

Team of Pianists

Colin & Cicely Rigg Bequest Classic Music in Historic Venues 2024 - 2025

The Hollywood Connection at Barwon Park

Sunday November 10, 2024 at 2:00pm

Barwon Park
105 Inverleigh Road
Winchelsea VIC 3241

Vivien Hamilton - mezzo-soprano, **Josephine Vains** - cello
Robert Chamberlain - piano

Programme

Luke Severn

...when the world was young (2018) for cello & piano

Erich Korngold (1897 - 1957)

Four Shakespeare Songs Op. 31 for voice and piano

1 - *Desdemona's Song*

2 - *Under the Greenwood Tree*

3 - *Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind*

4- *When Birds do Sing*

André Previn (1929 - 2019)

Four Songs for Soprano, Cello and Piano (1994)

Settings of poems by Toni Morrison (1931 - 2019)

1 - *Mercy*

2 - *Stones*

3 - *Shelter*

4 - *The Lacemaker*

INTERVAL

Nino Rota (1911 - 1979)

Allegro Danzante for E flat saxophone & piano arr. for cello & piano

G. Gershwin (1898-1937)

Preludes for Piano

1. Allegro ben ritmato e deciso
2. Andante con moto e poco rubato
3. Allegro ben ritmato e deciso

André Previn (1929 - 2019)

Vocalise (1995) for cello, voice & piano

Hollywood Show Tunes - Songs from Film Musicals

George Gershwin (1898 - 1937) - *I got Rhythm*, voice & piano

Leonard Bernstein (1918 - 1990) - *Maria* from *Westside Story* arr. for cello & piano

Harold Arlen (1905 - 1986) - *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, voice & piano

André Previn (1929 - 2019) - *Good Morning to the Sun* arr. for voice, cello & piano

Programme notes

***...when the world was young* (2018) for cello & piano**

Luke Severn

Of this piece composer Luke Severn writes:

There is indeed a connection to Hollywood through this piece. John Walz, to whom the work is dedicated, is a wonderful cellist and dear friend of mine. He has been the principal Cellist of the Los Angeles Opera for many years, and also a principal member of the Hollywood film orchestras and has played on the soundtrack of hundreds of films. I wrote the piece for him while staying in his house in Los Angeles back in 2018. It was a very interesting time to be visiting the US, and the piece itself became a sort of meditation on people's relationships with their own memories. Always thinking back to being younger and things being different seems to be a universal human experience, and thus the title "...when the world was young" grew from the sketches I made.

[note by Luke Severn]

Four Shakespeare Songs, op 31

Erik Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957)

Austrian child prodigy (named after Mozart by his father), pianist and classical composer Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897 – 1957) was invited to move to Hollywood

by director Max Reinhardt in 1934 to write music scores for Warner Brothers. His first score was for Reinhardt's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935). Shortly after, he won two Oscars, the second being for the swashbuckling adventure *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938) starring Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland. A child prodigy living in Vienna, Erich could play four-hand piano arrangements alongside his father at age five, and by age seven he was writing original music. He was passionate about the music of Johann Strauss, discovering several of his lost scores and his music was praised by Richard Strauss and Giacomo Puccini. Korngold had a life-long love of the works of William Shakespeare. His *Shakespeare Songs* Op 31 are settings of poems from *Othello*, *As You Like It*.

Desdemona's Song: In Act 4, Scene 3 of Shakespeare's play *Othello* Desdemona is preparing for bed. Afraid that Othello is wrongly angry with her for being unfaithful she sings "The Willow Song", a mournful folk ballad in which a lady laments her lost love.

Under the Greenwood Tree: The setting for the performance of "Under the Greenwood Tree" in Shakespeare's romantic comedy *As You Like It* (Act 2, Scene 5) (1600) is England's idyllic Forest of Arden. Shakespeare invokes the pastoral world of Robin Hood and his Merry Men and invites friends to live simply and 'free as a bird'. The phrase originated in the 15th-century Robin Hood ballads: 'We be yemen of this foreste / Vnder the grene wode tre'.

Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind: Also from Shakespeare's *As You Like it* (Act 2, Scene 7)(1600), "Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind" is sung by Amiens, a lord who has followed his Duke into exile from the royal court. He sings that while the cold bite of winter is temporary, the harm and misery that those closest to us can inflict is more hurtful.

When Birds Do Sing (It was a Lover and his Lass): Shakespeare's joyful frolic "It was a Lover and His Lass" is a melody that has been arranged by many 20th century composers. One of its most famous musical incarnations, however, is Elizabethan composer Thomas Morley's famous madrigal. The text comes from Act 5, Scene 3 of *As You Like It* (1600) and Shakespeare celebrates the happiness that binds spring and courtship. The setting is the idyllic woods of England and the time is May Day when traditionally ("hey ding a ding, ding") wedding bells ring
[Note by Vivien Hamilton]

Four Songs for Soprano, Cello, and Piano (1994)
André Previn (1929 - 2019)

Andre Previn wrote his technically challenging *Four Songs for Soprano, Cello, and Piano* from a set of five poems given to him by the Nobel Prize (Literature) winning

poet Toni Morrison (1931-2019). The fifth poem was not set due to Morrison's use of a word Previn felt he could not set to any musical note. Her group of poems are thematically unrelated, however at the heart of each poem is a woman's voice. Toni Morrison said, "What is interesting to me is what is going on within the (African-American) community. And within the community, there are no major white players." But, unlike the subject matter of her other works, she said that the female speaker here is not necessarily African-American. Throughout his composition, Andre Previn's sensitive use of pulsating and shifting tonalities provides a dialogue between piano and cello, with the voice joining in climatic passages. Previn's musical career began in Hollywood, arranging and composing film scores from a young age. As his interest in Classical music grew he left the film studio system and moved onto the concert hall stage, where he pursued a career in orchestral conducting and jazz and classical piano performance projects throughout Europe and America. In *Four Songs for Soprano, Cello, and Piano* Previn's piano settings bridge both styles of composition, sometimes sparse, sometimes rhythmic and virtuosic and sometimes a simple harmonic accompaniment.

Mercy explores the theme of the shame of dying and how the media looks at starvation and misfortune. **Stones** is a lament based on an old blues song *Rocks in my bed* and inspired by the singing of singer Bessie Smith. The speaker is angry at the absence of a man in her life. **Shelter** showcases the happy inner world of a woman who is determined to overcome any obstacle in life. The song is both lyrical and gentle. **The Lacemaker** is a hollow, regretful and mournful song about a woman who has settled for less in life. In lieu of exploring passion in life she creates lace for royalty.

[Note by Vivien Hamilton]

1. **Mercy**

I could watch
heads
turn from the traveler's look
the camera's probe
bear the purity of their
shame
hear mute desolation in syllables
ancient as
death.
I could do these things
if
only if only
I knew that when milk
spills
and hearts stop

underheel
some small thing gone
chill
Is right
to warm toward a touch because
mercy
lies in wait
like a shore.
Mercy
mercy
mercy
like a shore.

2. Stones

I don't need no man
telling me I ain't one.
My trigger finger strong
as his on a shot gun.
Buttercake and roses smooth
stones in my bed.
Handmade quilts cover
stones in my bed.
I don't need no man
telling me I ain't one.
My backbone ain't like his
but least I got one.
High-heeled slippers break
stones in my bed.
Games played at night trick
stones in my bed.
Stones.
I don't need no man
telling me.

3. Shelter

In this soft place
Under your wings
I will find shelter
From ordinary things.

Here are the mountains
I want to scale

Amazon rivers
I'm dying to sail.

Here the eyes of the forest
I can hold in a stare
And smile at the movement
Of Medusa's green hair.

In this soft place
Under your wings
I will find shelter
From ordinary things.

4. The Lacemaker

I am as you see
what most becomes me:
miles skipped
cancelled trips
masters yet unmet.
Lace alone is loyal, sacred, royal, in control
of crimes stopped
by patterns of blood bred to best behavior.
As you see I am
what has become of me.

