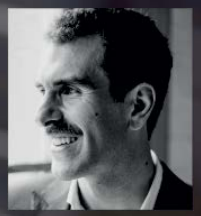

Exquisite Harmonies
THE MARAIS PROJECT

Exquisite Harmonies

THE MARAIS PROJECT

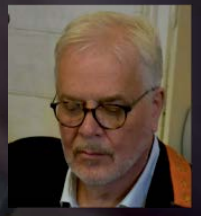
Anthony Abouhamad - harpsichord




Jennifer Eriksson – viola da gamba



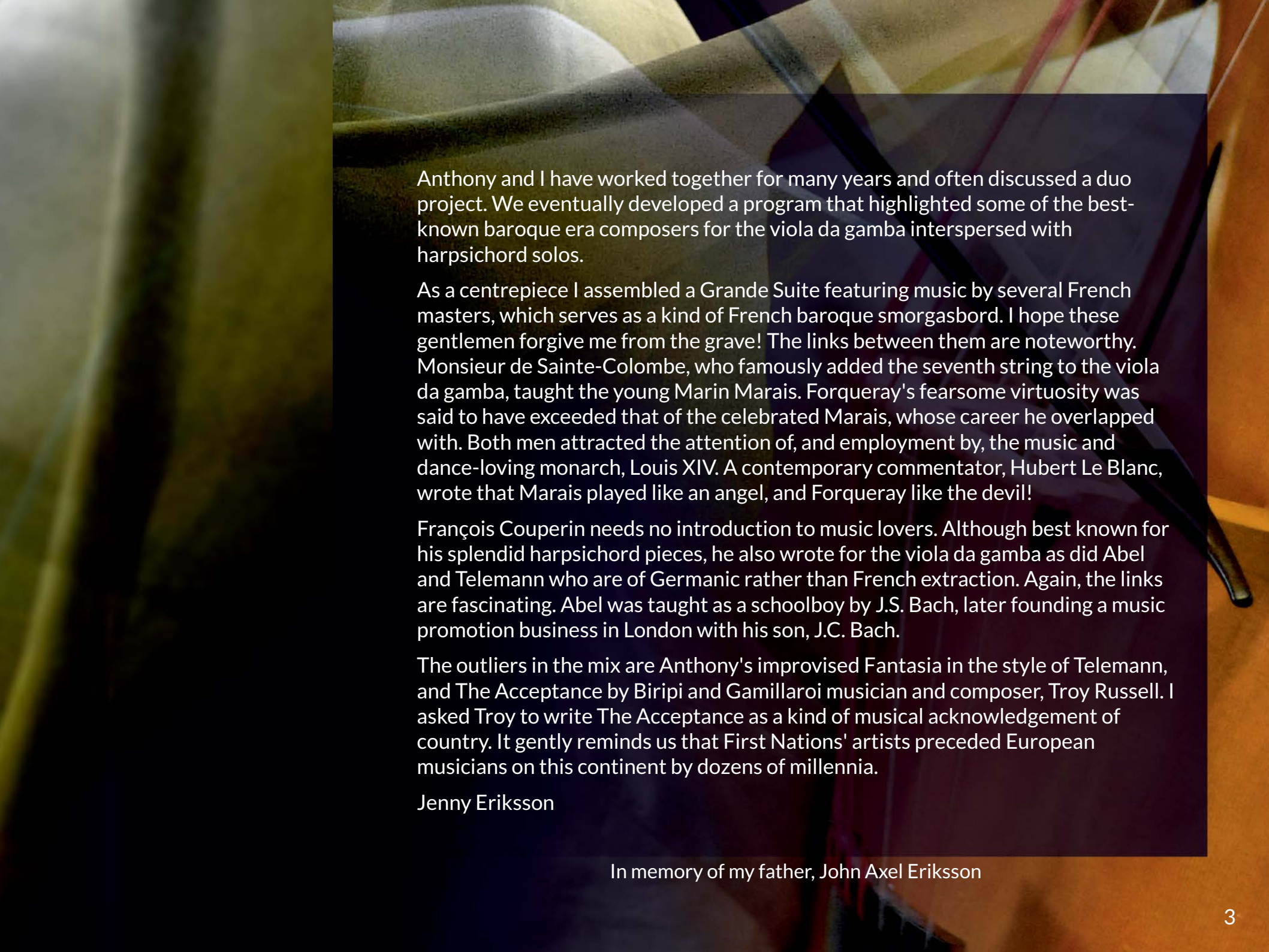

Susie Bishop - voice & violin

Tommie Anderson – gallichon

Produced by Llew Kiek

Sound Engineer – Chris Doherty



Anthony and I have worked together for many years and often discussed a duo project. We eventually developed a program that highlighted some of the best-known baroque era composers for the viola da gamba interspersed with harpsichord solos.

As a centrepiece I assembled a Grande Suite featuring music by several French masters, which serves as a kind of French baroque smorgasbord. I hope these gentlemen forgive me from the grave! The links between them are noteworthy. Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe, who famously added the seventh string to the viola da gamba, taught the young Marin Marais. Forqueray's fearsome virtuosity was said to have exceeded that of the celebrated Marais, whose career he overlapped with. Both men attracted the attention of, and employment by, the music and dance-loving monarch, Louis XIV. A contemporary commentator, Hubert Le Blanc, wrote that Marais played like an angel, and Forqueray like the devil!

François Couperin needs no introduction to music lovers. Although best known for his splendid harpsichord pieces, he also wrote for the viola da gamba as did Abel and Telemann who are of Germanic rather than French extraction. Again, the links are fascinating. Abel was taught as a schoolboy by J.S. Bach, later founding a music promotion business in London with his son, J.C. Bach.

The outliers in the mix are Anthony's improvised Fantasia in the style of Telemann, and The Acceptance by Biripi and Gamillaroi musician and composer, Troy Russell. I asked Troy to write The Acceptance as a kind of musical acknowledgement of country. It gently reminds us that First Nations' artists preceded European musicians on this continent by dozens of millennia.

