

# SANCTUARY & SOLIDARITY

## Programme

**Caroline Shaw (arr. Azkoul)** and the swallow

**Dietrich Buxtehude** Ad manus (from *Membra Jesu Nostris*)

**Basel Saleh** Oud improvisation #1

**Hildur Guðnadóttir** Fólk fær andlit

**Houtaf Khoury** The Journey (*USE commission*)

**Natalia Tsupryk** A Quiet Night - Tyhoyi Nochi (*SANSARA commission*)

**Basel Saleh** Oud improvisation #2

**Caroline Shaw** In manus tuas

**Caroline Shaw** To the Hands (*European Premiere*)

I. Prelude: Wordless

II. in medio / in the midst

III. Her beacon-hand beckons

IV. Litany of the displaced

V. ever ever ever

**Caroline Shaw** and the swallow

# Programme Notes

## DIETRICH BUXTEHUDE

Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707) was a Danish organist and composer of church, chamber and organ music who, along with Heinrich Schütz, was possibly the most influential composer of his time. Buxtehude moved to Lübeck in 1688 and became organist of St. Mary's Church. He rose to such fame that musicians from far and wide came to the city to hear his music. According to legend Bach walked some 380 km from Arnstadt to meet him.

*Membra Jesu nostri* (BuxWV 75) is a cycle of seven cantatas. More specifically and fully it is, in Buxtehude's phrase, a *devotio decantata* or "sung devotion" titled *Membra Jesu nostri patientis sanctissima* (Limbs Most Holy of Our Suffering Jesus). The cycle is considered the first Lutheran oratorio and the stanzas of its main text are drawn from the medieval hymn *Salve mundi salutare*, also known as the *Rhythmica oratio*. Each cantata addresses a part of Jesus' crucified body: feet, knees, hands, side, breast, heart and face; in each, Biblical words referring to each limb frame verses of the hymn's text.

## HILDUR GUÐANDÓTTIR

Hildur Guðnadóttir is an award-winning Icelandic composer, cello player, and singer who is at the forefront of experimental pop and contemporary music. In her solo works she draws out a broad spectrum of sounds from her instrument, ranging from intimate simplicity to huge soundscapes. Her work for film and television includes "Sicario: Day of the Soldado", "Mary Magdalene", "Tom of Finland", and "Journey's End". She received a Primetime Emmy Award and a Grammy Award for the soundtrack of the critically-acclaimed HBO series "Chernobyl". She has composed music for theatre, dance performances and film. The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra, Icelandic National Theatre, Tate Modern, The British Film Institute, The Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm and Gothenburg National Theatre are amongst the institutions that have commissioned new works by Hildur.

The choral version of *Fólk fær andlit* was written in response to the mistreatment and deportations of refugees in Iceland in 2015.

*"In December 2015 we followed a series of events that touched most of us there: Albanian children with terminal illnesses were deported from Iceland along with their families who had been denied residence permits. It was deeply distressing to watch the series of events unfold; how people divided into two separate oppositions, for or against — people."*

There are only two words/phrases repeated throughout the composition: the Icelandic word *miskun* (mercy) and different iterations and embellishments of the phrase *Fyrirgefið okkur fyrir* which translates as "forgive us for."

## HOUTAF KHOURY

Houtaf Khoury (Arabic هُتاف مارون خوري) is a Lebanese composer of western classical music. His music is regularly played by many performers worldwide in concerts or music festivals.

Born in Tripoli in 1967 and with a doctorate in musicology, Houtaf Khoury represents the younger generation of Lebanese composers. The formative influences on his work came from Ukraine, from Kyiv, where a grant enabled him to pursue his studies from 1988 to 1997. His orchestral works, chamber music and compositions for piano are pleas for a more humane world.

*“The Journey, dedicated to my friend Julian Azkoul and the United Strings of Europe, is a work which I started to compose at a time of great turmoil; on the one hand the stifling restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic and on the other the rapidly deteriorating economic situation in Lebanon. The title was inspired by the work Unfinished Journey by the great Franco-Lebanese composer Bechara El khoury. The Journey is a reflection on our inner lives, a yearning for greater freedom, and a wish to see our humanity restored.”*

## NATALIA TSUPRYK

Natalia is a Ukrainian composer and violinist. Her compositional style is drawn from her classical performance background and combines elements of folk, electronica, and new-classical genres. A prolific writer, Natalia has released a number of singles, EPs and albums since her debut LP *Choven* in 2020. These include a collaboration with composer and pianist Angus MacRae on two EP's: *Silent Fall* (2021) and *II* (2021), and a composition for the vocal collective SANSARA, released on Platoon.

