

MEET THE FELLOWS

SATURDAY 21 FEBRUARY

St James' King St



Presenting Partner

Coxswain Alliance

SYDNEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Emirates

Principal Partner

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PATRON Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres, reflecting the Orchestra's versatility and diverse appeal. Its award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, and the Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

The Orchestra's first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013, followed by David Robertson as Chief Conductor from 2014 to 2019. Australian-born Simone Young commenced her role as Chief Conductor in 2022, a year in which the Orchestra made its return to a renewed Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS CONCERT

Expect to enjoy yourself! Maybe your heart will beat a little faster. Maybe your hair will stand on end. It's hard to predict or describe how the vast sound of a symphony orchestra will affect each of us. Just bring an open mind and engage with the music – close your eyes, watch the conductor and the musicians, or just sit back and let the music take you away.

When do I clap?



Good question. Most pieces of music are broken up into different movements – usually, people only clap at the end of a piece, so there will be silent pauses between movements. On the next page you will see how many movements the pieces in this concert have, and the duration of each piece. But the simplest thing is to wait until the conductor turns around – or when everyone else starts applauding.

The conductor may leave the stage and come back on a few times, and acknowledge the different sections of the orchestra. You can keep clapping as long as you want to – and feel free to cheer and stomp your feet if you really enjoyed the concert!

Can I take photos or videos?



You can take photos and videos on your phone during the applause at the end of a piece of music. **Please switch your phone to silent, make sure the flash is off and dim the brightness of your screen so you don't distract other audience members.** And if you share it to your socials, tag us in your posts! We love seeing what people have captured.

Please leave professional and semi-professional camera gear at home and limit yourself to a phone camera inside the venue.

2026 CONCERT SEASON

MEET THE FELLOWS

Sydney Symphony Fellows in Concert

KARL AMADEUS HARTMANN (1905-1963)

Dance Suite for Wind Quintet (1931)

- i. Lustig (Funny)
- iii. Ruhige (Calm)
- iv. Lebhaft sehr energisch (Lively, very energetic)

ERWIN SCHULHOFF (1894-1942)

Concertino for Flute, Viola and Double Bass (1925)

- ii. Furiant. Allegro furioso
- iii. Andante
- iv. Allegro gaio

LOUIS ANDRIESEN (1939-2021)

Percosse (Beatings) (1959)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

String Quartet No.8 in E minor, Op.59 No.2
(Razumovsky No.2) (1808)

- ii. Molto adagio

SÁNDOR VERESS (1907-1992)

Sonatina for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon (1931)

- i. Allegro giocoso
- ii. Andante – Allegretto – Tempo I
- iii. Grave - Allegrissimo

ALBERT ROUSSEL (1869-1937)

Duo for Bassoon and Double Bass (1925)

MAARTEN ORNSTEIN (born 1967)

Koreri (selections) (2022)

Saturday 21 February, 5pm

St James' King St

Estimated durations

Hartmann – 10 minutes

Schulhoff – 15 minutes

Andriessen – 4 minutes

Beethoven – 13 minutes

Veress – 8 minutes

Roussel – 4 minutes

Ornstein – 10 minutes

The concert will run for
approx. 75 minutes,
with no interval.

All images

By Cassandra Hannagan

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.

Presenting Partner

Coxswain Alliance



Emirates
Principal Partner

WELCOME

Welcome to tonight's performance by the 2026 Sydney Symphony Orchestra Fellows, and the start of a new era for this wonderful Fellowship program.

This year we are throwing open the doors of this exquisite venue at St James' King St and inviting everyone to experience these remarkable young musicians as they take this huge step on the road to becoming fully-fledged professional musicians. This concert is our first opportunity to meet this particular cohort, hear them perform together and get a sense of each of them as musicians and as people.

For nearly 25 years, the Orchestra has proudly watched its Fellows go on to achieve highly successful careers in Australia and internationally, knowing that the opportunities the Program has provided have been fundamental to individual success. The Program offers outstanding young musicians the opportunity to be inspired by the greats on a daily basis – while on the path to becoming leading musicians themselves.

Both the Sydney Symphony and Coxswain Alliance know that in music and in business, great things happen when people are mentored, supported and inspired by leaders and peers, and we are delighted to be the Presenting Partner of the Orchestra's world-renowned Fellowship Program.

