

That Magic Bow

Ken Selby has been playing the violin since his school days, traveling by tram from North Sydney to lessons at the Mosman Conservatorium of Music. He is



particularly interested in violins and bows, and has a small collection of books on bows and violins, plus a collection of about 20 bows – many of them W.E. Hill and Sons bows. He provided this interesting information on bows:

The Bow is the most important part of the string instruments in an orchestra, and the most important part of the Bow is the horse hair.

No other product but horse hair produces the musical quality required. In the earliest bows, thongs of leather, strands of silk, threads, other strings, even rushes were used. For centuries, horse hair has been the only really acceptable material, although synthetic hair is now in use. Special wire hair has also been used for cello and bass bows.

On a violin bow, the hair is arranged to form a ribbon which is about 8mm wide at the head of the bow and about 10mm wide at the frog.

Let's hope that the existence of the horse is never lost. However, in the 1930's the horse population in Canada and the USA totaled 43 million; today the population is only about 2 million.

For the last 215 years - since the time of Francis Tourte - Pernambuco, a Brazilian wood, has been used in the construction of the Bow. Beech, ironwood and snakewood have also been used. However, Pernambuco could soon disappear from Brazil because Pernambuco trees are being cut down and replaced with coffee bushes.

All string players must look after and care for their bows. Most players insist on good tension, good weight, good hair. Bow hair is gradually lost from wear and so must be replaced by a good repairer.

There have been many good bow makers in England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and a few in Australia. The U.K. bow makers, W.E. Hill & Sons are a well known firm, but they no longer exist. The

most expensive bow by W.E. Hill & Sons was the gold mounted tortoise shell Fleur-de-Lys bow. If a customer purchased a Stradivaris or a Guarneri violin, Hills gave them a Fleur-de-Lys bow. The original price of a Fleur-de-Lys bow was 10 pounds. Today, the price could be \$20,000 or more, depending on the condition.

There were over 20 very fine bow makers who worked for W.E. Hill & Sons. Quite a number of Hill bows come on the market and can be purchased from dealers. Before 1917, every Hill bow maker was allocated a sign to record each bow he made. From 1917 onwards each bow maker was allocated a number and this was shown on the bow face and on the metal seating of the frog. Also recorded on every bow stick and frog was the year of construction. The first three very early bow makers at W.E. Hill & Sons (Samuel Allen, William Napier and James Tubbs), however, did not record marks or numbers on their bows.

The essential qualifications of a good bow are its perfect balance and levity, strength and stability. Whilst possessing a necessary flexibility, it must be straight as an arrow from heel to point. However, when in use, violin and viola bows will make a very slight curvature to the right and the cello bow to the left.

Much more can be written about bows... but, regrettably, space is limited.

For Your Diary

Saturday 11th March at 8.00pm & Sunday 12th March at 2.30pm Mozart and Mahler concert.
Tickets: MCA Ticketing 1300 306 776

Tuesday 14th March at 7.30pm KPO's AGM at Ku-ring-gai Town Hall, Pymble

Saturday 20th May at 8.00pm & Sunday 21st May at 2.30pm. The Grand Tour concert.
Tickets: MCA Ticketing 1300 306 776

Sunday 4th June Friends of the KPO afternoon recital. Enquiries: Madeleine 9144 6747

Advance notification: **Saturday 9th December** at 8.00pm. **Rotary Popular Classics** concert.
Tickets: MCA Ticketing 1300 306 776

Visit www.kpo.org.au for further details of **KPO's 2006 Concerts**

Journal of the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra Incorporated

Overtures

February 2006

“Mozart & Mahler” concerts Saturday March 11th and Sunday March 12th

These are enormous concerts to start the year.

The music is “big” - Mahler’s massive *Symphony No 5*, Mozart’s wonderful *Concerto No 1 for Flute and Orchestra* and Arvo Paart’s *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten*, which is described as “extraordinarily simple... and simply extraordinary”. And the orchestra is much larger than usual – with 90 musicians participating.

Free pre-concert talks are being presented 45 minutes prior to each concert.

