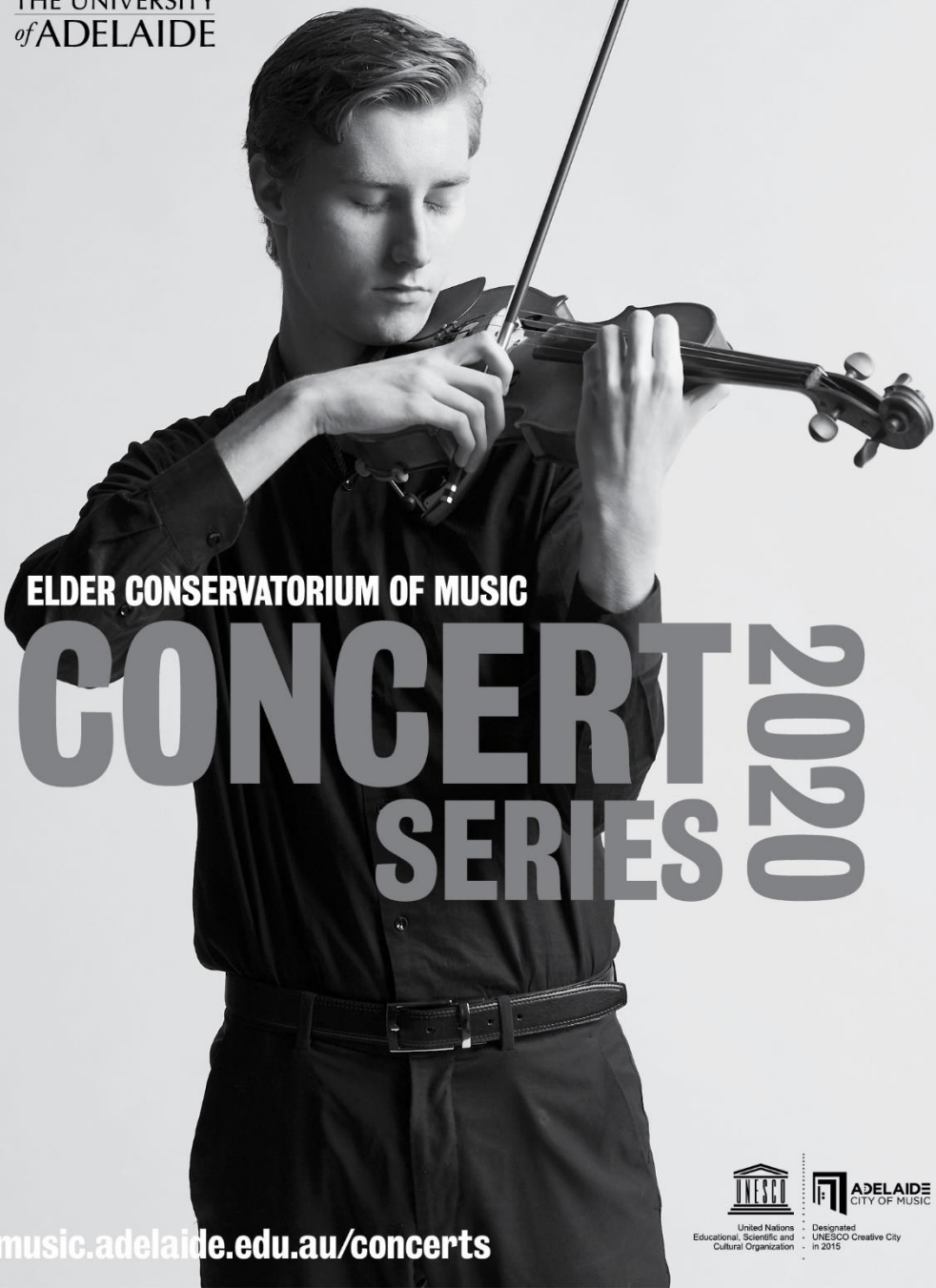




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 United Nations
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 **ADELAIDE**
CITY OF MUSIC

Designated
UNESCO Creative City
in 2015

Lucy Stoddart *soprano*

Jamie Cock *piano*

PROGRAM

A Green Cornfield

Michael Head

John Ruskin's call for artists 'to go to nature' was heeded by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his fellow Pre-Raphaelites. Rossetti's sister Christina, while not formally a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, influenced its work as artist's model and poet. Her poem, *A Green Cornfield*, so tenderly set to music by English composer Michael Head, celebrates the power of the present moment and the value of attending to the transient sights and sounds of an ordinary country scene.

