A long queue greeted me for the Corinthian Singers’ traditional Good Friday concert at the Radford Auditorium at midday last week. Once the near-capacity crowd was admitted to the auditorium, we were treated to a thoughtful program of reflective *a capella* music lasting a little less than an hour, including works by Renaissance and Baroque masters along with some more recent compositions, including two by Adelaide composers.

The concert opened with Thomas Tallis’s bracing motet ‘O Lord in thee is all my trust’, sung with obvious relish by the 24-voice choir. The program, avoiding the hackneyed with no sacrifice of accessibility, then followed the stages of Preparation, Premonition, Crucifixion, The Sacrifice and the Culmination, with Walford Davies’ hymn ‘O sons and daughters’ forming an optimistic epilogue. Highlights included Saint-Saens’ ‘Ave Verum Corpus’, an ‘O Vos Omnes’ by Pablo Casals, and Durufle’s ‘Tantum Ergo’. JS Bach’s chorale ‘Jesu, der du meine Seele’ provided a dignified meditation on the painful mysteries of the Christian faith.

For the Crucifixion section, Adelaide composer Bruce Stewart was represented by a powerful piece titled ‘The Ninth Hour’, and the high point of the afternoon was the world premiere of Carl Crossin’s ‘Stabat Mater’, written for the choir and dedicated to the guest conductor for the day, Jillian McGregor. A solemn and poignant 5-part motet, this piece has a particularly affecting middle section, with the upper parts descending in brief, sighing phrases on the Latin text, ‘O quam tristis et afflicta fuit illa benedicta mater’ - ‘Oh how sad and afflicted was that blessed mother’, over a sustained pedal note in the bass line. This lovely piece deserves to become a regular feature of the Holy Week choral repertoire.

Corinthian Singers’ Christmas concert in St Peter’s Cathedral last year, under their regular conductor Emma Horwood, was sublime, with consummate discipline and the most exquisite pianissimos I have ever heard from a choir in a live performance. The acoustics in the Radford Auditorium are not quite as kind, and there was the occasional raggedness. But overall their Good Friday concert was a lovely way to mark this solemn day in the Christian calendar, with a well-chosen, interesting program performed with perfect intonation and great feeling.