THE BOURBAKI ENSEMBLE

music from five continents

Aaron Copland Appalachian Spring
Greg van der Struik Bass Trombone Concerto
Heitor Villa–Lobos Suite for Strings
Eunsung Kim Vivo
George Dyson Woodland Suite

Greg van der Struik, trombone
David Angell, conductor

2.30 pm, Sunday 22 November 2026
St. George's Hall, Newtown

Welcome to the "Bourbaki World Tour"! Our final concert for 2026 presents music from around the globe: Australia (of course), Asia, Europe, North America and South America. We are very happy to welcome soloist Greg van der Struik for his fourth performance with the Bourbaki Ensemble, playing his own *Bass Trombone Concerto*. Since Greg's concerto also includes parts for woodwinds, we have chosen to pair it with the original chamber version of Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, as well as a charming suite of light music by English composer George Dyson. Music by Asian composers is still not very commonly encountered in the "classical" concert repertoire, but we feel confident that audiences will be delighted by Eunsung Kim's sparkling *Vivo for Strings*. The South American representation on today's programme is an early work by the great Brazilian composer Heitor Villa–Lobos.

In today's programme booklet we continue our "meet the orchestra" feature. Violinist Victor Wu has been participating in Bourbaki concerts for over a decade, and is also a film–maker whose work can be seen on SBS!

As always, we would like to express our immense gratitude to Newtown High School of the Performing Arts. It would be very difficult to put on Bourbaki concerts without their generous support, and we look forward to continuing the association.

We hope to present four Bourbaki Ensemble concerts in 2027, starting with an Australian saxophone concerto in March. Further details are on the back cover, and there will be an email circular early in the New Year. Anyone who is not on our email list and would like to be need only scan the QR code! Please join us next year for more programmes of music you (probably) haven't heard before!

PROGRAMME

Eunsung Kim *Vivo* for Strings

George Dyson Woodland Suite

1. At Evening Bell
2. Silken Sails
3. Moon–Fairy
4. Elfin Market

Greg van der Struik Bass Trombone Concerto

1. Allegro
2. In Chiesa
3. Rondo

Greg van der Struik, trombone

INTERVAL

20 minutes

Heitor Villa–Lobos Suite for Strings

I. Timide
II. Mysterieuse
III. Inquiete (air de ballet)

Aaron Copland *Appalachian Spring*, original chamber version

Eunsung Kim (1984–) was born in South Korea and studied at Seoul National University, earning a bachelor's degree in composition, before proceeding to further study at the Franz Liszt University of Music in Weimar, Germany. His catalogue includes orchestral works, choral works and chamber music, and he has been a prize–winner in various composition competitions.

Kim's *Vivo* is an eight–minute work for string orchestra and is predominantly, as the title indicates, fast and vivacious. A lively quaver pulse accompanies a fluid theme in the high register of cellos; the theme passes to other instruments, with a variety of deft key changes. A cheeky quotation from the Haydn C major cello concerto leads into a busy texture of arpeggios with a legato theme in second violins. Furious arpeggios overwhelm the whole orchestra before abruptly breaking off. A much slower and very powerful passage feels as though it might be another quotation, but none of today's performers has been able to identify it – please talk to us at interval if you can help! The work ends with a reformulation of the initial ideas, rhythmic quavers underpinning exuberant melodies and insistent scales.

Originally published in 1918 as a work for violin or flute with piano accompaniment, *In Pixie–Land* by **George Dyson** was released in a new version for strings, piano and woodwind in 1930. Its four short movements provide a fine example of undemanding and attractive early twentieth century English light music. For reasons that are not hard to imagine, the work's title has recently been altered to *Woodland Suite*. An oddity about the suite is that, while the woodwind and piano are listed as "optional", they frequently have important roles to play that are not present in the string parts. We feel strongly that the work is heard to best advantage in its full version.

George Dyson was born in 1883 into a Yorkshire working–class family. His parents had a keen interest in music and encouraged the same in their son, so much so that by the age of 21 he had won both a scholarship to the Royal College of Music, London, and the Mendelssohn Scholarship, which enabled him to spend some years studying in Italy. A number of compositions, mostly chamber and vocal music, but also including orchestral pieces and an unfinished opera, date from the next decade; these, however, are known only from secondary references, as Dyson in later life destroyed most of his manuscripts from this period. In 1914 he enlisted in the Royal Fusiliers, and saw action in the trenches until being invalided home in 1916. After the war Dyson entered upon what was to be his life's work as a teacher and administrator of music at Winchester College and the RCM. Alongside these activities he found time to compose; many of his works, notably *The Canterbury Pilgrims* (after Chaucer), belong to the great English choral–orchestral tradition, though he also produced a symphony and a violin concerto, each of which remains in the recorded repertoire. Dyson was knighted in 1941, and died in 1964; his music remains an attractive example of the more conservative tendency in British twentieth century composition.

Trombonist **Greg van der Struik** (born 1965), for many years a leading figure among Australian brass players, is lately attracting increasing attention as a composer. Today will be the fourth occasion on which he has been soloist with Bourbaki in his own compositions. Greg offers the following commentary about his *Bass Trombone Concerto*.

