



New Chamber Opera Studio

Lunchtime Recital Series

Programme:

Samuel Barber (1910-1981) – “Mary Hynes” from *Reincarnations*

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) – *Salve Regina*

Adolphus Hailstork (b.1941) – “Crucifixion” from *Five Short Choral Works*

James Macmillan (b.1959) – *...here in hiding...*

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) – *O sacrum convivium!*

The programme today is ordered to provide a gradual buildup of dramatic tension. Starting the programme is Samuel Barber’s *Mary Hynes*, a short piece characterized by jaunty rhythms mixed with smooth undulating melodies that serves perfectly as a beginning number. Francis Poulenc’s *Salve Regina*, while a much slower and serene piece, still manages to contribute to the dramatic buildup with the angular voice-leading and crunchy, sometimes sour harmonies so reminiscent of Poulenc.

Adolphus Hailstork’s *Crucifixion* brings back the rhythmic drive of the first piece but in nowhere near as playful of a manner. It instead echoes a repeated crying out of a crowd as their Lord is crucified before their eyes. The interplay of short, accented phrases seem to resemble multiple voices all in distress, or (more viscerally), the repeated driving of nails into Christ’s body.

This all leads up to the centrepiece of the concert, James Macmillan’s *...here in hiding...*, a 12-minute motet featuring a union of both English and Latin texts, sustained moments of intense dissonance that slowly melt away into consonance, complex interplay of heavily ornamented lines echoing something akin to Byzantine chant, and a poignant ending with a “fade-out” that instructs the singers to continue repeating a phrase quieter and quieter until it vanishes completely (think Holst’s “Neptune” or Whitacre’s “Sleep”). In the silence left behind, out emerges the final piece of our programme, Olivier Messiaen’s intimate setting of *O sacrum convivium!*. Characterized by a particularly low tessitura across all four parts, long static phrases and gorgeous harmonies, it serves to wind down the programme after such an intense build up.