



VAST

A Sonic Exploration of Dark Energy

Biographies



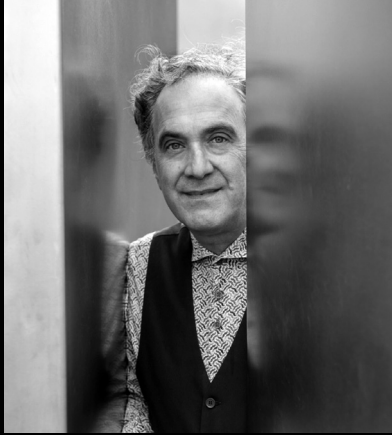
Frances Butler **– Producer / Arts Consultant**

Frances Butler is an independent creative producer and arts consultant specialising in interdisciplinary collaborations through her company Gap In The Fence.

Frances has ensured the success of numerous complex projects and tours of varying scales, grounded in collaboration and sustainability, connecting diverse stakeholders, and balancing creative ambition with practical achievement and innovative methodologies.

Frances is recognised as a strategic thinker and for their advocacy in the arts community. Their work as a consultant and producer bridges contemporary music, performance, visual art and community-focused initiatives, with a dedicated emphasis on empowering artists and nurturing new audiences.

Over 30+ years, Frances has worked with many leading arts organisations in Australia, and more recently led the Ltruwita Art Orchestra as founding Executive Producer/CEO and the Glenorchy Art & Sculpture Park (Artistic Director/CEO).



Constantine Koukias – Music & Tape

Constantine Koukias is an internationally acclaimed composer, opera director, and producer based in Amsterdam since 2013. Originally from Tasmania, where he co-founded with Werner Ihlenfeld IHOS Music Theatre and Opera, he has built a distinguished career spanning over three decades, with projects presented across Europe, Australia, North America, and Asia.

Koukias's work is distinguished by its innovative fusion of large-scale music theatre, opera, film, and installation art, often exploring themes of migration, identity, and human rights. His productions are recognized for their striking spatial and temporal designs and their integration of diverse musical traditions, including Byzantine, Latin, and Eastern influences. Major international commissions include *ICON* for the 20th anniversary of the Sydney Opera House and *The Barbarians*, inspired by Constantine Cavafy, which was commissioned by the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA). Koukias's avant-garde approach to opera has resulted in groundbreaking productions such as *Days and Nights with Christ*, *To Traverse Water*, *MIKROVION*, *The Divine Kiss*, *Tesla – Lightning in His Hand*, and *Prayer Bells*, which premiered in Chicago. Other notable works include *Kimisis – Falling Asleep*, which has toured the Netherlands and Australia, and *Before The Flame Goes Out*, performed at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and other major European museums.

Recent projects include the film noir opera *Deep Black Sleep* for MONA FOMA, the film opera *Shaped by Trees* (in collaboration with Biasino William Pezzimenti), and the international documentary-performance series *PRIMORDIAL*, exploring Ediacara fossil sites worldwide.

Koukias has received numerous prestigious awards, including the International Valentino Bucchi Vocal Prize in Rome for *Incantation II* for soprano and digital delay, the Sir Winston Churchill Fellowship for his contributions to music and opera, and The American Prize for his direction of *Backward from Winter*. He also won ABC Radio's Gallipoli Centenary Composer Competition with *Three Episodes from the Diary of Signaller Peter Ellis*. His opera *The Barbarians* was nominated for a Helpmann Award for Best New Opera. His work has also been recognized in the field of design with the Interior Design Excellence Awards (IDEA) and the Australian Interior Design Awards for the production of *The Barbarians*.

Beyond his artistic achievements, Koukias is recognized as a passionate collaborator and advocate for social justice initiatives.





Willem Van Erven Dorens – Tape & Live Spatial Speaker Design

Willem van Erven Dorens is a versatile composer, audio-visual artist, and sound designer whose work delves into the dynamic relationship between sound, image, space, and technology. He crafts immersive installations, musical compositions, and sensory experiences, pushing perceptual boundaries to invite audiences into the enigmatic beauty of nature.

Driven by a fascination with natural aesthetics, Willem composes audio-visual installations using elemental forces like light, sound, water, and air. These environments resonate with nature's rhythms, sparking curiosity and contemplation, transforming sound into a visual and spatial exploration of light, movement, and vibration.

