



organ
symphony



**BRISBANE
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA.
20 YEARS**

Sunday 8 November 2020
VPAC, South Brisbane

CONCERT PROGRAM

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

Piano Concerto No.2, Op.18

i. Moderato

ii. Adagio sostenuto – Più animato – Tempo I

iii. Allegro scherzando

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS

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

i. Adagio – Allegro moderato – Poco adagio

ii. Allegro moderato – Presto – Maestoso – Allegro

**Today's performance will not have an interval*



VIOLIN 1

Cameron Hough*
(Concertmaster)
Emma Eriksson
Tove Easton
Hwee Sin Chong
Carmen Pierce
Min Tan
Danny Kwok
Jonathan Ward
Bruce Young
Kaitlyn Bowen

VIOLIN 2

Yvette McKinnon*
Anna Jenkins
Rachel Olsen
Camilla Harvey
Cara Odenthal
Ailsa Hankinson
Nawres Alfreh
Tylar Leask
Lauren Jones
Elisna van Niekerk
Evangeline Jacobs

VIOLA

Bronwyn Gibbs*
Tim Butcher
Jenny Waanders
John McGrath
Katrina Greenwood
Eddie Watson

CELLO

Lynn Backstrom*
Edward Brackin
Charmaine Lee
Gabriel Dumitru
Nicole Kancachian
Elouise Comber
David Curry
Angela Batch

BASS

Samuel Dickenson*
Glenn Holliday
Dean Tierney

FLUTE

Jo Lagerlow*
Jessica Walther

PICCOLO

Lucia Gonzalez*

OBOE

Gabrielle Knight*
Hui-Yu (Whitney) Chung

COR ANGLAIS

John Connolly^

CLARINET

Daniel Sullivan*
Kendal Thomson

BASS CLARINET

Annie Larsen^

BASSOON

Lisa Squires*
Carl Bryant

CONTRABASSOON

Andre Oberleuter^

HORN

Melanie Taylor*
Joyce Shek
Michelle Hynes
Audrey Witmore

TRUMPET

Blake Humphrey*
Sophie Kukulies
Isabella Geeves

TROMBONE

Angela Longmore Prescott*
Peter Kleinschmidt

BASS TROMBONE

Clayton Fiander*

TUBA

Michael Sterzinger*

PERCUSSION

Kerry Vann*
Davis Dingle
Sarah Hundal

PIANO

Jasmine Buckley#
Ling Luc#



Conductor STEFANIE SMITH

Stefanie Smith is a current DMA candidate researching the emerging careers of Australian conductors, having completed her Master of Music Studies in Conducting at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University (QCGU) under Dr Peter Morris.

This year Stefanie has acted as assistant conductor for the QCGU Opera *Beatrice and Benedict* and has worked with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

Stefanie has participated in the Australian Conducting Academy with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and Johannes Fritsch as well as conducting masterclasses with Larry Rachleff (Rice University, USA) and maestro Benjamin Zander at the London Master Classes Conducting Course, with members of the Royal Northern College of Music. She is an alumnus of the Symphony Services International Conductor Development Program where she worked with a number of state orchestras in Australia.

She has participated in international conducting masterclasses in Olomouc,

Czech Republic and Singapore with Maestro Charles Olivieri-Munroe and the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra and Douglas Bostock with the Singapore Armed Forces Band respectively.

Stefanie is the founder and conductor of the ensemble *Consorte Ecllettica* which supports emerging local artists in Brisbane, premiering and performing chamber orchestra works in collaboration with other art forms. Stefanie is a sessional academic at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University where she assists with the Symphony Orchestra and Wind Orchestra and teaches the undergraduate conducting courses.

Stefanie is also the Young Conservatorium Ensemble Coordinator where she conducts the Symphony Orchestra, Wind Orchestra, and Woodwind Ensemble.

Stefanie has thoroughly enjoyed working with Brisbane Philharmonic Orchestra and soloists Alex Ranieri and Phillip Gearing for her first season with the ensemble.



Soloist (piano) ALEX RAINERI

Described by Limelight Magazine as “*a soloist of superb virtuosic skill and musicality*”, Australian classical pianist Alex Raineri (b. 1993) is internationally active as a recitalist, concerto soloist and chamber musician. International performances include tours throughout California, South-East Asia, United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, Germany and Austria.

