

With Concert five The Sydney Spring welcomes James Dillon, described by eminent French and Italian critics as "the most important British composer since Henry Purcell" on his first visit to Australia. This year, pre-concert talks (usually held at 7.10 pm) will be a feature and the all-Dillon concert will be preceded by the Scottish composer talking about his work in the ABC Atrium. The all-Dillon concert on Saturday 6 September, presents his masterpieces *black/nebulae* played by Stephanie McCallum and Robert Curry and *Windows and Canopies* by twenty musicians from the Libra and Spring Ensembles.

The first visit of Gilbert Amy is of significance to the contact our musicians are making with Europe's composers and directors of new music. Together with Boulez, Barraqué, Berio, Stockhausen and Xenakis, Amy was a former Messiaen student and it is a great pleasure to welcome him to Australia. With Concert six on Wednesday 10th September, seven works will be presented, preceded by the composer discussing his work.

Rolf Gehlhaar returns to the Sydney Spring and will first appear at the Academy on Saturday 2 September when he delivers his Berlin lecture: *How Time Passed (1899-1999!)* followed by an **Open rehearsal with the Sound Space and Electronics**. The significance of the Sound Space he invented and developed (now housed permanently at Artlink in Edinburgh and Musicworks in London) and his two Academy +AIM appearances are a *must* for this year's Spring. The all-Gehlhaar Concert seven, 13 September, will feature the composer performing three of his solo works for percussion with live electronics. The concert also witnesses the first performance in Australia of his masterpiece *Chronik* with the composer performing the electronic component of his torrential score.

Concert eight on Friday 12 September sees the debut of the dynamic new Sydney percussion group - **Sprung** - and it promises to be the Ruapehu of the Eighth Spring with an audacious programme directed by Guy du Blêt and guest director Daryl Pratt. The works include four world premieres by Australian composers: Tim Davies, Moya Henderson, Elena Kats-Chernin and Ian Shanahan, with the first Australian performance of Katia Tiutiunnik's *Bhairawa* played by Tamara Cislowska. The infamously difficult *East 11th St. NY 10003*, by Dillon and Gehlhaar's daunting *Maré* both directed by Daryl Pratt, make this an exceptional artistic event. Ian Shanahan also presents his new work - *153 Infinities* at this concert and again, in more detail, at the Spring Academy on Wednesday 3rd September together with his new work for the Renaissance Players.

Concert nine presents a revival of works of Raymond Hanson (1913-76) who was slyly cheated of his place in Australian music by some of the planners and administrators of his time who did not care for his political views. The programme will be the first in a new series entitled **Australian Perspectives** which aim to provide a focus on the achievements of pioneers who broke important new ground despite the difficulties they faced in their own time. Hanson was progressively isolated by those who administered mainstream music. Official neglect crippled his reputation and eventually suffocated his soul. Even twenty years after his death the struggle continues to bring his work to wider attention in his own country.

Hanson's *String Quartet* and *Piano Sonata* are two masterpieces, important works, all too rarely performed and which the Sydney Spring presents on Sunday afternoon 14 September together with a selection of his Songs, the world premiere of his *Piano Quintet* (composed in 1944!) and a short Chamber work entitled *Still Winds* (faithfully restored by Dr. Graham Hardie). APRA is to be thanked for funding this important project, also Karen Cummings, Kevin Power and the Spring Quartet for their commitment. Thanks as well to Dr. Hardie for preparing a valuable pre concert talk on Raymond Hanson and to Sue Tronser for her work behind-the-scenes.

Concert ten presents The Renaissance Players directed by Winsome Evans. It celebrates new music by Ian Shanahan and Medieval Spain including Pilgrim Songs, Cantigas from the Court of Alfonso X and traditional Songs of the Sephardim. We thankfully acknowledge Winsome Evans and the Renaissance Players for donating their services to the Sydney Spring. The seven premieres presented by the musicians of the Spring Ensemble at the penultimate concert provide the razor edge for this year's Festival with works by Dillon, Hoare, Shlomowitz, Meadowcroft, Ricketson and Boyd. The brilliant young Brisbane cellist Nicholas Bochner returns to perform Dillon's allegedly "unplayable" *Parjanya-Vata*. The ensemble for the remainder of this programme is built around the six violins and three percussionists scored by Dillon in *L'ECRAN parfum*. Anne Boyd adds a piano and harp to this combination for the world premiere of *Last Songs of the Kamikaze* with three poems sung by the counter tenor David Barnby to texts by Maslyn Williams. Anne Boyd cannot be thanked enough for having waived her commission. It is appreciated. The pre-concert talk will be given by Matthew Shlomowitz and a discussion of new works by Hoare, Shlomowitz and Ricketson will take place at the Spring Academy on Friday, 5 September. Very little is known about the final concert on Sunday, 21 September, organised by Nick Wales, except that it is called **Crackle!** It is a surprise with *new* music and electronic art. Once again the Spring welcomes music lovers, critics, interstate guests, those from abroad and all its loyal supporters. On behalf of us all at the Sydney Spring and our sponsors, I hope that you may take delight in our programmes and performances and that you might help us continue to bring you these innovations in a very practical way by taking up our Life Membership special offer (which is tax deductible). I look forward to meeting you during the Festival.

Roger Woodward AC
Permanent Artistic Director and Founder