AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA

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Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane MAY 2015

Paul Dyer AO Artistic Director and Conductor
Brendan Joyce baroque violin
Ben Dollman baroque violin
Christina Leonard soprano saxophone
Australian Brandenburg Orchestra

PROGRAM

BACH
Brandenburg Concerto no.3, BWV 1048

VIVALDI
Concerto for Two Violins op.3, no.8 RV 522 from L’estro armonico

C.P.E. BACH
Concerto for Flute in A minor, Wq 166 (arr. soprano saxophone)
(arr. C. Leonard)

INTERVAL

RICHTER
Recomposed – Vivaldi: The Four Seasons

Sydney City Recital Hall Angel Place
Wednesday 6 May, Friday 8 May, Saturday 9 May, Wednesday 13 May, Friday 15 May all at 7pm
Matinee Saturday 9 May at 2pm

Melbourne Melbourne Recital Centre
Sunday 17 May at 5pm
Monday 18 May at 7pm

Brisbane Queensland Performing Arts Centre
Monday 11 May at 7:30pm
Tuesday 19 May at 7:30pm

The duration of this concert is approximately 2 hours including interval.

We kindly request that you switch off all electronic devices during the performance.
A few weeks ago I had the great pleasure of visiting MONA in Hobart – what a magnificent place! My eyes lit up everywhere in that extraordinary space as I flowed through the world of Old and New. Tonight we explore this same blend of worlds and periods with the genius of Sebastian Bach, his son Carl Philip Emmanuel, the irrepressible Antonio Vivaldi and the Grammy Award winning contemporary British composer Max Richter.

Max has recomposed, reimagined and retouched Vivaldi’s four brilliant Concertos – *The Four Seasons* and has opened up contemporary sounds with this special composition. This remarkable work, while utterly modern, shows complete respect for Vivaldi’s celebrated masterpiece.

Tonight is the WORLD PREMIERE of Max Richter’s *Recomposed* on period instruments. Inspired by Bach, rock, ambient electronica and film music sounds, Max has created an electrifying fusion of Old and New. This piece recently topped the iTunes Classical charts in the UK, Germany and USA and we are excited to bring it to Australian audiences tonight.

My keyboards for this series include our beautiful Flemish harpsichord, Moog Synthesiser and AppleMac.

Shining their musical brilliance tonight together with the wonderful Brandenburg artists are Baroque Violinist Brendan Joyce and Saxophonist, Christina Leonard.

Also tonight we are thrilled to be celebrating the recent honour of receiving the prestigious Sidney Myer Performing Arts Group Award for 2014.
What stands out at concert after concert is the impression that this bunch of musicians is having a really good time. They look at each other and smile, they laugh...there’s a warmth and sense of fun not often associated with classical performance. Sydney Morning Herald

The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, led by charismatic Artistic Director Paul Dyer, celebrates the music of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with excellence, flair and joy. Comprising leading specialists in informed performance practice from all over Australia, the Brandenburg performs using original edition scores and instruments of the period, breathing fresh life and vitality into baroque and classical masterpieces – as though the music has just sprung from the composer’s pen.

The Orchestra’s name pays tribute to the Brandenburg Concertos of J.S. Bach, whose musical genius was central to the baroque era. After celebrating their 25th anniversary in 2014, the Brandenburg continues to deliver exhilarating performances.

The Brandenburg has collaborated with such acclaimed and dynamic virtuosi as Andreas Scholl, Fiona Campbell, Philippe Jaroussky, Kristian Bezuidenhout, Emma Kirkby, Andreas Staier, Elizabeth Wallfisch, Genevieve Lacey, Andrew Manze and more. The Brandenburg has been popular with both audiences and critics. In 1998 The Age proclaimed the Brandenburg “had reached the ranks of the world’s best period instrument orchestras”. In 2010 the UK’s Gramophone Magazine declared “the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is Australia’s finest period-instrument ensemble. Under their inspiring musical director Paul Dyer, their vibrant concerts and recordings combine historical integrity with electrifying virtuosity and a passion for beauty.”