Natalia has scored award-winning films across fiction, documentary, and animation, that have screened internationally at festivals including Palm Springs, Indy Shorts, PÖFF, and have been short-listed for the BAFTAs. Since 2017 Natalia has been collaborating with the Kyiv National Academic Molodyy Theatre scoring several plays, including *The Master Builder* and *Ostriv Lyubovi*.

As a violinist, Natalia performed all around the world, both as a soloist and a member of chamber groups and orchestras in venues such as Wiener Musikverein, Wiener Konzerthaus, ORF RadioKulturhaus, Synchron Stage Vienna, and the National Philharmonic of Ukraine.

**A Quiet Night - Tyhoyi Nochi** is a new piece of choral music commissioned by SANSARA for Ukrainian Independence Day on 24 August 2022 and to mark six months since the February 2022 full scale invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces. The piece is a musical expression of solidarity with the people of Ukraine: it is also a catalyst for connection, providing a creative vehicle for choirs to meet and

sing with all those displaced by conflict in their communities. Since its release in August, the piece has been performed by choirs around the world including Chorus Austin in collaboration with Liberty Ukraine, a local fundraising initiative.

## CAROLINE SHAW

Caroline Shaw is a musician who moves among roles, genres, and mediums, trying to imagine a world of sound that has never been heard before and yet has always existed. She is the youngest recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in Music for her *Partita for 8 Voices* written for the ensemble Roomful of Teeth, and she works often in collaboration with others, as producer, composer, violinist, and vocalist. Caroline has written over 100 works in the last decade for Anne Sofie von Otter, Davóne Tines, Yo Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Dawn Upshaw, LA Phil, Philharmonia Baroque, Seattle Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Aizuri Quartet and others.

In her piece **and the swallow**, commissioned by the Netherlands Chamber Choir, Shaw sets text from Psalm 84. Shaw has described how she was thinking of the Syrian refugee crisis whilst writing the piece:

“There’s a yearning for a home that feels very relevant today. The second verse is: “The sparrow found a house and the swallow her nest, where she may place her young” which is just a beautiful image of a bird trying to keep her children safe—people trying to keep their family safe.”

*and the swallow* is presented in two versions framing the rest of the programme, the first in arrangement by Julian Azkoul for strings and the second in the original choral setting.

The next piece is a short work for solo viola which is drawn from a text echoed in themes throughout the programme. Shaw writes:

“**In manus tuas** is based on a 16th century motet by Thomas Tallis. While there are only a few slices of the piece that reflect exact harmonic changes in Tallis’ setting, the motion (or lack of) is intended to capture the sensation of a single moment of hearing the motet in the particular and remarkable space of Christ Church in New Haven, Connecticut. *In manus tuas* was written in 2009 for cellist Hannah Collins, for a secular solo cello compline service held in the dark, candlelit nave.”

Commissioned by The Crossing Choir as a response to *Ad manus* from Buxtehude’s *Membra Jesu Nostri* Shaw’s **To the Hands** is a striking contemporary cantata and we are excited to be giving its European Premiere tonight. Alongside the freely available scores for this piece, Shaw has shared the following notes:

“*To the Hands* begins inside the 17th century sound of Buxtehude. It expands and colors and breaks this language, as the piece’s core considerations, of the suffering of those around the world seeking refuge,

and of our role and responsibility in these global and local crises, gradually come into focus.

The prelude turns the tune of *Ad manus* into a wordless plainchant melody, punctured later by the strings' introduction of an unsettling pattern. The second movement fragments Buxtehude's choral setting of the central question, "*quid sunt plagae istae in medio manuum tuarum,*" or "what are these wounds in the midst of your hands." It settles finally on an inversion of the question, so that we reflect, "What are these wounds in the midst of our hands?" We notice what may have been done to us, but we also question what we have done and what our role has been in these wounds we see before us.

The text that follows in the third movement is a riff on Emma Lazarus' sonnet *The New Colossus*, famous for its engraving at the base of the Statue of Liberty. The poem's lines "Give me your tired, your poor,/ Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free" and its reference to the statue's "beacon-hand" present a very different image of a hand — one that is open, beckoning, and strong. No wounds are to be found there — only comfort for those caught in a dangerous and complex environment. While the third movement operates in broad strokes from a distance, the fourth movement zooms in on the map so far that we see the intimate scene of an old woman in her home, maybe setting the table for dinner alone. Who is she, where has she been, whose lives has she left? This simple image melts into a meditation on the words *in caverna* from the Song of Solomon, found in Buxtehude's fourth section, *Ad latus*.

