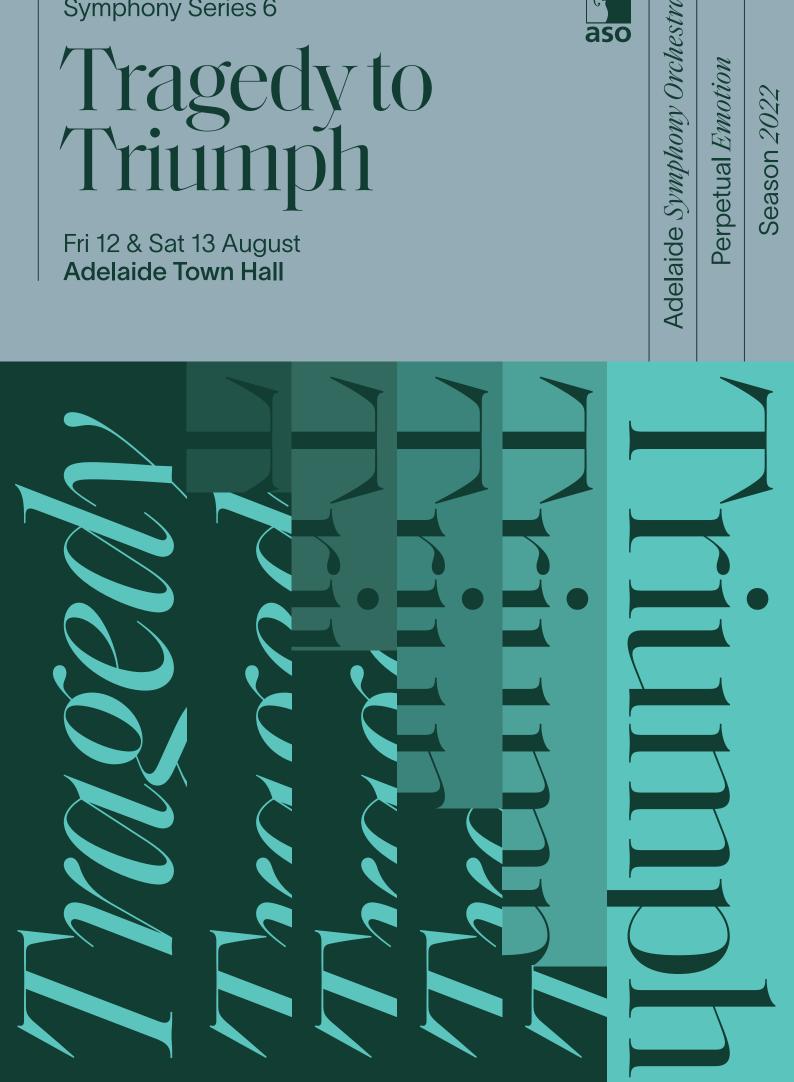
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Symphony Series 6

# Tragedy to Triumph

Fri 12 & Sat 13 August Adelaide Town Hall











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Symphony Series 6

## Tragedy to Triumph

Fri 12 & Sat 13 August Adelaide Town Hall Alpesh Chauhan Conductor Andrew Bain Horn

[57']

Acknowledgement of Country  Jack Buckskin arr./orch. Ferguson  Pudnanthi Padninthi I – Pukiyana	[2']
Lili Boulanger (1893-1918) D'un soir triste (Of a Sad Evening)	[12']
World Premiere, co-commissioned by the ASO and Aspen Music Festival	
Paul Dean (born 1966)	[20']
Concerto for Horn and Orchestra	
Against the current	
Alone in the darkwaiting for the fire	
The Bushfire	
INTERVAL	

#### Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Symphony No.10 in E minor, Op.93

Moderato

Allegro

Allegretto

Andante - Allegro

**Duration** Approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes, including a 20 minute interval

**Listen Later** This concert will be recorded for later broadcast on ABC Classic.

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## Welcome

Paul Dean is one of Australia's leading musicians. As a clarinettist, artistic director and educator he has made an outstanding and enduring contribution to our national musical life. In recent years he has added to these accomplishments his work as a composer. We're thrilled now to see the fulfillment of a long-delayed dream, the first performances of a major new work Paul has created for an instrumentalist from Adelaide who has become a major figure on the world stage.