The Australian proclaimed that “a concert with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is like stepping back in time, as the sounds of period instruments resurrect baroque and classical works with reverence and authority.”

Discover more at brandenburg.com.au
In January 2013 Paul Dyer AO was awarded the Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his ‘distinguished service to the performing arts, particularly orchestral music as a director, conductor and musician, through the promotion of educational programs and support for emerging artists’ in recognition of his achievements as Co-founder and Artistic Director of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Brandenburg Choir.

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Paul completed postgraduate studies in solo performance with Bob van Asperen at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague, performed with many major European orchestras and undertook ensemble direction and orchestral studies with Sigiswald Kuijken and Frans Brüggen.

Paul appears as a soloist, continuo player and conductor with many major ensembles including the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Orchestra, Opera Australia, Australian Youth Orchestra, Victorian State Opera, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Pacific Baroque Orchestra, Vancouver, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, London.

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Ben Dollman is one of Australia’s leading performers on baroque violin, having held the position of Principal 2nd violin in the ABO for over ten years.

Studies in modern violin at Adelaide University were followed by time at Indiana University in the US where he developed a love of early music through work with the Australian violinist Stanley Ritchie. Upon returning to Australia, Ben was further mentored by then ABO concertmaster Lucinda Moon, and was invited to become a regular member of the ABO in 1999. He has since also performed as soloist and concertmaster on a number of occasions.

Based in Adelaide, he is an active chamber musician in other early music ensembles as well as in more contemporary music on the modern violin. Over many years he has also been a regular guest with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. He maintains a keen teaching practice in addition to which he has been involved with a number of educational programs including for Musica Viva and the Australian Youth Orchestra.

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JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G major, BWV 1048

[Allegro]
Ada glio
Allegro

In March 1721 Bach sent “Six Concertos for Several Instruments” to the Margrave of Brandenburg, who was the uncle of King Friedrich Wilhelm I of Prussia. Using the conventional obsequious style he reminded him that he had performed for him in Berlin two years earlier and that on that occasion the Margrave had asked for some of his compositions. This is the only definitive information we have about the history of the musical works now known as the “Brandenburg Concertos”.

From what we do know it seems that Bach did not compose them especially for the Margrave nor did he compose them as a set but rather, that he selected these concertos because their enormous variety of form and instrumentation showed his range as a composer, and he was hoping that the Margrave might offer him a job.

Scholars now believe that Bach composed the concertos during the years 1713 to 1721, when he held positions at the courts of Weimar and Cöthen. He was appointed court organist and chamber musician at Weimar in 1708, later being promoted to the rank of concert master, or orchestra leader, and it was here that he developed significantly as a composer. In 1714 the court acquired a large number of scores recently printed in Amsterdam and this enabled Bach to study the new Italian style of Torelli, Alessandro and Benedetto Marcello and, above all, Vivaldi.

Although Bach’s talent was acknowledged by the Weimar court, internal politics meant that he was overlooked for the position of Kapellmeister (music director) when it became available, and he began to look for another post elsewhere. Like most composers of his time, Bach’s options for earning a living were limited; he could work as a court or chamber musician for a member of the nobility, or as a church or civic musician for a municipal authority. Throughout his career he continually sought out better paid positions that gave him maximum artistic control, so when he was offered the role of Kapellmeister by Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen towards the end of 1717, he enthusiastically accepted. Taking up the position was not as straightforward as simply resigning from his current job at Weimar, however. As a servant of the Dukes of Weimar, Bach required their permission to leave his current post and he was imprisoned for almost a month for being impertinent enough to ask for his own dismissal.

Although Cöthen was a small, nondescript mid-German town, Prince Leopold was a music connoisseur who paid Bach double the salary of the previous Kapellmeister. Like most noblemen
the Prince had his own orchestra but his was particularly fine, due to the presence of a number of virtuoso musicians who had found themselves out of a job when Friedrich Wilhelm I of Prussia, no music lover, dissolved the Berlin court capelle in 1713. Bach composed some of his most famous instrumental music for this group, and his five years at Cöthen, from 1717 to 1722, were among the most productive and artistically satisfying of his career.

