



THE 2009 FESTIVAL OF ACCOMPANISTS

Musician in Residence International Pianist

LESLIE HOWARD

ADELAIDE

JULY 2009



MEDIA KIT

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The 2009 Festival of Accompanists is proudly supported by



Adelaide: Thursday 4 June

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Guild continues celebrating the accompanist, with leading Australian pianist Leslie Howard

Leslie Howard is a sensitive, intelligent and committed musician. Alfred Brendel

In July 2009, the Accompanists' Guild of South Australia's fifth annual Festival of Accompanists will return with international Australian pianist, **Leslie Howard** as musician-in-residence.

Dr Leslie Howard is one of Australia's most successful pianists. He has recorded all the works of Liszt for Hyperion and has annual engagements on five continents.

His performances of chamber music and Lieder include collaborations with some of the greatest artists of our time, including the Amadeus, Britten and Endellion String Quartets, Salvatore Accardo, Augustin Dumay, Erick Friedman, Ani Kavafian, Benny Goodman, Charles Neidich, Steven Isserlis, Nathaniel Rosen, Torlief Thedeen, Geoffrey Parsons, Sir Thomas Allen, Yvonne Kenny and Dame Felicity Lott.

Following Malcolm Martineau's hugely successful 2008 residency the Guild was fortunate to discover that London based Australian pianist, **Leslie Howard**, a Geoffrey Parsons Memorial Trustee, was planning an Australian tour in 2009. In its third successive collaboration with Recitals Australia, (South Australia's longest established piano recital presenter) the Guild was delighted to secure Leslie's participation.

Guild founder and secretary, Diana Harris OAM remarks, "We are delighted that Leslie Howard has agreed to be our artist-in-residence for the 2009 Festival of Accompanists. To have a chamber musician of his calibre will add special significance to another stimulating and enjoyable celebration of collaborative music making."

From 6 to 9 July, Leslie as artist-in-residence will present a masterclass, a recital with young South Australian violinist, **Niki Vasilakis** of TriOz and chair the Jury for the 2009 Geoffrey Parsons Award.

In the Masterclass, Leslie Howard will coach emerging young solo pianists and chamber musicians studying at secondary and tertiary level. For the recital with Niki Vasilakis they will perform Cesar Franck's ever virtuosic and dramatic Violin Sonata and works by Franz Liszt.

The 2009 Geoffrey Parsons Award sees the Guild continuing to **fund the** prize money for Australia's leading prize for accompaniment, with a cash pool of \$4,000. The competitors selected following auditions, will perform a movement of Debussy's Violin Sonata with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra's Concertmaster, **Natusko Yoshimoto**, as part of **their 25 to 30** -minute competition recital.

Celebrate the art of accompanying with Leslie Howard who undoubtedly is one of Australia's musical treasures.



MEDIA RELEASE

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2009 FESTIVAL OF ACCOMPANISTS DIARY

Monday 6 July

- Masterclass with Leslie Howard at Elder Conservatorium 1.30 to 3.00pm
- Geoffrey Parsons Award Auditions as needed
scheduled between 3.15pm and 6.00pm
Bishop Hall, Elder Conservatorium The University of Adelaide
FREE

Tuesday 7 July

- Geoffrey Parsons Award Auditions continue as needed
scheduled between 3.15 pm and 6.00pm
Bishop Hall , Elder Conservatorium The University of Adelaide
FREE

Wednesday 8 July

- Young Accompanists' Showcase 12.10pm
- Leslie Howard with violinist Niki Vasilakis at Pilgrim Church 1.10pm
Pilgrim Church, 12 Flinders Street, Adelaide
Adults \$15, Concession \$10, AGSA & Recitals Australia Members Free (membership
identification required) Tickets at the door

Thursday 9 July

- Private Lessons with Leslie Howard (enquiries phone 8431 6030)
- Geoffrey Parsons Award Final 7.00pm
Hartley Concert Room, Kintore Avenue, The University of Adelaide
Adults \$15, Concessions \$10, Students \$5 AGSA Members Free Tickets at the door

Wednesday 15 July

- Junior Accompanists and Associates at Pilgrim Church 12.10pm
- Conservatorium and Chamber Musicians 1.10pm
Pilgrim Church, 12 Flinders Street, Adelaide
Adults \$5, Concession \$3, Members Free Tickets at the door

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BIOGRAPHY & QUOTES

LESLIE HOWARD pianist



Annual re-engagements on 5 continents and a 130-CD discography attest to the burgeoning popularity of pianist Leslie Howard. A resident of London since 1972, Australian-born Howard recently celebrated the 30th anniversary of his London debut with an internationally telecast award ceremony at Buckingham Palace: Queen Elizabeth II awarded the Member in the Order of Australia [AM] to Leslie Howard “for service to the Arts as Piano Soloist, Composer, Musicologist, and Mentor to young musicians.” The event was followed by 25 concerto performances - Beethoven 5, Liszt 2, Brahms 2, Rachmaninoff 3 and Dvorak - throughout Europe.

Howard performs worldwide with renowned conductors and orchestras in the world’s most prestigious venues, featuring a repertoire of over 100 concerti. Commanding the largest repertoire of any pianist who ever lived - and the largest discography of any pianist in recording history - Leslie Howard has justly earned his reputation as a pianist without peer on the international concert scene. No major pianist performing today can offer the unique recital programs that have made Howard a celebrated artist in 40 countries. Howard is also in great demand at prestigious international music festivals, where his co-performers in chamber music and lieder include the world’s most renowned artists.

