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NEW GROUND

Acknowledgement of Country

Buckskin & Goldsmith arr./orch. Ferguson
Pudnanthi Padninthi I – Pukiyana

[2']

Gershwin

An American In Paris

[16']

Harrison

InsideOut Concerto for Classical Accordion and Orchestra

World Premiere

ASO Commission

[20']

Interval

Bartók

Concerto for Orchestra

[36']

I. Introduzione: Andante non troppo – Allegro vivace

II. Giuoco delle coppie: Allegretto scherzando

III. Elegia: Andante non troppo

IV. Intermezzo interrotto: Allegretto

V. Finale: Pesante – Presto

Adelaide Town Hall

FRI 17 & SAT 18 JULY

Benjamin Northey

Conductor

James Crabb

Classical Accordion



Duration

2hr (inc. interval)

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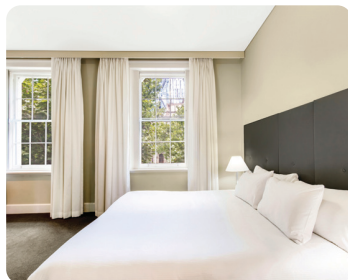
Roderick Shire & Judy Hargrave

Recorded Concert

Tonight's concert is being recorded for future use. Thank you to Daniel Denholm at Point Blank Productions and Sennheiser for their generous support.

Pre-Concert Talk

Join us in the Adelaide Town Hall auditorium one hour before each concert for our free *Classical Conversations* as Double Bass player Belinda Kendall-Smith discusses the music in tonight's program with composer Holly Harrison.



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SIMON LORD *DIRECTOR OF ARTISTIC PLANNING*

WELCOME

Welcome to *Symphony Series 6 – New Ground*.

One of the many pleasures of music is its capacity to surprise. It can connect the known with the unknown, juxtapose musical worlds and reveal unexpected connections. This evening's programme does all three, with three works which celebrate rhythm, virtuosity and colour.

Music is an evolving art form and tonight's world premiere celebrates that. When was the last time you heard a concerto for classical accordion and symphony orchestra? Let alone a brand new one. This evening, the virtuoso James Crabb gives the first performance of an ASO commission: Holly Harrison's *InsideOut*. Harrison shines the spotlight on a very distinctive instrument. The accordion occupies a unique place in musical life. It is equally at home in folk traditions and popular music but is all too rarely heard in the concert hall. Tonight, we hear it anew and marvel at its expressive range and dazzling virtuosity in dialogue with a symphony orchestra.

Alongside contemporary Australiana there are two vivid musical portraits. George Gershwin's *An American in Paris* captures the excitement and optimism of a young American discovering the French capital in the vibrant 1920s. It is music filled with jazz-inflected rhythms, smoky melodies and bustling urban life.

After the interval, there is another concerto. Béla Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* was written during a period of profound personal and global upheaval, yet it is music of resilience, ingenuity and invention. Rather than spotlighting a single soloist, Bartók allows every section of the orchestra to have its moment in the sun. Remarkably, here is a collection of individual voices all united in one shared artistic endeavour: a truly virtuosic concerto for symphony orchestra.

Thank you for being with us. I hope tonight's concert offers you moments of excitement, reflection and discovery and that you leave Adelaide Town Hall inspired by the unique experience of live music-making. ●



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Benjamin Northey
Conductor

Australian conductor Benjamin Northey is the Chief Conductor of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, Conductor in Residence of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and the Principal Guest Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In 2025 he was appointed Professor of Conducting at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and Director of the Australian Conducting Academy.

He has led productions for Opera Australia (*La bohème*, *Turandot*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, *Carmen*), State Opera South Australia (*La sonnambula*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Les contes d'Hoffmann*), Victorian Opera (*Candide*, *Into the Woods*) and New Zealand Opera (*Sweeney Todd*).

His international appearances include concerts with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia.

Winner of ARIA, AIR and Art Music Awards, he was voted *Limelight Magazine's* Australian Artist of the Year in 2018. Northey's many recordings can be found on ABC Classics.

In 2026, he conducts the Pittsburgh, Sydney, Melbourne, New Zealand, West Australian, Adelaide, Tasmanian and Christchurch Symphony Orchestras.

