

FELLOWS FAREWELL

17 OCTOBER 2026

St James' King St



Fellowship 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.

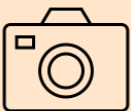
When do I clap?



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 everyone else starts applauding.

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

FELLOWS FAREWELL

SYDNEY SYMPHONY FELLOWS IN CONCERT

ELISABETH LUTYENS (1906–1983)

Chamber Concerto No.1, Op.8, No.1 (1939–40)

- i. Theme and variations
- ii. Aria – Adagio
- iii. Scherzo – Allegro scherzando
- iv. Rondo – Allegro con molto

FANNY HENSEL (1805–1847)

String Quartet in E flat major (1834)

- i. Adagio ma non troppo
- ii. Allegretto

HANNS EISLER (1898–1962)

Nonet No.2 (1940–41)

- i. Allegretto molto
- ii. Allegro
- iii. Allegretto
- iv. Allegretto
- vii. Comodo
- viii. Marcia funebre à la Mexicana
- ix. Finale: Allegro spirito

This work, published by Verlag Neue Musik, has been supplied by Clear Music Australia Pty Ltd as the hire agents in Australia & New Zealand.

LOUISE FARRENC (1804–1875)

Nonet in E flat major, Op.38 (1849)

- i. Adagio – Allegro
- ii. Andante con moto
- iii. Scherzo, Vivace
- iv. Adagio – Allegro

Saturday 17 October, 5pm

St James' King St

2027 SYDNEY SYMPHONY FELLOWS

LYDIA SAWIRES violin
SEBASTIAN COYNE viola
NOAH LAWRENCE cello
RIO KAWAGUCHI double bass
KARA THORPE flute
JUSTIN WANG clarinet
JAY LEE bassoon
LUCY SMITH horn
SOPHIE KUKULIES trumpet
HARRISON STEELE-HOLMES trombone
LEAH COLUMBINE percussion

SYDNEY SYMPHONY MUSICIANS

CLAIRE HERRICK violin
VICTORIA BIHUN violin
CALLUM HOGAN oboe

Estimated durations

Lutyens – 8 minutes
Hensel – 9 minutes
Eisler – 16 minutes
Farrenc – 29 minutes

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

Cover image

By Cassandra Hannagan

Fellowship Partner

Coxswain  **Alliance**

Emirates

Principal Partner

HELP US CHAMPION THE FUTURE OF MUSIC

Sydney Symphony Fellowship
Presenting Partner

Coxswain
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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



WELCOME

Welcome to this final performance by the 2026 Sydney Symphony Orchestra Fellows.

This has been a significant year for the Fellowship Program, the first time that the Fellows' performances have been opened to the public. Thank you for joining us and supporting them as they take this step towards becoming professional musicians. Our thanks also to everyone at St James' King St for the use of their venue.

For nearly 25 years, the Orchestra has watched its Fellows go on to careers in Australia and internationally. The Program has played a part in that success, giving young musicians the opportunity to be inspired by the Orchestra's players on a daily basis.

Both the Sydney Symphony and Coxswain Alliance know that in music and in business, people achieve more when they are mentored and supported by leaders and peers. Coxswain Alliance is delighted to be the Presenting Partner of the Orchestra's Fellowship Program.

It has been exciting to watch the Fellows develop over their year in the Program and all of us at Coxswain Alliance look forward to seeing how their careers unfold.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Braithwaite'.

Peter Braithwaite
Founder & Principal, Coxswain Alliance

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ELISABETH LUTYENS (1906–1983) **Chamber Concerto No.1, Op.8, No.1** (1939–40)

Born in London in 1906, Elisabeth Lutyens was one of five children of Lady Emily Bulwer-Lytton, a member of an aristocratic family, and the prominent English architect Sir Edwin Lutyens.

Elisabeth aspired to be a composer from an early age, and at 16 enrolled at the École Normale de Musique de Paris to pursue her musical education, living with a young composer, Marcelle de Manziarly, who had trained with Nadia Boulanger. She left Paris in 1923 to accompany her mother to India, but upon returning to England studied at the Royal College of Music from 1926 to 1930.

While at RCM Lutyens turned away from the ‘overblown sound’ of Mahler, joining with a small group of other female students devoted to modern music by the likes of Debussy and Britten. (That dislike extended to her contemporaries including Vaughan Williams, Holst, Ireland and Bax, later dismissing them as ‘the cowpat school’ and disparaging their ‘folky-wolky melodies on the cor anglais’.)

