
MISO

CHAMBER 1

6 MAY 2018

CONCERT PROGRAM

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra



Principal Partner

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Wendy Clarke flute

Thomas Hutchinson oboe

Jack Schiller bassoon

Kathryn Taylor violin

Nicholas Bochner cello

Donald Nicolson harpsichord

Mairi Nicolson host

Couperin *Concert Royal* No.1

Couperin *Concert Royal* No.4

INTERVAL

Couperin *Concert Royal* No.2

Couperin *Concert Royal* No.3

Running time: 1 hour and 40 minutes, including
a 20-minute interval

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you for silencing and dimming the light on your phone.*

*The MSO acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the
land on which we are performing. We pay our respects to
their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other
communities who may be in attendance.*

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Symphony
Orchestra**

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MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Established in 1906, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO) is an arts leader and Australia's longest-running professional orchestra. Chief Conductor Sir Andrew Davis has been at the helm of MSO since 2013. Engaging more than 4 million people each year, the MSO reaches a variety of audiences through live performances, recordings, TV and radio broadcasts and live streaming.

The MSO also works with Associate Conductor Benjamin Northey and Cybec Assistant Conductor Tianyi Lu, as well as with such eminent recent guest conductors as Tan Dun, John Adams, Jakub Hrůša and Jukka-Pekka Saraste. It also collaborates with non-classical musicians such as Elton John, Nick Cave and Flight Facilities.

WENDY CLARKE FLUTE



Wendy Clarke has held the position of Associate Principal Flute at the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra since 1991. Born in Perth, Wendy studied with the late Owen Fisenden at the University of Western Australia, gaining a Bachelor of Music with Honours. Upon completion of her degree, Wendy was appointed Principal Piccolo with the Western Australian Symphony Orchestra.

In 1982 and 1984 she studied briefly in England with Peter Lloyd, Principal Flute with the London Symphony Orchestra. In 1996, she was invited to play with the World Symphony Orchestra in Bangkok. Wendy spent several years at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts as a Lecturer in Flute before moving to Melbourne to take up her position with the MSO. She has performed and recorded as soloist with the WASO, the MSO and Academy of Melbourne.

THOMAS HUTCHINSON
OBOE



New Zealand-born oboist Thomas Hutchinson studied in Auckland with Martin Lee and Alison Jepson before moving to Melbourne to study at the Australian National Academy of Music with Jeffrey Crellin, during which time he won the concerto competition and the most outstanding recital prize.

Following the advice of his teachers, he then moved to Paris to study at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris with Jacques Tys, David Walter and Frédéric Tardy, where he graduated with 'mention Très Bien à l'unanimité, avec les félicitations du Jury'. As a soloist, he has made numerous appearances including with the Auckland Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Youth Orchestra, Bach Musica NZ, Orchestra Victoria, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and the Dubrovnik Symphony Orchestra. In 2015, he successfully auditioned as associate principal oboe of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

JACK SCHILLER
BASSOON



Jack Schiller has held the position of Principal Bassoon with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra since 2013. Born in Adelaide, Jack began playing the bassoon at the age of 12. From 2008, Jack spent four years under the tutelage of Mark Gaydon from the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, including two years of study at the Elder Conservatorium of Music. In 2012, he took up a scholarship at the Australian National Academy of Music, studying under the guidance of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's Elise Millman. During Jack's time at the Academy he won the ANAM Concerto Competition, performing the Mozart Bassoon Concerto with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, was awarded First Prize in the Chamber Music Competition, and was awarded the Director's Prize for Outstanding Achievement by a leaving student. In 2013 Jack was awarded a Fellowship with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and later was contracted as Associate Principal Bassoon with the Orchestra. He has also worked with the Adelaide and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras, performed as concerto soloist with Orchestra Victoria, and was a member of the Australian World Orchestra.

KATHRYN TAYLOR
VIOLIN



Born in Tasmania, Kathryn Taylor studied for many years with Alison Lazaroff. She continued her violin studies in Brisbane with Spiros Rantos and Michele Walsh, and in Dublin with Eyal Kless. She later attended the Australian National Academy of Music on a full scholarship, and has had lessons and performed in master classes with Maxim Vengerov, Salvatore Accardo, Takács Quartet, the Australian String Quartet, Oleh Krysa, Thomas Brandis and Rudolf Koelman. She was selected as a recitalist in the National Youth Concerto Competition, and won the Queensland Symphony Orchestra's Young Instrumentalist Competition. She has toured extensively overseas with the Australian Youth Orchestra and Camerata Australia. Kathryn has worked regularly with Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Southern Cross Soloists and Melbourne Chamber Orchestra. In 2005, she was appointed to a permanent position in the First Violin section of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

