



Canberra
Symphony
Orchestra
2024

AUSTRALIAN SERIES

FIRST LIGHT

Welcome

Welcome to *First Light*.



It is our great pleasure to have our Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, Jessica Cottis, return to Canberra to conduct and present our final Australian Series for 2024.

We are grateful to our Cultural Partner, the National Museum of Australia, for hosting us in the stunning Gandel Atrium. Their support helps us amplify Australian voices and stories in this unique space.

Tonight's program delves into the profound and often poetic bond between artists and their creations. Jessica has thoughtfully curated an inspiring selection of contemporary Australian music, including the premiere of Natalie Williams' *Light Visions*.

If tonight's performance moves you, we invite you to join us in shaping the future of Australian music by contributing to the Australian Music Giving Circle. For more information on how you can get involved, please contact us via philanthropy@csso.org.au.

Rachel Thomas
Chief Executive Officer

Image: Martin Ollman

The Canberra Symphony Orchestra acknowledges the Ngunnawal people, traditional custodians of the land on which our concerts take place. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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FIRST LIGHT

AUSTRALIAN SERIES

6.30pm, Thursday 12 September 2024
National Museum of Australia

Jessica Cottis *Curator*

Doreen Cumming *Violin*

Sponsored by Prof Brian Anderson AC &
Dianne Anderson AM

Brad Tham *Violin*

Tahlia Petrosian *Viola*

Patrick Suthers *Cello*

Sponsored by Paul Lindwall & Joanne Frederiksen

Kiri Sollis *Flute*

Sponsored by Elspeth & Graham Humphries

Matthew O'Keeffe *Clarinets*

Veronica Bailey *Percussion*

Edward Neeman *Piano*

The Keyboard chair is sponsored by Anne Foote

Craig Greening *Electronics*

NARDI SIMPSON

Burruguu (2020) 5'

BREE VAN REYK

Light for the First Time (2017) 11'

NATALIE WILLIAMS

Light Visions (2024) 7'

World premiere, new CSO commission

LIZA LIM

The Heart's Ear (1997) 12'

** Timings are approximate*

A portrait of Jessica Cottis, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark blue blazer over a white collared shirt. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

Jessica Cottis

Curator

Jessica Cottis has earned widespread recognition for her inventive, thought-provoking programming and inspiring musical leadership. A gifted communicator, she is one of the most outstanding Australian conductors working today, in demand around the world.

Recent highlights include engagements with the London, Singapore, Sydney, and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestras; the Danish and Prague Radio Symphony Orchestras; the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; Royal Danish Opera; the Oslo and Los Angeles Philharmonics; the National Arts Centre Orchestra (Canada); National Symphony Orchestra Dublin; and Orchestre National de Bordeaux – as well as numerous invitations to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and the prestigious BBC Proms. Cottis has recorded for the BBC, ABC and Decca Classics labels.

In September 2023, Cottis assumed the role of Artistic Partner of the Västerås Sinfonietta in Sweden – and continued her third season as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra (CSO). Across 2023–24, Cottis also makes highly anticipated debuts with Opera Australia; Luxembourg Philharmonic; Melbourne Symphony Orchestra; and in Milan with Orchestra i Pomeriggi Musicali.

Under her visionary leadership, the CSO has delivered a significant commissioning output, collaborated with First Nations creators, and continued to champion Australian composers. Admired internationally for her deep musical curiosity and affinity for new music, Cottis also recently conducted critically acclaimed productions of Poul Ruder's *The Handmaid's Tale* (Royal Danish Opera) and John Adams' *The Death of Klinghoffer* (Norrlandsoperan), and was Music Director for the world premiere of Laura Bowler's *The Blue Woman* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Recently honoured with the titles of Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (London) and Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University School of Music, Cottis works widely as an advocate for classical music. She is a frequent contributor on BBC radio and television, commenting on a range of arts-related topics, from opera to architecture, synaesthesia, and acoustics.

www.jessicacottis.com

[@jessicacottis](https://www.instagram.com/jessicacottis)

Image: Martin Ollman

Doreen Cumming

Violin



Doreen Cumming started violin studies at the Canberra School of Music at six years of age, with renowned Julliard graduate Vincent Edwards.

Doreen went on to study with some of the country's finest

pedagogues including Charmian Gadd, Larry Sitsky AO FAHA and John Painter AM. She first appeared with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra (CSO) in 1984, at the age of 13.

Doreen has toured extensively, domestically and internationally, and has played with most of Australia's symphony orchestras, including holding a full-time position with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (TSO). She has also appeared many times with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Sydney Philharmonia and the Opera Australia Orchestra (OAO).

