

the bridge



MELBOURNE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA NEWSLETTER

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t. 03 9650 3365 www.mco.org.au

New to our Block

Having recently taken up his spot in MCO's seat in the chocolate centre of Melbourne, Block Arcade, Stephen Block is relishing the opportunity to reacquaint himself with a Melbourne he came to know well when managing the Australian String Quartet for nearly a decade.

Attracted to the position of CEO with MCO by the energy and excitement of this young orchestra, his decision to leave his loved TSO in Hobart was sealed when he experienced the breathtakingly fine acoustics of the superb MRC.

Melbourne, MRC and MCO – a trinity of perfect opportunity!

Stephen writes:

I can't wait for **Enchanted** in late June – and the rare opportunity to hear the chamber version of Mahler's Symphony no 4, with the wonderful Emma Matthews adding her sublime voice to this marvel of the arranger's art, after first singing some spellbinding Mozart.

In this 150th anniversary year of the birth of Mahler, MCO is offering a fresh perspective on the composer and his music.

First scored for 12 players – in place of the full work's 90 – the arrangement by Erwin Stein also allows for Mahler's textures to sparkle with a clarity rarely heard.

I am also eagerly anticipating **Wildflower** to experience the amazing talent of our own rising star Kristian Winther in the dual role of director and soloist in the Beethoven violin concerto. Souvenir de Florence, Tchaikovsky's loving and exuberant tribute to a much-adored city opens the concert – a glorious piece that brings out the romantic in all of us!

If you see me at a concert please come up and introduce yourself. I look forward to meeting you.



Stephen Block, MCO's new CEO

MCO can save you tax!

Many people see it as a privilege to be able to contribute to an organisation which in turn contributes to the community in which they live. In MCO, the benefit of giving is tangible and results in a better city and a better life for its residents and musicians.

Box office prices cover only one-quarter of the cost of staging MCO concerts. As we head towards the end of the tax year and the economic outlook continues to improve, please keep a tax-deductible donation to the MCO in mind.

MCO's program has grown dramatically on all fronts in recent years and its move to the Melbourne Recital Centre has been a

major success. Our latest development is MCO's pilot regional education program, which gives promising students exciting opportunities to perform.

To support our programs, contact Esther Benjamin, Fundraising and Philanthropy Manager, on 0409 576 184 and please also refer to the last page of this newsletter.

Beethoven... as never before

Did Beethoven finish his great violin concerto or did an invisible hand choose the final structure?

Kristian Winther relishes the artist's challenge of presenting reality as we have never seen it before.

He last performed the concerto with MCO (as Pro Arte) in 2006. Much has changed since, for Kristian, MCO and for Beethoven in a way.

Kristian has toured the world with the Tinalley String Quartet and ACO, the former winning the Banff International String Quartet Competition along the way. He has come much closer to the composer in the process.

He is fascinated that the "autograph" version of the concerto (in Beethoven's hand) contains several options for passagework at many points, suggesting the composer might have been inviting improvisation, a skill for which he was renowned. While Beethoven endorsed the printed version and it is accepted as writ, the fact that there is no revised autograph suggests some scope for artistic variations hitherto unexplored.

Kristian's view of tempi in Beethoven also reflects his new insights. Beethoven was dismissive of customary but loose terms such as *allegro* and *andante*. Examination of the movements to which he assigned metronome marks reveals a relatively consistent band of tempi for each of these terms, a revelation that has affected Kristian's approach to his work. So expect to see a major difference this time in the length of the performance.

This is a concert that you might one day want to tell your grandchildren, "I was there."

Wildflower –
12 and 15 August, in
Elisabeth Murdoch Hall,
Melbourne Recital Centre



Kristian Winther



Emma Matthews

Photography: Bridget Elliot

Enchanted – register for pre-concert talks

Pre-concert talks will take place in The Salon at Melbourne Recital Centre 45 minutes prior to the start of both performances of this wonderful program. Come and learn more about each of the pieces in the program in an informative presentation by respected musicologist and writer Dr Robert Gibson. Numbers are strictly limited – please pre-register at enchanted@mco.org.au or by phoning 9650 3365.

- Thursday **24 June** at 6.45pm
- Sunday **27 June** at 1.45pm

Program Notes Online

A reminder that program notes for each concert will be available on MCO's website, a week prior to each performance. Keep informed by visiting www.mco.org.au

SPECIAL OFFERS

Five Genevieve Lacey recordings to be won

Register your email address with MCO for the first time and you will go in the draw to win one of five Genevieve Lacey recordings, *Reinventions*, featuring the Flinders Quartet. Simply complete the form on the back of **the bridge** (including your email address) and fax to 03 9650 3301. Alternatively, enter your details on the Contact Us page of our website (www.mco.org.au). Entries must be received no later than Sunday, 20 June 2010. Winners will be notified by Wednesday, 23 June.

