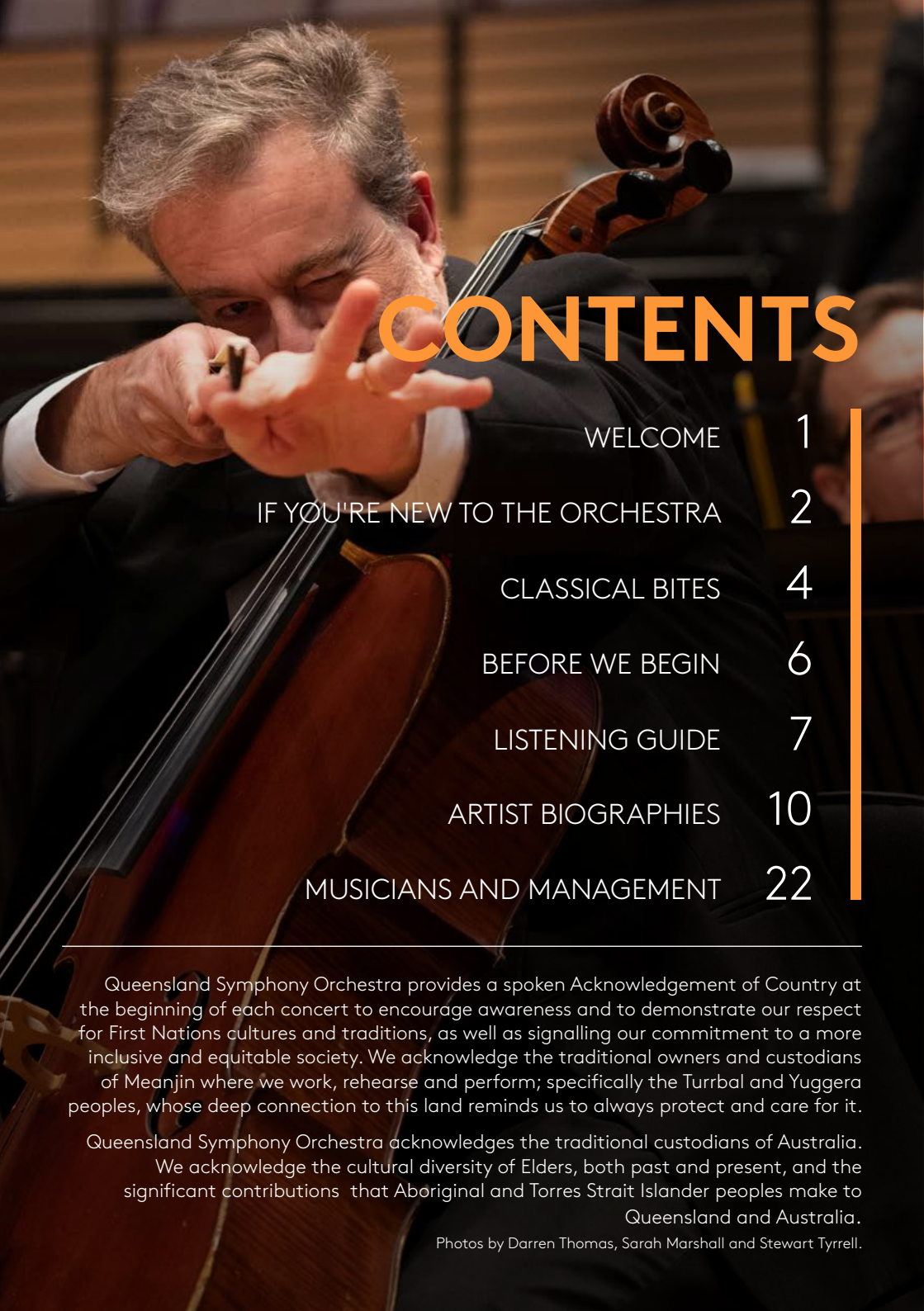


Triumphant Tchaikovsky



QUEENSLAND SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

12 + 13 APR 2024
CONCERT HALL, QPAC



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Queensland Symphony Orchestra provides a spoken Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of each concert to encourage awareness and to demonstrate our respect for First Nations cultures and traditions, as well as signalling our commitment to a more inclusive and equitable society. We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of Meanjin where we work, rehearse and perform; specifically the Turrbal and Yuggera peoples, whose deep connection to this land reminds us to always protect and care for it.

