

VOX PIX

Voices and images together

**Performances 15 and 16 October
Exhibition 4 – 16 October
2011**

**Wyselaskie Auditorium
Centre for Theology and Ministry
Melbourne**

THE VOX PIX TEAM:

Paintings
Animations
Icon Trio
Early Voices

James Yuncken
Gregory Alex-Vasey
Justine Anderson, Vivien Hamilton, Jeannie Marsh
choir from Melbourne Conservatorium, University
of Melbourne, directed by Vivien Hamilton
Irine Vela
Peter Neville
Jeannie Marsh and James Yuncken

Cretan Lute
Percussion
Event Producers

Please take the opportunity tonight to view 22 of the Vox Pix paintings on display in the foyer outside the auditorium. All paintings are for sale. Price list is available.

Please join us for refreshments in the foyer after the show

MANY THANKS TO:

Angelo Delsante and Sophia Panagiotidis for their work and support way above and beyond, **The Opus 50 Charitable Trust** for their generous financial support of this project, Janis Mikelsons for special insights into the Latvian texts, Wilmars Mikelsons, Lena Torikov, Mark McSherry, Peter Neville, Irine Vela, Bruno Anetta, Carmel and David Taig, Judy Pile, Simon Loveless, Faye Dumont, front of house teams, the staff at: Centre for Theology and Ministry; Melbourne Conservatorium University of Melbourne; Australian National Academy of Music; Print Music Works

This musical event is supported by

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THE PROGRAM

	Paintings by James Yuncken; animated by Gregory Alex-Vasey	Music	Composer
1	Earth	<i>Trisagion 1</i> from <i>Ikon of Light</i>	John Tavener 1983
2	Air	<i>O Virgo Splendens</i>	Anon 14 th Century
3	Matrix	<i>Alle Psallite</i>	Anon 13 th Century
4	Ferment	<i>Christo é nato et humanato</i> from <i>Laude Cortonese</i>	Gavin Bryars 2004
5	Final Analysis	<i>Exaud</i> * from music-drama <i>1975</i>	Irine Vela 2003, arranged for trio 2011
6	Icon Paintings 1, 2, and 3	(silence)	
7	Paradeisos	<i>Adoramus Te</i>	Giovanni Palestrina (1525 – 1594)
8	All Sorts of Weather	<i>Vessels</i> (extract) from music for film <i>Koyaanisqatsi</i>	Philip Glass 1982
9	From Icon by Andre Rublev: Holy Trinity	Improvisation	Peter Neville
10	Greek Icons 1 and 2	<i>Mist:Waves</i> *	Mark McSherry 2011
11	Swirl	<i>Dies Irae</i> (extract)	Anon 13 th Century
12	Cherry Chinese Screen	<i>Sing Joyfully</i>	William Byrd (1543 – 1623)
13	Silver Lining	<i>Salmo 150</i>	Ernani Aguiar 1993
14	Centrefold for Scientific American	<i>Meteor 1</i> *	Peter Neville 2011
15	Centrefold (continued)	<i>Meteor 2</i> *	Peter Neville 2011
16	Centrefold (continued)	<i>Meteor 3</i> *	Peter Neville 2011
17	Two Views of a Hypothetical Landscape	<i>Kratiza Ti Zoi Mu</i> from <i>Epiphania</i>	Mikis Theodorakis 1962
18	Lush Green Earth	<i>Nai Sto Schima t'ouranou</i> from <i>Axion Esti</i>	Mikis Theodorakis 1960
19	Red Earth	<i>Dami conforto, Dio</i> from <i>Laude Cortonese</i>	Gavin Bryars 2004
20	Evolution: Asian Influence	<i>Hvalitsie Ghospoda s nebes</i> from <i>Liturgy of St John Chrystostum Op. 42</i>	Pavel Chesnokov c.1912
21	From the Dark Night	<i>Ave Maria</i>	Jacob Arcadelt (1514 – 1575)
22	From Icon in St Catherine in Sinai: Christ Pantocrator	Improvisation	Irine Vela
23	In Excelsis Davies (Paul)	<i>Gloria</i> (extract) from <i>Mass: Puer Natus est Nobis</i>	Thomas Tallis (c. 1505 – 1585)
24	Floral Pattern	<i>Balts sniedzīņš snieg uz skujiņām</i> from <i>2 Latvian Carols</i>	Andrejs Jansons 1991
25	Roots and Shoots	<i>Ziemas svetki sabraukuši</i> from <i>2 Latvian Carols</i>	Andrejs Jansons 1991
26	Stained Glass Pattern	<i>Ave, Regina Gloriosa</i> from <i>Laude Cortonese</i>	Gavin Bryars 2004
27	Earth	<i>Trisagion 2</i> from <i>Ikon of Light</i>	John Tavener 1983