***Allegro Danzante* for E flat saxophone & piano arr. for cello & piano Nino Rota (1911 - 1979)**

Remembered these days almost solely as a prolific composer for film, the Milanese composer Nino Rota (1911-1979) traversed multiple stylistic idioms. From a long line of musicians, Rota studied for a time under luminaries in Italy before crossing the Atlantic at the urging of Maestro Toscanini for further study at the Curtis Institute with conductor Fritz Reiner and composer Rosario Scalerò. A long association with the film director Federico Fellini was born in the 1950s and led to notable scores for films such as *La Strada* (1954) and *8 1/2* (1963). With over 150 film scores to his credit, Rota is perhaps best known for his Oscar winning music for Francis Ford Coppola's 'The Godfather' films. In Fellini's words, Rota "lived in music with the freedom and contentment of a creature that lives in a dimension they find naturally congenial."

The *Allegro Danzante* (1977) was composed originally for clarinet and piano, and then later arranged for alto saxophone. It reveals the elegant balance of optimism and soulfulness with which Rota imbued his music.

[Note by Josephine Vains]

Preludes for Piano (1926)
George Gershwin (1898 - 1937)

The *Three Preludes for Piano* were first performed by the composer at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City in 1926, two years after the premiere of his wildly successful *Rhapsody in Blue*. They are the only concert work for solo piano that was published in Gershwin's lifetime. His original intention was to write 24 Preludes, as had Chopin and other composers, but only six preludes were completed and three published (in 1927). These are heavily jazz-influenced works, with syncopations, flattened sevenths, blues intervals, and duality between the major and minor keys. The second, slower prelude is particularly striking in its evocation of blues music, a "sort of blues lullaby" according to the composer, while Gershwin described the final lively prelude as "Spanish," likely referencing the parallel moving chords, like guitar barre chords, in the rhythmic introduction.

[Note by Robert Chamberlain]

Vocalise for Soprano, cello and piano
André Previn

Andre Previn's early experiences composing for Hollywood films provided a great training ground for composing complex music under time pressure. He became an adept craftsman and composed this elegant and technically taut *Vocalise* in 1995 at Tanglewood for the American soprano Sylvia McNair and cellist Yo Yo Ma. Previn completed his score within two hours. Sustained by the haunting and sensuous atmosphere of the piano part, Previn showcases the melodious capabilities of each of the three "voices" in a pure and wordless expression of joy, wonder and space. As the piece progresses there is reference to Richard Strauss and his glorious *Four Last Songs*. But Previn expands Strauss' lament through the 'call and answer' of the cello and voice (in different keys) and ends this musical gem with the piano playing a cloudy puff of harmonic smoke!

[Note by Vivien Hamilton]

Songs from Film Musicals
George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, Harold Arlen, Andre Previn

I Got Rhythm: George and Ira Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm" was originally a slow ballad until transformed into the up-tempo jazzy song we recognise today. It premiered in the stage musical GIRL CRAZY on October 14, 1930 in New York. Ethel Merman made her stage debut that night, and the production launched her co-star Ginger Rogers into stardom. Ira's punchy consonants and grammatically incorrect sentences, e.g. 'I got rhythm' rather than 'I've got rhythm' match George's

strongly syncopated melody. The song is as popular today as when it was first performed.

Maria: The musical *West Side Story* was the idea of choreographer Jerome Robbins who wanted to retell Shakespeare's story of *Romeo and Juliet*. Shakespeare's warring Montague and Capulet families became opposing gangs of Puerto Rican immigrants and white Americans. Leonard Bernstein (music) and Stephen Sondheim (lyrics) published their score in 1956 and it was filmed in 1961. In "Maria" Tony (the leader of the white American gang) sings "*I'll never stop saying Maria*" 29-30 times during the moments he falls in love with Maria (the sister of the leader of the Puerto Rican gang).

Somewhere Over the Rainbow: was written by Harold Arlen with lyrics by Yip Harburg for the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*, starring a teenage Judy Garland. It won the Academy Award for Best Original Song and became Judy's signature song. However, after an advance screening MGM executives attempted to remove the ballad because they felt it slowed down the film. Associate producer Arthur Freed confronted Louis B. Mayer with the ultimatum "The song stays_ or I go". The rest is history. In 2001 "Over the Rainbow" was voted the greatest song of the 20th century.

