AUSTRALIAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA
WITH KARIN SCHAUPP

THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER, 7PM
ELISABETH MURDOCH HALL,
MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE

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THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER, 7PM
ELISABETH MURDOCH HALL, MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE

Australian Youth Orchestra

Fabian Russell CONDUCTOR
Karin Schaupp GUITAR

PÄRT Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten

EDWARDS Veni Creator Spiritus
Yena Choi, Yuhki Mayne, Isabel Hede, Hayato Simpson, violin
Charlotte Fetherston, Cameron Campbell, viola
Daniel Smith, Timmothy Oborne, cello

SCULTHORPE Nourlangie: for solo guitar, strings and percussion
Karin Schaupp, guitar

- INTERVAL -

BARTÓK Music for strings, percussion and celeste

No filming or photography permitted during the concert
*This concert will be streamed via YouTube and broadcast live by ABC Classic FM

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Eliza McCracken, 2014 AYO Participant
AUSTRALIAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Since its first performance in 1957, the Australian Youth Orchestra has performed in some of the world’s most prestigious concert halls and festivals, fulfilling the role of cultural ambassador for Australia on no fewer than 21 international tours across Europe, Asia and America.

Orchestra members are selected through a highly competitive annual audition process and represent the best young musical talent in the nation. The orchestra regularly attracts superlatives from the ranks of the international music press, confirming its high standing throughout the world. Geoff Brown of The Times, said of the AYO’s performance at the Proms in 2010:

A succulent refinement of tone and touch, an adult grasp of emotions and cultural worlds usually thought beyond any teenager; in any hemisphere.

The Australian Youth Orchestra has worked with some of the world’s leading conductors and soloists including Sir Charles Mackerras, Christoph Eschenbach, violinist Joshua Bell, Sir Mark Elder, Simone Young, and soprano Lisa Gastein.

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Today, more than 65% of musicians working in Australian orchestras are AYO alumni and countless AYO alumni are members of the finest professional orchestras worldwide.

FIRST VIOLIN
Yena Choi Concertmaster
Victoria Bihun
Isabel Hede
Sunkyoung Kim
Liam Oborne
Benjamin Tjpa
Lillian So
Julianna Kim

SECOND VIOLIN
Yuhki Mayne Principal
Hayato Simpson
Flora Wong
Ben Spiers
Jenna Cholim Park
Jasmin Parkinson-Stewart
Hannah Walters
Molly Collier-O’Boyle

VIOLA
Charlotte Fetherston Principal
Cameron Campbell
Angela Huang
Anthony De Battista
Vanity Brockman
Madeleine Coco

CELLO
Daniel Smith Principal
Timmothy Oborne
Jovan Pantelich
Gemma Tomlinson

DOUBLE BASS
Jaan Pallandi Principal
Christopher Bainbridge

PERCUSSION
Robert Allan Principal
Stefania Kurniawan

TIMPANI
Hugh Tidy Principal

HARP
Melina van Leeuwen Principal

PIANO
Jacob Abela Principal

CELESTE
Cara Tran Principal
Fabian Russell was born in Sydney, Australia in 1968. In a career spanning over twenty five years he has established a significant career both in Australia and abroad as a conductor, orchestral musician, artistic director, soloist and teacher.

Since taking the decision in 2002 to become a professional conductor, whilst still a member of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Fabian has quickly become recognized as one of Australia’s leading conductors. He has been engaged to conduct many of Australia’s finest music organisations including the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Victorian Opera, Australian Youth Orchestra, Australian National Academy of Music, Orchestra Victoria, Sydney Symphony Sinfonia, Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, Melbourne Youth Orchestra, Melbourne Conservatorium of Music Symphony Orchestra, Monash Academy Orchestra, Queensland Youth Orchestra, Sydney Youth Orchestra, Darwin Symphony Orchestra, University of Tasmania Conservatorium Orchestra, Australian International Summer Orchestral Institute and AYO National Music Camp. He has collaborated with leading soloists including legendary American pianist Gary Graffman, Brett Dean, Richard Tognetti, Michael Kieran Harvey, Alexei Yemtsov and Kristian Winther.

Fabian has had a twenty year relationship with the Australian Youth Orchestra as a conductor and tutor. In his role as AYO Associate Conductor he has been engaged to prepare AYO in 18 seasons since 2003 including three international tours for various Guest Conductors including Lawrence Foster, Diego Masson, Benjamin Zander, Alexander Anissimov, Rossen Milanov, Alexander Shelley, John Nelson, Thomas Dausgaard, Simone Young; and most recently Christoph Eschenbach and soloist Joshua Bell. In 2013 he was Conductor in Residence at the AYO National Music Camp in Adelaide.

