

GRANDIOSO

METRO SERIES #1



 **BRISBANE
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA.**

Conductor: Simon Hewett | Sunday 3 April 3pm | Old Museum Concert Hall

CONCERT PROGRAM

SAMUEL BARBER
Adagio for Strings

SAMUEL BARBER
Violin Concerto Op. 14

I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Presto in moto perpetuo

INTERVAL

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
Symphony No.4 in C minor Op. 43
(Queensland premiere)

I. Allegretto poco moderato – Presto
II. Moderato con moto
III. Largo – Allegro



FIRST VIOLINS

Clare Cooney (Concertmaster)
Hayden Burton
Cameron Hough
Elena James
Emma Eriksson
Graham Simpson#
Hwee Sin Chong
Isabel Young
Keith Gambling
Lachlan Wilkins#
Maddisyn Dixon Whitbourne
Mimi Versace#
Min Tan
Tom Riethmuller
Tove Easton

SECOND VIOLINS

Sarah Trenaman^
Sophia Goodwin
Ai Miura
Alison Giles
Anna Jenkins
Briony McConnell
Elisna (Lisa) van Niekerk
Evangeline (Evie) Jacobs
Finn Williams
Lauren Jones
Nicholas Ooi
Rachel Olsen
Ryan Smith
Sally Waterhouse#

VIOLAS

Sophie Ellis*
Amber Evans
Anthony Rossiter
Brendon Crosby
Bronwyn Gibbs
Courtney Schuur
Dan Tipping
Jacob Seabrook
Jane Wei
Jenny Waanders
John McGrath
Katrina Greenwood
Kyle Brady
Lauren Foster
Michele Adeney
Paul Garrahy

CELLOS

Renee Edson*
Amy Naumann
Andrew Ruhs
Andrew Zischke
Anitah Kumar
Charmaine Lee
David Curry
Edward Brackin
Elouise Comber
Eugenie Puskarz Thomas
Jane Elliott
Joanna Cull
Lynne Backstrom
Tamara Cheung
Tianlan Cai
Yoel Garcia Marin

BASSES

Samuel Dickenson*
Andrea Sitas#
Angela Batch
Angela Jaeschke
Chan Luc
Charlotte Scanlan#
Deakin Darby#
Dean Tierney
Steve Dunn

FLUTE

Jo Lagerlow*
Ella Kay-Butterworth#
Jessica Walther#
Jessica Sullivan

PICCOLO

Lucia Gonzalez*
Ev Ramadan#

OBOE

Gabrielle Knight*
Hui-Yu (Whitney) Chung
Anton Rayner

COR ANGLAIS

John Connolly*

CLARINET

Daniel Sullivan*
Simon Redshaw#
Rory Davison#
Gavin Rebetzke#

E FLAT CLARINET

Annie Larsen*

BASS CLARINET

Hugo Anaya Partida*

BASSOON

Amelia Cody-Byfield^
Lisa Squires*
Elliot McGuire#

CONTRABASSOON

Carl Bryant*

FRENCH HORN

Oscar Schmidt*
Laura Hjortshoj-Haller#
Simon Olsen#
Lauren Owens#
Prue Russell#
Richard Fryberg#
Jessica Piva#
Isabelle Raiz-Scanlon#

TRUMPET

Blake Humphrey*
Sophie Kukulies
Bella Geeves#
Cooper Williams#

TROMBONE

Zhao Ming Liu*
Richard Sanderson#

BASS TROMBONE

John Rotar^

TUBA

Michael Sterzinger*
Stan McDonald#

PERCUSSION

Davis Dingle*
Patrick Hassard
Andrew Palmer
Greg Turner#
James Guest#
Emily Moolenschot#
Joe Teague#
Harine Lee#
Ella Hicks#

PIANO/CELESTA

Patrick Hassard*

HARP

Myiesha Maisuria^
Vienna Page-Hanify#

*denotes principal

^denotes acting principal

#denotes guest performer

Conductor SIMON HEWETT



After completing a Bachelor of Music at the University of Queensland (First Class Honours and a University Medal), Simon Hewett received a German Government Scholarship and finished his studies in conducting at the Hochschule für Musik 'Franz Liszt' in Weimar, Germany. In 2002 he was offered a position in Opera Australia's Young Artists' Programme, and he made his debut at the Sydney Opera House in 2003 conducting *Les Pecheurs du Perles*. He returned many times to conduct for Opera Australia in Sydney and Melbourne, where his repertoire included *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Otello*, *Aida*, *Macbeth*, *Tosca* and *Turandot*. For his interpretation of *Salome* in 2012 he was awarded a Green Room Award for Best Conductor of an Opera.