In the fifth movement, the harmony is passed around from one string instrument to another, overlapping only briefly, while numerical figures are spoken by the choir. These are global figures of internally displaced persons, by country, sourced from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) data reported in May 2015. Sometimes data is the cruelest and most honest poetry.

The sixth and final movement unfolds the words *in caverna* into the tumbling and comforting promise of "ever ever" — "ever ever will I hold you, ever ever will I enfold you". They could be the words of Christ, or of a parent or friend or lover, or even of a nation."

# Texts & Translations

## **Buxtehude** Ad Manus

Quid sunt plagae istae  
in medio manuum tuarum?

*What are those wounds  
in the midst of Your hands?*

Salve Jesu, pastor bone,  
fatigatus in agone,  
qui per lignum es distractus  
et ad lignum es compactus  
expansis sanctis manibus.

*Hail, Jesus, good shepherd,  
wearied in agony,  
tormented on the cross  
nailed to the cross  
Your sacred hands stretched out.*

Manus sanctae, vos amplector,  
et gemendo condelector,  
grates ago plagis tantis,  
clavis duris guttis sanctis  
dans lacrymas cum osculis.

*Holy hands, I embrace you,  
and, lamenting, I delight in you,  
I give thanks for the terrible wounds,  
the hard nails, the holy drops,  
shedding tears with kisses.*

In cruore tuo lotum  
me commendo tibi totum,  
tuae sanctae manus istae  
me defendant, Jesu Christe,  
extremis in periculis.

*Holy hands, I embrace you,  
and, lamenting, I delight in you,  
I give thanks for the terrible wounds,  
the hard nails, the holy drops,  
shedding tears with kisses.*

## **Guðnadóttir** Fólk fær andlit

Miskun  
Fyrirgefið okkur fyrir  
*Mercy*  
*Forgive us for*

**Tsupryk** A Quiet Night - Tyhoyi Nochi  
It is us who sing in the quiet of the night  
when the inner town is silent  
burying the seeds of our sighs  
in the breath of black earth

*from The History of Snow by Serhiy Zhadan*  
*(trans. Sasha Dugdale, Oksana Maksymchuk)*

Our land was sown with bullets and shells  
No enemy was able to take root here  
No shackles can bind our free spirit  
We are free people who have their own path

*from President Volodymyr Zelensky's speech on the Day of Victory of Nazism in*  
*World War II (9 May 2022)*

## **Shaw - To the Hands**

II. in medio / in the midst

quid sunt plagae istae  
quid sunt plagae istae in medio manuum tuarum in medio  
quid sunt plagae istae  
quid sunt plagae istae in medio manuum nostrarum

*what are those wounds*  
*what are those wounds in the midst of your hands in the midst*  
*what are those wounds*  
*what are those wounds in the midst of our hands*

*text from Buxtehude's Ad manus: Zechariah 13:6 - adapted by Caroline Shaw,*  
*with*  
*the addition of in medio manuum nostrarum ("in the midst of our hands")*

III. Her beacon-hand beckons

Her beacon-hand beckons: give  
give to me  
those yearning to breathe free tempest-tossed they cannot see what lies beyond  
the olive tree whose branch was lost amid the pleas for mercy, mercy

give  
give to me  
your tired fighters fleeing flying from the  
from the  
from  
let them  
i will be your refuge  
i will be your refuge  
i will be  
i will be  
we will be  
we will

*text by Caroline Shaw, responding to the 1883 sonnet "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus, which was mounted on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in 1903*

IV. ever ever ever

ever ever ever  
in the window sills or  
the beveled edges  
of the aging wooden frames that hold old photographs  
hands folded  
folded  
gently in her lap  
ever ever  
in the crevices  
the never-ending efforts of  
the grandmother's tendons tending to her bread and empty chairs

left for Elijahs where are they now  
in caverna in caverna

*text by Caroline Shaw: the final line, in caverna, is from Buxtehude's Ad latus - the line from the Song of Songs, in foraminibus petrae, in caverna maceriae, or "in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow of the cliff"*

V. Litany of the Displaced

The choir speaks global figures of internal displacement, sourced from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (<http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-figures> — accessed 01/03/2016). The numbers spoken are the numbers of internally displaced persons by country, in ascending order. These are people, some of whom may have legal refugee status, who have been displaced within their own country due to armed conflict, situations of generalized violence or violations of human rights.

