

**Lisa
Moore**
7 April
Sundays
in the
Sound
Gallery

Lisa Moore
Sunday 7 April, 3pm

David Li Sound Gallery
The Ian Potter Centre
for Performing Arts

Bugs & Birds: the nature of piano

Robert Schumann

Friendly Landscape

Lonely Flowers

Bird as Prophet (from *Forest Scenes* Op.82)

Meadow Bridgham

Seventeen Years—The Life Cycle of the Cicada

Leoš Janáček

They chattered like swallows

A blown away leaf

The barn owl has not flown away

(from *On An Overgrown Path*)

Martin Bresnick

Ishi's Song

Béla Bartók

From the Diary of a Fly

Philip Glass

Metamorphosis II

Elena Kats-Chernin

Butterflying

*Moth Eaten Rag**

Alexander Scriabin

Sonata No.10, Op.70 'Insects'

'I find myself returning to music that conjures up abstract imagery, magically creating a narrative flow. Beginning with romantic Schumann miniatures, and journeying through to modern composers, I have selected music that illuminates landscapes, birds, insects, and also humanity. From the forests of Moravia to the back cupboards of Australia, this music makes owls hoot, wings flutter, moths flicker, flies buzz, cicadas emerge, and perhaps even the sun shine.'

—Lisa Moore

*Melbourne premiere



Lisa Moore

Lisa Moore, piano

New York-based Australian musician Lisa Moore is a multifaceted pianist, a prolific recording artist, and an avid collaborator. *The New York Times* has singled out her playing for its “life and freshness” and “fragility and tenderness”, *The New Yorker* describes her as “visionary” and “New York’s queen of the avant-garde piano” while *Pitchfork* claims “she’s the best kind of contemporary classical musician, one so fearsomely game that she inspires composers to offer her their most wildly unplayable ideas”. Her playing combines lyricism and virtuosity with expressive and emotional power whether in the delivery of the simplest song, a solo recital of Schumann and Janáček, a concerto, or a fiendish new chamber score. Given a special passion for the music of our time, Moore won the silver medal in the 1981 *Carnegie Hall International American Music Competition* and has since performed hundreds of commissioned works and world premieres—having worked with more than two hundred living composers, while residing and collaborating in the vibrant new music scene of New York City since 1985.

Moore has performed throughout Europe, the UK, USA, and Asia—on some of the world’s great stages: New York’s Carnegie Hall and Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center, the Sydney Opera House, La Scala in Milan, London’s Royal Albert Hall and Royal Festival Hall, and Vienna’s Musikverein. She has released twelve solo albums—ranging from music by Leoš Janáček to Julia Wolfe—and more than thirty collaborative discs. *Gramophone* writes about her 2015 *Mad Rush* Philip Glass disc: “what becomes abundantly clear is Moore’s highly developed, intuitive and nuanced approach to this music”. Moore’s 2016 album *The Stone People* was selected by *The New York Times* *Top Classical Albums 2016* and *Naxos Critics’ Choice 2017*. In June 2022, Moore released *no place to go* but around—her second album of music by Frederic Rzewski—to compelling notice. *The New York Times* remarked that the album is “meticulous...clever...hits the gas with controlled force” and has “a greater range of emotion than other interpreters.”

For sixteen years (92–08) Moore was the founding pianist for the award-winning electro-acoustic sextet *Bang On A Can All-Stars*. She has performed with leading artists, ensembles and dance companies—Philip Glass, Meredith Monk, Ornette Coleman, Frederic Rzewski, Don Byron, Pamela Z, Thurston Moore, Iva Bittova, Bryce Dessner, London Sinfonietta, Steve Reich Ensemble, New York City Ballet, American Composers Orchestra, and The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

As a concerto soloist, Moore has performed with the London Sinfonietta, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Albany Symphony, La Jolla Symphony, Sydney Symphony, Tasmania Symphony, Thai National, Monash Academy Orchestra, Canberra Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Virtuosi, Wesleyan University Orchestra-Sumarsam Gamelan, and the Queensland Philharmonic. She has worked under the batons of David Robertson, Leonard Bernstein, Pierre Boulez, Brett Dean, Brad Lubman, Steven Schick, Benjamin Northey, Richard Mills, Reinbert de Leeuw, Jorge Mester, Leonard Dommett, Dobbs Frank, and Angel Gil-Ordonez.

