



24 AUG 2024

CHURCH OF STS PETER AND PAUL (SINGAPORE)

SACRED CHORAL STORIES

PRESENTED BY CREÁTUS CHAMBER . SERENTA . SPP CHOIR

FOREWORD

I am delighted to witness and celebrate the **40th Anniversary of the founding of Sancti Petri et Pauli Choir (SPP Choir)**. It is a privilege and a blessing that we can be a part of a choir that has survived 4 decades since its founding. I've learnt much on this journey, having spent 25 years with them. I am grateful for her founder, Mr. Thomas Tan, and the caretakers that have come before us.

It is never easy to persist in a journey of service. While we often hold ideals, the challenges in inter-personal relationships are oft-cited reasons for people ceasing to serve. We often find ourselves contemplating and reflecting in our thoughts: what was said, what was done, what could have been, what is to come. In the post-COVID social media era, the content and experiences we consume are often in the quiet privacy of relentless scrolling through our screens. How has this made us relatable to each other, or has it socially distanced us even further as we become more attached to the comfort of our private perspectives? Humanity is the practice of "being": being there for one another.

The stories from this year's edition of **Sacred Choral Stories** re-tell the struggles of the politically suppressed (the 19th century Armenians & African Americans), as well as those who are besieged in their mental health (Sara Teasdale's poem from The Stillness of Music). While many may dwell in despair, we are reminded by the suffering of Christ himself – who despite his Passion, overcame his ordeal and inspired the birth of Christianity.

It is my hope that the stories from the songs tonight encourage and inspire; comfort and uplift you. What others have overcome before us, may we too find the tenacity to triumph over.

Kenneth Wee

Music Director
Creátus Chamber

2024

PROGRAMME

Soorp Soorp

Gomidas Vartabed

Exultate Deo

Alessandro Scarlatti

The Music of Stillness

Elaine Hagenberg

Healing River

Mark Hayes

Veni Veni Emmanuel

Michael John Trotta

Missa Brevis K220

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

ABOUT US

Creátus Chamber



Creátus Chamber was formed in 2016 primarily to explore and study Sacred Polyphony. As most of its repertoire was used in a liturgical setting, Creátus Chamber aims to share a more spiritual interpretation of the music for various audiences; as well as its history and how it remains to be beautiful and relevant for the modern listener.

The group has been a regular participant at the Voices of Singapore festival and has had collaborations and joint concerts with various singing groups in Singapore: Cappella Martialis, The Crescendos, Vox Camerata as well as around the region with the Byrd Consort (Australia/UK) and Ottophony (Malaysia).

ABOUT US

SANCTI PETRI ET PAULI CHOIR



The Sancti Petri Et Pauli Choir, was formed in 1984 and serves the liturgy for the Saturday 5:30pm Mass at the Church of Sts. Peter & Paul, Singapore. Over the years, this dedicated group of singers, most of whom are amateur musicians with little formal training, has blossomed into a vibrant and harmonious choir. Many members joined with no prior choir experience, yet their passion for music and commitment to the liturgy has enabled them to grow together, forming a close-knit and supportive community.

The choir takes pride in curating choral and chant pieces that enrich the liturgical experience, creating a prayerful atmosphere that resonates with the congregation. Their journey has been marked by numerous milestones, including the privilege of being hosted by the Goodwood Park Hotel for Christmas caroling from 2017 – 2019. The choir also enjoys collaborating with other Catholic Choirs from the South-East Asian region and has had memorable exchanges with the Catholic Choirs of the Cathedral in Kuala Lumpur and the Hanoi Catholic Youth Choir.

The choir continues to be invited for various collaborations and fund-raisers and also participates in outreach with the less fortunate, the sick and elderly as part of their community service projects.

ABOUT US

SERENATA



Serenata —Italian for serenade —carries with it a beautiful tradition of music written and performed in honor of someone special. At Serenata, our mission is to honor our Almighty Father through our music, singing with heartfelt devotion and reverence.

Founded in February 2019, Serenata is one of the many Filipino choirs in Singapore, united by a deep friendship and a shared love of music. The choir members come from a variety of professions, each bringing their unique talents and experiences to their collective mission.

As members of different parishes across Singapore, the choristers are actively involved in a wide range of liturgical services, spiritual gatherings, and church events. Serenata joyfully participates in significant celebrations such as the Simbang Gabi, a cherished Advent tradition where the choir comes together to await the Birth of Jesus Christ with festive and meaningful music. Our regular Tagalog Anticipated Masses, St. Niño (Holy Child) Masses, and various church weddings are just a few examples of how we contribute to the rich tapestry of spiritual life in our community.