NICOLAS BOCHNER
CELLO



Nicholas Bochner has held the position of Assistant Principal Cello since 1998. Nicholas began his music studies on piano at the age of seven, taking up the cello two years later. After exploring different musical styles at school, where he played jazz piano and electric guitar, he completed a Bachelor of Music with Honours at the University of Adelaide, where he studied cello with Janis Laurs. He subsequently spent two years at the Guildhall School of Music in London under the tutelage of Stefan Popov. In 1995 Nicholas returned to Australia to take up the position of Artist in Residence at Queensland University as part of the contemporary music ensemble *Perihelion* before joining the MSO. Nicholas has a keen interest in improvisation in teaching and performing contexts, and in 2009 was awarded the Dame Roma Mitchell Churchill Fellowship to travel to the UK to study the use of improvisation in teaching classical musicians. He also developed a program of music for solo cello and electronics which was premiered at the Adelaide Festival in 2012.

DONALD NICOLSON
HARPSICHORD



Melbourne-based harpsichordist, organist and pianist, Donald Nicolson is a prominent figure in performance and research of the music of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe. Donald undertook postgraduate studies at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague, the Netherlands studying under Ton Koopman and Tini Mathot, focussing especially on the interpretation of the sixteenth-century English virginal music and the keyboard music of seventeenth-century France.

Continuing to work on both sides of the Tasman as keyboardist for the ACO, the MSO, SSO, and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, he has directed numerous performances from the harpsichord including the Melbourne Symphony and Australian Chamber Orchestras, and regularly teaches baroque practice at the University of Melbourne.

Currently Donald is completing his PhD (Musicology) at the University of Melbourne investigating societal and rhetorical elements in the keyboard preludes Preludes of Louis Couperin.

MAIRI NICOLSON
PRESENTER



Mairi Nicolson can be heard six days a week on ABC Classic FM, Australia's only national classical music network. She presents *Lunchtime Concert* each weekday at 1pm, and *The Opera Show* each Saturday at 4pm. In her new show for 2018, *Legends*, (Tuesdays at 3pm) Mairi will explore the lives and art of the music world's most legendary characters, sharing their iconic recordings and the music that shaped their lives.

Mairi's love affair with radio began after she graduated from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, majoring in piano and singing. She spent the first decade of her ABC career reading radio news in Sydney, presenting *Behind the News* with John Hall, broadcasting the Sydney Symphony Orchestra concerts, hosting *In Tempo* (also known as *The Music Show*) on Radio National and the Sydney International Piano Competitions.

Now, Mairi regularly presents pre-concert artist talks, and hosts live broadcasts from Melbourne for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Opera Australia, Musica Viva and the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition.

PROGRAM NOTES

FRANÇOIS COUPERIN

(1668–1733)

Les Concerts royaux

Premier Concert:

Prélude (Gravement)

Allemande (Légèrement)

Sarabande (Mesuré)

Gavotte (Notes égales et coulées)

Gigue (Légèrement)

Menuet en Trio

Deuxième Concert:

Prélude (Gracieusement)

Allemande fuguée (Gayement)

Air tendre

Air contrefugué (Vivement)

Échos (Rondeau) (Tendrement)

Troisième Concert:

Prélude (Lentement)

Allemande (Légèrement)

Courante

Sarabande (Grave)

Gavotte

Muzette I and II (Naïvement)

Chaconne (Légère)

Quatrième Concert:

Prélude (Gravement)

Allemande (Légèrement)

Courante française (Galament)

Courante à l'italienne (Gayement)

Sarabande (Très tendrement)

Rigaudon (Légèrement et marqué)

Forlane (Gayement)

There is a persistent, though sadly un-provable story that J.S. Bach and François Couperin corresponded, but – a detail bizarre enough to make the story plausible – that Bach's letters ended up being used to seal pots of freshly made jam. Naturally the idea that two of the greatest composers of their time were in touch is hugely attractive. It has been suggested the composers discussed methods of harpsichord playing (especially ornamentation) and of tuning: scholars have speculated that later works of Couperin rely on the knowledge of the new kinds of tuning that made Bach's *The Well-tempered Clavier* possible. We do know that Bach owned some of Couperin's music, including some liturgical organ works and some of the harpsichord pieces. The late 18th century composer Carl Friedrich Zelter wrote to the poet Goethe saying that Bach had taught his sons to play Couperin's 'pretty delicate little pieces with their wildly curly notation', but there is reason to suppose that Bach's esteem went rather deeper than that.

