

new choral works 2017

music by Hong Kong composers

Saturday 25th February, 8pm
Sheung Wan Civic Centre Lecture Theatre



Bethan Clark | Peter Clarke | Sam Hilton | Vanissa Law | Joseph Travers | Phil Tudor



聯合節目
ASSOCIATED PROJECT



JOSQUIN THE MASTER

EDWARD WICKHAM CONDUCTOR

20 MAY 2017 (SAT) 8PM
ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH

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On behalf of everyone on stage, I would like to offer my sincere thanks for taking the plunge and coming to hear something different this evening. What began as a weekly composition exercise for me, grew to encompass 6 composers and 7 pieces of new music. Everyone's giving of their time, talents and enthusiasm to the project made it one of the most enjoyable creative learning experiences I've had the pleasure of being involved in. Among the extremely wide range of musical styles on offer tonight, we hope that you find something to tickle your fancy.

Bethan Clark

Programme

The Nexus Monologue	<i>Music:</i> Phil Tudor	<i>words:</i> Rutger Hauer
If Any Man Is In Christ	<i>Music:</i> Peter Clarke	<i>words:</i> 2 Corinthians
Audibly Exhale	<i>Music:</i> Bethan Clark	<i>words:</i> Kenny
The Night Became Long	<i>Music:</i> Sam Hilton	<i>words:</i> Ammar Tabbab
Animal Farm		
I. Comrades. What is the nature of		
II. The Seven Commandments		
	<i>Music:</i> Vanissa Law	<i>words</i> George Orwell
A Certain Attention	<i>Music:</i> Sam Hilton	<i>words:</i> Amy Eisner
To Musick - To Becalms a Sweet-Sick Youth		
	<i>Music:</i> Joe Travers	<i>words:</i> Robert Herrick

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Phil Tudor - The Nexus Monologue (2016)

Phil studied Music at the universities of Bath Spa and Keele. He graduated 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 worked 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 big choral commission was for Kassia Women's Choir in 2005. More recently he has composed for Scottish Opera's lead soprano, Gloria Ellis. His introduction into tonight's project was initially as a composition coach for one of this evening's composers. This proved to be a very inspirational two way process.

About the piece: This text comes from the end of Ridley Scott's 1982 sci-fi movie, Blade Runner. The Nexus brand replicant (artificial life form) suddenly starts to die and immediately before passing, recites this famous monologue: touching words because they are a last utterance, highlights of a live lived. The deadpan delivery of this monologue, minus dramatic visuals and special effects paradoxically intensifies the imagery. To indicate the vast spaces between images, two choirs explore unrelated key centres. As time is universal, and it supersedes life, the piece begins as it ends.

Peter Clarke - If Any Man Is In Christ (2016)

At the age of 17, Peter Clarke tossed a coin to decide whether to study music or science. Although the coin came down on the side of science, he has retained 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: The Christian faith teaches that a person's inner being is created anew when that person makes a commitment to Christ. *If any man is in Christ* uses a Bible text from 2 Corinthians to celebrate this beautiful mystery.

The work is in ternary form: reflective outer sections express the believer's peace with God and himself, while the rhythmic inner section rejoices in the freedom and new life expressed by Isaiah: "You will go out in joy / and be led forth in peace; / the mountains and hills / will burst into song before you, / and all the trees of the field / will clap their hands."

Bethan Clark - *Audibly Exhale* (2016)

A comparative newcomer to original composition, Bethan has been working alongside Phil Tudor (*Nexus Monologue*) in semi-regular composition tutorials since 2015. *Audibly Exhale* is the first completed work to emerge from this process.

Bethan is the founder and director of Katterwall, chorus master of Tallis Vocalis and conductor of Inventum Women's Choir (Discovery Bay) for whom she has recently composed *Discover Me Again* for voices and harp.

About the piece: Crystal Methamphetamine (aka Crystal, Ice, Tina, X) is quite possibly the most addictive substance in existence; addiction can be fast to take hold and virtually impossible to shake off.

