



**2023**  
**Your impact  
on live music**

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**MELBOURNE  
RECITAL  
CENTRE**



# Thank you

This year has been marked not only by the artists who graced our stages and the melodies that filled our halls but also by the unwavering support of people like you. Your dedication, evident in every ticket purchased, every friend brought along, and every generous donation, has provided a stage, an audience, and a thriving community for live music in Melbourne.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to you for championing music at Melbourne Recital Centre and beyond through your support.

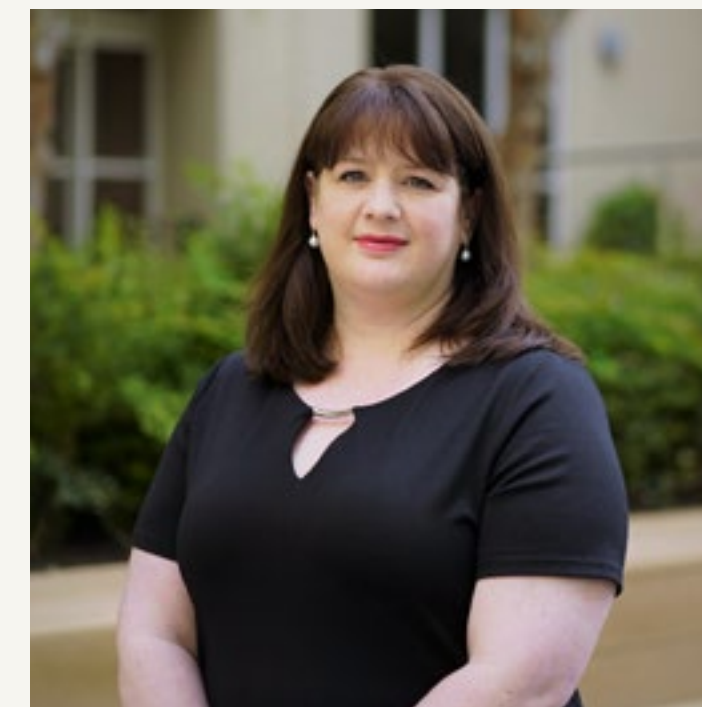
In March we bid farewell to Euan Murdoch, our CEO for six years. Euan led with unparalleled care and kindness, particularly steering the Centre through the challenges posed by the pandemic.

We are now delighted to celebrate the eight-month milestone of Sandra Willis, who seamlessly stepped into the role of CEO. Sandra has infused the Centre with remarkable energy and a profound sense of purpose, deeply caring for audiences, artists, and team members alike. Her leadership is characterised by an infectious enthusiasm and a commitment to excellence that resonates throughout the organisation.

The pages that follow are a testament to the joy and wonder of the music that resonated in and beyond our walls this year – made possible by you. As we eagerly anticipate the new year – our 15th – we look forward to welcoming you back to the Centre, sharing in the thrill of live music, and growing the vibrant community that defines Melbourne Recital Centre.

Thank you for your support.

Jody Evans  
Chair, Foundation Advisory Committee



Jody Evans  
Chair, Foundation  
Advisory Committee



Sandra Willis  
CEO

Melbourne Recital Centre acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, live, perform and learn. We pay our respects to people of the Kulin nation, their Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

**Melbourne  
Recital Centre**  
*2023 by numbers*



**539**  
performances



**119,557**  
tickets



**208**  
venue hires



**66**  
concerts by our Key Presenting Partners



**18**  
school concerts

# Melbourne Recital Centre Presents 2023 by numbers

As well as providing a platform for our Key Presenting Partners and community organisations and companies, Melbourne Recital Centre programs and self-presents a diverse range of concerts and events, creating performance opportunities for local artists and bringing the best of the world to Melbourne.

Thank you to the generous Music Circle donors who bring Melbourne Recital Centre's programming to life. *Live from Melbourne Recital* is generously supported by the Peggy and Leslie Cranbourne Foundation.



**67**

Melbourne Recital Centre Presents events



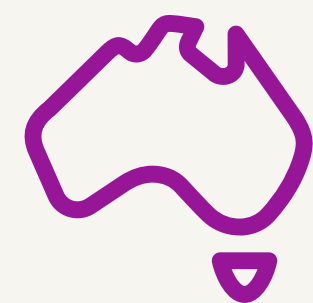
**124**

Melbourne Recital Centre co-presentations featuring a wide range of local artists and ensembles



**24**

world premiere performances



**17**

Australian premiere performances



**21**

free recordings added to our *Live from Melbourne Recital* online archive of performances



# Jordi Savall & Hesperion XXI

## A Signature Event

Rare and prized concerts, each Signature Event brings a world-renowned ensemble to Melbourne Recital Centre for a suite of performances for Melbourne audiences.

