



PIANISTS OF EXCELLENCE

MEMBERS OF THE TEAM OF PIANISTS

Eric Raymond
Anne Bortolussi
Darryl Coote
Robert Chamberlain

HAYDN • SCHUBERT • SCHUMANN • CHOPIN • BRAHMS • SCULTHORPE

Eric Raymond



In May 1988, Eric Raymond won the first prize in the Chopin Competition of Australia, giving him as recipient of this award, the opportunity to travel to Europe, and to play in concerts and broadcasts in both Australia and Europe.

In the same year Eric was also a finalist in the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Young Performers' Competition and he won a grant from the Australia Council for studies in Australia and Europe.

Eric Raymond was born in 1967 and he commenced his musical studies at the age of eight. He soon showed signs of unusual brilliance. In 1983 he began learning from Max Cooke and shortly afterwards became part of a special University Research Project for the development of talented young musicians. In 1984 he toured Europe and Asia in a party of nine University students under Max Cooke's guidance. This gave him the opportunity of being exposed to the highest levels of music making, and of playing for such artists as Alfons Kontarsky and Paul Badura-Skoda. In 1985 he commenced studies for the degree of Bachelor of Music at the University of Melbourne. During his course

he has received several prizes including the Maude Harrington Prize for accompanying, the Grace Funston and the Allans Awards for piano performance, the Johnston Award for Germanic studies and the Lady Turner Prize for general academic excellence.

As member of the Melbourne based Team of Pianists, Eric has given many concerts in Australia and abroad. Highlights of his concert activity include a recital with soprano Merlyn Quaife and a performance of the Brahms Piano Concerto No 2 with the Perth Symphony Orchestra.

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The *Nocturne Op 15 No 2* (1830-31) and the *Etude Op 25 No 5* (1832-34) share a three-part form in which the second section contrasts with the first and the third. In the Nocturne the cantilena of the outer section is disturbed by the agitato quintuplets of the central 'doppio movimento'. The outer sections of the Etude present virtuosic writing and pianistic challenges that find a more intimate counterpart in the central section. The difficulties of the Etude involve stretches between the fingers in the right hand chords. But as in all of Chopin's Etudes, the technical difficulties are subservient to the poetic ideas expressed in each piece.

The Ballade No 4 by Chopin was composed in 1842, seven years before the death of the composer, and forms a fascinating synthesis of many aspects of his art. The form of the work is

ambiguous, drawing on elements of the sonata, the rondo, the fantasy, as well as ternary and variation forms. The different stylistic elements out of which the work is composed are equally heterogeneous – a waltz and a nocturne alternate with contrapuntal and bravura passages. From these disparate elements Chopin has created a work of irresistible elegance, subtlety and inspiration. E.R.

Anne Bortolussi



Anne Bortolussi's interests in music are wide. She held a research scholarship for post-graduate studies involving both practical and academic fields. She has been a Manager with the Melbourne Youth Music Council Saturday Morning Music School, and

assistant Director of the Victorian Boy's Choir. During a period of leave of absence from these activities, she will visit a number of music institutions in Europe, and will work under the guidance of the Italian pianist and teacher Andrea Bonatta in Bolzano.

Anne Bortolussi's serious music studies began when she was attending

the Methodist Ladies College where she was awarded music scholarships for four years. In 1982 she enrolled in the Bachelor of Music course at the University of Melbourne, was actively involved in concerts within the Faculty of Music, and became a founding member of the Team of Pianists.

In 1983 Anne won two first prizes at the Dandenong Festival of Arts and also won the gold medal for the most outstanding instrumentalist. During her University studies she was awarded the Wright Prize for the best performance on any instrument (second year), the Rosemarie Kenny Prize for excellence in piano playing (third year), and twice received Ormond Exhibitions for outstanding results in all subjects. In 1986 she completed the double degree Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Music Education.

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The term 'Impromptu' is derived from the Latin 'in promptu' which means in readiness, and is also closely related to the term improvisation from the Latin *ex improviso* – without preparation. Thus the Impromptus could be described as improvised pieces prompted by inspiration on the spur of the moment. They differ, however, from free piano fantasies through their more concise structure and their song-like nature, although they are not really songs without words like those of Mendelssohn; they are free from programmatic influence and draw from a

wealth of purely musical ideas. Above all, the Impromptus demonstrate the hallmarks of Schubert's style, a beautiful simplicity, a directness of expression and a genuine Romantic lyricism.

