

# *PERFUMES OF THE EAST*

Featuring Konstantin Shamray, Nina Korbe and Amalia Hall



Sunday 2nd June 2024, 3pm  
Concert Hall QPAC

## Message from QPAC Chief Executive

Imagine if you will, it's 1896 and Camille Saint-Saëns is in his creative prime. After settling in for his annual winter sojourn in his beloved Cairo, perhaps reclined in a wicker chair on the terrace of a colonial-style hotel overlooking the bustling, dusty streets of the capital, he puzzles over his last piano concerto. This picture speaks to a time of exploration, romance and mystique in the East, and the music featured in today's SXS program could almost be imagined as a that the soaring concerto implies and the fact that it demands a virtuoso pianist to do it justice. What a privilege it is to welcome Konstantin Shamray back to QPAC with SXS to do just that.



That virtuosity is a thread that runs through today's SXS program. From Ravel's *Cinq mélodies populaires grecques* that will position Nina Korbe's soprano voice front and centre, through to Kovács' *Hommage à Manuel de Falla* that allows Ashley Smith's clarinet to shine in all its haunting glory – this is a program that celebrates the remarkable musicians that the Soloists consistently bring to the stage.

In addition to experiencing SXS musicians and collaborators, it's always a pleasure to see an 18<sup>th</sup> century chamber piece like Vivaldi's *Viola d'amore* programmed alongside a brand-new Stephen Leek composition for the Didgeridoo Project. It's why we're always delighted to co-present SXS concerts: there is always a little something for everyone. Enjoy the adventure of *Perfumes of the East*.

John Kotzas AM  
Chief Executive

## Message from Southern Cross Soloists' Acting Artistic Director

Legendary cellist Pablo Casals once said, "Music is the divine way to tell beautiful, poetic things to the heart." In our second concert of our 15th QPAC Concert Series 2024, *Perfumes of the East*, we enjoy the captivating and exotic melodies of the Mediterranean.

The program explores one of the many concepts of romance by celebrating the diverse melting pot of countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, ranging from the lively and rhythmic sounds of Flamenco in Spain to the melodic and modal music of Greece and the Arabic-influenced music of North Africa.



Journey into the exotic with *Perfumes of the East* as it invites you to explore a sensory odyssey inspired by the Mediterranean's enchanting shores. Konstantin Shamray features in Saint-Saëns' sparkling and majestic Piano Concerto No.5, famously dubbed 'The Egyptian,' evoking the grandeur of Luxor's ancient temple. Returning to the stage with SXS is internationally acclaimed violinist Amalia Hall and soprano superstar Nina Korbe. We are thrilled to have Nina perform for this concert after her spectacular debut at our 20th Bangalow Chamber Music Festival 2023 and her most recent Opera Australia debut as Maria in *West Side Story*. Nina will perform an alluring selection of songs that capture the vibrant spices and rich aromas of Mediterranean cultures, along with a new composition by the esteemed Australian vocal composer Stephen Leek in collaboration with SXS didgeridoo Artist in Residence Chris Williams for the *SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project 2022 - 2032*. The concert also features two Spanish-inspired pieces for clarinet and James Wannan in a Concerto by Vivaldi for the rarely heard *Viola d'amore*, known as the 'viola of love.'

I hope you will enjoy today's concert as we take a trip around the Mediterranean shores and explore the rich and prolific diversity of cultures from this region. The program promises to sweep you off your feet with the enchantment of romance in a concert of passionate and sublime music that highlights the extraordinary artistry of the musicians of Southern Cross Soloists and our exceptional line-up of featured soloists. We thank our long-serving Artistic Director Tania Frazer for her exceptional creative direction and programming of this concert.