Through our music, Serenata seeks to create a profound and uplifting experience for all who listen, celebrating the divine presence and fostering a sense of unity and joy.

SOORP SOORP

GOMIDAS VARTABED

What do Cher, Andre Agassi and Kim Kardashian share in common? An Armenian heritage!

Soorp Soorp by Gomidas Vartabed, who is widely regarded as the father of Armenian music, dates back around 120 years. This hymn is known to us as the Sanctus - an integral part of the Eucharistic Prayer in the Catholic liturgy. It sounds nothing like the Sanctus that is sung in Western Catholic churches these days though. Sounding absolutely ethereal, this Armenian hymn does not follow a strict meter nor rhythms, with a lot of leeway left in the way of the conductor and choir.



Gomidas Vartabed (also known as Komitas Vartabed) was a prominent Armenian musicologist, priest, and composer born on September 1, 1869, in Kütahya, Ottoman Empire (now Turkey). He is celebrated as one of the most important figures in Armenian music history and is often referred to as the father of modern Armenian music.

SOORP SOORP

GOMIDAS VARTABED

Armenian

Soorp Der zo-roo-tyants

Lee yen yer-geenk
yev yer-geer pa-rok ko

Orh-noo-tyoon ee par-
tsoons

Orh-nyalt vor yer-geer

yev ka-lotst es
an-vamp Dyarn

English

Holy Lord of hosts

Heaven and earth are full of
thy glory

Blessing in the highest

Blessed art thou that didst
come

and art to come
in the name of the Lord

EXULTATE DEO

ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI

The text of ***Exultate Deo*** is taken from Psalm 80:2 in the Latin Vulgate Bible. Psalm 80, composed by Asaph—one of the Levites appointed by King David to lead singing in the house of Yahweh—is a psalm of celebration and gratitude. Asaph, who is credited with writing 12 psalms, titled this one "A Song of Deliverance: Remembering God's Faithfulness."

This joyful psalm was likely intended for the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, a festival that commemorates God's redemption of Israel from Egypt and gives thanks for the recent harvest. Psalm 80 emphasizes God's unwavering faithfulness, His desire for the obedience of His people, and the blessings that come from following His commandments.

The first two verses, subtitled "Gathering God's People to Listen and Obey" and a "Trumpet Call to Israel," serve as an invitation to worship and praise God through song.



Alessandro Scarlatti (1660 – 1725) was an Italian Baroque composer who was born in Sicily in 1660. While he spent most of his creative effort composing opera, he made a significant contribution to vocal and choral music composing cantatas, masses, oratorios and motets.

He composed *Exultate Deo*, a 4-part acapella sacred motet, in 1708, during his time in Rome. The piece was first performed in the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore.

EXULTATE DEO

ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI

Latin

Exultate Deo, adjutori
nostro.
Alleluia!

Jubilate Deo Jacob.
Alleluia!

English

Rejoice in God our helper.
Praise the Lord!

Sing aloud to the God of
Jacob.
Praise the Lord!

THE MUSIC OF STILLNESS

ELAINE HAGENBERG

Elaine Hagenberg's *The Music of Stillness*, based on a poem by Sara Teasdale, is a powerful piece that captures the poet's struggle with sadness and her longing for peace. The music begins softly, with all voices singing together to represent the idea of "rest." However, as the voices gradually separate, the difficulty of achieving this peace becomes evident.

Hagenberg skillfully uses the piano to evoke the imagery of stars shining and snowflakes falling, while moments of quietude in the music embody the concept of "stillness." As the piece progresses, the intensity increases, expressing the speaker's determined yet challenging quest to create a peaceful world, even if it feels like an unattainable dream. The music swells to a powerful climax, with high notes and repeated phrases conveying a deep, almost desperate hope for peace.

The composition concludes with a quiet, hummed note, symbolizing a moment of calm and relief. For some, the stars may represent heaven and the peace found in divine stillness, but for all listeners, the piece offers a chance to experience a fleeting yet profound sense of peace.



Elaine Hagenberg is an acclaimed American composer known for her choral music, performed globally at prestigious venues like Carnegie Hall and international festivals. Her compositions are celebrated for their lyrical beauty, emotional depth, and intricate harmonies, often inspired by poetry, scripture, and nature.

THE MUSIC OF STILLNESS

ELAINE HAGENBERG

There will be rest, and sure stars shining
Over roof-tops crowned with snow,
A reign of rest, serene forgetting,
The music of stillness holy and low.

