



THE ST GEORGE'S COLLEGE CONCERT SERIES

PORTRAITS OF UWA

3:30PM-5:15PM SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2014

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE CONCERT SERIES

In a joint initiative between the University of Western Australia and St George's College, the College has become a venue for high quality ongoing classical and other musical programs. The Concert Series continues throughout the year and is designed to take full advantage of our Fazioli piano and the amazing talent within the College and the broader UWA and Perth arts communities. Concerts take place in the Hackett Dining Hall, Chapel and Quadrangle.

We provide to our neighbours and friends the opportunity to be involved in and to attend many of the activities and events we have scheduled throughout the year. These events are in a variety of formats; our music program is an outstanding example of a way to become involved. Our friends are also encouraged to enjoy our grounds and buildings and introduce them to guests and visitors. Friends are welcome to attend our regular Fireside Chats and the concerts within the Music Program.

You can view our upcoming events at www.stgeorgescollege.uwa.edu.au.

UPCOMING



UWA SUMMER MUSIC ACADEMY

8-12 DECEMBER

The UWA School of Music and St George's College have created the Summer Music Academy as an exciting opportunity for young West Australian and Asian region musicians to reside at the College whilst enjoying intensive orchestral, band, keyboard and choral training, in addition to general musicianship skills and a number of recreational activities in a world class setting. Admissions close Monday 17 November 2014.

AUTUMN SERIES

MARCH 2015

The College's Concert Series will resume early next year in the Autumn. The details of the series will be made available on the College's website in the coming months. If you wish to be notified via email, please contact admin@stgeorgescollege.uwa.edu.au to be added to our mailing list.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

St George's College would like to thank and acknowledge every performer for kindly donating their time to rehearse and perform today's program.

STRING ORCHESTRA

Conductor: Raymond Yong

Violin I: Jasmin Parkinson-Stewart (*leader*),
Julia Nicholls,
Louise May

Violin II: Sarah Pappa,
Marissa Loh

Viola: Eunise Cheng,
Theo Triantos

Cello: Osborn Fong,
Olivia Thorne

Double Bass: Ebony Lim

SOLOISTS

Bass Clarinet: Ashley Smith

Piano: Adam Pinto

Violin: Paul Wright

Cello: Jeremy Huynh

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographer: Michael Grebla

Assistant: Justin Kruger

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Michael wishes to personally thank and acknowledge:

Dr. Christopher Tonkin and James Ledger for their direction, guidance and support in composition and many other areas over the past six years.

Dr. Victoria Rogers for her assistance in the presentation of this concert program and continued support in his research endeavours

The Warden of St George's College, Ian Hardy, for the use of St George's College and affording him the latitude and support to coordinate the College's music program.

His family.

CONCERT PROGRAM

PORTRAITS OF UWA

COMPOSED BY MICHAEL GREBLA

Portraits for Solo Cello

- i. Orbicular Granitoid Fountain
- ii. The Reflection Pond

Performed by Jeremy Huynh

Portraits for Solo Piano

- i. The Moreton Bay Fig
- ii. Youth

Performed by Adam Pinto

Interval
(20 min)

(please enjoy the exhibit of photography)

Bayreuth Nostalgia (arranged for string orchestra)

Conducted by Raymond Yong

Portraits for String Orchestra & Soloist

Conducted by Raymond Yong

- i. Elegy for a Duck for bass clarinet

Performed by Ashley Smith

- ii. Andrew the Peacock for violin

Performed by Paul Wright

END



Michael Grebla
(b.1989)

THE COMPOSER

Michael is a young, Perth born composer who has always had a strong affinity for music, pursuing piano and voice from a young age through to high school. Michael could be seen singing leads in high school musicals such as Jesus Christ Superstar and the Producers, or playing Beethoven piano sonatas at competitions. Enthralled by the way in which composers were able to share such powerful ideas in the music he performed, he had always hoped to compose his own music and do the same.