Victorian Opera's *The Turn of the Screw*

20% off tickets to Victorian Opera's *The Turn of the Screw*

"Britten's most perfect opera: part coming-of-age story, part spectral who-dunnit. It is terrifying and touching in equal measure."

Paul Kildea, Conductor

From 7 – 17 July in the Playhouse, Victorian Opera presents this dramatically appealing opera, an atmospheric tale of good versus evil and the supernatural as a Governess battles for the souls of two children.

For 20% off full priced A reserve tickets, use the password 'BRITTEN' www.victorianopera.com.au

Hennessy peddles hard for this instrument

William Hennessy, Artistic Director

I have long thought that bicycles were thoroughly modern.

I understand that in his later years, the founder of Malvern Star, Tom Finnigan, was asked what sort of business he would go into were he a young man today, given that he started his famous Malvern business in 1902.

"Why, bicycles of course!" he replied.

And why wouldn't he? It was after all on a Malvern Star that Victoria's Sir Hubert Opperman won the 1931 Tour de France setting a new record for the race!

Bikes have always been one of my life loves. I rode around the streets of Bellambi on the NSW south coast as an 11 year old, caught between the passion of trying to spot my 11 year old sweet-heart, to whom I never had the courage to say even one word (nor did I ever spot her), and the passion of dreaming of dedicated bike paths, a reality I was never to experience until moving to Melbourne 30 years later.

The first bike I ever bought myself (from winnings at the Canberra Eisteddfod when I was 12) was, like Opperman's, a Malvern Star and I have been winning the Tour de France ever since!

My habit of longer distance riding clearly came from my late father. When I was 10, he mentioned to me that he had ridden from Melbourne to Wangaratta looking for work in 1936. I was distinctly unimpressed. "I could do that." So the next morning at 4am I began circumnavigating the tennis court an intended 15,000 times to equal his feat, only to have to retire at 10pm under the lights with 5,000 laps still uncompleted!

But my appetite had been whetted! What's more, one mightn't be surprised to hear that I have found Albury to Thredbo, Port Fairy to Castlemaine and all the other longer trips rather more stimulating than thousands of laps of the court!

Clearly, so do my children. The latest cab off the rank is Lara, our five year old, who now rides the tracks which I dreamed of as a kid.

She's done up to 20 kilometres a few times now. After 17k the other day however, she was pooped. She couldn't go another



William Hennessy and Katharine Brockman with their children

inch. I looked at her back tyre which I then realised, to my horror, must have been pretty flat when we set out! ... I think she has nearly forgiven me now!

Footnote – *Honestly, for my whole life prior to sitting down to write this letter I had always understood that the "Malvern" of "Malvern Star" was somewhere in the sky, or at least somewhere equivalent. Clearly as a Wollongong/Sydneysider I had no idea! I'm off to Glenferrie Road to make atonement!*

Advanced Strings Education Program

MCO's strings program is unique in bringing high-level strings tuition to regional students in Victoria and providing them with development opportunities by involvement in ensemble practice and a performance with the MCO at a regional concert. This pilot education program took place in Geelong and Ballarat in May. Workshops in Mornington will occur later this month. MCO gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation in supporting this initiative. More news about the MCO Advanced Strings Education Program in the next edition of **the bridge**.

One woman's legacy

Helen Macpherson Smith Trust is an independent perpetual philanthropic trust established in 1951 by the late Helen Macpherson Schutt (nee Smith) for the benefit of Victorian charitable institutions.

For nearly 60 years it has quietly given away over \$84 million in total to a wide variety of eligible charities and a diverse range of projects that seek to benefit and improve the lives of the people of Victoria. Amongst the many beneficiaries is the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra.

Unlike some of Melbourne's better known philanthropists, Helen's is not a household name and little is known of Helen herself. She was an only child born into one of Melbourne's wealthiest families in 1874. In 1901 she married the barrister, raconteur and Essendon football player William (Billy) Schutt, who went on to become a Justice of the Victorian Supreme Court. The couple had no children and, in 1923 at the age of 47, Helen left for Europe, never to return. Newspaper reports of William's life, especially after his retirement from the bench, give an insight into parts of Helen's life in Europe from early 1924 to her death in 1951. She travelled widely, with a base in Switzerland and the south of France. She and William made extensive trips together in Europe, their activities widely reported in the press.

William died in 1933 aged 65, after an accident on board ship while returning to Australia from one of his many visits abroad to travel with Helen. In 1951, while living at the Hotel Majestic in Cannes on the French Riviera, Helen contracted pneumonia and died. Her story could have ended there but for the fact that on her death, she left the majority of her considerable wealth to establish a philanthropic trust to benefit Victorian charities.

