Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

8

Seasons
28 & 29 November 2025

SYMPHONY SERIES

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8 SEASONS

Bridge [11′]
Summer

Elgar [30′]
Concerto for Violoncello in E Minor, Op.85

Adagio; Moderato
Lento; Allegro molto
Adagio
Allegro; Moderato; Allegro, ma non troppo

Interval

Walton [43′]
Symphony No.1 in Bb Minor

I. Allegro assai
II. Presto, con malizia
III. Andante con malinconia
IV. Maestoso - Brioso ed ardamente - Vivacissimo

NOVEMBER

Fri 28 & Sat 29
Adelaide Town Hall

Mark Wigglesworth
Conductor

Daniel Müller-Schott
Cello

Duration
2 hrs (incl. interval)

Listen Later
ABC Classic
Sat 13 December
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Free Pre-Concert Talk
Join us for *Classical Conversations* one hour before the concert in the stalls of Adelaide Town Hall, as ASO's Chief Conductor Mark Wigglesworth joins Director of Artistic Planning Simon Lord to discuss the program.

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WELCOME

As we gather for this final concert of the 2025 Symphony Series, I am grateful for the musical journey the ASO has travelled this year. For those of you who have attended multiple concerts in this series I hope that you have found it rewarding.

Under the inspired leadership of our Chief Conductor Mark Wigglesworth, we've experienced some of the repertoire's great works, well known to many, and shared some brilliant music that is heard less often. Tonight, Mark directs the ASO through a program of remarkable English masterworks that showcase the full depth of our orchestra's capabilities.

Bridge's *Summer* opens our evening with its shimmering impressionistic beauty—a perfect evocation of warmth and light. Given the recent Spring weather experience, the idea of Summer seems a long way off!

Written in the aftermath of the Great War, Elgar's *Cello Concerto* stands as one of music's most poignant statements—a work of profound introspection and emotional honesty. We are looking forward to hearing Daniel Müller-Schott's artistry as he shares his interpretation of this masterpiece.

We conclude with Walton's monumental *Symphony No. 1*, a work of tremendous power and architectural grandeur. Its driving energy, lyrical beauty, and ultimate triumph provide a fitting culmination to our season.

Thank you for your generous support throughout this season. Whether you are here for this one concert or a season package holder, we appreciate your interest and passion for your orchestra and for the music that we share together.

Here's to the next part of our journey together – the ASO's 2026 90th anniversary season!

Colin Cornish AM
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Mark Wigglesworth
Conductor

Mark Wigglesworth has worked with the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw, London Symphony, Boston Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, and Tokyo Symphony. Recordings include a critically acclaimed cycle of the Shostakovich Symphonies with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Mahler's Sixth and Tenth Symphonies with the Melbourne Symphony, Britten's *Peter Grimes* with Glyndebourne, and the Brahms Piano Concertos with Stephen Hough.

In opera, he has enjoyed long relationships with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and English National Opera, and operatic engagements elsewhere include the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Bavarian State Opera, Opéra National de Paris, and Teatro Real, Madrid. In 2017 he received the Oliver Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera.

He has written for *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, made a six-part TV series for the BBC entitled *Everything to Play For*, and his book *The Silent Musician: Why Conducting Matters*, published by Faber & Faber, has been translated into Spanish and Chinese. In September 2024 he became Chief Conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and in 2025 took up the role of Chief Conductor with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

Daniel Müller-Schott
Cello

Daniel Müller-Schott is one of today's leading cellists, performing on major concert stages worldwide. He has appeared with top orchestras including the Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony, New York Philharmonic, and Sydney Symphony, under renowned conductors such as Christoph Eschenbach, Andris Nelsons, Kirill Petrenko, and Susanna Mälkki. *The New York Times* praises his "intensive expressiveness" and describes him as "a fearless player with technique to burn."

Highlights of his 2025/26 season include performances with the London Symphony Orchestra under Antonio Pappano, San Francisco Symphony with Daniele Rustioni, the Czech Philharmonic with Dalia Stasevska, and an international tour through Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. He will also appear at Carnegie Hall in *Maxim Vengerov and Friends*.

A strong advocate for both classical and contemporary music, Müller-Schott has had concertos dedicated to him by composers like Sir André Previn and Peter Ruzicka. He supports music education through masterclasses and the *Rhapsody in School* initiative.