Moore’s festival guest appearances include Lincoln Center, BAM Next Wave, Banff, Tanglewood, Aspen, Chautauqua, Gilmore, PianoSpheres LA, Chamber Music Northwest, Huddersfield, Vale of Glamorgan, Liquid Music MN, Holland, Graz, Hamburg, Taormina, Paris d’Automne, Rome, Milan, Turin, Lithuania, Uzbekistan, Hong Kong, BBC Proms, Southbank, Barbican, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne Metropolis, Israel, and Warsaw.

Lisa Moore is a Steinway artist.
Please visit lisamoore.org

Program Notes

Robert Schumann

Robert Schumann (1810—1856) was born and lived in Germany where he began training as a concert pianist before an accident injured his hand and he turned to full-time composition. He wrote 4 symphonies, an opera, volumes of songs, chamber works and solo piano music. Schumann married the daughter of his piano teacher, Clara Wieck, a concert pianist and great champion of Schumann's works. Schumann was an influential critic and music journalist. His writings appeared mostly in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* ('The New Journal for Music')—a publication he founded. Schumann championed piano music in both large and small forms. *Waldszenen* (1849) is a set of nine character pieces, a late work in the composer's output, illuminating a journey into the forest and the experiences therein. It demonstrates Schumann's unique talent for the smaller, programmatic form. These are three favourite selections from the collection—*Lonely Flowers*, *Friendly Landscape* and *Bird as Prophet*.



Lisa Moore

Meadow Bridgham

Meadow Bridgham (b.1989) makes new music from old ideas—a kind of musical upcycling, an antique restoration. Their melodies spin out and layer like the Baroque; their form is firmly constructed like the Classical; their gestural language is sweeping like the Romantics; and their harmonic signature is born from 20th-century neotonality, where kaleidoscopic chord progressions shift and cycle endlessly, forming chains of modulations.

Many dichotomies hold their music together—minimal-maximal, tonal-atonal, new-old—and Meadow balances it all with extramusical framing; this includes the anthropomorphizing of insects, the allegorizing of stories from their life, and the commenting on aspects of their identity.

Meadow Bridgham has worked with composers such as William Bolcom, Martin Bresnick, Aaron Jay Kernis, Libby Larsen, Bright Sheng, and Joan Tower. Additionally, as a fellow of the Rubin Institute of Music Criticism, they had the privilege of working with influential writers such as Alex Ross, Tim Page, John Rockwell, and Anne Midgette.

Bridgham's music has been performed as part of the American Music Festival, the New York Festival of Song, the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Third Place [MusicFest], and the North American Saxophone Alliance Biennial Conference. They have reached international audiences through the Westben Composer-Performer Residency in Canada, the Brisbane Music Festival in Australia, and the International Double Reed Society Convention in Thailand. Recent appearances of their music include the Rivera Court at the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Utzon Room at Sydney Opera House, and Merkin Hall at New York's Kaufman Music Center.

Meadow holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Yale School of Music, where their *Violin Sonata* was awarded the Frances E. Osborne Kellogg Memorial Prize for best composition written in a contrapuntal style. (MB)

Seventeen Years—the life cycle of the cicada (2021)
The composer writes: “Into a blinding light, a cicada nymph emerges from the soil. After seventeen years of root sap and cold ground, the nymph climbs its mother tree and rests on the bark as it changes form. It pushes its newly-crafted wings from its husk, unfolds, and spreads them out in the drying sunlight. Metamorphosed and matte, it sings its first song, then carefully, if somewhat clumsily, flies its first flight. Predators approach, but on blissful dumb luck, the now full-grown cicada escapes, gliding over to a nearby tree and gracefully landing. There it meets another. They lock eyes, dancing widely in the air until they weaken and fall gently to the forest floor. Some time passes, and then one of many eggs vibrates on top of the tree they met. A new nymph is born. It scuttles across its branch, clings on tightly to the tip, looks past a field of discarded cicada skins out at a lush prismatic scene, and without further hesitation, leaps. The new nymph has a vision as it floats down to the ground below. It dreams of a life of transformation, flight, love, and death before it burrows into the soil, and the cycle starts anew.

Leoš Janáček

Leoš Janáček (1854—1928) was born in Hukvaldy, Moravia (now the Czech Republic) and spent most of his adult life as a dedicated organist and teacher of keyboard and harmony while based at the Music Academy in Brno. Professionally he was considered a ‘late developer’—achieving little international recognition until just a few years before his death (after his operas were translated into German by Max Brod, who also translated Franz Kafka’s works). In understanding Janáček’s music one must not discount the effect of his long unhappy marriage, complicated by the unrequited love and intense passion for the infamous *Camilla*. The composer wrote: ‘I no longer saw any worth in my work, and scarcely believed what I wrote. I had become convinced that no one would ever notice anything of mine.’ However, over time Janáček’s music has built a reputation as some of the most original, intense and dramatic music of the twentieth century. His operas are now regularly performed in major opera houses and his chamber and piano music is firmly established in the repertoire.

