



4

Southern  
Highlands  
Symphony  
Orchestra



## 2023 CONCERT SERIES 4

Saturday 2nd December 7.30PM  
Sunday 3rd December 2.30PM

Bowral Memorial Hall

**LUDWIG van BEETHOVEN**

*Leonore Overture No.3 Op.72*

**ANN CARR-BOYD**

*Fantasy for Harp and Orchestra (1996)*

Soloist - Verna Lee

**OSCAR DUNN-LUCK**

*Inseguimento*

**BEDŘICH SMETANA**

*Vltava (The Moldau)*

**INTERVAL**

**EDWARD ELGAR**

*Concert Overture "Froissart" Op.19*

**GEORGES BIZET**

*L'Arlésienne Suite No.2*

*Pastorale*

*Intermezzo*

*Menuet*

*Farandole*

**JOHN CORLEY**

*Christmas Crackers*

# **THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

## **Patrons Ann Carr-Boyd AM and Andrew Ford OAM**

The orchestra was formed in 2014 as a result of overwhelming interest in establishing a symphony orchestra in the region. Musicians from the Southern Highlands and surrounding districts rehearse on Sunday evenings. The SHSO has become a significant feature of the cultural life of the Southern Highlands.



Photograph by Chris Donaldson

## **ALLAN STILES**

### **Artistic Director and Chief Conductor**

Allan has directed orchestras, bands, choirs, and theatre productions over many years. He formed the Western Youth Orchestra and The Beecroft Orchestra. He has also conducted operas and musicals for several Musical Societies, including the Gilbert and Sullivan Society and the Highlands Theatre Group.

While teaching for the NSW Department of Education he pioneered primary school bands. He later directed orchestras, bands, choirs and theatrical productions at The King's School Parramatta, Holy Cross College, and Pymble Ladies' College, from which he conducted two European concert tours.

Conducting studies were with Robert Miller and later as part of his MMus at UNSW.

He has played in orchestras in Sydney and London.

As a musicologist he has catalogued the works of Colin Brumby, Graham Powning and Alfred Hill, the latter for his PhD thesis, and has published many previously unavailable works by Australian composers.

## VERNA LEE



Photograph supplied

Verna has won critical acclaim for her playing with her performances being described as “brilliance”, “elegance” and “all tears and goosebumps”.

After learning piano and violin from an early age, Verna decided she would like to play a larger instrument so she took up the harp at the start of high school.

Making her solo debut at the age of 14, Verna spent 10 years as principal harpist with the Australian Youth Orchestra while studying and performing in Germany, the United States, Japan, Singapore and New Zealand. She was a featured soloist with the Australian Youth Orchestra at the Adelaide Arts Festival in 1996, performing Ravel's *Introduction and Allegro*. Verna has given over 50 solo concerto performances to date, premiered numerous contemporary Australian works, and lesser-known harp concertos. She is constantly in demand as a soloist and chamber musician, performing all over Australia. She was also invited by Ann Carr-Boyd to record her *Fantasy for Harp and String Orchestra*.

Verna is one of Australia's key orchestral harpists, having performed with the Kiev Ballet, the English National Ballet, the Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss, sopranos Greta Bradman and Amelia Farrugia, and international performers such as Sumi Jo, Aled Jones, Il Divo and Tina Arena. She has worked and recorded with the Singapore Symphony, the Sydney Symphony, Australian Opera and Ballet, Adelaide Symphony and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras. Despite all this, she seems to be more famous for appearing in the movie *The Matrix*. In 2012 Verna was awarded a grant for her sold-out multimedia performances, *The Harp In Nature*, which showcased stunning images of the Australian landscape accompanied by solo harp works by Australian composers. This recital was also performed at the World Harp Congress in 2014.

In 2015, Verna became fascinated with the Baroque triple harp and started exploring the role of this instrument in early music (thus giving her the perfect excuse to host Medieval banquets). On this harp, she has already performed with Sydney Consort and in masterclass with Andrew Lawrence-King.

Verna is the director of the Sydney Harp Eisteddfod, organises harp workshops, presents lectures at various harp festivals and teaches at the Sydney Conservatorium High School, at various schools, her private studio as well as tutoring for National Music Camp.