This year, audiences were treated to two exquisite Signature Events – *Jordi Savall & Hesperion XXI* and *The Academy of St Martin in the Fields with Joshua Bell*.

Jordi Savall and Lixsania Fernández from Hesperion XXI perform in the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall. Photo credit: Laura Manariti

Generously supported by Robert Peck AM, Yvonne von Hartel AM, Rachel Peck and Marten Peck of peckvonhartel architects





The Academy of St Martin in the Fields with violinist and director, Joshua Bell.  
Photo credit: Laura Manariti

Melbourne Recital Centre Presents | **Music Circle**

# The Academy of St Martin in the Fields with Joshua Bell

## A Signature Event

*“This immediacy of sound lent profound emotional impetus to Bell’s powerful account of the Beethoven concerto. Maintaining the dramatic tension of the opening allegro throughout, a dazzling cadenza by Bell himself brought the movement’s titanic struggle to an exciting close. A contrasting air of quiet recollection characterised the central larghetto, eliciting beguiling soft playing, before the rondo finale established a sense of infectious joy, capped by yet another bravura solo display.”*

— TONY WAY, THE AGE

Generously supported by Robert Peck AM, Yvonne von Hartel AM, Rachel Peck and Marten Peck of peckvonhartel architects, Jim Cousins AO and Libby Cousins AM, Andrew Wheeler AM and Jan Wheeler, Cathy Simpson and John Simpson AM, Alex King, Di Bresciani OAM and Lino Bresciani, and Igor Zambelli.



## International Classics

**In 2023 our *International Classics* recital series brought some of the brightest local and international soloists to Melbourne to perform in the intimate surrounds and world-class acoustics of the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall.**

Showcasing established luminaries as well as exciting rising stars, this important program stream plays a key role in helping the Centre achieve its mission of placing Melbourne in the company of the great musical cities of the world.

Paul Lewis

Siobhan Stagg with Timothy Young

Alexander Gavrylyuk

Anthony Marwood with Stefan Cassomenos

Steven Isserlis and Charles Owen

Ilya Gringolts with Aura Go

*“I know that one of the things that is so thrilling, moving and powerful about Ilya’s playing is that experiencing his playing gives you exactly that experience – you are not passive; you feel like you are not just witnessing but participating in the creative impulse of the music itself, which is the most thrilling thing that we can experience when we’re in contact with music.”*

— AURA GO ON ILYA GRINGOLTS

Series Partner: The Langham Melbourne  
Digital Series Partner: Australian Digital Concert Hall

Aura Go, piano.  
Photo credit: Anne Mofat





## Chamber Now

**Launched in 2019, the Chamber Now series extends the Centre's flagship international classical programming to showcase some of the world's finest chamber ensembles.**

This year we welcomed four exquisite international chamber ensembles to the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall and Primrose Potter Salon.

The Gesualdo Six

Brodsky Quartet

Van Kuijk Quartet

Musicians of the Gewandhaus Orchestra



The Brodsky Quartet

*“I believe that the Melbourne Recital Centre is the best chamber music venue in the world. I don't know how they've done it, but when one is standing on that stage, about to put bow to string, there is a palpable silence the like of which I have not experienced anywhere else. It is a quietude that somehow seems to have an energy about it, as though it is poised and eager to receive your sound. One can then choose from an endless palette of sounds, from the very quietest, most intimate utterances, to the most grandiose gestures; all will be accepted and made to sound the best they can be. A truly inspirational place. Thank you, Melbourne.”*

— PAUL CASSIDY, BRODSKY QUARTET



## Mostly Mozart

**Presented by Melbourne Recital Centre and Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM), this special matinee series brings the Centre to life during the day, and provides treasured opportunities for ANAM students to gain experience performing in the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall.**

In 2023 there were five sumptuous matinee performances as part of the Mostly Mozart series, each accompanied by our famous morning tea!


*Beginnings and Endings* with Caroline Henbest, viola and Zoë Black, violin

*Serenade* with David Kim, violin

*Drama of the Winds* with Paavali Jumppanen, piano

*The Playhouse* with Matthew Wilkie, bassoon

*Legacy* with Anthony Marwood, violin



Musicians of the Australian National Academy of Music perform with pianist and Artistic Director Paavali Jumppanen in the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall. Photo credit: Laura Manariti



# Spotlight on First Nations Music

**First Nations programming is an integral part of the Centre's acknowledgement of the country we live and perform on, and a recognition of First Nations people past and present.**

2023 First Nations performances included:

Southern Cross Soloists

Gina Williams & Guy Ghouse with  
The String Contingent

Emma Donovan

Yirramboi – Oh My God I'm Blak!

