



Barber & Prokofiev



QUEENSLAND SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

14+15 MAR 2025

CONCERT HALL, QPAC



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

Queensland Symphony Orchestra acknowledges the traditional custodians of Australia.

We acknowledge the cultural diversity of Elders, both past and present, and the significant contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to

Queensland and Australia.

Photos by Sam Muller

WELCOME

Welcome to the 2025 Maestro Season!

Thank you for joining us for the first concert of our Maestro Series with a program that showcases exceptional works and even more exceptional talent, led by the incomparable Jessica Cottis as our guest conductor.

Opening the concert, we put the proverbial pedal to the metal with Australian composer Matthew Hindson’s *Speed*, a high-energy rush of energy which increasingly mirrors the relentless pace of modern life.

At the heart of the program, we are honoured to be joined by James Ehnes as he takes the stage for Samuel Barber’s Violin Concerto. Renowned for his technical brilliance and deep musicality, Ehnes will bring this soaring, lyrical masterpiece to life, drawing us into its breathtaking beauty before unleashing fiery virtuosity within the piece’s final movement.

To close our first Maestro concert of 2025, our Orchestra will deliver Prokofiev’s Fifth Symphony. Written as a tribute to human resilience and triumph, this symphony’s sweeping grandeur and emotional depth make it a fitting finale. Sit back and let these world-class artists take you on a remarkable musical journey.

IN THIS CONCERT

Conductor	Jessica Cottis
Soloist	James Ehnes, violin

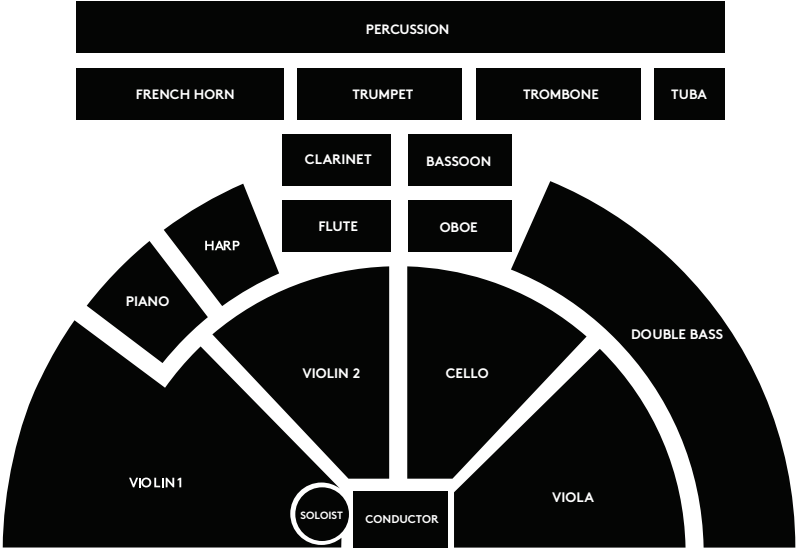
PROGRAM - Friday

HINDSON	<i>Speed</i>	16'
BARBER	Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op.14	25'
PROKOFIEV	Symphony No.5 in B flat, (Fri movement I only)	14'

PROGRAM - Saturday

HINDSON	<i>Speed</i>	16'
BARBER	Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op.14	25'
INTERVAL		20'
PROKOFIEV	Symphony No.5 in B flat, Op.100	46'

IF YOU'RE NEW TO THE ORCHESTRA



WHO SITS WHERE

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

STRINGS

These instruments produce sound by bowing or plucking stretched strings.

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

WOODWIND

Wind instruments produce sound by being blown into.

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

KEYBOARD

Keyboard instruments are played by pressing keys.

- Piano
- Celeste
- Organ

BRASS

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

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

PERCUSSION

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

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

WHO'S ON STAGE TODAY



BEFORE WE BEGIN

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

Formalist

Music which has its meaning determined by its form.

Cadence

The end of a phrase in which the melody or harmony creates a sense of resolution.

Dissonance

The impression of tension or clash experienced by a listener when certain combinations of tones or notes are sounded together.



