

Symphony *Series*

8 – Titan

Fri 29 & Sat 30 Nov
Adelaide Town Hall





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Symphony *Series*

8

Titan

Keitaro Harada
Conductor

Kate Suthers
Violin

—

Duration
2 hrs (incl. interval)

Fri 29 & Sat 30 November
Adelaide Town Hall

Acknowledgement of Country

Buckskin & Goldsmith arr. / orch. Ferguson

[2']

Pudnanthi Padninthi

Australian Premiere

Gipps

[8']

Death on the Pale Horse

Mendelssohn

[26']

Violin Concerto in E minor, Op.64

I. Allegro molto appassionato

II. Andante

III. Allegretto non troppo – Allegro molto vivace

Interval

Mahler

[53']

Symphony No.1 in D *Titan*

I. Langsam schleppend

II. Kräftig bewegt

III. Feierlich und gemessen

IV. Stürmisch bewegt

Listen Later ABC Classic is recording this concert for later broadcast. You can hear it again on Friday 14 December at 1pm.

Classical Conversation Join us in the Adelaide Town Hall auditorium one hour before each concert for our free *Classical Conversations* as conductor Keitaro Harada and broadcaster Russell Torrance discuss the music in tonight's program.

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Welcome



Colin Cornish AM
Chief Executive Officer

Thank you for being here to listen to our Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. This might be your first time experiencing the symphony, in which case we are delighted to welcome you to an epic program of music. Before Mahler's *Titan*, you will be the first in Australia to hear Ruth Gipps' composition inspired by a beautiful but terrifying painting.

If you are returning to the orchestra, you may previously have witnessed our concertmaster Kate Suthers leading our extraordinary violin section. Tonight, she takes the role of soloist in one of the most brilliant works composed for her instrument. We hope you enjoy this rare opportunity to hear this cherished member of our orchestra performing in the spotlight of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto.

Behind the stage, we are deeply proud to have been part of *Songs Inside*. The documentary film, which premiered this October at the Adelaide Film Festival, shares the stories of 12 inmates of Adelaide Women's Prison who learnt how to express their voices through song. First Nations artist Nancy Bates taught each woman how to make music, and our orchestra

supported them for a brave and moving performance in front of hundreds of inmates, officials, and guests.

Our important cultural contributions will continue in 2025. We have just announced our powerful new season, and single tickets are on sale. We invite you to browse our season online, and to open the door to new experiences. Whether you feel excited to watch a blockbuster film while our orchestra plays the soundtrack, or be there for the world premiere of a stimulating composition, we are looking forward to sharing each musical moment with you.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge violinist Ann Axelby who is retiring after 43 years with our orchestra, and one of our dedicated staff members Sarah McBride who is retiring after 18 years. Thank you to both Ann and Sarah for their significant contributions to the ASO community over many years.

Thank you once again for joining us for the final *Symphony Series* event of 2024. We hope you will join us for more music making in 2025.



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Keitaro Harada
Conductor

As Music Director, Keitaro Harada has transformed Savannah Philharmonic with his imaginative programs and charismatic presence. In 2024, Harada became Permanent Conductor of Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, and Principal Guest Conductor and Artistic Partner of Aichi Chamber Orchestra.

Harada is a 2023 Sir Georg Solti Conducting Award recipient. In 2024–25, Harada makes his debut with Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and subscription debut with Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. Recent and upcoming engagements include the symphony orchestras of Houston, Seattle, NHK, Yomiuri Nippon, Osaka, Hawaii, Fort Worth, Indianapolis, Memphis, Louisiana, Charlotte, West Virginia, Tucson, Phoenix, and Virginia; the Osaka, Kanagawa, Nagoya, Japan, New Japan, and Tokyo philharmonic orchestras; and Mexico's Orquesta Filarmónica de Sonora.

Harada was the 2010 Tanglewood Music Center's Seiji Ozawa Fellow. He has since led performances of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, Bizet's *Carmen*, and Britten's *Turn of the Screw* at North Carolina Opera. In past seasons, he has led performances at Cincinnati Opera, Sofia National Opera, and Tokyo Nihonkai Opera, and adopted the role of Associate Conductor of Arizona Opera.

