

Matinée *Series*

1 – Savour

Wed 24 April
Elder Hall



Matinée Series

1

Savour

Kate Suthers
Director/Violin

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Duration
1 hr 15 min (no interval)

Wed 24 April
Elder Hall

Caroline Shaw [6']
Valencia

J.S. Bach [15']
Concerto for Violin No.1 In A minor BWV 1041
I. Allegro moderato
II. Andante
III. Allegro assai

Tchaikovsky [34']
Souvenir de Florence
I. Allegro con spirito
II. Adagio cantabile e con moto
III. Allegro moderato
IV. Allegro vivace

Listen Later ABC Classic is recording this concert for later broadcast. You can hear it again on Friday 24 May at 1pm.

The ASO acknowledges that the land we make music on is the traditional country of the Kaurna 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 Kaurna 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 Program

From the first moment that I began discussing a possible program for today's concert with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra's Director of Artistic Planning Simon Lord, I knew I wanted to include *Souvenir de Florence*. *Souvenir* is a piece that is incredibly rich in melody, harmony, and texture, and I wanted to explore that sound world with my string-playing colleagues in an uncondacted setting.

Choosing the other music was like planning a menu. I wanted pieces with a lightness that would complement the indulgence of the main musical feast, starting with just four musicians and expanding from there. My only other consideration when programming this concert was completely selfish: I only chose pieces which I love.

Our concert begins with *Valencia*, not in reference to Spain, rather about an orange. This short quartet is explosive in its colours and sounds, with harmonics, open strings, pizzicati, and sudden crescendo all pinging out like a burst of fresh juice or zest.

I'm a Caroline Shaw fan. She's a Pulitzer Prize-winning composer, a singer and a violinist, and a member of arguably the best-named vocal ensemble ever, Roomful of Teeth. Her musical language is instantly recognisable, simultaneously new yet grounded in the harmonic language of plainsong and Bach chorales. Shaw wrote *Valencia* to play with friends, and was inspired by the sensational structure of the fruit itself. I first came across this piece around five years ago when I was listening to an album of Shaw's music recorded by the Attacca Quartet (aptly, the album is called *Orange*). I can happily say that I've now played every piece on that album, bar the final one.

From *Valencia*, we wind back 300 years to the masterpiece that is Bach's Violin Concerto No.1

in A minor. This work also pulses with energy, thanks to plenty of rhythmic counterpoint and the underpinning of the score by the harpsichord. The outer two movements of the concerto bounce along in the home key of A minor. The first movement is in ritornello form (a recurrent theme interspersed with contrasting episodes), and the third movement is a rollicking jig (gigue).

The slow movement is more languorous, though there is an insistence to the ostinato accompaniment that interrupts the endlessly lyrical solo line. I've known and loved Bach's violin concertos since I was a child. I'm not sure how old I was when I first played this one, I think it was in Suzuki Book 7, but it remains an absolute joy to perform.

And so we arrive at our centrepiece, Tchaikovsky's sextet of 1890 *Souvenir de Florence*. 'Souvenir' translates as memory or recollection; a reference to the seasons Tchaikovsky would spend in Italy (in Rome and Venice, as well as Florence) that inspired him to write this work. What started as a simple sketch of the violin and cello duet that forms the main melody of the second movement became a four-movement work drenched in the sunshine and passion of Italy. This Italian source is heard alongside Tchaikovsky's native Russian folk music. Traveling is one of the many privileges of being a musician, and this work is a wonderful aural depiction of how each of us carries our own musical identity and heritage with us.

As with other full string arrangements of works like Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* or Schubert's *Death and the Maiden*, there's a balance sheet of the gains and losses resulting from expanding musical forces. In their original forms, these works can have far greater flexibility and fluidity in performance. Scores can become increasingly



Kate Suthers
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unwieldy the more players you add, but there is an undeniable added depth of sonority thanks to the addition of double basses, and a greater range of dynamics available, both at the loud and soft extremes of a full string ensemble compared to a quartet or, in Tchaikovsky's case, a sextet. Is it gilding the lily? Possibly, but with this piece in particular, I think the full-strings rendition has an increased drama and chaos that's very much in keeping with Tchaikovsky's musical spirit.

The first movement is a tempestuous beast, all cross-rhythms and colourful harmonies with only the briefest respite provided by a gentler second subject. The second movement, however, is serene. Opening with an organ-like descending scale, the main body of the movement is a beautiful duet between first violin and first cello. There's a short, unsettling middle section, an apparition of a trembling, ghostly choir that disappears as quickly as it arrives, the opening duet reinstated. The third movement is a folksy affair, violas taking centre stage for the main theme, and the whole ensemble scampering around a musical village fair which sets up the mood for the fireworks of the finale. Recordings of the Bach and Tchaikovsky may be well-known to many in the audience. It's wonderful to present all these works to you today as they were intended by their composers – in live performance.

Thank you for joining us, and enjoy the feast!

Kate Suthers

Based in the UK until her appointment as Concertmaster of the ASO in 2022, Sydney-born violinist Kate Suthers' versatile career spans string quartet to symphony orchestra, and ranges from the music of Hildegard von Bingen to world premieres. Kate has always played music by living composers, and has worked with Thomas Adès, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Anna Meredith, Jörg Widmann, Jonny Greenwood and Sir James MacMillan. She has also collaborated across art forms in opera, theatre, film, and dance, and enjoys working with artists of different traditions.

Before holding positions in the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Kate studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London with renowned violinist and teacher György Pauk. Whilst at the academy, Kate directed the Soloists Ensemble for a recording with Trevor Pinnock and Linn Records, and worked with many great musicians including John Adams, Semyon Bychkov and Clio Gould. In 2022, Kate was made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

Kate's upcoming engagements include performances with Scottish Ensemble, two BBC Proms, and chamber music in both hemispheres.

Kate Suthers plays a Carlo Carletti violin from Pieve di Cento, Bologna, c.1920.

Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

Violins

Kate Suthers**
Concertmaster
Cameron Hill**
Associate Concertmaster
Holly Piccoli*
Principal 1st Violin
Alison Heike**
Principal 2nd Violin
Emma Perkins~
Acting Associate Principal
2nd Violin
Minas Berberyan
Gillian Braithwaite
Julia Brittain
Alexis Milton
Michael Milton
Ambra Nesa
Liam Osborne
Alison Rayner
Kemeri Spurr
Niki Vasilakis

Violas

Justin Julian**
Martin Alexander~
Acting Associate Principal
Lesley Cockram
Linda Garrett
Michael Robertson
Rosi McGowran

Cellos

Sharon Grigoryan**
Acting Section Principal
David Sharp~
Acting Associate Principal
Sherrilyn Handley
Shuhei Lawson
Andrew Leask
Gemma Phillips

Double Basses

David Schilling**
Belinda Kendall-Smith~
Acting Associate Principal

Continuo

Joshua van Konkelenberg*
Guest Principal

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

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