

OMEGA ENSEMBLE



RE:CLASSICAL



JESSIE MONTGOMERY

CONCERTO GROSSO

ELENA KATS-CHERNIN

ORNAMENTAL AIR

David Rowden, Clarinet Solo

MAX RICHTER

THE FOUR SEASONS RECOMPOSED

Véronique Serret, Violin Solo

SYDNEY

Fri 12 Apr 2024 — 7:00 PM
City Recital Hall

MELBOURNE

Mon 15 Apr 2024 — 7:00 PM
Elizabeth Murdoch Hall,
Melbourne Recital Centre

NEWCASTLE

Thu 18 Apr 2024 — 7:00 PM
Newcastle City Hall

PENRITH

Sat 20 Apr 2024 — 7:30 PM
The Joan Sutherland
Performing Arts Centre

2024 NATIONAL CONCERT SEASON

RE:CLASSICAL

DURATION

This performance will last approximately
90 minutes without interval.

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This performance may be recorded for broadcast.
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devices are on silent and switched off to avoid
disruption to the performance or recording.

PHOTOS AND VIDEO

Personal photos are permitted. However, the
best time to take a photo (without flash) is
during applause. Video or audio recording of the
performance is not permitted at any time.

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Cover photo: Saksia Wilson / Photo opposite: Jordan Munns

ON STAGE



David Rowden *
Solo Clarinet



Véronique Serret
Solo Violin



Peter Clark *
Violin I



Zoe Freisberg
Violin I



Kyla Matsuura-Miller
Violin I



Megan Yang
Violin I



Natalia Harvey *
Violin II



Charlie Westhoff
Violin II



Felix Pascoe
Violin II



Marlane Bennie
Violin II



Neil Thompson *
Viola



Harry Swainston
Viola



Phoebe Gilbert
Viola



Paul Stender *
Cello



Rachel Siu
Cello



William Hansen
Double Bass



Vatche Jamabzian *
Piano / Harpsichord /
Synthesizer



Georgia Lowe
Harp

* = Principal Ensemble



Photo: Jiyang Chen

JESSIE MONTGOMERY (1981 —)

CONCERTO GROSSO

World Premiere · Co-commissioned by Omega Ensemble, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival and Boston Symphony Orchestra. Made possible with the generous support of Norman Gillespie and The Michel-Simpson Foundation.

- I. —
- II. —

A leading voice of her generation and an acute interpreter of the American sound in the 21st-century, the infectious music of Grammy Award-winning composer and violinist Jessie Montgomery interweaves classical traditions with elements of popular vernacular and social consciousness.

With her emphasis on combining the music of the past and present, Montgomery says: "I've always been interested in trying to find the intersection between different types of music. I imagine that music is a meeting place at which all people can converse about their unique differences and common stories."

Written during her tenure as the prestigious Mead Composer in Residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the *Concerto Grosso* is Montgomery's first commission from an Australian ensemble.

From the composer:

[Concerto Grosso] is a contemporary take on the baroque practice of solo against ripieno dynamics, and improvisation in the solo part. The piece is composed in a way that allows the soloist to decide in the moment either to play what is on the page or to depart and add their own flourish against the ensemble backdrop — a kind of “choose your own adventure” spontaneity that can either blend or add unexpected textures.

The single wind instrument becomes a secondary solo line at times, adding color and counterpoint to the solo violin line. Both movements are shaped primarily by interweaving melodic lines that provide the form and build their emotional evolution.

ELENA KATS-CHEENIN (1957 —)

ORNAMENTAL AIR

World Premiere • In a new version by the composer commissioned by Omega Ensemble and Penrith Performing and Visual Arts. Made possible with the generous support of Geoff Stearn, Tom and Dalia Stanley, Ron Ramsey, Peter Frost, Robert and Lindy Henderson, and Therese and Rudy Wildschutt.

Original orchestral version (2007) written for Michael Collins and commissioned by North Carolina Symphony, City of London Sinfonia, Swedish Chamber Orchestra and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

- I. —
- II. —
- III. —

One of Australia's most celebrated and prolific musical voices, Elena Kats-Chernin's extensive musical output encompasses almost all genres and scale of composition: from her beloved book of piano rags to deep sea music for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony, music for the animated film *Mary and Max*, a Concerto for Eight Double Basses and Orchestra, and a recent opera based on the life of Brett Whiteley, as well as countless works for chamber music, ballet, theater, and choral.

Packed with virtuosic arpeggios and explosions of colour, the title *Ornamental Air* reflects the melodic embellishments found throughout the baroque and classical periods, but also embraces the jazz and folk traditions found within Kats-Chernin's own exuberant musical style.

Originally written as an orchestral concerto for clarinetist Michael Collins, *Ornamental Air* was commissioned as a partner piece to Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto* and is scored for the basset clarinet - an adapted clarinet with greater lower range - for which Mozart's *Concerto* was originally intended.



