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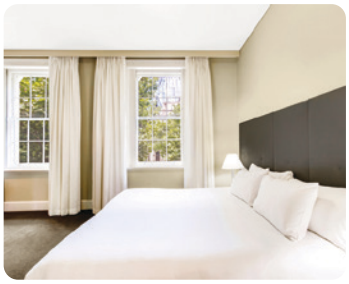
CONCERT 4 • NATURE UNTAMED

5 & 6 JUNE • 2026



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NATURE UNTAMED

Mahler arr. Britten [10′]
What the Wild Flowers Tell Me

Shostakovich [30′]
Concerto for Cello No.1 in E-flat Op.107

I. Allegretto
II. Moderato
III. Cadenza
IV. Allegro con moto

Interval

Jankowski [12′]
Courante
World Premiere
ASO Commission

Dvorák [34′]
Symphony No.8 in G Op.88

I. Alllegro con brio
II. Adagio
III. Allegretto grazioso
IV. Allegro ma no troppo

Adelaide Town Hall

FRI 5 & SAT 6 JUNE

Mark Wigglesworth
Conductor

Ivan Karizna
Cello

Duration
2hr (inc. interval)

Tonight's ASO Commission and World Premiere is generously supported by the following Patrons of Jakub Jankowski:

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Listen Later

ABC Classic is recording this concert for later broadcast on Saturday 27 June 2026 at 12:00pm.

Pre-Concert Talk

Join us in the Adelaide Town Hall auditorium one hour before each concert for our free *Classical Conversations* as Camilla Bellstedt discusses the music in tonight's program with composer Jakub Jankowski.

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WELCOME

Welcome to tonight's very aptly named concert, *Nature Untamed* – it's a pleasure to be performing for you.

When we think about music, it is often in terms of feeling or emotion. A concert offers us a window into history and the fascinating times in which these composers lived, and their complex relationships to that world. Music reminds us that, despite the march of time, what unites us is far greater than what divides us.

What the Wild Flowers Tell Me was originally the second movement of Mahler's Symphony No.3 and was described by Mahler, who was an avid hiker and nature lover, as Summer's Midday Dream. Half a century later Benjamin Britten, who felt a keen kinship with Mahler, arranged this movement as a way of bringing Mahler's (then little-known) music to public attention.

From the moment they met in 1960, Britten and Shostakovich had a shared understanding and mutual respect, which quickly turned into a firm friendship. The Shostakovich work that you will hear tonight – his First Cello Concerto was written a decade after the death of Stalin and while the horror of living under Stalin's rule is pervasive, Shostakovich interleaves these feelings with moments of grotesque absurdity. It's a work that never fails to move me as a performer.

In his own lifetime, Dvořák enjoyed the simple pleasures of life was very attached to the land and his own place in it. In his Symphony No.8, tonight's central theme of nature comes full circle. Here we see a wonderful synthesis of Dvořák's love of Bohemian folk tunes and rhythms. This is one of those pieces that fills the stage with joy and I can't wait for you to hear it.

The surprise in tonight's concert is the World Premiere of *Courante*, a work by Jakub Jankowski – one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary Australian composition. It's a privilege to be bringing this to life for the very first time, and I hope you are as curious as I am to discover it.

From all of us on stage, we hope you enjoy tonight's offerings – 140 years of music across time and place, reminding us of the shared emotional qualities of being human.

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Mark Wigglesworth
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Ivan Karizna
Cello

Mark Wigglesworth is recognised internationally for his masterly interpretations both in the opera house and in the concert hall, highly detailed performances that combine a finely considered architectural structure with great sophistication and rare beauty.

Highlights have included performances with the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw, London Symphony, Boston Symphony and New York Philharmonic. Recording highlights include a critically acclaimed cycle of the *Shostakovich Symphonies* with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Britten's *Peter Grimes* with Glyndebourne, and the *Brahms Piano Concertos* with Sir Stephen Hough.

In opera, Wigglesworth has enjoyed long relationships with The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, English National Opera, The Metropolitan Opera, New York, The Bavarian State Opera, Opéra National de Paris, and The Vienna State Opera. In 2017 he received the Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera.

