

A close-up, low-angle photograph of a young man with long, light brown hair and a light beard, looking intently at the camera while playing a double bass. He is wearing a dark, long-sleeved shirt and a black wristwatch on his left wrist. The background is dark, and the lighting highlights the wood of the instrument and the man's features.

TIME PRESENT / TIME PAST

RBE Richard
Bonyng
Ensemble



Penrith Conservatorium of Music

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penrithconservatorium.com.au

Hamish Wright | Credit: Eddy Summers

Welcome

Time Present / Time Past

Robust exuberance paired with gentle lyricism

Inspired by *Four Quartets*, a set of four poems written by T.S. Eliot, *Time Present / Time Past* is a reflection of the complexity of life, the consequences of our choices and the emotions we experience.

This is a time to reflect upon those who have come before us, the memories that can provide grief, joy, strength, and our desire for escape. It's an opportunity to acknowledge the past while also embracing the present and to find strength in the timelessness of our experiences.

We hope that this performance is as rewarding and fulfilling for you as it is for us.

Brian Kjim
Artistic Director

To send light into the darkness of men's hearts - such is the duty of the artist.
Robert Schumann



SATURDAY 19 August, 6.30PM

Q THEATRE - JOAN SUTHERLAND PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

TIME PRESENT / TIME PAST

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Piano Quintet in E-flat major, Op.44 30'

GRAEME KOEHNE

Time is a River 20'

BRENDA GIFFORD

Ancestors 10'

TIMOTHY FORD

The Hornsounder's Tale 12'

Richard Bonyng Ensemble reserves the right to alter scheduled musicians and programs as necessary.

This concert will conclude at
approximately 7:45pm.

Cover image: Flynn Starr | Credit: Eddy Summers

Penrith Performing & Visual Arts acknowledges the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the original owners and custodians of lands and waters, including the lands and waters of Penrith City.

penrith **Con** the **Joan** Omega Ensemble

About the music



Robert Schumann, lithograph, 1839

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810–1856)

Piano Quintet in E-flat major, Op.44

I. Allegro brillante

II. In modo d'una marcia: Un poco largamente

III. Scherzo: Molto vivace

IV. Allegro ma non troppo

Along with his work as a performer and music critic, Robert Schumann is widely regarded as one of the greatest composers of the Romantic era. Between 1830 and 1839, Schumann concentrated almost exclusively on the piano, composing virtually all of his famous solo works.

Schumann composed predominantly symphonic compositions throughout 1841, following which he focussed on chamber music.

Schumann's *Piano Quintet in E-flat major* is considered to be one of his finest and most influential compositions, revolutionising how the piano quintet was characterised and performed. The first movement, *Allegro brillante*, begins with one of the boldest of Schumann's inspirations: a powerfully striding theme from which all of the movement's other thematic material, including the expressive second subject, is derived. The second movement, *In modo d'una marcia*, is a menacing C-minor march which would strike responsive chords in many late-Romantic composers, pre-eminently Gustav Mahler. The march is interrupted by two wildly disparate contrasting sections, a rich theme in C major and a stormy F-minor episode, apparently a suggestion made by Mendelssohn.

The brilliant *Scherzo* is based on a simple scale ingeniously disrupted by a series of misplaced accents. There are two trios: the first containing a veiled reference to the principal theme of the first movement, the second an exuberant country dance with gypsy overtones. The vigorous finale is a fusion of sonata and rondo forms. After the dramatic development, the movement ends with a fugal coda in which the great theme from the first movement makes a triumphant final return.



GRAEME KOEHNE (1956–)

Time is a River

Composed in 2010. Commissioned by Terrey and Anne Arcus for Musica Viva. This performance is a new setting arranged in 2023 by Jessica Well for Omega Ensemble.