It was not until coming to UWA that Michael would act on this desire. Following some encouraging words in the second year of his Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Engineering degree from the head of composition at the University, Dr. Christopher Tonkin, and the course adviser for music, Dr David Symons, Michael left his chemistry studies behind and commenced studies in music in 2009.

(Continued...)

THE COMPOSER

(Continued...) While at UWA, he has studied composition under the tutelage of Dr. Christopher Tonkin and James Ledger. In this time he has received a range of commissions, including from the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research, St George's College, the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery and The Richard Wagner Society of WA.

In mid-2010, Michael became a resident of St George's College to better enable participation in his music studies. His decision to move to the College would prove to be a defining moment in his life. Michael was the College's J M Wolff Music Scholar from 2011 to 2013. In 2011 he was awarded the Bayreuth Scholarship by the University on behalf of The Richard Wagner Society of Western Australia. Michael became the coordinator of the St George's College music program which he - with the support of the College - established in early 2013. This was marked by the acquisition of a Fazioli 278 concert grand piano, the foundation of a high quality concert series, and a formal partnership with the UWA School of Music. In 2014 Michael was appointed Director of Music at the College and was the recipient of the inaugural Knight Family Scholarship and the Warden's Bursary. Michael was awarded the 2014 Victorian Georgians' Travel Bursary, spending the winter break laying the foundations for a national intercollegiate piano competition with eastern states colleges. Michael's achievements and contributions to the University were recently recognised with UWA Convocation's prestigious Bryant Stokes Matilda Award for Cultural Excellence in Music.

Michael complements his studies and composition pursuits by operating "Grebla Media," a small business that provides freelance photography, sound production and videography services to Perth musicians and arts organisations.

This afternoon's concert marks the end of Michael's undergraduate studies at UWA and his first composition recital. Following the completion of his bachelor degrees, Michael hopes to complete a master's degree in composition at the University before looking overseas to pursue further postgraduate study.

PORTRAITS OF UWA

(Notes from the composer)

'Portraits of UWA' is a creative project I decided to undertake for my honours recital in composition under the extensive supervision of Dr. Christopher Tonkin. The project explores various aspects of my interactions with The University of Western Australia. This includes the architecture, culture, grounds, and wildlife through a collection of musical works and accompanying photographic exhibits.

Oddly enough, the idea for this project came about when contemplating a potential topic for my engineering research thesis in acoustics. My engineering supervisor challenged me to create a method or program that could be used to change an image into a piece of music, and a piece of music into an image. Having arrived late for lunch one afternoon, I was left eating on my own in the dining hall, and with the challenge fresh in my mind I stared at the portrait of Sir John Winthrop Hackett above the fireplace and thought, "how could I make this painting into a piece of music?" The problem proved beyond my comprehension as an engineer, and though it did not eventuate into an engineering research project, it proved an interesting challenge for a composer. This triggered the broader idea for creating a series of musical and photographic portraits in the spirit of the University's recent centenary.

The six portraits in the suite represent my experience and interactions with various aspects of the University over the course of my eight years as a student since 2007. The suite can roughly be divided into three sets; two works for solo cello concerning still and moving water features of the Crawley campus; two works for solo piano exploring the connection between the old and historic, and the young and dynamic; and two works for string orchestra and soloist about birds native to the campus. Unlike the two sets for cello and piano, the set of works for string orchestra and soloist share no musical or metaphoric relation.



The set of accompanying photographic portraits were taken at the Crawley campus of the University in the spring of 2014. Each photographic portrait was taken during the composition of each musical portrait. This allowed a large amount of creative exchange between photographic and musical composition; aspects of the music could influence the composition of the photograph, and some photographic phenomena (such as long exposure photography) would make clear possibilities for musical exploitation. In this sense, the music and photographs may be considered as two interdependent and complementary halves of an artistic experience. For this reason, the photographic and musical portraits are intended to be experienced simultaneously.

