



Joy

Farrenc and Beethoven

7:30pm | Tuesday | 25 September 2018  
City Recital Hall



# What's On



## Vocalise: Rachmaninoff and Poulenc

Special Guest: Lee Abrahmsen, soprano

**Poulenc** Selected Chansons, Banalités and Poemes

**Rachmaninoff** Selections from 14 Romances, Op.34

**Munro** Letter to a Friend [Australian Premiere]

### Master Series

2:30pm | Sun | 21 Oct

Utzon Room, Sydney

Opera House

[sydneyoperahouse.com](http://sydneyoperahouse.com)

02 9250 7777



## Momentum: Schubert and Mendelssohn

**Bruce** "Gumboots" for Clarinet and String Quartet [Australian Premiere]

**Schubert** String Quintet in C major

**Mendelssohn** String Quintet No. 2 in B flat major

### Virtuoso Series

7:30pm | Tue | 13 Nov

City Recital Hall

[cityrecitalhall.com](http://cityrecitalhall.com)

02 8256 2222



## Maria Raspopova in Recital

**Prokofiev** Vision Fugitives, Op.22

**Debussy** Claire de Lune

**Chopin** Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52

**Satie** Trois Gymnopédies

**Liszt** Grandes études de Paganini No.3 in G sharp minor, "La campanella"

**Rachmaninoff** Etudes-Tableaux Op.33 No.8

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# Joy

## Farrenc and Beethoven

**Tuesday 25 September 2018**

7:30pm

City Recital Hall

Presented as part of the

2018 Virtuoso Series

**Franz Schubert**

Notturmo in E flat major, Op. 148

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

Violin Sonata No.5 in F major, Op. 24, "Spring"

Interval

**Louise Farrenc**

Nonet in E flat Major, Op. 38

**Elena Kats-Chernin**

Russian Rag (arrangement by the composer  
for Omega Ensemble)

The concert will last approximately 105 minutes, including a  
20 minute interval.



Please ensure your mobile devices are turned to  
silent and switched off for the full duration of this  
performance.



Please note that unauthorised recording or  
photography of this performance is not permitted.

Omega Ensemble reserves the right to alter  
scheduled artists and programs as necessary.

# About the music

## Introduction

Imagine there's no Schubert. Unthinkable to us, but it could easily have been the reality. The reputation of an obscure schoolteacher whose works were most often performed in friends' salons, whose published works were almost entirely restricted to songs and shorter piano pieces, whose occasional forays into the theatre were unsuccessful, could easily have disappeared soon after his shockingly early death. No such fate could have befallen Beethoven for the simple reason that a huge range of his work had been published in his lifetime, and that while the Viennese public preferred to listen to Rossini operas, they still regarded Beethoven as the greatest composer around. Beethoven's powerful innovations in the fields of symphony, string quartet and solo sonata happened very much in the public eye, unlike Schubert's.

In the event, it was only a decade or so after Schubert's death that, having been contacted by the late composer's brother Ferdinand, Robert Schumann helped bring Schubert's orchestral works to public awareness with the help of Mendelssohn. Still, the world knew nothing of the '*Unfinished*' *Symphony*, arguably his greatest hit, or many of the great works of chamber music until 1865. The lovely *Notturmo* fared a little better, appearing in print only 20 years after composition. But the story of the reception of Schubert's music after his death is a salutary

reminder of the fragile nature of fame, even for unarguably great artists.

Schubert's fall into obscurity was comparatively short-lived; Louise Farrenc was not so lucky. Born into a distinguished family of painters and sculptors (male and female), she was the only female professor appointed at the Paris Conservatoire in the 19th century. Farrenc was clearly a wonderful pianist and a composer of great gifts. Ironically, the major publishing venture, *Le trésor des pianistes*, that she and her husband embarked on, was to bring together music from the Baroque and classical periods, as well as contemporary works, and make it available to her contemporaries. That her husband also published her music has meant, at least, that printed scores existed, but her disappearance, sadly, seems to be the result of simple discrimination: though a great pianist she was only able to teach female students, and, it seems, probably not the best of those. She is said to have had composition students but none – and we can assume they were pretty much all male – had ever admitted having been taught by a woman. The inevitable comparison with another brilliant Frenchwoman, Nadia Boulanger, one of the greatest and most influential teachers of the 20th century, is telling. And yet Farrenc's work stands up well in comparison to that of her contemporaries. Her *Nonet*, like much of, say, Mendelssohn's or Schumann's work, seems to ask how one proceeds writing in classical forms in the wake of Beethoven, who even in 'approachable'

works like the 'Spring' Sonata pushed the boundaries of classicism in ways unimagined before. It is a question that Farrenc answers decisively.