Jenny Eriksson

In memory of my father, John Axel Eriksson

THE MUSIC

Carl Friedrich Abel - Sonata in C major, Op. 9, No. 2 (WK 87). London 1771/1772.
Abel was one of the last professional viola da gamba players of the late baroque/early classical era. Born in 1723 in Germany, he died in London in 1787, one year before the colonial settlement of Australia. His father, Christian Ferdinand, held the role of principal viola da gambist and cellist to the court orchestra of Leopold, Prince of Anhalt-Köthen. Abel junior boarded at St Thomas' School Leipzig where he was taught by J.S Bach. Moving to London he teamed up with Bach's son, Johan Christian, to promote the Bach-Abel concerts, a series that premiered some of the symphonies of Haydn. Abel was a great virtuoso of the viol, but also wrote symphonies, one of which was mis-attributed to Mozart for some years as Mozart had copied it in his own hand. Abel's catalogue of 420 works also includes much chamber music. The Sonata in C major is a charming work, likely composed for students. I believe that ours is the first Australian recording.

Georg Philipp Telemann - Fantasia no.5 from 'Three Dozen Fantasias for Harpsichord' (Fantaisies pour le clavessin; 3. Douzaines. Hamburg: 1732-33); Fantasia after Telemann (improvised).

Compared to his overall output, Telemann composed little for the harpsichord. The Three Dozen Fantasias for Harpsichord, a published collection of fantasias that he wrote throughout the years 1732 –33, make up a considerable portion of his compositions for that instrument. Each fantasy – a generic term that refers to a 'product of the imagination' – follows a similar da capo form; the opening section explores a melodic idea after which comes a contrasting and shorter second section that is then followed by a repeat (da capo) of the first section. On account of their brevity and melodic inventiveness, the fantasies are attractive pieces that remind us of Telemann's mastery as a composer whose music engages listeners and performers alike.