Following his appointment as Kapellmeister and Assistant Music Director to the Hamburg State Opera in 2005, Simon has conducted over 500 performances in Hamburg of a large repertoire of opera and ballet.

He was Principal Conductor of the Stuttgart Opera from 2011-2016, and he has appeared as a regular guest conductor with many of Europe's leading ballet companies. His debut performances of Kenneth Macmillan's *Anastasia* with the Royal Ballet Covent Garden in 2017 were broadcast in cinemas worldwide and released on DVD. He has conducted the Ballet of the Paris Opera in performances of Mahler's 3rd Symphony, *Swan Lake*, *A Midsummernight's Dream*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. He has also appeared as a guest conductor with the Vienna State Opera Ballet, leading in 2018 and 2019 respectively the premiere performances of *Peer Gynt* and *Coppelia*.

Since conducting the premiere of John Neumeier's ballet *Parzival* at the Festspielhaus Baden Baden in 2006, Simon has enjoyed a close relationship with the Hamburg Ballet. He was appointed Principal Conductor in 2008, and since then he has conducted the premieres of *Orpheus*, *Liliom*, *Tatyana*, *Duse*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Das Lied von der Erde*. He has appeared with the Hamburg Ballet at the Salzburg Festival, the Spoleto Festival, in the USA, Japan, Hong Kong, Moscow and Australia. In 2019 he conducted premieres of John Neumeier's *The Glass Menagerie*, Christopher Wheeldon's *The Winter's Tale*, and he returned to the Vienna State Opera for performances of *Peer Gynt*, and to the Royal Ballet for *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Upon relocating to Australia with his family in 2020, Simon has taken on a role as Director of Music of the Queensland Youth Orchestras, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra. His performance with QYS in March 2021 was recently awarded a Gold Award at the World Youth Orchestras Festival - one of only 2 Youth Orchestras world wide. Simon will return to the Vienna State Opera in January 2022 for performances of *Eugene Onegin*.

Soloist ADAM CHALABI



Adam Chalabi holds the position of Associate Professor at the School of Music at the University of Queensland.

He is first violinist of the internationally renowned Tinalley String Quartet, and held the position of Concertmaster of Orchestra Victoria from 2009-2014 before assuming the Artistic Directorship of the company from 2013-2014. He has appeared as guest concertmaster with major Australian orchestras including the Sydney, Melbourne, Queensland and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras and previously held the position of Head of Strings at the Australian National Academy of Music.

Born in 1977 Adam Chalabi began his violin studies at the age of 4 with the Suzuki Method. His early teachers were Alison Apley and Felicity Lipman. He subsequently attended the junior department of Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Purcell School of Music before completing his studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester under the tutelage of Maciej Rakowski.

In 2001 Adam won a position in the Zürich Chamber Orchestra 1st violin group and in 2004 was appointed to Principal 2nd violin. In Switzerland he also worked as Principal 2nd violin in Camerata Bern and Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and more recently as Guest Concertmaster of Symphonieorchester Vorarlberg in Austria and Suedwestdeutsches Kammerorchester Pforzheim in Germany.

Adam has appeared as soloist with the Zürich Chamber Orchestra in performances of Bach, Vivaldi and Schnittke Concerti. He has given performances of Nielsen Violin Concerto in England and Sweden and the rarely performed Alban Berg Chamber Concerto. He has recorded numerous acclaimed CDs for the Decca, ABC Classics and Capriccio labels with Tinalley String Quartet, UQ Chamber Players and Linos Ensemble.

Adam plays on an 1805 Joseph Panormo violin. He is also very grateful to have been supported by the Countess of Munster, Ian Fleming and Lawrence Atwell Charitable Foundations.

ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA

The Brisbane Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO) is Brisbane's leading community orchestra. The orchestra brings together up to 200 musicians a year to play a variety of classical orchestral music. Over 100 members of the incorporated association form the core of the orchestra. Other players perform as casual musicians, but often join as full-time members after their first concert with BPO. The orchestra was founded on principles of musical excellence and development, communal participation, and organisational professionalism.

