



Kim André
ARNESEN

Infinity: Choral Works

Even When He Is Silent • Flight Song
Making or Breaking • Cradle Hymn

Kantorei
Joel Rinsema

Kim André Arnesen (b. 1980)

Choral Works

One of Norway's most frequently performed contemporary composers, Kim André Arnesen was born in 1980 and grew up in Trondheim. He began playing the piano when he was six and joined the Nidaros Cathedral Boys' Choir at the age of ten. He was later educated at the Music Conservatory in Trondheim.

His interest in music is diverse and embraces the genres of Baroque, contemporary classical and popular – but it is choral music that has always been his greatest passion. At the age of 18 he had his first performance in 1999 with the Nidaros Cathedral Boys' Choir. Since then he has written music that has been performed by choirs internationally. In 2010 his first large-scale work, *Magnificat*, was commissioned and premiered by the Nidaros Cathedral Girls' Choir. This first performance received a favourable critical and public response and resulted in several new commissions. In April 2014 Arnesen's *Requiem* was premiered by the Nidaros Cathedral Boys' Choir and the work had its US premiere in April 2015 in West Virginia. The Denver-based choral ensemble Kantorei and their artistic director Joel Rinsema invited Arnesen to be composer-in-residence for their 2015–16 season.

On 28 July 2016 Arnesen's large-scale work *The Wound in the Water* made its debut during the St Olaf Festival in Trondheim, with soprano Elin Manahan Thomas, Trondheim Solistene, Conspirare and conductor Craig Hella Johnson. The National Lutheran Choir commissioned a new major composition for 2017 – entitled the *Holy Spirit Mass*, this substantial 50-minute setting for chorus, piano and strings was written in commemoration of 500 years since the Reformation. Several new anthem-length pieces are being performed in 2017, including a commissioned work for the Texas Choral Directors Association and Oregon Bach Festival. Arnesen is an elected member of the Norwegian Society of Composers.

Even When He Is Silent (2011) was written for the St Olaf Festival in Trondheim. Found after the Second World

War, the text was written by a prisoner on a concentration camp wall. Imagining what that person endured gave the words great resonance for the composer. As he puts it, 'This is about keeping faith in God, love and hope ... Even if people take away your freedom, your friends, the people you love – they cannot take God away from you'. Arnesen's setting begins quietly, rises to a climax at the words 'I believe in love' and ends in hushed contemplation. The character of the piece is summed up by the marking 'With hope' at the head of the score.

The SATB version of *Even When He Is Silent* presented here was first performed on 26 November 2011 by the Nidaros Cathedral Boys' Choir and conductor Bjørn Moe in Nidaros Cathedral. Since then the piece has been heard on numerous occasions around the world and featured on several CDs.

Flight Song (2014) was a gift to Anton Armstrong on the occasion of his 25th year as conductor of the St Olaf Choir written in gratitude for their performances of Arnesen's music on tours in the US and Norway. The text, by Welsh poet Euan Tait tells of each singer's hidden song and the conductor drawing that song from the singers. In Arnesen's words, 'music making is the song of new life, fragile as the fall of a feather'. Flowing and relaxed, *Flight Song* was premiered by the dedicatees on 2 November 2014 at the Skoglund Center Auditorium at St Olaf College, Minnesota.

O Sacrum Convivium (2014) was commissioned by the Mogens Dahl Chamber Choir of Copenhagen, Denmark, and premiered in the Church of Holmen, Copenhagen on 23 November 2014. The text of the great medieval Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas praises the institution of the supper sacrament as a sacred dinner banquet that 'fills the mind with grace' and gives a foretaste of eternal delights. The setting is marked 'With wonderment' and this calmly awestruck quality is maintained throughout.

Child of Song (2014) is dedicated to the memory of Stephen Paulus and was premiered by the VocalEssence

Ensemble Singers and conductor Philip Brunelle on 14 May 2015 at the 40th anniversary celebration of the American Composers Forum, which was co-founded by Stephen Paulus. The text sings of music as the essence of a person's being, how whatever we sing becomes a permanent, living part of the vivid creation around us. Arnesen's treatment of the text, by Euan Tait, is measured and poised. The final solo phrase is sung by a soprano thereby increasing the drama of the ending.

The gift I'll leave you (2015) was commissioned by Kantorei and artistic director Joel Rinsema. The poet, Euan Tait, has this to say about this warmly expressive piece: 'One of the unforgettable gifts our fellow students leave us is the lasting effect of their friendship on us – their loyalty, their willingness to stay with us as we struggle, the amazing way we discover how deeply we are loved and accepted'.

