



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

# Challis Bequest Society News

Edition 14, 2016

## Gift will inspire music's future generations

One of our nation's greatest composers – the late Peter Sculthorpe – was renowned for creating music that captures the uniqueness of Australia, from its diverse cultures to its climate, geography and fauna. His work earned him a string of accolades, including Officer of the Order of Australia, Officer of the British Empire, and National Trust of Australia National Living Treasure status.

As well as his own compositions, Peter made another kind of gift to the musical life of Australia through a bequest to the University of Sydney, where he was an emeritus professor and had taught since the 1960s. In line with his wishes, a sum of more than \$4 million from his estate is now being used to establish the Sculthorpe Chair of Australian Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

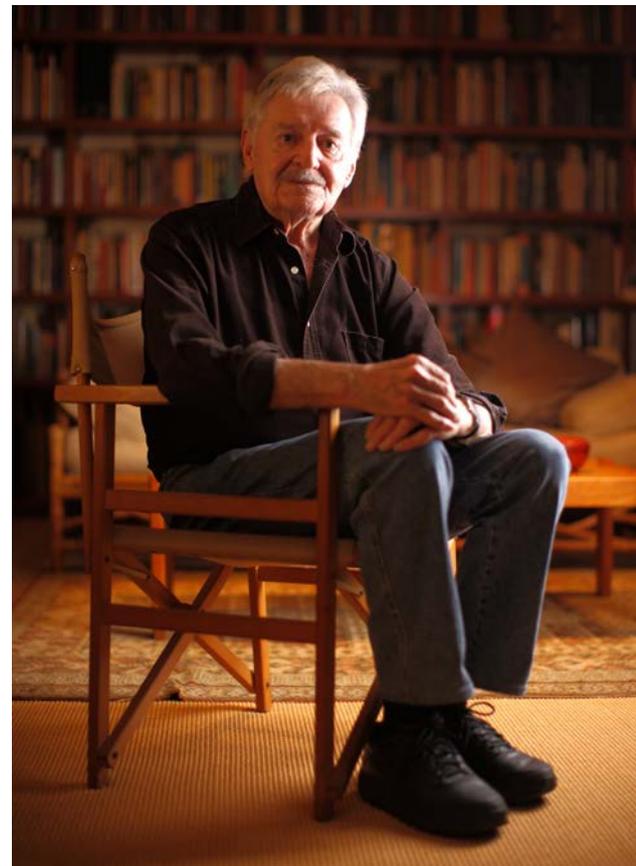
The role of the chair – which is the first of its kind in the country – will be to support, promote and advance music in Australia. The academic who holds the position will help to

nurture the next generation of researchers and composers in Australian music, working closely with postgraduates and emerging scholars. They will also undertake their own projects, which could include original compositions or research into the nation's musical styles.

“Thanks to Peter's foresight, we will now be able to have a senior academic position dedicated to researching Australian music, and the role of composers and musicians in the Australian music scene,” says Anna Reid, Dean and Principal of the Conservatorium.

“Peter was so keen on Australian music, people and culture, and his bequest means that the Conservatorium is going to continue that vision forever. We are enormously happy about that because sometimes you have to scramble for funding a program that should be core business.”

Back in 2009, when his gift was first announced, Peter Sculthorpe explained that it was inspired by the existence of the Chair of Australian Literature in the English



The Late Emeritus Professor Peter Sculthorpe AO, OBE

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**Anna Reid**  
Dean and Principal, Sydney  
Conservatorium of Music



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department. “The question I asked myself was ‘why not a Chair of Australian Music?’” he said at the time. “It is a logical, timely and obvious move. And it was imperative that it be at Sydney’s Conservatorium.”

The chair will be limited to terms of two years, explains Professor Reid, which will enable a range of experts with diverse interests to hold the position.

Over time that will deepen our knowledge of the many varieties of Australian music – both historical and contemporary – including Indigenous music, while also providing insights into practical questions such as how our musicians need

to adapt to the technical challenges of 21st century performance.

The NSW Government and Sculthorpe Trustees established a new fellowship that bears Peter’s name to support young composers. Worth \$30,000, the grant is awarded every two years starting in 2015.

Its first recipient was Peggy Polias. “It’s really nice to be able to support young composers with a decent amount of time and space to write their music,” says Professor Reid.

“Alongside the chair, this will get the next generation up and running.”

