



Astra Concerts

2008

Musical Director John McCaughey



Concert 1 / 1a

5 pm, Sunday 6 April

St Mary Star of the Sea

Corner Victoria and Howard Streets

West Melbourne

8 pm, Sunday 13 April

St Mary of the Angels Basilica

Corner Yarra and Myer Streets, Geelong

(tickets available at the door \$17/\$14 conc)

**‘they heard a voice from the sky...’
choir & poetry in conflicted times**

The Astra Choir and soloists
conducted by John McCaughey

Michael Bertram, MASS (2002)

soloists, choir, violoncello and organ

Graham Hair, LAMENT FOR

SANTA SOPHIA (2000)

10-part choir & soloists with computer-processed bells

with **Josquin, Clemens, Gesualdo**, motets

Bo Holten, BLAKE CHORUSES (1995)

Francesco Pavan, O VOS OMNES (2007)

A program set in two large architectural spaces in Melbourne and Geelong. The Melbourne concert marks the re-opening of the spectacular Star of the Sea Church, the second performance joins the music series at Geelong’s bluestone Basilica. Two works of 21st-century Australian music – by Michael Bertram and Geelong-born Graham Hair – create an expansive sonic environment with Renaissance motets and recent Danish and Italian pieces.

Concert 2

5 pm, Saturday 3 May

Assembly Hall

160 Collins Street, Melbourne

**Reconstruction:
a program revisited after 30 years**

The Astra Choir conducted by John McCaughey
with Tristram Williams (solo trumpet)

György Ligeti, LUX AETERNA (1966)

16-part choir

Max Reger, EIGHT SACRED SONGS Op.138 (1916)

on early German poems, 8-part choir

Luciano Berio, SEQUENZA 8 (1983)

solo trumpet

Hugo Wolf, SIX SACRED LIEDER (1881)

on poems by Eichendorff, choir a cappella

Wolfgang Hufschmidt, BEATITUDES (1969)

eight motets for choir

– THE DAY WILL COME!

text by Brecht, actor, voices and instruments

This 30th anniversary concert repeats the program of April 27 1978 in Assembly Hall, the start of Astra’s second historical phase as a contemporary choral organization when John McCaughey succeeded George Logie-Smith as Musical Director in 1978. Ligeti’s *Lux aeterna* opens into a choral terrain of explorative and retrospective elements. Tristram Williams is guest soloist in Berio’s virtuoso trumpet Sequenza of the same era.

Concert 3

5 pm, Sunday 1 June

Lithuanian House

44 Errol Street, North Melbourne

**concertino, sonata, street fugue,
folk chorus**

Michael Kieran Harvey (piano), Miwako Abe (violin)
with instrumental ensemble. **The Astra Choir** and
soloists conducted by John McCaughey

Martin Friedel, INVISIBLE LANDSCAPES (2008)

concertino after Calvino for piano & ensemble *first performance*

– SLOGANS FROM WALTER BENJAMIN

(1995-2008)

choir, piano, instrumental obbligati

Leos Janacek, CONCERTINO (1926)

piano & ensemble

– THE WOLF’S TRACK (1916)

melodrama/folk-tale, soloists, female choir and piano

Lawrence Whiffin, PIANO SONATA NO.1

(1961/2007)

solo piano, *first revised performance*

– REVOLUTIONARY FUGUE (2008)

choir and soloists *first performance*

Mark Pollard, BEATING THE RUSTY NAIL (2007)

violin & piano

with **Robert Schumann**, CHORAL BALLADS (1849)

and choral songs of the French Revolution (1789-99)

Martin Friedel’s new concertino for pianist Michael Kieran Harvey takes its unusual scoring from Janacek’s Concertino of 1926, and initiates a wider landscape of musical forms and texts with instruments, solo voices and chorus.

Concert 4

5 pm, Sunday 28 September

Gasworks Theatre, corner Graham and Pickles Streets, Albert Park

(bookings at Gasworks 9699 3253, or www.gasworks.org.au)

Carter 100 (1)
choir, percussion, string quartet

The Astra Choir conducted by John McCaughey with guests including Speak Percussion, Eugene Ughetti (director), Miwako Abe and string quartet

Johanna Beyer, MARCH FOR 30
PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS (1939)

and other works for percussion ensemble
– THREE CHORUSES (1937)

Stefan Wolpe, TWO CHINESE EPITAPHS (1937)
choir and percussion

Francis Poulenc, FIGURE HUMAINE (1943)
cantata for double-choir

Elliott Carter, STRING QUARTET NO.2 (1959)
– TO MUSIC (Robert Herrick) (1937)
solo soprano and choir

