

AE News

April, 2020

What's On

Young Apollo

Melbourne Digital Concert Hall
Ian Munro, piano
Thursday 9 April, 8.30pm

Beethoven – Piano Sonata
No.1 in F minor, Op.2 No.1
Beethoven – Piano Sonata
No.2 in A major, Op.2 No.2
Beethoven – Piano Sonata
No.3 in C major, Op.2 No.3

melbournedigitalconcerthall.com

For online updates about the
Australia Ensemble UNSW,
visit our website:

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



UNSW
SYDNEY

Let's get digital!

With rehearsals and concerts cancelled, the music industry on mass has headed online in response to social distancing. Continuing to create and share content in this way 24/7, artists and arts companies are still finding their feet as they navigate this exclusive online world, in which they now solely



Ian Munro, pianist

operate. This new way of life is not only felt by artists, but of course also by you, their audience, who are adapting to seeing performances at home, and like everyone else, adjusting to the industry's new intimate offerings, artists streaming from their own home right to yours. This small window into an artist's life is as behind-the-scenes as it gets, and far from the expansive concert halls to which we had previously become accustomed.

Over coming months, we too will join our music colleagues online to bring you some interesting interviews from our artists' homes to yours, and to keep you in touch with your favourite performers of the Australia Ensemble and guest artists. We will hear what they have been up to and how they are coping in this extraordinary time. We will also let you know of any upcoming performances that the Australia Ensemble musicians are performing online, emailing these straight to your inbox, during this time. The first we can report on, is a series of piano recitals Ian Munro is performing in Melbourne. Ian will perform the complete set of Beethoven Sonatas for Melbourne Digital Concert Hall over the coming weeks, commencing on Thursday April 9 at 8.30pm.

By now, you should have received via email a discount code to the first concert with a reduced ticket price offer. If you have not received this from us, please contact us for your code at australia.ensemble@unsw.edu.au.

Tips to ready yourself for a concert at home

Concerts watched at home can be transformative. You may find these tips by Julian Smiles helpful to set the mood, as you settle back and enjoy watching concerts online from the comfort of your home over the coming months.

Be sure to set up early so you don't miss the start, and give yourself enough time to have a relaxed glass of wine in the glamorous and intimate space you call home.

When the concert begins, maybe think of it as a meal that has been prepared for you - in planning these programs artists think not only of the taste of the dishes individually, but also of the way in which the diner travels through the culinary journey.



Dimity Hall violin and Julian Smiles (2008)

We'll often have a light Entree, and a substantial Main Course. Amuse-bouches might feature, and if you find a dish containing somewhat more roughage than you are happy with, see it as an aid to your overall digestion of the meal.

One of the most important things to treasure is this being a unique moment. While artists rehearse thoroughly, spontaneity remains a very important part of performances.

Through many years of playing together artists are able to suggest things to each other during a performance, with a look, physical gesture or the way we play a phrase, which will send the music down a new path. In this way every performance will be different, fed by their inspiration and mood.

Now it's time to sit back and bask in the deeply heartfelt beauty of your chosen concert, and let your world be transformed.

Sincere thanks from us to you!

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Australia Ensemble during these unprecedented times. In lieu of a refund, 40 subscribers generously donated the value of their tickets to our cancelled April 18 and May 30 concerts.

While our hall is dark, it is comforting to have our community come together to support our musicians and our organisation where they can. We are lucky to have philanthopists in the extended Australia Ensemble UNSW family to help us through these unprecedented times.

At home with the ensemble



What are the players up to this week?

Geoffrey is at home in Adelaide; Julian, David and Paul are all doing online teaching; Irina is spending her time cleaning and cooking; Ian is growing a beard and hopefully practising Beethoven, and Dimity is renovating a house! Be sure to stay in touch with us over the coming months, by visiting our website music.unsw.edu.au where we will release weekly video updates on the members of the ensemble and our guest artists!

In the Spotlight: Elizabeth Layton, violinist

We are very sad that Elizabeth Layton is unable to join us in April as planned so we caught with her recently to ask her about her career path and to find out what chamber music means to her.