The Helen Macpherson Smith Trust is shortly to publish a new hardback biography of Helen detailing her pioneering forebears, the Macphersons and the Smiths, as well as chapters on both the Trust and other Australian women philanthropists.

www.hmstrust.org.au

I'm an MCO supporter because...

Following *Profusion*, Ian Evenden wrote:

Last Sunday afternoon's concert was wonderful. The Orchestra performed beautifully with the pieces being complementary and totally engaging. Sara MacIver sang with brilliance. It was also great to see the MCO's ongoing commitment to young talent, in inviting Kristian Winther to conduct!

As an audience member I see William Hennessy derive real pleasure from the Orchestra members' journey of excellence as they meet each challenge he programs for them. As a subscriber I enthusiastically enjoy witnessing the Orchestra develop on this journey of excellence!

Take a Listen!

MCO's *Field of Dreams* conducted by Sir Neville Marriner on ABC Classic FM 105.9 Monday, 14 June 2010, 8pm
Visit www.mco.org.au for details

Melbourne mecca for music lovers

Don and Susan Fry

Don and Susan Fry have spent most of their lives in Cairns where they were very involved in the classical music scene. Susan assisted with establishing Encore Concerts which bring some of the finest classical musicians to North Queensland. Don has been associated with a number of brass bands and played French horn with the Cairns Civic Orchestra. He is also Patron of the Choral Society.

When Susan retired from Ansett and Don wound back his engineering and shipbuilding company commitments, they seized the opportunity to make Melbourne their principal place of residence, so they could both be close to their family and enjoy the vibrant concert life this city provides. Since moving to their new apartment on Flinders Street, they are within walking distance of the best of Melbourne's offerings and have become supporters of this city's music community, including MCO. Don says that the Marriner Festival was a real bonus, especially as he recalls meeting Sir Neville in Hamburg when he conducted a concert one Sunday morning in the Music Halle.

Don still remains involved with the development of devices for improving orthopaedic surgery, and establishing the 'Walk Again' project supporting research into an innovative procedure to heal spinal chord injury; and, as an adjunct Professor with the University of Queensland, he continues to develop serum jet technology.

Don and Susan travel extensively and this year are taking part in a Chopin tour with the ABC's Damien Beaumont. We are delighted they have become MCO patrons and supporters.

Musical Feast satisfies

MCO's Musical Feast has quickly become a much-anticipated event in the calendar of our friends and supporters. This year, musical feasters were entertained by a "super-group" quartet – William Hennessy, Paul Wright, Katharine Brockman and Sharon Draper – with guest star Genevieve Lacey and harpsichordist, Ann Morgan. Combined with the unique chance to sample Australia's best new-generation wines from Castagna Beechworth, the second annual Musical Feast at Sofitel Melbourne on Collins was a night to be treasured, and one which raised a significant sum in support of the Orchestra's artistic program.

MCO Ambassador Bill McHarg once again contributed to the success of the evening through his skilled and entertaining mastery of the live auction. He drew spirited bidding for distinctive items which appealed to the artistic senses and presented a rare buying opportunity. This included a child's violin, imprinted in its timber soul with William Hennessy's deft touch, purchased for a very lucky grandchild.

We particularly thank all musicians and members of the organising committee – Sue and Alastair Campbell, Caroline Johnston, Jan and Geoff Phillips, Esther Benjamin and Gwenda Flintoff – who all gave so much of their time and energy to make this such a successful event.

MCO also acknowledges those who contributed so generously to the 2010 Musical Feast. Major supporters included:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Allans Music | Peppers Springs Retreat and Spa |
| Haigh's Chocolates | Sofitel Melbourne on Collins |
| William Hennessy and | Taft's The Pen People |
| Katherine Brockman | The Australian Ballet |
| Henry Bucks | Musica Viva Australia |
| The Islington Hotel (Hobart) | |



Photography: Belinda Strodder

Get close. Be moved.

If interested in supporting MCO's artistic program and the Relocation Project, please contact Esther Benjamin on **03 9650 3365**

Melbourne Chamber Orchestra
www.mco.org.au

Keep in touch

If you are not already on the MCO mailing list, please fill out this form and return it to the address below or send us an email.

Remember, email is relatively carbon neutral and is a very time-saving way of communicating. If you are not receiving occasional emails from us, please provide an email address to help reduce the global warming impact.

Make a donation

We welcome your tax-deductible donation to Melbourne Chamber Orchestra.

Please send your cheque (payable to Melbourne Chamber Orchestra Donation Fund), or complete the credit card details section, or ring 03 9650 3365.

Melbourne Chamber Orchestra

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