Since its creation in 2000, the BPO has become the community orchestra of choice for over 500 musicians. It is eagerly sought as a performance partner for touring choirs, festivals, and internationally acclaimed instrumentalists and vocalists. The BPO performs its own series of symphony concerts and participates in multiple community and festival events throughout the year, attracting an audience of over 2,500 people. The orchestra's main metropolitan concert series includes four to five symphony concerts at Brisbane City Hall and the Old Museum Concert Hall. Programs vary between concerts featuring the great classical, romantic, and 20th

century composers, light concerts including film music, as well as concerts with programs targeted at a younger audience. Additionally, BPO occasionally performs chamber music concerts, featuring smaller groups in a more intimate setting.

The BPO maintains many community partnerships including with the Queensland Music Festival, 4MBS Festival of Classics, Brisbane City Council, and The Brisbane Airport Corporation. These partnerships provide essential connections in artistic, educational, professional, and social programs and cater to the association's increased responsibility to culturally enhance localities and bring a diversity of people together in a fast-paced, ever-impersonal global village. Unusually for a community orchestra, entry to the BPO is by audition and the ensemble is the only community orchestra within the city that rotates guest conductors by invitation rather than establishing a permanent Music Director. Uniquely, this allows a variety of the finest local professional conductors to deliver diverse and innovative programming to artistically stimulate members of the orchestra.



PROGRAM NOTES

Samuel Barber (1910 - 1981)

Adagio for Strings

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At only nine years of age, Barber wrote a charming letter to his mother confidently stating:

"Dear Mother: I have written this to tell you my worrying secret... [I] was meant to be a composer and will be. Do not ask me to forget this 'thing' and go play football please!"

From that point onward, he exchanged sport for music and never looked back.

While Barber received some of his earliest piano lessons from his mother, it was really his aunt and uncle who inspired him to pursue his musical talents. Both were gifted musicians, his aunt working as a leading operatic contralto and his uncle a composer of American art songs.

In 1924, at the young age of 14, Barber commenced study at the Curtis Institute of music. There he studied piano, composition, singing, and conducting under the venerable Fritz Reiner, developing his distinctive style. As 20th century music was becoming more abstract, dissonant, and atonal, Barber continued to draw inspiration from the mid-19th century composers like Liszt and Wagner. He possessed a knack for creating lush soundscapes overflowing with gorgeous harmonies, demonstrated elegantly in both works presented today.

Fascinatingly, the *Adagio* was originally part of a string quartet which Barber wrote in 1936 whilst he and his partner Gian Carlo Menotti were spending the summer in Rome.

Two years later, Toscanini was planning the 1938 season premiere of the NBC Orchestra and wanted to feature American compositions. He sought out Barber and commissioned him to write a piece for the premier. As its 1936 premier in Rome was a success, Barber decided to send Toscanini an excerpt from his String Quartet. Noting the popularity of the *Adagio*, Barber re-orchestrated this movement for string orchestra and upon completion, posted the score to Toscanini. Months passed before Barber received a reply from the great conductor and, to his horror, the scores were returned without any explanation. Demanding to know why he disapproved of his partner's work, Gian sent a letter to Toscanini on Barber's behalf. The great conductor responded sympathetically stating that there had been a misunderstanding; for he had not returned the score to Barber's *Adagio* out of disgust, but rather he had committed the work to memory and had returned the score out of courtesy. With the confusion cleared up, the *Adagio for Strings* officially opened the NBC Orchestra's 1938 Season. Its success instantly made Samuel Barber a household name.

With its tense and sombre atmosphere, it is fitting that this work has accompanied some of humanity's most morose moments.

Indeed, the whole work could be likened to a person in a highly emotional state. Like a mourner suffering alone with their grief, the piece begins with a few of the upper strings playing in a high register. Suddenly, this dissonant note is enveloped by a harmonically rich drone played by the

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lower strings. Over the top of this drone, the upper strings begin playing a stepwise melodic motif which slowly builds in intensity. After a brief pause, the drone continues, and the motif begins its downward descent.

As the sustained lower strings and the melody reach consonance, the piece once again slips into silence. The whole piece is studded with these pauses, growing in intensity after each one. The climax comes when in a gesture evoking nigh unbearable agony, the upper strings crescendo as they reach the zenith of their range, dying away abruptly. Again, the first motif is played before the piece concludes as quietly as it began, with a feeling of acceptance.

Samuel Barber (1910 - 1981)

Violin Concerto Op. 14

I. Allegro

II. Andante

III. Presto in moto perpetuo

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It is a common trope in classical music that being a skilled composer is no guarantee of a steady paycheck. Unfortunately, Barber learnt this lesson firsthand. In the summer of 1939, Samuel Fels (director of the board of the Curtis Institute of Music) offered Barber a thousand dollars to compose a violin concerto for a Curtis student named Iso Briselli. Wanting to make his *alma mater* proud, Barber accepted the commission and began working on the concerto whilst sojourning in Switzerland. However, from the outset, Briselli raised issues.