As a music composer and sound designer, Willem has created music for short films, theater, and commercial projects, including Rituals Cosmetics' "The Art of Soulful Living" series. He also collaborates with composers as a sound engineer and designer, crafting complex speaker and stage setups for immersive live performances. Willem combines technical mastery with artistic vision to shape soundscapes that enhance storytelling and transform spaces. In addition, he teaches Art and Technology at the University of Jaén in southern Spain, inspiring students to explore the fusion of creativity and technological innovation.



Gabriella Smart – Piano

Gabriella Smart is a celebrated Australian pianist, curator, and a leading advocate for contemporary music, whose influence has shaped the musical landscape both nationally and internationally. In 1993, she founded Soundstream in South Australia—a pioneering platform dedicated to contemporary music, with a core vision of promoting cultural diversity, gender equality, and innovation in the arts. Under her visionary leadership, Soundstream has become a vital force in Australian music, employing over 300 Australian musicians, mentoring more than 40 emerging artists, and commissioning upwards of 200 world and Australian premieres. These achievements have garnered Soundstream numerous accolades, including the SA Premier’s Award for Best Event in 2009 and the APRA/AMCOS Award for

Excellence by an Organisation in 2013, recognizing its outstanding contribution to the arts.

As a pianist, Smart is renowned for her compelling performances and adventurous programming. She has graced the stages of Australia’s most prestigious festivals and venues, such as the Melbourne International Festival, MONA MOFO, OzAsia Festival, and the Adelaide International Festival, captivating audiences with her virtuosity and commitment to new music. Her international engagements include acclaimed appearances at the Cité internationale des arts in Paris and performances across China, further establishing her as a global ambassador for Australian music.

Gabriella Smart’s dedication to fostering new talent and her collaborative spirit have made her an influential figure in Australia’s cultural scene. Through her artistic leadership, she continues to push boundaries, championing innovative projects and nurturing the next generation of musicians, while inspiring audiences with her passion and artistry.





Katharine Dain – Soprano

Katharine Dain is an acclaimed American soprano based in the Netherlands, renowned for her captivating artistry and versatility across opera, chamber music, and orchestral repertoire on international stages. With a luminous voice and a keen interpretive sense, she has established herself as a sought-after collaborator and soloist, performing with leading ensembles and orchestras throughout Europe and beyond. Dain's artistry is marked by her ability to bring both emotional depth and technical brilliance to a wide range of musical styles, from Baroque masterpieces to cutting-edge contemporary works.

A passionate advocate for creative collaboration, Dain has recently served as Artist-in-Residence with Finland's Tapiola Sinfonietta, where she engaged in innovative projects that highlight her commitment to musical exploration. She has also worked with renowned orchestras including the Orchestra of the 18th Century and the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, further cementing her reputation as a dynamic and insightful performer.

Dain's operatic highlights include acclaimed performances as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Konstanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, roles she has interpreted on prestigious stages across Europe. Her debut album, *Regards sur l'Infini*, recorded with pianist Sam Armstrong, received the 2021 Edison Klassiek award for Best Debut, earning praise for its refined and expressive interpretations of works by Messiaen, Debussy, and Saariaho.

A champion of contemporary music, Dain is a frequent guest at innovative festivals such as Aldeburgh and the Holland Festival, and has appeared with the Dutch National Opera. Her wide-ranging repertoire and commitment to artistic excellence continue to inspire audiences and collaborators alike, making her a distinctive voice in today's classical music world.



Tyrone Landau – Tenor

Tyrone Landau is a highly accomplished musician whose career began as a pianist in a dance school in Covent Garden, London, before he transitioned into the world of opera and musical direction. Early in his career, Tyrone served as Musical Director of Dance at Clwyd Theatre Cymru in Wales, where he honed his skills in both performance and leadership. After several successful years in Wales, he returned to London, where he established himself as a sought-after tenor, particularly noted for his interpretations of traditional operatic repertoire, with a focus on the works of Rossini, Mozart, and Donizetti. Tyrone's versatility as a performer

is matched by his deep engagement with contemporary music and opera, making him a dynamic presence on both classical and modern stages.

