

Newcastle University Choir presents

The Armed Man

A Mass for Peace

by Karl Jenkins

With soloist Sally-Anne Russell,
conducted by Dr Christopher Allan

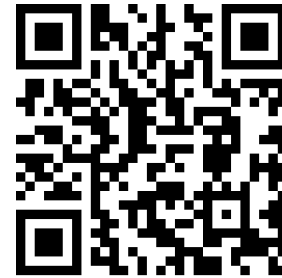
Sunday 21 September 2025 at 2.30pm
The Harold Lobb Concert Hall, Newcastle Conservatorium of Music, Laman St, Newcastle

This concert will contribute to Shaping Futures Scholarships, supporting talented students in need to stay in education.

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY CHOIR
UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
YEARS OF LONDON 1900

Tickets
Adult: \$49
Concession: \$39
Student: \$29
Tickets available at trybooking.com/DEDXN

newcastleuniversitychoir.org



With turmoil in numerous parts of the world, many minds are on peace. On Sunday afternoon, 21 September 2025 at 2:30 pm, the Newcastle University Choir (NUC) will perform *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* by Sir Karl Jenkins in the Harold Lobb Concert Hall, Newcastle Conservatorium of Music. Conducted by Dr Christopher Allan, the choir will be supported by a small orchestra, with internationally renowned soloist, the mezzo-soprano Sally-Anne Russell.

Tickets are \$49 Adult, \$39 Concession, \$29 Student, and can be obtained from www.TryBooking.com/DEDXN or by scanning the QR Code (next column). Proceeds from this concert will contribute to Shaping Futures Scholarships at the University of Newcastle, supporting

Karl Jenkins is a Welsh conductor, composer, and multi-instrumentalist. Born in 1944, he was educated in music at Cardiff University and the Royal Academy of Music.

In 1972, he played saxophone, flute, and keyboard with a jazz rock band named Soft Machine. This group made several albums and was voted the Best Small Group in *Melody Maker* Jazz magazine in 1974.

After leaving the band, he was involved in creating advertising music before blossoming as a choral composer, beginning with a cross-over project *Adiemus* (1995). Following this he wrote *Palladio* in 1995, *Requiem* in 2005, and *Stabat Mater* in 2008. He was awarded a Knight Bachelor in 2015 after receiving a string of other honorary degrees and awards, including an OBE, and CBE.

The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace was commissioned by the Royal Armouries Museum for the Millennium celebrations in 2000, and was dedicated to victims of the 1999 Kosovo crisis. It combines the traditional church Latin mass components (i.e. *Kyrie*, *Santus*, *Agnus Dei*, *Benedictus*), with some very different, and usually angry choruses depicting the horrors of war. For example, the first chorus, sung in French (*L'Homme Armé*), is a very stringent military march. It is very repetitive through three parts, emphasising strongly military might through the music. This is followed by an *Adhaan* or *Muslim Call to Prayer*, which normally would be sung from the top of a minaret extending up from a Mosque, completely changing the musical focus toward prayer and peace.

Following is the first of the traditional Latin Mass components, a beautiful version of the *Kyrie*. Here is where we first hear our mezzo-soprano soloist, Sally-Anne Russell who introduces this movement, which the choir then broadens.

Save me from Bloody Men is a short prayer, sung as a Gregorian chant. The *Sanctus* that follows is full of menace, and has a primeval, tribal character that adds to its power. The menace grows in the next movement as Kipling's *Hymn Before Action* builds to its final devastating line "Lord grant us strength to die."

Then come the battle choruses, *Charge!*, *Angry Flames*, *Torches*. In each of these, Jenkins uses text from unexpected sources. The text for *Charge!* comes from John Dryden and Jonathan Swift with more military trumpets, drums and anger. *Angry Flames* uses a text by Toge Sankichi, and describes the physical destruction caused by terrible war, The text for *Torches* comes from The Mahabharata, a 6th Century BCE description by Adi Parva. Here the horrors of being burned are starkly described.

Finally, toward the end the *Guns have Stopped*, and all is silent at last. This is followed by *Benedictus*, a blessing, and a hope that war will never happen again. The work finishes with *Peace is Always Better*, heralding a thousand years of peace. The text is a combination of items from Mallory, Tennyson, and Revelations from the *Bible*.

If ever there was a time for peace in the world, this decade is a perfect example. Wars and conflict in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Central Africa, SE Asia, seem to grow with great regularity. The guns have not stopped.

In addition to the Jenkins work, the choir will sing two pieces which have origins in Gregorian chant. *Ubi Caritas* ("Where charity and love are, God is there") is by Norwegian-born American composer, Ola Gjeilo. It is written originally for unaccompanied choir, however the composer has added a piano accompaniment drawn from his own jazz based improvisations on the work. A beautiful combination of voice and piano is the result.

The choir will also sing a glorious setting of *O Magnum Mysterium* ("O Great Mystery"- a Gregorian chant for Christmas) by American composer,

Morten Lauredsen. It has been described as “expressive ethereal sounds in imperturbable calmness”.

We are delighted that Sally-Anne Russell will sing an unaccompanied work by South Australian composer, Jodie O’Regan called *Hope Is a Thing of Feathers*. Sally-Anne has performed on the concert platform and operatic stage in twenty-five countries. She has recorded over 40 CDs and DVDs including her solo aria disc *Enchanting* with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. Her awards include an ARIA for Pergolesi Stabat Mater with Sara Macliver, and nominations for Young Australian of the Year, Young Achiever of the Year, Green Room and Helpmann Awards.

She has over 90 operatic roles in her repertoire and regularly works with all the major opera companies and symphony orchestras in Australia. International highlights include the Spoleto Festival Italy, Washington National Opera (DC) and Carmel Bach Festival in California.

Sally-Anne is co-artistic director of Albury Chamber Music Festival, a member of the Kathaumixw Festival International Artistic Council in Canada and the Belvedere International Singing Competition, Vienna.



*Howard Bridgman,
Ross Newman
Editors*