– PIECES 1-4 FOR FOUR TIMPANI (1950/66)

Andrew Byrne, SHOUTS AND WHISPERS (2008)
actions, movements for choir singers and instruments *first performance*

– CRADLE SONG (2007)
solo for crotales

Neil Kelly, DISSIDENT CONSONANT CHORUSES (2007)
choir and multiple keyboards

The first of two concerts for Elliott Carter's centenary presents his seminal mid-century string quartet among earlier strands from American and French music, together with new Australian works – by New York-based Andrew Byrne and Neil Kelly, member of the international Slave Pianos group. The concert also provides the Australian launch of Astra's Johanna Beyer double-CD from New World Records in the USA – with her previously unperformed percussion works and a re-hearing of three choruses.

Concert 5

6 pm, Saturday 15 November

6 pm, Sunday 16 November

Eleventh Hour Theatre,
170 Leicester Street, Fitzroy

Shakespeare /Dostoyevsky
a collaboration with
Eleventh Hour Theatre

Jerzy Kozłowski (solo bass), Jane Nolan and David Tredinnick (actors), Anne Thompson and William Henderson (directors), Kim Bastin (piano), **The Astra Choir** and soloists conducted by John McCaughey

Dimitry Shostakovich, FOUR VERSES OF
CAPTAIN LEBYADKIN op. 146 (1974)

poems from *The Possessed* by Dostoyevsky, for bass & piano

Helen Gifford, SIX SETTINGS FROM SHAKESPEARE (1974-2006)

Songs and Dramatic Declamation for 6 solo singers *first performance*

with CHORAL SETTINGS by Igor Stravinsky and Martin Wesley Smith
ENACTMENTS AND READINGS by William Shakespeare and Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

The final work of Shostakovich, a cycle for bass and piano after Dostoyevsky's *The Possessed* has been described as a micro-opera of a unique parodistic character. It follows Jerzy Kozłowski's sell-out Astra performance of the same composer's Michelangelo cycle in 2006. In this concert it is woven into a larger fabric of theatre and music, with Helen Gifford's new set of 'declamations' after Shakespeare and the collaboration of actors and directors from Melbourne's adventurous theatrical voice, Eleventh Hour Theatre.

Concert 6

7 pm, Sunday 7 December

Central Hall
20 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy

Carter 100 (2)
brass ensemble, choir, percussion

Tristram Williams, Mark Skillington (trumpets), Geoff Lierse (horn), Robert Collins, Charles MacInnes (trombones), Speak Percussion, Eugene Ughetti (director), Kim Bastin & Joan Pollock (keyboards)
The Astra Choir conducted by John McCaughey

Giovanni Gabrieli, IN ECCLESIIIS (1605)
soloists, 2 choirs, brass ensemble & continuo

Elliott Carter, MUSICIANS WRESTLE EVERYWHERE (Emily Dickinson) (1945)

– BRASS QUINTET (1974)
2 trumpets, horn & 2 trombones

– PIECES 5-8 FOR FOUR TIMPANI (1950/66)

Carl Vine, AFTER CAMPION (Thomas Campion) (1989)

3 solo voices, choir & 2 pianos

Claudio Monteverdi, MADRIGALS FROM THE FOURTH BOOK (1603)

with music by **Charles Ives**, **Henry Cowell** and **Edgard Varèse**

The 100th birthday on December 11, 2008 of Elliott Carter - still alive and composing in his centenary year – is celebrated on the preceding weekend in this second of two concerts. One of the composer's most brilliant and challenging ensemble works, the Brass Quintet, provides a focal point among the vast context of music and poetry, in American and other traditions, from which Carter developed his compositional language.

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The Astra Chamber Music Society is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council; Arts Victoria, a division of the Department of Premier and Cabinet; the William Angliss Trust, Diana Gibson and private donors. Donations to Astra Chamber Music Society over \$2 are tax deductible.

You can become a member of the Society on payment of FULL \$30 (incl gst), CONC. \$15 (incl gst). This entitles you to vote at the Annual General Meeting. Programme details are correct at the time of printing.

BOOKINGS

Tel: 03 9326 5424, or Email: astra@connexus.net.au.

Single ticket prices:

FULL: \$27, CONC: \$15.

Concession includes low income earners, arts workers and seniors.
STUDENT \$10.

SUBSCRIPTION (20% discount)

6 concert package:

FULL \$129.60, CONC. \$72,

4 concert package:

FULL \$86.40, CONC. \$48.

Subscription tickets are transferable. This means a 6 ticket subscription enables 6 people to hear 1 concert together, or any other combination. Whichever way you choose to use the tickets, you receive a 20% discount on single ticket prices.

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