Dormi, Jesu (2012) was commissioned by A Cappellissimo and conductor Grete Daling of Trondheim, Norway, and was premiered by these musicians in Our Lady's Church, Trondheim on 16 December 2012. Also called the 'Virgin Cradle Hymn', *Dormi, Jesu* is a gentle and tender lullaby inspired by choral music from Eastern Europe and the composer's visit there.

Making or Breaking (2015), for soprano, saxophone and chorus was commissioned by Kantorei and artistic director Joel Rinsema. The poem by David Roberts was in part inspired by the first pictures of Earth taken from space and the music was inspired by pictures of the refugee crisis. In the simplest possible terms, this eloquent work sets out the choices before each of us: what we should do with our lives, and our planet which we inhabit for just a small part of time.

Cradle Hymn (2010) was written for the Nidaros Cathedral Girls' Choir and conductor Anita Brevik and premiered in Nidaros Cathedral in 2010. It was arranged for mixed choir in 2014. The carol sings of Mary and her infant and is a silent praise of his birth. Arnesen's beautifully evocative piece sets a poem by the famous hymn writer

Isaac Watts. In 2016, *Cradle Hymn* was performed at the White House for President Barack Obama.

The Lamb (2015) was commissioned by Chorus with conductor Randi F. Lundemo, who premiered the piece in Our Lady's Church, Trondheim in December 2015. In this eloquent musical setting of William Blake's beloved poem, the piece gradually builds to a dramatic climax in the penultimate phrase, and then concludes with a tender ending, 'God bless thee'.

Pie Jesu (2013) is one of the movements of Arnesen's *Requiem* which was commissioned by the Nidaros Cathedral Boys' Choir and conductor Bjørn Moe. To make the movement work as a standalone piece, adjustments were made to the choral parts so they differ slightly from the movement in the *Requiem* and only one soloist is required in the version featured on this recording. Originally, when choosing texts for his *Requiem*, the composer decided not to write a *Pie Jesu* but one day a melody came to him, unbidden, and he could hear and sing the whole piece.

This programme concludes with two further works commissioned by Kantorei and artistic director Joel Rinsema, and written during the composer's position as composer-in-residence in 2015–16. *Infinity* (2016) is a substantial, wide-ranging and intensely communicative setting of a text by David Roberts. The score is marked 'Mysteriously, with stillness and energy'. Arnesen has summed up the message of this piece: 'The human situation is awe-inspiring and challenging. What should we do with our lives?'.

The text of *There We Shall Rest* (2015) is taken from *The City of God* by St Augustine of Hippo and dates from the early 5th century. St Augustine writes about heaven through metaphor and about the gift of peace. Arnesen's fluent setting is intensely devotional in character.

Paul Conway

1 Even When He Is Silent

Text: Anonymous 20th century

I believe in the sun even when it's not shining.
I believe in love even when I feel it not.
I believe in God even when He is silent.

2 Flight Song

Text: Euan Tait (b. 1968)

All we are, we have found in song:
you have drawn this song from us.
Songs of lives unfolding
fly overhead, cry overhead:
longing, rising from the song within.

Moving like the rise and fall of wings,
hands that shape our calling voice
on the edge of answers
you've heard our cry, you've known our cry:
music's fierce compassion flows from you.

The night is restless with the sounds we hear,
is broken, shaken by the cries of pain:
for this is music's inner voice,
saying, yes, we hear you,
all you who cry aloud,
and we will fly, answering you:
so our lives sing, sing,
wild we will fly,
wild in spirit we will fly.

Like a feather falling from the wing,
fragile as a human voice,
afraid, uncertain,
alive to love, we sing as love,
afraid, uncertain,
yet our flight begins as song.

3 O Sacrum Convivium

Text: Traditional

O sacrum convivium!
in quo Christus sumitur:
recolitur memoria passionis eius:
mens impletur gratia:
et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur.
Alleluia.

[*O sacred banquet
in which Christ is received
the memory of his Passion is recalled,
our souls are filled with grace,
and a pledge of future glory is given to us.
Alleluia.*]

4 Child of Song

Text: Euan Tait

Child of song, your music
sang from the bone,
the music of a visceral dancer.

The feral tree in full pearl green new leaf,
the squalling water alive around the swimmer,
is touched by your music, will always carry it.

No child of song falls into silence
but into love's rest
seeded with re-awakening.

Your music, child of song.

