

# Nativity

Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

Season 2022

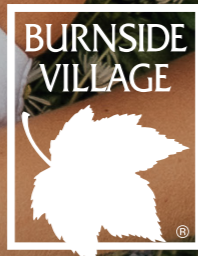


Fri 16 – Sun 18 December  
Adelaide Town Hall





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# Messiah

Fri 16, Sat 17, Sun 18 December  
Adelaide Town Hall

Erin Helyard  
Conductor

Sara Macliver  
Soprano

Russell Harcourt  
Countertenor

Nicholas Jones  
Tenor

David Greco  
Baritone

Adelaide Chamber Singers  
Christie Anderson  
Artistic Director and  
Conductor

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George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

*Messiah*

A Sacred Oratorio

The words selected from Holy Scripture  
by Charles Jennens (1700-1773)

Part the First

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INTERVAL

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Part the Second

Part the Third

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Duration Approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes, including a 20 minute interval

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# Welcome

How many sacred works continue to speak as powerfully to audiences all over the world as *Messiah*? It is unique and extraordinary, whether sung and played by huge forces or, as the ASO will present it for you now, with a choir and orchestra closer in size to those of Handel's time.

These are our first *Messiah* performances since 2018; on occasions as special as these it's a pleasure to welcome Erin Helyard to direct the work. Erin, artistic director of Pinchgut Opera, has forged new standards of excellence in historically informed performance in Australia, and brings unique insights into Handel's musical world. He's joined by a team of magnificent singers, and, as all Adelaideans know, one of the nation's leading vocal ensembles, the Adelaide Chamber Singers.

If you haven't already looked ahead to discover the many inspiring concerts we'll be presenting for you next year, you might want to consider our exploration of the spiritual and sublime in the unique two-concert series *Sacred and Profane*. Featuring Fauré's Requiem, Poulenc's Organ Concerto and many other works of a timeless grandeur, these performances take place in the resonant beauty of St. Peter's Cathedral.

Thank you for being part of the ASO experience this year, and my best wishes for a safe, happy and musical festive season. We look forward to making music for you again in 2023.



**Simon Lord**  
Director, Artistic Planning



Erin Helyard Conductor

Erin Helyard has been acclaimed as an inspiring conductor and a virtuosic and expressive performer of the harpsichord and fortepiano. He aspires to be a lucid scholar and communicator who is passionate about music of the past, and the discourse between musicology and performance.

Erin graduated in harpsichord performance from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with first-class honours and the University Medal. He completed his Masters in fortepiano performance and a PhD in musicology with Tom Beghin at McGill University, Montreal. As Artistic Director and co-founder of Pinchgut Opera and the Orchestra of the Antipodes (Sydney) he has forged new standards of excellence in historically informed performance in Australia.

Pinchgut Opera won Best Rediscovered Opera for Hasse's *Artaserse* at the 2019 International Opera Awards in London. Operas under his direction were awarded Best Opera at the Helpmann Awards for three consecutive years (2015-2017). He has received two Helpmann Awards for Best Musical Direction: one for a fêted revival of *Saul* (Adelaide Festival) in 2017 and the other for Hasse's *Artaserse* (Pinchgut Opera) in 2019. Together with Richard Tognetti, Erin won an ARIA for Best Classical Album in 2020.

Erin is a Senior Lecturer at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and appears courtesy of Pinchgut Opera.



Sara Macliver Soprano

Sara Macliver is one of Australia's most popular and versatile artists, and is regarded as one of the leading exponents of Baroque repertoire.

Sara is a regular performer with all the Australian symphony orchestras as well as the Perth, Melbourne and Sydney Festivals, Pinchgut Opera, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Musica Viva, and a number of international companies.

Sara records for ABC Classics, and has more than 35 CDs and many awards to her credit. In 2017/18 Sara sang with West Australian Opera, the Sydney, West Australian and Adelaide Symphony orchestra; the Australian String Quartet; St George's Cathedral; the Auckland Philharmonia, and in several programs with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. That year she also sang with Bangalow Festival and Collegium Musicum, amongst many other projects. Sara took part in an album of Calvin Bowman songs for the Decca label, released in 2018.

In 2019 Sara sang with the West Australian, Tasmanian, Queensland and Adelaide Symphony orchestras; Sydney Philharmonia; Ten Days on The Island; the Peninsula Summer Festival; Brisbane Camerata and ANAM, amongst others.

Sara has been awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Western Australia in recognition of her services to singing.