He has written articles for *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, and made a six-part TV series for the BBC entitled *Everything to Play For*. His book *The Silent Musician: Why Conducting Matters* is published by Faber & Faber and has been translated into Spanish and Chinese. He currently holds the position of Chief Conductor with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

Ivan Karizna is a profound musical storyteller and poet with a powerful stage presence. Described by András Schiff as 'one of the best cellists of his generation', he has won numerous awards, including prizes at the Tchaikovsky and Queen Elisabeth Competitions.

In 2025–26 Karizna returns to Netherlands Philharmonic to give the Dutch premiere of Thomas Larcher's Cello Concerto under Dmitri Slobodeniouk at the Concertgebouw and makes his debut with Netherlands Radio Philharmonic to perform the Brahms *Double Concerto*. He tours Australia, performing with Sydney, Adelaide, Queensland and West Australian Symphony Orchestras whilst other appearances include with Residentie Orkest, Kuopio Symphony, and BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

Karizna is an avid chamber musician. Past collaborations include with Gidon Kremer, András Schiff, Renaud Capuçon and Christian Tetzlaff. This season he joins colleagues in Amsterdam's Muziekgebouw and Utrecht's TivoliVredenburg, as well as at UKARIA in the Adelaide Hills and returns to Elena Bashkirova's Jerusalem Chamber Music Festival.

Born into a musical family in Minsk, Karizna's early training was in the Russian tradition, and at 17 he moved to the Paris Conservatoire, before completing his training at the Kronberg Academy with Frans Helmerson. He is a French citizen, dividing his time between Paris and Amsterdam.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Nature has long been a wellspring of musical inspiration for composers, particularly for the medium of the orchestra. From wildflowers to forests, mountain ranges and the humble garden, the composers in this concert all look to the wondrous, wild, and musically vibrant world of the great outdoors.

If nature's splendour is vast, Gustav Mahler's orchestral works do their best to rival it in their scale. Mahler's Third Symphony is gigantic in proportions – both in the maximalist scope of the orchestra, and the 90 minutes that the six movements unravel over. It is a masterful conjuring of nature that resonated deeply with English composer Benjamin Britten, who almost fifty years later, repackaged the floral second movement into this reduction for an orchestra of more standard dimensions. ***What the Wild Flowers Tell Me*** was Mahler's private subtitle for this sunshine second movement, and is here allowed to bloom as a work in its own right, without the shadow of the symphony's first movement before it: a 30-minute long march that announces summer's arrival.

Britten and Mahler never overlapped in life – Britten was born two years after Mahler's death – and each composer is a figurehead for a very separate national identity. Britten, as one of England's most renowned composers, and Mahler, as a bridge between 19th century Austro-German traditions and 20th century modernism.

In 1941, when Britten, aged 28, embarked on this arrangement (or rather, reduction), Mahler was a lesser known name, whose works were far from obscure, but still criticised for their extravagance. However, Mahler was easily Britten's biggest influence – of a performance of another of his works, *Das Lied von der Erde*, Britten wrote: 'It is cruel, you know, that music should be so beautiful.' Where others found excessive opulence and overinstrumentation, Britten found craft. While he would never become a symphonist, and certainly not to the unapologetic degree of Mahler, his gestures belie many of Britten's illustrative compositions.

Britten's reduction does shift the character towards a gentler intimacy – but even beforehand this sweet minuet was unapologetically pastoral. The oboe's opening lilt evokes the flowerladen fields Mahler so frequented, as a regular hiker and swimmer among the mountains. The main theme lifts, ambling along with lightness. While the centre of the movement begins to cascade into stormier territory, with agile woodwind runs and the snap of glockenspiel, this episode is only a cloud over the enchantment Mahler carves from the mystique of florals and fields.

While Britten reduced Mahler's magnificent conception of the orchestra, Dmitri Shostakovich deliberately opted for an intimate, almost Mozartian orchestra for his first cello concerto, **Cello Concerto No. 1 in E♭ major, Op. 107**.

A 1968 PHOTOGRAPH OF THE CONDUCTOR/CELLIST MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH, THE COMPOSER DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH, AND THE PIANIST SVYATOSLAV RICHTER

With no brass section, it is a single horn who leads the charge, supported by a standard ensemble of woodwinds and strings. Shostakovich evidently had specific timbral concepts in mind, as his choice of instrumentation left room for a contrabassoon, and a twinklingly evocative celesta part joins the percussion regiment.

