



RIVER CITY VOICES

western sydney. choral. excellence



FRIDAY 16 DECEMBER 2022

Riverside Theatres
Parramatta

PROGRAM

WELCOME TO RIVER CITY VOICES



Welcome to River City Voices' final program for 2022, and in what we believe is an Australian first, the Slam Messiah!

For a choir that commenced in 2019 just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, River City Voices has gone from strength to strength in 2022. Our initial performance for 2022 *Songs of Destiny* here at Riverside Theatres, commenced our collaborative approach (thank you Willoughby Symphony and Willoughby Symphony Choir) and demonstrated our commitment to premiering new works with the first ever performance of Troy Russell's evocative and heart wrenching *The Chant* and Elizabeth Sheppard's awakening and re-birth in *Gandangarragal*.

This performance was quickly followed by River City Voices appearing in the first Blackheath Choir Festival in 3 years, and the immense joy of premiering our 'What the World Needs' program at Granville Centre together with the artists from Arts and Cultural Exchange Club Weld program.

If you haven't managed to download the music on Bandcamp, I heartily recommend purchasing a CD tonight.

And from such diverse artistic collaborations to partnering with Catch.com.au for their national ad campaign - getting colder, colder, then warmer, warmer, River City Voices singers have traversed these experiences with professionalism and aplomb.

In 2022 we farewelled Raquel Tracy from our Board and saw the appointment of Piroozi Desai OAM and Robert Love AM. I would like to thank each for their generous contributions of time and expertise.

None of this would be possible without the tireless commitment and energy of our Artistic Director, Dr Sarah Penicka-Smith, and our General Manager, Inara Molinari. It is testament to their vision for Western Sydney, and Parramatta's flagship symphonic choir, that River City Voices continues to deliver choral music collaborations and performances that are in, of, and for Western Sydney and that show how the artistic culture of Western Sydney contributes so much to the Sydney, New South Wales, and Australian artistic landscapes.

I hope you thoroughly enjoy tonight's re-vision of Handel's Messiah, possibly one of the most famous works in the choral canon, interspersed with slam poetry and engaging with the lyrics, politics and meaning from Handel's time to ours. Thank you for your continued support at performances and through your generous donations; it means the world to a new choir.

Thank you and I wish you all a wonderful festive season!

Catherine Dolle-Samuel

Chair, Board of Directors

BOARD

Chair

Catherine Dolle-Samuel

Director | Founder

Inara Molinari

Directors

Schon G Condon, RFD

Piroozi Desai, OAM

Robert Love, AM

William Soper, FCA (UK)

MANAGEMENT

Artistic Director

Dr Sarah Penicka-Smith

General Manager

Inara Molinari

Finance

William Soper, FCA (UK)

ARTISTIC STAFF

Principal Conductor

Dr Sarah Penicka-Smith

Repetiteur

Su Choung

Rehearsal Conductors

Joanna Brooke

Dr Philip Eames

Natalie Gooneratne

Rehearsal Pianists

Jane Andino

Dr Philip Eames

Callum Tolhurst-Close

2022 CHORISTERS

SOPRANO

Jennifer Baker
Catriona Champion
Josephine Chan
Maria Costello
Tamara Craig
Susan Forss-Clarke
Hadassa Gitau
Lyn Higgs
Wendy Hopley
Deborah Howitt
Iona Mathias
Naomi von Senff
Nicole Senior
Karla Stewart-Sykes
Lynn Taye
Ingrid Turner
Klara de Wit

TENOR

Richard Heagren-Gibbs
Ian Jenson
Joshua Lenehan
Prony Melvin
Gabriel Newman
Spencer Thew

ALTO

Mel Bester
Grace Bondoc
Clare Brown
Catherine Dolle-Samuel
Sarah El-Khansa
Sally Glass
Danica Gluvakov
Belinda Huang
Jane Jamieson
Laima Karklins
Roshi Melvin
Nancy Nicholls
Rina Pinto
Hiroko Uchihara
Helen Yiu
Fiona Yue

BASS

Steve Barnett
Don Church
Philip Gerber
Ivars Karklins
Geoff Kerr
Kris Morgan
TiMi Thomas
Michael West
Dominic Wong

