

= Phillip Wilcher =

Phillip Leslie Wilcher ( born 16 March 1958 ) is an Australian pianist and classical music composer and was a founding member of the children 's music group , The Wiggles . When Wilcher published his first work , " Daybreak " , at the age of 14 , he was one of the youngest classical composers in Australia . Early in 1991 Wilcher joined The Wiggles after he met co @-@ founder Anthony Field , who requested Wilcher 's assistance in recording the group 's self @-@ titled debut album . Wilcher was a major contributor for the music of the album , but he left the group shortly after its release to focus on his classical music career .

Wilcher has published over 100 piano @-@ related works and has performed both solo and with ensembles . Rita Crews for The Studio Quarterly Magazine described his style as " free @-@ flowing , with an underlying romantic character , one in which melodic line and lyricism are all @-@ important elements " . His music has been broadcast by radio stations ABC @-@ FM and 2MBS @-@ FM ? the latter has aired two documentaries , Wilcher and the French Connection and Wilcher 's World .

= = Family and personal life = =

Phillip Leslie Wilcher was born on 16 March 1958 to Naomi Joy Thompson ( 8 April 1929 ? 21 June 2005 ) and Leslie James Wilcher ( born 16 January 1923 ) , a World War II veteran . Wilcher grew up in Camperdown . As of 2004 , he resided in Concord and owns no cell phone , watch , computer , or car : " My entire life since I was a boy was writing music and that has overshadowed everything . I would be happy living in an oversized cardboard box with a piano and a blank sheet of manuscript paper " .

= = Career = =

= = = Early years = = =

Wilcher started piano lessons at the age of eight ; his first teachers were Gladys Woodward and Jean Teasel . His interest in composing music began at an early age , before his teens . At the age of 14 , Wilcher published his first piano composition , " Daybreak " , with the Sydney @-@ based music company , J. Albert & Son , making him the then @-@ youngest published composer in Australia . The track was later recorded by Leslie Ritter and Scott Petito ( The Fugs ) on their album , Circles in Sand ( 2001 ) , and re @-@ recorded in 2006 by John Martin on his CD , Ancient Rivers .

For seven years , after he published " Daybreak " , Wilcher was a student of composer and musicologist , Franz Holford , who was an editor at J. Albert & Son ; he later composed music with Holford for over twenty years . Wilcher 's piano piece , " Autumn Rain " , was published when he was 17 , by J. Albert & Son . He also studied with classical musicians Neta Maughan and Elpis Liossatos , and began a thirty @-@ year association with composer Miriam Hyde . In 1976 Wilcher became an assistant editor for J. Albert & Son 's Classical / Educational Division . During the 1980s he worked for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation ( ABC ) .

= = = The Wiggles and children 's music career = = =

Early in 1991 , while working in the Macquarie University early childhood music program , Wilcher met Anthony Field , former member of the Australian rock group The Cockroaches , who was studying child development . According to Wilcher , Field asked him to join his newly formed children 's music group , The Wiggles , and to help them record their self @-@ titled debut album .

Wilcher claims that he " contributed the most musically to the debut album " , composing 75 % of the music . The album included another piece he had composed at 14 , " Summer Dance " , which

appeared on the album as " Archie 's Theme " . Wilcher was nicknamed Archie due to his admiration of American pianist Liberace . He performed in two of the group 's videos , " Get Ready to Wiggle " and " Dorothy the Dinosaur " .

In 1992 , Wilcher left The Wiggles . Their spokesperson , Dianna O 'Neill , claims that he submitted a letter of resignation because he wanted to continue composing classical music . According to fellow founding member Greg Page , " Archie had considerable input into the arrangement of some songs on that first CD ... he is quite a musical genius ... However ... the musical direction of The Wiggles was changing " . Australian Record Industry Association ( ARIA ) awarded the band members , including Wilcher , with gold and platinum certificates for the album .

In 1993 , Wilcher published a lesson plan for early childhood activities , A Musical Offering . By the late 1990s , for reasons not entirely clear , The Wiggles had not only rerecorded their first album , but also renamed it " Wiggle Time " and removed all of his compositions . Wilcher has been called " the fifth Wiggle " in the press for his part in the early history of the group . In 2005 , when The Wiggles had become Australia 's most successful children 's act , he seemed to criticise The Wiggles in the press , but he has since recanted , stating that reporters had misrepresented him and that he chose to remain silent in the aftermath of their articles .

= = = Later career = = =

Phillip Wilcher 's career was described by The Sydney Morning Herald 's Steve Dow as " an eclectic mix of classical and flim @-@ flam " . He has published over 100 piano @-@ related works . Wilcher has composed music for pianist Aaron McMillan , and for musician and former ABC broadcaster , news reader and journalist , Clive Robertson . He has also set poetry by American librettist Jack Larson to music . In 2007 , he composed " 1791 " , a work honouring Mozart on the anniversary of his death , which was performed by oboist Rachel Tolmie , and the Bourbaki String Ensemble conducted by David Angell . It appeared on a compilation album , Into His Countenance ( 2008 ) , which featured various artists performing Wilcher 's compositions .

His works have been included on several other CDs released by Jade Music and Wirripang . Pianist Jeanell Carrigan has recorded six CDs of his compositions , two for Publications by Wirripang . Rita Crews , in a review of Carrigan 's album Shimmer ( 2004 ) for The Studio Quarterly Magazine , described Wilcher 's style as " free @-@ flowing , with an underlying romantic character , one in which melodic line and lyricism are all @-@ important elements " . 2MBS @-@ FM 's Mike Smith found it was of " a more openly romantic nature than in his earlier " work and he was " reminded of Rachmaninov , Albeniz and even Brahms " .

As well as composing , Wilcher has performed both solo and with ensembles . This has included playing three times for the Liberace Foundation in Las Vegas . His music has been broadcast by radio stations , ABC @-@ FM and 2MBS @-@ FM ? the latter has aired two documentaries on his music , Wilcher and the French Connection and Wilcher 's World . He has had an active public speaking career , and is an elected life member of Australasian Performing Right Association ( APRA ) and a board member of the Australian Music Teacher Magazine , for which he has written articles on Chopin , Brahms , Ravel , and music education .

In 2014 , Wilcher released Heaven @-@ Haven . The music was performed by The Linden String Quartet . During production of the CD , Wilcher saw press reports about the fatal attack of 18 @-@ year @-@ old Sydney resident Thomas Kelly ; Wilcher was unable to separate the sorrow he felt for Kelly and his family from the sentiment he was trying to convey through his music . He eventually dedicated the project to Kelly and announced that proceeds from the album would benefit the Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation .

= = Discography = =

Studio albums

Arabesque ( 2000 )

Out of the Blowing Sands ( 2001 )

Etchings ( 2002 )  
Shimmer ( 2004 )  
Bundanon ( 2009 )  
Wind Chimes ( 2012 )  
Heaven Haven ( 2014 )  
Compilation albums  
Into His Countenance ( 2008 )  
Goldleafing a Dream ( 2011 )