

Brian Everingham
2022

The Bathurst Escape



Participants

Mr Phillip Sametz – Tour Leader (VIC)

Mr Kevin Pollard – Tour Manager

Mrs Libby Albert and Mr Robert Albert

Ms Faye Bingham and Mr Brian Everingham

Mrs Oksana Birchall

Ms Jan Bowen

Mrs Sandy Campbell (TAS)

Dr Barbara Carney

Ms Emily Cross (VIC)

Dr John De Luca

Mrs Mary Gannon and Prof Frank Gannon (QLD)

Mrs Win Garside

Mrs Camilla Gill

Mrs Helen Hallett

Mrs Diana Hazard

Mrs Mary Newhouse

Mrs Roz O'Connor (TAS)

Mr David Pacey (VIC)

Mrs Helen Philips

Mrs Barbara Raff

Ms Peggy Sanders

Ms Evelyn Tait

Mrs Joy Taylor



Friday 30th September 2022

We managed to walk to the station in between showers, caught an almost empty South Coast train to the city and walk to the Grand Sheraton under shelter, except for the occasional crossing. The streets showed that there had been a downpour.

The party was already gathering when we arrived but we did not get away until all luggage was stowed away. On the road by 10.15!



And, surprisingly, heading north over the Harbour Bridge, to follow the various tollways south and west. Of course, the M7 was almost at a standstill. Thankfully it was an easy drive to the Blue Mountains. We stopped at Wentworth Falls for a toilet break. The clouds hugged us!



Mount Solitary through the mist



Budding Pomaderris species



Lunch was at Highfields Garden in Little Hartley, a delightful ridge but carved into numerous small farmlets for those escaping the city life.





The meal was inside and as a gluten-free diner Faye had chicken. I had quiche. The salad was excellent and so was the wine. All wines were sourced from Orange. Over the meal we were able to get to know some of our fellow travellers. Opposite us were Libby and Robert Albert. Yes, the Albert music family. Direct links to the sheet music empire but also to the discovery of AC/DC. And next to us we're Mary and Frank Gannon, now downsized at Newstead, on the Brisbane River.

And then we walked around the Garden, the loving creation of David Kennedy, though badly affected by the excessive amount of rain. It was an eclectic combination of planting but an inspired piece of engineering.





Shades of Ansel Adams

On the drive into Bathurst, I listened to an *Axe Files* interview with Beth Lacy. She is one of the tough journalists who exposed the addiction issues in working class (especially OxyContin) America and she has a clear sympathy for those who have lost their jobs and confidence due to deindustrialisation. I like her line about becoming a journalist. Her husband said to her that even a fence post would talk to if she talked to it long enough.

We have now arrived at Rydges Mount Panorama and we are in comfort in room 406. It faces the finish line. I wonder how much it costs next weekend¹!

We gathered for our own private meal on level 7, predated by a lovely talk about the music ahead by Phillip Sametz. Phillip spoke of the central importance of Chopin to so many composers who followed and he then turned to the historical development of the piano.

Before dinner we also met the four pianists: Alexander Gadjiev, Tamara Anna Cislowska, Calvin Abdiel and Stephanie McCallum.

¹ Apparently, a minimum of five nights for a staggering \$9000



Saturday 1st October 2022

Our room is exceedingly comfortable and large but I am in a black spot for Wi-Fi. I can relax. At least I am able to upload in other parts of this strange looking hotel.

Meanwhile we begin the day under cool, crisp sunshine with a breakfast in the Chicane Bar and Grille. Of course, that's what you'd name it, isn't it! By the time we had finished our repast the clouds had descended and there was rain falling on Winburndale. It didn't look promising.

After breakfast, from 9.15, we joined Phillip once more for a pre-performance talk on the music ahead. This time we were in room 1. And this time the talk focused on the unpredictable mazurkas as a very Polish style of music, a national call to keep identity alive in the face of Russian rule. That has strange echoes for today, given that Putin has now "included" the eastern provinces of Ukraine formally as Russian. In response, I might add, Ukraine has immediately requested to join NATO.