The Fantasia after Telemann is my attempt to imitate the compositional model that Telemann presents in his Three Dozen Fantasias. Following Telemann's model, my fantasia uses da capo form to explore and contrast melodic ideas. I was able to develop these ideas – as products of the imagination – by using my knowledge of eighteenth-century counterpoint and harmony to improvise the fantasia at the harpsichord. This process helped me to better understand the

idea that eighteenth-century compositions are simply written records of a composer's improvisations. It is interesting to reflect on this concept and consider the sheer number of improvisations (thousands, if not millions) that eighteenth-century musical masters left unrecorded. Moreover, however, I believe that by practising improvisation and composition we may come closer to experiencing the intimacy and immediacy that eighteenth-century music has to offer. (Anthony Abouhamad)

Georg Philipp Telemann - Sonata in A minor (TWV 41:a6) for viola da gamba and continuo. Essercizii musici, Hamburg 1739-40.

Telemann and J.S. Bach both used the viola da or gamba or bass viol in their church cantatas and chamber works. Telemann also wrote concerti for the bass viol. In 2015 a copy of Twelve Fantasias for unaccompanied bass viol, previously considered lost, was discovered in the State Archive of Lower Saxony. Although not of the musical calibre of Bach's solo cello suites, they serve to indicate Telemann's clear affinity with the viol and consummate skill as a composer. I have a long relationship with this sonata, first published in a set of sonatas and trios for miscellaneous instruments. It was one of the initial works I learned when transitioning from a cellist to a gambist many years ago. It is an attractive and lyrical piece loved by performers and audiences alike.

Grande French Suite - music selected by Jennifer Eriksson.

Our Grande French Suite is, of course, a concoction of my own making. My intention is to present an accessible selection of some of the most respected exemplars of French baroque viol music for 21st century ears. Those represented were influential performer-composers of the viol.



Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe – Les Pleurs. Concerts à deux Violes Esgales XLIV.
Sainte-Colombe is well known to fans of the famous French film and novella, TousMatins du Monde. In addition to being a virtuoso and composer, he was the teacher of viol player and music theorist, Jean Rousseau (1644–ca.1699) and the ambitious young viola da gambist, Marin Marais. He must have made an impression on the latter as in 1701 Marais wrote a moving Tombeau in memory of his mentor. Little is known of Sainte-Colombe's life but there is evidence of his performing regularly in consorts with his two viol playing daughters and others of his students. Of his surviving works, some of the best known are his sixty seven concerts or suites for viol duo titled Concerts à deux Violes Esgales (Concerts for two equal viols). His melancholic, heartfelt music was not published in his lifetime – which may have been intentional on his part. A manuscripts of Concerts à deux Violes Esgales was discovered by the musicologist Paul Hooreman in a private library in Lausanne in 1966 – a tremendous find. Les pleurs was originally composed for two unaccompanied viols. In our version, Anthony improvises the continuo accompaniment, and plays the first viol part.

Louis de Caix d'Hervelois – Suite in G Minor/ Major. Pièces de viole Premier Livre, Paris 1708.
Caix d'Hervelois was a student of Marin Marais who was a student of Sainte-Colombe. The few facts that remain of his life are embodied in scattered contemporary references. One academic writer noted: 'In the rich tapestry of 17th and 18th century French music, few figures shine as brightly yet remain as obscure as Louis de Caix d'Hervelois.' His music sits elegantly well on the viol. It is a privilege to once again record examples of his craft.

François Couperin – Les Silvains (Majesteusment, sans lenteur). Pieces de Clavecin Premier Livre, Paris: 1713.
François Couperin came from a family of musicians and is considered one of the greatest French composers of the eighteenth century. Les Silvains, a rondeau, comes from his first book of harpsichord pieces, published in Paris in 1713. Like the three books that followed it, many of the pieces in this book include descriptive titles. These titles, Couperin explains in the book's preface, 'reflect my ideas … it would be as well to point out that the pieces which bear them are a kind of portrait which, under my fingers, have on occasion been found fair enough likenesses.' The likeness to whom Les Silvains refers to is unclear. We may deduce from Couperin's preface, however that the piece reflects the character of a friend or

acquaintance. Les Silvains is noteworthy on account of Couperin's use of the harpsichord's low register, which, along with the frequent arpeggio passages he introduces in the rondeau's couplets, provides a performer with the opportunity to display the instrument's potential resonance. In a like manner to Marais and the viol, Couperin's style of writing for the harpsichord invites performers to explore the instrument's innate qualities. (Anthony Abouhamad)