Harada was Associate Conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony and Pops. He is a six-time recipient of The Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistance Award. Harada has released eight albums with various orchestras, and served on the Pacific Music Festival faculty.



Kate Suthers
Director/Violin

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 across music of all ages and styles. 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 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. In 2022, Kate was made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

Kate's upcoming engagements include performances with Scottish Ensemble, guest leading the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and chamber music in both hemispheres.

Kate Suthers plays a Carlo Carletti violin from Pieve di Cento, Bologna, c.1920. Her musical heroes are Caroline Shaw, Bach, and the Danish String Quartet.

About the Program

Australian Premiere

Gipps (1921–1999)

Death on the Pale Horse

Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Violin Concerto in E minor

Mahler (1860–1911)

Symphony No.1 in D *Titan*

And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat upon him was Death, and Hell followed with him. (Revelation 6:8)

In 1800, Romantic artist William Blake painted a watercolour interpretation of this biblical scene. From the shadows of his paper emerges a pale horse with wild black eyes, and legs poised to gallop above the flames. Its rider is a ghostly man whose armour-clad arm lifts a sword high into the air. With a crown atop his flowing silver hair, and a disturbingly hollow expression on his face, he guides his horse towards the end of the world. This painting signifies the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, which some believe will trigger war, famine, and destruction. The frightening energy of Blake's artwork inspired Ruth Gipps to compose a musical version of the scene. Her work is named after the painting: **Death on the Pale Horse**, Op.25.

With this concert program, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra performs the Australian premiere of Gipps' wartime work – an important service to the composer's legacy and presence in this country. She penned the piece some 81 years ago, and while it captured the struggles of living through World War II, it remains strikingly relevant today as we continue to navigate the terrain between harmony and conflict.

Gipps was born in England, 1921 but as a composer, she peaked during the war. When she was younger, she refused to engage in newspapers that wrote of politics and global affairs because, as she stated, 'nothing in them

gave emotional or artistic satisfaction, so why read them?'. When she reached her 20s, she grew up quickly. No longer could she remain ignorant: the war forced her to confront the events of the world around her. Distressing thoughts started entering her mind – she had 'no illusions' as to what might happen to her if the enemy won the war. Such ideas found their way into her work, particularly her 1940s symphonic poem *Knight in Armour*. Like *Death on the Pale Horse*, this work also took inspiration from a painting – Rembrandt's depiction of a young warrior. Militaristic artworks became creative vehicles that allowed Gipps to process conflict in her own way. In her score for *Knight in Armour*, she notes how the music 'opens with a blaze of brass, the trumpet representing the knight in battle'. This brass-heavy instrumentation, later juxtaposed with gentler double reeds, reflects compositional choices that again appear in *Death on the Pale Horse* – and also echo her talent as a skilled oboist.

In the leadup to *Death on the Pale Horse*, Gipps continued experimenting with the musical language of war, and she based her 1940 song *Peace*, on war sonnets from Rupert Brooke. Her body started to suffer from food instability, though she volunteered to join the war efforts as her husband joined the Royal Air Force. Through it all, she continued to make music, and we can hear her experiences in the opening notes of *Death on the Pale Horse*. It begins with a militaristic horn call. Soon, wistful double reeds paint a pastoral picture that could sound charming if not for the return of warlike brass. Towards the centre of the



Death on the Pale Horse c. 1807
Benjamin West.

piece, Gipps' use of cymbals and timpani connects us to the calamity that would have surrounded her. Strings further develop the mood as the music alternates between darkness and hope. The work premiered in 1943 at the Birmingham Town Hall – a venue that once was used as a military enlistment centre, located in a city that endured the Blitz.

