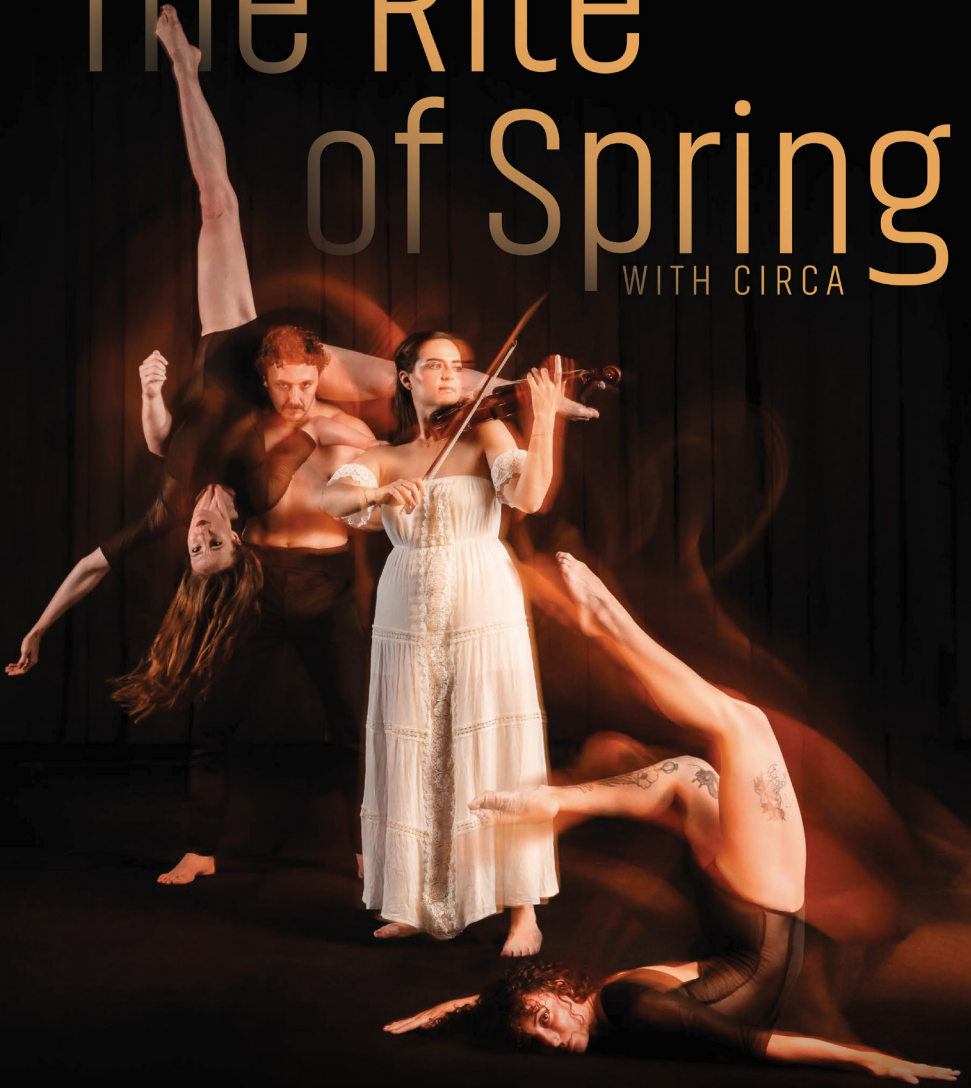


The Rite of Spring

WITH CIRCA




QUEENSLAND SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

CIRCA

20-22 FEB 2025
CONCERT HALL, QPAC

A photograph of a woman in a black dress playing a violin. She is in the foreground, looking down at her instrument. In the background, another violinist is partially visible. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

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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

On behalf of the Orchestra and our friends at Circa, we would like to thank you for joining us for the 2025 Season Opening Gala for Queensland Symphony Orchestra: *The Rite of Spring*.

As you enter the Concert Hall today, hold in your mind the 1913 premiere of the original ballet – not the infamous riot that broke out, but how art evolves through bold creativity, risk and deviation from the norm.

