

The Royal Organist



QUEENSLAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 26 & 27 JUL 2025

CONCERT HALL, QPAC



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.

QSO FIRST NATIONS ARTWORK WHO WE ARE

The First Nations artwork that appears on QSO attire is reprinted with permission and drawn from Who We Are by Jeremy Donovan. Jeremy speaks about the work here:

"This artwork was commissioned to capture and reflect the Queensland Symphony Orchestra (QSO). Painted in the office of the QSO, I had the unique opportunity to engage with musicians, QSO staff, and supporters. The painting was influenced by these conversations and interactions. This painting depicts the whole of the QSO. In each individual panel, the Orchestra is depicted using different colours to reflect the roles and the variety of instruments played. The central panel features the hands around the orchestra, which is symbolic of the people who come to experience the QSO and the music. Blue features across all three panels and represents the land on which the QSO is based, and pays respect to both the Turrbal and Yuqqera peoples, and the custodianship of this beautiful region.

Greens are the mountains and the rainforests of Queensland. Fine detail within the greens is symbolic of our Far North Queensland Shield designs. There are three of these on the middle panel; they are our Elders and are symbolic of three individuals who were just acknowledged for their 40-year service to the orchestra. Across the top of the painting, the fine white dot work is symbolic of the Dark Sparkles (Milky Way) in the sky—a Dreaming story belonging to my family. Beyond the stars are the musical notes silhouetted in the sky, acknowledging that sound is infinite. The seven purple circles on each panel are symbolic of the dedicated teams behind the music. QSO is so much more than what people get to see, hear, and enjoy. There are tireless teams behind the magic of the music. These seven circles are also the Seven Sisters, connecting my Grandmother's Dreaming.

Having spent my career as a musician and artist, and being privileged to play alongside classical and symphony orchestra musicians, the creation of this piece was a special experience."

-Jeremy Donovan



WELCOME

Welcome to The Royal Organist!

Today's program offers a rare and exciting opportunity to hear two works in one program that showcase the QPAC Klais Grand Organ that you can see above the Concert Hall stage. We welcome our acclaimed guest soloist, James O'Donnell, whose exceptional musicianship will bring these works to life. Also, passionate Spanish conductor Pablo González who you may have seen at Beethoven & Strauss a few weeks ago.

The Jongen Symphonie concertante is a thrilling and virtuosic work, rarely performed in Australia. Written almost 100 years ago, it is a brilliant display of the organ's grandeur, weaving together dramatic solo passages and rich orchestral textures. We also bring you something Australian – Harry Sdraulig's *Colourscapes*. The piece explores the relationship between music and visual imagery, capturing the essence of shifting landscapes and emotional states.

To end our performance on a high, we move to a gem in the symphonic repertoire where James will capture us again with the beloved Saint-Saëns Symphony No. 3 – the Organ Symphony. It is a work of contrast with delicate, intimate moments; and thunderous, aweinspiring passages that showcase the full might of the organ. Those of you attending on Sunday will also hear the iconic J. S. Bach Toccata & Fugue in D minor with James.

It is such a pleasure to be able to share this unique musical experience with you AND my parents in the audience. The Organ Symphony is one of my Dad's favourite pieces and I am so happy that he is able to hear it today. We hope you all enjoy every moment.



Claire Ramuscak Principal Contrabassoon

IN THIS CONCERT

ConductorPablo GonzálezSoloistJames O'Donnell, organ

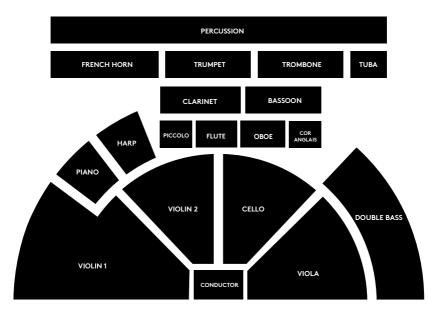
SATURDAY PROGRAM

JONGEN	Symphonie concertante for Organ & Orchestra, Op.81	36'
INTERVAL		20'
SDRAULIG	Colourscapes	9'
SAINT-SAËNS	Symphony No.3 in C minor, Op.78 (Organ Symphony)	40'

SUNDAY PROGRAM

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ВАСН	Toccata and Fugue in D minor, BWV 565	9'
JONGEN	Symphonie concertante for Organ & Orchestra, Op.81	10'
	(movement one only)	
SDRAULIG	Colourscapes	9'
SAINT-SAËNS	Symphony No.3 in C minor, Op.78 (Organ Symphony)	40'

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.

