

# Konstantin Plays Beethoven

ADELAIDE  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA  
SEASON 2020



October 2020  
Festival Theatre





#### MANAGING DIRECTOR

### Vincent Ciccarello

In a city like ours, with such a rich performing tradition, I suppose, in the past, it has been possible, even for the most enthusiastic music lover, to take the abundance of live music-making in Adelaide as a given. Yet the last few months have reminded us that the moments when we come together as audiences and performers in spaces made for music are among the most life-giving of all.

This really came home to me last month when the ASO returned to this venue for the concert in which we gave concertmaster Natsuko Yoshimoto her official farewell after 11 years leading the orchestra. Following such a long absence from the stage, there was a palpable thrill in hearing the musicians perform with Natsuko as soloist, under Dane Lam's direction, before hundreds of enthusiastic people. That concert will live in my memory for a long time.

The many challenges caused by COVID-19 can seem overwhelming, and the world of the performing arts will take a long time to recover. But the enforced pause in activities has also given us time for reflection and introspection, and to remember how blessed we are to have such great artistry on our doorstep – including Nicholas Braithwaite, our former Principal Conductor, with whom we have an enduring friendship and a rich recorded legacy; and soloist Konstantin Shamray, a true virtuoso who makes Adelaide his home.

Creating a season of performances is far from straightforward right now, but our plans for 2021 are coming together and, in a few weeks, you'll find out more about our program for the first six months of 2021. We will continue to bring you the music you love but, necessity being the mother of invention, there will be some innovations in concert presentation and programming that we hope you will find exciting and enjoyable.

This year was intended to be a huge international celebration of the music of Beethoven, who was born 250 years ago. Although many of those celebrations – including the ASO's – had to be cancelled, I hope you take pleasure in tonight's performance of one of the greatest of all piano concertos, and the other masterworks with which it shares the program.

## Program

# Konstantin Plays Beethoven

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**Nicholas Braithwaite** Conductor

**Konstantin Shamray** Piano

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PAUL DUKAS (1865—1935)

***La Péri: Fanfare***

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EDWARD ELGAR (1857—1934)

***Serenade for Strings in E minor, Op.20***

*Allegro piacevole*

*Larghetto*

*Allegretto – Come prima*

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BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913—1976)

***Four Sea Interludes from Peter Grimes, Op.33a***

*Dawn (Act I)*

*Sunday Morning (Act II)*

*Moonlight (Act III)*

*Storm (Act I)*

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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770—1827)

***Piano Concerto No.5 in E flat, Op.73 Emperor***

*Allegro*

*Adagio un poco mosso –*

*Rondo (Allegro)*

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**Konstantin Shamray** Piano

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DURATION ⌚

**This concert runs for approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes, and will be performed without interval.**

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**This concert will be recorded for delayed broadcast on ABC Classic. You can hear it again on Saturday 21 November at 1pm.**

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## Program note

A critic, teacher and composer, Dukas saved his harshest criticism for his own music; on his death he had left to the world only seven major works, including the one that would ensure his lasting fame, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. He created his last substantial piece, the one-act "dance poem" *La Péri*, in 1912; it is a re-telling of the Persian legend of the prince Iskender and his encounter with a beautiful péri (fairy) as the prince searches for the flower of immortality. Dukas said that he wanted the orchestra to sound like "a kind of dazzling, translucent enamel." The sumptuous fanfare, which precedes the ballet itself, opens tonight's concert.

Dukas' father Jules was a banker, a cultured man who encouraged his son to train as a musician. Elgar's childhood was even more musical; his father owned a music shop, and by his late teens Elgar could play piano, organ, bassoon and violin, had learned to repair instruments, and had studied scores by many composers – Handel, Mozart and Beethoven among them – who would subsequently influence his own music. Soon Elgar was appointed conductor of the band at the Worcester City and County Pauper Lunatic Asylum, and as he was called upon to create original music for this ensemble, his life as a composer began in earnest when he was in his early 20s.

As an instrumentalist, the violin remained his first love, and you can hear how beautifully he wrote for strings in this **Serenade for Strings**, of 1892. "Really stringy in effect" he told his friend Jaeger (who would, a few years later, be depicted as Nimrod in the 'Enigma' Variations) and this short, heartfelt, melodic work is one of his most popular. While the Serenade is an essentially delicate work, it has an eloquence that speaks of the Elgar to come in his two symphonies, the *Introduction and Allegro* for Strings and much more. The Serenade was a gift to his wife on the third anniversary of their marriage, and was probably premiered by the Ladies' Orchestral Class of Worcester, which Elgar trained.

Elgar was the pre-eminent British composer of his age, as was Britten several decades later. In 1945, the opera *Peter Grimes* brought him his first fame as musical dramatist, and was quickly taken up by opera companies around the world.