On the following pages are more comprehensive explanations of each individual portrait.



Portraits for Solo Cello

I. ORBICULAR GRANITOID FOUNTAIN

The Orbicular Granitoid Fountain is located between the University's Computer Science and Geology buildings and is made of orbicular granitoid rock sourced from Mount Magnet in Western Australia, where it occurs in a small area on Boogardie Station. It consists of a large spinning orb of granite suspended on a bed of water.

The work 'Orbicular Granitoid Fountain' emulates my own interaction with the orb, casting attention to different aspects of the orb's behaviour and beauty. The orb is always in motion, glittering with a thin reflective film of water atop the polished stone. Similarly, the rhythm of the cello is fast-moving and relatively constant. Interactions with the orb such as touching it may cause it to slow down, speed up, stop, or change direction. This interruption of momentum is translated musically through the augmentation of tempo. Variations in surface texture and colour in the granite dictate the harmonic colours of the work.

Furthermore, if you observe a single point on the orb you can see the veins of granite change from light to dark, interspersed with large drops of glittering silver ore. As the work progresses, more attention is given to the colours of the reflections in the thin film of water atop the granite. These reflections are linked to the natural harmonics of the cello due to their sharp and shimmering sound. Eventually, even the motion of the orb is ignored, and attention is given only to the reflections as you try to touch the sky and watch the water crest around your finger.

This work was first performed at a College dinner for the Chancellor of the University (a former geologist) in September 2013. Soon after, it was performed publicly in the 'St George's College 2013 Spring Festival'.



Portraits for Solo Cello

II. THE REFLECTION POND

“The Reflection Pond” provides a very static contrast to the turbulent “Orbicular Granitoid Fountain.” Naturally reflections are much more prominent in the pond than in the orb fountain as the water is less turbulent. The beauty of the pond lies not just in the quality of its reflections, but in how susceptible these reflections are to disturbances in the water’s surface. It is possible to watch a disturbance such as a pebble or duck landing create ripples which spread to the edge of the pond, reflect inward and so on until they vanish. In effect, the water experiences multiple instances of reflection: the reflection of light from its surface and also the effect of waves and disturbances reflected within the pond.

I found these ideas of reflection to be an interesting premise for exploration on the cello. The work relies entirely on the open strings of the cello and natural harmonics of each string, that is the string is forced to vibrate in different ways without the length of the string being changed. Musically the reflection of light from water is likened to different modes of vibrations or natural harmonics acting atop an open string, just as we see both the water, and a reflection in the water. The cellist then alternates between open strings and harmonics at varying speeds during the piece, just as ripples of varying magnitude move through the water, occasionally even obscuring the reflection.

Reflection also underpins the form of the piece. The work starts at the bottom of the cello, close to the bridge on its highest string and over time progresses across the four strings to the lowest string. The bottom C string then acts as a point of reflection as the cellist jumps to the other end of the instrument and works their way back up to the top A string. Similarly, the dynamics take their cue from the varying intensity of the sun arching over the pond during the day, creating soft reflections in the early morning, hard reflections by midday and soft reflections again in evening.



Portraits for Solo Piano

I. THE MORETON BAY FIG

Dedicated to the Knight family

I recall arriving at University as a freshman every morning at 7:30am for my 8:00am mathematics lectures. I always enjoyed the walk from the University bus stop to the Alexander lecture theatre in Arts, though most particularly I enjoyed the way the morning sun would light up the Moreton Bay fig tree as I passed under its branches. It was by far one of the largest and most expansive trees I had ever seen. I was fascinated by the vastness of its branches and how each branch would divide in two so clearly. Every morning as I walked under the tree, it would occur to me how many generations of busy young students have passed under this tree and how many future generations will also pass under this tree which appears stationary yet grows ever so slowly.