Fred Leone

Songs for Freedom

Rekindled Systems

Eric Avery

Songs for Freedom with Shellie Morris and the  
Freedom Collective. Photo credit: Jackson Grant





# Spotlight on Contemporary Music

**Melbourne Recital Centre is a champion of contemporary music, drawing artists from the far reaches of Australia and beyond.**

Our commitment to contemporary music is a fervent celebration of innovation and creativity, a spotlight on Victoria's homegrown talent, and an invitation for audiences to participate in a unique sound experience that transcends mere spectatorship.

Ásgeir

Angel Olsen

Bela Fleck & Abigail Washburn

Bic Runga

Kimbra

Luke Howard x Responsve

Monolake + Electric Indigo

Mary Lattimore

Nakhane

Paul Kelly

Speak Percussion

The Chills



## Our Festivals

**Festivals bring music experience seekers together in a burst of community and creativity. This year we presented concerts in association with renowned festivals Midsumma, Yirramboi and RISING, and presented two festivals of our very own.**

### Music Play, 17-18 April 2023

During the April school holidays, the Centre welcomed kids and families to enjoy big and mini concerts, workshops and free musical foyer fun.

### New Music Days, 19-21 April 2023

Festival audiences were immersed in the world's best new music with a focus on First Nations and female composers.

*“Warmest thanks and congratulations to you, and to all at MRC for your generous support of Finding Our Voice, and for the stunning delivery of your New Music Days. We are in your debt, as are musicians and listeners in our community, for your visionary artistic leadership and championing of new music. It was fantastic to witness the sense of hope and commitment on stages, in foyers and audiences, and to experience firsthand the incalculable value of such programming for music and listeners.”*

— GENEVIEVE LACEY, MARTEL, JUDE,  
AND ALL OF US AT FINDING OUR VOICE,  
NEW MUSIC DAY ARTISTS

Free Foyer Fun at Music Play is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Betty Amsden bequest. New Music Days was generously supported by the Robert Salzer Foundation.



## Artist-in-Residence

**The Artist-in-Residence program gives participating artists the freedom to shape the nature of their time with the Centre, with regularly scheduled performances throughout the year and opportunities to engage with the Centre's programs.**

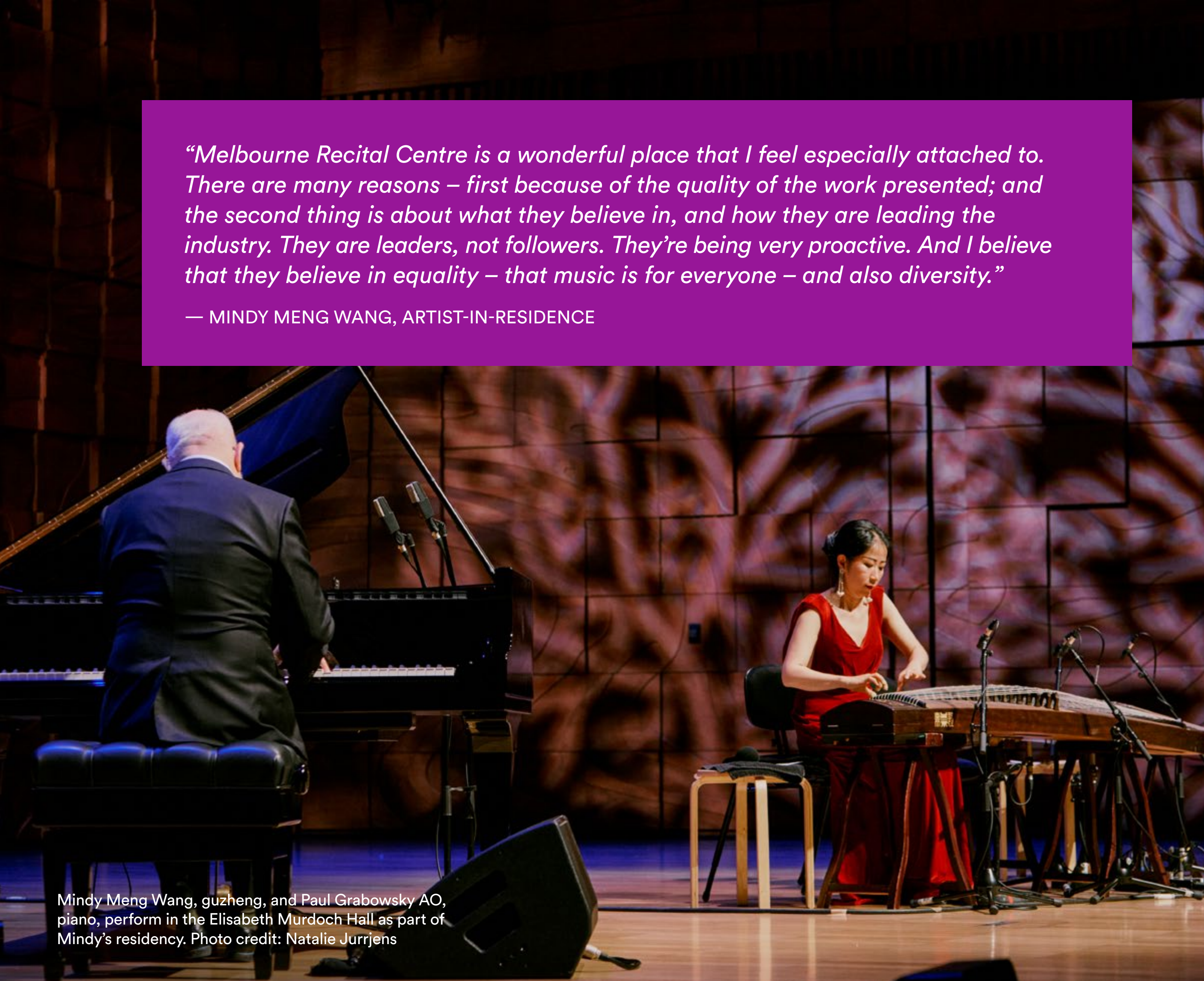
Mindy Meng Wang is a Chinese/Australian composer and performer, masterfully trained on the traditional Chinese instrument, the guzheng. Born and classically trained in China, Mindy studied Western Musicology in the UK before migrating to Australia. Excelling in experimental music and improvisation, she is pioneering a new sonic direction for the guzheng.

