

Jennifer Eriksson completed her initial musical studies at the NSW State Conservatorium of Music studying cello with Barbara Woolley. In 1985 she left Australia to study the viola da gamba with Jaap ter Linden at the Rotterdam Conservatorium where she completed post-graduate studies in baroque music. Whilst in Europe she performed regularly in Holland and Germany including a guest appearance at the Utrecht Festival.

Since returning to Australia Jennifer has performed as a soloist with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Victorian State Opera Orchestra and Salût. She is highly sort after as a continuo player and has appeared with the Australian Opera, the Renaissance Players, the Early Dance Consort, the Sydney Consort, The Musicke and numerous other ensembles. Jennifer has also performed in regular live broadcasts for the ABC and tours for Musica Viva in the ensemble "Sounds Baroque".

The idea for a complete cycle of the works of Marais was a product of the Olympic games in Sydney. The celebration of athletic inspired Jenny to undertake this 4-5 year performance marathon. Concerts I and II featured baroque dance and French baroque poetry. Concert IV will be held in conjunction with an exhibition of modern Australian wood fired pottery.

Tommie Andersson was born in Sweden, is widely recognised as Australia's leading specialist in lute and early guitar. A graduate of the State Conservatorium of Music in Gotëborg (Gothenburg), Sweden and the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, he is in great demand both as a soloist and as a continuo player. He performs regularly with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Opera Australia, the Brandenburg Orchestra, the Song Company and Sydney Philharmonia amongst others. Tommie appears on numerous discs and has released a solo compact disc of Baroque lute and guitar music on the Swedish label, Musica Rediviva. He lectures in lute at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Catherine Tabrett commenced studying cello with Dorothy Sumner and subsequently, Georg Pedersen, obtaining her AmusA in 1990. As a member of the SBS Youth Orchestra she toured Europe, Taiwan and the Pacific and participated in several recordings for SBS Television. Catherine completed her Bachelor of Music (honours) at Sydney University in 1997, performing the Saint-Saëns' cello concerto no. 1 with the Sydney University Orchestra. She has also made several chamber music recordings for 2MBS FM and ABC FM.

During this period, Catherine commenced learning the viola da gamba with Jennifer Eriksson. She has since performed on the instrument in several ensembles including The Renaissance Players, the Conservatorium Baroque Orchestra, Salût, The Sydney Consort and Sarabande.

Marshall McGuire is one of Australia's leading harpists, with a special interest in contemporary and baroque repertoire. He has commissioned many composers to write new works for harp, receiving the 1997 Sounds Australian Award for the Most Distinguished Contribution to the Presentation of Australian Music.

Marshall was born in Melbourne and studied at the Victorian College of the Arts, the Paris Conservatoire and the Royal College of Music, London.

He is principal harp with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and has performed with Les Talens Lyriques, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Ensemble Modern and the Australia Ensemble and at the Aldeburgh, Melbourne, Milan, Brighton, Vienna, Huddersfield, Huntington and Adelaide festivals. From 1988-1992, Marshall was Principal Harpist with the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra. He has been a member of the ELISION ensemble since 1988, and lecturer in harp at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music since 1990. Marshall has been nominated twice for ARIA awards and his latest CD Spring Sea - music for dreams with shakuhachi master Riley Lee, was released last year on ABC Classics.

Marshall's performances in 2001 include recitals in New York and London, and performances at the Sydney Festival, Sydney Spring International Festival of New Music, Tasmania's 10 Days on the Island Festival, Queensland Biennial Festival of Music, Melbourne Autumn Music Festival and the Vale of Glamorgan Festival in Wales.