Inspired by the blog entry of an addict, and in combination with research and friendship with an addict, *Audibly Exhale* is an attempt to touch on some of the physical, mental and external effects of this most evil of drugs: paranoia, heart palpitations, panic attacks, auditory hallucinations, mood swings, tremors and psychosis, not to mention the huge impact on those who get sucked into the addict's chaos.

The harmony is built around the drug's chemical formula ($C_{10}H_{15}N$), and the principal motif uses an addict's identity number whilst on remand for possession of crystal meth.

Sam Hilton - The Night Became Long & A Certain Attention (2016)

Sam has been a choral singer for over 25 years, in groups of all sizes and musical styles. He is a founding member and chief arranger of the contemporary a cappella group Eight Five Tunes, and is a member of the Renaissance group Tallis Vocalis and of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus. He was previously the music director of the 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 a number of musical theater productions.

About the pieces: *The Night Became Long*: This piece attempts to incorporate into music the refugee journey articulated in the text. The primary element of this is the second soprano line, which gradually destabilizes the tonal chorale of the other voices, and simultaneously echoes and contradicts the request for anonymity in the final lines. The other key element is the piece's directionless harmonic progression, with little in the way of traditional cadences. Less obviously, this directionlessness is also reflected in the inversion and reshuffling of the chorale voices in the third verse.

A Certain Attention: The structure of this piece arises from the rhythm of the opening line. The sparseness of the text yields an amelodic series of suspensions, supplanted by the more melodic middle section. Following a false climax, these sections are blended and build to the true climax of the piece. The coda resolves the musical and textual tensions with an almost conventionally harmonic cadence.

Vanissa Law - Animal Farm (2016)

Vanissa was born in Hong Kong and began her studies at Hong Kong Baptist University as a piano major. After graduating Vanissa 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 returned to Hong Kong in 2010 and obtained her PhD in 2016 under the supervision of Prof. Christopher Keyes. Vanissa's pieces and installations have been premiered and exhibited at events and festivals including the 13th International Conference on New Interfaces for Musical Expression (Korea), Society of Composers (SCI) Region VI Conference (Texas), University of

Central Missouri New Music Festival (Missouri), 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 inspired by a local social movement and based on Orwell's most significant work *Animal Farm*, which reflected events that lead up to the Russian revolution and the Stalinist era that followed. The two movements: I. Comrades. What is the nature of & II. The Seven Commandments share themes relating to contemporary events in Hong Kong. The first movement is self-explanatory: "*What is the nature of this life of ours? Let us face it: our lives are miserable, laborious, and short.*" while the second movement uses Napoleon's seven commandments (a character based on communist leaders), which are subsequently modified afterwards to suit his own interest.

Joseph Travers - To Musick (2016)

Joseph Travers studied music at York University and has lived in Hong Kong for the last six years where he currently Head of Music at Island School. Joe is an experienced choral singer who performed with the English Chamber Choir in prestigious UK venues including St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and York Minster, in addition to recording music for film, television and radio. As a composer and arranger, Joe has worked with several London-based ensembles including the English Chamber Choir, the Chimera Ensemble, Majestic Brass, and the Wimbledon Symphony Orchestra. He has composed extensively for education and runs composition workshops and summer schools. Since moving to Hong Kong, Joe has performed with the Hong Kong Bach Choir, Celtic Connections and Kassia Choir. He currently sings tenor with Tallis Vocalis.

About the piece: I was inspired to write this piece whilst singing with Tallis Vocalis in concerts which placed Renaissance choral works alongside pieces by contemporary composers. My piece has one foot in the past and one foot in the present. The piece borrows musical techniques found in Renaissance choral music but updates the sound to a contemporary style. I chose this poem by Robert Herrick because though the text was written over 400 years ago, the theme that music has the power to affect and influence us, is timeless.

the texts

The Nexus Monologue - Rutger Hauer (*Blade Runner*, 1982)

I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain. Time to die.