Queensland Symphony Orchestra acknowledges the traditional custodians of Australia. We acknowledge the cultural diversity of Elders, both past and present, and the significant contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to Queensland and Australia.

Photos by Darren Thomas, Sarah Marshall and Stewart Tyrrell.

WELCOME

We continue our 2024 journey into Romanticism with two works that exemplify the initial public scepticism and criticism of the Romantic era of music as it emerged in the 19th century.

Benjamin Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem* and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony angered their initial reviewers, drawing harsh criticism and even rejection from those who commissioned the work.

Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem* was primarily an anti-war composition, drawing from the darkening events that led up to WWII. The Japanese government who commissioned his work rejected it for its sombre tones, and it wasn't until its premiere one year later that the piece found its accolades.

Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony followed a similar trend, initially drawing so much criticism that Tchaikovsky himself considered it a failure. Due to the symphony's themes of "ultimate victory through strife," the piece was embraced by governments and citizens alike during WWII, and even played in London's Philharmonic Hall while bombs fell on the city's surrounds.

Since their respective debuts, both pieces have grown in popularity to the point in which Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony is today considered one of his most beloved symphonies.

The placement of Triumphant Tchaikovsky in QSO's 2024 program may seem deliberate considering the global events currently unfolding, but this solemn coincidence offers us a pertinent chance to reflect on the themes that Britten and Tchaikovsky explored in their respective works.

Whether these pieces move you to reflect on their meanings, or you simply enjoy listening to these beloved pieces, we look forward to sharing two symphonies that were once underdogs and are now receiving their just applause.

IN THIS CONCERT

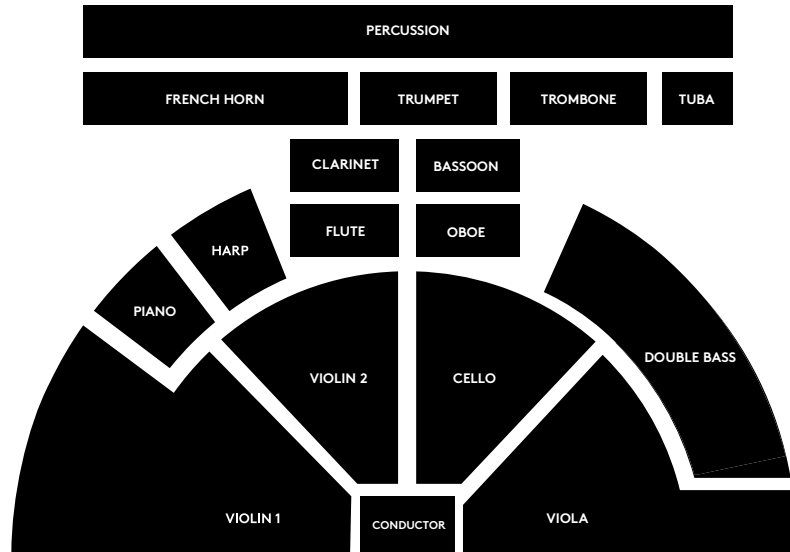
Conductor Andrew Gourlay

PROGRAM

BRITTEN	<i>Sinfonia da requiem</i>	21'
TCHAIKOVSKY	Symphony No. 5 in E minor	50'

Relive this concert on ABC Classic 4 May at 1pm AEST.

IF YOU'RE NEW TO THE ORCHESTRA



WHO SITS WHERE

Orchestras sit in sections based on types of instruments. There are four main sections in the symphony orchestra (strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion) and sometimes a keyboard section.

STRINGS

These instruments produce sound by bowing or plucking stretched strings.

