

Institution: University of Aberdeen
Unit of Assessment: UoA 35 - Music, Dance and Performing Arts
Title of case study: <i>Ubi Caritas: A Body of Original Compositions for Chorus</i>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>This case study explores the way in which unforeseen, serendipitous impact can lead to planned and managed impact. Mealor's research in choral music led to serendipitous impact when a student group's performance of <i>Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal</i> was heard by HRH The Duchess of Cambridge. Unforeseen impact on one person led to an invitation to write <i>Ubi caritas</i> for the 2011 Royal Wedding. Alongside all the music performed at the ceremony, this piece reached a worldwide audience through its dissemination on broadcast media. Unlike the rest of the music, this particular piece has achieved impact on a global scale.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Professor Mealor's body of choral music has cultivated a distinctly British style of composition that puts practicality and 'use' alongside innovative linear and horizontal harmonic investigations. Like his near contemporaries, Gabriel Jackson (b. 1962) and Tarik O'Regan (b. 1978), Mealor borrows from ancient and modern English choral traditions, combining Tudor, baroque and twentieth-century techniques to create a distinctive and individual voice. The sense of Britishness is further revealed in his affinity for English, Welsh and Scots poetry and his desire to communicate the emotional content of his chosen texts through a specific lyrical sense of musical expression which could be argued to have begun in the music of Kenneth Leighton and William Walton, later developed by Michael Berkeley, Richard Rodney Bennett, James MacMillan and Judith Weir.</p> <p>Salient features of his developing compositional research and method during the period 2008 to 2011 are the bringing together of fluent linear part-writing within a contrapuntal texture (<i>Locus Iste, Ave Maria, Salvator mundi</i>), textural manipulation (<i>O vos omnes, Crucifixus, Salvator Mundi</i>), and structural symmetry and balance, especially across and throughout large choral cycles (<i>Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal, Crucifixus</i> and <i>Praise</i>). Further preoccupations emerged in later works, and include now a prevalence of modality combined with canonic imitation (<i>...and profoundest midnight...</i>), set alongside metric shifts, extensive use of tone clusters (<i>Praise, The Farthest Shore</i>) and the use of more aggressive, driving repetitive rhythms (<i>The Farthest Shore</i>).</p> <p>Mealor has combined this developing harmonic and rhythmic language with a gradual, conscious 'stripping away' of the dense, multi-layered vocal part writing (or multiple-divisi textures) of his earlier works in an attempt to create a more focused linear-driven, rather than moment-driven, musical narrative and a freer, lighter choral texture which allows for greater emphasis on the text. Works from 2003 onwards, including the choral cycle on rose texts (<i>Now Sleeps The Crimson Petal</i>, 2010), exemplify this research, with the first and last movements of the cycle in particular showing the importance of 'line-driven' musical narrative that is 'lighter' in choral texture with fewer vocal parts and clear in its text-setting, whilst retaining Mealor's stylistic harmonic voice.</p>
<p>3. References to the research</p> <p>Key Research Outputs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>A Tender Light</i> (London: Novello, 2011): includes <i>Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal, O vos omnes, Locus iste, Ave Maria</i> and <i>Ubi caritas</i> 2. <i>Salvator mundi</i> (London: Novello, 2012) 3. <i>Crucifixus</i> (London: Novello, 2012) 4. The premiere of <i>Ubi caritas</i> at the wedding of HRH The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge by the Choirs of Westminster Abbey and The Chapel Royal, St James's Palace conducted by James O'Donnell, 29 April 2011, and the live broadcast on TV and radio stations throughout the world including: BBC TV, ITV, SKY TV, American Public TV, BBC Radio,

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Classic FM, Canadian TV & Radio, Australian TV & Radio, New Zealand TV & Radio, etc, 29 and 30 April 2011, with subsequent broadcasts throughout 2011 and 2012 on BBC Radio 3, KUSC Los Angeles WQXR New York, and Classic FM.

5. The commercial recording of *Ubi caritas* included on *The Royal Wedding Album* (Decca, 2011) .
6. A further recording of *Ubi caritas* alongside other works by **Mealor** sung by Tenebrae and accompanied by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra on *Paul Mealor – A Tender Light* (Decca, 2011), and positive reviews received in nationally and internationally recognised broadsheets.

Evidence of Quality:

The consideration of **Mealor's** *Ubi caritas* outside the world of the media and within a scholarly context provides evidence of its research quality and the subsequent commissions resulting from the impact of its première have made a further impact on the development of the musical language of contemporary sacred choral music in an immediate way. In the book, *The Musician's Trust* by James Jordan (Professor of Music & Choral Activities at Rider University, NJ, USA), published by GIA Publications, Inc, Chicago 2013, Jordan cites *Ubi caritas* as 'a turning point in the creation of sacred music; one where the solitary voice of plainchant met the twenty-first century in an innovative and, for once, successful way, inspiring composers across the United States into action'. This supports the contention that **Mealor's** choral output has a significance in terms of its reception within the academic domain of choral composers, especially in the USA.

