

THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY FELLOWS IN CONCERT

15 MAY 2026

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House



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 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.

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 learning and engagement 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.

PERFORMING IN THIS CONCERT

FIRST VIOLINS

Liam Pilgrim

Alexandra Osborne

Associate Concertmaster

SECOND VIOLIN

Lydia Sawires[†]

VIOLA

Sebastian Coyne[†]

CELLO

Noah Lawrence[†]

DOUBLE BASS

Rio Kawaguchi[†]

FLUTE

Kara Thorpe[†]

OBOE

Amy Clough[†]

CLARINET

Justin Wang[†]

BASSOONS

Jay Lee[†]

Matthew Wilkie

Principal Emeritus

HORN

Lucy Smith[†]

TRUMPETS

Sophie Kukulies[†]

David Elton

Principal

TROMBONES

Harrison Steele-Holmes[†]

Christopher Harris

Principal Bass Trombone

PERCUSSION

Leah Columbine[†]

KEYBOARD

Alexander Yau^{*}

Simon Niemiński^{*}

Bold Principal

^{*} Guest Musician

[°] Contract Musician

[†] Sydney Symphony

Fellow

2026 CONCERT SEASON

THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY FELLOWS IN CONCERT

THE NEXT GENERATION OF AUSTRALIAN TALENT

REUBEN BROWN conductor

2026 SYDNEY SYMPHONY FELLOWS

MUSICIANS OF THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

HOLLY HARRISON (born 1988)

Jabberwock (2015, rev. 2026)

Commissioned the Sydney Symphony Orchestra

JEAN FRANÇAIX (1912-1997)

À huit (For Eight) (1972)

- i. Moderato – Allegrissimo
- ii. Scherzo
- iii. Andante – Adagio
- iv. Mouvement de Valse

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)

Octet (1923)

- i. Sinfonia
- ii. Theme and variations
- iii. Finale

PAUL HINDEMITH (1895–1963)

Kammermusik No.1, Op.24 (1922)

- i. Very fast and wild
- ii. Moderately fast half-notes
- iii. Quartet: very slow and with expression
- iv. Finale 1921: Lively

Friday 15 May, 11am

Tea & Symphony

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

Estimated durations

Harrison – 9 minutes

Françaix – 20 minutes

Stravinsky – 16 minutes

Hindemith – 16 minutes

The concert will run for
approx. 1 hour

Cover image

By Cassandra Hannagan

Estey Reed Organ No.
378630 (1910) supplied and
tuned by Andrew Grahame

We acknowledge the
traditional custodians of the
land and water on which we
work and perform. We pay
our respects to First Nations
Elders past and present.

Presenting Partner

Coxswain  Alliance

Emirates

Principal Partner

WELCOME

Welcome to today's performance in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, as the 2026 Sydney Symphony Orchestra Fellows take centre stage for the first of what we are sure will be many performances in this magnificent venue.

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.

This special one-off performance has been curated by Sydney Symphony Principal musicians and Fellowship Artistic Directors Harry Bennetts, David Elton and Matthew Wilkie. These richly textured works by Igor Stravinsky, Paul Hindemith, Jean Françaix and exciting young Sydney composer Holly Harrison give every Fellow their moment in the spotlight, while also providing plenty of captivating textures for the whole ensemble.

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

YOUR CONCERT AT A GLANCE

HOLLY HARRISON (born 1988)

Jabberwock (2015, rev. 2026)

Harrison draws inspiration from Lewis Carroll's poem, *Jabberwocky*, and its nonsense words that create irregular rhythms and sounds. This 2026 version has been revised to include oboe.

It was premiered by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra Fellows in 2015, in which NASA's *New Horizons* became the first spacecraft to fly past Pluto.

Contemporary music included John Adams's *Scheherazade.2*, Jennifer Higdon's *Viola Concerto* and the premiere of Georges Lentz's *Jerusalem (after Blake)*.



Photo by Steve Broadbent

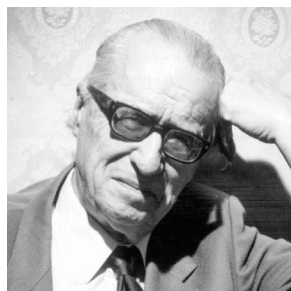
JEAN FRANÇAIX (1912-1997)

À huit (For Eight) (1972)

Inscribed 'To the revered memory of Franz Schubert', and written for the same instrumental combination as his Octet, Françaix's work exhibits a characteristically French style of musical humour in the tradition of Chabrier, Satie and Poulenc.

