



# Love

Weber and Franck

7:30pm | Wednesday | 18 July 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** A Forest of Birds [Australian Premiere]

## Master Series

2:30pm | Sun | 21 Oct

Utzon Room, Sydney

Opera House

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

02 9250 7777



## Joy: Farrenc and Beethoven

**Schubert** Notturmo in E flat major

**Beethoven** Violin Sonata No.5 in F major

**Farrenc** Nonet in E flat Major

**Kats-Chernin** Russian Rag (Nonet arrangement)

## Virtuoso Series

7:30pm | Tue | 25 Sep

City Recital Hall

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

02 8256 2222



## 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: From Bach to Satie

**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

**J.S. Bach** Partita in C minor, BWV 826

## Master Series

2:30pm | Sun | 2 Dec

Utzon Room, Sydney

Opera House

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

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# Love

## Weber and Franck

**Wednesday 18 July 2018**

7:30pm

City Recital Hall

Presented as part of the  
2018 Virtuoso Series

**César Franck**

Sonata for Violin and Piano in A major

**Gerard Brophy**

We Two Boys Together Clinging (2017)

Interval

**Edward Elgar**

Romance for Bassoon and Strings  
in D minor, Op. 62 (arr. Trevor Cramer)

**Carl Maria von Weber**

Quintet for Clarinet and Strings  
in B flat Major, Op. 34

The concert will last approximately 106 minutes, including a  
20 minute interval.

Approximate work durations (minutes):

35 – 15 – Interval – 6 – 30



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performance.



Please note that unauthorised recording or  
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Omega Ensemble reserves the right to alter  
scheduled artists and programs as necessary.



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# About the music

César Franck (1822-1890)

## Sonata for Violin and Piano in A major

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Allegro
- III. Recitativo – Fantasia
- IV. Allegro poco mosso

Franck wrote his *Violin Sonata* in 1886 as a wedding present for the great Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe.

The first movement is a lilting allegretto in 9/8, whose main theme consists of a chain of thirds announced by the violin after a set of introductory piano chords. It is lyrical and wistful, but A major, the tonic key of the movement (and the work) is not sounded until the eighth bar, then only on a weak beat, and immediately 'cancelled out' by chromatic notes. The first climax – on piano with a melody in octaves – is in E major; only on its second statement near the end is it emphatically, but briefly, in the tonic A.

In D minor, the second movement is the sonata-allegro of the work, with piano figurations that resemble Liszt at his most Byronic, and a surging, tightly chromatic melody passed from the piano to the violin's lowest register. The more serene second theme, played by the violin over slow-moving chords on the piano, is derived from the first movement's main theme – an example of Franck's principle of 'cyclical form', developed from Liszt's idea of thematic transformation. The

development section, in contrast to the turbulence of the movement's opening, is reflective and fragmentary before the return and intensification of the allegro material.

The third movement, designated Recitativo-Fantasia, has one of Franck's most innovative formal designs. Highly chromatic and gestural at first, this movement forms the dramatic turning point of the piece. It begins with chords in the piano and a violin melody, whose rising thirds are a transformation of the opening of the first movement; the violin's almost-cadenza contains motifs from the second movement. In addition to another version of the chain-of-thirds idea, the Fantasia section introduces two new themes, one based on a falling three-note figure and another, on violin, of long notes against piano triplets, which will feature in the finale.

Only in the finale are we presented with diatonic melody in an unequivocal A major. This folk-like tune is a call and response for the two instruments, like two people in absolute accord. After the yearning first movement, the turbulent second, and the occasionally disoriented form of the third, the fourth offers simple joy. There are frequent markings like *cantabile* (singing) and *dolcissimo* (most sweetly), and it may not be fanciful to hear wedding bells evoked by the scale-passages in octaves towards the end.

Gerard Brophy

## We Two Boys Together Clinging (2017)

Commissioned by Mark Wakely in loving memory of Steven Alward.

