

STRATHFIELD

Symphony Orchestra

Serious Fun!

presents

Antarctica

Chief Conductor & Artistic Director
Sarah-Grace Williams

Guitar - Phillip Moran
Vocal - Daniel Belle
Harp - Helen Boyd

Sancta Maria
- Mascagni

Antarctica - Westlake
The Last Place on Earth
Wooden Ships
The Penguin Ballet
The Ice Core
Finale

INTERVAL

Symphony No 1 - Brahms
Un poco sostenuto – Allegro – meno Allegro
Andante sostenuto
Un poco Allegretto e grazioso
Adagio – Più Antante – Allegro non Troppo ma con brio – Più Allegro

8.00pm Saturday 23 June, 2007

Strathfield Town Hall, Cnr Redmyre & Homebush Rds, Strathfield

www.strathfieldsymphony.org.au

The Orchestra

1st Violin

Paul Hoskinson**
Volf Frishling
Carol Henson
Belisario Hernandez
Marie Hodsdon
Beatrice Ip
Julia Jooyeon Park
Paul Pokorny
Justin White
Spring Wu

2nd Violin

Elizabeth Cooney*
Karina Barnard
Diana Barraga
Simonil Bhavnagri
Michelle Hood
Carol Hua
Bonnie Leung
David Loonam
Stephen Matthey
Behram Taleyarkhan
Joe Singles
Jill Webb
Noriko Yamanaka

Viola

Martin Lee*
Jennifer Cooke
Derek Davies
Chris Elenor
John Fahey
Anthony Harvey

Cello

Laura Hitchcock*
Derek Brotherson
Rowena Cseh
Merle Morcom
David Oldroyd
Haydn Skinner
Richard Hartley

Double Bass

Manfred Schoen*
Mark Szeto
Moya Molloy
Sasha Marker

Flute & Piccolo

Bruce Lane*
Catherine Loonam

Alto Flute

Bruce Lane

Oboe

George Jessup*
Nicola Young

Clarinet

David Abbott*
Karl Murr

Bass Clarinet

Karl Murr

Bassoon

Mark Pinner*
Alex Thorburn

Contra-Bassoon

Graeme Widmer

French Horn

Dennis Williams*
Bill Cotis
Annalisa Gatt
Ngoc Long Vuong

Trumpet

David Young*
Janette Vardy

Trombone

Lindsay Smartt*
Belinda Pickering
Paul Young

Timpani &

Percussion

Merilee McNaught*
Andrew Blake
Niki Patterson
Luka Wang

Harp

Helen Boyd

** Denotes

concertmaster

* Denotes principal

Special thanks to the Friends of the Orchestra

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Margaret Shirley*

Mrs J Widmer

* Denotes life member

Strathfield Symphony Orchestra would like to thank those who helped in the realisation of the film accompanying the Antarctica Suite.

Without their support and encouragement, in many cases without a fee, this project would not have been possible.

John Weiley – Director, for allowing us to rework the IMAX film

Nigel Westlake – Composer, for his encouragement

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Bruce Lane – concept and production

Strathfield Symphony Orchestra is proudly sponsored
by Strathfield MP Virginia Judge.

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Program notes

Johannes Brahms

Brahms studied piano from the age of seven and showed early promise, helping to supplement the rather meager family income by playing the piano in restaurants and theatres and teaching. For a time Brahms also learned the cello, although his progress was cut short when his teacher absconded with his instrument. He gave a few public concerts in Hamburg, but didn't become well known as a pianist until he made a concert tour at the age of nineteen. In later life, he frequently took part in the performance of his own works, whether as soloist, accompanist, or participant in chamber music. He was the soloist at the premieres of both his Piano Concerto No.1 and his Piano Concerto No.2. He conducted choirs and became a proficient choral and orchestral conductor.

Like Beethoven, Brahms was fond of nature and often went walking in the woods around Vienna. He often brought penny candy with him to hand out to children. To adults Brahms was often brusque and sarcastic, and he sometimes alienated other people, gaining a reputation for being a grump.