The *Impromptu* in Bb major is in variation form and based on the Rosamunde theme. It contains five variations, each of sheer musical beauty, in which Schubert demonstrates his supreme skill in utilising the many tonal qualities of the piano.

The *Andante* in Gb major is an intimately gentle work. It features a hauntingly beautiful melody suspended above a rippling quaver accompaniment. An atmosphere of almost dream-like serenity is created.

The *Impromptu* in C minor is a dramatic Allegro. Its somewhat rhapsodic character is provided by the ever changing use of the main theme, a constant presence throughout almost the entire work. Here Schubert's richness of musical material combines with his lyrical imagination to produce constant variety in thematic presentation and accompaniment. A.B.

Darryl Coote



In 1985, playing the Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No 1 with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Darryl Coote won the Victorian State Finals of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Concerto and Vocal

Competition. Since then, he has become established as one of Melbourne's finest young pianists.

Born in Korumburra, South Gippsland in 1963, he began his piano studies at the age of eight. Some ten years later, after completing his Higher School Certificate at Warragul High School, being equal Dux of the school in that year, he commenced studies for the Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Melbourne studying piano with Max Cooke.

During the next four years he won several scholarships and awards including the Allans Award for high distinction in piano playing. In 1984 he completed his degree with first class honours.

The year 1985 brought Darryl good fortune. He was the inaugural winner of the National Hephzibah Menuhin Scholarship which enabled him to travel to

West Germany for a year's study with Kurt Bauer at the Musikhochschule in Hanover. He returned to Australia in late 1986 to complete a Master's degree with funding from a Commonwealth Post-graduate Research Award.

As Artistic Co-ordinator and a founding member of the Team of Pianists, he has performed in numerous suburban, country and interstate recitals, appeared as concerto soloist and on radio with the ABC and 3MBS-FM, as well as in duet performances with Max Cooke. Recently he had the honour of accompanying Sir Yehudi Menuhin in an impromptu performance at the Robert Blackwood Hall. He is currently teaching at the University of Melbourne where he is a part-time member of staff.

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The four late sets of *Klavierstücke* (Op 116, 117, 118 and 119) contain many of Brahms' finest thoughts. The atmosphere is introspective and intimate, Brahms now writing for himself rather than the public. The striving for simplicity and concentration becomes very pronounced in these pieces; modulations are more limited than in his earlier works, the harmony less complicated, and the rhythm more uniform. Nonetheless, there is a surprising degree of invention within this musical economy.

The *Klavierstücke* Op 118 were written in Vienna in 1892, and comprise six short pieces.

In contrast to the rhapsodic structure

which would be otherwise implied by its title, the *Ballade* in G minor is set in a strict ABA form. The opening section has an air of energetic forthrightness, while the middle section, a third away in B major, entrances with its tender charm.

The following *Intermezzo* in F minor presents a completely different mood, that of agitated introversion. Through-composed in three main sections, the frenetic quaver figures of the opening – in the absence of an identifiable melody – set a scene of disquiet. This is contrasted by the feeling of security and peace which comes from simplicity of harmony and rhythm in the mid-section, while the tightly structured climax is of considerable intensity.

A scene of idyllic peace is depicted in the *Romanze* in F major, reflecting the qualities of beauty, devotion and integrity. The organ-like chords of the opening section evoke a connotation of prayer, and even the gentle pastoral nature of the bass ostinato of the D major mid-section does nothing to disturb this idyllic calm. Here Brahms exploits to the full the harmonic resonance of the iron-framed piano.

The final *Intermezzo* in E flat minor embodies a passionate outpouring of grief, the culmination of the frustrations of a life's experience. Lamenting over the interval of a minor third (G flat-E flat), the melody of the first section leads seamlessly into a series of poignantly moving outbursts which explode into the climax, before the postlude subsides gradually with a series of tragic sighs. D.C.

Robert Chamberlain



Robert Chamberlain has an interest in both solo piano music and accompanying. In 1985 he won the Apex/Robert Stolz Scholarship for studies in Vienna, Austria. Working with Igo Koch on solo music and with David Lutz

on vocal accompaniment he was able to attend summer masterclasses given by Paul Badura-Skoda, whom he had met on an earlier visit to Europe, and Alexander Jenner. He has performed as soloist and accompanist in concerts in Vienna, and as accompanist in the USA.