Northey studied conducting at Finland's Sibelius Academy with Professors Leif Segerstam and Atso Almila and completed his training at the Stockholm Royal College of Music with Jorma Panula.



James Crabb
Classical Accordion

Scottish born James Crabb, widely regarded as one of the world's great classical accordionists, studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, Copenhagen, where he subsequently became a professor and was awarded the Carl Nielsen Music Prize, Denmark. He also held a guest professorship at the University in Graz, Austria.

James has collaborated with many of the world's leading contemporary composers including Sofia Gubaidulina, Thomas Adès, Harrison Birtwistle, Sally Beamish, Luciano Berio and has premiered countless concertos, chamber music and solo works dedicated to him. Recognised internationally as an authority on the music of Astor Piazzolla he was invited to curate the inaugural Piazzolla Festival in Buenos Aires. James gave the world premiere of Brett Dean's accordion concerto *The Players* in Sweden, (recorded on the BIS label) and featured in the on-stage role in Dean's opera *Hamlet* with Glyndebourne Opera, Cologne Opera, the Bavarian State Opera, Munich, Adelaide Festival and for Opera Australia. Recent and upcoming projects include returns to the ACO, MCO and QSO, Yellow Barn Festival, USA, Wigmore Hall, in recital with Anthony Marwood, and recitals at festivals around Australia.

A passionate and sought-after music educator and mentor, whilst Artistic Director of the Four Winds Festival in Bermagui, James curated both the Easter and inaugural Youth Festivals and developed the local schools music education program.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This weekend's program celebrates three works that pulsate and sparkle with the irrepressible freshness of the new. The two works that bookend these concerts have more than secured their place in the twentieth-century canon, and surely number amongst the most frequently heard music on the orchestral stage today. Despite their deeply contrasting sound worlds, both compositions share an infectious rhythmic drive, a virtuosic treatment of the orchestra, and a consummate mastery of instrumental colour. At the time of their respective premieres, nothing quite like these pieces had ever been heard before. This makes them ideal companions to sit alongside a new concerto from one of Australia's most talented young composers – a work that, like the Gershwin and Bartók masterpieces before it, revels in new sonic possibilities for many of the instruments in the orchestra, albeit with an unexpected new champion at its centre.

We begin with a work by a composer who quite literally sought to capture his experiences of being on 'new ground' in the Roaring Twenties and, in doing so, brought the sounds of the Jazz Age into the concert hall. Having already been asked by Walter Damrosch (the then conductor and director of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra) to write a substantial follow-up to *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924), George Gershwin (1898–1937) set off for Paris in 1926, in search of more advanced compositional training. Although both Nadia Boulanger and

Maurice Ravel refused to teach him, Gershwin nevertheless returned emboldened by the electrifying atmosphere of the French capital, its heady cacophony of sound still very much alive and swirling in his mind.

The idea of expanding 'Very Parisienne' (a melodic souvenir sketched during his European sojourn) into a fully-fledged 'rhapsodic ballet' arose from staring out the window towards the Hudson from his home in Manhattan. 'I love that river,' Gershwin later recalled, 'and I thought how often I had been homesick for a sight of it, and then the idea struck me – *An American in Paris*, homesickness, the blues.' During his second visit to Paris in the early spring of 1928, Gershwin purchased four used taxi horns which, in a masterstroke, were deftly incorporated into the new work's soundscape as one of its most iconic features.

An American in Paris opens with a brisk and buoyant melody played by the oboes and violins (*Allegretto grazioso*). The orchestration thickens with the introduction of the brass and percussion, before the famous three-note taxi-horn motif is presented at various pitches. They jostle about and taunt one another, transporting us into the heaving metropolis with stunning immediacy. As our eponymous narrator skips across the cobblestones, there are numerous changes in tempo: we might imagine pedestrians pausing at street crossings, picking up the pace, before

HOLLY HARRISON



slackening off. All the while, exotic melodies and intoxicating can-can rhythms (muted trumpets, jazzy interjections from the trombones and clarinets) seem to stream out from behind half-closed doors.