Stravinsky's work, while confusing and even enraging supporters due to its stylistic changes, has since been instrumental in the development of modernist music, influencing composers such as Aaron Copland, Philip Glass, Béla Bartók, and Pierre Boulez.

So, as you enter the Concert Hall, ready to experience these great composers and artists, let us celebrate the essence of all great creators: invention.

"I am an inventor of music."

-Igor Stravinsky

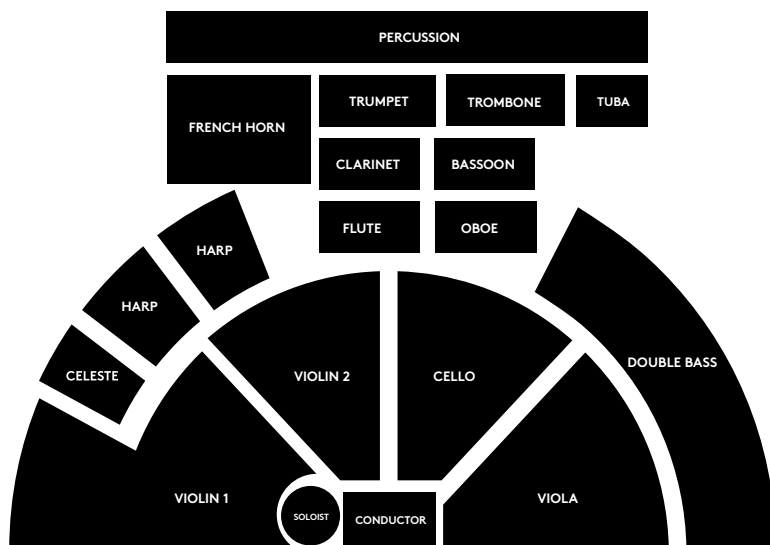
IN THIS CONCERT

Conductor	Umberto Clerici
Soloists	Kristian Winther, violin
CIRCA	Holly-Rose Boyer Helga Ehrenbusch Scott Grove Chelsea Hall Sam Letch Daniel O'Brien Lachlan Sukroo Joshua Strachan Billie Wilson-Coffey Christina Zauner

PROGRAM

DEBUSSY	<i>Prélude à "L'après-midi d'un faune"</i> (Prelude to "the Afternoon of a Faun")	10'
RESPIGHI	Concerto Gregoriano	30'
INTERVAL		20'
STRAVINSKY	<i>The Rite of Spring</i>	33'

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



Find out who's on stage today,
scan the QR code below.



BEFORE WE BEGIN

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

- Tone Poem** A piece of orchestral music that illustrates, evokes or is based on a poem or story.
- Tritone** A musical interval with the second note three whole tones from the base note. Nicknamed 'The Devil's Interval' in the Middle Ages for its dissonance.
- Chromatic Scale** A musical scale that uses every note as it goes up or down (if looking at the piano, you would sequentially play every white and black note).
- Prelude** Music that is generally played as an introduction to another, larger musical piece.
- Primitivism** A musical style characterised by simple tunes, harsh dissonance, and repetitive rhythms.
- Staccato** Performed with each note sharply detached or separated from the others.
- Accents** An emphasis or stress placed on a particular note or group of notes.
- Tristan Chord** The Tristan chord is one of the most famous harmonic innovations in Western classical music, famously used by Richard Wagner in his opera *Tristan und Isolde* (1859). This chord is a striking and unresolved dissonance that plays a crucial role in expressing the themes of longing, desire, and the tension between the conscious and unconscious.



LISTENING GUIDE

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

Prélude à "L'après-midi d'un faune" (Prelude to "the Afternoon of a Faun")

Prelude to "The Afternoon of a Faun" is the epitome of impressionism—a genre less concerned with rules and convention, and more focused on capturing the atmosphere of a scene. Debussy's 1894 **tone poem** invites us to use our imagination, to float into luscious forests where mythical creatures play.