Written in 2010, *Time is a River* was originally scored for clarinet and string quartet, and is also frequently performed in an expanded orchestral setting. In a new arrangement for Omega Ensemble, this performance returns to the emotional intimacy of the original, with the addition of piano floating between melodic and accompanying roles, emphasising both the natural and spiritual narrative in the work.

Time is a River bears a dedication to the composer's mother, who had passed a year before the premiere. Koehne writes:

"This piece represents the first instance where emotional communication and memories were my primary concern. I wanted something more reflective and emotionally communicative. It was about this idea of music as a language of emotion. As I get older, I realise that really is the function of music. It is a language and melody is an important part of that.

The string quartet is the 'river', pursuing its relentless course, by turns gentle, swirling, turbulent and free-flowing.

The clarinet represents some form of persona – a soul, if you like – that is carried along by the flow of the strings, pursuing its own diverse range of characters: melancholic, reflective, playful, ecstatic, capricious, finally reaching a state of acquiescence or acceptance.

You write a piece and you're never quite sure if it's going to hit the mark and find a place for itself. I had hoped that future clarinetists may pick it up and would be interested in it, and that seems to have happened. It still means something to me on this personal level because of that connection. It is a lovely reminder of her."







BRENDA GIFFORD (1968–)

Ancestors

Commissioned by Omega Ensemble and Penrith Performing & Visual Arts with the generous support of Richard Cobden SC. Additional arrangements by Jessica Wells.

Composer, award-winning jazz saxophonist and proud Yuin woman, Brenda Gifford's culture is the basis of her music and arts practice.

Previously commissioned by Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Canberra International Music Festival and Four Winds Festival, Brenda was also recently First Nations Resident Composer with Ensemble Offspring and nominated for an ARIA Award for her children's album *Music for the Dreaming*.

In the opening bars of *Ancestors*, Gifford includes the following note as a programmatic guide to the performers:

*I follow in the footsteps of my Ancestors.
Rivers are the veins of Country,
they tell our stories.
We have read Country since time immemorial.*

Drawing upon her jazz and improvisation background, Gifford instructs performers to respond freely to words and imagery of nature, traditional Ceremony, as well as Australia's confronting history.

Gifford writes:

"We all follow those who have come before us. This idea spans both my culture and my music.

We have our Ancestors, our Skin (Whadu) and our clan. Skin can be literal and lateral. It's something that governs your relationship to the past and within your community.

When writing this piece, I thought about those in the early days who bore the brunt of colonisation. There is light and shade in our stories. Dissonant and stark, and then the calm flow of the Duraya (river).

The end of the piece returns to the beginning. It starts and ends with air, with stillness. It's a cycle."



TIMOTHY FORD (1999–)

The Hornsunder's Tale

World Premiere

Commissioned by Penrith Performing & Visual Arts.

- I. Jak 'o the shadows*
- II. The colour of trust*
- III. Sounder of the horn*

Timothy was born in the North of England in 1999. Having grown up with acapella community choirs run by his mother Jacqui, he has been immersed in music and sound from a young age. Some of his earliest memories are of playing air guitar to classic rock songs on the radio.

After moving to Australia in 2017, Timothy is now studying Composition at the Australian Institute of Music. He has a great passion for film music and upon completing his studies he hopes to compose soundtracks for blockbuster movies and television shows.

The Hornsunder's Tale follows the story of the character, Olver, from the popular book series *The Wheel of Time* by Robert Jordan. Each movement represents a different part of the character's story.

Jak o' the Shadows introduces Olver - a young, recently orphaned boy. In this movement, there is a sense of sadness and despair, accompanied at times by a fast and frantic rhythm, symbolising the character's skittish nature and desire to flee. The rhythmic texture of the melodies mirror the syllabic rhythm of a song in the book called *Jak o' the Shadows*, with the character of Jak being a personification of Death.

The Colour of Trust tells the medial section of Olver's story. At this point in the tale, he is being raised by a group of unruly 'uncles' who are all generals in a mercenary band. In this environment, Olver feels safe, cared for, and comfortable for the first time in his life.

