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The background of the entire page is a large, artistic illustration of a tree with a large, glowing sun or moon in the sky. The colors are warm and golden-brown, with a textured, painterly quality. The tree's branches are dark and intricate, while the sun/moon is a large, bright circle. The overall mood is serene and natural.

THE AUSTRALIAN TRIO

A Piano Trio Anthology

BRAHMS | TCHAIKOVSKY | HUMMEL | DEBUSSY | ARENSKY
SMETANA | BRIMER | EDWARDS | BERNSTEIN



CD1	[74'17]
JOHANNES BRAHMS 1833-1897	
Piano Trio No. 2 in C major, Op. 87	[29'19]
1 I. Allegro	9'38
2 II. Andante con moto	8'12
3 III. Scherzo: Presto	4'37
4 IV. Finale: Allegro giocoso	6'52
PIOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY 1840-1893	
Piano Trio, Op. 50 'A la mémoire d'un grand artiste'	[44'56]
5 I. Pezzo elegiaco	18'45
6 IIa. Tema con variazioni	18'47
7 IIb. Variazione finale e coda	7'24
CD2	[75'22]
JOHANN NEPOMUK HUMMEL 1778-1837	
Piano Trio No. 1 in E-flat major, Op. 12	[21'11]
1 I. Allegro agitato	9'58
2 II. Andante	6'18
3 III. Finale	4'55
CLAUDE DEBUSSY 1862-1918	
Piano Trio No. 1 in G major	[22'34]
4 I. Andantino con moto allegro – Allegro appassionato	9'11
5 II. Scherzo – Intermezzo: Moderato con allegro	3'26
6 III. Andante espressivo	4'06
7 IV. Finale: Appassionato	5'51
ANTON ARENSKY 1861-1906	
Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 32	[31'31]
8 I. Allegro moderato	13'03
9 II. Scherzo	5'00
10 III. Elegia	6'55
11 IV. Finale	6'33

CD3	[47'41]
JOHANN NEPOMUK HUMMEL	
Piano Trio No. 4 in G major, Op. 65	[18'22]
1 I. Allegro con spirito	9'11
2 II. Andante grazioso	4'50
3 III. Rondo: Vivace assai e scherzando	4'21
BEDŘICH SMETANA 1824-1884	
Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 15	[29'18]
4 I. Moderato assai	11'01
5 II. Allegro, ma non agitato	8'53
6 III. Finale	9'22
CD4	[58'47]
MICHAEL BRIMER b.1933	
Piano Trio No. 1	[23'35]
1 I. Adagio – Larghetto – Allegro – Presto – Andante – Larghetto – Adagio	16'43
2 II. Andante – Allegro	6'51
ROSS EDWARDS b.1943	
Piano Trio	[19'01]
3 I. Allegretto	8'27
4 II. Poco adagio e mesto, quasi recitativo	6'46
5 III. Allegro assai	3'48
LEONARD BERNSTEIN 1918-1990	
Piano Trio	[16'10]
6 I. Adagio non troppo – Allegro vivace – Largamente	7'46
7 II. Tempo di marcia	3'36
8 III. Largo – Allegro vivo e molto ritmico	4'48
The Australian Trio	
Donald Hazelwood violin, Catherine Hewgill cello (CD2 and 3), Susan Blake cello (CD1 and 4), Michael Brimer piano	

The piano began to come into its own towards the end of the 18th century. At the same time chamber music involving the piano began to flourish, and what was to become one of its most popular genres, second only to the duo, was well set on its way by Haydn and Mozart. Beethoven's Opus 1 was a group of three piano trios, the third of which (in C minor) had such weight and was so disturbing that Haydn advised against its publication – to no avail, of course! It was eight years after this (1803) that the first of **Hummel's** seven numbered piano trios was published in Vienna. (There had been a very youthful one published when the composer was twelve years old.) By the time Schubert composed his two great trios (1827), all seven of Hummel's had been published.