Russell Harcourt Countertenor

Countertenor Russell Harcourt is a graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium and the Royal Academy of Music, London, where he furthered his studies with Yvonne Kenny, was an Associate of the Jette Parker Young Artists' Program at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, studied part-time at the National Opera Studio, and became an alumnus of the Britten-Pears Young Artist Program.

Russell's recent engagements include Ruggiero (*Alcina*) with National Opera Canberra, Handel's *Coronation Anthems* and Haydn's *Nelson Mass* with Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, performances with Bach Akademie Australia, and with Sara Macliver for the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra; the title role in Handel's *Oreste* for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden at Wilton's Music Hall; Evanco (*Rodrigo*) for Göttingen International Handel Festival; Roberto (*Griselda*) for Irish National Opera; Megabise (*Artaxerxes*), Andronico (*Bajazet*) and Corrado (*Griselda*) for Pinchgut Opera; John Adams' *Gospel According to the Other Mary* at Bonn Opera; Bach's B Minor Mass with Florilegium; Pisandro (*The Return of Ulysses*) for Iford Arts Festival, and Narciso (*Agrippina*) for English Touring Opera.

Further appearances include Nerone in *Agrippina* for Brisbane Baroque (Helpmann Award nomination for Best Male Performer in a Supporting Role in opera), and as soloist in *Vanguard* (Australian Ballet) and *Messiah* (New Zealand Symphony Orchestra).



Nicholas Jones Tenor

Nicholas Jones recently won the Green Room Award for his portrayal of David in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* for Opera Australia, and was nominated for a Helpmann Award for this same role.

A graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts and a Herald-Sun Aria finalist, Nicholas' other roles for the national company have included: Remendado in *Carmen*, Marasquin in *Two Weddings, One Bride*, Albazar in *Il Turco in Italia* and several roles in Shostokovich's *The Nose*. He also sang Tamino and Almaviva in Opera Australia's touring productions of *The Magic Flute* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia*.

In 2016, Nicholas created the role of Fish Lamb in the world premiere of Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet*, composed by George Palmer and presented by State Opera South Australia (SOSA). He sang Male Chorus in Victorian Opera's *The Rape of Lucretia*; Britten's *Canticles* and Stefan Cassomenos' *Art of Thought* for Melbourne Recital Centre, Soldier in *The Emperor of Atlantis* and Barnardo in *Erwin und Elmire* for IOpera, Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn & Strings* at ANAM and Hadyn's *The Creation* for Sydney Philharmonia. Nick was an original cast member of Deborah Cheetham's indigenous opera *Pecan Summer*.

Most recently, he sang Michael Driscoll in the world premiere of *Whiteley* and Tony in *West Side Story* for Opera Australia and Tom in *Christina's World* for State Opera of South Australia. 2022 engagements include leading roles for OA, SOSA and The Adelaide Festival, and concert appearances with the Sydney and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras.

Nicholas is the current recipient of the Dame Heather Begg Memorial Award.



David Greco Baritone

David Greco has sung on some of Europe's finest stages, and has appeared as a principal in major opera festivals, including Aix-en-Provence and Glyndebourne.

David has appeared as a soloist with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Australian Chamber Orchestra and, most recently, with the Sydney Symphony in their Helpmann Award-winning concerts of Bach's cantata for bass, *Ich habe genug*. In 2017, he was a principal artist with Opera Australia, appearing in *The Eighth Wonder* and *The Love for Three Oranges*. His appearance as Seneca in Pinchgut Opera's production of *The Coronation of Poppea* received critical acclaim.

David's solo recordings include *Poems of Love and War*, featuring arias by New Zealand composer Jack Body, on the Naxos label. In 2019, David made his first recital album, presenting works by J.S. Bach, with the Netherlands-based Luthers Bach Ensemble, for the Brilliant Classics label.

David is an active researcher into historical performance practice of 19th century voice, and recently received his doctorate from the University of Melbourne. His PhD has led to the first Australian recording project focused on the historically informed performance of Schubert's songs cycles *Winterreise* and *Die schöne Müllerin* on the ABC Classic label. The latter received an ARIA nomination for Best Classical Album in 2020.



Adelaide Chamber Singers

Adelaide Chamber Singers (ACS) has been a significant contributor to music in Adelaide for more than 35 years. Formed by Carl Crossin OAM in 1985, ACS comprises some of Adelaide's best ensemble singers, most of whom are also soloists, teachers or conductors in their own right. ACS is widely respected as one of Australia's finest chamber choirs and was awarded the 2011 Ruby Award for 'sustained contribution by an organisation', as well as several awards from the Australian Music Centre at the 2016 and 2017 National Art Music Awards in Sydney.