If Any Man Is In Christ - 2 Corinthians

If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has gone, the new has come.

Audibly Exhale - Kenny (drug.addictionblog.org/how-to-help-a-crystal-meth-addict, 2016)

makes you feel that you're invisible Superman Hulk all the superheroes combine and with the dark deepness of the devil himself it'll make you a conniving lying careless soulless hollow shell of a human being...still couldn't kick the monkey off my back until him and the Prince of Darkness wanted me for their puppet I was damn near doing his dirty work...I know it's no excuse when I say this but you get pressured in this world we live in bills taking care of a family and you're the only one working at the time didn't have a drug in my body or even over drink...can somebody out there imagine what I'm feeling I am broke down chewed up spit out and tossed to the bottom of Dante's Inferno...I just want somebody to look out for me now give me a guiding hand in my time of need I know all these problems does not excuse to turn to drugs or whatever toot your horn but temptation is something else and the Prince of Darkness lice and can I and slippers that serpent tongue of his...all I gotta say is this world's going to hell in a handbasket sitting on a freight training the end of days is near brother against brother family to get to families I see it and it sucks let some of my family don't my I can't take much heartac anymore let alone the rapid beat in the pressure that a fat lady is sitting on your chest

The Night Became Long - Ammar Tabbab

The night became long and the darkness deepened,
but I could not find starlight to show the way.
The trip became long, and my footsteps began
to disappear, without them how would I find a way back...
I doze off with a dream caressing my eye.
At the same time I fear the daybreak will bury me.
Don't ask about me.
Don't ask who I am.

Ammar Tabbab (b.~1982) is a Syrian poet from Damascus. He is a director of the Syrian Interim Government's Syrian Commission for Transitional Justice, based in Turkey.

Animal Farm - George Orwell (1903 - 1950)

I. Comrades. What is the nature of

Now! Now! Comrades. Now!
What is the nature of this life of ours?
Miserable, laborious, short
This life of ours
We are born
We are given just so much food as to keep the breath in our bodies
No one in here knows what is happiness
No one knows happiness or leisure after he is a year old
No life is free
We are born
This life of ours is misery, slavery

II. The Seven Commandments

Whatever goes upon two legs in an enemy
Whatever goes upon four legs or has wings is a friend
No animal shall wear clothes
No animal shall sleep in a bed
No animal shall drink wine
No animal shall kill
All animals are equal

All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others
No animal shall sleep in a bed without a sheet
No animal shall drink wine to excess
No animal shall kill without a cause

A Certain Attention - Amy Eisner (b. 1971)

This is a funeral procession for a bird.
For the way I refused to look
at the way the dead claws curled.

For the blossoms I forgot to name
falling nameless in the woods, filling
all the empty in-betweens of leaves.

For the trespass of the gardener
planting ornamentals in a preserve
and the fairy house I forgot to find,

Trampled under fox-foot, to restore—
the red stones scattered, the fairies
huddled sodden under a wing of lichenized bark.

They call the pinkish rain magnolia.
They call its fragrance spring, and bite
hungrily its pale white edge.

Amy Eisner teaches creative writing and literature at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore.

To Music, To Becalms a Sweet-Sick Youth - Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

Charms, that call down the moon from out her sphere,
On this sick youth work your enchantments here:
Bind up his senses with your numbers so
As to entrance his pain, or cure his woe.
Fall gently, gently, and a while him keep
Lost in the civil wilderness of sleep:
That done, then let him, dispossessed of pain,
Like to a slumb'ring bride, awake again.

Robert Herrick was a 17th century English lyric poet and cleric.

Edward Bagnall
Michael Cheung
Bethan Clark
Peter Clarke
Elizabeth Coupe
Ross Furmedge
Genevieve Hilton
Sam Hilton
Vanissa Law
Sue Morris
Tom Raggett
Julian Reed
Arlene Siagian
Fiona Steffensen
Kevin Tang
Joe Travers
Phil Tudor
Naomi Weir

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