Fabian has received numerous prizes and awards including a nomination for a Green Room Award in 2009 for Music Direction in a new production of Stravinsky’s Soldier’s Tale by The Hayloft Project. He was awarded the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Elton John Scholarship in 1998, Equal 1st Prize in the Other Instruments Category of the Symphony Australia Young Performer Awards in 1997 and the Sir Winston Churchill Fellowship in 2011. He is an international adviser to the London based Australian Music Foundation.

2014 engagements include Victorian Opera, Australian Youth Orchestra, Monash Academy Orchestra, The Orchestra Project; and in December he will make his debut with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra and the Malaysian Philharmonic Youth Orchestra.
Karin Schaupp is one of the most outstanding guitarists on the international scene. She performs widely on the international stage as a recitalist, concerto soloist and festival guest, and has given countless recitals in Australia, Europe, Asia, the US, Mexico and Canada. Karin’s playing receives the highest acclaim from critics and audiences alike and she is held in great esteem by her peers worldwide. Her unique stage presence and magical, passionate playing have inspired several composers to write works especially for her.

Karin’s guitar training began at the age of five and she first performed in public the following year. While still in her teens she won prizes at international competitions in Lagonegro, Italy and Madrid, Spain, where she was also awarded the special competition prize for the Best Interpretation of Spanish Music. Taught almost exclusively by her guitarist mother, Isolde Schaupp, Karin completed her tertiary music studies at The University of Queensland with First Class Honours, a Masters degree and was the recipient of a University Gold Medal. In 2003 she was awarded the Music Council of Australia Freedman Fellowship in recognition of her achievements, and in 2013 was awarded the prestigious Music Fellowship (2014-2015) from the Australia Council for the Arts.

Karin has recorded an extensive discography for Warner Music International and ABC Classics. “Her acclaimed solo debut Soliloquy (1997) for Warner Music was praised by UK Classical Guitar Magazine as “a pace-setting performance in all respects…”. This was soon followed by the ARIA nominated bestseller Leyenda (Warner 1998), and then Evocation (Warner 2000), Dreams (ABC Classics 2004), Lotte’s Gift (ABC Classics 2007), and Cradle Songs (ABC Classics 2010). Her chamber music collaborations have also led to a number of recordings including three albums with the ARIA award winning ensemble Saffire, The Australian Guitar Quartet, a duo album with Genevieve Lacey (recorders), the ARIA nominated Fandango (ABC Classics 2011) with Finders Quartet and most recently the double ARIA nominated Songs of the Southern Skies (KIN 2012) with Australian songstress Katie Noonan.

Karin’s orchestral recordings include the award-winning world premiere recordings of Philip Bracanin’s Guitar Concerto (1995 with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra), which was written for her, and Ross Edwards’ Concerto for Guitar and Strings (2004 with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra). Karin has also recorded Peter Sculthorpe’s Nourlangie (2005) for guitar and orchestra with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and Spain (2009 ABC Classics) featuring works by Rodrigo, Bacarisse and Castelnuovo-Tedesco with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and the choir Cantillation. Gramophone Magazine (UK) praised the recording, saying “By combining the lapiadr precision of Williams with the expressiveness of Bream, Schaupp here brings us an Aranjuez fit to stand alongside the best of them…” In 2014, ABC Classics released Karin’s Mosaic: Australian Guitar Concertos album.

Karin has appeared live on television in many parts of the world: most notably performing solo to twenty million viewers and listeners in China, on the occasion of China Radio International’s 50th Anniversary celebrations and solo as part of a prestigious line-up of international artists in the opening Gala of the Goodwill Games, which was broadcast live on international television. She has also appeared on German, American and Canadian television and some of her Australian television appearances have resulted in an overwhelming response from viewers with record numbers of viewers calling in. Karin also plays regularly on radio, including numerous broadcasts of live recitals, as well as countless interviews and guest appearances.

Following training at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), The Australian Acting Academy, and most extensively, private tuition with Martin Challis, Karin has extended her performance activities to the theatrical stage. Combining her love of music and passion for acting, Karin starred in some 150 performances of Lotte’s Gift, a play written especially for Karin by David Williamson, Australia’s best-known and most prolific playwright. The work enjoyed its international premiere with a four-week season at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2009.

