

STEEL CITY STRINGS

THE RETURN

2020



2.00pm Sunday 29 November

Berry School of Arts

7.30pm Saturday 5 December

Wollongong Town Hall

2.00pm Sunday 6 December

Bowral Memorial Hall

OUR PATRON Andrew Ford OAM

RESCHEDULED SUBSCRIPTION SEASON (cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19).
ALL 2020 SUBSCRIBERS CAN USE THEIR 2020 TICKETS

STEEL CITY STRINGS 2021 SUBSCRIPTION SEASON – CELEBRATING OUR REGION

We will be showcasing the wonderful talent in our region that led to us being declared the winner of the 2019 APRA/AMCOS Art Music award for excellence in a region and commitment to Australian music.

SERIES 1 FEBRUARY-MARCH: 'The Composer is in the Room' features the world premiere of a new composition by Elena Kats-Chernin, voted #1 favourite Australian composer in the 2019 ABC Countdown. Where possible, Elena and other featured Australian composers, will be present at performances.

Chevalier Performing Arts Centre - 2pm, Sun 28 Feb | Wollongong Town Hall - 7.30pm, Sat 6 March | Nowra School of Arts - 2pm, Sun 7 March

SERIES 2 AUGUST: 'Earth Connections', featuring William Barton on didgeridoo, sees Steel City Strings collaborate with other Indigenous composers, musicians and performers in music to celebrate the talent in our region.

Chevalier Performing Arts Centre - 2pm, Sun 22 Aug | Wollongong Town Hall - 7.30pm, Sat 28 Aug | Nowra School of Arts - 2pm, Sun 29 Aug

SERIES 3 NOVEMBER: 'Seasons' Featuring brilliant young violinist Emily Sun, 2018 ABC Australian Young Musician of the Year and multi international prize-winner. Vivaldi's Four Seasons will be bookended by works by JS Bach and an Australian composition.

Chevalier Performing Arts Centre - 2pm, Sun 14 Nov | Wollongong Town Hall - 7.30pm, Sat 20 Nov | Nowra School of Arts - 2pm, Sun 21 Nov

If you subscribed in 2020 your subscription is good for 2021.

New subscribers: register for our newsletter on www.steelcitystrings.com.au for updates on when bookings for 2021 subscriptions open.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM IN 2021

The popular "Celebration of Youth" Program returns in 2021, featuring our young rising stars as soloists, composers and orchestra members

CELEBRATION OF YOUTH (JUNE):

Chevalier Performing Arts Centre, 2pm Sunday 20 June. Wollongong Town Hall, 7.30pm Saturday 26 June. Nowra School of Arts, 2pm Saturday 27 June.

Register For Our Newsletter on www.steelcitystrings.com.au for updates on when bookings for "Celebration of Youth" open.

Capriol Suite (1926)

Peter Warlock

Basse-Danse

Pavane

Tordion

Bransles

Pieds-en-l'air

Mattachins (Sword Dance)

Concerto for Two Cellos in G minor, RV 531 (1710)

Antonio Vivaldi

Allegro

Largo

Allegro

Soloists - Karella Mitchell and Rita Woolhouse

Concerto Grosso for String Orchestra and Piano obbligato (1925)

Ernest Bloch

Prelude

Dirge

Pastorale and Rustic Dances

Fugue



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CONDUCTOR: Luke Spicer

An acclaimed Violist and chamber musician, Luke is making his mark as an operatic and symphonic conductor.



He graduated with a Masters of Conducting from the Sydney Conservatorium, and was a participant in the Symphony Services International Conductor Development Program during 2016.

In 2014 Luke was appointed Principal Conductor of the Sydney University Symphony Orchestra, in 2016 he became Music Director of Blush Opera in Sydney, and has been the Associate Conductor of the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra for several years.

In 2017 Luke joined Opera Australia as Music Director of the NSW schools tour, and made his conducting debuts with the Tasmanian and Canberra Symphony Orchestras. In 2018 he conducted Willoughby Symphony Orchestra in their subscription series. He is now a conductor with Opera Australia as part of their Young Artist Program and has been assistant conductor to Simone Young.