Beethoven and Hummel respected and were fond of each other. Ferdinand Hiller, a student of Hummel's, described the occasion when he was taken by his teacher to meet Beethoven a few weeks before his death: "The expression of Beethoven's features grew very mild and gentle when he caught sight of Hummel, and he seemed to be extraordinarily glad to see him. The two men embraced with the utmost heartiness." Beethoven thought highly enough of Hummel's music to request that Hummel improvise on themes from his (Beethoven's) music at the memorial concert to be held after his death. It is reported that Hummel's improvisation on the Prisoners' Chorus from *Fidelio* was especially moving.

Why then the neglect of Hummel for so long? Perhaps the fact that he was regarded as one of the greatest pianists of his time confused the issue of his standing as a composer, and certainly the fact that he lived at the same time as Beethoven would have made true assessment difficult. If one were to refer to Hummel as the successor to Haydn at Eisenstadt and a predecessor of Liszt's at Weimar, one might appear to be treating him as someone who was either too early or too late for the main game. But in fact it was Hummel who was more on the main road from Mozart to the early Romantics than Beethoven.

Hummel began very close to Mozart – in Mozart's household, in fact, because he lived with the Mozarts from around 1786 to 1788 while he was studying with the great man. His father had already taken him on a "prodigy exhibition" tour of Europe, as Mozart's father had done. Both Hummel's music and his pianism are founded in Mozart, but there is also evidence in his work of Beethoven's influence, even though he is said not to have found everything Beethoven did to his liking. Hummel did, however, prefer the lighter touch of the Viennese piano, and his pianism obviously reflects this preference. In the end it can be said that one thing he was not was a facile imitator of his then and now highly regarded contemporaries. His music strikes one as absolutely genuine in its expression. "Most

charming Hummel" was how Beethoven addressed him in a letter of 1814, and there is in his music plenty of the charm Beethoven discerned in the man, but also strength when necessary, as in the middle section of the second movement of the first trio. His melodies are memorable, his command of contrapuntal writing is admirable, and his masterly control of harmonic progression is employed most significantly to create the element of surprise, which is so important in the sustaining of interest. He wrote music in virtually every genre except that of the symphony, but his love of the piano ensured that his works involving that instrument are particularly special. His piano writing, especially in his concertos, influenced Chopin greatly.

Hummel's Piano Trio No. 1 in E-flat major was published when the composer was a young man of 24. The main theme of the first "sonata-allegro" movement belies the *agitato* direction at the top of the score with its initial easygoing flow and slow harmonic movement. It is well complemented by the scoring of its accompaniment – and particularly so at its return at the start of the recapitulation. Although this theme dominates the movement, there is nevertheless plenty of *agitato*, and in spite of the exhibition of considerable ingenuity in this large-scale movement, it maintains a feeling of freshness and spontaneity which is thoroughly appealing.

The second movement is in ternary form and is based on a flowing 6/8 melody of great simplicity which moves the listener in a way that some might find surprising, given the composer's apparent limiting of himself to materials which would surely have been very common property. His scoring is superb, as is also the case in the recapitulation where the piano indulges in what looks on paper like a virtuosic flight, but is mostly a gentle decoration of great detail. The middle section of this movement is also surprisingly full of notes, but its turbulence is balanced by an impassioned yet controlled utterance of the cello.

The last movement is a grand gallop, of excellently original commencement and admirable maintenance of momentum. At times the contrapuntal complexity is considerable, but it always manages to contribute to the main order of the day, which is sheer *joie de vivre*.

Hummel's Piano Trio No. 4, the second of two in G major, was composed in 1814-15. It is a high-spirited and delightful work which, in spite of one or two almost inevitable, though no doubt unconscious, references to the music of his mentor Mozart, nevertheless is full of original melodic and harmonic touches.

The first movement is in the usual sonata form; the second features some unusually florid writing (unusual in a slow movement, that is) for cello and violin; and the third movement, in

sonata-rondo form, breathes the eastern-Mediterranean air of Mozart's opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio*.

Bedřich **Smetana** was a great admirer of the music of Robert Schumann and he did, in fact, meet the Schumanns during their visit to Prague in 1847. Schumann's three piano trios were written between 1847 and 1851. Smetana's only piano trio was composed in 1855, the year following the publication of Brahms' first trio, and revised in 1857. That it is a great piece of music is without question.

