

October Events

Australia Ensemble @UNSW

Free lunch hour concert

Tuesday October 11, 2016

1.10 - 2.00pm

Leighton Hall, Scientia Building

Connession: *Disco toccata*

Munro: *Clarinet Quintet*

Bartok: *Suite paysanne hongroise*

Brahms: *Hungarian Dance Suite*

Free piano masterclass

Thursday October 13, 2016

1.10 - 2.00pm

Leighton Hall, Scientia Building

Pianist Ian Munro works with two

young performers Diana Zhang,

Daniel Guo and Halina Leung

Free, all welcome

Australia Ensemble @UNSW

Subscription Concert 6, 2016

Saturday October 15, 2016 at 8pm

Sir John Clancy Auditorium

A Flock of Stars

Connession: *Techno-Parade*

Smalley: *Piano Quintet*

Debussy: *Noël des enfants*

Williams: *A Flock of Stars*

Twist: *Jubilate Deo*

Stanhope: *Songs of Innocence and Joy*

Brahms: *String Sextet in G Op.36*

with the Sydney Children's Choir

(Director: Lyn Williams)

Collegium Musicum Choir

Sunday October 23, 2016 at 5pm

Sir John Clancy Auditorium

MOZART: 'Credo' Mass

KODALY: Three choral pieces

KODALY: Missa Brevis

AE subscribers 15% discount on

pre-booked tickets

p. 02 9385 4874

www.music.unsw.edu.au

The voices of today

The Australia Ensemble will be joined by the magnificent young choristers of the Sydney Children's Choir for a series of works in October, led by their tireless Artistic Director Lyn Williams. FRANCIS GREEP gives some insight into the story behind this incredible organisation.

When Lyn Williams OAM created the Sydney Children's Choir in 1989, she wanted audiences to experience the unique and captivating sound of a well-trained children's choir. Since then, the organisation has grown to include Sydney Children's Choir, Gondwana National Choirs and Gondwana Indigenous Children's Choir, captivating audiences across Australia and the world. Gondwana Choirs now comprises the most accomplished choral groups of young people in Australia. The organisation is now synonymous with performance excellence and has a well-deserved reputation for the highest standards of young people's choral music in Australia and internationally.

Lyn Williams' tireless work as the Artistic Director and Founder of Gondwana Choirs over 27 years has seen her sphere of influence on Australia's artistic landscape touch young musicians across the country in her creation, artistic leadership and day-to-day involvement in the three arms of Gondwana Choirs that she has created. Her exceptional skill in working with young people is recognised internationally for its high artistic quality and ground-breaking innovation.

Lyn has conducted most major professional choirs and orchestras in Australia, including the Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Australian Youth Orchestra and Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and has been Music Director and Conductor for a number of major

Sydney Children's Choir





Artistic Director and Founder of Gondwana Choirs,
Lyn Williams OAM

events, including the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games.

The Sydney Children's Choir proudly represents Sydney as the most prestigious and well-known vocal program for young singers of school age. Founded as a single ensemble in 1989 by Lyn Williams OAM, it now comprises approximately 500 young people, comprising of performing choirs and training ensembles. The performing ensembles are instantly recognised for their crystal clear sound and known for their precision and discipline, developing through regular training a courageous and compelling performance style.

The singers are intimately connected to contemporary and traditional repertoire throughout their training. They are deeply engaged in the creation and presentation of new work at all levels of the program, through collaborations with emerging and established composers. The body of work created over the past 26 years for the Sydney Children's Choir is now integral to Australian choral education, and has supported the development of many Australian composers.

Sydney Children's Choir regularly collaborate with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and other leading ensembles, with conductors including Charles Dutoit, Michael Tilson-

Thomas, David Robertson and Vladimir Ashkenazy. They have performed for many high profile events including the Sydney Olympics Opening Ceremony, World Youth Day, Sydney Festival and the Youtube Symphony Orchestra. International tours of the choir have included Japan, Finland and China. In 2013, the choir undertook its 10th and longest tour to Europe, with performances at the prestigious choral festival *Polyfollia* in Normandy; Notre Dame, Paris; Palau de la Música, Barcelona; and in London at Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral. In 2015 the choir toured to mainland China and Hong Kong.

Singers from all three arms of the organisation, Sydney Children's Choir, Gondwana National Choirs and Gondwana Indigenous Children's Choir, have come together on several occasions, most notably in 2014 with Sydney Symphony Orchestra for the world premiere performances of *Jandamarra: Sing for the Country* by Paul Stanhope.