It was premiered in 1972, the year that saw burglary at the Watergate hotel, and Gough Whitlam elected Prime Minister of Australia.

Contemporary music included Einojuhani Rautavaara's *Cantus Arcticus* and Steve Reich's *Clapping Music*.



Jean Françaix

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

Octet (1923)

The Octet is generally regarded as the beginning of neoclassicism in Stravinsky's music, a major stylistic shift from the neo-primitivist Russian style of *The Rite of Spring*.

It appeared in 1923, Hitler's failed Beer Hall Putsch and the founding of The Walt Disney Company.

Contemporary music included the premieres of Sibelius's Sixth Symphony, Zemlinsky's *Lyric Symphony* and Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto.



Stravinsky c. 1920-25.

PAUL HINDEMITH (1895-1963)

Kammermusik No.1, Op.24 (1922)

Hindemith wrote eight pieces in his *Kammermusik* series during the 1920s; No.1 is the only one that is actually chamber music. After its premiere, one reviewer described it as 'music of a lewdness and frivolity only possible for a very special kind of composer.'

It appeared in 1922, a year that saw Mussolini's National Fascist Party come to power Italy, the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun and the creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

Contemporary music included Nielsen's Fifth Symphony, Ravel's orchestral arrangement of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and Vaughan Williams's *Pastoral Symphony*.



Paul Hindemith in 1923.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.



HELP US CHAMPION THE FUTURE OF MUSIC

The Sydney Symphony Fellowship Program has nurtured the next generation of orchestral musicians for almost 25 years.

Each Fellow receives intensive training and professional development, including masterclasses with visiting artists, dedicated mentorship from Sydney Symphony musicians and the opportunity to perform with the Orchestra.

To find out how you can support Australia's Emerging Artists, please contact Gabriela Postma on (02) 8215 4625 or visit sydneysymphony.com/fellowship

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

REUBEN BROWN conductor

Hailing from the deep south of Aotearoa New Zealand, Reuben Brown (Ngāi Tāmanuhiri, Ngāti Rongomaiwahine, Rongowhakaata) was the 2025 New Zealand Assistant Conductor-in-Residence with the Auckland Philharmonia. In this role, he made his debut with the Philharmonia and the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, and assisted both visiting and resident conductors. In 2026, Reuben continues to assist Sydney Symphony Orchestra Chief Conductor Simone Young and will conduct the SSO Fellows in May. Committed to the development of young musical talent in Aotearoa, he leads the 2026 NZ Secondary Schools' Symphony Orchestra, both to fuel his own passion and to encourage theirs.

Reuben debuted with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (NZSO) in 2023 with Christmas Brass at Te Papa Museum. Following this, he assisted NZSO Artistic Advisor and Principal Conductor Gemma New on multiple programmes. As a 2022–2024 NZSO Conducting Fellow, Reuben was mentored by Music Director Emeritus James Judd and Principal Conductor-in-Residence Hamish McKeich, alongside international conductors André de Ridder and Miguel Harth-Bedoya. He recorded four Kiwi works for the NZSO/CANZ Composer Workshops, and has conducted the NZSO National Youth Orchestra, and the NZSO's Tamariki Time and Open Doors touring concerts.

One of Aotearoa's emerging talents, Reuben was one of 12 artists selected to perform alongside international luminaries in the Michael Hill International Violin Competition's 2025 Whakatipu Music Festival. Here, Reuben received coaching from leading choral conductor, Dr. Karen Grylls, whilst working with choirs and small ensembles.

As a performer, Reuben plays euphonium with the Royal New Zealand Air Force Band and Wellington Brass Band - Aotearoa's premier brass band - where he is also Associate Musical Director. He recently conducted the band at the 2026 National Brass Band Championships to a podium finish. As a previous Musical Director for the National Secondary Schools' Development Brass Band, he is a proponent for young brass talent.