SLAM_MESSIAH

Australian Premiere Performance

CONDUCTOR

DR SARAH PENICKA-SMITH

Assistant Chorus Masters

DR PHILIP EAMES | PETER ELLIS

Rehearsal Pianists

DR PHILIP EAMES | CALLUM TOLHURST-CLOSE

JANE ANDINO

VOCAL SOLOISTS

SARAH CHERLIN | SOPRANO

DAMIEN NOYCE | TENOR

WARWICK FYFE | BASS

POETS

DAVID ALASDAIR CARTER

J. MARAHUYO

PARIS ROSEMONT

SLAM CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

SAGAR NAGARAJ | VIOLIN 1

SURAJ NAGARAJ | VIOLIN 2

JONATHAN KARANIKAS | VIOLA

NAZLI SENDURGUT | CELLO

FRANK GIRALDO | OBOE

SAMUEL GIDDY | ORGAN**

RIVER CITY VOICES

Soprano Josephine Chan | Susan Forss-Clarke | Maria Costello | Hadassa Gitau | Natalie Gooneratne*
Deborah Howitt | Nathalie O'Toole* | Elsa Rapon* | Naomi von Senff | Nicole Senior | Lynn Taye
Ingrid Turner | Klara de Wit

Alto Ann Adams^ | Mel Bester | Clare Brown | Catherine Dolle-Samuel | Sarah El-Khansa | Sally Glass
Belinda Huang | Laima Karklins | Roshi Melvin | Nancy Nicholls | Rina Pinto | Jan Shaw*
Libby Sorrel^ | Helen Yiu | Fiona Yue | Priscilla Yuen*

Tenor Rob Foster" | Rowen Fox^ | Richard Heagren-Gibbs | Ken Goth" | Ian Jenson | Joshua Lenehan
Chris Lu" | Prony Melvin | Mark Nelson" | Gabriel Newman | Ben Thurley*

Bass Jose Augusto^ | Steve Barnett | Don Church | Philip Gerber | Ivars Karklins | Tim Kaye^ | Kris Morgan
Ben Waters* | Michael West

* Guest singer from Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

^Guest singer from Penrith City Choir

"Guest singer from Willoughby Symphony Choir

** Continuo organ by Henk Klop, Garderen, Nederland 2004

Supplied & prepared for performance by Carey Beebe

Why "Slam Messiah"?

Since 1742, George Frederick Handel's oratorio has been a crowd favourite, a contemporary Easter tradition in Europe, and a Christmas tradition Down Under.

What do you do when you're a new choir from Western Sydney, wanting to share the choral blockbusters, but also honour local artists and stories? You look around for an art form that is at home in your part of town, and come up with slam poetry. And so we asked three slam poets to create six new works in response to key moments in *Messiah*.

Some of my favourite audience experiences, whether in a gallery or concert hall, have been when new work is placed next to old. You see new things in the familiar, and at the same time are reminded that all art is created by humans, who have things in common across the ages. It's very easy to see Baroque music as museum pieces, but that doesn't have to be the case.

This evening's slam poets show that the issues Handel and his librettist Charles Jennens highlight are the same issues we struggle with today: oppression and discrimination, selfishness, territorialism, a lack of listening and care. And both the music and the poems in *Slam Messiah* give us a chance for reflection and hope, and provide calls to action for how we can improve our world.

Whether you know Handel's *Messiah* or not, pause a moment to consider the astonishing achievement of both Handel (1685-1759) and his librettist, Charles Jennens (1700-1773). You could call Jennens a Handelian fanboy - he had manuscript copies made of every piece Handel wrote - but that would denigrate the spiritual connection he felt to Handel's music. His intense devotion to the composer frequently lifted him from depression, saying, 'Everything that has been united with Handel's music becomes sacred by such a union in my eyes'. *Messiah* was Jennens' idea; Handel didn't ask him to write it.

The musical world is full of works describing Christ's nativity, the Passion, or single events within Christ's life (such as Beethoven's *Christ on the Mount of Olives*). Yet *Messiah* is unique: yes, it follows Christ from birth to crucifixion and resurrection, but its full reach goes far beyond these events, looking back into the Israelites' history to explore the prophets who preceded the Messiah, and projecting forward to the birth of the Church. How many single musical works span such an epic number of years? (I can't actually think of any others.)

