



# Summer Winds

From Beethoven to Ravel

2.30pm | Sunday | 25 February 2018  
Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House



# What's On



## Eternal Quartets: Messiaen and Schubert

**Barber** Adagio for Strings

**Messiaen** Quatuor pour la fin du temps  
(Quartet for the End of Time)

**Schubert** String Quartet No. 14, "Death  
and the Maiden"

### Virtuoso Series

7:30pm | Wed | 11 Apr  
City Recital Hall

[cityrecitalhall.com](http://cityrecitalhall.com)  
02 8256 2222



## Fairy Tales: Schumann, Bruch and Borodin

**Schumann** Märchenerzählungen (Fairy Tales)  
for Clarinet, Viola and Piano

**Hogarth** Trio [Australian Premiere]

**Bruch** Eight Pieces for Clarinet, Viola and Piano

**Borodin** String Quartet No. 2 in D major

### Master Series

2:30PM | Sun | 17 Jun  
Utzon Room, Sydney  
Opera House

[sydneyoperahouse.com](http://sydneyoperahouse.com)  
02 9250 7777



## Love: Weber and Franck

**Elgar** Romance for Bassoon and Strings

**Weber** Quintet for Clarinet and Strings

**Brophy** We Two Boys Together Clinging

**Franck** Sonata for Violin and Piano

### Virtuoso Series

7:30PM | Wed | 18 Jul  
City Recital Hall

[cityrecitalhall.com](http://cityrecitalhall.com)  
02 8256 2222



## 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)  
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# Summer Winds

## From Beethoven to Ravel

**Sunday 25 February 2018**

2:30pm

Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House

Presented as part of the  
2018 Master Series



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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.

**Claude Debussy**

*Syrinx* for Solo Flute

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

Duo for Clarinet and Bassoon

- I. Allegro sostenuto
- II. Aria con variazioni: Andante con moto – Allegro assai

**Taffanel**

Wind Quintet in G minor

- I. Allegro con moto
- II. Andante
- III. Vivace

Interval

**Maurice Ravel**

Le Tombeau de Couperin

- I. Prélude
- II. Forlane
- III. Menuet
- IV. Rigaudon

**Malcolm Arnold**

Three Shanties for Wind Quintet, Op. 4

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Allegretto semplice
- III. Allegro vivace

The concert will last approximately one hour and 21 minutes, including a 20 minute interval.

Approximate work durations (minutes):

6 – 8 – 20 – Interval – 20 – 8



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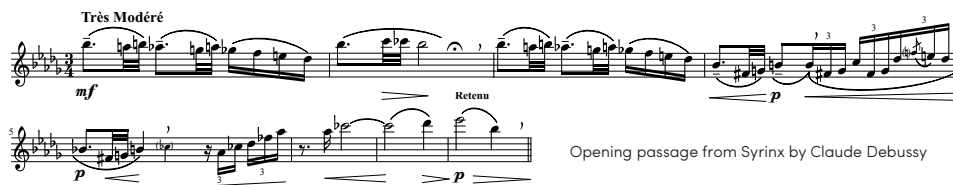
In the 1840s a Bavarian flautist, Theobald Boehm, revolutionised his instrument's design: Boehm, who was also a goldsmith, experimented with metal, rather than wood, and with a tube that was of even width (older flutes, like oboes, grow progressively wider away from the mouthpiece), so that the instrument was able to produce an immeasurably greater volume of sound. And, a few years before, he had invented a system of keys that eliminated the sometimes unreliable and awkward 'cross-fingerings' needed to produce sharps and flats. Chromatic passages could be achieved more comfortably, and the timbre of the instrument was more even over all. French players and instrument builders in particular took up Boehm's innovations with great enthusiasm, modifying the key mechanism to fit instruments like the clarinet, and establishing France as the centre of composition and performance of music for woodwinds.

Debussy's sinuously chromatic *Syrinx* is said to be the first unaccompanied piece composed for the Boehm system flute, and would have been unthinkable without it. The title alludes to the story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* where the nymph, Syrinx, escapes being raped by the god Pan by being transformed into a clump of reeds, out of which he makes a set of panpipes. Debussy wrote the piece, at first entitled *La Flûte de Pan*, as part of the incidental music for a 1913 production of *Psyché* by Symbolist poet Gabriel

Mourey. Pan, along with various other mythical creatures, appears in the play. Formerly thought to herald Pan's death, the piece seems, according to recently discovered manuscripts, to have appeared midway through a dialogue between two nymphs, when the fearful water nymph is seduced by the beauty of Pan's offstage playing.

*Syrinx* was popularised in concerts by flautist Louis Fleury, who had studied at the Paris Conservatoire with the founder of the modern French school of flute-playing, Paul Taffanel. A brilliant flautist himself, Taffanel also worked tirelessly as a conductor, educator and promoter, founding the Société de Musique de Chambre pour Instruments à Vent (society for chamber music for winds) in 1879. He composed his masterly Wind Quintet in 1876, and the piece won first prize in the Société des Compositeurs' competition for new quintets the following year.