This concerto was Shostakovich's first of two for the cello, both dedicated to the inimitable Mstislav Rostropovich. The pair met when Rostropovich was a student at the Moscow Conservatory, and Shostakovich, 21 years his senior, would become his lifelong friend and artistic collaborator. Rostropovich had been hoping Shostakovich would pen him a concerto, but as Shostakovich's wife Nina warned: 'If you want Dmitri Dmitrievich to write something for you, the only recipe I can give you is this—never ask him or talk to him about it.' When the announcement of the cello concerto finally came about, in the form of a magazine interview, Rostropovich had to wait, tightlipped, as it was not for another month that Shostakovich would finally ask him if he would premiere it. Perhaps surprisingly, Shostakovich was shy about this affair – as Rostropovich recalled, he repeatedly asked the cellist if he actually liked the concerto. When Rostropovich assured him he did, Shostakovich then asked his permission to dedicate it to him. The preparation period was short and frantic: Rostropovich notably practised for up to ten hours for almost four days straight in order to both learn and memorise the entire concerto.

The work is in four movements; this in itself is slightly atypical of a concerto format, but made even more unconventional by the third movement. Ordinarily the solo cello's cadenza would be placed in the first movement, as a brief moment of unaccompanied virtuosity. In this case, it is given its own solo movement, pious intensity that spirals without hesitation into the finale.

The opening begins with the solo cello, four notes that are reminiscent of (although different to) Shostakovich's signature four-note motif, designed to make his music distinguishable if Soviet authorities ever dared strip his name from it. From this introduction, a sardonic march is launched, where the cello nervously continues on its way. The lone horn competes for importance, with an almost continuous part which winds throughout this movement.

The break between the first and second movements is the only one of the concerto, once the lyrically damning song of the second movement begins, the narrative of the concerto is in unstoppable motion. The conclusion of this movement is ghostly: clarinet solos weave through a desolate cello pathos, cut only by the metallic punctuation of the celesta. The cellist, fingers only lightly brushing the strings, performs

technically fearsome harmonics, high-pitched and vibratoless. This foreshadowing welcomes the third movement, the aforementioned solo cadenza.

The finale breaks this stillness with a unified front of might. Stalin's death six years earlier is alluded to with the cheeky inclusion of the dictator's favourite Georgian folk song, 'Suliko,' which peeks through in fragmented form. The opening motif from the first movement returns, and with an epic rush of energy, the cellist once again battles the thrill of the orchestra's power. Here we truly see the fiendish dimensions of this concerto, in its full spectrum of moods, from the lightest bow touch to gritty, string-contorting fury.

A similar spectrum of colour, though of a very different flavour emerges in Jakub Jankowski's ***Courante***. Commissioned by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, this world premiere is one of many collaborations between ASO and Adelaide-based Jankowski.

A *Courante* is a dance form that originated in the Renaissance, and its structure forms the basis of Jankowski's evocation. This tree-lined dance calls for a number of orchestral additions: the woodwind section brandish branches, and an electric power drill can even be sighted in the percussion section. The flutes adopt improvisatory bird calls, and the string section are frequently instructed to emulate white noise, using the extremes of the instruments, in both range and dynamic. The result of this shifting layering of texture and sonority is a sense of suspended time, sound that creeps out of an almost supernatural hush. Much of Jankowski's work negotiates the natural world: the resonant croak of a frog at dusk, reflections on evolving landscapes. *Courante* conjures its own ecosystem, where reverent pauses, microtonal gestures, and the connection between touch, breath, and instrument, all operate in a calculated weaving of reverberation.

While Mahler spent his days floating among the mountains, and Jankowski's soundscape takes on the majesty of forest glades, it could be argued that Antonín Dvořák was more a man of the garden. His **Symphony No. 8** is a tribute to the miracles of nature's design, and more precisely, the landscapes of his summer estate. At first, it seems the scene is set morosely – a long, solemn chord as the orchestra greets us. Then the flicker of a chirpy flute solo conjures up a playful pastoralism, and the first movement launches away. The flute is arguably the main character of this symphony, often heralding in the bucolic joy Dvořák imbues through this symphony.

