

MUSES TRIO

SONGS OF SILENT EARTH

AN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY FUNDRAISER FOR CWA DROUGHT RELIEF

TM PRESENTS



MUSES TRIO

www.musestrio.com

Muses Trio are some of Australia's leading and most exciting musicians in contemporary classical music, known for their edgy, spine tingling and virtuosic performance style: Christa Powell (violin), Louise King (cello) and Therese Milanovic (piano).

Muses Trio celebrate music composed by women, performed by women, and focus on bringing this relatively unknown, yet vastly deserving collection of works to the stage and enthralled audiences. Signatures of their carefully curated public performance events are guest speakers/ performers with an inspiring cause, and a focus on creating memorable experiences. Discovering, inspiring, collaborating, commissioning, connecting and supporting creative women to pursue and share artistic excellence drives the passion and impetus of their artistic focus. They have released two albums, *The Spirit and the Maiden*, and *Celebrating Clara*, and celebrated eight seasons together, with performances across Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Northern NSW, Canberra, and the Sydney Fringe Festival. This year they are recording a new album ABC Classic FM's *Women of Note* compilation series, featuring living Australian women composers.



LOUISE KING

www.celldreaming.com

Louise King is a portfolio musician, recording and concert artist, teaching artist, active chamber musician, examiner, conductor, music director and adjudicator. She has extensive international training and professional performing and teaching experience.

Louise is a multi-award and competition-winning graduate of the Royal Colleges of Music in London and Manchester, and has worked extensively throughout the UK, Europe and Asia with the BBC Philharmonic, the Hallé Orchestra, and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, and on faculty at the Royal Northern College of Music and Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University.

As a soloist and chamber music partner, she performs in Australia's major art festivals and established classical concert series and has recorded seventeen albums showcasing diverse collaborations from New Music, Chamber Music, Early Music and singer-songwriters including three albums for ABC classics.

As Artistic Director of Cello Dreaming she runs a teaching practice, presents community and professional concerts, music workshops, collaborative performance projects, and mentors emerging young musicians. She is a guest conductor and clinician for school music camps and tutors for the Australian Youth Orchestra and Australian Chamber Orchestra education programs.

Louise has worked with the world's leading conductors, orchestras and classical music companies. She is a producer of community and professional classical music events and supports global music for social change programs with annual fund-raising benefit concerts.



CHRISTA POWELL

www.topologymusic.com

Highly respected performance musician, collaborative artist and music educator, Christa Powell is as comfortable lending her talents to an orchestra as she is in character wardrobe, playing on stage with Led Zeppelin or playing solo violin as an integral part of the choreography in Heidi Duckler Dance Theatre. Christa Powell is a uniquely talented woman whose technical skill and innate musicality is a major source of inspiration to those she teaches. Christa is a founding member and director of Topology, one of Australia's leading creative arts organisations. As well as creating the award winning program Top Up, Christa has managed the day to day business of Topology over the past two decades, molding, shaping and refining the organisation

into the respected arts organisation it is today. After completing B Mus Hons, Christa spent several years in London with Emmanuel Herwitz of the Melos Ensemble and playing with the Olyver Gypsy Ensemble. Returning to Brisbane, Christa obtained her Masters of Music in performance research in 1996 before co-founding Topology in 1997. Outside of Topology, Christa performs a wide range of chamber music, her long held passion. She plays with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, guests for visiting international acts and teaches violin privately and at various educational institutions.



THERESE MILANOVIC

www.theresemilanovic.com

Therese Milanovic is a passionate performer, educator, and musicians' health advocate. After a decade of playing-related injuries, studying the Taubman Approach (USA) enabled her to resume her chosen pathway. Therese was the first Australian to become a Taubman Instructor (2009), the focus of her PhD, and is the most experienced Taubman teacher in Australia (Master Level and Associate Faculty with the Golandsky Institute (USA)). She is an advocate for musicians' injury prevention and rehabilitation, providing access for curious interstate and international students through Skype and Coach on Demand consultations, alongside workshops, teacher training and lectures. Therese has been a Keynote Speaker for numerous national

conferences including APPCA and ANZCA. She is committed to her ongoing learning and artistic development through continued study with Edna Golandsky and John Bloomfield via Skype.

