Symphony Series 2

# Affirmation

Fri 13 & Sat 14 May Adelaide Town Hall



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#### Symphony Series 2

# Affirmation

Fri 13 & Sat 14 May Adelaide Town Hall Brad Cohen Conductor Colin Prichard Trombone

Acknowledgement of Country Buckskin arr./orch. Ferguson [2'] Pudnanthi Padninthi I - Pukiyana Respighi (1879-1936) [15'] Fountains of Rome The Fountain of Valle Giulia at Dawn The Triton Fountain in the Morning The Fountain of Trevi at Midday The Villa Medici Fountain at Sunset World Premiere, ASO Commission Joe Chindamo (born 1961) [20'] Ligeia - Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra I. Animato II. Adagio/Valzer di Ligeia/Cadenza III. Attacca/Avventuroso **Colin Prichard** Trombone **INTERVAL** Lisa Illean (born 1983) [11'] Land's End Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) [30'] Symphony No.5 in E flat, Op.82 Tempo molto moderato Andante mosso, quasi allegretto Allegro molto

Duration Approximately 2 hours, including a 20 minute interval

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

**Classical Conversation** Join us at the Meeting Hall (located just behind Adelaide Town Hall) one hour before the concert for *Classical Conversations* and hear from composer Joe Chindamo and ASO's Director of Artistic Planning Simon Lord.

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# Welcome

Thank you for joining us tonight.

As orchestras around the world emerge from the pandemic, the ways in which concerts are programmed has begun to change. The ASO is certainly not alone in bringing you concert seasons which showcase more music by women and by contemporary composers.

We're equally proud to be commissioning several new works, and tonight's world premiere represents an especially exciting occasion for us; Joe Chindamo, one of Australia's major musical figures – as composer and performer – has written his new concerto *Ligeia* as a showcase for our Principal Trombone Colin Prichard. And the haunting *Land's End*, by UK-based Australian composer Lisa Illean, is being played in Adelaide for the first time this evening

As you'll hear tonight in the music of Respighi and Sibelius, the classics of the orchestral repertoire will always have a proud place in our programs; and no composer is more central to an orchestra's life than Beethoven. To hear all nine of his symphonies in a fortnight is a rare and exhilarating experience. No wonder tickets to the ASO's *Beethoven: The Symphonies* are selling so quickly! If you haven't yet purchased your tickets to these September performances, I urge you to do so soon. These concerts also present the perfect opportunity to introduce your friends or loved ones to some of the greatest music ever created.

With thanks, as always, for your support of Adelaide's orchestra, and with all good wishes for a wonderful evening.



Vincent Ciccarello Managing Director



Brad Cohen Conductor

Brad Cohen is an Australian musician, working internationally as a conductor, technological innovator, and publisher. He was Artistic Director of West Australian Opera between 2015 and 2018, and is the Founder of the immersive music platform *Tido*.

Brad grew up in Sydney before studying at Oxford University, the Royal College of Music, and the Royal Northern College of Music. He first came to public attention when, a year after winning the 1994 Leeds Conductor's Competition, he conducted the world premiere of Thomas Adès' Powder her Face. Over the succeeding decades he has led orchestras including the London Philharmonic, the Philharmonia, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo, Stuttgarter Philharmoniker, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, Het Gelders Orkest, and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Brad has conducted a wide-ranging repertoire at opera companies including English National Opera, New York City Opera, and Opera Australia. His numerous recordings for Deutsche Grammophon, Chandos and Naxos encompass both French and Italian operas.



Colin Prichard Trombone

Born in Newcastle, Australia, Colin began tertiary studies at the Newcastle Conservatorium with Warwick Tyrrell (a former ASO principal trombone). After graduating with a Bachelor of Music in 2011, Colin undertook postgraduate study at the Sydney Conservatorium with Scott Kinmont. Colin is currently completing his Soloist Diploma with Professor Jonas Bylund at the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien in Hannover, Germany.

While studying in Europe, Colin achieved success in several international music competitions. In 2017, he won First Prize at the Eighth International Competition for Brass Instruments in Gdansk, Poland, and the First International Trombone Competition in Alsace, France. Colin was also a semi-finalist of the Porcia International Trombone competition in 2015.

As a soloist, Colin has been engaged to perform concertos with several orchestras in Germany and Australia including, most recently, the Göttinger Symphonie Orchester, the Philharmonisches Orchester Bremerhaven and the ASO.

Since 2018, Colin has held the position of Principal Trombone with the ASO. As a guest musician, Colin has worked with orchestras and chamber ensembles in Australia and Europe including the Melbourne, Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Tasmanian Symphony orchestras, Staatsoper Hannover, Teatro Regio di Torino, and World Brass.