All of us at Coxswain Alliance look forward to observing these unique professional careers unfold over time. I wish all of the dedicated and talented 2026 Fellows the very best for their time in this extraordinary program.



Peter Braithwaite,
Founder & Principal, Coxswain Alliance

ABOUT THE MUSIC

KARL AMADEUS HARTMANN (1905-1963)
Dance Suite for Wind Quintet (1931)

Hartmann was major figure of the musical life of post-war Germany, and has been described as the greatest German symphonist of the 20th century.

With the rise of the Nazis he withdrew from musical life in Germany and refused to allow his works to be performed. As a result he was one of the few prominent surviving anti-fascists whom the postwar Allied administration could appoint to a position of responsibility, and he became a vital figure in the rebuilding of West German musical life.

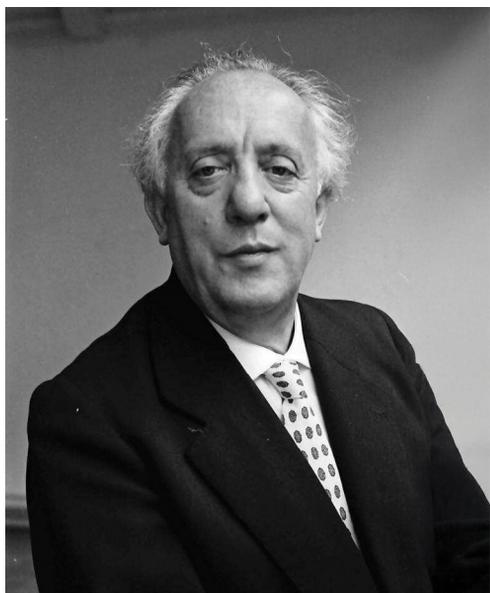
Hartmann's music represents a melting pot of many different styles, from jazz to symphonic forms in the tradition of Bruckner and Mahler. He admired Bach's polyphony and Stravinsky's neoclassicism, and took an interest in the music of his contemporaries Bartók, Kodály and Schoenberg.

ERWIN SCHULHOFF (1894-1942)
Concertino for Flute, Viola and Double Bass (1925)

Schulhoff demonstrated musical aptitude at an early age; he entered the Prague Conservatory at just 10, encouraged by Dvořák. He studied composition and piano in Vienna, Leipzig and Cologne; his teachers included Claude Debussy and Max Reger. He served on the Russian front during World War I, was wounded and was in a prisoner-of-war camp when the war ended.

He was one of the first generation of classical composers to find inspiration in the rhythms of jazz; he also embraced the avant-garde influence of Dadaism and blended these, Czech music, Russian and eastern music, late Romanticism and expressionism into his own unique style.

Schulhoff wrote this Concertino in just four days and draws heavily on folk dances: the second movement is based on the Czech *furiant* (a favourite of Dvořák's), the third on a song from the Carpathian mountains in modern-day Ukraine, and the finale another lively dance.



Karl Amadeus Hartmann in 1962. Photo by Willy Pragher.
Source: Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abt. Staatsarchiv Freiburg, W 134 Nr. 070904b.



Erwin Schulhoff. Image from Radio Praha

ABOUT THE MUSIC

LOUIS ANDRIESSEN (1939–2021)

Percosse (Beatings) (1959)

Louis Andriessen is now widely regarded as the leading Dutch composer of his generation who played a pivotal role in the international new music scene.

From a background of jazz and avant-garde composition, Andriessen evolved a style employing elemental harmonic, melodic and rhythmic materials, heard in totally distinctive instrumentation. His acknowledged admiration for Stravinsky was illustrated by a parallel vigour, clarity of expression, and acute ear for colour. The range of Andriessen's inspiration was wide, from the music of Charles Ives, the art of Mondriaan and medieval poetic visions, to writings on shipbuilding and atomic theory. He tackled complex creative issues, exploring the relation between music and politics, the nature of time and velocity and questions of mortality.

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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

String Quartet No.8 in E minor, Op.59 No.2 (Razumovsky No.2) (1808)

This quartet was published in 1808, placing it squarely in Beethoven's 'heroic' 'middle' period. His hearing loss began in 1798, initially causing a deep depression but ultimately leading to a new and resolute purpose to pour everything into his music.

