

## Joining the Orchestra



**Geoffrey Windsor Gee.** "Perhaps the start of a generational dynasty," Graeme (a violinist with the KPO) suggests. "I joined the KPO in 1983, Judith (a flautist) in 1995, where we met. We were married in 2002. Geoffrey was born May 27, 2007. 3.8kg, 53cm. He has been thriving ever since, and attended his first rehearsal a few weeks ago! We haven't picked an instrument out for him yet – that depends what the orchestra needs in a few years, I guess."

## KPO's Music Librarians

One of the most important 'behind the scenes' roles within the KPO is that of music librarian - because if we have no music, we have no concert!

KPO has two music librarians, Suzanne Cattell and Carol Stiles. Their job of sourcing parts and scores for the orchestra actually begins 18 to 24 months before each concert when they determine where the music is available to hire or buy. This might be an overseas source, it might be a supplier or another orchestra in Australia...or it might be from KPO's own collection of music.

Several months before each concert, the music will have been hired or purchased. Then comes the job of ensuring we have enough parts for each player, and distributing these to the members of the orchestra. If we have 80 players in the orchestra and (as is the case with the *Rhythms of Latin America* concert on September 1st) there are 9 works being performed, that's 720 parts (+ the conductor's scores) to be organised and distributed (and again checked on their return at the end of the concert)! Each player signs for the parts they receive, because each

part not returned to a hirer can cost the orchestra up to an additional \$100 – an expense we desperately try to avoid.

The job of securing music is not without its challenges. The NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition presents one – as our librarians usually only have three weeks between the date the finalists are selected (and, therefore, they know the 7 or 8 pieces to be performed) and the orchestra's first rehearsal...and, of course, there is absolutely no guarantee that all the music will be immediately available to the KPO from a source within Australia!

It often makes sense for the orchestra to buy (rather than hire) music. These scores and parts are added to our growing music library, and can be hired out to other Australian orchestras...with our music librarians organizing the despatch of the music and checking, then storing, the music on its return.

KPO is always grateful of donations to enable us to purchase music. One generous member of the orchestra has for a number of years provided funding for the purchase of at least one work each year, and 3M Australia recently provided the orchestra with funding to enable acquisition of scores and parts for this year's NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition Finals Concert.

### For Your Diary

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September at 8.00pm. **Rhythms of Latin America.** Tickets: 1300 306 776

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> September at 2.00pm & 3.30pm. **Kids' Proms Concerts.** Tickets: 1300 306 776

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October at 3.00pm **Music for Friends.** Enquiries: Madeleine, 9144 6747

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November at 8.00pm. **Masterpieces...for a Friend.** Tickets: 1300 306 776

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 8.00pm **It's Jazz – St Ives Rotary benefit concert.** Enq: Margaret 9488 9161

**Visit [www.kpo.org.au](http://www.kpo.org.au) for further details of KPO's 2007 Concerts**

When next updating your Will, please consider including a bequest to assist the KPO. You'll be helping ensure that fine music is provided to future generations – and we can't think of more deserving beneficiaries!

We welcome any feedback, suggestions on content, and contributions to *Overtures*. These can be forwarded direct to the editor, Peter Lacey, 9899 2957 or laceyblax@yahoo.com, or mailed to KPO, PO Box 165, Pymble NSW 2073

# Overtures

August 2007

This issue of *Overtures* is primarily devoted to introducing some "faces of the KPO". But first, our next concert...

## The Rhythms of Latin America

What a night this promises to be (for those lucky enough to have secured tickets)!

We're starting with a pre-concert talk by Daniel Rojas – born in Santiago, Chile; the son of a Peruvian folk singer; a pianist who has performed extensively in Australia, Japan, Spain and South America; a composer whose works often reflect his research into various Latin-American popular, folk and indigenous traditions.

One of Daniel's compositions, *Concierto para piano y orquesta: latinamericanismos*, is being performed during the concert by Zubin Kanga – who gave the premiere performance of this work in 2006.

Pianist Zubin Kanga (who is about to leave Australia to commence postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy of Music, London) and soprano Verity Snook join the KPO in an exciting (and, for the orchestra, challenging) program of music from Mexico, Brazil, Jamaica, Peru, Argentina, Cuba, Venezuela and Chile, as well as other music inspired by colourful Latin American folk music traditions.