As a performer, Therese loves collaborating with like-minded musicians. She has performed with Topology since 2009, including shows in the Netherlands, NYC, Belgium, and Indonesia, national tours and festivals (www.topologymusic.com). Chamber music is also close to her heart, presenting events to highlight lesser-known repertoire, in particular new music and music by women (see www.musestrio.com). Otherwise, Therese plays turtles and garbage trucks with her toddler and attempts (unsuccessfully) to sneak vegetables in his meals.

RECLAIMING THE SPIRIT

(1993), (violin and cello version 2011)

"In 1993 the Director of Tall Poppies Records Belinda Webster invited me to compose a new solo cello work ('Reclaiming the Spirit') for cellist David Pereira - to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the renaming of Uluru. Having lived in the Northern Territory for 9 years (1981-1990) and having spent time in Central Australia and at Uluru I was inspired by the idea. Given the deeply spiritual energy of Uluru and its profound connection with the aboriginal people in that area I wanted to create a piece which honoured and celebrated this. For me 'Reclaiming the Spirit' is like "musical alchemy". The opening 'cello bird calls' connect us to the beauty of nature, the flowering cello melody opens our hearts, the deep earthy drones anchor us to the heart of the Earth and the sound of the didgeridoo emulated by the cello honours and celebrates indigenous Australia. For me the sound of the didgeridoo is akin to the sound of the earth in the Northern Territory.

My compositional process in creating 'Reclaiming the Spirit' was very intuitive and holistic. I spent several days improvising meditatively on my cello - letting the music flow intuitively and allowing the melody to flower & crystallise. I recorded my 'work-in-progress' cello improvisations to listen back to as part of my compositional process. Once the piece was musically complete (and recorded with me playing it) I then notated the final score which many other cellists now play from.



SARAH HOPKINS

www.sarahhopkins.com | www.harmonicwhirlies.com

Sarah Hopkins is a unique Australian composer-performer, internationally acclaimed for her visionary music & inspiring performances. Since 1981 she has represented Australia at many prestigious events in America, Europe and South East Asia and she has toured extensively as a Cultural Ambassador for the Australian Government. Sarah's compositions for choir, orchestra and ensemble are regularly performed worldwide and her music is studied in schools and universities.

Recent projects include a co-write with the Icelandic superstar Bjork (2017), 'Healing Circles for Reconciliation' Workshops (2013 - present), Sacred Sound Journeys (2010 - present), plus Sacred Artworks Series : 'Illuminations' & 'Radiance' (2017- present).

Sarah's creation, the Harmonic Whirlies - celestial sounding musical instruments & powerful vibrational healing tools - are available worldwide along with her many solo & collaborative CD recordings ('Sky Song', 'Reclaiming the Spirit', 'Honour the Earth', 'Kindred Spirits', 'With the Songmen' & 'Sounds of Global Harmony').

SONGS OF SILENT EARTH

(2018)

Songs for Silent Earth is a suite for Piano Trio, commissioned by local Byron music lover, Vicki Brooke. This piece was written for the Muses Trio and premiered at Byron Bay, Australia, 2018 for International Women's Day. The piece was commissioned as a work that could celebrate the natural beauty of the Byron Bay area, on Australia's east coast, alongside a celebration of the voices of women. This suite reflects upon three female figures and interprets their voices musically in a series of "songs for the hours," musical pieces intended for the passage of the day.

The opening movement is an Aubade, a song of parting between two lovers in the morning. The piece evokes the joint aspects of daybreak and sorrow; the joy of the new day against the sadness of parting. The morning song is an ode to the sleeping woman. Connecting with the silent woman theme, this movement is an "Ode to Epicoene" a silent female figure who appears in Ben Johnson's eponymous 1606 play. Her role as a mute character is portrayed musically through mournful melodic material, rising slowly as the piece unfolds.

The middle movement, Serenade is an homage to Echo, the Greek nymph punished by Zeus' wife through the removal of her own voice, limited only to the mimicry of others. This movement explores the interplay between the violin and cello, the violin mimicking the plaintive voice of the mournful cello themes. This movement is also a rejection of the silent woman, burdened with deep sadness. The string instruments echo each other with a falling "sigh" figure throughout the movement.

The final movement, Nocturne is a celebration of Mother Earth, celebrating the closing of the daylight hours. This Nocturne reflects upon timelessness as an evening song to the earth. The slow chorale evokes the falling of the night, dying, fading and the mystery of approaching darkness. The two strings interchange a simple lullaby melody above a repetitive chordal pattern in the piano. Within the deepest night-time hours, earth is perhaps the most silent woman of all. Each movement is inscribed with a short excerpt from the poetry of Lord Byron (1788-1824). Byron's grandfather John, served as a naval officer and circumnavigator under Captain James Cook.