- First and Second Violin
- Viola
- Cello
- Double Bass
- Harp

WOODWIND

Wind instruments produce sound by being blown into.

- Flute/Piccolo
- Clarinet/E-flat Clarinet/Bass Clarinet
- Oboe/Cor Anglais
- Bassoon/Contrabassoon

KEYBOARD

Keyboard instruments are played by pressing keys.

- Piano
- Celeste
- Organ

BRASS

Brass players create sound by vibrating their lips. When this vibration is pushed through large brass tubes, it can create significant noise.

- French Horn
- Trumpet
- Trombone/Bass Trombone
- Tuba

PERCUSSION

These instruments create sound by being struck or, for the harp, plucked or strummed. Some instruments just make a sound; others play particular notes.

- Timpani, Bass drum, Snare drum, Cymbals, Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Vibraphone, Tam-tam, Triangle, Sleigh Bells.

WHO'S ON STAGE TODAY



Find out who's on stage today,
scan the QR code below.



CLASSICAL BITES

SINFONIA TO SYMPHONY

While we admit this might take you longer than 60 seconds to devour a Sinfonia by Britten and a Symphony by Tchaikovsky, learning about classical music has never felt so... bite-sized.

A BIT OF BENJAMIN BRITTEN

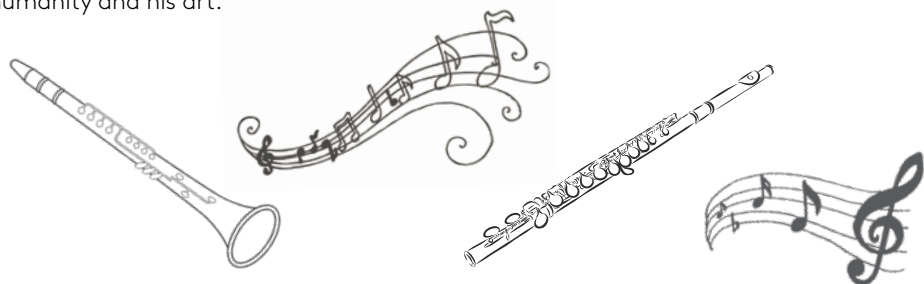
Born in 1913, Britten was an English composer, conductor and pianist most famous for his operas. Britten was often inspired by English literature – his music had a keen English sense for poetic drama and emotional depth, yet was accessible to many. Some might say he was the Shakespeare of composers – capable of deep meaning, yet a fan of the masses.



SLICES OF SINFONIA

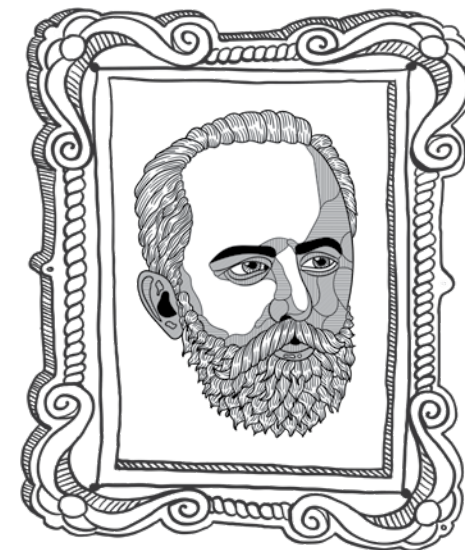
Traditionally, a Sinfonia is a piece of orchestral music used as an introduction to an opera. Untraditionally, it's a great piece of music to get you ready to take in a triumphant symphony and a word Britten used to define a symphonic work that just didn't fit into the word "symphony."

Britten's Sinfonia is an emotional piece commissioned originally by the Japanese government in 1939 – consider how the music constantly edges on dramatic and how in 1939 the world was on the brink of war. The three short movements begin with a mournful atmosphere. In the first movement, the oboes snake around musical corners until the brass instruments appear menacingly. The second movement bristles with frantic urgency from the flutes and wind instruments. The final movement unfolds into a solemn yet graceful sound, and even though during the time Britten composed this work the world would not see peace for a number of years, there are glimmers of hope both in humanity and his art.