Marin Marais – Suite in G major. Pièces de viole, Cinquième Livre, Paris 1725.
Sociologically, Marais was the product of modest circumstances. The son of a Parisian shoemaker, his initial musical training was as a boy soprano in a church choir. In the context of the Grande French Suite, I would draw attention to the many connections between Marais and the other giants of the French baroque viol as well as the role played in their professional lives by Louis XIV. King Louis was a prolific cultivator and funder of music and art. There exists a clear musical lineage: Sainte-Colombe taught Marais, Marais was the tutor of Caix d'Hervelois. Marais, Couperin and Forqueray all worked at the Court of Versailles when Lully, originally from Italy, was synthesising the Italian and French styles, ultimately framing new approaches to opera, ballet and chamber music. Marais' contribution to French music includes more than 500 pieces for the viol, chamber music and several operas. Once an obscure 'jobbing musician' of the baroque, his reputation continues to rise.

Antoine Forqueray - Chaconne La Buisson. Pièces de Viole Premier Livre, Paris 1747.
A child prodigy, Forqueray first played for Louis XIV at ten years of age. The king was so impressed that he funded the young man's ongoing music tuition. Louis later appointed him as a

Court musician, a position Forqueray kept until his death. His approach to music contrasted that of the Court's refined, senior gambist, Marin Marais. In comparison to Marais, Forqueray cultivated a virtuosic, dramatic style, often accompanied by his harpsichordist wife, Henriette-Angélique. Their marriage was unhappy, however, and they later separated. Forqueray also had a difficult relationship with his son, Jean-Baptiste, even having him imprisoned in 1719. It was Jean-Baptiste, however, who published his father's viol music after his death, along with arrangements for harpsichord. It has been speculated that the sheer virtuosity of Forqueray's compositions contributed to the viol falling out of fashion. This is unlikely as a preference towards the violin family was already on the rise. Nevertheless, he was criticised by Mercure de France in 1738 for composing works 'so difficult that only he and his son can execute them with grace.'

Troy Russell – The Acceptance

I met Biripi-Gamillaroi composer and musician, Troy Russell, through the Musica Viva in Schools program. I became aware of his compositions via projects he did with Ensemble Offspring and Bach Akademie Australia. The son of respected artist, Elaine Russell, amongst his many achievements, Troy was one of the inaugural First Peoples Artists-in-Residence at Sydney Conservatorium in 2022. He wrote The Acceptance as a flexibly