The Fountain of Valle Giulia at Dawn (Andante mosso) The Triton Fountain in the Morning (Vivo) The Fountain of Trevi at Midday (Allegro moderato) The Villa Medici Fountain at Sunset (Andante)

# Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936) Fountains of Rome

Respighi was Italy's most important composer of instrumental music at a time when opera dominated the country. He certainly wrote eight operas, but also recast Gregorian chant, madrigals and early Italian instrumental works into his own orchestral and chamber music. In the sumptuous tone poems *Fountains of Rome* (1916), *Pines of Rome* (1924) and *Roman Festivals* (1928) Respighi sought to depict some of the sights, sounds and legends of Rome.

Respighi sanctioned this program note for the work:

In this symphonic poem the composer has endeavoured to give impression to the sentiments and visions suggested to him by four of Rome's fountains, contemplated at the hour in which their character is most in harmony with the surrounding landscape, or in which their beauty appears most impressive to the observer.

The first part, inspired by the Fountain of Valle Giulia, depicts a pastoral landscape: droves of cattle pass and disappear in the fresh damp mists of a Roman dawn.

A sudden loud and insistent blast of horns above the trills of the whole orchestra introduces the second part, *The Triton Fountain in the Morning*. It is like a joyous call, summoning troops of naiads and tritons who come running up, pursuing each other and mingling in a frenzied dance between the jets of water.

Next there appears a solemn theme, borne on the undulations of the orchestra. It is the *Fountain of Trevi at Midday*. The solemn theme, passing from the woodwind to the brass instruments, assumes a triumphal character. Trumpets peal; across the radiant surface of the water there passes Neptune's chariot, drawn by seahorses and followed by a train of sirens and tritons. The procession then vanishes, while faint trumpet blasts resound in the distance.

The fourth part, *The Villa Medici Fountain at Sunset*, is announced by a sad theme which rises above a subdued warbling. It is the nostalgic hour of sunset. The air is full of sounds of tolling bells, birds twittering, leaves rustling. Then all dies peacefully into the silence of the night.

#### Performance History

The ASO first performed *Fountains of Rome* in March 1958 under conductor Tibor Paul. The most recent performance took place in September 1986, conducted by Jorge Mester.



I. Animato II. Adagio/Valzer di Ligeia/Cadenza II. Attacca/Avventuroso

# Joe Chindamo (born 1961) *Ligeia* – Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra

*Ligeia* channels the literary world of Edgar Allen Poe – hence the title, borrowed from one of the writer's better-known stories.

The concerto reflects the nature of duality, or the double, a recurring theme in Poe's Gothic tales of mystery and the macabre.

In turn, Poe's exploration of duality presages aspects of Carl Jung's work by nearly a century. Jung believed that we all wear a mask to convince others and ourselves that we are not a bad or hypocritical person. This is manifested in *The Tell-Tale Heart* (another of Poe's famed tales) in which an unnamed narrator endeavours to convince the reader of his sanity while simultaneously describing a murder he has committed.

Jung argued that we cannot escape the limitations of our persona – or mask – until we have incorporated into our character those darker traits which belong to what he called the 'shadow self'.

*Ligeia*, in three movements, reflects this idea of psychic struggle through its highly energetic and virtuosic character, for the orchestra and

soloist alike. The work is replete with quasioperatic passages, full of drama, tempered by an eerie tender lyricism – as exemplified in the recurring *Ligeia* waltz (which first appears in the second movement). Playing on the idea of duality in particular, the often relentless drive (and self-assuredness) that propels the first and third movements is countered by periods of stillness and introspection – 'the shadow self'.

There is also a strong nostalgic streak that permeates the concerto; not necessarily a personal or specific nostalgia but rather, a sense of longing for a time beyond one's own. As the son of Italian immigrants, I know this feeling all too well, since I grew up spiritually and culturally aligned with a country I didn't personally experience till my mid-20s. (There is a wonderful word that has become popular recently which describes this kind of nostalgia – anemoia.)

It was a long-standing Austrian/German/ Catholic tradition to use the trombone in settings of the Requiem Mass; Mozart, for example, employed it as a portent of death, thereby making the instrument a perfect narrator for Poe-esque themes. In this work however, the trombone's bandwidth extends well beyond the funereal. Here it also conjures the hero, satirist, sage, poet, wit, lover, and court jester: one by one, entangled in a symbiotic waltz with 'the shadow'.

Throughout the work, Poe's duality is expressed musically by employing different musical languages. The metamorphosis – as we transition between the flip personality sides – is expressed by oscillating between the tonal and atonal, and between full symphonic romanticism and angular minimalism.