Mordent A note played with a single quick alternation between either the

note above or below.

Toccata A musical composition for a keyboard instrument designed to

exhibit the performer's touch and technique.

Prestissimo To play very fast or as fast as possible.

Fugue A musical composition in which one or two themes are repeated

> or imitated by successively entering voices and contrapuntally developed in a continuous interweaving of the voice parts.

Lento misterioso "Lento" indicates a slow tempo, while "misterioso" instructs the

performer to create a mysterious mood.

Notes having the time value of half a quaver or 1/16 of a **Semiquavers**

semibreve.



LISTENING GUIDE

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Toccata and Fugue in D minor, BWV 565 (Sunday only)

Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor is excessively theatrical – a nail-biter that evokes visions of a haunted mansion, you're about to find out why it sounds so commanding.

First, Bach strikes a note on the organ. (A, if you're wondering.) Above it, he puts a pause, which tells the musician to hold onto that note as long as they desire. As listeners, we eagerly await what's coming - a clever way to demand our full attention from the get-go. Above that famous opening note, Bach also places a mordent - a little squiggle that's responsible for the quiver of tension you'll hear before the pause.

The organist's fingers then fly down a D minor scale, a sequence of notes we associate with darker feelings. It's the first of many virtuosic passages; even the word **toccata** refers to the player's skilful 'touch'. Although you'll hear notes played at breakneck speed (prestissimo), the musician also enjoys fluidity and can express the music in their own way (like holding those pauses to maximise the drama). The **fuque** part of the work is named for the compositional technique: one musical voice introduces a theme, then another answers it.

Some musicologists don't believe Bach composed this piece. We don't know when he wrote it, and we don't have his original manuscript. We can't even be sure it's an organ work! But here's another curveball - composer Felix Mendelssohn believed it was Bach, and in 1833 organised for the work to be published. The manuscript he used was not signed by Bach, but by another Baroque organist and composer from Germany: Johannes Ringk. Coincidence or conspiracy? Your call.



JOSEPH JONGEN (1873-1953)

Symphonie concertante for Organ & Orchestra, Op.81 (Sunday movement one only)

- I. Allegro, molto moderato
- II. Divertimento, molto vivo
- III. Molto lento, misterioso
- IV. Toccata (Moto perpetuo, allegro moderato)

When you think of the great masterpieces for organ, you're probably not thinking of how they'd sound in a shopping centre. But Joseph Jongen's colourful Symphonie concertante for Organ and Orchestra was commissioned for exactly that type of venue: Wanamaker's department store in Philadelphia. Naturally, you may wonder what a pipe organ is doing in a store – and this is where our musical journey begins.

Rodman Wanamaker was an avid golfer, friend of King Edward VII, and owner of the Wanamaker's store. He commissioned Belgian organist-composer Jongen to write a piece celebrating the store's instrument, which he'd brought back from the St. Louis World's Fair. Look up a photo after this concert, and you'll see the strikingly beautiful impact of the 22-karat gold leafed instrument, towering above the archways of the Grand Court. It was the largest pipe organ in the world, with about 30,000 pipes designed to emulate orchestral instruments.

The booming sounds of this organ enveloped shoppers with concerts almost every day – none of which featured the premiere of Jongen's Symphonie concertante. Although Wanamaker commissioned it in 1926 to debut at the store, several events prevented this from taking place: Jongen's father passed away and, shortly after, so did Wanamaker. Symphonie Concertante premiered in Brussels, 1928. Eighty years later, it was finally performed in the Wanamaker Building.

