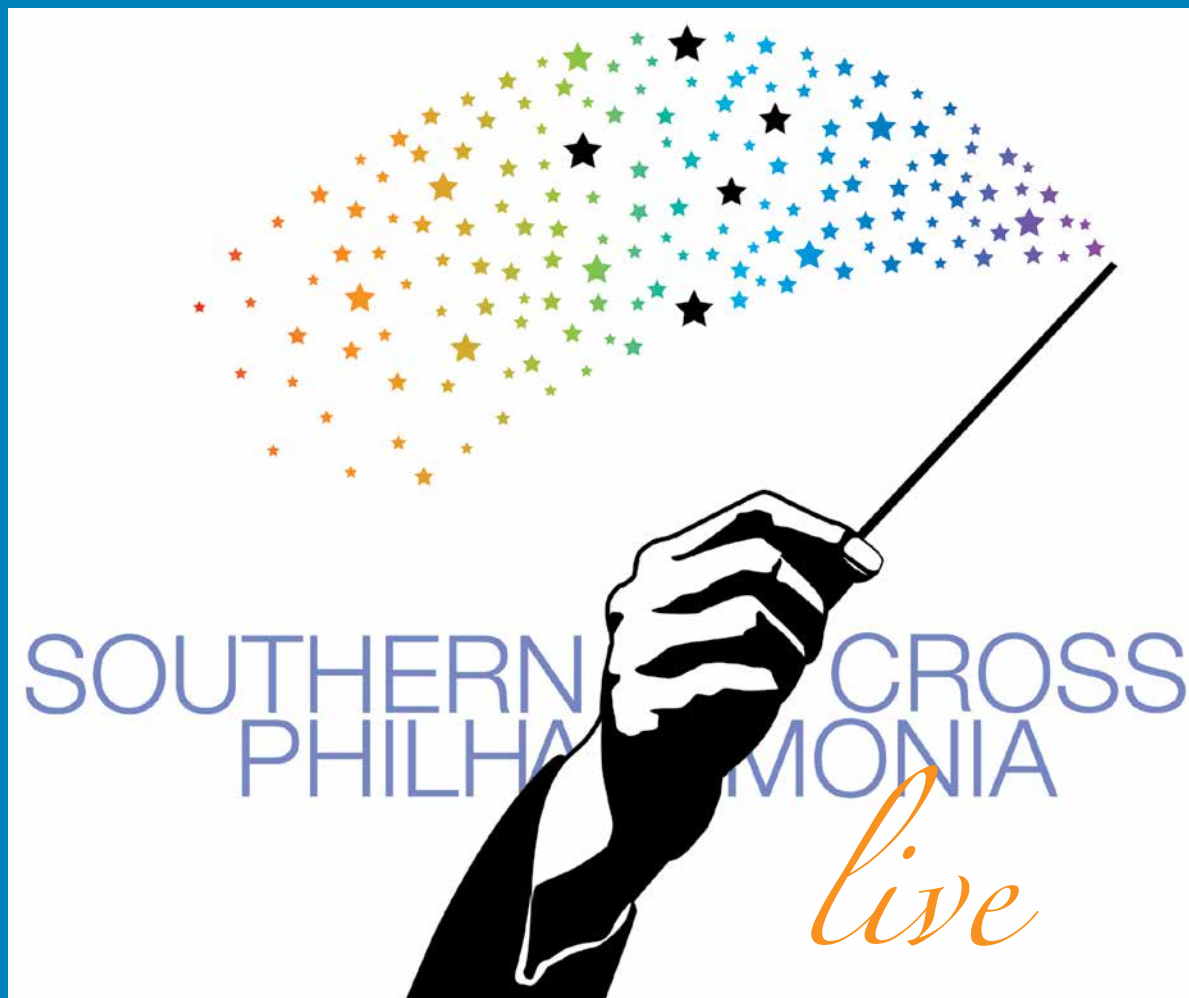
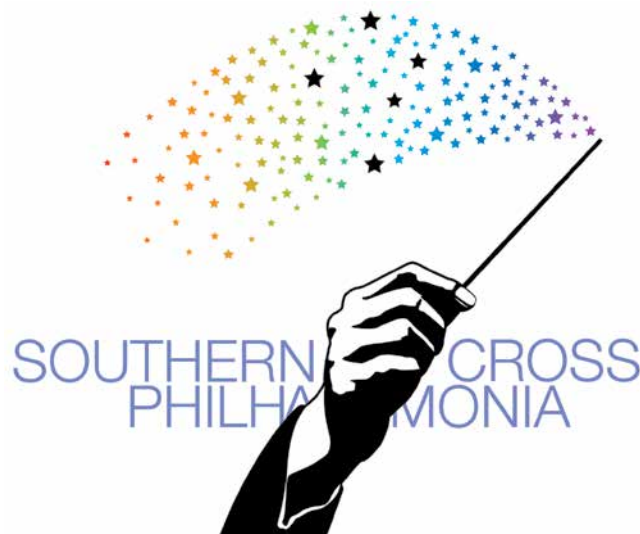


