

Leigh Harrold

Leigh Harrold enjoys a reputation as a “musician of rare talent and intelligence”, and is one of Australia’s busiest and most sought-after pianists since being named *The Advertiser* ‘2008 Musician of the Year’.



Born in Whyalla, South Australia, Leigh completed undergraduate and post-graduate studies at The University of Adelaide with concert pianist Gil Sullivan. During this time he had many successes, including being a National Finalist in the Young Performer Awards and a recipient of the prestigious Beta Sigma Phi Classical Music Award – the conservatorium’s highest honour. He moved to Melbourne in 2003 to take up a full scholarship at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) under the mentorship of Geoffrey Tozer and in 2004 was made the Academy Fellow - the first person in the institution’s history to be chosen as such after just one year of study.

Leigh has performed extensively throughout Europe, North America, Africa and Australia as both soloist and chamber musician, including concerts at Australia House in London, the Royal Academy of Music, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, the Harare International Festival of Arts, and concerto engagements with many Australian orchestras. In 2007 he undertook an extensive tour of the United States and Canada where he gave lectures on and performed the solo piano music of the American composer Robert Muczynski. In 2015 he gave a lecture-tour of England, promoting and performing Australian piano music at Trinity College and the University of London.

His international reputation as an associate artist has led to collaborations with such luminaries as Thomas Reibl, lecturer in viola at the Salzburg Mozarteum; Michael Cox, principal flautist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra; Daniel Gaede, ex-concertmaster of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra; London flautist Wissam Boustany; New York violinist Charles Castleman; Swedish soprano Camilla Tilling; and British pianist Mark Gasser, to name just a few. Other significant international collaborations have included performance and studies with Andrew Ball at the London Royal College of Music; Sophie Cherrier at the Paris Conservatoire; New York-based pianist Lisa Moore and English composer Peter Maxwell Davies. He has twice been awarded the Geoffrey Parsons Award for Associate Artists, and in 2014 was the recipient of the pianist’s prize in the Mietta Song Competition.

Leigh is a founding member of the Kegelstatt Ensemble and the Helpmann Award-nominated Syzygy Ensemble. Both ensembles are winners of major national prizes, with Syzygy releasing its independent debut CD ‘Making Signs’ in 2015. Additionally, Leigh has recorded and released CDs for Sony, ABC Classics, and Move Records.

An enthusiastic and committed teacher, speaker, and writer, Leigh is regularly invited to tutor and lecture at many institutions, adjudicate competitions, and has given several masterclasses around Australia, Africa, the USA and the UK, as well as regular pre- and post-concert talks for the Melbourne Recital Centre. In April 2012 Leigh was awarded a PhD for his research into the music of Robert Muczynski for which he received a Dean’s Commendation for Thesis Excellence, and in 2015 he was published internationally in the Liszt Society of London Journal. He holds two University medals - one for Music and one for Applied Science.

Currently Leigh holds positions on the Faculties of ANAM and the University of Melbourne, and is pianist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. When not seated in front of a piano, he finds time to go on long walks, read voraciously, and drink lots of coffee and tea. He lives in Brunswick with Craig and Bart.

QUOTES AND REVIEWS (if required)

“ A musician of rare talent and intelligence” (Raymond Chapman Smith, ‘The Advertiser’)

"Piano playing of the highest calibre" (Raymond Chapman Smith, 'The Advertiser')

"...playing always empathetic...interpretative intentions always crystal clear..." (Rodney Smith, 'The Advertiser')

"A pianist of real stature." (Roger Knight, 'The Adelaide Review')

On Mozart:

“...few have as magical touch as Harrold. Every phrase glowed with a radiant intensity that has become Harrold’s hallmark. Let’s hear more of him.” (Grahame Strahle, ‘The Adelaide Review’)

On Messiaen's "Vision de l'Amen":

"...confident, powerfully driving... an overpowering, white-hot expression of compressed ecstasy realised with extraordinary cohesion and éclat." (Clive O'Connel, 'The Age')

On Takemitsu's Piano Trio:

"...Harrold again exerted his considerable pianistic gifts... a shining example of flexibility in ensemble and collegiality of purpose." (Clive O'Connel, 'The Age')

On Ives' First Piano Sonata:

“Harrold is a determined and persuasive advocate and he produced many moments of beauty and arresting harmonic colouration as he navigated his way through Ives’ richly inventive maze. His facility at the piano is remarkable... a tour-de-force.” (Rodney Smith, ‘The Advertiser’)