By 10.30 we were being loaded on board our coach once more to visit Abercrombie House. This was our second visit to this Victorian-Tudor 1870s house, with its impressive facade, quirky interior and delightful owner.



Chris tells us about his home; his passion!







The original bed returned and ready for restoration



And the restored ceiling

After lunch we then transferred to Blackdown Farm, once home to Tim Storrier. It dates from the 1820's. It was a land grant to Thomas Hawkins, a British naval officer, and the selection was 2000 acres. He, his wife, his mother-in-law, eight children and nine convicts arrived by wagon across the Blue Mountains in 1822.



In 1883 the farm, plus 1660 acres, was sold to a John Newel Gilmour and when he died, in 1896, it went to his granddaughter, Una Brown. Now here it got interesting. Una travelled to Italy to study music and met and married a Count Marcio Vincenzo Romano. Back in Bathurst they had two children but the Count “deserted” her. She divorced him, remarried, returned to Italy, managed to get interned during WW2, got back home and then helped Italian migrants who turned 20 acres into a vegetable patch. No wonder there is an Italian theme for dinner tonight beyond the operatic music.



And our first concert, under the title of “Welcome Dance”, began. Drawing inspiration from Ildaka Kovacs’ 2004 painting, “Opal”, this music was attempting to demonstrate movement and line in experimental ways, and included works by Chopin, Fabre, Debussy and Ravel.



Program

Frédéric Chopin:

Polonaise-Fantaisie in A \flat major Op.61

from Mazurkas Op.56

No.2 in B major

No.3 in C major

Waltz in A \flat major Op.42

Polonaise in F \sharp minor Op.44

(Alexander Gadjiev)

~ interval 30 minutes ~

Gabriel Fauré:

from Masques et Bergamasques Op.112

I. Ouverture

III. Gavotte

(Stephanie McCallum & Tamara Anna Cislowska)

Claude Debussy:

Petite Suite L.65

I. En bateau

II. Cortège

III. Menuet

IV. Ballet

(Stephanie McCallum & Tamara Anna Cislowska)

Maurice Ravel:

La Valse for two pianos

(Calvin Abdiel & Alexander Gadjiev)

The Chopin pieces were played by Alexander Gadjiev. Stephanie McCallum and Tamara Anna Cislowska played the Faure and Debussy and Caluin Abdiel and Alexander Gadjiev played Ravel (La Valse for two pianos). That Ravel piece was simply stunning.

Our evening meal was a Fiesta Italiana. Of course, we had wine: a choice of Vale Creek Pinot Grigio 2021 or Vale Creek 2017 Sangiovese, the perfect vanilla bean aroma out of French oak barrels to dine amidst the olive groves.

As for the main meal, we had Central West slow-cooked Beef Ragout, accompanied by hand-made pasta, drizzled with local olive oil and accompanied with fresh steamed local asparagus and broccolini sautéed in butter and toasted almonds. The sourdough just topped it off, though some in the party were not excited by the Beef Ragout.

We ended the evening with a second concert, Notte Italiana, an overture to a dramatic night at the Italian opera. The visual stimulus for this was “The Ladder” by Tim Storrier. It’s a nice touch that the works we were being stimulated by were all held in the Bathurst Regional Art Gallery.



And, yes, the music included works by Scarlatti, Rossini, Respighi, Bach, Busoni and Ponchielli. Meanwhile, during the interval we enjoyed a Vale Creek Moscato and a “richly-textured” Tiramisu “blending the bold flavours of cocoa and espresso with

savoury mascarpone cheese and wine, layered with ladyfinger biscuits”. Foodies can be every bit as lyrical as wine lovers.

That performance of the Respighi piece was sublime.

