

Upcoming Events

Australia Ensemble UNSW Subscription Concert 1

Saturday March 12, at 8pm
Sir John Clancy Auditorium

Time is a River

Jennifer HIGDON | Dash
Carlos GUASTAVINO | Clarinet Sonata
Graeme KOEHNE | Time is a river
Wolfgang MOZART | String Quintet in
E flat K614

Performed without interval

David Griffiths, clarinet; Dene Olding,
violin; Dimity Hall, violin; Irina
Morozova, viola; Julian Smiles, cello;
and Ian Munro, piano
with guest artist Tobias Breider, viola

Staying Safe at our Concerts

Patrons are requested to wear a
mask whilst inside our foyers and
auditorium, including during the
performance.

Within the venue, always take your
allocated seat.

As you move around Sir John Clancy
Auditorium foyers, please practise
physical distancing (1.5m whenever
possible) and follow the guidance
provided by our staff and signage.

There will be a COVID-19 Safe Officer
at each of our performances.

QR Code registration for
all patrons is required. Please see an
usher if you do not carry a mobile and
they will assist with checking you in.

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New Year. New Beginnings.



After a very interrupted two years where we were only able to present three live programs, the Australia Ensemble UNSW is delighted to return to the stage in March 2022 for the first of our subscription concerts 'Time is a River'. This is also the title of the whole series which comes from the mellifluous and radiant clarinet quintet by Australian composer, Graeme Koehne. Full of nostalgia and calm mystical lyricism, this work is something of a meditation on the 'restless flow' of time. Music is, of course, a time art. Sound unfolds through time, yet something strange happens when we are truly captivated by a performance: our perception of time seems to change. It might seem to stand still, pass quickly or hold us in a single moment of concentration and rapture.

In American composer Jennifer Higdon's hands, time seems to press on relentlessly with great momentum and speed. *Dash* a trio for clarinet, violin and piano – seems to sum up the relentless pace of modern life and showcases the brilliant agility of the ensemble musicians. A sense of flow is also present in Argentine composers Carlos Gustavino's

Clarinet Sonata. His sense of time is truly Argentinian, in that it involves stylish dance-inspired movements framing a melancholic middle movement, full of song-like lines and flourishes.

Mozart's String Quintet in E flat is his final chamber music composition. Commissioned by a mysterious Hungarian music-lover, the piece was composed during the production of *The Magic Flute*. The opera and chamber work seem to share much in character, including humorous energetic passages as well as the rich sonorities and darker, more foreboding moments. The piece was completed in April 1791 and by December the same year, his time had come to an all-too-early end. Yet this magnificent work lives on, as though out of time, continuing to enrich our lives as it will for generations to come.

I look forward to seeing you all back in the Clancy Auditorium on Saturday March 12 and at further concerts to share once more in the wonderful experience of live chamber music, performed brilliantly by the members of the Australia Ensemble UNSW.

Paul Stanhope

Celebrating 20 Years: A Choral Salute

Eleasha-June Mah

For many in our community the Choral program is more than a cerebral experience. It is a place of expression, creativity, a space of social engagement and belonging. Underpinning this special and unique world is Choral Director, Sonia Maddock. This year marks a major milestone, with Sonia celebrating her 20th anniversary as Director of UNSW's Choral program.

Sonia has developed and inspired thousands through her in-depth knowledge of choral repertoire, and her tireless commitment to making quality music education an accessible and inclusive experience. Since its founding days under Patricia Brown, the Choral program has been, and continues to be, open to everyone: UNSW students, staff and community members.

With two main parts to UNSW's Choral program, Sonia directs and programs: the Collegium Musicum Choir, a 60–80 voice choir that is not auditioned, and the Burgundian Consort, an auditioned chamber choir open to elite singers and consisting of 12-20 members.

Reflecting on Sonia's significant contribution to Choral music at UNSW, violinist and Australia Ensemble UNSW musician Dene Olding writes "It has been wonderful to observe the personal and professional growth of Sonia over this significant period of time. She has a natural affinity with Choral music which was evident the first time she conducted a choir concert (a little nervously) and her knowledge of music in general is far-reaching. Most importantly, she has become a friend and trusted ally who has grown the performance activities and prestige of UNSW."