Upon viewing an early draft, Briselli was originally satisfied that the first two movements showcased his talents; but his instructor felt the score was far too simplistic and sent it back to Barber with a note stating that it was in "*drastic need of revision*".

Eager to appease his commissioners, Barber accepted this feedback and wrote a third movement which was far more virtuosic. This time though, the teacher was impressed, but the student was dissatisfied. Briselli argued that the third movement, with its outpouring of virtuosity, clashed in mood with the opening two movements, and was therefore too jarring. Again, the work was sent back for revision. By this stage, Barber was naturally becoming fed up with his patrons and decided to cut his losses. Accepting half of the 1000 dollars owed, he resigned the commission and began looking for a more amicable soloist.

Violinist Albert Spalding immediately fell in love with the work, and enthusiastically accepted Barber's request to be the soloist at its premier. With a successful premier in 1941 and repeat performances at Carnegie Hall, Samuel Barber's Violin Concerto secured its reputation as one of the most important works of the 20th century. While Barber was originally underpaid for the work, it nonetheless achieved something which is ultimately priceless – a lasting place in the standard repertoire of classical music.

The concerto instantly springs to life with the violinist playing a free-flowing lyrical melody. In the early moments of the Allegro, the orchestra appears to echo the ornate theme presented by the violinist. Suddenly, the music takes a mysterious minor turn as the violin becomes silent and the orchestra takes over.

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This brief minor interlude is interrupted as the strings re-enter, playing a heart-warming theme in thirds. As this theme builds in intensity, the violin reappears playing a rhythmic downward descending motif. This motif quickly morphs into a rigorous arpeggiated theme, and the tempo quickens as the soloist and orchestra pass this theme back and forth. As the movement unfolds, the music seems to alternate between passages of romanticism and virtuosity; between sections of heart-in-throat major, and ominous minor.

The Andante opens with an exquisite oboe theme. After the soloist's entry and building to a stunning crescendo, the music takes a minor turn. During this minor interlude, the orchestral accompaniment becomes sparse and the violinist comes to the fore, playing sliding scales and irregular sonorities. Suddenly, with a sustained trill from the violin, the music returns to tranquillity. From this trill, the soloist repeats the opening melody, with winding countermelodies bringing the movement to a passionate tutti finale.

The third movement, with its hurried and frantic pace, is certainly the most technically challenging - imagine Barber all those years ago after the criticism of the previous movements, determined to set the soloist ablaze. With barely any warning, the violinist launches forward with a rapid-fire semiquaver motif, labelled Presto in moto perpetuo (very fast, always moving). This motif is taken through a spectacular series of variations before the whole work is brought to a resounding conclusion, leaving the audience as out of breath as the soloist!

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906- 1975) ***Symphony No.4 in C minor Op. 43*** (Queensland premiere)

I. Allegretto poco moderato – Presto

II. Moderato con moto

III. Largo – Allegro

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"Composer Shostakovich appealed to the Leningrad Philharmonic with the request to withdraw his Fourth Symphony, that it no way corresponds to his current creative convictions and represents for him a long-outdated phase".

Pravda, December 11th 1936.

So read an article in the newspaper considered to be the mouthpiece of the Soviet government on the day that Shostakovich was meant to premier his Fourth Symphony. Did he himself make the fateful request to cancel the work's premier? Yes. Did he do so because he felt the work "[in] no way corresponded to his current creative convictions"? That is less likely. The general consensus is that Shostakovich was yet another victim of the Soviet Union's repressive crackdown on the creative arts; the iron fist of Stalin had dealt him a crushing blow.

Interestingly the Soviet Union, before Joseph Stalin, was somewhat liberal towards composers. Arts organisations were still run by the state, however because the government of the late 1920s and early 30s was preoccupied by civil war and economic crises, it turned a blind eye to some of the more experimental and modernist compositions of the day. It was in this environment that the young Shostakovich originally flourished.

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Upon graduating from the Petrograd Conservatory in 1919, Shostakovich premiered his first symphony which earned him fame across Russia. Over the next decade, having secured the admiration of his own people, Shostakovich began to develop an international following through his ballets and operas; he seemed to be taking the first steps towards a promising career, a career which was to suffer a major setback with the rise of Stalin.