Starting in the 1860s Brahms was financially quite successful. But he preferred a modest life style living in a simple three-room apartment with a housekeeper. He gave away much of his money to relatives, and anonymously helped support a number of young musicians. Brahms was an extreme perfectionist. He destroyed many early works - including a Violin Sonata - and once claimed to have destroyed 20 string quartets before he issued his official First in 1873. He labored over his first official Symphony for almost fifteen years, from about 1861 to 1876. Even after its first few performances, Brahms destroyed the original slow movement and substituted another before the score was published. The long gestation of the symphony may be put down to his self-critical fastidiousness but also to the expectation of Brahms' friends and the public that Brahms would continue Beethoven's inheritance" and produce a symphony of commensurate dignity and intellectual scope - an expectation which Brahms felt he could not fulfill easily in view of the monumental reputation of Beethoven. The *Symphony No. 1 in C minor*, Op. 68, was first performed in 1876. The work is in the typical four movements:

Un poco sostenuto – Allegro – meno Allegro

Andante sostenuto

Un poco Allegretto e grazioso

Adagio – Più Antante – Allegro non Troppo ma con brio – Più Allegro

In 1877 one conductor called the symphony 'Beethoven's Tenth', due to perceived similarities between the work and various compositions of Beethoven. This rather annoyed Brahms as he felt that this amounted to accusations of plagiarism, whereas he saw his use of Beethoven's idiom in this symphony as an act of conscious homage. Brahms himself said, when comment was made on the similarity with Beethoven, 'any ass can see that'.

Brahms frequently traveled, for both business (concert tours) and pleasure. From 1878 onwards he often visited Italy in the springtime, and usually sought out a pleasant rural location in which to compose during the summer. He was a great walker and especially enjoyed spending time in the open air, where he felt that he could think more clearly.

In 1890, the 57-year-old Brahms resolved to give up composing. However, as it turned out, he was unable to abide by his decision, and in the years before his death he produced a number of acknowledged masterpieces. While completing the Op. 121 songs, Brahms developed cancer. His condition gradually worsened and he died on April 3, 1897. Brahms is buried in the Zentralfriedhof in Vienna. His place in musical history, which so concerned him, has placed him among the three great "Bs" of German composers: Bach, Beethoven and Brahms.



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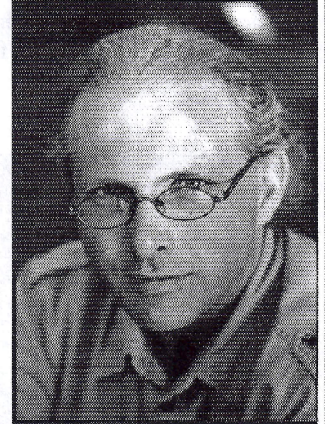
Program notes

Pietro Mascagni

Mascagni first studied composition in Milan, rejecting his father's wishes to continue the family bakery business. Although he wrote other operas, none matched the success of *Cavalleria Rusticana*. The one-act opera is a passionate tale of Sicilian peasants, with lashings of love, jealousy and tragic death. In brief, Alfio a carterer, murders neighbour Turiddu in a duel having been told of Turiddu's relationship with his wife Lola by the rejected Santuzza, a village girl. At the heart of the opera is the intrigue and infidelity between all the principal characters. The opera ends with Alfio the victor and Santuzza in a deep swoon, her lover dead. The famous *Sancta Maria* is a serene interlude played to an empty stage representing the calm before the storm, the final climax of the death of Turiddu.

Nigel Westlake

Nigel Westlake studied the clarinet with his father, Donald Westlake (principal clarinetist with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra) and subsequently left school early to pursue a performance career in music. Nigel toured Australia and the world playing with ballet companies, a circus troupe, chamber music groups, fusion bands and orchestras. His interest in composition dates from the late 1970's when he formed a classical/jazz-rock/world-music fusion band to play original music. During this time he started to receive offers to compose for radio, circus, TV and film. He studied in the Netherlands before joining guitarist John Williams's group 'Attacca' as a performer and composer. His credits include TV documentaries, tele-movies and news themes and he also has a string of film credits including the feature films *Miss Potter*, *Babe*, *Babe - Pig in the City*, *Children of the Revolution*, *The Nuggett* and the IMAX films *Antarctica*, *The Edge*, *Imagine* and *Solarmax*.



