

Murray River
Fine Music
Presents

The Art of Wonder

and Consolation



The Cube
Wodonga

INAUGURAL FESTIVAL - A FEAST OF MUSIC

The Art of Wonder and Consolation

Murray River Fine Music's Inaugural Festival
11 – 13 September, 2026 The Cube, Wodonga

Concert 1

Inventi Ensemble

The Art of Fugue

Friday 11 September, 7:30pm

Concert 2

MRFM Duo and Flying Fruit Fly Circus

Children's Games and Mother Goose

Saturday 12 September, 2:00pm

Concert 3

Stefan Cassomenos

The Art of the Piano

Saturday 12 September, 7:30pm

Concert 4

Lior and The MRFM Ensemble

Compassion

Sunday 13 September, 2:00pm

From the Artistic Director

Welcome to Murray River Fine Music's first festival, *The Art of Wonder and Consolation* here at The Cube. We've worked very hard to bring it all together and are delighted to share this feast of music with you.

It's wonderful to welcome old friends like Inventi back to the region, especially in their radiant program of Bach's last works, and Lior, whose *Compassion*, written with Nigel Westlake, is surely an Australian Classic.

We're also thrilled to partner with the Flying Fruit Fly Circus for the first time, accompanied by local pianists Miriam Briggs and Grace Kernaghan in a marvellous celebration of childhood and local talent.

As in past years we're hosting the Geoffrey McFerran Piano Competition (Regional) in partnership with the *Victoria Music Teachers' Association* and hope you'll support the young players at the Wodonga Senior Secondary College.

We're very lucky to have as our adjudicator this year the distinguished pianist Stefan Cassomenos, who will play a spectacular recital on Saturday night, generously supported by Agency of Sculpture, Yackandandah.

There are many people to thank, including the team at here The Cube, our lovely donors, our fabulous performers and you – our loyal audience – who make it all possible.

Helena Kernaghan



Concert 1

Inventi
The Art of Fugue

James Armstrong
Violin

Daniel You
Viola

Gemma Kneale
Cello

Melissa Doecke
Flute

Ben Opie
Oboe

Program

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
The Art of Fugue BWV 1080 (1751)

Contrapunctus i
Contrapunctus ii
Contrapunctus iv
Contrapunctus v
Contrapunctus viii

Triple fugue
Contrapunctus iii
Contrapunctus x, a 4 alla decima
Contrapunctus ix, a 4 alla duodecima

Kym Dillon (born 1989)
XIV (afterword)

About the Music

Bach, sadly, didn't live to complete *The Art of Fugue* but despite ill-health and encroaching blindness — created what has been called 'some of the most visionary and profound music ever composed'.

Bach gave no firm indication of what instrument(s) should play the pieces in this collection, leading many to regard them as an example of how to write counterpoint with its subjects (themes stated at the start), answers (a second line that plays the subject in a new key), countersubjects and free episodes; in all its variety it is derived from the one theme heard at the start of the first piece.

Inventi's arrangement allows us to hear the intricate beauties of Bach's vision of ultimate order in eight selections. We hear two four-voice fugues on the principal subject, the second varied with a 'French' dotted rhythm. There follow two fugues where the principal subject is inverted.

Contrapunctus VIII is a triple fugue, while *Contrapunctus III* is an intensely chromatic with four voices. Then we have two canons (where a theme is imitated across the parts) before two more double fugues.

Bach died leaving a triple fugue unfinished, so Inventi commissioned Australian composer Kym Dillon to complete it.

Trying to imagine where Bach might have gone with it, leads at first to diffidence, but then, as she writes:
all control and fugal formality is lost; the floodgates to infinity are opened ... It is now as if we were floating through empty space ... eventually it gently leads us to a point of realisation, revelation and reflection. The four subjects are presented one by one, and slowly connect contrapuntally together to create an emotional, ever-modulating ode to Bach's legacy, his work, his unapproachable mastery. It is an expression of my gratitude towards him.

Concert 2

Program

Georges Bizet (1838-1875)
Children's Games (1870)

The swing
The spinning top
The doll
Wooden horses
Battledore and shuttlecock
Trumpet and drum
Soap bubbles
Puss in the corner
Blind man's buff
Leap-frog
Little husband, little wife
The ball

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)
Mother Goose Suite (1910)

Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty
Tom Thumb
Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodas
Conversations of Beauty and the Beast
The Fairy Garden

MRFM Duo and
Flying Fruit Fly Circus
Children's Games
and *Mother Goose*

Grace Kernaghan
Miriam Joy Briggs
Piano

Seth Scheuner
Circus Director

Helena Kernaghan
Music Director

About the Music

Perhaps taking a lead from the evocative miniatures of Schumann's *Kinderszenen* (Scenes from Childhood), Bizet's *Children's Games* of 1871 is, in the words of one commentator, 'a fine example of high sophistication in the service of apparent naivety'... ,

... especially in its original 12-movement version for piano, four hands. Written against the horror of the Franco-Prussian war the previous year, it spawned something of a vogue among French composers such as Gabriel Fauré, Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel, who all composed suites that reflect childhood experience through games, toys, animals and fairy tales.