* denotes premiere performance

WELCOME TO VOX PIX

The idea for this project began over a coffee (as so many projects do) three years ago, and has led us down fascinating creative paths as we explored ways to bring the idea to fruition. I had recently seen James' series of paintings inspired by Greek Orthodox icons, and I found their vibrant colours and richness of texture exhilarating. As James and I discussed these works, I thought of a number of his other paintings (from exhibitions in 2005 and 2008) with similar qualities. To me, as a singer, these paintings evoked the passionate, warm world of singing. We started building a glorious fantasy, in which his paintings were combined with live choral music and vocal chamber music, immersing the audience in music and images. Well, sometimes fantasies can become reality...

By early 2011 other musicians and artists had joined the team, bringing their wide experience and sense of adventure to the project: Gregory Alex-Vasey leapt into the task of setting the paintings in motion via digital animations, singers Justine Anderson and Vivien Hamilton joined me to form the Icon Trio, and Early Voices choir (directed by Vivien) came on board. It was a particular joy when three Melbourne composers (Mark McSherry, Peter Neville and Irine Vela) came forward to create music especially for the event, with Peter and Irine also playing tonight. It has been a privilege to work closely with these artists this year, as we created Vox Pix together. I give my heartfelt thanks to them all for giving so generously of their time and skills in this project.

In addition to the performance, you also have the opportunity tonight to view many of the Vox Pix paintings "in the flesh" in the gallery space outside the auditorium

We hope you enjoy Vox Pix! ***Jeannie Marsh***

Abstract painting is painting at its most musical. But there is an inherent contradiction between the two art forms: music is bound to time, painting is static.

At least it may seem that a painting can be taken in instantaneously. In reality most paintings are like a book with all its pages appearing to you simultaneously. The plot may be instantly recognisable, but all the complexity, the many relationships, their implications and meanings, will only become apparent over time and with consideration and thought.

The challenge in this project has been to marry the two art forms in a harmonious way and the excitement for me has been the novel way in which each art form has illuminated and expanded the other. ***James Yuncken***

In Vox Pix I have been exploring the crossroads between design and art, and I have been relishing this rare opportunity to perform design within this creative context.
Gregory Alex-Vasey

MUSIC AND IMAGES TOGETHER

From very early on in the project, James and I tried different sorts of vocal music with the paintings, and found that certain styles worked well: Medieval chant and song, 20th and 21st century music inspired by this early music, richly-textured Renaissance choral music, and strongly-rhythmic music (with interesting harmonies) from our own era. We were also drawn to Greek and Russian choral music, and simple folksong settings. Things started falling into place when Justine Anderson suggested the intriguing *Laude Cortonese* vocal trios by Gavin Bryars (Medieval texts and ideas explored via a 21st century musical sensibility), and Vivien Hamilton brought to the table Medieval and Renaissance masterpieces from the repertoire of Early Voices. My experience with choral music of Theodorakis, Tavener and Glass led me to other works that interacted in interesting ways with the paintings. Russian and Latvian music I encountered at the ACCET choral conducting summer school this year also found a home.

