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Monday, 29 November — 8pm AEDT

Livestreamed from Cullen Wines

RACHELLE DURKIN
JONATHAN PAGET

Online Concert



Musica Viva Australia

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Musica Viva Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which we meet, work and live, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present - people who have sung their songs, danced their dances and told their stories on these lands for thousands of generations, and who continue to do so.

PROGRAM

- Benjamin BRITTEN (1913-1976)**
Folk Songs for Voice and Guitar (1956-58) 7 min
- I *I will give my love an apple*
 - II *Sailor-boy*
 - III *Bonny at Morn*
- David BRAID (b. 1975)**
Songs of Contrasting Subjects, Op. 47 (2015) 5 min
- II *Fear No More*
- Leo BROUWER (b. 1939)**
'Balada de la Doncella Enamorada'
from *El Decamerón Negro* (1981) 5 min
- Heitor VILLA-LOBOS (1887-1959)**
Bachianas brasileiras No. 5 (1938/45) 6 min
- Francisco TÁRREGA (1852-1909)**
Recuerdos de la Alhambra (1899) 5 min
- Manuel DE FALLA (1876-1946)**
Siete canciones populares españolas (1914) 8 min
- I *El paño moruno*
 - III *Asturiana*
 - IV *Jota*

Rachelle Durkin, Soprano
Jonathan Paget, Guitar

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Britten's folk song arrangements for voice and guitar were written for renowned tenor Peter Pears (1910-1986) (also Britten's partner) who collaborated extensively with guitarist Julian Bream (1933-2020). They continue the trend of Vaughan Williams (and other associated with the 'English Musical Renaissance') in harnessing folk song to create a distinctly English musical idiom. These arrangements are delightfully quirky, straddling the line separating the traditional and the modernist. In clothing the familiar with strangeness, we are led to reconsider the meaning of the text. In 'I will give my love an apple' a series of riddles (subsequently explained) become metaphors for love, while 'Sailor-boy' satirises the fleeting nature of maritime courtship rituals. The text of 'Bonny at Morn' depicts the impact of a baby on rural farming life ('we're all laid idle wi' keeping the bairn') while Britten's somewhat darker musical setting hints at the spectre of post-natal depression.

Songs of Contrasting Subjects by contemporary Welsh composer **David Braid** (b. 1970) takes a series of disparate and unrelated texts from the English literary canon. 'Fear no More' is a poem by Shakespeare from the play *Cymbeline* and constitutes a philosophical contemplation of death. With a lyricism reminiscent of Britten, Braid's counter-intuitive

rhythmic placement creates a poignant and thoughtful miniature.

'Ballada de la Doncella Enamorada' (Ballad of the Young Girl in Love) is the third movement of the suite *El Decamerón Negro* (The Black Decameron) by Cuban composer **Leo Brouwer** (b.1939). The suite is inspired by the similarly titled collection of African folk tales concerning love and sexuality by anthropologist Leo Frobenius (1873-1938). Likewise, Frobenius adopts the word 'decameron' with reference to the classic 14th century collection by Boccaccio. This music stems from Brouwer's third (neo-romantic) period. It combines post-minimalist textures, neo-tonal harmonies, and Afro-Cuban rhythms.

The *Bachianas brasileiras* are the epitome of the fascination held by composer **Heitor Villa-Lobos** (1887-1959) for combining Baroque counterpoint (especially that of Johann Sebastian Bach) with the idioms of Brazilian popular styles—such as the dotted dance rhythms of the *choro*. No.5 was originally for eight cellos and soprano; and the first movement ('Cantilena'), sung here, was re-arranged for voice and guitar by the composer at the request of guitarist Andrés Segovia (1893-1987). The central section sets an evocative poem by Ruth Corrêa

describing a nocturnal scene of moonlight and drifting clouds. The combined effect is reminiscent of the jungle painting *Le Rêve* (The Dream) by Henri Rousseau (1844-1910).

Recuerdos de la Alhambra [Memories of the Alhambra] is one of the most cherished works of the guitar repertoire, composed by Spanish guitarist **Francisco Tárrega** (1852-1909). The piece commemorates the Alhambra palace, a spectacular fortress complex in Granada, Spain—now treasured as one of the most beautiful exemplars of Islamic architecture in Europe. The piece is also the most well-known exemplar of guitar tremolo, which creates the illusion of a sustained melodic line, able to be phrased in vocal fashion. A highly influential pedagogue, Tárrega set the foundations for modern guitar technique and his pupils (among them Miguel Llobet and Emilio Pujol—arrangers of the next item on the program) sparked a modern Renaissance in solo guitar playing in the early twentieth century.

Siete canciones populares Española [Seven Spanish Folk Songs] are one of **Falla's** most celebrated song cycles. Originally for voice and piano, they were subsequently arranged for voice and guitar by Miguel

Llobet (1878-1938) and revised by Emilio Pujol (1886-1980). As with the Britten, Falla's expressive settings bring fresh meaning to the texts. *El paño Moruno* (the Moorish cloth) describes a stained cloth as a metaphor for the idea of 'fallen' woman (with the cloth now selling for less), a notion that vividly reflects the gender inequality of the period and within traditional Spanish culture. 'Asturiana' (a regional style) describes the heartache of a jilted lover, and 'Jota' (an Aragonese dance) describes the piquant anguish of separation felt by young lovers.

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MEET THE ARTISTS



Rachelle Durkin's most recent performances include soprano soloist in Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Detroit Symphony under Leonard Slatkin, Musetta (*La bohème*) and Helena (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) with Hawaii Opera Theatre, Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*) with West Australian Opera and Opera Australia, Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra under Asher Fisch, Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Norina (*Don Pasquale*) with Opera Australia and The Metropolitan Opera, New York and a Gala Concert with Bryn Terfel at Leeuwin Estate, Western Australia.

Other appearances have included Lisa in *La Sonnambula*, Clorinda in *La Cenerentola* and Miss Schlesen in *Satyagraha* at The Met and Violetta, Fiordiligi, The Countess, Armida (*Rinaldo*), Alcina and Tytania for Opera Australia.

In 2021, Rachelle played Tytania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the Adelaide Festival. In 2022, Rachelle will star as The Governess in State Opera South Australia's production of Benjamin Britten's iconic opera *The Turn of the Screw*.

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Jonathan Paget is an Associate Professor at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Edith Cowan University, where he has led the classical guitar program since 2005. Winner of multiple prestigious international guitar competitions, Jonathan has performed throughout Australia, the USA, and Asia, and at festivals such as the Darwin International Guitar Festival and the Port Fairy Spring Music Festival. He has performed with Karin Schaupp, Slava Grigoryan, and Chrystian Dozza, among others, as well as with the *Silver Sands Guitar Trio* from 2016-2019. He has released two solo CDs: *Kaleidoscope*, and *Midsummer's Night* (Move Records), which have been played extensively on Australian radio. Reviews describe him as 'a fine musician with brilliant technique' [Soundboard, USA], 'up there with some of the best' [Classical Guitar, UK]. Winner of prestigious academic awards such as Fulbright and Hackett scholarships, Paget completed doctoral studies at the Eastman School of Music in upstate New York. He has been the Associate Dean of Research at WAAPA since 2017 and actively researches guitar literature and performance practices.

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