## Music chair fulfils partner’s last wish

Eddie Glastra-Marcello has set up the Marcello-Glastra Foundation that will support the chair. He explains the inspiration behind his involvement.

“My late partner Theo Marcello had always wanted to do something for the musical world, being a talented musician himself. For some time he searched to find the right venue to donate his estate, in memory of his family name. Theo was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease in 1982 and, unfortunately, was unable to complete his search for a suitable recipient. I promised to fulfil his wish.

Then came the news of the late Emeritus Professor Peter Sculthorpe wanting to set up a Chair of Australian Music. I am sure that this was what we had been looking for.

I am certain that Theo would be very content about the outcome of our estate and thrilled that the name Marcello shall live on in the musical world for some time to come.”



Eddie Glastra-Marcello (left) and late partner Theo Marcello

## Why education about our past will counter future racism and prejudice

Mr Stepan Kerkyasharian AO (DLitt ’07) and Mrs Hilda Kerkyasharian know from personal experience the impact of ignorance on racism and are determined to counter it.

### Members profile: Stepan Kerkyasharian AO and Hilda Kerkyasharian

Of Armenian heritage, Mr Kerkyasharian was raised by refugee parents who survived the Armenian genocide. Mrs Kerkyasharian, nee Kayikian, was also the daughter of survivors of the genocide who, with her uncle Nishan, came to Australia as migrants and succeeded in business. The Kerkyasharian and Kayikian fund also celebrates the survival of the two families. Both are motivated by their experiences and heritage to make a lasting contribution to tertiary education – in particular, Armenian studies.

For this reason, they have donated \$250,000 to establish the Kerkyasharian and Kayikian Fund. It will support awards, grants and scholarships for honours students, postgraduate students and academic staff at the University of Sydney carrying out research related to Armenian history and culture, from the 19th century and earlier. The fund will also be supported through a gift in their will.

“I think that by offering scholarships in Armenian studies we honour our families. But more importantly, we hope it will help people to understand each other and live in harmony through that understanding, because people can learn from our history,” Mr Kerkyasharian says.

“Racism and prejudice are the products of ignorance and are often exploited by those who should know better, but have a geo-political agenda. Education is one of the best counters to racism and prejudice.”

Professor Duncan Ivison, formerly the University’s dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (now the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)), says the gift is “a remarkable act of faith in the power of the humanities to contribute to the ongoing dynamism

and resilience of an extraordinary culture. This is the perfect fit between a far-sighted philanthropist and distinguished public servant on the one hand, and a faculty deeply committed to the role that research in the humanities and social sciences can contribute to the public good on the other.”

Mr Kerkyasharian has made a significant contribution to the Australian community in the area of multicultural affairs, anti-discrimination and community relations. He was chair and CEO of the Community Relations Commission, founding head of the Radio Division of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) and played a key role in improving community relations after the 2005 Cronulla riots.

“Armenia is not very well known in the modern world. A lot of this nation’s rich history and culture is not well understood in academic circles. Through the establishment of this fund, we will be able to assist those who want to learn more,” Mr Kerkyasharian says. “It is important that research is undertaken not only for the benefit of Armenians but for the benefit of humanity.”



Stepan Kerkyasharian AO and Hilda Kerkyasharian at the 2015 Challis Bequest Society Lunch

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## Bequest supports excellence in economics

Professor John Romalis is the first professor to hold the title of Sir Hermann Black Professor in Economics. With a global presence, he is acknowledged as a world leader in international economics and trade.



Sir Hermann and Lady Black. Image courtesy of the University of Sydney Archives (G77\_1\_2099)

“My particular field is the study of international trade, which primarily focuses on how production is organised across countries. That has important implications for the determination of people’s income in different countries and their ability to consume goods and services,” says Professor Romalis.

Some of Professor Romalis’ research studies the fundamental determinants of international trade while other research looks at the effects of trade liberalisation – both multilateral liberalisation, under the World Trade Organization (WTO), and bilateral or regional trade liberalisation, such as the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA).

“I’m looking at the benefits of trade liberalisation by studying the effects of the liberalisation we’ve seen over the last 30 years. Part of what’s engaging me is what we should be doing in trade policy negotiations,” he says.

“I’ve shown empirically that individual free trade agreements don’t actually do a lot of good. They don’t tend to make countries much better off.”

What does help, according to Professor Romalis, is all countries reducing their tariffs or trade barriers under the WTO. “Getting worldwide trade barriers down is much more important than just securing a few special deals with a few countries,” he says.