Program

Gioachino Rossini/Maurice Decourcelle:

Ouverture: Il Barbiere di Siviglia for Eight Hands

(Piano 1 primo: Tamara Anna Cislowska

secondo: Alexander Gadjiev.

Piano 2 primo: Stephanie McCallum

secondo: Calvin Abdiel)

Domenico Scarlatti:

Sonata in D minor K.213

Sonata in A minor K.175

(Calvin Abdiel)

Ottorino Respighi:

from No.1 from 3 Preludes on Gregorian Melodies

(Alexander Gadjiev)

~ interval 30 minutes ~*

Alessandro Marcello/Johann Sebastian Bach:

Oboe Concerto in D minor BWV 974

(Tamara Anna Cislowska & Alexander Gadjiev)

Ferruccio Busoni:

from Indian Diary No.3 - Andante

(Stephanie McCallum)

Johann Sebastian Bach/Ferruccio Busoni:

Two Chorale Preludes

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland BWV 659

Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gmein BWV 734

(Calvin Abdiel)

Amilcare Ponchielli:

Dance of the Hours from La Gioconda for Eight Hands

(Piano 1 primo: Tamara Anna Cislowska

secondo: Alexander Gadjiev.

Piano 2 primo: Stephanie McCallum

secondo: Calvin Abdiel)



Sunday 2nd October 2022

Gosh, the Panorama track is a hive of activity at the moment and Faye is totally fascinated by how much work is happening behind the scenes to prepare for the race next weekend. The logistics of management is always of interest.



And in that context, Marcus Barker spoke to us before the concerts about those logistical issues surrounding setting up this piano festival. He and Alexander Gadjiev both wanted to manage a special musical experience that linked the music to place, to local food and to local wine. Beyond that, Marcus wanted to provide economic benefits to the local community not just to help that community but to provide a basis for returning to the same venue in future years.

My favourite line from the introductory talk by Phillip this morning referred to Liszt as a man “who broke hearts, corsets and piano strings” across Europe before taking Orders. I must find a biography. The Liszt Consolations followed the Chopin Ballade! Liszt was a bridge between Chopin and Debussy.



And we lose an hour of sleep but today’s concerts are enough for anyone to wake to and, given that it is a Sunday, we began with “Reflective Moments”, a concert inspired by sacred themes. I am not quite sure how the abstract painting of John Coburn, “African Summer”, illustrated this theme but perhaps the organisers are truly deeply ecological warriors too.



There was music by J S Bach, Olivier Messiaen, Chopin, Carl Vine, Liszt and Ross Edwards to fill our senses in the morning show. Phillip Sametz spent some time talking about the Chopin Ballade in his talk this morning, especially his haunting introduction.

Johann Sebastian Bach:

*from Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre
Jagd BWV 208*

IX. Sheep May safely Graze

(Tamara Anna Cislowska & Stephanie McCallum)

Olivier Messiaen:

from Visions de l'Amen

No.1 Amen de la Création

(Calvin Abdiel & Alexander Gadjiev)

Frédéric Chopin:

Ballade No.4 Op.54

(Alexander Gadjiev)

Carl Vine:

from Five Bagatelles

V. Threnody

(Tamara Anna Cislowska & Calvin Abdiel)

Franz Liszt:

from Consolations S.172 No.3

(Stephanie McCallum)

Aleksandr Scriabin:

Piano Sonata No.5 Op.53

(Calvin Abdiel)

Ross Edwards:

Tyalgum Mantras for Eight Hands

(Tamara Anna Cislowska, Alexander Gadjiev,

Stephanie McCallum & Calvin Abdiel)

Johann Sebastian Bach:

from Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben BWV 147

X. Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (for 8 hands)

(Tamara Anna Cislowska, Alexander Gadjiev,

Stephanie McCallum & Calvin Abdiel)

Johann Sebastian Bach from Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd BWV208
IX Sheep May Safely Graze
Played by Tamara Anna Cislowska and Stephanie McCallum

Olivier Messiaen from Visions de l'Amen No 1 Amen de La Creation
Played by Calvin Abdiel and Alexander Gadjiev. Now this was a wonderful performance. Those discordant church bells on one piano played against the tumultuous rage on piano 2.

