

2021 CONCERT SERIES 2

5TH JUNE, SATURDAY 7.30PM

6TH JUNE, SUNDAY 2.30PM

Venue: Oxley College
11-29 Railway Road, Burradoo

John Corley
High Flight

Winner of the 2020 SHSO Composing Competition

Antonin Dvořák
Romance for Violin and Orchestra Op.11

Soloist Alexandra Dening

Jean Sibelius
Karelia Suite Op.11

1. *Intermezzo*
2. *Ballade*
3. *Alla marcia*

INTERVAL

Carl Nielsen
Symphony No.1 Op.7

1. *Allegro orgoglioso*
2. *Andante*
3. *Allegro comodo*
4. *Allegro con fuoco*

THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The orchestra was formed in 2014 as a result of overwhelming interest in establishing a symphony orchestra in the region. Musicians from the Southern Highlands and surrounding districts rehearse on Sunday evenings. The SHSO has become a significant feature of the cultural life of the Southern Highlands.



ALLAN STILES

The orchestra is conducted by Dr Allan Stiles, who has directed orchestras, bands, choirs, and theatre productions over many years. He formed the Western Youth Orchestra and The Beecroft Orchestra. He has also conducted operas and musicals for the Hurstville Light Opera Company, the Hills Musical Society, the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, the Parramatta Musical Comedy Company and the Highlands Theatre Group. He directed orchestras, bands, and theatrical productions while a teacher for the NSW Department of Education at Penshurst West (where he pioneered primary school bands for the Department) and Frenchs Forest, The King's School, Holy Cross College, and Pymble Ladies' College.

Conducting studies were with Robert Miller and later as part of his MMus at UNSW.

He has played in orchestras in Sydney and London.

As a musicologist he has catalogued the works of Colin Brumby, Graham Powning and Alfred Hill, the latter for his PhD thesis, and has published many previously unavailable works by Australian composers.

ALEXANDRA DENING



Alexandra Dening is well-known in the Southern Highlands as a performer and teacher. She graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree from ANU in 2015 and completed a Master's in Teaching from UNE in 2018. She currently teaches privately and at Powerpoint Music, as well as Bowral Public School. She plays in many Highlands ensembles including the Southern Highlands Symphony Orchestra and the Highlands Music Collective.

JOHN CORLEY



High Flight

Impressions on a poem by John Gillespie Magee Jr. (1922-1941)

High Flight was the winning entry in the 2020 Southern Highlands Symphony Orchestra Composition Competition, an initiative of one of our patrons, Ann Carr-Boyd. Due to Covid the debut performance had to be delayed until this year. John Corley took his inspiration from a poem by John Gillespie Magee Jr, a Royal Canadian Air Force Spitfire pilot who served in World War II. Tragically this young pilot was killed in a mid-air collision over Lincolnshire aged only 19. He wrote the poem approximately three months before his untimely death. Entitled ‘High Flight’, the poem has been a favourite amongst both aviators and astronauts. It is the official poem of both the Royal Air Force and the Royal Canadian Air Force and is inscribed in full on the back of the Space Shuttle Challenger Memorial.

John Corley, a pilot himself, captures the exhilaration of flying and the grandeur of the skies in his music. In the last six bars of the piece, he has marked the score “In Memoriam” dedicated to the poet and those aviators who have been lost, forever flying in the *long, delirious, burning blue*.

John has recently spent the last 11 months working as a Covid Screener at Bowral and District Hospital, a position he thoroughly enjoyed, before recently returning to flying duty.