### OSCAR DUNN-LUCK



Photograph by Chris Donaldson

Oscar is an enthusiastic young musician who began learning the piano when he was four and started cello lessons at ten. During his school career at Moss Vale High, Oscar has been very involved in a wide range of musical extra-curricular opportunities, regularly performing at school concerts and assemblies. He has accompanied school-based vocal ensembles at the Opera House and performed Brahms' *Rhapsody No.2 for Piano* at the Sydney town hall as a part of the Department of Education's Festival of Instrumental Music. Oscar has taken part in a number of school musicals, arranging music for the orchestra as well as playing keys in the pit. His involvement in the percussion section of the Southern Stars Orchestra in the last two years has sparked a growing interest in percussion, which has led to his recently joining the Southern Highlands Concert Band. Oscar has also keenly participated in the Bowral Autumn Music Festival masterclasses and Musica Floreat Concerts over the last few years and has been delighted with the opportunities to develop his musicality and performing skills.

In recent years, Oscar has begun to develop a passion for composition, especially in the field of orchestral music. His orchestral work, *Inseguimento*, was presented with the Highly Commended Award in the SHSO 2023 Composition Competition, sponsored by Ann Carr-Boyd AM.

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)**  
***Leonore Overture No. 3, Op. 72b***

Beethoven devoted ten years to his only opera, *Fidelio*, an unprecedented amount of time to spend perfecting such a work during the early 19th century, given that Rossini composed 31 operas and Donizetti 35 in a similar ten-year period. Even Mozart launched seven operas during his decade in Vienna. For Beethoven, however, *Fidelio* was more than just a mere theatrical diversion – it was his philosophy set to music. This story of the triumph of justice over tyranny, of love over inhumanity was central to his principles. To present such grandiose beliefs in a work that would not fully serve them was unthinkable, and so Beethoven wrote and rewrote until he was satisfied. The most visible remnants of Beethoven’s extensive revisions are the four overtures he composed, the only instance in the history of music in which a composer generated so many curtain-raisers for a single opera. The first version of the opera, written between January 1804 and early autumn 1805, was initially titled *Leonore* after the heroine, who courageously rescues Florestan, her husband, from his wrongful incarceration. For that production, Beethoven wrote the Overture in C major now known as *Leonore No. 1*, utilising themes from the opera. The composer’s friend and early biographer Anton Schindler recorded that Beethoven rejected that first attempt after hearing it privately performed at Prince Lichnowsky’s palace before the premiere. He then composed a second Overture in C Major, *Leonore No. 2*, and that piece was used at the first performance, on November 20, 1805. (The management of Vienna’s Theatre an der Wien, site of the premiere, insisted on changing the opera’s name from *Leonore* to *Fidelio* to avoid confusion with Ferdinand Paër’s *Leonore*.) The opera foundered but Beethoven was encouraged by his aristocratic supporters to rework the opera and present it again. That second version, for which the magnificent *Leonore Overture No. 3* was written, was presented in Vienna on March 29, 1806, but met with only slightly more acclaim than its predecessor. In 1814, some members of the Court Theater approached Beethoven, by then Europe’s most famous composer, about reviving *Fidelio*. The idealistic subject of the opera had never been far from his thoughts, and he agreed to the project.

The libretto was revised yet again, and Beethoven rewrote all the numbers in the opera and changed their order to enhance the work's dramatic impact. The new *Fidelio Overture*, the fourth he composed for his opera, was among the revisions and is now generally heard to open the opera.

*Leonore No.3* stands alone as a magnificent work in the orchestral repertoire. It distills the essential dramatic progression of the opera into purely musical terms: the triumph of good over evil, the movement from darkness to light, from subjugation to freedom, is integral to this music. It is a musical/philosophical road Beethoven also travelled in his Fifth and Ninth Symphonies, and in this sweeping overture it is compressed into a powerful tonal document.

The structure of the overture follows the basic sonata-allegro form but adapted by Beethoven to fit the dramatic requirements of his subject. It begins with a broad, slow introduction, by turns lugubrious and threatening, during which the clarinets and bassoons intone the opening phrases of the aria Florestan sings in his dungeon prison. In a faster tempo, the violins present the arch-shaped main theme, which grows to a riveting climax before the entry of the complementary theme, a lyrical strain introduced quietly by flute and violins. The development section is filled with sudden dynamic changes and expressive harmonic excursions that mirror the perilous struggles of the play. Then, in an unforgettable coup de théâtre, a distant trumpet call signals deliverance for Florestan and his faithful Leonore. The recapitulation of the themes glows in triumph. A jubilant coda, begun with whirling scales in the strings, brings this superb work to a stirring close.