Dr Ashley Smith  
Acting Artistic Director

Southern Cross Soloists and QPAC present

# *PERFUMES OF THE EAST*

## PROGRAM

- Leek/Williams** Juwoon, Tu, Ngyin'anga (Country, Heart, Life)  
WORLD PREMIERE  
**SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project 2024**
- Kovács** Hommage à Manuel de Falla
- Vivaldi** Concerto for Viola d'amore in D major RV.392  
I. Allegro  
II. Largo  
III. Allegro
- Ravel** Vocalise-étude en forme de Habanera
- Rimsky-Korsakov** The Nightingale and the Rose Op. 2 No. 2
- Ravel** Cinq mélodies populaires grecques  
I. Chanson de la mariée  
II. Là-bas, vers l'église  
III. Quel galant m'est comparable  
IV. Chanson des cueilleuses de lentisques  
V. Tout gai!
- Saint-Saëns** Piano Concerto No. 5 'The Egyptian'  
I. Allegro animato  
II. Andante  
III. Molto Allegro

All arrangements by John Rotar

Today's concert will run approximately 90 minutes, with no interval.

# Featured Soloists

## **Nina Korbe | Soprano**

Nina Korbe is an accomplished young soprano quickly establishing herself in the Opera industry as a rising talent being praised for her creamy tone, brilliant top notes and sensitive performances, which continue to delight audiences. Nina received her Bachelor of Music Performance from the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University and recently graduated from the Master of Arts Programme from the Royal Academy of Music in London. Upon returning to Australia, Nina has performed with many of the country's leading ensembles including Opera Queensland, Camerata, Queensland Ballet, Southern Cross Soloists and the Goldner String Quartet. As a proud Koa, Kuku Yalanji, Wakka Wakka woman, she sits on the board for Queensland Youth Orchestra's

Reconciliation Action Plan as a First Nations Representative, while also working with QSO on their First Nations Advisory Board. Nina made her professional debut in the role of Maria in *West Side Story* with Opera Australia in March.



## **Amalia Hall | Violin**

Noted by *The Strad* for her "blazing insight and dazzling virtuosity", New Zealand violinist Amalia Hall celebrates a diverse career as an international soloist, as Concertmaster of Orchestra Wellington and violinist of NZTrio. Amalia's career blossomed after winning the 1st prize at five international competitions, plus, numerous laureate prizes including Joseph Joachim International Competition and International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. As a teenager she won all of the major national awards in New Zealand, before completing studies at the Curtis Institute of Music. Since her debut with the Auckland Philharmonia at age nine, her solo appearances include *I Virtuosi Italiani*, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, United Strings of Europe, National Symphony Orchestra of Uzbekistan and Mexico State Symphony Orchestra.

Amalia has performed as a soloist, recitalist and chamber musician in Europe, United Kingdom, USA, Latin America, Asia, South Africa and Australia, appeared as guest concertmaster with orchestras including l'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Auckland Philharmonia and Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, and recorded for BIS, Bridge, Rattle and Atoll Records. **Violin Chair sponsored by Cass and Ian George.**



# SXS Artist in Residence 2024

## **Konstantin Shamray | Piano**

Described as an exhilarating performer with faultless technique and fearless command of the piano, Australian based pianist Konstantin Shamray enjoys performing on an international level with the world's leading orchestras and concert presenters.

In 2008, Konstantin burst onto the concert scene when he won First Prize at the Sydney International Piano Competition. He is the first and only competitor to date in the 40 years of the competition to win both First and People's Choice Prizes, in addition to six other prizes.

Since then, Konstantin has performed extensively throughout the world. Recent and future Australian highlights include engagements with the Sydney Symphony, Queensland Symphony and West Australian Symphony Orchestras. Konstantin enjoys a special relationship with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra who he collaborates with each season. Konstantin also enjoys regular appearances with the Southern Cross Soloists who he looks forward to performing with three times this season. In two consecutive seasons, Konstantin undertook prestigious nationwide tours with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and most recently with Musica Viva with Avi Avital which ventured to the country's leading concert halls to sold out audiences.

As a chamber musician, Konstantin has collaborated with the Australian String Quartet, the Australian Piano Quartet, Kristof Barati, Andreas Brantelid, Richard Tognetti and Li Wei Qin and regularly appears at the Adelaide Festival, the International Piano Series in Adelaide, the Melbourne Recital Centre, and Ukaria Cultural Centre.