High Flight

*Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-slivered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
of sun-split clouds, – and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of – wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air ...
Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or ever eagle flew –
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.*

Recitation by Brian Haydon

ANTONIN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

Romance Op. 11

Soloist Alexandra Dening

Antonín Dvořák, born in 1841 in the small village of Nelahozeves in Bohemia, was one of seven children of the local butcher who also kept the village inn. As a youth he showed considerable musical talent, performing on piano, organ and viola and studying counterpoint. From 1857 to 1859 he studied music in Prague, after which he became a professional viola player at first in a band but later, from 1866 to 1873 in the orchestra of the Prague National Theatre. During this period, he began to establish himself as a composer of importance with his third symphony completed in 1873 and the fifth in 1875. His style was influenced by the works of Schubert, Wagner and Brahms, but it is his love of the countryside and the Slavonic traditions of his upbringing that put a unique stamp on his music.

The *Romance F minor* takes much of its material from the second movement of his *String Quartet in F minor* Op.12, which was composed in 1873 but never publicly performed in the Dvořák's lifetime. A version for violin and piano was completed in 1877 and the version for violin and orchestra was published in 1879. The orchestral version is not an arrangement of the quartet movement but rather a free reworking of the same ideas. The work is built on two linked themes. The first is a song like melody, heard high on the violins at the outset, and then freely elaborated by the soloist who

weaves intricate melodic patterns around the other orchestral players. The second theme is again a romantic melody, less elaborate than the first with the soloist soaring high above a running orchestral accompaniment. The middle section is much more dramatic with virtuoso figures played by the soloist punctuated by dramatic outbursts from the orchestra, but this is only short-lived and the mood of tranquillity is restored with the return of the first theme. The piece moves into the tonic major with the recurrence of the second theme before a brief coda draws it to a close.

The Romance is a highly characteristic work of Dvořák, combining his deep understanding of classical form and romantic harmony with beautiful flowing Slavonic melody. The reworking of the piece from the string quartet movement into a romance was done at a time of great personal tragedy. Within the space of a few years three of the Dvořák children had died – one just two days old, the second through an accident and the third from smallpox. Perhaps these events contributed to the emotional intensity of the work, the poignant harmonies and the lyrical beauty of the violin writing.

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865 – 1957)

Karelia Suite Op. 11

- 1. Intermezzo*
- 2. Ballade*
- 3. Alla marcia*

At the time Sibelius was born Finland was under Russian rule, and although supposedly autonomous, was a country with a precarious national identity. The official language was Swedish and the Finnish-speaking members of the population were regarded as second-class citizens. Sibelius was only two years old when his father died in a cholera epidemic and he was brought up by his mother in the home of his maternal grandmother. His ancestry was part Swedish and part Finnish, but as members of the middle class, the family was Swedish-speaking. Jean was taught some Finnish from the age of eight to prepare him for entry to the local grammar school, which was exceptional in being one of the few schools in the country where lessons were taught in Finnish.

Sibelius' background ensured that he came into contact with music at an early age: families made their own entertainment and children often learnt to sing and play a musical instrument. He studied violin with the local bandmaster from the age of 14, though by then he had already begun to compose on his own. Music-making, however, was not really approved by the family as a profession. On leaving school he was enrolled in law at Helsinki

University, but he soon abandoned his legal studies to go to the Academy of Music as a special student to study violin and composition, under the director Wegelius, then with Busoni in Berlin and Goldmark in Vienna. Returning to Finland in 1891, he spent the summer in the family house at Loviisa. Back amongst the scenery he loved so much and surrounded by family and friends he relaxed and his musical plans took shape.

At this time the rising tide of nationalism was sweeping through Finland. Karelia, the area that ran along the borders of Finland and Russia, was an important part of Finland and one of the centres of Finnish nationalism. Russia's encroachment was seen as a real threat and there was a concerted drive among the people to preserve their cultural identity. Sibelius was commissioned by the Students' Association of the University of Helsinki – a student organisation that was prevalent across the province of Viipuri – to compose music for an historical pageant that would celebrate Finnish culture. Sibelius' score, composed in a frenzied rush in 1893, was to accompany a series of tableaux depicting important moments in Karelia's history, and the festival that autumn became the occasion for a nationalistic rally by the Viipuri students.

