

BLOCKBUSTER, OR SMASHING IT ON PIANO

Team of Pianists’ latest 2023 event details and plans for 2024

C&C RIGG BEQUEST CLASSIC MUSIC IN HISTORIC VENUES 2023-2024

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Britten and Bonis at Barwon Park

Sunday 19 November 2023 at 2.00pm
‘Barwon Park’
105 Inverleigh Road, Winchelsea, VIC. 3241

Benjamin Britten’s all-too-rarely heard cycle of eight songs from 1953, *Winter Words* was set to some of the last poems written by Victorian English poet Thomas Hardy and is remarkable for its clarity of text.

This recital in the National Trust’s Barwon Park mansion (built by Thomas and Elizabeth Austin in 1871) allows listeners to experience Britten’s original tenor setting in elegant and intimate surrounds, performed by tenor **Michael Petruccelli** and accompanied by **Darryl Coote**.

Compositions by the late Romantic French composer Mel Bonis have become better known in recent years. Her four-movement *Sonata for flute and piano*, with its lyrical beauty and excellent structural balance, will be performed by the *Principal Flute* of *Orchestra Victoria* **Lisa-Maree Amos** with **Darryl Coote** at the piano.

Also on the programme are two shorter works for flute and piano, including *Road Trip* by Australian composer **Sally Whitwell**, inspired by commuting to work on a train. Darryl Coote’s performance of Schubert’s *Impromptu No. 1 in C minor*, Op. 90 will round out the recital.

Programme:

Michael Petruccelli (tenor), **Lisa-Maree Amos** (flute) and **Darryl Coote** (piano)

- Benjamin Britten** - Winter Words Op. 52
- Mel Bonis** - Sonata for flute and piano
- Francis Poulenc** - Sonata for flute and piano
- Sally Whitwell** - Road Trip for flute and piano
- Bellini** - Casta Diva (Norma) for flute and piano
- Franz Schubert** - Impromptu Op.90 No1 in Cminor for piano

Ticket prices include the recital, viewing of the mansion and a country-style afternoon tea after the recital with the performers and other audience members. Don’t miss this special opportunity to experience great music and great performers in the splendour of the Barwon Park mansion

Visit www.teamofpianists.com.au for all booking and ticket arrangements. Ticket prices are \$80 adult and \$60 concession.

IN THIS EDITION:

TOP concert information, interview with Caroline Craig, the order form for the Max Cooke’s framed piano hammers, and more.

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C&C RIGG BEQUEST CLASSIC
MUSIC IN HISTORIC VENUES
2023-2024

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**Piano ‘Blockbuster 2’ concert -
the Team's Christmas celebration
recital at Rippon Lea**

**Tuesday 12 December 2023 at 6.30pm
The Ballroom
‘Rippon Lea Estate’
192 Hotham Street, Elsternwick, VIC, 3185**

Celebrate the end of 2023 at this gala recital with the *Team of Pianists* in the Ballroom at Rippon Lea. Join **Darryl Coote, Rohan Murray, Robert Chamberlain** with brilliant guest pianist **Kevin Suherman** in an entertaining program of piano music for four and eight hands at two grand pianos. Acclaimed Australian actor **Caroline Craig** will narrate the two-piano performance of Saint-Saëns' Carnival of the Animals. Also on the program, is Mendelssohn's Sonata No 2 in D major Op. 58 for cello & piano, with brilliant young cellist **Ye Jin Choi** from **Orix Duo**.

Programme:

- **Mack Wilberg** - Fantasy on Themes from Bizet's Carmen for 2 pianos, 8 hands
- **Saint-Saëns** - Carnival of the Animals for two pianos (Darryl Coote & Robert Chamberlain - with narration by acclaimed Australian actor **Caroline Craig**)
- **Mendelssohn** - Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 2 in D major, Op. 58 (Orix Duo - Ye Jin Choi, cello & Kevin Suherman, piano)
- **William Gillock** - Champagne Toccata for 2 pianos, 8 hands

With the support of our valued sponsor [Bernie's Music Land](#) this recital will feature two Schimmel Konzert Series grand pianos.

Enjoy canapé refreshments (included in the ticket price) and bar drink sales on the pool terrace, meet our committee members of the *Friends of the Team of Pianists* (FOTOPS) and enjoy music and festivities in this special heritage venue. This recital forms a special part

of the Team's Rigg Bequest Classic Music in Historic Venues 2023 - 24 series

Please note: due to catering requirements, **bookings must close on Wednesday 6 December at 2.00pm** and no door sales will be possible on the night.

Please note this event features a specially discounted ticket price of \$60 (normal price \$80) for current FOTOPS members at the time of booking. Non-members buying a ticket are offered free membership of FOTOPS until June 2024. Fill out a FOTOPS Membership Form on the website and include a note you have a ticket. For all bookings, go to the Team website; <https://www.teamofpianists.com.au/concerts>

On the Home page, click ‘BOOK NOW’ and this will take you to the TryBookings site, to order tickets. This online booking will be open until the start of the concert.