Gondwana Choirs has received many awards and recognition of their work, including the 2015 APRA/AMCOS award for Excellence by an Organisation for its artistic program in our 25th year, and significant contribution to Australian music since 1989. Lyn Williams OAM was named in the 100 Women of Influence in 2015, and is engaged nationally and internationally for her expertise in choral training.

Alumnus of Gondwana Choirs are now employed by the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Sydney and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras and Opera Australia, and regularly appear at Pinchgut Opera, Covent Garden, Glyndebourne Festival and the Deutsche Oper Berlin. They contribute to Australia's cultural life as composers, conductors, music teachers, pop artists, arts managers, board members of Australian arts organisations and Gondwana Choirs staff. They are medical professionals, business leaders and social justice advocates, and their lifelong love of music fostered by Gondwana Choirs draws them to become the next generation of arts philanthropists and audiences.

The Sydney Children's Choir will perform four works with the Australia Ensemble on Saturday October 15, by Debussy, Paul Stanhope, Joseph Twist, and Lyn Williams' A Flock of Stars.

Taking a final bow

Many will have seen the announcement this week by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra that long-serving concertmaster Dene Olding will be stepping down from the role, with his final performance being Beethoven's Symphony no.9 on October 29.

Perhaps as a parting gift, the SSO has offered Dene the title of Concertmaster Emeritus, having served as co-concertmaster for almost 30 years.

Fortunately for Sydney audiences, Dene is not retiring completely, but will continue in his role as violinist of the Australia Ensemble here at UNSW, to be enjoyed throughout the season in 2017.



Music for mental wellness

On Wednesday September 14, UNSW's Burgundian Consort performed some short accompanied works at NIDA as part of an exhibition *Keeping the body in mind: Recovery narratives* presented in partnership with the Black Dog Institute. The Black Dog Institute is a not-for-profit organisation, internationally recognised as a pioneer in the identification, prevention and treatment of mental illnesses and the promotion of wellbeing.

The Burgundian Consort sang Wilbye's *Draw on, sweet night*, Gorecki's *Ciemna nocka, ciemna* and Kodaly's exquisite *Esti dal*, in advance of their evening recital, *Draw on, sweet night*, on Wednesday 21st September at 7.30pm.

<http://www.music.unsw.edu.au/choral/burgundian-consort/draw-on-sweet-night>

For the love of new music

SONIA MADDOCK

When Executive Director of Financial Operations at UNSW, Jonathan Blakeman, first proposed a UNSW prize for contemporary music composition, Professor of Music and leading composer Andrew Schultz was quick to support the idea. Sadly, this proposal came in the last year of Blakeman's life, but the resultant prize serves as an ideal legacy for a man who was a great supporter of contemporary classical music and creative pursuits. Schultz established the Blakeman National Composition Prize through UNSW's School of the Arts and Media with \$5000 awarded to the best work, selected through an anonymous process by a panel of three, and the winning work to be performed in the 2017 subscription season of the Australia Ensemble.

Blakeman was on the board of contemporary music group Ensemble Offspring and a supporter of flautist Lamorna Nightingale as a contemporary music artist. He donated his 4000-strong CD collection of almost entirely contemporary instrumental music to UNSW, shared between the UNSW Library, Music Performance Unit, and staff and students of the School of the Arts and Media. His passion for new music was utterly sincere, so it seems fitting that a contemporary chamber music composition prize be a lasting tribute to his time at UNSW.

Given the anonymity of the process, it was a great surprise to all involved that the winning work of the inaugural Blakeman National Composition Prize was written by a current Australia Ensemble subscriber. Mark Grandison has long been Director of Music at Kambala, although previously studied composition with Richard Meale in Adelaide. He is an accomplished composer as well as music educator, whose works have been commissioned by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, Adelaide Chamber Orchestra, Nexus, and Queensland Orchestra. His considerable experience in music education has also led to commissions from the Sydney Youth Orchestra, and numerous pieces for the Kambala School Orchestra.



Composer Mark Grandison's work Riffraction will be performed in the Australia Ensemble's 2017 season

Grandison refers to his own youth as having been absorbed in popular and jazz music, and having influence over his rhythmic language. The prize-winning work scored for clarinet, string quartet and piano is indeed based on funk-inspired rhythmic nuances which are progressively distorted or refracted, hence the pun-based title *Riffraction*. He does give it context perhaps closer to the usual concert hall experience: "In spirit, *Riffraction* is a scherzo, though one whose form and temperament is twice interrupted. Three brisk riff-based sections are separated by two hovering interludes, darker in character and offering temporary respite from the otherwise manic surface energy."

