

Monash
Academy
Orchestra
Force
Majeure

Monash Performing Arts Centres

Sunday 14 April
2.30pm

Alexander Theatre
The Ian Potter Centre
for Performing Arts

Force Majeure

Sergei Prokofiev

Symphony No.1 in D major

'Classical'

- i. Allegro
- ii. Larghetto
- iii. Gavotta: Non troppo allegro
- iv. Finale: Molto vivace

Elena Kats-Chernin

Force Majeure for piano

and small ensemble*

- i. Rotor
- ii. Broken Barcarolle
- iii. Twisted Rag
- iv. Czardas Noir

Franz Joseph Haydn

Symphony No.95 in C minor

- i. Allegro moderato
- ii. Andante
- iii. Menuetto—Trio
- iv. Finale—Vivace

Roger Benedict

conductor

Lisa Moore

piano

Monash Academy Orchestra

*Melbourne premiere

About *Force Majeure* by Elena Kats-Chernin

Force Majeure (2022) is a concerto for piano solo and large ensemble in four movements. It was commissioned by Lisa Moore and made possible through the generous support of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and individual donors: Brian Abel, Hannah Fink, Ken and Liz Nielsen, Julie Robb, Ezekiel Solomon, and Bob Weis. It had been our wish for a while to have a piano concerto project come to life. Lisa and I are very grateful to a group of incredibly generous, kind and musically interested people who felt it was rewarding to support the birth of a new larger piece.

The initial compositional impetus of this concerto coincided with creating an orchestra score for the silent film *Variete* for German TV Channel ZDF/arte. I found myself watching and “inhaling” the scenes of the world of trapeze artists at the Showgrounds, working and living through all kinds of emotions, highs and lows. The circus atmosphere, along with some darker undertones, subconsciously flowed into the piano concerto.

Lisa Moore and I met during our studies in the late 1970s at the Sydney Conservatorium, where the world premiere took place in November 2022. Apart from her virtuosity and wonderful musicality, I have always admired Lisa’s vibrancy, generosity, high energy and great dedication to contemporary classical works. Our main collaboration was on her solo album of my work—“Purple Black and Blues” (*Tall Poppies*)—which includes *Sonata Lost and Found* (also commissioned by Lisa, for the CD). Lisa not only performed *Stur in Dur* (*Stick to Major*—a piece with spoken text) many times, but also translated the text for it. She performed one of the two complex piano parts in the Australian premiere of *Clocks* (with the Australian Chamber Orchestra). Other collaborations include the *Other Minds Festival* in San Francisco where Lisa performed my *Tast-en*, the premiere performances of *Pro-Motion* at the 1996 Adelaide Festival and the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York—a piece I wrote for *Bang On A Can All-Stars* (Lisa was their founding pianist 1992—2008).

I am very grateful to Roger Benedict, for supporting *Force Majeure* from day one, and conducting it today at Monash University.

Force Majeure cont.

The four movements of Force Majeure are as follows:

- 1 Rotor has at its base the rhythmic, motoric and harmonic drive. It's a movement of high pulsating energy, is a real workout for Lisa, and has a glimpse of the occasional Bach reference.
- 2 Broken Barcarolle is trance-like, mysteriously atmospheric, elusive at times. There is emphasis on harp and plucked sounds, delicate vibraphone and an occasional gong. There are 4 main harmonic sections, with a scale-like melody appearing in horn and other brass at certain points, just before the harmony makes a shift. There are hints of Debussy here and there.
- 3 Twisted Rag is an edgy, "in your face", at times a dissonant dance, ending with a kind of a Jahrmarkt Waltz after a slowish solo piano moment.
- 4 Czardas Noir. I have always liked Czardas. This finale starts, as often with Czardas, with a slow unfolding of accented materials. There are more heavy, low registers used in this movement. While it is in 4/4, an occasional 3/4 throws it off balance. Many semiquaver passages are being passed around between soloist and ensemble. Towards the end some of the first movement "Bachian" chord progressions return.