NATALIE WILLIAMS

www.natworksmusic.com

Natalie Williams is an Australian-born composer and United States Permanent Resident. Her works are hailed by critics as "richly expressive and deeply poignant... devastatingly impassioned... with profundity and depth," "a beautifully direct aesthetic." Her output has been commissioned and performed by international ensembles, including the Atlanta Opera, Omaha Symphony, the Berkeley Symphony, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Musica Viva, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Baroque, the Sydney Youth Orchestra, the Australian Youth Orchestra, Indiana

University Chamber Orchestra, and the Plathner's Eleven Chamber Ensemble (Germany).

Natalie Williams' orchestral works have received critical acclaim including the premiere of her first symphony "Our Don" by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, 2014; a multimedia orchestral tribute to Sir Donald Bradman AC. Her orchestral output includes fifteen orchestral commissions from ensembles including the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, and the Adelaide and Sydney Youth Orchestras. In May 2015 her doctoral dissertation was chosen for performance within the American Composers Orchestra, EarShot reading sessions with the Berkeley Symphony and was also chosen for the Omaha Symphony New Music Symposium in 2012. In 2005 Natalie was commissioned by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the Cybec Foundation, and by Musica Viva for the 2019 national tour, also premiered to critical acclaim.

BACKLIGHT TRIO

(2017), composed for Muses Trio

Isabella describes her Trio as “somewhat of a ‘reverse chaconne’. Where a chaconne repeats the same chords with variance in the melody, my piece has repeated sections which use the same melody harmonised differently. The new harmonic context of the melody causes it to be harmonically ‘backlit’ differently in each section”.



ISABELLA GEROMETTA

www.i-gerometta.com

Isabella Gerometta is an emerging Australian composer and conductor. Her works have been performed nationally and internationally at the Musica Viva Festival, New York City's 'The Lounge' and the Palestine Choral Festival with premieres by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Perth Symphony Orchestra, Muses Trio, Camerata - Queensland's Chamber Orchestra and New York City's Conflus duo. In 2020, she will write a new work for the Queensland Conservatorium Symphony Orchestra as part of the Silver Harris and Jeff Peck Composition Award. From 2015-2016, Isabella was Composer-in-Residence with The Australian Voices with three of her choral works featured on ABC

Classics release albums.

Isabella has prepared and directed choruses for a number of events with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, working alongside internationally recognised conductors such as Simone Young and Alondra de la Parra. She has also performed and co-directed a number of concerts for The Australian Voices, including Everyday Requiem in collaboration with Expressions Dance Company in 2018.

Isabella also contributes music to the Brisbane film community and has notably composed incidental music for the internationally recognised short film 'Heathen' by award-winning director Siobahn Mulready. Her scored films have been shown at several festivals including Hollyshorts (Los Angeles), Flickerfest (Sydney) and the West End Film Festival.

ANREGUNG

(1999) for violin, cello and piano

Anregung was commissioned by Musica Viva in 1999 as a 'concert opener'. In this short piece my intention was to whet the musical appetite; to focus the listener's attention, to heighten their aural awareness. This intention is reflected in the title 'Anregung' - a German word meaning to stimulate or excite. From the understated beginning, the piece emerges, gradually unfolding and transforming. In the compositional process I chose to focus on the transformation of three elements of the music - dynamics, pitch range and the rate of articulation. Each of these elements follows its own trajectory throughout the piece and it is this approach which gives the overall structure and shape to Anregung.

I'm proud and happy that my music is part of this fundraising effort for the CWA's Drought Relief campaign. It is wonderful to see women joining forces to help communities in need at this difficult time, especially for those families living in rural areas. A wonderful way to celebrate IWD and what women can achieve together.



CHRISTINE MCCOMBE

www.christinemccombe.com

Christine McCombe is a composer, digital artist, writer and lecturer in sound and music composition. After initial studies in composition at the University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts, Christine moved to the UK in 1997 to study with James MacMillan at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and later completed a PhD in composition at the University of Edinburgh. Composition prizes and awards include the The Dorian Le Galienne Composition Award, The Lyrebird Music Society A.N.A. Prize for Composition, a Keith and Elizabeth Murdoch Fellowship (VCA), a bursary from the Centre Acanthes (France) and a Bundanon Artists Trust Residency.