5 The gift I'll leave you

Text: Euan Tait

*Commissioned by Keith and Sue Ferguson
for Kantorei, Denver and artistic director, Joel Rinsema*

When you walked in, my friends
did you wonder what love is?
Did you say in your heart
I do not know, I do not know?
Did you call out to love,
not knowing his name,
not knowing her name, cry:
Who are you, who are you?

Let me tell you, friend
what you did not know:
love's a slow discovery,
and we are here, we are here.

Our friendship will tell you
what love is, what love could be.
I did not know too, my friend,
but here I am, here I am.
Remember this gift
when you enter our broken world,
for you are love or injustice:
remember this gift, remember.

6 Dormi, Jesu

Text: Traditional

Dormi, Jesu! Mater ridet
Quae tam dulcem somnum videt,
Dormi, Jesu! Blandule!
Si non-dormis, Mater plorat,
Inter filiat cantans orat,
Blande, veni, somnule.

[*Sleep, sweet babe! My care beguiling:
Mother sits beside thee smiling;
Sleep, my darling, tenderly!
If thou sleep not, mother mourneth,
Singing as her wheel she turneth:
Come, soft slumber, balmily!*]

Translation: Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834)

7 Making or Breaking

Text: David Roberts (b. 1942)

*Commissioned by Judith Kay Fredericksen
in memory of Jack Fredericksen for Kantorei, Denver
and artistic director, Joel Rinsema*

We inherit the world,
the whole of history,
our place on earth,
our place in time,
our fortune, good or bad,
pure chance.

Now,
in one picture,
we see our entire planet:
one world,
one race,
one future,
bound together
for the first time.

Ours
for the breaking
or making.

8 Cradle Hymn

Text: Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

Hush my dear, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed!
Heavenly blessings without number
Gently falling on thy head.
See the kindly shepherds round Him,
Telling wonders from the sky!
When they sought Him, there they found Him,
With His Virgin mother by.
See the lovely babe a-dressing;
Lovely infant, how He smiled!
When He wept, the mother's blessing
Soothed and hush'd the holy child.
May'st thou live to know and fear Him,
Trust and love Him all thy days;
Then go dwell forever near Him,
See His face, and sing His praise!

9 The Lamb

Text: William Blake (1757–1827)

Little Lamb who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life and bid thee feed,
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, wooly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Little Lamb I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb.
He is meek and he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child and thou a lamb,
we are called by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee.
Little Lamb God bless thee.

10 Pie Jesu

Text: Traditional

Pie Jesu Domine,
Dona eis requiem sempiternam.

[Merciful Lord Jesus,
grant them rest everlasting.]

11 Infinity

Text: David Roberts

Commissioned by Keith and Sue Ferguson
for Kantorei, Denver and artistic director, Joel Rinsema

How far, how far
is the furthest star
we can see?
A distance
that's measured
in time.

What there may be
beyond what we see
no one knows,
a vastness
that time
cannot tell.

In all this space
is just a trace
of human race,
whose fortunes
are measured
in dust.

In oceans of time
the story of life
is cast about
in chaos
seeming futile
and blind.

Our moment in time
one human race.
Choose the dark all the light
to rise or to fall,
one chance
for us all.

12 There We Shall Rest

Text: St Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–AD 430)

Commissioned by Michael Bizzaro in loving memory of
Ruby Bizzaro for Kantorei, Denver and artistic director,
Joel Rinsema

There we shall rest and see,
we shall see and love and praise.
Behold what will be at the end without end.
For what other
end do we have, if not to reach the kingdom
which has no end?

Alicia Rigsby



Photo: Scott Dressel-Martin

Pianist Alicia Rigsby is one of the original members of Kantorei, both as a soprano and accompanist. She works as a pianist, singer and teacher in the Denver area, and holds a Master of Music degree in piano performance and music theory from Indiana University, Bloomington. She has performed with the Estes Trio, the Boulder Chamber Orchestra, and has attended and performed at the Aspen Music Festival.