One has only to dip into a book like *Women of Note*, by Rosalind Appleby, to see how difficult it has been at various times for woman composers in this country. Strongly individual voices, like that of Margaret Sutherland, were met with bafflement or hostility; others, like Peggy Glanville-Hicks merely stayed away, building careers elsewhere. On the other hand, Australia, considering itself isolated in the early and mid-20th century, saw the emergence of a number of women composers writing, but by means exclusively, music for educative purposes. While it has never been easy for women composers here, it has been easier than in some other countries. Generations of students were familiar with the work of Dulcie Holland, Miriam Hyde, Esther Rofe or Mirrie Hill; regular ABC listeners would have known Sutherland's tone poem *The Haunted Hills*. And we can be proud that a significant number of Australian composers with truly international profiles are women, including, of course, the much-loved Elena Kats-Chernin represented on this program by one of her greatest hits, *Russian Rag*. Parity is still a long way off, of course, but a concert such as this, with a program of great and contrasting works by men and women is an occasion of great joy.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

## Notturmo in E flat major, D. 897

The origin of Schubert's only stand-alone movement for piano trio is still something of a mystery. It is generally thought to have been written in late 1826 or 1827, and perhaps as a slow movement for the *Trio in B flat major, D. 898*. It is, after all in E flat, the same key as the Trio's *Andante*, and has the A-B-A form that

Schubert preferred in his slow movements. Such a date would make it barely two years before his untimely death, at a time when he was enjoying a respite from the ravages of the syphilis which would eventually kill him. The previous year had brought a number of setbacks; he failed to secure an expected appointment as a court musician, and his final operatic venture came to grief on the censor's desk. March 1827 saw the death of Beethoven, an event that touched Schubert deeply.

The A section of the *Notturmo* is dominated by a melancholy, lyrical tune in 4/4 given out first by the strings in parallel motion contrasts. The contrasting B section, with which the first material alternates is in 3/4 and has a theme which, legend has it, Schubert overheard being sung by a group of workers in the spa town of Gmunden. In any event, the title *Notturmo* is not Schubert's but was added by the publisher Diabelli in 1845, well after the composer's death.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

## Sonata for Piano and Violin in F major, Op.24, 'Spring'

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio molto espressivo
- III. Scherzo: allegro molto
- IV. Rondo. Allegro ma non troppo

The first three years of the 19th century were amazingly productive for Beethoven, despite – or perhaps because of – the deep emotional turmoil unleashed by the realisation that his deafness was permanent and incurable. As he wrote in the 1802 document known now as the *Heiligenstadt Testament* Beethoven considered suicide, 'but my art held me back'. Resolving to take fate by the throat, he plunged into a period of sustained creativity.

As so often in Beethoven, the F major Violin Sonata is one of a pair of works, like the Quartets

Op.74 and 95, or the odd and even numbered symphonies, that contrast extreme expansiveness with extreme compression. Its immediate predecessor, the *Sonata in A minor, Op.23*, is a much shorter, more concentrated work. The larger scale and opulent sound of this F major sonata account for its nickname (not conferred by the composer).

The expansiveness of the piece is heard in the opening theme from the violin, with its motif of long notes that dissolve into rapid semiquavers. The tune is so ornate that Beethoven reverses the conventional idea of the 'contrasting lyrical second theme': the subject here consists of long notes in the violin, that eventually produce a chirping motif, and full emphatic patterns of chords from the piano.

The pattern of long notes followed by a flourish continues in the *Adagio*, where it is given by the piano over a hypnotic bass, while the violin, at first, offers short isolated motifs. Beethoven had, after all, inherited the 18th century 'accompanied sonata' where the melody instrument is often used merely for reinforcement of the piano's right-hand material. Of course, here the material becomes ever more elaborate, and the instruments ever more intertwined.

In another radical departure from the 18th century model, Beethoven inserts a *Scherzo* as the third movement. Its main material is terse, to say the least, with a simple rhythmic staccato pattern. In contrast, the central Trio section fills in the gaps with a constant stream of scales.

Conventionally enough, the last movement is a Rondo, with a main theme, sounded first by the piano and then by the violin, which has the ring of a Viennese popular song. The interspersed episodes contrast with it, but Beethoven being Beethoven, the main material is varied and developed on each appearance before a brilliant coda brings together motifs from earlier parts of

the movement.