Each of the 12 pieces in Bizet's suite evokes the game of its title, in a clearly recognisable musical form – reverie, march (one he borrowed from his opera *Ivan IV*), lullaby and so on. The music also represents motion, as in 'The Swing' and 'The Spinning Top'.

Mother Goose began life as the 'Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty' for piano, four hands. Ravel composed it for Mimie and Jean Godebski (aged six and seven respectively), to whose parents he had dedicated his *Sonatine* for piano.

Ravel then composed four more *pièces enfantines*, depicting characters from the fairy-tales anthologised by three 17th-century authors: Charles Perrault ('Sleeping Beauty' and 'Tom Thumb'), the Baroness d'Aulnoy ('Laideronnette') and the Prince of Beaumont ('Beauty and the Beast'). 'The Fairy Garden' was an original inspiration.

The work's premiere in 1910 was given by two children, Jeanne Leleu (later a professor at the Paris Conservatoire) and Geneviève Durony.

The Art of the Piano

Stefan Cassomenos
Piano

Program

Richard Wagner (1813–1883)
Transcribed by Franz Liszt (1811–1886)
'Isolde's Liebestod' from
Tristan und Isolde (1859/1867)

Caroline Shaw (born 1982)
Gustave Le Gray (2012)
after Frederic Chopin's *Mazurka*
Op.17 No.4 (1833)

Carl Vine (born 1954)
Toccatissimo

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Transcribed by Franz Liszt (1811–1886)
Symphony No.5 in C minor, Op.67
(1808/1837)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Sonata quasi una fantasia,
Op.27 No.2, 'Moonlight'

Allegro con brio
Andante con moto
Scherzo. Allegro – Trio –
Allegro

Adagio sostenuto –
Allegretto – trio –
Allegro agitato

About the Music

In the 19th century orchestral music frequently appeared in piano transcriptions for broader exposure, rehearsals and so on, and Franz Liszt made innumerable versions of operatic excerpts, songs and whole symphonies to fill out his concert programs.

His soon to be son-in-law (despite Liszt being only two years older) Richard Wagner overturned the operatic world with *Tristan und Isolde*, first produced in 1865, in which erotic longing can only end in death. Liszt transcribed Isolde's ecstatic final monologue at the climax of which she falls dead by the body of her lover.

Carl Vine's 2011 *Toccatissimo* is one of several works commissioned over the years by the Sydney International Piano Competition as a test piece. It is, as Vine notes, 'an extreme toccata, not for the faint-hearted.'

In 1801 Countess Giulietta Guicciardi, Beethoven thought, 'loves me and I her... this is the first time I feel that marriage could bring happiness with it'. But he was realistic: 'Unfortunately, she is not in my class'.

After Beethoven's death, writer Ludwig Rellstab thought the first movement sounded like moonlight on Lake Lucerne.

It's more interesting than that, gradually transforming gentle triplets, via short scherzo, into a ferocious finale.

US composer Caroline Shaw imagines 'a world of sound that has never been heard before but has always existed. *Gustave Le Gray* is a multi-layered portrait of Op. 17 No.4 using some of Chopin's ingredients overlaid and hinged together with my own. It was written expressly for pianist Amy Yang'.

In 1837, 10 years after Beethoven's death, Liszt transcribed Symphonies Nos.5-9 in tribute, and revised Nos.5-7 in 1863-4.

As Derek Watson notes, it is too easy to see them as showpieces: Liszt had studied Beethoven's scores intimately so the results are certainly excitingly virtuosic, but deeply true to Beethoven's vision.

Concert 4

Program

Lior and The MRFM Ensemble
Compassion

'Sim Shalom' – 'Grant Peace'	'Al Takshu L'vavchem' – 'Don't Harden Your Hearts'
'Eize Hu Chacham' ? – 'Who is Wise' ?	'Ma Wadani Ahadun' – 'Until the End of Time'
'La Yu'minu' – 'Until You Love Your Brother'	'Avinu Malkeinu' – 'Hymn of Compassion'
'Inna Rifqa' – 'The Beauty Within'	

Compassion

Lior
Vocals

Kaori Sparks
Violin

Yuhka Nagai
Violin

William Vyvyan Murray
Viola

Charlotte Jacke
Cello

Michael Fortescue
Double Bass

Helena Kernaghan
Piano

Steve Falk
Percussion

About the Music

Compassion is a song cycle in seven movements based on a collection of ancient Hebrew and Arabic texts by Lior and Nigel Westlake.