Under Carl Crossin's leadership, ACS performed to critical acclaim around Australia, and around the world, having won several First Places at major international competitions, and three *summa cum laude* awards in Canada, Italy and at Llangollen in Wales. Nationally, ACS has performed at the Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth International Arts Festivals and many regional Australian festivals. ACS also frequently steps out of its 'choral box' to support and collaborate with a wide range of artists including The Rolling Stones, Hilltop Hoods, Greta Bradman, Kronos Quartet and The Tallis Scholars.

In January 2022, former ACS Associate Conductor Christie Anderson took on the mantle of Artistic Director and Conductor.

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Handel, in a portrait by Thomas Hudson of 1756.

## George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

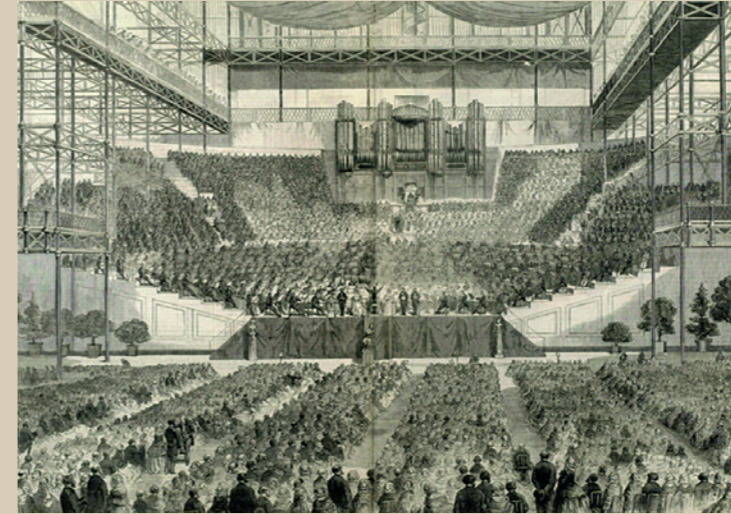
### *Messiah*

### A Sacred Oratorio

The words selected from Holy Scripture  
by Charles Jennens (1700–1773)

The composer Richard Wagner once observed that at a performance of a Handel oratorio in England, everyone held their vocal score ‘as one holds a prayer-book in church’. Certainly by the mid-19th century performances of *Messiah* had assumed the character of a *de facto* religious ritual and, in keeping with the general ethos of the Victorian era, such performances also assumed gargantuan proportions: on the centenary of the composer’s death in 1859 the work was performed by a chorus of more than 2000 and an orchestra of 460 to an audience which numbered in the tens of thousands. One can understand, therefore, how Berlioz could, however mistakenly, describe Handel as a ‘barrel of roast pork and beer’, even though such performances were clearly very different from what Handel himself envisaged or experienced when he wrote the work in 1741. Moreover, none would have been more surprised than the composer at the revered status that *Messiah* would attain. While there was never any doubt about its musical quality, *Messiah*’s early history was by no means a story of easy triumph.

The 1730s had been a time of professional turbulence for Handel. His status as the pre-eminent composer of opera for the London stage had been challenged by a cabal of noblemen associated with the Prince of Wales – as much for party political as aesthetic reasons, and while the details are unclear it seems there may have been a boycott of his work in the last years of the decade. There was certainly some kind of fall from grace – whether the result of this politics or what Handel referred to enigmatically as ‘a faux pas made but not meant’. In the event, the stress also affected the composer’s health. He suffered what was probably a mild stroke, leading to paralysis in his right arm. Handel fortunately made a full recovery, though his energies from now on went into oratorio rather than opera. In 1741 he wisely took the advice of an acquaintance who suggested that ‘he would do very well to ly quiet for a year or two’. Handel didn’t exactly ‘ly quiet’ but he did accept the invitation of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to present concerts in Dublin beginning in November of that year.



From the Illustrated London News of June 1857: Artists’ impression of the Handel Festival given that month in London’s Crystal Palace, in which the oratorios *Messiah*, *Judas Maccabees* and *Saul* were performed by a choir of 2000 and an orchestra of 396.