Daniel's artistic vision connects music with visual arts and literature. He has produced an impressive discography and is winner of numerous awards, he studied with Walter Nothas, Heinrich Schiff, Steven Isserlis, and Mstislav Rostropovich.

Daniel plays the 1727 "Ex Shapiro" Matteo Goffriller cello.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Frank Bridge (1879–1941)
Summer

Edward Elgar (1857–1934)
Concerto for Violoncello in E Minor, Op.85

William Walton (1902–1983)
Symphony No.1 in Bb Minor

Tonight's program captures a fascinating cross section of the English symphonic tradition in the first half of the twentieth century through three of its most celebrated exponents. Loosely united by their explicit and implicit seasonal associations, the first half showcases two wildly divergent artistic responses to a world in flux. Composed at the dawn and the twilight of World War I respectively, both works were completed in rural surroundings as their composers sought refuge from the horrors of wartime London. In the second half, we hear how another great English composer responded to a bleak midwinter of his own, in one of the twentieth century's most significant British symphonies. Presented together, these compositions offer three unique vantage points of history, viewed from an A-reserve seat in London's Queen's Hall, where each work received its first performance (keep in mind, as you listen and read, that this storied venue was soon to be obliterated by an incendiary Luftwaffe bomb on 10 May 1941).

Appalled by the brutal atrocities of war, Frank Bridge was a noted pacifist (at least according to his student, Benjamin Britten, whose preternatural gifts in composition were destined to eclipse his own). Much of the music Bridge wrote during this epoch – including the turbulent Piano Sonata (1921–24; dedicated to the memory of Ernest Farrar, killed on the Western Front aged thirty-three) and *Oration* (1930; a brooding, eight-movement 'Concerto Elegiaco' for cello and orchestra) – owes its raison d'être to the ubiquity of death and destruction, present then on a scale unimaginable to many of us today.

Not long after the beginning of the Great War (1914–18), Bridge relocated from Chiswick to Bedford Gardens, Kensington, in search of solace and tranquility. The balmy tone poem ***Summer***, begun in 1914, is one of three significant orchestral works completed there, and reveals traces of the sound world of both Frederick Delius and Claude Debussy. A breezy, sun-drenched tableau rendered all the more poignant by its brevity, *Summer* revels in its juxtaposition of evocative sonorities (lush string textures that shimmer and dissolve in a filmy haze; a long, wistful oboe solo, full of delicious languor; and the piquant sparkle of harp and celesta, suggesting beads of dew illuminated by morning sunlight against a carpet of green), creating a softly rippling sonic mirage.

Several years later, whilst immersed in a conducting tour of the United States, Bridge reflected on the success of the work abroad, confessing a belief that American audiences had misunderstood *Summer's* uniquely English virtues. 'It has nothing to do with twenty-storey buildings or the concrete roads which run throughout this country,' he wrote in a letter from 1923. 'Only to the lover of the footpath which winds through the woods and over the brooks with the aid of old-fashioned foot-bridges, or with stepping stones, can this piece arouse a sympathetic understanding.'

A far cry from such bucolic vistas, the **Concerto for Violoncello in E Minor, Op.85** by Edward Elgar has been described by Diana McVeagh as a work 'haunted by an autumnal sadness.' The

Brinkwells, West Sussex —— Elgar's second home

composition's inception can be traced back as early as 1900, when the German cellist Carl Fuchs managed to obtain an informal agreement from Elgar to write a cello concerto. Yet nearly twenty years had passed, and not even a single note had been written. Bizarrely, it would take a trip to a London hospital in March 1918 for inspiration to strike. Following a successful tonsillectomy, Elgar returned home and, whilst recovering, asked for pencil and paper, sketching out a melody in 9/8 time.

The composer's convalescence continued in the rustic environs of 'Brinkwells' (his thatched cottage near Fittleworth in Sussex), with Elgar finding respite from the perils of modernity by observing local farmers at work, strolling through the woods and, to his own surprise, revisiting composition. From August 1918, he began work on three significant chamber pieces, which had their respective premieres in the spring of the following year. During this time Elgar had also revisited the *Moderato* theme he had sketched earlier, orchestrating and expanding it into 'a real large work' he deemed both 'good' and 'alive'.