The Piano Trio in G minor reflects a really rather terrible period in the composer's life (not the only such period either, given the appalling character of his later deafness). He had married in 1849 and his wife Katerina gave birth to four daughters, three of whom died between 1854 and 1856. Katerina herself died of consumption in 1859. The death of his eldest daughter Bedřiška in 1855, from scarlet fever, shocked him greatly and his feelings are reflected in this trio, which he composed in her memory – the touching dedication reads: "In memory of our eldest child Bedřiška, whose rare musical talent gave us such delight; too early snatched from us by death at the age of 41/2 years."

The three movements seem to reflect a broad spectrum of the aspects of mourning, reminiscing, finding strength in recalling the character of the deceased and, somehow, still

exhibiting faith and thankfulness. The glorious transfiguration (still permeated with longing) at the end of the last movement must surely be one of the finest things in all music.

Technically the work is brilliantly written for all three instruments. Himself a pianist, who in earlier years had his heart set on the dual career of virtuoso pianist and composer, Smetana had written ten years earlier: "By the grace of God and with his help I shall one day be a Liszt in technique and a Mozart in composition." He was not far off the mark.

Musically the work reflects the composer's national background but with strong influences of Schumann, and every now and then harmonic and melodic touches of the Wagner of *Lohengrin* (first performed in 1850).

Debussy's Piano Trio in G major is an early work, and it fits absolutely into the general musical picture of France at the time. The composer was still an admirer of Wagner when he wrote it – he actually went to Bayreuth two years running (1888 and 1889). The trio dates from approximately ten years earlier, when Debussy had just turned 18. He completed it in the summer of 1880 in Fiesole, Tuscany while on a visit there as a member of Nadezhda von Meck's household – Tchaikovsky's famous benefactor also engaged Debussy for a time as her house pianist. As such, apart from teaching piano to her children and playing duets with her, Debussy

must have experienced at first hand, and certainly sooner than most people, several of Tchaikovsky's works, which he no doubt had to play to his employer as soon as the manuscripts arrived from that composer. Madame von Meck mentioned Debussy's completion of this trio in a letter to Tchaikovsky. Debussy and the other two members of her resident trio would no doubt have played it to her.

Pianistically the work bears little relation to the mainstream of piano writing in France. Although a piano pupil of the great Marmontel (whose teacher Zimmermann once beat Kalkbrenner to a *premier prix* at the conservatoire), Debussy failed his piano exams twice and Marmontel is reported to have said, "Debussy isn't very fond of the piano, but he loves music." The writing is very effective but nowhere near as "different" as his piano style was later to become. This matters absolutely not at all. The work is fine and there are probably many people who would wish that Debussy's style had not altered as much as it did from what is displayed here; and what we have here is a totally genuine expression of feeling by a young genius unfettered by philosophies or agendas. The work remained unpublished until 1986 when the parts of its manuscript, which over the years had found different homes, were finally reunited.

The first movement puts a very interesting slant on sonata-allegro form. A lyrical *Andantino* of

great beauty and sensitivity introduces the movement, which then breaks into a rollicking *Allegro* sonata exposition, with a first subject in C and a second subject in F. Instead of a development section, there is a return of the *Andantino* beginning in B. Then comes a recapitulation of the *Allegro* with the first and second subjects in D and C respectively, and finally a return of the *Andantino* in the home key.

The ternary-form second movement is headed *Scherzo – Intermezzo*. Presumably the *Intermezzo* part of the title refers to the middle section, which is slower and of gentler character, in spite of the crossover of some material. The folk/fantastic quality of the main section is unusual and appealing in its apparent (but no doubt calculated) naivety.

The material of the third movement (*Andante espressivo*) is of such beauty and character that it could easily have served as the basis for a much longer movement, and would that the composer had written such a piece! The ternary movement he has written is, however, perfectly formed.

The *Appassionato* finale breathes great gulps of late Romanticism – but with a sniff here and there of something a little different in the wind. Its shape may be said to be that of sonata-allegro form, with a short recapitulation and a long coda. The intensity of feeling exhibited by this 18-year-old is palpable.

