

THE AUSTRALIAN HORN

Volume One: A Century of Chamber Music



Works by
Don Banks
Frederick Septimus Kelly
G. W. L. Marshall-Hall
Peter Sculthorpe
Margaret Sutherland

Carla Blackwood, horn
David Griffiths, clarinet
Elizabeth Sellars, violin
Lucy Warren, violin
Jenny Khafagi, viola
Caroline Henbest, viola
Rhodri Clarke, piano
Peter de Jaeger, piano

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

A HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN HORN IN MUSIC

Carla Blackwood

This album begins a series of first recordings of works for horn by Australian composers, offering a vivid cross-section of the musical voices and stylistic currents that shaped the twentieth century. Featuring music by Septimus Kelly, George Marshall-Hall, Margaret Sutherland, Don Banks and Peter Sculthorpe, it traces a lineage of Australian composition that has largely remained unheard.

The origins of this project reach back to my years living in Europe in my twenties and thirties. During that time, I became increasingly aware of an internal divide: one part of me was firmly anchored in Australia, sustained by a deep sense of place and belonging, and the other was defined by my professional identity as a classical horn-player. Australian music had played only a minor role in my musical upbringing, and I felt that absence keenly. Returning home, I felt a strong desire to address it – to perform Australian works, to understand the history of the horn in my own country, and thus to reconcile these two facets of my identity.

The search for repertoire required extensive research, ultimately culminating in my Ph.D., *Making the French Horn Australian*, and to the discovery of a rich but largely overlooked repertoire for the instrument. The pieces recorded here represent only a selection of the remarkable works I uncovered. By bringing them to light, I hope to contribute to the continuity of the Australian musical heritage and to celebrate the creativity of composers who lived, worked or found their artistic roots on this continent.

FREDERICK SEPTIMUS KELLY

1881–1916

Quartet for Horn, Violin, Viola and Pianoforte (1904)

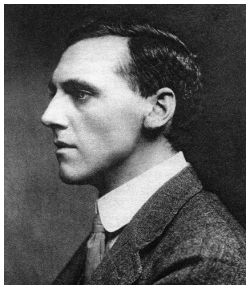
In 1904, the Australian-born composer Frederick Septimus Kelly wrote a compact quartet for horn, violin, viola and piano – among the earliest chamber works by an

Australian composer to include the horn.¹ Although born in Sydney, Kelly was educated in England from the age of twelve and later studied at Oxford with Donald Tovey. A figure of striking versatility, he also achieved distinction as an athlete, winning a gold medal in rowing at the 1908 London Olympic Games.

Kelly's formative musical training continued in Germany between 1904 and 1908, where he studied composition with Iwan Knorr (who also taught Percy Grainger) and piano with Ernst Engesser. This horn quartet [1] appears to date from this period and may reflect exposure to German horn traditions.

Although Kelly's surviving diaries are usually detailed, the work is not mentioned, nor is there any record of its performance. As Richard Divall has suggested, it may have been intended for a student concert. Brief in scale – only three pages, comprising 34 bars with repeats – the piece is nonetheless idiomatic in its writing for the horn, set in its characteristic key of E flat major. The musical language evokes pastoral landscapes and hunting calls, while also allowing space for a lyrical voice for the horn.

Kelly returned to Australia only once, in 1911, presenting three solo-piano recitals and two chamber concerts. At a July concert he introduced his *Serenade* for flute, horn, harp and strings, the premiere featuring the Italian-born horn-player Guido Gervasoni, whom Kelly described approvingly as a 'good player', despite expressing reservations about other performers.² The *Serenade*, written for the flautist John Lemmoné – an associate of Dame Nellie Melba and a fellow traveller on Kelly's return voyage – draws clear inspiration from the serenade traditions of Mozart and Beethoven. Although the horn does not assume a soloistic role, it contributes colour, contrast and occasional countermelodic interest to the texture.



¹ The score was typeset by Richard Divall and is held in the Monash University Digital Music Archive: Frederick Septimus Kelly, *Quartet for Horn, Violin, Viola and Pianoforte – Frankfurt, 1904*, ed. Richard Divall, Australian Music Series, MDA043, Monash University, Melbourne, 2014.

² F. S. Kelly, diary entry, 21 July 1911, in *Race Against Time: The Diaries of F. S. Kelly*, ed. Thérèse Radic, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2004, p. 225.

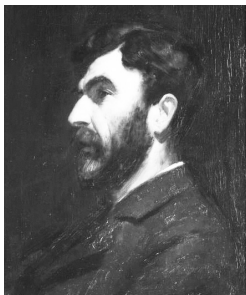
Kelly's career, marked by exceptional breadth of talent, was cut tragically short when he was killed in action during the Battle of the Somme in 1916. His death stands as one of many losses that profoundly reshaped the cultural landscape of the early twentieth century, in Australia as elsewhere.

G. W. L. MARSHALL-HALL

1862–1915

Quartet in B major for Violin, Viola, Horn and Piano (1909)

George Marshall-Hall played a pivotal role in shaping the early Australian musical landscape. Arriving in Melbourne in 1890 as the inaugural Ormond Professor of Music at the University of Melbourne, he soon founded the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and established the first sustained symphony orchestra in the country. Operating from 1892 to 1912, the Marshall-Hall Orchestra presented annual seasons of five to seven concerts, complemented by chamber performances. These concerts were hailed as 'a landmark in Australian musical development', reinforcing Melbourne's reputation as the musical capital of the nation.³ A visiting English critic, A. E. J. Lee, remarked that 'music in Australia means what Marshall-Hall is doing. [...] The Marshall-Hall orchestral concerts have programmes as fresh and good as any concerts I have heard in London.'⁴ As Thérèse Radic observed, Marshall-Hall assembled 'a first-rate body of players', whose performances were recognised by visiting musicians as equal to the general standard of European orchestras.⁵



*George Marshall-Hall
painted in 1900 by the
major Australian artist
Tom Roberts (1856–1931)*

³ William A. Orchard, *Music in Australia: More Than 150 Years of Development*, Georgian House, Melbourne, 1952, p. 56.

