

Pictures: Jackson Hindell



JESS THE THING FOR A ROUSING RETURN

The West Australian Symphony Orchestra is bouncing back into action with the help of local conductor Jessica Gethin. Gethin, pictured centre with singers Perry Joyce and Amy Manford, became instafamous three years ago after a picture of her jumping on stage in a

pair of converse trainers while conducting Perth Symphony Orchestra went viral. With regular maestro Asher Fisch overseas, Gethin has stepped in to help WASO reshape the 2020 season, which starts on October 2-3 with Carl Orff's Carmina Burana.



Tributes for a legal titan

BEN HARVEY

WA has lost one of its most formidable legal minds after the weekend death of former Supreme Court judge Michael Murray.

Mr Murray, pictured, died on Sunday. The one-time handy squash player was 78 and had been struggling with ill health for months.

Mr Murray retired from the bench in 2012, 47 years after being admitted to legal practice. He was WA's youngest-ever chief Crown prosecutor, having taken the job in his early 30s, and the State's most experienced Supreme Court judge — clocking 22 years on the bench.

His career included appointments as Crown counsel, which led to his extensive review of the Criminal Code, and as president of the Law Society.

In retirement he remained chairman of the juvenile parole

board and was an adjunct professor of law at Murdoch University. "I also reckon I have what everybody reckons they have in them and that's a bestseller novel, if that ever gets written," he said at the time.

In 2013, he was appointed parliamentary inspector to the Corruption and Crime Commission.

Former Supreme Court judge-cum-former CCC commissioner John McKechnie paid tribute to Mr Murray.

"Michael was a very fair judge and a very courteous one," Mr McKechnie said.

"He was just impossible not to like. He was a nice person, a decent person."

Mr Murray retired as CCC inspector in April, shortly after Mr McKechnie left the role of commissioner after the parliamentary committee responsible for appointing him refused to do so. Mr Murray is survived by his wife Dale and three children.



Hacey Taylor

Academic Enrichment Program, Newman.

In Newman young students showing greater academic potential now have a pathway to follow. An Academic Enrichment Program set up with the support of BHP identifies students with both the right ability and the right attitude. They have breakout classes furthering progression in STEAM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics. Find out more at [BHP.com/community/programs](https://www.bhp.com/community/programs)

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The West Australian

TODAY

Strike up the band

WASO's back with a rousing program & new conductor at the helm



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WEDNESDAY
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Rousing return for

COVID-19 curtailed Jess Gethin's work overseas but freed her to take up the WASO baton ahead of an exciting season

David Cusworth



When WA Symphony Orchestra returns to Perth Concert Hall on October 2 it will come with not one but two game changers.

Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* will unite 130 voices and full orchestra in a rumbustious song cycle for the ages that has illuminated commercials and movies for decades.

And they'll be under the baton of Jess Gethin, long-time artistic director of cross-town rival Perth Symphony Orchestra, now taking Perth's biggest band on the main stage for the first time.

Gethin conducted *WISOLE* in the WA Ballet season of *Giselle* last year, and will do it again for *Dracula* in September — both from the pit at His Majesty's — and recorded the score for WA animated movie *100% Wolf*.

"But this will be the first time I've worked with them on a main stage," Gethin says. "We've been in talks about the 2021 season, so those discussions were already happening it's just (the pandemic) has brought those opportunities forward — which is just as well because all my overseas work has been cancelled."

The WA native — who became *Instafamous* for "Jessie's Jump" on stage with PSO in Converse sneakers three years ago — was taking on work opportunities in Asia when the coronavirus hit.

"I was actually there when COVID was happening in February. I came home and I was supposed to go back for a concert with Singapore Symphony Orchestra on the 22nd of March, and a few days before we got the 'do not travel' message," she says.

Gethin, who turned 40 in April, says after nine years at PSO she was up for a new challenge. And, being freelance, she is able to literally jump at any opportunity that comes her way.

"I can work with any orchestra or company if I'm interested in the project," she says.

With regular maestro Asher Fisch overseas, and guest artists



WASO conductor Jess Gethin, centre, with singers Perry Joyce and Amy Manford. Picture: Jackson Flindell

Credits

FEATURES EDITOR

Ross McRae
ross.mcrae@wanews.com.au

ADVERTISING

9482 3723
advertisingenquiries@thewest.com.au

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Picture: Jackson Flindell

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WASO

“If you’re going to return to the stage that’s the way to do it with something that energises everybody, and unites everyone.”

unable to travel, Gethin consulted with WASO to reshape a shattered program.