Konstantin was recently appointed Senior Lecturer in Piano at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music at the University of Melbourne.

**Artist in Residence 2024 sponsored by Susan and Paul Garside.**



# SXS Didgeridoo Artist in Residence

**Chris Williams | Artist in Residence | Didgeridoo**



A descendant of the Wakka Wakka people from Queensland, Didgeridoo player Chris Williams began his music studies from an early age. He studied Classical Trumpet at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and also earned a Masters degree in Classical Trumpet Performance at the Royal College of Music in London. Chris has appeared as guest principal trumpet with the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, the

Queensland Pops Orchestra and the Australian Youth Orchestra. He was nominated for the Australian Freedman Fellowship Award for Jazz and for the Australian Young Achiever Award twice. Currently Artist in Residence with the Southern Cross Soloists, Chris is regarded as one of Australia's leading Didgeridoo soloists. As a Didgeridoo soloist, Chris has performed extensively throughout Africa and Europe. Solo Didgeridoo performance highlights include Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace, Israel, the Vatican, Didgeridoo Concerto with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Solo with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. From 2022, in partnership with the Southern Cross Soloists, Chris has embarked on an ambitious project to collaborate with established composers to commission 3 new works for didgeridoo and classical music ensemble every year for the next 10 years. A number of works so far in the SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project have been nominated for APRA AMCOS Awards. Current and previous composers include Sean O'Boyle, John Rotar, Leah Curtis, Joe Twist, Matthew Dewey, James Morrison, John Jorgenson and Lachlan Skipworth. He lives on the beautiful Sunshine Coast/Gubbi Gubbi country with his family.

**SXS Didgeridoo Artist in Residence sponsored by Kay Feeney and Michelle May.**

## **SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project: 2022 - 2032**

Established in 2022 the *SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project 2022 - 2032* is a unique collaboration with established composers to commission three new Australian works for didgeridoo and classical ensemble every year for 10 years, culminating with the 2032 Brisbane Olympic Games. SXS appointed Chris Williams as the Chair of the Advisory Executive Committee of the SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project in late 2022. This multi-year legacy project explores the use of didgeridoo in classical music to create new hybrid sounds with a quintessentially unique Australian flavour. Our second concert in our 15th QPAC Concert Series sees Williams co-compose with Australian Stephen Leek. Lachlan Skipworth will contribute to the series also in 2024. SXS Cultural Consultant is Wakka Wakka Elder Professor Kevin Williams. The 2024 *SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project* is supported by Arts Queensland.



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# SXS Composer

## Stephen Leek | Composer

Born in 1959, Leek has, for over four decades, had associations with innovative choirs around the world and through his own choirs, vOiCeArT and acclaimed The Australian Voices, that he co-founded and conducted until 2009. As a composer, his original compositions have their own distinctive voice and are performed regularly throughout the world and championed by the most innovative conductors. As a conductor Leek works with beginner community and children's choirs through to leading professional ensembles with equal ease. His music is available via: [stephenleek.com](http://stephenleek.com). A Churchill Fellow, Stephen Leek has received numerous national and international awards including the most prestigious Robert Edler International Choral Prize in 2004. He has a great belief in the development of global choral music. To facilitate this Leek has held national and international



positions including the Australian National Choral Council, Vice President of the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM) from 2011 – 2017, Founding Artistic Director of the Shanghai Youth Choir 2012/13, and in 2015, Conductor of the Asia Pacific Youth Choir. Leek has strong ties to Queensland after teaching at the Queensland Conservatorium for 17 years, but now resides in Australia's national capital, Canberra where he continues to freelance internationally as conductor and composer.



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# SXS Cultural Consultant

## **Prof Kevin Williams | SXS Cultural Consultant and First Nations Elder**

Uncle Professor Kevin Williams is the son of Maureen Stanley, a Wakka Wakka woman, and George Williams, a Gungurri man. His parents valued education as a means to escape poverty, a dream they instilled in their children.