Paul's Horn Concerto, which you'll hear tonight, should have had its premiere here in 2020, but for a pandemic which delayed many such dreams. But patience and persistence have their rewards, as you'll hear. The Concerto allows us to welcome back to the ASO – after a long absence – Andrew Bain who, for the last decade, has been Principal Horn of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He is one of the finest horn players I have ever heard and, like you, I'm looking forward to hearing him as soloist in a work written specifically for his extraordinary talents.

We have another first tonight, as Alpesh Chauhan makes his debut with us. This young conductor is making waves in Europe for his exciting work in the concert hall and the opera house, and we're delighted to welcome Alpesh to Adelaide.

My best wishes for your enjoyment of *Tragedy to Triumph*.



Vincent Ciccarello Managing Director



Alpesh Chauhan Conductor



**Andrew Bain** Horn

British Conductor Alpesh Chauhan is Principal Guest Conductor of the Düsseldorfer Symphoniker, Associate Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Music Director of Birmingham Opera Company.

Recent and forthcoming highlights include with the Oslo Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, London Philharmonic, touring with Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC Symphony, as well as recording and symphonic projects with BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

Alpesh enjoys collaborations with distinguished soloists such as Veronika Eberle, Johannes Moser, Stephen Hough, Leila Josefowicz and Pavel Kolesnikov, and singers Karen Cargill and Christianne Stotijn.

Birmingham Opera Company's 2019 production of Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* directed by the late Sir Graham Vick led to Chauhan being named *Newcomer of the Year* in the 2021 International Opera Awards. He is the recent recipient of the conductor award from the Italian National Association of Music Critics for *Miglior Direttore* for concerts across 2021.

Alpesh is a patron of Awards for Young Musicians, a UK charity supporting talented young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. He was the conductor of the second BBC Ten Pieces film which brought the world of classical music into secondary schools across the country and received a distinguished BAFTA award.

Alpesh was honoured with an OBE in HRH The Queen's New Year's Honours in January 2022 for Services to the Arts.

Born and raised in Adelaide, Andrew Bain was appointed Principal Horn of the Los Angeles Philharmonic by its music director Gustavo Dudamel in May 2011.

Prior to moving to LA, Andrew held positions of Principal Horn of the MSO and QSO, Münchner Symphoniker and the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, and Associate Principal Horn of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. From 2003-2012 he was the Principal Horn of the Colorado Music Festival.

Andrew has performed regularly as a soloist with the LA Phil at Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Hollywood Bowl since joining the orchestra, and has given a number of world premieres.

Andrew is passionate about education and is very lucky to work with some of the finest young horn players as the Horn Professor at the Colburn School Conservatory, at the Aspen Music Festival, Australian National Academy of Music and in masterclasses throughout the world. In 2020, Andrew and his wife Rupal founded Invested Musician, an organization dedicated to helping musicians take their careers to the next level.

Andrew can be heard on numerous Hollywood film scores. Performing John William's incredible soundtracks of *Star Wars*: Episodes VII, VIII, and IX are life highlights and a dream come true for Andrew.



## Lili Boulanger (1893–1918) D'un soir triste (Of a Sad Evening)

Lili grew up amongst the very best of Parisian culture thanks to her parents. Her father was a composer of some repute, but he was 77 when she was born, and died when she was only eight years old. Lili and her older sister Nadia were now inseparable. Although Lili only lived another 18 years, with the support of Nadia, she left behind a remarkably refined and self-assured body of work.

She won the Prix de Rome at just 19 years of age, becoming the first woman to do so. This prestigious and historic prize took her to the Villa Medici, to focus on compositional craft alongside leading lights in architecture, painting, and sculpture. On this trip she had begun several larger pieces, testaments to her grand imaginings, but heartbreakingly curtailed by the First World War and ill health. Lili's father had also won the Prix de Rome, and his stay at the Villa Medici was similarly cut short, but not because of war, because of a cholera epidemic in 1836.

The sombre mood pervading Of a Sad Evening balances its sunup twin, D'un matin de printemps (Of a Spring Morning). Their composition was the last time Lili worked by hand, her sister Nadia transcribing and editing her works from then on. The Boulanger sisters not only needed to be better than their male contemporaries to achieve

similar recognition, they also needed each other. Throughout Nadia's trailblazing career as a composer, teacher, and conductor she was Lili's greatest champion. More than six decades after her sister's death, Nadia wrote how Lili still 'represents the best, the most intimate, the most profound elements in my life.'