'The Moreton Bay Fig' was written as the first movement in a set of two piano portraits. This work is the static, slow-growing counterpoint to 'Youth,' the chaotic and energetic second movement. 'The Moreton Bay Fig' borrows from the melodic material of 'Youth' while also using the idea of 'branching' as a governing mechanism for organic growth, progression and form. From each melodic branch shoots another, and another and so on until the work reaches a critical number of branches such that no individual melodic line is discernible amongst the vast amount of overlapping. Eventually, these branches terminate in leaves which fall from the tree. This is represented musically by a tripletted figure which slowly dissolves the dense melodic texture.

Portraits for Solo Piano

II. YOUTH

(Commissioned by St George's College 2013)

Dedicated to the Knight family

"Youth" was commissioned by St George's College and first performed by Adam Pinto to celebrate the acquisition of the College's Fazioli concert grand piano, and the commencement of the College's concert series in 2013. As youth is the central focus of the St George's College Concert Series, I thought it fitting to compose a musical tribute to it. The piece embodies the same hope, excitement and optimism associated with youth that underscored the commencement and future of the concert series.

My secondary objective was to write a work that would demonstrate the unique capabilities and features of the piano. Faziolis are renowned for their crisp touch, rich resonance, tone and long sustain. Youth specifically exploits these resources.

Though the substance of this work predates the conception of the "Portraits of UWA" suite, it is in essence a musical portrait of the bright young student minds at the University and has since been revised. 'Youth' is an abrupt musical contrast to the 'The Moreton Bay Fig'. The work is driven forward by a perpetuum mobile, a rapid ticking fabric of clustered notes from which melodic fragments increasingly stated plainly and with confidence (though also flippantly at times). Triplet material is borrowed from the first movement later during the work, alluding to a metaphoric connection between the fabrics of the University and constitution of its students.

I wish to dedicated these two works for piano to the Knight Family in recognition of their support of the College's music program and as a token of my appreciation for their generosity in supporting my residency at the College.



Portraits for String Orchestra and Soloist

I. ELEGY FOR A DUCK

(Commissioned by the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery)

I have always considered wildlife to be a large component of the University's aesthetic appeal and charm. The presence of ducks in Crawley predates the foundation of the University and colonisation of Western Australia.

'Elegy for a Duck' recounts the profound feeling of disappointment, sadness and shame I experienced witnessing the death of a campus duck. It was early on a winter afternoon and as I stepped out for a run, I noticed a duck sitting on the side of Mounts Bay Road. I thought it an odd place for a duck to sit and took a closer look. The faint trail of blood stretching from the roadside and the duck's very visible short breathing made it clear that it was injured. It didn't appear particularly panicked, and was likely unable to comprehend that its wing had been clipped by a car. A colleague and I secured the duck for transport and made our way to the emergency vet clinic. As we made our way to the clinic, the duck's breathing changed. It would breathe faster and deeper with increasing desperation, followed by increasingly extended periods of breathless silence. My colleague, a medical student, explained that the duck was exhibiting 'Cheyne-Stokes respiration,' a cycle of breathing symptomatic of a terminal condition. I'd realised I had witnessed this process before. As the silence between breaths grew longer, I would wait anxiously for the next breath, not knowing if it was to be the last. The duck took its final breath in my lap two minutes from the clinic. Its passing stirred a chilling realisation: while this might be the first duck I had seen die as a result of our way of life, it was not the first, and it likely will not be the last.

'Elegy for a Duck' is a very literal representation of this experience. The bass clarinetist musically mimics the duck as it begins to exhibit Cheyne-Stokes respiration, taking increasingly exaggerated breaths between increasingly desperate melodic gestures. Large gaps of breathless silence between phrases are narrated by a simple string accompaniment echoing my own feelings of fright and despair on the drive to the vet.

This work existed first as a commission for solo bass clarinet by the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery's 'Memento Mori' (Remembering Death) exhibit in October 2014 under the title "Cheyne-Stokes."





