



Scarlatti, Chopin, Debussy, Prokofiev, McIntyre

Stephen McIntyre - our next concert on September 15

This recital by eminent Australian pianist and teacher Stephen McIntyre presents milestones in piano history from Scarlatti's influential Baroque pieces to Prokofiev's ground-breaking sonata.

Stephen's long and distinguished career began in Melbourne, then to studies in France and Italy with Nadia Boulanger and Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli. He was Head of Piano at the VCA from its inception until 1992 when he moved to Melbourne University Conservatorium as Associate Professor.



Scarlatti *Four Sonatas*
Chopin *Sonata in B flat minor Op.35*
Debussy *Four Preludes*
Prokofiev *Sonata no.7 in B flat major Op.83*

Scarlatti's many short keyboard sonatas laid the groundwork for modern piano technique. These single movement compositions are often strikingly modern; modulating to remote keys and freely using discords. Few were published in Scarlatti's lifetime but later composers like Chopin and Brahms recognised their importance.

Chopin took piano composition and technique to yet another level, some say to the pinnacle. His second sonata was composed in 1839 but the 'funeral march' movement, for which this sonata has become famous, dates from 1837. Chopin was more at home with smaller idioms, composing only three sonatas and two concertos.

Debussy and Prokofiev both extended the possibilities of the piano even further. Debussy disliked the label "impressionist", stating he was simply trying to do something different. His two books of *Preludes* have descriptive titles (which appear at the end of each piece) indicating that he was writing to a specific idea or 'program'. Prokofiev was a very capable pianist, though his first love was composing operas. Many of the 14 he wrote have faded

into obscurity but his piano music is alive and well and features prominently in the concert repertoire. The *Piano Sonata No.7*, sometimes called 'Stalingrad sonata', is from the popular group of three 'war' sonatas. It was premiered in Moscow in 1943 by Sviatoslav Richter.

Ardacia Winds review

Three reeds, a brass cone and a blow-hole joined forces as Arcadia Winds presented the GCMS concert in McAuley Hall last Friday night 18th August. Playing to an enthusiastic audience, mostly brought up to believe that chamber music was for strings only, listeners were delightfully surprised at such a variety of balanced and blended colour, meticulously presented. Not without charm were the player's descriptions of the music performed, giving valuable insight into the composer's motives and techniques.

Ravel's memorial to his fallen comrades of WW1 used a Baroque framework to present 4 movements from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, each one imaginatively utilizing the timbre and techniques of the 5 instruments. The final Rigaudon was the most familiar and lively.

An arrangement of Beethoven's *Sextet Op.71* (arranger not acknowledged) was thoughtfully played, with fine delicate lines in the slow movement in particular, and a powerful, rhythmic rondo finale.

The evening's highlight was *Echoes and Lines* (2017) by Australian composer Lachlan Skipworth. This recent work is in 9 short movements, each reflecting back to a solid bass fragment, showed much overlapping of textures and pairing up of instruments. The concept of variation was observed, and the playing was heartfelt and refreshing.

Back to sonata form in Nielsen's *Quintet* of 1922, where the composer reflects upon the character and personality of the players he knew so well. (cf. Elgar's *Enigma Variations*). This led to much good humour and playfulness, with an emphasis upon pairing-up. The composer's beautiful chorale brought us back to diatonic Earth, and concluded this unique work with a series of variations in imaginative moods..

The youthful ex-ANAM musicians were generous of their time and talent, finishing with Grainger's *Walking Tune* as an encore. This was a positive and most enjoyable evening.

Malcolm John



Geelong Gallery

Fred Williams in the You Yangs

19 August to
5 November 2017



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Geelong Gallery is open again and welcomes you to the newly designed foyer, gallery spaces and shop. The Gallery is open daily 10am-5pm. Come in and find out about member benefits and stroll through the Fred Williams exhibition.

Concert Diary

- **Friday 15 September 7.30pm**
Stephen McIntyre - McAuley Hall Sacred Heart College
Scarlatti, Chopin, Debussy, Prokofiev
- **Sunday 17 September 3pm** Vox Angelica
Music at The Basilica - St Mary's
- **Sunday 24 September** Music In The Round - All day event
Abbotsford Convent - Anna Goldsworthy, Bill Hennessy, Arcadia Winds, more
- **Tuesday 3 October 10am**
Streeton Trio - Melbourne Recital Centre
Musica Viva Coffee Concerts
- **Friday 27 October 8pm**
Geelong Symphony Orchestra - Costa Hall
Mozart & Beethoven
- **Friday 27 October 8pm**
Geelong Symphony Orchestra - Costa Hall
The Last Night of The Proms!
- **Saturday 28 October 2pm**
Geelong Symphony Orchestra - Costa Hall
The Last Night of The Proms!
see GCMS website for more

Member's Soirée

Members of GCMS are invited to an end of season soirée to enjoy company and refreshments and hear what's in store for our 2018 season. Financial members will receive an invitation next month, so make sure you have renewed your membership.



New members are always welcome - there's a membership form on the wrapper of this newsletter or contact our secretary on 5243 6931. Membership information and forms are also available from our website.

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