You can go to Trybooking directly.

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REPORTING FROM EARLY 2023

The ‘Darryl Hits 60’ concert on 1 May was a partying success. Darryl was worked very hard for his birthday on that piano, accompanying separately an oboe, a cello and a mezzo-soprano with a program of pieces. He survived, and has been seen since with an ‘I’d do it all again’ expression, when asked did he enjoy it?

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ADVANCE NEWS FOR NEXT YEAR

Regarding the 2024 part of the *Rigg Bequest Classic Music in Historic Venues 2023-2024 Series*, some dates are set, but details are still to be ‘played out!’

- Sunday 21 April 2024 2pm at Como, (two performances of the same program – at 2pm and at 4pm, Robert Chamberlain piano, Vivien Hamilton – mezzosoprano, plus one more guest artist - with FOTOPS to serve refreshments on the eastern verandah for both concerts), and
- Sunday 26 May at Labassa, (again two performances of two programs in two different rooms, with audience moving to the other room at interval – Robert Chamberlain, Roman Ponomariov – horn, Judith Dodsworth – soprano as one of the recitals, Darryl Coote with guest artist as the other recital),

Other dates and programs are ‘still in the works’

INTERVIEW: AN ACTOR AMONG MUSICIANS

Mr Ed has interviewed musicians who don't touch piano, singers and promoters, but this is a first conversation with an actor. Caroline Craig has agreed to be narrator in the coming Team of Pianists 'Blockbuster 2' concert. She will narrate the story of 'Carnival of the Animals'. Caroline is well known for TV roles including 'Blue Heelers' and 'Underbelly', and in films, and for appearing in stage productions across Australia. The Team are pleased she has come back from New York to include our Rippon Lea concert in her itinerary.

Caroline, thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for the FOTOPS Newsletter:

Mr.Ed: *Were you ever trained in or tempted by the piano or another instrument?*
Caroline: *YES. I learnt piano, violin and music theory as a child. I went up to AMEB Grade 6 on violin and kept up the music theory when I did singing for VCE music. I auditioned for the Conservatorium at Melbourne University, but finished a BA ACTING at NIDA in Sydney instead. I sang in a band at University and sang in my last theatre show – **Starfish the [Redacted]** - that just closed at La Mama last week. Music has been a huge part of my life. We have my great aunt's baby grand piano at home, my husband and I play and now my girls learn. My great aunt was a strict but brilliant bel Canto teacher. She and my grandmother were great inspirations to me musically. Every day after school, my grandmother would play the piano and we would dance and sing and play. A piano is the heart of a happy home.*

Mr.Ed: *How and when did you first meet the members of the Team of Pianists?*
Caroline: *I met Darryl Coote through my stepfather Professor Anthony Buzzard, who belongs to The Boobooks, a Melbourne University Alumni organization, who share ideas over dinners once a month. Darryl and I are distantly related - both my great aunt Libby and Marjorie my grandma - musical mentors - were Cootes. I'm hoping the pianist DNA will carry through to my girls as they learn to play.*

Mr.Ed: *What has been your favourite role in your career to date?*
Caroline: *I played Matron Grace Wilson in an ABC TV series Anzac Girls about the nurses who cared for the wounded at Gallipoli. She was an incredibly strong leader and a kind and brave woman, who lost her brother in the war and made huge progress for women in medicine. There are retired nurses today who still talk about what a huge heart Grace had, and the working conditions and retirement homes that she put in place for women who served in war. I feel so privileged to play such a trailblazing woman and unsung heroine. There are so many more stories. I'm sure a spin off series is overdue!*

Mr.Ed: *What part has music played in your work, in working with other musicians?*
Caroline: *I love singing in all the shows I've been in, I worked with Iain Grandage, Tim Minchin, Eddie Perfect and many more brilliant composers. My first musical was 'Seven Little Australians' when I was twelve. I adore making new work and telling Australian stories through song.*

Mr.Ed: *Having travelled, do you have a favourite venue?*
Caroline: *I loved performing in the Traverse Theatre in Edinburg and the Opera House. My favourite is La Mama here in Carlton. There is so much history in those walls. Wonderful energy of live performance and the stories told, and yet to be told. Also performing in regional theatres where audiences are so alive and engaged. Wollongong and Canberra are favourites. Also Adelaide's Space Theatre in the Festival Centre has a warm intimate feeling. You can connect with audiences in a unique way.*

Mr.Ed: *Do you have a favourite composer or a piece of music, and why?*
Caroline: *That's a hard one. I am a big fan of many Australian composers. Tim Minchin's lyrics and speed and alacrity and humour always make me laugh, but Iain Grandage and Elena Kats-Chernin really connect with me right now when I'm in the veggie garden with the kids. I also love Chopin for the piano, and am enjoying a few Beethoven classics when I can find the time. Jason Beck-Gonzales is a pianist who really inspires my husband's playing. Tricky stuff, but fills the house with light and love!*

Mr.Ed: *What is your favourite ice cream?*
Caroline: *My favourite ice cream is hazelnut. You can never go wrong!*

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FRIENDS PLAY FOR FRIENDS

24th September saw another successful matinee for the Friends Play for Friends piano group. Irasema Furfaro was our host and we all enjoyed her hospitality very much. Works performed by members included the "Flight of a Bumblebee", movements from Haydn Sonatas, improvisations on Hey Jude" and "You're so Beautiful" and "Ondine" from Ravel.