Beethoven revolutionised music in the first decade of the 19th century: major works included his Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth symphonies, his Third, Fourth and Fifth piano concertos, the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* piano sonatas, his opera *Fidelio*, his Violin Concerto and these 'Razumovsky' string quartets, among many others.

According to his student Carl Czerny, the second movement of this quartet was inspired by Beethoven's contemplation of the starry sky and the music of the spheres; it has a hymnlike quality reminiscent of the Heiliger Dankgesang hymn to the Divine in the Quartet Op.132.



Louis Andriessen in 2018. Photo by Marco Borggreve.



Portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven (1803) by Danish artist Christian Horneman (1765–1844).

ABOUT THE MUSIC

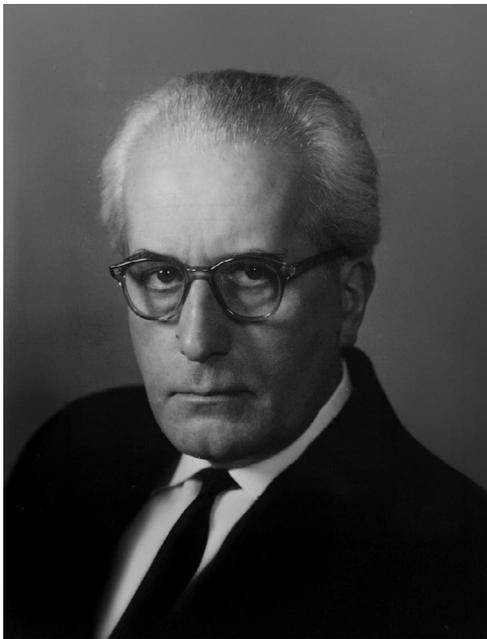
SÁNDOR VERESS (1907-1992)

Sonatina for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon (1931)

Sándor Veress was a Hungarian composer, who eventually emigrated in 1949 to Switzerland where he spent the second half of his life. Although Veress managed to survive the interwar era in Hungary and the ever more repressive regime that followed Hungary's entry into the War on Germany's side, it was the Soviet takeover that drove Veress away. He had been a student of both Kodály and Bartók, succeeded the former as professor of composition at the Budapest Academy in 1943 and was for a long time one of Bartók's assistants in his folk-music research.

The three movement *Trio d'anches* (or Reed Trio) is a fun piece for the listener and performers. The work clearly demonstrates some of the composer's influences with its rhythmic gestures reminiscent of Bartók, and ostinato moments that bring to mind Veress' Hungarian heritage. He plays around with normal sonata form by opening with a jaunty *Allegro giocoso* followed by a slightly more serious central movement. However good humour reasserts itself and the mood of the opening movement is revisited in the closing *Allegrissimo*.

© **Norah O'Leary**



Sándor Veress in Bern, c.1960. Photo by Christian Moser.

ALBERT ROUSSEL (1869-1937)

Duo for Bassoon and Double Bass (1925)

Roussel did not initially seek a career in music; instead he spent several years in the French Navy, including a deployment to southern Vietnam which exposed him to a new world of Asian culture, which later became one of the chief sources of his musical inspiration.

He resigned from the navy in 1894 and went to Paris, where he studied music seriously until 1907, when he was already 38 years old. Unsurprisingly given his interest in Asian music he was initially drawn to French Impressionism, but found a unique personal style with more formal design and a strong emphasis on rhythmic drive, becoming one of the most important French composers of the interwar period.

This Duo for Bassoon and Double Bass was composed in 1925 for the bassist and conductor Serge Koussevitzky, on the occasion of his appointment to the rank of knight in the Order of the Legion of Honor.



Albert Roussel in 1923. Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France/Wikimedia Commons.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

MAARTEN ORNSTEIN (born 1967)

Koreri (selections) (2022)

The composer writes:

Koreri is a suite for octet in 10 parts with instrumental excerpts from a chamber opera called *Opera Papua*. The opera was composed in 2022 and premiered in Amsterdam in May 2023.

The title of the octet refers to ‘Koreri’ - literally the state in which one has shed one’s old skin – a term used to describe the paradisiacal state or state of salvation in which humans lived in primeval times, according to the mythology of the inhabitants of Biak and Numfor in Geelvink Bay near New Guinea. In ancient times, the people on earth and in the land of souls were one, and there was no illness, old age, poverty or death. The people on earth lost the secret of koreri, which has since been known only in the land of souls. However, it is expected that the paradisiacal state will return one day.