⁴ Quoted in Sir James Barrett, 'Professor G. W. L. Marshall-Hall: Address delivered on 20 March 1935 on the Occasion of the Opening of the Marshall-Hall Wing of the University Conservatorium, 21 March 1935, Melbourne, University of Melbourne, 1935, p. 9.

⁵ Thérèse Radic, *G. W. L. Marshall-Hall, Portrait of a Lost Crusader*, Music Monograph No. 5, Department of Music, University of Western Australia, Perth, 1982, p. 9.

Among the distinguished performers drawn to Australia by this flourishing musical environment was the Austrian Hermann Kühr (1866–?), who became Marshall-Hall's principal horn. Kühr, who had studied at the Vienna Conservatorium, became Australia's first true orchestral principal horn, giving local premieres of major works and establishing the foundations of the Australian horn tradition.⁶ Frequently praised for his tone and artistry, Kühr was also the first horn-teacher appointed to a conservatorium in any British colony. Kühr and Marshall-Hall formed a close friendship, both deeply embedded in the vibrant artistic circles in Melbourne – urban, bohemian and bush alike. Both men were associated 'Heidelberg School' artists, the group credited with initiating a distinctly Australian movement in western art. They both spent time at Charterisville, an artists' camp near Eaglemont (now a north-eastern suburb of Melbourne), a decaying estate that became a crucible for creative exchange among painters, musicians and writers.⁷

This creative partnership almost certainly inspired Marshall-Hall's two major works featuring the horn, both composed in the first decade of the twentieth century: the *Phantasy for Horn and Orchestra* (1906) and the *Quartett for Horn, Violin, Viola and Piano* (1909). Although probably written with Kühr in mind, the Quartet received its premiere in London on 6 November 1909, during Marshall-Hall's efforts to promote his opera *Stella* there. The horn part was performed by Adolf Borsdorf – one of the leading horn-players in London⁸ – alongside members of the Nora Clench Quartet.⁹ The

⁶ Further detail on Kühr, including his Australian premieres, can be found in Carla Blackwood, *Making the French Horn Australian* (Ph.D. diss., Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne, 2026), pp. 110–11 and 134–39.

⁷ Discussed in, for example Ann Galbally, 'Shackled & Set Free: Art, Music and Theatre in Melbourne in the 1890s', in *Marshall-Hall's Melbourne: Music, Art and Controversy, 1891–1915*, ed. Suzanne Robinson and Thérèse Radic, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2012

⁸ Born in Saxony, Borsdorf (1854–1923) moved to England in 1879 and was soon recognised as the most important horn-player in the country. He was Principal Horn in the orchestra which performed in the very first Promenade Concert conducted by Henry Wood in Queen's Hall in 1895, and in 1904 he was a founder member of the London Symphony Orchestra. As a teacher at the Royal College and Royal Academy he laid the groundwork for the British tradition of horn-playing.

⁹ The Canadian Esther Leonora ('Nora') Clench (1867–1938) was a childhood prodigy, studying with Adolf Brodsky in Leipzig by the time she was fifteen. The Nora Clench Quartet was founded in 1904 (the cellist was Mary Mukle) and gave its final performance only three years later, and a year after that, in 1908, Clench retired, upon her marriage to Arthur Streton, who was then relatively unknown. By the time they moved to Australia in 1924, his reputation had eclipsed hers. His knighthood, conferred in 1937, meant that she spent the last year of her life as Lady Streton, but her own standing was by then forgotten.

connection came through Clench herself, whose husband, the Australian painter Arthur Streeton, was a close friend of Marshall-Hall and a Heidelberg artist. Borsdorf, celebrated for his breath-control, phrasing and interpretive depth, was described by Reginald Morley-Pegge as ‘the conscientious artist par excellence.’¹⁰ Marshall-Hall, accustomed to the high standard of Kühr’s playing, would have demanded a performer of Borsdorf’s calibre. Kühr gave the Australian premiere in August 1911 with the Victorian Orchestral Association, performing it again in December 1912 at the Musical Society.

The horn-writing in the Quartet is virtuosic and uncompromising. It spans the full four-octave range of the instrument, demands rapid leaps between registers and frequently places the horn in dialogue with the violin or in commanding melodic roles. The horn frequently descends into a cello-like register before rising again to engage in dialogue with the violin. The style is Romantic, idiomatic and technically exacting – evidence of Marshall-Hall’s deep understanding of the expressive and dramatic potential of the instrument. His poetic reflections on the instrument, which illuminate his approach to writing for it, appear in a 1911 essay, ‘The Orchestra’. After initially grouping the horn with the brass, he pauses to distinguish its unique character: ‘There is often something dreamily remote in the wonderful unearthly tone of the horn; it is haunted with memories and wrapped in the wistful languor of twilight landscape. At times, too, it can be the very opposite of all this, and assumes almost the grandeur of the trombone.’¹¹ Later in the essay, he devotes an entire paragraph to the horn alone, taking characteristic poetic licence to articulate its singular expressive power – a power vividly realised in this quartet.