This term the Collegium Musicum Choir will rehearse and perform a program of Mozart and Schubert under Sonia's direction, while the Burgundian Consort sets its sights on a program of Australian music by Chance, Cameron and Eames. 2022 is a particularly sweet occasion for the Choral program, having been held primarily online for the past two years due to COVID-19. During this challenging time, Sonia's commitment to the program remained resolute, nurturing choristers and directing rehearsals via Zoom.



Rehearsing weekly, members participate in rich learning experiences performing a diverse range of repertoire including substantial choral works from the canon. A highly rewarding experience, the Choral program is underpinned by programming that is well informed and supports diverse voices. Sonia's advocacy for Australian music and the performance of Australian choral music at UNSW is a quality we see interweaved in her curation of these programs.

Emerging composers also find their place on UNSW stages through Sonia's active involvement in the Willgoss Choral Composition Prize, which showcases and celebrates the choral writing of an emerging Australian composer each year – the backlist is impressive and includes industry recognised and respected composers Elizabeth Younan, Philip Eames, Ronan Apcar, Owen Elsley, and Oliver John Cameron.

Long-time member of the Collegium Musicum Choir, Rosie Kingsford sums up Sonia's unwavering commitment to the program. She says "I count myself luckier than most because I have enjoyed Sonia's leadership as Choral Director of the CMC for two decades, ever since she replaced Patricia Brown in 2003. Even before this, I remember her secretly orchestrating a wonderful surprise choral piece, with clever lyrics and beautiful vowel enunciation for the retiring Patricia. She then "soldiered on" (as she often says!) through her first year as Director, pregnant with her first child, right up to her delivery date. And the rest is history. We all love Sonia. She effortlessly organises her choristers from the youngest to the older, like me. Her enthusiasm and wonderful sense of humour weave a special magic which gets the best out of us, as one. Sonia is also there through thick and thin, no more apparent than over the last two awful

years of COVID with remote Zoom rehearsals to keep us going: a brief musical respite each week for us under lockdown. Over the past two decades, many Burgundians and CMC choristers have come and gone, enriched by the wonderful experience of Monday and Wednesday evenings with Sonia at the helm. Every week Sonia leads us through great music, uplifting us and culminating in wonderful concerts. Sonia, congratulations, thank you and looking forward to the next two decades."

UNSW Alumni and former Music Performance Unit (MPU) staff member Elizabeth Hayllar expresses similar sentiments, saying "It was a privilege to work with Sonia. Sonia is extremely knowledgeable and endlessly generous with her time. As a member of the MPU team in Sonia's first year as Choir Director, I could see the important role choir played in UNSW's community, and was able to observe Sonia's dedication and significant contribution to the program from day one".

Two decades later, Sonia's dedication continues to shine. On behalf of the MPU, and all past and current members of the Choral Program, we take our hat off to you, Sonia. We thank you for your lasting contribution and vision for Choral music on campus. Congratulations, here's to another twenty years of music making at UNSW.

Remembering Nigel Butterley

Gordon Kerry

Days before his death, the storied Australian composer Nigel Butterley listened with pleasure to his own recording of John Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes*. A brilliant pianist, he had introduced the work to Australian audiences, and it's very 'him' – not so much its sound as its mystical feeling.

Having grown up Anglican, Nigel explored ever-wider metaphysical fields; a bright thread through his work is a sense of awe, that reality lies just beyond our easy comprehension. For this reason, he was drawn to figures like navigator James Cook (in the piano concerto *Explorations*) and aviation pioneer

Lawrence Hargrave (the opera *Lawrence Hargrave Flying Alone*), who searched beyond their known horizons. It also influenced the development of his highly personal musical language, that cumulatively repays repeated hearing.

His magnum opus *Spell of Creation* from 2000 weaves together texts from Hindu, middle-eastern and medieval European sources with poetry by Henry Vaughan and Kathleen Raine in a vast canvas for solo voices, chorus and orchestra. Raine's mystical poetry was a major source of inspiration in Nigel's later work, notably the orchestral song cycle *The Woven Light* (1994); his last work, a lovely, poised duo for soprano and cello, sets Raine's *Nature changes at the speed of life* (2014).

Nigel's inclusive vision was evident early in *In the Head the Fire*, a radiophonic collage of

passages, sung and spoken, from the Dead Sea Scrolls, ancient Irish mystical poetry, and other religious texts in Hebrew, Latin and Greek with instrumentation including woodwind and brass, recorders, piano, organ, percussion and the Jewish ram's-horn trumpet, the shofar. The work won the prestigious Prix Italia in 1966.

