

Agape

Music Collective

It is Well with my Soul

3:00pm, Sunday 12 May 2024

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 170 Flinders St, Adelaide

All proceeds to  SU Australia

PROGRAM:

St Paul's Suite, Movements 1, 3 & 4,
Gustav Holst

Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle
Daniel Burton

Toccata and Fugue in D minor
Johann Sebastian Bach

O Theotokos Ever-Vigilant in Prayer
Sergei Rachmaninov

The Prayer
Hyejin Jun

Evening Prayer from Hänsel and Gretel
Engelbert Humperdinck

Presentation (Scripture Union) - Chris Battistuzzi

It is Well with my Soul
Philip Bliss arr Joel Raney (words Horatio Spafford)

Lullaby
Johannes Brahms

Songs my Mother Taught Me
Antonín Dvořák

Hymn of Heaven
Phil Wickham, Chris Davenport et al

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Please join us in the hall at the conclusion for tea and coffee.

Program Notes

Today's concert is a cornucopia of hymns, prayers, lullabies and songs that glorify our Heavenly Father while also honouring our mothers on this special day of the year. From the outset, Gustav Holst's **St Paul's Suite** will stir you into a spirit of joy. This piece was written for the composer's students at the St. Paul's School for Girls in Hammersmith, London, and is bursting with evocative and often jaunty tunes. The first movement *Jig* fulfils all that it promises with a toe-tapping tune that becomes breathless as it springs between the sections and whirls towards the climax. The strings lay out a bed of *pizzicato* in the *Intermezzo*, over which the solo violin has licence to flaunt its silken riches – this reverie is repeatedly juxtaposed with vivacious interruptions from the unruly strings. The movement ends with a quartet sighing through a cadential *Adagio*. The *Finale's Dargason* is a sixteenth-century folk tune that cycles through the sections of the ensemble almost in the style of a round, before being layered against the tune of Greensleeves.

Next, floating down from the heavenly realm of the organ loft, will come the strains of **Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle**, a sixth century hymn that proclaims Jesus' humble death bringing redemption to the world.

“Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle;
sing the ending of the fray.
Now above the cross, the trophy,
sound the loud triumphant lay:
tell how Christ, the world's Redeemer,
as a victim won the day.”

Johann Sebastian Bach's **Tocatta and Fugue** brings heaven to earth in a most compelling and visceral way. The organ thunders through the virtuosic *Tocatta*, which is a form of keyboard composition meant to highlight the performer's 'touch'. This is set alongside the complex counterpoint of the *Fugue*, which layers many voices against each other in a form distinctive of the Baroque period.

In Sergei Rachmaninov's **O Theotokos Ever-Vigilant in Prayer**, the string orchestra becomes a choir and Bethlehem Church becomes its soundbox – close your eyes and you can almost imagine the church as a living instrument. This piece is a setting of a Russian Orthodox Liturgy that praises the prayerful posture of the Virgin Mary, and in this arrangement, the strings are called upon to emulate the meditative, ancient chant of church choristers.

The scene now set, we are invited to continue dwelling in prayer as siblings Lara and Samvel Berberyan join Stephen van der Hoek for Hyejin Jun's luscious **Piano Trio**. Engelbert Humperdinck's **Evening Prayer** is drawn from Act 2 of his 1893 opera *Hänsel and Gretel*, based on the Grimm brothers' fairy tale. We join the story when the two children have just encountered the Sandman in the forest, who lulls them into a sublime sleep. Before they nod-off, Hänsel prays this evening

benediction, heralding an angelic moment in the midst of their otherwise troubling adventures. The scene segues into a dream pantomime where fourteen angels come to guard the children as they rest on the forest floor.

“When at night I go to sleep,
Fourteen angels watch do keep,
Two my head are guarding,
Two my feet are guiding;
Two upon my right hand,
Two upon my left hand.
Two who warmly cover
Two who o’er me hover,
Two to whom ’tis given
To guide my steps to heaven.”

The hymn **It is Well with my Soul** was written by Horatio Spafford following a traumatic period of his life, in which he lost his four daughters to a shipwreck and suffered through the Great Chicago Fire. The lyrics are a faithful reminder that Jesus has regarded our helplessness, and in His compassion has substituted our sorrow with peace and certainty.

“When peace like a river attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll;
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
“It is well, it is well with my soul.”

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
let this blest assurance control:
that Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
and has shed his own blood for my soul.”

Brahms’ **Lullaby** and Dvořák’s **Songs my Mother Taught Me** are programmed in tribute to all our Mums – the ones in the room and the ones in our hearts – who have soothed us as children and as adults; who have rocked our cradles and our children’s cradles; who have sung us to sleep and taught us to see paradise in our dreams.

“Good evening, good night,
With roses covered,
With cloves adorned,
Slip under the covers.
Tomorrow morning, if God wills,
you will wake once again.

Good evening, good night.
By angels watched,
Who show you in your dream
the Christ-child’s tree.
Sleep now blissfully and sweetly,
See paradise in your dreams.”

Today's performance ends with Phil Wickham's **Hymn of Heaven** in a rousing arrangement for orchestra and choir that encourages us to keep singing the songs of faith, for the Lamb is indeed worthy.

"Every prayer we prayed in desperation,
The songs of faith
We sang through doubt and fear,
In the end we'll see that it was worth it,
When He returns to wipe away our tears.

There will be a day
When all will bow before Him.
There will be a day
When death will be no more.
Standing face to face
With He who died and rose again,
Holy, holy is the Lord!"

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Agape Music Collective musicians today are:

Erna Berberyan	Lois Fong	Neal Perkins
Lara Berberyan	Will Grosser	Sophie Szabo
Minas Berberyan	Heystek Jordaan	Stephen van der Hoek
Samvel Berberyan	Bethany Nottage	Tahlia Williams
Jennifer Brohier	Greg Perkins	Lester Wong

Agape Voices today are:

Erna Berberyan	Frikkie Jacobs	Kylie Serfontein
Caleb Buhren	Erika Jordaan	Alexander Siow
Stuart Carter	Jordan Newsham	Pippa Stolarski
Andrew Day	Bethany Peters	Jesse Trumble
Heather Day	Amy Proctor	Maggie Trumble
Talitha Drummond	Ashlee Ramirez	Mary-Ann van der Hoek
Bethany Eloise	Joel Ramirez	Josiah Williams
Caroline Jacobs	Melanie Sandford-Morgan	

***Thank you for your attendance today.
Please join us at the conclusion in the hall across the side street for tea,
coffee and an opportunity to find out more about Scripture Union.***

Agape Music Collective Mission Statement:

Agape Music Collective is a group of professional and semi-professional Christian musicians based in Adelaide, whose mission is to freely use their professional gifts and talents to bring praise and glory to Jesus Christ while supporting the spread of the Gospel. It does this by performing mostly Christian music from across the ages, mentoring and developing up-and-coming Christian musicians, supporting Gospel partners in Australia and overseas, and providing a forum for all people to hear how the Good News changes people's lives.

Agape Music Collective and Agape Voices gratefully acknowledge and sincerely thank Bethlehem Lutheran Church and Unley Park Baptist Church for their generous support and assistance in making this concert possible.

Finally, a big thank you to the many Agape supporters and volunteers, without whose prayer and practical help these concerts wouldn't be possible. Particular thanks today to Lisa, Alison, Anthony, Liv and Mary – you've all been awesome!