We are delighted to welcome Emma Sholl, Associate Principal Flute with the SSO, as soloist for the Mozart Concerto.

So please join us at one of the two performances. And do bring a friend...there’s a very special \$5 per ticket offer available to them (see yellow insert).

The venue is Ravenswood Centenary Centre Auditorium, commencing on Saturday at 8pm, Sunday at 2.30pm.

The orchestra has dedicated this concert to long-standing supporters, George and Esther Szekeres, who passed away late last year. George was particularly fond of Mahler’s symphonies - so as an added tribute to him, a long time friend provided funding to the KPO to purchase the score and parts for Mahler’s *Symphony No 5* for these performances and then to add to KPO’s music library (which is regularly accessed by other Australian orchestras).

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.

Emma Sholl



Emma is a “local” girl, having lived in Arrarmon and completed schooling (with a music scholarship) at Roseville College.

Her family has a significant music background. Both her great grandmothers were pianists and one was a music teacher. Her grandmother was also a pianist. Both her parents, whilst not musicians, are extremely fond of music... and her 20-year-old brother is currently studying the clarinet at the Sydney Conservatorium.

The decision to perform Mozart’s *Flute Concerto 1* with the KPO was greatly influenced by Emma’s mother. “She likes it a lot better than Mozart’s second Flute Concerto,” Emma revealed to us.

We also learned that Emma performed this flute concerto last year with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra – we think the ideal ‘rehearsal’ for her appearances with the KPO!!

Emma joined the SSO in 1999 and is now Associate Principal Flute with the orchestra.

Emma has studied in Geneva and toured extensively, including to St Petersburg and Moscow in Russia.

Performing as a member of the SSO demands most of Emma’s time. She, however, greatly cherishes the opportunities of performing as a soloist with orchestras or in recitals, as this requires different performance skills and presents her with quite different challenges.

Emma enjoys a variety of sports – particularly swimming, tennis and golf. And she’s currently renovating a house – when *Overtures* contacted her recently, she was busy painting window frames!!

Oh, what a night!

Last December's *Popular Classics* concert, presented by the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra and organised by the Rotary Club of St Ives, was a huge success.

Compliments received by the Rotary Club of St Ives included "The evening was just superb. It was a wonderful program of music, presented by stunning performers in a warm and friendly atmosphere", "I thoroughly enjoyed the performance... all my favourite type of music" and "the concert was brilliant... an unforgettable night." Over \$10,000 was raised by Rotary, to benefit a number of local children's charities.

The good news is that another *Popular Classics* concert will be presented by the KPO in 2006. The date is Saturday 9th December (please mark this in your diary now) and the venue will again be the Gillian Moore Centre for Performing Arts, Pymble Ladies College, Pymble.



Olivia Sham, soloist, and the KPO at the 2005 Rotary *Popular Classics* concert.

KPO's Office is a Kitchen Table...

or more accurately, a number of kitchen tables. KPO survives (or, as many would argue, thrives!) because it is volunteer-based, volunteer-managed, volunteer-driven. It has no paid staff – it simply can't afford such a 'luxury'!!!

A number of very active committees and very dedicated individuals ensure the KPO keeps moving forward. These include an Executive Committee (representing the orchestra's players and the orchestra's various sub-committees), a Planning

Committee, a Marketing Committee and a Concerto Competition Committee.

So various kitchen tables throughout Sydney double as KPO offices.

In any year, around 100 musicians freely give of their time to rehearse and perform with the KPO. This alone can be a significant commitment – in the week of the March and May concerts, for example, this necessitates attending two rehearsals (Tuesday and Friday evenings) plus the performances on Saturday and Sunday.

A number of individuals also give an enormous amount of extra time to the KPO. To name just a few: Louise Keller (KPO's President) and Anne Cahill (Vice President) provide the leadership and undertake many of the 1001 administrative tasks required to keep the orchestra performing; Graeme Gee, as Treasurer, looks after the KPO's finances; Peter Lacey, our Marketing Manager, co-ordinates publicity and fundraising for the orchestra; Jocelyn Brennan-Horley is responsible for ticket sales and KPO's regular letterboxing activities; music notes are written by Deb Dietz, David Angell, Suzanne Cattell and Lewis Cornwell; Ros Graham regularly updates various mailing lists and databases; Madeleine Adams co-ordinates our *Friends of the KPO* activities and supports at concerts; Martin Brown maintains KPO's website, www.kpo.org.au.