Alex has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3, Radio NZ, California Capital Public Radio, ABC Classic FM and all of the Australian MBS Networks. As a concerto soloist he has featured with the Queensland, Tasmanian, Darwin and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, Southern Cross Soloists, Orchestra Victoria, Four Winds Festival Orchestra, Bangalow Festival Orchestra and the Queensland Pops Orchestra.

Alex has been the recipient of a number of major awards including the Kerikeri International Piano Competition and Australian National Piano Award. Alex is the pianist with the Southern Cross Soloists and other notable chamber partnerships include; Andreas Ottensamer, Twoset Violin, eighth blackbird, ELISION, Sara MacIver, Natalie Clein, Greta Bradman, Li Wei Qin, Teddy Tahu Rhodes, Jack Liebeck, Kathryn Stott, Slava Grigoryan, Brett Dean and many others.

He is the artistic director of the annual Brisbane Music Festival and is a passionate exponent of contemporary music having given 129 world premieres and 89 Australian premiere performances to date. Discography includes; Transfiguration (2019), Inventions (2019), I'll Walk Beside You – Teddy Tahu Rhodes and Southern Cross Soloists (2018 – ABC Classics) and braneworlds – Kupka's Piano (2017).



Soloist (organ) PHILLIP GEARING

Phillip Gearing is a widely experienced organist, chamber musician, *Lieder* accompanist, orchestral keyboardist and choral director.

He was a Senior Lecturer in Music at the University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba (1992-2014) and has performed throughout Australia and in Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, Denmark and Norway, where he has been broadcast on radio.

Phillip is currently Director of Music at St Mary's Kangaroo Point, Accompanist to St Peters Chorale, Organist at St John's College, University of Queensland, a Director of the Organ Historical Trust of Australia, and an examiner for AMEB.

He performs regularly with Austral Harmony, Canticum Chamber Choir and Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

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

By Cameron Hough

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

***Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor,
Op 18 (1908)***

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Rachmaninoff's melancholy Second Concerto had its genesis in a long period of difficulty for the composer - the poor reviews of the premiere of his First Symphony (1897) caused Rachmaninoff to spiral into the compositional doldrums, depressed and left unsure of his place in the world - was he a "true" composer or just a brilliant piano soloist writing concerti for his own use but nothing more "serious"? For almost three years, Rachmaninoff barely wrote a note and underwent counselling, until he eventually began composition again.

The Second Piano Concerto's unconventionally dark, brooding opening was Rachmaninoff emerging from this compositional hiatus. The entry of the piano unaccompanied at the beginning of a concerto was not without precedent - Beethoven's Fourth Concerto, for example - but the darkly chromatic, searching, bell-like sequence of piano chords that Rachmaninoff produced were like nothing before heard in a piano concerto, quickly turning into a turbulent torrent of piano arpeggios over which the orchestra plays an anguished, characteristically-Russian sounding, lament. Aside from a brief *piu mosso* piano passage, the piano unusually plays only an accompanying role throughout the entire extended first theme of the concerto - as if overwhelmed by the orchestra's grief.

The piano then enters solo with the more-lyrical second subject, joined by the orchestra in duets (with the lower strings and clarinet featuring prominently - indeed, the whole concerto makes much use of these instruments). The exposition is brought to a close by a brief descending passage and brass fanfares.

The central development section has an ominous atmosphere with the orchestra brooding on the first theme, with virtuosic piano passage work, muted strings and wind trills giving an unsettled mood, then building to a massive climax with hammered triplet passages on the piano and a blare of sound, out of which the orchestra plays the first theme again, now with the soloist playing a forceful march-like countermelody while the bass instruments thud peremptorily below. The piano then takes over the remainder of the first theme - claiming the melody which has previously been the orchestra's preserve, after which a rhapsodic horn solo plays a slowed-down version of the second theme. After a slower mysterious section a final ominous acceleration to the final chords occurs.

Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op 18 (1908) continued...

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While there is always an element of conflict and opposition between soloist and orchestra enshrined in concerto form, the first movement of the concerto seems rather more like a struggle than most - with the soloist (and, perhaps, symbolically Rachmaninoff himself) initially being overwhelmed by the struggle but eventually rising triumphant at the end.

