

# AE NEWS

newsletter of the Australia Ensemble @UNSW

## Upcoming Events

Australia Ensemble @UNSW  
Free Lunch Hour Concert  
**Tuesday 8 October, 1.10pm**  
**Tyree Room, Scientia Building**  
Rachmaninoff | String Quartet No.1  
Rachmaninoff | Vocalise arr. for cello  
& piano  
Anniversary Miniatures:  
Marcellino | Les Darcy Dances  
Ford | On Winter's Traces  
Wesley-Smith | Invention  
Edwards | Retrospective  
Hindson | Beauty  
Sculthorpe | A Little Song of Love  
Kats-Chernin | Birthday Miniature

Australia Ensemble @UNSW  
**Saturday 12 October, 8pm**  
**Sir John Clancy Auditorium**  
**Guilty Pleasures**  
Schoenberg | Ein Stelldichein  
Peterson | Guilty Pleasures  
Nazareth | Tangos arr. Munro  
Brahms | Serenade in D Op.11  
*Pre-concert Composer Conversation  
with John Peterson, 7pm in the foyer*

Nemanja Radulović with  
Ensemble Liaison  
**Saturday 26 October, 7pm**  
**Sir John Clancy Auditorium**  
Bach | Sonata in E minor BWV 1034  
arr. Griffiths  
Handel/Halvorsen | Passacaglia  
Khachaturian | Trio in G minor  
Bartók | Romanian Folk Dances  
Brahms | Piano Quartet No.1 in G  
minor, Op.25 arr. Griffiths

Goldner String Quartet  
Free Lunch Hour Concert  
**Tuesday 5 November, 1.10pm**  
**Tyree Room, Scientia Building**  
Haydn | String Quartet Op.76 No.3  
'Emperor'  
Vine | String Quartet No.6 'Child's  
Play'

[www.music.unsw.edu.au](http://www.music.unsw.edu.au)

## Composer in Conversation

***The Australia Ensemble is bringing John Peterson's 2007 work Guilty Pleasures back to the Clancy stage for the final concert of the 2019 season. We asked John about his influences, his relationship with his own music, and what advice he has for upcoming composers.***



Film music and popular music are often among the two most dominant influences on my own musical creativity, and permeate many aspects of my compositions. I am interested in taking the influences from these vernacular forms and combining them with aspects of sometimes quite traditional compositional art music techniques. I often consider the works that emerge from this process as my personal 'guilty pleasures': hence the title of this current work. *Guilty Pleasures* is in two movements.

The first movement, entitled *The Sounding Sea (Beyond the Ninth Wave)*, is influenced by both physical (the sea) and the metaphysical (Celtic mythology) worlds and I like to think that the music is rich in emotional content – it is the sort of music that, I hope, surrounds you and envelops you in waves (pun intended!) of evocative harmonies and melodies.

The second movement, *A Wilderness of Monkeys*, is more abstract in nature and does not attempt to evoke any particular images at all. It is fast paced and rhythmic music throughout, and the whole movement has a kaleidoscopic structure that is created from blocks of musical material that are juxtaposed in all sorts of ways to create sudden shifts in mood – much like the music for a spy or action film!

Not surprisingly, I do feel quite close to my own compositions and am quite proud of them all, but it is interesting coming back to a particular work after not having looked too closely at it for several years because there is always the temptation to think that revising some sections might be a good idea. But, in fact, I rarely revise anything after the music has been first performed and the score published, mainly because I realise the work represents my personal creative vision at a particular point in time and it should, therefore, stand on its own merits. The other reason for not revising anything is that I often simply want to move on to creating new works rather than spend time endlessly revising older works.

Most young composers working today use some form of notation software to produce their scores and, therefore, they increasingly compose at the computer. This is fine but often there is a subsequent reliance on the MIDI playback of the computer-notated score. The quality of the MIDI playback can vary enormously, and is never a reliable source for making decisions about timbre and balance, so it unfortunately often gives the composer a relatively poor understanding of how the music will actually sound when played in a live acoustic situation. So, I think

one of the most important things a young composer should do is work with performers as much as possible, especially during the composition process. As composers, we generally work alone and, while we often have some understanding of how a few different instruments or voice types work and sound, nothing can replace the experience of hearing your music actually being performed on the instruments or voice types for which you are composing. This is so important as it allows you to then make more informed decisions on aspects of quality of timbre and the overall balance within an ensemble formation, and can make any weaknesses in your writing for particular instruments or voices more easily apparent.

