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BRIEF AUST CHAMB

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Sound wall built from Estonia

CATHERINE LAMBERT

Rehearsing in front of Arvo Part is always an honour for singer Henry Tiisma. The bass member of the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir is happy to count the revered Estonian composer as a friend.

“He is a celebrated national treasure,” Tiisma says. “We are very proud to be performing with him and for him.”

Part is one of the most distinctive composers of the last 50 years and represents new classical music. Musicians as diverse as Bjork, Michael Stipe of R.E.M. and PJ Harvey credit him as a major artistic influence.

But it is the Estonian Philharmonic who are the foremost interpreters of Part’s choral music which is otherworldly in its depth and range.

“He’s a timid man but intimidating,” says Tiisma. “We don’t get anything too wrong in the choir but he can help point out when he punctuates something or explain what he was thinking at the time of writing to help us understand the atmosphere. It’s a great privilege and honour to be the guinea pig for him.”

The choir is reuniting with the Australian Chamber Orchestra for the first time in 20 years. The concerts will feature Bach’s Lutheran motets as well as Part’s mystical explorations of the Orthodox faith before reaching the climax, Part’s *Berliner Messe*.

For Tiisma, a trained civil engineer, the chance for a full-time career in music is a dream come true, let alone the chance to travel to Australia.

“Music has always been my

passion and is now a huge part of my everyday life and it is an important part of the Estonian culture. Small nations stuck next to a superpower have to cling on to everything that is truly their own,” he says.

**SEE: ARVO PART & JS BACH
ESTONIA PHILHARMONIC CHAMBER
CHOIR AND ACO, ADELAIDE TOWN
HALL, FEBRUARY 12**



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MONUMENTAL: Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir will perform with the ACO at Adelaide Town Hall.