

# The Sonata Project

**Bernadette Harvey**

Sydney Conservatorium of Music

11 November 2017



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

Sydney  
Conservatorium  
of Music

# Bernadette Harvey together with the Sydney Conservatorium of Music presents The Sonata Project

This piano recital premieres new sonata compositions both inspired by and performed by pianist Bernadette Harvey and presented by Rachel Kent, Chief Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.

Approximately 1 hour and 50 minutes (including a short seated interval between Act I and II)

## **Creative Director**

Lynne Bradley, Lynne Bradley Interiors

## **Piano Technician**

David Kinney

## **Lighting**

David Kim-Boyle and Jarrad Salmon

## **Stage Technicians**

Maggie Pang and Noel Esho

## **Stage Hands**

Ravel Balkus and Luke Pritchard

## **Venue Operations Manager**

Guy McEwan

## Act I

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*Sonatas introduced by Rachel Kent*

### **Piano Sonata by Aristeia Mellos**

Paintings by Lara Merrett:  
*Casus Fortuitus II and V*, 2016  
Acrylic and ink on canvas  
each 270 cm x 350 cm

Flowers by My Violet  
(featured throughout)

PBS screens by Koskela and Nebula  
screens by StylecraftHOME (used  
throughout)

Wingback Armchair and Lamp Table  
designed by Zuster (used throughout)

*Shard* rug designed by Emma Elizabeth  
for Designer Rugs

### **Piano Sonata by Melody Eötvös**

*Floral Allsorts* rug designed by  
Romance Was Born for Designer Rugs

## Act II

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*Sonatas introduced by Rachel Kent*

### **Piano Sonata by Jane Stanley**

*Black Hole* rug designed by  
Daniel Malik for Designer Rugs

### **Piano Sonata by Ross Edwards**

*Shibori Round* rug designed by  
Akira Isogawa for Designer Rugs

## **Bernadette Harvey's Note**

# The Sonata Project is an ongoing commissioning and performing program of new large-scale Australian works for the solo piano

In offering my skills as an interpreter and collaborator in the creation of original substantial solo compositions and in recording and performing these works, I hope to provide a platform upon which the work of 21st century Australian composers is amplified. I also wish to see an increase in the number of significant piano works written by female composers and to keep the support of classical acoustic solo piano recitals buoyant by engaging new audiences to experience them.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Australia Council for the Arts in collaboration with the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and Con Brio Examinations for their assistance with this special project, and especially to the three fearless and gifted female Australian composers who accepted my challenge of creating the first installment of sonatas: Jane Stanley, Aristeia Mellos and Melody Eötvös. Their entrancing new sounds, rhythms and moods will resound from the ever-evolving grand piano forever more. A fourth sonata by the renowned fellow Australian composer, Ross Edwards, will also debut for Australian audiences.

Launching with the inaugural concert this November, I hope to bring a clarity of understanding to these new sonatas that have been forged over a long and intense creative process. More Sonata Project concerts and recordings are planned for 2018 and beyond to celebrate the ongoing creation and performance of new works (please visit [bernadetteharvey.com](http://bernadetteharvey.com) for future notifications).

# BACKGROUND

## The Origins of the Modern Day Concert

Prior to the 19th century, purely instrumental music was heard exclusively within royal courts or churches. Yet during the 1800s, cultural matriarchs in Paris began hosting soirées within their private *hôtels particuliers* (grand mansions) where the aristocracy mingled with intellectuals, writers, artists and musicians, making them a mediating zone between the nobility and upwardly mobile middle class. Newly composed music premiered within these intimate environments where great political and philosophical discussions also took place. Soon this became a broader phenomenon around Europe. Recognising the keen interest in and need for this 'modern' music to be heard by a wider audience, concert halls began to appear across the continent, one of the first being the Wiener Musikverein in Vienna (built 1870).

## The Birth of Celebrity

The spectacle of mostly young women swooning, shrieking and sobbing at the sight of their musical idols is widely considered a modern phenomenon emerging in the 1950s and '60s with Elvis and Beatlemania. Conversely, this adoration evolved in the private music salons and concert halls of 19th century Europe, where a talented young Hungarian composer and pianist named Franz Liszt was celebrated as a bona fide 'celebrity' by mainstream audiences. The heightened mood at his recitals was akin to today's rock and pop star hysteria. He didn't just play the music, he played the room. Over just eight years during Liszt's career he performed some one thousand recitals, a number not even U2 or The Rolling have surpassed!