Christine's musical influences include Bach, Messiaen and PJ Harvey. Her work covers a range of styles from chamber music to electroacoustic composition and video with performances by leading ensembles and soloists, both in Australia and internationally, including the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, soloists from the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the Vienna Piano Trio, Topology, and the Australia Ensemble.

She is the winner of the 2018 Pythia Prize. Her new CD three kinds of silence is out now on Tall Poppies Records and available online through Presto Music, the Australian Music Centre and Buywell Music. She currently lives and works in Melbourne, Australia.

BLUE SILENCE

for cello and piano (2006)

More than a decade ago, Elena's son Alex was diagnosed with schizophrenia. At the time he was 14 years old. In 2006, Elena was asked to compose music for the launch of the exhibition and book *For Matthew and others*, featuring artworks by and about people with schizophrenia. Several of her son's drawings were included. Elena wrote and performed three pieces: *Triptych for Silence* made up of *Blue Silence*, *Nonchalance* and *No Silence*. In the radio feature *Blue Silence*, Elena Kats-Chernin talked about how her style of composition has changed since Alex's diagnosis. Through music, she has tried to create the silence she imagines her son craves.



ELENA KATS-CHERNIN

Elena Kats-Chernin is one of the most cosmopolitan composers working today, having reached millions of listeners worldwide through her prolific catalogue of works for theater, ballet, orchestra, and chamber ensemble. Her dramatically vivid music communicates a mixture of light-heartedness and heavy melancholy, combining strong rhythmic figures with elements of cabaret, tango, ragtime, and klezmer.

One of Australia's leading composers, Elena Kats-Chernin has created works in nearly every genre. Among her many commissions are pieces for Ensemble Modern, the Bang on a Can All-Stars, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Adelaide, Tasmanian, Melbourne, Queensland and Sydney Symphony Orchestras, Present Music, City of London

Sinfonia, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Berliner Philharmoniker, and the opera houses of Sydney, Stuttgart, Antwerp and Kassel, to name only a few.

Her brilliantly scored, energetic, and often propulsive music has been choreographed by dance-makers around the world. In 2000 she collaborated with leading Australian choreographer Meryl Tankard in a series of large-scale dance works, including broadcasts to an audience of millions worldwide for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games opening ceremonies. Kats-Chernin's music was also featured heavily in the UK with the long-running Lloyds advertising campaign "For the journey..." employing *Eliza Aria *from *Wild Swans*.

Among an extensive list of international collaborations and accolades, Elena's *Whitely* was presented in 2019 by Opera Australia – the organization's first opera world premiere in 10 years. The 2019/20 season sees no less than three new children's operas, presented in Berlin, Luxembourg, and Kassel. Elena Kats-Chernin's music is published exclusively by Boosey & Hawkes. Excerpt reprinted by kind permission of Boosey & Hawkes. Please see Elena's full biography [here](#).

SUMMER BECKONS

(2014) for violin and piano

Summer Beckons captures the beauty of the leafy growth in a walled garden:

'...in Summer the walls are covered with blossoms and buds and tendrils reaching...'

The piece was written as a response to Martina Hoffman's poem 'My Love is a House'. Several composers were commissioned by Thea Zimple to create a song cycle bringing to musical life the text of Hoffman's poem (with poetry and music interwoven with narrator and music ensemble).

The original scoring of this work was for flute and piano, but the composer re-worked the music specially for a violin and piano setting. This pairing brings a particular beauty and depth particularly in the middle section, where the violin bow ricochet's effervescently across the strings, evoking the shimmering of water fountains. The music then expands with a vivid and joyful wonder as the vine tendrils twirl, seeking their next grip hold as they face their leaves towards the warmth of the sun: the beauty and bounty of Summer growth!



SALLY GREENAWAY

www.sallygreenaway.com

Sally Greenaway is a multi-award winning composer, pianist, teacher and musical director from Canberra, Australia. She is a versatile and diverse musician, having worked with many of Australia's music ensembles including schools, community, and professional. She is regularly invited to give masterclasses, workshops and adjudicate competitions. She was musical director for ConneXion Big Band for 10 years and has lectured at the CIT Music Industry Centre, the ANU School of Music and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Greenaway is a post-graduate from the Royal College of Music, London, where she received the Lucy Anne Jones award, studying composition and orchestration. She is also a graduate of the ANU School of Music, specialising in jazz piano.