An honours graduate of Te Kōkī – New Zealand School of Music, Reuben co-founded Wellington's Gallery Orchestra, performing in unique collaborations. In 2023, he conducted the ensemble for a forthcoming album with Kiwi artist Arjuna Oakes. Other conducting engagements include the Auckland Symphony Orchestra, Manawatū Sinfonia, Virtuoso Strings Orchestra, St Kilda Brass Band, Te Kōkī ensembles, and numerous Wellington-based groups.



Photo by Sadbbh Photography

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT HOLLY HARRISON

Holly Harrison is an Australian composer from Western Sydney. Her music is driven by the nonsense literature of Lewis Carroll, embracing stylistic juxtapositions, the visceral energy of rock, and whimsical humour. Highly in-demand, Holly's works are frequently heard across Australia, Asia, Europe and the USA. Her music has been described as "exploding off the page", full of "riotous energy, eclectic rhythmic complexity" and "inventive, witty and invested with thrilling dynamism and momentum". *Limelight* has hailed her as "writing some of the most exciting works to come out of Australia over the past decade". Her music is published by Wise Music G. Schirmer Australia.

2026 sees the world premiere of her concerto for classical accordion, written for virtuoso James Crabb and co-commissioned by the Adelaide, Queensland, Tasmanian and West Australian Symphony Orchestras. Recent highlights include a national tour of *Hovercraft* by theremin superstar Carolina Eyck and the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and the premiere of her sax concerto, *Superhighway*, by Matt Styles and the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. Holly was previously Composer in Residence with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra from 2020-2022 and Composer in Residence at the 2024 Canberra International Music Festival.

Holly has been recognised multiple times by the APRA AMCOS Art Music Awards, including finalist nominations for *Daredevil* (2024) and *Splinter* (2021), and winning Performance of the Year for *Lobster Tales and Turtle Soup* by Eighth Blackbird (2018).

She holds a Doctor of Creative Arts from Western Sydney University and is currently Composer in Residence at The King's School, North Parramatta. A committed mentor and educator, she leads workshops and seminars nationally, supporting emerging composers.



Photo by Steve Broadbent

ABOUT JABBERWOCK

The composer writes:

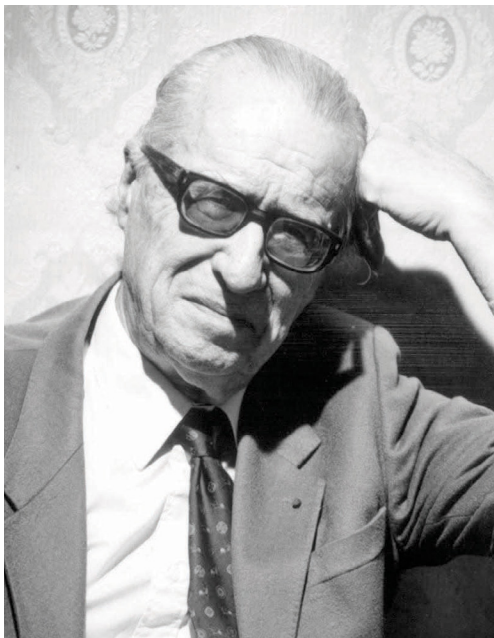
Jabberwock draws inspiration from Lewis Carroll's nonsense poem, *Jabberwocky*, from the second Alice novel, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871). The Jabberwock is a fictitious and seemingly frightening creature with 'jaws that bite' and 'claws that catch', who is slayed at the end by a nameless character. The poem is famous for its use of portmanteau words, where two meanings are packed up into one word: for example, 'frumious' is a combination of 'furious' and 'fuming', and 'frabjous' of 'fair, fabulous, and joyous'. *Jabberwock* features text from the original poem, most of which has been rearranged, cut up, and added to. This takes the form of narration, rap, and spell-like rhythmic chanting, suggesting a conjuring up of the creature. The Jabberwock is personified throughout by the lowest instrument of each section: contrabassoon, trombone and double bass.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The structure of *Jabberwock* can be divided into three main sections. The first, where the Jabberwock is alive and well, up to all kinds of mischief and terrorising whimsical creatures ('raths' – green pigs, according to Humpty Dumpty, and 'borogroves' – shabby-looking birds with a mop-like appearance) in the 'tulgey' wood. The second section sees the creature hunted and slain with the 'snicker-snack' of the 'vorpal blade' wielded by our hero, while the third is a rejoicing of the Jabberwock's death; a 'frabjous' day. *Jabberwock* takes some liberties with the original poem's story; this final section wonders whether the Jabberwock was all bark and no...bite, and whether there was in fact a more fearsome predator – the frumious Bandersnatch! This ending could instead be interpreted as the Jabberwock's last hurrah in a kind of 'choose your own adventure' style.

