

Tuesday 3 November 2026, 7pm  
Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House



# ABC YOUNG PERFORMERS AWARDS 2026

**JEREMY FERNANDEZ** and **MEGAN BURSLEM**  
presenters

**BENJAMIN NORTHEY** conductor

**EDWARD ELGAR** (1857–1934)  
**Cello Concerto in E minor, Op.85** (1919)

**CHARLOTTE MILES** cello

**SERGEI PROKOFIEV** (1891–1953)  
**Violin Concerto No.2 in G minor, Op.63** (1935)

**BEATRICE COLOMBIS** violin

## INTERVAL

**FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN** (1810–1849)  
**Piano Concerto No.2 in F minor, Op.21** (1829)

**DILLON CHAN** piano

**JOSEPH TWIST** (born 1982)  
***Ancient Lights, Mystic Sky*** (2022)

## Estimated duration

The concert will run for approx. 2 hours and 30 minutes, including a 20-minute interval.

This concert is being filmed for television. Throughout the evening you may notice cameras, film crew and presenters moving discreetly throughout the hall. We invite you to relax, enjoy the music and share in the excitement of seeing the magic of television in action.

## Broadcast guide

This concert will be broadcast live on ABC Classic, with an abridged version broadcast at 8.50pm on Thursday 5 November on ABC TV. The full concert will be available on streaming at a later date.

## WELCOME

Welcome to the Grand Final of the 2026 ABC Young Performers Awards, Australia's longest running and most prestigious competition for emerging classical musicians.

Returning to ABC stewardship this year, the competition launched in February with a video performance round. Twelve semi-finalists competed, and now just three remain. I have had the joy of following Beatrice Colombis, Charlotte Miles and Dillon Chan through every stage, and tonight they perform with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Benjamin Northey, on one of the world's most celebrated stages.

This competition has always been about introductions: putting the finest young artists in front of the supporters, organisations and audiences who will follow their careers for decades. Tonight, that audience extends well beyond this room. The concert is broadcast live on ABC Classic and ABC listen, and filmed for ABC TV and ABC iview, so people across the country can share in every note, as it happens and into the future.

By the end of the evening, one finalist will be named the winner, and ABC Classic will be right behind them as their career grows. Whatever the result, I am certain we will hear a great deal more from all three.

No young musician reaches this stage alone. Behind every finalist are years of lessons, early starts and long hours of practice, and the teachers and families who supported them. This competition is possible only because of the people and organisations who understand how vital it is to give emerging talent opportunity and support.

I would like to thank the Sydney Symphony Orchestra for partnering with us to make this Grand Final possible. Thanks also go to the dedicated ABC Classic team, the many colleagues across the ABC, and this year's adjudication panel.

Finally, thank you for joining us and supporting young classical musicians. It promises to be an exhilarating concert, and I hope you enjoy it.

**Philip Noyce**

Head of ABC Classic and ABC Jazz

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of the land and water on which we work and perform. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

# ABOUT THE FINALISTS

## CHARLOTTE MILES cello

The first Australian to attend Germany's prestigious Kronberg Academy, where she studies with Prof. Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt and where she was recently awarded the 2025 Altkönigstift Prize, Melbourne-born cellist Charlotte Miles captivates with her "keen musical intelligence, assured technique and honeyed tone" (*Sydney Morning Herald*).

Awarded over 100 Australian and international prizes, including at the 2024 ARD (Germany), 2018 Gisborne (New Zealand) and 2020 Anna Kull (Austria) competitions, in 2021 she won both the Concerto Competition and the Most Outstanding Recital Performance Prize at ANAM. The 2025 recipient of the Melbourne Prize for Music's Professional Development Award, in 2019 Miles won the Australian National Young Virtuoso Award and was named the 3MBS Young Performer of the Year.

A passionate chamber musician, recent highlights include the Landshut (Germany), Oxford May (UK), Stamford (UK) and Haute-Provence (France) festivals, the Australian Festival of Chamber Music (AU) and the Cello Biënnale Amsterdam (Netherlands). She has toured with the Australian String Quartet and the Australian and Mahler Chamber Orchestras, and substitutes with the Berlin Philharmonic.

For the 2025/26 season, Miles is a laureate of the Gautier Capuçon Foundation, and tours with his cello ensemble, the Capucelli. She performs on a c.1780 Joseph Hill cello kindly on loan from an Australian collection.



## BEATRICE COLOMBIS violin

Beatrice Colombis, 23, is an Italian-Australian violinist who is currently studying at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler in Berlin with Prof. Suyeon Kang. In 2024 she completed her Bachelor Degree of Music Performance at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music studying with Prof. Goetz Richter. She began her studies at the age of 3 with renowned teacher of the Suzuki Method, Yasuki Nakamura, and continued her studies with ACO violinist Ilya Isakovich.