Janáček often composed using *speech rhythms*—melodic fragments he transcribed while surreptitiously listening to the lilt of Czech conversations in cafés and on the street. He transposed and transformed these fragments into music, producing brief melodic figures referred to as *interruption motives*. Moving freely between major, minor and modal tonalities, Janáček uniquely juxtaposes these interruptions with longer Moravian folk melodies. The music shifts effortlessly between folk simplicity and worldly sophistication while revealing an impassioned lyricism and driving urgency.

On An Overgrown Path is a set of 10 gentle piano miniatures, reflecting Janáček’s love and understanding of nature, as well as his own inner personal and artistic struggles. Within the set, Janacek recalls his daughter’s childhood and their life together—until her untimely death in 1903. The programmatic titles trace a speechless drama, touched by personal memories and feelings of longing. *They chattered like swallows*, *A blown away leaf*, and *The barn owl has not flown away* are part of this collection.

“I first heard Leoš Janáček’s music about 25 years ago and was immediately struck by its unusual lyricism and intense urgency. Filled with exotic, haunting melodies and “speech rhythms”—Janacek sat in cafes and while eaves-dropping notated the rhythms of speech and transformed them into melody—this Czech (Moravian) composer shifts effortlessly between folk simplicity and mature sophistication. His harmonic palette mixing major, minor and modal tonalities while sweeping gesturally across time—reveals the known and the unknown, sadness and joy, the past, present and perhaps even the future.”

—Lisa Moore

Martin Bresnick

Martin Bresnick (b.1946) was born and raised in NYC. His compositions range from opera, choral, chamber and symphonic music to film scores and computer music. Bresnick delights in reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable—bringing together repetitive gestures derived from minimalism with a harmonic palette that encompasses both highly chromatic sounds and more open, consonant harmonies and a raw power reminiscent of rock. At times his musical ideas spring from hardscrabble sources, often with a political import.

Besides having received many prizes and commissions—the first Charles Ives Living Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, The Rome Prize, The Berlin Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a Koussevitzky Commission among many others—Martin Bresnick is also recognized as an influential teacher of composition. Students from every part of the globe and of virtually every musical inclination have been inspired by his critical encouragement. He is currently a professor at the Yale University School of Music, where he has been a widely influential teacher of contemporary composition since 1981. His teaching has been recognized by a Walter J. Gores Award for Excellence in Teaching at Stanford University, ASCAP Foundation's Aaron Copland Prize for Teaching, and the Yale School of Music highest honour—the Sanford Medal for Service to Music.

Martin Bresnick's compositions are published by Carl Fischer Music Publishers, New York; Bote & Bock, Berlin; CommonMuse Music Publishers, New Haven; and have been recorded by Cantaloupe Records, New World Records, Albany Records, Bridge Records, Composers Recordings Incorporated, Centaur, Starkland Records and Artifact Music.

Ishi's Song—Ishi was among the last of the Yahi Indians. Living in northern California, these Native Americans were part of a larger group known as the Yana. They were ruthlessly suppressed and finally decimated at the end of the 19th century. The few remaining Yahi people hid in the mountains until they all died, leaving only Ishi. He was found and brought to the University of California at Berkeley by sympathetic Anthropology professors Alfred Kroeber and T.T. Waterman. Ishi lived for several years at the University's museum, then in San Francisco, teaching the professors and other researchers the ways of his people and helping to create a dictionary of his language. He was the last native speaker of the Yahi-Yana language. The opening melody of my work was taken from a transcription of a recording made by Ishi himself singing what he called "The Maidu Doctor's Song". There is no known translation of the text.

—*Martin Bresnick*

Béla Bartók

Béla Bartók (1881—1945) was born in Nagyszentmiklas, Hungary near the Romanian border. His early studies began with his mother and continued in Pressburg and Budapest. Around 1905 Bartók's friend and fellow-composer Zoltan Kodaly directed his attention to Hungarian folk music and, coupled with his discovery of the music of Debussy, Bartók's musical language changed dramatically from a more romantic style, becoming more concentrated, chromatic and dissonant. Bartók became an assiduous ethnomusicologist—encompassing a number of ethnic traditions—most notably Transylvanian, Romanian and Bulgarian. Like Janáček (just across the border) he composed opera, orchestral, chamber and solo repertoire.