I Said Good Morning to the Sun: was composed for the Hollywood film musical *It's Always Fair Weather* (1955) which starred Gene Kelly, Dan Dailey and Michael Kid. This all singing, all dancing comedy by Betty Comden and Adolf Green was a loose follow-up to their previous film *On The Town*. It tells the story of three soldiers who, after returning from World War II, share a drink in a New York City bar and agree to return to the same location in 10 years. When the appointed date arrives, the three men reunite -- only to discover with sadness that none of them has achieved his goals, and that they no longer wish to be friends. This charming song was cut from the film.

[Notes by Vivien Hamilton]

Biographies

Vivien Hamilton - mezzo-soprano

Vivien Hamilton is a Melbourne-based singer and music educator who has chalked up forty years in the music profession. Her musical passions and innate curiosity led her into a musical career in which she has explored seven centuries of musical style — from the mediaeval era, through opera and into the 21st century — through the prism of historically informed and contemporary performance practice.

Vivien studied with Molly McGurk (Artsong: Perth, WA) and Jane Manning (Contemporary song: UK), David Mason (Opera: UK) and musicology (specialising

the French Baroque Music) with Professor David Tunley (University of Western Australia). But Vivien counts the influence of her parents' love for music as a prime instigator in her desire to pursue music as a profession. Her father Tom sang tenor in the Edinburgh Festival Chorus performance of Mahler's 2nd Symphony at Ely Cathedral under the baton of Leonard Bernstein, a dramatisation which can be seen in the film "Maestro" starring Bradley Cooper.

Vivien's singing is renowned for its nuanced lyricism and vibrant tonal clarity, whether she finds herself on the concert hall stage, singing for festivals, on radio and television or on film. She is equally at home as soloist or ensemble player and has performed with Kent Opera, New Sadlers Wells Opera, The Hilliard Ensemble, BBC Singers, e21, Blackbird (USA), 6 Degrees, Icon Trio, Barry Kosky, and pianists Len Vorster, Ian Munro and Glenn Riddle, amongst others.

Vivien taught at tertiary level for Monash University where she conducted the Women's Choir and Rockin' Jazz Swingers and singing at the Australian Catholic University. Whilst on staff at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music she was director of Early Voices 2005-2015 — an ensemble which has produced professional singers working in Europe with Jordi Savall, Paul Hillier, Emma Kirkby (e.g. Ars Nova Copenhagen, Bach Collegium Barcelona, La Capella Real de Catalunya, Las Huelgas, Lux Musicae, Theatre of Voices, Vienna VolkOper, Westminster Abbey, etc) — and also lectured in vocal pedagogy for the Bachelor and Master of Music Education degrees at the University of Melbourne.

"A versatile vocalist with unerring control" and "splendidly accomplished" Clive O'Connell, *The Age*

For more details please visit www.auncienthermony.com

Josephine Vains - cello

Josephine is a versatile and engaging performer, heard regularly in concert around Australia and overseas as a cellist and chamber musician. She has worked with myriad artists on diverse projects including piano trio/quartet/quintet, string quartet, opera, baroque ensembles, contemporary and electronic music, and Argentine tango music. She is a passionate educator, currently training the next generation of musicians at Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School and the University of Melbourne. She is a regular tutor for Melbourne and Australian Youth Orchestra, Mt. Buller and Clunes Chamber Music, Pettmann National Junior Academy (NZ) and for iartschool (China).

Josephine is a founding member of Firebird Trio, lauded as a 'fabulous internal communicator' in *The Age*. Equally at home on modern and period instruments,

Josephine performs and records regularly with other ensembles including CelloZ, Ensemble Old and New, Ludovico's Band, Accademia Arcadia, Elysium Ensemble and Melbourne Baroque Orchestra.

In Australia she has performed for Musica Viva and Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne Festivals. International performances include at the Musicfest Vancouver, White Nights Festival (Russia), Longyou Caves Festival (China) and Akaroa Chamber Music Festival (NZ).

