
ASTRA + INLAND

5 pm, Sunday 31 March
CHURCH OF ALL NATIONS
Carlton, Melbourne

A G O N

Filippo Perocco Igor Stravinsky Anthony Pateras
Giovanna Dongu Codex Faenza Rohan Drape
Jacopo da Bologna Riccardo Vaglini Jon Heilbron
Maura Capuzzo James Rushford Francesco Landini

Rebecca Lane, Jon Heilbron,
Kim Bastin, Joy Lee,
James Rushford, Justin Kenealy
Catrina Seiffert, Leonie Thomson, Tim Drylie
The Astra Choir

Rebecca Lane *piccolo, quarter-tone bass flute*,
Jon Heilbron *double bass, pitch-pipe*,
Kim Bastin *piano, organ*, Joy Lee *piano, organ portativ*,
James Rushford *organ portativ*, Justin Kenealy *saxophone*,
Rohan Drape *electronics*
Catrina Seiffert *soprano*, Leonie Thomson *soprano*, Tim Drylie *tenor*

The Astra Choir

soloists

Louisa Billeter, Katie Richardson, Ben Owen, Robert Franzke, Steven Hodgson

soprano

Sarah Maher, Irene McGinnigle, Catrina Seiffert, Leonie Thomson,
Jenny Barnes, Louisa Billeter, Jean Evans, Kate Sadler, Alison Tokita

alto

Gloria Gamboz, Anna Gifford, Katie Richardson,
Beverley Bencina, Jane Cousens, Joan Pollock, Aline Scott-Maxwell

tenor

Stephen Creese, Tim Drylie, Richard Webb,
Ben Owen, Greg Deakin, Simon Johnson

bass

Robert Franzke, John Mark Williams,
Ross Ficcaro, Steven Hodgson, Chris Smith, John Terrell

John McCaughey *conductor*

ASTRA and INLAND have both overlapping and complementary aims and styles in the presentation of new and unfamiliar music. Today's concert has been jointly devised not only as an amalgam of our work, but also as a kind of antiphony.

Now in their sixth year, Inland concerts regularly present music in some of its newest forms of exploration. Technology and live processing of sound play an important part, joining new modes of performance that at times extend beyond the conventions of concert practice. Inland programs also reflect the fluidity of today's musical environment, with frequent participation of a network of Australian performers and composers based in other countries. In today's concert, two long-time residents of Berlin, Rebecca Lane (flutes) and Jon Heilbron (contrabass) return to perform works by Anthony Pateras, an Australian composer-performer whose life has developed between Berlin and residencies in several other European countries.

With a choir as their base, Astra concerts tend to present contemporary works more in interaction with past repertoire, both recent and ancient. In common with Inland, connections with centres of composition in other countries are also central to the programming. Among these, the relation to the Venice region of Italy has led to many performances here and in Italy. The 'Ensemble L'Arsenale', previously announced as a participant, was unfortunately unable to come from Venice for this occasion. In its place, the program presents a spectrum of Italian scores, opening with a very recent work by Ensemble L'Arsenale's director, Filippo Perocco, and continuing with premiered choral pieces by Riccardo Vaglini, the germinal teaching figure at the Venice Conservatorium, and Giovanna Dongu, from Sardinia.

From two of Astra's core performers, Kim Bastin and Joy Lee, **Stravinsky's** 2-piano ballet *Agon* offers both a metaphor for the concert – its title connotes a public display of contending elements – and a musical source radiating to different forms of future and past. Composed in Stravinsky's mid-70s, the work had an unusually long period of creation, as Stravinsky explored the extension of his refractive tonal styles (reaching to mediaeval and folk music) into the serial world of 12-tone music. The two choral pieces represent both sides of this great synthesis: the setting of Eliot is a jewel of 12-tone choral writing, composed at the age of 79; the watery imagery of Ariel's 'Full fathom five' was originally set as a translucent tonal web for mezzo-soprano, flute, clarinet and viola – here translated to choir.

Set into the Stravinsky, choreographed movements seemingly come to a near standstill in **Anthony Pateras's** works for solo piccolo and contrabass respectively. More in the nature of moments captured and sustained in time, the music imposes new kinds of playing efforts on

[notes continued on p.7]

PROGRAM

Filippo Perocco, *Canzona detta l'imaginaria* (Imaginary Chanson) (2019)
piccolo, soprano saxophone, pitch-pipe, prepared piano

Igor Stravinsky, *Agon* (1957)
ballet for twelve dancers, arranged for 2 pianos by the composer
Part I:
Pas-de-Quatre – Double Pas-de-Quatre – Triple Pas-de-Quatre

Anthony Pateras, *Burning is The Thing* (2018)
piccolo & electronics

Agon, Part II:
Prelude – Sarabande-Step – Gailliarde – Coda

Anthony Pateras, *A Happy Sacrifice* (2018)
contrabass & electronics

Agon, Part III:
Interlude – Bransle Simple – Bransle Gay – Bransle Double

Igor Stravinsky, *Anthem (The dove descending breaks the air)* (1962)
poem by T.S. Eliot, choir *a cappella*

