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Folklore  
Wed 12 Nov  
2025

# MATINÉE SERIES

# 4

# FOLKLORE

**Vaughan Williams**  
*The Wasps: Overture*

[9']

NOVEMBER

Wed 12  
Elder Hall

**Australian Premiere**  
**Ruth Gipps**  
Concerto for Oboe, Op.20

[21']

**Jessica Cottis**  
Conductor

*I. Allegro moderato*  
*II. Andante*  
*III. Allegro vivace*

**Joshua Oates**  
Oboe

**Mendelssohn**  
Symphony No.1 in C Minor, Op.11

[32']

**Duration**  
70 mins (no interval)

*I. Allegro di molto*  
*II. Andante*  
*III. Menuetto: Allegro molto*  
*IV. Allegro con fuoco*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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.

MATINÉE SERIES

**Listen Later**  
**on ABC Classic:**  
Mon 24 November, 12pm

# ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The pieces in today's program all possess a refined elegance and sense of youthful exuberance. Ralph Vaughan Williams and Ruth Gipps were proudly inspired by English folk tunes and their simple but impactful beauty. Felix Mendelssohn's graceful musical voice emerged remarkably strongly from a young age, as can be heard in his first symphony written for a full classical orchestra at only fifteen.

In 1909 Vaughan Williams was commissioned to write incidental music for a performance of Aristophanes' *The Wasps* for the Greek Play Committee of Cambridge. The play is a satirical comedy which skewers political machinations in Athens.

**The Wasps: Overture** begins with a pulsating buzzing effect on the strings which brings to mind a swarm of wasps. After this reference to the title, the overture moves energetically through a number of sweeping melodies reminiscent of a swashbuckling film score. While the play was written in 422 BCE, Vaughan Williams doesn't draw on antiquity or Greek music for inspiration. The pastoral quality of his quintessentially English voice comes through clearly.

Ruth Gipps was born in 1921 and was soon discovered to be a musical prodigy. She played piano concertos with local orchestras at only ten years old and won a place to study at the Royal College of Music in London at fifteen. Gipps went on to tenaciously carve out an enduring musical career in conducting and lecturing despite roadblocks placed in her way because of her gender.

Her **Oboe Concerto** is remarkably assured and polished when you consider she was only twenty years old when she wrote it. The first movement opens with a striking five-note motif heard on the brass, and strikes a mysterious and uneasy tone with mellifluous lines on the oboe. The following movement is more subdued: not quite melancholic but certainly contemplative. The piece ends with a sprightly movement which calls up images of village dances.

This performance marks the Australian Premiere. Its first performance in 80 years, and the US premiere, only occurred in 2021 and came about because of the advocacy of oboist Katherine Needleman and the

creative team at Richmond Symphony. Needleman had come across the handwritten score and was able to get the parts professionally engraved by the publisher of Gipps' music.

Needleman reflected on the strangeness that the Oboe Concerto had not entered the repertoire – particularly when you consider a close contemporary Oboe Concerto by Vaughan Williams has been played thousands of times over the decades: "The underlying tension lurking behind the pastoral folk tunes, which sometimes erupts into full blown darkness and anxiety, is very much reminiscent of Vaughan Williams' Oboe Concerto, except, of course, that her concerto came first."

Felix Mendelssohn enjoyed many privileges as a child. He was given the benefit of a first-class musical education, and his parents encouraged his talents by hiring out orchestras to perform his compositions at soirees in their Berlin home.

His **Symphony No.1 in C minor** was written when he was only fifteen, but by that age he had already produced twelve symphonies for string orchestra. His first symphony for full orchestral forces signalled a maturation of his artistic voice.

The opening of the *allegro di molto* first movement is refined and aristocratic. The *andante* second movement unfolds slowly with a gentle flowing melody played by the woodwinds. Mendelssohn smoothly moves from the energetic and bustling Minuet to a delicate middle section and back again. The symphony comes to a bright and kaleidoscopic finish with Mendelssohn showcasing his mastery of fugal counterpoint in the strings.

The symphony was well received after its London Premiere in 1829, according to music journal *The Harmonicon*: "Fertility of invention and novelty of effect, are what first strike the hearers of M. Mendelssohn's symphony; but at the same time, the melodiousness of its subjects, the vigour with which these are supported, the gracefulness of the slow movement, the playfulness of some parts, and the energy of others, are all felt."