Britten grew up on England's Suffolk coast, and once wrote: 'My parents' house in Lowestoft directly faced the sea, and my life as a child was coloured by the fierce storms that sometimes drove ships on our coast and ate away whole stretches of neighbouring cliffs.' Inspired by *The Borough*, a poem of 1810 by fellow Suffolk native, poet George Crabbe, *Peter Grimes* concerns a brutal fisherman who is ostracised by his local community, and gradually loses his grip on reality. It was Britten's first full-scale opera, and its premiere at London's Sadler's Wells in 1945 was a triumph; *Peter Grimes* remains one of the most frequently performed operas of the 20th century.

In an opera full of sharply-etched vocal characterisations, there is a brilliantly-drawn character that never appears on stage: the orchestra. You hear this most explicitly in the **Four Sea Interludes**, which form introductions to scenes in the opera, and which Britten subsequently published separately as a concert suite. These pieces are vivid, evocative seascapes which also chart the ebb and flow of the opera's narrative, and of the title character's inward journey. Britten's palette of orchestral colours is vast and evocative, from the cold sheen of the high flutes and violins in the opening bars of *Dawn to the Storm*, in which timpani, brass and low strings set in motion a swirling picture of Grimes' mental anguish, mirroring the tempest taking place outside.

Beethoven was the first great composer never to compose for the harpsichord. In 1770, the year of his birth, the piano was still a relatively marginal instrument, but its rise was rapid; in England, in 1795, it replaced the harpsichord in the King's Band. Beethoven's inexhaustible desire to innovate is almost unthinkable without the rapid developments made in piano building and design during his lifetime. By the time he composed the **Emperor** concerto in 1809, the piano's invasion of the Western world's drawing rooms had begun, but the instrument also had the carrying power to be heard in public performance; in its rich expressive possibilities, it had become the keyboard instrument of its day – and the next day as well.

Perhaps none of Beethoven's five piano concertos illustrates the instrument's new expressive possibilities more dramatically than the Fifth, which later acquired the nickname *Emperor*, supposedly to honour its scope and majesty. You sense the scale of Beethoven's ambition from the opening bars, in which the piano enters with a grand flourish, punctuated by three massive orchestral chords (which also tell us in no uncertain terms that we are in the key Beethoven often used in his heroic moods, E flat). This first movement is an epic in its own right, longer than the other two movements combined, and is marked by a sense of joy and delight, and a bold exploration of tonalities a great distance from E flat, particularly in the closing section, in which Beethoven explores the movement's main themes with a dazzling adventurousness and energy.

After these splendid festivities, the short *Adagio* is a haven of peace and tranquillity, with the soloist joined only by muted strings and woodwinds (no trumpets or drums). This leads into the finale without a break, the piano plunging in immediately with the buoyant main theme, full of galloping cross-rhythms. The concerto's final moments include a memorable passage in which the piano is accompanied only by the timpani, before a florid series of scales from the soloist brings this landmark in the history of the concerto to a bold, bracing conclusion.

Annotation ©Phillip Sametz 2020



## CONDUCTOR

### Nicholas Braithwaite

Nicholas Braithwaite's career has been unusually wide-ranging, both musically and geographically. He has held positions as Music Director or Principal Conductor from Norway to New Zealand and many places in between, including the Tasmanian and Adelaide Symphony orchestras. His repertoire has centred around German and Russian music and he is regarded as an outstanding Wagner conductor, having conducted all of that composer's works from *Rienzi* onwards, including seven cycles of *The Ring of the Nibelung*.

Concurrently with his Australian activities he was Principal Conductor of the Manchester Camerata. Other orchestral appointments have included Permanent Guest Conductor of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, and Associate Conductor to Constantin Silvestri with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. A frequent guest conductor for all the major orchestras in the UK, he also toured Japan and Korea with the London Philharmonic Orchestra as Associate Conductor to Sir Georg Solti.

He has appeared with, among others, the Orchestre National de Belgique, Orchestre National de France, the Oslo Philharmonic, Bergen Philharmonic, Odense Symphony, Aarhus Symphony, Aalborg Symphony, New Zealand Symphony, Auckland Philharmonia, Melbourne, Sydney, Queensland and West Australian Symphony orchestras, Danish National Radio Symphony and the Collegium Musicum Copenhagen.

Nicholas Braithwaite has conducted more than 80 operas, holding appointments as Associate Principal Conductor of Sadler's Wells/English National Opera, Music Director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera, and Musiksjef of Gothenburg's Stora Teater. As guest he has also conducted opera at Covent Garden, Hamburg, Norwegian Opera, Scottish and Welsh National Operas, and many companies in Australasia.

For Lyrita Recorded Edition he has released more than 30 albums of music by British composers, conducting the London Philharmonic, London Symphony, Royal Philharmonic, and Philharmonia orchestras.

His recording of Wordsworth's Symphonies No. 2 and 3 with the London Philharmonic Orchestra won a 1991 Record of the Year Award from *Gramophone* Magazine, and his recording of flute concertos with Alexa Still and the New Zealand Chamber Orchestra for Koch was nominated for a 1992 Grammy award.