Sibelius subsequently condensed several pieces of the incidental music to make an orchestral suite, consisting of three movements. The opening *Intermezzo* accompanied a tableau that depicted a moment during the winter of 1333 when the Lithuanian Duke Narimont collected tax tributes in the Käkisalmi district. Over a quiet murmur of strings, four horns sound the call of a fanfare that runs through this movement, which is essentially a long crescendo and decrescendo. The fanfare is first heard in the distance, then grows louder, building to a climax before fading into the distance. The orchestral writing is superb, with brass calls ringing out over busy string figures, all of it underpinned by an accompaniment of timpani, bass drum, cymbals and tambourine.

The *Ballade* accompanied a scene that took place in the Viipuri castle in 1446, when the nobleman Karl Knutsson Bonde was entertained by a court singer. In the original incidental music, a baritone soloist sang a ballad to the words of the old Swedish folksong *The Dance in the Flowering Grove*, but for the orchestral suite Sibelius transferred his vocal line to the cor anglais. A clarinet duet outlines the opening theme of this movement, and this leads to a full-bodied string chorale. Following the cor anglais solo, the music concludes with a quick reprise of the opening material.

The *Alla marcia* depicted the conquest of Käkisalmi by the Swedish general Pontus De la Gardie in 1580. At the première, the opening section of the movement was accompanied by a fireworks display, recalling De la

Gardie's military victory. Sibelius adapted the second half of the movement, making it an exhilarating march, which steadily increases momentum towards a grand, heroic conclusion.

CARL NIELSEN (1865-1931)
Symphony No. 1 in G minor Op. 7

1. *Allegro orgoglioso*
2. *Andante*
3. *Allegro comodo*
4. *Allegro con fuoco*

Danish composer Carl Nielsen was born in 1865 on Funen, Denmark's second largest island. His father, a painter, also worked as a village musician, and as a boy Carl was a member of his father's dance orchestra. At the same time, he played in the local amateur orchestra whose repertoire, besides entertainment and dance-music, also included the symphonies of Viennese Classicism. At the age of just fourteen he was engaged as a trombonist in the regimental band in Odense. Alongside his work as a military musician, he played string quartets with his friends and studied Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* on his own initiative. From these years came his first real attempts at composition – mainly chamber music works in the Classical style. Thanks to patrons in Odense, Nielsen had the chance to go to Copenhagen, where he studied violin, theory, piano and music history at the Royal Academy of Music from 1884-86. He continued his theoretical studies after leaving the Academy and in 1888 published his opus 1, the *Suite for Strings*. The next year he joined the second violin section in the Royal Orchestra, a position he kept until 1905. In 1890, as recognition of his talent, he was awarded the grant, 'Det Anckerske Legat', which enabled him to go on a study trip to different places on the Continent. Whilst living in Berlin he began to compose his first symphony. By the time he had completed it he had married the Danish sculptor Anne-Marie Brodersen, to whom the Symphony is dedicated.

During this period, Nielsen became acquainted with the ongoing Brahms-Wagner debate (also known as the 'War of the Romantics') that dominated German music in the late 19th century. This aesthetic disagreement between supporters of the two composers centred on the role of form and structure in music, with both groups claiming to follow in the footsteps of Beethoven. Brahms' supporters in the 'Leipzig school' believed that composers should maintain classical forms, writing economically within familiar styles and genres. They felt that there was no need to discard tradition in order to express new ideas. In contrast, Wagner's followers in the 'Weimar

school' (also known as the New German School) believed that composers should invent new forms derived from new musical materials. This group was particularly drawn to program music (music which describes a specific story, frequently using a literary work as inspiration) and made extensive use of musical "effects" which might not fit into traditional classical forms.