The term 'Lisztomania' was coined by the German literary figure, Heinrich Heine, to describe the massive public response to Liszt's virtuosic piano

performances. So popular was his appeal (and that of his European contemporaries) that performances were sometimes limited to standing room only. The term, still widely referenced today and most famously by the French Indie electro-pop group, Phoenix, in their eponymously titled hit, is used to describe fanatical adoration of famous musicians both on and off the stage.

## Staging

Endeavouring to forge new ways to engage 21st century classical music audiences, the Sonata Project's staging incorporates fashion, art and interior design to recreate the *frisson* and opulence that once surrounded the performances of legendary Romantic musicians inside the salon. Celebrating a departure from the more rigid style of traditional performances of recent decades, Bernadette Harvey is dressed in whimsical designs by

cult Australian fashion label, Romance Was Born, and will encourage both applause and vocal appreciation from the audience to enliven the evening's atmosphere from the seat of the grand Fazioli piano.

Creating a sensory utopia, interior designer, Lynne Bradley (a former fellow student at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music), has orchestrated the decadent stage décor to inspire and provoke emotive responses that evolve with each of the sonatas. Uniquely crafted furniture and innovative props by leading Australian design companies together with compelling floral arrangements framed by immersive abstract paintings by Sydney-based artist, Lara Merrett, adorn the stage.

# SYNOPSIS

## Act 1

### Aristea Mellos

#### Piano Sonata

I. *We Ate the Stars*

II. *Cardinal Spada's Gallery*

III. *Vanishing Point*

Each of the three movements function as Mellos' memory of a Roman holiday. The exuberant introduction, *We Ate the Stars*, recalls a party she attended one Summer evening overlooking the Pantheon. Guitar duos, Mendelssohn four hands and Puccini arias sounded in the night air. Outside, a choir sang rounds. Local bakers laboured all evening and the rancid smells of yeast and vinegar wafted up to the terrace which was crammed with boisterous Italian students who were copiously drinking and smoking. It was an overstimulating Fellini-esque evening, and due to the odd combination of familiar music in unfamiliar surrounds, Mellos felt strangely removed from the scene. From her little corner of the terrace she observed the wild collage of activity, drinking in the atmosphere – eating the stars.

*Cardinal Spada's Gallery* recollects a sombre, claustrophobic excursion to the Galleries Spada, a palazzo filled with a disturbing collection of artworks spanning from Antiquity to the 18th century. Assorted curiosities include a grotesque assembly of deformed children, crucified martyrs and gory biblical scenes. The afternoon air was stifling and the atmosphere was oppressive in the Cardinal's chamber of horrors.

*Vanishing Point* is the most abstract of the three movements. Cast in a quasi Rondo form, it ponders perception of scale and the disorienting affect it can have on one's sense of self. With its distorting architectural perspectives and imposing monuments bearing down at every piazza corner, anyone can feel dwarfed within the space of a footstep in the eternal city.

### Melody Eötvös

#### Piano Sonata

I. *The Demoiselle D'Ys*

II. *Vérité Cachée*

In an age where our expectations of the horrors that regularly impact our society are exponentially desensitising us towards a thoroughly numbing modern reality, an unexpected sensory satisfaction can be gained by looking back at the original psychological horror stories that, in their time, were unimaginable. Eötvös' first movement is inspired by *The King in Yellow*, a book of short ghost stories by Robert Chambers in which the king's dark presence is always felt, but never materialises. Written in Paris during the fin de siècle, they are a blend of grisly, tender, thrilling, and disquieting tales.

Being a devout student of the Beethoven Sonatas, Eötvös readily threw herself into the shadows of the dramatic narrative. Her gripping introductory movement evokes a malevolent and pervasive strangeness, treading a mysterious line between reality, time travel, and a spirit world. The main protagonist in the short

story, *The Demoiselle D'Ys*, is Philip, an American visiting Brittany for a hunting expedition who loses his way and encounters Jeanne D'Ys who invites him to her castle. The pair become close despite Philip's observations that this world is disorienting. As they longingly embrace one another, Philip is attacked and bitten by a snake which renders him unconscious. He wakes once again in 'his' world (reality) and shortly after stumbles across a grave marked: Jeanne D'Ys – died in her youth for love of Philip, A Stranger, AD 1573. Atop the gravestone lies a woman's glove, still warm to the touch.

Balancing out the heaviness and low-registrar focus of the first movement, *Vérité Cachée* translates as 'Hidden Truth,' and exudes an other wordly/fantasy-like sentiment. In contrast to the rigorous structural goals of *The Demoiselle D'Ys*, compositionally, it is free and lighter to create a more dream-like state.

# SYNOPSIS

## Act 2

### Jane Stanley

#### Piano Sonata

##### Prelude

I.