As a composer, Greenaway's writing spans a wide assortment of styles, including classical chamber works, jazz big band works, and film soundtracks. In 2017 she received the APRA AMCOS 'Instrumental Work of the Year' Art Music Award. In 2013, she was a finalist in the Seattle Women's Jazz Orchestra Composition Contest, in 2009 she was awarded the Canberra International Music Festival Young Composer Award, and in 2008 she won the Jazzgroove Mothership Orchestra National Big Band Composition Competition. Greenaway's compositions feature on numerous CDs, including the ABC Classic 100 Swoon collection, and her own CD releases have received worldwide critical acclaim.

INTO THE LIGHT

(2015) for violin, cello and piano

'Into the Light' was commissioned and premiered by Plexus Collective in 2015, at Melbourne Recital Centre as part of their commemoration of the centenary of World War I. It was also premiered on International Women's Day, and so this work is dedicated to the nurses who served in WWI. It tries to capture the excitement they must have felt, at having the opportunity to move beyond the traditional roles of mother and wife, and also the heartache and devastation surrounding the war.



NAT BARTSCH

www.natbartsch.com

Nat Bartsch is a Melbourne-based pianist/composer who creates lyrical, ethereal work that crosses chamber jazz and postclassical genres. After graduating from the VCA in music improvisation, Nat travelled to Europe in 2008 to study with ECM artists Tord Gustavsen and Nik Bärtsch (no relation) with the inaugural Lionel Gell Travelling Fellowship. In 2010, Nat was awarded the Melbourne Prize for Music, and was a 2010 Bell award finalist for Young Australian Jazz Artist of the Year.

Earlier in her performance career Nat was known as bandleader of the Nat Bartsch Trio, performing across Australia, Japan and Europe, with three critically acclaimed recordings. In 2014, Nat shifted her focus to creating works as a solo artist, releasing her debut solo album *Hometime* (2017), recorded on her own upright piano at home. In 2018 Nat released her acclaimed second solo release, *Forever*, and *No Time At All*: an album of lullabies influenced by music therapy research. This album is used across Australia by parents from pregnancy, to birth, to the evening sleep routine, and enjoyed by non-parents alike.

She has composed chamber music commissions for PLEXUS and Solstice Trio. Nat also plays with the Jazzlab Orchestra, indie, folk and postclassical artists such as Whitaker, Sweet Jean and Timothy Coghill, and has worked with Thando, Matt Corby and Ella Thompson and Circus Oz.

Nat is also a mental health advocate, particularly in promoting the health and wellbeing of performing artists, and has presented on the two-way link between bipolar disorder and creativity at a variety of conferences.

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

www.cwaa.org.au

The CWA of Australia Drought Relief program distributes household funds to those affected by the current drought, particularly people in rural Australia who are doing it tough. In the past 18 months the Country Women's Association (CWA) has distributed over \$30 million in household support to drought affected families. CWA members across Australia cover all administration costs and so every dollar gets to where it is needed most.

Donations collected will be distributed to the State / Territory Country Women's Associations based on where the need is greatest and their level of available funds. These decisions will be made by the CWA of Australia Drought Committee, comprised of representatives of each State/Territory CWA. All the funds will go to drought affected farmers, farm workers and their families. Funds are distributed in grants of up to \$3000 for households expenses - groceries, utility bills, school costs, rates and fuel. Anything you can give will help, across Australia we are distributing around \$150,000 per week when funds are available.

By providing household support, drought affected families have money to spend in their own communities, they have the money to buy things they could not otherwise afford. This in turn helps the businesses in that town - the butcher, the baker, the hairdresser.

Get Involved

Are you a music lover? An artist, small business owner, composer? An admirer of all things wonderful by women? We'd love to have you on board. Here are some ideas of how you can support the Muses Trio.

Donate

Please consider making a donation towards Muses Trio future projects in the community. We are an independent group of women with a cultural cause yet we have no current funding to present performance or commission music. Thanks to you, our generous supporters and listeners, we can continue to bring cultural projects to the community.

How you can help

Spread the word, come to more of our performances and join our mailing list. Purchase a CD and listen to more music by women. Are you interested in partnering on a project, sponsoring a concert or education workshop, donating toward future commissions? Can you volunteer behind the scenes or host a performance or workshop in your community? Do you want to advertise your business or event in our concert programs? Contact Therese on therese.milanovic@gmail.com.

For more info: www.musestrio.com