Louise Farrenc (1804–1875)

## **Nonet for Strings and Winds in E flat major, Op.38**

- I. Adagio – allegro
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Scherzo: vivace
- IV. Adagio – allegro

It is a measure of the esteem in which Louise Farrenc was held that, when her *Nonet* premiered in 1850, the violin part was taken by the young superstar Joseph Joachim. Born Louise Dumont in 1804 she was a contemporary of Chopin, Mendelssohn and Schumann, and the latter wrote glowingly of her abilities as a composer in 1836. Her compatriot, Berlioz, also praised her, noting her mastery of orchestration (he spoiled the compliment somewhat by adding that this was 'rare in a woman'.)

As a woman, she was unable formally to study composition, but did so privately with Anton Reicha, a friend and colleague of Haydn and more particularly Beethoven, and two of her piano teachers, Johann Nepomuk Hummel and Ignaz Moscheles were also esteemed composers. At 17 she married Aristide Farrenc, who started life as a flautist and composer but moved into music publishing, in which field he had great success. Together the Farrences began publishing *Le trésor des pianistes*, an important historical anthology of keyboard music. Aristide died after eight volumes were completed, and Louise singlehandedly brought out the remaining 15.

Louise Farrenc was appointed to a professorship at the Paris Conservatoire in 1842, teaching piano. Much of her output is keyboard music, but it was at the Conservatoire that some of her ensemble and orchestral work was premiered, among those works her excellent *Third Symphony*, and

the *Nonet*. Her chamber music was held in high regard, winning her the *Académie des Beaux-Arts' Prix Chartier* on two occasions. She withdrew from concert life on the untimely death of her daughter Victorine (herself a brilliant musician) in 1859, and seemingly never composed again.

Through her association with Reicha, Farrenc was exposed to the music of Viennese Classicism – which was by no means standard fare in Paris in the early 19th century. A work like the *Nonet* displays a deep understanding of classical norms. The first movement opens with a slow introduction in timbres that suggest Mozart, before breaking into a sustained and substantial allegro movement. The second movement is a set of four variations and coda on an elegant theme, in which Farrenc deftly exploits the idiomatic character of her instruments in solo and duo writing. The scherzo contrasts Mendelssohnian lightness with rollicking 'hunting' motifs, and a pastoral trio section. The finale, too, begins with a solemn slow introduction that leads, via a short oboe solo and horn motif, to a genial and brilliantly coloured *Allegro*.

Elena Kats-Chernin (1957- )

## Russian Rag

Born in Tashkent, Elena Kats-Chernin studied music in Moscow, Sydney and Hanover. She has created works across nearly every genre, from rags to operas and works for robotic sound machines to a full scale choral symphony. Her music featured at the opening ceremonies of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games and the 2003 Rugby World Cup. She has received several awards including Sounds Australian, Helpmann, Limelight, Sydney Theatre Award and Sidney Myer Arts Award. She has composed scores for three full-length silent films for ZDF/arte TV channel in Germany; adapted three Monteverdi

operas (premiered September 2012), and wrote a children's opera *Schneewittchen und die 77 Zwerge* (*Snow-White and the Seventy Seven Dwarves*) for Komische Oper Berlin (premiered in 2015).

The score of the original version of *Russian Rag* bears the inscription '12 pm, 11. Sept. 1996, Peggy Glanville-Hicks House' – the Paddington home bequeathed by Peggy Glanville-Hicks as a refuge for composers. Kats-Chernin had written a number of ragtime pieces at the request of ABC producer Ralph Lane, who was particularly taken with the original version of this one, though he suggested certain changes which the composer embraced. Kats-Chernin, as Richard Toop has noted, uses composing ragtime as a way of avoiding composer's block, and as she herself has written: 'I was inspired by William Bolcom's rags to write something slightly nostalgic and with wistful-sounding harmonies. It is in a rondo form, with an introduction and a small coda.' The piece was used as Max's theme in the 2009 claymation *Mary and Max* by Oscar-winning animator-director, Adam Elliot.

It has been arranged several times, including this arrangement for Omega Ensemble.