**ANN CARR-BOYD AM (1938 – )**  
***Fantasy for Harp and Orchestra***

*Fantasy for Harp and Orchestra* was the first work commissioned by Rev Dr Arthur Bridge AM on behalf of Ars Musica Australis. Dr Arthur Bridge founded this organization to foster a love of classical music in the western suburbs of Sydney, an area he felt had been neglected. Since its foundation, AMA has commissioned more than 200 new works and also funded scholarships to sponsor the career of young performers in music and dance. Dr Bridge subsequently commissioned a number of works from Ann, including works for piano and also orchestra. Ann has remained close friends with Fr Arthur (as he is affectionately known) since the *Fantasy* was composed in 1996 and acknowledges the great encouragement and impetus Fr Arthur has given to her musical life.



The first performance of the *Fantasy* was given by the Sydney Youth Orchestra conducted by Thomas Woods, with Genevieve Lang as soloist, at the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Penrith.

Further performances included a special concert in the presence of the Governor General, to launch a large community tapestry created for the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, in 2001, with Vanessa Souter as soloist. At the request of Amy Johansen, Sydney University Organist, Ann arranged the work for harp and organ and in this form it was performed by Vanessa Souter and Amy Johansen as part of the Organ Recital Series in the Great Hall of Sydney University in May, 2004.

More recently Ann arranged this work for harp and string orchestra and it was recorded by Verna Lee with the Steel City Strings conducted by Shilong Ye in 2018. It was released by Wirripang on the CD *Stairway to the Moon* in 2019 (Wirr-097).

(Notes by the composer)

## **OSCAR DUNN-LUCK** *Inseguimento*

*Inseguimento* is an orchestral work in two movements. The name means ‘pursuit’ in Italian, although the actual meaning of the piece is very much open to interpretation.

The first movement opens with a slow and haunting passage in E minor as a deep bassoon melody is played over string tremolos and echoing sonorities in the tubular bells and timpani. This states the first theme which is then used throughout the rest of the piece. The music then slowly builds up with the addition of the woodwinds and brass before suddenly dying away into the second section. Here the tonality shifts to E major as the first theme is inverted and passed around between a solo violin and assorted woodwinds. A *poco accelerando* then pushes the music into a faster 3/4 section with the addition of a new musical idea. The strings and horns then pick up a soaring melodic role before it slowly changes to F# minor. The first theme is then restated, signifying the end of the first movement.

A fast-paced fanfare opens the second movement before abruptly diminishing to an agitated section dominated by staccato woodwind melodies under consistent chord stabs in the lower strings. The gradual addition of more instruments builds up to a final statement, which then resolves into the next section. Here, the addition of the brass and percussions adds drama to the piece as the orchestra works itself up into a furious climax. Rapid and abrupt



modulations create further instability and tension before an intense timpani roll brings an end to the chaos. The familiar chord stabs in the lower strings start up again, indicating a repeat of the first section. However, the melodic roles are shared between the violins and woodwinds. A gradual crescendo builds the music back up as the strings and woodwinds constantly interrupt each other, trying to vie for the listener's attention. The brass then interrupts the other sections of the orchestra as they reinstate the first theme from the previous movement. A short, syncopated section then propels into the last passage where a unified orchestra triumphantly states the end of the piece.

(Notes by the composer)

**BEDRICH SMETANA (1824-1884)**  
***Symphonic Poem – Vltava (The Moldau)***

Bedrich Smetana was born in 1824 in Bohemia, which was then a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. From a very early age Smetana exhibited a prodigious musical talent, both as pianist and composer. At the age of 19 he went to Prague to study composition. The inevitable round of teaching followed and what may be called the post of "resident pianist" to the deposed Emperor Ferdinand I. He was caught up in the revolutionary times of 1848, and subsequently accepted a conductorship in Gothenburg, Sweden.