Today she performs on a Thomas Kennedy Cello, (1850) London.

Visit: <https://www.josephinevains.com/>

Robert Chamberlain - piano

Robert Chamberlain gained Bachelor and Master degrees in Australia under Max Cooke, studied in Vienna as a winner of the *Apex/Robert Stolz Scholarship*, and also at the Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada. He works as a performer, adjudicator, presenter and pedagogue and is a partner in the Melbourne based *Team of Pianists - Artists in Residence* for the *National Trust of Australia (Vic)*. Between 2004 and 2013 he developed and directed the *Team's* annual *Spring Piano School*, an intensive enrichment program for school aged pianists aged from 6 to 18 years. Along with the other *Team of Pianists* partners, he performs in and co-directs their annual concert series in historic venues, supported by the *Colin & Cicely Rigg Bequest*.

Concert engagements with Australian and international colleagues have taken him to Turkey, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand, Canada, as well as around Australia. His recordings on around 15 CD's encompass music for solo piano, two pianos, chamber music, voice and piano, for the *Team of Pianists* as well as on the labels *Tall Poppies*, *Naxos*, *Move Records* and *VoxAustralis*. Concert performances with leading Australian musicians have included chamber music recitals in Sydney and Melbourne with colleagues from the *Sydney Symphony Orchestra*, programs based around Scottish, Australian and animal themes with vocal colleagues Justine Anderson, Vivien Hamilton and Jeannie Marsh from *Icon Trio*, trios and duos in *The Four B's* (Brahms, Beethoven, JS Bach) and *A Musical Flower-Garden* (Bach, Bruch, Zemlinsky) with Robert Schubert clarinet and Josephine Vains cello, multiple piano programs with Team partners including two piano repertoire with Darryl Coote, plus many other recital programs.

Robert has been on the piano faculty at the *Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music and Performance* at Monash University since the 1990's and in 2019 he filled a temporary 12-month role as *Coordinator of Piano* in that school. His scholarly work has included a critical edition of Australian composer Margaret Sutherland's Sonata

for Violin and Piano (Currency Press, 2000), while his academic interests include piano teaching, learning and performance, creativity in piano pedagogy, and style and technique in piano performance.

Robert was Secretary of the organising committee for the [15th Australasian Piano Pedagogy Conference](#), held at Monash University, Clayton Campus in July 2024. Links to papers and articles and a fuller biography of Robert may be found at <http://www.teamofpianists.com.au/partners/robert-chamberlain>.

Luke Severn - composer

Conductor, Composer, and Concert Cellist Luke Severn possesses a musical voice of great versatility and passion. Noted for his expressive performances and dynamic and engaging personality he is emerging as an artistic tour-de-force in the Australian musical landscape.

Luke is currently the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Bendigo Symphony Orchestra and Artistic Director of The Gisborne Singers. A champion of new composition and Australian works, he has conducted world premieres of works by Cally Barlett, Christopher Healey, Matan Franco and Elena Kats-Chernin.

As a soloist, Luke is a champion of both the standard concerto literature and new exciting works for cello and orchestra. In recent seasons he has performed as a soloist with The Monash Academy Orchestra, The Frankston Symphony Orchestra, The Essendon Symphony Orchestra, Monash Sinfonia and the Melbourne Sinfonia among others. In 2018 Luke gave the Australian Premiere of the Concerto for Cello and Strings (2008) by British-Bulgarian composer Dobrinka Tabakova.

As a composer, Luke's music has been performed throughout Australia, Europe, North America and Asia. He has written for many of Australia's finest virtuosi, including pianist Yasmin Rowe, oboist Briana Leaman, vocalists Kelsey Cotton and Merlyn Quaife AM, and saxophonist Joseph Lallo; who debuted Luke's Concerto for Saxophone and String Orchestra (2020). Other recent commissions include Transfiguring the Sky for the Preston Symphony Orchestra (2021) and his 7 movement suite, and other lines written for Duo Obax and Yasmin Rowe and recorded by ABC Classic, available on all major streaming platforms.

<https://www.lukesevernmusic.com/>