It draws from the rich worlds of Islam and Judaism to present a collection of profound and poetic messages surrounding the idea of compassion between human beings.

The texts are largely a collection of poems, proverbs and songs that give us an insight into such wisdom. Their similarities are immense and their universality is undeniable. Far from the misguided commentaries that have so often steered humanity away from the true enactment of compassion, these texts affirm that attaining a greater sense of compassion is an ultimate goal, and letting it guide our actions is the ultimate wisdom.

Two Worlds in Common

The research that eventually led me to the texts threaded through *Compassion* took me far and wide, from conversations with religious leaders and linguists, to regular consultations with my good friend Waleed Aly, who took me through the finer details of Arabic pronunciation and the subtleties of the Arabic texts.

Being a fluent Hebrew speaker, I initially thought that singing some of the texts in Arabic would feel foreign and disingenuous, yet to my surprise, many of the words I encountered were common to both languages. It became clear in learning these texts that these two languages shared a deep and common source.

Just as experience often validates the existence of a well-worn cliché, it is difficult to escape the analogy of two brothers starting from a common source and branching out to gather their own rich experience and identity to become what we now know as modern Hebrew and Arabic.

In time, I would also come to learn not only of the similarities in language, but in the very essence of the messages embodied throughout these proverbs and poems.

What began with a feeling of trepidation as to whether Nigel and I could sincerely encapsulate the artistic concept and vision we shared for this undertaking, has ended with a full embrace and a somewhat unexpected sense of renewed optimism. It may seem strange in the context of this work, yet neither Nigel nor I consider ourselves religious people.

We do however share a firm belief that much of the beauty and wisdom found within so many works of art and philosophy attributed to a certain religion need not lie exclusive to those who subscribe to its faith, or only to those who seek a connection with God through directional prayer. They have so much to offer to those who might accept them without bias or judgement.

i. Sim Shalom – Grant Peace

Sim Shalom
Chen vachesed v'rachamim
Aleinu ve'al kol am
V'imru Amen
Sim Shalom Aleinu ve'al kol am
Tova u'vracha
Ahavat chesed u'tzdaka u'vracha verachamim
Vecha'im veshalom
Barchenu Avinu
Kulanu k'echad

More than any of the texts used in *Compassion*, 'Sim Shalom' demonstrates that a literal translation is often inadequate in conveying the depth and richness of these texts. An example can be found in one of the stanzas relating to the vital virtues of character – 'chesed, tzedakah, u'vracha, v'rachamim', – 'charity, integrity and compassion'.

The word 'rachamim' can be quite simply translated as 'compassion'. When uncovered however, this word has far richer and deeper meaning, being a derivation of the Hebrew word for 'womb'. More importantly, a closely related word of the same origin – 'Rachaman' – which can be translated as 'the Compassionate One', is one of the three names for God in the Jewish religion. Interestingly, the origin, meaning and use of 'Rachaman' is almost identical between the two worlds of Judaism and Islam. Such is the centrality and esteem these two religions place on the virtue of compassion, that it is in fact one of the names given to God.

ii. Eize Hu Chacham? – Who is Wise?

Eize Hu Chacham?
Halomed mikol adam
Eize hu gibor shebagiborim
Mi she'ose soneh ohavo
Al tehi baz lechol adam
U'maflig lechol davar
She'ein adam she'ein lo sha'ah
Ve'ein davar she'ein lo makom
Dabru emet ish et re'ehu
Emet u'mishpat shalom
Shiftu b'sha'areichem
Eile hadvarim asher ta'asu

Eize Hu Chacham is a collection of ethical and moral statements of the Sages taken from 'Pirkei Avot' – Ethics of our Fathers. 'Pirkei Avot' is a section of the 'Mishna', one of the fundamental works of the Jewish Oral Law. 'Who is wise? One who learns from every man' (Ben Zoma – Pirkei Avot 4:1)

‘Who is a hero?
One who turns an enemy into a friend’

(Avot d’Rabbi Natan Ch 23: True Heroism)

‘Do not scorn any person, and do not
discount any thing. For there is no one
who has not their hour, and no thing that
has not its place’

(Ben Azzai – Pirkei Avot 4:3)

iii. *La Yu’minu – Until You Love Your Brother*

*La yu’minu
Ahadukum hatta yuhibbu li akhihi
Ma yuhibbu li nafsihi
Al rahimuna yarhamuhum
Ar rahman urhamu
Man fil arda yarhamakum
Man fis samaa*

‘None of you will have faith until he wishes
for his brother what he wishes for himself’

*(Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 1 : #12)
Reporter – Hadhrat Anas (r)*

‘Those who are merciful will be granted
mercy from the Most Merciful; be merciful
to those on the earth and those in the heavens
will have mercy on you.’