—Elena Kats-Chernin
February 2024

Roger Benedict

Roger Benedict has earned a reputation as a musician's musician, a conductor of deep musical convictions and a highly engaging performer and communicator. He is currently Chief Conductor at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and in demand as a freelance conductor, regularly conducting major Australian orchestras such as the Sydney Symphony and the Adelaide Symphony.

Passionate about working with emerging artists, for nearly twenty years Roger was Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony's celebrated Fellowship Program, and is a frequent conductor of Australian Youth Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra (UK) programs. He also believes music can highlight social justice issues and for the last 9 years has been involved, with *Orchestra for Life*, in staging fundraising concerts for suicide prevention and Indigenous mental health charities.

Roger is also an acclaimed viola player. He was principal viola in the Philharmonia Orchestra, London for nine years and in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra for sixteen. As a viola soloist he has appeared with the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Ulster Orchestra in the UK as well as the Sydney Symphony, Canberra Symphony, New Zealand Symphony and the Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa (Japan). Roger has released several highly acclaimed solo recordings on the Melba and ABC Classics/Universal label.



Roger Benedict

Lisa Moore

Lisa Moore is a multifaceted New York-based Australian pianist, recording artist, and avid collaborator. *The New Yorker* describes her as “visionary” and “New York’s queen of the avant-garde piano”, while *The New York Times* has singled out her playing for its “life and freshness” and “fragility and tenderness”. *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”. Given her 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 new commissioned works and world premieres. She has worked with more than two hundred living composers, while residing in the vibrant new music scene of New York City since 1985.

Moore has released 12 solo albums, ranging from Leoš Janáček to Philip Glass and Elena Kats-Chernin. In June 2022, to compelling notice, Moore released her second album of music by the American maverick composer-pianist Frederic Rzewski—*no place to go but around*. *The New York Times* remarked the album is “meticulous, clever, and hits the gas with controlled force” with “a greater range of emotion than other interpreters.” *Gramophone* writes about Moore’s solo 2015 *Mad Rush Philip Glass* disc: “what becomes abundantly clear from listening to almost any bar on this recording is Moore’s highly developed, intuitive and nuanced approach to this music, one which has been allowed to evolve and refine over a number of years”.

Moore has released over thirty collaborative discs. Her record labels include Cantaloupe Music, Tall Poppies Records, Orange Mountain Music, Irreverence Group Music, Bandcamp, Sony Classical, Nonesuch Records, Deutsche Grammophon, BMG, New World Records, ABC Classics, Albany Records, New Albion, Starkland, and Harmonia Mundi.

Moore has performed throughout Europe, the UK, USA, and Asia on many of the world’s great stages, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Sydney Opera House, La Scala, Royal Albert Hall, and the Musikverein. She was the founding pianist (92–08) for the ground-breaking electro-acoustic sextet *Bang On A Can All-Stars*, winning the 2005 Musical America *Ensemble of the Year* award. Moore has collaborated with leading artists and ensembles, including Philip Glass, Meredith Monk, Ornette Coleman, Thurston Moore, Iva Bittova, Bryce Dessner, Don Byron, London Sinfonietta, Steve Reich Ensemble, New York City Ballet, American Composers Orchestra, and The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Lisa Moore is a Steinway artist.



Lisa Moore

Elena Kats-Chernin

As one of Australia's foremost contemporary composers, Elena Kats-Chernin's vibrant and distinctive music across all genres has reached millions worldwide, featuring at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, 2003 Rugby World Cup and 2018 Commonwealth Games. Born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, she has received numerous prizes including Helpmann, Limelight, Sounds Australian and Sydney Theatre Awards, the Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award and the 2022 Australian Women in Music Award (AWMA) for 'Artistic Excellence'.