Beatrice is winner of the Michael Hill International Violin Competition in 2026. In 2024, she was a semi-finalist in the Max Rostal International Violin Competition in Germany and a finalist in the Tokyo Classic Violin Competition in Japan. She has been a prize winner in several Australian competitions, including second prize in the Dorcas McClean Travelling Scholarship (2025), first and audience prizes at the Kendall National Violin Competition (2023), the Roger Woodward ACO OBE Award and runner up prize in the 2MBS Young Virtuoso Award (2024), Richard Mills first prize in the Melbourne Bach Competition (2021) and the Anne Kantor Award in the Great Romantics Competition (2024). In 2020, Beatrice, with her brother and cousins as the Cousin Quartet, won Musica Viva's inaugural Strike A Chord national chamber music competition.

Beatrice has performed as a soloist in Australia with Concerto Arcana, Caesura Ensemble and the Sydney Conservatorium Symphony Orchestra. Beatrice was selected as an Emerging Artist with the Australian Chamber Orchestra in 2023 and 2024. She has played casually with the ACO, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Karajan Akademie Orchestra and Sydney Symphony Orchestra. She was selected for the Gustav Mahler Academy in Bolzano in 2025/26.

Beatrice has travelled and performed with various string quartets, including as guest violinist with the Alma Moodie Quartet at Adelaide Festival in Ukaria. In 2024 her quartet Elvina gave their debut recital in Melbourne after returning from a residency in Munich with the Schumann Quartet. They also performed at the Craven Creek Chamber Music Festival in 2024 and the Orange Chamber Music Festival in 2025.



## DILLON CHAN piano

Melbourne-born pianist Dillon Chan, 14, studies with Ian Munro and receives artistic guidance from Katarzyna Popowa-Zydroń. He receives chamber music coaching from Caroline Almonte at Melbourne Conservatorium's Melbourne Young Chamber Music Academy and Rachel Atkinson at Camberwell Grammar School (CGS). A Year 9 CGS music scholar, his Kingussie Trio won the Strike a Chord National Chamber Music Competition's First Prize in 2026 and Second Prize in 2025, as well as the 3MBS Radio Award in 2024.

Dillon achieved LMusA with Distinction at 10. He won the Polish Music Competition Australia (2021), the Musical Society of Victoria's Hephzibah Menuhin Memorial Award (2024), and Steinway Youth Piano Competition Australia overall (2022).

Dillon won First Prize at the 29th International Fryderyk Chopin Competition for Children and Youth (Poland). The youngest finalist at the 19th Ettlingen International Competition (Germany), he received Fourth Prize and a Special Commendation for Young Talent. In 2025, he won First Prize at the Fourth Jeune Chopin Competition (Switzerland), jury chaired by Martha Argerich, leading to sponsored recitals in Lausanne alongside Argerich and at Chopin's birthplace in Żelazowa Wola.

Dillon made his orchestral debut at 9 and worked with Muhai Tang as pianist and Graham Abbott as organist. A Young Ambassador of the Lang Lang International Music Foundation, he performed for Lang Lang after a Melbourne recital.

This year, Dillon performed Chopin Concerto No.1 with Preston Symphony Orchestra, Camerata Orchestra and Queensland Symphony Orchestra under Alan Buribayev, and won the Young Lev Vlassenko Piano Competition and 37th Preston Symphony Orchestra Youth Concerto Competition.



# ABOUT THE COMPETITION

Since 1944, the ABC Young Performers Awards has been a launchpad for Australia's most promising classical musicians, inspiring and kick-starting the careers of many of the nation's most celebrated artists.

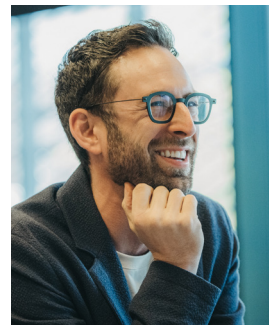
Applications for the 2026 competition opened in February, welcoming talented musicians aged 31 and under from across the country with entries across strings, woodwind, brass, piano and percussion categories. Following fierce live semi-final rounds held throughout August, the competition culminates tonight on stage with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, with the three grand finalists competing for a share of a \$60,000 prize pool.

## PRIZES

The winner of the competition will receive a \$40,000 career development prize together with the opportunity to record a solo studio album with ABC Classic. First runner-up will receive \$15,000 and second runner-up \$5,000.

These prizes are generously supported by the Triffitt Bequest, courtesy of Symphony Services Australia, and the ABC.

## ADJUDICATION PANEL



### Marshall McGuire (Chair)

Harpist and arts leader Marshall McGuire has performed around the world and commissioned more than 100 new works for harp. From 2015–2025 he was the Director of Programming at the Melbourne Recital Centre. Currently he is the Chair of the Australian Music Centre and Artistic Advisor for Music and Opera at the Adelaide Festival.

### Aura Go

Aura Go is an Australian concert pianist, curator and educator. She has appeared as soloist with the Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Queensland Symphony Orchestras, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Melbourne Chamber Orchestra and more. Aura is Head of Piano at Monash University.

### Sophie Rowell

Sophie Rowell is Artistic Director of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra and former Co-Concertmaster of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Since winning the ABC Young Performers Awards in 2000, Sophie has forged an impressive career which includes solo, chamber and orchestral engagements in Australia and overseas. In 2025, she was appointed Associate Professor of Violin at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music.