His recent operatic roles include standout performances in *Friends Like The Rain* and *Alt Om Min Familie* for Bergen Nasjonale Opera in Norway, as well as *The Owl and the Pussycat* for the Royal Opera House in London. He has also appeared in *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* at the Melbourne Arts Centre in Australia, and in *Anti-Midas* at the Beckett Theatre in Dublin. Beyond opera, Tyrone's diverse repertoire includes *Messe un Jour Ordinaire* for Cité de la Musique in Paris, *L'Hôtel Chelsea* for Kings Place in London, and *La Partenza* for the National Gallery of Victoria in Australia. Other notable performances include *Tonos Humanos* in Melbourne, *L'Agilité du Bocal* with Ensemble Ars Nova in Poitiers, *Passio Olavi* at the Kirke Autunnale Festival in Bergen, and *Praxitella* for the reopening of Leeds Art Gallery. Tyrone Landau's artistic journey reflects a unique blend of tradition, innovation, and international experience.





Jennifer Owen – Violin

Jennifer Owen is a highly accomplished Australian violinist, celebrated for her artistry, leadership, and dedication to both orchestral and chamber music. Raised in Canberra, she began her musical journey as a child, performing regularly with youth ensembles and quickly establishing herself as a prodigious talent. Jennifer's formal training led her to significant roles early in her career, including Associate Concertmaster of the Richardson Symphony in Texas, as well as Principal First Violin and Acting Associate Concertmaster of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. Her international experience expanded as she served as Principal Second Violin of the Houston Symphony from 1999 to 2015, where she further honed her craft and gained recognition for her musical excellence.

Upon returning to Australia, Jennifer became the Principal First Violin of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, a position she continues to hold with distinction. She has also served as Acting Principal First Violin with the Melbourne Symphony and has performed with the Australian World Orchestra. As a soloist, Jennifer has appeared with the Tasmanian Symphony, the Houston Symphony, and the Riverside Symphony in New York City, showcasing her versatility and expressive playing.

Jennifer is a passionate chamber musician, performing with Virtuosi Tasmania and at festivals such as Dark MOFO. She is also the Musical Director of Virtuosi Tasmania, where she curates innovative programs and inspires fellow musicians. Her commitment to music education and outreach is evident in her co-curation of the Music at Woolmers series. Throughout her career, Jennifer Owen has earned numerous distinctions and awards, reflecting her outstanding contributions to the Australian and international music scenes.



Celia Craig – Cor Anglais

Celia Craig is a distinguished cor anglais and oboe player based in Adelaide, Australia, renowned for her artistry, leadership, and advocacy in classical music. Originally from England, she trained at The Purcell School, the University of York, and the Royal Academy of Music, where she was elected an Honorary Associate in 1997. Her early musical education was shaped by mentors such as Bela de Csillery and Nicholas Daniel. Celia's international orchestral career includes performing as Principal Cor Anglais with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and as Principal Oboe of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra from 2011 to 2018. She has toured five continents, recorded at Abbey Road Studios, and performed for the British Royal Family.

Celia's commitment to music extends beyond performance; she is the founder of Artaria, a not-for-profit music production agency, and curates unique chamber concerts in heritage venues. She is celebrated for her work as an educator, developing national school programs such as "Colours of Home," which explores synesthesia and creativity. Her leadership roles include serving as President of the Australasian Double Reed Society and as Resident Artist with the National Trust of South Australia.

Throughout her career, Celia has garnered numerous awards and distinctions. She received the Excellence in Classical Award at the 2023 Australian Women in Music Awards and the Winnovation-SA Arts Award in 2020. She has also been awarded fellowships from Arts South Australia and the National Library of Australia. Composers such as Dame Judith Weir and Lord Michael Berkeley have dedicated major works to her, and she continues to champion new music and neurodiversity in the arts.

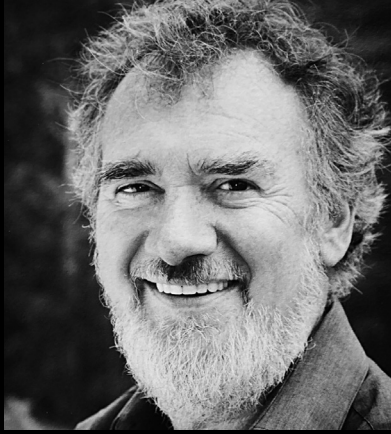




Yoram Levy - Trumpet

Yoram Levy is an accomplished trumpet player and music educator based in Australia, renowned for his profound contribution to classical music and brass pedagogy. Originally from Tel Aviv, Levy began his professional journey in 1982 when he joined the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra under Zubin Mehta, performing with leading conductors and touring across Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Australia. He continued his studies at McGill University in Montreal with James Thompson and later earned his master's degree from Northwestern University, studying with Vincent Cichowicz.