Marshall-Hall’s musical language is rich, tonal and deeply expressive, aligning more closely with Brahms and early Richard Strauss than with later modernist developments. His compositional voice reflects both his German training and his artistic preferences as demonstrated in the orchestral programmes he curated and conducted, featuring works by Beethoven, Wagner, Brahms, Schubert, Schumann and Weber, alongside

¹⁰ Reginald Morley-Pegge, *The French Horn*, Ernest Benn, London, 1960, p. 167.

¹¹ Marshall-Hall, ‘The Orchestra’, in *Program of the Marshall-Hall Concert, 5 August 1911*, Programs of the Marshall-Hall Orchestral Concerts 1892–1910, Grainger Museum Collection, University of Melbourne, 1911, pp. 19–24 (<https://hdl.handle.net/11343/23616>).

more contemporary composers such as Richard Strauss, Ravel and Debussy. Much of this repertoire demanded advanced horn technique and a high degree of expressive nuance – qualities that Marshall-Hall brings to the fore in his quartet. His music is characterised by strong thematic development, dense textures, and carefully worked motivic relationships.

The first movement, *Allegro* [2], opens with a dark, mid-register unison, underpinned by pulsing syncopations in the piano. The horn and viola introduce a singing melody in thirds, soon contrasted by jaunty dotted rhythms that become a defining feature of the movement. They lead to a confident main theme – one that can whimsically be fitted to Marshall-Hall's name, George William Marshall-Hall. A second theme emerges in a radiant mediant major, its harmonic language recalling Debussy, and its character as relaxed and expansive as the opening idea. Throughout the movement, these broad, sweeping melodies are juxtaposed with the more rhythmically alert 'Marshall-Hall' subject, punctuated by rich climaxes, dense textures and a brief shadowed episode in the development. The lyrical interplay between violin and horn is supported by the warm inner voice of the viola and the often orchestral breadth of the piano-writing. After the recapitulation, a coda revisits the lyrical material, evoking the delicate shimmer of bells and birdsong in a luminous, almost celestial ascent.

Marked *Lento penseroso*, the second movement [3] begins with a pensive and introspective piano solo, characterised by expressively sustained upbeats (carefully marked *ten.* by the composer). The theme is simple yet affecting. In keeping with Marshall-Hall's restless musical temperament, it soon intensifies into a dramatic climax before subsiding once more. The central section introduces gently pulsing offbeats and a lilting compound-time theme, nodding to the pastoral associations the instrument has always enjoyed. This passage gives way to a delicate, fairy-like piano episode, accompanied by ascending, wind-like figures in the strings. When the opening theme returns, the horn takes it into its lowest register, echoing the earlier piano melancholy, while the piano overlays light, rustling arpeggios. A further insistent climax follows before the movement resolves into a quiet, slightly nostalgic close, again grounded by the horn in a bass-like role.

The third movement, *Allegro grazioso* [4], immediately lightens the mood with a sprightly scherzo, full of subtle humour and rhythmic playfulness. A stuttering rhythmic character unsettles performers and listeners alike. A more lyrical secondary theme leads into a cheerful middle section evocative of the hunt, rich with pastoral colour and exuberance. As the movement progresses, the energy gradually dissipates, suggesting the hunters returning home at dusk – the birds falling silent and the vitality of the day gently spent. The lyrical material returns, followed by a brief recollection of the jovial central section, before a whimsical piano cadenza leads seamlessly into the finale.

It opens, *Allegro animato* [5], with restless, pianistically awkward arpeggiated figures, their slight disjunction creating a sense of tension and forward momentum. A genial yet quietly insistent main theme follows, marked by its emphasis on the yearning sixth degree of the scale. A second theme, more urgent and dramatic, unfolds in triple time, accompanied by stormy, chromatic piano-writing. A third theme returns to the pastoral world of earlier movements, populated by birdsong, fluttering gestures and a flowing, brook-like accompaniment. This atmosphere is abruptly interrupted by an austere and angular fugue – perhaps a nod to late-Romantic expectations of formal gravity – which provides a more emphatic, less fluid contrast. It leads to a powerful climax, where the opening material is transformed into a series of bell-like sonorities. The second theme returns in a heightened, almost frenzied state, propelled by diminished harmonies toward one of the most forceful moments of the entire work: a triple-forte culmination with the piano plunging to its lowest register. In the aftermath, the music fragments. Piano and strings exchange sombre, questioning chords before the bells toll once more, now tinged with grief. Gradually, optimism returns: the first theme reappears, followed by the pastoral third theme, during which the horn traverses nearly its entire range in just a few bars. Once again, birds and rustling leaves animate the texture, though a sudden turn to the minor introduces a long, Brahmsian melody suggesting a fleeting shadow of regret. This moment passes, and the work concludes in a spirit of affirmation, with radiant B major arpeggios bringing this expansive and richly satisfying composition to a joyous close.¹²

¹² Many thanks to Peter de Jaeger for his assistance with discussion of the Quartet.

MARGARET SUTHERLAND

1897–1984

Quartet in G minor, *House Quartet*, for clarinet, horn, viola and piano (1942)

Margaret Sutherland composed her Quartet in G minor, *House Quartet*, for clarinet, horn, viola and piano in 1942, creating one of the most distinctive contributions to midcentury Australian chamber music.