1882 was a vintage year – for the piano trio repertoire, at any rate! It saw the completion of two masterworks of the genre. Brahms had begun work on a piano trio in 1880 and completed the magnificent Piano Trio No. 2 in C major in June 1882. In 1881 Tchaikovsky received a letter from Madame von Meck, requesting that he write her a piano trio. Tchaikovsky replied that he did not like the medium – and then proceeded to write one of the finest piano trios ever composed, and undoubtedly one of his finest works: the Piano Trio in A minor (“In memory of a great artist”), finishing it on 9 February 1882.

Together these two works provide a virtually complete overview of the possibilities open to the piano trio genre in Late Romantic (pre-Impressionism) times. Both composers adopted a grand approach when it came to piano writing. Both had already shown, in works for the violin and the cello with orchestra, that they were aware of the highest degree of virtuosity of which those instruments were capable. Both trios are formally on a large scale. And there the similarities end.

The Brahms trio is ostensibly “pure” music, while the Tchaikovsky trio is overtly programmatic, being a tribute to the recently deceased Nikolay Rubinstein. Each composer liked the other well enough, while not being able to stand the other’s music. The awkwardness of their relationship is evident in a letter of early

January 1888 from Tchaikovsky to his brother Modest, relating to the occasion of his first meeting with Brahms in Leipzig, where they were in each other’s company, Grieg there as well, for a few days. Given the compliments Tchaikovsky paid to Brahms the man in his diary, this description of their relationship in the letter may not be quite accurate, but at least it is indicative: “Yesterday and today we have been together a lot. We are ill at ease because we do not really like each other, but he makes a real effort to be kind to me...”

Uneasy bedfellows though the Brahms and Tchaikovsky trios may have been in their day, over a century later they seem to complement each other very well indeed.

This second of **Brahms’** three piano trios, a full-blooded work, was completed approximately one year before the composer finished his Third Symphony. The first three movements are spacious in construction, the last being shorter but, nevertheless, ending with a brilliant climax.

The first movement is a driving triple-time *Allegro* with strong C major statements set off by more lyrical and more harmonically complicated sections. There are two sections which suddenly increase the speed – an unusual feature for later Brahms – and the coda works up to a grand conclusion.

Brahms’ love of Hungarian gypsy music affects the “theme and variations” that constitute the

second movement. A wide range of feeling is covered while, as one would expect, everything nevertheless coheres. The “Scottish Snap” or “Lombard rhythm” (an inverted dotted rhythm) in the first bar caused Clara Schumann to describe the style of this movement as “popular”!

The *Scherzo*, in C minor, begins in ghostly fashion and continues mostly in that vein. The trio section in C major provides one of Brahms’ most inspired and extended melodies and reaches one of his finest triumphant climaxes before subsiding into the ghostly repeat of the *Scherzo* proper.

The fourth movement is more complicated in every way than *Allegro giocoso* would suggest – more perhaps like the sort of thing Mahler was to do under a similar sort of title. There are, however, robust and ebullient outpourings in plenty.

Wonderfully expressive motifs that can be extended are the basic bricks and mortar of the work. The opening long melody of the **Tchaikovsky** Piano Trio in A minor, however, gives immediate indication of a different approach. There are separable motifs within the melody, and they are indeed used separately later, but we are given the whole to begin with.

Nikolay Rubinstein, the great pianist and teacher, and protagonist for Tchaikovsky, had died in March 1881 at the age of 46. He was five years Tchaikovsky’s senior. Tchaikovsky had been wanting to write a work in his memory, so

decided to make the piano trio asked for by Madame von Meck such a work, intending to reflect Rubinstein’s pianism in the memorial. In the end, the work is a virtuosic vehicle for all three instruments, but the virtuosity is always motivated by the musical argument.

