



Frederick Septimus KELLY

CHAMBER MUSIC
SERENADE FOR FLUTE AND PIANO
VIOLIN SONATA NO. 1
PIANO TRIO

Michael Waye, flute
Laurence Jackson, violin
David Wickham, piano
The West Australian Piano Trio

FREDERICK SEPTIMUS KELLY – THE LOST OLYMPIAN

by David Wickham

Frederick Septimus Kelly was Australia's greatest cultural loss of the First World War. His brief life uniquely encompassed the highest standards in sport (as an Olympic rower) and music (as pianist, composer, conductor and patron). It ended with a hero's death. Kelly was a Lieutenant-Commander in the Hood Battalion of the Royal Naval Division. He was twice at Gallipoli, where he was wounded, receiving the DSC for his bravery under fire. He was in the burial party when Rupert Brooke was interred on the island of Skyros, the poet having died as the Royal Naval Division was making its way to the Dardanelles. Moved by this loss, Kelly wrote his *Elegy for String Orchestra: in memoriam Rupert Brooke*. He was killed during one of the last major battles of the Somme at Beaucourt-sur-Ancre, on 13 November 1916, when he was shot in the head while taking a machine-gun post.

Kelly was born in Sydney on 29 May 1881, into a wealthy Irish family, his father being a wool-broker, company director and a mining promoter. From 1893 he studied at Eton, where he met the cream of British musical life as well as members of high society. At Balliol College, Oxford, he studied Modern History and rowed in the successful college team. His solo sculling record of 1905, established at Henley-on-Thames, stood unbeaten until 1938. In 1908 he was a member of the British eight that won a gold medal in the London Olympic Games.

From 1903 to 1908 Kelly was a student at Das Hoch'sche Konservatorium in Frankfurt, where he studied composition with Iwan Knorr (Percy Grainger's teacher) and piano with Ernst Engesser. Kelly kept a daily diary, where he commented on his musical colleagues and activities, as well as on his wide circle of acquaintances.¹

¹ I have adapted these three paragraphs of biography from Richard Divall's introduction to *The Unpublished Songs*, Australian Music Series, Monash University Digital Music Archive, 2014. www.artsonline.monash.edu.au/music-archive

Violin Sonata No. 1 in D minor (1901)

The manuscript of Kelly's Violin Sonata in D minor is inscribed 'Begun circa June 20; finished August 2nd 1901', by which time he had reached the end of his first year at Balliol. On hearing that his father was dying, Kelly sailed back to Sydney, arriving in early June. Christopher Latham describes Thomas Hussey Kelly as the composer's 'hero'; the father had shaped the son's character and education.² Thomas died on 25 July, so that the Sonata was conceived and written in the family home, Glenyarrah, on Double Bay (between central Sydney and Bondi Beach to the east), during his last illness. It is very much a family piece, then, as it was written for performance by Kelly's talented brother, Bertie. Though Bertie had not chosen to become a professional musician, he had studied with Joseph Joachim, and was clearly possessed of considerable technique and imagination.

It is unwise to insist too much that biographical circumstances can be made explicit in compositions, but it is not fanciful to hear in the Sonata a summation of various episodes in Kelly's development. First, there is the ambitious undertaking of a work in sonata form, after many pieces in shorter moulds. With time to think, he was able to expend the 'tremendous effort literally thinking out every bar', as he described it.³ As the holder of one of the Balliol College Nettlehip Scholarships, Kelly was under the direct musical supervision of Donald Francis Tovey, a strict and gifted teacher with a fierce work ethic. Mastering sonata form would have been something that Kelly expected of himself, and that Tovey would have expected of him. Throughout his life he had both a strong sense of beauty and a sense of duty. Second, to write such a major work for Bertie might be seen as a strong statement of their 'coming of age', having left school and now seeing the imminent passing of their father-figure. The music is filled with passionate animation and powerful lyrical exchanges; one can feel a young man's energy as the motivating force.

The Sonata was first performed in public for the Balliol College Musical Society, Oxford, on 9 February 1902. There was no Australian sonata of such dynamic imagination

² Christopher Latham, in conversation, 2022.

³ Kelly, letter to Balfour Gardiner dated 22 July 1901, quoted in an unpublished biography of Kelly by Thérèse Radic.

and technical refinement before this one. Indeed, there were very few Australian sonatas at all at that time, making Kelly's achievement all the more important.

A simple minor scale provides the generative material for the whole sonata. The restrained *Adagio* introduction [1] gradually increases the tension coming from the counterpoint between the melody and bass exploring scales in contrary motion. When the tension is released into the main body of the first movement, *Allegro vivace*, the loose theme is also built on the scale. Scales also inform the inventive and swiftly changing harmony, when each scale step is newly harmonised; the opening of the development in particular is wildly chromatic, and here Kelly struggled to set out his intentions clearly in his manuscript. Scales also break out into virtuosic volleys and highly strung semiquaver figuration. Brahms is the model for the piano-writing, most audibly in a sustained moment of calm over a tonic pedal.