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**Jessica Cottis**  
Conductor

Conductor Jessica Cottis has earned widespread recognition for her inventive, thought-provoking programming and inspiring musical leadership. In 2025/26, she begins her third season as Artistic Partner of the Västerås Sinfonietta in Sweden and continues her fifth season as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra.

Recent highlights include two consecutive years opening the Aldeburgh Festival (in 2025 with the world premiere of Colin Matthews' opera *A Visit to Friends*), and guest engagements with orchestras including the Real Filarmonica de Galicia, Queensland Symphony, Edmonton Symphony, National Radio Orchestra of Romania, Turku Philharmonic, Gavle Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Ottawa and the National Youth Orchestra of Ireland. She has recorded for the BBC, ABC, and Decca Classics labels.

This season, Cottis will appear with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Malmo Symphony, Belgian National Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony, Danish Philharmonic and Calgary Philharmonic, and will conduct three programmes with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, including a concert performance of Bizet's *Carmen*.

Jessica Cottis grew up on her family's sheep farm in south-eastern Australia. She now resides in Stockholm, and outside of music pursues her passion for butterflies all over the world.



**Joshua Oates**  
Oboe

Joshua Oates has been the Principal Oboe of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra since 2020 and is a sought after musician across the country. Joshua studied with some of today's leading oboists, undertaking a masters in Germany with internationally acclaimed oboist Philippe Tondre, and prior to this, he was a Sydney Symphony Orchestra fellow under the mentorship of Diana Doherty, Shefali Pryor, Alexandre Oguey. During his time in Germany, Joshua played in theatre orchestras in Aachen, Düsseldorf and Saarbrücken, as well as guest principal with Cappella Aquileia Heidenheim. He has also played as guest principal in most of Australia's professional orchestras.

Joshua's undergraduate studies took place at the Elder Conservatorium of Music Adelaide with Celia Craig, where he graduated with first class honours. In 2021, he returned to the Elder Conservatorium as oboe teacher, and is passionate about working with the next generation of Australia's oboists. He is a keen recitalist and chamber musician, and had his premiere as solo artist at the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in 2023. In 2025, Joshua will appear as concerto soloist with the Bendigo Symphony Orchestra and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

# Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

**Mark Wigglesworth**  
Chief Conductor

## Violins

**Elizabeth Layton\*\***  
Guest Concertmaster  
**Holly Piccoli\***  
Associate Concertmaster  
**Alexis Milton\***  
Principal 1st Violin  
**Lachlan Bramble\*\***  
Acting Principal 2nd Violin  
**Gillian Braithwaite~**  
Acting Associate Principal  
2nd Violin  
**Janet Anderson**  
**Erna Berberyán**  
**Minas Berberyán**  
**Julia Brittain**  
**Belinda Gehlert**  
**Danielle Jaquillard**  
**Michael Milton**  
**Ambra Nesa**  
**Julie Newman**  
**Liam Osborne**  
**Alexander Permezel**  
**Alison Rayner**

## Violas

**Justin Julian\*\***  
**Linda Garrett~**  
Acting Associate Principal  
**Lesley Cockram**  
**Anna Hansen**  
**Natalie Maegraith**  
**Rosi McGowran**  
**Michael Robertson**

## Cellos

**Sharon Grigoryan\*\***  
Acting Principal  
**Sherrilyn Handley~**  
Acting Associate Principal  
**Shuhei Lawson**  
**Andrew Leask**  
**David Sharp**

## Double Basses

**Damien Eckersley\*\***  
Guest Principal  
**David Schilling~**  
**Jacky Chang**  
**Gustavo Quintino**

## Flute

**Kim Falconer\*\***

## Piccolo

**Lisa Gill\***

## Oboes

**Renae Stavely\*\***  
Acting Principal  
**Peter Duggan~**  
Acting Associate Principal

## Clarinets

**Mitchell Berick\*\***  
Acting Principal  
**Darren Skelton**

## Bassoons

**Jackie Newcomb\*\***  
Acting Principal  
**Leah Stephenson**

## Horns

**Adrian Uren\*\***  
**Timothy Skelly**  
**Philip Paine\***  
**Emma Gregan**

## Trumpets

**David Khafagi\*\***  
**Martin Phillipson~**

## Timpani

**Andrew Penrose\***

## Percussion

**Steven Peterka\*\***  
**Sami Butler~**  
**Jamie Adam**

## Harp

**Jessica Fotinos\***

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

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