THE BOURBAKI ENSEMBLE

music for chamber orchestra

Wagner Siegfried Idyll

Anne Boyd Flute Concerto

Finzi A Severn Rhapsody

Daniel Rojas *Little Serenade* for string orchestra

Eugene Goossens By the Tarn

Dag Wirén Serenade for String Orchestra

Christine Draeger, flute

David Angell, conductor

2.30 p.m., Sunday 26 October 2008

St. Stephen's Church, Newtown

Welcome to the third Bourbaki Ensemble concert for 2008! Today we are excited to be able to present the world premiere of the salsa–inspired *Little Serenade* by Daniel Rojas. Dan, whose reputation as a composer has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years, is a local (Erskineville) resident; unfortunately he is unable to join us today as he is working on various compositional and performance projects in Peru. He has recently appeared there as soloist in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21.

We are delighted to welcome back to St. Stephen's distinguished Sydney flautist Christine Draeger, playing Anne Boyd's flute concerto. This is Christine's second appearance with Bourbaki: in 2005, together with harpist Verna Lee, she joined us in a performance of *Toward the Sea II* by Tōru Takemitsu. For your diary – in December Christine and Verna will perform Mozart's *Concerto for Flute and Harp* with Orchestra 143. See the programme back cover for details.

Following our successful performances of Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring* last year and our CD release *Mozart in Love*, we have once again invited a few wind and brass players to join the strings of the Bourbaki Ensemble in pieces by Wagner, Goossens and Finzi. *A Severn Rhapsody* concludes our celebration of Finzi's music for small orchestra.

And speaking of *Mozart in Love*... we were extremely gratified by the audience response to the first public appearance of the CD at our August concert. Anne and Brennan Keats of Wirripang Publishers will be here again today and copies of the recording will be available for sale.

Details of next year's Bourbaki Ensemble concerts will be sent out to our mailing list as soon as possible. (If you are not yet on the list, please ask!) We hope you have enjoyed the music presented by Bourbaki in 2008, thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you again in 2009.

PROGRAMME

Dag Wirén Serenade for String Orchestra, Op. 11

I Preludium: allegro molto
II Andante espressivo
III Scherzo: allegro vivace
IV Marcia: molto ritmico

Eugene Goossens By the Tarn, Op. 15 No. 1

Gerald Finzi A Severn Rhapsody

Anne Boyd Concerto for Flute and Strings

I Vivace, sempre grazioso
II Lento e misterioso
III Molto vivace

Christine Draeger, flute

INTERVAL
20 minutes

Richard Wagner Siegfried Idyll

Daniel Rojas *Little Serenade* for string orchestra

i. wrestless children
ii. mischief
iii. nostalgia por mi niñés
iv. games
v. a little night of latin

Undoubtedly the second most famous Swedish entrant in the history of the Eurovision Song Contest was **Dag Wirén** (1905–1986). He was born and raised some 200 kilometres west of Stockholm in the province of Västmanland, and enjoyed a musically active childhood in this rural region before moving at the age of 14 to Stockholm, and later to Paris, for further study. In 1934 he returned to his native land (together with his wife, an Irish cellist whom he had met in Paris), and he remained based in Sweden for the rest of his life.

Wirén's compositions include five symphonies, a similar number of string quartets, and a large quantity of film music. Nowadays, however, he is represented in the concert hall only by his *Serenade for String Orchestra*, commissioned and premiered by Tobias Wilhelmi and the Stockholm Chamber Orchestra at the National Museum in Stockholm in 1937.

The opening *Preludium* of the *Serenade* has the clarity of a classical *allegro*, tempered by the jazzy twist of an occasional "blue" note such as F♮ within a context of G major. The first theme is delightful: over a busy accompaniment, violins sneak in quietly with a long note followed by a flurry of semiquavers. The second movement has the feel of an intermezzo, though it is not so described on the score. Different instruments, turn by turn, play a single quiet, beautifully balanced melodic line, with the rest of the orchestra providing a *pizzicato* accompaniment; on a couple of brief occasions a second melodic strand joins in. The harmony is unostentatious but now and then surprising, as when a C major cadence guilelessly reinvents itself on repetition in C♯ minor. The scampering triplets and abrupt key changes of the *scherzo* are set off by a trio of more thoughtful character. The finale is a march with contrasting middle section. Warwick Thompson, in a sleeve note for Decca, describes the first part as "naive" and the second as "delightfully vulgar".

