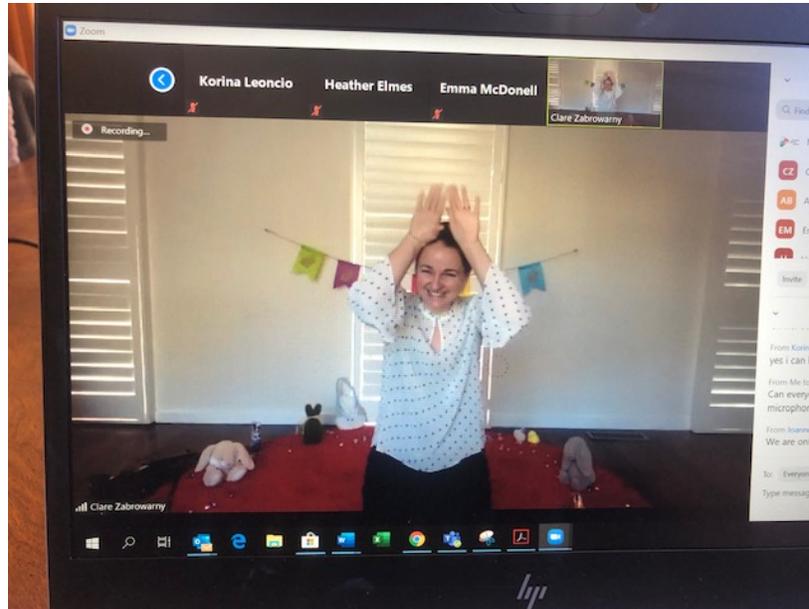


MEDIA ALERT

MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE PRESENTS

MORE VICTORIANS ENJOY MUSIC - ONLINE



Clare Zabrowarny hosts Song Play for kids and families over Zoom

Since Melbourne Recital Centre's temporary closure in March 2020, many of its *Learning & Access* programs have been delivered online. Hundreds of people continue to enjoy the benefits of live music, in many cases for free. Attendees and participants have included everybody from children with disabilities and emerging artists to socially isolated aged care residents.

The Centre's *Relaxed Performance* series has moved online as a closed event program for Special Developmental Schools around Victoria. This has been a highlight for many families who have been homeschooling during the lockdown period. The Centre has been inundated with requests from schools to be part of the program and plans to host 13 performances with a number of different ensembles by the end of the year.

Music Always, the Centre's program for people in aged care, has been successfully adapted for the online delivery with musicians presenting carefully designed concerts to engage and delight residents. These residents have had few opportunities to experience live music due to the impacts of coronavirus. Attendance has never been higher, with a recent concert for Emmy Monash Aged Care in Caulfield attracting 150 virtual concert-goers over Zoom.

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Ben Opie, a regular *Music Always* artist, echoed the sentiment of many involved with the Centre's *Learning & Access* programs, saying:

'In this time of uncertainty, I am constantly searching for new and socially responsible ways to share music with people.'

Through the dedication of artists like these, its partners and team, the Centre is keeping the music alive for the Victorians who need it most.

In June, young artists gave talented performances of virtuosic music by J.S Bach in the Centre's annual Bach Competition, held online for the first time. The Centre's Great Romantics Competition will follow online in December. A variety of workshops, mentor sessions, instrumental sessions and regional master classes have similarly shifted to a digital format, helping to further the development of Victoria's rising stars.

Song Play, a program popular with the Centre's youngest audiences and their families, now uses online meeting services to keep the music going. Designed to spark children's passion for music during their earliest years, the sessions are filled with playing, singing and dancing. *Song Play* typically attracts families in Southbank, where the Centre is based. Online, the doors are open for more Victorians to join.

Early childhood educator and violinist Clare Zabrowarny, who hosts *Song Play*, said:

'In March, as COVID-19 prevented social gatherings, we moved the *Song Play* program online. It has proved to be a wonderful experience for all involved and has helped many of the participants throughout a particularly isolating time.'

One attendee expressed their gratitude for *Song Play*, saying: 'It was so wonderful to add a little bit of normal to our very un-normal life right now!'

Speaking about the expansion of the program for new audiences, Clare Zabrowarny adds:

'*Song Play* online has been developing a partnership with Vision Australia to provide the program to children who are blind or have low vision. The program has been specially designed to cater to the needs of the children involved.'

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INTERVIEW & MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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Melbourne Recital Centre's diverse *Learning & Access* programs are made possible thanks to generous philanthropic support received from a wide community of donors and foundations. For a full list of supporters, please [click here](#)