In 1986, Howard embarked on the largest recording project ever undertaken by a solo pianist: the entire solo piano music of Liszt - completed on 95 CDs within 14 years for the Hyperion label. Howard’s recordings also appear on the Deutsche Grammophon, EMI Classics, Nimbus, Cala, Pearl, ABC Eloquence, Musical Heritage Society and Merlin Classics labels. Entered into the *Guinness Book of World Records*, Howard’s Liszt series won 5 Grands Prix du Disque, with a Special Grand Prix du Disque awarded upon completion of the Liszt series. He holds numerous international awards for his dedication to Liszt’s music; the Hungarian Government honoured Dr. Howard in 2000 with the Pro Cultura Hungarica Award at a special ceremony in Budapest, and in Lebanon in 2004 the Hungarian President presented him with the Medal of St. Stephen. Since 1988, Leslie Howard has served as President of the Liszt Society.

Beethoven’s “Hammerklavier” Sonata:

“Mr. Howard is not only a virtuoso of the first order but a deeply serious musician whose sense of structure served him to the greatest advantage in the sonata. The scale of the first movement was immense, with no trace of hardness in the tone. The Scherzo, taken fast, was for once perfectly accentuated while the great slow movement emerged as the ultimate fulfilment of the composer’s art. The fugue was breathtaking in its intensity and clarity.” *The Daily Telegraph*

Schumann’s Fantasy:

“A performance which gave a magical impression of inspired improvisation, culminating in one of the most elegiac finales I have ever heard.” *Music and Musicians*

Rakhmaninov's Sonata no. 2 [original version]:

"A truly diabolical sweep and panache in a reading both structurally coherent and virtuosically exciting. After such a performance, a Chicago Symphony engagement would be warranted." *John von Rhein - Chicago Tribune*

A Liszt recital:

"Not only a virtuoso in the grand tradition, but also a musicologist of considerable learning". *The Musical Times*

Dvořák's Concerto in G minor:

"It is doubtful if the work has ever been so convincingly played." *The Musical Opinion*

A New York recital:

"Leslie Howard's concert provided some of the most exciting pianism of the season." *New York Times*

"The Klemperer of the piano..." *Edward Greenfield - The Guardian*

"Leslie Howard is a sensitive, intelligent and committed musician." Alfred Brendel

On the Hyperion Liszt recordings: "The most adventurous, most consistently realised, and grandest project in recording history" *Fanfare*

Bryce Morrison "Howard always seems to know where the music is going and why." *Gramophone*
"Howard is, by general consensus, the finest living exponent of Liszt, and his traversals afford all-enveloping verve and charisma, tremendous daring and a formidable intellectual grasp of the music...his vastly superior performances will continue to carry the day." *BBC Music Magazine*

NIKI VASILAKIS - violin

Niki Vasilakis is regarded as one of the most exciting violinists to have emerged from Australia in recent years. Her appearances on Australian television on programmes such as the Nine Network's A Current Affair, Today Show, SBS 'Classical Destinations' and a busy international schedule of concerts and recording, have already made her name familiar to a wide public.



Niki commenced her violin studies in Adelaide at the age of four, and has since received many awards, including the Elder Conservatorium Concerto Prize, the Nelly Apt Scholarship, and the Perry Hart Memorial Prize (twice). She has been repeatedly successful in music competitions, winning the Gisborne International and the Hunts Master Performers National Instrumental Competitions, among others. In 2003 she won the String Final of Symphony Australia's Young Performer of the Year, the premier competition in Australasia for talented young musicians.

Now one of Australia's busiest soloists, Niki has performed with the Melbourne, Tasmanian, Symphony Orchestras, Orchestra Victoria, as well as the Queensland Orchestra. In January 2004 she appeared with the Sydney Symphony in the Symphony in the Domain, to an audience of more than 100,000 people. This followed her successful debut with that orchestra for the Sydney Opera House's 30th Anniversary celebrations.

International orchestras with whom she has performed include the Wellington Symphony Orchestra, New Zealand, Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra of China in July 2004 and the Prague Symphony Orchestra.

Niki was nominated for Young Australian of the Year in 2003 and 2004 in recognition of her outstanding achievements in music and her extensive commitment to community work, including volunteer programs and teaching community groups. In October 2003 she was included in *The Bulletin* magazine's 'Smart 100' list.

Niki was Artist in Residence at St Andrew's Cathedral School in Sydney for four years (2000-2004) while completing her Bachelor of Music; Performance at The Australian Institute Of Music Sydney with 'First Class Honours.' Niki is a guest Performer at the National Academy of Music Melbourne while completing her Post Graduate studies at the Elder Conservatorium of Music.

Future plans include short term study in Israel and visiting Africa to play to impoverished communities. Niki was guest soloist with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in 'Symphony in the park' 2007, featuring in 'Ovation' series and a new feature film project on Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons' called "4" with violinists Pekka Kussisto and Jimmy Lin.

Niki also presented a new television series about music called *Classical Destinations* aired in Australia on SBS and BBC international.

Recent engagements for Niki Vasilakis include a guest performance for the Australian Prime Minister at a State Dinner, Performances at the Rockefeller Centre New York for the Anzac day memorial, UN head quarters New York, Washington Cathedral, Athens Olympic Torch Celebrations Sydney Opera House.

Niki's has recently released her debut album with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra on ABC Classics.

Niki plays an Antonio Guadagnini Violin 1872.