The breezy second theme (*Calmato*) is presented by the cor anglais. Haunting yet restrained, this wistful melody floats high above a bed of lush, silvery strings and clarinets, but is over almost as soon as it begins. The boisterous atmosphere returns; the mutes come off and volleys of staccato semiquavers are unleashed in the bells, xylophone and first violins. A few moments later, a brief, twinkling celesta melody converses with an improvisatory violin solo, and the music strays into reverie, presaging the arrival of the 'Blues'. The 'spasm of homesickness' experienced by our traveller, who has paused at one of the cafés along the boulevard and promptly becomes inebriated with French wine, is captured through one of Gershwin's most memorable trumpet solos. The theme is developed in the trombones, before being passed to the strings and saxophones, which further enhance the smoke-filled, bluesy haze.

Eventually the music seems to free itself from the grip of its *mal du pays*: before we realise it, we've strolled into a jazz club (or is it the *Moulin Rouge*?) and are dancing the Charleston. A heavily accented trumpet solo cuts through the orchestra,

its punchy syncopations and raspy trills taking us right into the heart of the action. Woodblocks, clarinets and flutes lead us back to the return of the 'walking' theme (now with the added sparkle of bells), before a final, resplendent statement of the blues theme (recalling the culmination of *Rhapsody in Blue*) arrives as the final summation to this most evocative, rose-tinted portrait of Paris.

Australia's Holly Harrison (b. 1988) also breaks new ground in this concert, with the world premiere of her ***Concerto for Amplified Classical Accordion and Orchestra*** (subtitled *InsideOut*), co-commissioned by the Adelaide, Tasmanian, Queensland and West Australian Symphony orchestras and written for the Scottish virtuoso James Crabb, who stunned Adelaide audiences with his remarkably theatrical performances in Brett Dean's *Hamlet* in the 2018 Adelaide Festival. Harrison is, in many ways, uniquely suited to this unenviable task: her 'omnivorous' musical aesthetic (defined by its use of stylistic juxtapositions, high-contrasting colour, and rhythmic disruption) has previously been showcased in concertos for theremin, saxophone, trumpet and viola.

'I really wanted to explore this idea of the orchestra being *inside* the accordion, like a musical nesting doll,' says Harrison. 'We're hearing the orchestra unpacked within the accordion itself, which was sparked by this idea that James

had when we first met up – that the accordion is a portable orchestra.’ Harrison describes wanting to build the orchestral colour out of the accordion sound itself, superimposing instruments upon one another ‘so that we create this mega accordion from the orchestra.’ It’s an idea that harkens back to her well-documented fascination for Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, which has served as an enduring influence throughout her oeuvre. ‘Who dreamed who, the accordion, or the orchestra?’ she asks. ‘Is the orchestra the accordion, or is the accordion the orchestra?’

The first movement, playfully titled *Stretch*, refers to an array of physical and temporal factors: the ‘stretching’ action used to play the accordion; the disjunct melodic leaps its soloist must negotiate; and the frequent ‘stretching’ (or disruption) of rhythmic boundaries. In addition to the obvious high-octane, rock-inflected writing for percussion, echoes of the ‘Psychedelic Sixties’ abound throughout. Some listeners may note the prevalence of the E7 sharp nine chord (a dominant seventh with an added augmented ninth, otherwise known as the ‘Hendrix chord’), which adds an unmistakable touch of ‘Purple Haze’ to this eclectic melange of influences.

In the opening of the blues-inflected second movement, we discover just how well the accordion can blend with four solo horns. Here, the soloist becomes more insular and lyrical, as if trying on a new disguise. ‘I think the clue is in the title *Squeeze*,’ Harrison says. ‘We’re going inward – it’s like the concert hall is a chamber within the accordion, and so we’re being squeezed and hugged by it.’ Towards the end, the music erupts into what Harrison describes as an ‘accordion malfunction’ (replete with wonky *glissandi* effects and glitching semitone crunches), before the soloist battles it out with the solo flute and regains control. Here, she invites the audience to think of Crabb as ‘a puppet master, or a mad scientist: the orchestra is like his Petri dish. Maybe a strange bacteria has grown... something’s happening that’s not meant to be happening.’