The *Andantino* second movement [2] is a rhapsodic invention on the scale of A minor, freely counterpointed by slowly rising chromatic bass lines. Kelly's grip on the structure is strongest in this compact progression from dark to light, minor to major.

The shade of Mendelssohn presides over the final movement, also *Allegro vivace* [3]. Once more, the scale provides the essence of the thematic material, the harmony more settled than in the restless and almost experimental first movement. The rhythm and virtuosic figuration provide the energetic drama. Kelly had clearly absorbed many lessons from his piano-playing, displaying a range of textures and articulations, and a sure feeling for voicing, counterpoint and colour. Perhaps more remarkable is his confident handling of the violin, in writing that is idiomatic, demanding and thoroughly integrated into the common texture.

Serenade for flute, harp, horn and string orchestra, Op. 7 (version for flute and piano) (1911)

Kelly began writing his *Serenade* in 1911 aboard the S.S. Orontes, travelling to Sydney from England to make his Australian debut. He attended a concert, 'a great deal of which was unconsciously funny', as he wrote in his diary,⁴ but also featured a first-class

⁴ Diary entry for 12 January 1911, held in the National Library of Australia, Canberra.

performance by the flautist John Lemmone. As well as acting as Dame Nellie Melba's manager, Lemmone often performed with her.

Lemmone recorded that

During the voyage, evenings of music helped to enliven the journey. Naturally I joined with the enthusiasts. I practised in my cabin. A young gentleman passenger asked if he might intrude. He was at once intensely interested and asked many technical questions. He impressed me with being very musically intelligent. Several weeks later my visitor informed me that he was composing a work for me, a flute solo, with harp, horn and string orchestra accompaniment. (This work is published by Schott & Co, London, and is also arranged for flute and pianoforte.) It was practically completed before we reached Sydney. He called it *Serenade*, consisting of five movements. The first – 'Prelude' – was written in the Indian Ocean; the second – 'Idyll' – off the coast of West Australia; the third – 'Minuet' – in the Great Australian Bight; the fourth – 'Air and Variations' – off the coast of Victoria; and the fifth – 'Jig' – off the coast of New South Wales. The work is of transcendental beauty and undoubtedly a classic. Later, in Sydney, I had the rare pleasure of playing this composition conducted by the composer, who was none other than F. S. Kelly, a brilliant Australian pianist, perfectly modest about his fine musicianship and a composer who would probably have made a great reputation, but alas! was killed in action in France.⁵

After the premiere of *Serenade* Kelly wrote in his diary that 'Lemmone's playing was delightful – he has the most pleasing sense of phrasing'.⁶

This suite is more delicate and restrained than the string music in this recording in its demands upon the players, its harmony and its emotional range, hinted at by its original instrumentation.

The opening 'Prelude' [4] is a pleasing confection of French flute music and English folk idiom, meeting in the sound-world of Gaubert's or Taffanel's compositions in

⁵ Donald Westlake, *Dearest John: The Story of John Lemmone, Flute Virtuoso and Nellie Melba*, Bowerbird Press, New South Wales, 1997, pp. 72–73.

⁶ Diary entry for 21 July 1911.

antique style. Lightness and charm are its chief characteristics, allowing Lemmone's characterful playing to shape and inflect the flow.

The 'Idyll' [5] is the most exploratory and original of the set harmonically, and the most searching and varied melodically and texturally. French makers, players and composers dominated the flute world at the time, and Kelly grasped all its essentials of flexibility, quicksilver virtuosity and sustained melodic capacity of that school.

A folk-like sensibility also infuses the 'Minuet' [6], with stout cornemuse-like pedals and horn calls that duet with the flute. The balancing Trio is of artless simplicity, entirely governed by the winning melodic flute-writing.

The 'Air' of the fourth movement [7] is given solely by the piano in a four-part texture directly recalling Haydn's quartets. The variations are vehicles for the flautist's virtuosity in dexterity and articulation, before the rich restatement of the 'Air' restores pastoral calmness.

The opening of the 'Jig' [8] is in a Purcellian measure, and so perhaps Kelly intuited his great predecessor's ability to take French structure and rhetoric and give it an entirely convincing English accent. As with Purcell, the balanced architecture is clear, elegant and not a beat too long, and the minor key rich rather than melancholic.

Piano Trio (c. 1905?)