Notes by Hugh Robertson unless otherwise credited



Maarten Ornstein. Photo by Deirdre Daly.

ABOUT THE 2026 FELLOWS

LIAM PILGRIM violin

Growing up in Newcastle, Liam Pilgrim relocated to Adelaide in 2017 to undertake studies with Elizabeth Layton at the Elder Conservatorium. Liam then began learning with both Zoe Black and Adam Chalabi at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) in 2022, while also studying chamber music with Sophie Rowell. Here he formed the Rosina Quartet with his close friends, receiving masterclasses from the Brodsky Quartet, Thomas Carroll and Matthew Jones.

While at ANAM, Liam had the opportunity to perform with most of Australia's leading orchestras, with a particular highlight being a part of the Sydney Symphony's performance of Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* in early 2024. Liam collaborated with Lachlan Skipworth as part of the ANAM Set Festival in 2024, premiering Skipworth's *Villanelle* for violin and piano.

A Fellow in 2025, Liam was appointed to trial with the Orchestra following auditions for a Tutti role in our First Violins.



LYDIA SAWIRES violin

In memory of Matthew Krel Chair

Born and raised in Sydney, Lydia started playing violin at the age of nine. Growing up in a large musical family, she knew that music was the path she wanted to take.

Lydia completed her Bachelor of Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where she studied with Janet Davies. Lydia is now in her final year at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) studying with Head of Violin Adam Chalabi, and previously with Zoë Black. Through her time at ANAM, Lydia has performed with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and Auckland Philharmonia. Lydia has also led the ANAM orchestra numerous times and worked with renowned artists such as Simone Young, Anthony Marwood, James Crabb, Michael Collins, Christoffer Sundqvist and the Brodsky quartet.

When she's not playing classical repertoire, Lydia performs in many musical projects including Arabic, and contemporary chamber music. Some highlights include performing with The Middle East, GODTET, Rahim AlHaj and partnering with NIDA and SBS Australia.



NOAH LAWRENCE cello

In memory of Mrs W Stening Chair

Noah is a dynamic young musician hailing from Bendigo, Victoria. He has performed side-by-side with most of Australia's professional orchestras and also as chamber musician and soloist at the Bendigo Chamber Festival and Port Fairy Spring Festival. He was the Principal Cello of the Australian Youth Orchestra in 2024.

Having completed three years of study under Howard Penny at the Australian National Academy of Music, he is excited to be taking the next step as Fellow with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 2025 and 2026. Noah is at home in diverse musical contexts; his goal is always to create connection through performance.



ABOUT THE 2026 FELLOWS

SEBASTIAN COYNE viola
Checketts Family Chair

Sebastian is a dedicated violist whose musical journey began with violin and piano at the age of six. He grew up performing in Suzuki group classes and local contemporary music projects alongside his siblings before transitioning to viola early in primary school. He studied with Louise Ray throughout much of his high school education and later continued at the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, studying with Christopher Cartlidge and Gabrielle Halloran.

After graduating, Sebastian studied at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) under the tutelage of Caroline Henbest, where he was supported by the Georgina Grosvenor Scholarship generously sponsored by the Bokhara Foundation. He is now completing his Bachelor of Music Performance at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, where he studies viola and undertakes a piano minor.

He was awarded the Brett Dean Prize for Best Performance of an Australian Work at ANAM for the world premiere of *Towards the Edge of Google Maps* by Stuart Greenbaum, written for him for the ANAM Set Festival. Chamber music highlights include Schumann's *Piano Quartet* with Anthony Marwood and Schubert's *Quintet in C* with Jakub Jakowicz. Highlights of Sebastian's training also include masterclasses with Lawrence Power, Tim Ridout, and Florian Peelman.

RIO KAWAGUCHI double bass
Christine Bishop Chair

Based in Brisbane, Rio Kawaguchi is studying under Principal Bass of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Phoebe Russell, at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University. In her school years, she studied with the principal bass of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Stuart Thomson.