> The work was a dual commission from Yves Bauer (bass trombone, Orchestre national de Lille) and Steve

Rossé (principal tuba, Sydney Symphony Orchestra). Both wanted a solo work with brass quintet. In this form the work has been performed in Australia, Spain and France. A later performance gave me the opportunity to orchestrate the work for chamber orchestra. In this form Ed Diefes (former principal tuba, Opera Australia Orchestra) has performed the work a number of times.

Rather than writing two works, I took the idea from the French school of lower brass writing where repertoire can be interchangeable between bass trombone and tuba. The opening presents a little rhythmic contest between the soloist in $\frac{3}{4}$ and ensemble in $\frac{6}{8}$, resolving in the soloist's favour! The second movement's opening was inspired by plainchant and aims to generally express a feeling of space and calm found in a large church. The third movement is a busy and good humoured *rondo*.

Many listeners will, no doubt, be familiar with the music of **Heitor Villa–Lobos** – extrovert, rhythmically vigorous, passionate (the series of *Bachianas Brasileiras*), vividly pictorial (*The Little Train of the Caipira*). It may come as a surprise to hear in the *Suite for Strings* – an early composition, written in Villa–Lobos's 25th year – a very different side to the composer. The titles of the three movements tell the whole story – *Timide*, *Mysterieuse*, *Inquiete*. The first is based upon the gently rocking figure heard in the first violins at the very outset, and features poignant harmonies in which standard triads are gently embellished by added notes. The haunting theme of the second movement is introduced in quick succession by cellos,

first violins and second violins. By the time of the fourth entry in the violas, the accompanying harmonies have acquired a distinctly "spooky" feel, in line with the movement's title. The finale is rather more robust, and if it has an air of disquiet, as proclaimed in the title, this may be a result of the insistently repeating three–note patterns. This movement was, rather mystifyingly, adapted by Villa–Lobos for a later work entitled *The Evolution of the Aeroplane*.

Heitor Villa–Lobos was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1887 into an educated family with strong musical interests, his father hosting regular musical activities in the home. The boy Heitor picked up a good deal of his musical aptitude from overhearing these sessions, and relatively little from any kind of formal education. Although in this way he would, doubtless, have acquired a certain familiarity with the "classical" repertoire, he was soon to seek out and absorb other influences. Before the age of 20, he was already investigating the musical traditions of indigenous Brazilians, as well as those of Portuguese and African provenance. Cinema, tango and Brazilian urban street music also contributed to the young composer's musical personality. A series of concerts (1915–1921) at which Villa–Lobos introduced his music to the public included the premiere of the *Suite for Strings*.

In 1923, at the recommendation of the great pianist Arthur Rubinstein, Villa–Lobos presented some of his compositions in Europe, where, it seems, they aroused considerable interest. He returned to Brazil in 1930 and owing to the Brazilian political situation, followed by the Second World War, was unable to travel abroad for some fifteen years. This period saw the composition of his *Bachianas Brasileiras*, in which he cast Brazilian musical material into forms inspired by the works of J.S. Bach. After 1945 he made up for lost time, with many tours of Europe,

Great Britain and the United States, during which he conducted his own compositions. He died in 1959 in his birthplace of Rio de Janeiro.

Aaron Copland (1900–1990) is generally regarded as the most outstanding American composer of the mid–twentieth century. He was resident for most of his life in New York, and his early works display a notable jazz influence. This style was displaced by more rigorous and modernist tendencies; before long, however, America succumbed to the economic depression of the 1930s, and Copland felt obliged to write music which would communicate more directly with his listeners. Most of the music for which he is best known comes from the next decade or so, and much of it seeks to depict various aspects of American life: the urban (*Quiet City*, 1940), the rural (*Appalachian Spring*, 1944), the frontier (*Billy the Kid*, 1938; *Rodeo*, 1942).

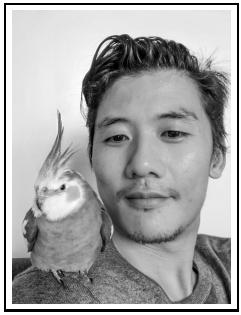
Appalachian Spring was the result of a commission by the eminent American patron Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge for the renowned choreographer Martha Graham. Its original incarnation as a thirty–minute ballet for flute, clarinet, bassoon, piano and small string ensemble was followed by a suite for the same forces, omitting the parts where music is subordinate to dance: this is the version which we perform today. A third setting, in which the music of the suite is scored for full symphony orchestra, is the best known version nowadays; nevertheless, the chamber version has a freshness and transparency which admirably express the mood of the scenario.

The ballet depicts a rural idyll at the beginning of the nineteenth century: a young farmer and his bride–to–be take their place in the community. The suite opens with a quiet dawn suggested by the lean lines of the woodwind and harmonic clusters

of the strings. Suddenly piano and upper strings announce a wide ranging, leaping theme which after a time subsides into a quieter, sometimes harmonically complex section. Offbeat accents convey the impression of a sort of barn dance, which soon develops, however, into something much more rhythmically intricate. The opening music reappears as a brief introduction to the work's most famous section, a set of variations on a Shaker melody *The Gift to be Simple*. A coda, marked "like a prayer", sees the couple "left quiet and strong in their new house".