Kevin's mother emphasised its importance, saying, "Education is your way out of poverty and you will use that education to help your people," while his father added, "You will get an education so that you are not a slave like me." Four of their children achieved tertiary qualifications.



Kevin excelled academically, achieving the highest mark in Queensland's senior exam in Modern History and earning a university scholarship. Before attending university in his late twenties, he worked for the Aboriginal Development Commission. He became the first Aboriginal degree graduate from what is now Central Queensland University and later completed his undergraduate law degree at UNSW and a Master of Laws at SCU with the Lionel Murphy law scholarship. Although he was accepted for a PhD at Harvard, he declined for family reasons.

In 1994, Kevin helped establish the Indigenous pre-law program at UNSW, a model that inspired similar programs in other fields and universities. He was the first chair of Ngalaya, the organization for Indigenous lawyers and law students in NSW. He has also taught law at universities for many years. Now semi-retired on the Sunshine Coast (Gubbi Gubbi country), Kevin lectures part-time at UniSc, sits on several university ethics committees, and mentors students at UniSc and Career Trackers.

He is a member of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council and has written and lectured on the unsuccessful referendum for Indigenous constitutional recognition. Kevin believes music is a universal language and champions the fusion of the didgeridoo with modern music, seeing it as a source of pride for all Australians by blending traditional and contemporary sounds.

# Southern Cross Soloists

*Southern Cross Soloists (SXS) are the stars of Australian chamber music. Since 1995, SXS have firmly established themselves as one of Australia's pre-eminent classical music ensembles. Championing chamber music globally, SXS, each year, continue to reach new heights. The collaborative nature of the ensemble and its creative direction, ensures a commitment and desire to form long-lasting, diverse cultural partnerships with Australia's and, the world's, most notable musicians, and composers. 2024 marks SXS 29th year of successful operation.*

## **Dr Ashley Smith | Clarinet**

Described as 'Incandescent... a masterly display of skill and insight... as an apologist for contemporary music-making, you would search hard to find this young clarinetist's equal' (The Age), clarinetist Ashley William Smith has performed as a soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician throughout Australia, USA, Europe, and Asia. He is a laureate of several of the industry's most prestigious prizes including the APRA Performance of the Year, the Music Council of Australia Freedman Fellowship, an ABC Symphony International Young Performer Award, and a Churchill Fellowship. He is recognised by the world's leading clarinet manufacturer as a Buffet-Crampon Artist. Ashley is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Western Australia where he is the Head of Winds and Contemporary Performance.



As a soloist and director, he has performed alongside several international and Australian orchestras. Most notably, his performance of Lachlan Skipworth's Clarinet Concerto with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra was awarded the APRA 2015 Performance of the Year. Ashley is the clarinetist of the Southern Cross Soloists and performs at internationally leading chamber music festivals with ensembles including the Calder, Dover, and Australian String Quartets. A graduate of Yale University, the University of Western Australia, and a Fellow of the Australian National Academy of Music, Ashley was awarded the highest honours as the most outstanding performance graduate of each institution. Outside of music Ashley is a fitness enthusiast and enjoys CrossFit, long distance running, handstands, and swimming. In 2019, he competed in Melbourne as a national finalist in the Allstar CrossFit Masters.

**Clarinet Chair sponsored by Jennifer Blake.**

### **Nick Mooney | French Horn**

Nick Mooney is the Section Principal horn of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. Born in Sydney, Nick studied at the University of Sydney and Sydney Conservatorium before being awarded a place in the Southbank Sinfonia training orchestra in London in 2016. In 2017 Nick became the principal horn of the Flanders Symphony Orchestra in Bruges, a position that he held until 2021. Alongside this position Nick maintained a busy freelance career in the UK, performing as guest principal horn with most of the symphony orchestras in the UK, including the London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra and Philharmonia Orchestra. Nick maintains these relationships to this day and in 2023 joined the London Symphony Orchestra as guest principal horn on their successful tour of Australia under Sir Simon Rattle.