As a passionate Orchestral musician, she has recently performed in Europe as part of the Australian Youth Orchestra's International tour. And has toured regional Queensland with Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra as a 2025 Upbeat artist. She has played as Principal bass with the QCGU Orchestra in 2024 and 2025 and has been a dedicated member of the Australian Youth Orchestra since 2019.

She has performed with many major Australian Orchestras, including the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and Australian Romantic and Classical Orchestra.



ABOUT THE 2026 FELLOWS

KARA THORPE flute

The Ross Trust Chair

Kara Thorpe is currently in the fourth year of her Bachelor of Flute Performance degree at Sydney Conservatorium, studying with Emma Sholl.

Originally from Tasmania, Kara began her musical journey on the piano when she was five, and later started learning flute. Kara was awarded her AMusA on piano in 2017, and her AMusA on flute in 2018.

Kara has performed as soloist with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra as the winner of the TSO Rising Star competition in 2023, and with the Derwent Symphony Orchestra in 2017. She has won awards at the Flute Society of NSW, Sydney and Hobart Eisteddfods.

Kara is a founding member of the Orpheus Quintet which is the fellowship ensemble at the Australian Festival of Chamber Music for 2026.



AMY CLOUGH oboe

Dugald & Janet Black Chair

Amy Clough is a New Zealand oboist who completed her Bachelor of Music at the New Zealand School of Music, studying Classical Performance Oboe, in 2023.

In 2024, she was awarded the Deane Orchestral Studies scholarship to work towards a Master of Fine Arts (Creative Practice) in Orchestral Studies, which included an internship with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, Amy was a recipient of the Victoria University of Wellington Cammick Scholarship in 2023, which funded travel to Europe to have lessons with renowned oboists.

As well as having freelance experience with a variety of New Zealand orchestra such as the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestra Wellington, Amy was a fellow with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 2025, and this year has also worked with ensembles such as Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and Ensemble Apex.

Amy is excited to once again be Oboe Fellow with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 2026.



ABOUT THE 2026 FELLOWS

JUSTIN WANG clarinet

Black, Morgan-Hunn & Stening Chair

Justin is currently completing his Bachelor of Music degree at the Sydney Conservatorium under the tutelage of Frank Celata where he is the recipient of the Myron Kantor Bequest Scholarship. As a young artist, Justin is enjoying a multifaceted career as a soloist, orchestral musician and chamber player, both in Australia and abroad.

Recently, Justin has performed at international music festivals including the Brevard Music Festival, USA, the Voksenåsen Summer Academy in Norway, and the XIV International Clarinet Seminar in Madrid where he worked with prominent clarinetists, including Yehuda Gilad, Mark Nuccio, Andreas Sundén and Björn Nyman. He is a founding member of the Sydney-based Orpheus Wind Quintet, who have recently been selected as the Fellowship Ensemble at the 2026 Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Cairns.

Justin performs regularly with ensembles including the Australian Youth Orchestra, the Sydney Youth Orchestra and Ensemble Apex.



JAY LEE bassoon

June & Alan Woods Family Bequest Chair

Jay Lee is currently in his second year of bassoon studies at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music under Andrew Barnes. A recipient of the Quinquin Foundation Scholarship, Jay has been a part of distinguished ensembles including the Australian Youth Orchestra, Sydney Lawyer's Orchestra, Caesura Ensemble and the Sydney Youth Orchestra, in which he currently holds the principal chair. Jay is also a new member of the Orpheus Quintet which was recently awarded the Australian Festival of Chamber Music Fellowship. He has also participated in numerous masterclasses, including Whitney Crockett and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Wind Quintet.



SOPHIE KUKULIES trumpet

Warren & Marianne Lesnie Chair

Sophie Kukulies is a professional musician building a flourishing career as a classical trumpeter and educator. Based in Brisbane, she maintains a dynamic portfolio career as both a freelance performer and dedicated teacher. She has recently returned from London where she completed her Master of Performance degree at the Royal Academy of Music graduating with a Distinction and earning the Regency Award for all-round contribution and achievement. In 2023 she held a 12-month contract as associate principal trumpet with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and has continued to enjoy working with them as a casual musician.

Sophie's musical journey began at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, where she graduated her Bachelor of Music degree with an academic excellence award in 2021. Her acclaimed performance of the Gregson Trumpet Concerto at the Queensland Conservatorium Concerto Festival in May 2021 showcased her talent. During her time in London, she worked with the Philharmonia Orchestra and performed with Septura Brass and the London Philharmonic Orchestra as part of the Royal Academy of Music's side-by-side projects.