This is Luke's fourth year as resident conductor of Steel City Strings.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CONCERTMASTER: Kyle Little

Kyle Little is founding Artistic Director and Concert Master of Steel City Strings. He completed his Bachelor of Music in



violin performance from the University of Dalhousie, Canada in 2006. He graduated from the University of Wollongong in 2010 with a Graduate Diploma in Education and in 2013 with a Masters in Education - Research.

Kyle is the full-time instrumental ensemble director and classroom music teacher at Campbelltown High School of Performing Arts. He was awarded the NSW ACEL Mary Armstrong Award for educational leadership in 2017.

Kyle teaches violin at Wollongong Conservatorium and taught the Music Methods course at Wollongong University in 2019. He advocates for the importance of quality music education in schools.

PIANO: David Vance

David Vance studied piano with Nan Price and Greville Rothern (assistant to Claudio Arrau). He holds



honours degrees in English literature (UNSW) and in music performance (Sydney University) and pursued further musical studies as an accompanist and conductor in Italy, Austria and England. He taught at the University of Sydney and the NSW Conservatorium of Music before his appointment in 1982 by the University of Wollongong with a brief to develop musical activities on campus. When he retired in 2012 as an Associate Professor, his contribution to the musical life of the university was recognised in the award of an Honorary Fellowship.

David has performed with some of Australia's leading artists over many years, and has broadcast and recorded chamber music for the ABC. He remains active as an accompanist with a particular interest in vocal repertoire. David regularly contributes program annotations for Steel City Strings.

THE ORCHESTRA

Conductor Luke Spicer

First violins Kyle Little (concertmaster)
Monique Ziegelaar
Janine Jackson
Kate Malone

Second violins Jacob Antonio*
Liana Bonaccorso
Siobhan Mewes
Mitra Ahmadi
Pirshahid

Violas

Adrian Davis*
Renee Richardson
Anna Hewgill
Rachel Miller

Celli:

Karella Mitchell*
Rita Woolhouse
Catherine Barnett
Louisa Lovez

Double Bass Ethan Ireland*

Piano/Continuo David Vance

** denotes principal*

SOLOISTS

Karella Mitchell



Karella started learning cello when she was 7 years old after hearing Jacqueline du Pré playing on the radio. She completed a Bachelor of Music at the Sydney Conservatorium studying with Georg Pedersen and went on to graduate with Honours from the Newcastle Conservatorium where she was the cellist for the Conservatorium String quartet.

Karella holds a post-graduate Diploma in Music Performance from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Having studied with esteemed teachers as George Pedersen, Anthea Scott-Mitchell, Dorothy Sumner and Tim Blomfield she appreciated, assimilated and developed both as a cellist and teacher from each experience.

Rita Woolhouse



Rita Woolhouse studied cello at the NSW Conservatorium of Music, with Colleen McMeekin and David Pereira, graduating with a DSCM in performance. She then undertook further studies in the UK with Joan Dickson and Christopher Bunting.

Rita has performed as a freelance musician with various chamber and orchestral ensembles including the John Gould String Quartet and the Majorian Ensemble and has appeared as a soloist with a number of regional orchestras. She and the composer Judith Stubbs have often collaborated in a wide range of musical genres, including performing together in Mumbai and at the Adelaide and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals.

Rita currently performs and teaches in NSW.

Capriol Suite for String Orchestra

Peter Warlock (1894 - 1930)

Basse-Danse

Pavane

Tordion

Bransles

Pieds-en-l'air

Mattachins (Sword Dance)

The British composer Philip Heseltine, better known by his pseudonym Peter Warlock, quickly discovered that a career as a concert pianist was not for him. Instead he satisfied his musical interests by turning to the study of early music, transcribing and editing some six hundred published works over his brief and tempestuous lifetime, while his close friendship with Delius no doubt nourished his aspirations as a composer. These two endeavours come together not only in many of his song settings, particularly those of the Elizabethan poets, but also in what is possibly his best known work, the Capriol Suite for string orchestra, written in 1925. The suite springs from thematic material found in one of the earliest French treatises on dance music, *Orchésographie*, written in 1588 by the French cleric, Thoinot Arbeau (itself an anagrammatic non de plume for Jehan Tabourot). The text appeared in English translation in 1925, and immediately found an avid reader in Warlock.