The mystical and metaphysical lies behind all of Nigel's vocal music (except, perhaps, *First Day Covers: A Philharmonic Philatelia* from 1972, where he collaborated with Mrs, later Dame, Edna Everage). It also provided crucial inspiration for

the orchestral works *Meditations of Thomas Traherne* and *From Sorrowing Earth*, and chamber pieces such as his four string quartets and the luminous octet *Laudes*, which evokes four European church-buildings.

Nigel's music is ultimately about love – of the numinous, of creation, and of fellow humans

(especially as expressed in several pieces indebted to Walt Whitman). The whole slow movement of *Goldengrove* (after Gerard Manley Hopkins's poem) for string orchestra (1982) appeared fully-formed when Nigel's life-partner, Tom Kennedy was in extremis after a serious accident.

Nigel is survived by Tom, to whom we extend loving sympathy.



Composer Nigel Butterley

Nigel Butterley: 13 May 1935 – 19 February 2022

Musical Chairs

Alexandria Sigers

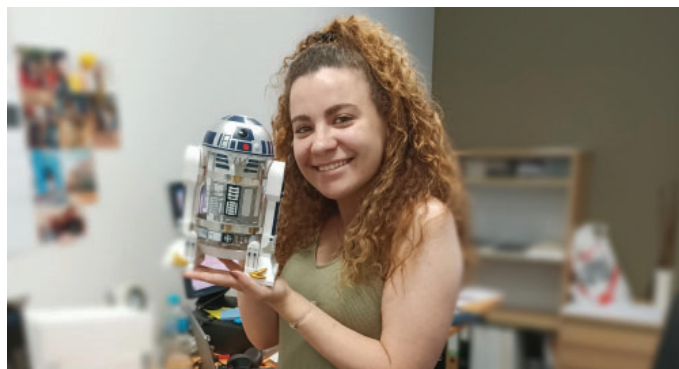
Joining the UNSW Music Performance Team this year is our new Music Event Assistant, Vanessa Agius. Vanessa has come to UNSW from Sydney Youth Orchestras where she was Orchestral Training Coordinator, after graduating from a Bachelor of Music Studies in Classical Voice at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Vanessa is really passionate about film music and often enjoy researching the behind the scenes of her favourite films to see how the music and sound was created. She is also a self-confessed "massive geek at heart." "From Star Wars to Harry Potter and everything in between! I used to be a writer and editor for a pop culture & gaming publication and am an avid comic-con cosplayer." She enjoys listening to a good podcast either on a walk or on her morning commute. On rotation at the moment are: Science with Dr.Karl and; The Star Wars Report.

Vanessa's talents and passions don't stop in the science and science-fiction aisles, she is also bilingual and an accomplished musician in her own right. She says "whilst at university I also studied Italian Language and Culture and am bilingual. I am very proud about my Italian and Maltese heritage and often used lockdown to improve my language skills, learnt how to perfect focaccia, and research my family history." She posts her recipes online, so keep an eye out for her recipe here: iltesoroitaliano.com if you're looking to try making some focaccia yourself!

As a musician, her favourite moment so far was when she had the opportunity to perform alongside Patti LuPone, who is a living musical theatre icon,

in her Sydney "Don't Monkey with Broadway" tour, something she "will always treasure and never forget." Vanessa is looking forward to meeting new



Music Event Assistant, Vanessa Agius

people and learning so many new skills in her role at UNSW, particularly the opportunity to be creative and celebrate all aspects of music. She loves the diversity of working in the performing arts. "You meet so many people from so many different backgrounds and interests that it always makes work exciting. The field of music is also so vast, so no two musical journeys are ever the same. I also love how versatile the artform allows you to be. I have had the fortunate opportunity to be involved in everything from opera to jazz and collaborate with people in so many different fields."

Vanessa works Monday, Tuesday, and half days on Thursday and Friday. Vanessa is responsible for coordinating the box office. She also provides support for our operations including the Australia Ensemble UNSW. You can reach Vanessa on ph: 9385 4874 or via email australia.ensemble@unsw.edu.au



2022 Season.... For Your Calendar

Concert 1: March 12, 2022

Concert 2: April 9, 2022

Concert 3: May 21, 2022

Concert 4: August 27, 2022

Concert 5: September 24, 2022

Concert 6: October 22, 2022

Music Performance Unit

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