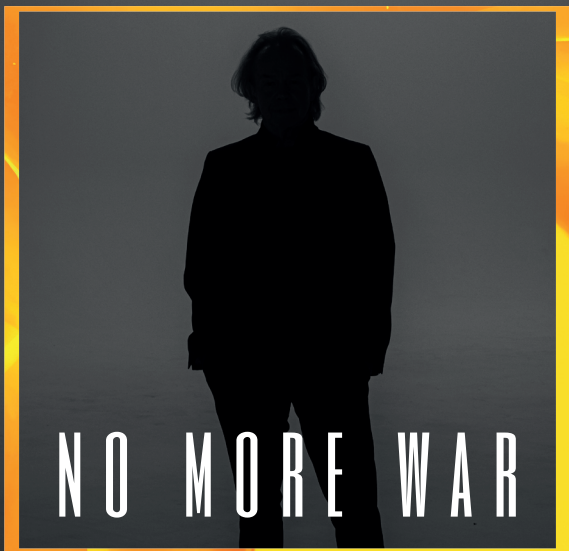


VOCAL ART ENSEMBLE
OF SWEDEN



NO MORE WAR

Jan Yngwe conductor

NO MORE WAR

Strong words and voices raised in protest against war in our time

Passionately invested in the burning questions of our day, the Vocal Art Ensemble of Sweden and Jan Yngwe present 11 compelling new works that express concern and frustration about the issues our world is currently up against: War, terror, and climate change.

Several new commissioned works now enrich the Swedish choral repertoire thanks to support by the Swedish Arts Council:

Jan Yngwe's urgent call to action **No More War**, and Henrik Dahlgren's lament **Vox in Rama** – both of which are dedicated to the people of Ukraine.

Jan's **In State of Emergency** for choir and percussion, which deals with the fight for freedom, as described by the Burundi poet Ketty Nivyabandi, - "*it's raining bullets on God's green pillow*"; and **The Cry of Refugees**, which is dedicated to everyone suffering worldwide due to war. At present, 114 million people are displaced.

My Thoughts, a pithy piece by the Latvian composer Eriks Esenvald, has become one of the ensemble's

favourite works in latter year. Esenvald has set a text by the Russian Orthodox monk Saint Silouan the Athonite to music. "*My Soul is crying for the whole world.*"

And four pieces of music with a message of hope for a better world:

Jocelyn Hagen's vocalize **Hands**; Henrik Dahlgren's arrangement for VAE of Katzenjammer's **God's Great Dust Storm** - "*hold my hand, hold my faith*";

Henrik Andersson's **Agnus Dei/Breathing** - "*all I can do is keep breathing*";

and Jan Yngwe's life-affirming setting of Edith Södergran's **A Triumph to Exist**.

Two mighty works are presented by the young Filipino composer Ily Matthew Maniano: **Daluyong**, a tribute to the survivors of Typhoon Yolanda that ravaged the Philippines in 2013, and his **Lux aeterna**, a strong outpouring of reverence and loss for those affected by war, natural disasters and acts of terrorism. "May eternal light shine upon them."



1. JAN YNGWE
NO MORE WAR!
(2022)

This piece is dedicated to the people of Ukraine, who continue to fight in the face of great hardship. Moved by the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022, Jan composed this choral piece with a simple yet pithy text by Asif Andalib, a poet from Bangladesh.

*No more war, please
Please, no more war
No more bloodthirsty leader, please
Please, no more bloodthirsty leader
No more humanity's slaughter, please
Please, no more humanity's slaughter
Learn to love, please
Please, learn to love*

2. JAN YNGWE
THE CRY OF REFUGEES
(2023)

Solo: Josefin Lidén

Commissioned by the Vocal Art Ensemble of Sweden and supported by the Swedish Arts Council. World premiere at the choir's 45th anniversary, November 2023.

*I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat
I was thirsty-and you gave me nothing to drink
I was a stranger and I needed clothes
I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me
I was a stranger and you did not invite me in*

The Cry of Refugees for choir and percussion has lyrics based on the Gospel of Matthew 25. This piece is dedicated to all souls suffering worldwide due to war. Right now, 114 million people are displaced. These refugees - children and families - struggle daily to find food, water and shelter. It is impossible for us to fully take in their suffering.