In *Engine Room*, we are introduced to the beating heart of the orchestra (and the accordion).

‘Maybe it’s like the smallest nesting doll now, and there really was something pumping away all along,’ Harrison says. ‘There’s more of that rock and metal influence, I think, coming through here. It’s a bit grungier, it’s a bit dirtier, but we also still have these accordion “glitch” moments that disrupt that. I really view the last third of this movement as working towards creating this mega instrument – the accordion has taken over the orchestra! And then at the end, it vaporises, disappearing into the ether, and we get a bit of a sigh with the bellows air at the very end, which is like the engine room running out of steam.’

After hearing a work that cleverly obscures the boundaries between soloist and orchestra, what better way to finish than with a composition that blurs the lines between concerto and symphony?

The ***Concerto for Orchestra*** (1943) by Béla Bartók (1882–1945) was conceived during a period of deep turmoil. Three years earlier, the composer had escaped Nazi-occupied Hungary with his wife, and together they had settled in New York. They had little money, and Bartók’s health – both physical and mental – was rapidly deteriorating. Several trips to the hospital ensued, but the early symptoms of leukaemia (the cancer that would later claim his life in 1945) were largely overlooked. It is thanks to two of Bartók’s compatriots (the violinist Joseph Szigeti and the conductor Fritz Reiner, who together managed to secure a commission from the Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation) that one of the greatest orchestral showpieces of the twentieth century came into being. Against all expectations, the ailing composer managed to muster the strength and creative resources to complete his magnum opus within two months.

The *Introduzione* begins ominously with the celli and double basses conjuring Bartók’s quintessential ‘night music’ atmosphere, with rising fourths accompanied by shimmering tremolos in the violins and violas. The second



BIRTHDAY PARTY HONOURING
MAURICE RAVEL, NEW YORK CITY,
1928. RAVEL AT PIANO AND COMPOSER
GEORGE GERSHWIN ON FAR RIGHT

theme alternates between 4/8 and 3/8 time, as it introduces us to the contrasting colours of the oboe, harp, trombone, clarinets, and flutes. The magnificent *fugato* contains some of the most impressive orchestral writing for brass, propelling the movement inexorably towards its stunningly virtuosic conclusion. The scherzo-like *Presentando di coppie* ('Presentation of the couples') is an effervescent, five-sectioned procession of different pairs of instruments based on Yugoslavian folk-dance themes. First we hear the bassoons (a minor sixth apart), then the oboes (in minor thirds), clarinets (in minor sevenths), flutes (in fifths) and trumpets (in major seconds). A central brass chorale serves as the movement's trio section (perhaps a marriage ceremony?), before the pairs are successively reprised, albeit with charming variations: an additional bassoon third-wheels alongside the original couple; the clarinets and oboes appear simultaneously; and glistening harps join the duo of trumpets.

The *Elegia* ('a lugubrious death-song', as Bartók called it) serves as the keystone of the Concerto. Rising from the inky depths of double basses and timpani, swirling clarinets and flutes enrobe a keening oboe melody. Further on, such whirlpool-like figuration plays counterpoint to a more declamatory theme that seems to swell and throb with grief. The ensuing *Intermezzo interrotto* provides some welcome moments of comic relief, presented alongside a beautifully

contrasting *cantabile* melody that appears in the violas (a quotation of a popular song by Zsigmond Vincze, entitled 'You are lovely, you are beautiful, Hungary'), revealing Bartók's own nostalgia for his homeland. In the movement's central 'interruption', the 'invasion' theme from the first movement of Shostakovich's *Leningrad* Symphony is lampooned, with sniggering woodwinds and even a rip or two of sonic flatulence from the trombones and tuba.

The Finale ties up the many threads of the Concerto with unexpected cohesion and, it must be said, no small measure of symphonic fireworks. A fanfare-like motif in the horns heralds the arrival of the notorious *perpetuum mobile*, defined by its scuttling string semiquavers that whip by at a dizzying pace. Remarkably accessible and thrilling for listeners yet notoriously difficult for the musicians who are called upon to bring it to life, the *fugato* textures throughout once again cast a spotlight over the various sections of the orchestra with dazzling – if merciless – transparency, allowing each 'soloist' a final curtain call before a vertiginous, three-octave rush of septuplets: surely one of Western art music's most exhilarating denouements.