The Artist in Residence program is generously supported by The Vizard Foundation.

*“Melbourne Recital Centre is a wonderful place that I feel especially attached to. There are many reasons – first because of the quality of the work presented; and the second thing is about what they believe in, and how they are leading the industry. They are leaders, not followers. They’re being very proactive. And I believe that they believe in equality – that music is for everyone – and also diversity.”*

— MINDY MENG WANG, ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Mindy Meng Wang, guzheng, and Paul Grabowsky AO, piano, perform in the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall as part of Mindy's residency. Photo credit: Natalie Jurrjens





## Learning and Access

**Melbourne Recital Centre's extensive Learning and Access program is the manifestation of our strategic commitment to ensuring that people of all ages and backgrounds have meaningful opportunities to access and participate in the unique joy of live music.**

Presented for free or at very low cost to all participants, the program includes a wide range of initiatives across three areas of focus – Access, Learning, and Artist Development – which are each described in detail in the following pages.

This work is generously supported by members of the Learning and Access Consortium: The Calvert-Jones Foundation | Mrs Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM | The Canny Quine Foundation | The Gailey Lazarus Foundation | The Marian and E.H. Flack Trust | The Hon Justice Michelle Gordon AC & The Hon Kenneth M Hayne AC KC | The Sentinel Foundation | The Hugh Williamson Foundation | The Peggy and Leslie Cranbourne Foundation | George and Laila Embelton | Anonymous



Clare Zabrowarny, violinist and music educator leads a Song Play session in the Level 2 foyer.  
Photo credit: Laura Manariti





A Relaxed Performance participant and her carer from Burwood East Special Developmental School.  
Photo credit: Laura Manariti

## Access

**At Melbourne Recital Centre we believe that the joy of live music should be for everyone. Our wide range of accessible programs seek to make this vision a reality by working to remove financial, distance, and disability-related barriers to accessing live music faced by individuals and communities throughout Victoria.**

### Relaxed Performances

These specially designed concerts in the Primrose Potter Salon ensure that people with a wide range of sensory and accessibility requirements have the opportunity to experience the joy of live music.

Featuring exceptional local musicians, Relaxed Performances are presented in a modified environment that it is particularly suited for audiences with sensory sensitivities

such as autism, learning disabilities and sensory or communication needs. Small changes create a safe and welcoming environment with audience members being able to enter and exit throughout the performance, the house lights up, shorter performances of 45 minutes and the sound moderated; all of which provides a more comfortable, less formal musical experience.

These modifications also make the series perfect for young families.

- 469 people attended one or more of the seven Relaxed Performances.
- 26 artists in seven ensembles performed across the Relaxed Performances.

