

ANAM RECITAL: MADELEINE AARONS (HORN)

Horn(y) Women

MONDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 1.30PM
ROSINA AUDITORIUM, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

Ruth GIPPS (1921-1999) Horn Concerto, op. 58 (1968) 17'
i. *Con moto – Tranquillo – Cadenza*
ii. *Scherzo. Allegretto*
iii. *Finale. Allegro ritmico*

Maria GRENFELL (b. 1969) *Tempus Fugit* (2025)* 7'

Claire FARRELL (b. 1998) *In Tasmania* (2022) 5'

Helen WANDERS (b. 1960) *The Beaumaris Variations* (2022) 6'

Madeleine Aarons (NSW) horn
Jamie Willson # (TAS) percussion
Leigh Harrold (ANAM Associate Faculty) piano

Approximate duration: 40 minutes

ABOUT MADELEINE AARONS

Originally from the UK, Madeleine Aarons is a horn player from Sydney. Since completing her studies in Queensland and during her first year at ANAM, Madeleine has performed with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (SSO), Queensland Ballet, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO), Auckland Philharmonic and Victorian Opera. She has also worked on multiple recordings for Marvel and other solo artists as well as teaching horn at several of Sydney's top private schools. In 2024 she won the Ursula Hoff Performance Award for Most Outstanding Chamber Music Performance with two of her ANAM colleagues.

When she is not in the practice room and covered in slide grease, Madeleine enjoys cooking, going for adventures in nature and dancing rather badly to her Spotify playlists.

Madeleine is supported by ANAM Syndicate donors Arnis Dzedins, Robert Gibbs and Tony Wildman, Mike and Jane Hall, Lee and Greg Ridder, Anna and Mark Yates.

Denotes ANAM musicians supported by ANAM Syndicate donors or foundations.

** The 2025 ANAM Set commissions are supported by the Anthony and Sharon Lee Foundation.*

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 our website, 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

This recital's program has been curated to highlight the brilliance of female composers and musicians across the globe, the struggles they have and continue to face, the grit they have all shown and their perseverance through discrimination and hardship. Ladies: this one is for you.

Starting off the recital we have **Ruth Gipps's** horn concerto. Gipps was a successful soloist on piano and oboe. Unfortunately, due to an injury at the age of 30, she was forced to retire as a performer and shifted her focus onto composing. She was a student of Malcolm Arnold and Gordon Jacob, both incredibly significant composers for horn and brass in general. Whilst Gipps found success during her lifetime, it did not come without sacrifice and struggle: being a woman in a highly male dominated field, Gipps was often unable to submit her works for competitions and her music was very rarely performed or taken seriously by her peers or critics. Because of the discrimination she faced, she developed a tough outer skin and became a fierce advocate for women in music.

This concerto was written in 1968 for her son, Lance Baker, and is one of the toughest in the horn repertoire. With an expansive range and demanding technical details, this piece truly is a virtuosic masterpiece.

This first movement starts with a dreamlike lyrical melody that becomes a recurring motif. The horn effortlessly passes the line back and forth to the woodwinds, creating a call and response. The development builds in intensity with a fast-moving tongued passage that shows off the horn's range and the player's own agility. The movement finishes with an expansive cadenza, allowing the horn to show off its dynamic range and concluding on a quiet resolved chord.

The second movement is in a joyful 7/8 metre, which creates a sense of playfulness between the woodwinds and the horn. This theme is interrupted by long sweeping melodic lines and concludes with another cheeky demonstration of the horn's vast 4 octave range.

The third movement starts with a bang; or rather, a clap, with clapsticks jumping right into the playful melody, which the horn quickly takes over. This last movement is a test for the player's stamina and technique, with beautiful legato lines quickly transformed into technical tongued passages over strange harmonic progressions. It ends with a very fast passage running up to the horn's highest register, concluding this concerto with a flourish!

The Australian composer **Maria Grenfell** has had her works played all over the world, has given guest lectures in the USA, New Zealand, Singapore and Australia, and is currently an associate professor at the Tasmania Conservatorium of Music. She is also regularly involved in mentorship programs for young developing composers. In Maria's notes on *Tempus fugit* ('Time Flies'), she says that the commission for this piece came at a very busy time in her life, and the music reflects the idea of time moving forward. The piece is flowing and expresses the horn's fluidity and melodic line. The middle has a short fugal section and is a nod to her earlier work for horn and piano, *Fugue and Foxtrot*.

The last two pieces in the program are **Helen Wanders' Beuamaris Variations** and **Claire Farrell's In Tasmania**. These pieces were commissioned by my friend and ANAM colleague Jamie Willson for horn and percussion, and both demonstrate how the horn can be placed in more unusual ensemble pairings and still create beautiful sounds. The marimba and vibraphone both reflect and mimic the mellow and rich sounds of the horn. These pieces beautifully reflect the Australian landscape and use extended techniques to create atmospheric sounds that represent this wonderful country.

Thank you to everyone involved in bringing this program to life, and a bigger thank you to the female powerhouses and trailblazers who composed this incredible music for me to play today.

Words by Madeleine Aarons