Doreen also studied conducting with TSO's chief conductor, David Porcelain. She has conducted the TSO, and toured and recorded for the ABC.

Doreen is Principal Second Violin with the CSO and second violin with Acacia Quartet. Doreen also performs regularly with TSO and OAO.

Image: Martin Ollman

Brad Tham

Violin



Brad is in his final year as a double degree student at The Australian National University (ANU), studying psychology and music. He is studying with Tor Frømyhr, Principal Viola of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra.

Hailing from the Central Coast in NSW, Brad has held several Concertmaster positions including with the Sydney Youth Orchestras, ANU Orchestra, ANU Chamber Orchestra and his hometown youth orchestra.

Brad has appeared across Canberra's music scene, including with Canberra Sinfonia, Canberra Bach Ensemble, Musica da Camera and Qwire, as well as at the Canberra International Music Festival (CIMF).

Brad is a Wesley Music Scholar, and, through the program's support, co-founded the Ellery String Quartet which is in its third year of running. Notable performances include appearances at the National Folk Festival and CIMF, as well as a concert under the stars atop Mount Stromlo.

Brad's current musical interests involve Early Music and neo-traditional folk. He hopes to continue exploring different genres.

Image: Mady Hall

Sponsored by Prof Brian Anderson AC &
Dianne Anderson AM

Tahlia Petrosian

Viola



Tahlia Petrosian enjoys a multi-faceted career as a soloist, chamber musician, director of KLASSIK underground, creative producer and member of the Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig.

As a soloist and chamber musician, Tahlia has

performed in Wigmore Hall, the Sydney Opera House, the Semperoper Dresden, the Berliner Philharmonie, the Gewandhaus Leipzig, at Tanglewood Music Center, and directly on 5th Avenue in New York. Her chamber music partners have included Leif Ove Andsnes, Joshua Bell, Gautier Capuçon, Leonidas Kavakos and Nikolaj Szeps-Znaider.

Tahlia's individual playing style has been recognised with awards from the Australia Council for the Arts, the Australian Music Foundation in London, the Paul Hindemith Gesellschaft in Berlin, the DAAD and the Dame Joan Sutherland Fund in New York. Tahlia has been a guest speaker at the Karajan Conference Salzburg, the ARTS + Conference in Frankfurt, the Avant Premiere Music and Media Market Vienna, the national Deutscher Orchestertag in Berlin and at the Edinburgh International Culture Summit.

Upcoming engagements include performing with the Australia Ensemble at UNSW and collaborations with both the Sydney and Melbourne Conservatoria as well as with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in the UK and the Colburn School in the US.

www.tahlia-petrosian.com

Image: Gert Mothes

Patrick Suthers

Cello



Patrick Suthers is the Principal Cellist of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra (CSO).

Patrick studied cello at the Australian National University's School of Music with David Pereira and Julian Smiles, graduating with

First Class Honours and a University Medal.

His musical training also included a Sydney Symphony Orchestra (SSO) Fellowship; as a Fellow, he worked regularly with the SSO and performed frequently with the SSO Fellowship Ensemble, including performances for Pope Benedict XVI. He also received tuition from the Takács Quartet, the Jerusalem Quartet, and visiting soloists.

Patrick's career has included extensive orchestral work, including with the Canberra, Sydney, Queensland (Associate Principal) and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras. He has also performed in a variety of chamber ensembles and orchestras; orchestras for opera, ballet and film scoring; and in music education concerts.

Since 2012, Patrick has been the Principal Cellist of the CSO and enjoyed a successful career in the Australian Public Service.

Image: Martin Ollman

Sponsored by Paul Lindwall & Joanne Frederiksen

Kiri Sollis

Flute



Kiri Sollis is a Canberra-based performer and teacher, specialising in piccolo and contemporary chamber music.

Kiri is flautist for The Griffyn Ensemble, one of Australia's most innovative chamber

groups. With Griffyn, Kiri has collaborated with leading musicians from around the world, including working in Scotland with the UK's Red Note Ensemble and hosting musicians from Sweden, Poland, the UK and China in Canberra. Kiri has performed over 50 Australian premieres and over 15 world premieres as a chamber musician and soloist.

Kiri has extensive experience as an educator and ensemble mentor. She currently teaches at the Australian National University's (ANU) School of Music and at Radford College.

Kiri has a Master of Music from the ANU and has been based in Canberra since 2005. In 2021, she was appointed Principal Flute of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra.

Image: Martin Ollman

Matthew O'Keeffe

Clarinets



Matt O'Keeffe studied Clarinet with Alan Vivian at the Australian National University in Canberra.