Other recent performance highlights include concerts with the London Philharmonic Orchestra (UK) in London’s Royal Festival Hall, the Springfield Symphony Orchestra (USA), the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and performances at the World Expo (Aichi, Japan), Hong Kong Arts Festival, and APEC Summit in Sydney, Australia, and her 2013 International Concert Season tour with Pavel Steidl for Musica Viva Australia.

Karin is on staff at The University of Queensland as a specialist teacher of guitar. She lives in Brisbane with her husband Giac and two young children.
One of Arvo Pärt’s shorter works, Cantus (1977) is nonetheless a complex response to the death of Benjamin Britten. For 40 years the Estonian Pärt was ‘shielded’ from many musical developments in the West by a repressive cultural policy enforced by Soviet authorities. As such Part only became aware of Benjamin Britten’s compositional style and techniques scant years before Britten’s death in 1976.

Though Britten was the impetus, the style of Cantus is most definitely Pärt’s own. Typical of the mystic minimalist form of which Pärt is arguably the greatest exponent, there is an ‘old’ feel to this composition. Part scholar Paul Hillier states that Pärt’s music reveals ‘a kinship with the likes of [early Renaissance composers] Ockeghem and Josquin’, both in its spiritual nature and in its technical organisation (long lines of melody revealing passing passages of unity and dissonance). Major works that reveal Part’s interest in his Orthodox heritage and the melodies and modes from the church include his Symphony No.3 (1971) and Credo (1968).

Also inherent in Part’s compositions, and strongly linked to the spiritual, is his use of bells, both literally and harmonically: literally in pieces such as De profundis (1980) and Cantus, and harmonically in his mimicking of bells and/or their harmonic series to create a tintinnabular style.

The ‘melody’ of Cantus is essentially a slowly moving, at times almost glacially slow, descending scale on A minor (but, typical of Part, the scale is in its older sacred form, the Aeolian mode). The first violins begin in their highest register while the contra-basses (which enter several bars later) are confined to their lowest notes. As such, it is a piece of tonal extremes. All string sections are divided excepting the violas, which seem to play a different role, adding a fifth contrasting harmonic voice to the mix of the surrounding strings. The addition of the tolling bell takes the work to a higher level that Paul Hillier describes as one of ‘ineffable sadness’ – bringing to mind the ending of a funeral rite.

Pärt has said of the genesis of Cantus:

In the past years we have had many losses in the world of music to mourn. Why did the date of Benjamin Britten’s death – December 4, 1976 – touch such a chord in me? During this time I was obviously at the point where I could recognise the magnitude of such a loss. Inexplicable feelings of guilt, more than that even, arose in me. I had just discovered Britten for myself. Just before his death I began to appreciate the unusual purity of his music – I had had the impression of the same kind of purity in the ballads of Guillaume de Machaut. And beside, for a long time I had wanted to meet Britten personally – and now it would not come to that.

Out of this ‘inexplicable feeling of guilt’ came one of Part’s greatest meditations on loss.
“Early in 1989, I made my first visit to Kakadu National Park. Flying over Nourlangie Rock, I could see across the great floodplains to the abandoned remains of early white settlement, to the Arafura Sea and, in my imagination, to Torres Strait and even the islands of Indonesia. The music of these places, and of Kakadu itself, fused in my mind. It was inevitable that I should write a piece about Nourlangie. The work is more concerned with my feelings about the place than with a physical description of it. While writing it, I often dreamed of a lost guitar in the sea, lying there since the time, in 1606, when a Spanish expedition led by Luis Váz de Torres sailed through waters to the north.”