When Nigel Westlake composed the film score to John Weiley's IMAX film, *Antarctica* it proved to be a major turning point for him, as on the strength of its success he abandoned a career as a professional clarinetist to become a full-time composer. After composing the film score he reworked the music into a suite for guitar and orchestra for John Williams and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra in order to celebrate the 60th birthday of the ABC. Significant re-orchestration was required to translate the "studio mix" ideas to a "live" orchestra, as the original scoring for strings, French horn, percussion ensemble, voices and solo cello would not balance together well in a normal acoustic context. Westlake saw the commission as an opportunity to explore some of the ideas that had never made it to the film and considers this work a 'sister' piece. The second movement and the cadenza between the fourth and fifth movements are entirely new.

The acoustic guitar plays a pivotal role in colouring the orchestration and as a solo instrument, exploring both traditional and modern methods of guitar playing. Brilliant single note picking alternates with rapid tremolos and rasgueado strumming. Harmonics and fingerboard slapping are explored. Dense chords contain colourful dissonances on occasion and function to heighten or release tension. Virtuoso playing is required throughout the piece, particularly in the cadenza.

John Weiley, the director of the original IMAX film, agreed to its being adapted for the Suite. Nigel Westlake also supported the project. The Orchestra was very fortunate to have Nick Holmes, who edited the original film, agree to re-edit the film for the Suite. The objective was to produce images which would enhance the music, while retaining the integrity of the original film as far as possible.

The Last Place on Earth

The movement opens with an aerial shot of the ship settling against the ice cap in the full light of the midnight sun in summer. The insistent three note hammer like theme represents the harshness of the continent. After frenetic activity and a guitar cadenza, the movement ends quietly. The guitar uses a scordatura tuning, with the lower strings tuned down from E to C and from A to G.

Wooden Ships

This lyrical music was not used in the original film, but the archival footage for which the music was intended was used. The music is a tribute to the first Antarctic explorers. Our film includes images of Shackleton's expedition, including Frank Hurley's pictures of ice crushing Shackleton's boat - you can see the masts collapsing. Also included are Douglas Mawson's expedition, Raold Amundsen, the Norwegian adventurer who beat Scott to the South Pole, and of course Scott and his party. Scott's hut is seen today as he left it. There are sequences from the 1948 Ealing Studios film starring John Mills as Scott, for which Vaughan Williams provided the soundtrack (later reworked into his *Sinfonia Antarctica*). The movement finishes with the image of the cross marking Scott's final resting place.

The Penguin Ballet

The Ballet is the most literal sequence of matched images and music, attempting to capture the everyday habits of the penguins as they swim, dive, waddle and slide on the ice. Underwater shots show the unsuspected speed and elegance of penguins as they surface through a hole in the ice to escape leopard seals. This movement is a favourite with audiences.

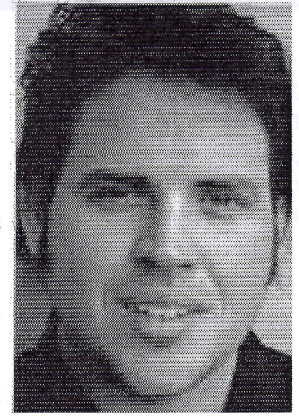
The Ice Core / Finale

We see underwater cathedrals with the clearest natural water on the planet, from a cavern inside a glacier. Until this footage was taken, no-one knew that such caverns existed. Ice core samples show a climate record going back over 100,000 years. The last image in the sequence shows bubbles of air that were trapped in the ice more than four thousand years ago. The *Finale* has an upbeat sense of optimism - a reflection of the fact that as the film was being completed, the Antarctic Treaty, protecting the last great wilderness for future generations, was signed.