*(Sunan At-Tirmidhi, Book of Righteousness,
Number 1924, Sahih] Reporter – Abdullah ibn Amr*

iv. *Inna Rifqa – The Beauty Within*

*‘Inna rrifqa la yakunu fi shay
Illa zanahu wa la yunza’u min shay
illa shanahu’*

(Hadith 6767, Sahih Muslim) Reported by A’isha

‘Compassion does not enter into anything
without beautifying it, and is not removed
from anything without making it ugly’.

For several hundred years, the narrations
of the Prophet were passed down via word
of mouth. As time passed, and the chain of
narration grew, it became more difficult
to be certain of the authenticity of a hadith,
and hence a rigorous science of examining
the authenticity of hadiths grew.

Such was the importance placed on the
science of verifying the credibility of Hadith,
that it grew to become a complex academic
field and for many, a lifetime’s dedication
and pursuit. The most authentic collection
of Hadith is widely recognized as those
based on the study of Imam al-Bukhari.

There is a famous story highlighting the
level of Imam al-Bukhari’s rigorous approach.
Upon one of his journeys to seek out and
examine the character of those involved in
the chain of narration, al-Bukhari noticed one
such person gesturing to his horse to come
over to him by tricking him that there was
food when in fact there was not.

Al-Bukhari cited this act of trickery
towards the animal as behavior not worth
of trustworthiness, and hence the chain of
narration to which this man was involved
in was thereby deemed inauthentic.

A *Hadith* is a report of something the Prophet Muhammad said or did. Hundreds of thousands of these reports have been gathered together in the Hadith collections that form the basis of so much Islamic thought and teaching. This piece, titled ‘La Yu’minu’ is a melding of two central hadiths. These two proverbs relay a simple yet universal truth, the closest approximation of the first being that of ‘the golden rule’ : ‘do unto others as you would have them do unto you’, while the second speaks of what some of us might otherwise call ‘karma’.

v. *Al Takshu L'avachem – Don't Harden Your Hearts*

'Al takshu l'avachem'

(Tehilim – Book of Psalms 95:8)

*'Limnot yameinu ken hoda
venavi l'av chochma'*

(Tehilim – Book of Psalms 90:12)

*'Vekhi yagur itcha ger, be'artzechem
lo tonu oto'*

(Lev 19:33)

*'K'eizrach mikem yihiyeh lachem
hager hagar itchem. Ve'ahavta lo
kamocha ki gerim ha'item'*

(Lev 19:34)

'Don't harden your hearts'

*'Teach us to number our days, that
we may get a heart of wisdom'*

*'And if a stranger is among you
in your land, you shall not do him wrong.'*

*'The stranger that is among you, shall be
unto you as the home-born among you,
and thou shalt love him as thyself,
for you once were also strangers'*

*There is a beautiful quote by The Dalai Lama
– 'There are no strangers, only friends you
haven't yet met'*

*'Fear makes strangers of people who
would be friends.' – Shirley MacLaine.*

vi. *Ma Wadani Ahadun – Until the End of Time*

*'Ma Wadani ahadun illa bathaltu lahu
Ssafwal mawadati minni akhiral abadi
Wala qalani wa in kana almasi'u bina
Illa da'awtu lahu rahmanu bil rushdi
Wala tumintu ala sirrin fabuhtu bihi
Wala madattu illa li ghayr aljameel yadi'*

*'None ever showed me compassion Except
that I showed them compassion until the
end of time And if someone were to show me
harshness I would pray to the most merciful
to give him wisdom'*

*'Ma Wadani Ahadun' is a poem written by
Ali Ibn Abi Talib, a cousin of the Prophet
Muhammad and the fourth Caliph after the
Prophet some 1400 years ago. Widely known
for his calm wisdom and use of reason in
place of hot-headedness, Ali is a universally
revered figure in the Muslim world: a man
through whom both the Sunni and Shi'ite
traditions pass, whose strong character of
kindness and compassion inspires people
across sectarian divides.*