While Lili's music is often driven by sizzling rhythms and harmonies, *Of a Sad Evening* moves and morphs with the pathos of the late-Romantics and the timbral éclat of Debussy. A plaintive melody is floated on the opening swirl, which surges and then succumbs to the gravity of a rumbling morass. Following this crescendo, and emerging from the orchestra's lowest registers, the piece achieves the tranquillity of a placid lake – black from its depth but calm. From this low ebb it wends towards first light. After the terrible power of the orchestra crests again, its upper reaches glint like lens flares over a dawn horizon.

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#### Performance History

This is the ASO's first performance of *D'un* soir triste.



Against the current
Alone in the dark... waiting for the fire
The Bushfire

### Paul Dean (born 1966) Concerto for Horn and Orchestra

for Andrew Bain in memory of Barry Tuckwell

World Premiere, co-commissioned by the ASO and Aspen Music Festival

#### The composer writes:

I happened to be sitting next to Andrew Bain on a bus outside Chennai in India whilst on tour in 2015 with the Australian World Orchestra. We had not seen each other for a few years, and I cheekily mentioned that it would be great to write him a concerto one day. And here we are, seven years and a couple of Covid-caused cancellations later, and we are finally at the premiere – with many thanks to the persistence of the ASO, and the wonderful people at the Aspen Festival.

The piece itself was inspired by many thrilling hours listening to Andrew play, either from the clarinet section, the stalls in a concert hall or from a comfy cinema chair watching *Star Wars*. However, it was two events during the composition process that really helped create the piece as it is today.

I began teasing out my first ideas in September 2019. By then, the bushfires that were to

dominate the East Coast of Australia for the next months (and which eventually became known as the Black Summer Bushfires) had well and truly begun in my home state of Queensland. In our house, we became increasingly stuck in front of ABC24, and we lived the progress of the fires for the next several months, increasingly devastated at the loss of life and property and the unstoppable advance of nature over anything that humanity could throw up in defence against it. Like all Australians, I felt powerless, fearful and increasingly angry at our lack of progress on climate change.

The first movement, *Against the current*, is in many ways related to the ways in which the firefighters, despite their herculean efforts, were almost useless against the might of the raging firestorms that were gaining momentum every day and springing up everywhere. The title is also a reference to the movement led by former NSW firefighting chief Greg Mullins, who had constantly warned the Federal Government that danger was looming, to no avail.

The second movement, Alone in the dark... waiting for the fire, is music to represent that eternal nightmare of regional Australians, who bunker down in their shelters, waiting for the approaching attack. This is obviously the stuff of nightmares, and I was haunted by the stories of the survivors who went through this during those months of bushfires. Then the great Australian horn player, Barry Tuckwell died, on the 16th of January 2020. I had spoken to Barry a few times, especially during my time directing the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne; my last chat with him was at the forefront of my mind the next time I opened the score to work on the concerto. We talked about our shared love of the music of Anton Bruckner, particularly the Adagio of his Seventh Symphony – and more specifically, the moment in that movement when the composer hears about the death of his hero Wagner. I knew that I would have to pay tribute to Tuckwell, an Australian musical legend, in some way during the slow movement of this piece. I wrote the words, 'Barry Tuckwell, god of Horn' into the solo horn part and proceeded to write a melody with the notes available from the letters in that phrase. Right at the end of this slow movement, the orchestra stops and pays homage to the great man and the solo horn plays Bb (B), A, C, E, G, D, F, B (H).

The third movement, *The Bushfire*, developed from a series of mental pictures and images that arose as I watched the bushfires unfold over several months. I also found the Judith Wright poem *The Bushfire*, which formed the basis of my mindset for the movement, so much so that I placed these words – which express my feelings in such an accurate yet startling way – in the score at this point:

'I am that which is not able to be whole', says the fire: 'and therefore I devour, seeking the absolute I do not find.

This strength that falls to ash within the palm grew through a million days, is eaten in an hour – and in its death I die.'

#### From The Bushfire – Judith Wright

The movement is my musical picture of an approaching bushfire – the unrelenting force that stops for no one. The horn represents the firefighter, (or as I say in the score, 'Superman') doing their best to save lives and property against immeasurable odds. After a final assault, the fire (as Wright suggests) dies its death in the death of the trees and wildlife and an eerie quiet descends, desolate, and post-apocalyptic. The concerto finishes uneasily for the listener, as if sitting amongst the desolate landscape themselves, surrounded by smouldering trees and burnt-out stumps.