Frederic Chopin, Ballade No 4, Op 54 played by Alexander Gadjiev

Carl Vine from Five Bagatelles V Threnody, played by Tamara Anna Cislowska and Calum Abdiel. The two pianos took turns to echo each other, each switching roles and playing off each other.

Franz Liszt, from Consolations S172, No 3 played by Stephanie McCallum.

Aleksandr Scriabin, Piano Sonata, No 5, Op 53 played by Calvin Abdiel. Calvin informed us that Scriabin said he was dealing with "timid shadows of life" and to us he brought "audacity". Indeed, he did. This was Stravinsky before Stravinsky. It was almost a challenge to live. To live on the edge!

Ross Edwards, Tylgum Mantras for Eight Hands (all the pianists!). And members of the public who were invited to come up, hit a key, move back and on it went. One such intervention was by piano enthusiast, Bronwyn Bishop. I had a chat with her yesterday. It was even civil, focused on Kats-Chernin. It struck me how short she trucks and as she has aged and gone into flats, she appears even more shrunken.



Johann Sebastian Bach from Herz und Tat and Leben BWV 147 X Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring. All eight hands at work! This final piece brought a harmonious resolution to the concert. The only discordant notes filtered the hall from a flock of galahs.



And then, inevitably, we ate. The crab-apple trees were in full blossom and we dined under that long table. Indeed, the food reached exquisite high notes too. We began with caramelised onion and goats' cheese tart garnished with homemade beetroot relish, followed by a choice (alternate drops) of two main courses; "succulent grass-fed beef fillet" or "free range roasted chicken breast wrapped in crispy prosciutto". Both dishes were served on a bed of "golden gratin potato" and fresh, seasonal vegetables. Oh, and I must mention the "rustic cheese and chive sourdough", washed down with a Renzaglia Shiraz Di Renzo or a Renzaglia Premium Sauvignon Blanc. The first was "an inviting and elegant cool vintage Shiraz, eliciting delicate tones of rhubarb, red berries and toasted nuts". The second hinted at "a bouquet of white flowers swirl with intense

grapefruit, lime and green pineapple” which promised to “awaken the palette”. Oh, I love this language. But those crab-apple petals did fall into our wine, on our meat and in our hair. I chose the white and got the meat.



Immediately after lunch we headed into “dazzling perfection” with a “fierce expose of the romantic piano concerto”. The visual inspiration this time came from “Conifer - Essington” by Joanna Logie, a mystical brushing, scrapping and smudging landscape” that worked better with a foggy day but in this blue sunshine day perhaps not so much.



Program

Frédéric Chopin:

Piano Concerto No.2 Op.21

I. Maestoso

II. Larghetto

III. Allegro vivace

(Alexander Gadjiev accompanied by Calvin Abdiel)

*~ interval 30 minutes ~**

Johannes Brahms:

Variations on a Theme by Haydn Op.56b

I. Theme. Andante

II. Andante con moto

III. Vivace

IV. Con moto

V. Andante

VI. Poco presto

VII. Vivace

VIII. Grazioso

IX. Poco presto

X. Finale. Andante

*(Piano 1 Stephanie McCallum,
Piano 2 Tamara Anna Cislowska)*

Franz Liszt/Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Réminiscences de Don Juan S.418

(Calvin Abdiel)

And between the two pieces we adjourned to the grass outside for “decadent strawberry and vanilla bean crème fraiche layered chocolate brownie.



We were able to return to the hotel for a brief break!