The 18th century, according to poet W.B. Yeats was ‘that one Irish century that escaped from darkness and confusion’, a legitimate overstatement given the grandeur of Dublin and the vibrancy of intellectual life there during the Georgian period. Dublin was, in the early 18th century, one of the largest cities in Great Britain and Ireland; it boasted some of the most beautiful architecture and town planning in the kingdom and one of the earliest purpose-built music halls in Europe. In fact, music was not one of the principal entertainments of the city’s exclusively Protestant gentry and aristocracy, but there was at this time a move to effect social improvement through advocacy groups such as the Dublin Society and through the establishment of charitable organisations. Handel had raised money for various charities in London (and would continue to do so – most famously for the Foundling Hospital) and part of his mission was to do likewise in Dublin. His new oratorio raised the considerable sum of £400 for Dublin hospitals. And, as his noted contemporary Charles Burney later put it, *Messiah* ‘has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, fostered the orphan, and enriched succeeding managers of the oratorios, more than any single production in this or any other country’.

*Messiah*, written with Handel’s characteristic haste during the previous summer in London, formed the climax of his concert series at the New Music Hall in April 1742. The Dublin audiences had enjoyed numerous works including his *Ode for St Cecilia’s Day*, *Acis and Galatea* and the biblical oratorio *Esther*, and when *Messiah* was performed at an open rehearsal on 9 April the response was overwhelming – so much so that ladies of the audience for the official

premiere were asked not to wear hoop skirts, and gentlemen to leave their swords at home to make enough room in the auditorium. But it wasn’t all plain sailing. One prominent Irish churchman was outraged. He rather humourlessly threatened to ban the choristers from St Patrick’s Cathedral (of which he was Dean) from taking part in a secular entertainment based on scripture, but was fortunately convinced otherwise. His name was Jonathan Swift. But another clergyman, Patrick Delany (whose wife’s diaries are a famous and invaluable document of Georgian life) was overwhelmed. Handel had insisted on using the singer Susannah Cibber (then in disgrace over an adultery scandal); Delany, hearing her sing ‘He was despised’ famously cried out ‘Woman, for this be all thy sins forgiven thee!’

Handel had faced ecclesiastical opposition before, notably when the Bishop of London had denounced his *Israel in Egypt* in 1738 for similar reasons. In fact when it came time for the London premiere of *Messiah*, Handel nowhere used the title in the advance publicity, preferring the term ‘A Sacred Oratorio’. It didn’t help: *Messiah* was roundly denounced as sacrilegious and heretical by the hierarchy, many of whom were offended by the sight and sound of scripture outside ‘proper’ places of worship. One asked if such a work was ‘an Act of Religion ...; if it is, I ask if the Playhouse is a fit Temple to perform it in?’

Handel was a man of the theatre but was also a devout Christian – as was his librettist for *Messiah*, Charles Jennens. Jennens, son of a prosperous Midlands family, had been denied his degree at Oxford for refusing to acknowledge George II’s Hanoverian family as the legitimate



*Messiah's* librettist, Charles Jennens, in a portrait of the early 1840s by Thomas Hudson.

kings of England but the theology of his libretto is nonetheless that of an orthodox Protestant. Jennens' *Messiah* takes judiciously selected passages from both Old and New Testaments to dramatise the prophecies of Christ's incarnation and atoning death, his resurrection and ascent into glory and final redemption of creation. The following is a summary by Handel scholar David Vickers of Jennens' own division of the work into three 'acts':

I (i) The prophecy of Salvation; (ii) the prophecy of the coming of Messiah and the question, despite (iii), of what this may portend for the World; (iv) the prophecy of the Virgin Birth; (v) the appearance of the Angels to the Shepherds; (vi) Christ's redemptive miracles on earth.

II (i) The redemptive sacrifice, the scourging and the agony on the cross; (ii) His sacrificial death, His passage through Hell and Resurrection; (iii) His Ascension; (iv) God discloses his identity in Heaven; (v) Whitsun, the gift of tongues, the beginning of evangelism; (vi) the world and its rulers reject the Gospel; (vii) God's triumph.

III (i) The promise of bodily resurrection and redemption from Adam's fall; (ii) the Day of Judgement and general Resurrection; (iii) the victory over death and sin; (iv) the glorification of the Messianic victim.

