
Sacred & Profane 1



Magnificence

Thu 13 & Fri 14 April
St Peter's Cathedral

Adelaide
Symphony
Orchestra

Season
2023



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Magnificence

Anthony Hunt
Conductor

Joseph Nolan
Organ

Thu 13 & Fri 14 April
St Peter's Cathedral

Duration
1 hr 15 mins (no interval)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) [15']
Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) [10']
Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, BWV 542
Joseph Nolan Organ

Giovanni Gabrieli (c.1556-1612) [10']
Canzoni et Sonate: Canzon II à 6
Canzon III à 6
Canzon IV à 6

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) [22']
Concerto in G minor for organ, strings and timpani
Andante – Allegro giocoso – subito Andante moderato – Allegro (Molto agitato) – Très calme (Lent) – Tempo de l'Allegro initial – Tempo Introduction (Largo)
Joseph Nolan Organ

Listen Later ABC Classic is recording this concert for later broadcast. You can hear it again at 1pm on Monday 8 May.

The ASO acknowledges that the land we make music on is the traditional country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains. We pay respect to Elders past and present and recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that this is of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today. We extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are with us for this performance today.

About the *music*

In the sanctity of Adelaide's St Peter's Cathedral, these four works remind us of the sheer timelessness of reverence.

The *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* is a shimmering rendering of a sacred renaissance hymn. English composer **Ralph Vaughan Williams'** adaptation of this music for the concert hall was highly unusual, and divided his audience in equal parts between captivation and confusion at the work's 1910 premiere in Gloucester Cathedral. The original theme is composed in Phrygian mode – a scale of antiquity somewhat akin to the modern minor scale – which in light of Vaughan Williams' characteristically pastoral colours seems both from a long-distant past, yet lushly contemporary. Vaughan Williams approaches his orchestration with an unusual configuration. The parts are divided into three groups: two string orchestras, one large and one small, and a solo string quartet. The result is as much a study of space and sound as it is an illumination of the past: while all players begin together, the parts gradually separate, melodies dovetailing one another to great antiphonal effect. While the power of Vaughan Williams' radiant sound world shines through the massed array of strings, the solo melodic lines are equally poignant. Between moments of glorious resonance comes the voice of a solo viola – later joined by the other members of the string quartet – reciting its own benediction. A solo violin proclaims a tender conclusion.

From one fantasia to another, Bach's Great Fantasia and Fugue in G minor is a solo feature for the impressive organ of St. Peter's Cathedral. An air of ambiguity surrounds this work, as the original manuscript has not survived, but scholars believe that it was likely conceived as one of Bach's improvisations. As such, it is an incredible feat of musical calculation. The fantasia begins with an electrifying mass of sound, snaking melodic figures weaving between blows of ferocity. While Vaughan Williams was looking into the past, Bach's chromatic gestures and terrifying dissonances

feel almost futuristic. When the artful fugue emerges, it is from the impassioned cloud of the fantasia. The fugue recalls a traditional Dutch melody, *Ik ben gegroet van* ('I am greeted'), modulating around the circle of fifths with an ease only Bach could so seamlessly command.

Before Bach, in the late 16th century, Italian composer Giovanni Gabrieli produced an immense output of instrumental music. The ASO's brass musicians will perform II, III and IV à 6 from Gabrieli's *Canzoni et Sonate*, three movements that centuries later, remain a key feature of the brass ensemble repertoire. Gabrieli, immersed in the religious milieu of Renaissance Venice, wrote his music to complement the architecture of the cathedral space. The movements are short features of warm unified sound and artful polyphony, the perfect snapshot of the versatility and majesty of a brass ensemble.

While Francis Poulenc's early works had given him a reputation as something of a musical joker, the death of a friend in 1936 was the catalyst for a profound religious transformation. This, paired with the darkening political climate of Europe, harkened an era of 'serious' composition for the Frenchman. His Concerto for organ, strings and timpani was commissioned by Princess Edmond de Polignac, who requested an 'easy' organ part that she could perform herself, to be premiered in her private salon. Poulenc, having never written for the instrument, turned to the great organ works of Bach as part of his composition process, and moments of the work are reminiscent of the Great Fantasia, even down to a shared tonality. Although in a single movement, the concerto is divided into seven distinct episodes, resembling a free-form fantasia. The opening of the work is an anguished proclamation, although the organ is not without intimacy and reveals, in brief moments, its subdued, conversational side. The final bars, a massive organ gesture, are one last hammer-blow of grief, a spiritual exaltation.