The trio is on a scale equivalent to that of his large orchestral works, which might seem strange when at first glance it appears to have only two movements. It really has three, however, the *Variatione finale* (IIb) being a self-contained sonata-form movement, but having main themes that are derived from the theme which is the basis for the variations. There are, ostensibly, eleven variations under the IIa heading but Variation XI is definitely a coda in form and intent and certainly rounds off the set of variations. Tchaikovsky later made a cut in the *Variatione finale*, in effect removing the exposition and development sections of the sonata-form movement and leaving only the recapitulation to be played before the coda. This cut seems to do no injustice to the work and, in fact, brings it more into line with the composer’s labelling of the movements. Perhaps it was the fact that both first and second subjects of this *Variatione finale* are taken from the theme: there has already been so much development and transformation of that material through the preceding eleven variations that a further development section was deemed unnecessary.

The first movement is notable for the introduction of an extremely beautiful, ethereal

and formally unrelated slower section at the end of the development. This appears again just before the coda of the movement.

The theme and variations are said all to relate to aspects of Rubinstein's life. No details are known, except in relation to the theme, which apparently recalls an incident that took place on a country excursion by staff members of the Moscow Conservatorium, of whom Tchaikovsky was one, and of which institution Rubinstein was the head. But obviously, the music reflects the composer's reactions to his particular reminiscences of Rubinstein and the whole piece is an uninhibited expression of Tchaikovsky's feelings about an artist he greatly admired. The return of the main theme of the first movement in the coda to the last movement, its mood transformed into that of sheer anger, leaves one in no doubt as to the extent of those feelings.

Another "memorial" is Anton **Arensky's** Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, composed in 1894 in memory of the cellist, composer and, for a period, director of the St Petersburg Conservatory, Karl Davidov.

Musically Arensky's trio is a synthesis of the mainstream European tradition and Russian folk characteristics. Arensky's teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, opined that his music would not survive his death – but then Rimsky-Korsakov, together with other members of the "Mighty Handful" group of composers, had castigated

Tchaikovsky for a lack of "Russianness," only to have to admit after his death that he was the most Russian of them all. (Arensky's admiration for Tchaikovsky finds direct audible form in his *Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky*, written a few months after Tchaikovsky's death.)

It is no doubt the memorial aspect that opened the floodgates of Arensky's inspiration, for this trio, boasting admirable melodic invention over a wide emotional range, and proceeding with a gratifying inevitability, has remained probably the composer's most popular work.

The sonata-form first movement is followed by a brilliant *Scherzo*, which includes a more down-to-earth and bouncy trio section. It is in the funereal characteristics of the third movement that Arensky makes most obvious his sorrow at Davidov's death, and the last movement offers no relaxation.

Leonard **Bernstein's** Piano Trio brings us to the 20th century. This still little-known work was written by Bernstein in 1937; the main material of the second movement was reused by the composer in his musical *On the Town*, but the piano trio original surfaced only about 15 years ago, and is a welcome addition to the repertoire, even though the version now available shows signs of a lack of "polishing" for publication. It is one of only a small handful of chamber works by the composer. Written when Bernstein was 19 years old, it exhibits many traits of the mature

composer but also, at times, a stronger brand of dissonance than one usually associates with Bernstein. Neo-classical elements are plentiful and there are several suggestions of Prokofiev. Popular elements are, as is often the case in the composer's work, present as well.

The form of the first movement is palindromic (ABCBA) with an increase of speed for sections B and C; however, as the opening section contains motifs that appear many times later, the structure is not particularly obvious. The second movement could probably sit quite comfortably within Prokofiev's *The Love for the Three Oranges*. After a moody introduction, the third movement settles into a powerful headlong rush, which increases in speed as it goes, interrupted only by three bars of cello solo (*tempo ad lib*) before a final *Presto* conclusion.

"Headlong" is an appropriate description for the progress of the last movement of Ross **Edwards' Piano Trio** (1998), its end being precipitous enough to warrant the provision of air-bags for the performers!

The following annotation is taken from the score of the work:

"Ross Edwards' distinctive sound world combines shapes and patterns from nature with a variety of musical influences which reflect and celebrate Australia's cultural diversity. In his *maninya* (dance/chant) pieces, he has tried to

restore to 'serious' music such qualities as lightness, spontaneity and the impulse to dance. His belief in the healing power of music is reflected in a series of contemplative works influenced by birdsong and the mysterious polyphony of summer insects."