Nice touch, the heroic white explorer being guided



And “supported”

At 6.00 we once more gathered. This time we enjoyed a sunset in the rose garden while consuming a variety of canapés and a glass of Renzaglia 2033 Rural Method Di Renzo. The language truly gushed out of this bottle. It promised to be “cloudy yet filled with bright and effervescent flavours of nashi pear and white peaches dancing across your nose and mouth”! No wonder we were ready to be serenaded into the night under the inspiration of Debussy and the art of David Brian Wilson (Wind and Water)



Program

Claude Debussy:

from Préludes Book 1

No.5 Les collines d'Anacapri

(Calvin Abdiel)

Erik Satie:

from Gnossiennes

No.2. Avec étonnement

(Stephanie McCallum)

Claude Debussy:

from Préludes Book 1

No.9 La sérénade interrompue

(Calvin Abdiel)

Charles Koechlin:

from Les Heures persanes Op.65

No.5 En vue de la ville

(Tamara Anna Cislowska)

Claude Debussy:

from Préludes Book 1

No.12 Minstrels

(Calvin Abdiel)

Sam Wu:

Tiny Forests (world premiere)*

(Tamara Anna Cislowska)

Claude Debussy:

from Préludes Book 2

No.12 Feux d'artifice

(Calvin Abdiel)

Aristea Mellos:

Prelude No.1 A ghostly finger writes forgotten words (in the dust on the piano)

(Stephanie McCallum)

Claude Debussy:
from *Préludes Book 1*
No.6 Des pas sur la neige
(Alexander Gadjiev)

Erik Satie:
from *Gnossiennes*
No.4 Lent
(Stephanie McCallum)

Claude Debussy:
from *Préludes Book 2*
No.2 Feuilles mortes
(Alexander Gadjiev)

Elena Kats-Chernin:
from *Unsent Love Letters*
No.2 Unsent Love Letters: a Musical Meditation on Erik Satie
(Tamara Anna Cislowska)

Claude Debussy:
from *Préludes Book 2*
No.8 Ondine
(Alexander Gadjiev)

Erik Satie:
from *Gnossiennes*
No.5 Modéré
(Stephanie McCallum)

Claude Debussy:
from *Préludes Book 2*
No.7 La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune
(Alexander Gadjiev)

Arvo Pärt:
Für Alina
(Tamara Anna Cislowska)

Program

Claude Debussy from *Préludes Book 1*, No 5 Les collines d'Anacapri, played by Calvin Abdiel

Erik Satie from *Gnossiennes*, No2 Ave etonnement played by Stephanie McCallum

Claude Debussy from *Préludes Book 2*, No 9 La serenade interrompue played by Calvin Abdiel

Charles Koechlin from *Les Heures persanes Op 65*, No 5 En vue de la ville, played by Tamara Anna Cislowska

Claude Debussy from *Préludes Book I* No 12 Minstrels played by Calvin Abdiel

Sam Wu, *Tiny Forests* (a world premiere) played by Tamara Anna Cislowska (pity about the phone that rang during the performance. You'd think that concert goers would know by now)

Claude Debussy from *Préludes Book 2*, No 12 Feux d'artifice played by Calvin Abdiel

Artistes Mellos *Prélude No 1* A ghostly finger writes forgotten words (in the dust on the piano) played by Stephanie McCallum

Claude Debussy from *Préludes Book I* No 6 Des pas sur la neige played by Alexander Gadjiev

Erik Satie from *Gnossiennes* No 4 Lent played by Stephanie McCallum

Claude Debussy from *Préludes Book 2* No 2, Feuilles mitres played by Alexander Gadjiev

Elena Kats-Chernin from Unsent Love Letters No 2, Unsent Live Letters: a musical meditation on Erik Satie played by Tamara Anna Cislowska