The second movement begins dreamily with a modulation sequence of orchestral chords from C minor to the E major home key of the movement, then the soloist enters with a timeless-sounding melody. It is only when the flute and then clarinet enter with serene extended melodies that there is a brief moment of uncertainty - the soloist's rhythms, so seemingly simple when heard solo, are actually syncopated relative to the orchestra! The soloist then takes over the winds' melody with a gentle clarinet and pizzicato string accompaniment. The central section builds in intensity and drama, reaching several climaxes, after which there is a faster passage and then a piano cadenza. The gentle mood of the opening then returns, now with muted strings playing the melody, and then the coda changes mood to a kind of rhapsodic catharsis rising and then falling away to silence.

The third movement begins ominously with a sense of subdued menace, with a short orchestral passage leading to a brief piano cadenza, and then the movement proper begins with the soloist playing the virtuosic and turbulent main theme of the movement.

The metre oscillates between duple and triple time, with the piano continuing to play an extended virtuosic solo, until oboe and violas introduce the major-key second subject of the movement (which is very similar to the second subject of the first movement). The exposition finishes with an unsettled passage over a pedal bass note with the piano playing sinuous melodies ascending to trills with the winds and percussion playing countermelodies.

The development section begins stormily with material based on the main theme and vehement statements being traded between the piano and orchestra, then a fugato passage with a toccata-like piano solo. The section ends with a more expansive piano solo and then a return of the second subject - the recapitulation essentially skipping the main theme because the development had treated it so comprehensively (almost obsessively). The "unsettled" passage from the end of the exposition returns, and then bassoon, clarinet and viola introduce a dark return of the main theme, although once the soloist enters the mood swiftly changes and becomes excited - after a fanfare and a piano cadenza, a triumphant coda brings the second subject back, transformed into a celebration of victory as the soloist plays over the top of the orchestra and then an ebullient payout brings the concerto to a confident conclusion.

The Second Concerto was enthusiastically received and won Rachmaninoff his first Glinka Award - while more importantly its success with the public and critics restored Rachmaninoff's faith in himself and led to his further masterworks.

Camille Saint-Saens (1835-1920) ***Symphony No. 3 in C minor, Op. 78, "Organ" (1886)***

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Saint-Saens was a true musical prodigy and a prolific composer, making his first public performance at the age of only ten and over the course of his long life writing a rich sequence of lush romantic works that blended classical traditions with some of the innovations of musical visionaries such as Wagner and Liszt.

Although remembered now more as a composer, Saint-Saens was a formidable player, described by Liszt as the best organist in the world and by Berlioz as "an absolutely shattering master pianist" and he continued to perform publicly well into his 80s. His most famous symphony, the Third, completed in 1886 at what was arguably the height of his career, is somewhat of a summary of his career, combining orchestral brilliance with prominent parts for keyboard instruments.

Commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society to compose a symphony, Saint-Saens, in his own words "gave everything to it. What I have here accomplished, I will never achieve again", and produced a masterpiece of the symphonic repertoire, remarkable for its compositional sophistication as much as for its prominent use of the pipe organ. Although commonly known as the "Organ Symphony", it would be better described as a symphony "with organ"

- while the organ is certainly prominently featured in the symphony, it is treated by Saint-Saens as part of the orchestra rather than as a solo instrument. Indeed, the organ is silent for approximately half of the symphony!

Saint-Saens was heavily influenced by Liszt, whom he considered a friend and mentor, and the Third Symphony uses Liszt's idea of thematic transformation - where melodies are transformed and modified and recur over the course of the composition. The motif that unifies the Third Symphony is a sinuous snippet of Gregorian plainchant, which has some characteristic rising and falling melodic contours. As well as using cyclical form to unify the symphony, Saint-Saens also casts the symphony in a novel two-movement structure (although each movement has itself two sections such that the symphony as a whole approximates a traditional four-movement symphony).

Describing the symphony, Saint-Saens wrote:

"the first [section], checked in development, serves as an introduction to the Adagio, and the scherzo is connected after the same manner with the finale. The composer has thus sought to shun in a certain measure the interminable repetitions which are more and more disappearing from instrumental music".

Symphony No. 3 in C minor, Op. 78, "Organ" (1886) continued...