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CONCERT SPOTLIGHT: A NIGHT AT THE BALLET

Some music was never meant to stay in the orchestra pit

Next week, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra performs at Festival Theatre for *A Night at the Ballet*, a celebration of some of the most beloved music ever written for dance, theatre and storytelling.

Led by Australian Ballet Music Director Jonathan Lo, this special concert journeys through some of the most iconic dance scores of the 20th century. Bernstein's *On the Town* opens with infectious energy and the excitement of New York City, before Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* brings one of history's greatest love stories vividly to life. Audiences will also be treated to music from Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*, a landmark work whose sweeping melodies and emotional depth helped redefine musical theatre. The evening concludes with highlights from Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, a score filled with wonder, imagination and some of the most recognisable music ever composed.

Together, these works reveal the extraordinary power of music to tell stories, create atmosphere and move us emotionally, even without a single dancer on stage.

While ballet and theatre audiences know these scores well, hearing them performed live by a full symphony orchestra offers a different experience

entirely. Every colour, every emotion and every musical detail takes centre stage, showcasing the orchestra at its most expressive and virtuosic.

If you've been looking for a reason to enjoy a night out this winter, this is it.

For one night only, the ASO has partnered with Sofitel Adelaide to offer *The Complete Night Out* package. Begin the evening with canapés, a two-hour beverage package and an exclusive pre-concert conversation with Jonathan Lo and ASO Principal Cello Sharon Grigoryan before making your way to Festival Theatre for the performance.

Whether you're drawn to the romance of *Romeo and Juliet*, the nostalgia of *Carousel*, the magic of *The Nutcracker* or simply the thrill of hearing a world-class orchestra live, *A Night at the Ballet* promises an unforgettable evening.

With the performance now just days away, tickets are selling fast. Secure your seats now and experience one of the highlights of the ASO's winter season.

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*The Complete Night Out package available exclusively for the Saturday performance.

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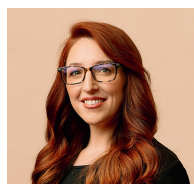
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Principal 1st Violin
Bruce DeBelle AO KC ♪



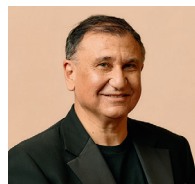
Alison Heike
Section Principal
2nd Violin
FASO in memory of
Ann Belmont OAM ♪



Lachlan Bramble
Associate Principal
2nd Violin
In memory of
Deborah Pontifex ♪



Janet Anderson
In memory of
Gweneth Willing ♪



Minas Berberyan
Linda Sampson ♪



Gillian Braithwaite
Mary Dawes BEM ♪



Liam Osborne
Judy Sanders &
Jenny Pike ♪



Emma Perkins
Pamela & the late
Peter McKee ♪



Alexander Permezal



Alison Rayner



Kemer Spurr

Erna Berberyan

CELLOS



Sharon Grigoryan
Acting Section
Principal
Sibby Sutherland ♪
John Turnidge AO
& Patricia Rayner ♪



Sherrilyn Handley
Peter Wells &
Celia Whittle ♪



Andrew Leask
John Sulan KC
& Ali Sulan ♪



Shuhei Lawson
Judy Hare &
Grant Whiteman ♪



Gemma Phillips
Acting Associate
Principal
Anonymous donor ♪



David Sharp
Dr Aileen F Connon
AM ♪



Cameron Waters
Pamela & the late
Peter McKee ♪

PICCOLO



Julia Grenfell
Principal
In memory of Father
Kevin McLennan &
Barbra McLennan ♪

OBOES



Joshua Oates
Section Principal
Caryl Lambourn
& Graham Norton ♪

COR ANGLAIS



Renae Stavelly
Associate Principal
Roderick Shire
& Judy Hargrave ♪

CLARINETS



Peter Duggan
Principal
Dr JB Robinson ♪

BASS CLARINET



Dean Newcomb
Section Principal
Ann Vanstone ♪

TRUMPETS



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Principal
In memory of Mary Angel ♪

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