### **James Wannan | Viola**

James Wannan studied viola with Alice Waten in Melbourne and viola d'amore in Vienna with Marianne Rônez and explores his passion for music from ancient to contemporary on several instruments. In 2015 James performed as violin soloist in Elliott Gyger's opera *Fly Away Peter* featured at the Melbourne Festival, recorded a CD of music by Jack Symonds, collaborated on five Australian premieres and toured to China with the Sydney Symphony. As a soloist James has worked with orchestras including the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. He has performed as a viola d'amore soloist in festivals in Austria and Germany and has been invited to perform as guest principal viola with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. James toured Europe as principal viola of the Asia Pacific United Orchestra and has toured as principal violist with the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra. He has performed as guest principal viola with the Hong Kong Philharmonia Orchestra and recently premiered a new viola d'amore concerto at the Bendigo New Music Festival.



**Viola Chair sponsored by Leanda Elliot and Philip Dubois.**

# Guest Associate Artists

## David Silva | Flute

Belonging to a new generation of Portuguese classical musicians, Sydney-based David Silva has rapidly established his career as a distinguished flutist. Covering a repertoire of more than four centuries of music, David has been a member of the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester and appeared as a guest with the Staatskapelle Dresden, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Winterthur Musikkollegium Orchester, amongst others. Recent accomplishments include the 1st prize at the 23rd Estoril Interpretation Competition (Portugal), 2nd prize at Clara Wieck Schumann Competition 2022 (Italy), 4th prize at 2022 Tampere Flute Fest - Young Artists Competition (Finland) and 3rd prize at the Dutch International Flute Competition 2021. David completed his studies at Haute École de Musique de Genève (Switzerland) and at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels (Belgium) with the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. **Flute Chair sponsored by Shirley Leuthner.**



## Andre Duthoit | Cello

Born in Tasmania in 1966, Andre began playing the cello at 13. His first teacher was Ruth Saffir and he also had a short period of lessons with Sela Trau. Andre graduated with First Class Honours from the University of Tasmania in 1988, having been a student of Christian Wojtowicz. After receiving an Australia Council study grant he had lessons with Michel Strauss in Paris and Switzerland and then for a year joined Tobias Kühne's cello class at the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, where he also studied chamber music with Rudolph Leopold. In 2000 he was awarded his Masters in Music from the University of Queensland, having studied with Gwyn Roberts. Andre has worked with a number of Australian orchestras, including the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra, the Melbourne Symphony, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra as well as a number of modern music chamber groups, including Loops and Topology. He has been a member of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra since 1990 and has appeared as a soloist with the orchestra as well as appearing frequently in the Orchestra's Chamber Series. Andre has toured in Switzerland several times as a member of the Adelaide Cello Trio and has been a member of the Adina String Quartet since 2015. As a chamber musician Andre has also performed with Edicson Ruiz and Sergio Tiempo. A career highlight is his performance with bassist Edgar Meyer and violinist Brendan Joyce of Meyer's Trio No. 3 for Violin, Cello and Bass in the 2015 Queensland Music Festival.



### **Courtenay Cleary | Violin**

Courtenay is fast becoming one of Australia's brightest young soloists, who burst onto the world stage with her solo performance at Westminster Abbey for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, which was broadcast live on BBC television. She has appeared as a soloist at other prestigious venues including Wigmore Hall, Buckingham Palace, Colston Hall, The Regent Hall and The Lincoln Center. Courtenay recently graduated with a Master of Music degree from The Juilliard School in New York where she studied with violin Professor Naoko Tanaka. During her time at Juilliard she was awarded the M. & E. Cohen Scholarship and the Charles H. Bechter Scholarship, and was a finalist in the 2020 violin concerto competition. She received her Bachelor of Music degree with first-class honours from the Royal Academy of Music in London where she studied with professor Maureen Smith. She is a Tait Memorial Trust and ABRSM scholar, and was recently awarded the Dame Joan Sutherland Award from the American Australian Association and the Guy Parsons Award from the Portland House and Australian Music Foundations. **Violin Chair Sponsored by Cass and Ian George.**



