

## Upcoming Events

### Australia Ensemble UNSW Subscription Concert 2

Saturday May 22, at 8pm  
Sir John Clancy Auditorium

### While the music lasts

GOLIJOV | Lullaby and Doina  
BONIS | Suite en Trio Op. 59  
KERRY | while the music lasts  
Gabriel FAURÉ | Piano Quintet no. 1 in  
D minor, Op. 89

*Performed without interval*

David Griffiths, clarinet; Dene Olding, violin; Dimity Hall, violin; Irina Morozova, viola; Julian Smiles, cello; and Ian Munro, piano with guest artists Lisa Osmialowski, flute and Andrew Meisel, double bass

### Staying Safe at our Concerts

Our mask wearing policy will be in line with NSW Health Guidelines and we strongly recommend the wearing of masks inside our foyers and auditorium, including during the performance. We will make every effort to communicate updates as and when the NSW Health response changes.

Seating is allocated. Groups have been socially distanced. Within the venue, always take your allocated seat.

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

We have regular cleaning of high-traffic and high-touch areas. There will be a COVID-19 Safe Officer at each of our performances.

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

[music.unsw.edu.au](https://music.unsw.edu.au)

## while the music lasts

Gordon Kerry

When I did the tree-change thing and moved to the country nearly twenty years ago it meant, for a while, living in fairly primitive conditions – you know, poor radio reception and dial-up internet. So it meant that if I wanted to listen to ABC Classic the best place was in the car parked up the hill slightly, and I remember repairing to it one evening, glass of wine in hand, to listen to a broadcast of the Australia Ensemble.



*Gordon Kerry, Composer*

The Ensemble was playing my *Sonata da camera*, which had been commissioned by Musica Viva for its 1992 national tour. So the musicians had played it many times, then and since, (and recorded it for Tall Poppies) but not for a while, and I was curious to hear how it had 'matured'.

The piece was one of the first in which I had used a generic title. Until then (which was, after all, still early in my career) I had worked with the somewhat more mixed ensembles required – then at least – for much contemporary music, often responding to an extramusical idea, rather than an established form or genre. Like many of my colleagues I had felt that an evocative (or provocative!) title would help an audience unfamiliar with my work to grasp what I might have been trying to achieve. I avoided the suggestive monosyllable beloved of some composers, but often used a poetic image related to the piece's inspiration.

The *Sonata da camera*, then, was an attempt to write a truly abstract piece that the audience needed to accept, or not, on its own terms. And who better to play it than this ensemble, a group of people deeply invested in the traditional repertoire of three centuries' music. I was therefore delighted, sitting with my glass of wine in a car in a paddock to hear a performance that sounded as assured and comfortable as if the ensemble had been playing Brahms. (Which I said to a slightly nonplussed Dene Olding the next time we met).

*while the music lasts* offered the opportunity to write a bookend piece to the *Sonata da camera*. Though my language has evolved over thirty years, it's for the same instrumentation, of course, and, despite my lapsing into the use of poetic title, has a similar formal design: both works contain two substantive linked movements, of

which the first is mostly active and virtuosic, while the second more hymnal and reflective though not without textural intricacy and the odd climactic moment.

It was written, to a commission from Dr Patricia Brown as a tribute to Professor Roger Covell, co-founder of the Ensemble and a prime mover in this School that hosts it. As a critic, Roger had always been very supportive of my work as composer and writer, reviewing my music, usually favourably, and always in his customary Olympian prose. After the premiere of *while the music lasts* he paid me an even higher compliment, saying simply 'I loved it.'

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## Pamela Griffith: The Art of Nature

Elena Taylor

Senior Curator, UNSW Art Collection

The latest exhibition in the Sir John Clancy Auditorium foyer features works by well-known Sydney artist Pamela Griffith. In a lifetime dedicated to art, Griffith has established her place as one of Australia's foremost printmakers and an accomplished landscape painter. Best-known for her abiding fascination with the natural world, she has traversed Australia to observe living creatures in their natural habitats, creating works that celebrate this continent's unique flora, fauna and diverse eco-systems. *Pamela Griffith: the art of nature* is drawn primarily from the UNSW art collection and includes a group of works which have recently been gifted to the University.