The work is based on Stéphane Mallarmé's symbolist poetry, weaving the tale of a faun—half-goat, half-man. The creature breathes a spellbinding melody through his panpipes (there's your flute solo that opens the piece). Leaves glisten in the afternoon sun as he frolics with playful nymphs, gradually surrendering to sleep on the forest floor. With a flutter of the harp, we're seduced into his alluring dreams.

Debussy was a composer who found enchantment in the gentle brushstrokes of a painting, the intimacies of a poem, and the scales of Eastern cultures. He placed Western classical harmonic structures low on his list of creative priorities. From his earliest days as a child prodigy at the Paris Conservatory, Debussy rejected the constraints of traditional music theory. This is why his *Prelude* is transcendent—even from a musicological perspective.

The composer found charm in the **tritone**, an unseemly interval once associated with the devil. (You'll hear it each time the flute glides gently along its **chromatic scale**.) The work is barely even a **prelude**; Debussy introduces us to a faraway land but doesn't continue to develop his ideas once the dream has ended. He had planned to extend the narrative through two more movements, but realized that this fleeting score was all his soundscape required.

Debussy wasn't the only composer to rethink classical music. Wagner had also broken ground with his original concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*—an elaborate art form that married music with other creative mediums. But Wagner's voice was boisterous, his passionate subject matter buried under a thunderous execution. It was a stark contrast to the subtler textures of Debussy. Nevertheless, the French composer was inspired by such new approaches to musical storytelling. (On a technical level, Debussy recalls Wagner's **Tristan chord** as winds and brass flourish after that celestial flute solo.)

In *Prelude*, Debussy found his own version of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. He crafted an enveloping piece of music—tender, introspective, and rooted in another art form. He used fresh tone colors to paint an impression of a magical land, conjuring something far greater than correctly placed notes on a page. It reshaped the world's expectations of orchestral music and reimagined the very sounds these instruments could produce when combined. It was a momentous work in Debussy's career as an orchestral composer, and later, Pierre Boulez would suggest that the Faun marked the birth of modern art music itself.

LISTENING GUIDE

OTTORINO RESPIGHI (1879-1936)

Concerto Gregoriano

I. Andante tranquillo - Allegro molto moderato - Calmo, tempo I

II. Andante espressivo e sostenuto

III. Finale [Alleluja]: Allegro energico

Whether we're watching old movies, admiring famous paintings, or listening to Ottorino Respighi, we're often drawn to the appeal of art produced before our time. Venturing into the archives of history fulfills our cravings for nostalgia, discovery, and timeless beauty. It was no different in Respighi's day: the composer learned about the traditions of music while studying in his home city of Bologna. Into his compositions, he infused the spirit of the past, weaving Renaissance and Baroque influences through his *Ancient Airs and Dances*, and even venturing as far back as the Medieval period to find inspiration for *Concerto Gregoriano*.

Just as architects design cathedrals in Gothic or Greek Revival styles, Respighi's 1921 Violin Concerto is a revival of Gregorian chant styles. The *Andante tranquillo* (slow, tranquil) opening movement projects an elegant yet uneasy feeling due to the presence of open harmonies (using chords with large intervals/distances between them). In the strings, the effect sounds as hollow as an old cathedral. But when the solo instruments begin—first the winds, then the virtuosic violin—their Romantic warmth brings the composition closer to the modern era.

In the striking solo lines, Respighi often pays homage to the melismatic style of Gregorian chant, in which a voice behaves somewhat like an instrument, taking just one syllable and using it to glide between notes. Respighi's concerto also references a chant called *Victimae Paschali Laudes*, heard at the start of the *espressivo* (expressive) second movement, before the proud third-movement finale.