For the eighty biblical verses in his libretto, Jennens used only ten verses from the Gospels, including the angel's appearance to the shepherds. The rest of the libretto he selected across the Old and New Testaments, from Job to Revelations. In all of *Messiah*, the name 'Jesus' appears only once - in the chorus 'But Thanks' (which we are not performing tonight).

As chorister and retired minister Denis McIntyre once pointed out to me, Jennens' careful text selection from across the entire Bible makes the oratorio a work about the figure of the Messiah, rather than being a biographical account of Jesus. And there is a crucial reason for this.

Messiah is not simply a work to the glory of God, or a retelling of the Christmas and Easter stories. It is a political work. Jennens was a non-Juror, refusing to swear allegiance to William of Orange and his wife, Mary, and like most non-Jurors, he belonged to the High Church. His convictions were more than just politically unwise, with the Low Church holding much of the power under William and Mary; they were also out of fashion.

Jennens was living through the Enlightenment and the rise of Deism, where the natural world itself was taken as adequate proof of divine creation, and revelation, miracles, and the Messiah were rejected. Jennens was campaigning to keep his orthodox Church of England alive. The pillar of this Church was belief in a Messiah, and the figure of the Messiah was defined largely by the prophecies contained in the Old Testament. For Jennens, *Messiah* was a call to arms, a vibrant and colourful illustration of Biblical prophecy, and a reminder to his backsliding compatriots that they were straying from the path of truth laid in the Old Testament, and brought to fruit in the New. Jennens offered this precious text to the finest composer he knew: George Frederick Handel.

Born in Germany, Handel moved to England in 1712 after a stint in Italy. He made a name for himself as one of the great operatic composers of his day, as well as an impresario who staged lavish productions of his own music. Yet, like Jennens' passion for the High Church, Handel's love of opera became dangerously unfashionable in England. And so, in the 1730s, Handel reinvented himself, transferring all his brilliant operatic writing to an art form which still allowed for solo arias, roaring choruses and, most importantly, drama, just without the costumes - oratorio. Many commentators have noted that Handel's oratorios are just as operatic as his operas, and in some ways *Messiah*, with its dramatic storytelling, gripping recitatives, and decorative arias, is no different.

Jennens and Handel had a well-established relationship by the time Jennens wrote *Messiah*. He expected Handel to 'lay out his whole Genius & Skill' on it: '[Handel] said he would be a year about it, & make it the best of all his Compositions'. Handel, however, received an invitation to visit Ireland, and so he dashed off *Messiah* in a mere three weeks (while also squeezing in six weeks on *Samson* before he left). 'I shall put no more Sacred Works into his hands, to be thus abus'd', Jennens lamented. (Not true: Handel managed to woo him into working on *Belshazzar* a couple of years later.)

In spite of Jennens' qualms, Handel's setting of *Messiah* remains one of the great works of the choral repertoire. I sometimes wonder whether it could have been improved even if Handel did take eight months to write it - although we know Handel revised it several times, largely due to the performers he had at his command.

Our performance today focuses on the most dramatic moments of the story, largely keeping intact movements which are built from consecutive Biblical verses. We hope to tell you a story; a story which, despite its focus on one man's life and death, spans centuries and peoples.

© Dr Sarah Penicka-Smith



Photo: Karen Almond

Sinfonia *Slam Chamber Ensemble***For behold, darkness shall cover the earth** *Warwick Fyfe*Isaiah 60:2

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

The people that walked in darknessIsaiah 9:2

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

For unto us a child is born *River City Voices*Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Birth of A New Dawn *Paris Rosemont***Pifa (Pastorale - Shepherd's Music)** *Slam Chamber Ensemble***There were shepherds** *Sarah Cherlin*Luke 2:8

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night

And lo! the angel of the LordLuke 2:9

And lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto themLuke 2:10-11

And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

And suddenly there was with the angelLuke 2:13

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God *River City Voices*Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men

Behold the Lamb *Alasdair David Carter***Behold the Lamb of God** *River City Voices*John 1:29

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

Surely He hath borne our griefsIsaiah 53:4-5

Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

And with His stripesIsaiah 53:5

And with His stripes we are healed.

All we, like sheepIsaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

All they that see Him *Damien Noyce*Psalms 22:7

All they that see Him, laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying:

He trusted in God *River City Voices*Psalms 22:8

He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him.