*Tropical sunbird and Whitsunday Passage* is one of nine colour etchings depicting species of birds, frogs, and butterflies found in coastal North Queensland. Griffith undertook extensive research in the development of the series, visiting the area to make drawings and take photographs, as well as collecting plant specimens for later reference in her studio. These works belong to the great tradition of natural history illustration, an essential part of the scientific study of nature for hundreds of years, yet transcend dry recording, becoming exquisite works of art in their own right.



In recent years, Griffith has increasingly turned towards painting and the exhibition includes three recent paintings of the landscapes and vegetation of the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. Her *Flannel flower season* looks across the Park's rugged terrain towards the Hawkesbury River, a frieze-like arrangement of native flowering plants filling the foreground like nature's garden. Painted several months earlier, *Spring waratahs*, *Perimeter Trail*, *Terrey Hills* features a stand of magnificent flowering waratah.

Pamela Griffith was born in 1943 in Sydney into an artistic family. After training to become an art teacher, she set up her own printmaking studio in 1965 and established the fully equipped Griffith Studio and Graphic Workshop at Bardwell Park in 1975. She has trained and assisted a generation of Australian artists in printmaking and played an important part in the revival of etching in Australia in the 1960s and 70s. Griffith has exhibited widely and her works collected by the National Gallery of Australia and the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In recognition of her contribution to Australian culture and natural history, she has been made a Fellow of the Royal Society of New South Wales and a Life Member, Royal Zoological Society of South Australia.



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Top: Pamela Griffith  
*Tropical sunbird and Whitsunday Passage* 1993  
etching and aquatint in colour, 45 x 34.5 cm (image)  
UNSW Art Collection  
Gift of Selena Griffith, 2020

Bottom: Pamela Griffith  
*Flannel flower season* 2021  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas 100 x 150 cm  
Collection of the artist  
Courtesy of IndiCo Galleries, Indigenous and  
Contemporary Art, Mosman

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# All About The Bass

Andrew Meisel

I first picked up a double bass at the age of 14 when a school music teacher started a beginner string group. My best friend and I thought it might be a bit of fun and we were right, it is! It used to be rare that anyone took up the bass at an early age because there were no small basses. Now students can start on 1/12 size basses and start at a much earlier age. This has had a massive impact on the standard of double bass playing in a very positive way. I completed my final 2 years of school at the Conservatorium High School and continued on to studies in performance at the Conservatorium. At age 19, I successfully auditioned for a permanent tutti position in the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra and five years later successfully auditioned for the position of Associate Principal with the same orchestra which is the position I hold today. I have been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to study with the very best teachers in Australia, the UK and USA. I have also been fortunate to be able to perform with almost all major orchestras in Australia, New Zealand and Bergen, Norway.

## **What do you like about Golijov's Lullaby and Doina?**

As a double bass player, performing the *Lullaby and Doina* by Golijov is not without its challenges but it is also an extremely rewarding and enjoyable piece of music to prepare. Within the variations of the *lullaby* the bass sustains long pedal notes and the challenge is to find the tone colours that fit with the Yiddish and folk like themes. The *Doina* finishes in a fast Gallop that is described in the music as "wild". The double bass has a fast pizzicato section that exploits the rhythmic and percussive qualities of the bass that can so often be found in the Latin and Jazz styles of music.

**Do you have a favourite Opera?** I find it very hard

to narrow my favourite opera down to just one. I love a lot of the opera repertoire for very different reasons. I would find it easier to pick favourite operas by composers. Verdi, *Otello* is such a complete piece of drama and the orchestral



Andrew Meisel, Guest Double Bass

colours and harmonies so vividly describe the plot. Puccini, *Tosca* for being such a powerful piece of music with the colours of instruments being so closely linked to the voices. Strauss, *Rosenkavalier* is a marathon but performing it has been one of my very favourite musical experiences and the final ten minutes never fails to move me to tears.