The years 1719 to 1721 were very difficult ones for Bach personally, however. During this time his brother and his fifth child died. High rates of infant mortality were a part of everyday life in the eighteenth century, and only ten of Bach’s twenty children survived past childhood. Worse was to come, however, with the death of his wife Maria Barbara. According to his son Carl Phillip Emmanuel Bach, only six years old at the time of his mother’s death:

After thirteen years of blissful married life with his first wife, the misfortune overtook him, in the year 1720, upon his return to Cöthen from a journey with his Prince to Carlsbad, of finding her dead and buried, although he had left her hale and hearty on his departure. The news that she had been ill and died reached him only when he entered his own house.

After the death of his wife it appears that Cöthen lost its appeal for Bach. Prince Leopold’s marriage to an un-musical princess and overstretched finances foreshadowed a down-sizing of the court’s musical establishment, and provided further impetus for Bach to look for a new position. History does not record what the Margrave thought of Bach’s gift but the next job offer came not from Berlin but from Leipzig, where Bach moved in 1723.

We know very little about the performance history of Bach’s instrumental works and there is no record that the Brandenburg Concertos were performed anywhere in Bach’s lifetime, although the Prince’s orchestra at Cöthen certainly included musicians capable of playing this very demanding music. The autograph score remained in the possession of the Prussian royal family but the concertos were largely neglected and unknown, and were not mentioned either in Bach’s obituary or his first biography published in 1802. They were published only in 1850 when a German musicologist stumbled upon them in a library in Berlin, but it was not until one hundred years later, with the early music revival of the 1950s, that they began to be widely heard.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 may be the earliest of all the concertos. Some scholars have dated at least the first movement to 1714, the period when Bach was beginning to immerse himself in the new Italian concerto style for one or two soloists made popular by Antonio Vivaldi.

In this, as in most of his concertos, Bach broadly followed Vivaldi’s model of three movements, fast–slow–fast, the fast movements structured around a refrain (ritornello) that is stated with variations by the full orchestra, alternating with different thematic material (known as episodes) for the soloists. Bach took ritornello form to a new level of complexity, with his layering of orchestral texture and virtuosic writing for solo instruments.

Concerto No. 3 is just for strings, with three parts for each of violins, violas and cellos, accompanied by double bass and harpsichord continuo. The dance-like first movement is brimming with exhilaration and zest. Each instrument or instrumental group takes a solo role in turn, but in a far more complex and original way than in Vivaldi’s concertos. The second movement consists of just two bars with no direction on the score as to their interpretation. Did Bach deliberately omit a movement from the copy he wrote out for the Margrave, or did he envisage a solo improvisation at this point? And on what instrument? Musicians of the day would have been similarly perplexed, having never encountered such an issue in any of the concertos published to that time, with not even an “ad lib” in the score to guide them. In this performance the second movement will be an improvisation played by the first violinist. The rushing third movement is in the form of a gigue.

ANTEONIO VIVALDI (1678–1741)

Concerto Op. 3 No. 8 for two violins RV 522 from L’estro armonico

Allegro

Larghetto e spirituoso

Allegro

Vivaldi died penniless and unknown in 1741, yet only thirty years earlier he had been the most famous instrumental composer in Europe after the publication in 1711 of his Opus 3, a collection of twelve concertos that he called L’estro armonico. Described by the Vivaldi scholar Michael Talbot as “perhaps the most influential collection of instrumental works to appear during the whole of the eighteenth century”, this seminal work provided a model for concerto composition that was followed and built on by other composers from France to Germany to Italy for years to come.
Vivaldi’s nearly eight hundred works might have remained in obscurity had it not been for a revival of interest in JS Bach during the nineteenth century, when scholars found that Bach had developed his compositional style by studying and transcribing some of Vivaldi’s violin concertos. This piqued an interest in Vivaldi for his own sake and his published works began to be studied, but it was not until 1926 that the bulk of Vivaldi’s works were rediscovered. Bach transcribed six of the L’estro armonico concertos for other instruments; this concerto was the basis for his organ concerto BWV 593.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

L’estro armonico means frenzied or passionate harmony, an appropriate title given the sheer energy and vigour of Vivaldi’s style expressed in forceful rhythms and endless variety which, along with the concertos’ originality in terms of musical form, made them so fascinating. Vivaldi wrote about two hundred and thirty concertos for solo violin and twenty five for two solo violins like this concerto, most of them thought to have been written for the exceptionally fine female players at the Pietà, the orphanage for girls for whom Vivaldi worked on and off for most of his life.

