



Adelaide
Symphony
Orchestra

1

Soar
April 16
2025

MATINÉE SERIES

1 SOAR

Shostakovich / arr. Barshai
Chamber Symphony Op.110a

[22']

I. Largo
II. Allegro molto
III. Allegretto
IV. Largo
V. Largo

Vaughan Williams
The Lark Ascending

[13']

Grieg
Holberg Suite, Op.40 (From Holberg's Time)

[21']

I. Prelude
II. Sarabande
III. Gavotte and Musette
IV. Air
V. Rigaudon

APRIL

Wed 16
Elder Hall

Kate Suthers
Director/Violin

Duration
60 min (no interval)

Listen Later
ABC Classic
Friday 25 April
12:30pm

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
OF COUNTRY

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

There is a persistent image of 'divine inspiration', where the heavens part and an idea emerges magically and fully-formed in a composer's mind. But in reality, waves of inspiration are constant and overlapping.

The pieces programmed in today's concert are all examples of composers looking outwards for their creative stimuli. Dmitri Shostakovich reflected on the horrors of World War 2 less than twenty years on. Vaughan Williams traversed England transcribing folk songs in every village pub. Edvard Grieg immersed himself in Baroque dance styles to celebrate playwright and philosopher Ludvig Holberg. While these may be wide-ranging points of inspiration, they resulted in pieces which give us a deeper insight into the composers themselves.

Chamber Symphony Op.110a is a reorchestration of Shostakovich's String Quartet No.8 in C minor. In a letter to theatre critic Isaac Glikman, the composer confessed of the quartet, 'I started thinking that if some day I die, nobody is likely to write a work in memory of me, so I had better write one myself.' While Shostakovich did not reorchestrate the quartet himself, he enthusiastically approved of Rudolf Barshai's arrangement after hearing it.

Shostakovich originally wrote the quartet in 1960 as part of the score for *Five Days, Five Nights*, a Soviet film set in the rubble of Dresden. The German city was destroyed in 1945 by Allied bombs, leading to greater fatalities than the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Shostakovich dedicated the piece to the 'memory of the victims of fascism and war', but it makes sense that the composer's own traumatic experiences living under Stalin also informed this hugely emotional work.

Shostakovich quotes himself a number of times throughout the piece. The opening movement alone features his musical signature D, E-flat, C, B, as well

as fragments from the opening of his First Symphony and his Fifth Symphony. This *Largo* movement is imbued with a sense of dread. It is telling that the optimism of a young composer writing his First Symphony in 1926 has been thoroughly transformed into something far darker in 1960.

The *Allegro molto* second movement opens with thumping, jagged rhythms which are positively *Psycho-esque* in their violence. The energy is relentless and does not let up for the entirety of the movement. The liveliness of the *Allegretto* contrasts unnervingly with its sinister character. The second-last *Largo* opens with famous repeated chords and features a heartbreaking solo cello quotation from the final act of Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, where Katarina realises her husband has betrayed her. The final movement harks back to the piece's opening with a fugue on the D, E-flat, C, B motif and a second quotation of the First Symphony. The chamber symphony is quite simply a devastating work of genius.

Vaughan Williams began writing ***The Lark Ascending*** in 1914, inspired by George Meredith's poem of the same name. His work on the composition was naturally paused as he took part in military service for World War 1, but he completed the work in 1920.

The lark is represented with a solo violin line which is woven into the string orchestra texture across three cadenzas without bar lines. Williams included three excerpts from the poem in his dedication of the work:

He rises and begins to round / He drops the silver chain of sound / Of many links without a break / In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake. / For singing till his heaven fills / 'Tis love of earth that he instils / And ever winging up and up / Our valley is his golden cup / And he the wine which overflows / To lift us with him as he goes. / Till lost on his aerial rings / In light, and then the fancy sings.

The pastoral beauty of *The Lark Ascending* has ensured its place as one of the most beloved works of the classical canon. It delivers a sense of peace and contentment which is particularly moving knowing it immediately followed the horrors of the Great War.

Edvard Grieg's **Holberg Suite, Op.40 (*From Holberg's Time*)** was written in 1884, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Danish-Norwegian playwright Ludvig Holberg. Grieg and Holberg were both born and raised in the city of Bergen, Norway. Holberg's clever comedic plays earned him the nickname 'the Molière of the North'. Grieg was commissioned by Bergen officials to write a piece for the celebration in Holberg's honour.

Later Grieg wrote a second piece dedicated to Holberg. This solo piano work was divided into five Baroque dance forms to follow the musical styles of the playwright's time. Grieg saw the piece as something light and fun, dubbing it 'a perruque piece' in reference to the powdered wigs worn by the aristocracy of the 18th century. The next year he expanded the work for chamber orchestra.

The opening *Prelude* is sprightly and elegant. This is contrasted with the gentle yearning of the *Sarabande* which hovers on the edge of melancholy. The third movement, an aristocratic *Gavotte*, conjures up images of a dazzling ballroom filled with dancers in extravagant finery. The penultimate *Air* is even more fraught with emotion than the *Sarabande*. Grieg brings the piece to an energetic conclusion with the final *Rigaudon*.

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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.

Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

Mark Wigglesworth
Chief Conductor

Violins

Kate Suthers**
Concertmaster
Cameron Hill**
Associate Concertmaster
Holly Piccoli*
Principal 1st Violin
Alison Heike**
Principal 2nd Violin
Lachlan Bramble ~
Associate Principal
2nd Violin
Janet Anderson
Erna Berberyan
Gillian Braithwaite
Julia Brittain
Nadia Buck
Belinda Gehlert
Danielle Jaquillard
Alexis Milton
Michael Milton
Ambra Nesa
Liam Osborne
Emma Perkins
Niki Vasilakis

Violas

Justin Julian**
David Wicks~
Guest Associate Principal
Martin Alexander
Linda Garrett
Rosi McGowran
Michael Robertson

Cellos

Martin Smith**
Guest Section Principal
Sharon Grigoryan~
Sherrilyn Handley
Gemma Phillips
David Sharp

Double Basses

Jonathon Coco**
Guest Section Principal
David Schilling~
Jacky Chang
Harley Gray

Flutes

Kim Falconer**
Lisa Gill

Oboe

Joshua Oates**

Clarinets

Mitchell Berick**
Acting Section Principal
Darren Skelton

Bassoons

Mark Gaydon**
Leah Stephenson

Horns

Sarah Barrett~
Timothy Skelly

Percussion

Sami Butler~

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~ denotes Associate Principal
* denotes Principal Player

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