We're always grateful of more helpers. If you would like to be part of the 2006 KPO team, please contact Anne Cahill (9416 4199), Madeleine Adams (9144 6747) or Peter Lacey (9899 2957).

The KPO Annual General Meeting is at 7.30pm on Tuesday 14th March at Ku-ring-gai Town Hall. All orchestra members are encouraged to attend. 2005 Annual Reports will be presented... plus, this is your opportunity to help shape the orchestra in 2006 and beyond.

Making a few dollars go a long, long way

After surmounting the intricacies of the music, the greatest ongoing challenge facing the KPO is generating the income needed to sustain all the orchestra's activities.

Providing effective promotion for each concert is a necessity, because every seat that's filled also brings in valuable dollars. We are delighted to see that audience numbers are consistently rising, and that

several concerts each year now attract capacity audiences... and we assure you that we're really appreciative of those who regularly attend KPO concerts.

Unfortunately, ticket sales generate only half of KPO's required income – so we are continually working to attract grants, sponsorships, advertising support and donations.

We have a long list of projects that will benefit from any money the orchestra can raise this year (see green insert). If you're in a position to assist, we would **love** to hear from you. If you wish to make your donation using a credit card, or wish to direct your support to a specific purpose, please simply call 9899 2957.

Because KPO has no administrative staff to pay, no office to maintain, and no professional fundraisers to remunerate, every dollar received is effectively directed by the orchestra to its wide range of community-focused activities.

Donations to the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra are fully **tax deductible**.

And one final thought on supporting the KPO. Bequests are becoming an increasingly valuable source of income to organizations like the KPO – so when you're next reviewing your Will, please consider including a bequest to benefit the KPO.

Many Thanks to

- Ku-ring-gai Council for its 2005 grant of \$5,830 – to enable provision of buses from retirement villages to KPO concerts, to assist with the staging of our Chinese Connections concert, and the organization, adjudication and provision of prize money for the Multiple Concerto section of the NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition.

- Bayer Australia Limited and the Northside Youth Orchestra Bursary for providing prize money for the NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition.

- Two individual donors who have each given substantial donations enabling purchase of the scores and parts for Mahler's 5th *Symphony* and, for performance in 2005, Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No 5* and Dvorak's *From the New World Symphony*.

- Various donors and *The Friends of the KPO*

whose generous donations led to recent purchases by the orchestra of crash cymbals and a tam tam, and enabled the orchestra to conduct a highly successful Orchestral Development Workshop with music educator and conductor, John Curro, in November.



KPO's Jane Makeham with the tam tam, stand and beater, recently purchased using donations received from Friends of the KPO and other generous supporters

Do you know any talented musicians attending high school?

If so, please remind them that entries for the 2006 NSW Secondary Schools Concerto Competition, organized by the KPO, close on Friday 17th March.

Entry Forms can be downloaded from KPO's website, www.kpo.org.au, or by phoning 9498 3619.

Auditions will be conducted at the Ravenswood Centenary Centre Auditorium, Gordon, on Sunday 9th April commencing at 8am. If you would like to see and hear some truly talented young musicians, please come to these auditions - admission is free.

The Finals Concert, when the finalists perform with the KPO, will be held on Saturday 24th June. This is always a "sell out" evening – so to avoid possible disappointment, please book your tickets as early as possible through MCA Ticketing 1300 306 776.

Friends of the KPO

Friends of the KPO are an exclusive "inner circle" who support the Orchestra and, in return, receive a range of privileges.

Sunday afternoon chamber concerts are held several times each year for KPO Friends, allowing them to meet members of the orchestra and to gain special insights into the organization and running of the orchestra. The next Friends recital is on June 4th.

Membership of the Friends for 2006 is just \$20. To join, simply complete and return the enclosed yellow form.