ABOUT THE 2026 FELLOWS

LUCY SMITH horn

Dr Gary Holmes & Dr Anne Reeckmann Chair

Growing up in Sydney, Lucy began learning the horn in high school with Rafael Salgado. She moved to Melbourne in 2022 to study with Carla Blackwood at the Melbourne Conservatorium.

In 2025, Lucy returned home to study with Rachel Silver and Sam Jacobs at the Sydney Conservatorium, graduating with first class honours.

She has been lucky enough to play casually with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Opera Australia Orchestra, and Orchestra Victoria. Lucy loves orchestral music, the teamwork required to play in a horn section, and is incredibly excited to take part in the SSO fellowship this year.



HARRISON STEELE-HOLMES trombone

Tony Schlosser Chair

From a young age, Harrison was surrounded with the sounds of brass, his parents and family all being involved in brass bands. Quickly captivated, he began playing the trombone at the age of 8. Harrison's love for the trombone grew with his love for classical music, and in the later years of high school, he began dreaming of a career in classical music and performing in one of the world's best orchestras.

Having grown up predominantly as a soloist in his high school years, Harrison has won numerous solo state- and nation-wide competitions, including sections in the Australian national band championships since 2015, finalist and winner of the Australian Youth Classical music competition in 2021, and finalist in 3MBS The Talent in 2019. Since 2019, Harrison has been involved in frequent Australian Youth Orchestra programs and was a part of its most recent International European Tour this year, performing in some of the most famous concert halls in the world like Musikverein in Vienna and the Concertgebouw concert hall in Amsterdam.



LEAH COLUMBINE percussion

Sylvie C Sloane Chair

Leah's percussion journey began at the age of 10. During her school years, she competed in various categories at the Australian Percussion Eisteddfod, winning first place in Junior High Timpani (2015), Intermediate 2-Mallet (2017), and Intermediate Snare Drum (2017). In 2018, she earned a Distinction for the Associate of Trinity College London Diploma in Percussion Performance. She later pursued a Bachelor of Music with Honours at the University of Melbourne, where she received the Wright Prize Award for 'Proficiency in a Musical Instrument' during her second year. In 2022, she was awarded first place in the MSO Snare Drum Award.

Leah currently performs as a casual musician with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. In 2025, she was featured as a marimba soloist with the Stonnington Symphony. Additionally, she served as principal percussionist for the Australian Youth Orchestra from 2023 to 2025, recently returning from AYO's international tour, where she performed in Germany, the Netherlands, and Austria.



ABOUT THE 2026 FELLOWS

PANAGIOTIS KARAMANOS conductor

Panagiotis Karamanos, also known as Pani, developed a passion for music at an early age, which led him to pursue formal studies in music teaching and conducting.

His musical journey began at Sydney's Conservatorium of Music, where he attended the Conservatorium High School starting in Year 7 in 2009. After graduating from the Conservatorium High School he began his Bachelor of Music Education in 2015 and graduated in 2018. He has recently completed his Master's degree in conducting under the guidance of Dr Elizabeth Scott at the end of 2025.

In 2016, Panagiotis founded the Modést Orchestra comprised at the time of university students, aiming to create a collaborative and stress-free environment focused on the joy of making music. Over the years, the Modést Orchestra has grown and matured to expand its roster to include professional musicians from various parts of Sydney. This has enabled the orchestra to perform significant works, including *The Planets* and Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony.

Panagiotis has also been active in the Australian music scene, contributing to various projects and performances that highlight contemporary compositions and sound art. He has worked with various university ensembles at the University of Sydney and UNSW, conducted an Opera Gala concert with Pacific Opera, and collaborated with emerging artists, providing performance opportunities for young concerto soloists and engaging with established Australian composers on significant projects in both Sydney and Melbourne.

As a conductor, Panagiotis also has a strong background in musical theatre, having led musical productions of *The Addams Family*, *Chicago* and *Carrie*. Most recently, he served as an assistant conductor for the combined NIDA and Conservatorium Opera Project in 2024 and was the assistant conductor for their production of Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* in 2025.