The first of the three substantial movements contains three main ideas: an urgent pattern stated in octaves by clarinet and bassoon, a more hymnal passage for the upper winds and a martial texture of dotted rhythms. Taffanel subjects them to always colourful and inventive development (the flute, unsurprisingly, often given an extra flourish), even after the traditional recapitulation, where the music briefly moves into the major key. The work's chromaticism is made possible by the flexibility provided by



Opening passage from *Syrinx* by Claude Debussy



Theobald Böhm, photograph by Franz Hanfstaengl, ca. 1852.

the Boehm system. In the Andante the winds accompany a long and wide-ranging melody for horn (reminding us that horn-building technology, especially, again, in France, was keeping pace with that of woodwinds) before breaking into a tracery of elegant counterpoint. The finale is a kind of tarantella though in sonata design, playing off the contrast of the buoyant first theme and a series of static chords. As in the previous movements, the material is relatively simple and diatonic, but Taffanel takes it apart and puts it through a series of transformations in often distant keys.

That sort of modulatory freedom was unavailable to composers of the 18th and early 19th centuries, as we hear in this *Duo for Clarinet and Bassoon*. The last of a set of three, they are only known from a score, published (unsurprisingly enough) in Paris around 1810. They are generally dated around 1792, only shortly before other wind music of Beethoven's, notably the unquestionably great *Quintet, Op.16*, so 'stylistically', as one publisher suggests hopefully, they 'belong to Beethoven's earliest creative period'. Except that they are probably not by Beethoven, according to current scholarly consensus. Nevertheless they

are works of considerable charm written in a musical language that Haydn, Mozart or early Beethoven might indeed have cultivated. The opening movement is a poised sonata built on regular four-bar phrases. The second is largely given over to an aria with four texturally inventive variations followed by an energetic coda in 6/8.

*Le Tombeau de Couperin* was begun, as a 'French Suite', in 1914, but when it appeared in 1917 its title proclaimed it as a memorial to the great French Baroque composer – hence Ravel's use of French Baroque dance forms. Each movement, moreover, was dedicated to a friend who died defending France and its culture. (Ravel himself served in World War I as a truck driver near the battlefield at Verdun.) Shortly after the first performance in 1919, Ravel orchestrated four of the six movements in an orchestral suite claimed by many to surpass the original in its ingenuity and variety. This version of the same movements was made in 1989 by much-feted Danish composer, Hans Abrahamsen, who has written two beautifully crafted wind quintets (*Landscape* and *Walden*) and has also made fascinating arrangements for quintet of such works as Schumann's *Kinderszenen*.

The Prélude has a kind of improvisatory flourish to it, though Abrahamsen neatly articulates the structure with subtle changes of register and colour. The Forlane, in a stately 6/8 and, is characterised by quirky 'wrong-note' harmony, though based on a specific work of Couperin's, and steady ascension into higher realms of the ensemble. This provides contrast with more steady rhythm and limpid modal harmony of the Menuet. The folk-song influenced Rigaudon, in a fast 2/4 time, provides an exciting finish but not before a digression into some more introspective music.

Like Ravel, Malcolm Arnold served in uniform – in his case as a very young man in the British Army towards the end of World War II. Already a celebrated trumpeter with the London Philharmonic Orchestra among others, Arnold



Maurice Ravel as a soldier, photo, 1916

composed his set of *Three Shanties* in 1943. The LPO Wind Quintet performed it in the hangar at Filton Airfield (later, incidentally the home of the Anglo-French Concorde) that year. Each movement is based on one of the working songs (from the French, *chanté*) popular with sailors in the age of sail. The first is based on 'What shall we do with the drunken sailor?', and shows the gift of easy mimicry and comic timing that would soon make Arnold a prolific and successful film composer.

We are left in no doubt about the drunken sailor's exploits, which range from frenetic chasing and staggering to a moment of tango-dancing (with, perhaps, a partner of Middle-Eastern appearance) before a peremptory return to reality. The 'slow movement' is based on 'Boney was a warrior', a shanty which details the main incidents of Napoleon Bonaparte's career. The plangent mood here suggests Napoleon reflecting on his life after 'they sent him into exile, [where] he died on St Helena's isle/ Boney broke his heart and died'. Wit and humour return in the finale, based on 'Johnny come down to Hilo', a

shanty with clear roots in African-American song – in fact the 'Arkansas farmer' who appears as the protagonist in modern versions of the text is a late substitution for a phrase including the 'N word'; he loves a 'little girl across the sea/ she's a 'Badian beauty'... 'Hilo' probably refers to a port in Peru, rather than the one of that name in Hawaii. Arnold seems less interested in illustrating the text than in putting the tune through a series of Stravinskian paces using 'wrong-note' harmony, irregular metres and ostinato figures, though a Caribbean flavour emerges before the enigmatically quiet ending.

