

VENDESTINY

10:00 AM
SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER 2025
LECTURE HALL



Kym Alexandra DILLON (b. 1989)
Vanishing Act

Travelling Tune

Franz LISZT (1811 – 1886)
Au lac de Wallenstadt

Kym Alexandra DILLON
For Honour

Three two one

Connexions

Keith JARRETT (b. 1945)
Part IIc

Kym Alexandra DILLON
Fare thee well

The Waves

Kym Alexandra Dillon, *Piano*

Kym Alexandra Dillon is an Australian composer, pianist and presenter whose unique path as a musician has led her to cultivating a category-defying artistic career. Equally at home improvising in jazz ensembles, composing for symphony orchestras, performing complex contemporary works or engaging orchestral audiences with her talks on music, her professional activity spans across a multitude of disciplines and genres, all stemming from her deep love of music, and belief in its power to shape and enrich our lives.

As a pianist she has performed in the Melbourne International Jazz Festival, been awarded “best accompanist in the finals” at the 2022 National Liederfest, the Maurie Fabrikant Award for Piano Playing Excellence from the Victorian Jazz Club, and frequently tours across Australia accompanying performers such as Simon Gleeson, Rachael Beck, Gorgi Coghlan, Ian Stenlake, and Harrison Craig. She also appeared on ABC TV’s *The Piano* performing her own composition, *Epilogue*.

As a composer she has been a finalist for the Australian Art Music Awards, has been commissioned by ensembles such as the MSO, AYO, Forest Collective, Inventi Ensemble, Musica Viva, Homophonic! and the Melbourne Recital Centre (MRC), and was awarded the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music/MRC Composition Prize in 2023.

As part of her work deepening public engagement with music, she regularly conducts two large community choirs (who have been featured on the ABC and Channel 9), regularly gives pre-concert talks for the ACO and MSO, and has been a guest presenter for ABC Classic radio.

VENDESTINY is a word I conjured up to represent how our own individual stories intersect with the stories of those around us, how a person has many different sides and ways of being, and about trying to hold together all of your complexities and possible paths within a world that seeks to categorise and define. This show is a sneak preview of my upcoming album of the same name, coming out next year.

For me the piano feels like the lens through which I experience and process the world; it’s my home, and these pieces are the most natural expression of my pianistic personalities. My favourite performances are when there’s room for improvisation and change in the moment, so although these pieces are compositions, they still exist in a malleable, somewhat improvisatory state — many of them aren’t properly written down, and exist in my memory purely through having played them so much! They move fluidly through classical, jazz and contemporary languages, and each of them mean multiple things to me at once, and change in the light they’re seen in. I hope that for you they offer a window for your own imagination, and totems for some of your own thoughts and feelings. In this concert, I have also included two other pieces from Franz Liszt and Keith Jarrett, two players who have had a large influence on the way I improvise and play.

I’ll offer some words for each piece about some of what they mean for me, but I invite you to enjoy your own journey and associations — it’s very much in the spirit of VENDESTINY that your own connection to this music is just as real as mine!

Vanishing Act

Stemming from a melancholic tune that first came into my head at a train station at night, for me this piece expresses the desire to take time out inside one's own imagination, find refuge in art, come back to who you are, and, on occasion, perhaps be a little invisible...

Travelling Tune

I love getting the piano to act like a finger-picked acoustic guitar, and that enjoyment sparked off this country-imbued piece which for me expresses an innocent optimism and ode to the journey, regardless of the destination.

Au lac de Wallenstadt (Franz Liszt)

Franz Liszt is a composer who seems to invite the piano to transcend itself, to break free of its own box. One of his most serene pieces, the texture of *Au lac de Wallenstadt*, with its lapping water, droplet-melody and hypnotic ripples, always transports me away, and I include it as a humble tribute to a composer whose belief in the limitless scope of the piano continues to inspire me.

For Honour

Speaking of Franz Liszt, this piece started out its life with me improvising over an intermediary two-bar section of Liszt's piano concerto *Totentanz*, and then expanded out to become this early music, folk-inspired meditation on virtue, purpose and enchantment.

Three two one

To my mind, this wild thing seems to variously blend the energy of jazz fusion, slap bass, and *Mario Kart* soundtracks.

Connexions

Originally inspired by the way that certain Hans Zimmer compositions begin with a simple recurring chord sequence which progressively adds layer after layer of texture, for me this piece expresses facing the future with determination, how one person can influence others, and that feeling of realisation that comes when a huge, long-term plan is coming together.

Part IIc (Keith Jarrett)

This is the final piece Keith Jarrett performed as part of his famous Köln concert in 1975, with this piece later being revealed as a tune he'd written called *Memories of Tomorrow*. Originally learning it when I was 18 made a deep, eternal mark on my contemporary piano style, and it has always been a piece that I can come back to and find refuge in. I feel such gratitude to Jarrett for showing how a piano can be a whole ensemble in just two hands, and how this piece of his opened doors for me.

Fare thee well

A piece about gratitude, acceptance, and partings. In its musical language it expresses my profound gratitude to piano composers like Beethoven and Jarrett, and is even partly inspired by the atmosphere of Joe Hisaishi soundtracks to Studio Ghibli films, but emotionally it was written while going through the break-up of a long-term relationship, and the feelings of gratitude for the time had with someone, while accepting change.

The Waves

A meditation on the ocean, the enchanting mysteries of sound waves, and the changing seasons of one's life.