Other, alien, like *J. Marahuyo*

Paris Rosemont



Alasdair David Carter



J. Marahuyo

PROGRAM

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart *Damien Noyce*

Psalm 69:20

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness; He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him.

Behold and see

Lamentations 1:12

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.

He was cut off

Isaiah 53:8

He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of Thy people was He stricken.

But thou didst not leave

Psalm 16:10

But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell, nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.

Lift up your heads *River City Voices*

Psalm 24:7-10

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.

Lift Up your Head *Alasdair David Carter*

How beautiful are the feet *Sarah Cherlin*

Isaiah 52:7; Romans 10:15

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Their sound is gone out *River City Voices*

Romans 10:18; Psalm 19:4

Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Why do the nations *Warwick Fyfe*

Psalm 2:1-2

Why do the nations so furiously rage together? and why do the people imagine a vain thing?

The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed.

Let us break their bonds *River City Voices*

Psalm 2:3

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us.

He that dwelleth in heaven *Damien Noyce*

Psalm 2:4

He that dwelleth in Heaven shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision.

Thou shalt break them

Psalm 2:9

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Hallelujah *River City Voices*

Revelation 9:16; 11:15; 19:16

Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Kintsugi *Paris Rosemont*

Behold I tell you a mystery *Warwick Fyfe*

Corinthians 15:51-52

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

The trumpet shall sound

Corinthians 15:52-53

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Strands of Lightning *J. Marahuyo, with Alasdair David Carter and Paris Rosemont*

Worthy is the Lamb *River City Voices*

Revelation 5:12-14

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Blessing and honor, glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

Amen

ARTISTS

Dr Sarah Penicka-Smith Artistic Director & Principal Conductor, River City Voices



Versatile, perceptive, and a passionate advocate for music as a force for change, Dr Sarah Penicka-Smith is one of four artists with a socially-engaged practice selected for the inaugural CASE Incubator program. She has led River City Voices as Artistic Director since its inception in 2018. During this time she has conducted the choir's performances of *Carmina Burana*, *Messiah*, new arrangements of Japanese anime music for the Sydney Cherry Blossom Festival, a featured performance at ABC Radio's Sing Out Sydney, and recently completed new choral arrangements and recording sessions for a collaborative project that engaged neurodiverse musicians from Arts + Cultural Exchange's Club Weld program. She was recently appointed as Willoughby Symphony's Associate Conductor, conducting two acclaimed collaborations with *Legs On The Wall*.

Sarah's other positions include Head of Creative Arts at St Andrew's College, Principal Conductor with the Macquarie Singers & Macquarie Chamber Orchestra, and Artistic Director of Pacific Pride Choir. She also founded the Lifehouse Volunteer Orchestra, bringing music to patients and their families at the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse.

Sarah made her international debut in Dallas in 2018 through the Hart Institute for Women Conductors at The Dallas Opera. She has conducted a number of operas with Sydney companies, as well as guest conducting for various ensembles including Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Penrith Symphony Orchestra, Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra, and Sydney Youth Orchestra.

Sarah's current projects include libretto development for The Klein-Arkininstall Project, a new one-woman opera about living with OCD; Festival Choir Director for the Blackheath Choral Festival, and a recording/performance project with River City Voices and the neurodiverse musicians of Club Weld in Parramatta.

Dr Philip Eames RCV Assistant Chorus Master + Piano

Hailing from Brisbane, Dr Philip Eames studied piano with Dr Max Olding, AM and Dr Stephen Savage at the Queensland Conservatorium. He then travelled overseas on scholarship for further study at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, before completing his doctorate in 2017 at the Sydney Conservatorium, on the choral music of Percy Grainger.

Philip has worked with choirs for well over a decade, initially as an accompanist before expanding into director roles. In 2019, Philip was selected as one of the inaugural assistant conductors of River City Voices, with the opportunity to serve as chorus master for Handel's *Messiah* and has enjoyed collaborating with them since. He is the musical director of Aqualuna Singers, and is frequently a guest conductor and accompanist for other choirs including the Macquarie Singers, Jubilate Singers, Willoughby Symphony Choir and Pyrmont Sings. Philip is also highly active as a composer, and choral music forms an important part of his output. His choral cycle "This Great Unrain" was selected as the winner of the 2020 Willgoss Choral Composition Prize. In 2023 Philip takes up the baton as Macquarie Singers Principal Conductor.