Anthony Hunt
Conductor

Anthony Hunt is Head of Music and Chorus Master at the State Opera of South Australia, and the Director of Music at St Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide.

He was Chorus Master at Opera Australia from 2013-2019, where he prepared the chorus for more than 60 different operas, performing at the Sydney Opera House, The Arts Centre Melbourne, and Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour. At OA he also worked as a répétiteur and assistant conductor.

Recent conducting engagements have included *Sweeney Todd* and *Bright Lights, Big Dreams* for State Opera, Gorecki's *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs* as a fundraiser for Afghanistan with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, and Handel's *Messiah* with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra. He has been a guest chorus master for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Chorus.

Anthony completed his studies in London, as a répétiteur on the Royal Academy of Music specialist Opera Course, winning additional prizes in piano accompaniment. He has been a participant in the Symphony Australia Conductor Development Program, and graduated from the Elder Conservatorium of Music with an honours degree in piano and organ performance. He is an associate of the Royal Academy of Music, and Artistic Director of the St Peter's Cathedral Music Foundation Concert Series.



Joseph Nolan
Organ

British-Australian Joseph Nolan has been hailed by ABC Radio National 'as one of the great organists of our time' and by *Limelight* magazine 'as indisputably one of the world's finest organists'. Joseph has also been lauded by BBC Radio 3 Record Review for 'his miraculous playing' and by *Gramophone* magazine for his 'towering technique, vivid virtuosity and inspired interpretive insight'.

Joseph's discography for Gramophone label of the Year, Signum Records, includes performances on some of the world's greatest organs including Paris' St Sulpice, La Madeleine and St Etienne Du Mont, St Sernin (Toulouse), St Francois de Sales (Lyon), St Bavo (Haarlem), St Ouen (Rouen) and Buckingham Palace.

These recordings have been awarded innumerable five-star reviews, Editor's Choice, Critics' Choice and Recordings of the Month and Year in *Gramophone*, *Limelight*, *BBC Music Magazine* and *MusicWeb International*.

Joseph has performed as a concerto soloist with many major orchestras, most recently as a soloist on a national tour with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra alongside famed Venezuelan pianist Gabriela Montero and conductor Alexander Shelley.

Joseph is represented for general worldwide management by Mark Stephan Buhl Artists Management based in Vienna.

Adelaide *Symphony Orchestra*

Violins

Kate Suthers**
Concertmaster
Cameron Hill**
Associate Concertmaster
Helen Ayers*
Guest Principal 1st Violin
Lachlan Bramble**
Acting Principal 2nd Violin
Emma Perkins~
Acting Associate Principal
2nd Violin
Janet Anderson
Erna Berberyan
Minas Berberyan
Julia Brittain
Hilary Bruer
Jane Collins
Belinda Gehlert
Danielle Jaquillard
Michael Milton
Ambra Nesa
Julie Newman
Liam Osborne
Alexander Permezel
Kemerri Spurr

Violas

Justin Julian**
Rosi McGowran~
Acting Associate
Martin Butler
Lesley Cockram
Natalie Maegraith
Sandra Ionescu
Michael Robertson
Cecily Satchell

Cellos

Simon Cobcroft**
Sharon Grigoryan~
Guest Associate
Christopher Handley
Sherrilyn Handley
Andrew Leask
Gemma Phillips
David Sharp
Cameron Waters

Double Basses

Jonathon Coco**
Harley Gray~
Acting Associate
Jacky Chang
Belinda Kendall-Smith
Benjamin Saffir

Trumpets

David Khafagi**
Martin Phillipson~
Gregory Frick

Trombones

Colin Prichard**
Ian Denbigh

Bass Trombone

Amanda Tillett*

Timpani

Andrew Penrose*

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

Thank You

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