LISTENING GUIDE

MATTHEW HINDSON (BORN 1968)

Speed

Is it the shark from *Jaws*? Did you see James Bond darting away in his tux? Are we in for a high-speed car chase? These thoughts may race through your mind when you hear the start of *Speed* – a wild ride through the sounds of the orchestra. It's cinematic, it's adrenaline-inducing, and it's as fun as a '90s dance party.

Double bass builds tension from the beginning of *Speed*, echoing the scores of John Williams (there's your *Jaws* influence). After, brass tones clash in the spirit of a mid-century crime film – will the mystery be solved before time runs out? From there, percussion leaps into play with a relentless beat that shows no signs of slowing down.

Speed was written in the mid-'90s and exists firmly within its era. Wollongong-born composer Matthew Hindson bridged the gap between the classical and contemporary, using the traditional instruments of the orchestra to create a sound world that's far from traditional. Techno and pop influences, which may be heard in the rapid and repetitive four-on-the-floor beat, are juxtaposed against daring themes from the various instruments. 'Aggressively hyperactive,' Hindson writes in his score. It's extra loud (*ff*), and as fast as a runner's heartbeat (156 beats per minute).

Then, lightning-quick, it all changes. Strings lay a gentler bed of sound – for a short while, anyway. This section makes a country Western-style transition back to the original pitch-bending brass theme.

At the time he wrote this composition, Hindson was a fairly young composer. He studied with leaders in the field – including Peter Sculthorpe and Ross Edwards – then became one of the leaders himself. Hindson's works have been performed across the globe, and his knowledge of music shared through his teachings at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and the TSO Australian Composers School. He continues to compose.



LISTENING GUIDE

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)

Violin Concerto, Op.14

I. Allegro

II. Andante

III. Presto in moto perpetuo

Artistic differences. They happen to the best – and they’re not easy to resolve. Samuel Barber (the composer behind the heart-wrenching *Adagio for Strings*) wrote a perfectly fine concerto for violin. But the soloist’s teacher didn’t like it, and that was that.

Actually, there’s a bit more to the story – let’s backtrack. Barber wrote his first-and-last Violin Concerto around 1939, having been commissioned by Samuel Fels. Fels was the rich president of a soap company who enjoyed sharing his wealth with worthy recipients. He became a philanthropist, and one of the artists to benefit from his support was Barber. Fels commissioned Barber to produce a brand-new concerto for Iso Briselli, a young Russian-born virtuoso who came to America in the '20s. Briselli studied at the Curtis Institute of Music; Barber was there at the time, too.

Barber fulfilled the commission – and this is where things grew complicated. Briselli had a rather arrogant teacher named Albert Meiff who disliked Barber’s concerto. He said he could do a better job of writing one himself! Because of their artistic differences, the premiere was cancelled. It would take another two years for the work to be presented to the public – and poor Briselli was not at the helm. If you’ve ever thrown a basketball, you may recognise the brand name Spalding; this family produced a competent violinist named Albert Spalding, and it was he who premiered the work with the Philadelphia Orchestra.



The music has a lovely ‘lyrical’ introductory section, as Barber stated in his own notes accompanying the music. The soloist begins immediately with no preamble from the orchestra. You’ll hear call and response as one instrument makes a statement and another responds in a similar fashion; a soft and pleasant conversation between the soloist and the orchestra. Then, despite the work being designed to showcase the virtuosic violin, you’ll hear an oboe come to the fore. This woodwind solo takes up a large portion of the second movement, which is marked in the score with words such as *tranquillo* (tranquil), *dolce* (sweet), and *animando* (animated) – so you can expect a vast range of emotions in this expressive music. Violin then scurries into the third and final movement with notes so fast, you’ll have trouble counting them (but if you’d like to, they’re grouped into triplets – three notes squeezed into a space that usually fits two). The conclusion is furiously bright.