*One such performance later came to be
the very seed of this project, as Nigel and I
entertained the notion of orchestrating this
beautiful ancient melody which I had only
ever previously performed acapella. The text
of 'Avinu Malkeinu' houses a beautiful link
between not only compassion and wisdom,
but that of freedom. It highlights the notion
of compassion being the path to liberation,
a concept that has always stayed with me.*

Notes © Gordon Kerry, Lior, Nigel Westlake

vii. *Avinu Malkeinu – Hymn of Compassion*

*'Avinu Malkeinu chanenu v'aneinu ki ein
banu ma'asim Aseh imanu tzedakah
vachessed ve'hoshi'enu'*

*I have vivid memories of hearing 'Avinu
Malkeinu' emanating out of synagogues
in my childhood. The prayer is recited on
Yom Kippur – The Day of Atonement, the
holiest day of the Jewish year. What initially
drew me to the prayer was its haunting
melody, yet it was only later in life when
I learnt of its meaning and universal
resonance, that I felt drawn to perform it.*



Inventi

Inventi Ensemble is renowned for their trailblazing performances and commitment to musical exploration. Founded in 2014 by Artistic Directors Ben Opie and Melissa Doecke, the ensemble has redefined the chamber music experience through a fusion of traditional repertoire and cutting-edge contemporary works.

Winners of the Melbourne Recital Centre's Contemporary Masters Award, they consistently push the boundaries of classical music, seamlessly integrating elements of improvisation, multimedia, and cross-genre collaboration to create captivating and memorable performances.

In addition to their riveting live performances, Inventi is deeply committed to music education and community engagement.

They regularly conduct workshops, masterclasses, and educational programs, reaching out to diverse audiences and inspiring a new generation of musicians.

Through their innovative approach to classical music, they aim to break down barriers and make the genre accessible and relevant to audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

Inventi's discography is growing, with their fourth album *1001 Nights* debuting in April 2024 at No.2 on the Aria Classical Charts. Past releases include an impressive double album release in Nov 2020: *Women of the Earth* celebrating Australian female composers and *Peer Gynt* which debuted in the Top 20 of the ARIA Charts.

With a relentless spirit of artistic exploration and a mission to redefine the classical music landscape, Inventi Ensemble continues to captivate audiences, push boundaries, and inspire musical innovation both in Australia and beyond.



The Flying Fruit Fly Circus

The Flying Fruit Fly Circus is Australia's National Youth Circus – a unique performing arts company where world-class training and extraordinary creativity come together. Based on the border of New South Wales and Victoria, it is home to the country's only full-time circus school, offering exceptional training and academic education to young Australians from Year 3 to Year 12.

Our young acrobats learn by performing. Their education is shaped by creativity, collaboration, and the thrill of the stage – developing not only remarkable artists but confident, well-rounded individuals.

As both a nationally recognised training organisation and a vibrant performing company, the Flying Fruit Fly Circus continues to push the boundaries of contemporary circus. Its productions, tours, and creative programs share the energy and excellence of our young artists with audiences across Australia and the world.

Now approaching its 50th year, the Fruities remain dedicated to nurturing the next generation of Australian circus artists and inspiring audiences everywhere with the joy and wonder of live performance.



Miriam Joy Briggs



Grace Kernaghan



Stefan Cassomenos



About the Performers

Miriam Briggs is a pianist based in Yackandandah. She trained under Glen Riddle and attended classes with Max Cooke, Roger Woodward, and Ronald Farren-Price, at the University of Melbourne. She teaches piano, classroom music and works with children's choirs. She is the founder of BAM — Briggswood Academy of Music, a vibrant studio dedicated to quality, joyful music education. She contributes to community music through accompanying, children's choirs, drumming groups, the Yackandandah Folk Festival parade and civic performances.

Miriam is drawn to the expressive worlds of Romantic, Impressionist, and jazz-influenced repertoire and delights in musical collaboration — from piano duets, small ensembles and accompanying to concerto work. Beyond the studio and stage, she enjoys paragliding, gardening, nature, and art.

Albury's Grace Kernaghan began piano lessons at the age of five, following in her musical family's footsteps. She quickly found an affinity with the instrument, which led her to study a Bachelor of Music (performance) at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, where she studied with pianist Benjamin Martin.

During her time in Melbourne she performed often with her classmates, fostering a love for a variety of classical music styles. A talented multi-instrumentalist, Grace has performed on keys, guitar, bass and vocals at a variety of events — The Galah Bar variety shows, part of the MRFM ensemble performing with Wendy Rule, and with the quartet Vocal Point at Albury City Carols and Broadway Lounge.

Working as a piano teacher for 15 years, she is passionate about passing on her love for all kinds of music and her instrument to the next generation.

Grace is looking forward to bringing this exciting show to you all!

