

The 1912 University Anthem

The University Anthem was first performed at the Opening Ceremony of the University held on Monday, March 11, 1912, in front of the then newly completed Main Building. It was performed by the Choir of the St John's Cathedral, the Chorus of the Philharmonic Society, and the full Military Band of the 1st Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. The music was composed by Denman Fuller and the Latin verses by Cecil Clementi. The Anthem was used at formal University occasions until the 1930s, but after the war it was largely forgotten, preserved in the archives as an historical curiosity that could be seen but seldom heard. To celebrate the University's centenary, this 100-year-old anthem has been revived. The music has been reconstructed from the original parts, re-orchestrated and recorded, bringing an old tradition back to life for a new century.



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Hearing the Anthem will transport you back a hundred years to Edwardian Britain. This is music of the Empire, with the pomp and circumstance of both the army (provided in 1912 by the military band), and the church (courtesy of the Choir of the St John's Cathedral). The work is not an anthem in the sense of a 'national anthem' that can be easily sung by all, but takes its bearings from the church anthem, with Latin verses that speak of the light of knowledge shining forth from the East.



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Bringing this work back to life was a complex task. First, a score had to be put together like a jigsaw from the original parts in order to get a 'picture' of the original. From this sounding image, it was evident that this anthem, designed for an outdoor occasion, was not a masterpiece in orchestration but volume. There are two ways to revive the musical past: to reconstruct a historical sound-world or to re-interpret the original in the light of the present. Although the former would have been interesting, it was clear that the original arrangement would benefit from some refinement if it were not to remain a historical curiosity. After all, an open-air anthem with its necessarily blunt instrumentation would lack the expected nuances when reproduced as an 'indoor' recording. Moreover, the military sounds and ecclesiastical tones seemed out of place for Hong Kong in the twenty-first century. So the Anthem was not only revived, but given new set of orchestral colours by Dr Chan Hing-yan, Chairperson of the Department of Music.

A recording also fixes for posterity what had always been an occasional work. So it was critical to find local musicians of the highest calibre to record the Anthem. One hundred and fifty musicians were needed. The chorus, directed by HKU alumnus, Ronnie Cheng, was made up of members of the Union Choir of the University and the DBS DGS Senior Mixed Choir. The Hong Kong Sinfonietta provided the orchestral accompaniment. The Anthem was performed and recorded in City Hall on May 18, 2011 under the baton of the University Artist Yip Wing-sie.

To bring this forgotten work back to life requires more than a reconstruction of an original performance; it needs a dedicated team that can capture the spirit of HKU, animating the past with such skill, sensitivity and musical brilliance that the music brings the audience itself to life. I believe that this historic recording of the University Anthem captures this spirit.

*Professor Daniel K L Chua
Head, School of Humanities*



The first page of the University Anthem printed by Novello
諾維羅有限公司印刷《校歌》歌譜之首頁

Mr Denman Fuller's manuscript for Clarinet in Bb.
校歌作曲者傅勒先生之手稿

University Anthem

Finis hic operum! Domus
Stat potens Academia,
Unde ab occiduis recens
Ampliore flust plagis
Mox doctrina meatu.

Fons ubi est sapientia?
Et, Scientia, qua lates?
Pontus has negat in suis
Subditas latebris, negat
Has se Terra tenere.

En! Dei reverentia
Hac scientia! Qui malis
Abstinet, sapit. Hoc diu
Munere assidue valentem
Exercete iuventam!

Pandite ostia! Iam Deo
Gratias agimus. Dei
Semper auxilio novum
Splendeat sapientia
Lumen ex Oriente! AMEN

Lyrics by Sir Cecil Clementi

Here end our labours!
Strong stand the buildings of the University,
whence modern learning soon will flow
from western land in more ample course.

Where is the fountain of wisdom?
And how, O science, art thou hidden?
The Sea denies that these are concealed
in his hiding-place
and the Earth denies that she contains them.

Lo! The fear of God—that is science!
Whoso abstains from evil, he is wise.
Long and earnestly may ye train
youth's vigour in this duty!

Fling open the gates!
Now we give thanks to God.
By God's grace may the new light of wisdom
ever shine out from the East! AMEN

Translator: Unknown (1912)

Producer: Professor Daniel K L Chua
Orchestration: Dr Chan Hing-Yan
Conductor: Yip Wing-sie
Choir Master: Ronnie Cheng
Performers: Hong Kong Sinfonietta
Hong Kong University Students' Union Choir
DBS DGS Senior Mixed Choir
Project Manager: Sharon Lu
Recording Engineer: Clement Pong

*“Strong stand the buildings of the University
Where modern learning soon will flow.....”*

University Anthem



MAIN BUILDING
Opened in 1912
Declared a monument in 1984



HUNG HING YING BUILDING
Opened in 1919
Declared a monument in 1995



UNIVERSITY HALL
Built around 1860
Declared a monument in 1995



TANG CHI NGONG BUILDING
Opened in 1931
Declared a monument in 1995

Gala Dinner guests will receive a miniature of one of these buildings as a souvenir.