Although Elgar eventually dedicated the work to Sidney Colvin and his wife, Frances, it was Felix Salmond who was asked to give the ill-fated premiere as soloist, with the composer conducting the London Symphony Orchestra on 27 October 1919. The LSO's then Principal Conductor, Albert Coates, exhausted the lion's share of rehearsals on his own repertoire, leaving almost no time for Elgar and his new Concerto, and the performance was an unmitigated disaster. 'Never, in all probability, has so great an orchestra made so lamentable an exhibition of itself,' wrote the esteemed music critic Alfred Newman in *The Observer*. The Concerto would languish in relative obscurity for nearly fifty years before it finally found the champion who would elevate it to the legendary status it now enjoys today. In 1965 a young Jacqueline du Pré (barely twenty but already a worldwide sensation) joined Sir John Barbirolli (who had played in Elgar's premiere as a nineteen-year-old cellist) and the LSO to make what is still considered by many as the work's definitive recording.

Structurally, the Cello Concerto departs from tradition in two notable ways: it unfolds over four movements (not the typical three), and the customary orchestral introduction is abandoned in favour of something much darker. It begins instead with an *Adagio* soliloquy wreathed in pathos – the soloist almost biting into the strings, its harmonic declamations (marked *fortissimo* and *nobilmente*) stretched over a compass of two octaves. The clarinets, bassoons, and horns answer, before a pregnant pause gives way to the main *Moderato* melody in 9/8 time (the lilting theme Elgar sketched after his operation; first heard unaccompanied in the violas). It passes to the celli, and then to the soloist, growing ever more mournful and intense, before climaxing in a *fortissimo* explosion from the full orchestra. Clarinets and bassoons announce the major-oriented contrasting theme, before the principal theme returns. It descends in both pitch and

volume to a distant whisper, concluding with two pizzicato crotchets in the celli and double basses and segueing into the second movement without pause.

Plucked fragments of the opening theme alternate with material of a more capricious and playful character, like two distinct personalities in conversation. A *Lento, ad lib.* cadenza for the soloist gives way to an *Allegro molto* scherzo that is over almost as quickly as it begins. By turns coquettish, majestic and virtuosic, the soloist's scrubbing semiquavers – always audible above the carefully calibrated orchestral accompaniment – are dispatched like water off a duck's back.
Set in the distant key of B-flat major, the *Adagio* third movement is an unsent love letter to a now-vanished Edwardian world, replete with haunting melodies, sighing rests, and ravishing beauty. The character is pensive and mournful throughout, eschewing variation and development, and ending in a fragile half-close, the strings marked *con sordini* (with mutes) in a tender exhalation of 'C'est la vie.'

The finale returns us to the home key of E minor with another declamatory opening, once again marked *nobilmente*. After an emotive cadenza, a boisterous *Allegro, ma non troppo* theme appears *forte* and *risoluto*, revealing a confidence and swagger hitherto unheard in the Concerto. Brief, whimsical episodes of contemplation emerge here and there, with some serpentine-like chromaticism in the cello weaving in and out of the orchestral texture. After one final appearance of the elegiac theme from the opening of the first and second movements, a brief and quasi-erratic coda (*Allegro molto*) brings the work to a hasty and ironic conclusion, suggesting a narrational presence scurrying hurriedly away, only too eager to slam the door closed behind him.

In 1932, a thirty-year-old William Walton began writing his **Symphony No.1 in Bb Minor**, following a request from Sir Hamilton Harty (Chief Conductor of the Hallé Orchestra). Walton initially expressed excitement at the prospect, suggesting that he 'may be able to knock [Arnold] Bax off the map.' Although Walton managed to complete the first three movements by the middle of 1933, he struggled to complete the finale.

'The trouble was that William changed girlfriends between movements,' a friend later explained, referring to the demise of Walton's turbulent relationship with Baroness Imma von Doernberg. By December 1934, with the finale still incomplete, the composer was persuaded to allow a public performance of the first three movements to proceed. Walton was only able to complete the finale – so the story goes – after he had fallen in love with Lady Alice Wimborne, a society hostess twenty-two years his senior, and could thus close the book on the whole sordid affair.