Beyond the Lake | Mindy Meng Wang | SARAY Iluminado | All Day Fritz | Chrysalis Trio | Divisi Chamber Singers | The Parlour



Our Relaxed Performance series welcomed audiences from the following partner organisations:

Burwood East Special Developmental School | Odyssey House | Yarraville Special Developmental School | Uniting Agewell | Belmore Special School | Glenroy Special Developmental School | Australian Unity Aged Care | Giant Steps School | Yooralla Footscray Learning Hub | Your DNA Creative Arts | Wintringham Housing Thorne Harbour Health



A young Relaxed Performance participant tries his hand at the tambourine, with SARAY Ilumando artist Nela Trifkovic. Photo credit: Laura Manariti

*Dear Belinda and the MRC Relaxed Performance Team*

*On behalf of the Burwood East SDS students, staff and families, I would like to say a heartfelt thank you for the diverse musical opportunities and community connections you provided us this year. The Relaxed Performance program at the Melbourne Recital Centre has become an important part of our Performing Arts offerings (Yay, Catherine!) and we all look forward to the “outing to the city for some fun.”*

*Our staff and families particularly expressed their appreciation of the inclusive atmosphere and safe environment your team prepared for us. Thank you, all the philanthropic donors and the Melbourne Recital Centre! We can’t wait to be part of this program for many more years to come!*

*Yours sincerely  
Helen Smith (Principal)*

*“Congratulations to you and the MRC team on this (Relaxed Performance) initiative and the faultless delivery of a valuable program. You really managed to create a safe and inviting environment for everyone and that was clearly appreciated by the communities who access the service. As performers, we felt well supported and informed through the whole process too. Again, thank you so much for the opportunity – it was the gig that we didn’t know we needed!”*

— KAREN VAN SPALL,  
RELAXED PERFORMANCE ARTIST

Relaxed Performances are generously supported by the Learning & Access Consortium and the many individual donors to the Centre’s Learning and Access philanthropy pillar.





A Sound Vibrations workshop in action

## Accessibility Workshops

Melbourne Recital Centre's range of music accessibility workshops are specially designed to provide opportunities for young people with a wide variety of special needs to experience the special joy of making their own music.

Developed in close consultation with our community of partner organisations across the disability sector, these life-changing workshops are delivered by local artists who are provided with specialist access and inclusion training.

### Sound Matters

Partnering with Vision Australia, these quarterly sound workshops for children aged 8-12 years who are blind or have low vision explore a wide range of music-making and listening skills. This year First Nations composer James Henry was the Artist-in-Residence for Sound Matters.

## Sound Vibrations

Seven workshops explored music creation and participation for 76 children aged 8-12 years who are Deaf or hard of hearing from Victorian College for the Deaf. These workshops involved 13 ANAM musicians.

## Music Production Mentoring

Led by Thomas 'Soup' Campbell, Artistic Director of the Music Production Mentoring program, this program is designed for high school students who are blind or have low vision. The program provides an opportunity to learn about music production with individual mentors from Melbourne Recital Centre. Six students participated in the mentoring program this year across 37 sessions.

Access Music Workshops, as part of our Accessibility Stream, are generously supported by the Learning and Access Consortium.





A Music Always performance by the Hetty Kate Trio at Emmy Monash Aged Care

## Music Always

Music Always is our uplifting outreach initiative that tours artists who appear at the Centre to perform in not for profit aged care and assisted living facilities throughout Victoria.

- 32 performances across four tours visited 1,234 people in six aged care facilities.
- 14 artists in four ensembles performed as part of Music Always.

Arcadia Winds | Stiletto Sisters | Ensemble 3 | Hetty Kate Trio

## Share the Music

*Share the Music* is our ticket and transport subsidy program that provides free access to performances at the Centre for people in our community who face financial or other barriers to attendance.

This unique gift of music supports individual wellbeing, reduces social isolation for older people, enhances cognitive outcomes for children and opens up a world of creativity and learning for everyone.

This year, *Share the Music* enabled us to welcome 563 children and adults to the Centre to experience a wide range of concerts and music workshops.

*“I had the happiest of residents still talking about the performance late this afternoon. They clapped, sang, and even danced – the feeling in the room was one of utter joy!”*

— AGED CARE MUSIC ALWAYS PARTNER

Music Always, as part of our Accessibility Stream, is generously supported by the Learning and Access Consortium.



## Regional Touring

Nine performances by eight ensembles took place in five regional locations – Benalla, Castlemaine, Healesville, Mildura and Montrose.

La Compañia | Jackie Bornstein | Divisi Chamber Singers | Kristian Chong & Friends | Bush Gothic | Duo Kirsanova-Lewis | The Radiohead Project | Quartz

## Free Music

Free Music is an annual program of free, open morning rehearsals that take place in the Primrose Potter Salon. Local artists who are performing as part of our co-presentation concert series are invited to use the Salon as a rehearsal and creative development space for an entire morning, free of charge.

The only requirement is that they open the doors to the public for one hour, where the audience is free to move around, observe their work from any angle and ask questions.

