You  
and surrender it wholly to be governed by your will.  
Give me only your love and your grace,  
and I am rich enough and ask for nothing more.*

## The Ugly Truth

text from 'The Little Prince'

text: Antoine de Saint-Exupéry music: Cheryl Hui

### I. That's A Hat

That's a hat  
Hat, that's a hat.  
There is a snake.  
That's not a hat.  
The elephant swallowed by the snake.

### II. B612

Six one two.  
There's nothing.

There's a prince.  
There's a rose.

### **III. The Lonely Prince**

Good morning.  
Who are you?  
I am all alone.  
Good morning.  
Who are you?  
We are roses.  
The common roses.

### **IV. The Prince's Rose**

Good morning.  
Who are you?  
I'm a fox. Play with me.  
No! I am not tamed.  
There is no shop to buy friendship.  
The roses are nothing.  
They are not my roses.  
Oh my rose!  
It's the time.

## **Animal Farm**

**text:** George Orwell

**music:** Vanessa Law

### **III. No Question Now. All Animals Are Equal.**

That night there was the sound of uproarious singing, which was followed by what sounded like a violent quarrel and ended at about eleven o'clock with a tremendous crash of glass. No one stirred in the farmhouse before noon on the following day, the pigs buy another case of whisky. Years passed. The seasons came and went the short animal lives fled by. A time came when there was no one who remembered the old days before the Rebellion.

Dead. Muriel was dead. Bluebell was dead. Jones too was dead. Boxer's forgotten. Snowball's forgotten. Clover's forgotten. Napoleon was now a mature boar of twenty-four stone. Squealer could not see out of his eyes. Only old Benjamin was much the same as ever, as the old days before the Rebellion. Yes. We accepted everything. They have grown richer.

No question now. All animals are equal.

## Last Night

**text:** Aileen Wurnos & Nick Broomfield

**music:** Bethan Clark

**Nick:** You know, I'm just wondering how you're gonna be at 9.30 tomorrow morning. Are you prepared? **Aileen:** I'm alright with it, but, like I said, I know that the cops knew who I was after Richard Mallory died. They let me kill the rest of those guys to turn me into a serial killer. I know they did. Because I was no professional serial killer or a murderer or whatever you wanna call it, you know? **N:** So Aileen, how have you prepared yourself for tomorrow morning? **A:** I'm alright with it. Yeah, I'm ready to go. Hey, I was tortured, they were using sonic pressure on my head. **N:** Sonic press...? **A:** I'm thinking that probably had the TV rigged... **N:** And do think, what... did it affect your mind, do you think? **A:** Huh? **N:** The sonic... **A:** It was crushing my head and they were using sonic pressure...

increased the pressure of the volume of the comm, increased the harassment on the floor, increased the trays being inedible, increased every bit of my complaint and trashed all grievances. Tryin' to make it look like I was crazy at all times, I've suffered so bad. **N:** But you're OK now? **A:** I'm OK, I'm OK. God is gonna be there. Jesus Christ is gonna be there. All the angels and everythin'. And you know, whatev, whatever is on the beyond, I think it's gonna be more like Star Trek, beaming me up into a space vehicle man, and then I move on, recolonize to another planet or whatever but, it's, whatever's beyond, I know it's gonna be good because, I didn't do anything, as wrong as they said. I did the right thing. And I saved a lot of people's butts from gettin' hurt and raped and killed too.

**N:** What more is there to say about the cops? **A:** [hmm?] **N:** What, what more do you wanna say about the cops? **A:** A lot of stuff. Did you know that they were surveilling me before I killed? And that I knew it? And that it was covered up? Did you know that there was helicopters dropping down from the sky? Deputy Sheriff with decoys pickin' me up? Four, five months before my arrest? It was covered up? **N:** But nonetheless...**A:** Nobody ever asked me these questions **N:** Whether the cops were following you or not, Aileen

**A:** Oh ho! Whether the cops were following me or not Aileen, what? **N:** OK, OK, let's say, let's say the cops were following you **A:** Yeah? **N:** Let's say they were following **A:** Aha? **N:** and they did everything that you're s, you're saying they did **A:** Aha? **N:** Nonetheless, you killed seven men **A:** Yeah, sure did **N:** And I'm asking you what got you to kill the seven men **A:** And I'm telling you because the cops let me keep killing them Nick, don't you get it? **N:** But not, not everybody is killing seven people. So there must have been something in you that was getting you to do that. **A:** Oh you are lost Nick. **N:** So explain. **A:** I was a hitchhiking hooker. Running into trouble, I'd shoo, shoot the guy if I ran into trouble? Physical trouble? **N:** But how come there was so much physical trouble in just, it, because it was all in one year. Seven people in one year. **A:** Oh well! Oh well. **N:** But why not say now? **A:** Out of retaliation for taking my life, like this, I lost my fucking life because of it. Couldn't even get a fair trial. Couldn't even get a fair investigation or nothing. Couldn't even have my appeals right. You sabotaged my ass, society. And the cops. And the system. A raped woman got executed and was used for books and movies and shit. You're an inhumane bunch of fucking living bastards and bitches. You don't take fucking human life like this and rip it apart. [*Shout:* Thanks a lot for all the fucking money I made off o ya / Book and movie info / I been tryin' to tell the truth / Keep getting' it stepped on] Now I know what Jesus was goin' through. We're gonna have to cut this interview, Nick. I'm leaving. I'm glad. Thanks a lot society for railroading my ass.



# Another Lullaby for Insomniacs

text: A. E. Stallings

music: Phil Tudor

Sleep, she will not linger:  
She turns her moon-cold shoulder.  
With no ring on her finger,  
You cannot hope to hold her.

She turns her moon-cold shoulder  
And tosses off the cover.  
You cannot hope to hold her:  
She has another lover.

She tosses off the cover  
And lays the darkness bare.  
She has another lover.  
Her heart is elsewhere.

She lays the darkness bare.  
You slowly realize  
Her heart is elsewhere.  
There's distance in her eyes.

You slowly realize  
That she will never linger,  
With distance in her eyes  
And no ring on her finger.

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## Singers

Stephen Bolton  
Nadia Chan  
Maggie Cheung  
Michael Cheung  
Ronny Cheung  
Bethan Clark  
Peter Clarke  
Elizabeth Coupe  
Ross Furmedge  
Geneviève Hilton  
Sam Hilton  
Toby Lai  
Dora Lau  
Vienna Lau  
Vanissa Law  
Deirdre Lee  
Isabella Liu  
Helena Murchie  
Tom Raggett  
Clare Reavey  
Fiona Steffensen  
Joanna Tam  
Kevin Tang  
Charlotte Toralde  
Joseph Travers  
Phil Tudor  
Winni Wong  
Alvin Ying

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## Percussion

Cheryl Hui

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## **With thanks to**

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