Stylistically, the work belongs, arguably, to the realm of polystylism, about which much was written in reference to the great 20th century Russian composer Alfred Schnittke, a selfproclaimed polystylist.

Polystylism is the use of multiple styles or techniques in literature, art, film, and especially music. Not to be confused with cross-genre, in which fully gestated genres are combined – mostly unsuccessfully – polystylism combines the DNAs of various styles (often from different periods) in such a way that a new music – an authentic music – emerges in an organic way. In this manner it is possible for, say, pre-modern music, impressionism, neo-classicism and atonality to co-exist as parts of the whole in the same piece.

There are relatively few concertos written for the trombone, especially if one compares the output to the number produced for the piano, violin, cello etc. This presents a great challenge for a modern composer, in that there are fewer works from which to draw inspiration. At the same time, it also provides a great opportunity to contribute to the course of the instrument's evolution. Before undertaking the project, my working knowledge of the trombone's capabilities did not extend much beyond its functionality as an orchestral instrument. However, to write a part that will excite and challenge a virtuoso practitioner (especially in a musical medium where a few 'partings of the waves' are expected), is to enter an entirely different universe, one which required a huge leap in my conceptualisation of the instrument.

I've had many conversations with soloist Colin Prichard. With someone of his ability, one soon realises that standard references are not very useful, since he can play well beyond the working range of the instrument and accomplishes feats that would frighten most other trombonists. As a composer, I needed to discover what his parameters were, not just those of the instrument. Our initial talks were essentially about finding a common ground, so I could create a piece that was as much his as mine. Our common ground turned out to be incredibly fertile and I was delighted to discover that we shared many musical values.

#### © Joe Chindamo 2022

*Ligeia* was commissioned by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra



# Lisa Illean (born 1983) Land's End

Small artworks on paper draw the viewer in. Wind-swept ocean surfaces, frozen in time, with no horizon, no perspective. Works of detail and obsession, each created over a full year with a simple graphite pencil.

Composer Lisa Illean found inspiration in these small yet epic seascapes of Latvian-American artist Vija Celmins. 'In such work, surfaces act as forms through which subtle change can be perceived and felt', Illean says. In response, her piece, *Land's End*, 'evolves gradually, like a change in temperature or hue.' Gentle transience is everywhere: harmonies shift glacially, notes barely emerge, notes slide slowly, speeds change imperceptibly.

'For some time,' says Illean, 'I have been interested in sounds comprising hushed repetitive fragments. These recall the murmurings – of human voices or natural elements – that form a continuous, ever-varying undertint to more foreground sounds.' The music of *Land's End* is hushed, still. High, fragile strings glisten; brass mumble, muted; percussion barely touch their instruments. This tranquillity opens a space for audiences, so that 'the experience of the piece is to be found as much within the listener as the sounds I have organised.' Illean challenges her players with a 'discreet virtuosity of finely-attuned listening, tuning and balance.' This is a virtuosity that we, leaning quietly forward in the audience, can share.

Timothy Munro © 2016

#### Performance History

Land's End was commissioned by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. That orchestra gave the world premiere performance in March 2016, conducted by David Robertson. This is the ASO's first performance of the work.



Tempo molto moderato Andante mosso, quasi allegretto Allegro molto

# Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) Symphony No.5 in E flat, Op.82

The pitiless despair of Sibelius' Fourth Symphony (1911) puzzled many of its first listeners. The work seemed an unlikely sequel to the gentle radiance of the Third (1907), yet its gaze into the abyss gave way, in the Fifth, to one of Sibelius' most shining, life-affirming creations.

While the Fifth is light to the Fourth's darkness, a progression (it seems) from doubt to belief, it doesn't represent a shift in Sibelius' compositional principles. An economy of orchestral resource, the building up of musical paragraphs by the development of tiny melodic fragments, the determination to create his own solutions to the problems of harmonic language and symphonic form - these were abiding features of his music from the beginning. In fact, of all the major composers of the last century he was the most solitary, methodical and purposeful in his stylistic development, taking only fitful interest in the work of his contemporaries. In writer Neville Cardus' memorable description, Sibelius 'sits alone in the house of music rather away from the hearth and the logs and the company; he says little, and sometimes by his taciturnity alone he makes an impression of deep thinking.'

He created this work, now one of his most popular, at a time of great personal difficulty.

World War I had broken out and, as a result, Sibelius lost access to the revenue from his German publishers. To earn some regular income, he wrote a great number of salon pieces for domestic performance, and had little time for other composing; the Fifth Symphony is his only major work of the war years.

