



Sunday 17 April 2011
The Great Hall, University of Sydney

Lamentations

Part I

3pm COUPERIN *Leçons de Ténèbres*

The Marais Project
Jennifer Eriksson *director*

Megan Cronin & Belinda Montgomery *sopranos*
Jennifer Eriksson *viola da gamba*
Anthony Abouhamad *organ & harpsichord*

Part II

6.30pm MUSIC OF TALLIS, BYRD, CHARPENTIER, PURCELL,
SANDSTRÖM & STANHOPE

Sydney Chamber Choir
Paul Stanhope *conductor*

Joseph Tawadros *oud*
James Tawadros *req*
The Marais Project



Sydney Chamber Choir is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

Program – Part I

**Première Leçon de Ténèbres
pour le Mercredi Saint à une Voix** (1714)

Aleph
Beth
Gimel
Daleth
He

Megan Cronin *soprano*

François Couperin
(1668–1733)

Tombeau pour Mr de Sainte Colombe (1701)
From 2e livre de Pièces de viole

Marin Marais
(1656–1728)

**Deuxième Leçon de Ténèbres
pour le Mercredi Saint à une Voix** (1714)

Vav
Zain
Heth
Teth

Belinda Montgomery *soprano*

François Couperin

La Rêveuse (1717)
From 4e livre de Pièces de viole

Marin Marais

**Troisième Leçon de Ténèbres
pour le Mercredi Saint à deux Voix** (1714)

Jod
Caph
Lamed
Mem
Nun

Megan Cronin, Belinda Montgomery *sopranos*

François Couperin

Megan Cronin – soprano

Megan Cronin grew up in Canberra where she sang with the Canberra Children's Choir, played oboe in the Canberra Youth Orchestra and Canberra Symphony Orchestra and studied at the Canberra School of Music. As a chorister Megan has sung with some of Australia's finest choirs, including the Australian Chamber Singers, The Contemporary Singers, Sydney Chamber Choir and ACO Voices.



Megan is a founding member of the Early Music/Celtic ensemble Pastance, with whom she has recorded and toured extensively. With Pastance Megan has taken early music to some of Australia's largest folk festivals, including Woodford, Port Fairy and the National Folk Festival. For the past 14 years she has performed in schools throughout Australia, New Zealand and Singapore for Musica Viva in Schools and the Queensland and Victorian Arts Councils.

Megan has performed as a soloist in Monteverdi's *Vespers of the Blessed Virgin* and has also sung a number of dramatic roles, including Filia in Carissimi's oratorio *Jephte*, music theatre works by Canberra composer Judith Clingan and the lead role in the early Mozart opera *Lo sposo deluso* for the Mostly Mozart festival. Megan also sings regularly with the Baroque/contemporary music ensemble Phoebus Fire.

Belinda Montgomery – soprano



Belinda Montgomery graduated in 1997 from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Music (Honours) in Voice. She later studied with Emma Kirkby and Evelyn Tubb in England and has since established a freelance career in Sydney, where she is particularly active as an early music specialist.

Belinda has appeared with various ensembles, most notably the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Salut! Baroque, Concertato, The Sydney Consort and, of course, The Marais Project. She has also appeared with contemporary music specialists, Halcyon.

Solo engagements have included Bach Cantatas (Australian Brandenburg Orchestra), Handel's *Dixit Dominus* (Sydney Philharmonia Motet Choir), Bach's Mass in B Minor, Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, Faure's Requiem, Mozart's Requiem and Solemn Vespers (Sydney Chamber Choir) and Steve Reich's *Drumming* (Synergy Percussion). In March 2003, she gave the world premiere performance of Andrew Ford's song cycle, *Learning to Howl*, which later won the APRA Award for Best Composition in 2004 as well as the Paul Lowin Prize for Song Cycle.

As both a soloist and chorus member Belinda has performed extensively with Cantillation, Australia's leading professional chorus, directed by Antony Walker, appearing on many of their ABC recordings. She has recorded music for radio broadcast and has appeared on many CDs for the labels Tall Poppies, Walsingham and Celestial Harmonies.

Jennifer Eriksson – director, viola da gamba

Jennifer Eriksson completed her initial musical studies at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, studying music education and cello with Barbara Woolley.

She subsequently studied the viola da gamba, initially with Catherine Finnis in Sydney and then with Jaap ter Linden at the Rotterdam Conservatorium for three years, where she completed post-graduate studies in Baroque music.