Sarah Cherlin Soprano



Described as "dramatic, quietly technical, and at the same time so mischievous and witty" (The Underground Stage), Sydney-based soprano Sarah Cherlin is quickly making her mark on the Australian operatic stage. Earlier this year she sang Barbarina (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) with Sydney's newest opera start-up, The Cooperative. She recently sang Suor Dolcina in Pacific Opera's *Suor Angelica*, and debuted with the Concordia Ensemble singing Pierre (*The Wandering Scholar*), the title role in Viardot's *Cendrillon*, followed by First Witch and Spirit in *Dido and Aeneas*.

Sarah also recently sang in Ensemble Apex's Verdi *Requiem*, and is thrilled to now join RCV for her first Handel's *Messiah*.

In addition to her operatic career, Cherlin has established a passionate audience as a singer/songwriter, recently releasing folk/pop EP, "Small Machines". Over the past two years she has been awarded a slew of 1st placings in multiple Eisteddfodau across NSW, for both her songwriting and classical singing.

Cherlin has completed language studies at home and abroad, having a 3ème degré from the DEFLE Université Bordeaux 3 - Michel de Montaigne, France, and a Bachelor with French major from Macquarie University. She has studied advanced Italian at the Università di Bologna, Italy, where she returned in 2015 to sing with Opera in Celle, in Forte Sangallo, Nettuno.

Damien is an Australian Young Heldentenor, usually based in London, but for the past two years he put a pause on his career in order to take care of his dying mother in Australia.

Damien has been supported by Roadshow Entertainment, ARS Musica Australis, the Gertrude Johnson Memorial Foundation, the NSW & Victorian Wagner Societies, English National Opera Benevolent Fund and The Royal Theatrical Fund.

He has worked in a variety of opera houses throughout Australia, the UK and Europe, mainly working in Verismo, Germanic and Modern repertoire. His talents also as an actor and dancer have seen him perform in starring roles in the West End and touring the UK.

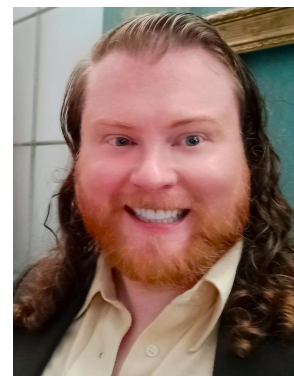
Damien represented Australia in the World Championships of Performing Arts, winning Overall World Champion & Gold Medals in all of his categories. He has also won and been nominated for several awards in the London Cabaret scene.

While in Australia, he has been working for Precedent Productions as one of their singers/entertainers for the Local Business Awards, throughout most areas of greater Sydney & New South Wales, performed for the Wagner Society of NSW, and recorded vocal parts for demos for two new musicals.

In 2019 Damien was the Tenor Soloist for River City Voices first Messiah and is very excited to be joining them again for this new version.

Damien would like to dedicate his performance to his late Mother, Robyn. She always loved this music and him singing it.

Damien Noyce Heldentenor



Warwick Fyfe Heldenbaritone



Portrait by Teresina White

Warwick Fyfe is Australia's leading Heldenbariton and has received many awards including a Churchill Fellowship, Helpmann and Green Room Awards, the prestigious Bayreuth Scholarship and the McDonald's Aria. He is best known for his performances in challenging roles, such as Wotan/Wanderer Der Ring des Nibelungen), Alberich (Der Ring des Nibelungen); Beckmesser (Die Meistersinger); Klingsor (Parsifal); The Flying Dutchman; Wolfram (Tannhauser); Athanael (Thais); Rigoletto; Falstaff; Germont (La Traviata); Paolo (Simon Boccanegra); Father (Hansel and Gretel); Geronio (Turco in Italia); Four Villains (Tales of Hoffman); Mandryka (Arabella); Amonasro (Aida); Tonio (I Pagliacci); Faninal (Der Rosenkavalier); Scarpia (Tosca); Pizarro (Fidelio); Dr Schoen (Lulu). Warwick has performed with every major orchestra and opera company in Australia and New Zealand; and was for many years a Senior Principal Artist with Opera Australia. Internationally, he has performed with Finnish National Opera, English Touring Opera, Welsh National Opera, Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, and with international companies in Japan, Singapore, Vietnam and China. Warwick will reprise the roles of Wotan/Wanderer for Melbourne Opera's production of The Ring in Bendigo March/April 2023.