### **Dušan Walkowicz | Double Bass**

Dušan began to play the double bass in his native Czech Republic where he completed his Performance Diploma at the Conservatorium in Ostrava. After he moved to Australia, Dušan continued tuition at Sydney Conservatorium with Max McBride and Kees Boersma. He was accepted to the prestigious Viennese Music Academy and studied with Prof. Josef Niederhammer and Herbert Mayr (Principal Double Bass - Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra). Returning to Australia, Dušan was appointed as the Associate Principal Double Bass for the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. He has been guest artist with all Australian professional orchestras and regularly participates in chamber music and has a passion for education. He is a member of the teaching faculty at the Queensland Conservatorium and has also given tutorials at many training institutions including Australian Youth Orchestra and Australian National Academy of Music.



### **Mia Huang | Piano**

Pianist Mia Huang completed her Master of Music degree under the tutelage of Oleg Stepanov at the Queensland Conservatorium in 2022, awarded with Distinction. As an undergraduate, she trained under Wendy Lorenz at the Australian National University and received numerous awards including 1<sup>st</sup> prize at the Whitworth Roach Classical Competition, the ACT Young Virtuoso Award, and the esteemed Peter & Lena Karmel Prize for the Best Graduating Music Student. Mia has enjoyed performing in numerous capacities in the concert halls of Moscow, Brisbane, Canberra, and other regions of Australia. She has performed as a soloist with the Canberra Symphony x ANU Orchestra. With a passion for collaborative piano, Mia has worked with the Queensland Conservatorium Orchestra, Opera Queensland, and various chamber ensembles.



### **Laura Biemmi | Oboe**

Laura Biemmi is a Perth-born oboist based in Sydney. She has performed as an oboist and on cor anglais with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, the Perth Symphony Orchestra, the Perth Symphonic Chorus, and the Fremantle Chamber Orchestra. She has studied at the UWA Conservatorium of Music and the Sydney Conservatorium under Liz Chee and Shefali Pryor respectively. As a student, Laura was the recipient of the Delano Music Prize and the Royal Overseas League Music Honours Prize. In addition to her work as a freelance oboist, Laura is also a musicologist and holds a PhD in musicology from the University of Western Australia. Laura plays on a Dupin oboe.



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## **LEEK/WILLIAMS** Juwoon,Tu, Ngyin'anga (Country, Heart, Life)

World Premiere

This work was commissioned specifically for the Southern Cross Soloists in collaboration with the Wakka Wakka soprano Nina Korbe, and Wakka Wakka didgeridoo player Chris Williams as part of their ongoing *Didgeridoo Commissioning Project 2022 - 2032*. Setting the unusual task of bringing Indigenous words and sounds together with modern instruments in a contemporary setting, was a challenge. The sound of the didgeridoo and the sound of the traditional words, bring with them a history that stretches tens of thousands of years, which can't be ignored.

In conjunction with Southern Cross Soloists cultural consultant Uncle Professor Kevin Williams, the words of a traditional Wakka Wakka welcome song, *Gurri Ngindin Narmi*, were used (with permission). The text also incorporates rarely heard lines from Chris's grandmother's version of the song, which she learnt from her Wakka Wakka grandparents growing up in the bush near Cracow, South West QLD. The traditional melody, to which the words were sung, was used as a welcome to other Indigenous people when they gathered on Wakka Wakka Country for the annual Bunya nut harvests. Wakka Wakka country is north of Brisbane and inland from the Sunshine Coast, a landscape that features rolling hills, rivers, and spectacular waterfalls and rainforests. The traditional song is only referenced in this piece through the use of small fragments, but it is in the words, and their sentiment, that I attempt to capture the essence of this place.

Juwoon,Tu, Ngyin'anga (Country, Heart, Life) is in three quite distinct sections - each embracing an important element of life - traditional and modern.

Program Notes by Stephen Leek - Composer, in collaboration with SXS Chris Williams (composer, didgeridoo) and with approvals from SXS Cultural Consultant First Nations Elder Professor Kevin Williams.