MUSIC FOR STRINGS

Wolf-Ferrari • Grixti • Dreyfus • Britten • Grainger • Rومان • Grieg



Gerald Gentry *conductor* • **Amir Farid** *piano*



ERMANNOWOLF-FERRARI (1876-1948)

Serenade for strings (1883c)

- 1** I. Allegro 5'48"
- 2** II. Andante 6'39"
- 3** III. Presto 3'01"
- 4** IV. Finale 5'57"

JESMOND GRIXTI (b.1969)

- 5** **Angelica, preghiera senza parole** (2008) 3'37"

GEORGE DREYFUS (b.1928)

- 6** **Lighthouse** (1993) 3'58"

BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913-1976)

Simple Symphony Op.4 (1937)

- 7** I. Boisterous bourrée: Allegro ritmico 3'17"
- 8** II. Playful pizzicato: Presto possibile pizzicato sempre 3'08"
- 9** III. Sentimental sarabande: Poco lento e pesante 7'36"
- 10** IV. Frolicsome finale: Prestissimo con fuoco 3'20"

PERCY GRAINGER (1882-1961)

- 11** **Handel in the Strand** for piano and string orchestra (1911) 4'39"
Amir Farid piano

ROGER ROOMAN (1948-1996)

- 12** **Arioso in Alto (Skybridge)** (1992) 5'21"

EDVARD GRIEG (1843-1907)

Holberg Suite, Op 40 (1884)

- 13** I. Praeludium: Allegro vivace 2'46"
- 14** II. Sarabande: Andante 4'28"
- 15** III. Gavotte: Allegro 3'19"
- 16** IV. Air: Andante religioso 5'39"
- 17** V. Rigaudon: Allegro con brio 4'26"

Total time 78 minutes. Recorded at Melba Hall, University of Melbourne in 2010 except **1-4** in 2009, and **5-10** in 2008. Mastering by Martin Wright, Move Records.

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ERMANNOWOLF-FERRARI

Serenade for strings

Wolf-Ferrari was born in Venice to a German father and an Italian mother. In 1892 in Munich he enrolled in the composition class of Rheinberger. By 1902 he became director of the Venice Conservatorium, a post he held until 1909. During this period he transformed into comic opera the wild and witty farces of the 18th century Venetian playwright, Carlo Goldoni. His operas were among the most performed in the world until the outbreak of World War I, when he left his beloved Venice and returned to Munich.

Serenade for strings is his first composition written while a student. It was premiered at the Odeon in Munich. This work follows the classical Mozartian tradition which he varied in his own original and unique way with his predilection of quiet conclusions and intermediate cadences.

GEORGE DREYFUS

Lighthouse

This piece was composed in honour of Sir Ernest Edward (Weary) Dunlop (1907-1993), an Australian surgeon who was renowned for his leadership whilst being held prisoner by the Japanese during World War II.

On the score following the dedication, the composer quotes the following: "We built a railway from near Bangkok to near Rangoon . . . thousand of us POWs . . . starved, scourged, racked with malaria, dysentery, beriberi, pellagra and the stinking tropical ulcers that ate a leg to the bone . . . when despair and death reached for us Weary Dunlop stood fast,

a lighthouse of sanity in a universe of madness and suffering." (Donald Stuart, *West Australian*, 22 January 1977)

JESMOND GRIXTI

Angelica, Preghiera Senza Parole

Grixti is an Australian composer born in Malta. He studied composition in the UK, Italy and at the University of Melbourne with Brenton Broadstock. This work is a retrospective journey, an acknowledgement of his Southern European roots and the influence of post Pius X 1903 *Motu Proprio* and its consequences on Maltese sacred music. Intentionally avoiding contemporary tools of harmony, counterpoint, form and tempo which normally constitute his musical output, Grixti adds personal touches to lift and freshen up the sound world of this composition. These include interwoven modal and tonal sonority, textural distribution, harmonic spacing and sustainable sonority. The work is dedicated to Angela, his wife.