- Peter Sculthorpe

As Sculthorpe explained, “Basically Nourlangie consists of an alternation of two ideas”, one chromatic and mysterious, the other straightforwardly diatonic. The first of these, as its appears in the short, nunnous opening chorale passage (Poco misterioso), is a repeating sequence of slow string chords, later reworked in various guises to produce most of the work’s minor-sounding music, fast and slow. By contrast, the major-sounding diatonic second theme is modelled to resemble a typical Torres Strait Island dance song (a case of generic imitation, rather than literal dependence on an actual Indigenous model). According to Sculthorpe, it “almost always takes the form of a somewhat ecstatic melody”, and as first introduced by the guitar (Calmo) it is accompanied by the composer’s trademark shimmering gong rolls and flocking bird sounds from the strings. The minor-sounding first theme returns transformed into a fast ostinato (Risoluto), the guitar dryly accompanied by bongos (each with its own ostinato pattern), later joined by the strings pizzicato. This is followed seamlessly by a repeat of the major theme by the violins in an almost disembodied pianissimo with the guitar accompanying (Poco estatico). As repeated, however, the theme is subsumed within an intensifying texture in which the soloist’s pattern-making gradually comes to the fore. At the half-way point of the work, the chromatic theme returns in its original slow setting (Misterioso), though now in a more extended dream-like treatment, the chorale-like chords now in the guitar (as if “lost … in the sea”) with a chromatically spiraling counterpoint for the violins, leading into a shimmer of flocking bird sounds. By degrees, the answering second idea (Estatico) returns as if from afar (Lontano), before a roulade from the bongos (movimento per meta) builds to a sizzling but, in the event, fleeting climax. And while the luminous close recalls the mood of the work’s mysterious opening, the pitch material is finally serenely diatonic.

Program note by Graeme Skinner © 2014
The second half of the 1930s saw the most productive years of Bartók’s career as a composer: orchestral works alone from this time include the Second Violin Concerto, the Divertimento and, arguably his masterpiece, the *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste* of 1936. Most of Bartók’s output at this time arose from specific commissions, and the *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste* was commissioned by the legendary Paul Sacher. Sacher was at once a philanthropist, personally commissioning a Who’s Who of early to mid 20th-century composers, and a conductor who gave many of the resulting works’ first performances. His commission for the *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste* was to celebrate the tenth anniversary of his Basle Chamber Orchestra, which gave the work’s premiere in January 1937. It rapidly established itself as a modern classic, receiving numerous performances within the next two years even in Germany, where Bartók was officially out of favour.

The title of the work doesn’t give much away: between them, strings and percussion include piano and harp as well as a varied number of percussion instruments including the celeste. The disposition of the orchestra, moreover, is unusual for its time. The strings are symmetrically arranged, allowing for antiphonal (or ‘stereo’) effects, with the other instruments taking literal centre stage. Symmetry also informs the musical content of the piece. The first movement, for instance, is a *fugato*: the sinuous opening theme is stated unaccompanied, and successive parts restate it in progressively more distant keys as the music develops into a richly complex texture. Originally muted, the string tone gradually increases in strength until the movement’s climax (where other instruments are finally introduced). The opening theme of the movement pivots on the note A; the climax is achieved by a string unison E flat. In terms of the grammar of tonal music, this is as far from A as one can get, and from this point Bartók creates the illusion of the music’s going backwards, to coalesce once more on A.

The apparently symmetrical shape of the opening movement is, of course, illusory. Music can’t go backwards, as it unfolds in time. But the proportions of the music give that impression. It used to be thought that Bartók used a mathematical sequence known as the Fibonacci series to map out the distance between significant musical events and thus create the satisfying proportions of such movements. A similar mathematical ratio underpins the rhythm of the famous xylophone solo at the beginning of the third movement. There is little evidence, however, that Bartók did consciously use these calculations, but his instinct was sure.

Versions of the first movement’s opening theme also appear in the succeeding three movements. In the vigorous second movement it appears disguised in the second theme we hear; it acts as a bridge between episodes in the mysterious, and characteristically Bartókian, ‘night music’ of the third. In the final movement, the theme appears in a striking passage, its intervals adjusted to produce a sense of spacious, stable consonance. And therein lies one key to this extraordinary piece: it traces a simple journey, via sound-worlds of amazing variety, from instability to radiant concord. Symmetry is only half the story.

Indeed this music thrives also on asymmetry, not just in its overall trajectory but in certain details. Bartók, along with his friend and colleague Zoltán Kodály, was a pioneer in recording and notating the fast disappearing folk musics of Eastern Europe. From 1934 Bartók pursued this work on a full-time basis at the Budapest Academy of Sciences. At the time of the *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste*, Bartók was at work on music collected in Turkey; a few years earlier he had intensively researched Bulgarian music. The influence on his own work can’t be overstated, particularly in his use of irregular or compound rhythms, and the constant variation of material. The inexorable *fugato* theme in the first movement is actually of remarkable elasticity; the asymmetrical rhythmic motifs which power the faster movements of the work are likewise derived from folk music. The abstract nature of the title and the work’s astounding structural complexity aside, the *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste* is a deeply humanist document.

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