The two movements for piano trio are undated on the manuscript, but probably date from Kelly's Oxford days. Like the D minor Violin Sonata, the music is dense and virtuosic, delighting in complex counterpoint and some bold harmonic progressions. It also shares with the Sonata an audible debt to Mendelssohn and Brahms, and, in the trio of the second movement, to Russian and Slavic music. Kelly's technique and irrepressible energy infuse these two movements with vitality and conviction, and the music is in no way derivative. One hopes against hope that, a century and more later, two missing movements will one day turn up in a library, attic or auction room – if, indeed, he composed them. But even in what may be this incomplete state, this truncated Trio is head and shoulders above other Australian chamber works from this time.

The first movement is cast as a patient *Lento* (*moderato*) [9], unhurried and authoritative. Brahms has taught Kelly the value of gradual harmonic movement

through counterpoint and careful inflection, and of the interplay of opposing rhythmical subdivisions. Mendelssohn provides him with the model for the demanding piano-writing, which provides drive and richness of texture without ever allowing it to become cloyingly thick. It is up to the listener to decide whether the theme recalls a popular American folksong.

Kelly's dynamic Scherzo 10 strongly recalls the big-hearted trios of Smetana and Dvořák in its deft, delicate but headlong progress, its cross-accents and melodic inflections. The minor-key Trio wears the trappings of an Orthodox Church hymn, further evidence of Kelly's musical curiosity and ability to gather what he required from diverse sources.

This recording is another step in the process whereby, after decades of neglect, the music of Frederick Septimus Kelly is beginning to receive its due respect.⁷ The late conductor and musicologist Richard Divall, Kelly's biographer Thérèse Radic (whose book awaits the attention of a publisher) and the violinist Christopher Latham, the artistic director of the 'Flowers of Peace' project of the Australian War Memorial, were the principal pioneers in this revival. I was the 2021 Creative Fellow at the National Library of Australia, where I prepared many new editions of Kelly's works, including the scores for this recording. The title of these notes is taken from the book *The Lost Olympian of the Somme*, edited by Jon Cooksey and Graham McKechnie.⁸

<https://www.flowersofpeace.com.au/fskelly>

Laurence Jackson studied with Emanuel Hurwitz, Maurice Hasson and Anne-Sophie Mutter. He was a prize-winner at the 1985 Yehudi Menuhin 'Concours de Paris' Competition and won Third Prize at the First Sarasate Violin Competition in Pamplona. He received the First Prize at the Seventeenth International Violin Competition 'Dr Luis Sigall' held in Viña del Mar, Chile.

After making his Royal Festival Hall debut in 1990, he was leader of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra from 2005 to 2015, as well as guest-leading many orchestras worldwide, including the BBC Scottish Symphony, Guildhall Strings, Calgary

⁷ An album of Kelly's piano music – featuring the *Twelve Studies*, Op. 9 (1907–13), and the *24 Monographs*, Op. 11 (1914–16), performed by Alex Wilson – was released on Toccata Classics TOCC 0525 on 2020.

⁸ Bonnier Books, London, 2016.

Festival Orchestra, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Ballet and Bergen Philharmonic. In Australia, he has guest-led the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. In 2016, he was appointed First Concertmaster of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra.

From 1994 to 2006, he was first violin of the Maggini Quartet, with which he often toured the USA, Canada and Europe. Worldwide sales of their recordings for their Naxos series of British composers have exceeded 100,000 albums. He has recorded the John Jeffreys Violin Concerto (Meridian) and the Frank Martin Violin Sonata (ASV) with Iain Burnside, piano. With the pianist Ashley Wass, he recorded two albums for Naxos of the complete repertoire for violin and piano by Sir Arnold Bax.

He is an Honorary Fellow of both Brunel University, London, and Canterbury Christ Church University and was awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Academy of Music in 2013. He plays a violin made by J. B. Vuillaume, c. 1850.



Photograph: NIK Bahic



Michael Wayne has held the positions of Principal Piccolo and acting Principal Flute with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. He is also a Lecturer in Flute at the University of Western Australia Conservatorium of Music and at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts, WAAPA. He studied with renowned Australian flautist Linda Vogt and later at the Canberra School of Music under Vernon Hill.

As a soloist, recitalist and chamber musician, he has performed with the Camerata of Western Australia, Nova Ensemble, the 20th Century Ensemble of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra (with Roger Smalley), also appearing with the pianists Jennifer Fox Russell, Graeme Gilling and Cathie Travers and the harpists Jane Geeson and Will Nichols. He has

also appeared as soloist with the violinist John Harding and harpsichordist Neal Peres Da Costa in performance with the WASO Chamber Orchestra, as guest artist alongside the English flautist Paul Edmund-Davies and more recently in recordings with David Wickham, Katja Webb and Allan Meyer.