Kats-Chernin has written for ballet, opera and theatre, and is performed by all major orchestras in Australia, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Brandenburg Orchestra and Australian World Orchestra; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Komische Oper Berlin, Deutsche Kammerorchester Berlin, City of London Sinfonia, BBC Orchestra, and in festivals across the USA, Europe, and throughout Australia. She has collaborated with well-known artists such as Marin Alsop, Avi Avital, Tamara-Anna Cislowska, Michael Collins, Mahan Esfahani, Shobana Jeyasingh, Axel Ranisch, Richard Tognetti, Simone Young, and many more.

Kats-Chernin's opera, WHITELEY, for Opera Australia (libretto by Justin Fleming) on the life of iconic Australian artist, Brett Whiteley, was nominated in the 2020 International Opera Awards for 'Best new opera'; *Eliza Aria* from ballet *Wild Swans* (choreographer Meryl Tankard) was made famous by British bank Lloyds TSB; *Russian Rag* in award-winning claymation film, *Mary and Max*. Kats-Chernin also composed the music for the first ever Australian episodic opera for television, *The Divorce*, (libretto by Joanna Murray-Smith) watched by over a million viewers on ABC TV. With multiple premieres including most recently for the Melbourne, Adelaide, and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, Sydney Festival, Komische Oper Berlin and Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Kats-Chernin's music is published exclusively by Boosey & Hawkes, and recorded by Deutsche Grammophon and ABC Classics. Notable releases include ARIA No.1 albums *Butterflying* and *Unsent Love Letters* (performed by Tamara-Anna Cislowska), and the 'Kats-Chernin Collection', a limited edition 10-disc collection featuring several large-scale works from the past 25 years and recordings of pieces by world-renowned artists such as Daniel Hope, Lang Lang, and more.



Elena Kats-Chernin

Monash Academy Orchestra

Monash Academy Orchestra is a symphony orchestra based on the Clayton campus of Monash University. Consisting of students from the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music and Performance as well as musicians from across the wider Monash campuses, it is an orchestra committed to sharing the joy of musical performance.

The orchestra has established an enviable reputation as an outstanding training and mentoring orchestra, performing a large variety of major symphonic repertoire from Beethoven and Mozart to Stravinsky, Kats-Chernin and Duke Ellington. Students are provided with the opportunity to develop their knowledge of orchestral repertoire, as well as the ensemble skills necessary for professional practice.

The orchestra is committed to performing the work of Australian composers. To this end, a new work is commissioned from an Australian Composer each year and premiered by the orchestra. The orchestra works closely with established and renowned conductors and recognised soloists, providing students with the opportunity to learn from some of the very best in the industry



Monash Academy Orchestra

**Monash Academy
Orchestra**

Violin One

Erica Kennedy^
Paul Hwang
Michelle Iskhakbaev
Caitlin La
Lauren Loh
Alexander Lam
Claire Huang
Jasmin Buell
Riyaan Buell

Violin Two

Alyssa Wong
Ella Summers
Aleya Ta'eed
Chan Ning
Liesl Parnell
Tintin Cao
Kavindra Widodo
Tyra Trappett

Viola

Layla Maitri
Merewyn Bramble^
Shanon Sze
Emma Wang
Amethyst Gration
Connor Senn-Sanger

Cello

Elizabeth Rayner
Isambard Knox-Johnson
Brianna Rowling
Harry Gregor

Double Bass

Gareth Hill^
Jemima Smith

Flute

Douglas Burns
Serena Ford

Piccolo

Douglas Burns

Oboe

Benjamin Roe
Alannah Brearley-Vivian

Clarinet

Freya Parr
Hugh Blacket

Bassoon

Christopher Haycroft^
Christopher Martin^

Alto Saxophone

Matthew Pines

French Horn

Henry Eames
Lynton Sun
Sienna Machin
Alexandra Pels

Trumpet

Sarah Henderson^
Riley Brennan

Tenor Trombone

Trea Hindley^

Harp

Su Min Lee

Timpani

Ethan Cheung

Percussion

Ethan Cheung
Grace James

^denotes guest musician

Acknowledgements

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