Each of the composers was the greatest product of a musical dynasty, though in other respects their experiences were worlds apart. Bach was always essentially a provincial musician in some of the various small jurisdictions that made up Germany, while Couperin became a court musician to France's 'Sun King' Louis XIV with the title *organiste du roi* in 1693, having also, it seems, been involved with the court of Britain's exiled Stuart royalty.

Both composers had an internationalist outlook, in Couperin's case with a particular interest in Italian music.

This influence is seen, from an early date, in Couperin's solo sonatas and in his love for the Trio Sonata. Late in life he justified his Italian influence by saying that his 'ancestors...will always be more admirable than imitable.'

The four 'ordres' that make up *Les Concerts royaux* were published in 1722, but at least some were performed in 1714 and 1715 for Louis' entertainment, and Couperin would later add several 'nouveaux concerts' in his *Les goûts-réunis*. They are suites based on popular dance forms, like so many of Bach's works from around 1720, but the heavily 'French' nature of most of Couperin's music here is partly attributable to Louis' sensibilities.

The four concerts were published in a collection of harpsichord music and are written in keyboard score, but Couperin makes it clear in his preface that they can be played either as solo works or with a selection of other instruments (he lists the original performers by name). The melody lines can be distributed among 'violin, flute and oboe', while 'viol and bassoon' may stiffen the bass line, which the keyboard would use to fill out the harmony. Like Bach's Cello Suites, each of Couperin's *Concerts* begins with a prelude that need not correspond to any dance form. The four *preludes* are thus studies in contrast: as their movement headings indicate, each has its own mood, varying in speed and metre, though

in all cases they provide a contrast to the lightness of the *allemandes*, which in three cases are marked *légèrement*. The exception is the *allemande* from the second *Concert*, which is fugal in form and marked *gayement*, and which occasionally suggests the sound world of Corelli and other Italians.

After its *prelude*, the first *Concert*, in G, unusually goes from the airy *allemande* to the *sarabande*, switching to the minor mode to enhance the stately sombreness of the dance. The second *Concert*, in D, substitutes for the *sarabande* a three-in-a-bar *air tendre*, a minor-key piece characterised by astringent, almost Purcellian, major-minor ambiguities. The feeling of the *sarabandes* of the third (in A) and fourth (in E) *Concerts*, are both explicitly named; the A minor piece is entitled *grave*, while the piece in E is to be played *tendrement*. Both of these are preceded by a more energetic *courante* – in fact, two in the case of the fourth *Concert*, where the 'gallant' French version contrasts with the 'gay' (and rhythmically complex) Italian.

The first and third *Concerts* contain sprightly *gavottes*, and the first an even sprightlier *gigue*, though that set then concludes with a more decorous *menuet*. As well as a *gavotte* the third *Concert* offers a pair of *muzettes*, characterised by an unmoving bass that recalls the small French bagpipe of the same name. The fourth *Concert* includes two older-style dances that Ravel much admired, the fast, folksy *2/4 rigaudon* and the *6/8 forlane*.

While the works are never far from their roots in the dance, Couperin's method is highly sophisticated. The second *Concert*, as its movement titles make clear, is highly concerned with fugal counterpoint, though it is not above the simple but charming echo effects of the last movement. But even the more relaxed-seeming third *Concert* uses a kind of cyclical form, beginning its first three movements with motifs based on a falling four-note scale pattern. Couperin makes dramatic use of shifts between major and minor keys in the *muzettes* and *chaconne*.

Where Couperin was clearly flexible about the *Concerts*' instrumentation, in other respects – as we see, he makes clear the intended mood of each piece – he is much more precise than Bach ever was. This is particularly true of his approach to ornamentation, which most of his contemporaries, like Bach, left to the taste of the performers. Not so Couperin, who was frequently appalled at how his music was misused, writing that such 'negligence is unpardonable', and insisting that

It is not at all an arbitrary matter to introduce such ornaments as one wishes. I declare that my pieces must be executed as I have marked them.

This explains the 'wildly curly notation', as Zelter put it, of Couperin's scores, where his myriad of symbols corresponds to a table of ornaments that he published. It gives the music an intricately detailed surface, like

much of the architecture and décor that surrounded it. But Zelter is wrong to patronise the music as 'pretty and delicate' when it is so rigorously constructed and beautifully wrought.

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This is the first performance of Couperin's *Les Concerts royaux* by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Anne-Sophie Mutter

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