Claude Debussy from Préludes Book 2, No 8 Ondine played by Alexander Gadjiev

Erik Satie from Gnossiennes No 5 Modere, played by Stephanie McCallum

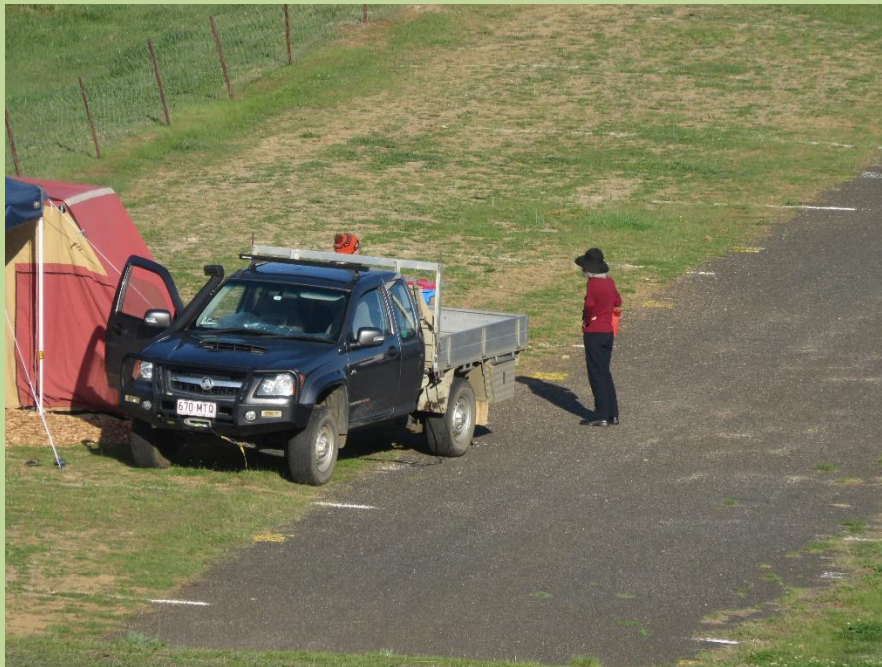
Claude Debussy from Préludes Book 2 No 7 La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune played by Alexander Gadjiev

Arvo Pärt Fur Alinta played by Tamara Anna Cislowska

And with that the night ended! Debussy was either the backbone or the punctuation holding the concert together but my favourite pieces were the Kats-Chernin and the Arvo Pärt. By the time the Pärt was putting us to bed, figuratively, at least one in the audience took it literally and was “breathing heavily”.