II.

##### Postlude

The invitation to compose a piano sonata posed an intriguing challenge for Stanley. 'Sonata form' immediately suggests the principles of duality as well as tension, resolution and form. It also implies a piece of weighty, substantial proportion, so she developed gestural archetypes which involved building the piece with a catalogue of distinctly contrasting units and working in a 'sculptorly' way to arrive at a finished form.

The longest movement (II) is perhaps the most formally traditional in the sense that it is possible to perceive an overall arch shape and the varied return of gestural elements to evoke a recapitulation. They are like mighty proclamations, blasted out and thunderous, prophetic in nature. A collection of archetypes angrily tussle and interject with each other, forming a first 'group.' This is contrasted with a more serene and reflective lyrical idea to suggest a second 'subject.'

The contemplative and atmospheric third movement harnesses the piano's capacity to filter and manipulate resonance, especially through the sophisticated use of all three pedals. The central climax emerges from soft to loud as an insistent, rapid, irregularly repeating middle-register note. This idea filters in and out of the texture during which flourishes ascend from low to high register.

These main movements are bookended by two shorter 'unassuming' ones, agile and intricate with precise staccato articulations. Whilst the pitch and rhythmic content is identical in each presentation, other parameters (such as tempo) are varied to convey subtly different musical characters.

### Ross Edwards

#### Sea Star Fantasy

##### I. Distant and Dreamy

##### II. Sprightly

The two movements that make up *Sea Star Fantasy* are inspired by one of the most beautiful plainsongs honouring the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Star of the Sea, Ave Maris Stella* ('Hail Star of the Sea'). From the Middle Ages to the present day, composers have seen fit to incorporate it into their own work, sometimes making it the basis of an entire composition. For Edwards (and in some ecological and eco-feminist movements), she is revered as a symbol of the universal Earth Mother, nurturer and protector of the environment and the piece expresses the joy of life, positivity, and the love of beauty's nature.

Fragments of the chant are woven into the texture of *Sea Star Fantasy*. The first movement is dreamlike and gently whimsical. The second distills the sounds of the natural environment and springs to life in an exuberant, rhythmically compelling sprightly dance before plunging into the heart of a tropical rainforest, alive with clamorous birdsong and brilliant colours. The cool, quiet moments are like being at rest on the forest floor, listening to its sounds. The faint return of the chant is like a dream before the movement reaches its passionate climax.

*Sea Star Fantasy* was commissioned by John Porter as a special tribute to his friend and partner Ann Wesley-Smith.

# BIOGRAPHIES

## Bernadette Harvey

Born in Australia, Bernadette Harvey is an acclaimed soloist and chamber musician and is currently lecturing piano and piano pedagogy at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Her career as a pianist began when she won her first medal in the Sydney Eisteddfod at just 2 ½ years of age. She went on to win the ABC Young Performer of the Year playing in recitals and as a soloist with the Australian Symphony Orchestra. In 2000 she was awarded a Centenary Medal for her contributions to Australian music, and received the Australian Music Centre's award for the Promotion of Australian Music and the Best Performance of an Australian Composition as part of Australian Virtuosi (2001).

Following early studies in Australia, Harvey travelled to Canada, England and France, graduating with a Masters and Doctorate of Musical Arts from the Eastman School of Music (Rochester, New York). Harvey then taught at the New England Conservatory and the Longy School of Music in Boston at Cambridge, Massachusetts. Returning

to Australia in 1997, she accepted the Artistic Directorship of the Australian Women's Music Festival.

Harvey's recent chamber music appearances include the 2017 Tucson Winter Chamber Music Festival (USA) where she has performed annually since 2009. She has also collaborated with the Tokyo, Shanghai, Jupiter and Pražák Quartets, Joseph Lin of the Juilliard Quartet, and with solo musicians including Marc Andre Hamelin and David Schifrin, amongst others. Harvey also plays regularly for Musical Viva Australia in nationwide tours and recently presented a series of solo recitals in America at the University of Arizona, Indiana University and the Eastman School of Music.

To safeguard a vibrant future for pianists, Harvey is also currently researching injury preventive keyboard techniques to enable her students to possess a prosperous career.

[bernadetteharvey.com](http://bernadetteharvey.com)

## Aristea Mellos

Aristea Mellos is an Australian composer of contemporary classical music. Born in Crete, she received her formative musical training in Sydney, where she was an avid chorister and studied classical piano. A winner of the 2014 Gallipoli Song Competition, Mellos is also a recipient of grants from the Presser Foundation in 2015 (Philadelphia, PA); the Australia Council of the Arts (2014), the American Australian Association (2013 & 2014) and the Eastman School of Music (University of Rochester, USA), receiving the Professional Development Award (2014); and the Earle Brown Foundation (USA) in 2016. Mellos is also a represented artist of The Australian Music Centre. Her music has been published by the *Capliano Review and Soundboard* magazine, and has been recorded and broadcast by ABC Classic FM, NPR, WAYO 104.3FM, and 2MBS FM.