And in case you were wondering – Wirén's unsuccessful Eurovision entry was his 1965 *Annorstädes vals* ("Elsewhere Waltz"). He never tried again. Perhaps he felt that as a pop composer he had met his Waterloo.

In 1845 one Eugène Goossens was born in the city of Bruges in north–western Belgium. He studied music and gained renown as a conductor; from the 1870s he worked frequently with the Carl Rosa Opera Company in England, one of his major engagements being the British premiere of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. His son, also Eugène, was born in 1867 and joined his father as principal conductor at the Carl Rosa in 1899. The next member of the dynasty again bore the name Eugène and is sometimes referred to as Eugène III; by this time the family was well established in Britain, and in later life the accent in his name was usually omitted. So let us say that **Eugene Goossens** was born in London in 1893; given his ancestry one may well imagine that his future career was never in doubt. He became even more celebrated a conductor than his forbears, among the highlights of his professional life being the first British concert performance of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, many engagements as assistant to Sir Thomas Beecham, and the post of conductor with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (1931–1946). In 1947 he moved to Australia to become the first Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and the director of the NSW Conservatorium. His was an influential voice in promoting the construction of an opera house in Sydney, and he was largely responsible for the choice of site at Bennelong Point.

Goossens attracted immense acclaim for invigorating Australia's rather stolid musical life; but in 1956 he became embroiled in a scandal, some details of which are still contentious.

The affair was said to involve importation of pornographic material and involvement in occult activities; the formal result was a fine of £100, but the effect on Goossens' reputation was disastrous. He was forced to resign his posts and return to England. He never truly recovered from the disgrace, and died in 1962.

While pursuing his conducting career, Goossens also managed to achieve recognition as a composer of some importance, completing two symphonies, two operas and an oratorio *The Apocalypse*. Numerous fine shorter works include the 1916 *Two Sketches* for string quartet, the first of which, *By the Tarn*, was expanded in 1919 for string orchestra with optional clarinet. It shows a distinct impressionist influence in its harmony, which typically consists of five or six simultaneous notes from the same scale. These quiet, mysterious sounds contribute much to the magical evocation of a small mountain lake shrouded in mists.

Born in London, **Gerald Finzi** (1901–1956) in his early twenties lived for a few years in Gloucestershire. The local countryside and riverscape inspired *A Severn Rhapsody* for small orchestra. Composed in 1923, the piece is relaxed in spirit and flexible in rhythm: in a word, as the title implies, rhapsodic. Beginning softly, it rises to a broadly expressive central episode. Although it evokes the beauty and serenity of the Severn region, this grave and moving piece is not merely an exercise in nostalgia: Finzi, who had lost his father and three brothers before reaching adulthood, was always acutely aware of the sorrow that may be inextricable from the joy of human experience.

The *Severn Rhapsody* is scored for flute, oboe (doubling cor anglais), clarinet (doubling bass clarinet), horn and strings.

Born in 1946, **Anne Boyd** managed to acquire an elementary musical education despite the obvious challenges of doing so while growing up on a remote Queensland sheep station. Later she studied at the Universities of Sydney and York, and since then has had a distiguished academic career, her principal appointments having been at Sussex, Hong Kong and Sydney. Among Anne's best known works are *Angklung* for piano; *Goldfish through Summer Rain* for flute and piano; and *As I Crossed a Bridge of Dreams* for unaccompanied chorus.

Many of Anne Boyd's compositions are inspired by the music of Asian cultures, and it is possible to hear an echo of the Indonesian *gamelan* (percussion orchestra) in the textures of the opening *vivace, sempre grazioso* of her flute concerto. In this movement the sense of conflict and drama generally expected in a Western concerto is replaced by the creation of intricate patterns, leading to a sense of cooperative stasis and a kind of "actively meditative" quality.