Sibelius himself conducted the Symphony's first performance, at a concert given on 8 December 1915 to mark his 50th birthday. It was a jubilant event, treated almost as a national holiday, but Sibelius was unhappy with the work and revised it twice. In 1916 he joined the first two of the original four movements together, and he made further revisions before it was published in 1919.

The Symphony begins quietly on horns and timpani. The theme you hear at this point is soon elaborated into a woodwind cadenza. At its conclusion the strings enter, and you seem to be moving gradually and inexorably deep into the landscape of the music, until you come to the vista presented by a great tolling of the brass and the announcement of a jagged syncopated theme on the strings. Now you've reached the threshold beyond which the heart of the Symphony lies. A mysterious, cloudy passage for the strings – over which the bassoon utters a sorrowful version of one of the main themes – leads to a burnished assertion by the trumpets of the Symphony's very first theme, shortly after which, with a change of time signature from 12/8 to 3/4, the mood changes to one of dancing lightness, in which the sound of the two flutes leads you on. Soon the music gathers pace, and the strings take up the dance strain with increasing excitement until the brass join in for the final, sudden, invigorating climax.

The second movement is a set of variations not on a theme, but on a rhythmic pattern that Sibelius contrives to behave like a theme. The whole movement is a centre of calm; even the passionate descending string tune that marks one of the most decisive transformations of the original idea is marked Poco tranquillo. Towards the end of the movement the brass toll out a reminiscence of their earlier, more excitable selves; this leads to a series of cloudy gestures which recall music from the first movement. But towards the end the mood changes to one of almost childlike serenity, which is carried through to the short, abbreviated, coda.

The finale throws us into its hurly-burly almost immediately, with a whirlwind passage for the strings leading to one of the most famous of all themes in Sibelius' music, that in which, it has been said, Thor swings his hammer. It's a good example of how orchestrally conceived Sibelius' ideas are. Played on the piano the tune would mean very little, but given out on horns with a high, syncopated woodwind counterpoint, it attains a unique nobility. After some woodwind carolling and a return to the gusty sounds of the movement's opening, Sibelius prepares us for a return of the swinging horn theme. When this finally re-appears, it does so as a chorale that must struggle through long pedal-points and changes of key before bursting into its sunset glory. These final minutes contain the richest orchestration of the whole work, but almost before we can register the fact, the symphony ends with six jubilant, adamant chords.

Phillip Sametz © 1995/2022

#### Performance History

The ASO first performed Sibelius' Symphony No. 5 in June 1951, with conductor Michael Bowles. The Orchestra's most recent performance took place in October 2018, conducted by Douglas Boyd.



# 5 Minutes with Composer *Cathy Milliken*

ASO Composer in Association Cathy Milliken will unveil her new work and the ASO's third commission, *Earth Plays V: Ediacaran Fields* inspired by the Ediacaran fossils at the South Australian Museum at *Symphony Series 4 – Serenity*, 24 & 25 June. The work is generously supported by founder and chair of the Flinders Ranges Ediacaran Foundation, Mary Lou Simpson OAM.

# Your new work is inspired by Ediacaran fossils how did this inspiration come about?

For this composition I was fortunate enough to have such an inspired instructor and coach in Mary Lou. It was her love and knowledge of the Ediacara fields and period that pushed me to research further. It is also fascinating to appreciate how the fossil imprints give us clues in the search for the development of life forms.

# What does the new work sound like and what can audiences expect?

I wanted to write a piece that exists somewhere in swirling oceans and tides as well as shifting sands and that does justice to these small symmetrical life forms that existed peacefully in their surroundings without the more aggressive tactics of the creatures of the following age. I felt a challenge to not create musical structures that develop, but rather to create smaller cyclical cells or elements. Coupled with the knowledge of the Ediacaran life form's inexplicable extinction due to some event as also the varied gentle forms that these fossils portray, the composition hovers between gentle depictions and their harmonic and rhythmic interrelations and the darker premonitions of a cataclysmic event to come. Here overlays of all previous musical elements, teeming with life in a frenzied dance to ensure their existence, could be questioning our own environmental commitment to our existence on this planet.

#### ASO is committed to the representation of female composers. As a female composer how does this make you feel and why is it so important?

I think it's a wonderful commitment. It is quite disheartening to see program after program with limited breadth of cultural choices. This doesn't do anyone a service as it narrows the perspective, the lens of experience for the listener. How wonderful to achieve a diverse interesting inclusive programming instead that reaches out and inspires people of all gender and cultural traditions.

Symphony Series 4 – Serenity, 24 & 25 June also includes Vaughan Williams' The Lark Ascending, Saint-Saëns' Introduction & Rondo Capriccioso and Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition.

Tickets at aso.com.au

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