Notes by Gordon Kerry, 2018.  
Russian Rag after notes by Richard Toop  
and Elena Kats-Chernin

# Musicians

## Veronique Serret, Violin

**Orchestras** Australian Chamber Orchestra, Darwin Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra

**Ensembles** Ensemble Offspring, Sydney Dance Company, Topology, Joanna Newsom Band, Omega Ensemble **Premieres** Boulez Anthemes

**Selected recordings** Bach Partita No.2 in D minor (debut album)

## Neil Thompson, Viola

**Orchestras** Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. **Ensembles** The Nano Symphony, Caro String Quartet, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Skyline String Quartet, Omega Ensemble. **Premieres** Anthony Pateras, 'Crystalline' String Quartet. **Selected**

**Recordings** Omega Ensemble: Munro-Mozart-Palmer (ABC classics), Hive (Kammerklang). **Awards/Study** BMus (Honours), Elder Conservatorium, Adelaide, ANAM (Full Scholarship), ACO emerging artist, SSO fellowship

## Paul Stender, Cello

**Orchestras** Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra. **Ensembles** Australian Chamber Orchestra, ACO Collective, Omega Ensemble. **Selected Recordings** Omega Ensemble: Munro-Mozart-Palmer (ABC classics)

## Alex Henery, Double Bass

**Orchestras** Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (Co-Principal double bass), London Philharmonic Orchestra (Co-Principal double bass), London Symphony Orchestra (Guest Principal double bass), Sydney Symphony Orchestra (Principal double bass), Shanghai Symphony (soloist), Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (soloist). **Ensembles** Omega Ensemble **Study** Sydney Conservatorium of Music

## Sally Walker, Flute

**Orchestras** Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kammerakademie Potsdam, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Australian Chamber Orchestra.

**Ensembles** Omega Ensemble, Shanghai String Quartet, Acacia String Quartet, Halcyon. **Premieres** Elena Kats-Chernin: Night and Now Flute Concerto, Andrew Ford: Once Upon a Time there were Three Brothers..., Coco Nelegatti: Tres Temas Argentinas. **Selected Recordings** French Miniatures (Chartreuse), Waves II (Halcyon), ACO: Mozart's Last Symphonies (ABC Classics). **Awards/Study** 2nd Prize Friedrich Kuhlau International Flute Competition, BMus (Sydney), Artist Diploma (Hanover), Masters (Munich). **Masterclasses** Royal Swedish Academy of Music, Royal Irish Academy of Music, Instituto Universitario Patagónico de las Artes, Argentina, Anton Bruckner Private University, Austria, Australian National Academy of Music

## Nicola Bell, Oboe

**Orchestras** Opera Australia Orchestra, Western Australia Symphony Orchestra, Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, Finnish National Opera, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Norrköpping and Gävle Symphony Orchestras, Tampere Philharmonic, Finnish Radio Orchestras, Georgian Sinfonietta, Georgian National Philharmonic, Munich Symphony Orchestra, Braunschweig Theatre Orchestra, WDR Funkhaus Orchestra.

**Ensembles** New Theatre Ensemble, Munich Winds, Georgian Chamber Orchestra Ingolstadt, Württemberg Chamber Philharmonic Heidenheim. **Awards/Study** BMus Hons I (Sydney Conservatorium of Music), MMus (Munich School of Music and Theatre), Ian Potter Cultural Trust, Adlerbertska Stipendium

## David Rowden, Clarinet

**Orchestras** Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, The Queensland Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. **Ensembles** Omega Ensemble, Australia Ensemble, Sydney Soloists. **Premieres** George Palmer: Clarinet Concerto, Ian Munro: Clarinet Quintet. **Selected Recordings** Omega Ensemble: Mozart—Munro—Palmer (ABC Classics), Play School 50th Anniversary Special (ABC3). **Awards/Study** BMus (London), LRAM, Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM)



## **Todd Gibson–Cornish, Bassoon**

**Orchestras** Sydney Symphony Orchestra (Principal Bassoon), Philharmonia Orchestra London, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

**Ensembles** Sydney Soloists, Omega Ensemble **Premieres** Christopher Rouse Bassoon Concerto (Sydney Symphony 2019). **Selected Recordings** Sydney Symphony Orchestra – Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring (ABC Classics). **Awards/Study** Royal College of Music London, BMus(Hons) first class, awarded the Tagore Gold Medal presented by HRH The Prince of Wales.

## **Michael Dixon, Horn**

**Orchestras** Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra, Australian Opera &

Ballet Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Canberra Symphony Orchestra. **Ensembles** Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, LOCANA, Omega Ensemble **Selected Recordings** Omega Ensemble: Mozart—Munro—Palmer (ABC Classics) **Awards** MMus (Musicology), MPhil (Composition), DCA

## **Clemens Leske, Piano**

**Orchestras** London Philharmonic Orchestra, Moscow Virtuosi, Guangzhou (Pearl River) Philharmonic, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Australian Youth Orchestra, Australian Doctors' Orchestra, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Queensland, West Australian and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras. **Ensembles** Ensemble Offspring, Halcyon, Sydney Soloists, Moorambilla Voices, TrioKroma. **Premieres** Works of Australian composers Nicholas Vines,