Professor Romalis’ interest in economics began in high school when, in the early 1980s, economic debate was sparked by a deep recession and lower terms of trade. “This period led to a lot of economic reform in financial markets, such as liberalising the Australian dollar, liberalisation of the labour market and tax reform,” says Professor Romalis.

Professor Romalis was also motivated by his economics teacher in high school who, he says, “was extremely well trained in economics and inspired interest in the subject”.

Passing on economic knowledge to his 1500 students each year is equally important to Professor Romalis.

“People should know more about economics. Because the more people are informed about economics, the better economic policy decisions will become,” he says.

“People need to know how vigorous competition tends to benefit most people,” he adds. “What you want is big markets with many competitors. In macro-economics, we need to know that governments spending more money during a recession can actually be a good thing. We need to relearn how fiscal policy can be used to fight recessions.

“My job satisfaction comes from expanding that knowledge. I help teach those basic facts. A little bit of micro-economics about competition and the evils of monopoly, and a bit of macro-economics.”

Professor Romalis’ position at the University was made possible thanks to the generosity of former chancellor, the late Sir Hermann Black and his wife, the late Lady (Joyce) Black.

A loyal supporter of the University, it was Sir Hermann’s wish that if he outlived his wife, their estate would go to the University. Although Lady Black outlived her husband, her will reflected his wishes and she left their estate, including the home and its contents, to the University in memory of her late husband.



Sir Hermann was Chancellor of the University of Sydney from 1970 until he died in 1990, but his impact on the University Senate began well before, in 1949, when he was first elected a Fellow.

He began his working life as a teacher before joining the University of Sydney as an assistant lecturer in economics in 1933. A gifted speaker, Sir Hermann was well known for his role as commentator for the Australian Broadcasting Commission from the 1930s and member of discussion panels such as the Monday Conference.

Together, Sir Hermann and Lady Black were an extraordinary couple who worked at the University for more than 30 years, leaving a legacy of hard work, well established programs – including the Chancellor’s Committee and the Book Fair – and a clear vision for the future.

