# Turbulent Times

Autumn Season Concert 2024

SATURDAY 6 APRIL, 7:30PM FEDERATION CONCERT HALL HOBART / NIPALUNA

ayo

Australian Youth Orchestra by the Australia Government

Arts8



Australian Government

# Australian Youth Orchestra

Welcome to the Country - Trish Hodge, NITA Education

**RAVEL** La Valse

**SZYMANOWSKI** Violin Concerto No.2

I. Moderato-Molto tranquillo

II. Andantino sostenuto

III. Allegramente-Molto energico

IV. Andantino-Molto tranquillo

Interval 20'

**PROKOFIEV** Symphony No.5

I. Andante

II. Allegro marcato

III. Adagio

IV. Allegro giocoso

Australian Youth Orchestra acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the orchestra has rehearsed and performed during this program. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and recognise and respect their enduring connection to land, waters and culture.

# **About the Australian Youth Orchestra**

AYO

### "Definitely one of the best orchestras in the country" - Ed Le Brocq, ABC Classic

AYO occupies a special place in the musical culture of Australia, where one generation of brilliant musicians inspires the next, where aspiring musicians get a taste of life as professional musicians, and where like-minded individuals from all over the country gather for intense periods to learn from each other, study and perform. On the world stage, AYO has established itself as a cultural ambassador for Australia on twenty-three international tours since its first in 1970.

AYO is a member of Arts8, the select group of Government-funded performing arts training organisations. A critical pipeline of creative talent for the national performing arts sector, Arts8 ensures we will continue telling Australian stories for generations.



# **Australian Youth Orchestra**

#### Violin 1

Theonie Wang Concertmaster Jasmine Milton Lili Stephens Hannah Kim Miriam Niessl Sean Weatherley Lily Song Angel Gilbert

Adina Lopez Khang Mai Natasha Paran Benjamin Lam Claire Litwinowicz

Jonah Spriggs

Katherine Ma

### Violin 2

Ezra Uxó Williams Principal Sophia Jones Haneulle Lovell Ingram Fan Sarah Chang Luke Hammer YoYo Zhou Sara Barbagallo Beverly Kwan Eric Kim Candice Buchanan

#### Viola

Hanna Wallace Principal Julian Kwok Olivia Spyrou Ella Pysden **Aaron Dungey** Tim Tran Justin Chen Daniel Casey Lucy Dube

Edmund Mantell

#### Cello

Noah Lawrence Principal James Monro Joshua Jones Jack Overall Fergus Ascot Kate Hwang Maggie Wang William Thorpe

#### **Double Bass**

Alyssa Deacon Principal Luca Arcaro Rio Kawaguchi Allan McBean Maddison Furlan Emma Meixner