Nevertheless, the Symphony (completed in August 1935) remained dedicated to the Baroness, and it is not difficult to hear one of the most difficult and traumatic chapters in Walton's life 'lived out' in music. Unlike Elgar's Cello Concerto,

William Walton——1976

it received a rapturous response from both critics and the general public when it was performed in its entirety on 6 November 1935, with Harty conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

The litany of Italian directives printed in the score of the first movement provide a bird's-eye view of the various fluctuations in tempi and intensity throughout. It begins with a distant, ominous rumble in the timpani, quickly followed by the horns and the second violins, evoking an immutable and austere winter landscape that immediately brings to mind Jean Sibelius. A quietly menacing soundscape is conjured as the celli and basses thicken the texture, before the oboes offer a keening melody. As instrument after instrument is added to this bubbling symphonic cauldron, it seems as if we are climbing a step ladder to hell: the music surges ever upward, falls back on itself, and rises again with renewed ferocity, like a long-dormant volcano beginning a series of massive eruptions – each outburst more grandly terrifying than the last.

As if the previous movement was not enough, Walton ratchets up the tension yet again in the ensuing *Scherzo*. A descending third cascades from the flutes and clarinets to the oboes and bassoons, before the refrain is first heard as a dialogue in the bassoons and celli. Cast in the key of E minor and designated *Presto, con malizia* ('very fast, with malice'), an insidious atmosphere prevails throughout, with stinging accents, disorientating passages in 5/4 time, and malevolent tuba interjections. The tension rages unabated (reprieve is precluded by the absence of a central trio section), growing wilder and more diabolical with every measure as Walton hurtles us inexorably toward the edge of the abyss.

Despite its gloomy C-sharp minor tonality, the third movement – *Andante con malinconia* ('at a moderate pace, with melancholy') – offers some respite from its tempestuous siblings. It begins softly with the second violins, violas, celli and horns, as a hauntingly beautiful melody in the solo flute floats above, revealing the kind of intimacy that has thus far eluded us. The tranquility is, alas, short lived: the snarling crescendoes return in a dark cloud, revealing the fragility of innocence.

Some critics have questioned the authenticity of the finale, positing that such an ardent declaration of victory sits uncomfortably within the context of an eviscerating cri de cœur. Indeed, there may well be something insincere (even ironic) about the blazing, magisterial harmonies, the valedictory fugal procession, and the thunderous *fortississimo* conclusion. And yet others have seen it as the only conceivable finale – a necessary counterweight, if you will. Walton himself, in any case, described the movement as 'the best of the lot.'

The perfect bloom is
like the perfect note

TYNTE
FLOWERS

Daniel Müller-Schott——Cellist

5 Minutes with Cellist Daniel Müller-Schott

Your career has taken you around the world and across a huge range of repertoire. Has your relationship with music changed over time – and if so, how?

Well, it has certainly become deeper over the years. The older you get, the more you realise lifetime is limited and very precious. And in music, you are constantly forced to think about "expressing" time. Therefore, I'm sure every note counts even more than 20 years ago, and this alone makes a deeper impact for me making music today.

You'll be performing Elgar's Cello Concerto with the ASO. Do you approach the performance of a work like the Elgar differently in 2025 than you would have a decade ago?

It certainly has changed, because we live in such different times now. The fragility of our times makes every piece of music even more precious and certainly this one. This is what I feel. Elgar was mourning about a time that he thought about which was being lost. The time of romanticism. And he had experienced the horrors of the First World War, which left him in deep shock and confusion. So, this piece is a reaction to this. It is in some ways a Requiem, he created as his last symphonic piece for cello and orchestra.

In between your travels and performances, what keeps you creatively grounded? Are there rituals, routines, or escapes that help you reset?

In general, I love traveling. Wherever I go, I like to explore different cultures and cities, getting to know the people, and trying to understand how societies of different countries are functioning. And I love nature very much. Whenever I have time, I go out and do some hiking or just sit somewhere under a tree, reflecting on life. And when I'm home, I'm happy to spend all the time I have together with my family.

What music – classical or otherwise – surprised or inspired you lately?

I'm very open in experiencing all kinds of genres of our time. I always like to know what moves people in our times. If it's a Coldplay song, Billie Eilish or some Jazz, I like to hear it and draw some inspiration from that. In Classical music I'm working with composers of our time to create new music as well. But here in Adelaide I'm just happy diving into the mysterious world of Elgar again and sharing it with everyone.

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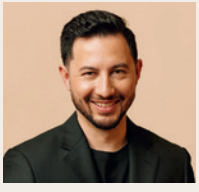

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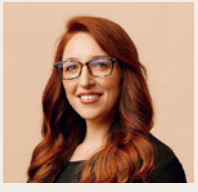

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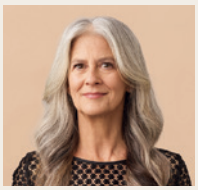

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