**Join us for our Pre-concert Composer Conversation with John Peterson, hosted by Paul Stanhope. Saturday 12 October at 7pm in Sir John Clancy Auditorium foyer.**

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## Friends of the ensemble

Former Australia Ensemble member Catherine McCorkill is returning to UNSW in October, curating a Cushion Concert for children of UNSW Early Years centres on campus. Working closely with a clarinet trio, Catherine will read *The Things I Love about Friends* by Trace Moroney, interspersed with musical excerpts from Milhaud's *Suite* and Khachaturian's *Trio* for clarinet, violin and piano. The half-hour concert presentation aims to introduce young children on campus to high quality musical experiences in a relaxed environment. The trio will be made up of Rowena Watts, clarinet; Maria Lindsay, violin; and Josephine Allan, piano. We expect our audience to be 60 to 70 children under 4 years of age, and each will go home with a curated playlist of music to listen to with their families.



*Acacia Quartet in our Cushion Concert in June*



*Before and after treatment of Mona Hessing's Banner*

*Photo: International Conservation Services*

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## Don't forget to look up!

As the end of the Sir John Clancy renovation draws near, we also get closer to being reunited with Mona Hessing's tapestry, *Banner*, which is currently being stored offsite. This spectacular installation comprises over 150 individual tapestry lengths with textured bullion twists and knotted rope drops. For several months, the textile work has undergone careful conservation treatment, to restore wear-and-tear from years of environmental exposure. The work completed by the conservator includes the brush vacuuming of each tapestry element, realigning loose bullion twists and untangling twists, stitching and securing the drop lengths, and tiding the drop lengths hanging out of sequence. We are very pleased to report that the cleaning treatment and conservation care has been extremely successful, recovering the original colours and brightness of the work created by the artist when it was commissioned for the UNSW Art Collection in 1971. The architects of the Clancy renovation used the rich colouring of the tapestry to inform the new colour scheme. *Banner* is due to be reinstalled in the foyer of the Sir John Clancy Auditorium in October, just in time for our final performance of the Australia Ensemble. Don't forget to look up and take in this spectacular work!

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## Thank you Jane

The Australia Ensemble dedicated its September performance to the Honorable Justice Jane Mathews AO who sadly passed away on August 31. A major supporter of the arts and former Deputy Chancellor of UNSW, Jane was a dedicated subscriber attending our concert series for decades. Her support and generosity of spirit always went above and beyond, and in 2010, the Australia Ensemble was once again the fortunate beneficiary of this altruism. Jane commissioned Matthew Hindson to write a new work for the Ensemble, entitled *Light is Both a Particle and a Wave*, premiered on 23 October 2010. We pay tribute to Jane, to her love and vision for the arts, and especially for music, and will deeply miss seeing her light up the foyer and concert hall with her presence. From all of us here, farewell Jane - our heartfelt thanks for your significant contribution and unwavering support of music in this country. You will be missed, and always remembered.

# Australia Ensemble - the sum of its parts

Genevieve Lang

Irina Morozova, viola, can't hide her delight at 40 years of the Australia Ensemble. 'It's a ridiculous achievement!' Irina is a foundation member of the group which started life in 1980. 'Our job is so fabulous, playing chamber music. It keeps you keeping on. It's a great thing to do.' Prior to committing her life to chamber music, Irina was principal viola with both the Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Elizabethan Trust Orchestra (now the Opera Australia Orchestra). It was through the ACO and the Australia Ensemble that she and violinist Dene Olding would fatefully meet. 'He was headhunted to lead the ACO and the Australia Ensemble,' Irina explains. You can still hear the warm glow of pride in Irina's voice, even after all these years.

For his part, Dene Olding, former concertmaster with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, was only lured back from an extended stint in America by the double-barrelled offer. But after the hustle and bustle of life in America, including an extended stint in New York, there was a period of adjustment: 'I was struck by the inconvenience of life here,' reflects Dene. 'In New York, you could take the lift to the ground floor [of your building, and] everything was within a couple of blocks, and open all night. Australia didn't even have ATM machines!' It was a bit of a puzzle to Dene. 'In Australia, if you were working nine to five, how were you supposed to go shopping?'

Culture shock aside, Dene found his place here in Sydney, and came to view the Australia Ensemble as a place of stability and friendship. 'For me initially I was fairly green. I'd come out of a hothouse environment at the Juilliard School where the focus was on a lot of solo and orchestral repertoire.' The study of chamber music was more niche, so joining the ensemble was a baptism of fire. Between the ACO and the Ensemble, Dene recalls, 'I remember being incredibly busy.' Despite being a quick study, Dene found himself a bit stretched: 'At one point I had to learn 60 new pieces! And I remember thinking "what have I got myself in for?"'

As it turns out, he couldn't have made a better decision, for after a few years, Dene and Irina – already in strong musical partnership – committed to a lifetime together. 'If the Australia Ensemble wasn't around,' says Irina, 'I never would have met the person who's the most important to me in my life, other than my son.' And music has acted as a great metaphor for their life together, as Dene explains: 'Chamber music can be a great teacher about how to get on in life. You come to know when to assert yourself or take a secondary role; how to negotiate your way around a musical argument, know what's worth fighting for and what's not. If everybody in the world played chamber music, it would be a better place.'