Such a structure is, of course, operatic – one contemporary description of Handel's oratorios noted how 'the Solemnity of Church-Musick is agreeably united with the most pleasing Airs of the Stage'. This was, as we have seen, part of the reason for the Church's initial mistrust

of the work; we might add that while Handel gave up writing operas, he continued using opera singers for his oratorios and these were performed in theatres and even taverns rather than chapels or churches. Handel's music is certainly unapologetic in its operatic tone – some sections, like 'For unto us a child is born', are recycled from decidedly non-sacred moments in his operas. And yet Jennens' libretto solves the sacred/secular problem brilliantly: Jesus himself never speaks (unlike in, say, Bach's Passions) and the prophecies, descriptions and commentaries are all in the third person. The solo singers represent, as it were, disembodied prophetic voices; the chorus takes on the roles of prophet, angelic host, angry mob or the voices of various apostles, but these incarnations are only temporary. No actor is identified with any single character, and the work thus maintains a level of abstraction which allows us to concentrate on the unfolding of the drama through text and music. By focussing not, like Bach, on the suffering and death of Jesus so much as the cosmic plan for salvation, Jennens displays what Ruth Smith calls a 'generous faith' with its initial promise of comfort.

The work itself went through several incarnations – in fact there is no definitive version, as Handel was obliged to revise, re-score and occasionally recompose depending on the performers at his disposal. After his death there were various 'improvements' made by, among others, Mozart, who added parts for a classical orchestra including clarinets and brass, and of course the cast of thousands at the 1859 performance were not even pretending to give an 'authentic' reading. But by then *Messiah*



Susanna Cibber, sister to composer Thomas Arne was, at the time of her death in 1766, the highest-paid female actor in England. She was also a notable singer, and was contralto soloist in the premiere of *Messiah*.

was firmly established in Anglophone culture, having acquired its status as a quasi-liturgical work. Wagner, who tried to create a national consciousness through Germanic myth in his operas, only scoffed because Handel held a position that he coveted himself.

Gordon Kerry © 2006

### *Performance History*

The ASO's first performances of *Messiah* took place in the Adelaide Town Hall in December 1943 under Norman Chinner's direction, with the Adelaide Philharmonic Choir and soloists Vera Thrush, Gwen Collett, Stanley Clarkson and Frederick Williamson. The three performances were given in aid of the Fighting Forces Comfort Fund. The Orchestra's most recent performances were given in Elder Hall in December 2018, when Christian Curnyn conducted the ASO, Adelaide Chamber Singers and soloists Sara Macliver, Fiona Campbell, Henry Choo and Morgan Pearse.



The New Music Hall in Fishamble Street, Dublin, where *Messiah* received its first performance, in April 1742.

## Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

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### *Violins*

Cameron Hill\*\*  
Acting Concertmaster

Helen Ayres\*\*  
Associate Concertmaster

Emma Perkins\*  
Acting Principal 1<sup>st</sup> Violin

Lachlan Bramble\*\*  
Acting Principal 2<sup>nd</sup> Violin

Janet Anderson~  
Acting Associate Principal  
2<sup>nd</sup> Violin

Minas Berberyán

Danielle Jaquillard

Jennifer Newman

Julie Newman

Alexander Permezél

Kemeri Spurr

### *Violas*

Justin Julian\*\*

Anna Hansen~  
Acting Associate

Cecily Satchell

*Cellos*

Simon Cobcroft\*\*

Gemma Phillips~  
Acting Associate

### *Double Bass*

Jonathon Coco~

### *Oboes*

Callum Hogan\*\*  
Guest Principal

Matthew Bubb

### *Bassoon*

Jackie Newcomb\*

### *Trumpets*

David Khafagi\*\*

Gregory Frick

### *Timpani*

Andrew Penrose\*

### *Chamber Organ*

Peter Kelsall\*  
Guest Principal

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

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Correct at the time of print



### Congratulations *Jennifer Newman* *Tutti Violin*

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Please join us in congratulating Jennifer Newman on an extraordinary career as she retires from the ASO after over 46 years of service.

## Adelaide Chamber Singers

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### *Soprano*

Alexandra Bollard

Emma Borgas

Victoria Coxhill

Ciara Ferguson

Gianna Guttilla

Laura Mohan-Ram

Imogen Tonkin

Ruby Washington

Brooke Window

### *Alto*

Rachel Bruerville

Riana Chakravarti

Courtney Day

Stephanie Eaton

Ali Hansen

Emma Horwood

Monique Lymn

Isobel Martin

Emma Woehle

### *Tenor*

Richard Black

David Hamer

Andrew Linn

Jack Overall

Martin Penhale

Sean Tanner

Kit Tonkin

Rhys Williams

Graham Yuile

### *Bass*

Andrew Bettison

Jonathan Bligh

Aidan Foyel

Christopher Gann

Nikolai Leske

Allan McBean

Brendan O'Donnell

Jordan Rose

Matthew Ruttý

Lachlan Symonds

Matt Winefield

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Cameron Hill Associate Concertmaster — Graeme & Susan Bethune ♪  
 Alison Heike Principal 2nd Violin — FASO in memory of Ann Belmont OAM ♪  
 Lachlan Bramble Associate Principal 2nd Violin — In memory of Deborah Pontifex ♪  
 Janet Anderson — In memory of Gweneth Willing ♪  
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 Elizabeth Collins