Encumbered with personal bereavements, he returned to Prague in 1861. His most productive and mature years were to follow, during which he wrote five operas, the second of these being the ever popular *The Bartered Bride*. In his homeland, Smetana came to be regarded as the first major Czech composer of the 19th century, and he was influential in establishing a National Opera. At the time of composing his fifth opera, *Libuse*, during the period 1874-1879, Smetana was beginning to be troubled by deafness, together with the development of the disease that would cause him to see out his years in a lunatic asylum. It was during this time that he commenced work on *Ma Vlast* ("My Country"). It consists of six tone poems celebrating Bohemia's history, mythology, and landscape.

The second of the cycle, *Vltava*, describes the river upon which Prague stands. The piece is sometimes referred to as "*The Moldau*" - the river's German name. The Vltava rises in forest land about sixty miles south of Prague from one warm spring and one cold spring. Smetana is thought to have visited the spot where the two streams meet, and to have taken the inspiration for the tone poem from this experience. The music follows the river's course as it flows through the Bohemian plain and the city of Prague. It is in the form of a Rondo,

united by a recurring theme which represents the river. Smetana's own preface to the score describes the music's content. Undulating flutes begin, representing the first tributary. They are soon joined by clarinets, representing the second. The river gathers strength until violins, oboes and bassoons unite in the first expression of the warm, rich rondo theme, which is taken from a Bohemian folk tune. Horns and trumpets portray the river flowing through the forest, with hunting calls heard over the river motif. The river next flows past a rustic wedding celebration. At this point we hear dance music - part polka, part march in 2/4 time. A climax is reached and subsides as the moon - represented by pianissimo woodwind figures - rises and sparkles in the rippling water. Fluctuating flutes lead to the "dance of the Water Nymphs", subdued, nocturnal music suggesting the river flowing through a smooth course. Then the pace quickens as the water tumbles and foams over the St John rapids and the music becomes vigorous and stormy. It recovers from its turmoil to flow majestically into Prague, where it passes under the great fortress of Vysehrad then flows on, leaving Prague behind. The music has a "dying fall" and is lost to sight. Smetana ends the piece with two emphatic chords to round off the tableau.

**INTERVAL**  
**20 minutes**

**EDWARD ELGAR (1857-1934)**  
***Froissart – Concert Overture, Op.19***

Following their marriage in 1889, Edward Elgar and his wife, Alice, settled in London. He hoped that he would be able to establish a national rather than purely provincial reputation, but it was not to be. In truth, at that time Edward had written little to justify the status he aspired to. After eighteen months of comparative hardship and disappointment, he and Alice returned to live in their native Worcestershire. It is therefore somewhat ironic that, while in London, he received a commission from his hometown for a short orchestral work to be premièred at the 1890 Three Choirs Festival.

Elgar decided on the form of a descriptive overture, named for the medieval French writer Jean Froissart. Froissart worked as a merchant and a clerk before he became the court poet and historian to Philippa of Hainault, the consort of Edward III. His Chronicles, written as he travelled round England, Scotland, Wales, France, Flanders and Spain, are one of the most important contemporary records of the period leading up to the Hundred Years' War. Froissart's value as a reliable historian is disputed, but what appealed to Victorian England was his depiction of the values of chivalry. Rather than any

specific event, Elgar evokes the spirit of dashing nobility. The score is prefaced with a quotation from Keats that sums up the Romantic enthusiasm for this ideal: “When Chivalry lifted up her lance on high.”

*Froissart* is not a programmatic work, like Elgar’s later works, *Falstaff* and *Cockaigne*. It does not tell a detailed story but rather evokes a mood and manner in broad terms. The music is characterised by a blend of ebullience and wistfulness, and the orchestration has all the distinguishing features that were soon to earn Elgar his reputation as one of England’s finest composers.

The composer retained a lifelong affection for the work: revising the score for publication in 1901 he wrote to his friend Jaeger: ‘What jolly healthy stuff it is—quite shameless in its rude young health!’.

## **GEORGES BIZET (1838-1875)**

### ***L’Arlésienne Suite no.2, arr. by Ernest Guiraud***

***Pastorale***

***Intermezzo***

***Minuet***

***Farandole***

French composer, Georges Bizet, showed precocious brilliance as a child but never lived long enough to completely fulfill his promise. He entered the Paris Conservatoire just before he turned ten and later won the Prix de Rome. Best known today for his only opera, *Carmen*, his early death at the age of 36 denied him the fame and fortune he deserved.