Whilst in Europe she performed regularly in the Netherlands and Germany, including a guest appearance at the Utrecht Festival.

Jennifer has performed with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Salut! Baroque, Opera Australia, the Renaissance Players, the Early Dance Consort and the Sydney Consort. She performs in regular broadcasts for ABC Classic FM, and tours for Musica Viva in the ensemble Sounds Baroque.

Jennifer founded The Marais Project in 2000 with a view to performing the complete works of Marin Marais, and to provide a vehicle for bringing ancient and modern music for the viola da gamba to a wider audience. The Marais Project recently released its second CD, *Love Reconciled*, on the MOVE label.

Anthony Abouhamad – harpsichord, organ



Anthony Abouhamad studied Harpsichord and Fortepiano at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music under Neal Peres da Costa and graduated in 2009 with a Bachelor of Music (Performance) with First Class Honours.

As an active performer, both as a soloist and as a continuo/chamber musician, Anthony's professional engagements have been with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO2) and the Australia

Ensemble. Anthony is also a member of the chamber group Musica Galante, which specialises in Baroque and Classical repertoire, performing on period instruments. He tours for Musica Viva in the ensemble Sounds Baroque.

Performing regularly on ABC radio as a soloist and orchestral musician and in venues such as the Sydney Opera House, City Recital Hall Angel Place and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Anthony is an enthusiastic performer whose interests range across all musical media from the early 17th to early 19th centuries.

Anthony is a member of staff in the Sydney Conservatorium's Musicology Department, where he teaches Harmony and Analysis.

About the Music

François Couperin (1688–1733) was born in Paris, where he lived and worked for most of his life. At eighteen he inherited his father's post as organist at St Gervais, and in 1693 he was appointed organist at Versailles. Couperin's musical approach is a conscious blending of the elegant French style and the flamboyant Italian style. He is widely regarded as one of the finest composers of the Baroque era – which spanned the period from 1600 to 1750 – and worthy of mentioning in the same breath as Handel and J.S. Bach.

‘That which was established only to produce a holy and beneficial remorse in Christian souls has been transformed into entertainment!’ thundered one conservative 18th-century critic back in the 1730s. He was referring to the increasingly popular Holy Week services held at the Abbey of Longchamp near Paris, where on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Saturday were presented musical settings of the highly emotive words found in the Old Testament book, the *Lamentations of Jeremiah*. The prophet Jeremiah's writings were considered particularly apt in assisting Christians to reflect on Jesus' crucifixion and death during the pre-Easter period. The attendees were throngs of fashionable Parisians, who in the weeks leading up to Easter, would have busily discussed where they would be ‘doing Ténèbre’ this year. The intriguing name, *Leçons de Ténèbre* (Lessons (i.e. scripture readings) in the dark), owes to the fact that these services were sung in the dark in accordance with the Lenten regulations of the Catholic Church.

During Lent, and especially in Holy Week, the week leading up to Easter, it had been traditional for centuries in the Western church for a great blanket of austerity to descend. The pipe-organ was silenced, sumptuous choral arrangements were reduced to unison chanting, and candle consumption slashed considerably. Thus was born the new Ténèbres tradition at the aforementioned Abbey of Longchamp in the early 18th century. Away from any critical eyes and the strict Lenten regulations, the nuns sponsored the performance of newly composed *Leçons de Ténèbres* in their own attempt to find a compromise between liturgical austerity and aural excess.

Couperin's offerings in this genre are in the intimate semi-theatrical style known at that time as the ‘chamber style’, building on the refined and expressive secular French tradition of the *air de cour*

(court song). One of his three Leçons is composed for two soprano soloists, the others for one. The accompaniment was to be provided not by the large church organ which, as noted, was not allowed in Holy Week, but by a portable chamber organ, if available, harpsichord and lutes. Additionally, Couperin made specific mention of the necessity of the viola da gamba or bass viol.

A slightly more controversial element of the Longchamp experience was that singing stars from the opera and court were involved. One of the greatest stars of the time was Mademoiselle Catherine-Nicole Le Maure, of whom it was said an opera company could be bankrupted if she became ill. Indeed, her absence from a performance on more than one occasion caused shows to fail, and once she was imprisoned for this. At Easter time, she contributed to the Leçons de Ténèbres of Couperin and his contemporaries at the Abbey. Eventually she tired of the politicking of the secular music world and became a nun herself.