ABOUT JEAN FRANÇAIX

Probably because he composed so many small, approachable works in neo-classical style featuring wind instruments, many of them for young performers, Jean Françaix is usually thought of as a composer of trifles, pleasant, characteristically French program fillers. Yet in 1942 Poulenc described Françaix and Messiaen together as the only young French composers who took serious notice of modern trends. Ravel and Stravinsky were clearly his inspiration in several much larger early works, now alas seldom heard, like the arresting visionary war-time oratorio *The Apocalypse of St John* (1939-42), the opera *The Hand of Glory* (after Gérard de Nerval's novel), a symphony (1932), the ballet *The Emperor's New Clothes* (1932) and concertos. Today, his best-known larger work is his formidable Clarinet Concerto (1968). Less known about, but still more widely heard, were his twelve film scores for the great French film director Sacha Guitry, who punningly described Françaix as 'the most French of French composers'. Françaix's soundtracks for Guitry included *Les perles de la couronne* (1937), *Napoléon* (1955), and *If Paris Were Told to Us* (1956).



Jean Françaix

By the 1970s, when this octet was composed, Françaix was considered by French modernists like Boulez to be irredeemably conservative. Yet, as he protested at the time, 'Though my works are not considered contemporary, I am not yet dead!'

Dating from 1972 when Françaix was 60, his Octet *À Huit* (For 8) was composed for the Vienna Octet, originally founded by its first fiddler Willi Boskovsky, dedicated to the memory of Franz Schubert and intended to be a companion work to Schubert's great Octet, whose instrumentation it shares. The work is in four straightforward movements, with a further and later Viennese reference – to Strauss (not Schubert) waltzes, in which Boskovsky (an André Rieu of his day) was a specialist – in the finale.

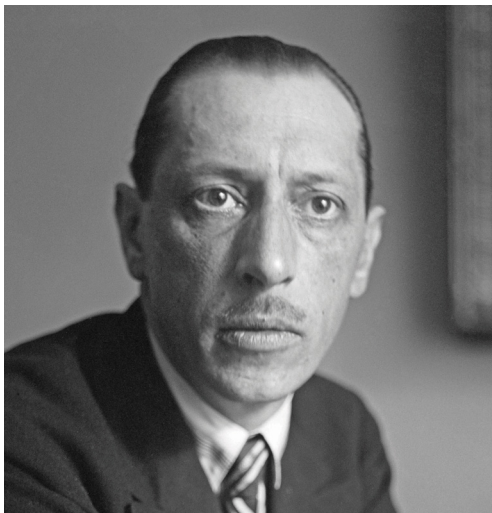
Graeme Skinner © 2010

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT STRAVINSKY'S OCTET

The Octet, begun in 1922, is the first work in which Stravinsky's neo-classical style declares itself in all its purity. Someone unsympathetic to that style recognised the cleverness of the music, but recommended it only to enthusiasts for Stravinsky's most poker-faced manner. That enthusiasm has grown, recognising music like this Octet as self-sufficient, rather than emotive music. This was the composer's aim: 'My Octet is a musical object', he wrote, and indeed it invites contemplation of its ingenious musical devices. Yet its form also harks back to the divertimento music of 18th century composers, and Stravinsky's 'rediscovery' of this medium, he tells us, came to him in a dream. 'I found myself (in my dream state) in a small room surrounded by a small number of instrumentalists who were playing some very agreeable music'. On waking, he couldn't recall the music, but remembered counting eight instruments - pairs of bassoons, trumpets and trombones, and one each of flute and clarinet. 'I awoke from this little dream concert in a state of delight, and the next morning I began to compose the Octet'.