Rather than choose sides in this debate, Nielsen sought to find a third path. He immersed himself in the symphonies of Beethoven, paying particular attention to the Fifth. He was fascinated by the powerful way in which Beethoven manipulated small rhythmic motives in this work rather than making the grand melodic gestures typical of Nielsen's contemporaries. Nielsen later remarked that as he began his own symphony, he chose to emulate this concise precision in rebellion against what he considered to be the excesses of romantic emotion so he adapted the conventional mould of the 19th century symphony to his own style and method, maintaining a clear sense of expression with a new energy and vigour. In stripping away the thick-textured lushness of the Romantic period he sought the crisp precision of the Classical period. His method was to create a new tonal structure in which he developed new techniques of harmony, a compositional device known as progressive tonality where the whole work, or a movement, ends in a different key to that in which it began. The effect is to create a sense of momentum by the progression of keys to a new goal while the work is in progress. Instead of establishing the key of the work from the outset with its basic tonality stated at the beginning and dominating the whole musical structure, Nielsen treated a particular key as the goal of the piece, and withheld this key until the end. Thus, this symphony in G minor starts firmly in C major.

The first movement, marked 'Allegro orgoglioso' (lively and proud) by Nielsen, is full of urgency, opening with a vigorous main theme based on the repetition of a rapid, staccato six-note figure. The second, contrasting theme is more lyrical – a sinuous, gentle subject introduced by the oboe and continued in the violins. Following Classical tradition, the exposition is repeated, a development section ensues, and there is a real sense of affirmation when the recapitulation begins fortississimo with the opening burst now in the home key of G minor. The slow movement consists almost entirely of one long lyrical outpouring from the violins, at times supported by winds, who only occasionally assume prominence. The third movement is not the expected scherzo, but rather an Allegro comodo (comfortably lively) such as Brahms might have written. The time signature is 6/4, which lends the music a leisurely, spacious character. Of special note are the two sonorous hymn-like episodes for brass alone. The Finale lives up to its marking 'con fuoco' (fiery) from the start. The music seems to be striving to shed any possible gloomy

associations with the original home key of G minor, as the tempo notches up to Allegro moderato and the symphony swerves magnificently into joyous C major. A brief triumphant flourish on the trumpets brings the work to an exultant finish.

King Christian IX and Queen Louise, along with several other members of the Danish royal family, were in the audience at the Symphony's première in 1894. It was received with such rapturous ovation that the young composer was called from his second violin desk in the orchestra to acknowledge the applause. Among those who sent letters of congratulations afterwards was the famous Norwegian composer, Edvard Grieg. Eventually Nielsen became a national hero, with his portrait gracing the front of the Danish 100 kroner bill, but recognition beyond Denmark would take longer. It was nearly 20 years after his death in 1931 before Nielsen's music began to attract foreign audiences, thanks to the touring Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the advent of musical recordings and support from dynamic conductors such as Leonard Bernstein.

Notes by Elizabeth Dalton

ENCORE SOCIETY

The Southern Highlands Symphony Orchestra wishes to acknowledge the following members of its Encore Society. Each one of the following has made a tax-deductible donation to ensure that the SHSO is able to maintain its artistic and community vision. We thank you.

Jan and Frank Conroy

Dr. Penny Knowlden

R and D McAllery

Michelle and Michael Phillips

Moss Vale Community Pharmacy

Jenny Simons OAM

Cheryl Tucker

We also thank those music lovers who have donated anonymously.

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Become a supporter of the Southern Highlands Symphony Orchestra.

The aim of the Friends is to promote the appreciation of fine music in the community and surrounding districts by supporting the organisation of concerts and fundraising.

Email: info@shso.org.au to join the Friends mailing list.