With the musical picture now emerging, our three Melbourne composers responded to the paintings, the trio, and the concepts of the project with enthusiasm. Peter Neville decided to use the Federation Bells in his work, Irine Vela was happy to add her Cretan lute to the picture, so we now had other rich colours to play with – and the music for Vox Pix was under way. With these musical resources we felt we could explore some themes that run through James' Vox Pix paintings.

The works include large paintings with glowing colours (evoking ecstatic joy, or the awe felt on looking up at the night sky, or the terrifying power of the God of the Old Testament). There are also mysterious works with enigmatic symbols, and works inspired by satellite images. Some paintings are small and intimate, like an icon for personal comfort and meditation, or a corner of a rich piece of fabric, or the first sight of a glorious garden. The four elements (earth, air, water, fire), meeting points between astronomy and spirituality, seeing both the "micro" and "macro" scale in one scene, the earthly wonders around us...all of these ideas came up in discussions between James, Gregory, and me. As music was selected, various approaches to animation were explored, responding to these themes. ***Jeannie Marsh***

NOTES ON THE MUSIC BY MELBOURNE VOX PIX COMPOSERS

Meteor is a setting of poems by Jack London, Giovanni Malito and the 8th Century Chinese poet Li Po. The three movements are in a traditional slow, fast, slow format and are designed to showcase the wonderful voices of the Icon Trio as well as the beautiful "Federation Bells", created in 2001 by Ausbell as part of the celebrations of the Centenary of Australian Federation. I wanted to create music of simplicity, beauty and ecstasis. The work is dedicated to the Icon Trio. ***Peter Neville***

Exaudi is a piece that I composed for the music-drama *1975* which premiered in Melbourne in 2003. Originally the piece was written for a vocal sextet of soloists with choir and a small orchestra. In that work the piece was conceived as a Requiem Mass for the East Timorese genocide and for the Australian journalists who were murdered while covering the Indonesian invasion of East Timor - but also beyond that, as a lament for the death of idealism and principle in Australian political life - the repercussions of which we are experiencing today. ***Irine Vela***

mist:waves is inspired by two paintings, both featuring clearly recognizable boat icons. The idea came as I was viewing James' paintings on screen – one followed the other, and the subtle changes between them created an automatic image of a mysterious vessel emerging out of an imagined mist. The musical piece is based on one very short melodic idea. It emerges slowly to a full statement around two thirds of the way through. It is then fragmented again to become an atmospheric hint of its former self. **Mark McSherry**

VOX PIX COMPOSERS FROM BEYOND MELBOURNE

The Medieval music heard tonight has come down to us through manuscripts such as *Llibre Vermell de Montserrat* (*O Virgo Splendens*) and the Montpellier Codex (*Alle Psallite*). The composers' names may have been lost but the music survives.

Renaissance composers **Thomas Tallis** and **William Byrd** (England), **Giovanni Palestrina** (Italy), and **Jacob Arcadelt** (Franco-Flemish) were leading musical figures of their times, each producing large amounts of vocal music that has continued to be performed frequently around the world for over 400 years.

Pavel Chesnokov (1877 – 1944) was a prolific and successful Russian composer of choral music for the Russian Orthodox Church, producing over 400 works.

Greek composer **Mikis Theodorakis** (b.1925) is another prolific producer of vocal music, with thousands of songs and numerous major choral works. Both Theodorakis works heard tonight come from cantatas setting poetry by Nobel-Prize winning Greek poets (Odysseus Elytis in *Axion Esti*, George Seferis in *Epiphania*), involving soloists, traditional Greek instruments, and orchestral instruments. Both these choral works have connections to Greek Orthodox traditions, and to the dramatic, often dark history of modern Greece. Songs from these works became well-known and cherished by Greek audiences around the world.

