

ANAM RECITAL: EMMA JOHN (HORN)

Old and New Favourites

WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER 1.30PM
ROSINA AUDITORIUM, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

Jane VIGNERY (1913-1974) Horn Sonata, op. 7 (1942) 18'
i. Allegro
ii. Lento ma non troppo
iii. Allegro ben moderato

Jörg WIDMANN (b. 1973) *Air* (2005) 9'

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791) Horn Concerto No. 4 in E-flat Major, K. 495 (1786) 17'
i. Allegro maestoso
ii. Romance. Andante cantabile
iii. Rondo. Allegro vivace

Emma John * (WA) horn
Francis Atkins * (NSW) piano
Berta Brozgul (ANAM Associate Faculty) piano

Approximate duration: 45 minutes

ABOUT EMMA JOHN

Emma John is a horn player originating from Perth, where she studied music performance at the University of Western Australia. She completed her undergraduate studies under the tutelage of Julia Brooke (WASO) in 2023 before commencing studies at ANAM in 2024. Emma is excited to continue at ANAM in 2025 with Carla Blackwood and Ben Jacks, as well as the many visiting artists that ANAM receives. In 2024 Emma was able to perform in masterclasses with Sarah Willis, Katy Woolley, and Přemysl Vojta.

In her spare time Emma takes a keen interest in marine biology, loves to swim, snorkel, and read up on new discoveries in scientific journals!

Emma is supported by ANAM Syndicate donors Bill and Sandra Burdett.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Jane Vignery, born 1913 in Belgium, is a relatively unknown composer, perhaps because she had such a small output of work, perhaps because she didn't follow the avant-garde trends of her time, or perhaps because she is a woman. Despite the limiting factors she faced, her sonata for horn and piano is a sparkling example of fantastic writing for horn. This work achieved some recognition at its conception, winning the 'Prix Emile Mathieu', but now the majority of my colleagues who I mention this work to have never heard of it before. Technically challenging yet clearly written with a careful consideration of the instrument, this work is a delight to perform.

To me, it is charmingly evocative of a day in the French countryside. If you will allow me to guide your ear, I'll write here some of the images that come to my mind. We begin with a joyful awakening. The sun is up, beaming brightly! We are excited for the summery joys ahead of us! We hear a sprightly breeze running through the grassy hills and water rippling as insects buzz over the surface. A leisurely stroll through the countryside leads to cheerful adventures. In the second movement, we hop into a rowboat and make our way down the river. Waves lap gently at the side, we float past serene water lilies, and we brave a series of rapids. To top off this lovely day, we go for a horse ride! Such fun, but our ponies are being a bit naughty. Racing through the fields, faster and faster, we jump over fences and do our best to hang on!

German born composer, clarinettist, and conductor **Jörg Widmann** is in the midst of an illustrious career. Not only has he held positions as Composer in Residence for the Berliner Philharmoniker, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, and the Lucerne Festival Orchestra (amongst others), Widmann has frequently ranked in the top ten most performed living composers in the world (closely behind John Williams and Arvo Pärt). His work *Air* for solo horn was composed in 2005 for the 54th International Music Competition of the German broadcaster ARD. Widmann describes the work as a 'microtonal cosmos,' referring to the construction of melody from overlapping natural harmonic series. The slow development of haunting melodies juxtaposes with jagged changes in timbre, dynamic and rhythm. Given the nature of the commission, the work is highly virtuosic with a strong emphasis on technical playing characteristics. Despite the somewhat intimidating compositional ideas, Widmann based the work around the simplest facet of horn playing: air.

The final work of this recital is one of the best loved pieces in the solo horn repertoire. **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** contributed significantly to the horn repertoire, with his concerti being amongst the most performed works for horn. Mozart famously wrote his horn works for his close friend Joseph Leutgeb, a Viennese cheesemonger and virtuosic natural horn player. Delightfully cheeky (as Mozart was prone to be), his fourth concerto pokes fun at the performer and is rife with tricky passages. Despite this, the concerto is a gleaming example of melodic writing for horn. One can see how Mozart not only loved Leutgeb as a dear friend but deeply respected him as a horn player.

Words by Emma John