Hermann Kühr had been naturalised as a British citizen in Australia in 1911 (Australian citizenship did not exist before 1947), and in 1913 he migrated to the United Kingdom, never to return to Australia. Beyond three seasons as principal horn of the Carl Rosa Opera Company in London, traces of him are lost. The timing of his departure suggests that it was probably related to the collapse of the Marshall-Hall Orchestra and Marshall-Hall's own departure in February that same year.

Although written nearly three decades after Hermann Kühr left Australia, Sutherland's quartet maintains subtle musical and personal ties to that earlier generation. Sutherland may well have heard Kühr perform during her childhood through the association of her aunt, Jane Sutherland, with the Heidelberg School of artists. Margaret Sutherland was also profoundly influenced by Marshall-Hall, whose lectures and concerts left what she later described as 'an aching void' when he died.¹³

The Quartet in G minor is often referred to as the *House Quartet*, a title given it by the composer, apparently in reference to her intention to provide a piece for amateur or domestic performance. According to David Symons, the Quartet, like much of Sutherland's chamber output, contained elements of Hindemithian *Gebrauchsmusik* as well as Percy Grainger's concept of elastic scoring, in that it was written for whichever musicians were to hand, but it was also made available to a wider range of possible performers by specifying alternative instrumentation.¹⁴ In Sutherland's own words, she

¹³ Jillian Graham, *Inner Song: A Biography of Margaret Sutherland*, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2023, p. 42.

¹⁴ David Symons, *The Music of Margaret Sutherland*, Currency Press, Sydney, 1997, p. 84.

‘wrote the quartet for Piano, Clarinet, French Horn and viola, simply because there were the players available.’¹⁵

The House Quartet received its first performance in the ‘Middays’ concert series organised by Sutherland and the Women of the University Patriotic Group, which raised funds for the Red Cross prisoner-of-war effort and sought to revitalise Melbourne musical life, which had been depleted by wartime enlistments. Sutherland viewed the series as a platform for promoting Australian music that expressed local identity rather than relying on imported traditions.¹⁶ The ensemble giving the premiere featured Tom and Roy White – the principal clarinet and horn of the Victorian Symphony Orchestra – alongside the violist Paul McDermott, with Sutherland herself at the piano.

Sutherland’s *House Quartet* offers a striking contrast to the late-Romantic richness of Marshall-Hall, presenting instead a voice that is concise, exploratory and modern. The work is notable for its engaging harmonic progressions, sensitive interplay between instruments, and finely judged blending of timbres. Its economy of material highlights Sutherland’s early experimentation with motivic development – an approach that would become central to her mature compositional style. Throughout the work, expression arises not from expansive rhetoric, but from clarity of line, subtle colour and the dynamic interplay of instrumental voices.

The first movement [6] opens with a sense of immediacy and poise, favouring concise, articulated gestures over extended melodic statements. The texture is transparent and often contrapuntal, with each instrument maintaining a clear and independent role. Motivic fragments are exchanged in quick succession, generating momentum through rhythmic vitality and interaction rather than harmonic density. Although the musical language is modern and at times angular, it retains a lyrical impulse, shaped by careful attention to contour and balance. The result is a movement that feels alert, conversational and finely wrought.

¹⁵ James Murdoch, transcript of interview with Margaret Sutherland, 3 April 1968. James Murdoch Papers, Australian Manuscript Collection, National Library of Australia, MS 2967, p. 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

The slow movement [7] forms the expressive core of the Quartet. Here, Sutherland adopts a more introspective tone, unfolding a restrained yet deeply affecting lyricism. Melodic lines emerge gradually and are passed between instruments with a sense of spaciousness, often supported by harmonies that hover between tonal centres. The horn plays a particularly grounding role, offering sustained warmth against the more delicate textures of the strings and piano. Silence and stillness are integral to the character of the movement, allowing the music to breathe and lending it a quiet, contemplative intensity.

A scherzo-like third movement [8] introduces a lighter, more playful character, though its humour is subtle and refined. Irregular accents and shifting rhythmic patterns create a sense of wit and unpredictability, while the texture becomes more fragmented and kaleidoscopic. Brief gestures and contrasting colours pass rapidly between the instruments, creating a lively but controlled energy. Hints of pastoral character occasionally emerge – particularly in the horn-writing – but are treated with restraint, avoiding overt sentimentality.

The final movement [9] brings a renewed sense of direction and cohesion, drawing together elements from earlier in the work. Rhythmic drive is once again at the forefront, and motivic ideas are developed with increasing focus and clarity. Although traces of earlier lyricism and textural colour remain, the movement is characterised above all by its sense of purpose and forward motion. The work concludes with a gesture that is decisive and yet understated, affirming Sutherland's preference for structural clarity over grandiose effect.

The critical reception was warm. *The Argus* praised the premiere as a 'well-knit and vivacious study', commending Sutherland's imaginative handling of the ensemble.¹⁷ A 1944 performance for the British Music Society of Victoria, paired with Brahms' Horn Trio, drew enthusiastic applause and was admired for its 'clear individuality' and the 'happy impression' created by the third movement.¹⁸ The work appeared several more times in Melbourne that year, often alongside other chamber pieces by Sutherland and

¹⁷ 'Thanked for Services', *The Argus* (Melbourne), 17 June 1943.

¹⁸ 'Composer Receives Ovation', *The Argus*, 6 April 1944.

works featuring Roy White on horn, including Schubert's *Auf dem Strom* and Othmar Schoeck's *Wandersprüche*.