"Marin Marais: A Life's Work"

Directed by Jennifer Eriksson

Concert 3

Sunday 24 June 2001

Jennifer Eriksson – **viola da gamba**

Catherine Tabrett – **viola da gamba**

Tommie Andersson – **theorbo, baroque lute
& baroque guitar**

Marshall McGuire – **baroque harp**

Alliance Française de Sydney
257 Clarence St, Sydney

Program Notes

Marin Marais, the son of a shoemaker, was born in Paris in 1656. He studied music from an early age and became one of the greatest viol players of his time. Sainte-Colombe, a master violist of the previous generation, was Marais' teacher. Legend has it that within six months of commencing study with the older Sainte-Colombe, Marais had surpassed his teacher. Jealousy prevailed over art and Sainte-Colombe declared he would no longer teach Marais. As depicted in the film "Tous les matins de monde", Sainte-Colombe frequently retired to his small tree house in the garden to practice. The industrious Marais, having been dismissed as a student but desiring to possess the secrets of the master, crept down the garden and sat under the tree house secretly listening to Sainte-Colombe practice.

Marais subsequently learned composition technique from performing in Lully's orchestra at the Court of Louis XIV. In 1679 he was appointed "Musician in Ordinary to the King's Chamber". He composed operas, trios and, of course, the five books of pieces for the viola da gamba. Marais was particularly well known for his descriptive pieces such as the famous storm in "Alcyone" or "Le Tableau de l'Operation de la Taille" depicting a gall stone operation! The unique genius of Marais is also demonstrated in the many character pieces he inserted between the traditional pieces of the baroque suite that normally consisted of prelude, allemande, courante, sarabande, gigue etc. Today I will perform one such work depicting a windmill, "Le Moulinet".

On my long journey through the "Labyrinthe" of Marais' viol music I am similarly charting my own path through the many suites and other works. There is a sense of being able to really enter into the creative process as the concert series develops, a sense that is heightened by my emerging understanding of what a fine composer Marais was.

It is said that the mark of a great composer is that listeners can quickly recognise a work of the master, and that the music is remarkably robust. There seems few limitations to the approach one can take to performing Marais' music as he gives the interpreter freedom to create a highly personal approach. There can be up to 33 movements in a single suite, for example, which creates great latitude for the performer to choose and order the music depending on mood, circumstances and ability.

In today's concert I have concentrated mostly on the music from Book III. In many ways, these are the best known and most performed suites, although I have chosen two lesser-known works. Book III consists of simple, straightforward suites with a few character pieces added for good measure - a formula that French audiences of the time would have known and loved. It was not until Book IV that Marais made a substantial break from the traditional baroque suite tradition.

Marais' flexibility encourages the performers not only to interpret the works, but also to actively arrange and re-arrange the continuo accompaniment. Today I have taken what some would see as liberties with the text such as giving the second gamba the harmony line from the solo part, and assigning the melody occasionally to the theorbo or the harp. My objective in doing this is to allow the audience to participate in the best possible performance on the instruments at hand, and to experience the full range of possible sonorities and textures.

Finally, a word as to the viola da gamba itself, an instrument much beloved of past generations. In 1636 Marin Mersenne wrote in his "Harmonie Universelle":

"Those who have heard excellent performers and good ensembles of Viols know that, except for good voices, there is nothing as ravishing as the languishing bow strokes which accompany the trills which are done on the fingerboard. But since it is no less difficult to describe their grace as that of a perfect Orator, they have to be heard to be understood."

It is our hope today that having heard a little more of the gamba, you too will understand something more of its particular beauty.

Jennifer Eriksson

Program

Marin Marais (1656 – 1728)

Pièces de violes 3^e livre – Paris 1711 (suite in g minor)

Caprice
Sarabande
Gigue la Chicane
Rondeau Louré
Plainte
Menuet Fantasque & Double
Le Moulinet (The Windmill)

Pièces de violes 4^e livre – Paris 1717 (Suite d'un goût étranger)

La Reveuse (transcribed for the baroque lute by Tommie Andersson)

Pièces de violes 2^e livre – Paris 1701 (suite in d minor)

La polonaise
Menuet
Ballet en rondeau

Interval (drinks will be served)

Pièces de violes 4^e livre – Paris 1717 (suite in a minor)

Muzettes I & II

Pièces de violes 3^e livre – Paris 1711 (suite in C major)

Prélude
Allemande
Courante
Sarabande en Rondeau
Gigue
Chaconne