

MELBOURNE
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PRESENTS

J.S.
Bach

PART ONE

Music for Reflection

‘The eyes are the mirror of the soul and reflect everything that seems to be hidden; and like a mirror, they also reflect the person looking into them.’ Paulo Coelho

Wednesday 10 March 2021, 7.30pm
Elisabeth Murdoch Hall
Melbourne Recital Centre

Artists

Rachael Beesley violin
Josephine Vains cello
Robert Cossom marimba/vibraphone

Program

EARLY RE-FLECTION

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Cello Suite No.3 in C, BWV 1009
1. Prelude

Ross Edwards (b.1943)
10 Little Duets
1. Rain

J.S. Bach
Cello Suite No.3 in C, BWV 1009
4. Sarabande

ECHOES

Ross Edwards
10 Little Duets
10. Echoes

J.S. Bach
Violin Sonata No.1 in G minor,
BWV 1001
3. Siciliana

Charles MacInnes (b. 1966)
Quiet Girl Suite
Petite Air I - Echo

J.S. Bach
Violin Partita No.2 in D minor,
BWV 1004
1. Allemande

RE-FLECTION

Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)
Spiegel im Spiegel

J.S. Bach
Violin Sonata No.2 in A minor,
BWV 1003
3. Andante

RE-ECHO

J.S. Bach
Violin Sonata No.3 in C,
BWV 1005
3. Largo

Katy Abbott (b. 1971)
Re-echo

NIGHTTIME

Thomas Ravenscroft (1588-1635)
The Three Ravens

Robert Cossom (b. 1967)
Nocturne
2. Stars

PEACE

Stephen Leek (b. 1959)
Anembo, place of peace

J.S. Bach
Violin Sonata No.1 in G minor,
BWV 1001
1. Adagio

Svante Henryson (b.1963)
Green Song

About the music

Music for Reflection brings together the peaceful and soulful solo works by J.S. Bach echoed in solo and ensemble works by contemporary Australian, Swedish and Estonian composers. At this moment in time, almost 300 years since they were written, J.S. Bach's compositions speak to us with such directness, offering a wealth of potential to replenish our imaginations and create an environment of curiosity, experimentation and creativity.

J.S. Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for violin alone are a true exploration of the instrument's possibilities, and when performed on instruments of our age the range of textures and timbres are expanded and enhanced. Presented as individual pieces, a contemplative and reflective space is found in the midst of these grand designs as they bring our consciousness and breathing into the present moment. Organist Albert Schweitzer writes: 'We hardly know what to admire most - the richness of the invention, or the daring of the polyphony that is given to the violin. The more we read, hear and play them, the greater our astonishment becomes.' Bach's autographed fair copy of the six solos for violin is dated 1720, but they were likely composed earlier during his time as Capellmeister in Cöthen. J.S. Bach certainly meant for his works to be performed by other musicians and being one of the most prolific teachers of the 18th century, these works gave his many students (over 100) ample opportunity to learn about rhetoric gestures, vocal lines, harmonic patterns and intricate textures.

J.S. Bach was known to have made transcriptions of these works for organ while Robert Schumann arranged accompaniments in the 19th century. Today transcriptions of J.S. Bach's *Sei Solo a Violino senza Basso accompagnato* for the marimba produce unique sonic and resonant possibilities. Inspired by J.S. Bach's solo violin writing, composer and performer Robert Cossom also invites us into the evening light with Stars from his Nocturne, a reflective abstract for the vibraphone exploring the shining and shimmering aspects of this reverberant instrument.

Traversing Australia's unique compositional voices, Rain and Echoes from *10 Little Duets* by Ross Edwards and Petite Air I - Echo from the *Quiet Girl Suite* by Charles MacInnes enable sounds of nature and sounds from the past to be re-echoed in a contemporary light. Stephen Leek creates a place of peace with *Anembo* for solo violin while *The Three Ravens*, an English folk ballad printed in the song book compiled by Thomas Ravenscroft, draws our thoughts to the dark. Points of reflection are felt in the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt's *Spiegel im Spiegel* (*Mirror in the Mirror*) performed on cello and vibraphone.

The cello breathes like a singer in J.S. Bach's Cello Suites, composed during 1717-23, finding resonance and range in ways unsurpassed before or after his lifetime. Cellist Josephine Vains reflects on these *Suites á Violoncello Solo senza Basso*: 'Bach grows with you as a musician, providing varying doses of emotional succour, playfulness and endless room for thought. While the analytical side of me enjoys playing Bach, and with it the flex of interpretational muscle, the heart always wins. I love being drawn into his world of harmony and voices, rhetoric and dance.'