As a music educator, Panagiotis works extensively with young musicians through orchestral camps, intensive ensemble programs, and classroom teaching. He is also the conductor of Symphonic Encounters, an educational concert series for primary and secondary schools.

NEIL WANG conductor

Neil Wang is an emerging Australian conductor and violist. He is currently a first-year student undertaking a Bachelor of Music (Performance) in Viola at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, studying under Stuart Johnson and Roger Benedict. He is also a member of the Australian Conducting Academy.



ABOUT THE 2026 FELLOWS

AIJA DRAGUNS conductor

Aija Draguns is a Sydney-based emerging composer and conductor. Her compositions draw inspiration from her Latvian heritage, particularly the folk and choral traditions.

She studied piano, saxophone and singing before attending the Sydney Conservatorium to pursue composition. Aija holds a Bachelor of Music and an Honours degree and is currently completing her Master's, specialising in language in vocal composition under Paul Stanhope.

Her works have been programmed by The Australian Voices, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and Orchestra, National Youth Choir of Australia, Sydney Chamber Choir, Melbourne Trinity College Choir and ensembles across the country.

In addition to teaching music theory at the University of Sydney, Aija is an emerging orchestral and choral conductor. She regularly leads ensembles across Sydney, including the Leichhardt Espresso Chorus and the Sydney Latvian Male Choir: the longest-running Latvian male diaspora choir in the world.

In 2021 she was awarded the Ensemble Apex Conducting Fellowship. The following year she received the Create NSW Conducting Fellowship with the Sydney Youth Orchestras. In 2023, she led her first full orchestral program with the Woollahra Philharmonic Orchestra; in 2024, she participated in conductor training programs with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra under Benjamin Northey and Jessica Cottis.

Aija has been mentored by conductors including Elizabeth Scott, Zahia Ziouani, Kira Omelchenko, Fabian Russell, Ivars Cinkuss, John Lynch and Brett Weymark. She was selected for the 2025 Australian Conducting Academy, where she trained with state orchestras across the country.

Most recently, she premiered and conducted her new opera *In Cosmic Utero* at NIDA's Parade Theatre, in collaboration with director Lindy Hume. For her, composing and conducting go hand-in-hand, offering unique insights into each artform.

JESSICA ZUK conductor

Jessica is a Melbourne-based emerging conductor. Currently the 2025 Assistant Conductor with the Zelman Memorial Symphony Orchestra, she has also worked with the Victorian Youth Symphony Orchestra, Maroondah Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Summer Orchestra and Melbourne Bach Choir. In addition, she is a founding co-Artistic Director of Ascolta Qui, a Melbourne not-for-profit organisation supporting young musicians.

In 2024, Jess completed an Honours year in conducting, studying with Luke Dollman at the Elder Conservatorium in a program delivered in collaboration with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. She has participated in masterclasses and training programs with Jessica Cottis, Alice Farnham, Guido Rumstadt and Keitaro Harada, and is currently mentored by Rick Prakhoff at ZMSO.

Prior to her recent conducting studies, Jess completed Bachelor's and Honours degrees in flute performance at Monash University and the University of Melbourne, respectively, during which time she played with the Melbourne Opera Orchestra and various university orchestras.

Jess also has experience in classical vocal training and enjoys choral singing.



FELLOWSHIP ARTISTIC LEADERS

2026 FELLOWSHIP ARTISTIC LEADERS



Harry Bennetts



David Elton



Matthew Wilkie

2026 FELLOWSHIP MENTORS

Alexandra Osborne

Emma Jezek

Violin

Sandro Costantino

Viola

Kristy Conrau

Cello

Jaan Pallandi

Double Bass

Carolyn Harris

Flute

Alexandre Oguey

Oboe

Alexander Morris

Clarinet

Todd Gibson-Cornish

Matthew Wilkie

Fiona McNamara

Noriko Shimada

Bassoon

Rachel Silver

Horn

Anthony Heinrichs

Trumpet

Christopher Harris

Trombone

Rebecca Lagos

Percussion

HARRY BENNETTS Associate Concertmaster
Judy & Sam Weiss Chair

Sydney-born violinist Harry Bennetts studied at the Australian National Academy of Music under Dr. Robin Wilson, and in the Karajan Academy of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra mentored by concertmaster Noah Bendix-Balgley. His first years of violin lessons were in the Suzuki method and his subsequent teachers were Philippa Paige and Mark Mogilevski.