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

The Rite of Spring

PART I: Adoration of the Earth

Introduction

The Augurs of Spring

Dances of the Young Girls

Ritual of Abduction

Spring Rounds

Ritual of the Rival Tribes

Procession of the Sage

The Sage

Dance of the Earth

PART II: The Sacrifice

Introduction

Mystic Circle of the Young Girls

Glorification of the Chosen One

Evocation of the Ancestors

Ritual Action of the Ancestors

Sacrificial Dance (The Chosen One)

Ta gueule! ("Shut up!") audience members shouted at the premiere of Stravinsky's ballet. It was 1913, and concertgoers in Paris were in an uproar. They'd started listening to *The Rite of Spring*, and despised every moment. As offensive as they found this modern work, their rowdy behaviour was equally shocking to the composer, who was present at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées at the time. Stravinsky stormed backstage where Serge Diaghilev, the founder of the Ballets Russes (who had commissioned this work, as well as *The Firebird* and *Petrushka*), was frantically adjusting the house lights in a bid to control the ruckus.

When you hear the folk-like bassoon solo that opens the work, you may wonder how this relatively inoffensive (albeit challenging) music could have caused such a stir. But the markings on the music—*un poco en dehors* (to stand out)—hint at the work's impending recklessness. When you hear it today, you're likely to understand the audience's visceral reaction.

LISTENING GUIDE

This piece is not designed to transport you into the wondrous fairylands you might find in other ballets, such as Kats-Chernin's *Wild Swans* or Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*. Stravinsky's ballet explodes with raw and guttural energy—in musical terms, we'd call it **primitivism**. When you hear strings reminiscent of the *Psycho* shower scene, you'll know the pagan rituals have begun—and they culminate with a young girl dancing to her death.

The Augurs of Spring, performed early in the work, sounds violent—and the reason is twofold. Firstly, the notes are **staccato**, an instruction to play them short and detached. There are also **accents** in unusual places, making some notes sound more abrupt than others. These rhythms are mirrored by the dancers, who decisively pounce and punch their way through the scene. But to the listener, the effect is unpredictably sinister. Combined with the occasional shrieks of the brass, your human instincts will be on high alert for danger—and this drove the original audiences over the edge.

A similarly erratic mood is heard in *Dance of the Earth*. Percussion rumbles in like an earthquake, then brass and strings pulse vigorously towards the distressing culmination of Part I—an overarching section called *Adoration of the Earth*. The second part of the ballet is named *The Sacrifice*, signifying the virgin chosen to dance to her death while everyone watches. Her *Sacrificial Dance* begins laboriously under the weight of her gruesome fate. The orchestra booms incessantly until her spirit is ripped away in a final rush of the flute.

This ballet was like nothing the world had ever experienced. Today, Circa's interpretation achieves a similar vision, revitalising Stravinsky's ferocious music through mesmerising physical artistry.

©Stephanie Eslake

RITE OF SPRING DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In *Civilisation and its Discontents*, Sigmund Freud highlights the ineluctable tensions between the individual and society – how the very structures that enable and empower also control and contain. We – both as people and groups – are indelibly marked with the scars of these tensions.

When, on the cusp of World War 1, soon-to-be-exiled composer-of-genius Igor Stravinsky creates *Rite of Spring*, a work of unparalleled sophistication (444-time signature changes in 35 minutes), about the savage and primal, and it erupts like an attack on the sensibilities of 1913 Paris, it is as prophetic as it is cataclysmic. Irish Poet, William Butler Yeats, famously refers to the innocence-drowning “blood-dimmed tide” and the forces Stravinsky writes so compellingly of chart that tide’s twin currents – towards a cohesive society and into the dark heart of violence and violation.

Like a tide, history tells us this was far from a one-off: atavistic waves of untrammelled drives, growing brutality of the mob, the depth of our seduction by ostinatos of promises and threats have and indeed are rising. Recent history shows that wearing a suit and winning an election are neither marks of civilisation nor guarantees against savagery.

So, when we gather in homes of beauty and culture, like QPAC, and work collaboratively together with institutions devoted to the pursuit of great, sophisticated art, like the QSO, and avail ourselves of this sanctuary to explore power, darkness, togetherness, thrill and sacrifice in all their contradictory pluralities - then it is a rare and special event, a chance to gather and to remind ourselves as Daniel Mendelsohn memorably put it “how beautiful it is and how easily it can be broken”.