The fast first and third movements are built on repeated refrains (ritornellos), slightly varied each time to maintain interest and give a sense of momentum. Rapidly descending scales are a feature of the first movement.

Vivaldi was himself a virtuoso violinist, and much of his writing for violin is extremely technically demanding. Johann Uffenbach, a traveller from Germany and a keen amateur musician, was astounded at his technical feats:

Vivaldi played a solo accompaniment — splendid — to which he appended a cadenza which really terrified me, for such playing has never been nor can ever be; he came with his fingers within a mere grass-stalk’s breadth of the bridge, so that the bow had no room — and this on all four strings with imitations and at incredible speed.
From the late 1740s Bach started to apply for other positions including that of music director in Leipzig after his father’s death, but he was unsuccessful. Finally, in 1768, he was appointed resident composer and music director for the city of Hamburg, succeeding Telemann. He took a leading part in the city’s musical life, performing, teaching, and overseeing two hundred performances a year until his death twenty years later.

In a composing career spanning over sixty years, from the late Baroque to the high Classical periods, Emanuel Bach produced over a thousand works in all genres from keyboard sonatas to symphonies, concertos, songs and sacred vocal works. He was one of the most original musical thinkers of his time, always trying something new, and always with the goal of engaging and moving the listener.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Bach was highly respected in Berlin musical life outside the court, and he used the concertos he had composed for an indifferent Frederick for public concerts, with the solo parts re-composed to suit different solo instruments. This concerto, which he composed in 1750, was one of these. It exists in three authentic versions, for either flute, harpsichord or cello as solo instrument. For this performance the flute version has been further arranged for solo saxophone by Christina Leonard.

This concerto seems quite unpredictable compared to the structured ritornello model developed by Vivaldi. Emanuel Bach was an exponent of a mid-eighteenth century artistic movement known as Empfindsamkeit, or sensitive style, and believed that music should touch the heart and move the emotions. He wrote that he wanted his music to express many emotions, one after another, and this changeability characterises much of his music, giving it an intimate, conversational feel.

It is apparent in the strongly contrasting elements in the outer movements of this concerto. In the first movement the lyricism of the solo instrument is continually confronted by a raging, anxious full orchestra. After a calmer second movement the dialogue of soloist with orchestra picks up again in the final movement, the soloist giving half-finished answers to questions which are more playful and less anxious than the first movement’s.

INTERVAL
Max Richter was born in Germany but grew up in England, and studied piano and composition at the University of Edinburgh and the Royal Academy, and with post-modernist composer Luciano Berio in Florence. He is known for his interest in neoclassical composition and the bringing together of contemporary classical and alternative popular musical styles. Although he is classically trained, he is also influenced by punk and electronic music. As well as composing and recording his own music, for stage, opera, ballet and cinema, he is also known for collaborations with performance, installation and media artists.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Richter’s version of Vivaldi’s *The Four Seasons* was premiered in London in October 2012. He described it then as a re-composition, not an arrangement, as he said that three-quarters of the notes in the score are his, and not Vivaldi’s. In an interview he gave to London’s Guardian newspaper before the premiere, Richter discussed how he came to re-write arguably the most famous piece of classical music ever written.

“The *Four Seasons* is something we all carry around with us. It’s just everywhere. In a way, we stop being able to hear it. So this project is about reclaiming this music for me personally, by getting inside it and rediscovering it for myself – and taking a new path through a well-known landscape. … There are times I depart completely from the original, yes, but there are moments when it pokes through. I was pleased to discover that Vivaldi’s music is very modular. It’s pattern music, in a way, so there’s a connection with the whole post-minimalist aesthetic I’m part of.”