#### Flute

Anna Rabinowicz Principal Tina Gu

#### Piccolo

Megan Barbetti

#### Oboe

Phoebe Xu Principal Shana Hoshino

#### Cor Anglais

Harry Wagstaff

#### Clarinet

Jane Pankhurst Principal Josephine Daniel

#### **Eb Clarinet** Lewis Blanchard

**Bass Clarinet** Robert Mackay

#### Bassoon

Tasman Compton Principal Hayden Mears

#### Contrabassoon Bailey Ireland

#### Horn

Emily Miers Principal Lucy Smith Henry Langley Titan Sclavenitis Emma John

#### Trumpet

Elizabeth Dawson Principal Isabella Thomas Jade Park

#### Trombone

Harrison Steele-Holmes Principal Max Gregg

#### **Bass Trombone**

Harry Mcpherson Principal

#### Tuba

Michael Welch Principal

#### Timpani

Buddy Lovett Principal

#### Percussion

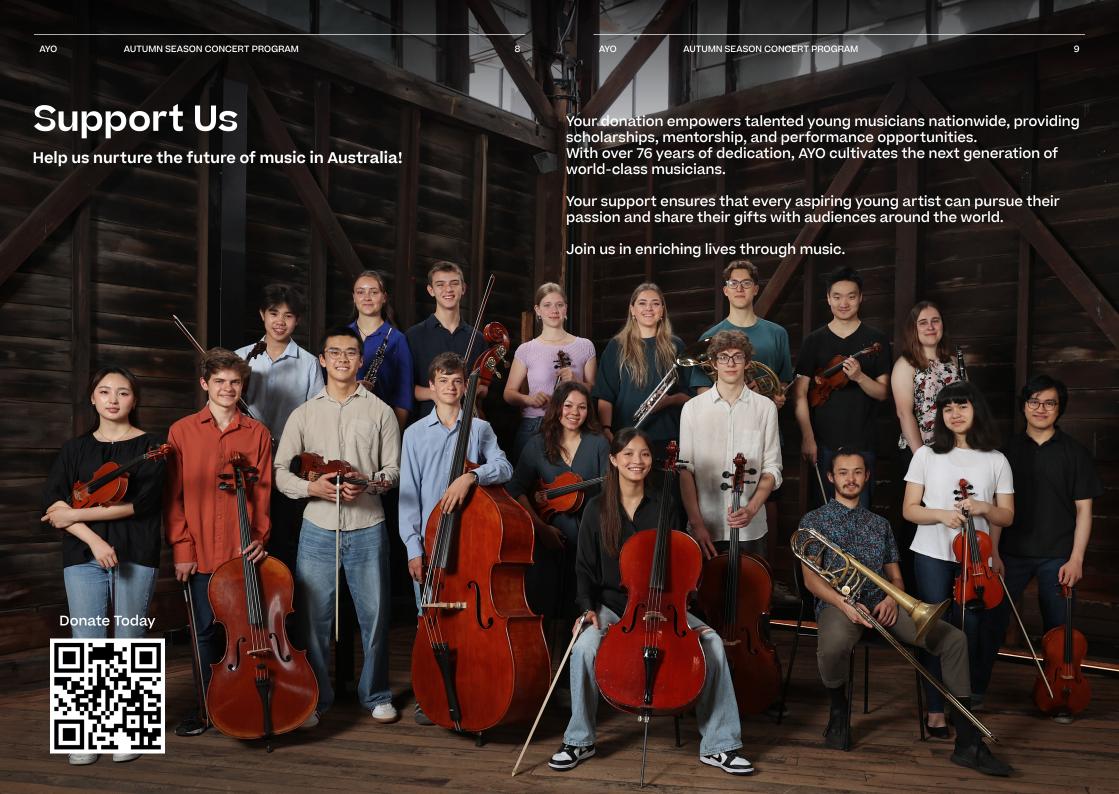
Leah Columbine Principal Joey Eng Jonathan Parker Steven Hartley Ben Weatherall

#### Harp

Grace Hordern Co-Principal Paul Nicolaou Co-Principal

#### Piano/Celeste

Sarah Chick Principal



Soloist

## Satu Vänskä

Born to a Finnish family in Japan, violinist Satu Vänskä! has developed an international profile through her role as Principal Violin with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, a position that she has held for the past twenty years. In that time Satu has both directed and performed as soloist with the ACO, an ensemble regarded as one of the greatest chamber orchestras in the world, hailed for its striking virtuosity and innovative programming.

Satu's development of solo violin projects is reflective of her desire to continually evolve as a musician and to courageously embrace new musical challenges. She has a passion for dynamic programming that explores the link between old and new music, alongside presenting boundary-blurring crossgenre collaborations, that resonate with today's classical music audiences.

As a soloist, Satu has performed with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, at the Sydney Opera House, at the Melbourne Recital Centre (opening their Great Performers Series in 2019) and as part of Tasmania's Mona Foma festival. Further afield, Satu has performed with London's Aurora Orchestra in the 2018 London season of Weimar Cabaret with the late Barry Humphries, the Arctic Chamber Orchestra, Sinfonia Lahti and at the Festival Maribor in Slovenia.

Satu is the founder, curator, front-woman, violinist and vocalist of the critically acclaimed ACO Underground, the ACO's



electro-infused, experimental spin-off project. With ACO Underground, Satu has performed collaborations with artists including Midnight Oil's Jim Moginie and the Violent Femmes' Brian Ritchie in venues ranging from New York's Le Poisson Rouge to Sydney's Phoenix Central Park, and has appeared as part of the Vivid Festival. In 2022 she formed Satu In The Beyond with Richard Tognetti and producer Paul Beard. This is a band that has evolved from ACO Underground over the years with the aim to present audiences with originally written music.

Satu took her first violin lessons at the age of three in Japan, before her family relocated to Finland when she was ten, where she continued her studies with Pertti Sutinen at the Lahti Conservatorium and the Sibelius Academy. She later studied at the Hochschule für Musik in Munich as a pupil of Ana Chumachenco.