In the 1920s and '30s Bartók's international fame spread, and he toured widely, both as pianist (usually in his own works) and as a respected composer. He continued to teach piano at the Budapest Academy of Music until his resignation in 1934. Despite his deep attachment to his homeland, with the outbreak of the Second World War, life in Hungary became intolerable, and Bartók emigrated to the United States with his wife, the pianist Ditta Paisztory. He obtained a post at Columbia University, and was able to pursue his folk-music studies. Yet his concert engagements were rare, and he received few commissions. Despite plans to return to Hungary, Bartók died of leukaemia in New York City in 1945. He is now considered to be one of the greatest 20th century composers.

Bartók's special contribution to piano pedagogy are his six piano volumes called *Mikrokosmos* (meaning tiny worlds in Greek)—short works, featuring many modal and rhythmic studies, designed as progressive piano teaching books in an unconventional style, and an introduction to the new music of the twentieth century. *From the Diary of a Fly* (1922) (*Mikrokosmos Volume 5*) depicts the insect caught in a spider's web. Bartók writes "Ouch! A cobweb" (in Hungarian) in the score. Only after a mighty struggle does the fly manage to gleefully free itself "con gioia".

Philip Glass

Philip Glass was born in 1937 and raised in Baltimore. He studied at the University of Chicago, and the Juilliard School of Music. Glass moved to Europe where he continued studies with the legendary pedagogue Nadia Boulanger, and worked closely with the sitar virtuoso and composer Ravi Shankar. He returned to New York in 1967 and formed the Philip Glass Ensemble. The new musical style that Glass developed was eventually dubbed "minimalism," although he prefers to speak of himself as a composer of "music with repetitive structures." His operas—*Einstein on the Beach*, *Satyagraha*, *Akhmaten* and *The Voyage* continue to play throughout the world's leading houses. Glass has written music for experimental theatre and for Academy Award-winning motion pictures such as *The Hours*, *Kundun* and *Koyaanisqatsi*.

Metamorphosis (1988) is a set of five related piano pieces. *Metamorphosis II* features a meditative melody that organically unfolds within the undulating classic Glass sound world. The title was inspired by the 1915 Franz Kafka short story where a man awakens to find himself transformed into a beetle.

Elena Kats-Chernin

Elena Kats-Chernin (b.1957 Tashkent) studied piano and composition in Moscow, Sydney, and Hanover. Her music was featured at the opening ceremonies of the 2000 Olympic Games and the 2003 Rugby World Cup. She has received several awards—among them the *Sounds Australian Award* in 1996 and the Helpmann Award in 2004 for the score of the ballet *Wild Swans* choreographed by Meryl Tankard for The Australian Ballet. Kats-Chernin has composed works for the Bang on a Can All-Stars, Ensemble Moderne, Australian Chamber Orchestra, a concerto for clarinet virtuoso Michael Collins, in addition to chamber operas, theatre music, and soundtracks to silent films. Her work *Eliza's Aria*, from the CD *Wild Swans* (ABC Classics), reached No.1 on *UK iTunes 2007 Classical Charts* due to its use and popularity in animation TV commercials for Lloyds TSBank. Pianist Lisa Moore has championed Elena's solo piano works, releasing her CD *Purple Black and Blues* in 1999. In March 2008 Moore and Kats-Chernin were featured together at the Other Minds Festival in San Francisco and in 2022 they collaborated on a new piano concerto *Force Majeure*. Kats-Chernin is based in Sydney. Her music is represented by Boosey & Hawkes.

Butterflying (2003) Originally written for the Opening Ceremony of the Rugby World Cup in Sydney in 2003, it was later adapted by the composer for children's choir, with a text about flying in one's dreams, as if personifying a butterfly. The main quality in this piece is fluidity and lyricism.

Moth Eaten Rag (2010/2023) Originally written in 2010 for clarinet and piano the composer made this solo piano arrangement for this concert.

Elena Kats-Chernin writes: "When my family arrived in Australia in the 70s as migrants from the Soviet Union they had to leave their possessions behind, but they were allowed to take along a couple of the beautiful handmade bed sheets and tablecloths. They were left unopened for decades and when finally opened one day, they were full of holes made by moths. While thinking about a concept for an album about textiles, this piece was written. There are a lot of rests in this piece, they represent the holes and the fleeting gestures are describing fast moving, yet very light moths. There are some dramatic fortissimo moments, they represent a despair about losing such important family memories."