Meet the orchestra! – **Victor Wu, violin**

Victor has had the pleasure of making music with Bourbaki since 2015. The thoughtful programming focused on giving life to underperformed music, living and Australian composers and a dialogue with social and community issues is what has kept him an eager member. And the ensemble has been a lifeline for him to continue ensemble music making as a violinist through his struggles with focal hand dystonia.



To expand his music making he has been exploring Japanese taiko drumming, bamboo flute and most recently Javanese gamelan. And he has explored combining his music practices with the meditation–based neuroplasticity therapy he uses to manage his condition through his music group `@sonic_horizon.meditation`.

Victor works as a software engineer in the acoustics field. His other main pursuit is queer diaspora storytelling. You can see his 2024 film *To Freely Flourish* on SBS on–demand; his community storytelling project is at `www.comingoutcominghome.au` or `@freelyflourish_thefilm` on Instagram.

Greg van der Struik, trombone

Gregory van der Struik currently enjoys a busy career as an orchestral and solo trombonist. He has held the position of Principal Trombone with the Opera Australia Orchestra since 1987 and has been active as a soloist and composer in Australia, China and Europe. Greg has been a founding member of the Early Brass Consort of Sydney and has been active in promoting Opera Australia Brass, including a highly successful concert tour of China.

As a soloist, Greg has released and been featured on a number of CDs which emanate from the *Trombonis Australis* project, initiated in 1990 to develop and present an Australian contribution to international brass repertoire. He has performed in Australia and overseas with ensembles such as the Orchestre de Picardie, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestre de Cuivres d'Amiens. Greg has been described by international trombonist and composer John Kenny "as one of the most interesting trombonists pushing for increased recognition of the trombone anywhere."

David Angell, conductor

As a violist and chorister, David has performed under internationally famous conductors including Sir Charles Mackerras, Stuart Challender and Richard Bonynge. Since taking up conducting in 1998, he has directed a number of musical societies and orchestras, most frequently the Bourbaki Ensemble and Orchestra 143. Highlights have included a Bourbaki concert in the Utzon Room of the Sydney Opera House; and the Orchestra 143 Mozartathon, in which David conducted all the symphonies of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in a series of five concerts spread over a single weekend. David has been guest conductor for two concerts with the Crendon Chamber Orchestra (Thame, UK).

THE BOURBAKI ENSEMBLE

The Bourbaki Ensemble is a chamber string orchestra which has been giving concerts in Newtown since 2001. Further concerts have been given at Christ Church St. Laurence, Macquarie University and the Garrison Church in The Rocks; September 2024 saw the Ensemble's Sydney Opera House debut. Besides masterpieces of the string repertoire, programmes include fascinating music by present–day composers including John Adams, Cecilia McDowall and Anna Clyne. Every concert features works by at least one Australian composer, most recently Peter Sculthorpe, Elena Kats–Chernin and Michael Dunn. The Bourbaki Ensemble has given world premieres of well over a dozen pieces, some written especially for our concerts.

Violins Warwick Pulley, Julia Pokorny, Joanna Buggy, Camille Hanrahan–Tan, Madeleina Hanrahan–Tan, Emlyn Lewis–Jones, Jenny Mee, Daniel Morris, Rob Newnham, Rob Nijs, Paul Pokorny, Victor Wu.

Violas Kathryn Ramsay, Evan Guy, Hannah Keese, David Tocknell, Evonne Voukidis.

Violoncellos John Napier, Liesje Croeser, Ian Macourt, Nicole McVicar, Catherine Willis.

Basses Sasha Cotis, Jordan Bartlett, Maureen Wallace.

Piano Diana Blom.

Flute Andrew Collins.

Oboe Rosalind Croucher.

Clarinet Ken Burnett.

Bassoon Eva Morris.

BOURBAKI 2027

Plans for 2027 are yet to be finalised, but we expect to start the year with a concert in early March, featuring saxophonist Jason Xanthoudakis performing the *Concerto* by Australian composer William Lovelock. We hope there will be three further Bourbaki Ensemble concerts next year, and we look forward to seeing you again!



Charles Denis Sauter Bourbaki (1816–1897) was a leading figure in the French military and served throughout Europe, as well as in Africa. Taking into account also his Greek ancestry, it is scarcely surprising that he should have developed a passion for travel – no doubt enhanced by a chance encounter with the celebrated writer Jules Verne. Bourbaki had lost favour with the higher echelons of the military after defeat at the Battle of Héricourt (1871), and was reduced to the role of inspector of coastguards, a service into which Verne had been conscripted. Verne was at this time well advanced on the composition of *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours*, which was to appear in 1872. Tantalising hints in the author's correspondence suggest that Bourbaki urged the inclusion of Brazil, Korea and Australia on Phileas Fogg's itinerary; but these destinations do not appear in the final version of *Le Tour*, and handwriting experts have cast doubt upon the authenticity of the relevant letters.