In 1990, Levy relocated to Australia, where he became Senior Lecturer in Trumpet at the Queensland Conservatorium in Brisbane, establishing himself as a key figure in Australian music education. Over the next decades, he performed as principal trumpet with several acclaimed orchestras including the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony, New Zealand Symphony, and Malaysian Philharmonic. As a committed educator, Levy has given masterclasses at respected institutions worldwide and currently teaches at the Tasmanian Conservatorium, where he also serves as Coordinator of Brass. His artistry as a soloist is documented in award-winning recordings, and his influence as a mentor extends across generations of young brass musicians in Australia and internationally.



Greg Gurr – Sound Supervisor

Greg Gurr is a distinguished sound designer and engineer based in Tasmania, Australia, renowned for his exceptional skills and creative contributions to theatre, music, and live performance. Beginning his journey in audio at the age of sixteen while still at school in Tasmania, Gurr quickly developed a reputation for technical mastery and artistic sensitivity. His career spans several decades and includes roles as an acoustic jazz and contemporary music concert engineer, film and video sound recordist, and designer and engineer for a wide range of theatre productions.

Gurr's expertise has been sought by internationally acclaimed artists and productions. He has engineered sound for legendary performers such as Roy Orbison, Don Burrows, Ivan Rebroff, The Angels, Sonny Terry, and Brownie McGee, and has toured with iconic bands including 10CC, ELO, and The Stranglers. Within Tasmania, he has played a pivotal role in the creative teams behind many innovative projects, including collaborations with IHOS Opera and the Museum of Old & New Art (MONA FOMA), where his work on productions like *The Barbarians*, *Tesla Lightning in His Hand*, and *ECHO Part 1* has been widely celebrated.

Notably, Gurr was the sound recordist for *Words and Silk*, an award-winning documentary on author Gerald Murnane, highlighting his versatility and excellence across mediums. While there is limited public record of individual awards for Gurr, his enduring presence, high-profile collaborations, and the critical acclaim of the projects he has shaped underscore the deep respect he commands in the Australian arts community.

Aiden Maidment – Live Sound Operator

Aiden Maidment is a highly experienced production manager and audio-visual technician recognised for his work across Tasmania's leading festivals and cultural events. His career encompasses site management and production, technical production, site operations, and event logistics for festivals including the Unconformity Festival, Dark MOFO, MONA FOMA, the Australian Wooden Boat Festival, and the Australian Antarctic Festival .

He works regularly with Tasmania's highest level production organisations including the Theatre Royal and Alive Technologies. With a background spanning theatre, live music, and large-scale outdoor events, Aiden is valued for his precision, adaptability, and collaborative approach under pressure particularly with cutting-edge site-based events and the incorporation of new technologies.





Donald Bate **– Live Delay Operator**

Donald Bate is a highly accomplished Australian musician, composer, and sound producer whose career spans several decades and encompasses a broad range of creative and leadership roles in the music industry. He began his formal training at the Canberra School of Music, earning a Bachelor of Music with a focus on trombone, composition, and conducting. Bate's early career saw him serve as Principal Trombone of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra for over twenty-three years, where he contributed significantly to the orchestra's artistic achievements and live performances.

Transitioning into music production and composition, Bate established his own production company, Don Bate Productions, through which he has composed music for film, television, theatre, and advertising, as well as produced recordings for a variety of artists across different genres. His expertise led him to prominent roles at ABC Classic FM, where he worked as Senior Music Producer, Live Music Producer, and eventually as Executive Producer of Music Production, overseeing the creation and broadcast of numerous acclaimed music projects.

Bate has served as Concerts Officer at the UTAS Conservatorium of Music, managing the end-to-end production of concerts and events and supporting the academic development of young musicians. Throughout his career, Bate has been recognized for his versatility and dedication to the Australian music scene, collaborating with ensembles ranging from the Australian Chamber Orchestra to international artists.