The program adds to the artistic vibrancy and daytime activation of the Centre but its biggest benefit is to artists and audiences. Artists benefit from having a dedicated performance space in which to rehearse, try new music, try out new players, experiment with new presentation formats, gauge audience reaction and interact with audiences to enhance their speaking skills. Audiences, particularly those who struggle to attend in the evening, or who may have financial barriers are provided with a unique ‘behind the scenes’ insight into musical interpretation and technique, how ensemble playing comes together and the joy of shared live music experience.

Kung Fu Cellist | Duo Eclettico | Sophia Kirsanova | Invenio | Ziggy & Miles | Eliza Shephard | Gryphon Baryton Trio | Queen of Hearts | Affinity Quartet

*“You are to be congratulated on bringing performances of this quality to the Yarra Valley. It is much appreciated by those of us who no longer like to make the trip to the city.”*

— REGIONAL TOURING AUDIENCE MEMBER,  
HEALESVILLE 2023



## Learning

**Dedicated to nurturing the next generation of gifted young musicians, as well as instilling a love of live music in our very youngest audience members, our wide range of learning programs are an investment in our collective musical future.**

This unique and highly impactful program creates hundreds of opportunities each year for talented young artists to learn from the world's great masters, collaborate with Australia's finest ensembles, develop musical and professional skills, build confidence, and perform at their best in our world class venue.



A Song Play participant.  
Photo credit: Laura Manariti



## Song Play

Song Play is the Centre's early learning music program for families with young children 0-4yrs, and for many of our young participants this program is their first experience of live music.

Taking place in our open foyer spaces every Wednesday during school terms, each session explores a different musical theme and develops the musical, physical and creative processes of music making. Led by violinist and specialist early-childhood music educator Claire Zabrowarny, Song Play is a mix of fun interactions with instruments, musical games, dancing, and most importantly, singing.

80 sessions were held in 2023, each with 15 children plus their guardians.

Song Play is generously supported by an anonymous foundation.

Song Play with Vision Australia is also run online for families with children who are blind or have low vision. 24 of these sessions ran in 2023 with 6-7 children with their guardian in each.

*"I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the amazing Clare and her creative genius that ignite children's love for music and movement."*

— SONG PLAY PARENT

## Music Production with Melbourne Indigenous Transition School

Presented in partnership with the Melbourne Indigenous Transition School, this workshop series provides opportunities for Year 8 students to learn about digital music production techniques, and express themselves by creating their own electronic compositions.

Led by First Nations electronic music producer Davey Norris, 24 students took part in the program this year, across seven workshop.





## Accelerando

Accelerando is our flagship, year-long, artist development program for exceptional musicians in Years 10-12 from Victorian government schools. Participants are provided with access to instrumental lessons, industry workshops, concert tickets and are showcased in an end-of-year performance at the Centre.

- Six Accelerando students took part in 2023, with three from regional locations
- 24 industry mentor sessions on marketing, business, music production, music journalism and audience connection
- 24 music lessons with leading artists
- 22 concerts attended
- One recital rehearsal in Warrnambool, the hometown of two participants
- One extraordinary end of year recital in the Primrose Potter Salon

Accelerando is generously supported by the Peggy and Leslie Cranbourne Foundation.



An Accelerando participant's end of year performance.  
Photo credit: Laura Manariti





Holly Dunn. Photo credit: Laura Manariti

## Making Waves

Making Waves is a unique program that connects talented Year 12 Music Composition students from across Victoria with leading Australian musicians for the life-changing opportunity to have their final year VCE compositions professionally performed and recorded at Melbourne Recital Centre.

123 student composers attended four ensemble workshops featuring Beatrice Lewis, Gian Slater, James Henry, Inveni Ensemble, Luoda and Syzygy Ensemble.

11 outstanding students, including six from remote and regional locations, received mentoring with industry leaders to workshop their compositions in the lead up to their world premiere performances, livestreamed from the Primrose Potter Salon.

*“Being a kid from regional Victoria, it’s so amazing to have these opportunities offered to me. To be able to go to Melbourne and spend time in a room like the Primrose Potter Salon and work with industry professionals! It was inspiring and cultivating!”*

— HOLLY DUNN, 2023 MAKING WAVES PARTICIPANT

Making Waves is presented in partnership with Virtual School Victoria and is generously supported by the Victorian Department of Education through the Strategic Partnerships Program, and by the Hugh Williamson Foundation.





Isla Biffin, harp. Photo credit: Laura Manariti

## Artistic Development

**By providing career-defining performance and commissioning opportunities for performers and composers in the early stages of their careers, as well as offering business development support for mid-career artists, our range of Artistic Development initiatives place the Centre at the very heart of a vibrant musical ecosystem.**

### Competitions

The Centre's annual performance competitions provide thrilling opportunities for exceptional young artists from around Australia to make their debut on the Elisabeth Murdoch Hall stage.