The next work on the program brings us back into the light. We often think of German composer Felix Mendelssohn as an optimistic figure: his youthful journey across Europe and Britain inspired an artistic travelogue filled with musical depictions and watercolour paintings of the sites he visited. He wrote the *Hebrides Overture* along with the *Scottish* and *Italian* symphonies in this fashion; the ASO recently performed the latter. But long before he created these works, Mendelssohn was a well-travelled child. At 12 years old, he took a trip to Weimar where he met the poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. He also went to Paris on several occasions, having piano lessons alongside his composer-sister Fanny, and meeting Italian composer Luigi Cherubini.

Mendelssohn was raised with a deep appreciation of arts and culture. Naturally, in adulthood he used music to connect with life, friends, and family. He remained close with Goethe, setting some of the writer's works to music. He met and admired composers Frédéric Chopin and Robert Schumann, and found favour with Queen Victoria to whom he dedicated his *Scottish*. But one of the closest friends his own age was violinist Ferdinand David who was just a year younger than the 16-year-old Mendelssohn when they first met.

Mendelssohn was a competent violinist, and during his teenage years he composed a substantial body of works for strings. Perhaps their shared love of the instrument brought David and Mendelssohn together for a friendship that would grow alongside – and successfully influence – both of their careers. When the composer founded the Leipzig Conservatory in 1843, he brought David along with him, naming him head of the violin faculty. He had already given David the role of concertmaster of the Gewandhaus Orchestra back in 1835. Mendelssohn started to think of a new platform to showcase his friend's virtuosity, and it came in the form of his **Violin Concerto in E minor, Op.64**.

David loved the concerto from its conception. Mendelssohn initially wrote to him: 'It is nice of you to press me for a violin concerto. I have the liveliest desire to write one for you and, if I have a few propitious days, I will bring you something.' He spent six years composing the piece: despite his own familiarity with the instrument, he did not boast of confidence. At times, he doubted his ability to craft a 'brilliant' concerto – the word he used to describe David's expectations of the work. He called upon David for friendly but practical advice, particularly in relation to the cadenza – a virtuosic solo line that sounds improvised, and is designed to inspire awe. Finally, in 1844, the concerto was complete. 'This is going to be something great!' David remarked. He went so far as to compare the work to Beethoven's only violin concerto, though Mendelssohn was far too humble to accept the compliment.

But Mendelssohn's violin concerto was great. It begins *appassionato* (passionately), drawing us in

from the opening statement. The first movement dominates the concerto, and there is no break before the second begins (or indeed the third): Mendelssohn wanted no distraction from the sound world he had created. Throughout the work, the soloist employs double and triple stops – playing two or three notes simultaneously – to boost the presence and power of the string instrument. This technique appears in the solo lines, which David helped shape. Such elements help make this concerto not only comparable with the standard of Beethoven's but, in the words of famous violinist Joseph Joachim, 'the dearest of all – the heart's jewel'.

Across the works on this program, we may find Gustav Mahler's music closer matches the spirit of Gipps than it does Mendelssohn. Where Mendelssohn was a dreamer who enjoyed discovering new places, Mahler found inspiration closer to home – and like Gipps, he used music to reflect on pastoral scenes. Their local countryside sentiments signified peace when the world around them – or inside their hearts – felt anything but calm. *Death on the Pale Horse* uses double reeds to hint at the nature of England, while Mahler's **Symphony No.1 (*Titan*)** uses these instruments with the addition of clarinet to represent birdcalls. Both composers were in their 20s when they wrote these magnificent tone poems – the pivotal age at which they began to understand their roles in the world, and in music. Where Gipps became an adult who no longer turned away from hardship – instead choosing to confront it through her work – Mahler's transition to maturity came with professional struggles, namely the need to convince the world of his innovative style as a symphonic composer whose works were not always well received. Although he did not live through World War II as Gipps had, many of his works were banned by the Nazis – as were Mendelssohn's. It is also believed that several

of his symphonies were destroyed during the war, and consequently the next in line – *Titan* – is named as his first. In this work, we can also hear militaristic cymbals and horns in the first movement; after all, Mahler had grown up near a military barracks.