In the early 30s Stalin began consolidating his power by purging Russia of what he considered to be undesirable elements or threats to his power. Political figures and intellectuals deemed suspect were banished to prison camps or mysteriously disappeared; seemingly, no one was safe from the black trenchcoats of the NKVD, Stalin's secret police. Russian musical organisations were consolidated into one organisation - the Union of Soviet Composers. Composers in this union were to use their art to indoctrinate the masses to conform to Marxist-Leninist ideology; the arts should "*enhance [the people's] patriotism and venerate the leadership*". The government wanted artists to draw upon simple folk melodies and stories to demonstrate the "*progress of the people under the Soviet state*" and to help celebrate Communist ideology and revolutionary heroes. Thus, anything abstract or symbolic was deemed bourgeois decadence and censored accordingly.

During this time of restriction and repression, Shostakovich found himself halfway through composing his Fourth.

While his earlier symphonies were well received, the 30-year-old Shostakovich still felt he had something to prove and sought to make his mark on the genre. Drawing upon the modernist trends of 20th century music, such as unusual rhythmic patterns, dissonant harmonies, and chromatic melodies, Shostakovich wanted to ensure his composition was truly ground-breaking.

While this may have been popular with audiences of the day, Stalin and the Soviet Government were less impressed. Condemning the work as too extravagant and challenging, the Soviet government did everything they could to censor the work. Multiple attempts were made to perform it, but in each instance the Government cancelled at the last moment, citing excuses such as the conductor being 'too incompetent to lead the orchestra'; or 'the musicians refused to perform'. It was not until 25 years later that Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony would finally have its premier.

The Fourth is not often played. Notably, today's performance is in fact its Queensland premiere! The orchestration demands a *huge* number of auxiliary players compared to a standard orchestral size; note the tremendous size of the woodwind, brass and percussion sections.

The symphony opens with a dissonant flourish and crash from the percussion, establishing an ominous and brooding atmosphere. As the strings play a repeated strumming pattern, the piece drives forward with intensity and the texture quickly thickens as more instruments begin joining this macabre march.

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Unexpectedly, the music takes a frantic turn when the upper strings and brass begin playing a dissonant call and response over top of the lower strings' driving rhythm. Suddenly, the brass plays a chromatic theme, and the music launches into a gripping forte. Briefly, the whole orchestra joins in this vigorous march before the texture thins and only the lower strings can be heard.

With a flourish from the lower strings, a new section begins. In stark contrast to the rhythmic intensity heard before, the strings and woodwinds play a wandering, listless and ambiguous theme. A staccato outburst from the horns marks a return to the macabre march which began the piece, but this time as the music marches forward it also builds dynamically. As the movement progresses, it alternates between a vigorous marching allegro and a tonally ambiguous legato before finishing softly on a dissonant chord.

The second movement begins mysteriously with the strings playing a four-note theme, unraveling into a mystical legato melody. As the movement develops, it slowly becomes more frantic as the woodwinds join the strings playing disjointed rhythms and dissonant harmonies. In what follows, the four-note theme, heard at the movement's opening, takes on some interesting harmonic, dynamic and rhythmic variations. The movement ends obscurely with the string playing the four-note motif pianissimo as the percussion marches the music to a slow fade out.

The final movement opens with a soft rumbling from the percussion beneath the bassoon playing a morose melodic theme. As this melody develops, it is taken up by the oboe, then by the flute, then by the strings. As each instrument joins the fray, the music's texture gradually thickens, and the work slowly becomes more dynamically intense before reaching a strident crescendo.

Following this crescendo, the texture thins leaving only the strings playing a sorrowful melody which flourishes before fading completely. As the strings fade, the woodwinds enter playing the same morose melody which began the piece. Suddenly, as each section begins to join the woodwinds, the music becomes more frantic. Much like the first movement, as the music continues it alternates between peace and restlessness before ending ambiguously with a high-pitched drone from the strings and distant call from the trumpet.

Program notes by James J Haywood



James Haywood presents Daybreak Classics on 4MBS Classic FM (103.7) every Tuesday and Sunday fortnight from 6am to 8am.

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Our members are just like you – ordinary people who enjoy coming together to make extraordinary music! Auditions are held to fill vacant positions or to appoint suitable reserve players capable of filling temporary vacancies from time-to-time.

Visit our website to download audition excerpts and fill out the online form to sign up!
www.bpo.org.au

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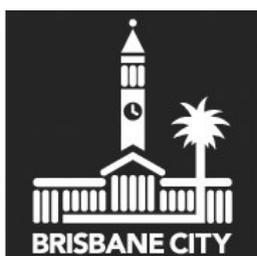
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