Yaron Lifschitz



© Paul Bourdrel

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Umberto Clerici QSO Chief Conductor

After a career spanning more than 20 years as a gifted cello soloist and orchestral musician, Umberto Clerici has consolidated his diverse artist achievements to rapid acclaim as a conductor. Umberto is now the Chief Conductor of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

Umberto began his career as a virtuoso cellist making his solo debut at the age of 17 performing Haydn's D Major cello concerto in Japan. After years of performing on the stages of the world's most prestigious concert halls, Umberto took up the position as Principal cello of the Teatro Regio di Torino following which he was Principal Cello of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra from 2014 to 2021.

It was in Sydney in 2018 that Umberto made his conducting debut with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House. Following a swift trajectory of prestigious conducting engagements, Umberto is now in high demand across Australia, New Zealand and Europe.

In addition to his role as Chief Conductor of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Umberto's recent conducting engagements include Elgar's cello concerto with Steven Isserlis for the Volksoper Vienna, and debuts with Orchestra del Teatro Massimo in Palermo and Orchestra Regionale Toscana. Umberto has also curated a three-week series with the Sydney Symphony for

'Symphony Hour' and returned to the podiums of the Dunedin, Melbourne and West Australian Symphony Orchestras.

In November 2024, Queensland Symphony Orchestra announced the extension of Umberto's Chief Conductorship until the end of their Season 2027.

Highlights in 2025 will include conducting Daniil Trifonov playing Rachmaninov's piano concerto No.3 with New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, a return to Teatro Massimo in Palermo and his second collaboration with Opera Queensland for which Umberto will conduct Puccini's *La Boheme*.

As a cellist, Umberto remains beloved by audiences worldwide, having performed internationally as a soloist at New York's Carnegie Hall, Vienna's Musikverein, the great Shostakovich Hall of St Petersburg, Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome, the Salzburg Festival and is one of only two Italians to have ever won a prize for cello in the prestigious International Tchaikovsky Competition.

Umberto plays cellos by Matteo Goffriller (*made in 1722, Venezia*) and Carlo Antonio Testore (*made in 1758, Milano*).



Kristian Winther

Violin

QSO 2025 Artist in Residence

As violin soloist, Kristian has appeared with the Sydney, Melbourne, Queensland, Christchurch and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras, the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, Auckland Philharmonic, Gruppo Montebello and Orchestra Romantique. He has performed under the batons of conductors including Jessica Cottis, Olli Mustonen, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Marcus Stenz, Oleg Caetani, David Robertson and Fabian Russell.

In the role of leader/director Kristian has performed as Guest Concertmaster of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, the Melbourne and Western Australian Symphony Orchestras, and as leader/director of ACO Collective.

A devoted chamber musician, Kristian was formerly violinist in the Tin Alley String Quartet, winning first prize at the Banff International String Quartet Competition, which was followed by tours of the USA, Canada and Europe. He has also performed chamber music with Anthony Romaniuk, Daniel de Borah, Anne Sophie von Otter, Angela Hewitt, Steven Osborne, Anna Goldsworthy, Richard Tognetti, Brett and Paul Dean, Konstantin Shamray, Hue Blanes and Joe Chindamo. As an original musician of the Play On series since 2016, Kristian has performed music from the 16th to the 21st centuries at diverse venues including an underground car park in Collingwood

and a nightclub in Berlin. Other recent solo/chamber music highlights include performing all of JS Bach's unaccompanied sonatas and partitas at the Canberra Festival in a single day, the complete Schumann String Quartets in one concert on raw gut strings, and Reger's monumental violin concerto at the Orlando Festival in the Netherlands.

Committed to performing new repertoire, Kristian has performed the world premiere of Olli Mustonen's Sonata for Violin and Orchestra (with the composer conducting the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra), as well as the Australian premieres of works by Louis Andriessen, Knussen, Kurtág, Salonen, Rihm, Widmann, Kelly-Marie Murphy, and numerous Australian composers. Kristian also gave the Australian premiere of John Adams' concertante work for string quartet and orchestra Absolute Jest with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and the Australian and New Zealand premieres of Brett Dean's violin concerto *The Lost Art of Letter Writing*.