I will make this world of my devising
Out of a dream lonely, a dream in my lonely mind.
I shall find the crystal of peace, – above me
Stars I shall find.

Composer Notes:

The inspiration for "The Music of Stillness" originated from the poem "There Will Be Rest" by Sara Teasdale, where she describes her journey from loneliness to hope through the hushed beauty of evening. One autumn night, when the weather first turned cold, I was enjoying the midwestern countryside and the entire sky was filled with stars. As the cold air hit my lungs, the expanse of the heavens took my breath away, and this is the music I heard. The music of a dream world under the stars where we can leave our troubles and find this momentary "crystal of peace" and rest. A place where beauty and calm exist, and all else fades away.

Reference: <https://www.elainehagenberg.com/ehm/the-music-of-stillness>

HEALING RIVER

MARK HAYES



The 'waters of the river' in the lyrics can be understood in a metaphorical way as God's justice and righteousness (Amos 5.24: 'let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream').

The river can also be understood as the waters of baptism. There are churches in Southern America that sing this song as members renew their baptismal promise. It reminds them that the water of baptism brings healing, freedom, refreshment and new life: 'as the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God' (Psalm 42.1).

Mark Hayes is a renowned American composer, arranger, and conductor, best known for his contributions to choral, orchestral, and sacred music. With a career spanning several decades, Hayes has become a prominent figure in the music world, particularly in the realm of church music.

His works are characterized by their blend of traditional and contemporary styles, often incorporating jazz, gospel, and classical influences. Hayes has published hundreds of choral anthems, vocal solos, and instrumental works, many of which are staples in the repertoire of choirs and musicians worldwide.

HEALING RIVER

MARK HAYES

O healing river, send down your waters,
send down your waters upon this land.

O healing river, send down your waters, and
wash the blood from off the sand.

This land is thirsting, this land is parching.
No seed is growing in the barren ground.
This land is thirsting, this land is parching.
On heal us now, send your waters down.

Let the seed of freedom awake and flourish.
Let the deep roots nourish. Let the tall stalks rise.
Let the seed of freedom awake and flourish proud leaves
uncurling against the skies.

O healing river, send down your waters,
send down your waters upon the land.

O healing river, send down your waters, and
wash the blood from off the sand.

O healing river, O healing river,
come heal our land, come heal our land!

VENI VENI EMMANUEL

MICHAEL JOHN TROTTA



Michael John Trotta is an American composer and conductor known for his distinctive choral compositions, which blend modern and traditional elements. His music, celebrated for its accessibility, lyrical melodies, and rich harmonies, is popular with choirs of all levels and often draws inspiration from poetry and literature.

Veni, Veni Emmanuel is a well-known Advent hymn, also familiar in its English version, O Come, O Come Emmanuel. The hymn's text is based on the "O Antiphons," a series of seven ancient chants sung in the days leading up to Christmas. Each antiphon has a unique meaning, and when their first letters are arranged in reverse order, they form the phrase "Ero Cras," which means "Tomorrow, I will be" or "I will come."

In his arrangement of this piece, composer Michael John Trotta pairs the hymn's text with the phrase "Ero Cras" to express anticipation of something coming. He designed the piece as a dialogue between those-seeking and the creator, blending old and new elements to convey a personal longing for something yet to come, alongside the certainty of something always present but not always visible.

Trotta adds a rhythmic pattern with the words "veni veni" to the familiar melody, creating a fresh and dynamic texture for each verse. The changes in rhythm build anticipation as the piece progresses, making Trotta's modern interpretation of this classic hymn both refreshing and captivating.

VENI VENI EMMANUEL

MICHAEL JOHN TROTTA

Latin

Veni, veni, Emmanuel
Ero cras

Veni, veni Emmanuel
Captivum solve Israel,
Qui gemit in exilio,
Privatus Dei Filio.

Gaude! Gaude! Emmanuel,
Nascetur pro te Israel!

Veni, veni Rex Gentium,
Veni Redemptor omnium,
Ut salvas tuos famulus,
Peccati sibi conscios.

Gaude! Gaude! Emmanuel,
Nascetur pro te Israel!

Quis veniet, Quis veniet?
Ero cras!

Veni, veni O Oriens,
Solare nos adveniens,
Noctis depelle nebulas,
Dirasque mortis tenebras.

Gaude! Gaude! Emmanuel,
Nascetur pro te Israel!

Veni, veni, Emmanuel
Ero cras!

English

O come, O come, Emmanuel
"I will come!"