Portraits for String Orchestra and Soloist

II. ANDREW THE PEACOCK

'Andrew' was the name of one of the original peacocks to colonise the Arts Faculty building in the '70s. Sadly, after some thirty years, Andrew passed away. Fortunately his legacy still lives on with Alistair the peacock featured in the image above, and I wrote this work to pay tribute to this unique UWA presence.

Generally speaking, I find peacocks are funny creatures. I recall hearing loud 'meow' like sounds in my morning maths lectures in Alexander Lecture Theatre in first year. I thought it odd that there were so many loud cat-like calls, yet I had not seen any cats in the area. It would take several weeks before I would realise the sounds were actually from peacocks. They would remain hidden for most of the early morning, contently perched on the rails of the New Fortune Theatre interrupting lecturers with their calls.

Having had more time to become better acquainted, I noticed some very interesting qualities of the peacock that lend to musical possibilities. When the peacocks are not flaunting their feathers, they are not impressive. I would even go as far as to say that they appear quite unprepossessing and a little bit awkward. Strutting one foot at a time- pause-head turns left- then right - then forward- then right, then another step. We see a very different side to the peacock, however, when it fan its feathers, suddenly it becomes a beautiful majestic creature, its movements appear far more fluid and a loud array of sharply contrasting feathers catch the eye of passers.

Musically, I understand the peacock to be a creature which oscillates between either 'avirtuosic' or 'virtuosic' behaviour. Many of these avirtuosic traits occur in the first section of "Andrew the Peacock." Jerky staccato rhythms, plucked strings, apparently random pitches and abrupt silences create a general air of unremarkable awkwardness as Andrew struts along. As the piece progresses, we see more and more of the peacock's virtuosity. As his feathers fan and shake, the violinist exhibits a variety of virtuosic and lush gestures as it moves through an ear catching variety of sharply contrasting harmonic and stylistic worlds with the orchestra. The work is interspersed with flamboyant impromptu cadenzas in which the behaviour of the violin can be described in no way other than shamelessly 'peacocking.'

BAYREUTH NOSTALGIA

(Commissioned by the Richard Wagner Society of Western Australia Inc.)

Bayreuth Nostalgia was commissioned in 2013 by the Richard Wagner Society of Western Australia Inc. as the opening work for Wagner's 200th birthday concert 'Wagner by the Swan.' Bayreuth Nostalgia attempts to recreate the sensation of nostalgia when reminiscing about my time at the Bayreuth Festival in Germany, where I attended five consecutive Wagner operas courtesy of the Wagner Society and The University of Western Australia. The piece is constructed entirely from parts of melodic material of the 'pilgrims' theme from Wagner's opera Tannhäuser. Attending the Bayreuth Festival in 2011 was a milestone in my life, and it was by chance when writing the work that I stumbled onto a recording of Tannhäuser for the first time since seeing the opera there. Within the first four notes I was transported right back into my cramped little seat with the lights dimmed, waiting with anticipation for the opera to begin.

The work was originally written for an ensemble of brass, though for today's performance it has been revised for string orchestra. At its first performance, critic Neville Cohen described the work as "a benediction on the afternoon." While this work is not a portrait of UWA, it is a work that has come about from a once in a lifetime experience granted to me by the University, and I felt it appropriate to include the work for this reason.

(Here end notes from the composer)



THE PERFORMERS

JEREMY HUYNH (CELLO) - Jeremy Huynh began his musical studies at the age of 4 with the piano, before starting to learn cello at the age of 8. An avid chamber musician, Jeremy was a founding member of the Apollo String Quartet which was established in 2011, and was invited to perform with the Australian String Quartet in Adelaide as part of the 2013 'Quartet Project'. As a soloist he performed the Dvorak Cello Concerto with the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra in 2013, and has played in masterclasses with international cellists such as Steven Isserlis and Jian Wang. Jeremy completed his Diploma of Music at UWA in 2012 and is currently in his 5th and final year of Engineering and Commerce at UWA.