Although not a premiere performance, this will be the first of Grandison's works to appear in a subscription season of the Australia Ensemble, and certainly the first work of a current subscriber to make its way into the programming. We look forward to hearing more from Mark in 2017 in the lead up to the performance of *Riffraction* in the fourth program of the year on August 19, which also includes Roussel's *Divertissement*, Dring's Trio for flute, oboe and piano, and Schubert's monumental Octet.

<http://www.music.unsw.edu.au/australia-ensemble/season-2017-voyages/schubert-octet>



Professor Andrew Schultz awarded the inaugural Blakeman National Composition Prize to Mark Grandison on August 13

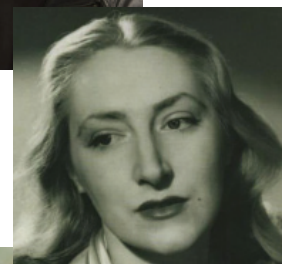
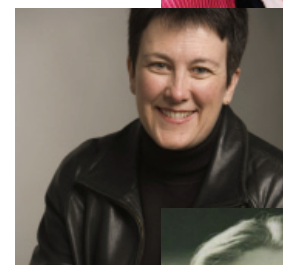
Composing women: a brighter future?

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) is presented in the history books as the first composer of the Western Canon. What is so remarkable about this? Well, quite remarkably, she was a woman who established a significant creative output despite living in a male-dominated, feudal world. And it's taken close to 900 years to get the ball rolling again. In the 18th and 19th centuries, it was fine for women to be performers, but it was seriously frowned upon to also be composers. Mozart's sister, Marianne (also known as 'Nannerl') was discouraged by her father Leopold in her composing endeavours in favour of the younger brother Wolfgang, although she was a brilliant improviser at the piano and a fine violinist. It may well have been that she had the potential to be a fine composer.

Fanny Mendelssohn was also a piano virtuoso and it was said that she "plays like a man" (presumably intended to be a compliment). Although Ms Mendelssohn wrote a fine string quartet, some songs and other works (some of which were published in her brother's name), she was discouraged by her father from composing. It was fine for Felix to be a composer of course. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy senior wrote that music would only be an 'ornament' for Fanny, as household duties were to be her priority. Clara Schumann also made promising strides as a composer (also one of the most famous pianists of her time) but in the end felt the pressure to conform to the expectations of the society.

In the early 20th century, pioneering figures included Lili and Nadia Boulanger, the latter being the teacher of some of the most interesting figures in the early part of the century, including Aaron Copland. In Australia, composing women provided an enormously important contribution to our creative landscape. Artists such as Margaret Sutherland, Peggy Glanville-Hicks (also a Boulanger student), Dulcie Holland and Miriam Hyde are names still well-known to us thanks to their contributions to repertoire of student performers. Each of these composers also wrote music for the concert stage, much of which deserves to be re-discovered and embraced.

Earlier this year, Sally Macarthur and Cat Hope published an article critical of many Australian music organisations for their lack of support for composing women in Australia. This was a significant wake up call and this has given pause for reflection in the Australia Ensemble as to our contribution towards the performance and commissioning of women composers. In fact, we have a very proud track record. One of our earliest commissions is *Min Min Light* by Moya Henderson, and we have commissioned and premiered works by numerous women composers including Maria Grenfell, Liza Lim, Christine McCombe and Elena Kats-Chernin; in 2017 we are proud to be commissioning Sydney-based composer Felicity Wilcox. Felicity is an experienced composer for the moving image and her piece fits beautifully into a program all about music written by composers for the screen. Felicity wasn't chosen because she is a woman, but because she is a skilled composer whose work we are proud to feature.



Top to bottom: Hildegard von Bingen; Elena Kats-Chernin; Jennifer Higdon; Madeleine Dring; Sofia Gubaidulina; Felicity Wilcox

Our 2017 season also includes works by the much-loved Elena Kats-Chernin, American composer Jennifer Higdon, English composer Madeleine Dring, and Sofia Gubaidulina from Russia. In our lunchtime concerts we have recently featured works by both Amy Beach and Thea Musgrave.

I note that on recent trends, around 50% of composition students entering their first year of studies at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music are women, with similar statistics from other institutions around Australia. Although there is a long and sad history of discouraging women in the field of music composition, there is, fortunately a much brighter future to look forward to. The Australia Ensemble is proud to play a role in this endeavour.

Paul Stanhope, Artistic Chair