American composer **Philip Glass** (b.1937) is well known for the driving rhythms and mesmerising repeating patterns of his operas, orchestral works, and film music. Glass' music for Godfrey Reggio's film *Koyaanisqatsi* (*Life out of Balance*) grew out of an extraordinary collaboration between director and composer, in which images and music were tightly linked. It has been interesting to compare the effect of the music in a different context, with different images. Latvian conductor and composer **Andrejs Jansons** (b.1938) has written a number of delightful settings of traditional Latvian folk poems and carols, in addition to larger choral works. English composer **Gavin Bryars** (b.1943) has explored many different musical styles, but remains most famous for his 1971 work *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* (based on a looped recording of a homeless man singing a hymn). In recent years his work with Norwegian group Trio Medieval, and the Latvian Radio Choir, has inspired rich vocal music. English composer **John Tavener** (b.1944) joined the Russian Orthodox Church in 1977 and has written many choral works inspired by his faith, including *Ikon of Light*, an extended work for choir and string trio, setting a text of St Simeon. It includes settings of the Trisagion text heard during many Byzantine rites. Brazilian composer, musicologist and choral conductor **Ernani Aguiar** (b.1950) has written in many genres, but is most widely-known for his choral music, including his fiery *Salmo 150*, which has achieved world-wide popularity.

VOX PIX TEXTS AND SUMMARIES OF TRANSLATIONS

Texts used in Peter Neville's work *Meteor*:

Li Po

Here it is night...I stand before the Summit Temple;
The stars are almost within reach of my hand...
In the awesome silence I speak no word,
That I disturb not the dwellers of Heaven.

Jack London

I would rather be a meteor
Every atom of me in magnificent glow
Than a sleepy and permanent planet.

Giovanni Malito

a shooting star
streaks the sky
making it real

clear night –
in the space of a smile
the meteor is gone

Balts sniedziņš snieg uz skujiņām (Latvian carol): riding to church on Christmas Eve, sleighbells ringing, snow on the ground, stars above, a sense of deep peace, contentment, joy; tonight the spirit can soar as high and pure as the angels above...

Ziemas svētki saubrakuši (Latvian carol): at Winterfest children listen for the sounds of Christmas, for the horses prancing in their finery, and they welcome God into their homes as He rides over the hill.

Kratiza ti zoi mu (Theodorakis, text Seferis): I've kept hold of my life, through dark journeys and the coming of the night

Nai sto schima t'ouranou (Theodorakis, text Elytis): temples in the shape of the sky...dark thunder clouds gathering beneath us...the beauties of a world now gone

O Virgo Splendens: praise to the Virgin Mary

Alle Psallite: all are urged to sing praise to God

Dies Irae: this extract tells of the terrifying events of the Day of Judgement, and calls upon God to have mercy upon souls

Adoramus Te (Arcadelt): adoration and blessings are offered to Christ

Ave Maria (Palestrina): praise to the Virgin Mary

Gloria (Tallis): in this extract praise is given to God in His glory

Hvalitsie Ghospoda s nebes (Chesnokov): praise to God in Heaven

Exaudi (Vela): In the extracts from the Requiem Mass chosen by the composer, God is asked to hear our prayer, to grant peace, eternal rest, and freedom to the souls of those who have died, and to deliver them from eternal death.

Christo è nato est humanato (Bryars): Christ is born in human form to save us, who have fallen

Dami conforto, Dio (Bryars): calling on God to give us comfort and joy, and to remind us of the sufferings of Christ

Ave, Regina Gloriosa (Bryars): praise to the Virgin Mary

Trisagion 1 and 2 (Tavener): call to God in His greatness to have mercy upon us.

Salmo 150 (Aguiar): Psalm 150 calls on us to praise God and His greatness with music and dance, with every breath.

ABOUT THE VOX PIX ARTISTS

Gregory Alex-Vasey

Gregory holds a degree in Fine Arts from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, USA, where he focused on oil painting, and also explored books as art. He migrated to Australia in 2006, and completed a Masters in Communication Design at Swinburne University of Technology. Currently Gregory teaches Communication Design at Swinburne, and is a self-employed graphic designer.