Internationally praised for his clarity, depth of expression, virtuosity and versatility, Melbourne-born Stefan Cassomenos is regarded as one of Australia's leading concert pianists.

His concerto repertoire now exceeds forty works, and has led to performances with the Beethoven Orchestra Bonn, Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, Opera Australia Orchestra, and Melbourne Chamber Orchestra.

He has performed as a soloist at Tonhalle Zürich, Gewandhaus Leipzig, Beethoven Festival Bonn, and at concert halls across Germany, Netherlands, England, Italy, Malta, Greece, Slovenia, Poland, Estonia, Russia, China, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia.

In 2013, Cassomenos was a grand finalist and recipient of the Second Grand Prize and Chamber Music Prize at the International Telekom Beethoven Piano Competition Bonn.

He is a founding member of acclaimed ensemble PLEXUS, which since launching in 2014 has commissioned and premiered over 120 new works.

Cassomenos began composing at an early age, giving the premiere of his own Piano Concerto No 1 with Adelaide Symphony Orchestra at age 16. His recent commissions include Victorian Opera, Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, and Festival Neue Musik Rockenhausen.

Cassomenos is currently co-Artistic Director, together with Monica Curro, of Port Fairy Spring Music Festival. He is generously supported by Kawai Australia.

About the Performers

Lior

Lior is one of Australia's most treasured singer songwriters renowned for his beautiful voice and songs that radiate truth and sincerity.

He burst on to the Australian music scene in 2005 with his debut album – *Autumn Flow* – which has become one of the most successful independent debut releases in Australian music history. That year Lior earned three ARIA nominations including 'Best Male Artist' as well as Triple J's 'J Award' nomination for 'Australian Album of the Year'. He has earned a total of seven ARIA nominations and is a two-time ARIA award-winner (Australian equivalent of the Grammys).

He has toured extensively both in Australia and internationally performing regularly at arts festivals and WOMAD festivals, including an entire season at the Edinburgh Festival. He has written songs for film and television and is a recipient of an APRA Award for 'Best Original Song Composed for Screen'.

Lior's hunger for new challenges has led to collaborations on various classical crossover works. Most notably, in 2014 Lior collaborated with Nigel Westlake on *Compassion*, a symphonic song cycle for voice and orchestra set to ancient texts in both Hebrew and Arabic centred around the themes of wisdom of compassion.

Compassion has been performed with major Australian symphony state orchestras. The recording won the 2014 ARIA for 'Best Classical Album'.

In 2019, Lior toured internationally as the featured vocalist for the Australian Chamber Orchestra. Lior was awarded the prestigious Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship for displaying outstanding excellence and courage in music.

Kaori Sparks

Kaori Sparks (nee Nogi) was born in Japan and studied at Musashino Music University in Tokyo, receiving honours for violin, violin-piano duet, chamber music, and orchestra performance.

She toured Europe as a member of the Tokyo-Budapest String Quartet, and Tokyo-Budapest Ensemble five times between 2004-2006. She also performed with the Salzburg Festival Orchestra and Hungarian National Orchestra during this time. She relocated to Albury in early 2009.

In early 2012, Kaori, Helena Kernaghan, and cellist Sam Goble, formed the Orpheus Trio. The group has performed extensively around regional Victoria and southern New South Wales, as well as Melbourne.

Kaori and Helena made a formal debut as Duo Gaku 楽 in late 2025.

Yuhka Nagai

A native of Japan, violinist Yuhka Nagai graduated in 2014 from the Royal Academy of Music in London. She has also studied at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance and the Musashino Academia Musicae in Tokyo, Japan.

Yuhka played in the Musashino Academia Symphony Orchestra as leader for three years, from 2007. She has been a member of a variety of chamber music ensembles and with the piano quartet, "Blüte," she won third prize in the 1st Memorial Tokyo Art Chamber Music competition.

She was the violinist of the Kodo Quartet. Science School and in New Zealand she has played with Auckland Philharmonia and NZBarok. In 2025 she has moved to Melbourne where she teaches and has performed with Melbourne Baroque Orchestra, Victorian Opera Chamber Orchestra and other ensembles. She is also an active trainee of Alexander Technique in Melbourne.



William Vyvyan Murray

William performs regularly with groups like the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, Inventi Ensemble, the Brandenburg State Orchestra and the Berliner Kammerorchester.

He studied at the Victorian College of the Arts, UdK Berlin, and the CNSM de Paris and later at the Conservatorio della Svizzera Italia and the Sweelinck Conservatorium van Amsterdam. William has composed original work for many groups throughout Australia and abroad and has won awards for his film composition. His compositions and arrangements have been performed throughout Europe. at the Tokyo Viola Space and across Australia.