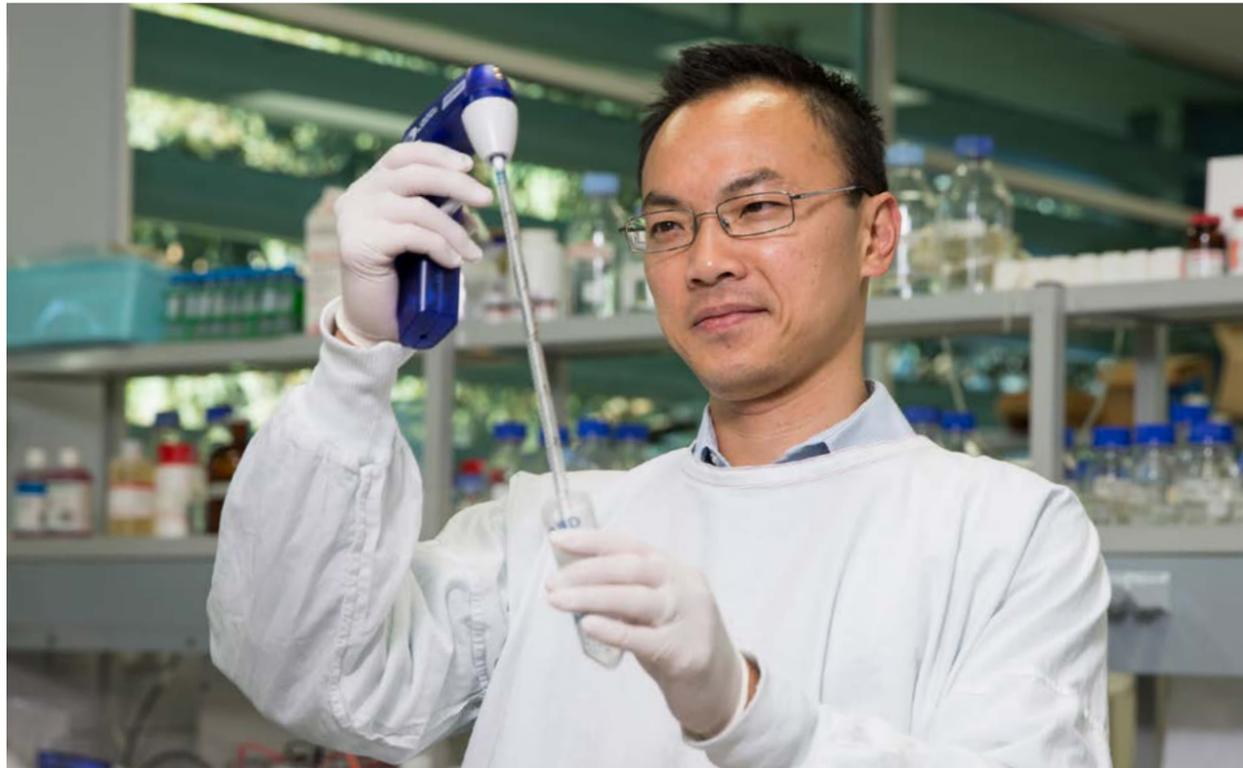


Image courtesy the Westmead Institute for Medical Research

## Breakthrough could transform heart failure treatment

University of Sydney researcher and physician, Dr James Chong, delivered the keynote address at the Challis Bequest Society Lunch in October last year. Dr Chong is the first author on a groundbreaking paper published in the prestigious scientific journal *Nature* in 2014.

Dr Chong, through the affiliated Westmead Institute for Medical Research (WIMR), collaborated with researchers from the University of Washington to successfully grow heart muscle cells in quantities required to repair the damaged heart of non-human primates after myocardial infarction (heart attack).

The significant breakthrough was described as a 'bold new step' towards solving the growing epidemic of chronic heart failure, which kills more than 20,000 Australians each year.

For the first time, researchers were able to grow stem cell-derived heart muscle at a sufficiently large scale to treat large animals. Injecting the cells into the animals' infarcted hearts resulted in large-scale re-muscularisation and regeneration of the failing organ.

Dr Chong says the research is a significant breakthrough in using the technology of regenerative medicine for human patients with heart disease.

"One in two people with advanced-stage heart failure will die within one year of diagnosis. New treatments are urgently needed," he says.

Dr Chong and his team were able to grow and graft stem cell-derived heart muscle in significantly large numbers, which also engrafted and survived in the infarcted hearts over a much longer period than had been previously demonstrated in a clinically relevant model.

Dr Chong says the technology is getting closer to the stage of human clinical trials.

"It brings us one step closer to one day being able to replace the need for heart transplantation," he says.

University of Sydney Clinical Professor of Cardiology, Professor David Ross, says the work of Dr Chong and fellow researchers is an important step in possible new treatments for heart failure.

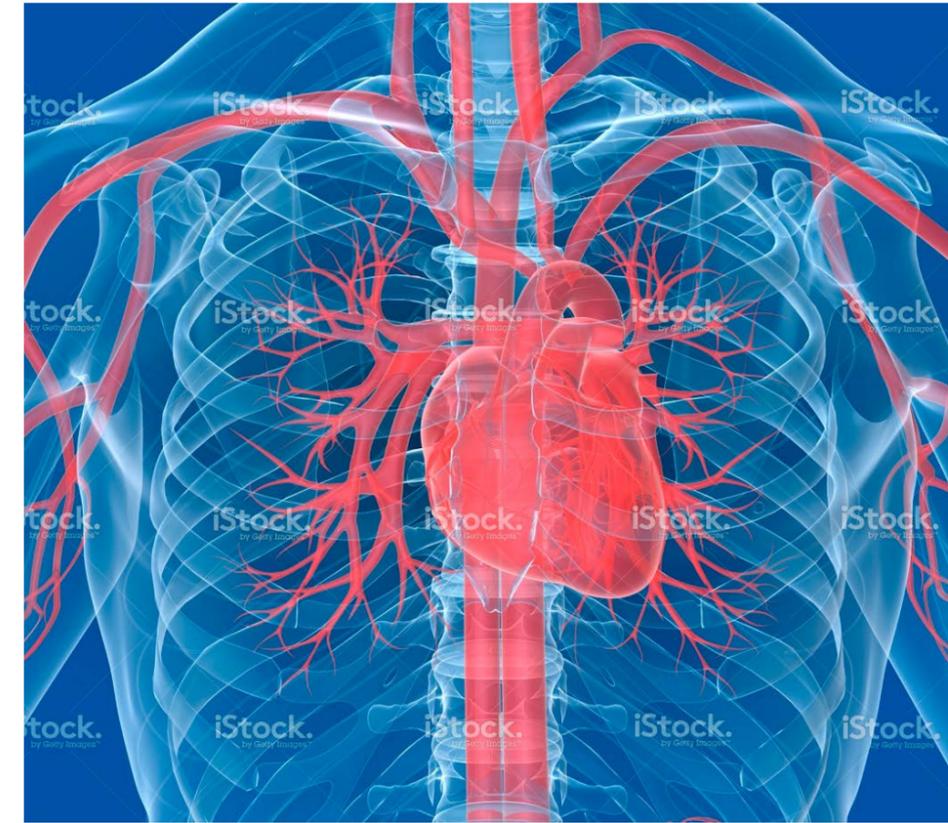
"Heart muscle has little or no capacity for regeneration after damage and repeated insults result in progressive reduction in the heart's pumping capacity, causing heart failure," Professor Ross says.