ADAM PINTO (PIANO) - As a pianist and composer Adam travels regularly to perform throughout Australia and internationally. He performs as a chamber musician and a sought after associate-artist, playing with some of the world's leading concert soloists and as a soloist himself. He has been privileged to perform in many International Arts Festivals including the Perth International Arts Festival, The Totally Huge New Music Festival, The World Saxophone Congress, The Government House Ballroom series and The Port Fairy Spring Classical Music Festival.

In Perth he performs as an orchestral pianist and accompanist with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and in Etica new music ensembles. He has recorded several CDs and with the ABC. His keen interest in new music has seen him premiere and record works by more than thirty Australian composers. As a composer himself he has had works published for solo instruments, including a series of piano tutor books through to pieces for large ensembles and band. As an examiner for the A.M.E.B. and a tutor at UWA, he has been invited to adjudicate in festivals and eisteddfods and to deliver master classes across Australia.



THE PERFORMERS

ASHLEY SMITH (BASS CLARINET) - Described as “Incandescent... a masterly display of skill and insight... as an apologist for contemporary music-making, you would search hard to find this young clarinettist’s equal” (The Age), clarinettist Ashley William Smith has emerged as one of Australia’s most internationally-demanded young musicians. A current Churchill Fellow, Ashley is a laureate of two of Australia’s most prestigious prizes for classical musicians: the 2012 Music Council of Australia Freedman Fellowship and the ABC Symphony International Young Performer Award (other instrument category). Ashley is currently an Assistant Professor at The University of Western Australia where he is the Head of Woodwind and Contemporary Performance.

Internationally, Ashley has performed throughout the USA and Asia including performances with Bang on a Can, the Chamber Music Society of the Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center and the Beijing Modern Music Festival. In 2014 Ashley’s international engagements have included performances in the USA with Chamber Music Northwest. Domestically Ashley has performed as a soloist with several of Australia’s major orchestras. In 2014 he appeared as a soloist with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra in a new concerto by Lachlan Skipworth.

Ashley is a Fellow of the Australian National Academy of Music and a graduate of The University of Western Australia and Yale University. At each institution Ashley received prizes as the most outstanding performance graduate.

PAUL WRIGHT (VIOLIN) - Adelaide-born Paul Wright began violin studies with Lyndall Hendrickson at the age of 8, and three years later was awarded a place at the Yehudi Menuhin School in England. He went on to study at the Guildhall School in London, after which he was accepted as a student at the Juilliard School in New York, where he studied under Ivan Galamian.

He has performed with many orchestras and ensembles in Australia and America as a director, soloist or concertmaster, including the Australian String Quartet, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble of the Classic Era, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and the West Australian Symphony Orchestra.

(Continued...)

THE PERFORMERS

(Continued...) Paul spent 2009-2010 as resident teacher and chamber music coach at the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne. Upon his return to Perth in 2011, Paul was appointed Winthrop Professor at UWA, a position he still holds. During 2014, Paul is performing as guest concertmaster with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra under the incoming chief conductor, Asher Fisch.

RAYMOND YONG (CONDUCTOR) - Raymond Yong was born in Melacca, Malaysia, emigrating with his family to Australia at the age of two. He began performing regularly in public piano recitals from an early age and has since gained widespread recognition as a pianist around Australia, performing in solo recitals, concertos with orchestras, and chamber music concerts with some of Australia's finest musicians and ensembles. Raymond has been engaged as a piano concerto soloist with many of the major orchestras of Australia, including the Sydney Symphony, Melbourne Symphony, West Australian Symphony and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras. His performances have been regularly broadcast on the ABC Classic FM network. He studied piano at The University of Western Australia under Mark Coughlan and at The University of Melbourne under Stephen McIntyre. A German government grant led to three years of study at the Hannover University of Music and Drama under Karl-Heinz Kaemmerling. Raymond Yong has also been a guest lecturer, piano teacher and examiner for the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and is currently Music Fellow in Residence at St George's College, University of Western Australia.





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