Paris Rosemont

Paris Rosemont is a performance poet whose work features in anthologies published by Verge Literary Journal, Upswell Publishing's *Admissions*, *Heroines Anthology (vol.4.)* and has been longlisted for the Joyce Parkes Writing Prize 2022.

Paris is a Frontier Poetry scholarship recipient, WestWords Academician and in-house writer-in-residence. She has been awarded a WestWords-Varuna Emerging Writers' Residency as well as an Arts Access Australia Professional Development and Poetry Mentorship.

Paris has performed her poetry as part of the *Sydney Fringe Festival* and *New Annual Festival 2022* and has also been a feature poet in *Girls on Key Poetry* and *Rhapsody Revue*. She is a semi-finalist in the *Australian Poetry Slam 2022*.

J. Marahuyo

J. Marahuyo is a Filipino-Australian emerging poet currently residing on Wangal country. Her poems have placed in a humble number of competitions, can be found in *Cordite Poetry Review*, on the *Born Writer's Award* website and in the *Living Stories* anthology. She explores themes of identity, mental health and everyday moments as whimsically as possible and is currently working on her first collection of poetry. When she is not writing she is trying to teach her cat tricks, bakes or is reading fantasy/sci-fi. Her Instagram is @j_marahuyo

Alasdair David Carter

Alasdair lives on Gadigal land, working as a peri-operative nurse and a performance artist. He lives a hair raising, tear jerking, bone shattering existence. He writes what he knows. He knows good hand hygiene. Alasdair's performance bandages together meaning from the colourful gore of day-to-day existence. He believes by sharing our stories, we can heal and recover and love each other back to life. Alasdair is a feature performer and workshop facilitator for Bankstown Grand Slam, Enough Said, KV Folk Festival, Word Travels and WestWords.

Sagar Nagaraj Violin 1



Sagar Nagaraj is one of the premiere violinists in Sydney, known for his versatility and virtuosity across classical, jazz, and pop music. He is Concertmaster of the Macquarie Singers Orchestra and the Rosemont Chamber Orchestra - performing world music like Bollywood and Persian music. Sagar is also 1st Violinist of the Rosemont String Quartet. With over 15 years of orchestral experience, he has performed with the Australian World Orchestra and Willoughby Symphony Orchestra, with roots in the Sydney and Australian Youth Orchestras. Sagar also performs on electric violin for parties and events, playing improvised covers of hit songs. He is also a passionate educator at Hunters Hill & Lane Cove Public School String Ensembles, conducting the next generation in concerts for local communities.

Suraj Nagaraj Violin 2

Suraj Nagaraj has been playing violin for the past 15 years, performing as the associate concertmaster for the flagship Sydney Youth Orchestra since the start of this year and has now been newly appointed as Concertmaster. He has also played with the Australian Youth Orchestra during their annual national music camps since 2020 and has recently performed with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra.

Suraj also regularly performs covers of Indian Bollywood songs on the violin in local concerts across Sydney and performs as a backing violinist for numerous Indian bands.



Jonathan Karanikas Viola

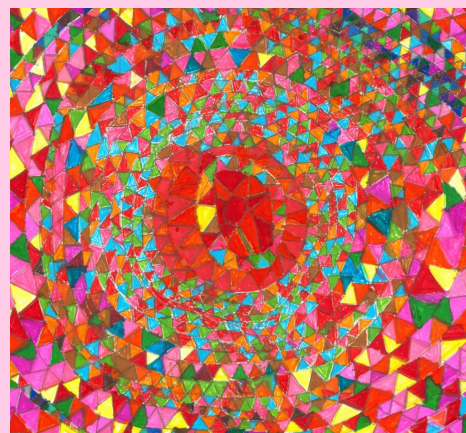


Jonathan is a trained classical musician, playing violin and viola regularly with The Metropolitan Orchestra, Willoughby Symphony Orchestra, Penrith Symphony Orchestra, and the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra. Also a brass player, Jonathan plays tenor horn and has served as treasurer of the Band Association of NSW. A peer-reviewed author, he has published in the Journal of the Australian and New Zealand Viola Society. Professionally, Jonathan is an auditor in public practice, providing assurance and advisory services primarily for not-for-profit organisations, nationally and internationally. A member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, he also serves on the boards of numerous charitable entities across Australia, in sectors including the performing arts, heritage property, education, and advocacy.