Justine Anderson completed her Master's degree in voice at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne in 2008. She has had wide performance experience as both a soloist and ensemble singer and her recent opera roles include Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, Michaela in *Carmen* and The Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*. In 2008 she recorded for the ABC the Australian premiere of the Alberto Ginastera work *Cantata for Magic America* as part of the Simplot International Masterclass Series. Other highlights include a performance as a nightclub singer in the short film 'The Black Pine Road', and work as the soloist in various Oratorio performances and festivals such as the Canberra Festival, Melbourne International Arts Festival, Port Fairy Spring Festival and Darebin Music Feast. Justine is the co-artistic director in the recently formed group *Six Degrees*, which specialises in contemporary classical works that feature voice.

Early Voices The ensemble is a select group of singers auditioned from voice students at the University of Melbourne. The ensemble specializes in the historical performance of secular and sacred vocal ensemble music from the Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque eras. Early Voices have been performing for several years at venues such as the National Gallery of Victoria, and the Knox Heritage Festival, and have built a profile as a dedicated and enthusiastic group of young musicians. In 2006 they performed in a fully costumed and gestured production of the John Eccles Restoration opera *The Judgement of Paris* (directed by Helga Hill). In March 2007 Early Voices recorded "The Burial of Christ" a CD of Byzantine Chant for the Global Melkite Church Association – the first recording of its kind in the world! Since 2007 they have presented an annual Renaissance and Early Music dinner entertainment at University House, The University of Melbourne. In 2008 they presented two hugely successful performances of Claudio Monteverdi's opera *L'Orfeo, Favola in Musica* for the Spring Early Music Festival (directed by guest conductor Italian tenor Sandro Naglia, these performances celebrated the 400th anniversary of the publication of this opera). In 2009 they presented a semi-staged production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, and in 2010 they presented Marc Antoine Charpentier's *Les Arts Florissants*.

Vivien Hamilton enjoys an active performing career as soprano soloist throughout Australia. As a young professional singer she sang and toured with the Hilliard Ensemble, sang ad-hoc with the BBC Singers and toured as chorus member and principal with Kent Opera and New Sadlers Wells Opera companies. She has sung and recorded for ABC Classic FM and 3MBS FM and is heard on CDs including "Olympia: The cantatas of Alessandro Scarlatti" (ABC Classics), a world premiere recording "The Music of Henry Handel Richardson" (PLC Melbourne), and most recently a collaboration with Consort Eclectus "Music for Viols and Voice". In April 2007 she sang the role of Clorinda in a performance of Monteverdi's opera *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* with e21 for the Castlemaine Festival. In September 2007 Vivien journeyed to Edinburgh, Scotland where she gave lectures

and recitals on the subject of Australian, French and Scottish Art Song. In December 2007 she sang under the baton of Richard Divallo in a performance of Schutz's *Historia der freuden Jesu Christi*. In 2009 she recorded for Move Records a CD dedicated to the Year of Homecoming Scotland featuring the poems and songs of the National Bard of Scotland - Robert Burns, and in 2010 performed in several recitals in Canada. Most recently Vivien gave an ABC Sunday Live broadcast "Dialogue d'Amour" (early 17th-century airs de cour) with Rosemary Hodgson (lute) and Stephen Grant (baritone), and sang for the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival in an event with Stefano di Pieri.

Jeannie Marsh: Jeannie studied music and opera at University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts, with grants and scholarships from University of Melbourne and the Australia Council enabling her to continue her studies in Italy and England. She was a Young Artist with Victoria State Opera, performing roles in operas such as *The Magic Flute* and *Eugene Onegin*, and sang frequently with Chamber Made Opera. Over the last 25 years Jeannie has sung for organizations such as MTC, MSO, RMP, Musica Viva, the ABC, and in the international festivals of Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney, and Brisbane. She has performed new operas with the Garden Project (Covent Garden, London), and toured in Asia and Europe. Jeannie has sung in many premieres of Australian works, and in 2004 she was awarded a Sounds Australian Award for her Long-term Contribution to Australian music. In 1999 she produced the CD *Madrugada* (Latin American and Australian music) with guitarist Ken Murray. In 2003 she produced and performed in the premiere season of *Love, Death, Music and Plants*, an opera by Matthew Hindson and Brian Lipson about Baron Ferdinand Von Mueller. Jeannie has been active since 1993 in community music, at Dandenong Ranges Music Council, and as a leader of Canto Coro choir. As music educator she has led many projects with voice and composition students at universities in Melbourne and beyond, directed student productions, and teaches Music Style and Composition at Distance Education Centre Victoria.