Sounder of the Horn is taken from the final parts of the book series, where the heroes are locked in battle with various antagonists. Olver plays a critical role in this final part of the story, as he summons legendary warriors from history to fight against evil by sounding a magical horn.





Credit: Keith Saunders

David Rowden

Guest Musician

Clarinet | Artistic Director, Omega Ensemble

David Rowden is an internationally recognised professional clarinetist based in Sydney. With a career spanning 20 years, David has performed in the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, South Korea, China, the USA, Australia, and New Zealand. David's playing has attracted excellent reviews from the press: his performances have been described as displaying "superb technique and artistry" (Limelight Magazine, 2018), and as being "expressive, accurate and nuanced" (International Clarinet Association, 2016).

After studying at the Royal Academy of Music in London (2001-2005), David founded the Omega Ensemble, a leading Australian chamber music organisation that presents classical music for a contemporary Australia. David is currently Artistic Director of the organisation and over the past 18 years has initiated the commissioning and performance of over 60 new works for the Ensemble by composers including: Nico Muhly, Christopher Cerrone, Caroline Shaw, Gabriel Prokofiev, Ross Edwards AM, Elena Kats-Chernin AM, Lou Bennett AM, and Carl Vine AO.

In 2016, David was awarded an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM) for his significant contribution to the music profession.

David's career has included performing solo, chamber and orchestral repertoire in prestigious venues and festivals worldwide including the Sydney Opera House, City Recital Hall (Sydney), Castlemaine Festival (Victoria), Newcastle Art Gallery, the Melbourne Recital Centre as well as at Juilliard School of Music (New York), the Royal Albert Hall (London) and the Beijing Central Conservatory (China). David's performances are featured regularly on ABC Classic radio station broadcast nationally.

In 2001, David was offered scholarships to study at the Royal Academy of Music, the Guildhall and the Royal College of Music. On completion of his degree at the Royal Academy of Music, David won the coveted Geoffrey Hawkes Prize for Clarinet Performance in 2004. David has studied with world-leading clarinet soloists and awarded scholarships to attend summer schools at the Longy School of Music, (Boston), Accademia Musicale Chigiana (Siena), Academie de Villecroze (France) and Pacific Music Festival (Japan).

David's career as a solo performer and chamber artist has included collaborations with artists including William Barton (didgeridoo/composer), Emma Matthews (soprano), and Paul Meyer (conductor/clarinet).

Richard Bonynge Ensemble

Established in 2021, Richard Bonynge Ensemble has the goal of enriching the community through music. The Ensemble performs a wide variety of repertoire, from well-known pieces, long-forgotten works deserving revival and new works from local emerging composers.

Through the integration of experienced musicians and mentors alongside young, talented instrumentalists, the ensemble aims to create its own distinctive style, and unique culture and to train the next generation of classical musicians.

Comprising some of the finest young talents in Penrith, the Richard Bonynge Ensemble gives serious and skilled early career musicians the opportunity to work with industry professionals through workshops and mentoring sessions, and to collaborate with professional chamber ensembles to develop their performance and musicianship skills.



Flute / Artistic Director
Brian Kjim



Piano
Logan Chen



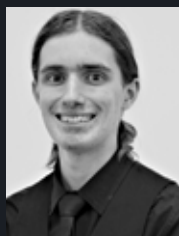
Violin
Hugh Matthews



Violin
Hamish Wright



Viola
India Culey



Cello
Flynn Starr



Horn
Jonathan Vardouniotis

Acknowledgement

David Boyce, Peter Clark, Cath Dadd, Kate Delkou, Angela Heckenberg, Dominic Lui, Lauren Nash, Alexander Poirier, Krissie Scudds, Valda Silvy, Shand Smith, Eugenie Tamplon, Malvina Tan, Haydn Vredegoor, Fleur Wells.

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