WHO WAS TCHAIKOVSKY?

In May of 1888, catastrophe struck. Four symphonies into his lifetime, Tchaikovsky's imagination had dried up. The pressure on composers who have delivered triumphant symphonies is a double-edged sword. Many think of Symphony No.5 as a patchwork quilt of Tchaikovsky's ideas and styles, and Tchaikovsky himself thought it was a failure. What we have come to understand in today's world is that art (be it music, painting or film) is most humanly beautiful when we can begin to understand how the artist made it. If you listen to each movement or patch as a glimpse into Tchaikovsky's form and style, the symphony becomes all the more captivating.

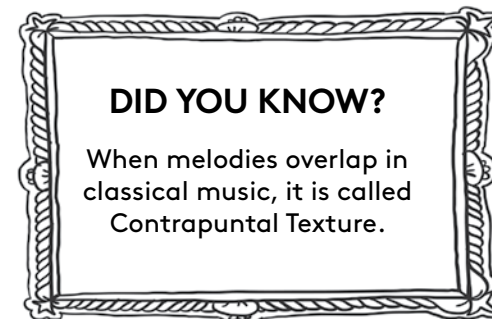


A SENSE OF SYMPHONY

To set the tone for the rest of the evening, Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony opens with a wistful French horn melody that broods until it gives way to a passionate theme in which the entire orchestra joins in – imagine a balloon of music being blown up, with each breath the music swells and with each exhale it quietsens. This swell and build continues throughout the entire movement as Tchaikovsky builds on the driving theme of Symphony No.5.

The second movement begins with the double-basses and cellos pulsing a sombre sound, before the French horn yet again starts a melancholy theme. Fear not, the bassoons lament a curiously dozy sound, and sombre turns to terrifyingly beautiful.

The third movement begins happier than the previous movements – waltzes tend to have that affect. The final movement unleashes a whirlwind of energy, propelled forward by an explosion from the string section instruments. By this point, our conductor is working overtime to keep up with Tchaikovsky's swelling theme and overlapping melodic lines.



BEFORE WE BEGIN

Before the performance begins, get to know a few musical terms in the Listening Guide.

Time signature	An indication of how musical beats are to be counted.
Staccato semiquavers	Performed with each note sharply detached or separated from the others.
Augmentation	The lengthening of a note or the widening of an interval
Tempo	The speed at which music is played
Pause	Hold the note or rest for slightly longer than its written value
Rests	An interval of time that a player is not sounding a note on their instrument



LISTENING GUIDE

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

Sinfonia da requiem

- I. Lacrymosa
- II. Dies Irae
- III. Requiem aeternum

There's something unsettling about the lowest instruments of the orchestra. The longer they sustain their notes, the deeper the tension grows. Instruments like the double bass, cello, and timpani are often associated with a dark and ominous feeling – and perhaps this is why Benjamin Britten chose them to open his 1940 *Sinfonia da Requiem*. The moody composition of three movements portrays themes of death (at odds with the celebratory reason it was commissioned – we'll get to that soon).

The disconcerting drone of brass against the metronomic thuds of double bass and harp offers a gateway into *Lacrymosa*, a movement that appears solemn until it evolves into a shrieking soundscape punctuated by the merciless strike of the timpani.

Then *Dies irae* is fast and fiery (*allegro con fuoco*): speedy strings project texture rather than melody. Alto saxophone brings a jarringly unusual and ghostly feel (aided by the fact that our ears don't generally expect the appearance of a saxophone in an orchestra). This cluttered and nightmarish movement eventually runs out of steam, collapsing into a desolate end before the *Requiem aeternam*.

This final movement, named after a prayer for the dead, introduces a melody on flutes that would sound beautiful if not for the dissonant clash of notes that are only a step apart. (A and B sound so similar, they grind together when played simultaneously; that's the unpleasantness you'll hear in this otherwise lovely flute music.) Though Britten writes *tranquillo* in his score, it doesn't sound particularly soothing.