“It’s a great sense of relief that the orchestra is able to get back to the main stage, everyone’s missed it so much,” she says.

“I think the opening concert is going to be a highlight simply for the grandeur and the presence that Carmina Burana brings.

“I’ve had such a wonderful time exploring the writings, the 24 songs and poems orchestrated by Orff, looking at the history.

“That whole wheel of fortune concept. The writings cover everything that we cover in life. That’s why it’s such an exciting work. They’re powerful and about joy and love and lust and opportunity — and missed opportunity — and destiny and providence, all these beautiful melodies and raw rhythms, and the collaboration with a 130-piece choir and the full symphony.

“If you’re going to return to the stage that’s the way to do it with something that energises everybody, and unites everyone.”

Lead singers Amy Manford, Perry Joyce and James Clayton are also West Aussies who, like Gethin, have had to restructure their year.

“It’s something unique when you get to perform for your home orchestra, it feels like home,” Gethin says.

“You’ve got your music teachers and your family in the audience, your community is right behind you, but it’s also nice that we get to bring all the things that we’ve experienced overseas that people don’t get to see in Perth. I think

West Australians really embrace that.”

Bernstein’s *Candide* overture and Grieg’s *Peer Gynt* Suite No.1 are the curtain-raisers.

The following week opens with another crowd pleaser in Mendelssohn’s *Hebrides* overture, and another rising talent, Emmalena Huning, playing Mozart’s *Violin Concerto No. 5*.

Gethin will then rock out her stint with Dvorak’s *Symphony No. 8*.

“It is just such a beautiful, joyous, optimistic work,” she says. “The way Dvorak treats his thematic material is so beautifully lyrical, the folk-inspired melodies.

“I’m really enjoying working closely with the orchestra on bringing together that real symphonic sound we love so much, that this orchestra does so well.”

Fast forward to November and WASO presents its annual *Last Night of the Proms*, with conductor Guy Noble, Huning again, soprano Sky Ingram and a pan-European program culminating in the traditional jingoistic singalong.

Then Fisch returns with two of the jewels of Romantic repertoire: Bruch’s *Violin Concerto No. 1* played by WASO concertmaster Laurence Jackson; and Beethoven’s mesmeric *Emperor Piano Concerto No. 5*, with Konstantin Shamray.

Bruch is bracketed by Mozart’s *Magic Flute* overture and Tchaikovsky’s majestic *Symphony No. 4*, while Beethoven is complemented by Brahms’ *swansong Symphony No. 4*.



Tomas Ford is co-creator of Normal Place TV. Picture: Andrew Ritchie

Right place for edgy TV

Fringe-style performance has found its home in Normal Place, a local streaming platform

Tanya MacNaughton

Alternative Perth cabaret crooner/DJ Tomas Ford and writer/director/producer Levon J. Polinelli have joined artistic forces to create Normal Place, a boutique streaming platform for cult and underground performance.

“It’s mostly the kind of performance you only get to see in Perth during Fringe World,” Ford says.

“It’s curating that kind of work into one place in a Netflix kind of way. We work with those artists to build live experiences that happen once and are really the kind of live experiences that can only happen

audience came to my rescue,” he says. “I made a fairly ridiculous amount of money the first stream I did for jumping around in my driveway at home. I don’t know how I would have survived without it, so it was a good surprise.”

The duo is now assisting local and international acts to present everything from 24-hour dance parties and cabaret to comedy and other live events online.

“The biggest challenge is psychological, with comedians especially,” Ford says. “Some have completely stopped doing comedy for now because they just can’t deal with not having that audience feedback. But the technical stuff is pretty nightmarish as well, for some performers.

“It’s intentionally out there and . . . risky.”

on the internet. They sometimes test the limits of Australian classification law.

“It’s intentionally out there and things you wouldn’t see anywhere else because it’s too risky for other platforms.”

The idea for Normal Place has been in the pipeline for about a year, but took development priority once the COVID-19 pandemic started, providing an income stream for Ford to make his mortgage repayments.

“I did some streams with my Crap Music Rave Party show. It had got pretty dire but then my

“We use whatever electronic devices with cameras the artists have, and if they have a couple of smartphones in their house then it can become a two-camera set-up.

“We do all the vision mixing here (Ford’s home) remotely. It’s low intensity for them and they get a polished product.”

Ford says his “Netflix for weirdos” was mainly curated through the Fringe performer network and gave a platform to artists who are “just bubbling under public awareness”.

Normal Place is at normalplace.tv