In 1945, Sutherland toured Canberra and Sydney with the White brothers, performing the *House Quartet* and other works. In Sydney, William Krasnik joined them on viola. Even the often critical Neville Cardus responded positively:

The unfamiliar ensemble of instruments is happily maintained, with many felicities of interplay and blend of tones. There are ideas in the work, too, even though they do not protest overmuch; and the adagio is really beautiful, both in its subdued romance and the legato style so quietly maintained. There were certain touches which recalled the contemporary English school of chamber composition, of which Benjamin Britten is at the moment the fashionable leader.¹⁹

Press coverage also highlighted the scarcity of wind chamber music in Australia, lamenting its neglect despite the richness of the repertoire. Both *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Canberra Times* commented on the expressive potential of the horn and its under-representation in recital programmes.²⁰ The Canberra concert marked the first recital featuring the horn in the capital, with Roy White also performing Schumann's *Adagio and Allegro*, Dunhill's *Three Miniatures* and a set of Cossack folk-tunes.

Sutherland's decision to write for horn was influenced by Roy White's availability and her longstanding connection with the White family – White's niece was a close friend. Her horn-writing may have been influenced by her exposure not only to Kühr, but also to the horn-playing and horn-writing she heard Europe in 1923–25. Frustrated by the conservative music-scene in Australia, she had travelled to Europe to further her studies in composition and orchestration. She visited Paris and Vienna, but primarily lived in London, where she studied with Arnold Bax. Bax was deeply impressed by her talent. Her time in Europe exposed her to composers such as Vaughan Williams, Strauss and Korngold – figures renowned for their mastery of instrumental colour, their horn-writing in particular. Although the *House Quartet* does not push the horn to

¹⁹ Neville Cardus, 'Chamber Music Out of The Ordinary', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 October 1945.

²⁰ L.B., 'Music and Drama: Neglected Music of the Wind', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 October 1945.

its technical limits, it is idiomatically crafted and highlights the timbral warmth it can generate. Compared with Marshall-Hall's more demanding quartet, Sutherland's writing is relatively conservative, prioritising musical clarity and accessibility over virtuosity.

The *House Quartet* was commercially recorded in Sydney in 1946 by the Australian Columbia Record Company and broadcast on 6 May 1951. The company, motivated by cultural nationalism, expanded its catalogue to include 'high art' music alongside popular entertainment.²¹ This archival recording was re-released in 1996 as part of the *Anthology of Australian Music on Disc* produced by the Australian National University.²²

The score to the *House Quartet*, though, had been lost since Sutherland's lifetime. Fragments are held at Monash Library, but in an unknown hand, and the final movement is incomplete. In 2022, therefore, with assistance from the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music Composition Department, I commissioned Tim Dargaville to reconstruct the work from the archival recording, and I premiered it in September 2022. This is the first recording of that reconstruction.

DON BANKS

1923–80

Horn Concerto (1965)

arr. 2023 for horn and piano by Catherine Likhuta

Don Banks composed his *Horn Concerto* in 1965 jointly for his fellow Australian Barry Tuckwell, then principal horn of the London Symphony Orchestra, and for the LSO itself. Premiered in the Royal Festival Hall on 27 February 1965 under Colin Davis, the work was soon taken on tour to Australia – the shared homeland of both composer and soloist. Critics responded with enthusiasm, several predicting that the concerto would become a major addition



²¹ Booklet text for Sutherland, Quartet in G minor, *Anthology of Australian Music on Disc*, Series 3, Australian National University, Canberra, 1996 (sound recording).

²² *Ibid.*

to the horn repertoire – and yet, despite this promising beginning, the work gradually slipped into relative obscurity. A live recording of Tuckwell with the LSO survives, but it is not widely accessible, and awareness of the concerto among horn-players – both in Australia and abroad – remains limited. One likely factor is the absence of a piano reduction, which has made the concerto difficult to study or perform without an orchestra. To address this gap, with support from the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, in 2023 I commissioned the Australian-Ukrainian composer **Catherine Likhuta** to create a piano transcription. Cathy Likhuta is highly regarded within the horn community for her substantial contributions to the repertoire of our instrument, and her background as both a jazz musician and pianist made her an ideal interpreter of Banks' musical language. Her imaginative and idiomatic reduction not only supports renewed engagement with the concerto but also stands as a compelling recital work in its own right.

Banks was one of the most important Australian modernist composers of the postwar era. Originally from Melbourne, he spent two decades living in London (1950–71), and his reputation rests largely on the symphonic and chamber works he produced there in the 1960s, though his creative reach extended far beyond the concert hall. He was an early advocate for jazz and bebop in Melbourne, a notable contributor to 'third stream' idioms that blended jazz and classical elements, and an active explorer of experimental and electronic practices. He was also a prolific composer for films, with soundtrack work providing his primary income during his London years. Cosmopolitan in outlook and yet firmly identifying as Australian, he played a vital role in strengthening institutional support for Australian composers both at home and internationally.

Three years before the concerto, Banks had written another major work for horn: his *Trio for Horn, Violin and Piano*, likewise composed for Tuckwell, who described both works as 'terrific pieces',²³ and their correspondence reveals a deep mutual respect.²⁴ These two compositions hold particular significance for horn-players: they are the only

²³ Barry Tuckwell, 'Barry Tuckwell interviewed by Peter Moore', 1981, Libraries Australia ID 14062875.