In 2025, the store closed its doors, marking the end of an era. However, the new building owners, TF Cornerstone, have announced plans to preserve the iconic organ and restore the Grand Court, ensuring that this historic space remains a cultural landmark. While we await the restoration, we can still experience the spirit of Wanamaker's dream closer to home. QPAC's Klais Grand Organ—crafted in the 1980s and boasting more than



LISTENING GUIDE

6,500 pipes—demonstrates the unique artistry that each performance brings. From department store to concert hall, the legacy of great organ music continues.

As Jongen explained in his own notes, Symphonie concertante is not a concerto. It positions the organ as a second orchestra – not in parallel with the actual orchestra, but in a dominant role. The first movement juxtaposes the organ's heft with strings playing staccato (short and detached). The players give each other space, respecting their contrasting dynamic abilities. The following Divertimento carries a pastoral feel with woodwinds reminiscent of bird song. It evokes countryside scenes, perhaps of England where the composer lived as a refugee during World War I.

The slow and mysterious (lento misterioso) third movement begins with a flute solo and blooms into an impressionistic sound world. The concluding Toccata refers to the player's virtuosic 'touch' – and with a constant barrage of **semiquavers**, it lives up to the name. Jongen's ambitious composition would have enlivened the day of any shopper tending to life's more mundane necessities.



HARRY SDRAULIG (BORN 1992)

Colourscapes

When we talk about the colours of the orchestra, we're talking about the unique sound qualities of the instruments. A double bass might add a darker shade, while a flute can sound as light as a bird under a blue sky. For centuries composers have used orchestral colour and texture to paint musical pictures, particularly the French impressionists whose works echoed the broader artistic movement of their time. A similar concept of colour lies at the heart of Harry Sdraulig's music. The Australian composer wrote *Colourscapes* in 2018 to showcase the way each instrument forms part of a vibrant palette. The music begins with a violin solo rivalling Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending*, while flute and harp craft a glistening and otherworldly vision. Each instrument in Sdraulig's work has time and space to breathe; it is sparsely orchestrated but richly coloured. Will you hear pastoral qualities? A cinematic flavour akin to Joe Hisaishi? Or perhaps a hint of the music you would've experienced in an early 20th-Century concert hall? Approach the piece like a blank canvas and it will leave its mark.

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921)

Symphony No.3 in C minor, Op.78 (Organ Symphony)

Adagio - Allegro moderato Poco adagio Part II Allegro moderato - Presto Maestoso - Allegro

Part I

There are three elements in Camille Saint-Saëns' Symphony No.3 in C minor, Op.78 (Organ Symphony) that make it easy to identify. First is the inclusion of a gargantuan instrument that rarely features in an orchestra. Second is a charming little melody about death. And last is the musical association with a talking pig. Before we dive into all three, we'll take a snapshot of the composer who wrote this life-affirming (albeit death-inspired) work.

Saint-Saëns was a master of all trades: pianist, writer, composer, organist. He played the latter instrument in the most gorgeous French churches, from the gothic Church of Saint-Merri to the Roman temple-like La Madeleine. He studied at the Paris Conservatory, and decades later combined his passions for organ and composition into his Symphony No.3. He dedicated this work to the memory of his close friend, composer Franz Liszt.

The symphony features the full force of organ, orchestra, and piano four-hands. This brings us back to its defining features, the first of which is instrumentation. The star of the show is the organ, but it doesn't feature in all movements. We hear it in the second movement, then again in the fourth – but don't count too strictly. The composer preferred to think of his work as existing in two broader parts. This brings us to our next listening element woven throughout the symphony: Dies irae. This apocalyptic hymn inspired many a horror film score (think *The Omen* and *The Shining*). Saint-Saëns even riffed on the medieval chant in his playfully ironic Danse Macabre. In his Organ Symphony, you'll hear a brassy premonition of the Dies irae as early as the first movement, where romance and darkness become competing forces.

We now arrive at the talking pig. The symphony's ecstatic finale—which transforms the bones of the Dies irae into a roaring triumph—caught the ear of Australian composer Nigel Westlake. He incorporated the theme into his 1995 film score for *Babe*, and it rings through the climactic moment in which the little pig successfully rounds up a flock of sheep. Crowds cheer and Magda Szubanski cries tears of joy. Not what Saint-Saëns originally had in mind—but the power of an uplifting melody travels far.