Swedish composer, Svante Henryson's *Green Song*, was performed in this very Hall by the composer when he was supporting the soprano Anne Sofie von Otter on tour and Josephine immediately secured a copy of the work and has now performed it everywhere, from a cave in China to inner-city Melbourne warehouses. It's a quietly content piece, reflective of the summer of his native Sweden and with a jazz sensibility.

Josephine notes about Katy Abbott's work *Re-Echo*: 'This was the last piece I played in public before the first Melbourne 2020 lockdown, when there was so much anxiety about the shifting external world. This piece had a transformative effect on me as a performer and will hopefully allow you, as audience, a moment of reflection today. The unusual pairing of cello and vibraphone find their perfect acoustic space here among the natural materials of Elisabeth Murdoch Hall.'

Bringing J.S. Bach back to Melbourne Recital Centre in 2021 creates a timely moment for us to pause and reflect by exploring Bach's solo works intertwined with exquisite moments of peace and contemplation by contemporary composers.

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About the artists

Rachael Beesley, violin

Rachael Beesley is an internationally renowned Australian violinist, director and concertmaster. Beginning her professional career with Orchestra Victoria in 1991, Rachael performs as guest concertmaster for Opera Australia, Victorian Opera and Pinchgut Opera. Performing in a wide range of orchestras and ensembles, Rachael has been engaged by the Australian Chamber and Australian Brandenburg Orchestras, directed the Tasmanian and Canberra Symphony Orchestras, performs for Musica Viva and has recorded on over 50 CDs.

Graduating from the Royal Conservatoire, The Hague, The Netherlands in 1999, Rachael's fascination with historically informed performance has blossomed into years of international experience performing in festivals, concert halls and opera houses worldwide. Constantly seeking out new challenges, Rachael is dedicated to creating and directing new orchestras and ensembles, including the Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra and Ironwood, by researching and redefining the approach to performance practices.

As an advocate of music education, Rachael presents workshops and lectures at international conferences and teaches at universities in Europe and Australia, including the Royal Conservatoire, The Hague and The University of Melbourne, and is a regular tutor for the Australian Youth Orchestra. For dedication to her work, Rachael has received an Ian Potter Cultural Trust grant and is listed in the Who's Who of Australian Women.

rachaelbeesley.com

Josephine Vains, cello

Josephine Vains is a versatile and engaging cellist and chamber musician, heard regularly in concerts around Australia and overseas. Josephine has worked with a myriad of artists on diverse projects including piano trio, quartet and quintet; string quartet; opera; Baroque ensembles; contemporary and electronic music; and Argentine tango music. Josephine is a passionate educator, currently training the next generation of musicians at the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School and The University of Melbourne.

Josephine is a regular tutor for the Melbourne and Australian Youth Orchestras, Mt. Buller and Clunes Chamber Music, Pettmann National Junior Academy (N.Z.) and for iartschool (China).

Josephine is a founding member of Firebird Trio. Equally at home on modern and period cello, she performs and records regularly with ensembles including Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, Ludovico's Band, Accademia Arcadia, Elysium Ensemble and Melbourne Baroque Orchestra. Josephine has performed for Musica Viva and Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne Festivals. International performances include the Musicfest Vancouver, White Nights Festival (Russia), Longyou Caves Festival (China) and Akaroa Chamber Music Festival (N.Z.). Josephine performs on a Thomas Dodd Cello, (1800) London, on loan from the estate of Annette Martin.

Robert Cossom marimba/vibraphone

Originally from Tasmania, Robert Cossom studied percussion and drum kit with Tom O'Kelly and Eric Johnstone. Attending the Tasmanian Conservatorium, Robert was awarded distinctions in composition and performance. Robert has performed with the Queensland, West Australian and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras and was appointed to a permanent position with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO) in 1995. Appearing as soloist with the Tasmanian and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras, Robert has also given solo recitals nationally.

Robert maintains a considerable commitment to education: tutoring at National Music Camp, presenting at schools' concerts for the MSO and teaching percussion at The University of Melbourne. In 2004, Robert established the MSO Snare Drum Award for tertiary students.

Robert was appointed in 2004 as Composer-in-Residence for Sydney Youth Orchestra's Junior Strings Program and during 2007 and 2008 was Composer-in-Residence at Border Music Camp, Albury. Robert's compositions are regularly heard in Australia and overseas, including recent performances at the Banff Centre in Canada. His works appear in AMEB, VCE and national tertiary education syllabi. A proud alumnus of the Derwent Scottish Pipe Band, Robert has addressed the Japan Percussion Society on the art of cimbalom playing. Robert is a member of the board of the Cybec Foundation and is supported by: Zildjian (zildjian.com), Pearl (pearldrums.com), Evans (evansdrumheads.com) and Just Percussion (justpercussion.com.au).

Robert appears courtesy of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Melbourne Recital Centre acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, live and learn. We pay our respects to people of the Kulin nation, their Elders past, present and emerging and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

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