Throughout the setting of the three Leçons, Couperin demonstrates an extraordinary ability in the art of vocal declamation as well as a well-developed feeling for word painting. The music is rich in dissonance and chromaticism. The texts, sung in Latin, are introduced by elaborate, melismatic vocal phrases (that is, many notes sung on one syllable) that have an almost improvised feel to them. Each melisma sets a single letter of the Hebrew alphabet – effectively, a numbering system, the equivalent of the English ‘(a), (b), (c)...’. All three Leçons conclude with a phrase from the book of the prophet Hosea: *Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum* (Jerusalem, turn to the Lord your God).

Couperin himself wrote the following in the published edition of the music:

A few years ago I composed three Tenebrae Lessons for Good Friday at the request of the nuns of L(ongchamp), where they were sung with success. For the last several months this has made me determined to compose those for Wednesday and Thursday. However, I am only offering here the three for the first day, not having had enough time before Easter to get the other six engraved.

The first and second Lessons for each day will still be for one voice, and the third Lesson for two: thus two voices will suffice for their performance; although the voice part is written in treble cleff, all

other kinds of voices can sing them, especially as most accompanists these days know how to transpose. I shall give the public the six others, in two groups of three, if it is content with the present ones. If a bass de viole or a bass de violon can be added to the organ or harpsichord accompaniment, that will do very well.

*

Marin Marais was one of the greatest string virtuosi of all time – the Paganini of the viola da gamba. His life (1656–1728) spanned the mid-Baroque period. Although not so well known in the English-speaking world, his fame has continued to this day in his native France, to the extent that his life was celebrated in the renowned novel and film *Tous les matins du monde* (All the Mornings of the World), which was a huge hit in Western Europe in the early 1990s. The film soundtrack, featuring the great Spanish gambist Jordi Savall, even reached the French Top 40! (Both the Marais pieces you will hear today feature in the film).

The full breadth of Marais' genius is revealed in his five-volume opus *Pièces de Violes* (Pieces for viola da gamba) which contains more than 600 individual works. *Pièces* is increasingly seen by musicologists and performers as a significant achievement: a summary of the technical, pedagogical and musical possibilities of the viola da gamba.

**Jennifer Eriksson, Chris Berensen
and Philip Pogson © 2011**

Texts and Translations

First Lesson (Lamentations 1:1–5)

Aleph

Quomodo sedet sola civitas
plena populo!
Facta est quasi vidua, Domina
gentium:
princeps provinciarum
facta est sub tributo.

*How doth the city sit solitary,
that was full of people!
How is she become as a widow! She
that was great among the nations,
and princess among the provinces,
how is she become tributary!*

Beth

Plorans ploravit in nocte,
et lachrymae ejus in maxillis ejus:
non est qui consoletur eam
ex omnibus charis ejus.
Omnes amici ejus spreverunt
eam,
et facti sunt ei inimici.

*She weepeth sore in the night,
and her tears are on her cheeks:
among all her lovers she hath none
to comfort her:
all her friends have dealt
treacherously with her,
they are become her enemies.*

Gimel

Migravit Juda
propter afflictionem et
multitudinem servitutis:
habitavit inter gentes,
nec invenit requiem:
omnes persecutores ejus
apprehenderunt eam inter angustias.

*Judah is gone into captivity
because of affliction,
and because of great servitude:
she dwelleth among the heathen,
she findeth no rest:
all her persecutors
overtook her between the straits.*

Daleth

Viae Sion lugent, eo quod non sint
qui veniant ad solemnitatem:
omnes portae ejus destructae,
sacerdotes ejus gementes,
virgines ejus squalidae,
et ipsa oppressa amaritudine.

*The ways of Zion do mourn, because
none come to the solemn feasts:
all her gates are desolate:
her priests sigh,
her virgins are afflicted,
and she is in bitterness.*

He

Facti sunt hostes ejus in capite,
inimici ejus locupletati sunt;
quia Dominus locutus est super
eam propter multitudinem
iniquitatum ejus:
parvuli ejus ducti sunt in
captivitatem, ante faciem tribulantis.

*Her adversaries are the chief,
her enemies prosper;
for the Lord hath afflicted her
for the multitude of her
transgressions:
her children are gone into captivity
before the enemy.*

Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum
Deum tuum.

*Jerusalem, turn to the Lord thy
God.*

Second Lesson (Lamentations 1:6–9)

Vau

Et egressus est a filia Sion
omnis decor ejus:
facti sunt principes ejus velut
arietes non inuenientes pascua:
et abierunt absque fortitudine
ante faciem subsequentiis.