Stravinsky's new objectivism coincided with his 'discovery' of sonata form, and the first movement is a sonata allegro with slow introduction, a form to be found in certain Haydn symphonies. It is quite probable, in spite of Stravinsky's dream explanation, that this music was composed first, and that the dream provided the solution as to the medium. Stravinsky also observed that the choice of wind instruments led to 'a certain rigidity of form'. For the second movement, the first idea that came to him was the waltz forming one of the variations. From this he derived the theme, which is followed by the element which returns, modified, in the course of the variations. Stravinsky called this the 'ribbon of scales' variation, for reasons which will be obvious.



Stravinsky c. 1920-25.

The final variation, a fugato, is the culmination of the contrapuntal invention so striking in this movement, and for which Stravinsky cited a model in Bach's Two-part Inventions. Then a flute cadenza makes the link to the final movement, a Rondo, with a typically Stravinskian way of saying 'the end': chords in a compound metre, hesitant yet final. The first performance of the Octet, in October 1923, marked Stravinsky's debut as a conductor (and more technique than he had was needed for the tricky music in an unfamiliar style). This took place in the cavernous auditorium of the Paris Opera, where Stravinsky's insect-like gesticulations in front of his intimate group of players must have given the impression (Eric Walter White suggests) of viewing the performance through the wrong end of a telescope.

David Garrett © 2005

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT PAUL HINDEMITH

Germany spent the 1920s reeling from its defeat in the First World War: economically and militarily exhausted, afflicted by hyperinflation and political extremism and isolated diplomatically. Composers were torn between a longing for the Romantic past that had been shattered by the war, a nationalist response to their military humiliation and embracing the modern sounds of the 20th century. The Golden Twenties saw a period of great creativity in German literature, cinema, theatre, musical works art and architecture, inspired by American jazz, Impressionist and Expressionist painters in Paris, Cubists and more.

Of course this gave rise to conservative reactionaries complaining that Germany was abandoning its heritage and traditional values: Hitler's rise to power was marked by his cries for a return to an authentic German culture.

Hindemith wasn't especially interested in cultural unification and spent the 1920s experimenting with wind instruments and taking inspiration from jazz. His *Kammermusik* series can be seen as a direct rejection of the emotional excesses of Romanticism and a return to Baroque values like polyphony – a style that would come to be known as neoclassicism when Stravinsky did it a few years later.



Paul Hindemith in 1923. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

ABOUT *KAMMERMUSIK* NO.1

Kammermusik No.1 was premiered in July 1922 and conducted by Hermann Scherchen, one of the great advocates for contemporary music who would support the work of works by Richard Strauss, Webern, Berg, Varèse, Xenakis and Luigi Nono throughout his career. After the premiere, Hindemith was stamped as a bad boy of music, with one reviewer writing:

We've reached it at last! Modern German music has finally managed to embrace today's lifestyle having its fling at its most frivolous and vulgar. The man who brought about this wonder is the composer Paul Hindemith in his *Kammermusik* op. 24/1. One is confronted with a kind of music the likes of which no German composer with an artistic attitude has ever even dared think about, let alone write, music of a lewdness and frivolity only possible for a very special kind of composer.

An odd thing to say about this cheerful, irreverent suite with its strong rhythms and sparkling instrumentation. Certainly it pays homage to Hindemith's many years performing in dance bands and musical comedy orchestras in and around Frankfurt, and yes, the foxtrot in the finale may be a bit helter skelter for those of a more Wagnerian disposition. But hardly the sort of thing that should have seen Joseph Goebbels denounce Hindemith as an 'atonal noisemaker'.

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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.

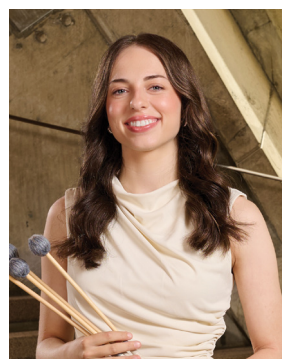


LEAH COLUMBINE percussion

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.



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

Benjamin Ward
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).

THANK YOU

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra is grateful for the generous support of all our Fellowship Patrons. The Fellowship Program receives leadership support from Paul Salteri AO & Sandra Salteri, Patricia H Reid Endowment, Jenny Dines Charitable Trust and the Estate of the late Helen MacDonnell Morgan.

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