Amongst his recordings with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra are Shostakovich's Symphonies 6, 7, 8, and 9, Elgar's Cello Concerto with Li Wei Qin and *Sea Pictures* with Elisabeth Campbell, and an album of French organ concertos with Simon Preston.



## PIANO

### Konstantin Shamray

Described as an exhilarating performer with faultless technique and fearless command of the piano, Australian-based pianist Konstantin Shamray enjoys performing on an international level with the world's leading orchestras and concert presenters.

Konstantin was born in Novosibirsk and began his studies at the age of six with Natalia Knobloch. He then studied in Moscow at the Russian Gnessin Academy of Music with Professors Tatiana Zelikman and Vladimir Tropp, and the Hochschule fur Musik in Freiburg, Germany with Professor Tibor Szasz.

In 2008, Konstantin burst onto the concert scene when he won First Prize at the Sydney International Piano Competition. He is the first and only competitor to date in the Competition's 40-year history to win both First and People's Choice Prizes, in addition to six other prizes. He went on to win First Prize at the 2011 Klavier Olympiade in Bad Kissingen, Germany and has performed at the Kissinger Sommer festival. In July 2013, following chamber recitals with Alban Gerhardt and Feng Ning, he was awarded the festival's coveted Luitpold Prize for "outstanding musical achievements."

In Australia he enjoys a special relationship with the ASO; his future engagements also include concerts with the West Australian, Melbourne and Sydney Symphony orchestras. Outside Australia he has performed with the Russian National Philharmonic, the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra, Moscow Virtuosi, Orchestre National de Lyon, Prague Philharmonia, Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra and the Calgary Philharmonic. The conductors with whom he has enjoyed collaborating include Vladimir Spivakov, Dmitry Liss, Tugan Sokhiev, Nicholas Milton and Alexandr Vedernikov.

Chamber music plays a strong role in Konstantin's career; collaborations include tours with the Australian String Quartet, the Australian Piano Quartet, Kristof Barati, Andreas Brantelid, Li Wei Qin and Leonard Elschenbroich. He has enjoyed critical acclaim at the Klavier-Festival Ruhr, the Bochum Festival in Germany, the Mariinsky International Piano Festival and the White Nights Festival in St. Petersburg, Adelaide Festival, 2019 Musica Viva Sydney and Huntington festivals. Konstantin has recorded albums for Naxos, ABC Classics and Fonoforum.

Konstantin is Lecturer in Piano at the Elder Conservatorium of Music at the University of Adelaide.

# Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

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## Violins

Natsuko Yoshimoto\*\*  
(Concertmaster)  
Cameron Hill\*\*  
(Associate Concertmaster)  
Shirin Lim\* (Principal 1st Violin)  
Lachlan Bramble\*\* (Acting  
Principal 2nd Violin)  
Gillian Braithwaite~(Acting  
Associate Principal 2nd Violin)  
Janet Anderson  
Ann Axelby  
Helen Ayres  
Erna Berberyán  
Minas Berberyán  
Julia Brittain  
Nadia Buck  
Elizabeth Collins  
Judith Coombe  
Belinda Gehlert  
Danielle Jaquillard  
Zsuzsa Leon  
Alexis Milton  
Alexander Permezel  
Kemerí Spurr

## Violas

Justin Julian\*\*(Acting Principal)  
Rosi McGowran~(Acting Associate)  
Martin Butler  
Lesley Cockram  
Anna Hansen  
Carolyn Mooz  
Michael Robertson  
Cecily Satchell

## Cellos

Simon Cobcroft\*\*  
Ewen Bramble~  
Sarah Denbigh  
Thomas Marlin  
Gemma Phillips  
Mason Stanton

## Double Basses

David Schilling\*\*  
Jonathon Coco~  
Jacky Chang  
Harley Gray  
Belinda Kendall-Smith

## Flutes

Geoffrey Collins\*\*  
Julia Grenfell

## Piccolo

Julia Grenfell\*

## Oboes

Joshua Oates\*\*  
Renae Stavelly~

## Clarinets

Dean Newcomb\*\*  
Darren Skelton

## Bassoons

Mark Gaydon\*\*  
Leah Stephenson

## Contra Bassoon

Jackie Newcomb\*

## Horns

Adrian Uren\*\*  
Sarah Barrett~  
Emma Gregan  
Philip Paine\*

## Trumpets

Martin Phillipson\*\*(Acting  
Principal)  
Gregory Frick  
David Khafagi

## Trombones

Colin Prichard\*\*  
Ian Denbigh

## Bass Trombone

Howard Parkinson\*

## Tuba

Peter Whish-Wilson\*

## Timpani

Andrew Penrose\*

## Percussion

Steven Peterka\*\*  
Jamie Adam  
Sami Butler

## Harp

Suzanne Handel\*

\*\* denotes Section Principal  
\* denotes Principal Player  
~ denotes Associate Principal

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