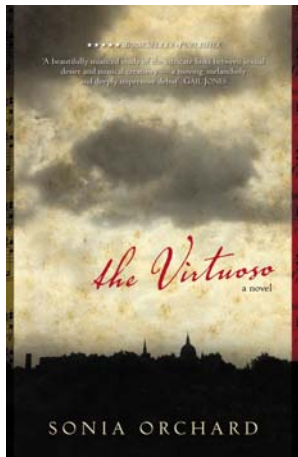


THE INDIE BOOK AWARD 2009



CATEGORY WINNER
DEBUT FICTION

The Virtuoso by Sonia Orchard
Published by Fourth Estate



NB. Author photo credit – Andrew Bott



What the judging panel said:

- Sonia Orchard's debut novel is inspired by the life of Noel Mewton-Wood, an Australian-born pianist and a prodigy of Sir Thomas Beecham.
- This is a well written novel that is both easy to read and remarkably enjoyable. The characters are well researched but also well drawn and fascinating.
- Finely judged and expertly crafted. A vivid account of a life on the tortured fringes, of obsessive love, of the devastating consequences of living a cheated life.
- A sensitive portrait of a young man struggling to come to terms with both his sexuality and the demands of his chosen career.

About the book:

London, November 1945: at a bohemian party, a young music student meets the charismatic Australian concert pianist Noël Mewton-Wood. The two immediately become lovers, and the affair unleashes an overwhelming passion as grand and sublime as the music they both love. Ten years on, the student, now a successful writer, reflects on the affair, the forces that shaped him and the one he adored, and the romantic obsession that ruled and almost ruined his life.

About the author:

Sonia Orchard has written a memoir, *Something More Wonderful* (2003), and obtained a doctorate in Creative Writing from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, where she also teaches. She lives in Melbourne with her husband and their two children.

The author's comments about the Indie Book Award:

I'm thrilled and absolutely honoured to receive this award from the independent booksellers; I think of these stores as such precious little havens on our streets. Their dedication to the literary world, especially the local one, is evident whenever you walk into one of these shops – the staff always seem excited by new works, and keen to connect readers with books that they'll love. We're incredibly lucky to have independent bookstores – not only do they give us access to such a vast array of books and journals, but by fostering emerging local authors, they're also ensuring a future for the Australian literary industry.