Arnold was always an eclectic composer, basing much of his work on folk material from Britain and Ireland, but freely acknowledging his debts to previous composers, French ones among them. His *Three Shanties* are light music of a very high order, showing what become possible for wind instruments thanks to Theobald Boehm a century earlier.

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# Why I play chamber music



## Sally Walker, flute

The greatest joy for me in any form of music making is the sense of union. Union with the music itself, with the musicians I am playing with, with the audience I am playing to and with the space I am playing in.

With the small number of players in chamber music, a tightly-woven unit is more easily obtained than with a larger number, where the individual impulses can necessitate a conductor to make executive decisions. Although great conductors allow players a lot of freedom, there is one focal person players look at. In chamber music, the role of leader is shared, swapped, relinquished...the give and take afforded by a small group allows spontaneous possibilities of when to be gentle, when to remain firm, when to shine and when to merge into texture. Not being fully directed and having the trust of the other players creates space for something magical to appear in the moment; a smallest nuance can immediately ripple through a responsive group.

I love both the rehearsal process and the performance in chamber music. By its very nature, every player is equal, has input and the fusion of the musical personalities can bring a great sense of team. There is time in rehearsals to find solutions to problems as a group, to try out everyone's ideas and to iron out technical minutia. The performance is the combination of two, three, or in the case of our forthcoming concert, five people's expertise and musical journey. The concert is the distilled version of this collective experience.

The smaller room chamber music is often played in, brings the performers and audience close together. This proximity connects in an immediate way, where the audience feels very involved and the performers have a visceral sense of this. Some of the repertoire is the most transformative in the musical canon.

Omega Ensemble brings together such fascinating musicians, each of whom brings their own musical ideas and approaches to make the synthesis very rich indeed.

# 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  
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. More recently the Ensemble has just returned from its first international tour to China performing and giving masterclasses at the Beijing Central Conservatory, Chang Chun's JiLin College of Arts and Dalian University.

# Musicians

## 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)

**Masterclasses** Beijing Central Conservatory, Jilin College of Arts, Dalian University

## 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.

**Masterclasses** Guangzhou Conservatory, University of Louisville, University of Madison-Wisconsin, University of Arkansas, New Zealand School of Music, University of Canterbury. Faculty of University of Auckland since 2007.

## Celia Craig, Oboe

**Orchestras** Adelaide Symphony, Australian Opera and Ballet, BBC Symphony, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Bournemouth Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony, London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Melbourne Symphony, New Zealand Symphony, Royal Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra

**Ensembles** Australia Ensemble, Jane's Minstrels, Icebreaker, London Chamber Players, Omega Ensemble, Sydney Soloists

**Premieres** Judith Weir: Oboe Concerto, Stuart Greenbaum: Oboe Sonata  
Messiaen: Concert a Quatre, Elliot Carter: Pastorale, Michael Berkeley: Tristessa, Carlos Miranda: Tiles of the Alhambra

**Selected Recordings** Cor Anglais soloist, Berkeley – Tristessa (Gramophone Choice Award) Artaria – Bax Oboe Quintet

**Awards/Study** BA Hons, University of York, Associate, Royal Academy of Music (ARAM) Harold Craxton Chamber Music Prize RAM, LRAM, LRAM dip RAM, Exhibitioner, RAM, Countess of Munster Musical Trust Awards, East Midlands Arts, Music for Youth Oboe Prize, European Music for Youth Oboe competition, The Purcell School, London

**Masterclasses** Adelaide University, Akaroa International Music Festival, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Royal Northern College of Music,

Royal Academy of Music, Trinity Laban Conservatoire, Queensland Conservatorium, Royal College 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

## 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

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To enrich life through a deeper understanding of music.

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

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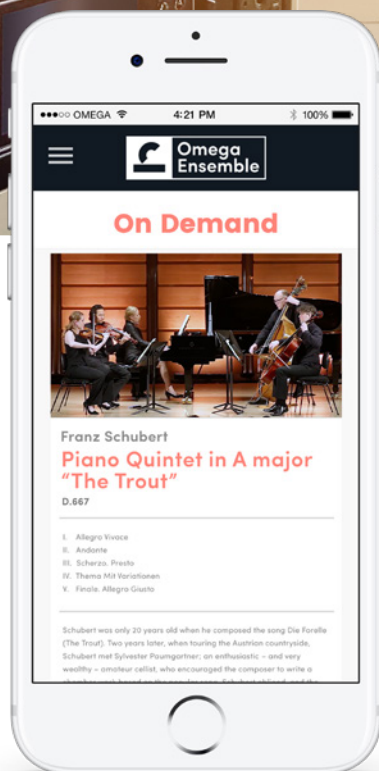


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