

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA

RETURN TO THE STAGE

AYO is supported by the
Australian Government



Australian Government

ABOUT THE

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA

The Australian Youth Orchestra is one of the world's most prestigious and innovative training organisations for young pre-professional musicians. Aged up to 25 years, orchestra members are selected through a highly competitive annual audition process and represent the country's best young musical talent.

AYO has always celebrated the wealth of talent that can be found here in Australia, not only in our orchestra, but in the conductors, composers and fellow music organisations we are lucky enough to work with. AYO has established itself as a cultural ambassador for Australia on twenty-three international tours since its first in 1970. Today, countless AYO alumni are members in some of the finest professional orchestras worldwide.

Earlier this year we were able to bring together over 250 aspiring young instrumentalists and arts administrators for a condensed National Music Camp in Melbourne. Tonight's concert is another milestone, marking the first time we've been able to return to the stage in three years. We are thrilled to be back sharing a live performance with our friends and supporters. In a time of uncertainty, we celebrate the moments that allow us to come together and share in a passion for live music.

Like many organisations across the globe, the Australian Youth Orchestra has undergone an irrevocable transformation over the past 24 months. AYO is committed to access and innovation and embracing new technology has allowed us to offer virtual training opportunities, present valuable webinars and run remote auditions for thousands of young musicians all over Australia, making AYO more accessible than ever before. Whilst these new digital initiatives started out as solutions to problems, they have quickly become an integral part of the AYO experience for our whole community. As we return to in-person activities we look forward to the evolution of these projects as we broaden our digital offering alongside our traditional AYO programs.

CONCERT INFORMATION

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Sunday 10 July / 5.00pm

HAMER HALL, ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE

Tuesday 12 July / 7.30pm

CONCERT HALL, QPAC, BRISBANE

Thursday 14 July / 7.30pm

SYDNEY TOWN HALL

Berlioz / *Les Francs-juges: Overture*

R. Strauss / *An Alpine Symphony*

Sir Mark Elder / *Conductor*

Australian Youth Orchestra acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Emily Su / *Concertmaster*
Julia Hill
In Yi Chae
Robert Smith
Theonie Wang
Catherine Jang
Daisy Wong
Jasmine Milton
Natalie Mavridis
Liam Pilgrim
Chae Eun Oh
Natalie Kendy
Lucy Clarke-Randazzo
Haneulle Lovell
Jordan Hall
James Tudball

Violin 2

Daniel Shao / *Principal*
Olivia Kowalik
Nanda Hong
Zak Ulliana
Lydia Sawires
Sujie Kim
Jackie Wong
Miriam Niessl
Emma Richardson
Natasha Paran
David Tan
Callail Rowley
Ezra Uxó Williams
Noah Coyne

Viola

Jamie Miles / *Principal*
Marlena Stanhope
Olivia Spyrou
Sandra Ionescu
Sarah Zhu
Daniel Casey
Patrick Shannon
Liam Mallinson
Helena Burns
Aaron Dungey
Jeremy Egerton
Felix Hughes Chivers

Cello

Charlotte Miles / *Principal*
Erna Lai
Alexandra Bekes
Noah Lawrence
Isaac Davis
Nadia Barrow
James Monro
Lily Dai
Joshua Jones
Angela Shin

Double Bass

Luca Arcaro / *Principal*
Alexandra Elvin
Julia Magri
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Flute

Jessica Walther / *Principal*
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Alyse Faith

Oboe

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Clarinet

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Brady Foxley-Conolly /
Principal

Tuba

Stan McDonald / *Principal*
Michael Welch

Timpani

Huon Bourne Blue / *Principal*
Owen Bloomfield

Percussion

Thomas Waller / *Principal*
Steven Hartley
Steven Bryer

Harp

Isla Biffin / *Principal*
Paul Nicolaou

Celeste

Kimberly Gilbert / *Principal*

Organ

Holly Broadbent / *Principal*

Assistant Conductors

Carlo Antonioli
Thaddeus Huang

* Doubling Wagner Tuba

* Offstage Banda



SIR MARK ELDER CH CBE

Sir Mark Elder CH CBE has been Music Director of the Hallé since September 2000. He was previously Music Director of English National Opera (1979–1993) and Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. From 2022/23 he will take up the post of Principal Guest Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra.

He has enjoyed long relationships with the London Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestras as well as working with leading symphony orchestras throughout the world. He is a Principal Artist of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and has appeared annually at the Proms for many years, including – in 1987 and 2006 – the internationally televised Last Night.

He has enjoyed a long association with the Royal Opera House and has appeared in many other prominent theatres including the Metropolitan Opera, Opéra de Paris, Bavarian State Opera, Zürich, Dutch National Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, San Francisco and Glyndebourne Festival Opera. He was the first English conductor to conduct a new production at the Bayreuth Festival.

From 2011 to 2019 he was Artistic Director of Opera Rara, and he has made many award-winning recordings in a wide repertoire with the Hallé, including a complete RING cycle, Parsifal and the three great Elgar oratorios.

Sir Mark Elder was appointed a Companion of Honour in 2017, knighted in 2008 and awarded the CBE in 1989. In May 2006 he was named Conductor of the Year by the Royal Philharmonic Society and he was awarded Honorary Membership of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2011. He is International Chair in Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music and Barbirolli Chair at the Royal Academy of Music.

LES FRANCS-JUGES

OVERTURE OP.3

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

From usurped thrones and forbidden courts to entrapped lovers, the plotline behind Berlioz's unfinished opera is extremely elaborate and was not long for the stage. Composed in 1826 while Berlioz was still a 23-year-old student at the Paris Conservatoire, *Les Francs-juges* (The Judges of the Secret Court) has been described by musicologists as 'an apparent failure'. The three-act opera was never performed. Most of its music, bar the overture, was either destroyed by Berlioz or recycled in subsequent orchestral works including his *Symphonie fantastique*.