Robert grew up in Canberra, where his musical studies included piano and carillon. In 1981 he began a course for Bachelor of Music at the University of Melbourne with piano studies under Max Cooke. He graduated in 1984 with first class honours in performance and musicology, and was awarded the Catherine Grace McWilliam Prize for the best student in the final year.

Robert Chamberlain has performed throughout Victoria with the Team of Pianists since its inception in 1983, and has given solo recitals in Canberra and Melbourne, as well as on radio station 3MBS-FM. He is a member of the Young Professionals' Centre of the Musical

Society of Victoria and a tutor in Piano at the University of Melbourne.

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Described by H.C. Robbins Landon as a work of genius, the *Sonata* in B minor, Hob XVI/32 was composed while Haydn was Director of Music for the Esterhazy family in Eisenstadt and Vienna. Attributed to the year 1776, it falls between the 'Sturm und Drang' outpourings of the 1760s and early 1770s and the absolute mastery of the classical style seen in Haydn's late keyboard works from the end of the 18th century. It is cast in three movements in the normal fast-slow-fast sequence and combines elegance and charm, particularly in the 'Menuet', with drama and drive in the outer movements.

Schumann's 'Album Leaves' were published in 1852 as part of a set of fourteen pieces entitled *Bunte Blätter* or coloured pages. This rather strange title is explained by the fact that each piece was originally to be issued with a coloured cover indicating its mood.

The *Albumblätter* were composed at various times between 1836 and 1841, and demonstrate Schumann's piano writing in miniature forms. No 1 in F# minor was used by Brahms as the theme for his 'Variations on a Theme of Robert Schumann' Op 9. Brahms also copied the texture and the mood of the second piece in B minor for one of the variations in this work.

The Australian composer Peter

Sculthorpe has been concerned for many years with the concept of a distinctly Australian music appropriate to the Australian environment and people. In his quest for an Australian style, he has often, as with *Snow, Moon and Flowers* (1970), turned towards Asian culture. The Sculthorpe authority, Michael Hannan, states that these works were a direct response to the principles of traditional Japanese art. The correlation between aspects of Japanese culture and these pieces is to be found at a technical level in the importance of the pursuit of technical perfection, and at an aesthetic level in the avoidance of ugliness and exaggeration

whilst stressing elegance and taste. With their clear harmonic basis and simple ternary forms, these three miniatures are immediately attractive, and represent, in Hannan's words, "perhaps the pinnacle of refinement and craftsmanship in Sculthorpe's output of compositions." R.C.

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OTHER TEAM OF PIANISTS RECORDINGS

Hamilton

Homage to Brahms

Mozart at Melbourne

New Norcia: a Spanish Rhapsody

Peter Sculthorpe piano music



● The production of this recording has been assisted by a grant from the Colin and Cicely Rigg Estate

● Recorded in the Waverley Studios of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Melbourne, on 4 and 5 June 1988

● Piano: Steinway concert grand

● Producer: Maria Vandamme

● Sound engineer: Jim Atkins

● Executive producer: Max Cooke

● Front cover

illustration: Leonardo Da Vinci – detail from Study of Hands for Mona Lisa

● Photographs: Jenny Snow and Alexander Furman

● Cover design: Jenny Snow

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Eric Raymond, Anne Bortolussi, Robert Chamberlain, Darryl Coote, Max Cooke

Eric Raymond

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

- 1 *Etude in E minor, Op. 25, No. 5* 3'06"
- 2 *Nocturne in F# major, Op. 15, No. 2* 3'37"
- 3 *Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52* 10'36"

Anne Bortolussi

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

- 4 *Impromptus, Bb major, Op. 142 (D 935) No. 3* 7'34"
- 5 *Gb major, Op. 90 (D 899), No. 3* 5'40"
- 6 *C minor, Op. 90 (D 899), No. 1* 9'14"

Darryl Coote

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) Klavierstücke, Op. 118

- 7 *Ballade* 3'40"
- 8 *Intermezzo* 2'41"
- 9 *Romanze* 3'32"
- 10 *Intermezzo* 5'17"

Robert Chamberlain

Josef Haydn (1732-1809)

11 *Sonata in B minor, Hob. XVI/32* 9'01"

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

12 *Albumblätter, Op. 99* 3'00"

Peter Sculthorpe (b. 1929)

13 *Snow, Moon and Flowers* 4'23"