



Canberra  
Symphony  
Orchestra  
2024

CHAMBER CLASSICS

# AFFINITIES

# Welcome



Good afternoon and welcome to this very special concert, the final performance in our 2024 Chamber Classics series.

Today's program feels especially fitting for this beautiful Albert Hall setting – deeply personal, full of human connection and designed to be enjoyed among friends.

Our theme, *Affinities*, explores the creative and family bonds between two Czech composers, Antonín Dvořák and his protégé, Josef Suk, who later became his son-in-law. You'll hear these connections woven throughout the music, whether it's Dvořák's *Songs My Mother Taught Me*, which speaks so beautifully of family traditions, or Suk's *Elegy*, composed in memory of a dear friend and fellow artist.

To close, my fellow performers and I – Patrick Suthers on cello and Susanne Powell on piano – I will perform Mendelssohn's *Piano Trio in D minor*.

It's a work that Robert Schumann, another great composer of the time, believed would "bring joy to generations." We think you'll agree – its heartfelt melodies and virtuosic energy make it the perfect conclusion to today's concert.

Though this is the finale in our 2024 Chamber Classics series, we are already looking forward to sharing more wonderful chamber music with you in 2025 – the 75th anniversary of your CSO. We hope this music brings you joy and reminds you of the connections that unite us all. Enjoy the performance!

**Kirsten Williams**  
Concertmaster

*Image: Martin Ollman*

The Canberra Symphony Orchestra acknowledges the Ngunnawal people, traditional custodians of the land on which our concerts take place. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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# AFFINITIES

## CHAMBER CLASSICS

2pm, Sunday 27 October 2024  
Albert Hall, Yarralumla

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**Kirsten Williams** *Violin*

**Patrick Suthers** *Cello*

Sponsored by Paul Lindwall & Joanne Frederiksen

**Susanne Powell** *Piano*

**ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK**

Selections from *Romantic Pieces*,  
Op. 75, B.150 10'

**ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK**

*Silent Woods* for Cello and Piano,  
Op. 68, No. 5, B.173 7'

**JOSEK SUK**

*Elegy*, Op. 23 6'

**ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK**

*Songs My Mother Taught Me*,  
Op. 55, B. 104 4'

**FELIX MENDELSSOHN**

Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 49 30'

\* Timings are approximate

# Kirsten Williams Violin



**Kirsten Williams is Concertmaster of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra (CSO) and one of Australia's leading violinists.**

Kirsten studied with Alice Waten (Sydney Conservatorium) and Igor Ozim (Switzerland) before joining the Royal Opera House Orchestra at Covent Garden and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields. Upon returning to Australia, Kirsten was appointed Associate

Leader of the Australian Chamber and later Associate Concertmaster of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Kirsten's versatility as a soloist and chamber musician both in Australia and internationally extends also to her passion for music for healing and she has recorded two much-acclaimed CDs with American harpist Jane Rosenson.

A key figure in the CSO's Kingsland Pathways Program, Kirsten also works with the Sydney and Australian Youth Orchestras and teaches at the ANU School of Music. Her contributions to the CSO and wider ACT arts community were recognised in 2021 when she received the Governor General's Medallion.

*Image: Martin Ollman*

# Patrick Suthers

## Cello



**Patrick Suthers is the Principal Cellist of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra (CSO).**

Patrick studied cello at the Australian National University's School of Music with David Pereira and Julian Smiles, graduating with First

Class Honours and a University Medal.

His musical training also included a Sydney Symphony Orchestra (SSO) Fellowship; as a Fellow, he worked regularly with the SSO and performed frequently with the SSO Fellowship Ensemble, including performances for Pope Benedict XVI. He also received tuition from the Takács Quartet, the Jerusalem Quartet, and visiting soloists.

Patrick's career has included extensive orchestral work, including with the Canberra, Sydney, Queensland (Associate Principal) and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras. He has also performed in a variety of chamber ensembles and orchestras; orchestras for opera, ballet and film scoring; and in music education concerts.

Since 2012, Patrick has been the Principal Cellist of the CSO and enjoyed a successful career in the Australian Public Service.