©Stephanie Eslake



LISTENING GUIDE

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)

Symphony No.5 in B flat, Op.100

I. Andante

II. Allegro moderato

III. Adagio

IV. Allegro giocoso

As Prokofiev raised his baton to conduct the premiere of his Fifth Symphony, Moscow shook with the sound of cannon-fire. It was January 1945, and the fusillade announced to the citizens that the Red Army had crossed the Vistula River in its rout of the invading Germans. If the cannon-fire signalled the turn of the war's tide, the symphony announced a new beginning. Its epic scale and optimistic trajectory perfectly reflected the mood of the time. Prokofiev later wrote that in this work 'I wanted to sing of the free, happy man, his mighty power, his chivalry and his purity of spirit...'.

We need, of course, to understand the deliberate ambiguity of such remarks: Prokofiev was well aware of the lack of freedom and happiness under Stalin; his description might sound like that of the new 'Soviet man' but can equally be read as a subtle denunciation of the regime. The composer, moreover, had first-hand experience of the precariousness of favour in the Soviet Union. He had permanently returned to Russia in 1936, and soon found that when he tried to compose in the officially sanctioned way he would be accused of writing music that was 'pale and lacking in individuality'; if he continued on the course he had begun in Western Europe he was derided as a '**formalist**'. However, with works like *Peter and the Wolf* and *Romeo and Juliet*, Prokofiev's stocks revived. He spent the summer of 1944 in the relative luxury of a government-run artists' colony and in a mere two months (with a little recycling) had composed his Fifth Symphony.

Beginning with a simple theme on flute and bassoon, the symphony's opening movement unfolds gradually but inexorably, with passages of characteristic wit, high lyricism, and overpowering full scoring until, in its final **cadence**, a radiant B flat chord emerges from tense **dissonance**.

The second movement introduces the fast paced music, its balletic quality partly explained by the use of discarded material from *Romeo and Juliet*. This recalls the Prokofiev of *The Love for Three Oranges* – fast, incisive, colourful – and provides a foil to the extended slow movement which follows.

In the finale, Prokofiev initially defies expectations by quoting the melody from the first movement, this time scored for the rarified sound of divided cellos. Whether or

not this represents what Prokofiev's 'official' biographer Israel Nestyev calls the 'theme of man's grandeur and heroic strength,' it is dramatically effective of the composer not to plunge immediately into the expected triumphal finale. As musicologist Arnold Whittall remarks, the movement avoids the 'naively life-enhancing' clichés of Soviet music but the subtle use of dissonance, and the uneasy sense right at the end, suggest that the energy of the music has outlived its meaning.

The timing of the symphony was, however, perfect, seeming to sing of Soviet victory. Sadly, it would not be long before Prokofiev would feel the weight of disfavour once more; moreover, concussion sustained in a fall shortly after the premiere meant that the Fifth Symphony would be the last work he would ever conduct.

© Gordon Kerry



ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Jessica Cottis Conductor

Conductor Jessica Cottis has earned widespread recognition for her inventive, thought-provoking programming and inspiring musical leadership. She is one of the most outstanding Australian conductors working today, in high demand from orchestras around the world.

In 2024/25, Cottis begins her fourth season as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, and continues her second season as Artistic Partner of the Västerås Sinfonietta in Sweden. Under her visionary leadership, the CSO has pioneered several important and award-winning initiatives, including a significant commissioning output, collaborations with indigenous creators, and championing Australian composers.

Cottis' recent highlights include engagements with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (Ireland), National Radio Orchestra of Romania, Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Opera Australia, Canberra Symphony Orchestra, and the Aldeburgh Festival, as well as re-invitations to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and the BBC Proms. She has recorded for the BBC, ABC, and Decca Classics labels.

Cottis' early musical career was as an organist. Awarded first-class honours at the Australian National University,

she continued her studies in Paris with pioneering French organist Marie-Claire Alain. After a wrist injury halted her playing career, she studied conducting at the Royal Academy of Music in London, before going on to serve as Assistant Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and at the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Hailed as the "2019 Classical Face to Watch" (The Times), Cottis was more recently honoured with the title of Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the School of Music, Australian National University.