He made his international performance debut at St Martin-in-the-Fields in London and has given

lectures and performances focused on Australian music at institutions such as Kneller Hall, the Versailles Conservatoire and the Australasian Clarinet and Saxophone congress. He has performed at festivals throughout Australia and internationally including the Basel Tattoo (Switzerland), Castlemaine State Festival, Four Winds, the Adelaide Fringe Festival, National Folk Festival, the Canberra International Music Festival, the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, and has performed on Clarinet and Principal Bass Clarinet with the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra and the Canberra Symphony Orchestra. He has recorded for Tall Poppies, ABC Classics and Move Records labels.

Matt is currently a Major in the Australian Army and is the Officer Commanding and Music Director of the Band of the Royal Military College based in Canberra.

Sponsored by Elspeth & Graham Humphries

Veronica Bailey

Percussion



Veronica is Principal Percussionist with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra (CSO).

Veronica has a Bachelor of Music from the Australian National University (ANU), and a master's degree focusing on percussion pedagogy. She also studied at the

Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University in 2007.

Veronica is a passionate educator and has been the classical percussion teacher at the ANU School of Music since 2018 and the ANU Open School since 2010. A number of her students have won prizes nationally, participated in Australian Youth Orchestra programs, and been awarded scholarships to study at the ANU, Sydney Conservatorium of Music and other universities.

Veronica is also a core member of Looking Glass Percussion, along with CSO percussionist John Dewhurst.

Veronica lives in Canberra with her husband, CSO trombonist Michael Bailey, and their two sons.

Image: Martin Ollman

Edward Neeman

Piano



Australian-American pianist Edward Neeman has performed across five continents. Critics have lauded him as a 'true artist' who 'isn't afraid to put a distinctive stamp on whatever he touches.'

A prize-winner of numerous international competitions, Edward has appeared as a soloist with the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra; the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas; the American West Symphony; and the Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, and Kentucky Symphony Orchestras, among others.

An enthusiastic collaborator, he has performed with musicians including Itamar Zorman, Kristian Winther, the New Zealand String Quartet, and members of the JACK quartet. Edward also performs with his wife, Indonesian pianist Stephanie Neeman, as the Neeman Piano Duo.

Edward holds a Bachelor of Music from the Australian National University (ANU), a Master of Music from the Manhattan School of Music, and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from The Juilliard School. He is on the piano faculty at the ANU in Canberra.

www.neemanpianoduo.com

The Keyboard chair is sponsored by Anne Foote

Craig Greening

Electronics



Craig Greening is a musician who has enjoyed a 40-year career as an audio engineer in radio, film, recording, live sound and studio sessions.

Studying music and classical guitar at Elder Conservatorium in Adelaide in the

1980s, Craig switched to electronic music and radio production, leading to work at 5UV (Radio Adelaide), ABC FM (Classic) and Radio National, in production and music programming. Transitioning to live audio in the early 1990s, he spent many years working days, nights and weekends in theatre, arts and music festivals, touring internationally.

Since 2010 Craig has settled happily into a weekday technical position at The Australian National University's School of Music. A keen cyclist and now mandolin player, he leads the second mandolins for the Canberra Mandolin Orchestra.

Craig's first engagement as a 'tape operator' was in a hybrid live concert performance with orchestra, playing 'windharp' from Digital Audio Tape (DAT) for Arvo Pärt's *Te Deum* in 1995.

Craig appeared as a guest artist for the electronic elements in *Lightsense* (Lisa Illean) and *Fern* (Kate Moore) in the CSO's 2023 Australian Series concert, *Play of Light*.

Image: Martin Ollman

Investing today in the sounds of tomorrow.

The Australian Music Giving Circle is an exciting, new philanthropic initiative, giving supporters the opportunity to directly support and shape Australian classical music.

To learn more, email philanthropy@csso.org.au or call 02 6247 9191.

FEATURED COMPOSER

Nardi Simpson

YUWAALARAAY
COMPOSER



Nardi Simpson is a Yuwaalaraay storyteller from New South Wales' (NSW) northwest freshwater plains.

As a member of Indigenous duo Stiff Gins, Nardi has travelled nationally and internationally for the past 22 years. She is also a founding member of Freshwater, an all-female vocal ensemble formed to revive the language and singing traditions of NSW river communities.

Nardi is a graduate of Ngarra-Burria First Peoples Composers and is currently undertaking a PhD through the Australian National University's School of Music in Composition. Nardi is the current musical director of Barayagal, a cross-cultural choir based at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. In 2021, Nardi was First Nations artist in residence at the Sydney Conservatorium and with Ensemble Offspring.