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The symphony opens with a short introduction with swells of string chords interspersed with plaintive wind phrases. Ominous walking pizzicatos lead into the fast first section proper, a scurrying *Allegro moderato* full of nervous energy and a Schubertian or Mendelssohnian lightness and capriciousness which introduces the plainchant theme. The scurrying semiquavers recur throughout the movement. The second subject is a more lyrical melody which builds to an ebullient climax as the brass enter, then dies away to a sequence of paired notes which anticipate the finale. As befits Saint-Saens' desire to "shun...interminable repetition" the movement follows an abbreviated sonata form where the development section is quite short and the fiery recapitulation is soon back, but then after the second subject, the movement dies down to pizzicato paired notes. The music of the introduction then returns briefly, ushering in the second section.

This *Adagio* section features a sudden key change to a warm D-flat major as the organ enters providing a rich foundation for the string section's rhapsodic melody, which is then taken over by the winds. The serene mood of the movement continues until there is a brief recurrence of the plainchant motif - initially as ominous pizzicato, but then marvellously transforming into a rolling accompaniment for the violins and cellos joining in a duet of the rhapsodic melody returning and the movement coming to a delicate conclusion.

The second movement proper begins abruptly with the energetic and assertive Scherzo - marked *Allegro moderato* again, it is based on a fragment of the plainchant melody. The muscular Scherzo is offset by a brilliant trio with gossamer string passages and sparkling piano passages - some of the brief but virtuosic keyboard writing for piano two hands (and later four hands) that features in the movement. After a return of the scherzo, the trio seems to start coming back, but then lower strings and brass start intoning a sequence based on the plainchant theme, and sparkling piano and winds lead to a descending chromatic passage, ending with the strings playing a serene imitative passage that ends calmly with a rising oboe melody and lower strings playing the plainchant 'sequence' underneath a bright C major chord.

The finale - *Maestoso* - has the organ enter with a majestic outpouring of C major chords as the orchestra plays the 'sequence' in canon, leading to another majestic organ chord, which dies away to reveal the upper strings and organ playing the 'plainchant' melody - now transformed to a radiant C major with coruscating piano 4 hand arpeggios then taken over majestically by the organ offset by brass fanfares.

Symphony No. 3 in C minor,
Op. 78, "Organ" (1886) continued...

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The theme of the Maestoso will be familiar to many from its use in the pop song "If I Had Words" (and the movie Babe). The second subject has expansive rising-and-falling arpeggiated melodies trading between winds and strings, then a fugato passage leads to magnificent brass fanfares and the return of the plainchant melody and a rousing orchestral climax. Afterwards, the arpeggiated melodies return again, followed once more by the fugato passage,

and then abrupt organ chords introduce the coda which has a breathtaking orchestral accelerando into a spectacular finale with a wall of sound as the full force of the orchestra and organ is unleashed and the final chords ring out (punctuated by a barrage of timpani strikes)!

The symphony was triumphantly received in its premiere in London in May 1886, but Saint-Saens' delight at its success was dampened only two months later when Liszt died. Saint-Saens dedicated the symphony to the memory of his friend and mentor.



**FOR 20 YEARS OF SUPPORT,
THE MEMBERS OF BPO
WOULD LIKE TO SAY**

thank you!

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO
SEEING YOU IN 2021**

THE TEAM

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Secretary: Josephine Lagerlow

Treasurer: Angela Prescott

Committee Member: Yvette McKinnon

Committee Member: Michael Sterzinger

Committee Member: Anna Jenkins

DONATIONS

The Brisbane Philharmonic Orchestra accepts donations from individuals, groups and businesses. Every donation, whether it be a one-off donation or an ongoing arrangement, greatly assists us to realise our goal of delivering an annual program of high quality music-making to benefit the Brisbane community and our members.

BPO holds deductible gift recipient status (DGR) for tax purposes. All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible and receipts are provided.

For further information email info@bpo.org.au

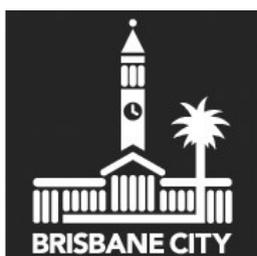
AUDITIONS

Being a member of the BPO is a rewarding community experience and a lot of fun. 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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Brisbane Philharmonic Association Inc
(ABN 12 092 897 904)
Website www.bpo.org.au
Email info@bpo.org.au
Post PO Box 792 Paddington QLD 4006