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Simple Symphony for string orchestra

Written in four movements, this work is a transcription of pieces written between the age of nine and twelve. It is based on eight themes (two per movement) for which Britten had a particular fondness. He completed the final draft at age twenty.

The simplicity of this work is debatable. The colourful invention that informs the later more sophisticated *Frank Bridge Variations* is evident here both in the irony of the *Sentimental Sarabande* and

the bucolic *Playful Pizzicato*. Britten dedicated this work to Audrey Alston (Mrs Lincolne Sutton), his childhood viola teacher.

PERCY GRAINGER

Handel in The Strand

Handel in the Strand for piano and strings orchestra was originally designated by the composer as a 'clog dance' (to be performed with or without clog dancing) in the composer's British Folk Music Settings.

Grainger contributed the following program note: "My title was originally *Clog Dance*. But my dear friend William Gair Rathbone (to whom the piece is dedicated) suggested the title *Handel in the Strand*, because the music seemed to reflect both Handel and English musical comedy (the 'Strand' – a street in London – is the home of London musical comedy) – as if jovial old Handel were careering down the Strand to the strains of modern English popular music."

ROGER ROOMAN

Arioso in Alto (Skybridge)

Roger Rooman was a true individual. He was born in Maldon, Victoria and grew up in Melbourne. He is largely self-taught. This work is the extracted and extended Aria from the 67 minute-long, unbroken continuity of *Prelude, Aria and Sinfonia*. The original *Aria* is a short, floating and often a high-pitched transitional movement between two large edifices of a pantheistic nature symphony, acting as a 'skybridge' to the enormous *Sinfonia*.

The composer's notes say that *Arioso in Alto*

(*Skybridge*) is “a sort of solar nocturne of immaterial length, memory-filled luminosity and poignant changes-of-air suggesting things beyond definite reverberation and measure. The work ends quietly and in an elegiac-like manner with the music fixing to the poignant coolness of its emergent inter-modal timelessness – now without bright, mirage-like haze, yet again ‘in alto’, but not floating.”

EDVARD GRIEG

Suite for strings ‘In Olden Style from Holberg’s Time’, Op 40

This work based on eighteenth-century dance forms, was written in 1884 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Danish-Norwegian humanist playwright, Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754). It was one of a number of works commissioned to celebrate this occasion. Born in Grieg’s Norwegian hometown of Bergen, Holberg made a large contribution to Danish theatre, his thirty-two theatrical comedies earning him the title ‘the Molière of the North’. Grieg was always a progressive writer and actively sought a music which could be heard as Scandinavian in character. In fact, he composed a number of works to celebrate this anniversary: a cantata for unaccompanied chorus of men’s voices (later discarded) and a number of piano works under the title ‘From Holberg’s Time’. These were soon afterwards reworked into this suite for string orchestra.

NOTES: BIANCA ROOMAN AND DAVID BARMBY



Gerald Gentry conductor

From 1954 to 1965 Gerald Gentry held the position of Staff Conductor for the BBC. During this time he was guest conductor for all major orchestras in the UK and Europe. From 1965 to 1984, Gentry held the role of Instrumental Music Advisor for the West Riding County Council and the Department of Education and Science, UK. From 1984 Gentry settled in Melbourne. He is Co-Founder of the Southern Cross Philharmonia.



Amir Farid piano

Winner of the 2006 Australian National Piano Award, Amir Farid has been described as “a highly creative musician – a pianist of great intelligence and integrity bringing strong musical substance to all that he does”.

In 2004 Amir completed his B.Mus (Hon) at the University of Melbourne under the guidance of Ronald Farren-Price, and later attended the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM), studying with Rita Reichman, Geoffrey Tozer and Timothy Young. In 2009, he graduated with distinction as a Scholar supported by the Gordon Calway Stone Memorial Award at the Royal College of Music London.

ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA

Southern Cross Philharmonia is a fully professional Orchestra. It was established in Melbourne in 2005. It is a not-for-profit organisation. Its purpose is to champion past and present Australian music within a framework of international repertoire.