Nardi's debut novel Song of the Crocodile won the 2017 Black&Write! Fellowship and the ALS Gold Medal and was longlisted for the 2021 Stella Prize and Miles Franklin Literary Award.

Nardi currently lives in Sydney and continues to be heavily involved in the teaching and sharing of culture in both her Sydney and Yuwaalaraay communities.

**www.nardisimpson.com
@nardiga**

Image: Lucy Simpson

SIMPSON

Nardi Simpson (b. 1975)

Burruguu (2020)

*Burruguu is the
Yuwaalaraay word for
'Time of Creation'.*

I am playing with this concept as not only a musical reference to the concept of Aboriginal time (the Lore, the dreaming or everywhen), but also an embodiment of the immediate point of musical creation, allowing space for the ensemble to create within the piece.

Ngarra-Burria brings the final piece to this puzzle; its continued growth and development, a promise to the future.

Burruguu is all around us, yesterday, today and tomorrow.

@Nardi Simpson

“Burruguu is
all around us,
yesterday, today
and tomorrow”

Bree Van Reyk

AUSTRALIAN
COMPOSER



Bree van Reyk is a drummer, percussionist, composer, sound artist and occasional maker of unkempt musical instruments.

She is currently working on a new opera for Sydney Chamber Opera, which will be presented on a double-bill with her previous SCO work, *The Invisible Bird*, in Sydney in 2025. Bree has been commissioned by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Dance Company, Ensemble Offspring and by many major arts festivals and galleries across Australia. Her work for Genevieve Lacey and Marshall MacGuire, *Threaded in Amongst the Infinite Threading*, saw her nominated as a finalist in the Art Music Awards in 2022.

Bree's solo performances centre on exploring minimal, experimental, and meditative experiential soundscapes using rustic, self-invented instruments and found objects. She has forged a unique career collaborating with artists such as Gurrumul, Paul Kelly, Sarah Blasko, Ensemble Offspring, Synergy Percussion, and the Australian Chamber Orchestra. Her debut album, 'superclusters', is a massed instrumental ensemble work featuring over 20 guest musicians including Jim White and Mick Turner (Dirty Three), and Véronique Serret. Bree holds an Associate Lecturer role at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Image: Stefanie Zingsheim

Bree Van Reyk

Light for the First Time (2017)



REYK

Light for the First Time is dedicated to my daughter. It imagines the experience of opening one's eyes for the first time, which occurs at around 28 weeks' gestation. The unfolding of the piece reflects a desire to be able to relive that moment endlessly, in slow motion, as if bathed in the brand-new memory of light. The sound of breath alone gradually expands into a universe of vibrant sound and colour, and the core ensemble of musicians is augmented by echoes of themselves, ghosts of prior performances and imagined futures.

© **Bree Van Reyk**

“It imagines the experience of opening one's eyes for the first time”



FEATURED COMPOSER

Natalie Williams

AUSTRALIAN
COMPOSER

“My experiences of light align with a sonic interpretation that I can share with others.”

Natalie Williams is a composer, academic and artistic manager.

Her music has been commissioned and performed in Australia, the United States and Europe. Commissions include multiple works for orchestra, opera, chamber ensembles, multi-media, vocal ensembles and soloists. A performing arts leader, she worked as a University Dean of the Performing Arts in the United States and has held faculty positions in music theory and composition at the University of Georgia and the Australian National University. Research interests include music theory pedagogy and post-tonal composition. Natalie holds a Graduate Certificate in Management from the Australian National University and a Doctoral degree from Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music.

www.networksmusic.com

Image: Megagraphics Photography

WILLIAMS

Natalie Williams

Light Visions (2024)

**World premiere,
new CSO commission**

Light Visions is a suite for mixed chamber ensemble exploring the sonic depiction of our visions of light. In the natural world, and particularly around Canberra, where I live, three different aspects of light permeate my experience and connection with this land and the water it carries. As a composer, I interpret and express experiences and emotion in sound, and this work aligns my experiences of light with a sonic interpretation that I can share with others.

Movement one – Specularity

This movement illustrates the sparkling and shining light effects of sunlight reflecting on moving water. Specifically, the movement highlights the dancing reflections of thousands of pictures of the sun upon a moving watery texture. We often see these reflections as a golden “road” of light, appearing wider when close to us, and narrowing as the reflected light moves away, and back towards the sun. What we see is the combined result of thousands of tiny “pictures” (reflections) of the sun itself, and the multi-directional refractions create a shimmering path of sunlit sparkles, often blinding and mesmerizing at the same time. The music is constant and never still, sparkling, flashing and shimmering, with brilliant tremolo unions that shake and shimmer across the ensemble.