"The research suggests it is possible to insert functional new heart muscle in damaged areas in a heart very similar to a human heart.

"While more research is needed into the long-term efficacy and safety of this approach, if it proves effective, it will transform the treatment of heart failure."

This therapy is close to being ready for the first human clinical trials. However, key safety issues need to be addressed, which requires additional funding.

"We are trying to get this promising treatment into humans and that will be the goal for the next five years, so that we can start helping patients," Dr Chong says.



"Unfortunately government research grants are at an all-time historic low. That's hurting the medical research community, particularly researchers in the early phases of their career, like myself," Dr Chong says.

While deaths from heart disease continue to be the number one killer in Australia and around the world, and incidence of heart disease increases, Dr Chong is adamant that research is crucial to improve treatment options and quality of life for heart failure patients.

"My particular research using stem cells is quite a novel approach and could make significant impacts to the lives of heart failure patients. Treatments over the last 30 years are able to slow deterioration of heart failure but not regenerate new tissue. This stem cell therapy could be a next big leap in heart failure therapy," he says.

**If you would like to learn more about supporting Dr Chong's research or the Sydney Medical School, please contact 02 8627 8824.**

## A message from the bequest manager

In October Challis Bequest Society members will again meet over lunch, marking the beginning of the society's 10th anniversary.

While we plan to celebrate this milestone next year, I would like to recognise and thank our members who have been with us since the launch of Challis in 2007 and to welcome all who have joined in the years since. The extent of our 480 members' support for scholarships, research and teaching, across all disciplines, is truly inspiring.

Your vision for a better future will allow students to concentrate on their studies rather than earning a living; and provide valuable financial support for research, which will assist with solving some of the world's most pressing problems. Thank you for your foresight and generosity.

This year we will again be hosting a tour of the Quadrangle. Everyone is welcome to join this one-hour discovery tour of our stunning architecture. Invitations will be sent in April.

I look forward to seeing many of you throughout the year.

**Wendy Marceau**

## Challis Bequest Society events

### Friday 27 May, 10am–12.30pm

Heritage tour of the historic Quadrangle Clocktower, the Quadrangle

### Friday 21 October, 12–2.30pm

Challis Bequest Society Lunch Great Hall, the Quadrangle

## Public events at the Nicholson Museum

The free talks in this series are on the first Saturday of the month and start at 2pm. Bookings are essential.

### Saturday 5 March

Michael Turner  
*The rise and fall of the Classical English landscape: celebrating 300 years of Capability Brown*

### Saturday 2 April

Matthew Laing  
*Roman History and the American Revolution*

### Saturday 7 May

Paul Roche  
*Modern Ovids: twentieth century transformations*

### Saturday 6 August

Michael Turner  
*The Romans in the South of France*

For details of all University events, please visit

– [sydney.edu.au/events](http://sydney.edu.au/events)

## Sydney Ideas

This unique program of regular and free forums brings together leading academics and researchers for talks and conversations on a diverse range of topics and issues.

– [sydney.edu.au/sydney\\_ideas](http://sydney.edu.au/sydney_ideas)

The ticketed talks in this series start at 6pm (for 6.30pm) to 7.30pm.

### Tuesday 1 March\*

Craig Barker  
*Cypriot Art in the Nicholson Museum*

### Tuesday 5 April\*

*Alpha and Omega* opening

### Wednesday 7 September\*

Sue Rollin  
*Ruins and Romance: Early Women Travellers in the Middle East*

\*Complimentary tickets for this series available to legacy members only. Legacy members are those who have provided the bequest office with a copy of their will/relevant clause in the will.

## For more information

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