As a composer who focuses on art songs and intimate chamber music, Mellos has worked closely with many notable soloists. Her vocal and ensemble works are regularly showcased in recitals in the USA, Greece, Croatia, Brazil, the UK and Australia. Mellos holds a B.M Honours Class 1 from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music (University of Sydney), an M.M (Composition) from the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York, and an A.Mus A. in piano performance. She is currently completing her Doctorate in Composition and Piano Performance at the Eastman School under the mentorship of Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon. In 2004, Mellos co-founded the Ritsos Project, a collaborative fine arts festival that unites composers, performers, visual artists, actors and poets.

[aristeamellos.com](http://aristeamellos.com)

## Melody Eötvös

Born in Australia, composer Melody Eötvös is currently based in America lecturing Music at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University where she also obtained her Doctor of Music. From the age of five she studied piano and music theory and at eight began learning the cello which coincided with her first experimentations in composition. Her mature work draws on both multi-media and traditional instrumental contexts to a broad range of philosophical topics and late 19th century literature. Eötvös attended the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University, during which time she won the Collusion Composition Prize (2005) and had various winning successes including the Gold Coast Composition Competition (2001) and the National Keys Competition (2003). She received a Master of Music from the Royal Academy of Music, London.

Eötvös was a participant in the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra Composers Workshop (2009), the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra Composers School (2008 & 2009), and the Modart09 Professional Development Project with the Sydney Song Company (2009). In 2010 she was selected for the National Composers Forum in Adelaide which included the premiere of her first string quartet by the Australian String Quartet, the revision of which went on to win the

Kuttner String Quartet Prize (USA), as well as a commission from the Australian String Quartet (2011).

Eötvös has also been awarded the APRA Professional Development Classical Award (2009), the Soundstream National Composer Award (2012), and won the Gallipoli Songs composition competition (2014). In addition, she has awarded the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commission administered by the League of American Orchestras and the EarShot Foundation (premiering at Carnegie Hall, New York, 2015), and the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber Orchestra International Composition Competition (2016). She has participated in numerous festivals and workshops internationally, the most recent being a collaboration with Musica Viva Australia, the Red Room and Claire Edwardes in Sydney Australia (2013-15), the ACO Underwood New Music Readings (New York), and the Aspen Music Festival and School (2015). Recent commissions include a percussion and choral work for Synergy Percussion + Vox, Sydney (2016), and the Chou's Composition Award Commission, China (2016). She was also a resident composer at the Aaron Copland House, New York (2016).

[melodyeotvos.com](http://melodyeotvos.com)

## Jane Stanley

Jane Stanley is an Australian-born composer and lecturer currently based at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. In 2004-5 she was a Visiting Fellow at Harvard University, and in 2006 she taught at MIT and Northeastern University in America. She has also received a PhD in composition from the University of Sydney.

Stanley specialises in composition for acoustic media. Her music has been performed and broadcast throughout the world, having featured at festivals and conferences including ISCM World Music Days (2005 & 2014); Gaudeamus Muziekweek, The Netherlands (2007); the Asian Composers League Festival, Israel (2004); and the Wellesley Composers Conference, Wellesley, Massachusetts, USA (2006). In 2008 Stanley was a composition fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, Massachusetts, USA, and in 2009 she was a fellow at the Aspen Music Festival and School, Colorado, USA.

Stanley's music has been performed by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Tanglewood Brass Ensemble, Continuum Sax, Duo Vertigo, Halcyon, Claire Edwardes, Niels Meliefste and Simon Smith. She is a recipient of the Sydney Moss Scholarship, an Australian Postgraduate Award, the Albert Travelling Scholarship, and the Tempe Mann Travelling Scholarship. She has also received grants from Ars Musica Australis and the Ian Potter Cultural Trust. In 1997 she received the Sarah Theresa Makinson Prize for Musical Composition and was joint winner of the 2MBS-FM Young Composers Award.

Stanley was recently selected as a member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh's Young Academy of Scotland and is a represented composer at the Australian Music Centre.