Igor Stravinsky, *Full Fathom Five* (1953)
from Three Shakespeare Songs, arr. for choir JMcC

Agon, Part IV:
Interlude – Four Duos – Four Trios – Coda

interval

Giovanna Dongu, *Sorgenti attraverso l'aria serena* (2018) *first performance*
poem by Alfred Tennyson, 8-part soloists and choir

Faenza Codex, *Bel fiore dança* (14th C)
instruments & voices

Rohan Drape, *Chalk* (2019) *first performance*
quarter-tone bass flute, contrabass & electronics

Jacopo da Bologna, *Fenice fu* (14th C)
solo soprano & solo tenor

Riccardo Vaglini, *Ave Maria* (2019) *first performance*
2 solo sopranos & choir

Jon Heilbron, *there are wild fires* (2019) *first performance*
solo contrabass

Maura Capuzzo, *O falce di luna* (1995)
poem by Gabriele d'Annunzio, choir & contrabass

James Rushford, *Leyning* (2019) *first performance*
two portativ organs & electronics

Francesco Landini, *Ecco la primavera* (14th C)
voices & instruments

Filippo Perocco

Canzona detta l'imaginaria (2019) piccolo, soprano saxophone, prepared piano

Igor Stravinsky

Agon Part I: (1957) Ballet for 2 pianos

Pas-de-Quatre (4 male dancers)

Double Pas-de-Quatre (8 female dancers)

Triple Pas-de-Quatre (4 + 8 dancers)

Anthony Pateras

Burning is The Thing (2018) piccolo & electronics

Agon, Part II:

Prelude

Sarabande-Step (1 male dancer)

Gailliarde (2 female dancers)

Coda (1 + 2 dancers)

Anthony Pateras

A Happy Sacrifice (2018) contrabass & electronics

Agon, Part III:

Interlude

Bransle Simple (2 male dancers)

Bransle Gay (1 female dancer)

Bransle Double (2 + 1 dancers)

Igor Stravinsky

Anthem (The dove descending breaks the air) (1962) choir *a cappella*

The dove descending breaks the air
With flame of incandescent terror
Of which the tongues declare
The one discharge from sin and error.
The only hope, or else despair
Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre—
To be redeemed from fire by fire.

Who then devised the torment? Love.
Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human power cannot remove.
We only live, only suspire
Consumed by either fire or fire.

– T.S. Eliot, *The Four Quartets* 1942

Igor Stravinsky

Full Fathom Five (1953) arranged for choir from *Three Shakespeare Songs*

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell
Ding-dong.
Hark! now I hear them, —Ding-dong bell.

– William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 1611

Agon, Part IV:

Interlude

Pas-de-Deux (1 female, 1 male dancer)

Four Duos (4 female, 4 male dancers)

Four Trios – Coda (12 dancers)

interval

Giovanna Dongu

Sorgenti attraverso l'aria serena (Rising through the mellow shade) (2018)

8-part soloists and choir vocal octet *first performance*

Molte notti vidi le Pleiadi, sorgenti attraverso l'aria serena,
Brillare come uno sciame de lucciole aggrovigliate in una treccia d'argento.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

– Alfred Tennyson, "Locksley Hall" 1835

Faenza Codex

Bel fiore dança (14th C) instruments

Rohan Drape

Chalk (2019) *first performance*

quarter-tone bass flute, contrabass & electronics

Jacopo da Bologna**Fenice fu** (14th C) Madrigal for solo soprano & solo tenor

Fenice fu' e vissi pura e morbida,
 Et or son trasmutata in una tortora
 Che vollo con Amor per le bell' ortora.
 Arbor secho mai n' aqua torbida
 No' me deleta, may per questo dubito,
 Va nel' astate l'inverno ven e subito.

Tal vissi e tal me vivo e posso scrivere
 Ch' a donna non è più chè onesta vivere.

A phoenix I was, pure and soft,
 and now am transformed to a turtle dove
 that flies through the fair garden with Love.
 Neither dry arbours nor murky water
 give me delight, for this is my quandary,
 the summer departs, winter comes soon.

Thus I lived, and thus I live and can write it down,
 that no gift is greater than to live virtuously.

Riccardo Vaglini**Ave Maria** (2019) 2 solo sopranos & choir *first performance*

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.
 Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
 et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus.
 Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
 nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.
 Blessed are you among women,
 and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
 Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
 now and in the hour of our death. Amen.

Jon Heilbron**there are wild fires** (2019) solo contrabass *first performance***Maura Capuzzo****O falce di luna** (1995) - choir & contrabass

O falce di luna calante
 che brilli su l'acque deserte
 o falce d'argente, qual messe di sogni
 ondeggia al tuo mite chiarore qua giù!

Aneliti brevi di foglie,
 di fiori, di frutti dal bosco
 esalando al mare: non canto non grido
 non suono pe'l vasto silenzio va.