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ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Pablo González Conductor

Pablo González brings passion, insight and a theatrical sensibility to communicating music to both orchestras and audiences, most recently as Principal Conductor of Spanish Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra (RTVE), where he also served as Artistic Adviser, between 2019 and 2023.

As Music Director of Orauestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya (OBC) from 2010 to 2015, he conducted full Mahler and Schumann cycles; led a central European tour, including an acclaimed appearance at Vienna's Konzerthaus; recorded and released three volumes of orchestral works by Granados, and Bizet's Carmen and L'Arlesienne suites (Naxos); and championed many new pieces by Catalan and Spanish composers. He strengthened the orchestra's community focus, developing a collaborative social project Et toca a tu, bringing the musicians of the OBC together with children who were at risk of social exclusion.

As a guest conductor, González has developed close relationships with orchestras including Helsinki Philharmonic, Residentie Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège, Orchestre National d'Île de France and Bochum Symphony. In recent seasons he has also collaborated with Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Dresden Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and City of Birmingham

Symphony Orchestra. Recent and future projects include debuts with London Philharmonic Orchestra, Milan Symphony Orchestra and NDR Hannover. He is highly in demand in his native Spain, enjoying collaborations with the country's most prestigious orchestras.

Born in Oviedo, González studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London and won prizes at the prestigious Donatella Flick and Cadaqués International Conducting competitions. He also took formal training to be an actor at the Academy Drama School in London, as well as taking other drama courses, and has appeared as an actor on stage and in film. He has previously served as Principal Guest Conductor of the Orchestra of the City of Granada and Assistant Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra.



James O'Donnell Organ

Internationally recognized as a leading conductor, organist, and teacher, James O'Donnell has performed all over the world. Following a distinguished 23-year tenure as Organist and Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey, Mr O'Donnell is now Professor of Organ and Sacred Music at Yale University, where he teaches postgraduate organ studies and also directs Yale Consort, a newly formed professional vocal ensemble. He is also Visiting Professor of Organ and of Choral Conducting at the Royal Academy of Music.

As Organist and Master of the Choristers of Westminster Abbey Mr O'Donnell was responsible for all musical aspects of the Abbey's work, directing the Abbey Choir in its daily choral services, recordings, concerts, and broadcasts and at the great occasions for which the Abbey is known, including the State Funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in September 2022, which was broadcast throughout the world to an estimated audience of over 4 billion people. He toured extensively with the Choir of Westminster Abbey to the United States, the Far East, Australia, and Europe. On leaving the Abbey he was appointed Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order (LVO) by King Charles III.

He studied at the Royal College of Music and at Cambridge University, where he was organ scholar of Jesus College and read for a degree in Music. He then served successively as Assistant and, for twelve years, Master of Music at Westminster (Roman Catholic) Cathedral where under his direction the renowned Cathedral Choir made many recordings and won the coveted Gramophone Record of the Year award, which remains unprecedented for such a choir.

He is in high demand as a concert organist and has appeared all over the world, including the Gstaad Menuhin Festival and the BBC Proms, and has worked as conductor and soloist with many leading orchestras and ensembles.