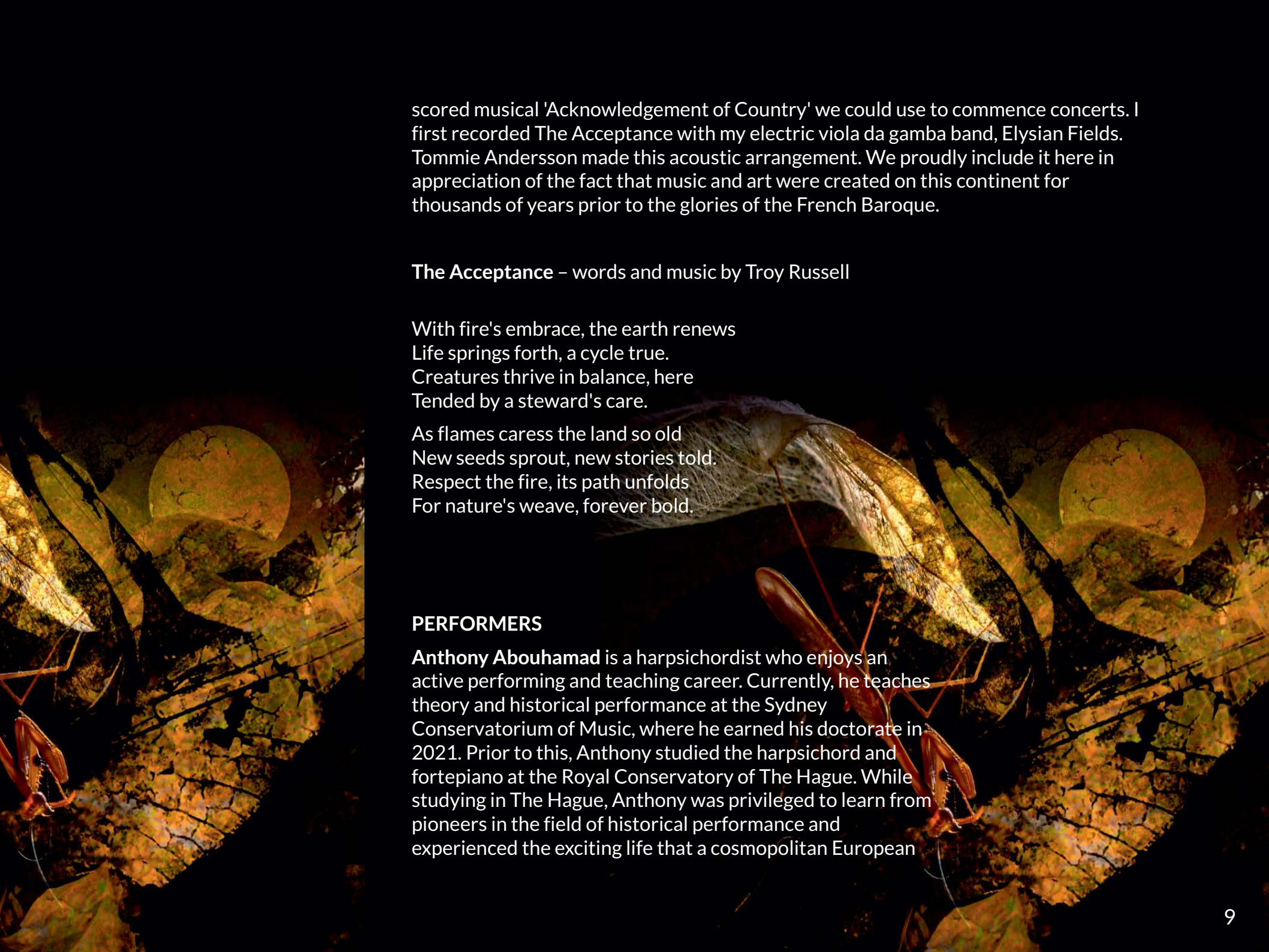


scored musical 'Acknowledgement of Country' we could use to commence concerts. I first recorded The Acceptance with my electric viola da gamba band, Elysian Fields. Tommie Andersson made this acoustic arrangement. We proudly include it here in appreciation of the fact that music and art were created on this continent for thousands of years prior to the glories of the French Baroque.

The Acceptance – words and music by Troy Russell

With fire's embrace, the earth renews
Life springs forth, a cycle true.
Creatures thrive in balance, here
Tended by a steward's care.

As flames caress the land so old
New seeds sprout, new stories told.
Respect the fire, its path unfolds
For nature's weave, forever bold.



PERFORMERS

Anthony Abouhamad is a harpsichordist who enjoys an active performing and teaching career. Currently, he teaches theory and historical performance at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where he earned his doctorate in 2021. Prior to this, Anthony studied the harpsichord and fortepiano at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. While studying in The Hague, Anthony was privileged to learn from pioneers in the field of historical performance and experienced the exciting life that a cosmopolitan European

city has to offer. In addition to his teaching activities, Anthony enjoys being a part of Australia's classical musical scene. Alongside engagements with symphony orchestras in the country's state capitals, he regularly performs with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and the Australian Haydn Ensemble. In 2016, Anthony co-founded The Muffat Collective with violinist Matthew Greco. After years of performing together since their undergraduate years, the pair were inspired to share their love of baroque music with Sydney audiences.