Mark McSherry: Mark has worked as a composer and music educator for over twenty years. He has written for theatre, film, cabaret and concert hall. He also works with multimedia and web-based technologies. He has been involved in shaping music curriculum for schools across the state and currently teaches senior music at the Distance Education Centre Victoria.

Peter Neville: As a percussionist, Peter has worked across the range of styles and settings, but he has a particular commitment to new music and chamber performance. As well as twenty-five years with the ELISION ensemble, he is also a current member of groups including: Speak Percussion, The David Chesworth Ensemble, Jouissance, The Bolt Ensemble, The Raga Dolls Salon Orchestra, Liminal and Six Degrees. As a composer he has written scores for the Arena Theatre Company, Playbox Theatre and Handspan Theatre as well as works for the Victorian Saxophone Quartet, the "Doubling Up" woodwind trio and the Hutes Melbourne Town Hall organ project. His radio work "After Hildegard" has enjoyed repeated broadcast. He is published by Reed Music. Peter is Convenor Of Percussion and Chamber Music at the Melbourne Conservatorium Of Music.

Irine Vela: For the past twenty five years Irine Vela has worked with scores of musical ensembles and theatre companies throughout Australia and collaborated with many of our leading performers, actors, vocalists, writers and directors in countless productions.

Her choral opera *Little City* was acclaimed by both music and theatre critics and enjoyed sell-out and return seasons in Melbourne and Brisbane. *Little City* also garnered her a *Sounds Australian Award* from the Australian Music Centre for Best Composition by an Australian Composer. In 2003 she won the *Tropfest film award* for Best Original Score and her epic music- drama *1975* enjoyed its world premiere. Both *Little City* and *1975* featured Jeannie Marsh as a vocalist.

She is founding member of *the haBiBis*. Their CD *Intoxication* received an *ARIA* award for Best World Music Album. The haBiBis also appeared in the Australian feature film *Head On*, on which Irine worked as music director and consultant.

She was awarded a 2007 State Library fellowship to research and create the multi-media music drama - *Australia in Danger - a slide night*. She has just completed work on the ABC miniseries *The Slap* and is currently working on a hip-hop collaboration with the Anti-Racism Action Band and the Melbourne Youth Orchestra.

James Yuncken is a visual artist who has been exhibiting regularly at various Melbourne galleries (recently **fortyfivedownstairs**) for around 20 years. James has been painting since 1986 and exhibiting since 1989.

James first studied privately in Canberra under Christopher Croft of the Graphic Investigation Dept, Canberra School of Art. James has also done master classes with Graham Nickson of the New York Studio School in 1998 and 2004.

Prior to turning to painting full time, James completed Degrees in Science, Law, and Computing and worked professionally in all these fields.

EARLY VOICES 2011:

Eric Butler, Chin Han Chng, Stephen Coutts, Robin Czuchnowski, Belinda Dalton, Marc Deaizpurua, Angelo Delsante (guest), Farah Diyanah-Hisham, Chun Lok Fan, Laura Fleming, Xavier George, Camilla Gorman, Andrew Hamilton, Brian Hamilton, Tom Hayman, Isabella Horsley, Amanda Lee, Elspeth Lewis-Taylor, Bianca Majechrzak, Alicia Metusela, Kate O'Callaghan, Hannah Pelka-Caven, Tiffany Tan, Erika Tandiono, Tudor Thomas

Find out more about the art of James Yuncken at his website:

www.jamesyuncken.com.au