



THE CHOIR LAB

DE PROFUNDIS: OUT OF OUR DEPTH

What do you get when you put choristers in front of a studio mic? Not *The Voice*...

The Choir of St James' disrobes to sing a collection of pop, dance, chamber and prog songs.

The Choir Lab is an experiment to see what happens when the classically trained choristers of The Choir of St James' are placed outside their comfort zone. The Choir Lab's singers sing sacred classical music every week, and whilst some spend their spare time singing in musicals, teaching, or playing jazz, others have never been to a pop concert or have never sang solo in a studio environment.

All songs are written by Brooke Shelley, who is a classically trained composer and has written a number of works for choirs. She has provided vocals for Nick Littlemore (Empire of the Sun, Pnau) and most recently collaborated with Littlemore for his The Two Leaves project; *Evening of the Sky* was released on 22 September 2017. Brooke has also written for and sang in her prog rock band, Resonaxis.

The idea for The Choir Lab came from Littlemore when Brooke was in the studio recording vocals for him. She complained about her own lack of vocal ability, wishing she had the talent of the other choristers in The Choir of St James'. Littlemore suggested she write songs for the choristers, and so Brooke went about writing works for specific singers in the Choir, past and present.

The result is a set of songs influenced by a variety of styles with melodies individually crafted to suit (or push) each singer. In addition to the singers being out of their comfort zone, Brooke also forced herself to write in styles she was not used to.

Does the experiment work or are they out of their depth? It's up to you, the listener, to decide. But you will definitely feel a sense of journey and discovery when you listen to these songs and know this isn't simply an album that fits into a pre-cut commercial mould: it is a deliberate attempt to take both the singers and the songwriter out of their comfort zone and to see if they sink or swim!

A little bit about the lead vocalists who have sung with or currently sing in The Choir of St James':

Joseph Twist (Tenor) - a film composer based in LA.

Andrew O'Connor (Bass) - sings in Australia's best vocal ensemble, The Song Company.

Josi Ellem (Soprano) - Opera student at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Owen Elsley (Tenor) - emerging composer, sings musical theatre, Physics/Maths graduate.

Isabella Woods (Soprano) - freelance proofreader and writer.

Helen Hughson (Contralto) - Economist, studying in the UK.

Rob Hansen (Baritone) - Arts Administrator in NYC.

Luke Iredale (Tenor) - Artistic Coordinator at Musica Viva, guitarist and singer in the band, Greyscale.

Liza Lilli (Soprano) - German language teacher.

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