

ANAM RECITAL: KAREN CHEN (CLARINET) She/Her

FRIDAY 1 AUGUST 11AM
ROSINA AUDITORIUM, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

Amy BEACH (1867-1944) Three Compositions, op. 40 (1898)	9'
<i>ii. Berceuse</i>	
<i>iii. Mazurka</i>	
Stacy GARROP (b. 1969) <i>Phoenix Rising</i> (2016)	11'
<i>i. Dying in embers</i>	
<i>ii. Reborn in flames</i>	
Miriam HYDE (1913-2005) Clarinet Sonata in F Minor (1949)	17'
<i>i. Allegro moderato</i>	
<i>ii. Tempo di minuetto</i>	
<i>iii. Allegro molto</i>	
Corrina BONSHEK (b. 1977) <i>As Small Birds Play</i> (2011)	5'
Ida GOTKOVSKY (b. 1933) <i>Images de Norvège</i> (1977)	4'
<i>i. Dolcissimo</i>	
<i>ii. Fantasque et gai</i>	

Karen Chen (NSW) clarinet
Aidan Boase (ANAM Associate Faculty) piano

Approximate duration: 50 minutes

ABOUT KAREN CHEN

Hailing from Sydney, Karen is currently in her second year of training at ANAM, under the tutelage of David Thomas. An avid chamber musician, Karen is particularly interested in contemporary styles such as the reed quintet, electroacoustic music and more recently, improv jams with friends. Karen has also enjoyed many orchestral opportunities, including performing as Principal Clarinet with the Järvi Academy Orchestra, the Sydney Conservatorium's various ensembles, and programs with the Sydney Youth Orchestra.

Karen is supported by ANAM Syndicate donors Di Jameson OAM and Frank Mercurio.

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PROGRAM NOTES

This program is a celebration of women's voices across time and cultural landscapes. From Beach's romanticism, Hyde's post-war healing and Bonshek's meditative soundscapes to Garrop's mythic dramatization and Gotkovsky's vivid imagery of Norway, each piece invites the audience into a unique and compelling musical world.

Amy Beach was one of the first women in America to gain public success as a composer and performer in a time when societal constraints and lack of access to European training made such achievements rare. Despite being a prodigious concert pianist in her teen years, her performance career was significantly limited after her marriage at 18, when her husband restricted her public performances. Only after his passing did she return to the stage.

Beach scored her *Three Compositions* for violin and piano in 1898 and later adapted it for cello. They reflect her lush late Romantic style, influenced by Brahms and Franck. *Berceuse* offers a gentle, lyrical lullaby, while *Mazurka* dances with vibrant energy from Polish folk traditions. In this recital, I play a transcription by David Cook, with a few voicing corrections of my own to better capture the sounds of the violin or cello Beach had in mind.

Chicago-based contemporary composer **Stacy Garrop** writes music rooted in storytelling and colour. Her works balance moments of tension and release while exploring the full sonic range of instruments. *Phoenix Rising*, originally for saxophone, draws on ancient Egyptian and Greek phoenix myths. In Garrop's words:

"These tales tend to share similar traits: a sacred bird with brilliantly colored plumage and melodious call lives for typically five hundred years; then the bird dies in a nest of embers, only to be reborn among the flames... The bird's association with immortality and resurrection are particularly intriguing aspects of these tales..."

The first movement, *Dying in Embers*, portrays an old phoenix breathing its last breath atop glowing coals. The second movement, *Reborn in Flames*, captures the energy and vitality of the phoenix reborn, tasting flight for the first time.

Miriam Hyde grew up in a home filled with music – her mother taught her piano, and she was surrounded by musical family members. Her clarinet sonata was written after an emotional reunion with her husband, who had spent over five years as a prisoner of war in Crete, and is one of her most poignant post-war works. Hyde herself premiered it with Sydney Symphony Orchestra clarinetist Henry Barlow. The piece flows through three movements, combining late Romantic lyricism and pastoral calm with undercurrents of loss and anguish. As Hyde once said:

"I feel my music can be a refuge for what beauty and peace can still be omnipresent... the triumph of good over evil."

Corrina Bonshek's writing is shaped by her meditation practice, blending nature and deep inner stillness. Her works are frequently collaborative, interdisciplinary and performed in unconventional spaces. *As Small Birds Play* was premiered by Sue Newsome in 2012 to celebrate the 125th anniversary of Centennial Park in Sydney. The music is a sonic memento of Bonshek's time in the park, where she would sit quietly among the paperbark trees, listening to birds and insects. She describes:

"The bird music is balanced by held high notes and slow, free-flowing phrases that symbolise a kind of deep tranquillity... influenced by Japanese Gagaku and its free-flowing, breath-length phrasing."

The piece also incorporates a field recording of native birdcalls from the Capertee Valley, home to over 200 bird species including the yellow-faced honeyeater and grey shrike-thrush.

French composer **Ida Gotkovsky** began composing at age eight, studied with Olivier Messiaen and Nadia Boulanger, and is now a professor at Paris's Conservatoire. She has written a wide array of music including operas, symphonies, and numerous works for clarinet. *Images de Norvège* is dedicated to her friend, clarinetist Guy Dangain. The first movement, *Dolcissimo*, captures the majestic beauty of glacial fjords, auroras and vast skies, while the second, *Fantastique et gai*, celebrates the lively spirit of Norwegian folk dance with vivid rhythms and joyful energy.

Words by Karen Chen