\*Please note. Gurri Ngindin Narmi is a traditional/sacred Wakka Wakka song used ceremonially. We have not arranged the song or even used the melody in our work. Appropriate permissions have been given to use some of the text in the format you hear today.

## **KOVÁCS** Hommage à Manuel de Falla

As one of the finest Hungarian clarinetists, Béla Kovács founded the Hungarian Wind Quintet and was a member of the Budapest Chamber Orchestra. Kovács wrote *Hommage a Manuel de Falla* to honour one of the greatest Spanish composers of the 20th century, Manuel de Falla. This piece comes from a series of nine *Hommages* that Kovács wrote for nine different composers.

This unaccompanied solo for clarinet is written in a traditional Spanish dance style,

known as *flamenco*. The two main themes across the piece reflect several of the main elements of the honoured composer. The clarinettist alternates between a set tempo and a freer section, which enables the clarinet to present the hallmark styles of Manuel de Falla. This variation provides a stark contrast between a flaring, trumpet-like manner, and a smooth calm style, which allows the performer to showcase a multitude of Spanish styles.

## **VIVALDI** Concerto for Viola d'amore in D major RV.392

- I. Allegro
- II. Largo
- III. Allegro

On August 25, 1717 in Cento, Italy, Antonio Vivaldi performed on an instrument that was evidently just as unusual then as it is now. According to an eyewitness, this instrument was “a special kind of twelve stringed viola” called the viola d’amore. His concerto for D Major is probably his most popular work for this instrument thanks to his mastery of highlighting its natural resonance.

This concerto sets the basic structure for all other concertos - a solo instrument accompanied by a string orchestra, clear ritornelli alternated by passages where the level of participation of the accompanying strings varies. The score of the D Major concerto is in Dresden, and exists only in a copy of Vivaldi’s original manuscript. Paul V. Miller believes Johann Georg Pisendel, one of the great violinists of the 18th century, and a great supporter of Vivaldi and the viola d’amore, might have it brought to Dresden.

The concerto opens with a cheerful first movement, and a bright open string chord. Vivaldi then transports us to a more lyrical world in B minor for the second movement. “The finale takes advantage of the instruments’ ability to play narrow double stops rapidly and accurately, building to a climax in the final solo section where many unison double” (Miller).

## **RAVEL** Vocalise-étude en forme de Habanera

‘Vocalise’: a musical passage sung upon one vowel as an exercise to develop flexibility and control of pitch and tone. (Collins Dictionary)

Originally written for piano in 1895, Ravel rearranged his work as a study for low voice, then cello, and later to many other instruments under the title *Pièce en forme de Habanera*. Interestingly, A.L. Hettich (singing teacher at the Paris Conservatory) commissioned several composers to write ‘vocalises’ for his singing class; amongst them Maurice Ravel. Ravel was an admirer of Spanish music, so he used this fascination to write one of the most difficult virtuoso exercises for the bass voice.

The accompaniment suggests without doubt that it was written for pedagogical purposes - an 'étude'; whilst the vocal scales, trills, staccati makes this a technically challenging work.

## **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV** The Nightingale and the Rose Op. 2 No. 2

It was very popular during the 19th century to include influences of the 'Orient' in all art forms. In early 1831 the young Russian poet Aleksei Koltsov published *The Nightingale Enslaved By the Rose*, a short poem in the Persian style which he dedicated to Alexander Pushkin. It has been set to music by three Russian composers: Nikolai Artsybushev, Anton Rubinstein, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov.

Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Nightingale and the Rose* stands as a testament to the enduring power of music to convey the depth of human emotion and storytelling. Through its enchanting melodies and harmonies, the piece continues to captivate audiences with its timeless beauty and profound themes. A nightingale falls in love with a rose and sings to her all day and night. Unfortunately, the rose just silently listens to his songs.

## **RAVEL** Cinq mélodies populaires grecques

- I. Chanson de la mariée
- II. Là-bas, vers l'église
- III. Quel galant m'est comparable
- IV. Chanson des cueilleuses de lentisques
- V. Tout gai!