Sinfonia da Requiem was composed to honour the anniversary of the founding of Japan. At least, that was the intention behind this commission – but the Japanese government thought it sounded too depressing for a ceremony, so they rejected it. Nevertheless, in 1941 it received a world premiere in Carnegie Hall with the New York Philharmonic.

LISTENING GUIDE

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Symphony No.5

- I. Andante - Allegro con anima
- II. Andante cantabile con alcuna licenza
- III. Valse: Allegro moderat
- IV. Finale: Andante maestoso - Allegro vivace

We have a habit of idolising the most famous composers of music history. So it can be easy to forget they were just regular people like you and me. They had their own self-doubts and insecurities. It took years for Brahms to realise he could hold his own against his predecessor Beethoven. Rachmaninoff had a breakdown after the humiliating premiere of his first symphony. And Tchaikovsky lost all belief in his own Symphony No. 5, telling patron and friend Nadezhda von Meck: “I have come to the conclusion that it is a failure”. He described his music as repellent and excessive; he was convinced that when the audience cheered after the performance, they were simply clapping for his earlier pieces – not the one they’d just heard. He thought nobody would ever enjoy his Fifth. Poor Pyotr, if only he could have known that you would be sitting here – 136 years later, on the other side of the world – hungry to hear a live performance of his rip-roaring symphony! But first, let’s listen to the surprisingly reserved introduction.

When you see a movement with a long Italian name, you’re getting a sneak preview into the structure of the music. *Andante – Allegro con anima* tells us it’ll start at a moderate pace before growing fast and lively, and this is what you have to look forward to. The clarinet begins with one of the simplest themes you could dream up: it’s repetitive, slightly mournful, and unravels in basic variations throughout the symphony. As the movement continues, a pleasant call and response across the orchestra’s sections leads into a tranquil (*tranquillo*) and graceful dance, making use of the waltz-like quality of the 6/8 **time signature**. Meanwhile, we’re leaping from seriously loud to extra soft. There are no lulls in the energy of this movement, regardless of the speed – and that’s what makes it so appealing to listen to.

The second movement’s title *Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza* is a guide for musicians to perform as though they’re enjoying a comfortable stroll, and taking a little freedom to hum the tune as they go. (*Cantabile* refers to a songlike quality.) Horns take on the sweet and expressive solo theme, which lovers of old swing and big band music will instantly recognise as the enchanting vocal melody of the 1930s hit *Moon Love* (Glenn Miller and Frank Sinatra each turned out some famous recordings of this song).

The third movement sees winds tiptoe along a whimsical theme, strings supplying a basic pulse to keep the music bobbing in time. It’s music fit for a 19th-Century ballroom – until the **staccato semiquavers** arrive. Then, you’d be flying off your feet trying to keep up with the music! (Do not try this dance at home.) Keep your ears open for the end of this movement, because clarinet and bassoon will remind you of that opening theme.

If you’d like to get technical, Tchaikovsky uses **augmentation** to stretch it out – meaning the individual notes are longer than when we first heard them at the start of the symphony. But because they’re also performed at a faster **tempo** here, you wouldn’t notice the technique unless you were looking at the score!

And with the final movement, we come full circle. Like the first, it opens slow (*andante*) before speeding up (*allegro* – again, the name gives you the structure). It mimics that simple opening tune, but where it first sounded hesitant and sombre, now it is undeniably triumphant! All symphonies need a little conflict, though – and this is where the vivacious (*allegro vivace*) change of mood comes in. This music will become so epic, that there’s a very real chance you’ll start applauding early: a well-placed **pause over rests** sounds as big as an ending! But there are still a few minutes more before the conductor lowers their baton – almost every section of the orchestra will have one last chance to revisit and enjoy that original theme. Then, when you give a standing ovation (at the correct moment, unless you really can’t contain yourself), remember: Tchaikovsky had once called *this work* a failure. We are our own worst critics!