Mealor's work has been featured in major broadsheet newspapers, musical blogs, radio and television programmes focusing on the musical and spiritual impact of his *Ubi caritas*. In his article, *Paul Mealor: The Still, Small Voice of Calm* (The Guardian, 1 December 2011) The Reverend Canon Michael Hampel writes that 'there's a challenge to the destructive culture of instant gratification... Paul Mealor has heard that challenge, but his music makes a challenge of its own to the church: that gentle insistence and calm persuasion are more Christ-like than the arguments of synods'.

4. Details of the impact

Mealor's compositional research has aspired to create a new musical language which can be both engaging and accessible to twenty-first century choirs and audiences, whilst embodying choral techniques informed by English music, renaissance and baroque choral techniques. As a result of this, he was commissioned by the John Armitage Memorial Trust (a body at the heart of commissioning contemporary music for student and school groups) to compose a setting of English poetry, *Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal*, for chorus. Following this, **Mealor** consciously created the potential for impact by recording the work with the amateur choir, *Con anima*, on *Mealor: Stabat Mater* (Campion, 2010). Serendipitous impact occurred when an amateur, student choir was heard singing it at St Andrews University by HRH The Duchess of Cambridge. The impact of a work on one person thus resulted in the subsequent invitation to adapt a movement from the work for her wedding to HRH Prince William and *Ubi caritas* was the resulting piece. It was performed at the Royal Wedding, broadcast around the world to an audience of two and a half billion people and recorded on a number of commercial compact discs.

Numerous international performances then followed by school, community and student choirs – especially in the UK and USA – creating an impact on amateur music-making and in the domain of (usually) non-formal education (in the case of school groups). It also had a cultural and spiritual impact, enriching liturgy and impacting upon the process of worship for performers and congregations; the piece entered the liturgy of Anglican and Catholic churches and cathedrals, providing innovative music for congregations at religious meetings and events.

Ubi caritas, unlike the other music at the Royal wedding ceremony, had a global impact, and through managed impact by the composer, publisher (Novello) and record company (Decca) created and sustained a spiritual, cultural and educational impact as more religious, amateur and church choirs subsequently purchased, performed and recorded the music. In turn this led to

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further commissions for the composer, commercial recordings of his music by professional choirs and orchestras and multiple broadcasts of his work over the next two years creating a sustainable cultural, spiritual and economic impact, which can be measured by sales figures from the publisher Novello (over 50,000 copies of *Ubi caritas*) and record company, Decca (over 1,000,000 CDs/downloads).

The recordings have themselves impacted on the wider world of the media and have entered our collective consciousness, with the music being used in TV documentaries and programmes. *Ubi caritas* featured on, amongst others, the sit-com, *Rev* and the BBC Two documentaries, *Masons of God* and *The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II*, 2012, thereby reaching large audiences outside the normal concert and religious contexts.

Other artists have adapted and arranged the music for various combinations. Wind band, brass band, organ, flute and harp, and voice and orchestra versions of *Ubi caritas* have been published by Novello and Studio Music with further recordings being made by Classic FM (Sir James Galway, flute and Claire Jones, harp) and Decca (Laura Wright, soprano and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra), enabling the music to impact on musical groups beyond the original intention and reach, becoming part of a wider cultural consciousness.

Because of its unusual harmonic language, intricate part-writing and extreme registers, *Ubi caritas* has been used in courses for youth choirs and for young conductors, with the American Choral Directors Association and Association of British Choral Directors setting it on the syllabus for participants in 2012, thereby impacting on educational courses for young conductors.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Organisations from whom evidence may be sought to corroborate the facts mentioned in section 4:

1. **Sales figures of Sheet Music: over 50,000 copies (2011 to date).**
Confirmation can be sought from Kate Johnson, Creative Manager, Music Sales Limited
2. **Sales figures for CD & download sales: over 1,000,000 units (2011 to date).**
Confirmation can be sought from Gavin Bayliss, Product Manager, Decca Records
3. Link to a YouTube performance of the 'live' event
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQE4ryqdvMg>
4. *Ubi caritas* has been reviewed and discussed in over 38,000 newspaper, musical blogs and magazine articles and in a number of academic articles and a recent book, *The Musician's Trust* by James Jordon (Professor of Music, Rider University, NJ, USA), published by GIA, Chicago. There are numerous reviews by respected music critics from major international newspapers and magazines. A number of the most important, international reviews by major critics and commentators on music that corroborate some of the information in section 4 are contained in the accompanying **Press Pack**, available at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/music/uploads/files/REF/mealor_pressbook.pdf and available from the HEI on request. They represent a small sample of the publicity surrounding *Ubi caritas*. Reviews of *A Tender Light* occur in, among others: Gramophone Magazine (Siôn; 21/3/12), BBC Music Magazine (Blain; 1/3/12) and Limelight Classical Music Magazine, Australia (Day; 8/5/12).