Born in 1875, French composer Maurice Ravel is known for his unique sound world and detailed craftsmanship, form and style. Despite being content to work with established form and harmonic structures, he still managed to manipulate these musical traditions, forging his own musical language and personality. Whilst still focused on tonality, his works are mostly modal based on old Greek Phrygian and Dorian modes. A perfect example of such is his *5 Popular Greek Songs*. Commissioned at the last minute by musicologist Pierre Aubry, in 36 hours Ravel wrote an accompaniment to these pre-existing unaccompanied folk songs for a Greek folk song lecture being prepared by Aubry.

Written in Phrygian mode, *The bride's awakening* (Chanson de la mariée) showcases the excitement of the narrator in rousing their fiancée. The constant repeating triplets and alternating octaves accompanies the singer until everything slows down for the ending describing the union of their families. This is followed by a slower movement, *Down there by the church* (Là-bas, vers l'église). Accompanied by gentle rolled chords the singer describes the church and reflects on the dead souls reunited in the graveyard. The third song is probably the simplest in the cycle. In *What gallant can compare with me?* (Quel galant m'est comparable) the singer tries to conquer the mistress Vassiliki.

In *Song of the lentisk gatherers* (*Chanson des cueilleuses de lentisques*), Ravel departs from his usual style of thick chords and involved piano, and instead chooses open-fifth block and broken chords, to put all the focus on the singer's beautifully ornamented melody. The cycle finishes with *All Merry!* (*Tout gai!*), the shortest song yet the most difficult for the pianist. The singer has a relatively simple melody narrating the excitement of the party, while the pianist adds to the upbeat mood with alternating hand patterns.

## **SAINT-SAËNS** Piano Concerto No. 5 'The Egyptian'

- I. Allegro animato
- II. Andante in D minor - Allegretto tranquillo quasi andantino - Andante
- III. Molto allegro

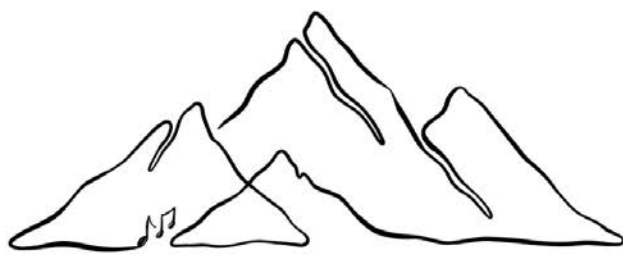
One can look upon the life of Camille Saint-Saëns with equal parts of admiration and awe. The man was astonishingly multi-dimensional: in addition to being a virtuoso pianist and prolific composer of works in all forms, he authored books on diverse subjects. He was also a linguist, and an insatiable world traveller. It was, in fact, one of his journeys in Northern Africa, in 1896, that inspired the present concerto.

Its exotic flourishes in the middle movement notwithstanding, the "Egyptian" Concerto is from the typical Saint-Saëns mold: melodious and straightforward, exuding the sophisticated charm and brilliance of a craftsman of the highest order. Fully understanding his own artistic identity, the composer put his credo in perspective when he wrote, "The artist who does not feel completely satisfied by elegant lines, by harmonious colors, and by a beautiful succession of chords does not understand the art of music."

As with several other of Saint-Saëns' concertos, the very beginning of this one does not immediately reveal its virtuosic intentions. Rather, the first movement opens with an unprepossessing melody, which, however, soon gives way to characteristic jet-speed scales and arpeggios, and to a certain urgency. The opening of the Andante second movement, with its dramatic, Near East exoticism, tells us the reason for the concerto being dubbed "Egyptian." And it is said that the lyric melody of this movement's mid-section is an authentic Nubian song the composer heard on a boat crossing the Nile. For the final movement, he eschews foreign picturesqueness, and returns to his native brand of French glitter, songfulness, and keyboard pyrotechnics, all of which should leave an audience "completely satisfied."

# 18 AUGUST 2024

SHAMBALA ESTATE, TAMBORINE MOUNTAIN



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## Program Notes

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