[janestanley.com](http://janestanley.com)

## Ross Edwards

Ross Edwards is one of Australia's best-known and most performed composers. He has created a distinctive sound world which reflects his interest in deep ecology and his belief in the need to reconnect music with elemental forces and restore its traditional association with ritual and dance. Edwards' music is both universal (in that it is concerned with age-old mysteries surrounding humanity) and tied to his Australian roots, celebrating cultural diversity and the natural environment. Most notably, it draws inspiration from birdsong and the mysterious patterns and drones of insects. His compositions include five symphonies, concertos, choral, chamber and vocal music, children's music, film scores, a chamber opera and music for dance. His *Dawn Mantras* greeted the dawning of the new millennium from the sails of the Sydney Opera House in a world-wide telecast.

A recipient of the Order of Australia and numerous other awards, Edwards lives in Sydney. Recent commissions include: *Sacred Kingfisher Psalms* for The Song Company, Ars Nova

Copenhagen, and the Edinburgh Festival; *Full Moon Dances*, a saxophone concerto for Amy Dickson, the Sydney Symphony and the Australian symphony orchestras; *Five Senses*, a song cycle for female voice and piano to poems of Judith Wright; *The Laughing Moon* for the New Sydney Wind Quintet; *Zodiac*, an orchestral ballet score commissioned for Stanton Welch by the Houston Ballet; *String Quartet No. 3, Summer Dances*, commissioned by Kim Williams for Musica Viva Australia; and *Animisms* for the Australia Ensemble. Most recent compositions include: *Frog and Star Cycle*, a double concerto commissioned for saxophonist Amy Dickson and percussionist Colin Currie; *Bright Birds and Sorrows*, a major work for Amy Dickson, saxophone; and the UK based Elias Quartet that premiered earlier this year at the Musica Viva Festival, Sydney. His recently completed *Entwinings* for the Australian Chamber Orchestra premiered this October.

[rossedwards.com](http://rossedwards.com)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Sonata Project is supported by The Australia Council for the Arts, the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Con Brio Examinations and Lynne Bradley Interiors



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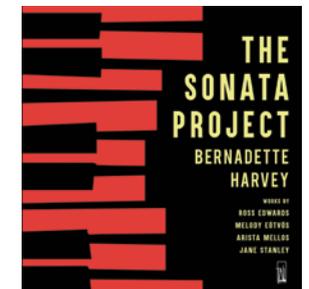
INTERIORS

### The Sonata Project CD

The inaugural Sonata Project CD, *The Sonata Project*, produced by Tall Poppies Records can be purchased via Bernadette Harvey's or Tall Poppies Records' websites.

Cost: AUD \$25

[bernadetteharvey.com](http://bernadetteharvey.com)  
[tallpoppies.net](http://tallpoppies.net)



## Bernadette Harvey's Thanks

I wish to thank all those who have collaborated on the project. Foremost, the composers plus Belinda Webster, Artistic Director, Tall Poppies Records, who produced the recording of the newly commissioned sonatas. To my children, Ariel and Ravel, thank you for all your support, and my husband, Peter, for managing and editing the recording and for his wise counsel. To Professor Anna Reid, Head of School and Dean, the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, The University of Sydney, many thanks for enabling this event tonight. In addition, Craig Wall for his flattering promotional portraits of me; Lara Merrett for the loan of her captivating immersive paintings; Myra Perez for her instinctively unique stage floral designs; the teams at Designer Rugs, Zuster, StylecraftHOME and Koskela; and last, but by no means least, Anna Plunkett and Luke Sales, the creatives behind the label Romance Was Born for my illustrious stage outfits.

My sincere thanks and gratitude goes to Lynne Bradley who is quite simply a miracle with faith, determination, humour and enormous talent. Special thanks also goes to Dimity Noble whose boundless energy and support of the Sonata Project's mission to promote Australian contemporary classical music in this unique way injected a huge dose of impetus and inspiration exactly when it was needed. To Georgia Ramage, thank you for all your assistance with so many facets of the event. Geoff Sirmay – well-known in the industry as a tireless and enthusiastic advocate for Australian musicians – thank you for being so warm, generous, upbeat and always reliable. My gratitude also extends to Jennifer Hou, my very clever student who handled the social media for the project; Trina, for her phone calls (!); and Neal Peres da Costa for organising the pre-concert musicians.

Special mention goes to my parents, Anne and Francis, who help tirelessly and never lose faith. They are the most important source of support and inspiration to me.

## Sonata

**səˈnɑ:tə/** noun

*Derived from the Latin word **sonāre**, meaning 'to make a noise,' a **sonata** is a composition for an instrumental soloist. Typically, it comprises several structural movements that vary in rhythm and mood with a narrative nature usually built on conflict and resolution, contrast and unity.*



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