Graham Hair, Carl Vine, Rosalind Page, Larry Sitsky, Carl Panvino and Cyrus Meurant; works of Cuban composer Tania León. **Selected Recordings** "Powerhouse" : Soloist, Graeme Koehne Capriccio for Piano & Strings (ABC Classics), "Indigena" : The Music of Tania León (CRI, New York), Cool Black: Chamber Works by Rosalind Page, Halcyon (Move Records), Mao's Last Dancer OST. **Awards/Study** Juilliard School, NYC, BMus. Hons., Hattori Foundation (London), Australia Council, Marten Bequest, Queen Elizabeth II Trust, Churchill Fellowship, David Paul Landa Scholarship, ABC Young Performer of the Year.

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# Omega Ensemble

## The Ensemble

Alexandra Osborne, violin  
Veronique Serret, violin  
Catalin Ungureanu, violin  
Airena Nakamura, violin  
Neil Thompson, viola  
David Wicks, viola  
Paul Stender, cello  
Howard Penny, cello †  
Alex Henery, double bass  
Sally Walker, flute  
David Rowden, clarinet  
Lloyd Van't Hoff, clarinet †  
Nicola Bell, oboe  
Celia Craig, oboe  
Josh Oates, oboe  
Todd Gibson-Cornish, bassoon  
Michael Dixon, horn  
Clemens Leske, piano  
Maria Raspopova, piano  
Samuel Hogarth, piano †  
Lee Abrahmsen, soprano †

† = Guest Artist

Founded in 2005, Omega Ensemble is one of Australia's finest chamber groups. With a dedication to presenting the finest Australian musicians, as well as engaging international guest artists, Omega presents outstanding musicians in an intimate and stimulating chamber setting. Its mission is to showcase outstanding artists who captivate and excite audiences through a revelatory program of chamber music.

Ranging from large chamber orchestras to duos, trios and quartets Omega performs a diverse range of repertoire; whether it is an iconic gem, a neglected beauty or a world premiere. The passion and commitment to the highest level of craft is still deployed.

To date, Omega has commissioned and performed over twenty new works from notable Australian and International composers, including Daniel Rojas, Mark Isaacs, Cyrus Meurant, George Palmer, Elena Kats-Chernin, Anne Boyd, Matthew Hindson, Christopher Gordon, John Peterson, Margery Smith, Stuart Greenbaum, Paul Stanhope, Ben Hoadley and Andrew Ford.

As well as performing premiere works, Omega also endeavours to uncover works that have been lost to time. Omega's ability to find these pieces and bring them to life spells out a deep love and passion not only for well-known chamber music, but also for exploring gems that delight, entertain and enrich their audiences.

In addition to concert performances, Omega also maintains a growing digital concert hall in which audiences can relive the magic of a live performance. Beyond these videos, Omega Ensemble's performances are now included as part of Qantas's inflight entertainment.

In addition to performances in Sydney the Ensemble regularly tours to country towns including Newcastle, Orange and Bathurst. The Ensemble toured to China for the first time in November 2017 performing and giving masterclasses at the Beijing Central Conservatory, Chang Chun's JiLin College of Arts and Dalian University. In March this year, the Ensemble returned to China to perform in the Sanya International Festival of Arts in Haitang Bay.

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## Acknowledgment of Country

Omega Ensemble acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of the land on which we perform. We pay respect to the Elders both past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

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## Program Design: Viqtor Studio, [viqtor.com.au](https://viqtor.com.au)

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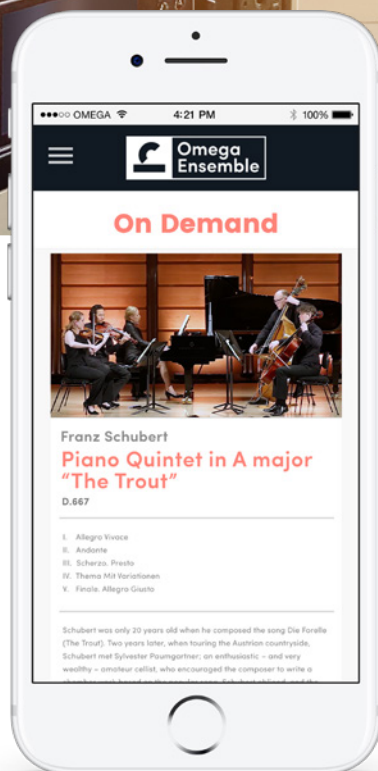


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