THE FLOWERS OF THE GREAT WAR

James Scott

Le Quesnoy
This book can only be given as a gift. It cannot be sold. This limited edition of 360 copies has been supported by those mentioned in the following pages.

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THE FLOWERS OF THE GREAT WAR

CHRISTOPHER LATHAM

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A Flowers of War publication
Flowers of the Great War

Music, as we know, is transcendent. It can take us to another, sometimes spiritual place. Music, indeed art itself, can be uplifting, powerful and emotive. Flowers of the Great War, compiled by Christopher Latham, is a collection of works by musicians and painters who served from 1914 to 1918 and provides the reader with a connection and newfound appreciation of events that took place on the battlefield.

Flowers of the Great War aims to build cultural bridges between Australia and those nations affected by the War. It is bookended by The Gallipoli Symphony and The Diggers’ Requiem, written by our finest living composers who responded to these battlefield experiences in the universal language of music. This gives us another perspective on this significant period in Australia’s history and enriches our understanding of events more than a century later.

The collection features composers lost to war from more than 12 nations and was performed by musicians from 12 nations, among them Australia, France, Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. The musicians came together specifically for this series of concerts, the recordings of which make up most of this edition.

The Great War took the lives of more artists than in any other conflict. More than 100 years later and at a time of much unrest around the world, Flowers of the Great War is a salient reminder that peace must be our ultimate goal.

As the renowned German composer Paul Hindemith once said, ‘Music is meaningless noise unless it touches a receiving mind.’

His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia
Foreword

The Australian War Memorial is our national repository of memory for all the wars in which Australians have fought and the peacekeeping operations to which they were sent. Throughout the centenary period of the Great War, for the first time an Australian musician has walked our battlefields responding to those echoes. That journey is documented in this publication.

Music is a powerful speaking to the soul. The music here by living composers describes the battlegrounds of our history. The recovered works, often written on those battlefields in Gallipoli, France and Belgium, by composers such as Septimus Kelly, whose complete recorded edition is assembled here for the first time, remind us of the suffering, endurance and sometimes even transcendence experienced by citizen soldiers during the Great War.

The artists in this collection served their nations; the majority died, many of the rest were terribly damaged or maimed. Their sensitivity to sound and sensation and their service as stretcher bearers or infantry officers ensured a very high casualty rate. Their losses remain a terrible secret burden that through this collection will be revealed and released into the world like flocks of white doves into our skies.

I salute all Australia’s cultural institutions, funding bodies, philanthropists such as MML, and the international partners who helped enable the success of this project.

It is right and proper that music should finally join the great visual record created by our finest painters a century ago. Through this book, we are beginning the creation of a national repertoire for commemoration, enriching the Memorial’s collection.

Please take this gift and make good use of it. Receive it generously. Share it widely. Bring great peace in its name.

The Hon Brendan Nelson AO BMBS FRACP (Hon) FAMA FRSN
Director, Australian War Memorial
Donors

Dedications

The FS Kelly Complete Recordings Edition has been supported by his great niece, Carol Jones (née Kelly) and her family.

Lt Peter Latham’s chapter, Through Catharsis Comes Healing in Three Treasures plus recordings and typesetting, has been enabled by his daughter Valentine Korah and his grandchildren, Hermione Brown, Penelope Griffiths, Richard Korah, Margaret Abrahart, his great grandson, Duncan Abrahart and Gemma Latham.

This publication is dedicated to the countless unknown soldiers and women who died in service of their country by Carrillo Gantner.

This publication is also dedicated to all who helped to heal those damaged by war, by Bob Winnel and Anthony Patis.

The chapter Sacrifice is dedicated to Sapper Frederick Allen Smith (who served with the AIF on the Western front as a tunneller, including at Hill 60) by his granddaughter Marjorie Lindenmayer.

The chapter The Healers is dedicated to the late Dr Murree Allen (posted to Concord Repatriation Hospital in WWII where he treated returning soldiers) by his daughter Dianne Anderson.

The chapter Monet’s Flowers of War is dedicated to Lt Col Charles Denehy of the AIF (who served at Gallipoli and on the Western Front) and Group Captain Hugh Moore, DFC of the RAAF, (Malaya Emergency) by their great niece and daughter, Helen Moore.

In the Diggers’ Requiem, Elena Kats-Chernin’s The Silent Field is dedicated to Pte Harold Clifford Lunn of the Lancashire Fusiliers (died with no known grave, aged 19, 9 October 1917, Passchendaele) by his great niece Harriet Elvin.

FS Kelly’s Somme Lament is dedicated to the memory of Sgt William (Bill) Baigrie M.M., of the 1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders (British Army) by his relative, Colin Milner.

Elena Kats-Chernin’s Lacrimosa, the Fields of Bullecourt, is dedicated to the memory of LCpl Corporal John Riseley who died of wounds suffered there on 13 April 1917, by his niece, June Mary Riseley.

Graeme Koehne’s Pie Jesu is dedicated to Cpl Samuel Stanton Melick (2nd AIF, 1942-46, Kokoda Track 1942-43) and Pte Ilias Loukas (Greek Army, UN Peacekeeping Force, Korean War) by their children, Major General Greg Melick and Chrissa Loukas-Karlsson respectively.