Gerard Brophy's *We Two Boys Together Clinging* uses Walt Whitman's poem from *Leaves of Grass* as a springboard to celebrate the relationship of the men who commissioned it, Steven Alward, who sadly recently died and Mark Wakely.

We two boys together clinging,  
One the other never leaving,  
Up and down the roads going, North and  
South excursions making,  
Power enjoying, elbows stretching, fingers  
clutching,  
Arm'd and fearless, eating, drinking,  
sleeping, loving.

No law less than ourselves owning, sailing,  
soldiering, thieving, threatening,  
Misers, menials, priests alarming, air  
breathing, water drinking, on the turf or the  
sea-beach dancing,  
Cities wrenching, ease scorning, statutes  
mocking, feebleness chasing,  
Fulfilling our foray.

Whitman's poem has been variously interpreted as a celebration of same-sex love on the one hand, and as a depiction of Civil War camaraderie on the other. But this latter interpretation lacks plausibility, given that the poem was included in the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855, at least five years before Union-Confederacy hostilities erupted. It's more likely that Whitman was drawing a picture of male bonding as he himself longed to experience it, frankly welcoming all the affectionate and erotic currents such bonding might entail.

Brophy initially considered setting the poem for tenor, but decided instead to use it as the

springboard for an instrumental piece: "The eclectic yet highly attractive combination of instruments facilitates a rich and evocative response to the commissioners' wishes for the piece to be a celebration of their relationship. The incorporation of the two clarinets and piano were at their express request." The piece features intricate imitation across all the parts, but the two clarinets are especially close, dovetailing and in each other's pockets throughout until the final bars, when only one remains.

This new work was commissioned by Mark Wakely and Steven Alward with support from Four Winds donors and Creative Partnerships Australia, as part of the recent 'Compose the Future with James Crabb campaign'. The Co-Artistic directors of the Omega Ensemble performed the premiere of the work at Four Winds Festival on Friday 30th March 2018 alongside the Australian National Academy of Music strings and clarinetist Lloyd Van't Hoff.

This evening's performance by the Omega Ensemble is the Sydney premiere of the work and is dedicated to the life of Steven Alward.

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

## Romance in D minor for bassoon and piano, Op.62

The son of an organist, piano tuner and owner of a music shop, Elgar was surrounded by music from an early age, though in many respects was self-taught. He played a variety of instruments – organ and piano thanks for his father, and violin, which he came to do professionally as well as teaching the instrument in his native Worcester. He taught himself the trombone, though his friend Dora Penny (later immortalised as 'Dorabella' in the 'Enigma' Variations) recounts an occasion at Elgar's home when his playing was so bad that she was forced to leave the room until her

gales of laughter subsided. With the bassoon he was much more successful, mastering the instrument well enough to perform with a local ad hoc wind quintet, for which he wrote several works, in the late 1870s. Not surprisingly, then, the short Romance for bassoon shows a composer thoroughly at home with the instrument's somewhat underrated lyrical qualities.

Originally scored for bassoon and orchestra, the piece's title reflects Elgar's conception of it as a simple character piece derived ultimately from song. The bassoon plays more or less constantly throughout, beginning, after a short introduction, with melody of long, graceful falling phrases that are lightly punctuated by the piano. The central section provides gentle contrast, a new melody sounded in part by the piano with accompanying figurations from bassoon, before a full-throated return to the original tune. After this briefly climactic section the music gradually winds down to an introspective silence.

The piece was composed in 1910, (mostly, in fact on 11 January of that year) as Elgar was completing his Violin Concerto (a work for another instrument he knew intimately). As he did on several occasions, Elgar intimated that the concerto had great personal significance, though declined to spell out what that might be. By contrast, the Romance was dedicated to Edwin James, principal bassoon (and one of the founders of) the London Symphony Orchestra, who performed it under Elgar's baton in Hereford the following year, and whose relationship with Elgar was only ever professional. It has been suggested though that the plangent character of the work may stem from Elgar's sadness at the recent deaths of two other friends, also depicted in the 'Enigma' Variations: the publisher A E Jaeger, whom Elgar dubbed 'Nimrod', and Basil Nevison (the BGN of variation 12).

Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826)

## Clarinet Quintet in B flat major, Op. 34, J182

- I. Allegro
- II. Fantasia: Adagio ma non troppo
- III. Menuetto: Capriccio presto
- IV. Rondo: Allegro giocoso

In 1811 the 25-year old Weber made an extensive tour of various German cities, giving concerts and networking. By March he was in Munich where one of his first concerts included a Concertino for the court clarinetist Heinrich Baermann (or Barmann). It would be prove to be one of the more important collaborations of Weber's career: he was immediately commissioned to compose two concertos for clarinet, and, in one of his relatively rare forays into chamber music, he began work on this Clarinet Quintet at around the same time.

The clarinet was still a relative newcomer when Mozart had written his great concerto and quintet some twenty years earlier; nevertheless, Weber's pieces are among its 'founding documents', as he worked extensively with Baermann to ensure that they were tailored to the technical capabilities of the instrument. Moreover, the clarinet's agility, large compass and range of colour suited the emerging language of German Romanticism to which Weber contributed so much.

The overall design of the quintet conforms to classical models: it is in four movements, beginning with an Allegro that explores strikingly contrasting material. The opening is deliberately ambiguous in mood, before the soloist takes things in hand with a sudden gesture. The movement is full of virtuosic feats, with the rapid arpeggios and wide leaps characteristic of Weber and so idiomatic to the instrument. The Fantasia slow movement reminds us of Weber's skill as an opera composer, with long cantabile lines and sudden shifts in register (not unlike some of Mozart's writing for the soprano voice) that end



Weber Clarinet Quintet, Holograph manuscript, 1812–15

in a passionate, though somehow unresolved manner.

The third movement's marking, *Capriccio presto*, makes it immediately clear that this is no stately *menuetto*, but a pyrotechnic display of that liquid agility of which the clarinet is uniquely capable – with a suitably contrasting Trio section at the centre. Again, following the classical models, Weber concludes with a Rondo movement in which the clarinet is called upon to demonstrate a full range of technical prowess; reflecting again his operatic bent, Weber effectively treats this

movement, as Roger Covell has noted, as a kind of *cabaletta*.

Weber only completed the Quintet in 1815 on a return visit to Munich while on leave from his conducting position at the opera in Prague. It was a momentous time: 1815 saw the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, and the peace it ushered in saw Weber's career burgeon.

Weber, Franck and Elgar notes by Gordon Kerry, 2018.  
 Brophy notes by the composer, 2018.



# Musicians

## Alexandra Osborne, Violin

**Orchestras** The National Symphony Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia, Eclipse Chamber Orchestra. **Ensembles** Omega Ensemble, Jackson Hole Chamber Music, Smithsonian 21st Century Consort, The Last Stand Quartet, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center Chamber Players, Gourmet Symphony. **Premieres** Michael Giacchino: Jurassic World in Concert, Mason Bates: Passage, Anne Dudley: The Man with the Violin, Red Bull Artsechro. **Selected Recordings** Christoff Eschenbach/National Symphony: Remembering JFK (Ondine), Martin Schlumpf: Summer Circle (Navona Records). **Awards/Study** The Juilliard School (Master of Music), The Curtis Institute of Music (Bachelor of Music), The Australian National Academy of Music, Michael Hill International Violin Competition, Symphony Australia Young Performers Award, Gisborne International Music Competition.

## Sun Yi, Violin

**Orchestras** Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Australian Opera & Ballet Orchestra, Tasmania Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, Asian Philharmonic Orchestra. **Ensembles** Shanghai String Quartet, Orient String Quartet, Whiteley Trio, Sydney Symphony String Quartet. **Selected Recordings** Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E minor, Bruch Scottish Fantasy, The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto, Nigel Westlake Compassion. **Awards/Study** 1st prize in the China National Violin Competition, Special prize in the 3rd Borciani International String Quartet Competition in Italy.