Ma rendi pur contento

Vincenzo Bellini

In the dawn of Italian Romantic opera the strongest voice was that of Bellini. Within a limited technical resource he brought to the prevailing Rossinian idiom a wealth of poignant melody enhanced by moments of expressive dissonance to which even Wagner paid tribute. His fame, of course, rests on his stage works, but, like all Italian opera composers of his day, he turned out a number of pieces for voice and piano that vary from academic exercises to songs dedicated to some noble dilettante or other.

Bellini had the gift for creating and spinning a simple line into utterly fluid melody, and this song brings together that simplicity and lyricism with supreme efficiency. It opens with subdued minor chords, the accompaniment switching to simple arpeggios as the vocal line begins. The vocal line is largely scalar, only becoming expansive and emphatic just before the end, before returning to the simplicity of the opening, in the last bars.

Widmung

Robert Schumann

Of the many works inspired by his beloved wife Clara, Robert Schumann's song 'Widmung' is probably the best known. Not only for its title, 'Dedication', but for its ecstatic text by Friedrich Rückert that seems to capture all his joy and relief in finally being able to anticipate their marriage.

After a long courtship, and facing strong opposition from Clara's autocratic father (and Schumann's piano teacher) Friedrich Wieck, their wedding took place in September of 1840. '*Widmung*' stands at the head of the collection 'Myrthen' that Schumann dedicated to Clara as a wedding gift. The title of the cycle represents the bridal wreaths that were often made out of myrtle, an evergreen shrub entwined with white flowers. These were among the first vocal works that Schumann published in what was to become known as his "year of song."

Gretchen am Spinnrade

Franz Schubert

Franz Schubert composed *Gretchen am Spinnrade* (Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel) in 1814, just months shy of his 18th birthday. Despite the composer's tender years, it has become one of Schubert's most enduring Lieder. It is based on a story from Goethe's *Faust* in which the demon Mephistopheles has made a bet with God, that he can corrupt the righteous mortal Faust.

Faust is lured into a pact with Mephistopheles; he will get whatever he wants on earth in return for his promise to serve the devil in Hell. One of the things Faust wants is Gretchen, but the ill-fated romance ends tragically in murder and infanticide.

Schubert's lieder invites us into Gretchen's private world as she sits at her spinning wheel and dreams of her new love. The accompaniment mimics the whirl of the spinning wheel with constant sixteenth notes played in the right hand while the left hand portrays the treadle. This movement reflects Gretchen's agitated state of mind as she thinks about Faust. When Gretchen sings of her lover's kiss the piano stops, as she abandons her spinning completely lost in her thoughts. In the final moments of the work, the melody soars to its highest notes as Gretchen sings about being lost in her beloved's kisses.

An die Musik

Franz Schubert

Schubert's *An Die Musik* is a setting of a poem by Franz von Schober. The two men, roughly the same age, enjoyed a close relationship – so close, in fact, that they sometimes referred to themselves collectively as "Schobert." The most prominent feature of *An Die Musik* is the plaintive melody, the arc of which leaps wistfully between chord tones. This gentle curve accompanies the germinal phrase of the poem: "O beloved art." Behind the lyrical melody, a simple chordal accompaniment softly undulates with rhythmic persistence, while a subtle but resolute bass line underscores the texture. The major sixth descent that gives the opening motive its characteristic reverence reappears throughout the song, lending to the otherwise restrained melody occasional moments of rhapsodic tenderness.

Consolations 1-3

Franz Liszt

Franz Liszt, the Hungarian virtuoso pianist, was a superstar of the romantic era. His solo recitals, unique at the time, were full of works of sparkling virtuosity and inspired a manic devotion (or Lisztomania) amongst his star-struck fans.

The six *Consolations* were published as a group in 1850 and their reflective, self-communing character reveals a new and much more thoughtful Liszt. The title has two possible derivations, both poetic. Most scholars attribute it to a collection of poems by Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, the *Consolations* of 1830. Another possibility is Lamartine's poem "Une larme, ou consolation." In either case, a quality of melancholy and introspection permeates the music, as it does the poems (music tinged with a secret sorrow).

The first of the Consolations is in E Major and is marked *Andante con moto*. It is the shortest of the set, consisting of just 25 measures. Consolation No. 2, also in E Major, is marked *Un poco più mosso* and is often played directly after the first, without a break. The third Consolation, an arrangement of a Hungarian folk song, is in D \flat major and marked *Lento placido*. A comparison with Chopin's Nocturne in D flat major (Op. 27, No. 2) is almost inevitable and the similarity between the two works is often interpreted as a tribute to Chopin who died in 1849, a year before the Consolations were published.