Our Soloists

Daniel Belle

Daniel Belle is 23 years old and has been a vocalist for 14 years. He has studied classical voice and also made the cross over to Music theatre and Contemporary music. He studied at the Conservatorium of music for one year before settling in to the Australian Institute of Music. As a current scholarship holder Daniel has learnt under the masterful hands of musicians and performers such as Sarah-Grace Williams, Jennifer Murphy, Bev Kennedy, Greg Crease, Peter Cousens and Gerry Sword. Daniel's Performance experience is extensive. Starting from school in musical productions and weekend performances with his vocal group, Daniel then found his way in to the top eight of Australian Idol in 2004. Since returning to the Australian Institute of music to further his studies, he has performed as a soloist on a number of occasions, including singing the national anthems at internationally broadcast rugby union games, cricket matches and A league finals.



Philip Moran



Philip Moran took up the guitar at the age of nine, studying with local teachers. He commenced a Bachelor of Music at the Sydney Conservatorium in 1977, majoring in guitar with Gregory Pikler. Philip spent 1979/80 in London studying the guitar privately with Timothy Walker and at the Guildhall School of Music, and toured England as a musician with the London Contemporary Dance Theatre. He was a regular member of the Benelong Players and toured parts of Australia presenting chamber music to school children.

Philip undertook master classes with John Williams at the Victorian College of the Arts and won first prize in the Australian Guitar Competition in 1983. In the same year he completed his Bachelor of Music and was named Student of the Year, obtaining high distinctions for his solo recital and concerto performances.

Philip returned to England in 1984 to pursue further guitar studies with Carlos Bonell and Gordon Crosskey, and completed master classes with David Russell and Jose Tomas in Spain. In 1985 he gave his debut solo recital at the Sydney Opera House, and performed Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* with the Sydney Youth Orchestra under maestro Tommy Tycho. Philip has performed with artists such as Martin Lass, Jane Rutter and Deborah Byrne.

Over the past fourteen years Philip has been involved with Christian ministry as Head of Music at a Christian Arts College and as Church Music Coordinator.

His love and talent for the classical guitar brought him back to the performance arena in 2002.

Currently Philip keeps up a busy schedule lecturing in music at the Wesley Institute, teaching guitar privately and freelancing as a musician in Sydney. Philip recently released his CD 'Spanish Inspiration' (October, 2003) and has been touring NSW and QLD where the album has been well received. Spanish Inspiration has also been regularly programmed on ABC Classic FM.

In 2004 Philip appeared as guest soloist in the "Spirit of Spain" concert with the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic, and gave concerto performances with the Beecroft Orchestra and the Eastern Sydney Chamber Orchestra. This year Philip has given numerous solo recitals for music clubs such as the Shoalhaven and Hunters Hill clubs. He played on the soundtrack recording for the new Australian film *The Bet*.

Helen Boyd

Helen Boyd began her study of the harp with Dr Evan Davies at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music when she was eight years old. In 1994 she was awarded an AMEB Associate Diploma in Music (A Mus A). Throughout 1997, Helen studied in Brisbane with Sebastien Lipman, Professor of Harp at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music. Subsequently, in October 1997, she became the first harpist in Australia to be awarded the AMEB Licentiate Diploma in Music (L Mus A). Helen was a finalist in the 1998 2MBS-FM Young Performer of the Year.

Her first performance in a professional musical was in Gordon Frost's production of *The King and I* at Her Majesty's Theatre in 1991. Whilst completing a Bachelor of Arts degree with Honours at the University of Sydney, Helen held the position of Principal Harpist for *The Phantom of the Opera* Sydney season, from 1993 to 1996 and performed in amateur productions of *Evita*, *My Fair Lady* and *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*.

Helen's orchestral experience includes working with the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra, Sydney Opera House Orchestra, Strathfield Symphony Orchestra, Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra, Balmain Sinfonia, ARS Nova Chamber Orchestra, Queensland Youth Symphony Orchestra and the SBS Youth Orchestra. As a founding member of the Harp Society of NSW, Sydney Chapter, an association of professional harpists and enthusiasts, Helen is actively involved in promoting harp playing and publicising the harp repertoire. She is currently studying for her Masters in International Studies at the University of Sydney, and enjoys teaching beginners of any age and undertaking a range of freelance work.