Ross Edwards Eternal Light is dedicated to Signalman William Menzies Hutton of the 8th Division (taken POW at the fall of Singapore) by his daughter, Ann Ryan.

Nigel Westlake’s works in the Diggers’ Requiem are dedicated to the memory of the “Glass Soldier” - bandsman/stretcher-bearer Nelson H. Ferguson of the 15th Field Ambulance AIF by his grandson Don Farrands.

The final Prayer for Peace is dedicated to all who have worked to achieve a lasting peace, and is generously supported by Barbara Blackman.

A general contribution to the publication was made in the name of Gunner Anthony Walter Lister, Australian Artillery, who took part in the liberation of Villers-Bretonneux, by his grandson Peter Lister.

A general contribution was also made in the name of Sgt Thomas James Carmody, No 3 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps MSM and bar, on behalf of his son Francis James Carmody, his grandson John Lawrence Carmody and his wife Julie Carmody.

A general contribution was also made in the name of Warrant Officer 1st Class Walter Hugh White MSM, who served with the 5th Battalion at Gallipoli and with HQ 1st Div Artillery on the Western Front, on behalf of his grandson Dave Chalmers.
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The Governor General of Australia

Foreword
The Director, Australian War Memorial

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HE TRAUMA CAUSED by the two World Wars, in particular the Great War, created an enormous fork in the road in classical music. We lost performers and composers in droves, but the real damage was done to the living. The composers who survived came home traumatised, and their music contained the scream of everything they had seen. The grieving audience turned away from them, needing something familiar to be comforted by. The Classical and Modern musical worlds separated, like an amoeba splitting in half. Modern musicians found a cutting edge context that did not allow the past - a one way freeway where you couldn’t turn back. Meanwhile the classical audience turned its back on the new, creating a museum culture that focused solely on the classics, endlessly repeating this frozen-in-time music from before the Great War.

Strangely, given this crack in history so profoundly shaped the course of music, the music actually written during the Great War is a sadly unexplored country. We rarely consider that music making occurred every day in the trenches on both sides - in the form of singing and communal singalongs, but also through organised band performances, and by composers quietly notating their works. While popular songs from the war have been explored, including in our Songs of the Great War recordings and Re-sounding Gallipoli, surprisingly little work has been done on the numerous compositions by serving musicians.

The most surprising thing about music written by serving soldiers, is just how beautiful it is. Often sunny or nostalgic gems - miniatures being the most common form. Works for piano, songs; sometimes a violin sonata, a trio or quartet. Circumstances rarely allowed deep concentration on a single idea for months at a time, so there are few large scale works, with some notable exceptions however.

An artist’s response to death is always profound. The music the composers write is gloriously life affirming. The images they paint, somehow even more luminous. We created a triptych of programs about Great War painters for the National Gallery of Australia, where we transformed Franz Marc’s final wartime sketches into paintings in The Man Who Painted Blue Horses, celebrated Monet’s great last Waterliilies in Monet’s Flowers of War and profiled all the great painters who lost their lives in The Lost Jewels.

Many of the composers in the trenches who were killed would write a final serene work that suggests an acceptance of death. These quiet mini-Requims make a deep impression. We have assembled many of them in the collection and have explored death, wounding, trauma and healing in Three Treasures, The Healers, and in the final poem-parable, The Boy Who Loved Heaven.

Each project was created for the centenary of a battle: Gallipoli (The Gallipoli Symphony and Re-sounding Gallipoli), Verdun (The Man Who Painted Blue Horses), the Somme (Sacrifice), 3rd Ypres (The Healers, which told that story from a nurse’s point of view), Villers-Bretonneux and the Armistice (The Diggers’ Requiem). The first and last of those were newly commissioned works by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs and the Australian War Memorial. All the other programs were curated from the music written in that battle. Cultural recovery was central to this task: researching young composers, finding their works and typesetting them, arranging them for the forces involved. We tried to present a good or great work by every composer who was wounded, killed or damaged, and forgotten.

At the heart of that ambition, we marked the century of the death of Frederick Septimus Kelly by starting a complete works recording edition which has been completed with this publication, with Therese Radic’s biography of Kelly to follow. Australia’s greatest cultural loss of WWI, Kelly is now able to come home, with the equivalent of seven CDs of his music being made available in this collection.

We give thanks for the support from the French, German, Austrian, Portuguese and Belgian Embassies, British High Commission and the European Union. The Flowers of War has also been supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Defence, Australian War Memorial, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, National Gallery of Australia, Tasmanian Symphony, Australia Council for the Arts and artsACT. I also would like to acknowledge Stuart and Sons whose pianos we used extensively. Most generously, Metal Manufactures Ltd has provided the funding for my Artist-in-Residence position at the AWM, and to create and present this publication.

This music has a great secret to teach us. It speaks to life, love and sacrifice. These are the last grapes before the frost, and their wine is distinctive. I welcome you all into this great garden. Please take the time to smell its flowers.

Christopher Latham, Director
The Flowers of War