These matinees provide an excellent opportunity for people who enjoy playing the piano to perform for an audience. These matinees occur regularly during the year so give you plenty of opportunity to practice your pieces in a semi-public setting. They are ABSOLUTELY FREE for our FOTOP members.

The next one will be 26th November. If you consider joining or would like to know more, please contact Ray on ray@ymp.com.au

Ray Jacobs
IMP VIC Pty Ltd
ray@ymp.com.au
0402 992 116

VALE KINGSLEY DAVIS OAM

Long time member and friend, Kingsley Davis passed away in April this year. He was a keen supporter of the Team's programs and attended most concerts. A pianist himself, Kingsley was a well-known Melbourne lawyer and was active in the community. He was involved in the National Trust Victoria, so our concerts gave him an extra opportunity to see Trust properties being used. He had been honoured some years earlier by the government for his service to Scouts Victoria and community work. Sadly missed.

MEMBERSHIPS

We have had the pleasure of welcoming several new members to our group this year. Renewal season is upon us again since the AGM in July. Response has been good. There are still some who need reminding. The Committee have become experienced in reminding members to stay in 'the fold'. Our continuing strong membership base means so much to the Committee and is appreciated by the Team members. We are still short of the 100-member target, but with up-coming concerts, recruiting is on our minds. Please encourage any family members or music-interested friends to join us. The Membership Form is now in the FOTOPS section of the Team's website. Its only \$35 to join and you receive benefits as well as supporting live music. If you are yet to renew, you know what to do!

REPORT OF THE AGM

This meeting took place on the evening of 24 July by Zoom. Members of the existing Committee were re-elected for the current 2023-2024 year. Reports by the President, Treasurer and Membership Officer were presented. Membership reached 94 members, which represents an excellent result, and given the impact of the earlier lockdowns, concerts are slowly coming back. Membership fees have not changed.

AWARD FOR PIANISTS

Have you ever given a piano performance only to find that the piano had a non-working or sticking key or a mal-functioning pedal or was somehow out of tune? The 2023 FOTOPS **Pedaldodgy Award** gives you a chance to write an essay about your event and how you played through the difficulty, or how you coped with the situation. Please submit your story to: Award entry - PO Box 333 Balaclava Vic 3183 Entries will be acknowledged and a winner may give consent to have their story published in this newsletter.

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IN HONOUR OF MAX COOKE OAM

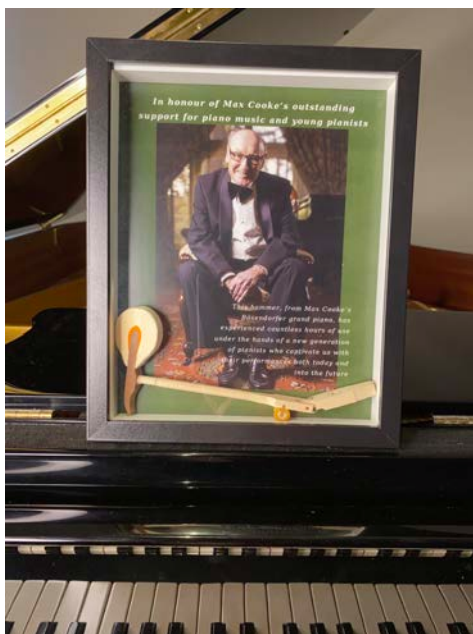
You are invited to acquire
a hammer from the late Max Cooke's Bösendorfer grand piano
Mounted and framed, these are available for \$50 each
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or postage can be arranged for an additional \$25

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well as perpetuate Max Cooke's generosity towards young pianists. By purchasing this piece of Max Cooke
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SPOTTED **❖** **❖** **❖** **❖** **❖** **❖** **❖** **❖** **❖** **❖

Spotlight on a piano! Does that come at a discount? Does it come with wrapping? Do you get a bonus ceiling fan?

Spot-on messages will be gladly received from members, at any spot.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS:
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND GENERAL ENQUIRIES, OR FOR PASSING ON ANY SUGGESTIONS:

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As Editor, I wish to thank all those who have contributed to this edition.

Mr.Ed

and Christmas cheer to you all.