Looking for a unique Christmas present?

Look no further than our wonderful CD
What the World Needs
recorded with the fabulous Club Weld
singer/songwriters

ON SALE
Riverside Foyer RCV VIP table
or download from Bandcamp



Artwork: Nina Gotsis

GALLERY



Nazli Sendurgut Cello

Nazli E. Sendurgut completed her Bachelor and Master of Music Studies (performance) degree in 2015 at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Nazli believes that music is a powerful tool to help others and raise awareness for important causes. For this reason, she has done various projects that have involved performance outside of traditional concert halls, such as in schools, a cancer clinic, regional Australia, a detention centre and the most poverty-stricken part of Colombia. Nazli also took part in an orchestra to raise funds for the 2019-20 Australian bushfires.

From the churches of New Zealand to the slums of Bogotá Colombia, Nazli has performed in amazing places like the Sydney Opera House and other beautiful venues across Australia. She has also performed in the Wiener Kammeroper in Vienna as well as concert halls in the Czech Republic and Italy where she took part in lessons and masterclasses.

Nazli works as a freelance cellist and plays on a modern Italian Stefano Marzi cello. Her schedule currently includes teaching cello, playing in orchestras across Sydney, performing on cruise ships, and performing solo and chamber music at functions and events.



Frank Giraldo Oboe



Frank Giraldo is a Venezuelan born Oboist and Cor Anglais performer raised in the renowned El Sistema programme. He started playing music at age 11 when he joined the Anzoátegui State Youth Orchestra and at 13 joined the Anzoátegui State Symphony Orchestra in his hometown of Barcelona. At age 14 he was appointed by audition as one of the founder members of the National Children Orchestra of Venezuela, which successively became the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra and the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela where he was Principal Oboe. Frank studied Oboe at the Simón Bolívar Conservatory of Music in Caracas - Venezuela, under Rafael Galindo and Ricardo Riveiro, and attended master classes under Albrecht Mayer, Maurice Bourgue, Andreas Wittmann and the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet.

With the Simón Bolívar Orchestras he toured over 40 countries in four continents, participating in world-class music festivals, such as BBC Proms, Lucerne and Salzburg Festivals, and concerts under the baton of maestros Gustavo Dudamel, Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboin and Sir Simon Rattle amongst others. His professional accomplishments include orchestral recordings with the label Deutsche Grammophon. One of the recordings, Fiesta, was nominated to the Latin Grammy Awards for Best Classical Music Album of the year in 2008.

Samuel Giddy Organ

Samuel Giddy enjoys a varied and successful career as a recitalist, liturgical organist and educator. From 2016 – 2019 he obtained a Bachelor of Music from Sydney Conservatorium, studying organ performance with Philip Swanton and graduating with first-class honours and the Frank Hutchens Student of the Year Award. A two-time winner of the Sydney Organ Competition (2018 and 2022), he has given solo recitals at major venues in Australia and internationally, including Brisbane City Hall, Chester & Guildford Cathedrals (UK), and St George's Hanover Square (London). In 2019 he was also a finalist in the Gottfried Silbermann Organ Competition in Freiberg, Germany. In his current role as Assistant Organist at St Andrew's Cathedral (Sydney), Samuel's liturgical playing is heard by thousands worldwide on weekly livestreams, as well as for choral evensong and special events at the Cathedral. In addition to his musical pursuits, Samuel is also completing a Graduate Diploma of Divinity from the Australian College of Theology.



RIVER CITY VOICES

River City Voices (RCV) is Parramatta's flagship, auditioned symphony choir. It was formed in 2018 by General Manager Inara Molinari to meet the community's desire for large-scale cultural events closer to home. Led by its exceptional Artistic Director Dr Sarah Penicka-Smith, the company's vision is to become a permanent and relevant organisation, renowned for its vocal excellence, surprising collaborative artistic programs, and events that reflect and engage its diverse community. In its brief history, RCV has engaged over 2,000 artists, arts workers and community members through its public performances, development programs and workshops. Performances have included curated programs, festivals, corporate and government gigs, and collaborative community events, such as the Parramatta premiere "Come & Sing" featuring *Carmina Burana*; an interactive Japanese anime music program with TaikOz for the Sydney Cherry Blossom Festival; and a sold-out performance of Handel's *Messiah* at St Patrick's Cathedral alongside Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and Orchestra. RCV has also been broadcast on ABC Local Radio following its feature performance at ABC Radio's Sing Out Sydney at the City Recital Hall in 2019.

