

GAMBA WATCH

The Newsletter of The Marais Project & Sounds Baroque



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Edited by Philip Pogson

ABC Classic FM CD of the week

We were surprised and gratified to be notified that "Lady Sings the Viol" had been selected as ABC Classic FM's CD of the Week in early May. This meant that the CD featured on ABC FM each morning and evening for seven days. As might be imagined, CD sales went up substantially and we received messages of interest and support from around the country. Our thanks to the folks at the ABC. Lady Sings the Viol is available on our web site -www.maraisproject.com.au - from Fish Fine Music and our distributor, MOVE Music. Download from iTunes.

What the critics say about Lady Sings

Critical support for the CD is growing:

"I'm not going to dissect the disk in detail as it is not necessary. It is a compilation of astonishing grace, beauty and sentiment, and expertly recorded". Early Music News (Apr-May 2013).

But some of the most moving feedback is coming from every day music lovers. For example, this comment appeared on our Facebook site recently:

"I have to admit I know nothing of classical music but of late I have been listening to ABC classic FM in the car

doing the school runs and today I had the absolute pleasure of hearing your version of La Vie en Rose. It made the hairs stand up on the back of my neck, honestly and no disrespect to the great Edith Piaf but that rendition is the most beautiful I have ever heard. I rushed back home to do some furious "googling" to find about "The Marais Project" as I am travelling to Paris next week and thought I may be lucky enough to encounter a concert. I was very pleasantly surprised to see you are an Australian group; I will be doing my utmost to fly to Sydney for your concert in August. Beautiful music, I am a fan. Have a lovely day."



Lady Sings the Viol CD launch

Which brings us to the CD launch which will take place on Saturday August 24, 2013 at The Independent Theatre, Miller St North Sydney. We wanted to do something complete different for this once-off performance so we've themed it as a Cabaret. The night will be directed by former Opera Australia principal soprano now independent producer/director, Christine Douglas with compere David Hidden. Tickets from The Independent or our WWW site.

Sounds Baroque's adventures

Our Musica Viva in Schools ensemble, Sounds Baroque, specialises in presenting specially arranged, educationally appropriate performances of baroque operas in schools across rural, regional and urban NSW. Current group members include singers Narelle Evans (who features on Lady Sings the Viol) and David Hidden, harpsichordist Ray Harvey (a Marais Project regular) and Jenny on viola da gamba and treble viol. This year they will present nearly 80 concerts.

Sounds Baroque and several other Musica Viva in Schools ensembles



Sounds Baroque and junior opera fans

including Mara! and The World According to James are working with Musica Viva as we go to press to develop a series of "family concert" style events which will enable the general public to see something of these fabulous groups outside of the school context. We will keep you informed as the idea progresses.

Recorder joins the viol

Alicia Crossley is widely recognised as one of Australia's most exciting young recorder players. Earlier in 2013 Jenny Eriksson played continuo viol in a studio recording Alicia made for the ABC. In the second half of 2013 Alicia will join The Marais Project to present concerts at Ryde-Eastwood and Macarthur Music Clubs. I caught up with Alicia recently.

Philip Pogson (PP) - How did you come to play the recorder? Did you start on a plastic version like the rest of us?

Alicia Crossley (AC) - I started playing recorder when I was 6 years old and it was the very first instrument I picked up. While I did learn to play other instruments including the saxophone and bassoon, I always continued to play the recorder. I loved it so much I decided to pursue a performing career as a recorder player.



Alicia and Recorders

PP - The recorder is somewhat unique in early music as it has such an extensive contemporary repertoire. I was surprised, for example, when you told me that some recorder teachers only work on new music. Where do you see the recorder headed over the coming years?

AC - The recorder has a very strong presence in contemporary music, particularly compositions written in an avant-garde style. I think in the future we will see a lot more repertoire written for recorder and electronics which

allow an enormous soundscape and overcome the recorders soft dynamics. However even though the recorder is gaining an increasing amount of contemporary repertoire, I believe early music will always be an essential part of the recorder repertoire.

PP - You are well known as an expert on the bass recorder and have released a CD of new music for the instrument. What is the attraction of this rarely heard but quite beautiful instrument?

AC - I am particularly interested in the bass recorder because of its raw sound and haunting tone which are unlike any other instrument.

PP - Building a viable career has challenges for recorder players and gambists as there is limited orchestral repertoire for either instrument. How are you going about this?

AC - As a recorder player, much like gambists or guitarists, you quickly become aware that orchestral positions are never going to be a viable option as a full time job. Much of my work is solo based or performing with small ensembles. The emphasis on solo work is also part of the reason I like to commission new works to perform.

PP - Finally, could you name some of your favourite performers and composers?

AC - Genevieve Lacey and Dan Laurin are some of my favourite recorder players who have very unique and individual performing styles. The composers I admire are a little random but they include Jacob TV, Gershwin (even though he never wrote anything for recorder), Tallis, and as a recorder player you can't go past Telemann!

Beautiful Banff

In January and February 2013 Jenny Eriksson undertook as five week Winter Residency at The Banff Centre, Canada. Banff is one of the largest arts centres in the world. To be accepted she presented a proposal to prepare a recital called "Six of the Best" which included works by five of the great French Baroque composers and a new commission by Australian composer, Rosalind Page. "Six of the Best" recently launched our 2013 season. The residency was part-funded by New South Wales Arts through a competitive grant. Jenny writes:



together, working through the repertoire I was preparing for my recital back in Australia. We performed a Caix d'Hervelois suite together on a Friday night. We also joined up with an Australian violinist, Christina Katsimbardis, to present a Corelli violin Sonata.

Every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon there were self directed concerts in a more relaxing venue, the "Bentley". On Tuesday evenings Henk Guitttart, the Dutch violist and Banff's music director, or one of the visiting faculty, gave a talk or showed a DVD. I enjoyed these sessions which often ended up in heated discussions in Maclab, the on-site pub.

"The short term music residency program was more structured than I had imagined although it was up to each artist as to whether or not they participated in any activities. For example, there was a Monday morning meeting where all musicians got together which also featured an occasional guest speaker. During the week there were two quite formal concerts Wednesdays at 4.30pm, a so-called "Mid Week Medley" and an evening concert on Friday night.

The whole atmosphere at residency in Banff was incredible. In my view this was created by Henk's outstanding leadership. There was no actual or hidden hierarchy, no "in cliques", which can be the bane of classical music. It didn't matter where we were in our careers, everyone was treated equally.

I was lucky that there was a fantastic harpsichordist in residence, Katelyn Clark from Montreal. Kate and I practiced most days

In summary, the five weeks I spent at Banff were some of the most interesting, challenging and productive times in my professional life. I made new friends, met artists from around the world and got to do nothing else but practice and play. My special thanks to The Banff Centre and to NSW Arts for making this opportunity available to me."



Jenny's practice studio in the snow



Jenny in the Canadian Rockies near Banff

 Join us on Facebook

Sounds Baroque and The Marais Project both operate active Facebook sites with members from around Australia and the world. Log in to keep up with concerts, events and photos.

Artistic Director Sounds Baroque and The Marais Project – Jennifer Eriksson
Joint Managing Directors
– Philip Pogson and Jennifer Eriksson