Lutyens juggled her career with a turbulent family life: two unhappy marriages, four children and problems with alcohol addiction and mental health. Her second husband was essentially unemployed from 1939 until his death in 1962, and Lutyens composed to support the family: she became the first female British composer to score a feature film in 1948, and worked consistently on Hammer horror films for many years, as well as music for documentary films and BBC radio and TV programs. (During these years she was frequently heard to quip, ‘Do you want it good, or do you want it Wednesday?’)

It was after the Second World War that Lutyens began to build her audience, even earning the nickname of ‘12-Note Lizzie’ from musical traditionalists, though she claimed in letters to Stravinsky that she had independently invented serialism before she had ever heard Anton Webern’s music.



1939 bromide print of Elisabeth Lutyens by Bassano Ltd.
© National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG x83093.

By the late 1960s she came into greater prominence, with a number of important commissions for the Proms, Cheltenham Music Festival and more. In 1969 she was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE).

Her **Chamber Concerto No.1** was published in 1939 but begun earlier – she supposedly had to put it away in despair at Neville Chamberlain’s declaration of war against Nazi Germany.

Written for oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, violin, viola and cello it employs serialist methods but with elegant rigour and intense lyricism in a way that is totally her own.

A future pupil, composer Robert Saxton, later observed of her, ‘She is often thought of, and admired, as the first 20th-century British composer to use serial technique. Thirty years after her death, a clearer perspective reveals that she employed the principles of 12-note composition at the service of a highly individual vision, technique being invariably the servant of her often burning inspiration.’

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

FANNY HENSEL (1805–1847) **String Quartet in E flat major** (1834)

Fanny Hensel was born Fanny Mendelssohn, a member of a prominent Leipzig family and older sister to Felix. The siblings both received a thorough musical education and both showed tremendous promise as both pianists and composers, but despite Fanny's abilities – one of their teachers wrote that she 'could give you something of [Johann] Sebastian Bach. This child is really something special.' – her musical career was discouraged by her family. In an 1820 letter, her father Abraham wrote, 'While music will perhaps become Felix's profession, for you it can and must only be an ornament, never the basis of your being and doing.'

Despite this lack of support she continued to compose in private, producing over 450 works including the string quartet you will hear today, a piano trio, a piano quartet, an orchestral overture, four cantatas, more than 125 pieces for solo piano and over 250 songs. Most of these were unpublished in her lifetime.

In 1829 Fanny married the artist Wilhelm Hensel who was supportive of her musical ambitions. The couple moved in artistic circles and travelled widely: on a trip to Southern Europe they spent time with young composers who had won the Prix de Rome (including Charles Gounod), whose respect for Fanny as a musician boosted her self-esteem, and she received positive feedback from others in German musical life.

In 1846, after having been approached by two publishing firms, she published a collection of her songs. The following year she had many meetings with Clara Schumann, at the time a celebrated pianist and composer as well as the wife of Robert.

Fanny died of complications from a stroke in 1847; Felix died of the same cause less than six months later.



Portrait of Fanny Hensel (1842) by German artist Moritz Daniel Oppenheim (1800–1882). Source: Jewish Museum, New York City/Wikimedia Commons.

Fanny's **String Quartet in E flat major** – her only string quartet – began life as a piano sonata, written in the weeks between her marriage and the return of Felix from his famous trip to Great Britain. Fanny never finished the sonata, but five years later repurposed it into one of her greatest works.

While demonstrating clear influences from both Beethoven and her brother, Fanny's quartet is a unique work that moves far beyond the established rules of the day. Fanny expressed doubts about her ability to handle large-scale forms such as a string quartet, writing that she 'lacked the ability to sustain ideas properly and give them the needed consistency'. But despite the lack of formal, traditional structure her ideas are clear and the emotional journey rich and satisfying.

Composed nearly a decade before Robert Schumann's earliest quartets and 30 years before those of Brahms, one is left to wonder the ways in which music may have developed if Fanny had been given the opportunities, and lived as long a life, as some of her better-known contemporaries.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

HANNS EISLER (1898–1962)

Nonet No.2 (1940–41)

Hanns Eisler was an Austrian and German composer, best known for composing the national anthem of East Germany and his long artistic association with Bertolt Brecht.

Born in Leipzig but raised in Vienna, Eisler was 18 when the First World War broke out and was drafted into the army, serving on the front lines where he was injured several times.

After the war Eisler returned to Vienna and studied music with Arnold Schoneberg from 1919-1923. Eisler was the first of Schoenberg's students to adopt the twelve-tone, serial technique of his mentor. In 1925, however, Eisler moved to Berlin and became close friends with Brecht, with his music becoming increasingly political bearing more and more influences from popular styles such as jazz and cabaret.