Poised for further success, COVID-19 saw the company swiftly demonstrate a nimble, adaptive response that despite program cancellations throughout 2021/22, has ensured the continued engagement of choristers, staff and community. Highlights during this time included: virtual choir and recording releases via social platforms that have reached over 2.5K viewers; an open rehearsal at CommBank Stadium, and associated recording and production of an album - *What the World Needs* (released via Bandcamp and Spotify in June 2022) - featuring new choral arrangements of songs composed by neurodiverse musicians from project partner Arts + Cultural Exchange's (ACE) Club Weld program. This project was made possible with funding support from City of Parramatta Council.

2022 has continued to be a challenging year, but the choir was thrilled to collaborate with Willoughby Symphony Orchestra and Willoughby Symphony Choir in May to present *Songs of Destiny* at Riverside Theatres. The program featured some luscious Brahms and the long awaited World Premieres of new choral commissions by composers Troy Russell and Elizabeth Sheppard supported by JBS&G.

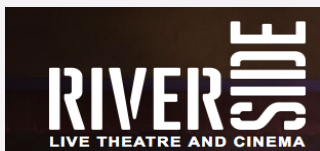
August 2022 saw the choir appear at the Blackheath Choir Festival, and on television in its first foray into the world of advertising for Catch.com.au's latest campaign. This was closely followed in September by the live performance of songs from our *What the World Needs* album, which was filmed for the ABC's Art Works program (Episode 30 !

And then in October, RCV was one of 11 choirs selected to perform in *From the Steps-Voices at Dusk*, the inaugural program of the Sydney Opera House 50th birthday celebrations. We invited fellow choristers from across western Sydney and beyond, proudly bringing to The Steps a 100 voice choir performing works by Australian composers.

Our bravely envisaged "Slam Messiah" is yet another program that exemplifies River City Voices mission to expand our singers', artists' and audiences' artistic horizons closer to home through unique, often local, collaborations.

This performance of SLAM MESSIAH would not have been possible without support from

and project partner



We acknowledge the presence of our special guests at tonight's performance:

Dr Geoff Lee, NSW State Member for Parramatta | The Right Worshipful Lord Mayor, Donna Davis, Parramatta City of Parramatta Councillors, Dr Patricia Procvic & Kellie Darley
Mr Arthur Stanley, VenuesLive NSW | Dr Clare McLean, Western Sydney University

Special thanks also to the following individuals and organisations:

CONDON ADVISORY GROUP, RCV's Visionary Foundation Sponsor

MICHAEL CAMPBELL, Executive Director of WestWords, for tireless and inspirational support of the poets and project

BRETT WEYMARK, FIONA HULTON, MARK ROBINSON & MEAGAN FITZPATRICK from Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

LUCY MCALARY, Penrith City Choir, WENDY LINDGREN & PETER ELLIS, Willoughby Symphony Choir

and all of our guest singers tonight who helped us ensure the show went on!

MARIJANA JEVREMOV, the marketing and box office team, and SEAN CLARKE and team at RIVERSIDE THEATRES

MILI LEE and team at St Patricks Cathedral, Parramatta, RCV's rehearsal home

MELANIE PENICKA-SMITH Director, Penicka-Smith Arts & Event Management

SARAH EL-KHANSA for leading the Instagram campaign and designing our striking flyers, posters and advertisements

SIMONE WHETTON, What's On, ABC Local Radio for the live-to-air interview with Sarah

CARA ANDERSON & MADDY BRIGGS, Limelight Magazine, for a great article

PHILIP GERBER & JENNIFER BAKER for reviewing program content

PIROOZI DESAI OAM & LILY MOLINARI for front-of-house VIP and CD sales

Our RCV BOARD MEMBERS, led by chair and chorister CATHERINE DOLLE-SAMUEL, who have generously donated their time and expertise over these rather difficult past few years to support RCV's continued success.

And finally our wonderful RIVER CITY VOICES CHORISTERS- we can't do any of this without you. THANK YOU SO MUCH !



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