

## ANAM RECITAL: RONAN APCAR (PIANO) The dark side of intimacy

FRIDAY 8 NOVEMBER 11AM  
ROSINA AUDITORIUM, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

<b>BJÖRK (b. 1965)</b> arr. <b>APCAR</b> <i>Pagan Poetry</i> (2001)	5'
<b>Einojuhani RAUTAVAARA (b. 1928)</b> <i>Narcissus</i> (2001)	6'
<b>BLACK COUNTRY NEW ROAD</b> arr. <b>APCAR</b> <i>Bread Song</i> (2021)	6'
<b>Sarah NEMTSOV (b. 1987)</b> <i>Seven Thoughts – Her Kind</i> (2018) <sup>†</sup>	9'
<b>Hannah MCKITTRICK</b> arr. <b>APCAR</b> <i>Perfect Struggler</i> (2022)	6'
<b>Ronan APCAR (b. 2000)</b> <i>He Hit Me</i> (2024) <sup>^</sup>	7'
<b>BJÖRK (b. 1965)</b> arr. <b>APCAR</b> <i>Black Lake</i> (2015)	10'

**Ronan Aparc\*** (NSW) keyboard and piano

**Liz Player** (guest) voice

**Sola Hughes\*** (QLD) violin

**Natalie Mavridis\*** (NSW) violin

**Peter Gjelsten\*** (NZ) violin

**Samuel Ke** (guest) violin

**Daniel You\*** (QLD) viola

**Sebastian Coyne\*** (VIC) viola

**Jack Overall\*** (SA) cello

**Noah Lawrence\*** (VIC) cello

*Approximate duration: 60 minutes*

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*\* Denotes a musician supported by ANAM Syndicate*

*† Australian Premiere*

*^ World Premiere*



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## PROGRAM NOTES

Written by Ronan Apcar

Intimacy is not just sex and love; it's the human need for closeness with those around us. It's wonderful, but when it goes wrong – losing that relationship or community, confronting ugly truths about ourselves, having societal pressures infiltrate every inch of our lives – it really hurts. And yet, we still crave it. We can't live without it, so we suffer for the chance of an intimacy that makes life worth living. This **dark side of intimacy** is an infallible inspiration for music – turn on the radio and it won't be long until you hear about love, heartbreak, or 'finding yourself.' A timeless and genreless subject, this program is a deep dive into the complex world of human intimacy through songs and art music that fearlessly explore the ugliness and tragedy of our feelings.

Icelandic trailblazer **Björk Guðmundsdóttir** probably does this better than anyone else. From her album *Vespertine*, inspired by the start of her relationship with multimedia artist Matthew Barney, *Pagan Poetry* is about the conflict between her desire for sexual freedom and faithful commitment. This newfound explosive passion and obsession spirals out-of-control and leaves Björk grappling with how much of her autonomy she is willing to sacrifice to realise the "*blueprint of the pleasure in me.*"

*"This time / I'm gonna keep me all to myself / But he makes me want to hand myself over"*

Finnish composer **Einojuhani Rautavaara** cleverly represents the ancient Greek story of Narcissus through his "love of symmetry" in music. After leaving a trail of heartbreak from endless suitors, the incredibly beautiful Narcissus comes across a pool of water and falls in love with his reflection. Trying to reach out for his double who disappears when he touches the water, Narcissus finally learns the pain of unrequited love and eventually withers away.

*"Narcissus will live a long life, so long as he never knows himself"*

A regular theme found in music by British rock band **Black Country, New Road** is the modern paradox of a loneliness epidemic in a world more connected than ever. *Bread Song* is about a failing long-distance relationship with a chorus centred on a metaphor of eating toast in someone's bed and leaving behind crumbs.

*"I just woke up / And you already don't care /  
That I tried my best to hold you / Through the headset that you wear"*

German composer **Sarah Nemptsov's** work *Seven Thoughts – Her Kind* for voice and 49 samples played on keyboard transforms Anne Sexton's confessional poem 'Her Kind' into a harrowing seven-part soundscape. Written during the 1950s, 'Her Kind' presents three women who reject the patriarchy dictating how they compose and carry themselves in every inch of their life. In return, they are shunned and cast as outliers, "witches," and not 'real women'.

*"A woman like that is not a woman, quite / I have been her kind"*

Melbourne-local **Hannah McKittrick** describes *Perfect Struggler* as "the feeling of things falling apart and deciding whether to repair the broken pieces or let them slip through the widening gap between your cupped palms." Exploring themes of heartbreak and suffering at another's hands, this is a courageous depiction of growing weary under the weight of anger and loss.

*"When will I stop growing nauseous / When I see your posture echoed in the shape of my heartbroken brother"*

In 2020, I was hit across my face. It was by someone I had known for about a year. We did have a strange relationship dynamic, but in any case, being hit by someone you trust in any capacity is violating. I remember the siren of fear that rang in my head, and it rushed back every time I crossed paths with him over the next couple of years. I wanted to zoom in and extrapolate that specific siren and feeling into a piece of music, and that became *He Hit Me*.

*"Well, I guess it's just my life / And it's just my body" – Body by Julia Jacklin*

And so, we return to the same relationship that started this program: **Björk Guðmundsdóttir** and Matthew Barney. The same relationship which inspired the lovestruck-album *Vespertine* would later crumble, inspiring the heartbreaking album *Vulnicura*. *Black Lake* is Björk's longest song and a musical expression of attempting to articulate ineffable grief, but forever remaining stuck in the pain – done in 12 verses and "freezes" (long, stagnant chords). The arc from *Vespertine* to *Vulnicura* is an unwelcome reminder that no matter how wonderful our relationships are, they will end at some point – and that's the simple cost of intimacy.

*"Our love was my womb / but our bond has broken / my shield is gone / my protection is taken"*