Dvořák was an exceptional melodist, and this first movement is flooded with distinct musical themes. The composer noted that ideas came to him faster than he could write them down, and he finished his first sketch of the full work in little over two weeks. He was on a retreat in an estate in Vysoká, the gardens of which occupied much

DVOŘÁK'S CHATEAU IN VYSOKÁ WHERE HE BEGAN, COMPLETED OR WROTE IN FULL AT LEAST THIRTY MAJOR COMPOSITIONS

of his leisure time, as well as the walks among the surrounding forests and mountains. His retreats here were often productive, and Symphony No. 8 was written for a particular commemoration: his election to the Bohemian Academy of Emperor Franz Joseph for the Encouragement of Arts and Literature. Its celebratory premiere was conducted by the composer himself, in Prague, in 1890. The work received immediate acclaim; critics were fascinated by its freshness, the abundance of musical material, and the nuance in his symphonic craft. In many ways, this symphony followed Dvořák like a good luck charm – its premiere in London was to notably rapturous applause, in Cambridge, it accompanied his honorary doctorate, and was soon performed in Chicago and Vienna.

The simplicity of Dvořák's orchestration gives it a particular rusticity, frequent soloists, minimal percussion, and blocks of strings give the orchestra an accessible simplicity to the ears. Still, this approach was not enough to please Dvořák's previously loyal publisher Fritz Simrock, who felt the music was too long and unlikely to make significant profit (instead, he wanted more *Slavonic Dances*, which had proved critical and commercial hits). Worst of all, he hoped to publish the symphony titles, and Dvořák's name, in German – something Dvořák could hardly accept on any occasion, but particularly not in this instance given the context of the symphony's conception, as both a celebration of his appointment and an ode to the Bohemian landscape. This point would become especially pertinent, as Bohemia would become a place of rosy nostalgia to Dvořák, as in the 1890s he relocated to the United States, the 'new world' where his famous Symphony No. 9 was composed.

We hear this density of mountain sketches and forest drifts in the second movement, which although marked *Adagio*, does not stagnate for a moment. Like the rest of the symphony, it flows organically, shifting through Dvořák's myriad ideas and passionate twists and turns. The third movement is a melancholic waltz, which slowly evolves into a Bohemian folk dance – this movement is delicate and deliciously melodious.

Then the finale, a maelstrom of activity. At every turn it's uncertain where his symphony will go – another glorious flute solo? An intense tremolo of strings? Or again the burnished call of Dvořák's brass section? All roads lead to elation, as conductor Rafael Kubelik said of the finale's opening fanfare: 'Gentlemen, in Bohemia the trumpets never call to battle – they always call to the dance!'

The perfect bloom is like the perfect note

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COME & PLAY WITH YOUR ASO

Bob Clampett, one of our valued Musical Chair donors, recently travelled from Sydney to take part in *Come & Play* – a community program inviting amateur musicians to rehearse side-by-side with the ASO. We spoke with Bob about the experience, and what music means to him.

When did you first start learning music, and what led you to take up the viola?

I came to music later in life. I'd been to an orchestral concert and saw an advertisement for adults to learn an instrument. The next day at a family barbecue, we talked about it. There were suggestions I take up the cello, but I couldn't imagine lugging it around, so I started with the violin instead.

Not long after, I met a woman who suggested I join the Mosman Symphony Orchestra, a local community orchestra. They invited me along and said if I enjoyed it, I was welcome to stay – and that was 25 years ago. I switched to viola about seven years ago. The ergonomics suited me better, and I've never regretted it.

What does being part of a community orchestra mean to you?

I really look forward to rehearsals – it's a challenge, and I should probably practise more! I joined the orchestra within eight months of starting lessons, which was quite a leap. Early on, a second violinist took me under her wing and taught me a lot. I'd never even seen an orchestral score before, having only sung in choirs.

Over the years, I've been very involved. I was the orchestra's librarian for 16 years – we started with half a dozen boxes of music, and by the time I handed it over, it filled a whole room. We now have over 300 works in the library. I'm also on the committee. It's a great group of people, with support from the local council and sponsors. We perform four programs a year and have played at Sydney Town Hall and the Opera House.

What did it feel like to sit alongside ASO musicians as a participant in *Come & Play*?

It was gobsmacking – really quite overwhelming, in the best possible way. The whole experience was marvellous. The conductor Ben Northey was incredibly kind and encouraging – it was a very supportive environment and honestly quite enlightening. It's definitely increased my desire to practise.

Our sincere thanks go to the SPT Charity Fund for generously supporting *Come & Play*.

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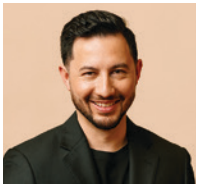

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