In 1872, hard up for money, he composed incidental music for a play by Alphonse Daudet called *L’Arlésienne* (*The Woman from Arles*). Embroiled in a war between the proponents of “high” art and “low” art, the critics refused to attend, and the play closed after 21 performances to an empty house. But Bizet did not let his incidental music, containing 27 numbers, go to waste. He extracted an orchestral suite that has remained popular in the repertory. After Bizet’s death, his friend Ernest Guiraud extracted a second suite that has become equally popular. Both suites are considerably rewritten from the original incidental music, which was scored for only 26 musicians, including a saxophone. While we do not know exactly how the incidental music fits into the plot, it conjures up the folk dances of the lovely setting in Provence, coupled with the play’s atmosphere of doom.

The opening *Pastorale* sets the early morning scene for Act 2. The *Intermezzo* is based on a Provençal folksong, and the *Minuet* is from Bizet’s opera *The Pearl Fishers* from 10 years earlier. The grand orchestral

melody of *Farandole* was taken from a motif of a popular French Christmas song with origins dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, known as *The March of the Kings*. Bizet's penchant for rich dramatic orchestration coupled with folk melodies enables this witty movement to be repurposed as a celebratory work for the festive season.

**JOHN CORLEY**  
*Christmas Crackers*

This cheerful arrangement of carols has been specially composed by one of our SHSO trumpeters for us all to enjoy at these concerts and to wish our audiences the compliments of the season.

Notes by Elizabeth Dalton

**BENEFACTORS**

The Southern Highlands Symphony Orchestra wishes to acknowledge the following, who have made tax-deductible donations to ensure that the SHSO is able to maintain its artistic and community vision. We thank you.

Jan and Frank Conroy

Jenny Simons OAM

Dr. Penny Knowlden

We also thank those music lovers  
who have donated anonymously.

R and D McAllery

Vanessa Woodhill

Moss Vale Community Pharmacy

**FRIENDS OF THE ORCHESTRA**

Graeme Bailey

Robyn and Andrew Kremer

Margaret Buckland

Cheryl Tucker

Ian Langford

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## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The Southern Highlands Symphony Orchestra invites students of orchestral instruments, to experience our rehearsals. Students must be of at least grade 5/6 AMEB level. Rehearsals are on Sundays from 7.00 till 9.00 pm.

Interested participants should apply to the Artistic Director, Dr. Allan Stiles, at: [directorshso@gmail.com](mailto:directorshso@gmail.com) This opportunity is provided as part of the SHSO commitment to education and the community.



Photograph by Chris Donaldson

**PICCOLO**

Aaron Smart

**FLUTE**

Zoe Andrews

Aaron Smart

**OBOE and COR ANGLAIS**

Michellé Biasutti

\* Vanessa Woodhill

Caroline Fargher

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Radu Boros

Myee Clohessy

Rebecca Coulter

Alexandra Dening

David Hart

David Mee

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Ellanor Clark

Rosemary Eddowes

Mia Gardener

Howard Lesslie

**VIOLA**

Timothy Senior – principal

Robert Arthurson

Stewart Bullivant

Xanthe Carr-Boyd

Heather Powrie

**CELLO**

Sarah Hick - principal

David Archer

April Butcher

Lisa Kawai

Byron Riveiro

Heath Robertson

Martin Stiles

**DOUBLE BASS**

Ethan Ireland – principal

Louis Ameneiro

Mark Scotland

Wind, brass and percussion players are listed in alphabetical order. Strings are listed after principals in their section.

\*Acknowledges a chair sponsor.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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the volunteers who assisted with setting up the hall and front of house,  
and the businesses that displayed our flyers and banners.







*The Southern Highlands Symphony Orchestra  
wishes you the compliments of the season  
and looks forward to seeing you  
at our concerts next year.*

## **SHSO 2024 CONCERT DATES**

### **SERIES 1**

Saturday 16th March  
and Sunday 17th March

### **SERIES 2**

Saturday 29th June  
and Sunday 30th June

### **SERIES 3**

Saturday 21st September  
and Sunday 22nd September

### **SERIES 4**

Saturday 30th November  
and Sunday 1st December