



MATINÉE SERIES

CONCERT 2 • VITALITY

17 JUNE • 2026

VITALITY

Chevalier de Saint-Georges
Concerto for Violin No.9 in G Op.8

I. Allegro
II. Largo
III. Rondeau

[20']

Elder Hall

WED 17 JUNE

Dvorák
Nocturne for Strings in B Op.40

[7']

Elizabeth Layton
Director/Violin



Bartók
Divertimento for Strings

I. Allegro non troppo
II. Molto adagio
III. Allegro assai

[24']

Duration
60min (no interval)

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

A chamber orchestra may be smaller than a full symphony orchestra, but it is no less able to convey a range of vivid emotions. The three pieces in today's program stretch across three centuries but all display the depth of feeling which can be created with string instruments: from spirited happiness to melancholy and unease.

Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges is one of the most fascinating figures in classical musical history. He was born on the island of Guadalupe in 1745, a French colony at the time. His father was a wealthy plantation owner and his mother was an enslaved 16-year-old girl from Senegal. Bologne's father openly claimed his illegitimate son and decided to give him a comprehensive education. It soon became clear that Bologne was a prodigiously talented fencer and violinist. Not long after his father brought him across to Paris at the age of eighteen, he was made a member of the King's Guard at Versailles and received the honorary title of Chevalier.

In a 1919 paper, researcher Lionel de La Laurencie noted Bologne's impressive qualities as a musician: "As a technician of the violin Saint-Georges may be numbered among the most brilliant of French virtuosi. He was at once extremely daring and skilful in passages demanding *brio* and brilliancy, and full of sentiment in the slow movements and Romances to which he was especially devoted."

Bologne's career as a composer and performer was just one chapter in a remarkable life. The bulk of his works were written between 1771 and 1779. During the same decade he performed with the renowned orchestra Concert des Amateurs and took over the ensemble's leadership when the founder moved

on to new projects. Bologne's **Concerto for Violin No.9 in G, Op.8** showcases the virtuosity he had on the instrument as well as his vibrant musical voice. The opening *allegro* movement is cheerful and vivacious, and it is hard to stop yourself from tapping your foot to the energetic rhythms. The *largo* second movement is stately and elegant, with plaintive lyrical solos on the violin. A sense of optimism is restored in the final *rondeau* movement.

The creative process does not always move in a straight line, and this is well demonstrated in the origin of Antonín Dvořák's **Nocturne for Strings in B, Op.40**. Dvořák kept copies of any pieces he left unfinished or decided not to publish. One of these was a string quartet in E minor dated from 1770. Dvořák never revisited the quartet as a whole but kept coming back to its slow movement, originally marked *andante religioso*, or 'moderately slow and religious/ reverent'. He tried editing down the movement and inserting it into his String Quintet in G, Op.77. This didn't seem right to the composer either, and in 1883 Dvořák finally decided to publish the movement on its own.

The term 'nocturne' usually refers to a piece of music inspired by the night. Dvořák's Nocturne certainly has a melancholy mood and almost hypnotic quality. The piece begins with the lower strings building the foundation over which the melody in the upper strings slowly unfurls over eight minutes. Dvořák moves towards a heart-wrenching cascading motif which is passed around the strings in an evocative canon, before the piece comes to a wistful conclusion.

Béla Bartók stands as one of the most influential composers of the 20th century. He had a lifelong



●
Elizabeth Layton
Director/Violin

interest in preserving folk music – not only from his own country of Hungary, but other countries such as Romania and Slovakia. Over the years Bartók and fellow composer Zoltán Kodály transcribed and recorded thousands of folk songs.

This music seeped into Bartók's DNA as a composer. He reflected in his biography "the old scales that are no longer used in our art music have not lost their vitality. Their renewed application made possible a new kind of harmonic combination."

Bartók wrote his *Divertimento* in 1939 as Europe was on the brink of war. Conductor and philanthropist Paul Sacher provided the composer with his chalet in the Swiss Alps to allow him to fully focus on its composition. It worked: Bartók finished the piece in only 15 days.

The *Divertimento* is a colourful and turbulent three-movement piece which follows the same basic structure as the baroque *concerto grosso*. This format sees a small group of soloists alternate with a larger orchestral force. But that is where the similarity to the baroque era ends, thanks to Bartók's utterly distinctive voice.

The first *allegro non troppo* movement takes the listener on an unpredictable journey with jagged rhythms and crunchy dissonances, contrasted with swirling passages which show the composer's folk influences. Bartók dials up the tension and unease in the second *molto adagio* movement with hushed strings punctuated by sharp outbursts. The final *allegro assai* movement features propulsive rhythms which move unrelentingly towards a grand finale.

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Described as 'one of the most outstanding performers of her generation' (*The Strad*), UK born violinist Elizabeth Layton has appeared as soloist with major international orchestras and toured chamber music worldwide. Recent performances have been given at the Coriole Festival, Sydney Opera House, Melbourne Recital Centre, Elder Hall with Ensemble Lumen, and throughout New Zealand, Thailand, China and India.

Elizabeth's recent CD releases include a critically acclaimed 3 CD set of complete chamber music by the 18th Century English composer William Shield (*Naxos*), and Boccherini's chamber music with flautist Sally Walker. Further releases of music by Ignaz Pleyel and Ferdinand Ries are scheduled for 2026. Previous recordings include the complete Beethoven piano trios (nominated for a Gramophone Award) and violin and piano works by Schubert (*Daily Telegraph* 'CD Choice'). Other chamber music recordings appear on DG, BIS, Chandos, Hyperion and Artaria.

A former Associate Leader of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and Concertmaster of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Elizabeth appears as guest concertmaster with orchestras throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Elizabeth is Head of Classical Performance at the Elder Conservatorium, Adelaide University where she was awarded a doctorate in 2019.

ADELAIDE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CHIEF CONDUCTOR

Mark Wigglesworth



VIOLINS

Elizabeth Layton**

Director/Violin

Cameron Hill**

Associate Concertmaster

Holly Piccoli*

Principal 1st Violin

Alison Heike**

Principal 2nd Violin

Lachlan Bramble~

Associate Principal

2nd Violin

Gillian Braithwaite

Julia Brittain

Danielle Jaquillard

Alexis Milton

Julie Newman

Liam Osborne

Alexander Permezel

Alison Rayner

Kemeri Spurr

Niki Vasilakis

VIOLAS

Justin Julian**

Rosi McGowran~

Acting Associate Principal

Andrew Crothers

Linda Garrett

CELLOS

Matin Smith**

Guest Section Principal

Gemma Phillips~

Acting Associate Principal

Andrew Leask

Cameron Waters

DOUBLE BASSES

Belinda Kendall-Smith**

Acting Section Principal

Holly Little~

Guest Associate Principal

** denotes Section Principal

~ denotes Associate Principal

* denotes Principal Player

Bouquets generously
supplied by Tynte Flowers

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