John Gunther



Photo: Marc D'Allo

John Gunther is a composer and multi-instrumentalist playing saxophones, clarinet, and flute. He enjoys exploring all forms of jazz from traditional to avant garde, as well as classical music, world music and experimental electronic music. He has performed or recorded with many notable jazz artists including Dave Douglas, Ron Miles, Christian McBride, Bobby Watson, Wallace Roney, Larry Goldings, Tom Harrel, Dewey Redman, Joe Williams, the Woody Herman Orchestra, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, and the Maria Schneider Orchestra. He received a PhD from New York University. In 2007 he founded the Boulder Laptop Orchestra (BLORk) to explore the intersection of music, performance, art, and technology. www.johngunthermusic.com

Kantorei



Photo: Scott Dressel-Martin

Kantorei, based in Denver, Colorado, is a premier choral ensemble comprised of volunteer singers under the direction of artistic director Joel M. Rinsema. Kantorei's choral artists have studied at schools with strong music programmes from across the United States, such as Augustana, Brigham Young, Concordia, Luther, Oberlin, St Olaf, and Wartburg, and many serve as choral music educators, conductors and teachers. Kantorei frequently performs at major choral conventions across the US, has toured around the world, and works with composers and conductors of international renown. Kantorei has recently sung under the batons of René Clausen, Simon Carrington, Eric Whitacre, Karen Kennedy, and Anton Armstrong. Kantorei has also commissioned and premiered new choral works from renowned composers including Kim André Arnesen, Eric William Barnum, Abbie Betinis, René Clausen, Ola Gjello, Joshua Shank, and Eric Whitacre. Kantorei performs a broad range of a cappella choral music and has as its mission 'to elevate the human experience through choral excellence'. www.kantorei.org

Kantorei

Joel M. Rinsema, Artistic Director and Conductor
Sarah Harrison, Assistant Conductor • Alicia Rigsby, Accompanist
Sara Michael, Librarian and Administrative Assistant
Kevin Gunnerson, Board President

Soprano

Mary Christ
Theresa Derr
Juliane Dowell
Kimberly Dunninger
Beryl Fanslow
Wendi Sue Grover
Heather Gunnerson
Stacie Hanson
Jade Howard
Sara Michael*
Alicia Rigsby
Pearl Rutherford
Christianna Sullins

Alto

Emily Alexander
Jan Ankele
Lindsey Aquilina
Lyn Berry-Helminger
Christina Bishop
Sarah Harrison*
Shannon Lemmon-Elrod
Melissa Menter
Erin Meyerhoff
Jennifer Moore
Tegan Palmer
Andrea Ware

Tenor

Kai Berry-Helminger*
Landon Covington
Keith Ferguson
Mason France
Matthew Gierke
Kevin Gunnerson
Keith Harrison
Jason Hindman
Steve Howie
Brad Larson
Alex Menter
Jonathan Von Stroh
Ryan Wright

Bass

Michael Bizzaro
Michael Boender
Garth Criswell
Jonathan Gentry
Stephen Hooper
Brad Jackson
Karl Johnson
John Ludwig
Larry Meerdink*
Marc Petersen
John Schaak
Matthew Weissenbuehler
Nathan Wubbena

*Section Leaders

Joel Rinsema



Photo: Scott Dressel-Martin

Artistic director Joel M. Rinsema joined Kantorei in 2014 from the Phoenix Chorale. Throughout his 23-year tenure with the Phoenix Chorale, he served in nearly every capacity with the organization. As assistant conductor, Rinsema contributed to all aspects of artistic planning and leadership. Phoenix Chorale recordings have earned a total of eight GRAMMY® nominations and two awards. Rinsema appears on all of the Phoenix Chorale recordings and was a soloist on the GRAMMY® Award-winning *Spotless Rose: Hymn to the Virgin Mary*. He is a passionate advocate for the professional choral art form, and he frequently consults with other choral arts organisations locally and around the US. For his leadership in his field, he received the Louis Botto Award for 'Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal' from Chorus America, the industry's advocacy, research, and leadership development organisation for choruses, choral leaders, and singers. He also serves as the North American choral promotion manager for Oxford University Press.

Kim André Arnesen is one of Norway's most frequently performed contemporary composers. International recognition of his music includes a performance of the beautifully evocative *Cradle Hymn* at the White House for Barack Obama in 2016. Arnesen's association with Denver's Kantorei resulted in their commissioning the warmly expressive *The gift I'll leave you* and the eloquent *Making or Breaking*. *Even When He Is Silent* sets a text written by a prisoner on a concentration camp wall, and Arnesen's own summing-up of *Flight Song* is that 'music making is the song of new life, fragile as the fall of a feather'.

Kim André **ARNESEN**

(b. 1980)



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*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

Beryl Fanslow **4**, **Sara Michael** **5** **6**, **Juliane Dowell** **6**,

Wendi Sue Grover **7**, **Christianna Sullins** **10**, **Sopranos**

John Gunther, Soprano saxophone **7**

Alicia Rigby, Piano **2** **5** **8** **10**, **Soprano** **11**

Kantorei • Joel Rinsema

The sung texts and translations can be found inside the booklet, and may also be accessed at
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