Kristian performs on a violin crafted by Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume, Paris, 1859, on generous loan from UKARIA Cultural Centre.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Circa: Circus that moves the world.

Circa is one of the world's great performing arts companies. Since 2004, they have called Brisbane, Australia, home while touring the world, captivating audiences in over 45 countries and reaching more than two million people. Circa's award-winning performances have earned standing ovations, rave reviews and sold-out shows across six continents.

Everything they do is fuelled by their core values: quality, audacity, humanity.

Circa is at the forefront of a new wave of contemporary Australian circus, redefining the art form by showcasing how extreme physicality can forge powerful and emotive experiences. They are relentless in the way they push boundaries, blending movement, dance, theatre and circus.

Under the visionary leadership of Yaron Lifschitz, and in collaboration with an extraordinary ensemble of circus artists, they craft a diverse array of productions that constitute "a revolution in the spectacle of circus" (Les Echos).

Each year Circa tour their shows across the world and premiere multiple new creations. They are a staple at prestigious festivals and venues in New York, London, Berlin and Montreal as well as throughout Queensland and across Australia.

Their extensive engagement programs, including Circa Academy, Circability and Circa Cairns (a First Nations-led circus initiative) provide access, participation and professional development outcomes. Circa have delivered major projects including the Creative Lead on the Commonwealth Games Festival 2018 and managing Artour for the Queensland Government.

We invite you to join them as they continue to "redraw the limits to which circus can aspire" (The Age).

Circa acknowledges the assistance of the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body and the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.

Circa is based in Meanjin (Brisbane) on the lands of the Jagera and Turrbal people. We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which we create and perform. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Always was. Always will be.



Yaron Lifschitz

Director

Yaron Lifschitz is a graduate of the University of New South Wales, University of Queensland, and National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA), where he was the youngest director ever accepted into its prestigious graduate director's course. Since graduating, Yaron has directed over 80 productions including large-scale events, opera, theatre, physical theatre, and circus.

His work has been seen in over 45 countries and across six continents by over two million people and has won numerous awards including six Helpmann awards and the Australia Council Theatre Award. His productions have been presented at major festivals and venues around the world including Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Barbican, Les Nuits de Fourvière, Chamaleon and all the major Australian festivals. His film work was selected for the Berlin and Melbourne Film Festivals. He was founding Artistic Director of the Australian Museum's Theatre Unit, Head Tutor in Directing at Australian Theatre for Young People and has been a regular guest tutor in directing at NIDA.

He is currently Artistic Director and CEO of Circa and was Creative Director of Festival 2018: the arts and cultural program of the 21st Commonwealth Games.



Libby McDonnell

Costume Designer

Libby is a designer and choreographer and she is currently Head of Engagement and Design at Circa. Libby works in diverse genres and forms. At the heart of her work is people and movement.

Libby has a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) in Visual Art from Queensland College of Art -Griffith University and an Associate Degree in Dance from Queensland University of Technology. Her professional career has included performing and making independent dance work, as an Artistic Director of Ballet Theatre of Queensland and Choreographer for Blue Room Theatre Company. For eleven years Libby has worked with the team at Circa to imagine, develop and deliver their productions locally, nationally and internationally. During her time at Circa she has designed costumes for over thirty productions, co-directed 3 main stage productions and led many of the company's engagement projects including the pilot of the Circability program.

Libby is based in Brisbane with her family.



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QSO Academy



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.

In 2025, we will welcome 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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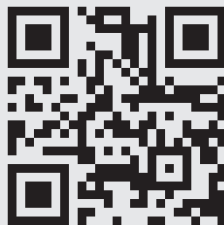
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FRI 14 MAR 11.30AM

SAT 15 MAR 7.30PM

Concert Hall, QPAC

Conductor Jessica Cottis
Soloist James Ehnes, violin

Hindson *Speed*
Barber Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op.14
Prokofiev Symphony No.5 in B flat, Op.100



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 Birralee

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*

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