And, to conclude the evening, a South American supper (empanadas, Chilean wine, alfajores, masas and Brazilian coffee) will be served while the music continues with a presentation by Kamina, a duo using guitar, charango (a small 10-string Andean instrument) and zampoñas (panpipes with two rows of pipes).

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September** at Ravenswood Centenary Centre Auditorium. **NO TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR.** Free pre-concert talk commences 7.15pm, concert commences 8.00pm.

## ...and the (Latin American) beat goes on, and on

For Daniel Rojas and the KPO percussion section, the rhythms of Latin American music will continue beyond this Saturday evening concert. KPO is planning a Latin American percussion workshop for musicians from local schools and youth orchestras. It will be held later this year or early next year, and Daniel will be principal tutor.



Daniel Rojas

"Latin American music can be very much like jazz because we seek spontaneity, and the music presented can vary significantly from one performance to another. Latin American rhythms pose special challenges to classical musicians, because they are trained to play exactly what is written on their scores...but often performances of Latin American music demand, for example, that the musician improvise or have prior knowledge of standard salsa rhythms. And even when notated, there is the question of how to "feel" the rhythm and how to interlock with other rhythmic parts in the orchestra and percussion ensemble. With Latin American music becoming an increasingly accepted part of the standard orchestral repertoire, it is important that Australian percussionists have the opportunity to gain practical experience at workshops such as this one organised by the KPO. So I am delighted that ten or so young percussionists will have the chance to broaden their practical experience at this workshop," Daniel Rojas suggests.

Workshop enquiries: Liz Wilson, 9498 3169.

### YOUR ADDRESS

If your address is incorrect, or if you'd prefer to be removed from KPO's mailing list, please return the accompanying mailing slip (with corrected address, or the notation 'remove') to KPO, PO Box 165, Pymble NSW 2073, or advise us via our website, [www.kpo.org.au](http://www.kpo.org.au)

KPO has recently appointed three violinists to join its team of Concertmasters. We are delighted to welcome each of them with a brief profile:

### Samantha Boston



'I have wanted to play the violin for as long as I can remember. I think it goes back to learning the alphabet from an illustrated book when I was really small; A is for apple, B is for bat ... V is for violin. We lived in Darwin when I was very young and it wasn't until we moved to Canberra when I was 10 years old that I started to learn the violin. So I was quite a late starter.

The first orchestra I ever saw was the Darwin Symphony Orchestra. They played *Peter and the Wolf* in what is known as "the Tank". It's an old water tank that has been converted into the Darwin High School gymnasium. The orchestra sat in the middle, like they would have during a rehearsal and chairs were crammed in all the way around them for the audience. I think we sat near the double basses and celli. I remember having a good view of the conductor. One person was invited to go up and conduct the orchestra for a piece; I was desperate to have a go but was too shy to volunteer. A small boy went up and took the baton instead.

I grew up in Canberra and learnt from two exceptional teachers there. My first teacher was Josette Morgan. And my second teacher, with whom I completed my Bachelor of Music in violin performance, was Barbara Jane Gilby. When I finished my degree in Canberra I came to Sydney to continue studying. I now teach violin full time and, of course, play with the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra. I also continue to have lessons of my own from Principal Second Violin of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Marina Marsden.

I feel lucky to have had such amazing women teaching me and mentoring me and they have given me a strong desire to pass on what I have learnt and to mentor young people

myself. I also feel lucky to be in the profession that I am, as it is also a passion for me. I love teaching my students and I suspect that I have more fun than they do. We play games together and sing and colour in, and play the violin. Learning becomes so disguised by the games and the enjoyment of playing the violin that they forget how difficult it can be and that they're learning.

I am greatly looking forward to the Kids' Proms concert in September as it will be my first opportunity to give a child an experience like the Darwin Symphony Orchestra gave me. Who knows, maybe they'll remember the experience and play an instrument for the rest of their life, and have fun doing it too.'

### Justin Tyler

'I started playing the violin when I was seven. My family is not musical, but Mum and Dad encouraged me to try a musical instrument because I was bored at school. We did not own a piano at the time, so the only other musical instrument on offer – the violin – determined the choice to be made. Knowing that I was growing quickly (and also perhaps thinking that the novelty would soon wear off), they found the cheapest violin they could lay their hands on and let me loose.