Green Finch and Linnet Bird

Stephen Sondheim

Green Finch and Linnet Bird comes from Stephen Sondheim's 1979 production, *Sweeney Todd: The demon Barber of Fleet Street*. It is sung out of the window by Johanna the young ward of the evil Judge Turpin whose corrupt actions have driven Sweeney Todd into his life of nihilistic revenge. Johanna's song compares her captivity in the judge's mansion to that of a bird in a gilded cage.

Après un rêve

Gabriel Fauré

Although *Après un Rêve* is one of Fauré's earliest songs, it is unquestionably his most popular. The first of his *Trois melodies*, Op. 7, which also include *Hymne* and *Barcarolle*, it has been transcribed for several solo instruments including piano, yet remains best known in its intended form; as a song for solo voice. The languid and richly expressive melodic line of *Après un Rêve* is set to words by Romain Bussine. The text – a French adaptation of an anonymous Italian poem – describes a dream of a lover's romantic rendezvous. An otherworldly experience, away from darkness, and toward an awakening light. But the dreamer, once awake, longs to return to the mysterious night.

Hôtel

Francis Poulenc

In a series of interviews spanning from October 1953 to April 1954, Poulenc proclaims: "*The setting of music to a poem must be an act of love, and never a marriage of convenience.*" Poulenc examined every aspect of a poem, often taking months to begin setting it to music.

Banalités is a wartime song cycle using poems by Guillaume Apollinaire and Poulenc's work seems designed to portray the dislocation of the period. Pierre Bernac, a renowned interpreter of French art song and lifelong friend of Poulenc, contended that *Banalités* does not constitute a cycle in the true sense of the word, as the works have no connection with one another, poetically or musically.

The second song in the set, *Hôtel*, reveals a singular mood of apathy. The sonorous piano accompaniment with the musical direction "very calm and lazy" provides a lush harmony for the languid words of the narrator who concludes, "*I do not wish to work, I only wish to smoke.*"

Pastorale

Aaron Copeland

Written in 1921 just before the composer moved to France to study with Nadia Boulanger, Copeland's *Pastorale* is a setting of Kafiri folk poetry (a region in modern Afghanistan) translated by E Powys Mathers. In this simple song the piano utters bird-like flutterings to accompany the singers idyllic descriptions of rural scenes.

There are Fairies at the Bottom of Our Garden

Liza Lehmann

Liza Lehmann carved out a successful career for herself both as a composer and as a singer at a time when it was difficult for a woman to gain acceptance amongst the musical establishment. The British-born daughter of a well-known German portrait painter, she was born into a family that mixed easily in artistic circles (Liszt, for example, was an acquaintance of her parents). Later, Liza was able to study singing with Jenny Lind and spent a short time visiting Clara Schumann and studying with her the lieder of Robert Schumann. *There Are Fairies At The Bottom Of The Garden* remains one of her best-known works and was based on a poem by Rose Fyleman.



Lucy Stoddart is an Adelaide based Soprano and graduate of Bachelor of Music, Classical Performance (Voice) at the Elder Conservatorium under the tutelage of Rosalind Martin and is commencing her honours year in July of 2020. During her time as an undergraduate at the Conservatorium, Lucy was awarded the Guli Magarey Prize (2017) for a female student of singing, the Adelaide Choral Society Prize (2018) for her work in choral music and in 2019, the Rae Cocking Memorial Prize. She has performed in the State Opera of South Australia's productions of Don Pasquale and Dido and Aeneas. Lucy has worked regularly with the Adelaide

Chamber singers, including Bach's Johannes Passion, conducted by Stephen Layton (2019). In March 2020, Lucy performed in the chorus of Romeo Castellucci's Mozart's Requiem as part of the Adelaide Festival. In January 2021, Lucy will participate in the Gondwana National Choral School for the fourth consecutive year and following this will tour to Europe with the ensemble for the second time.



Jamie Cock began piano lessons aged 14 with Dianne Spence in Balaklava, going on to complete an Honours Degree in Piano Performance at the Elder Conservatorium studying under Noreen Stokes and Stefan Ammer. He pursued further study in solo and chamber music at the Martinu Academy in Prague with Boris Krajny and at the Musikhochschule Freiburg, Germany under the guidance of Professor Felix Gottlieb.

He has presented concerts in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the US and throughout Europe. Since returning to Australia he has been active in everything from continuo to cabaret, performing with the Adelaide and Sydney Symphony Orchestras, for Recitals Australia, the Adelaide Festival, Melbourne and Adelaide Fringe Festivals, on ABC Classic FM and in collaborations with (among others) the State Opera of South Australia, The Firm, Brink Theatre and the State Theatre Company. Travel and languages are amongst his interests outside of music.

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