The treatise provides melodies for some fifty dances, together with detailed descriptions of instrumental performance of these dances and their steps, along with a philosophic discussion of the importance of dancing for health and pleasurable courtship. The treatise is constructed in the form of a dialogue between the author and a lawyer named Capriol, hence Warlock's title for the suite which comprises six dances found in Arbeau's catalogue.

The Basse-Danse, already obsolete in 1589 but included in the hope it would be revived by 'modest matrons', was so called because the feet were meant to glide over the floor rather than be raised over it. Warlock alternates successive statements of the melody between first and second violins, gradually thickening the texture and volume over the dance's stately progression. The Pavane maintains a constant rhythm - a long beat followed by two short ones - throughout its gentle course. The lively Tordion achieves humour in its deft string writing, often relying on pizzicatos for its soufflé lightness. Even faster, and then accelerating, is the rustic round dance, Bransles, an exhilarating fling that is counterbalanced by the following Pieds-en-l'air with its intimate and graceful gait. The vigorous finale to the suite is Mattachins, a sword dance in whose latter part the harmony departs alarmingly from the established modality, bringing to the antique a dissonant modernity.

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Concerto for two cellos in G minor, PV 411

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Allegro

Largo

Allegro

The solo concerto, although it developed alongside the concerto grosso, aims to display the virtuosity of a solo instrument, rather than the talents of a small instrumental ensemble. Its primary architect was the Venetian composer Antonio Vivaldi whose output in this form alone was astoundingly prolific. He wrote over 500 concertos, including 230 for solo violin. Then there are around forty concertos for two instruments, and about thirty for three or more soloists.

In this concerto, Vivaldi confronts the challenge of writing for two cellos, instruments that are normally entrusted with supplying a harmonic foundation rather than the tune. From the very outset, Vivaldi is careful to keep the orchestra at a distance so that the listeners' attention is focussed on the soloists. In fact the central Largo movement is scored entirely for the soloists accompanied only by the continuo - another cello, and harpsichord. Vivaldi allows his soloists space to relish the rich sonorities of their natural acoustic habitat, and, one suspects, for the moment at least, to enjoy being in the spotlight.

While written in G minor throughout, the minor key does not condemn the work to darkness or perpetual melancholy. The Allegro first movement maintains a vigorous energy that contrasts with the introspective Largo that follows, while the final movement is an extroverted and syncopated romp, full of playful vitality.

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Concerto Grosso No 1 in G minor for String Orchestra and Piano obbligato

Ernest Bloch (1880-1959)

Prelude

Dirge

Pastorale and Rustic Dances

Fugue

The Swiss-born composer Ernest Bloch composed the Concerto Grosso for String Orchestra and Piano obbligato (1924) as an exemplar for his students at the Cleveland Institute of Music to demonstrate how an antiquated form, the baroque concerto grosso, might be sustained within the more dissonant harmonic practices of the early twentieth century.

The work adopts various characteristics of its baroque ancestry including a four movement structure that provides ample opportunity for the concertino group - solo instruments drawn from each string section - to demonstrate individual and collective artistry. Where formerly a harpsichord would have supplied a continuo part, here the piano plays an occasional virtuosic role or acts as an accompaniment to solos from within the concertino ensemble. Elsewhere it doubles the orchestral tutti, adding a percussive element to idiomatic string writing or enriching the lush, impressionistic sonorities of the second and third movements.

Grandiose chords announce the Prelude with a sense of portent. These massive chords frame several tumultuous sections that are propelled by vigorous sequences, rising in chromatic tension and couched in the motoric energy typical of baroque allegro movements. The Dirge begins with a limpid phrase for strings high in their register. As the pitch descends, the harmonies darken to create a bleak atmosphere. A lyrical central section for solo strings and piano offers a sense of consolation before the elegiac mood returns, with the final cadence suggesting a hard-won resignation. Solo violin, viola and cello introduce the Pastorale with a languid serenity, only to be interrupted by an energetic theme that is clearly an invitation to a series of lively Rustic Dances. The concluding Fugue is a rigorous exploration of contrapuntal technique, one no doubt specifically designed to engage Bloch's students. But it is more than a pedagogical exercise: it is also a powerful essay that integrates past and present musical thinking in a rewarding exposition of compositional mastery.

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