William has performed at leading European music festivals and the Otaru festival in Japan and taken part in masterclasses with leading violists including Kim Kashkashian, Lawrence Power and Yuri Bashmet.



Charlotte Jacke

Charlotte Jacke graduated in cello performance from the Universität der Künste Berlin in 2006. She has participated orchestral workshops with conductors Sir Simon Rattle and Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

As a member of the Berlin-based jazz orchestra Andromeda Mega Express Orchestra, Charlotte has toured extensively throughout Germany, Switzerland and Korea, as well as featuring on their 2009 release Take Off.

Since moving to Melbourne in May 2009 she has performed as a freelance cellist in solo, chamber ensemble and orchestral capacities with Orchestra Victoria, Arcko Symphonic Project, 3 Shades Black, Click Clack Project, Nat Bartsch, Melbourne Ring Orchestra, Resonant Bodies Melbourne and Australian Art Orchestra. Charlotte works as a session and live musician for various albums, film scores, and theatre projects.



Michael Fortescue

Michael Fortescue played with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra from 1976 to 2013. He studied double bass in Canberra, in Hobart with Jan Sedivka, and in Paris where he gained performance and teaching diplomas from the François Rabbath Institute, Conservatoire Lili et Nadia Boulanger.

Michael performs a wide range of solo and small ensemble music in many music styles, particularly free improvisation and text-based performance.

He has taught at the Tasmanian Conservatorium and has a strong commitment to community arts. He's been state president and national vice president of the Musicians Union of Australia as well as a member of the Music Board of the Australia Council, the Tasmanian Arts Advisory Board and the boards of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Youth Orchestra and KickStart Arts. He is musical director of Second Echo Ensemble, an all-abilities performance group.

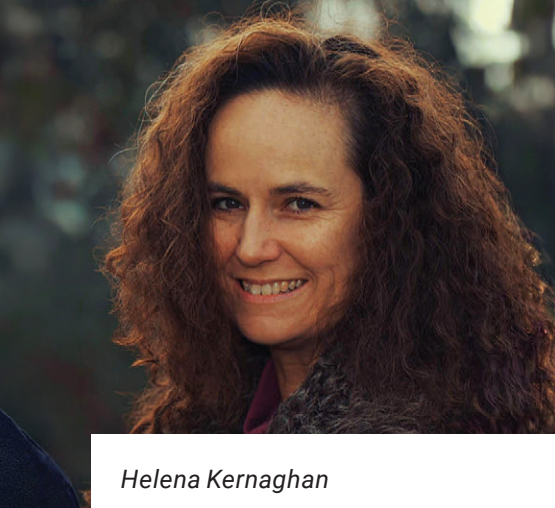


Steve Falk

Steve Falk's musical journey has taken him across continents, performing alongside leading contemporary improvisers in Australia and Japan.

He has been commissioned by Museums Victoria, the Light in Winter Festival, and for the unveiling of Inflatable Refugee, a poignant representation of the global refugee crisis. in 2011 he recorded Gary Wain's Marimba Concerto No.2 and Bryony Marks's score for the film *Magic Beach* in 2024. He has performed with the major Australian Symphony Orchestras, Orchestra Victoria, and Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa in Japan.

Steve attended the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Victorian College of The Arts, Queensland Conservatorium of Music, and Toho Gakuen College of Music in Tokyo. He is currently a faculty member at The University of Melbourne.



Helena Kernaghan

Helena graduated with a Master of Music Performance from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2005 and established herself as an accomplished chamber musician, accompanist and soloist. Highlights include studying and performing in Singapore and the UK with the Abraxas Trio, performing as soloist in Messiaen's *Oiseaux exotiques* at Government House Melbourne, recording Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps* for two pianos with Will Poskitt and soloist in Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*.

Since 2006 Helena has lived in Albury, teaching and performing. A founding member of Orpheus Trio and founding Artistic Director of the Albury Chamber Music Festival, he is now artistic director of Murray River Fine Music. In recent times she has collaborated with Dutch thereminist Thorwald Jørgensen, American pianist Donna Coleman, Australian singers Merlyn Quaife AM, Ayşe Göknur Shanal and Shanul Sharma, Ukrainian-Australian violinist Markiyano Melnychenko and violinist Simon Oswell. She has recently formed Duo Gaku 楽 with Kaori Sparks and they premiered Gordon Kerry's Violin Sonata No.2 in 2025.