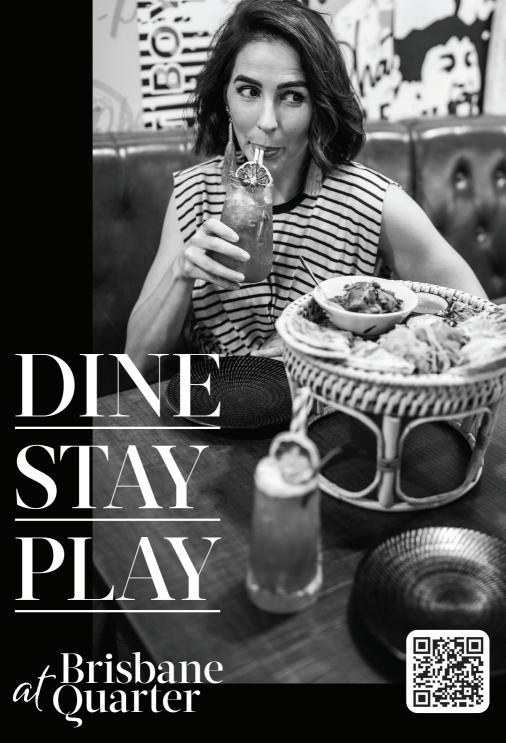




Your event maestros

Delivering event excellence is much like a brilliant musical production. Each performer must have passion for their craft, a commitment to detail, and keeping in time is everything!

Proud partner of Queensland Symphony Orchestra.





Hans Westerman has supported QSO for more than 20 years. His generosity enabled QSO to commission Paul Dean's 'Symphony no.3 (The Great Barrier Reef)' which premiered at our Symphony Under the Stars concert in Port Douglas in 2024.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MEMORY OR EXPERIENCE WITH QSO?

There are so many wonderful experiences that I can't single out one. But there is one I want to highlight: the commissioning of a new work by Australian composer Paul Dean and the first performance of his work 'Symphony no.3 (The Great Barrier Reef)' at Port Douglas last year. I hope that it will find its way in the concert hall with a full organ (as was intended).

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU TO SUPPORT QSO?

Music has been life-giving throughout my life and that of my late wife, Frederika, whose grandfather (Charles van Isterdael) was a renowned cellist and one of founders of the Residentie Orchestra in the Hague. The QSO is a superb Orchestra, supporting the whole of Queensland, and provides encouragement to young people to become part of the making and sharing of music.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THOSE CONSIDERING SUPPORTING QSO?

Without sponsors and donors, the QSO cannot provide the quality and variety of music, and the players and instruments the community expects.

WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE COMPOSER OR WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PIECE OF MUSIC?

That is too hard! I have many favourites of all periods. Bach, of course as I am an amateur organist, Mozart, Stravinsky, Debussy, Ravel and Poulenc. I also encourage young composers to explore, share and learn from the audience response. Making music together is a life changing experience.

Please contact the Development team on (07) 3833 5027 or development@qso.com.au to discuss how you can support QSO.

PACIFIC ConocoPhillips

More Than Music

It's a Way of Life



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

QSO is more than music: it's a way of life-one that begins with a single engagement and can continue for generations.

We thank each person who generously supported QSO with an end of financial year gift. Your contribution will enable us to continue our work to make music a way of life for Queenslanders across the length and breadth of this state, through performances and critical programs such as Regional Touring, Community and Education, and Health and Wellbeing.

You can support QSO at any time of year:

- Development (07) 3833 5027
- www.qso.com.au/support-us
- You can also scan the QR code to support us.



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Music lovers who support an individual musician's role within the Orchestra. We thank you.

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Lior & Westlake

SAT 9 AUG 1.30PM & 7.30PM

Concert Hall, QPAC

Conductor Soloists

Benjamin Northey

Lior, vocalist Kristian Winther, violin

Finsterer

Stabat Mater Symphony (mvt 1 only) Violin Concerto No. 1 Distant Light

Vasks Westlake and Lior

Compassion



Shostakovich Ten

FRI 19 SEP 7.30PM SAT 20 SEP 7.30PM

Concert Hall, QPAC

Conductor Soloist

Umberto Clerici

Prokofiev

Alexander Gavrylyuk, piano Piano Concerto No.3 in C, Op.26

Shostakovich Symphony No.10 in E minor, Op.93

Shostakovich's Tenth becomes the soundtrack to the William Kentridge film Oh To Believe In Another World in this unique pairing of artforms.



Lime Cordiale with **Queensland Symphony** Orchestra

SAT 27 SEP 7.30PM The Fortitude Music Hall

Conductor

Vanessa Scammell

Artist Lime Cordiale

Get ready for a genre-bending spectacle as pop-rock duo Lime Cordiale teams up with Queensland Symphony Orchestra for an unforgettable concert! Experience their biggest hits like never before—lush, cinematic, and more electrifying than ever.

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