The slow movement of the concerto may suggest to the listener the music of the *shakuhachi* (Japanese flute). A certain breathiness of tone, pitch bending, tremolos and rapidly reiterated figures are all important aspects of *shakuhachi* technique. The last part of the movement is notable for its carefully crafted "echoes", the flute's leading voice being shadowed by up to nine separate string lines. The finale follows without a break, beginning with a four–note figure thrown about between the soloist and orchestra. After a more *cantabile* central section and a flute cadenza, the four–note figure brings the concerto to a close.

Anne Boyd's flute concerto was written in 1992 and is dedicated to Australian flautist Victor McMahon, who died at the age of 88 shortly after the work's completion.

Political insurrection, domestic upheaval, exile and financial troubles defined the turbulent youth of **Richard Wagner** (1813–1883). In 1864, however, he had the great fortune to attract the admiration of the young King Ludwig II of Bavaria. Upon his accession to the throne Ludwig conceived it his mission in life to facilitate Wagner's artistic activities: he paid the composer's extensive debts; undertook to produce his operas; and later provided him with a home at Triebschen on the shores of Lake Lucerne in Switzerland. Here Wagner was joined by Cosima, at that time still the wife of the conductor Hans von Bülow. During 1870 Cosima divorced von Bülow and married Wagner; their son Siegfried had been born the previous year.

Wagner composed *Siegfried Idyll*, his only piece for small orchestra, as a tribute to his wife and young son. On the morning of her birthday, Christmas Eve 1870, Cosima awoke to the strains of Richard's new work filling the villa. Wagner later wrote a lengthy description of the music, which is here abridged.

"The beginning of *Siegfried Idyll* sings of the purity of the child's soul. His mother sings the boy to sleep with a lullaby. He falls asleep to soft, intermittent horn notes. The mother envisions her son as a handsome man in flowering youth [woodwind and horns in $\frac{3}{4}$ time]. The boy is driven to accomplish important deeds and gains for himself a place among men... he wanders alone in the forest [horns; birdsongs in clarinet and flute; this develops into an exultant *tutti* crowned by trumpet]. The mother awakens from her reverie. Once again the lullaby is heard... the horns and birdsong return... the boy sleeps quietly."

Daniel Rojas was born in Santiago, Chile in 1974, emigrating to Melbourne with his family at the age of six. In 1995 he began working towards a Bachelor of Music degree at the

University of Sydney, later proceeding to postgraduate study at the Sydney Conservatorium. One of his mentors in composition has been Anne Boyd, who by a happy coincidence is also represented on today's programme. Daniel's recent works include a piano concerto *Latinoamericanismos* for Zubin Kanga and the Sydney Youth Orchestra, and a large choral/orchestral work for the 150th anniversary of Sydney Grammar School.

Daniel's studies in composition and performance have always been combined with a keen interest in the music of South and Central America, particularly Peruvian indigenous music and salsa; the influence of the latter is particularly evident in his *Little Serenade* for string orchestra. The first, second and fourth movements are fast, energetic and exciting, full of emphatic rhythms and syncopations. A wide variety of string techniques is employed, including *sul ponticello* (playing near the bridge), *glissandi* and rapid alternation of *pizzicato* and bowed passages. The harmonies are often complex but the listener is whirled through them by the continual sense of forward motion. Many episodes for solo instruments feature in the slower and more contemplative third movement *nostalgia por mi niñés* ("pondering my childhood"), while the finale is a more traditional salsa, a repetitive foundation in violas, cellos and basses supporting varied violin lines, improvisatory in style. The score also specifies a role for the audience. You have been warned!

The composer has described to the present writer the kind of performance he envisages. We hope to do justice to his aims!

> "*Please* remember that at all times my music *must* be played with a lot of heart, and the salsa–like moments require full energy, commitment, and often even a willingness to be playing at the edge of one's rhythmic capabilities. It requires clarity and precision yet often a degree of uncontrolled wildness. Otherwise the music can become bland and too tidy… and that just ain't Dan Rojas."