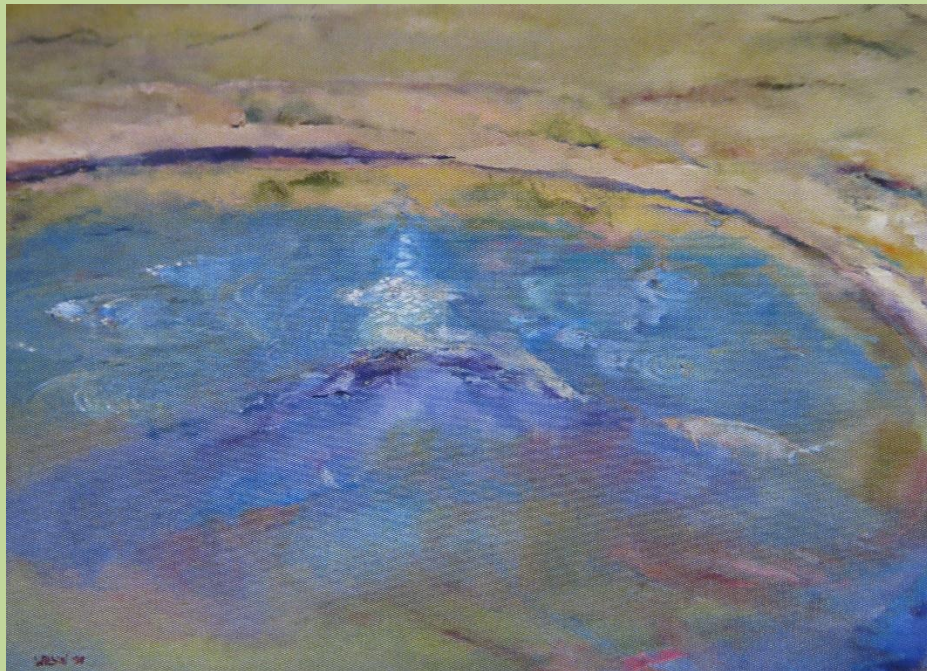
Monday 3rd October 2022

We escaped the hotel with only a few hiccups, including one person who had left her hearing aids in her room, but we still arrived at the concert in good time. In any case, Faye fitted in a walk amidst the tented throngs awaiting Bathurst 1000 and learnt even more about logistics, about site selection and about being a spectator at such an event. I watched Red-rumped Parrots.





Our final concert began at 11.00am. Appropriately it was entitled “Auf Wiedersehen, Goodbye” and featured the painting of Mandy Martin, entitled “Lake Leaghur Looking Due West”. Well, apart from the fact that most of us left heading east, I get it. The painting showed our ancient landscape under sleeting rain and brooding thunderstorms.



Program

Darius Milhaud:

Scaramouche - Suite for Two Pianos

I. Vif

II. Modéré

III. Brazileira

(Tamara Anna Cislowska & Stephanie McCallum)

George Gershwin/Percy Grainger:

Porgy and Bess Fantasy

(Alexander Gadjiev & Tamara Anna Cislowska)

~ interval 30 minutes ~

Sergei Rachmaninoff:

Two Pieces for Six Hands

I. Waltz

II. Romance

(Tamara Anna Cislowska, Calvin Abdiel & Alexander Gadjiev)

Francis Poulenc:

Sonata for Four Hands

I. Prelude

II. Rustique

III. Final

(Stephanie McCallum & Tamara Anna Cislowska)

Camille Saint-Saëns/Franz Liszt:

Danse macabre for Eight Hands

*(Piano 1 primo: Stephanie McCallum
secondo: Alexander Gadjiev.*

*Piano 2 primo: Tamara Anna Cislowska
secondo: Calvin Abdiel)*

Program

This is a hectic, high-octane, high-energy concert of immense technical demand and the pianists “done good”! Indeed, the entire event has been special and very different to our normal escapes.

The George Gershwin/Percy Grainger: Porgy and Bess Fantasy played by Alexander Gadjiev and Tamara Anna Cislowska was quite a mash-up of Gershwin. We were able to watch Tamara play. She was outstanding. Her fingers must ache after a concert like this!

Speaking of Tamara, she is the stepdaughter of Hetty Cislowska who was high up in the Department of Education and had lots to do with Faye in counselling. Her replacement, Ian McDonald (and his wife) was also here. We have run into them at both The Song Company and Griffin Theatre recently. As we thought it through, it’s almost certain that Ian was one of the two who selected Faye to become a counsellor.

Camille Saint-Saens/Franz Liszt: Danes macabre for Eight Hands turned into “ten hands”. They added the Artistic Director, Piers Lane.

And with that we had our light luncheon. Done with smooth efficiency and on time! The volunteers have been amazing.

Entree: Crispy three cheese arancini with local truffle oil

Mains: Either-

1. Moroccan chicken spiced with local herbs and a couscous divan
2. Locally sourced lamb tagine served with seasonal vegetables on a fragrant bed of jasmine rice

OK, and also a choice of

1. Rock Forest Chardonnay
2. Rock Forest Shiraz

Neither the program notes nor I have the energy left to wax lyrical at this stage of the trip. Besides, there was a long drive ahead at the end of a long weekend! But I must say that the Chardonnay spoke for itself.



Coming into Lithgow (the benefits of travelling by bus ... I have wanted to photograph this rail bridge for years)

We had a long tailback from Mount Victoria to Blackheath. We also hit a blockage out of Wentworth Falls. But we were in Sydney before 7.00pm and home and eating dinner not long after 8.30pm!







Brian Everingham