## 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, Cello

**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

## 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)

## Lloyd Van't Hoff, Clarinet

**Orchestras** Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, Opera Australia Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. **Ensembles** Arcadia Winds, Australian String Quartet, Goldner String Quartet, Australian Octet, Southern Cross Soloists, Eighth Blackbird, Bang on a Can Allstars, Omega Ensemble. **Selected Recordings** Arcadia Winds self-titled EP (ABC Classics), Conversations with Ghosts (ABC Classics). **Awards/Study** ABC Symphony Australia Young Performer of the Year 2015 (winner), Triffitt Prize (2015), ARIA Award for Best Original Soundtrack (Conversations with Ghosts, ABC Classics), Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University (B.Mus Hons.), Australian National Academy of Music.

## Ben Hoadley, Bassoon

**Orchestras** Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Pops Orchestra, Halle Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. **Ensembles** Omega Ensemble, Donizetti Trio,



Auckland Chamber Orchestra.

**Premieres** Alex Taylor: Bassoon

Concerto. **Selected Recordings**

Southern Invention: Bassoon Music from Australia and New Zealand

(Atoll), Arapatiki: Bassoon Music of

Gillian Whitehead (Atoll), Omega

Ensemble: Mozart Bassoon Concerto

(ABC Classics). **Awards/Study**

Sydney Conservatorium of Music,

New England Conservatory of Music,

University of Waikato, Fellowships to

Tanglewood Music Center, Australian

National Academy of Music, Weill

Music Institute at Carnegie Hall.

Douglas Lilburn Composition Prize.

## 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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# Gerard Brophy, composer



After an increasingly musical adolescence, Gerard Brophy began his studies in the classical guitar at the age of twenty-two. In the late seventies he worked closely with Brazilian guitarist Turibio Santos and the Argentine composer Mauricio Kagel before studying composition at the NSW State Conservatorium of Music.

He has been commissioned and performed by some of the world's leading ensembles, including the Melbourne, Queensland, Tasmanian, West Australian, Sydney and New Zealand Symphony Orchestras; the Malaysian Philharmonic; and the

BBC Philharmonic and Symphony Orchestras, to name a few. Over recent years he has developed a keen interest in collaborating with artists from other disciplines and he is particularly active in the areas of ballet, dance and electronica. He has also been involved in exciting collaborations with musicians from other cultures among them the great Senegalese master drummers, the N'Diaye Rose family, and the timbila virtuoso Venancio Mbande from Mozambique.

Recent performances include the sell-out season of his ballet Yo Yai Pakebi, Man Mai Yapobi choreographed by Regina van Berkel and performed by the Residentie Orkest and the Nederlands Dans Theater; the premiere seasons of Semele and Halcyon as part of the Australian Ballet's highly successful INTERPLAY and EDGE OF NIGHT programmes, and the Song Company's tour of Gethsemane, his contemporary passion play.

Currently he divides his time between Brisbane and Calcutta.

# 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 †  
Celia Craig, oboe  
Josh Oates, oboe  
Ben Hoadley, 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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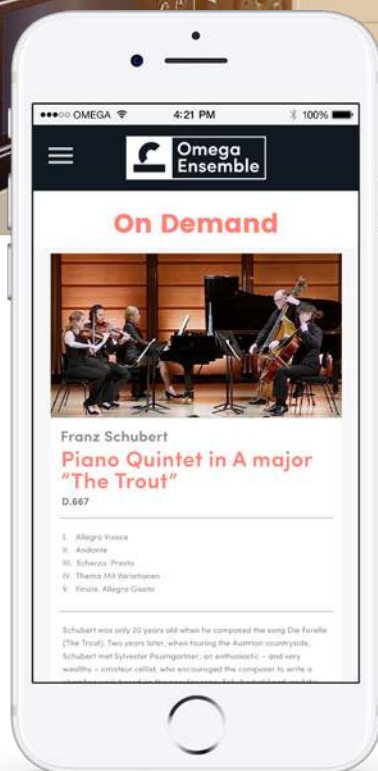


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