²⁴ Don Banks, Correspondence with Barry Tuckwell, Folder 272, Box 38, Don Banks Archive, National Library of Australia, Canberra.

works by an Australian composer written for and performed by Tuckwell. The 1962 trio was commissioned by Lord Harewood for Tuckwell and two other Australian musicians, the violinist Brenton Langbein (who was also a conductor and composer) and pianist Maureen Jones, to perform at the Edinburgh Festival. Inspired by Tuckwell's playing, Banks began sketching a work for horn and piano, and a subsequent commission from the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation for the 1965–66 LSO season prompted him to expand this impulse into a full concerto.

The concerto unfolds in a single continuous movement comprising eight contrasting sections. Its melodic material is derived entirely from the tone-row introduced at the outset, reflecting Banks' engagement with serial techniques. The row is characterised by prominent semitone figures – first heard in the clarinets – and by the recurring tritone, which appears twice and serves as a central motivic force, generating tension and directional pull.

The first section, *Lento* [10], is an introduction by the strings and winds, or in this case the piano, immediately stating the tone-row upon which the work is based. The second section begins, *Adagio* [11], with the first entry of the soloist, presenting the two principal motifs: the first played with the horn open, and the second with the horn hand-stopped. After a period of orchestral (here piano) development, a transitional passage – derived from the muted motif – leads into the third section [12]. This section is more dramatic in character and unfolds largely through forceful statements from the horn, which in turn prompt brief bursts of orchestral activity. Most of the horn passages are marked *liberamente* and are intended to be interpreted freely by the soloist. Towards the end of this section, the horn presents a winding, ascending phrase that gradually calms the musical momentum and introduces the fourth section [13], which is more peaceful and lyrical. This section begins with a passage for strings; the horn joins in the central part, after which the woodwinds restate the opening string material – in this version with Likhuta's piano. A linking passage follows, where the previously forceful horn phrases are taken over by the lower instruments of the orchestra. The fifth section, *Misurato* [14], is designed to showcase the extreme low register of the horn. Here, the soloist introduces an eight-bar theme, which forms the basis of a passacaglia with four variations. The

sixth section, marked *Con spirito* [15], takes on the character of a scherzo. Here, the horn demonstrates its agility through trills, accompanied by lively and rhythmically driven orchestral writing.

The seventh section, *Tranquillo* [16], is the most individual in Banks' use of the horn. In his own words:

The 7th section uses an effect which I had not come across before in horn literature, and that is the horn's ability to change colour on a single note. This is done by showing the difference between the same note produced by the open horn, by the horn half-stopped by hand, and the horn fully-stopped by hand. Although the player has to use a different valve combination each time, the note comes out exactly at the same pitch and the effect is, I think, a magical one of the same note changing colour and receding into the background.²⁵

The finale [17] begins more dramatically, featuring a dialogue between the percussion and the horn, which Likhuta has expertly transferred to the piano. After revisiting several earlier ideas, the music relaxes into a sustained note on the horn that continues serenely to the close, despite interruptions from the orchestra, before gradually fading into silence.

Banks' acute sensitivity to timbre is evident throughout. His horn-writing explores extreme registers and a wide spectrum of tonal colours, particularly through extended use of handstopping. Contrasts between open and stopped horn are a defining feature, with some stopped passages stretched to unusual lengths. In this piano reduction, Catherine Likhuta has translated Banks' orchestral textures with remarkable clarity and imagination, creating a version that is both faithful to the original and highly effective in performance in its new guise.

²⁵ Don Banks, programme note to his Horn Concerto, Folder 212, Box 28, Don Banks Archive, National Library of Australia, Canberra.

PETER SCULTHORPE

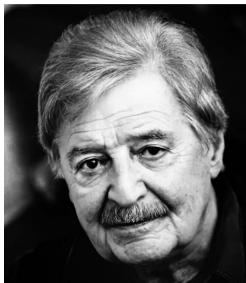
1929–2014

Night Song (1970, arr. 1993)

Peter Sculthorpe AO OBE was one of most celebrated and influential of Australian classical composers, widely recognised for defining a unique, modern ‘Australian sound’ that broke away from traditional European conventions by evoking the vastness and the textures of the Australian landscape. *Night Song* for horn trio [18] is one of his many arrangements of ‘The Stars Turn’, the central part of *Love 200* (1970) for two singers, rock band and orchestra. The original version uses a text by the Australian novelist and screenwriter Tony Morphet (1935–2018). The mood of Sculthorpe’s instrumental arrangements takes its cue from Morphet’s first verse:

The stars turn, the sun turns,
The earth turns forever.
We throw our weight on the windless spars,
And little and steady it turns the stars,
And the sun turns, and the windlass turns
Forever.

An introductory gesture leads into two statements of the original verses. A brief interlude creates space before two imaginative reworkings, and the music ultimately resolves in an extended coda. In 2019, with the violinist Elizabeth Sellars and pianist Rhodri Clarke, I founded the Quercus Trio, and in 2023 ABC Classics released our debut album, *Australian Horn Trios*, with works by Don Banks (that 1962 Tuckwell work), Elena Kats-Chernin, Gordon Kerry, Catherine Likhuta, Larry Sitsky and Roger Smalley. This recording of Sculthorpe’s *Night Song* by the musicians of the Quercus Trio can be seen as a postlude to both that recording and this new one.



Carla Blackwood has established a reputation as one of the most versatile and creative of Australian horn-players. She maintains a diverse career as soloist, chamber musician and orchestral performer, and is renowned for her creative musicianship and masterful phrasing. Equally at home on both modern and historical horns, she brings excitement and refinement to her performance and promotion of new music, historically informed performance on early instruments, and chamber music. On historical natural horns, she is Principal Horn of the Orchestra of the Antipodes (Pinchgut Opera), the Australian Haydn Ensemble and Genesis Baroque; her 2024 performance in *Julius Caesar* received much praise. On modern horn, she performs frequently with leading Australian ensembles, among them the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble Liaison and the Australia Ensemble, and she is a founding member of Lyrebird Brass, the Quercus Trio and the Australian Wind Quintet.