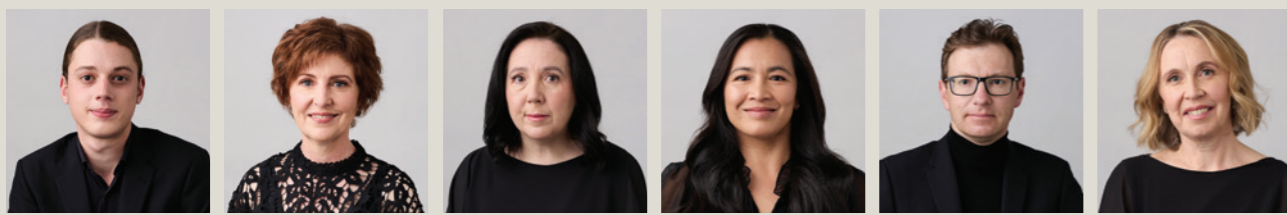


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 Danielle Jaquillard — K & K Palmer ♪  
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 Michael Milton — Judy Birze & Ruth Bloch ♪  
 Jennifer Newman  
 Julie Newman  
 Emma Perkins — Peter & Pamela McKee ♪



Alexander Permezal  
 Kemerl Spurr — In memory of Elizabeth Jamieson ♪

*Violas*



Justin Julian Section Principal — In memory of Mrs JJ Holden ♪  
 Lesley Cockram  
 Anna Hansen — Anonymous donor ♪  
 Rosi McGowran — Liz & Mike Bowen ♪  
 Michael Robertson  
 Cecily Satchell

*Double Basses*



David Schilling Section Principal — Daniel & Sue Hains ♪  
 Jonathon Coco Associate Principal — John Sulan KC & Ali Sulan ♪  
 Jacky Chang — Dr Melanie Turner ♪  
 Harley Gray — In memory of Bob Croser ♪  
 Belinda Kendall-Smith — In memory of Dr Nandor Ballai and Dr Georgette Straznicki ♪  
 Lisa Gill — Dr Tom & Sharron Stubbs ♪  
 Julia Grenfell Principal — In memory of Father Kevin McLennan and Barbra McLennan ♪

*Bassoons*



Mark Gaydon Section Principal — Pamela Yule ♪  
 Leah Stephenson — Liz Ampt ♪  
 Jackie Newcomb Principal — Norman Etherington AM & Peggy Brock ♪

*Contra Bassoon*



Adrian Uren Section Principal — Roderick Shire & Judy Hargrave ♪

*Horns*



Sarah Barrett Associate Principal — Margaret Lehmann ♪  
 Emma Gregan — The Richard Wagner Society of South Australia ♪  
 Philip Paine Principal

*Timpani*

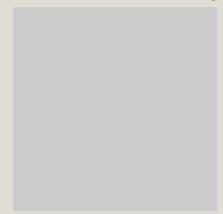


Andrew Penrose Principal — In memory of Drs Kristine Gebbie & Lester Wright ♪

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Steven Peterka Section Principal — FASO in memory of Bev McMahon ♪



Sami Butler Section Principal Percussion/Timpani

*Cellos*



Simon Cobcroft Section Principal — In memory of Rodney Crewther ♪  
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*Cor Anglais*



Peter Duggan Principal — Dr JB Robinson ♪

*Clarinets*



Dean Newcomb Section Principal — Ann Vanstone ♪

*Bass Clarinet*



Darren Skelton — K & S Langley Fund ♪  
 Mitchell Berick Principal — Nigel Stevenson & Glenn Ball ♪

*Trumpets*



Timothy Skelly  
 David Khafagi Section Principal — Alyson Morrison & Michael Critchley ♪  
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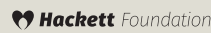
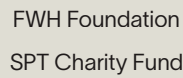
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