Satu performs on the 1728/29 Stradivarius violin on loan from the ACO Instrument

#### Conductor

# Alexandre Bloch

French-born Alexandre Bloch is Music Director of Orchestre National de Lille. a position he has held since 2016/17. Highlights of Alexandre's final season as Music Director in Lille include a full Sibelius symphony cycle, concert performances of George Benjamin's Written on Skin and collaborations with internationally acclaimed soloists including Patricia Kopatchinskaja and Alice Sara Ott. He will conclude his tenure with a performance in Amsterdam's Concertgebouw. From 2015 - 2021, Alexandre was also Principal Guest Conductor of Düsseldorfer Symphoniker.

Highlights of the 23/24 season includes debuts with City of Birmingham Symphony, Deutsche Oper Berlin, European Union Youth Orchestra, George Enescu International Festival, Rotterdam Philharmonic & Hamburger Philharmoniker. He returns to Israel Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Dusseldorfer Symphoniker and Dresdner Philharmonie, with whom he enjoys a regular relationship. Last season saw his return to Opera de Lyon with Le Nozze di Figaro, and next season he returns to Bayerische Staatsoper to conduct Carmen.



Alexandre works with a wide range of soloists including Nemanja Radulovic, Boris Giltburg,
Alice-Sara Ott, Isabelle Faust, Pierre-Laurent Aimard &
Alexander Gavrylyuk.

### **Program Notes**

## La Valse

#### **RAVEL**

Through whirling clouds, waltzing couples may be faintly distinguished. The clouds gradually scatter: one sees [...] an immense hall peopled with a whirling crowd. The scene is gradually illuminated. The light of the chandeliers bursts forth at the fortissimo [...]. Set in an imperial court, about 1855.

Maurice Ravel, Preface to the score of La valse, 1920

Maurice Ravel envisioned his poème chorégraphique pour orchestre, 'La valse', as a tone poem that would be brought to life on stage by Sergei Diaghilev's Ballet Russes. This aspiration was never realised, however, due to Diaghilev's assertion that the work was "not a ballet..." but instead "... the portrait of a ballet."

An enduring rift between the two artists ensued, that climaxed with a (later-recanted) challenge to a duel.

Perhaps Diaghilev had a point, though – the music itself evokes such an intricate image in one's mind's eye, that dancers are scarcely imperative to conjuring the candlelit ballroom, resplendent with silks and satins, sashaying pleats and brimming dance-cards.

Out of the murmur of the double basses' ambient chatter, fleeting impressions of the waltz begin to emerge – just a glimpse of twirling dresses through a misty winter window. A suite of allusions to the genre ensues, and we are only arrested from our swoon by the bass-drum's thunderous outbursts. Although professedly a tribute to Johann Strauss II's 19th century apotheosis of the genre, La valse is inseparable from its own milieu, and the waltz ultimately becomes distorted in "a fantastic and ever-growing fatal vortex" – whirling everdownwards into macabre ecstasy.

### **Program Notes**

## Violin Concert No. 2

#### **SZYMANOWSKI**

In 1930, Karol Szymanowski moved into the Villa Atma in the Tatra Mountains, seeking peace and an opportunity to convalesce from chronic ill-health, where to this day the cottage still nestles against its alpine backdrop on the border of Poland and Slovakia. Szymanowski's friend Arthur Rubinstein described the setting as "enchanting, with the river Dunajec roaring down from the heights, its pure and transparent water jumping over rocks and stones". It was in this idyll, deep within the Polish countryside, that Szymanowski composed his final orchestral work, the Violin Concerto No.2.

The composer's oasis becomes our own in this rhapsodic work. The mountains feel so close that their aura is sweet on the tip of your tongue; the breeze refreshes your mind; the presence of the alps resonates through your very being, while the cascade of the Dunajec river compels you everdeeper into this intoxicating landscape.

In the beginning, the violin's melody emerges out of the ancient heartbeat of the mountain, whereupon a conversation arises; violin, clarinet, horn and trumpet all deeply entwined.

This equality between the solo and orchestral instruments is a signature of Szymanowski's concertante, and the violin seems completely at one with the orchestra as it guides us deeper into a wonderland of Goral folk music, adorned with dance and pastoral imagery. The violin finally seizes its claim to a soloistic identity in the prodigious cadenza, composed by Szymanowski's dear friend and dedicatee of the concerto, Pawel Kochański. The ingenuous intervals and modality belie the fiendish demands upon the soloist in this one-woman chorus of double-stops.