Movement two – Evanescence

This slow movement captures the pensive and soft light of the last hour of each day, the mysterious “golden hour” of gentleness and tranquility. This light often appears on walls or flat natural surfaces as a soft and gentle, but heavy light that sits stoically as the sun returns to the horizon. My memories of this light often involve the soft shadows of lace curtains drapes or slowly moving leaves, swinging in the breeze and tracing their silhouettes in the last moments of a sunlit day. The soft after tones of this diffused light move through the ensemble who each have unmeasurable musical lines that they weave together in a soft, unfolding texture.

Movement three – Scintillation

The most special and captivating of my experiences of light were 2–3 occasions where I saw light refracted through diamond or gems. The result is a three dimensional “wash” of colour, a reflection of a thousand tiny rainbows as light passes through the diamond and splits into uncountable directions. As the gem moves, the tiny rainbows turn and spin, creating a kaleidoscope of beauty, with depth and height of unfathomable detail. This splash of nature’s own light spectrum is mesmerizing and unforgettable. The musical movement depicts this visual beauty through a crystalline texture of constantly moving contrapuntal lines, based upon a rhythmic string built from the prime number series, thus embedding natural mathematical processes into the musical structure itself.

© **Natalie Williams**

Liza Lim

AUSTRALIAN COMPOSER

Liza Lim (b. 1966, Australia) is a composer, educator, and researcher whose music focusses on collaborative and transcultural practices.

Beauty, rage & noise, ecological connection, and female spiritual lineages are at the heart of works such as *Sex Magic* (2020) for flutist Claire Chase; the orchestral cycle, *Annunciation Triptych: Sappho, Mary, Fatimah* (2019-22), and *Multispecies Knots of Ethical Time* (2023) for gestural performer, film and ensemble. Lim is Professor of Composition and Sculthorpe Chair of Australian Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

She is the first musician to be awarded an Australian Research Council Laureate Fellowship for a 5-year program 'Multispecies Creativity and Climate Communication' and was also recently named the 2024 OPUS KLASSIK Composer of the Year (one of Germany's highest honours for Classical music). In 2023, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her contribution to Australian music as an academic and composer. Her music has been published by Ricordi Berlin since 1992 and is released on 40 CDs including 10 portrait albums with Kairos, HCR_NMC, WERGO, Hat Hut, ABC-Classics.

© lizalimcomposer.com

Image: Harald Hoffmann



LIM

Liza Lim (b. 1966)

The Heart's Ear

The Heart's Ear for flute/piccolo, clarinet and string quartet, commissioned by the Australia Ensemble, has its roots in Arabic or Turkish Islamic music. Both the title of the work and the musical influences reflect a long-standing personal interest that I have in Sufi poetry and in particular, that of 13th-century mystic poet Jelaluddin Rumi.

Rumi's poetry is suffused with images of ecstatic communion with the divine. The poems often contain musical references, particularly the image of the relationship between a musician and their musical instrument as a metaphor for how human beings are vehicles through which spirit moves.



“... the melody is ‘like birdsong beginning inside an egg’ – a beautiful image of something nascent, about to open out into a larger world”

For instance:

*God picks up the reed-flute world and blows
each note is a need coming through one of us
a passion, a longing pain.*

A recurrent theme in Rumi's poetry is the theme of ‘Silence’ – not a state of absence but a kind of alertness, a state of listening with ‘the heart's ear’ that opens up to the potential of any moment.

The Heart's Ear begins with a very brief fragment of a Sufi melody as way of evoking that gift-like quality of attention.

To quote from another of Rumi's poems, the melody is ‘like birdsong beginning inside an egg’ – a beautiful image of something nascent, about to open out into a larger world.

I've thought of the piece as music that grows organically from this initial melody (the interior quality of a melody singing to itself) which ‘pecks’ its way out into a succession of musical spaces.

© **Liza Lim**

COMING UP

**7:00pm, Friday 18 /
Saturday 19 October 2024**
Llewellyn Hall,
ANU School of Music

Kirsten Williams leads the Canberra Symphony Orchestra in a musical tribute to the seasons. Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* brings to life the beauty of nature's cycles, while Piazzolla's *The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*, in Desyatnikov's arrangement, offers a modern, tango-infused counterpart.

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FOUR SEASONS

18/19 October 2024
Llewellyn Hall

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Image: Martin Ollman



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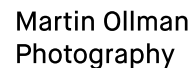
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