Enquiries: 0416 380 567

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Elizabeth Dalton

Ian McQuillan

Gay Scanlon

Patrick Webb

Belinda Wright

TRUMPET

Karyn Ashley

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TROMBONE

Bryn Corley

Kevin Skues

Trevor Wright

BASS TROMBONE

William Short

TUBA

David Ricketts

TIMPANI

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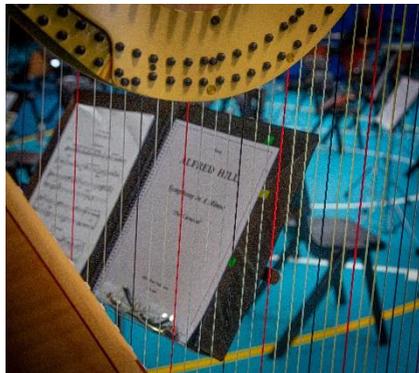
Wind and brass players are listed alphabetically, as are strings after principals.

New players are welcome.

Please contact:

Allan Stiles on 0415 309 760

or Roma Dix on 0432 466 882



SPONSORSHIP

The experience of enjoying live symphonic music is unique to every member of our audience, yet each of you plays an important role in ensuring that this live music experience continues. To support your Southern Highlands Symphony Orchestra through sponsorship or donations, which are tax deductible, please contact the Fundraising Chair on 0416 192 229.

If you have a favourite musician/instrument in the orchestra you may sponsor a “chair” to provide ongoing support for the SHSO.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Southern Highlands Concert Band,
The Highlands Sinfonia, Wingecarribee Shire Council,
Oxley College, Judith O’Brien OAM, Anne Donaldson,
Robert Crowe, Darren Powell, Flowers by Van Til, Artemis Wines,
Destination Southern Highlands, Highlands FM, 2ST, LOCALlure,
Stiles Music Publications, Southern Highlands News, Audible Hearing,
David McFarlane at Mittagong Print and Design, and the many
businesses that displayed our flyers and banners, and
the volunteers who assisted with setting up
the hall and front of house.

Photographs by Christopher Donaldson.

Find us on Facebook.

Email: info@shso.org.au Website: www.shso.org.au



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SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2021 CONCERT SERIES THREE

McGrath Hall, Chevalier College, Burradoo

Saturday 18th at 7.30 PM and Sunday 19th September at 2.30 PM

MUSIC FROM STAGE AND SCREEN

Richard Wagner Prelude to *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*

Ennio Morricone *Gabriel's Oboe* – theme from *The Mission*
soloist Michellé Biasutti

Claude-Michel Schönberg Suite from *Les Miserables*

John Williams March from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*

Tchaikovsky Waltz from *Eugene Onegin*

Arias and duets by Judith Rough (soprano) and Richard Lane (tenor)

2021 CONCERT SERIES FOUR

McGrath Hall, Chevalier College, Burradoo

Saturday 27th at 7.30 PM and Sunday 28th November at 2.30 PM

Overture TBA

John Carmichael *Fetes Champetres (Country Fair)*
soloist Alexandra Donaldson

Pierre Rode *Violin Concerto No.7* - soloist Emily Sinden

Georges Bizet *Carmen Suite*
with Angus & Lucinda's Academie de Danse

Leroy Anderson *A Christmas Festival*

Full Score - High Flight

Full Score - High Flight

"High Flight"

Impressions on a Poem by John Gillespie Magee Jr. (1922-1941)

Composed by John Corley

"High Flight"

Impressions on a Poem by John Gillespie Magee Jr. (1922-1941)

"Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth of sun-splitt clouds -
and done a hundred things You have not dreamed of -
wheeled and soared and swung high in the sunlit silence.
Hovering there I've chased the shouting wind along
and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air.

"Up, up the long delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,
where never lark, or even eagle, flew,
and, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
the high untrespassed sanctity of space,
put out my hand and touched the face of God."

John Gillespie Magee Jr. was a Royal Canadian Air Force Spitfire pilot who served in World War II.
He was tragically killed in a mid air collision over Lincolnshire aged only 19.
He wrote this poem approximately 3 months before he died.

Orchestral composition by John Corley.

May 8, 2020

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