

March 2024 Newsletter of the



Management Office Bearers

President: Elizabeth Cooney
Treasurer: Mark Kinnear
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Friends Office Bearers

Chairperson: Colin Semmler Ph: 47825765
Secretary: Cheryl Herman

www.orpheusstrings.org

The Orpheus Strings Orchestra performs at the *Pat Heffernan* Hall of Katoomba Public School, Merriwa Street, Katoomba. Admission at the door is \$20 full, \$15 pensioners (does not apply to Seniors Card holders), children free with supervising adult. All concerts commence at 3:00pm. Admission price includes afternoon tea.



SUNDAY 14th April at 3:00pm

We welcome you to our 2024 year of music

Program

Josef SUK (1874-1935): This year, we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Josef Suk, born in Bohemia (now Czech Republic.) Suk studied music and composition at Prague Conservatorium under the tuition of Anton Dvorak. He married Dvorak's daughter, Otilie. Concerned that Suk's compositions were rather melancholy, Dvorak suggested he write something a little lighter. The result was the 1892 **Serenade for Strings in Eb Opus 12**. Dvorak's influence is evident in the first movement with the second movement generally gracefully dance-like, flavoured with Czech rhythms. After a beautiful slow movement, featuring lower strings at the opening, the music is driven by playful high spirits, leading to a final Vivace. (Suk experienced the tragic death of his wife at the age of 27 in 1905, and his mentor, Dvorak's death a few months earlier.)

Gustav HOLST (1874-1934): This year is also the 150th anniversary of the birth of Gustav Holst. He was born in Cheltenham, England, to a multi-generational family of musicians. Neuritis in his right arm prevented him from playing the piano so he became a professional trombonist. His major work, *The Planets*, gave him world-wide attention. Although mostly known for his large compositions, Holst composed several chamber works, including **St Paul's Suite in C major for String Orchestra Opus 29 No 2**. It was one of many pieces that he wrote for St Paul's Girls' School, Hammersmith, London, where he was Director of Music from 1905 to 1934 and is now considered a pioneer in music education for women. Although written in 1912, Holst revised the work several times before final publication in 1922. The four movements display Holst's great interest in folk music, using familiar

melodies such as *Greensleeves* and *The Dargason*. The music is captivating and enjoyable for performers and audience members alike.

Elena KATS-CHERNIN (1957): The HUSH Foundation was established in Melbourne by Dr Catherine Crock, with the aim of providing and promoting programs to make more pleasant, the experience of being a hospital patient. Dr Crock particularly had children in mind with the program. In 2017, she commissioned Elena Kats-Chernin to contribute a piece to a CD recording to be played in hospitals and sold as a fundraiser for HUSH. The result was **Moon Feather Magic**. Elena stated that she was aware of the calming effect that her composition, *Eliza's Aria*, had on listeners so she used a phrase from that piece in the opening section. For the HUSH CD, Moon Feather Magic was recorded by the Australian Chamber Orchestra. In *Moon Feather Magic*, Alena has gently produced a flowing array of variations on a short phrase. The effect of the shifting tone colours and textures is quite magical.

Natalie NICOLAS: Multi award winning composer, Natalie Nicolas, is a Sydney-based musician, researcher and educator. She gained a Master of Music (Composition) and PhD from the Sydney conservatorium. She has composed works for many Australian orchestras and ensembles. Natalie was commissioned by HUSH to compose a short work in 2018 for CD number 18, the result being **We won't let you down** which was nominated for an ARIA award in 2019. Natalie spent some days with long-term adolescent patients at Westmead Hospital, discussing among many topics, their hardships, music and art preferences. In her compositions, Natalie aims to appeal to young people by using syncopated and quite complex rhythms that give a contemporary rock flavour to the sound. She has certainly composed a piece to cheer those in difficult and upsetting circumstances.

Colin Semmler and Julie Cooney



2024 Concert Dates

April 14, June 23, September 15, December 8.

