

A blurred, high-contrast image of a person's profile in motion against a blue background. The person is wearing a dark jacket with light-colored stripes on the sleeve. The image has a motion blur effect, giving it a sense of speed and movement.

OMEGA

ENSEMBLE

DISTANT WORLD



2025 NATIONAL CONCERT SEASON

DISTANT WORLD

Arvo Pärt
Spiegel im Spiegel

Miriama Young
DuskLit

- I. Jubilant Youth
- II. DuskLit
- III. Audabe

Pēteris Vasks
Piano Quartet

- I. Preludio. Moderato
- II. Danze. Allegro
- III. Canti drammatici. Andante
- IV. Quasi una passacaglia. Allegro - Andante
- V. Canto principale. Cantabile
- VI. Postludio. Adagio

Jabra Latham
Fire Music

- I. Life
- II. Fire
- III. Desolation
- IV. Renewal

Melbourne
Tue 13 May 2025, 7:00 PM
Melbourne Recital Centre

Sydney
Sat 17 May 2025, 2:00 PM
Sat 17 May 2025, 7:00 PM
ACO on the Pier

Duration

This performance is approximately
90 minutes without interval.

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Photos and video

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of your concert experience. To
avoid unintended disruptions to the
performance, the best time to take a
photo is during applause.

Love me or leave me

Keep this booklet as a complimentary
souvenir or leave it on your seat
following the performance to be
collected, reused and recycled.

MUSIC NOTES

Arvo Pärt (1935 —)

Spiegel im Spiegel

1978 • 10 minutes

Arvo Pärt's *Spiegel im Spiegel* (Mirror in the Mirror) is among the composer's most iconic and widely performed works.

Commissioned by the renowned violinist Vladimir Spivakov and premiered in 1978 at the Moscow Conservatory, it stands as one of the final compositions Pärt completed before his departure from Soviet Estonia.

The work's structure is remarkably simple yet profoundly deep. A gently unfolding dialogue between solo instrument and piano, the music follows a strict and transparent formula where each ascending melodic phrase is mirrored by a descending counterpart. Initially beginning with just two notes, the melody gradually expands, returning again and again to the central note — a "homecoming" that Pärt likens to a return after being away.

The piano's three-note accompaniment serves not only as harmonic support but as a symbolic "guardian angel," punctuated by delicate *tintinnabuli* — a name given by Pärt to describe the sound of "little bells" that shimmer above and below the melodic line.

Despite its surface simplicity, *Spiegel im Spiegel* demands extraordinary sensitivity from performers. As Pärt himself reflects, both composer and musician must set aside their ego in service of purity and innocence.

The result is a transcendent listening experience — a moment of stillness and timeless beauty that has found a place across disciplines, from film and tv, to contemporary remixes and popular culture.

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Miriama Young (1975 —)

DuskLit

World Premiere • 15 minutes

A composer and sound artist who uses music to blend worlds and create new sonic colours, Miriama Young's work draws on an eclectic array of art forms.

Through a callout on ABC Victoria's rural radio, Miriama Young invited young people in climate affected communities to contribute field recordings to this new work by engaging with their environment and the places special to them.

The result combines Young's unique compositional voice with captivating soundscapes, merging the physical and metaphysical into a powerful and compelling artistic statement for our time.

From the composer:

The first movement, *Jubilant Youth* draws on the energy of youthful exuberance for a mercurial and dancelike opening.

DuskLit refers to the dusk - or closing - of our current way of life on planet earth. 'Lit' in youthful parlance apparently refers to 'exciting' or 'excellent', but 'Lit' also connects to a hope that youth will light the path forward.

After dusk, *Audabe* is a song for the new dawn, filled with a sense of hope for our shared future.

DuskLit is part of the *Sonic Youth* project, developed in collaboration with Professor Kathryn Bowen (Climate Futures, University of Melbourne) and supported by the Robert Salzer Foundation.



Composer Miriama Young

Field recordings for this work were contributed by Sam Willoughby, Arielle Rose, Anika Robinson, Georgia Hasthorpe and Oliver May.

Pēteris Vasks (1946 —)

Piano Quartet

2001 • 40 minutes

Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks is celebrated for music that expresses profound emotional and spiritual reflection, often drawn from his experiences under Soviet rule and his love for the natural world.

Vasks' career developed in the years following the fall of the Berlin Wall, with his distinct voice shaped by both personal oppression and a deep yearning for freedom.

His *Piano Quartet*, composed in 2001, stands as a monumental work of emotional and technical intensity, grappling with themes of turmoil, renewal, and environmental devastation.

Structured in six continuous movements, it evolves from sparse, simple piano chords into a dense and emotionally charged landscape. Repetitive layering builds immense tension, carrying the listener through vastly different emotional states without pause.

Movements such as *Danze* and *Canti drammatici* offer frenzied rhythms and plaintive, chant-like melodies that rise from the cello in haunting beauty.

A complex fugue unfolds within the *Quasi una passacaglia*, marked by ominous piano figures and soaring string passages, before dissolving into a final, heartfelt *Postludio*.

The *Quartet's* emotional breadth — from hammering intensity to shimmering optimism — captures the often-convoluted path of modern life: a journey without easy resolution, but one that is ultimately illuminated by compassion, resilience, and hope.



Jabra Latham (1981 —)

Fire Music

2019 • 20 minutes

Jabra Latham's *Fire Music* is a searing and evocative response to the devastating bushfires that have reshaped Tasmania's landscapes and communities in recent years.

Drawing on the elemental force of fire as both destroyer and catalyst for renewal, the work explores profound themes of vulnerability, resilience, and transformation.

The piece unfolds across four interconnected movements — *Life, Fire, Desolation, and Renewal* — tracing a powerful cyclical narrative that mirrors the rhythms of nature itself. It captures not only the devastation wrought by unchecked natural forces, but also the regenerative power that follows in their wake.

The opening movement, *Life*, begins with a gentle, pulsing energy, evoking the fragile yet persistent spark of existence.

This quiet optimism is soon overwhelmed by the ferocious intensity of *Fire*, where surging rhythms, layered dissonances, and volatile textures conjure the chaos and terror of a world consumed by flame.

In *Desolation*, the music retreats into a stark, barren soundscape, filled with echoes of loss, silence, and memory.

Finally, *Renewal* emerges, gradually rebuilding from the ashes — a delicate and hopeful meditation on regeneration, growth, and the enduring strength of life.

Fire Music evolved through Latham's ongoing collaboration with clarinettist Andrew Seymour and has been adapted into various forms, including for orchestra. However, in this version, for clarinet and string quartet, the clarinet's capacity for both lyrical beauty and searing expressiveness across broad emotional terrain is at its most visceral.

Fire Music stands as a compelling testament to the cycles of destruction and rebirth that define both the natural environment and the human spirit — a vivid reminder of the natural world's beauty, power and fragility in the face of overwhelming global change.

MUSICIANS ON STAGE

David Rowden
Clarinet and Artistic Director

Emma McGrath
Violin

Mark Ingwersen
Violin

Neil Thompson
Viola

Paul Stender
Cello

Vatche Jambazian
Piano





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