*And from the daughter of Zion
all her beauty is departed:
her princes are become like harts
that find no pasture,
and they are gone without strength
before the pursuer.*

Zain

Recordata est Jerusalem dierum
afflictionis suae et praevaricationis,
omnium desiderabilium suorum,
quae habuerat a diebus antiquis,
cum caderet populus ejus in manu
hostili, et non esset auxiliator:
viderunt eam hostes,
et deriserunt sabbata ejus.

*Jerusalem remembered in the days
of her affliction and of her miseries
all her pleasant things
that she had in the days of old,
when her people fell into the hand of
the enemy, and none did help her:
the adversaries saw her,
and did mock at her sabbaths.*

Heth

Peccatum peccavit Jerusalem,
propterea instabilis facta est:
omnes, qui glorificabant eam,
spreverunt illam, quia viderunt
ignominiam ejus:
ipsa autem gemens
conversa est retrorsum.

*Jerusalem hath grievously sinned;
therefore she is removed:
all that honoured her
despise her, because they have seen
her nakedness:
yea, she sigheth,
and turned backward.*

Teth

Sordes ejus in pedibus ejus,
nec recordata est finis sui:
deposita est vehementer,
non habens consolatorem:
vide, Domine, afflictionem meam,
quoniam erectus est inimicus.
Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum
Deum tuum.

*Her filthiness is in her skirts;
she remembereth not her last end;
therefore she came down wonderfully;
she had no comforter.
O Lord, behold my affliction:
for the enemy hath magnified himself.
Jerusalem, turn to the Lord thy
God.*

Third Lesson (Lamentations 1:10–14)

Jod

Manum suam misit hostis
ad omnia desiderabilia ejus:
quia vidit gentes ingressas
sanctuarium suum,
de quibus praeceperas
ne intrarent in ecclesiam tuam.

*The adversary hath spread out his
hand upon all her pleasant things; for
she hath seen that the heathen entered
into her sanctuary,
whom thou didst command that they
should not enter into thy congregation.*

Caph

Omnis populis ejus gemens,
et quaerens panem:
dederunt pretiosa quaeque
pro cibo ad refocillandam animam.
Vide, Domine, et considera,
quoniam facta sum vilis.

*All her people sigh,
they seek bread;
they have given their pleasant things
for meat to relieve the soul:
see, O Lord, and consider;
for I am become vile.*

Lamed

O vos omnes, qui transitis per viam,
attendite, et videte si est dolor
sicut dolor meus: quoniam
vindemiavit me,
ut locutus est Dominus in die irae
furoris sui.

*It is nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow
like unto my sorrow, which is done
unto me,
wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me
in day of his fierce anger.*

Mem

De excelso misit ignem in ossibus
meis, et erudit me:
expandit rete pedibus meis,
convertit me retrorsum:
posuit me desolatam,
tota die moerore confectam.

*From above hath he sent fire into my
bones, and it prevaieth against them:
he hath spread a net for my feet,
he that turned me back:
he hath made me desolate
and faint all the day.*

Nun

Vigilavit jugum iniquitatum
meorum: in manu ejus convolutae
sunt, et impositae collo meo:
infirmata est virtus mea:
dedit me Dominus
in manu,
de qua non potero surgere.
Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum
Deum tuum.

*The yoke of my transgressions is
bound by his hand: they are wreathed,
and come up upon my neck:
he hath made my strength to fall,
the Lord hath delivered me
into their hands,
from whom I am not able to rise up.
Jerusalem, turn to the Lord thy
God.*

*English translation from the
King James Version of the Bible, 1611.*

NEXT FROM THE MARAIS PROJECT

Viol Song

Sunday 14 August

3pm

Recital Hall East

Sydney Conservatorium

The viol family has inspired song composers for hundreds of years.

The premiere of settings of Les Murray poems by Dan Walker, commissioned with assistance from Ars Musica Australis, continues this tradition. Also featured is Rosalind Page's lyrical reflection on the River Seine, *Aquarelle*, composed for us in 2009. The vocal theme continues with Marais' famous *Les Voix humaines* (Human Voices).

Andrei Laptev *tenor*

Alice Evans *violin*

Jennifer Eriksson *viola da gamba*

Catherine Tabrett *viola da gamba*

Tommie Andersson *theorbo*

For more information, visit www.maraisproject.com.au

*The truth we cannot speak about, we must sing,
we must say it in music.*

– Luciano Berio

www.maraisproject.com.au