

**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

**Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750)

Psalm 117, *Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden*

**Mohammed Fairouz** (b. 1985)

Psalm 14, *Diversions* (Australian premiere)

**Hans Leo Hassler** (1564-1612)

Psalm 1, *Beatus vir qui non abiit*

**Helen Bowater** (b. 1952)

Psalm 15, *Adonai mi yagur be'aholecha*  
(World premiere)

**Heinrich Schütz** (1585-1672)

Psalm 119,  
*Wohl denen, die ohne Wandel leben*

**Lodovico da Viadana** (1564-1627)

Psalm 33, *Exsultate iusti*

**Giammateo Asola** (1532-1609)

Psalm 148, *Laudate Dominum de caelis*

**Samuel Wesley** (1766-1837)

Psalm 114, *In exitu Israel*

**Michel van der Aa** (b. 1970)

Psalm 5, *Shelter* (Australian premiere)

**Bo Hansson** (b. 1950)

Psalm 90

**Claudio Monteverdi** (1567-1643)

Psalm 147, *Lauda Jerusalem Dominum*

---

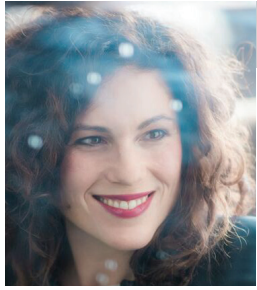
Presenting Partner

**THE AUSTRALIAN** ♠

Netherlands Chamber Choir is supported by the Performing Arts Fund NL

Supported by Amnesty International

Commissioned works supported by the Commissioning Circle



**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.

Thanks to the Adelaide Festival for inviting me here to this extraordinary place of worship to provide an introduction and personal reflection on the theme of today's music. To quote from the Festival's correspondence with me, I must provide "meticulously formulated thought" on this theme and link it to the great works of Bach and Monteverdi.

No pressure there!

And as you know, the theme of today is 'a mirror for today's society'.

As anyone who has ever stood in front of a three-way changing room mirror in David Jones and copped an eyeful of their back view in a new dress, mirrors can be cruel things.

They can shock and surprise us, drive us towards denial and depression.

They can also ground us in the familiar, provide us with much needed feelings of confidence, vim and vigour before we face the world. We look to them for personal affirmation and some sense of how others see us.

As a social researcher, I have spent years being invited to hold up a mirror on society for our leaders. Politicians, pundits and corporate executives often look to people like me - researchers, pollsters and experts

in big data - to tell them what's happening 'out there'.

But they often don't really want a mirror. They want a crystal ball. As we saw in last year's election, that doesn't always turn out so well. People are predictably unpredictable, thinking with the gabble of reason and emotion, with the fast and slow brain. At least that's what makes my job interesting.

And speaking further of mirrors, we have more than our fair share of leaders incapable of doing anything else but staring intently in a rear-view mirror while driving Mad Max-style towards an increasingly insecure and uncertain future. There is not just one mirror. There are, in fact, many. In today's world we have a side-show hall of mirrors, many of them distorting, making us feel bigger and smaller than we are.

The cliché is to say our media, specifically social media, is a big part of this sideshow - a cliché but it is true. As we project our best selves through these digital channels, the gap between how we appear and how we actually feel can become oppressive, even unbearable.

But it's not all bad. These social media worlds allow us to share our experiences with others, make productive and unproductive connections, hashtag our

way into fights with strangers but also exciting and transformative interactions with people and information once upon a time beyond our reach.

The task now is to ensure the handful of powerful interests that control these media worlds are accountable to national governments, that any possible (or further) manipulation of our democratic processes are not allowed to continue.

I've spent over 15 years listening to Australians talk about what they see in the mirror - how they see themselves and the world in the background. But increasingly I feel we need fewer mirrors and more binoculars, ways to bring the middle and far horizon closer to us.

In preparation for this short talk, I went to read the Psalms that the music compositions we will hear today are inspired by. Such background research was necessary. They were mostly unfamiliar to me. Yes it's been a long time between sips of the sacramental wine for this lapsed Catholic girl.

Of course you can read the Psalms as someone whose faith is alive and strong. Or you can read them for evidence of enduring human truths and identify in them the full spectrum of our emotional response to life on earth - love, fear, anger, hatred, envy, sadness, compassion, joy and pride. In this way the Psalms are not unlike the transcripts of the focus group discussions I produce as part of my research work. While I can't imagine putting those transcripts to music, I can attempt here a Psalmification (if you will) of a recent focus group discussion I conducted on attitudes to Australian politics. I must admit up front that it was a group particularly concerned about climate change, so know that that perspective is in there.

*Blessed is the crossbencher that walketh not in the counsel of the*

*fossil fuel company,*

*Nor standeth in the way of renewable energy investment,*

*Nor sitteth at the table of an expensive Canberra restaurant:*

*But his delight is in the proposed law of Zali Steggall;*

*And on this bill doth he meditate day and night.*

*And he shall be like a solar panel installed near a desalination plant in Port Augusta,*

*That bringeth forth tomatoes for Coles supermarkets through every season,*

*Whose vine also doth not wither;*

*And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

Let me try to be serious for a moment.

At the heart of the Psalms as a full body of work are the test and trials of the righteous as they seek to resist and repel evil and wickedness. The rewards for steadfastness, for keeping the faith, are often to be experienced after death. But there is also a priceless inheritance to be gained, a legacy to future generations. The Psalms point to the importance of permanence, of truth and faith stretching into deep history and into the far-flung future.

Of the many things religious thought has to offer our secular leaders of today is the notion that we have a higher responsibility to the world we were born into and will leave behind. In a world where the thinking of our most powerful leaders is often dominated by the 24 hour news cycle or quarterly

profit and loss statements, this long term, intergenerational view is more than important.

It's essential.

Of all the psalms I reviewed in my pre-reading for today the one that struck me as most profound, the most relevant and most worth reiterating in the light of the challenges that face us as a democracy and a society is Psalm 15. Let me be very modern and quote it in the new international version. Those who are admitted to the sacred tent, who can live on the holy mountain are those "whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart; whose tongue utters no slander, who does no wrong to a neighbor, and casts no slur on others; who keeps an oath even when it hurts, and does not change their mind; who lends money to the poor without interest; who does not accept a bribe against the innocent."

Amen and enjoy the music.

### 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 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 hieltel!
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 psalter 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 cælorum, et aquæ omnes quem super cælos 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 Judæa 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.