The trio was commissioned by the Melbourne International Chamber Music Festival in 1998 and reflects that fact in the characteristics of its writing. Edwards set out to pose major interpretative problems for the competitors, one of the biggest being the very frequent changes of time signature, at times at a very quick tempo. Many of the effects need extremely careful balancing to achieve faithful representation.

Edwards has described the first movement as "watery and light...a clear, open and transparent texture." The contemplative second movement, which gives the impression, much of the time, of free recitative-like writing, is, however, carefully measured, the piano's contribution being confined mainly to sustained chords while the string instruments rhapsodise gently together. Natural sounds seem to feature in the exciting last movement, which sustains its impetus over a potentially bewildering array of time signature changes. The resulting apparently displaced accents contribute greatly to the exhilarating effect.

The work is rich in invention, the slow movement very moving, and everything utterly convincing. It is also a joy to play!

As in the Bernstein trio, palindromic form appears in the first movement of the Michael Brimer Piano Trio No. 1, though here it is on a larger scale and not altogether strict (ABCDECBA).

The first movement, which is by far the longer of the two, is of a very serious nature, and means what it says. Each section has its own basic material, but there are crossovers, and the material of the opening *Adagio* does prove to be fairly pervasive. The second appearance of the C section is only a brief reference.

After a short introduction, the second movement gets going on a sustained *Allegro* (into which a more lyrical 5/8 section is inserted), which alters the mood considerably – eventually quite drastically – sliding into totally familiar harmonic territory.

The Australian Trio gave the work its first performance at Government House, Sydney, on 25 March 2001.

Michael Brimer

The Australian Trio

Comprising three of Australia's most distinguished musicians, The Australian Trio was born out of the enjoyment each of these artists derives from their musical collaboration.

Each performer brings a wealth of musical experience and depth of interpretative power to their performances. The Australian Trio is characterised by its great musical maturity and insight, which reveal to its loyal and devoted audience unexpected aspects of the works they play. Always searching for works outside the conventional repertoire, The Australian Trio, in addition to the major trios, performs and records works by contemporary Australian composers.

Donald Hazelwood

Donald Hazelwood, Sydney Symphony Orchestra concertmaster from 1965 and co-concertmaster from 1988 to 1997, has enjoyed a long and successful career at the forefront of Australian classical music. He first played in the Sydney Symphony in 1952.

An active performer of both symphonic and chamber music, Donald Hazelwood represented Australia at the 1974 Expo in Spokane, Washington, where he performed Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto with the Spokane Symphony Orchestra. He was one of only two Australian musicians chosen to participate in the performance of the World Philharmonic Orchestra in Stockholm in 1985.

During the Sydney Symphony's 1974 European tour, Donald Hazelwood's performances of Richard Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* were critically lauded and his repeat performances of this work were highly praised in the Sydney Symphony's 1986, 1989 and 1991 seasons.

As a soloist with the ABC orchestras, Donald Hazelwood's appearances include Barry Conyngham's *Ice Carving* for violin solo and strings, Peter Sculthorpe's *Irkanda IV* (released on CD), both the Elgar and the Bruch G minor concertos and solo appearances at Symphony under the Stars in 1992 and 1995. In 2002 he performed Dvořák's *Romance* with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in the Sydney Opera House at a tribute concert, in recognition of his extraordinary contribution to the orchestra.

Donald Hazelwood has worked with many of the leading conductors of our day, including Sir Charles Mackerras, Mark Elder, Yan Pascal Tortelier and Christopher Hogwood.

Apart from his work with The Australian Trio, his collaborations include performances in 1990 of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos Nos 4 and 5 with flautist James Galway; two world tours with the Austral String Quartet; four tours of Asia with his Hazelwood Trio, which included his wife, the late Anne Menzies, and pianist Rachel Valler; and regular Sydney performances with the Hazelwood String Quartet.

During 1988-89 Donald Hazelwood was Artistic Director of the National Ensemble based at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and was Director of Music for National Music Camp from 1989-91 and again in 1996. He is a life member of Youth Music Australia.