Elena Kats-Chernin frequently writes rags as an antidote to the pressure of serious large-scale compositions. Deeply personal objects, they are often composed as a release at some time of personal difficulty; they are vessels that carry deep waters, small worlds that embrace bittersweet feelings. In them, one finds pain and joy intermingled, the smiling through tears that is both deeply Russian and feminine. To hear one of Elena's rags is to know a small part of her own life intimately.

Alexander Scriabin

Alexander Scriabin (1872—1915) was a prodigious composer and virtuoso pianist from Moscow, Russia. He composed preludes, études, sonatas and tone-poems—now considered masterpieces of 20th century pianism. The early pieces are quite “Chopinesque”—delicate, romantic and lyrical. Scriabin’s style changed enormously as his compositional output progressed. His later works explore wild rhapsodic textures and develop a much higher degree of chromaticism, atonality and the use of his enigmatic “mystic” chord.

Scriabin was very interested in theosophy—Eastern religion and the mysteries of being, nature and divinity. He developed a system of *synesthesia* linking colour and musical keys. For example: the key of D corresponded with the colour yellow and the key of Db with the colour purple. Scriabin considered his last music to be fragments of an immense piece called *Mysterium*. This seven-day-long megawork was intended to be performed at the foothills of the Himalayas in India after which the world would dissolve in bliss. Bells suspended from clouds would summon spectators. Sunrises would be preludes and sunsets codas. Flames would erupt in shafts of light and sheets of fire. Perfumes appropriate to the music would change and pervade the air. Sadly the completion of this work was never to be. Upon Scriabin’s sudden death, the Russian pianist and composer Sergei Rachmaninoff toured Russia in a series of all-Scriabin recitals. It was the first time Rachmaninoff played music other than his own in public. As a youth Horowitz performed for Scriabin—who had an enthusiastic reaction but cautioned that Horowitz needed further training! Horowitz later remarked that Scriabin was obviously crazy because he had tics and couldn’t sit still. Despite Horowitz’ assessment, Scriabin held the rapt attention of the musical world in Russia while he was alive.

Sonata No.10 (1913)—Scriabin wrote: ‘my Tenth Sonata is a sonata of insects. Insects are born from the sun...they are the kisses of the sun.’ Strung in one movement this composer’s final piano sonata begins with a questioning, unsettling motive that binds the entire work. It unwinds gradually, as if awakening from a long sleep. Trills begin to flutter and grow into tremolos as an almost manic diabolic character is unleashed. It is as if the insects have come to life and cannot settle.

Program Notes © Lisa Moore 2024

Upcoming performances

MPAC presents four unique performances in the 'Sundays in the Sound Gallery' series for 2024.

Collide

Sunday 5 May

Collide unites three international soloists in an ensemble that brings vibrancy, colour and stunning technical virtuosity to every performance. Formed in 2017, Collide has performed sold out concerts across Australia and have become renowned for their energy, enthusiasm and joy in their playing.

Eric Avery

Sunday 16 June

Renowned for his exquisite voice, violin and dance, Eric Avery is an exceptional artist with a rich heritage spanning Ngayampaa, Yuin, Bandjalang, and Gumbangirr cultures. Seamlessly weaving together the violin and composition, Eric's artistic journey is a heartfelt homage to his ancestral roots. Guided by his family's custodial songs, he revives ancient traditions, infusing his performances with the essence of his people. His haunting compositions often feature him singing and playing violin, predominantly in the Ngayampaa language.

Ziggy and Miles

Sunday 28 July

Ziggy and Miles are two of Australia's finest young musicians currently forging an international career. Their performances are known for their transfixing synchronicity and subtlety, exploiting the full range of colours and techniques of the guitar. Currently based in New York City, Ziggy and Miles are continuing their studies at The Juilliard School under Multiple Grammy Winner Sharon Isbin, as Artist Diploma candidates, becoming the first Australians of any instrument and first guitar duo in the program's 20 year history to be accepted.

Matthias Schack-Arnott

Sunday 22 September

Matthias Schack-Arnott is an Australian artist, composer and percussionist, whose works span live performance, public art and installation. Over the last decade he has been building unique kinetic systems to create visceral and visually compelling sound worlds. In this extraordinary performance, Schack-Arnott collaborates with Amelia Lever-Davidson and Nick Roux to create a work for percussion, light sources and immersive electronic sound.

Book tickets at monash.edu/mpac



Collide



Matthias Schack-Arnott