### Eliza Shephard

Winner of the ABC Young Performer's Award in 2022, Eliza Shephard is a vibrant flautist, performing artist, collaborator and curator. Eliza is passionate about amplifying the voices of female musicians and composers and her seven-year March of the Women recording project showcases over 200 works by women. Eliza is a Teaching Associate and Sessional Academic at Monash University.

### Adam Szabo

Adam Szabo is director of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. He has worked across the orchestral, broadcast and touring industries for nearly 20 years. Prior to his appointment as Director of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Adam co-founded and was Chief Executive & Artistic Director of Manchester Collective. In 2027, he will commence in the role of Managing Director of the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM).

*ABC Classic would like to thank the following members of the adjudication panel who also assessed competition entries in Round 1: Rebecca Lagos, Leanne Sullivan and Lloyd Van't Hoff.*

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **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 previously held the posts of Associate Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (2010–2019), Resident Guest Conductor of the Australia Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra (2002–2006) and Principal Guest Conductor of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra (2007–2010).

Northey studied conducting at Finland's Sibelius Academy with Professors Leif Segerstam and Atso Almila after being accepted as the highest placed applicant in 2002. He completed his studies at the Stockholm Royal College of Music with Jorma Panula in 2006. He previously studied conducting with John Hopkins OBE at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music from 2000–2002.

Northey appears regularly as a guest conductor with all major Australian symphony orchestras, Opera Australia, New Zealand Opera, Victorian Opera and the State Opera South Australia. His international appearances include concerts with the London, Tokyo and Hong Kong philharmonic orchestras, Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, Malaysian Philharmonic and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Northey is highly active in the performance and recording of new Australian orchestral music, having premiered dozens of major new works by Australian composers. He has previously been a board member of the Australian Music Centre.

An ARIA Awards winner, he was voted *Limelight's* Australian Artist of the Year in 2018. Northey's many recordings can be found on ABC Classics.



Photo by Laura Manariti

## SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

### **FIRST VIOLINS**

#### **Alexandra Osborne**

*Associate Concertmaster*

Sercan Danis  
Georges Lentz  
Liam Pilgrim  
Leone Ziegler  
Brian Hong<sup>°</sup>  
Emily Qin<sup>°</sup>  
Lydia Sawires<sup>†</sup>  
Ilya Isakovich<sup>\*</sup>  
Elizabeth Jones<sup>\*</sup>  
Rain Liu<sup>\*</sup>  
Marcus Michelsen<sup>\*</sup>

### **SECOND VIOLINS**

#### **Kirsty Hilton**

*Principal*

#### **Emma Jezek**

*Assistant Principal*

Victoria Bihun  
Shuti Huang  
Monique Irik  
Benjamin Li  
Robert Smith  
Maja Verunica  
Caroline Hopson<sup>°</sup>  
Riikka Sintonen<sup>°</sup>

### **VIOLA**

#### **Anne-Louise Comerford**

*Associate Principal Emeritus*

Sandro Costantino  
Rosemary Curtin  
Justine Marsden  
Leonid Volovelsky  
Andrew Jezek<sup>°</sup>  
Stephen Wright<sup>°</sup>  
Nathan Greentree<sup>\*</sup>

### **CELLOS**

#### **Simon Cobcroft**

*Associate Principal*

Fenella Gill  
Timothy Nankervis  
Elizabeth Neville  
Christopher Pidcock  
Adrian Wallis

### **DOUBLE BASS**

Steven Larson  
Richard Lynn  
Jaen Pallandi  
Benjamin Ward

### **FLUTES**

#### **Lily Bryant<sup>°</sup>**

*Acting Associate Principal*

#### **Kate Lawson<sup>°</sup>**

*Acting Principal Piccolo*

### **OBOES**

#### **Callum Hogan**

*Acting Associate Principal*

#### **Alexandre Oguey**

*Principal Cor Anglais*

### **CLARINETS**

#### **Francesco Celata**

*Associate Principal*

#### **Alexander Morris**

*Principal Bass Clarinet*

### **BASSOONS**

#### **Matthew Wilkie**

*Principal Emeritus*

Fiona McNamara

### **HORNS**

#### **Samuel Jacobs**

*Principal*

Lucy Smith<sup>†</sup>  
Sarah Bernard<sup>\*</sup>  
Lee Wadenpfuhl<sup>\*</sup>

### **TRUMPETS**

#### **David Elton**

*Principal*

#### **Brent Grapes**

*Associate Principal*

### **TROMBONES**

#### **Scott Kinmont**

*Acting Principal*

#### **Nick Byrne**

*Acting Associate Principal*

#### **Jeremy Mazurek<sup>°</sup>**

*Acting Principal Bass Trombone*

### **TUBA**

#### **Marcel Kocbek-Malepa<sup>\*</sup>**

*Guest Principal*

### **TIMPANI**

#### **Antoine Siguré**

*Principal*

### **PERCUSSION**

#### **Rebecca Lagos**

*Principal*

Timothy Constable

**Bold** Principal

<sup>\*</sup> Guest Musician

<sup>°</sup> Contract Musician

<sup>†</sup> Sydney Symphony Fellow