Our Conductor & Artistic Director

Sarah-Grace Williams

Sarah-Grace Williams is fast gaining a reputation as one of the leading Australian conductors of her generation, appearing regularly with orchestras, choirs and musical theatre companies across the country. In February 2006 she was appointed Chief Conductor of the Strathfield Symphony Orchestra and Artistic Director in February of this year. Sarah-Grace is also Associate Conductor with both The Occasional Performing Sinfonia (TOPS) and the Australian Institute of Music (AIM) Orchestra. She is Director of the AIM Showcase Vocal Ensemble and has been an annual Guest Conductor with the Penrith Symphony Orchestra (PSO) since 2000.

2007 has been shaping up as an exciting year for Sarah-Grace. She has recently returned from New Zealand after conducting six concerts with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. In addition to her four concert series with Strathfield Symphony and concert commitments with both Penrith Symphony and TOPS, she will also be presenting an education concert entitle 'Construction' with The Queensland Orchestra in August.

An accomplished clarinettist and pianist, Sarah-Grace completed her Music degree at the University of Western Sydney in 1996, graduating with distinction in performance and composition. She received a scholarship for academic excellence and went on to achieve First Class Honours in Conducting before continuing conducting studies overseas with Maestro Alexander Polishchuk (St Petersburg Conservatoire, Russia) and Maestro Jorma Panula (Amsterdam, Holland). Sarah-Grace has also studied conducting under Johannes Fritzsich, Daniel Porcelijn, Marco Zucarrini, Janos Furst and Christopher Seaman.

As part of her involvement in Symphony Australia's Conductors Programme, Sarah-Grace has conducted Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, The Queensland Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra in both rehearsals and concert. She has also toured as a conductor throughout Europe, Asia, Great Britain and New Zealand. Beginning her musical life as a clarinetist and pianist, Sarah-Grace completed her Music degree from the University of Western Sydney in 1992, graduating with distinction in performance and composition. Receiving a scholarship for academic excellence, she went on to receive a First Class Honours in conducting before leaving Australia to study conducting further with Maestro Alexander Polishchuk (St Petersburg Conservatoire, Russia) and Maestro Jorma Panula (Amsterdam, Holland). She has also studied conducting under Christopher Seaman, Daniel Porcelijn, Marco Zucarrini and Janos Furst. Sarah-Grace was involved in Symphony Australia's Conductors Programme for three years and during this time conducted Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, The Queensland Orchestra and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in both rehearsals and concerts. She has toured as a conductor throughout Europe, Asia, Great Britain and New Zealand and has worked with several renowned soloists, including Simon Tedeschi, Sally Anne Russel and Elizabeth Campbell.

Recent conducting highlights include performances with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Handel's 'Messiah' with the Penrith Symphony Orchestra and Penrith City Choir in 2003/05/06, conducting the orchestra of the Sydney Anglicare Prom Praise concerts at the Sydney Town Hall, working as the Musical/Vocal Director for several music theatre productions at the Australian Institute of Music's including Bernstein's 'Candide' and writing/presenting a Baby Proms 'Pops for Tots' with PSO.

Sarah-Grace lectures in Conducting Studies, Musical Theatre Studies, Performance Studies, History and Aural Dedicated to Music Education, Sarah-Grace has a long history and passion for working with talented young musicians. She currently works at the Australian Institute of Music (tertiary) and works as a Musical Director and Vocal Specialist for the Catholic Schools Performing Arts (CaSPA), lecturing in Conducting Studies, Musical Theatre Studies, History and Aural. She is also a highly sought after, as well as working as a Vocal Coach and teacher of Piano, Performance Studies and Clarinet. For 10 years Sarah-Grace was a Director of Music with the Australian Youth Choir, embarking on a European Tour in which they collaborated with the Vienna Boys Choir. She has also been the conductor of several school ensembles, including the internationally award winning Sydney Girls High Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra and Symphonic Wind Ensemble, who she also led on two international tours.



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acknowledges with thanks
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Strathfield Municipal Council.**