Throughout my career I've been lucky enough to perform as soloist, in chamber music and as concertmaster of orchestras - and there have been so many highlights! It's great to play the music of your own country abroad and William Walton's violin concerto is a favourite. Conductor Osmo Vanska and I performed it in the magnificent acoustics of the concert hall in Lahti, Finland in mid-winter, with light reflected by snow all around the building and adjacent lake. The orchestra loved the piece despite many of them never having played it before, a magical evening. I have a soft spot for the music of Richard Strauss, and for any concertmaster performing the dramatic extended violin solos in Heldenleben is a joy. Playing at the Proms to 5,000 people sitting in the round in searing heat at the height of summer - the Royal Albert Hall air-conditioning is practically non-existent - adds to the drama! The atmosphere in these concerts is electrifying and walking out onto that stage has never ceased to be a thrill for me; playing that music in that venue was an unforgettable experience.

The violinist and composer George Enescu has been central to some of my recent research, and I've been exploring violin sonatas he commissioned in Paris in the early part of the 20th Century. Three of my own violin teachers were taught by Enescu, and as I researched his work I kept coming across ideas that I'd heard before and hadn't known originated from him. It's become a very personal voyage of discovery.

What do you love about performing chamber music?

Playing chamber music is really my happy place! There's nothing better than sharing music with friends who are also wonderful musicians, performing some of the greatest works in the repertoire.

What excites you about the music scene in Australia?

The chamber music scene in Australia is full of entrepreneurial and dynamic personalities. I've played in many different festivals and they all have their own unique flavour, with venues as diverse as wool sheds to wineries! I do hope we can all continue to support the wonderful variety of projects.



Elizabeth Layton, guest violinist

Featured Subscriber: Catherine Willis

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, we spoke with Australia Ensemble subscriber Catherine Willis. This is what she shared with us.

How long have you subscribed to the AE and do you have any highlights over this time that you can share with us?

You have lived a fortunate life if you have good friends and enjoy beautiful music. It was a fortunate day for me when in 1997 when my friend and colleague Ros offered me a ticket to an Australia Ensemble concert. I attended and was enchanted. There was probably a number of fantastic things that were played that night but I remember the wonderful quality of playing, and thinking that this was the best and most accessible chamber music group I was every likely to see on a regular basis in Sydney. I have held a continuous subscription now for 23 years. What is remarkable to me is the continuously high quality of musicianship demonstrated by the Ensemble over the years. Their commitment to excellence is much appreciated.

You are also a member of the choir. Please tell us a little bit about the Collegium Musicum choir, what it's about and your experience singing with the choir?

I attended the Collegium Musicum Sunday afternoon concerts for a number of years before joining the choir. They performed fabulous music similar in style and quality to that which I heard at AE concerts. The conductor Sonia Maddock was energetic and seemed to love what she was doing. The choir seemed very happy. There was a wide age range in the choristers. What was not to like?

As soon as I was able to reclaim time from a busy committed life for a weekly Wednesday evening rehearsal I joined. It is such a pleasure to be part of a 70 voice choir developing beautiful pieces of music to performance standard and then performing it for the pleasure of others.



Catherine Willis

Do you have any advice for any subscribers who may be thinking about joining the choir?

My advice to any AE subscriber who loves music is to come along and give the Collegium Musicum a go. There are many ways to enjoy music and participation in music making must be up there with the best things you will ever do in your life. It's a pleasure. If you need reasons other than pleasure, singing is good for you, it raises endorphin levels and makes you live a happier life.

To subscribers who have not yet found their own voice, come along and be open to a personal epiphany. To subscribers who still believe the year 2 teacher who told you not to sing, break free from that falsehood and come and sing. You will not find a better choir in Sydney.

The Collegium Musicum Choir is currently not rehearsing due to the COVID-19 outbreak, however we will keep you updated here via the AE News regarding it's return to operations in due course.

If you would like to talk to a staff member about possibly joining choir when we recommence, please email cmc@unsw.edu.au and one of our friendly staff will give you a call to discuss.