Since 2010 these national competitions have created life changing experiences for hundreds of young musicians who have taken part, many of whom have gone on to forge successful careers both on our stages, as well as around the world.

#### Great Romantics Competition

The Great Romantics Competition is our performance competition for musicians between 18 and 25 years of age with the opportunity to play in Elisabeth Murdoch Hall for a series of cash, performance and professional development prizes. The competition finals are presented as a free concert and livestreamed.

34 young musicians entered the competition this year with seven selected to take part in the finals.

#### Finalists

Dario Scalabrini, clarinet | Catherine Zhu, piano | Andrew Wang, violin | Lyla Levy-Jordan, voice | Liam Freisberg, violin | Isla Biffin, harp | Rachel Shindang, piano

#### Prize winners

- Elisabeth Murdoch Prize: Isla Biffin, harp
- Anne Kantor Encouragement Award: Rachel Shindang, piano
- Milan Kantor Encouragement Award: Lyla Levy-Jordan, mezzo-soprano

Competition finals generously supported by Margaret Ross AM & Dr Ian Ross. Prizes generously supported by Julie Kantor AO.





Bach Competition finalists. Photo credit: Laura Manariti

## Prize winners

- Richard Mills Prize: Jamie Miles, viola
- Encouragement Award: Hoaqing Liu, harpsichord
- Encouragement Award: Ein Na, violin
- Young Bach Scholars Award: Serena Zhang, piano

## Bach Competition

The Bach Competition is our annual music performance competition for artists under 18 years of age. The finals are presented as a free concert in Elisabeth Murdoch Hall with winners receiving a series of cash prizes.

103 young musicians entered this year with nine selected to take part in the finals.

## Finalists

Serena Zhang, piano | Lieun Park, cello |  
Lara Dowdeswell, violin | Audrey Chen, harp |  
Hoaqing Liu, harpsichord | Mahalia Shelton,  
cello | Minwu Hu, flute | Jamie Miles, viola |  
Ein Na, violin

Competition finals generously supported by Margaret Ross AM & Dr Ian Ross. Prizes generously supported by Richard Mills AM, Martine Letts, Vivienne Ritchie AM, and Maria Johnson on behalf of the late Harry Johnson.



## Commissions

### Merlyn Myer Commission

The Merlyn Myer Music Commission is a biennial composition prize awarded to a female composer to create a new musical work. Along with the commissioning fee, the award also supports the rehearsal, creative development, recording, and premiere performance of the new work in a major concert at Melbourne Recital Centre. The 2022/23 commission was awarded to Yuin composer Brenda Gifford for *Wadhu (Skin)* with the premiere performed by Ensemble Offspring in the Primrose Potter Salon in October.

*“It has enabled me to develop my composition skills and look at how my people’s culture inspires my music. I wanted to say thank you to the donors for this great opportunity; to enable me to have the luxury of time to work on my craft.”*

— BRENDA GIFFORD, 2023

The Merlyn Myer Music Commission is generously supported by the Aranday Foundation and the Yulgibar Foundation.



Rupert Myer AO and Annabel Myer pictured with the 2023 Merlyn Myer Music Commission winner Brenda Gifford, and members of Ensemble Offspring. Photo credit: Jackson Grant





Melbourne Recital Centre at dusk with forecourt lighting installation. Photo credit: Kayzar

## University of Melbourne Composition Awards

Since 2013, Melbourne Recital Centre has offered two significant composition awards each year for Melbourne Conservatorium composition students and recent graduates. Each prize includes a commission to write a new work for a professional local ensemble to perform in the Primrose Potter Salon.

For most winners, this prize represents their first professional commission, and the high-profile public performance of their work provides an invaluable opportunity for them to establish their professional reputation.

Two University of Melbourne Composition Award commissions were premiered.

- Thomas Misson's composition *Infinite Affinities* was premiered by Affinity Quartet in the Primrose Potter Salon in July
- Declan Postlethwaite's composition, *Lagom (not too much, not too little)* was premiered by Antelodic in the Primrose Potter Salon in April

Two University of Melbourne Composition Award commissions were awarded to be premiered in 2024.

- Kym Alexandra Dillon, to be performed by Penny Quartet
- Sanghoon Lee, to be performed by Melbourne Guitar Quartet

Generously supported by Jane Kunstler.





Natalie Grimmert, soprano, takes part in a public singing lesson in the Primrose Potter Salon, led by legendary Australian tenor Glenn Winslade, as part of a new partnership with the Melba Opera Trust. Photo credit: Laura Manariti

## Master classes

Master classes are one-on-one public lessons for outstanding tertiary-level music students, led by major international artists.

Two master classes were held in the Primrose Potter Salon this year taught by Glenn Winslade, tenor in partnership with the Melba Opera Trust, and The Gesualdo Six. 35 master class students participated.