Susie Bishop completed her first degree in music and theatre at Wollongong University and continued her studies in the UK on a scholarship, graduating with a Master of Music degree at the Royal Northern Conservatorium of Music in 2010, majoring in opera. Since returning to Australia, she has performed with The Marais Project, The Song Company, and Ensemble Offspring, in 2019 she was an associate artist with Pacific Opera and in 2020 was a recipient of the Prue Kennard Scholarship. At the end of 2020, she performed the role of Angela in a production of Love Burns with The Other Theatre. in 2021 she premiered The Last Season with Force Majeure at Carriageworks for the Sydney Festival. Other projects include Chaika, Meremba, Elysian Fields, Inlay Ensemble and the Miriam Lieberman Trio as well as guest performances with Monsieur Camembert and Bandaluzia.



Tommie Andersson was born in Sweden and has been based in Sydney since 1984. He is regarded as one of Australia's leading specialists in lutes and early guitars. He completed his studies at the State Conservatorium of Music in Göteborg (Gothenburg), Sweden, with a Master's degree in performance, studying under Josef Holecek. He was then awarded a Swiss Government Scholarship for further studies at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, where his

teachers included Eugen M. Dombois and Hopkinson Smith. Tommie is a founding member of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and features in numerous other ensembles and some sixty recordings for CD or vinyl. In 1990 he released La Suèdoise, an album of solo music for guitar and lute from the time of Queen Christina of Sweden. He is also a skilled arranger and well-versed in Swedish folk music. In 2016, he brought out Strängalek och Näckaspel, an album of Swedish folk music he recorded with Hållbus Totte Mattsson, a multi-instrumentalist folk musician and musicologist from Dalarna, Sweden.

Jennifer Eriksson completed her initial musical studies at the Sydney Conservatorium then moved to The Netherlands for three years to undertake viola da gamba tuition with Jaap ter Linden at Rotterdam Conservatorium. She founded The Marais Project in 2000 and directed Musica Viva in Schools ensembles for thirty plus years appearing in some 3,000 concerts across urban, rural and remote Australia. Jenny has recorded eleven albums and commissioned more than thirty works for viola da gamba and electric viola da gamba. Alongside her passion for early music, she collaborates with folk, and jazz musicians and plays regularly with the improvising string group, Inlay Ensemble. She has performed in Sweden, Norway, Singapore, The Netherlands, Germany, New Zealand, Canada, and New Caledonia. Jenny is Australia's only electric viola da gambist and leads the electric viola da gamba band, Elysian Fields. In 2025 Jenny was appointed to the Musica Viva Australia National Members Council.





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THE MARAIS PROJECT

	Carl Friedrich Abel - Sonata in C Major	
1	Vivace	2.14
2	Adagio	1.32
3	Minuetto	0.58
4	**Georg Philipp Telemann - Fantasia**	4.26
	Georg Philipp Telemann - Sonata in A Minor	
5	Largo	**2.58**
6	Allegro	2.16
7	Suave	2.38
8	Allegro	2.31
9	**Anthony Abouhamad - Fantasia after Telemann (Allegro-Affettuoso-Allegro)**	4.15
	GRANDE FRENCH SUITE (tracks 10 to 18)	
10	**Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe - Les pleurs**	1.51
	Louis de Caix d'Hervelois - Suite in G Minor/Major	
11	L'Agreable	2.26
12	La Fanatique	2.32
13	Allemande	2.30
14	**François Couperin - Les Silvains (Majesteusment, sans lenteur)**	5.44
	Marin Marais -Suite in G Major	
15	Saillie du Jardin	1.11
16	Rondeau le Troilleur	3.50
17	Le petit badinage	1.39
18	**Antoine Forqueray - Chaconne La Buisson**	5.23
19	**Troy Russell - The Acceptance (Arranged by Tommie Andersson)**	2.42

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Sound Engineer — Chris Doherty Edited by Llew Kiek and Jennifer Eriksson Mastered by Michael Lynch
Booklet edited by Philip Pogson. Artwork, booklet design and background images by Lyndall Gerlach
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