For his services to music, Donald Hazelwood was awarded an OBE in 1976 and was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1988.

He plays a violin made by Giovanni Grancino in Milan in 1716.

Catherine Hewgill

Catherine Hewgill's interest in the cello and early musical development began in Perth. In 1978 she performed with the West Australian Youth Orchestra before travelling to the UK for study. After a year with Eileen Croxford at the Royal College of Music in London, she studied at the University of Southern California with Gabor Rejto and attended the Santa Barbara Music Academy where she received awards for Best Cellist and Best Chamber Music Player. In 1984 she won the Hammer-Rostropovich Scholarship and was invited by Mstislav Rostropovich to appear in a special recital at the Second American Cello Congress in Arizona. A period of private study with Rostropovich followed.

In 1981 Catherine Hewgill gave solo performances with the University of Southern California Orchestra and the American Youth

Symphony Orchestra. On completion of her Bachelor of Music degree she received the award of Outstanding Chamber Music Graduate and an Aspen Fellowship to the Aspen Summer Music Festival in Colorado, where she was Principal Cellist with the Chamber Orchestra. Then followed a European concert tour with I Solisti Veneti, and study with William Pleeth in London.

On her return to Australia she became a member of the Australian Chamber Orchestra. In April 1989 she joined the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and was appointed Principal Cellist a year later. Catherine Hewgill performs with major orchestras both in Australia and overseas, and is active in chamber music performance.

She plays a Carlo Tononi cello made in Venice in 1729.

Susan Blake

Susan Blake is Lecturer in Cello and Chamber Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney. A winner in the ABC's Instrumental and Vocal Competition in 1977, she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship, enabling her to pursue postgraduate studies with Heinrich Schiff in Austria and in Basel, Switzerland.

Since then, she has made recordings for ABC Classics, Tall Poppies, Sounds Australia and 2MBS FM and has performed in many countries, including tours as soloist with chamber orchestras in Austria, Italy, Spain, Portugal,

Switzerland, Israel and South America – as well as symphony orchestras throughout Australia.

As a founding member of the Ensemble of the Classic Era she has toured extensively for Musica Viva Australia and performed at all the major music festivals.

The instrument on which she plays was made by Giovanni Grancino in Milan in 1701.

Michael Brimer

Michael Brimer has an unusually broad musical background as pianist, chamber musician, composer, organist, conductor and academic in London, Cambridge, Vienna, South Africa and Australia. He has performed the complete series of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas five times to great critical acclaim, most recently at the Sydney Opera House in 2002. In Australia, both the live broadcast and recorded series of the Beethoven and the complete Schumann piano works have been voted the most popular series on Classic FM in the ABC's annual listener survey. On six occasions he has performed the legendary piano concerto of Busoni.

The formative years of his piano study were with Eleanor Bonanar, a pupil of Leopold Godowsky. After study in London at the Royal College of Music and at the University of Cambridge, piano study with Franz Osborn and Franz Reizenstein in London and in Vienna with Joseph Dichler, Michael Brimer's international solo career

flourished in tandem with the academic, and has seen him give concerts both internationally and in Australia as recitalist and soloist.

Studies at the University of Cape Town, the Royal College of Music, the Royal School of Church Music in London and at Cambridge University led to academic appointments at the University of Western Australian as Lecturer, Monash University as Senior Lecturer, the University of Natal as Foundation Professor of Music, the University of Cape Town as Dean of the Faculty of Music and the University of Melbourne where he was, for nine years, the Ormond Professor of Music. He was appointed Professor Emeritus on leaving Melbourne in 1988.

His many engagements as organist have included performances at the Royal Albert Hall, Clare and King's Colleges, Cambridge, and the Sydney and Melbourne Town Halls, as well as solo appearances with Australian orchestras. His conducting experience with orchestras in Australia and overseas has encompassed opera, choral and orchestral repertoire, from classical to contemporary works (including premiere performances). Special areas of research have been the piano music of Beethoven and Schumann and the early music of Wagner.

As well as maintaining a busy lecturing and performing schedule, Michael Brimer has returned to composing in recent years.

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Recording Engineer Allan Maclean

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