3. KATZENJAMMER'S

GOD'S GREAT DUST STORM

(2015)

Arrangement for the Vocal Art Ensemble of Sweden
by Henrik Dahlgren (b. 1988)

In a time of turbulence and unrest, it is more important than ever to practice generosity, compassion, and dedication. And we must never lose faith in goodness, that it will prevail.

*Hold my hand, Hold my faith,
Hold my eyes to the sky
Take my sin's, wash them clean
In God's great dust storm*

4. ILY MATTHEW MANIANO

DALUYONG

(2017)

Solo: Josefin Lidén

In recent years, Ily Matthew Maniano (b. 1988) from the Philippines has become one of the choir's favourite composers.

Daluyong ("Wave") is a tribute to the survivors of Typhoon Yolanda, which ravished the Philippines in 2013.

Daluyong is a lamentation, a dirge for those who perished, yet also a celebration of the Filipino spirit: unshakable, stronger than the strongest storm.

It describes three phases: The calm before the storm, The Storm, and The Aftermath.

The choir sings in Tagalog, one of many Filipino languages.

Dugo ang kula ang langit -

Habang payapa ang pag hinga nang manga laát
Blood is the colour of the heavens as the open sea tranquilly breathes,
every time the inconsumable ancient fire glimpses

Dambuhala hilakbot delubyo ang sumaklot

Monstruous terror deluge, grabs, roars when it bellows, howls.
The devastating rush, surge of the waves

Dugo ang kula ang langit

Blood is the colour of the heavens

Text: Joey Vargas

5. JAN YNGWE

A TRIUMPH TO EXIST!

(2017)

Mixed choir and 4 tambourines

Solo: Sara Korsgren Norrby

In *A Triumph to Exist*, Finland-Swedish poet Edith Södergran (1892-1923) has reconciled herself with the thought of death as a natural part of life.

There is nothing to fear, we will all die and become a part of the universe. Södergran, taken by illness far too soon, expresses an indomitable will to live:

A triumph to live, a triumph to breathe, a triumph to exist!

Extract from *A Triumph to Exist*:

*What do I fear? I am a part of infinity
I am a part of the great power of universe,
a single world within a million of worlds,
a star of the first magnitude
which is extinguished at last.*

*A triumph to live, a triumph to breathe,
a triumph to exist!*

*A time to feel time run icy cold through your veins
and hear the silent river of night
and stand on the mountains under the sun.*

*I walk on sunshine, I stand on sunshine,
I know of nothing but sunshine*

6. JOCELYN HAGEN

HANDS

(2016)

Soloists: Agnes Hulander & Per Walfridsson Ohls

A vocalize for choir a cappella and two soloists by the American composer Jocelyn Hagen (b. 1980). Commissioned by the 11th World Symposium on Choral Music WSCM Barcelona 2017, for the Vocal Art Ensemble of Sweden. A piece about standing together in peace and love, where words are insufficient ...







7. JAN YNGWE
IN STATE OF EMERGENCY
(2019)

A drama commissioned by the Vocal Art Ensemble of Sweden and the Rhythm Art Duo with support by the Swedish Arts Council. World premiere at the May 2019 Point Music Festival held at the Gothenburg Concert Hall. Text by Burundi human rights activist Ketty Nivyabandi, who uses poetry as a means to raise awareness.

*It's raining bullets
on Gods green pillow
it's raining fear and steel -
on seeds of hope and freedom
but these seeds will grow*

*we seek freedom like yellow diamonds
thru dust, thru stone our naked hands
bleed on rocks
we breathe in coal - but exhale hope*

8. ĒRIKS EŠENVALDS
MY THOUGHTS
(2019)

Solo: Madelene Johansson

The Vocal Art Ensemble has collaborated with the Latvian composer Eriks Esenvalds (b. 1977) for many years, and he has also composed choral music for the choir's 35th anniversary in 2013, "Earth, Teach Me Quiet" for choir, tuned glass and marimba. In *Myslji moji/My thoughts*, Eriks has set a text by the Russian Orthodox monk Saint Silouan the Athonite (1866-1938) to music.

