



Kettering Concerts

KetteringConcerts.au



A regular member of the Kettering Concerts audience has offered to match dollar-for-dollar any donation to the fund to commission a string quartet by Elena Kats-Chernin. See article below.

A good news/bad news start to 2023

The bad news was that the New York City based pianist that was supposed to present the first concert of 2023, back in March, was caught up in another airline fiasco and unable to get to Kettering. The good news was that on fairly short-notice, Andrew Seymour (Principal Clarinet with the TSO) and Karen Smithies (piano) presented a wonderful concert of works by Brahms, Schumann and Poulenc. Unlikely anyone was disappointed by this substitution which showed the duo playing in top form, enthusiastically appreciated by the audience. In response they gave an encore of two pieces: *Vals Venezolano* and *Contradanza* by Paquito D'Rivera.

A bit of Bliss

A bit of a scare too; COVID-19 in a close contact of one of the musicians.... But on the day, all was well with Dinah Woods (oboe), Miranda Carson (violin), Frances Davies (violin), William Newbery (viola) and Martin Penicka (cello). The Quintet for oboe and string quartet by Arthur Edward Drummond Bliss was a first performance in Kettering and was well received, as were the quartets by Telemann and Beethoven. All the musicians are in the TSO so were familiar to most of our audience. In addition all but Miranda Carson have played many times in Kettering.

A very welcome back to Jono and Karen

The last of the autumn concerts saw Jonathan Békés (cello) and Karen Smithies (piano) greet the largest post-COVID Kettering audience. Their programme is best summed up by Peter Donnelly's review:

Beethoven's Cello Sonata, Op. 102 No. 1 is one of the lesser-known products of his 'late' period. It is in two movements and alternates quiet but somehow uneasy episodes with sudden eruptive agitated outbursts. This 1815 work from the, by then, totally deaf composer has revolutionary aspects in the use of form ('free sonata') and harmony that sometimes foretell musical

developments well into the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These musicians relished the wide contrasts in the material, presenting the piece with spontaneity, vibrancy and musical cohesion; the rapport between them was most striking.

Nadia Boulanger's Three Pieces for Cello and Piano provided a wonderful foil to the Beethovenian tensions of the opening work. The first two movements were delicately post-impressionist, followed by a frantic and technically challenging finale, all most beautifully and sympathetically performed.

Australian composer Stuart Greenbaum's 2008 Scarborough Variations for cello and piano is a delightful free-form take on the well-known 17th century English ballad 'Scarborough Fair'. The original tune appears in its entirety toward the end of the piece.

Finally, another rarely heard sonata from Russian Nikolai Myaskovsky (1881-1950) was given superb advocacy by Jonathan Békés and Karen Smithies. Movements one and two of this 1949 Cello Sonata No. 2 in A minor Op. 81 featured ruminative, folk-like material: the second projecting a more passionate, melancholic mood. The Allegro con spirito finale was like a fast dance.

This concert attracted a large audience that was treated to performances from two distinguished players at the top of their form. A deserved ovation was rewarded with an arrangement of Faure's song 'Après un rêve' (After a Dream).

Commission a new string quartet

As raised last year, we wish to commission a new string quartet to be composed by Elena Kats-Chernin. Elena has written a number of shorter works for string quartets, but the planned work will be a traditionally structured 4 movement work of about 25 minutes duration. On behalf of the Kettering Concerts

Committee, Annick Anselin and Dave Davey have been in conversation with Elena for over a year and have had the privilege of two-to-face meetings at her home in Sydney. She is very enthusiastic about the idea and even liked some of the suggestions on the structure we presented to her. So it's going to happen. Just a small issue of money.

We reported last year that Kettering Concerts Inc. is now registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC), but our application to be included in the Register of Cultural Organisations (ROCO) and the resultant granting of Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status with the ATO appears to have been held up by a Federal Government review of ROCO and DRG. So we registered the project with the Australian Cultural Fund - an organisation that hosts approved projects and allows for tax-deductible donations. So far the fund has nearly reached the half-way mark to the target of \$50,000, but to reach the target by late this year when Elena has indicated she will be able to start work, **we need your help**.

Donations can be made [here](#), or follow the Commissions tab at <https://KetteringConcerts.au> and of course with the end of the financial year rapidly approaching, this is an excellent time to gain a tax deduction.

And wonderful news, a donor has pledged to match your donation, so it would be double the value to the fund. The pledge applies until the June 30th or until the target is reached.

And please, if you know anyone who might be willing to be a part of this commission but not a regular Kettering Concert attendee, please let them know about it.

Once completed, the plan is for the **Tasmanian String Quartet** to perform the première as a part of a Kettering Concert.

Next Concert

On 20th August, Luke Frost will play a solo piano recital. Luke has performed three times in Kettering (first in November 2017), mostly as a part of a piano duo with Jennifer Marten-Smith, but with some solo works. His programme includes works by Clara Schumann, Robert Schumann, Chopin, Poulenc and Gottschalk. You will be able to hear how he has developed into a truly excellent pianist.

As an aside, there is a [YouTube video](#) with Luke playing a Chopin Etude (starts about the 10 minute mark), preceded by an interview by Meriel Owen of Rod Collins on piano tuning. Rod takes care of the Kettering piano, and Meriel played the piano in a Kettering Concert in October 2019.

Other Spring Concerts

Sep 17: Piano & Viola Duo - Jennifer Marten-Smith (piano) and William Newbery (viola).

Oct 8: Sue Collins and friends - String Duos and Trios

Nov 12: Hartz Trio - Alexandra Békés (cello), Natalya Bing (violin), Dianne Legg (piano)

Where does our ticket money go?

We were surprised to hear the idea that our musicians perform as volunteers. **Not so!** Our musicians are professionals and deserved to be paid accordingly. The concerts are managed entirely by volunteers. Every dollar of the ticket sales goes to the musicians except for a small amount for our expenses. And our expenses are fairly limited: the Hall rental (which is subsidised by the Kingborough Council); occasional piano tuning; our mandatory insurance.

Can you help?

Absolutely.

There is a lot our volunteers must do. There are the obvious activities on the day: putting up the sails and artwork; putting the platforms in place; getting the chairs out; setting up for the afternoon tea, checking and sometimes cleaning the toilets. That all has to be done in the morning before the musicians arrive for their rehearsal. Then there is the food preparation, assisting the musicians with their set-up, managing the heating, scanning or selling the tickets. Then that all-important afternoon tea that requires a small army of people. Afterwards there is the bumping out, the washing up and the hall cleaning.

But there are other activities: the general organisation managed by a committee; preparing posters, flyers and programmes; distributing the posters and flyers; preparing and erecting the roadside signs (for which permits must have been obtained); and bureaucratic activities like maintaining our bank accounts, incorporation and insurance.

So assistance will always be appreciated.

Other concerts?

If you want to find chamber music concerts, including the Kettering ones, use the [ChamberMusicTas website](#). If you know of any concerts that are not listed, please let webmaster@chambermusic.tas.au know.

Changed Address

If you haven't noticed our website is now at kettering-concerts.au without the ".org". The old form will work in the short term.