**What attracts you to chamber music?** I think one of the most enjoyable parts of playing chamber music is being able to have eye contact with the people you are making music with. This is something that is not so easily achieved when performing in a larger ensemble. The challenge of adapting and reacting to small movements and nuances I also find extremely rewarding. Having the opportunity to perform with Australia Ensemble is something very special for me and makes up a large part of my most challenging, rewarding and memorable musical experiences. It is also something special to make music with friends.

**See Andrew Meisel perform at our next concert: Saturday 22 May, 8pm, Sir John Clancy Auditorium.**

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## Rolling, And Action!



UNSW Orchestra conducted by Dr. Steven Hillinger

In place of the term concert, musicians from the Instrumental program took part in a professionally filmed recording session. These performances will be made available online via our social media channels in the coming weeks. This was a wonderful opportunity for the MPU to capture the ensembles for posterity and to be able to share these activities in 2021 with you, our audience. Listen to UNSW Orchestra conducted by Dr. Steven Hillinger perform *Farandole* from Bizet's *L'Arlésienne Suite No.2* via: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaAc9m5grro>

# Younan named 2021-22 Layton Emerging Composer

We are thrilled to announce Elizabeth Younan will be our next Layton Emerging Composer Fellow. With over 50 applicants, competition for the fellowship was fierce. Of the appointment, the Panel said “Elizabeth Younan was the clear and unanimous winner of the 2021 Layton Fellowship. Her work is imaginative and technically accomplished in all ways. She writes idiomatically for instrumental combinations and her music communicates in a highly compelling way.” The fellowship includes mentoring sessions and a workshop with the Australia Ensemble UNSW.

We look forward to hearing what Elizabeth compositionally realises over the next twelve months, as part of the Fellowship. We extend our thanks to Emeritus Professor Roger Layton AM and Merrilyn Layton who have supported the fellowship since its conception in 2018.



Elizabeth Younan, Composer

## Listening Between The Notes

Eleasha Mah

With performance opportunities around the world restricted due to COVID-19, our unit looked for tangible ways in 2020 to continue to contribute to the Australian musical landscape. One idea which grew wings was a new commission by Dr Katy Abbott, entitled *Still*. Scored for clarinet and piano, the work was written for two of Australia Ensemble UNSW musicians: David Griffiths, clarinet and Ian Munro, piano.

In the program note, the composer indicates her desire for *Still* not to be packaged as a lockdown work. Abbott hopes it instead speaks broadly to an audience of musical and human qualities through the performer’s interpretation. She says “I think creating metaphorical space within the music, through stillness, beauty and simplicity creates potential and capacity for audience reflection which both stimulates curiosity about ourselves and each other as well as inform us about how we show up in the world.”

In my early conversations with Abbott about the new commission, these themes emerged as threads she might draw on, ideas which were ultimately realised as the work unfolded and was put into the hands of the performers.

Abbott later adds in the note “The spaciousness within the piece provides an upside-down virtuosity – a way for the duo to connect deeply through the music; the space provides exposure – which although beautiful, is also vulnerable, fragile.”

In March 2021, Australia Ensemble UNSW musicians David Griffiths and Ian Munro joined us in Sydney to record Abbott’s *Still* in the Io Myers studio at UNSW. Earlier this month we released the recorded performance online which can be viewed on our website at [music.unsw.edu.au/listening-between-notes-katy-abbotts-still](https://music.unsw.edu.au/listening-between-notes-katy-abbotts-still)



David Griffiths, clarinet and Ian Munro, piano

In the early planning days of this work, it was envisioned that a video resource featuring the premiere performance of the work would be created.

Keen performers and viewers will find an easter egg directly following the performance of the work. Here, the performers, David and Ian share their insights and thoughts on the work, how they interpret Abbott’s score, and their approach to playing together and learning the work.

The Australia Ensemble UNSW was pleased to warmly commission this work in October 2020, and we hope you too enjoy the recorded performance of Abbott’s *Still*.

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