The text is the preface to a longer piece of writing, "My Soul is Crying for the Whole World", which is, unfortunately, even more relevant today. His writing and never-ending thoughts: *Myslji moji*, *Myslji moji*, show his conviction that goodness will prevail.

*Myslji moi perezhity dolgimi godami.
Bozhii milosti byli so mnoyu bez kontsa...
Ya pishu milosti Gospodni,
i mne legko pisat', ibo dusha moya znayet
Gospoda Dukhom Svyatym
i znayet, kak mnogo On lyubit cheloveka.
Za pisaniye moyo, kto budet chitat',
za vsyo prostite, za oshibki moi,
i proshu ja vas molit'sya za menya.
No pisal ya potomu, chto vlekla menya lyubov' Bozhiya,
v kotoroy ya sytosti ne znayu.
Ya sidel, i vsya dusha moya byla zanyata Bogom.
Ni yedinaya mysl' ne priblizhalas' ko mne
i ne meshala umu moyemu pisat'
o Nyom, o Gospode.
I kogda ya pishu slovo,
to drugogo yeshchyo ne znayu,
no rozhdayetsya ono vo mne, i ya pishu yego.*

*I have lived with these thoughts for many years.
God's mercies were with me without end.
I write out of Lord's grace,
And it is easy for me to write, for my soul knows
the Lord through the Holy Spirit,
and knows how much He loves humanity.
For those who read my writings,
I ask you to forgive everything, forgive my mistakes,
and I ask you to pray for me.
But I wrote because God's love drew me,
and I will never have enough of it.
I sat and my entire soul was filled with God.
Not a single thought came to me
that would distract my mind from writing
about Him, about the Lord.
And when I write each word,
then the next is not yet in my mind,
but it is being born inside me and I write it.*



9. HENRIK DAHLGREN (B. 1988)

VOX IN RAMA

(2023)

Soloists: Bente Thorsén och Tina Glenvik

Commissioned by the Vocal Art Ensemble of Sweden, supported by the Swedish Arts Council. World premiere at the choir's 45th anniversary, November 2023.

A primal scream, a lament that illustrates the pain and heartbreak of Rachel when King Herod decrees that all boys in Bethlehem up to two years old are to be killed.

In Henrik Dahlgren's own words:

"This is a parallel to our time, when thousands of mothers, wives, and sisters were forced to take leave of their sons, husbands, and brothers during those first frantic months of war in Ukraine."

*Vox in Rama audita est
ploratus et ululatus multus,
Rachel plorans filios suos,
et noluit consolari, quia non sunt.*

*A voice is heard in Ramah
that is loudly weeping and lamenting.
Rachel is weeping for her sons,
and will not be comforted because they are no more.*

10. WAINWRIGHT / ANDERSSON
AGNUS DEI / BREATHING
(2015)

Soloists: Henrik Andersson & Bente Thorsén
Music: Rufus Wainwright (b. 1973) /
Henrik Andersson (b. 1981)
Text: Traditional and Henrik Andersson
Arranged for the Vocal Art Ensemble of Sweden by
Henrik Andersson

A cry for help to cope with your own guilt in a world
on fire. All that I do is keep breathing.

*Agnus Dei, qui tolis peccata mundi.
Dona nobis pacem.*

A storm is coming, with people dying.
I close my blinds, I keep on breathing.
A storm is coming.
We all see the war raging with people dying.
I close my blinds. Just keep on breathing.
All that I do is keep breathing, breathing, breathing.

Dona nobis pacem.





11. ILY MATTHEW MANIANO

LUX AETERNA

(2013)

A strong vocal outpouring of reverence and loss for those affected by war, natural disasters and acts of terrorism. "May eternal light shine upon them."

*Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,
quia pius es.*

*Requiem aeternum dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

*May eternal light shine on them, O Lord,
as with Your saints in eternity,
because You are merciful.
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.*



VOCAL ART ENSEMBLE OF SWEDEN

For decades, the VOCAL ART ENSEMBLE OF SWEDEN has been a powerful voice in the Swedish and international choral community; ever evolving and eternally engaged. The choir, along with their conductor, Jan Yngwe, have toured the better part of Europe, as well as Japan (1989), Cuba (1995), South Africa (1999), Brazil (2004), and China (2012) - more than 40 international concert tours in all.

The VOCAL ART ENSEMBLE has been showered with prizes at international choir competitions. They have been lauded both at home and abroad for their many recordings, radio and TV appearances, and not the least for their interpretations of late Romantic and Contemporary choir music.

The musical collaboration between the VOCAL ART ENSEMBLE and Jan Yngwe is based on a conviction of the power and necessity of music in an increasingly fast-paced society, a belief in music as an opportunity and a vehicle for us all to reach a multidimensional and deeper understanding of our existence.

Their previous release, "Urgency of Now" - an innovative, genre-transcending collection of choral music that often deals with the existential questions of our time - has received accolades such as "Best Classical CD of 2015" (Hifi& Musik), and the VOCAL ART ENSEMBLE is honoured to be named IFCM Ambassadors (International Federation for Choral Music).

The 2023-2024 season marks the 45th anniversary of this collaboration between the ensemble and their conductor, and they commemorate this occasion with a new CD, "No More War" - 11 works that hold great significance for the choir and their audience.

The following singers have participated in these recordings

SOPRANOS

Carina Jonsson Rundcrantz
Christina Hasselqvist
Christina Holmgren
Cecile Sandin
Cecilia Engström-Mattisson
Josefin Lidén
Kajsa Lindvall
Kicki Rosén Bejstam
Madeleine von Liewen
Wistrand
Madelene Johansson
Maria Karlsson
Sara Korsgren Norrby
Tina Glenvik

TENORS

Anders Söderberg
Christian Petersén
Claes Skärström
Fredrik Widstrand
Gustaf Edlund
Henrik Andersson
Johan Andersson
Leo Sandström
Mikael Klaening
Sebastian Duraffourd
Tobias Littwold

ALTOS

Agnes Hulander
Anna Hansson
Anna-Lena Nordberg
Bente Thorsén
Elin Häggstam
Hanna Engström
Henna Hellestekangas
Ingegerd Andersson
Isabella Cortés
Jannika Andersson
Johanna Karlsson
Josefin Borgström
Lena Björk
Lina Rundberg
Siri Bergvide

BASSES

Anders Bergsten
Anders Rundcrantz
Daniel Molloy
Göran Linderroth
Jesper Lundgren
Jonas Bäcklund
Lars Söderqvist
Olle Björkman Hammander
Peder Källman
Per Walfridsson Ohls
Simon Bergvide
Tobias Olofsson
Tomas Carlsson



JAN YNGWE

Jan Yngwe (b 1953), who has conducted the choir since 1978, is an internationally celebrated **composer and conductor of choral and orchestral music**.

Following studies in London, Salzburg and Siena, he has conducted top-ranking orchestras in Sweden such as the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra.

Jan Yngwe is an inspired lecturer, and is very much in demand as a conductor, composer and jury member as well.

At present, he is *professor emeritus* of Conducting and Choir at the Academy of Music and Drama at Gothenburg University.

His production as a composer (select member of the Society of Swedish Composers, FST, since 1988) is dominated by choral and orchestral music, and many of his works have been dedicated to the Vocal Art Ensemble of Sweden.

Jan Yngwe has been awarded two of the finest Swedish distinctions for musicians; the **Johannes Norrby Medal** (2004) for his achievements within the field of Swedish choral singing and **Choral Conductor of the Year 2015** for his superb artistic quality and devotion, both on the national and international stage of choral music.

THE RHYTHM ART DUO

The **Rhythm Art Duo**, Daniel Berg and Fredrik Duvling, started playing together in 1992. Their close collaboration with composers has led to a large number of world premieres and several radio and disc recordings. In addition to working with the duo, Daniel Berg is a professor in percussion at the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm and the Academy of Music and Drama at the University of Gothenburg, while Fredrik Duvling is first percussionist at the Gothenburg Opera.



Photo: Jon Liinason

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