The Allegramente molto energico is heralded by a tambourine, and soon a fresh bounty of earthy timbres, ornamentation and sensuous melodies is on display. Tension arises as the key motifs become increasingly juxtaposed against each other, vacillating between climax and calm until the violin's original melody is called upon to draw the piece towards its monumental conclusion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The technique of playing two strings at once.

## **Program Notes**

# Symphony No. 5

#### **PROKOFIEV**

Sergei Prokofiev was a composer whose reputation spanned the gamut from child prodigy to enfant terrible. It's like a gorgeous painting viewed through a cracked mirror: beautiful, masterful, but sometimes a bit twisted. It's fitting then that the first movement of Symphony No.5 is teeth-grinding, fist-clenching stuff. The orchestra becomes a voke as Prokofiev takes melodies that seem beautiful and cruelly drags them through a muddy field.

The impish lightness of the second movement initially offers relief, but it's not long before an undercurrent of fear drops in through the nailing interjections of the percussion and lower instruments. An almost-patch of sun arrives through the sweetness of the winds. But Prokofiev tricks you once again: the trumpets interrupt with a leering melody that quickly turns into a cacophonic imitation of the opening.

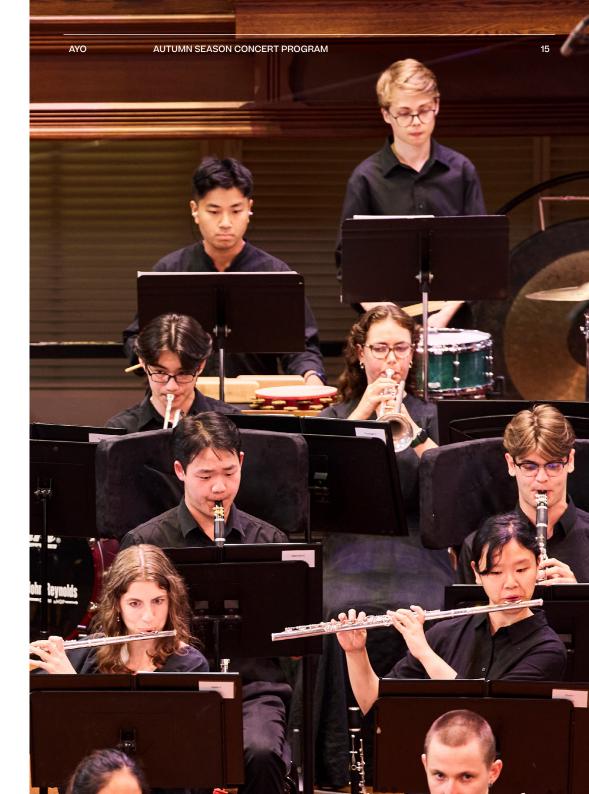
'Surely some pretty music now', you find yourself thinking after the chaos ends. But Prokofiev doesn't indulge you in the third movement: you get what sounds like a Disney villain's toddler child skipping through a Spotify classical playlist. It's an adagio that somehow sounds rushed, as though Prokofiev is throwing paintball melodies at a wall and seeing what sticks.

The fourth movement eludes description: music that isn't sure what it wants to be. veering between inquisitive, grotesque, and nostalgic. You'll notice the melody from the beginning of the symphony played in the middle and lower strings. The pace picks up quickly, introduced by

the snarling staccato of the violas. The violins and woodwind take turns at rudely interrupting each other, spurred on by the percussion and brass.

The music becomes increasingly frantic and crass: imagine a film protagonist sprinting through a circus ground, pursued by evildoers, occasionally stopping to think about his life. Then, when it seems the protagonist has eluded his capturers, the orchestra's texture becomes frighteningly glassy. One can picture a monster creeping up on our hero, until Prokofiev suddenly drops the curtain on this wild sound world with an abrupt B flat major scale.

Prokofiev claimed that Symphony No.5 was "conceived...as glorifying the grandeur of the human spirit...praising the free and happy man, his strength, his generosity. and the purity of his soul". But pianist Sviatoslav Richter described Prokofiev as "an extremely interesting person, but dangerous". In that case, does Prokofiev mean what he says? Perhaps it's fitting that a composer who was known for his aloof personality might write music which sounds otherwise.



# Thank you

The Australian Youth Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the support of all who enable us to discover, train and inspire the next generation of Australian musicians. In addition to those listed below, we also thank those generous individuals who choose to remain anonymous.

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**Australian Government** 

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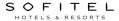
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