When I started playing my technique was horrible! I remember everything my first teacher used to say - "Left wrist back! Hold your violin up! Bend your right thumb!..." I was slow to catch on because I was more interested in finding new pieces to play than working on the details of the ones I had started. Needless to say I tested the patience of numerous teachers, becoming a good sight reader but not improving much in the areas like intonation that are very important if you are to become a good violinist. That I am still playing twenty five years later is testament to the patience of all the numerous teachers who have helped me along the way.

After learning the violin for a couple of years, I joined the Sydney Youth Orchestra Association (SYOA) in 1984. My 15 years in the SYOA really helped my development as an orchestral musician. It was during this period that I met Henryk Pisarek. Henryk was Artistic Director for the SYOA and was also Chief Conductor of the Sydney Youth Orchestra, the most advanced of around 10 orchestras run by the SYOA. Henryk was one of the main people who encouraged me to fix my technique. Indeed, on more than one occasion he refused to let me move to more senior orchestras within the SYOA until I had shown progress!

Now, after many years I have come full circle, working once again with Henryk - but as a more mature musician who has had the good fortune to develop in a fantastic environment that he helped to create and nurture.

The orchestras I have played in include not only the Sydney Youth Orchestra but also the orchestra of the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, the Willoughby Symphony,

### 'Suyeon Kang, Violin' CD

Those who were privileged to attend Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra's recital last August at The Grange, at which young violinist Suyeon Kang gave a spectacular performance of de Sarasate's *Carmen Fantasy*, will be interested to know that ABC Classic FM has just released a CD featuring her performances...and *Carmen Fantasy* is one of the tracks.

And, even better news, the CD is now available to KPO supporters for just \$15 – a 25% saving on the normal retail price.



Suyeon is an exceptionally talented musician. She is a previous prizewinner in the NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition and was named Young Performer of the Year in 2005 by Symphony Australia. After winning two significant scholarships in the past year, she recently left for Germany to pursue an international music career.

This CD - simply titled Suyeon Kang, Violin - includes Suyeon's rendition of Sibelius' *Violin Concerto* with The Queensland Orchestra, together with four vibrant pieces (de Sarasate's *Carmen Fantasy*; Dvorak's *Gypsy Songs, Op. 54 No 4 – Songs My Mother Taught Me*; Alberniz's *Tango*; Sarasate's *Ziguerweisen (Gypsy Aires)*) performed with pianist Tim Young. The music is exciting, so the CD is great listening. And, with Suyeon's links with the KPO, it is an exceptionally appropriate gift for your family and friends.

'Suyeon Kang, Violin' will be available at our Rhythms of Latin America concert on September 1st, or is available by phoning Peter on 9899 2957.

### KPO Composer Workshops 2007

"A golden opportunity for emerging Australian composers" is how the KPO Composer Workshops have been described. And, certainly, many composers from across the country agree. Out of fifteen national submissions, there were places for only three composers: Katia Beaugeais and Matthew Milne from Sydney and, from Melbourne, Lorenzo Alvaro.

It was felt that we had three of the strongest pieces submitted so far for these workshops, now in their fourth year. A number of innovations were introduced this year – for a start, composers were invited to compose a piece especially for the needs of the KPO, rather than sending in existing works. A few limitations were set (in terms of instrumentation, time-scale etc) and the works were monitored along the way, with feedback being given to the composers.

In 2007, more rehearsal time was allocated to the works – two Tuesday evenings plus a Sunday presentation, where previously there had only been one Tuesday rehearsal. This was of great benefit to both the orchestra and the composers. Katia, Lorenzo and Matthew all made use of the opportunity to make changes to their works along the way, significantly adding to the polish of the final product. I was delighted to see the pieces grow and evolve over the course of two and a half weeks. In the public forum on Sunday 29 July, all works were presented and recorded. Lorenzo's piece, by the end of this process, sounded fully-formed, with the KPO giving it an excellent rendition in the public forum, presented to a small but interested audience. The other two works also received convincing readings by the orchestra - which will help in documenting each of these works, and hopefully give them a further life into the future.

No amount of score-studying, text-book reading and theorising can quite prepare a composer as well as the experience of rehearsal and performance with a real, live orchestra! The KPO provides a rare (and friendly!) opportunity for young and emerging composers to give life to their ideas in the craft of orchestral writing. With tertiary education bodies largely abandoning their role in providing composers such opportunities, the KPO composer workshop provides a valuable resource for the future of Australian music. As tutor for this annual event, it has been my pleasure to be associated both with the composers and with the members of the KPO. We can all be proud of the quality of this innovative musical initiative.

- Paul Stanhope, composer tutor