Photograph: Kellenberger-Kaminsky

She is also a sought-after teacher and mentor. She is Senior Lecturer in French Horn Performance and Associate Director, Individual Performance Studies, at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, and was Horn Faculty at the Australian National Academy of Music from 2021 to 2025.

Previously, she was Principal Horn of the Tiroler Symphonieorchester Innsbruck and Professor of Horn at the Tiroler Landeskonservatorium. She has appeared as guest Principal Horn with major European orchestras and has held orchestral contracts across Australia and Europe.

Carla Blackwood is an active and passionate researcher: in her Ph.D. thesis *Making the French Horn Australian* she wrote the first history of the horn in Australia. Her 2023 album *Australian Horn Trios* with the Quercus Trio was released through ABC Classics to enthusiastic reviews in the music press.

www.carlablackwood.com

David Griffiths is a renowned clarinet soloist, chamber musician and educator. As a member of the Australia Ensemble@UNSW and Ensemble Liaison, he performs extensively in Australia and internationally. He is also Associate Director and Professor of Music at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne. As a member of Ensemble Liaison, he curates and performs an annual three-concert series which is currently in its twentieth season. He has also performed with the American, New Zealand, Goldner, Tinalley, Flinders and Australian String Quartets, the New York Wind Soloists and the Southern Cross Soloists. He has worked with many leading musicians, among them Ray Chen, Henning Kraggerud, Anthony Marwood and Nemanja Radulović, and has appeared at the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Townsville, Portillo Festival, Chile, Lucerne Festival and the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan. He has appeared as Guest Principal clarinet with all of the major Australian symphony and opera/ballet orchestras, and with the Australian Chamber Orchestra.



Photograph: Laura Manariti

Elizabeth Sellars is an Australian violinist known for her tonal refinement, expressive clarity and richly nuanced sound. As First Violinist of the Flinders Quartet and a founding member of the Quercus Trio, she performs extensively in chamber-music settings across Australia and internationally.

Born in Melbourne, she studied piano with Nehama Patkin and violin with Arkady Feldman, Nathan Gutman and Andre Hades, before continuing her training at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London with David Takeno and the Gabrieli and Takács Quartets. As a member of the Techinski Quartet, she won the Royal Overseas League Ensemble Prize and performed widely throughout the UK and Europe.



Photograph: Pat Johnson

In Australia she has appeared as guest Concertmaster and Principal Violin with the Melbourne and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras, Orchestra Victoria, the Australian Chamber Orchestra and Melbourne Chamber Orchestra. A dedicated chamber musician, she often performs for Musica Viva and at major festivals, and has recorded for labels including ABC Classica, Naxos and Toccata Classics.

Her work with Quercus reflects a strong commitment to collaborative performance and to exploring both core repertoire and contemporary works, including new Australian compositions.

Lucy Warren grew up on the Gold Coast, and was lucky to receive a wonderful musical education in Queensland, studying for many years with Michele Walsh, and developing life-long friendships and a love of orchestral music in the Queensland and Australian Youth Orchestras. She continued her study with Alice Waten and Semyon Kobets, attended the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM), studying with Paul Wright and William Hennessy, and in 2012 was a Sydney Symphony Fellow. In 2019, she undertook a Solo Violin Residency at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Canada, supported generously by the Robert and Elizabeth Albert Scholarship and a Flair Foundation Award.

She has performed extensively with the symphony orchestras of Sydney, Melbourne and Tasmania, as well as the Opera Australia Orchestra, and from 2013 to 2017 was Concertmaster of the Opera Australia National Tour. She joined Orchestra Victoria as a Tutti Violin in 2018 and enjoys a busy musical life in Melbourne, including performances with Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, various recording and chamber-music projects and festivals, teaching at Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School and Monash University, and community-engagement work.



Photograph: Carys Hughes

Caroline Henbest is a violist and Feldenkrais practitioner, a kind of movement therapy based on neuroplasticity. She is currently head of viola at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) and is based in Melbourne. Born in England, she came to Australia in 1993 to be Principal Viola in the Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO) following studies at the Yehudi Menuhin School and the Guildhall School of Music. These days she performs as a chamber musician and soloist across Australia and is violist in the Imaginista Quartet and Transfigured Trio. She has recently recorded string quartets and string trios by William Shield for Naxos with the Dorrit Ensemble. Since leaving the ACO, she has frequently acted as guest principal with many Australian orchestras as well as the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.



Photograph: Agatha Yimm

Jenny Khafagi is a Melbourne-based violinist and violist with a passion for chamber music. For ten years she was a member of the prominent contemporary-music group Syzygy Ensemble, and has also worked extensively with the Inspire Quartet of the Australian Chamber Orchestra. In Melbourne, she has performed with Inventi Ensemble, Melbourne Chamber Players, the Melbourne Ensemble and MSO Chamber Players. A frequent guest artist at the major Australian music festivals, she has also joined Ensemble Offspring in Sydney and twice had residencies at the Banff Centre in Canada. She has appeared as Guest Concertmaster with Orchestra Victoria, the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. In 2026 she joined the Australian String Quartet as guest second violin for their national tour, 'Interwoven'. She has also toured nationally and internationally on viola with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, appears regularly as Principal Viola with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and as Principal Second Violin with the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, and in 2023 joined the viola section of the MSO.