Following a series of success in national competitions, Harry has performed concerti as soloist with the Melbourne, Tasmanian, Willoughby and Canberra symphony orchestras. He has performed recitals in concert halls that include the Melbourne Recital Centre Salon, UKARIA Cultural Centre, Sydney Opera House Utzon Room, as well as numerous regional centres. He has performed chamber music at festivals in Townsville, Huntington, Baden-Baden, Cologne, Berlin and Melbourne.

Whilst still completing his studies, Harry was accepted into the International Musicians Seminar at Prussia Cove in the class of Thomas Adès and performed as an Emerging Artist with the Australian Chamber Orchestra (with whom he now tours as a guest). During his time studying in Germany he performed regularly with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra at their home in the Philharmonie and on their European tours. He has participated in masterclasses and lessons with Pinchas Zuckerman, Boris Kuschnir, Midori Gotō, Christian Tetzlaff and members of the Belcea and Doric string quartets.

Harry Bennetts plays a 1716 Grancino violin, affectionately named the 'Hazelwood' violin, formerly belonging to Donald Hazelwood AO OBE, concertmaster of the Sydney Symphony from 1965–1998.

In 2019 a generous donor, Vicki Olsson, purchased the violin from Don and loaned it to the Orchestra; in 2024, Olsson donated the violin to the Sydney Symphony - her only stipulation was that the instrument be renamed the 'Hazelwood' Grancino in honour of Don.

FELLOWSHIP ARTISTIC LEADERS

DAVID ELTON Principal Trumpet
Anne Arcus Chair

David Elton joined the Sydney Symphony Orchestra as Principal Trumpet in 2012, having previously held principal trumpet positions with the West Australian and Adelaide symphony orchestras. He has performed and toured as a guest principal with orchestras including the London Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Hong Kong Philharmonic. He has also performed on several occasions with the Australian World Orchestra.

As a soloist, he has performed concertos with the ACO and the Sydney, Adelaide, West Australian and Canberra symphony orchestras, including, with the WASO, the premiere of James Ledger's Trumpet Concerto, which was written for him. As a chamber musician, he is a member of the Australian Brass Quintet and has participated in many chamber music festivals including the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Townsville. He has also toured in Germany with World Brass and Mahler Chamber Brass.

Raised in Sydney, David Elton began studying trumpet at the age of nine and became a student of Paul Goodchild on reaching high school. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Queensland Conservatorium (where he studied with Yoram Levy), and a Master's degree from Northwestern University in Illinois (studying with Charles Geyer and Barbara Butler).

David Elton is on the Brass faculty at the Australian National Academy of Music. He was formerly Head of Brass at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and a guest faculty member at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory in Singapore.

MATTHEW WILKIE Principal Emeritus Bassoon
Nelson Meers Foundation Chair

Matthew Wilkie grew up in Canberra and in 1979, after studying at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, went to Europe, where he ended up staying for 23 years. While studying bassoon in Hanover, Germany with Klaus Thunemann, he was a prize winner at the International Music Competition in Geneva. He has since appeared as soloist with many orchestras, including the Orchestra de la Suisse Romande, Württemberg Chamber Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra of Europe, as well as the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, which he joined as Principal Bassoon in 2000.

He has been a member of the COE since 1986, travelling to Europe five times a year, and has worked under such conductors as Claudio Abbado, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Meta, Roger Norrington, Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Bernard Haitink. He appears on countless recordings with the COE, many of which have received international awards. His solo and chamber music recordings include concertos by Mozart, Vivaldi and Richard Strauss; the complete wind chamber music of Mozart and Richard Strauss; and six trio sonatas by Zelenka. His 2009 recording of Bach and Telemann sonatas, *The Galant Bassoon*, was shortlisted for an ARIA award and has been praised internationally. He has also appeared at many international festivals and is a regular guest at the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Townsville, and is much in demand as a teacher, giving masterclasses in Europe and Japan.

Matthew Wilkie's solo appearances with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra include Mozart's Bassoon Concerto (2008), the premiere of James Ledger's *Outposts* bassoon concerto (2011), which was written for him, and a Playlist series concert (2018).

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