Eisler wrote music for several of Brecht's plays, and together they wrote a popular militant anthem sung often during protests and demonstrations in the turmoil of the Weimar Republic. When the Nazis came to power in 1933 their work was dubbed 'degenerate music' (Entartete Musik) and banned; both fled the country. Eisler lived a peripatetic life in Europe for many years before settling in the United States in 1938, living first in New York before moving to Los Angeles in 1942, reuniting with Brecht who had gone west the previous year.

Eisler found success writing film scores in Hollywood, with two – *Hangmen Also Die!* and *None but the Lonely Heart* – nominated for Oscars in 1944 and 1945. But his success was interrupted by the Cold War and he was one of the first artists blacklisted by Hollywood. He was brought before Joseph McCarthy's infamous House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) and accused of being 'the Karl Marx of music' – his cause not helped by the fact that his brother was a communist journalist and his sister had been a leader of the Communist Party of Germany in the 1920s, but had turned into an anti-Stalinist informer upon emigrating to the US.



Hanns Eisler in 1940. Source: United States Library of Congress Prints and Photographs division, digital ID ds.01865/ Wikimedia Commons.

Eisler's supporters – including his friends Charlie Chaplin, Igor Stravinsky, Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein – organised concerts to raise money for his defense, but Eisler was deported in 1948.

Eisler returned to Austria and later moved to East Berlin, where he continued to work and even wrote an opera inspired by the legend of Faust. But the political and cultural upheaval of the time continued to stymie his opportunities; he died in 1962.

His **Nonet No.2** dates from 1940–41, when he was living in New York and teaching composition at The New School for Social Research.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

LOUISE FARRENC (1804–1875) **Nonet in E flat major, Op.38 (1849)**

Louise Farrenc was a composer, pianist and teacher of considerable significance in France in the mid-19th century.

She began piano studies at an early age and, showing great promise, was given lessons by significant teachers including Ignaz Moscheles and Johann Nepomuk Hummel. This, coupled with talent in composer, convinced her parents to let her study with Anton Reicha at the Conservatoire de Paris at the age of just 15. These lessons had to be private, as the Conservatoire did not formally admit female students at the time.

Farrenc spent the 1830s performing as a soloist, her reputation growing to the point that in 1842 she was appointed as Professor of Piano at the very same school that would not admit her as a student little more than a decade prior. Farrenc held this position for 30 years, widely acknowledged as one of the best piano teachers in Europe, with many of her students graduating with first prizes and becoming professional musicians.

Besides her teaching and performing career she also produced and edited an influential book, *Le Trésor des pianistes*, about early music performance style and was twice awarded the Prix Chartier of the Académie des Beaux-Arts.

As a composer, Farrenc's early focus was on piano music but grew outwards over the years, with her catalogue ultimately including chamber music for a wide variety of ensembles, two overtures and three symphonies.

Prominent in her repertoire is her **Nonet for winds and strings, Op.38**, a sensation at its premiere in 1850 and one that convinced her employers at the Conservatoire to raise her pay to be equal with that of her male counterparts – practically unheard of for the time.



1855 drawing of Louise Farrenc. Source: Gallica Digital Library (digital ID btv1b8417614m) / Wikimedia Commons.

Written in four movements it naturally owes something to earlier large-scale chamber works including Beethoven's Septet, Schubert's Octet and Spohr's Nonet, but as it develops it becomes abundantly clear that this is a talented composer with a unique voice.

Scored for a string quartet and wind quintet together it is the seamless integration of the instruments that demonstrates Farrenc's mastery, maintaining a full, rich sound while always maintaining energy and movement.

From the stately chords of the opening that make the nine instruments sound like an entire orchestra to the lively finale, this is a work of tremendous richness that takes the listener on a compelling journey combining Classical elegance and Romantic feeling.

All notes by Hugh Robertson © 2026

PARTNERS IN TRANSFORMATION

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power of people
in music, and
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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 Zoë 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 and 2026, 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.

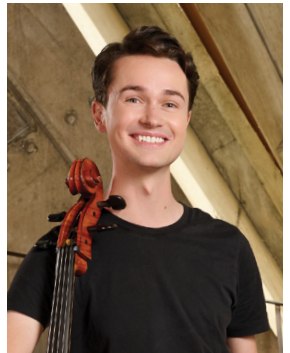


NOAH LAWRENCE cello

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 orchestras 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.



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, with 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.

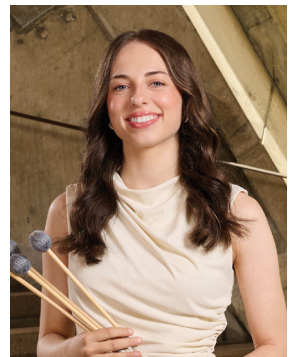


LEAH COLUMBINE percussion

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

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

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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