©Stephanie Eslake



ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Andrew Gourlay Conductor

Born in Jamaica, with Russian ancestry, Andrew Gourlay grew up in the Bahamas, Philippines, Japan and England. A trombonist and pianist by training, he studied conducting at the Royal College of Music, where he prepared Bruckner symphonies for Bernard Haitink and Mozart symphonies for Sir Roger Norrington. He was selected by Gramophone magazine as their 'One to Watch', and by BBC Music Magazine as their 'Rising Star: great artists of tomorrow'.

He won First Prize at the 2010 Cadaques International Conducting Competition, securing concerts with 29 orchestras around the world. For the next two years he was Assistant Conductor to Sir Mark Elder and the Hallé Orchestra. In 2015 Gourlay took up the position of Music Director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León (OSCYL), having been their Principal Guest Conductor since the 2014/15 season, and celebrated the orchestra's 25th anniversary in 2016/17.

Guest engagements since 2020 include a visit to the Enescu Festival with the Britten Sinfonia, and concerts with BBC NOW, BBC Scottish Symphony, London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, Britten Sinfonia, London Sinfonietta, Belgian National and Tampere Philharmonic Orchestras. He returned to the Proms

in 2022 for a televised concert with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. He returned to Germany in 1922/23 for a tour with the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie and concerts with the Bremer Philharmoniker.

Andrew Gourlay has conducted recordings with the London Symphony Orchestra, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, BBC Symphony, and BBC National Orchestra of Wales. The first own-label OSCyL disc of Rachmaninov's Symphony No 2 and The Isle of the Dead was released in spring 2019 to critical acclaim and was followed by Shostakovich 10 in 2021. His orchestral suite from Parsifal was released in October 2022 with the London Philharmonic Orchestra on Orchid Classics.





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WHAT DOES QUEENSLAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA MEAN TO YOU?

Having been a subscriber to the Orchestra since 1985, QSO has allowed me for two hours or so on many occasions each year, to escape to another world where only happiness and joy exist and the experience of complete contentment. In fact, listening in the Concert Hall to the Adagio movement of a Mozart piano concerto, it would not be unreasonable to say that music was heaven sent.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU TO SUPPORT QSO?

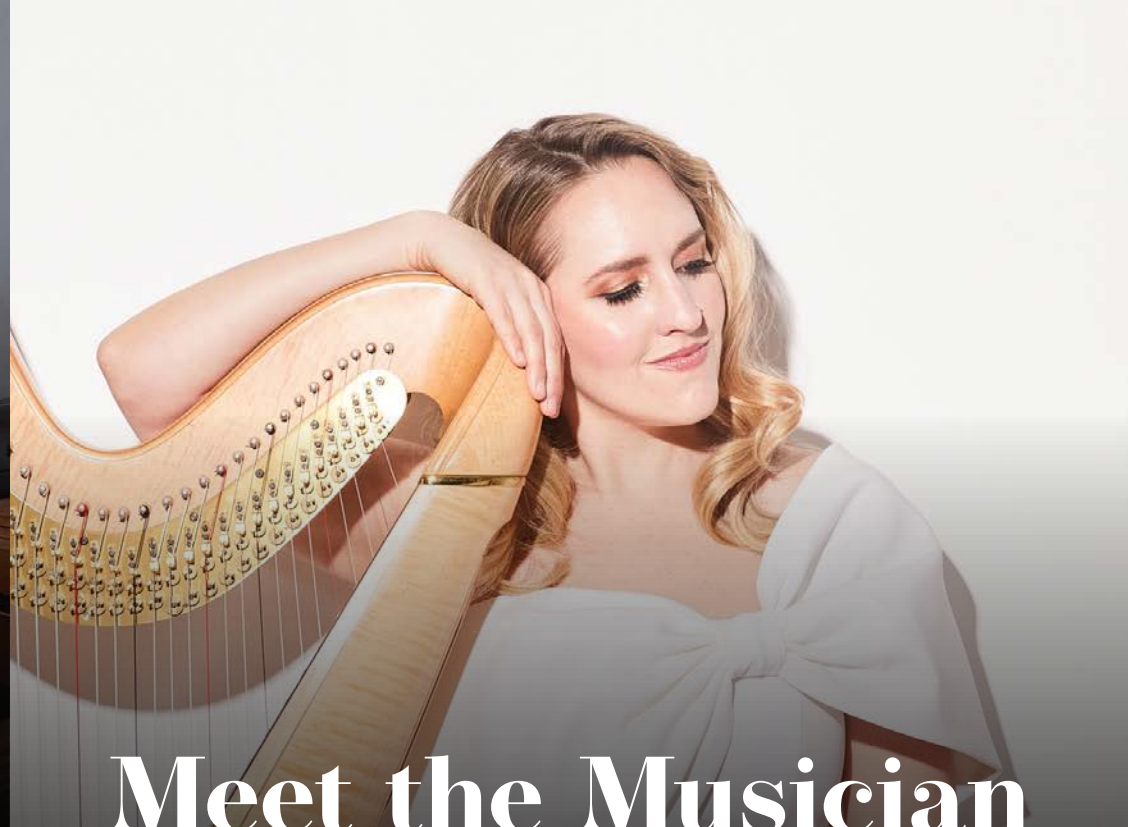
Arts play a huge role in the fabric of every civilised society and QSO is to the forefront of providing an essential element in the overall scene. It deserves every support it can garnish to maintain and improve its excellent achievements.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT SUPPORTING QSO?