So what is left of Vivaldi? The original overall structure remains – four concertos each with three movements – but Richter has added a shimmering introduction before the opening “Spring” concerto. The instrumentation also is essentially the same with the addition of a harp, but a major difference is the inclusion of different electronic effects composed by Richter for each movement and played on synthesiser. In each movement Richter has retained a fragment of Vivaldi – a melody, a rhythm – and re-used them through the repetition and regular continuous rhythmic patterns characteristic of minimalism. Through this he has arrived at his own interpretations of the seasons.

Richter would be very happy if his version encourages listeners to return to Vivaldi’s work with fresh ears. “The original *Four Seasons* is a phenomenally innovative and creative piece of work. It’s so dynamic, so full of amazing images. And it feels very contemporary. It’s almost a kind of jump-cut aesthetic – all those extreme leaps between different kinds of material. Hats off to him. That’s what I’m really pleased with: my aim was to fall in love with the original again – and I have.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>BACH</th>
<th>CPE BACH</th>
<th>CONTEMPORARY EVENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1678</td>
<td>Born in Venice</td>
<td></td>
<td>Roman catholics banned from English parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>1685</td>
<td>Born in Eisenach</td>
<td>Handel born</td>
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<tr>
<td>1703</td>
<td>Appointed as a priest. Appointed violin teacher at the Pietà girls’ orphanage in Venice First job as lackey and musician at court of Weimar</td>
<td>Composes first movement of Brandenburg Concerto No 3</td>
<td>Fire brigade founded in Edinburgh</td>
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<td>1708</td>
<td>Appointed organist &amp; chamber musician at Weimar</td>
<td>Construction of St Paul’s cathedral in London completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1711</td>
<td>L’estro armonico Opus 3 published</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1713</td>
<td>First opera performed, in Vicenza</td>
<td>The Guardian newspaper founded in England</td>
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<td>1714</td>
<td>Becomes impresario &amp; composer at S. Angelo opera theatre, Venice</td>
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<tr>
<td>1717</td>
<td>Leaves the Pietà to mount productions of own operas throughout Italy</td>
<td>Queen Anne dies; Elector of Hanover becomes George I, King of Great Britain</td>
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<td>1721</td>
<td>Sends concertos to the Margrave of Brandenburg</td>
<td>Smallpox vaccine first administered in England</td>
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<td>1722</td>
<td>Contracted by Pietà to produce two concertos a month</td>
<td>Attends Thomasschule where he is taught by his father</td>
<td>British parliament makes it an offence punishable by death to black one’s face to hunt deer</td>
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<td>1724</td>
<td>First performance of St John Passion</td>
<td>Canaletto paints the Grand Canal, Venice</td>
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<tr>
<td>1725</td>
<td>Four Seasons published</td>
<td>Catherine I becomes Empress of Russia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1727</td>
<td>First performance of St Matthew Passion</td>
<td>Takes part in J S Bach’s performances while studying law</td>
<td>Handel composes coronation anthems for George II</td>
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<td>1736</td>
<td>Re-engaged by Pietà as maestro of concerti</td>
<td>Teaching and composing at university in Frankfurt</td>
<td>Statue of Handel erected in Vauxhall Gardens, London</td>
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<tr>
<td>1740</td>
<td>Dies in poverty in Vienna</td>
<td>Handel composes Messiah and Samson</td>
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<tr>
<td>1747</td>
<td>Travels to Potsdam to visit CPE Bach; meets Frederick the Great</td>
<td>Completes Magnificat</td>
<td>Proof that citrus fruit prevents scurvy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1753</td>
<td>Publication of treatise on keyboard playing</td>
<td>British parliament extends citizenship to Jewish people</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td>Threatens to leave &amp; given salary raise by Frederick</td>
<td>First dictionary of the English language published by Samuel Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>1767</td>
<td>Appointed city music director in Hamburg</td>
<td>Fragonard paints The Swing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1768</td>
<td>Dies</td>
<td>First Fleet arrives in Botany Bay</td>
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- **THE FOUR SEASONS**
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