Oppresso d-amor, di piacere,
 il popolo dei vivi s'addorme...
 O falce calante, qual messe di sogni
 ondeggia al tuo mite chiarore qua giù!

– Gabriele D'Annunzio 1882

O crescent of the waning moon
 that shines on the deserted waters
 O sickle of silver, made of dreams,
 your glimmer undulates in all things here below!

Brief yearnings of leaves,
 of flowers, of fruit of the forest
 exhaling at the sea: do not sing, do not cry,
 do not sound in your vast silence.

Overwhelmed with love, with pleasure
 the populace of the living falls asleep.
 O waning crescent, made of dreams
 your glimmer undulates in all things here below!

James Rushford**Leyning** (2019) two portativ organs & electronics *first performance***Francesco Landini****Ecco la primavera** (14th C) Ballata for voices & instruments

Ecco la primavera,
 Che'l cor fa rallegrare,
 Temp'è d'annamorare
 E star con lieta cera.

See, the Spring is come !
 to awaken the heart's cheer,
 Time it is for love's abandon
 and to wear a merry face.

Noi veggiam l'aria e'l tempo
 che pur chiam' allegrezza
 In questo vago tempo
 Ogni cosa vagheça

We sense the air, the season,
 calling us to merriment
 in this weather of delight
 all things delight us.

L'erbe con gran frescheça
 E fior' coprono i prati,
 E gli albori adornati
 Sono in simil manera.

The grass is full and fresh
 and flowers cover the meadows
 and the trees in every branch
 are adorned with the same grace.

[notes continued from p.2]

the performers, and frees the listener to discover new dimensions and expressions within the sound, and the ear's reaction to it. Both works involve close interaction and merging of the played sound with material pre-recorded by Rebecca Lane and Jon Heilbron themselves. The pieces form part of a series for solo instrument and electronics produced by Anthony Pateras during an artist residency in 2018 at the Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart.

Five premiered works in the concert's second half are set among pieces from the Italian late middle ages, a distant modal memory in Stravinsky, but a dynamic new expression in the era of Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, when a 'New Art' in music thrived in parallel with the invention of Italian poetry. The two pianos are replaced by two *organetti*, or portative organs, as seen in depictions of **Francesco Landini**, the blind organist of San Lorenzo, Florence, and pre-eminent composer of 14th-century Italy. The Australian composer-pianist **James Rushford** has ranged to other keyboards in recent years, and his acquisition of an organetto led to the creation of a duo work for this concert, combining with Astra's organetto inherited from the instruments of the former Music Department at La Trobe University. Taking its title from the Jewish tradition of textual chanting, *Leyning* has the two instruments in an antiphonal relationship, tuned a quarter-tone apart, with electronics. Its composition draws on the cantillation studies by the late French composer-organist Suzanne Haïk-Vantoura, and on the Austrian sound-poet Gerhard Rühm.

Works of Inland's director **Rohan Drape** are familiar to both audiences, going back more than two decades in the case of Astra concerts. His new piece *Chalk* was created for today's event, and places the two guest performers in his characteristic terrain between played sound and electronic tuning and harmony. **Jon Heilbron** applies his virtuosity as a contemporary contrabassist to many explorative approaches with his instrument and with groups such as the Phonetic Orchestra in Berlin and the contemporary ensemble Quiver (with Rebecca Lane and others). His solo piece made for this concert focuses on the lowest E-string of the instrument, whose sound lies well below the human voice, but with harmonic components well above.

Riccardo Vaglini taught a course on Landini to Monash University composition students in 2016. His new choral setting for the Astra Choir of the traditional Ave Maria text takes the mediaeval open-fifth sonority as a point of departure, advancing across a wide arc of rhythmic and harmonic enrichment.

Maura Capuzzo, also professor at the Venice Conservatorium, and the Sardinian **Giovanna Dongu** have both been active as choral conductors in their respective regions of Italy, evident in the physical nature of their treatment of choral fabric. Capuzzo's early piece *O falce di luna* simulates the echoes of a building in its overlay of voices – a sonic metaphor of the glimmering moonlight in D'Annunzio's poem. The new premiered work by Giovanna Dongu captures the image of Tennyson's couplet in a radically simple pitch language for a wide diffusion of voices.

– JMcC

NOTE FOR ASTRA AUDIENCE MEMBERS:

The concert announced in the season program for Sunday, 27 October has been postponed to another year. The next and final Astra concert for 2019 will be as advertised – 5 pm Sunday, 8 December at the Good Shepherd Chapel, Abbotsford Convent.

NEXT INLAND CONCERT:

Inland 19.9: Mamoru Fujieda, Judith Hamann, Joy Lee, Julia Reidy, Erkki Veltheim
8 pm Monday, 14th October 2019, Church of All Nations, Carlton

Concert Manager: Margaret Lloyd
Astra Manager: Gabrielle Baker
Sound diffusion: Rohan Drape
Recording Engineer: Michael Hewes
Front of House: George Baker-Holland

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INLAND

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