Photograph: Laura Manariti

Rhodri Clarke has always been fascinated by the collaborative potential of the piano across many instrument groups and combinations. He began his musical journey in the early 1990s in South Wales, where he was a church organist and choral accompanist. This activity led him to study at the Royal College of Music in London with Roger Vignoles and develop his interest in both vocal and instrumental accompaniment, as well as in chamber music. As a member of the chamber ensemble Bolivar Soloists, he cultivated a love of Latin American music, culminating in albums with Deutsche Grammophon and Costa Records. Through his instrumental and vocal collaborations, he has performed with soloists such as Bryn Terfel, Edison Ruiz, Rolando Villazón and David Helfgott in many of the world's leading concert halls, including the Berliner Philharmonie, Vienna Musikverein, Barbican Centre in London, Carnegie Hall in New York and Sydney Opera House.



Now making his home in Melbourne, he is in demand as a collaborative pianist and chamber musician. He is a founding member of the horn trio Quercus. He is a regular staff pianist at Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, Opera Scholars Australia and for Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Chorus.

Peter de Jaeger is a Melbourne-based pianist, harpsichordist and composer. He is in demand as a soloist, chamber musician and continuo player. His repertoire spans the entire gamut of European classical music, as well as cabaret and music theatre, and he has a keen interest in historical performance practice.

He studied piano at the Australian National Academy of Music and harpsichord and composition at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. He has played as soloist and orchestral keyboardist with the Melbourne, Sydney and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras, as well as Orchestra Victoria.



Photograph: Lucia Ondrusova

Career highlights include being the inaugural winner of the Australian International Chopin Competition; participating three times in the Lucerne Festival Academy, playing modern chamber, orchestral and piano-duo works under the direction of Pierre Boulez; being awarded the Freedman Fellowship, allowing him to commission Chris Dench's 98-minute Piano Sonata, the performance of which in 2017 won him an ARPA AMCOS Art Music Award; performing the complete works for piano and harpsichord of Iannis Xenakis at the Melbourne Festival; and co-writing *Reception: The Musical* with writer-actor Bethany Simons and from 2014 to 2021 performing it together over 70 times around Australia

His compositions have been commissioned by the Australian National Academy of Music, the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, Astra Music, Speak Percussion, Inventi Ensemble, Kegelstatt Ensemble, the Port Fairy Spring Music Festival, Arcadia Winds and many soloists.

He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in performance focusing mostly on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century keyboard music, as a way to kickstart his Historical Concert Series (which currently is projected to contain 46 90-minute programmes), and is continuing his own studies into Just Intonation and Arabic classical music through learning to play the oud.

Recorded on 13 and 14 June 2023 in the Hanson-Dyer Hall (Banks) and on 6, 7, 9–12 and 17–19 February 2025 in the Prudence Myer Studio (Kelly, Marshall-Hall, Sutherland, Sculthorpe) at the Ian Potter Southbank Centre, Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne

Engineering, editing and mastering: Haig Burnell (Kelly, Sutherland, Banks and Sculthorpe) and David Wilkinson (Marshall-Hall)

Producers: Carla Blackwood, Haig Burnell (Kelly, Sutherland, Banks and Sculthorpe) and David Wilkinson (Marshall-Hall)



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Carla Blackwood and David Griffiths appear courtesy of the University of Melbourne.



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THE AUSTRALIAN HORN Volume One: A Century of Chamber Music

FREDERICK SEPTIMUS KELLY

1881–1916

- 1 **Quartet in E flat major for Horn, Violin, Viola and Pianoforte (1904)*** 2:38

G. W. L. MARSHALL-HALL

1862–1915

- Quartet in B major for Violin, Viola, Horn and Piano (1909)**** 28:30

- 2 I *Allegro* 7:40
3 II *Lento penseroso* 6:51
4 III *Allegro grazioso* 5:00
5 IV *Allegro animato* 8:59

MARGARET SUTHERLAND

1897–1984

- Quartet in G minor, *House Quartet*, for Clarinet, Viola, Horn and Piano (1942)** 17:11

- 6 I [no tempo marking] 4:15
7 II [*Adagio*] 4:53
8 III [Rondino. *Allegro giocoso*] 2:13
9 IV [*Allegro deciso*] 5:50

DON BANKS

1923–80

- arr. **Catherine Likhuta (b. 1981) Horn Concerto (1965, arr. 2023*)** 22:04

- 10 I *Lento* – 1:19
11 II *Adagio* – 2:18
12 III *A tempo; drammatico* – 4:33
13 IV *Tenero; a tempo* – 2:51
14 V *Misurato; a tempo* – 3:00
15 VI *Con spirito: ♩ = 76–80* – 2:17
16 VII *Tranquillo* – 3:01
17 VIII *A tempo: ♩ = 69* 2:45

PETER SCULTHORPE

1929–2014

18 *Night Song* (1993, arr. composer for horn trio, 2004*)

6:05

TT 76:32

* FIRST RECORDINGS

** FIRST COMPLETE RECORDING

Carla Blackwood, horn

Elizabeth Sellars, violin **1** **18**

Lucy Warren, violin **2**–**5**

Jenny Khafagi, viola **1**

Caroline Henbest, viola **2**–**9**

David Griffiths, clarinet **6**–**9**

Rhodri Clarke, piano **1** **6**–**18**

Peter de Jaeger, piano **2**–**5**