O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of the nations,
bind in one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid every strife and quarrel cease
And fill the world with heaven's peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Who will come, who will come?
"I will come!"

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadow put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, Emmanuel
"I will come!"

MISSA BREVIS K220

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) was an Austrian composer and a key figure in classical music. A child prodigy, he began composing at five and created over 600 works, including symphonies, operas, and piano concertos. Renowned for his clarity and elegance,

Mozart's masterpieces like *The Magic Flute* and *Don Giovanni* are central to Western classical music. Despite his genius, he faced financial difficulties and died at 35, leaving an enduring legacy.

Mozart composed the *Missa Brevis in C Major (KV 220)*, also known as the "Spatzenmesse" or "Sparrow Mass," around 1775 in Salzburg. The nickname comes from the chirping violin figures in the Hosanna sections, resembling sparrow sounds.

As a "brevis," this mass is concise, with movements for Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei, likely intended for regular liturgical use. Despite its brevity, the mass features bright, joyful melodies and light orchestration, showcasing Mozart's skill in creating expressive sacred music.

The *Missa Brevis in C Major* is popular in choral repertoire, often performed during Easter due to its uplifting character.

MISSA BREVIS K220

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Latin

Kyrie, eleison
Christe, eleison
Kyrie, eleison

Gloria in excelsis Deo
et in terra pax hominibus bonae
voluntatis.
Laudamus te,
benedicimus te,
adoramus te,
glorificamus te,

gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam,

Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili Unigenite, Iesu Christe,
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,

qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere
nobis;
qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe
deprecationem nostram.

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere
nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus
Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus, Iesu Christe,
cum Sancto Spiritu:
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen

English

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,

we give you thanks for your great glory,

Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

you take away the sins of the world, have
mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world, receive
our prayer;

you are seated at the right hand of the
Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone
are the Lord, you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

Latin

Credo in unum Deum,
Patrem omnipotentem, factorem caeli et
terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium.

Et in unum Dominum Iesum Christum,
Filium Dei Unigenitum,
et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.

Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
genitum, non factum, consubstantialem
Patri: per quem omnia facta sunt.

Qui propter nos homines et propter
nostram salutem descendit de caelis.

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est.

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato;
passus et sepultus est,

et resurrexit tertia die, secundum
Scripturas,

et ascendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram
Patris.

Et iterum venturus est cum gloria,
iudicare vivos et mortuos, cuius regni non
erit finis.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum
etvivificantem: qui ex Patre Filioque
procedit. Qui cum Patre et Filio simul
adoratur et conglorificatur: qui locutus est
per prophetas.

Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et
apostolicam Ecclesiam.

Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem
peccatorum. Et exspecto resurrectionem
mortuorum, et vitam venturi saeculi.

Amen.

English

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty, maker of heaven and
earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the
Father; through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down
from heaven,

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate
of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius
Pilate, he suffered death and was buried,

and rose again on the third day in accordance
with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the
right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living
and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of
life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and
glorified, who has spoken through the
prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic
Church.

I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of
sins and I look forward to the resurrection of
the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Latin

Sanctus, Sanctus,
Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini

Hosanna in excelsis!

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
dona nobis pacem.

English

Holy, Holy,
Holy Lord God of hosts.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord

Hosanna in the highest!

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.

OUR CONDUCTOR

KENNETH WEE Dip.LCM (Conducting) has been serving at the Church of Sts. Peter & Paul as a pipe organist since 1999. Serving as Music Director since 2016, the community choir has grown from 12 members to 50 members in just under 2 years. He is also the Music Director of Créatus Chamber (a performing acapella ensemble studying sacred polyphony).

He was previously the Asst. Conductor for VOCE Singapore Men's Choir and has toured with them to various destinations including the Festival Coros de Verão (Portugal). Kenneth is also a member of the Choral Directors' Association Singapore. He has previously studied under Reuben Lai (voice), Dr. Evelyn Lim (Pipe Organ), Dr. Darius Lim (Conducting), and Dr. Aloysius Leong (Conducting).

Kenneth has been building a practice in Financial Services since 2002, accumulating multiple awards while specialising in Corporate Risk. In addition to his responsibilities as a ROVER NSmen, he is an avid fitness enthusiast and is married with 2 children.



THANK YOU

We are deeply grateful for everyone who has supported Créatus Chamber, SPP Choir & Serenata on our journey to bring meaning to sacred music. Every achievement and milestone we've reached is because of your unwavering support. Thank you for being an essential part of our musical family



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