

Upcoming Events

Live Online Event

Overcoming Performance Anxiety

Join us online, as Psychologist Greta Bradman, musician David Griffiths and Olympian Georgia Winkcup unpack performance anxiety, and discuss strategies for performing at our best!

Date: Friday October 29

Time: 6pm-7:15pm

Register: music.unsw.edu.au/overcoming-performance-anxiety

Free. All welcome.

For Your Viewing at Home

SCULTHORPE Hill-song no. 2

Dene Olding, violin

Dimity Hall, violin

Irina Morozova, viola

Julian Smiles, cello

youtu.be/1kL3jA7M7rl

Collegium Musicum Choir:

An Introduction

youtu.be/JuJz_iLjxck

BONIS Ave Verum

Burgundian Consort UNSW

youtu.be/qh6Y6_uWZIA

I Want Your Job with Julian Smiles

youtu.be/lwxv-PtoHJw

FAURÉ Requiem III Sanctus,

Collegium Musicum Choir UNSW

and Dimity Hall, violin

youtu.be/3HIXPVjNGzU

FAURÉ Requiem VII In paradisum,

Collegium Musicum Choir UNSW

and Dimity Hall, violin

youtu.be/BPM3Sow6vso

music.unsw.edu.au

Bartók's Contrasts

Sonia Maddock

"It's an awesome piece!" was David Griffiths' first response to a query about Bartók's trio *Contrasts*, which he was scheduled to perform with the Australia Ensemble in September. It would have been the work's sixth appearance in an Australia Ensemble subscription season, and reasonably so. Scored for clarinet, violin and piano, it is an ideal 'mixed ensemble', and at around eighteen minutes' duration, is a substantial work without being immense. But more importantly, it is virtuosic for the performers and thrilling for the audience with its shifts in character and energy.

Bartók was still in Budapest in 1938, and his experience of writing chamber music moved into quite diverse ensembles – following his fifth string quartet in 1934, in 1937 came the unusually scoring of his *Sonata for two pianos and percussion*, before *Contrasts* for clarinet, violin and piano in 1938.



David Griffiths, clarinet
Credit: Timothy Young



Benny Goodman, clarinet

In seeking a contemporary composer for a new commissioned work, clarinettist Benny Goodman took the advice of friend and professional associate Josef Szigeti, a Hungarian violinist. The work was intended to be two movements of around six minutes to fit on the two sides of a 78rpm record - Bartók did accordingly create a slow and a fast movement, however it exceeded the specified limits of duration. With this limitation already overshot, Bartók took the opportunity to add a third movement between the original two, resulting in the work he recorded in 1940 with Goodman and Szigeti in New York. Roger Covell described this recording as "one of the treasures of the history of performance and recording", and Griffiths agrees that it is well worth a listen to understand the musical intention of the work. This recording also captures Bartók's



Béla Bartók, composer

Suggested listening

Goodman, Szegedy and Bartok
original recording, 1940:
<https://bit.ly/3mMYe7E>

Stolzman, Goode, Stolzman
recording, 1990:
<https://spoti.fi/3Bt7hia>

modesty, giving prominence to the violin and clarinet despite his own brilliance as a pianist.

Although the project was not as originally intended, the commissioning of this trio from Bartók was Goodman dipping his toe into the commissioning of classical composers, despite being known foremost as a jazz performer. His positive experience with Bartók was swiftly followed by some of the most important commissions of clarinet repertoire in the period, from similarly prominent composers Darius Milhaud (Concerto for clarinet and orchestra, 1941), Paul Hindemith (Clarinet Concerto, 1947), and Aaron Copland (Clarinet Concerto, 1947-49).

As a composer, Bartók is known for his dedication to Hungarian peasant music, rather than the gypsy music made popular by Liszt and others, preferring to season his work with elements of the gypsy idiom. This is evident across his entire oeuvre, through his extensive choral output as well as instrumental. Indicatively, the titles and styles of the three movements relate directly to traditional Hungarian

peasant forms, the crisp dotted rhythms of the ceremonial music used by the army in attracting rural recruits evident in the first movement, *Verbunkos* (Recruiting Dance), including a demanding clarinet cadenza. The second movement, *Pihenő*, translates to 'resting', and captures a brooding darkness of night, before the final *Sebes* dance movement captures the vitality of rural dance traditions with blazing energy. It is a work that David Griffiths looks forward to returning to, despite its difficulty, and the September performance would have been his first with his Australia Ensemble colleagues. "It's extremely challenging. Despite having played it many, many times, it doesn't seem to get much easier to play. It is incredibly dynamic, exciting, energetic, folk-music inspired, fast and fun!"

While we remain in lockdown, it is a work worth exploring to really dwell on the musical vigour that Bartók brought to chamber music in a world on the brink of war. And David Griffiths' evident love of the piece would certainly encourage the investment of time: "It's awesome. Did I already say that? So good."



For the calendar... Our 2022 season

We are pleased to announce we will officially launch the Australia Ensemble UNSW 2022 season in November 2021. Please put these in your calendar and hold the dates!

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

Overcoming Performance Anxiety

Nearly any situation can trigger performance anxiety, from competing in a sporting event, to taking a test in school, to parallel parking while your friends are watching.