VI. i will hold you



i would hold you  
i would hold you ever ever will i hold you ever ever will i enfold you  
in medio  
in medio  
in medio  
in medio  
in medio manuum tuarum

*text by Caroline Shaw: the final line is a reprise from the Zechariah text.*

### **Shaw** and the swallow

How beloved is your dwelling place,  
O Lord of hosts  
my soul yearns, faints,  
my heart and my flesh cry

The sparrow found a house  
and the swallow, her next,  
where she may raise her young

They pass through the valley of bakka  
they make it a place of springs  
the autumn rains also cover it with pools

## **SANSARA**

—> Pls get in touch for current bio

SANSARA is an award-winning vocal collective uniting the next generation of choral artists. Winners of the London International A Cappella Choir Competition, performance highlights include concerts at the Barbican, Kings Place, St John's Smith Square, V&A and several leading UK festivals.

“Choral music with real depth” - The Observer

“SANSARA slips easily into the elite ranks of exceptional performers” - Choir & Organ

“Expert interlocking of exquisite voices in a sound that takes us beyond our everyday selves” - Edinburgh Music Review

[sansarachoir.com](http://sansarachoir.com)

## United Strings of Europe

—> Pls get in touch for current bio

*United Strings of Europe creates musical experiences that celebrate diversity and bridge cultural divides. We regularly commission new work by exciting composers, our projects and collaborations tackle the important and powerful subjects of today.*

*Music has a unique capacity to help us make sense of the world, of its problems and conflicts but also of its beauty and solutions. USE is here for it all.*

[unitedstringsofeurope.com](http://unitedstringsofeurope.com)

## Basel Saleh

—> Pls get in touch for current bio

A Syrian conductor, composer, singer and oud player, Basel is a member of The Ivors Academy of Music Creators. Previously a professor of Oriental singing at the High Institute of Music in Damascus and a Conductor of the Orchestra and Choir Artists Association in Syria, Basel currently lives and works in the UK, and is the conductor of the Orchestra of Syrian Musicians and Academy of Art and Arab Heritage's Choir in London. He studied Qanoun and Classical Singing in The High Institute of Music in Damascus and holds a Masters Degree in Music Education from the University of Damascus.

Basel has performed internationally in several globally-acclaimed festivals, including Glastonbury Festival in the UK and Festival Roskilde in Denmark and conducted concerts that featured cross-cultural collaborations with renowned orchestras including Liverpool's Philharmonic Orchestra alongside artists that include Damon Albarn of Gorillaz. Throughout his 20-year international career, Basel has been particularly praised for his work as a composer, including the piece *Salabtany*, which was performed by the BBC Singers Choir and *From The Barada to The Thames*, performed by Truro Sinfonia.

[baselsaleh.com](http://baselsaleh.com)

## TOM HERRING

—> Pls get in touch for current bio

Tom Herring is a conductor, singer and artistic director with a passion for vocal music. Co-founder and Artistic Director of SANSARA, Tom develops the group's projects, programmes and collaborations. As an ensemble singer, Tom works regularly with Tenebrae and the Monteverdi Choir and has performed with choirs including the Tallis Scholars, Alamire, Vox Luminis and Contrapunctus. Since

graduating from Oxford in 2016, Tom has worked for several leading arts organisations including Oxford Lieder, Intermusica, the Association of British Orchestras, Sullivan Sweetland and produced the Holy Week Festival (St John's Smith Square/Tenebrae). He is an alumnus of the Netherlands Chamber Choir's innovative NXT scheme and a mentor for Young People in the Arts.

## **JULIAN AZKOUL**

—> Pls get in touch for current bio

Violinist Julian Azkoul is a soloist, ensemble director, and producer. As artistic director of the United Strings of Europe (USE), he curates programmes and projects, and arranges music for the ensemble. A number of Julian's arrangements can be heard on USE's critically acclaimed albums *In Motion* (BIS-2529) and *Renewal* (BIS-2549), and his transcription of Gareth Farr's *Mondo Rondo* has been published by Promethean Editions.

Julian has appeared as guest director of Camerata Nordica in Sweden, guest leader of Camerata Venia in Switzerland, principal player with Manchester Collective and guest first violinist of the Jubilee and Piatti quartets, co-leading UK orchestras such as the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and touring with the Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra. He regularly performs at major international festivals and venues with the London Symphony Orchestra, Geneva Chamber Orchestra, London Contemporary Orchestra, and Les Siècles. He also has a keen interest in Middle Eastern music.

## **ARTISTS**

—> individual artists tbc