Nigel Westlake

Nigel Westlake began composing in 1980 and was appointed composer in residence for ABC Radio in 1984. His film credits include *Babe*, *Miss Potter*, *Children of the Revolution*, *The Nugget* and the IMAX films *Antarctica*, *Solarmax*, *The Edge* and *Imagine*.

He writes for orchestras, ensembles and soloists and has received many awards, including the Gold Medal for Best Original Music at the New York International Radio Festival. He has won the Paul Lowin Orchestral prize for *Missa Solis – Requiem for Eli* and in 2019 for *Spirit of the Wild – Concerto for oboe and orchestra*.

He has conducted all the major symphony orchestras in Australia, as well as the New York Philharmonic and the RTÉ Symphony.

He holds an honorary doctorate from the University of NSW and received the HC Coombs Creative Arts Fellowship at the Australian National University in 2004.

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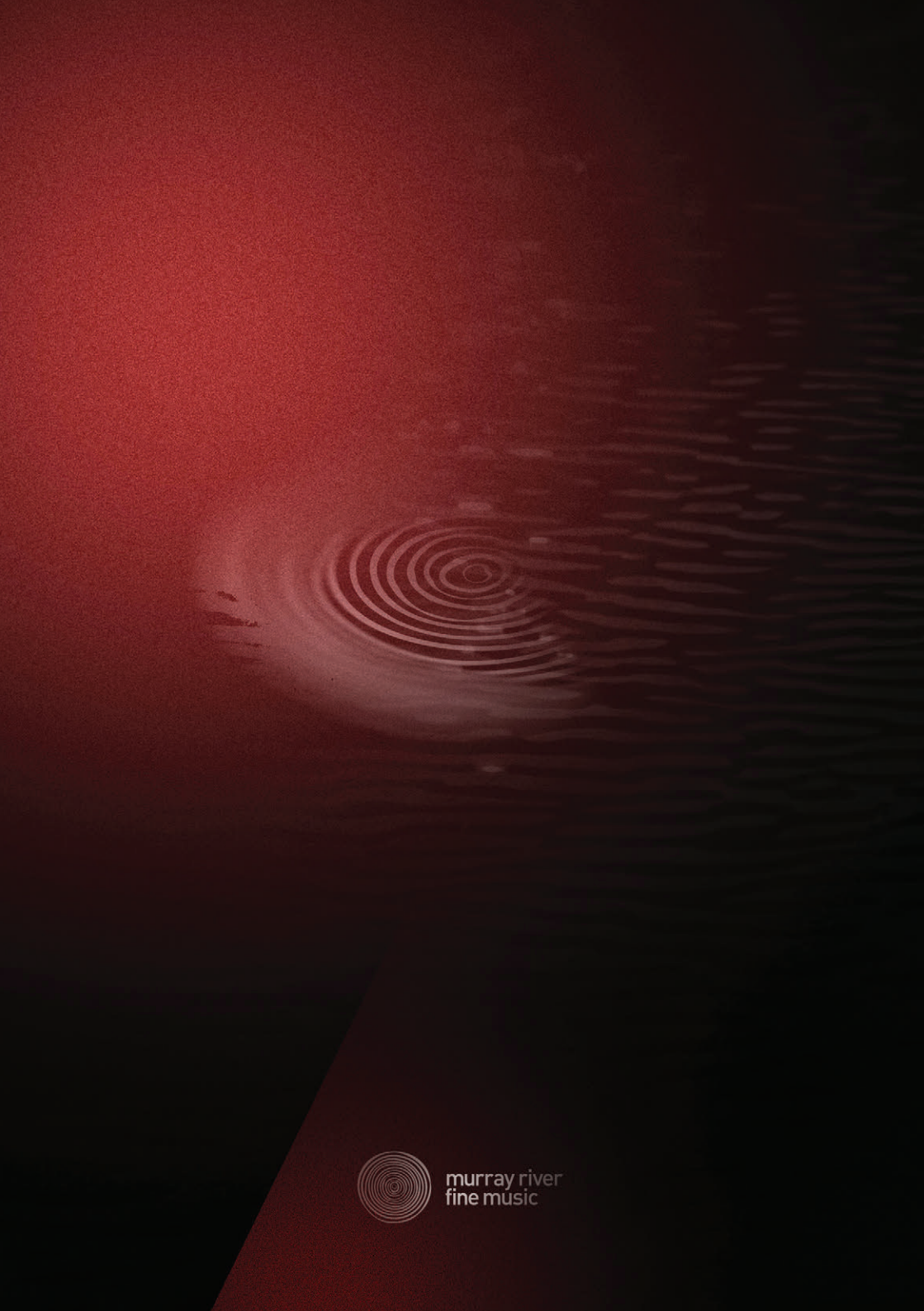
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