If you dread the thought of getting up in front of a group of people and performing, you are not alone. Millions of people suffer from performance anxiety, commonly called "stage fright." Athletes, musicians, actors, and public speakers often suffer from this affliction.

We invite you to join us and a panel of specialists from the music, health, and the sports industry as they unpack Performance Anxiety and discuss strategies for overcoming the physical and mental symptoms one experiences when "fight or flight" takes hold.

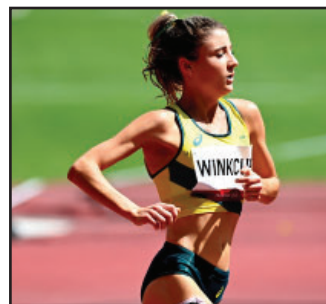
Our expert panel includes: Greta Bradman (pictured middle right), Soprano, Psychologist and Radio Broadcaster; David Griffiths (pictured bottom right), Associate Professor of Music and Australia Ensemble UNSW Clarinettist; and Georgia Winkcup, (pictured top right) Australian Olympian and UNSW Alumna, to explore the characteristics of performance anxiety, and what we can do to perform our best.

When: Friday October 29, 6pm - 7:15pm

Register to attend online: music.unsw.edu.au/overcomingperformance-anxiety

Free. All welcome.

This webinar is presented in collaboration with UNSW DiversityFest and takes place in Mental Health Month.



Thank You And Stay Safe

We recently announced the cancellation of our final concert of the 2021 season, our October 16 performance. While the decision was made with heavy hearts, the health and wellbeing of our audience, staff and musicians remains our priority. We wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support during this difficult time. Stay safe, and we hope to see you in 2022!

Fathers of Australia Ensemble UNSW Unite!

Fatherhood and paternal bonds were honored on September 5, with fathers of the Australia Ensemble coming together with their families to celebrate. Enjoy these behind the scenes snaps!



Artistic Planning During COVID

Paul Stanhope

I was recently speaking to a colleague who is an Artistic Manager of an orchestra in a state which currently has zero COVID cases. I was saying how lucky they had been to be able to keep performing at this time. Lucky, maybe, he said since he had also never been busier, giving the example of a program whereby he had to change conductor five times – not exactly a relaxing thought! Even when this orchestra can get in a conductor from overseas (very difficult) or from interstate (sometimes impossible) there are rules around hotel quarantining either side. Same situation for soloists, guest artists and, indeed, replacement players. So even when things seem good on the surface, Covid takes its toll in the chaos it brings in its wake.

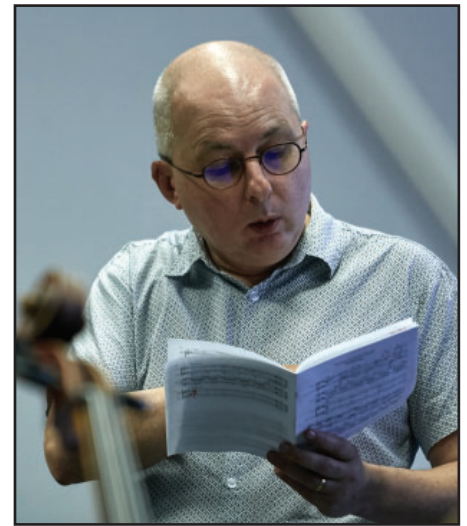


"Backstage in better times" with the Australia Ensemble UNSW and guest musicians

With the return of our subscription series for concerts in April and May, it looked like the Australia Ensemble 2021 series was going to be a cracker. We had been off to a flying start with a very successful new music workshop in March as part of the Layton Fellowship and Blakeman prizes. Ensemble members had returned with renewed vigour and passion, and it was clear how the audience valued the experience of beautiful performances from the ensemble. Alas, our last three programs for 2021 have, unfortunately, been cancelled. We are all saddened about this, but I particularly feel for Sydney-based composer, Holly Harrison, whose commissioned work *Slipstream* has now been postponed in both 2020 and 2021. Third time lucky, hopefully...

Artistic programming in the age of COVID hasn't been without its challenges. Yet, there is cause for cautious optimism for 2022. We are forging on,

hoping that by next year we will be back on stage in some form. The 2022 program will capture some themes of the present age: the awareness of time passing, the cycling of seasons and aeons, a celebration of the liveliness of



Paul Stanhope, Artistic Chair

youth and a commemoration of milestones. With COVID decimating the Beethoven anniversary year of 2020, it is hoped we might do better next year on the anniversaries front, with a program celebrating the music of Debussy (140), Vaughan Williams (150), Cesar Franck (200) and even Xenakis (100). And as a further taster of next year, there will be a welcome return to music by Mozart and Brahms both featured twice in the year, plus a spritely chamber work by Mendelssohn, an elegant Bach flute sonata and a fun cuisine-inspired piece by Martinu. And, yes, we will be (fingers crossed) premiering Holly's new work!

Artistic planning of any sort has become pretty fraught with shut borders and tough lockdown restrictions playing havoc with our lives. But we look forward to a brighter future and to seeing you all back in the Clancy Auditorium in 2022.



Subscribers in Sir John Clancy Auditorium UNSW