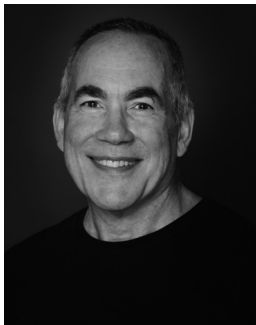
He has been seconded to perform as guest principal flute and piccolo with several other Australian and international orchestras, among them the Adelaide Symphony, Melbourne Opera and Ballet for the acclaimed Opera Australia production of Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen*, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and a memorable series of concerts with the Odessa Philharmonic.

Margaret Blades spent many years as leader and violinist of various orchestras, including the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. As a soloist, she has appeared with the Adelaide Symphony, Tasmanian Symphony, Adelaide Chamber Orchestra and West Australian Symphony Orchestra, where her solo performances have included an appearance with Nigel Kennedy in Vivaldi's Double Violin Concerto, and the premiere of works by Richard Mills, Ross Edwards and James Ledger. She has also performed as soloist in New Zealand and the USA, where she performed the Mozart *Sinfonia Concertante* with Lawrence Dutton, the violist of the Emerson String Quartet. She has performed with some of Australia's finest artists, including Michael Goldschlager, Geoffrey Lancaster, Beryl Sedivka and Geoffrey Tozer, both as a recitalist and chamber musician, for Musica Viva, the Adelaide International Festival of Arts, Blackwood River Chamber Music Festival, Barossa Music Festival, and in numerous broadcasts for ABC Classic FM.



Photograph: Nik Babic

Born in New York, the cellist **Michael Goldschlager** is perhaps best known to Australian audiences as the cellist of the Macquarie Trio through its many recordings and concert performances. He has recorded a set of the complete suites for unaccompanied cello by Bach for ABC Classics/Universal. He was principal cellist of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra for six years and is a frequent guest principal cellist with the Tasmanian and Sydney Symphony Orchestras. He has toured Europe as principal cellist of the Australian Chamber Orchestra and has recorded with all of these ensembles. His career in New York included appearances with some of the major musical organisations of the city, not least the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, NYC Opera, NYC Ballet, and as a principal with the Orchestra of St Luke's. For two years, he played Bach suites on stage as a musician and actor in over 1,000 performances of the Broadway play *The Elephant Man* with such notables as David Bowie.



Photograph: Nik Babic



Photograph: Nik Babic

David Wickham is one of Australia's pre-eminent accompanists. He was a lecturer at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), principal coach for West Australian Opera and a member of the music staff of the Australian Opera Studio, where he was music director for many productions.

He has broadcast numerous recitals for ABC Classic FM and BBC Radio 3. *The West Australian* described him as 'a musician whose fingers knew no fears, and who could shape even the subtlest nuances of the vocal line'. He has worked as a freelance répétiteur for English National Opera, Welsh National Opera and Scottish Opera. He has also worked on many productions for West Australian Opera. He conducted *The Mikado* for West Australian Opera, and

for WAAPA he conducted Adamo's *Little Women*, Bernstein's *Candide*, Britten's *Albert Herring* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and Williamson's *English Eccentrics*.

He was awarded the 2021 National Library Creative Fellowship to study the works of Frederick Septimus Kelly. As editor, he has prepared 37 volumes of the vocal works of John Antill, Phyllis Batchelor, Phyllis Campbell, Frederick Septimus Kelly, Meta Overman, James Penberthy and Rudolf Werther.



Recorded on 13 December 2021 (*Serenade*), 29 January 2022 (Piano Trio)
and 19 November 2022 (Violin Sonata No. 1) at Crank Recording, Perth, Western Australia
Recorded, produced and mastered by Lee Buddle

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FREDERICK SEPTIMUS KELLY Chamber Music

Violin Sonata No. 1 in D minor (1901)

26:06[1] I *Adagio – Allegro vivace*

10:33

[2] II *Andantino*

5:17

[3] III *Allegro vivace*

10:16

Serenade for Flute and Piano, Op. 7 (1911)

22:18

[4] I Prelude

3:16

[5] II Idyll

7:13

[6] III Minuet

2:11

[7] IV Air and Variations

6:24

[8] V Jig

3:14

Piano Trio (c. 1905?)

17:21[9] I *Lento (moderato)*

12:27

[10] II Scherzo and Trio (*Presto*)

4:54

Laurence Jackson, violin [1]–[3]**TT 65:45****Michael Waye, flute** [4]–[8]

FIRST RECORDINGS

David Wickham, piano [1]–[8]**The West Australian Piano Trio** [9]–[10]

Margaret Blades, violin

Michael Goldschlager, cello

David Wickham, piano