Despite its rocky conception, the overture's premiere as a standalone piece at the Conservatoire in May 1828 was enthusiastically received by its audience. It became the first of Berlioz's works to be performed outside of France and is now a beloved concert piece. Scored for an extended ensemble, including two piccolos, two contrabass keyed trumpets (now modern tubas) and a contrabassoon, the overture from *Les Francs-juges* utilizes the full power of the Romantic orchestra to explore themes of terror, helplessness and salvation in the secret Vehmic courts of medieval Germany. Steeped in 14th-century folklore, the opera tells the tale of Lenor, the rightful king of Breisgau. Lenor is imprisoned in a dark cavern and sentenced to death by the self-appointed judges of his tyrannous usurper, Olmerik. Before the sentence can be fulfilled, Lenor is freed by the kingdom's enlightened peasants and reunited with his lover Amelie.

Berlioz brings this tumultuous narrative to life, distorting traditional 19th-century musical conventions along the way. The piece opens with a soft, brooding lament in the strings and bassoons. Soon after, the arrival of the treasonous judges is heralded by a domineering theme in the lower brass. The theme is later punctuated by upper woodwind shrieks and a heartbeat-like pulse in the timpani and basses. A sudden change in tempo, followed by a pastoral tune in the violins and a slow-moving prayer in the woodwinds, propels the piece anxiously forward. This pastoral tune eventually wins out, representing Lenor's recuse by the enlightened peasants of Breisgau.

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AN ALPINE SYMPHONY

OP. 64

Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

In the final rehearsal before its premiere in 1915, Richard Strauss remarked of *An Alpine Symphony*: 'At least I have learned to orchestrate. I wanted to compose, for once, as a cow gives milk.' Given that he contributed so greatly to orchestral music before *Alpine*, some might say that this summation is slightly dramatic. If anything, however, it speaks to how magnificent, yet ultimately personal *Alpine* is.

Tone poems, single-movement orchestral works that usually tell some sort of story, were popularised by Franz Liszt in the 1840s and 50s. Strauss is arguably associated most closely with tone poems. He composed nine tone poems before *Alpine*, with inspirations that fall loosely into two categories. His earlier tone poems were composed to reflect literary or philosophical ideals, as Strauss himself proclaimed that 'new ideas must search for new forms.' The later tone poems are largely autobiographical, telling stories of Strauss's own life. As the last tone poem that Strauss wrote, *Alpine* is arguably a culmination of inspiration, combining both categories as a somewhat autobiographical and somewhat philosophical musical journey.

The piece is generally understood to be based on a hike that a 15-year-old Strauss took to the top of Heimgarten in Upper Bavaria, during which he got caught in a storm. In his memoirs, Strauss recalled this tumultuous journey: 'A terrible thunderstorm overtook us, which uprooted trees and threw stones in our faces. We hardly had time to find a dry spot before the storm broke... the rain came again and that is how we arrived in Schlehdorf, after a breakneck march (we did not rest for a single moment)—tired, soaked to the skin. The hike was interesting, unusual, and original in the highest degree.'



AYO's Words About Music program offers aspiring music journalists the opportunity to write, think and talk about music in all kinds of different ways.

The work was initially intended to be titled *Der Antichrist*, inspired by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's book of the same name. In Strauss's own words: 'I shall call my alpine symphony: *Der Antichrist*, since it represents: moral purification through one's own strength, liberation through work, worship of eternal, magnificent nature.' Ultimately the piece was titled simply *An Alpine Symphony*, although Nietzsche can still be viewed as source of inspiration. In some ways, it does not really matter what Strauss intended. Strauss wrote *Alpine* as a genuine tribute to the natural world; as either a retelling of a harrowing personal experience or as an exploration of a philosophy that was important to him. We are invited to explore what nature means for ourselves.

One of the ways Strauss aimed to illustrate his worship of nature was by writing for such a huge number of musicians. The score typically calls for around 125 players, including an offstage brass ensemble as well as unusual instruments ranging from the heckelphone in the oboe section to the wind machine in the percussion section. Strauss was reportedly pleased with how the piece expanded the possibilities of a symphony orchestra. However, this came with challenges; in a resource-strapped Europe during and post-WWI, *Alpine* was rarely played after its premiere.

The piece is made up of 22 continuous parts that describe elements of nature. They characterise the ascent, climax and descent of an unidentified hero on a mountain. The music describes distinct features of Bavarian alpine landscapes, from streams to woods and pastureland. It also illustrates the sunrise, the mist, a storm, and finally a sunset. Strauss is explicit, utilising cowbells to represent cows and a wind machine to represent wind. Perhaps what is most interesting, however, is that *Alpine* does not simply just retell what we can see in nature but what nature makes us feel.

WWI signalled an end to Strauss's devotion to tone poems and for big romantic German symphonic music more generally. As the music fades away and the hero descends the mountain, so too did an era of music.

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“I was amazed by my first AYO experience! The environment really inspired me and helped me find my feet as an orchestral musician”

- ROBERT SMITH, VIOLINIST

AYO has built a reputation as one of the world's finest and most innovative training organisations. For nearly 75 years, we have provided life-changing experiences and opportunities for thousands of talented young musicians, and after two years of disruption, we're determined to ensure this work can continue for generations.

The Australian Youth Orchestra plays a vital role in nurturing the creativity and development of young musicians. Your generosity will contribute to the future of Australian orchestral music and help outstanding musicians fulfil their potential.

Join us as we continue to inspire and train our country's most talented musicians – allowing them to dream for the future and share their stories with you and the world.

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