

ANAM RECITAL: TOM ALLEN (HORN)

MONDAY 28 OCTOBER 3.30PM

ROSINA AUDITORIUM, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

- Francis POULENC (1899-1963)** *Élegie* (1957) 11'
Tom Allen (VIC) horn
Berta Brozgul (ANAM Associate Faculty) piano
- Catherine LIKHUTA (b. 1981)** *Bad Neighbours* (2017) 16'
Tom Allen (VIC) horn
Emma John (WA) horn
Po Goh (VIC) piano
- Franz STRAUSS (1822-1903)** Introduction, Theme and Variations 11'
Tom Allen (VIC) horn
Berta Brozgul (ANAM Associate Faculty) piano
- TRADITIONAL** arr. **DAVIS** *Waltzing Matilda* 4'
Tom Allen (VIC) horn
Madeleine Aarons (NSW) horn
Emma John (WA) horn
Oliver Harris (NSW) horn

Approximate duration: 55 minutes

ABOUT TOM ALLEN

Tom Allen is currently in his first year at ANAM, studying with Carla Blackwood. Prior to starting at ANAM, Tom completed a Bachelor of Music (Performance) at the University of Melbourne, studying with Carla Blackwood and Nico Fleury. Tom first began playing the horn – after learning violin – at high school, where he learned from Linda Hewett. He took part in AYO programs between 2022-2024, which included a national tour with Sir Mark Elder and playing Principal Horn of the Alexander Orchestra at National Music Camp in 2023. As part of his degree, Tom took part in masterclasses with Stefan Dohr, Andrew Bain, Simen Fegran, Genevieve Clifford, and Casey Rippon. Find out more at anam.com.au/musicians

Emma is fully supported by [ANAM Syndicate](#) donors Bill and Sandra Burdett.

Po is supported by [ANAM Syndicate](#) donors Gina Fox, Janet Limb AO, Kim Low.

Madeleine is the 2024 Albert Scholar. She is further supported by [ANAM Syndicate](#) donors Arnis Dzedins, Mike and Jane Hall, Lee and Greg Ridder, Anna and Mark Yates.



ANAM relies on the generous support of donors to help us develop our young and talented musicians. To provide the very best performers for your concert experience today and in the future, please donate to ANAM now via this link, call (03) 9645 7911 or speak to our Box Office staff at today's concert.

ANAM respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands spread across Australia on which we work and live. We uphold and honour their continued relationship to these sites, we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

PROGRAM NOTES

Throughout his childhood, **Francis Poulenc** was surrounded by two distinct ideas of the world; a deep connection to Roman Catholicism embodied by his father Émile – a joint owner of a successful pharmaceutical company – and the more culturally sophisticated world of his mother Jenny, whose family took great interest in the Parisian artistic scene. One particular critic, Claude Rostand, described Poulenc as 'half monk, half naughty boy'. This contradiction is present within Poulenc's musical output too; his early works are quite serious and often based around religious themes, while his later works became increasingly light and humorous. Despite this, light and humorous do not seem appropriate for his *Élégie pour cor et piano*, a particularly thoughtful work Poulenc wrote as a tribute to British horn player, Dennis Brain.

Brain was one of the most sought-after horn players in Europe throughout the mid-twentieth century and was one of the first horn players to produce solo recordings. To this day, his recordings are very well respected by solo and orchestral horn players around the world. Although a keen motorist, Brain was killed in a car crash driving to London following a performance at the Edinburgh Festival in 1957. Published in *The Times*, his obituary read: "Music will be poorer by the loss of so brilliant an executant at the early age of 36" – to me revealing the profound impact Brain had on the musical landscape, something particularly rare in brass playing.

Poulenc begins his musical tribute with a twelve-note tone row, played by the horn alone. Atonality was not something Poulenc practised regularly, but here it suggests to me the disbelief and uncertainty one feels following an unexpected death. The tragedy of the event and subsequent anger is then expressed in a chromatic, agitato passage, the piano now joining the horn combining both C major and minor triads. Following a brief passage marked *très calme*, the main theme of the elegy is introduced, weaving its way between the horn and piano parts, finally resulting in a new tone row at the conclusion of the piece, leaving the audience unsettled and mournful.

Following the elegy is **Catherine Likhuta's** *Bad Neighbours*, a chamber concerto for two horns and piano. Though originally intended in this arrangement, the piece was first performed as a chamber concerto for two horns and horn quartet at the 49th International Horn Symposium in Brazil. Although now based in Brisbane, Likhuta is of Ukrainian origin and studying composition at the National Academy of Ukraine and jazz piano at the Kyiv Glière Music College.

Likhuta's heritage is central to the conception of this work, written as a reaction to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. The piece is perhaps more meaningful today, given the ongoing conflict between the two countries. Writing about the piece Likhuta states that 'it is about fighting for freedom and independence', sorrowfully implementing melodies and rhythms from Ukrainian folk songs to depict the plight of those affected. In performance, the two horns stand opposite each other, the first horn representing Ukraine and the second horn as Russia. While often complementing each other, the two horn parts have distinct melodies: the first horn often highlights the folk elements, soaring into the higher range, while the second horn remains brooding in the low register, echoing Russia's aggression. Despite its overall sombre character, the piece also contains jazz influences, particularly in its rhythmic drive, propelling the piece to an exciting, yet ominous conclusion.

Breaking away from the solemnity is **Franz Strauss' Introduction, Theme and Variations**, a more traditional work that I find expresses the lightness and grace of the horn. Franz Strauss, not to be confused with his son Richard, was a virtuoso horn player and principal of the Bavarian Court Opera for much of his professional life. As a composer, he is most well remembered for his works for horn, which included two concerti and various solo works. As confirmed by this piece, Strauss was not overly excited by the prospect of modern music, being heavily influenced by the classical style embodied by Mozart, Haydn, and Schubert. Perhaps not as virtuosic as theme and variations tend to be, it is demonstrative of Strauss' pride for the instrument, leaving the player satisfied and inspired.

Finally, is an arrangement of *Waltzing Matilda* for horn quartet. Arranged by the West Australian Symphony Orchestra's principal trombone **Joshua Davis**, it is far from the traditional melancholic tone of the original text. Written for Sarah Willis – member of the Berlin Philharmonic – and her colleagues, it features an extravagant fourth horn part, highlighting Willis' prowess in the low register.

Words by Tom Allen