David Angell, conductor

David conducts the Bourbaki Ensemble and Orchestra 143 (a chamber orchestra based in Turramurra); plays viola in various orchestras and chamber groups; co–wrote and conducted a film soundtrack heard in Sydney and London; has been conductor or pit muso for numerous musical theatre productions; is the editor of a revised score of the *Concerto for Strings* by Margaret Sutherland; has contributed translations of Russian and Italian poetry to the *Lied and Art Song Texts* website . . . and more!

Christine Draeger, flute

Christine Draeger studied with Zdenek Bruderhans at Adelaide University, graduating in 1979 with a Bachelor of Music (Honours). She was a member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra from 1981 to 1986, and has also worked with other major Australian orchestras. She has appeared as guest artist with Synergy, The Song Company, Perihelion, Sydney Bach Orchestra and the Bourkaki Ensemble.

A specialist in contemporary techniques, Christine was a member of Australia's leading contemporary music ensemble, Sonic Art Ensemble (formerly The Seymour Group) from 1982 to 2007. She has run workshops and masterclasses in contemporary techniques for various Australian tertiary institutions.

As a composer Christine has written works for solo flute, flute quartet and theatre pieces. She won first prize in the Australian Flute Composition Competition in 1999, and wrote *Practical Studies for the Advanced Flautist* with Rosamund Plummer. In 1992 she founded the Tucana Flute Quartet, an ensemble dedicated to creating new works for flutes. As well as performing and composing, Christine teaches flute and chamber music in her studio in Sydney.

THE BOURBAKI ENSEMBLE

2008 is the eighth year of Bourbaki Ensemble concerts in Newtown. Always keen to support Australian composers, this year we perform music by Graeme Koehne, Bill Cotis, Anne Boyd, Eugene Goossens and Daniel Rojas.

General Charles Denis Sauter Bourbaki (1816–1897) was a prominent figure in French nineteenth–century military circles. In 1871 he was interned for six weeks with his army in Switzerland. His life story has certain correspondences with that of Wagner, not least that the beautiful central Swiss city of Luzern numbers among its many attractions both the Bourbaki Panorama and the Richard Wagner Museum, the latter located in the villa of Triebschen where *Siegfried Idyll* was first performed.

Violins Alastair Duff–Forbes, Greta Lee, Kathryn Crossing, Katie Dixon, Paul Hoskinson, Emlyn Lewis–Jones, Deborah McGowan, Justin White, Richard Willgoss.

Violas Kathryn Ramsay, Dierdre Boyle, Berys Cuncannon.

Violoncellos Nicholas Thomas, Nicholas Comino, Laura Hitchcock.

Basses Caitlin Cahill, Mark Szeto.

Flute Amanda Muir.

Oboe/cor anglais Caroline Fargher.

Clarinets Ken Burnett, Katie Hanna.

Bassoon Christopher Bertram.

Horns Claire Cameron, Adrian Hallam.

Trumpet Andrew del Riccio.

REJOICE!

a Christmas concert with choir and orchestra

Mozart Flute and Harp Concerto
Charpentier Messe de minuit pour Noël
Corelli Christmas Concerto
Handel excerpts from *Messiah*

ORCHESTRA 143
JOUBERT SINGERS

Christine Draeger, flute
Verna Lee, harp

3.00 p.m., Sunday 7 December 2008
St. John's Anglican Church, 754 Pacific Highway, Gordon
David Angell, conductor

7.30 p.m., Tuesday 16 December 2008
St. Joseph's College Chapel, Mark Street, Hunters Hill
Rachelle Elliott, conductor

Christmas music from the baroque period – Charpentier's setting of the Christmas midnight mass; a concerto by Corelli, specifically written for the same occasion; and extracts from Handel's greatest oratorio. The Mozart concerto, while not strictly speaking a Christmas work, is delightful, sparkling and admirably suited to the season.

Tickets available at the door, or in advance from 94100145
Programme details subject to change