## Newsboys Regional Music Award

Awarded to a young musician living in regional Victoria, the Newsboys Regional Music Award provides the winner with an intensive week in Melbourne engaging with a wide range of professional music experiences.

Rebecca Stephens, a young flautist from Bairnsdale was this year's winner. Rebecca spent a busy week in Melbourne attending concerts and plays, and slotting in one-on-one flute and composition lessons with renowned local artists.

Generously supported by the Newsboys Foundation.

## Artist Assembly

Artist Assembly is a unique Melbourne Recital Centre initiative that provides financial support and bespoke mentoring and networking opportunities to independent local artists to help build their professional practices.

Five local artists and ensembles were awarded Artist Assembly grants to assist them in the business side of their artistic practice.

- Iaki Vallejo produced a music video
- Kyran Daniel created a business plan, updated his website including an e-commerce integration, received marketing strategy advice, and created content
- La Compañía filmed their performance at Melbourne Recital Centre to assist with promotion and audience growth
- Xani Kolac received PR coaching and created video content
- ZÖJ created photography and video assets

Artist Assembly is generously supported by Warwick and Paulette Bisley, Joy Selby Smith, Mary-Jane Gething AO, and donors to the Artist Development pillar.



# Life Membership Awarded to Lady Primrose Potter AC

Lady Primrose Potter's contribution to the arts and the Melbourne community is well-known. As a passionate advocate for musical excellence and artist development, Lady Potter has enjoyed a long-standing connection with Melbourne Recital Centre, initially inspired by her respect for our founding benefactor Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC DBE.

In 2018 the Centre was pleased to acknowledge Lady Potter's extraordinary support through naming the Primrose Potter Salon in her honour. As Salon Program Benefactor, Lady Potter's contribution to Melbourne Recital Centre's musical life goes beyond her transformative philanthropy. She is a staunch advocate for Australian musicians at all career stages, and she works tirelessly to encourage and support the lives and livelihoods of local artists, many of whom regularly bring the Centre life with their performances.

Lady Potter was a major contributor to the Centre's Covid-19 Local Artist Appeal, and her founding support of this initiative played an important role in encouraging so many other to give to this important cause – ultimately raising over \$2m to support employment and performance opportunities for artists.

Lady Primrose Potter AC was awarded Life Membership on 22 February 2023.



Melbourne Recital Centre Life Members

Richard Mills AM, Richard Gubbins, Jim Cousins AO, Jordi Savall, Penny Hutchinson, Margaret Farren-Price and Ronald Farren-Price AM, Lady Primrose Potter AC, Deborah Cheetham-Fraillon AO, Lin Bender AM.

Absent: Kathryn Fagg AO, Stephen McIntyre AM, Mary Vallentine AO.

Photo credit: Laura Manariti



## Farewell Euan and Shelley Murdoch

**After six fruitful years we bid farewell to a much-loved CEO.**

Often found in L1 and L2 in the stalls, Euan and Shelley Murdoch made an indelible mark on the Centre.

Coming over to Melbourne for the position of CEO at Melbourne Recital Centre, Euan was a true believer in the beauty and necessity of chamber music. An ally of all musicians and arts workers he brought warmth and genuine care to the Centre, along with his wife Shelley.

We wish them both well as they return to Aotearoa, and look forward to welcoming them back to many more concerts at the Centre whenever they return to their second home, Melbourne.





# Music Circle

**Thank you to the donors who support the depth and vibrancy of the Centre's musical program and play a crucial role in ensuring we can continue to present a broad range of the greatest musicians and ensembles from Australia and around the globe.**

\* Ensemble Giovane

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# Artistic Development

**Thank you to the donors who support our enriching artist development programs to help create a wide range of opportunities for local musicians to ensure a vibrant musical future for the Centre, Victoria and beyond.**

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The late Betty Amsden AO DSJ

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## Leave your legacy

**Thank you to this extraordinary group of donors for supporting the future of Melbourne Recital Centre both now and for generations to come.**

Jim Cousins AO & Libby Cousins AM  
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The Late Betty Amsden AO DSJ  
Barbara Blackman AO  
Jennifer Brukner OAM  
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Prof Dimity Reed AM  
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Mary Vallentine AO

## Take your seat

**Thank you to the donors who have dedicated an Elisabeth Murdoch Hall seat in the last twelve months.**

Michael Bennett  
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Anne Burgi  
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Colin Golvan AM KC & Dr Deborah Golvan  
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**Thank you for  
making all of  
this possible.**

**We look forward to sharing  
more extraordinary music  
with you in 2024.**

**Alistaire Bowler**

Head of Development

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The evening of Songs for Freedom. Photo credit: Jackson Grant