Dene Olding & Irina Morozova



Photos: Keith Saunders

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## International star coming this October!



©Charlotte Abramow courtesy of Deutsche Grammophon

Google his name, and you will see why Serbian violinist Nemanja Radulović is causing such a stir. You will find videos of him playing covers of ABBA's *Gimme! Gimme! (A Man After Midnight)* through to him slaying Monty's *Czardas* on violin. His playing is quite simply phenomenal, and as ABC Classics describes it, his "Slash-eque" hair is a sight to be seen! You're in for a ride when Radulović joins Ensemble Liasion in Sir John Clancy Auditorium on Saturday 26 October at 7pm. This will be his only chamber music performance in Sydney, so get your tickets now! Call the Box office on 9385 4874 or visit [music.unsw.edu.au](http://music.unsw.edu.au) Subscriber/group discounts apply.

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# Hold the dates: Australia Ensemble 2020 season

Although the 2020 season of the Australia Ensemble will be officially launched at our final 2019 concert on October 12, we are pleased to announce subscription season dates:

**Concert 1: Saturday 14 March, 2020**

**Concert 2: Saturday 18 April, 2020**

**Concert 3: Saturday 30 May, 2020**

**Concert 4: Saturday 15 August, 2020**

**Concert 5: Saturday 26 September, 2020**

**Concert 6: Saturday 24 October, 2020**

## Casting a new light

Since 1975 and the foundation of the choral program under the leadership of Patricia Brown, UNSW has presented an annual Christmas concert. A tradition emerged of communal carol singing and gingerbread-making, with performances by different ensembles including handbells, choirs, and instrumentalists, always ending with a rousing rendition of 'O Come, All Ye Faithful'. Sadly, all this came to an end with the final concert of 2018, the change of academic calendar impacting on the performance schedule in such a way that the traditional Christmas concert could no longer take place.

This year, then, is the first year without. Programs of the Collegium Musicum Choir, essentially a community choir for those in and around UNSW, have varied widely over its forty-four years, and have aimed to offer the singers quality experiences of significant repertoire as well as works they might otherwise not encounter. Easing into a choral year without a Christmas concert, this year the Collegium Musicum Choir is preparing Charpentier's *Messe de Minuit pour Noël*, not as a Christmas program, but as a top-shelf choral-orchestral experience which has not

been performed on campus despite its general popularity. Charpentier based the five movements of the mass Ordinary on ten traditional French Christmas carols, a practice not uncommon in church music but unprecedented in the context of an entire mass. For the November 24 performance, UNSW's chamber choir, the Burgundian Consort, will present the various carols in the original French as something of a lesson in musical context, as well as taking on the eight 'soloist' roles. This mass setting was composed around 1690, a festive work of the concertante style scored for flutes, strings and organ.

The choral year will then come to an end not with 'Adeste Fideles', but with eternal light. Morten Lauridsen's *Lux aeterna* was written over 300 years after Charpentier's masterful Midnight Mass, a five-movement work for choir and orchestra based on Latin texts with reference to light. Lauridsen writes 'I composed *Lux aeterna* in response to my Mother's final illness and found great personal comfort and solace in setting to music these timeless and wondrous words about Light, a universal symbol of illumination at all levels – spiritual, artistic and intellectual'. It is scored colourfully for strings with flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, two horns and bass trombone, without vocal soloists, and frequently using the absence of accompaniment as a textural mechanism. Lauridsen uses shimmering harmonic language and rhapsodic vocal lines to capture the opalescence of the texts.

Preparations are already underway, with the Collegium Musicum Choir in weekly rehearsals each Wednesday in the Sir John Clancy Auditorium, looking forward to being joined by the professional orchestra in the final week. It is certainly a break from tradition, but a departure leading to other, different joys.



## What are you listening to this month?

With the final Collegium Musicum Choir concert for 2019 just around the corner, we've been listening to the music of Morten Lauridsen and Marc-Antoine Charpentier. This month's favourite recordings include Kings College, Cambridge, performing Lauridsen's breathtaking *O Magnum Mysterium* on Christmas Eve, 2009 (find this one on YouTube!) as well as their recording of Charpentier's *Messe de Minuit de Noël* with Academy of St Martin in the Fields and English Chamber Orchestra. The Collegium Musicum Choir at UNSW will perform Lauridsen's *Lux aeterna* and Charpentier's *Messe de Minuit de Noël* with orchestra on Sunday 24 November at 5pm, in Sir John Clancy Auditorium.