

From Paraclete Press and Encore Publications come two excellently crafted compositions by Dr June Nixon:

**Oculi Omnium - SATB a capella, ATB a capella. (Paraclete Press)**

**On Easter-morn, ere Break of Day mixed voices and organ. (Encore Publications)**

*Oculi Omnium*, as set by Charles Wood, is known to thousands of choirs worldwide and has sustained justifiable popularity. To present an alternative to Wood's charming music requires a composer steeped in the world of choral music, and perhaps, particularly imbued with the Anglican Choral tradition and style.

June Nixon has composed numerous works over many decades, written in a captivating manner and demonstrating an innate understanding of choral harmony and style. Her setting of *Oculi Omnium* is a fine alternative to the Woods setting, and is available in either a four-part (SATB) or three-part (ATB) version. It is a delightful miniature.

Diligent choir directors will note the need for discreet basses at the beginning, as a closely set first chord unfolds into expressive harmony, with two or three chords here and there requiring divided parts.

This lush setting, like Woods', is short and beautiful, and whilst it is melodically accessible, sopranos will need to float in a controlled but atmospheric way at the "...Domine, Amen..." section. The music is harmonically and technically approachable, but may require a little more effort than the Charles Wood piece. However, the opportunity to sing a new setting of this text is certainly to be embraced. It is equally effective as an introit or short

anthem and is a more than welcome addition to the contemporary traditional repertoire.

A wry sense of lightness is sometimes apparent in June Nixon's compositions. This underlying sense of enjoyment is apparent in *On Easter Morn*, a delightful Easter Carol, dedicated to Ross Cobb and the choir of St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney. Those familiar with Christmas Carols from King's College, Cambridge, may remember the inclusion of June Nixon's outstanding setting of *The Holly and The Ivy* using an English traditional melody – a very welcome distraction from the familiar well-worn tune. *On Easter Morn* also uses a flowing English traditional melody, immediately engaging and singable. The harmony is atmospheric and the music offers a range of manageable challenges for a competent choir.

The carol alternates brief organ interludes with verses for choir, unison voices, and a short section for sopranos alone. The accompaniment requires neat and sprightly playing, and registration suggestions throughout indicate the mood. There is a splendid opportunity for a solo reed to enjoy a brief outing near the end. It is a brisk and immediately attractive piece, not without a hint of poignancy in the minor/modal style of the melody.

The wide-ranging compass in the soprano part will keep alert any Paschal sopranos who had a late Easter Vigil the night before. The carol also includes brief references to an Easter hymn tune familiar to those fortunate enough to still enjoy traditional tunes. You will have to buy copies to find out which tune!

*John Rivers is a retired freelance musician, who learned organ with the late Lindsay O'Neill FRCO. Some years ago, he made the only recording of the historic 1877 Willis organ in Wesley Church Box Hill.*

for Ross Cobb and the Choir of St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney

**Oculi Omnium**

Psalm 145 verse 15 June Nixon

Moderato ♩ = 76 *mp*

Soprano  
O - cu - li om - ni - um, in te sper - ant Do - mi - ne, et

Alto  
O - cu - li om - ni - um, in te sper - ant Do - mi - ne, et

Tenor  
O - cu - li om - ni - um, in te sper - ant Do - mi - ne, et

Bass  
O - cu - li om - ni - um, in te sper - ant Do - mi - ne, et

**On Easter-morn, ere Break of Day**

Text: Greek office of Easter Lauds English traditional melody  
 Trans. G. R. Woodward (1844-1934) arranged by June Nixon

Brisk, with fervour

SOPRANO  
ALTO

TENOR  
BASS

ORGAN  
Sw. *mf*  
Man.  
Ped. 16', 8'

1 On Eas-ter morn, ere break of day The three Saint Ma - ries.

Sw.  
Man.