#### ©Paul Dean 2022

The extract from *The Bushfire* is reprinted with permission of the Estate of Judith Wright and HarperCollins Australia.



Image: Deutsche Fotothek

Moderato Allegro Allegretto Andante - Allegro

## Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) Symphony No.10 in E minor, Op.93

Ever since Western listeners realised they might have been wrong to take Shostakovich at his word when he described his Fifth Symphony as 'a Soviet artist's reply to just criticism', we have pondered the real meaning of Shostakovich's works. The Symphony No.10, completed in October 1953 and premiered in December of that year, is supposed to be about the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, who had died eight months earlier. It is easy to imagine such a meaning for the heavy-booted 'gopak dance' of the second movement. And the first movement seems to possess that mixture of despondency and relief which may be expected when, after 40 years, you no longer have to feel that every acquaintance is a suspected police informer but haven't yet felt safe to fully vent your anger.

Shostakovich's friend Tatyana Nikolayeva claimed that the composer began work on his Symphony No.10 in 1951. Would that alter the meaning? It's possible that Shostakovich substantially revised the symphony in 1953, or finally completed it then. He certainly didn't release it for public presentation until Stalin was well out of the way.

From a technical point of view, the first movement is extraordinarily impressive.

Longer than the third and fourth movements

put together, it exhibits a masterly control of tension. Though heavy with thoughtful pauses, the mood of the opening, deep in the strings, is very much that of a slow stirring to life. The late Klaus George Roy, annotator for the Cleveland Orchestra, pointed out that the clarinet theme that then emerges may be a quote from the Mahler song *Urlicht*: 'Mensch liegt in grösster Not' (Humankind lies in direst need). This would not be surprising. Quotes from song are not unusual in Shostakovich's works. This symphony also quotes 'What's in my name?' from Shostakovich's own *Four Pushkin Monologues*.

We have been listening for nearly eight minutes when the flute launches what could perhaps be described as a pessimistic waltz: the first movement's second subject. It is the development section which, for the first time, unleashes the movement's underlying terror. Significantly, it's the 'Mahler quote' material that's developed. The scale of emotion is immense: in the central tutti, the first and second violins have to play continuously for well over four minutes with scarcely a semiquaver rest. Such an outburst, however, fails to dispel the predominantly bleak mood. The movement ends, after a brief recapitulation of the main themes, with a cold coda of duetting piccolos.

The contrasting styles of the first two movements suggest the high probability of an internal program. But what does the third movement mean? Here Shostakovich quotes his own musical motto, the intervals D-E flat -C-B natural, which in German musical nomenclature spell DSCH, for D. Schostakowisch. The opening bars, though, present the DSCH motif in altered form (C-D-E flat -B). Could this symbolise the mask Shostakovich had to assume in public? The whole of the second half of this symphony sees, in critic Michael Steinberg's words, the 'imprinting of [Shostakovich's] own presence', and in the finale the 'Shostakovich theme' seems to assume a warning role.

This finale opens solemnly. Then, with a flourish, the *Allegro* begins, and we are led to a raucous, apparently high-spirited conclusion. It can be argued that this *Allegro* is a counterweight to the first movement. But can we assume that no meaning is desired here? David Heaton speaks of Shostakovich's finales as 'false dawns'.

And though Stalin was dead, Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony was still subjected to criticism at a Union of Soviet Composers Commission on Musical Criticism. Boris Yarustovsky said that the work was '[a] tragedy of the profoundly isolated individual, helpless in the face of the forces of evil...Such a conception of the world is very far from that which is experienced by the majority of Soviet people.' Shostakovich responded by offering his own self-criticism: the first movement is too long, the second movement too short, the third movement, though 'more or less successful' is too long in some places and too short in others. How could anyone take this as serious self-criticism? It was

Shostakovich at his usual passive-aggressive game. The sober truth is that Shostakovich was an artist placed in an impossible situation. But the music itself supports Arnold Schoenberg's assessment that Shostakovich was one of the few of his contemporaries to have 'the breath of a symphonist'.

G.K. Williams Symphony Australia © 1999/2012

#### Performance History

Bernard Heinze conducted the Sydney Symphony in the first Australian performance of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 10, in September 1956. The ASO's first performance of this symphony took place in April 1957, under Henry Krips' direction. Most recently, the Orchestra played the work in September 2013, conducted by Arvo Vollmer.

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