As a Music Chair Program supporter since the inception of the Program more than a decade ago, not only have I been able to form a very nice friendship with my chosen musician - Graham Simpson, viola - but I have also been able to socialise with many other Orchestral players. This has heightened my general interest in the Orchestra.

WHAT WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT DO YOU HAVE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING SUPPORTING QSO?

Just do it because I can assure you the benefit you gain by being that much closer to QSO will more than equal any financial support you may offer.



Meet the Musician

Emily Granger, Principal Harpist

QSO was thrilled to welcome American-Australian Emily Granger as our Principal Harpist in 2023.

Emily is a globally renowned artist praised for her “vibrant musical personality”. She trained at the Jacobs School of Music and Chicago College of the Performing Arts, and co-founded the Chicago Harp Quartet. Emily has graced orchestras like Chicago, Sydney, and Tasmanian Symphony as Guest Principal Harpist, and collaborated with esteemed ensembles worldwide. Emily has been in high demand as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral performer since basing herself in Australia in 2016.

Emily’s 2022 debut solo album, “In Transit,” on AVIE Records, amassed 3.5 million streams, earning acclaim from BBC Music Magazine and Limelight Magazine. Emily’s accolades include being a 2021 Art Music Awards Finalist and a 2022 Freedman Classical Fellowship Finalist.

Beyond music, Emily is an avid hiker who has completed long distance walks such as New Zealand’s Te Araroa Trail, Spain’s Camino de Santiago, and California’s John Muir Trail.

If you are interested in supporting Emily through QSO’s Music Chair Program, please contact the Development office via development@qso.com.au or (07) 3833 5027.

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My Homeland

FRI 3 MAY 7.30PM
Concert Hall, QPAC

Conductor Tomáš Netopil
Smetana *Má vlast (My Fatherland)*



Symphony Fantastic

FRI 17 MAY 7.30PM
SAT 18 MAY 1.30PM
Concert Hall, QPAC

Conductor Umberto Clerici
Violin József Lendvay
Actor Robert Hofmann
Saint-Saëns *Danse Macabre*
Ravel *Tzigane, rapsodie de concert*
Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique*



Brahms & Rachmaninov

FRI 21 JUN 11.30AM
SAT 22 JUN 7.30PM
Concert Hall, QPAC

Conductor Jaime Martín
Piano Danis Kozhukhin
Rachmaninov *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*
Brahms *Symphony No. 4*
SATURDAY ONLY
Ravel *Le Tombeau de Couperin*

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