

STUDYING STRINGS

The Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music and Performance is a thriving hub of diverse musical practices in performance, composition, research, teaching and industry engagement. We are home to an exciting community of undergraduate, postgraduate and professional musicians, performers, and researchers working across classical, electronic, experimental, jazz, interdisciplinary and popular music.

Collaboration, creativity, excellence, inclusivity, diversity and community are at the heart of what we do. Our students are innovative, forward-looking and internationally informed, and celebrate Australian performing arts and its place in the world.

STRINGS AT MONASH

Strings offer a range of performance focus areas including solo, chamber, orchestral, and a wide variety of repertoire styles of string playing. Directed by Dr Anna McMichael, the string program is designed to produce exceptional musicians who are also articulate thinkers and collegial collaborators. The string program is diverse, inclusive and welcoming, with each student's study program designed according to individual goals and interests. A musical journey at Monash enables you to successfully embark on your chosen musical path beyond university, along with supportive peers who will become friends for life!



STRINGS CLASSES

Students participate in weekly chamber ensembles, one-to-one lessons, creative string practice workshops and artistic practice classes, plus other special opportunities. Students develop skills in interpretation and performance of repertoire, developing ensemble skills and regularly engage with national and international string artists.

STRINGS TEACHERS

Strings staff at Monash include violinists Dr Anna McMichael, Erica Kennedy (Associate Principal First Violin with Orchestra Victoria), Jos Jonker (Associate Principal Second Violin Melbourne Symphony Orchestra), Aaron Wyatt (ensemble coaching and chamber orchestra conducting), Rachael Beesley (ensemble coaching), and Lucy Warren (violin Orchestra Victoria).

Our viola teachers are Merewyn Bramble (Principal Viola of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra) and Jenny Khafagi (violin/viola, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra), and our cellist is Blair Harris (Principal Cello of Melbourne Chamber Orchestra). We also regularly host guest artists from Musica Viva and many leading national and international string players.

Monash is a QS World University Ranking Top 50 university (#36 in 2026).



MEET OUR STRINGS TEACHING STAFF



DR ANNA MCMICHAEL STRINGS COORDINATOR

Dr Anna McMichael is in demand as an experienced musician able to perform diverse styles of music. She enjoyed a successful 17-year career in Europe performing with a number of Dutch ensembles and toured extensively with groups such as the London Sinfonietta, Amsterdam Sinfonietta, the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. Anna performs at many festivals around Australia and internationally. She joined the School of Music and Performance as Coordinator of Strings in 2019.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Dr Anna McMichael
Strings Coordinator
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monash.edu/arts/music-performance/home

monash.edu/arts/music-performance/about/scholarships-and-prizes



ERICA KENNEDY, VIOLIN

Violinist Erica Kennedy is Associate Principal First Violin with Orchestra Victoria. She attended the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and the Australian National Academy of Music and has also studied performance with William Hennessy. Internationally, she has trained with David Takeno, Gabor Takacs, the Emerson String Quartet and Hatto Beyerle, as well as undertaking two residencies at the Banff Centre in Canada and the International Musicians Seminar in Cornwall.

She was the winner of the Hepzibah Menuhin Award for Strings and has toured extensively across the UK, Europe, Canada and Singapore. She has worked with the Flinders Quartet, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra and the Australian String Quartet, and has also been the guest associate concertmaster with both the Tasmanian and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras.



BLAIR HARRIS, CELLO

Hailing from New Zealand, and originally coming to Australia to attend ANAM, Blair Harris is a highly regarded Melbourne-based solo cellist and chamber musician, known particularly for his strikingly individual interpretations and innovative collaborative projects.

A member of Ensemble Offspring since 2015, he has commissioned many solos by Australian composers including by Jack Symonds, Alice Humphries and Paul Dean.

As a soloist he has performed with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra Victoria and he performs regularly as a duo with pianist Caroline Almonte and enjoyed many years performing with Syzygy Ensemble and Southern Cross Soloists.

Blair is Principal Cellist with Melbourne Chamber Orchestra.