As Gipps' tone poem was inspired by an artwork, Mahler's tone poem draws from an array of sources. He was moved by *The Hunter's Funeral Procession*, an ironic scene depicted in Moritz von Schwind's 19th-Century artwork: animals carry the casket of a dead hunter. In the third movement's funeral march, Mahler makes an unsettling reference to the children's tune *Frère Jacques*. He also nods towards his own *Songs of a Wayfarer* for which he wrote text inspired by folk poetry. Even the symphony's nickname *Titan* comes from an outside source – the early 1800s novel by Jean Paul. However, Mahler did not compose with this particular reference in mind: he decided to use the nickname after the fact, persuaded by friends that connecting the music with a backstory might make it more digestible among listeners. Here is where we find closer ties with Mendelssohn: the pursuit of success built upon the advice of friends.

Like Mendelssohn, Mahler spent several years finalising his work. The former composer tailored his piece with David before celebrating its final iteration in a public reveal. But for Mahler, revisions were conducted out in the open. He presented the first version of his symphony in its public premiere in Budapest, 1889. It premiered in Vienna the next year, yielding tremendously poor reviews – perhaps the worst of which being that it was 'not music'. The world was not yet ready for Mahler's work, both Romantic and modern in character – but in a few decades, and with the advocacy of none other than Leonard Bernstein, listeners would finally embrace it.

Stephanie Eslake

ASO

25





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Justin Julian
Principal Viola

Take a *Bow*

For string players, the perfect bow is indispensable for unlocking the full potential of their instrument. Recognising this, a generous philanthropist (who prefers to remain anonymous) has committed to acquiring and loaning bows of exceptional quality to professional musicians, elevating their performances and nurturing Australian talent. Among the beneficiaries of this generosity is Principal Viola Justin Julian. In conversation with Justin, we explored the impact of this unique form of philanthropy.

What sort of bow are you currently using?

I'm very fortunate to be using a viola bow made in 1931 by the French bowmaker Eugène Sartory, who is widely regarded as the best bowmaker of the 20th Century. The bow is also significant as it was made for Maurice Vieux, an influential French viola pedagogue and Principal Viola of the Paris Opera for over 40 years.

How and when did you come to be offered the loan of a bow, and how has this made a difference to your playing?

I've known the Patron since 2018, and our shared love of music developed into a friendship over the years. My former teacher of six years, Roger Benedict, was borrowing the 'ex-Vieux' Sartory bow before me. When Roger heard I was hunting for a fine viola bow, he kindly returned the bow to the Patron, who then very generously agreed that I could borrow it. The Sartory combines unusual stiffness and sensitivity making it capable of unleashing incredible power and projection but also sophistication and delicacy. It is perfect for

a principal violist who must play anything from the softest orchestral passages to difficult solos that must project over the rest of the orchestra.

How crucial is the quality of the bow to the overall sound production of a string instrument, and what can a good quality bow enable you to do?

A bow could be compared to the breath of a singer; while the instrument provides the core or 'body' of the sound, the bow has everything to do with how you shape it, from phrasing and articulation to colour and dynamics. A good quality bow enables you to play with extraordinary range and flexibility in all those areas, while also feeling very intuitive. Using a good bow feels like a natural extension of your body; you don't have to think how you will make the kind of sound you're looking for!

How difficult is it to select the perfect bow for a particular instrument?

Selecting the right bow is a difficult and highly subjective task, depending largely on the instrument and the player's preferences for sound. I think of the bow as a perfect foil to the instrument – it should smooth over the weaknesses of your instrument and increase the versatility of sound. The 'ex-Vieux' Sartory is a great match with my 1979 Guiseppe Lucci viola because it adds richness and depth to a bright and clear sounding viola, creating a wide tonal range. The kind of philanthropy that provides musicians with good bows and instruments is so crucial as it allows them to find the right combination for their taste without incurring the six figure (or more) price attached to these decisions!

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Natalie Maegraith
Rosi McGowran
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Cameron Hill
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Contra Bassoon

Horns



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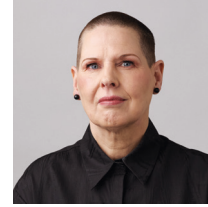
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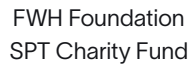


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