Clarinetist David Rowden assisted the composer during the development of the original concerto, testing the technically demanding solo writing and exploring the greater textural range of the unique basset clarinet.

Rowden explains:

More than a decade after first hearing sketches of *Ornamental Air* in Elena's studio, like much of her music, it's been stuck in my head like a bright and wonderful ear worm. I thought it time to give the work a go myself, and I'm grateful to Elena for not only writing such a challenging and brilliant work, but for adapting it in a foot-stomping new version for our ensemble.

MAX RICHTER (1966 —)

THE FOUR SEASONS RECOMPOSED

2012 · Originally released as a studio album on Deutsche Grammophon recorded by violinist Daniel Hope and the Konzerthaus Kammerorchester Berlin conducted by André de Ridder.

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| I. Spring 1 | VII. Autumn 1 |
| II. Spring 2 | VIII. Autumn 2 |
| III. Spring 3 | IX. Autumn 3 |
| IV. Summer 1 | X. Winter 1 |
| V. Summer 2 | XI. Winter 2 |
| VI. Summer 3 | XII. Winter 3 |

Max Richter stands as one of the most remarkable musical figures on both contemporary and classical scenes. From synthesizers to symphony orchestras,



as a composer, pianist, producer and collaborator, Richter's innovative and prolific output encompasses studio albums, music for ballet, film and television, and concert and theatre works.

The Four Seasons Recomposed was originally intended as a contribution to a album series by Deutsche Grammophon in which electronic producers were invited to update and remix recordings from the prestigious label's catalogue.

Richter was immediately enticed by recordings of Antonio Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, explaining that for many who revered the masterwork, it had ceased to be something of beauty, and had instead become "something that you hear in the supermarket... in adverts or as 'muzak' when on hold."

However, Richter explains that as he began the process, he was drawn far deeper into the work than expected:

I wanted to open up the score on a note-by-note level, and working with an existing recording was like digging a mineshaft through an incredibly rich seam, discovering diamonds and not being able to pull them out. That became frustrating. I wanted to get inside the score at the level of the notes and in essence re-write it, re-composing it in a literal way.

Rather than mixing with contrary modern elements, Richter sought to create an accessible style that mirrored Vivaldi's original intentions. To do so, he composed an entirely new score, discarding around three-quarters of Vivaldi's work and interpolating his own material.

Richter notes:

Vivaldi's music is made of regular patterns, and that connects with post-minimalism, which is one strand in the music that I write. That felt like a natural link, but even so it was surprisingly difficult to navigate my way through it. At every point I had to work out how much is Vivaldi and how much is me. It was difficult but also rewarding because the raw material is so fascinating.

The 2012 album release of *The Four Seasons Recomposed* instantly topped classical charts in over 20 countries, and just as quickly the work found its place in the standard repertoire of orchestras, ensembles and soloists, where it has firmly remained now for over a decade.



VÉRONIQUE SERRET

A musician effortlessly bridging the divide between classical and contemporary art forms, Véronique Serret has carved a niche for herself as an in-demand leader, chamber musician and collaborative artist.

Over many decades she has been fortunate to work extensively with Bangarra Dance Theatre, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Sydney Dance Company and has directed live string sections for artists including Neil Finn, Fleet Foxes, Sarah Blasko, Kate Miller Heidke, Amanda Palmer and Gurrumul, as well as performed alongside Archie Roach and Laurie Anderson.

As soloist Véronique performed Arvo Part's *Tabula Rasa* with the Sydney Symphony, Peteris Vasks *Lonely Angel* at Four Winds Festival, the Australian premiere of Boulez's *Anthemes* and recently performed Nico Muhly's electric violin concerto *Seeing is Believing* with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra at Mona Foma (2023).

veroniqueserret.com



Photo opposite: Jordan Munns / Above: T Burrows

OMEGA ENSEMBLE

Hailed as 'the best chamber music outfit in town' (Sydney Morning Herald) and 'Australia's most exciting and forward-thinking ensemble' (Limelight), Omega Ensemble is one of Australia's most dynamic chamber music ensembles.

With a mission to champion extraordinary Australian musical talent through high-energy and impactful performance, the Ensemble tour their National Concert Season to metropolitan and regional audiences across Australia, as well as frequent appearances in national music and cultural festivals.

At the heart of the Ensemble's success is the talent it supports, including some of Australia's most accomplished classical musicians and artistic collaborators. With a commitment to preserve and cherish foundational repertoire, the Ensemble also proudly stands at the forefront of new musical expression, with frequent commissions and premieres from leading Australian and international composers.

Profiling Australian musical voices also forms the foundation of the Ensemble's education and professional development programs, including through the CoLAB: Composer Accelerator Program, Young Ensemble in Residence program and in-school workshops.

The Ensemble was winner of Performance of the Year at the 2023 APRA/AMCOS Art Music Awards, and has previously received multiple nominations for Best Performance and Best New Work. In 2023, the Ensemble was also a finalist in the Limelight Artist of the Year Awards.

omegaensemble.com.au



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