Cottis grew up on her family's sheep farm in south-eastern Australia, and now resides in Stockholm, Sweden. Outside of music, she is an avid lepidopterist!



James Ehnes

Violin

James Ehnes has established himself as one of the most sought-after musicians on the international stage. Gifted with a rare combination of stunning virtuosity, serene lyricism and an unfaltering musicality, Ehnes is a favourite guest at the world's most celebrated concert halls.

Recent orchestral highlights include the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, London Philharmonic Orchestra, NHK Symphony, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and Cleveland Orchestra. Throughout the 24/25 season, Ehnes will be Artist in Residence with Melbourne Symphony and will tour to Asia, where he will perform the complete Beethoven sonatas at Kioi Hall, Tokyo, as well as performances with Hong Kong Philharmonic and Singapore Symphony Orchestras.

Alongside his concerto work, Ehnes maintains a busy recital schedule. He performs regularly at the Wigmore Hall, Carnegie Hall, Symphony Center Chicago, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Ravinia, Montreux, Verbier Festival, Dresden Music Festival and Festival de Pâques in Aix. A devoted chamber musician, he is the leader of the Ehnes Quartet and the Artistic Director of the Seattle Chamber Music Society.

Ehnes has an extensive discography and has won many awards for his recordings, including two Grammy's, three Gramophone Awards and twelve Juno Awards. In 2021, Ehnes was announced as the recipient of the coveted Artist of the Year title in the 2021 Gramophone Awards.

Ehnes began violin studies at the age of five, became a protégé of the noted Canadian violinist Francis Chaplin aged nine, and made his orchestra debut with L'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal aged 13. He continued his studies with Sally Thomas at the Meadowmount School of Music and The Juilliard School. He is a Member of the Order of Canada and the Order of Manitoba, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and an honorary fellow of the Royal Academy of Music, where he is a Visiting Professor. As of summer 2024, he is appointed as Professor of Violin at the Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music.

Ehnes plays the "Marsick" Stradivarius of 1715.

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2025 QSO Academy Musicians (l-r) Luke Hammer, Jonah Spriggs, Hannah McLellan, Laura Cliff, Stirling Hall, Felix Hughes Chivers, Lisa Smith, Alyssa Deacon

"I believe the QSO academy is one of our greatest achievements. It allows us to connect the entire musical scene in Queensland, creating a pathway for young musicians to experience what a professional orchestra does. Music shows how a perfect society should be: enhancing the abilities, diversities and personalities of many to come together and work towards a common outcome. For me this common outcome must involve the new generations, their ideas and their dreams. In this way our art form will have its future champions."

- Umberto Clerici, QSO Chief Conductor

The QSO Academy Program is an immersive experience which lays the groundwork for aspiring pre-professional musicians to step into an orchestral career through intense preparation and training.

This year we have welcomed our third group of Academy musicians. With your support, we can enrich and expand this important Program. We would love you to join us on this exciting journey with a donation to influence the future of Orchestral music in Queensland. For more information, please visit www.qso.com.au/about/qso-academy or contact development@qso.com.au or (07) 3833 5027.

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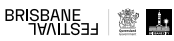
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Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2

SAT 5 APR 1.30PM

SAT 5 APR 7.30PM

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

Conductor Vanessa Scammell

Choir Voices of Birralea

Features music by

Alexandre Desplat



The Strauss Gala

SAT 10 MAY 7.30PM

SUN 11 MAY 11.30AM

Concert Hall, QPAC

Conductor Gábor Káli

Host Craig Allister Young (Sunday concert only)

J Strauss Jr. *On the Beautiful Blue Danube, Tritsch-Tratsch-Polka, Emperor Waltzes, Voices of Spring Waltz and many more*



Tchaikovsky's Pathétique

FRI 16 MAY 11.30AM

SAT 17 MAY 7.30PM

Concert Hall, QPAC

Conductor Gábor Káli

Soloist Daniel Lozakovich

Strauss *Til Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op.28*

Korngold *Violin Concerto, Op.35*

Tchaikovsky *Symphony No.6, Op.74*

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