*Image: Keith Saunders*

**Sponsored by Paul Lindwall & Joanne Frederiksen**

# Susanne Powell

## Piano



**Pianist Susanne Powell is a well-known Canberra performer who has shared the stage with some of the world's leading artists.**

Often performing at the Sydney Opera House on a wide variety of keyboard

instruments including piano, celesta, synthesiser, harpsichord and occasionally a Mac computer, Susanne is an ACT Creative Arts Fellow and keen mentor of upcoming Australian talent.

Susanne has appeared with many artists including Cho Liang (Jimmy) Lin, Dimitri Ashkenazy, Peter Coleman-Wright, Dr G Yunupingu, Nick Cave and Ben Folds. She performs regularly with the Sydney Symphony, Australian Ballet and Gondwana Choirs.

Susanne has worked with the world's leading conductors including Vladimir Ashkenazy, Valery Gergiev, Christoph von Dohnányi and Simone Young. She has performed in world premieres of works by John Adams, Brett Dean and Thomas Adès and played piano in Nigel Westlake's award-winning Oboe Concerto on Diana Doherty's CD *Spirit of the Wild*. Susanne can also be heard on the soundtrack for the upcoming movie, *Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway*.

After graduating with Honours from the Sydney Conservatorium, Susanne continued her studies at the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna. She has been a faculty member of ANU and tutors regularly for the Australian Youth Orchestra.

# DVOŘÁK

**Antonín Dvořák**  
**(1841–1904)**

*Romantic Pieces*, Op.75, B.150

*I. Allegro moderato*  
*IV. Larghetto*

By 1887 Czech composer Antonín Dvořák's international career was in full swing. His first set of *Slavonic Dances* had made his name around the world, his *Stabat Mater* had been performed in Europe, London and New York and his Seventh Symphony had received its premiere in London.

Dvořák had just finished orchestrating his second set of *Slavonic Dances* when he wrote a set of four 'Bagatelles' to play at home with his violinist colleague Jan Pelikán and Pelikán's student, Josef Kruis, a chemist who was renting a room in the same house as Dvořák and his family. Dvořák joined the pair on viola.

'I am writing some short Bagatelles at the moment, just think, for two violins and viola,' Dvořák wrote to his publisher Fritz Simrock. 'My work brings me as much pleasure as if I were writing a major symphony – what do you say to that? They are, of course, aimed at amateur musicians, but didn't Beethoven and Schumann also once write little pieces, and look what they came up with!'

Simrock published the Bagatelles as four *Romantic Pieces* that year, after Dvořák arranged them for violin and piano. In this performance you will hear the wistful first *Romance* and the beautiful but pensive final movement. While these pieces were written for the modest setting of a domestic performance, you can nonetheless hear the incredible skill for melody Dvořák brought to all his music – from the grandest symphonies to the most intimate chamber music.

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"My work brings me as much pleasure as if I were writing a major symphony..."

# DVOŘÁK

## Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

*Silent Woods* for  
Cello and Piano,  
Op.68 no.5, B173

Antonín Dvořák's star rose so far that in 1892 he was appointed director of the National Conservatorium of Music in New York, where he would write his Ninth Symphony, 'From the New World'.

Before he left Europe, however, Dvořák organised a farewell tour of Bohemia and Moravia. The composer played piano with two friends, violinist Ferdinand Lachner and cellist Hanuš Wihan. Dvořák realised he needed more music to perform with Wihan, so he turned to his cycle for piano four-hands, *From the Bohemian Forest*, arranging the fifth movement for cello and piano.

Dvořák wrote *From the Bohemian Forest* in 1883, inspired by the mountainous Šumava region in South Bohemia, at the request of his publisher Fritz Simrock. Dvořák asked Czech writer Marie Červinková-Riegrová to provide evocative titles for the movements, and she gave the dream-like fifth the name *Klid*, or Peace. For the new arrangement, however, Simrock – ever the cunning marketer – chose the German title *Waldesruhe*, or *Silent Woods*. The enchanting melody, with its beautifully expansive phrases, has become one of Dvořák's most beloved.

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“Suk established himself as an important voice in the next generation of Czech composers.”

## Josef Suk (1874–1935)

*Elegy*, Op.23

# SUK

Czech composer Josef Suk learned violin, organ and piano from his father, but his most famous teacher was Antonín Dvořák, with whom he studied at the Prague Conservatory. Suk and Dvořák became close, and the younger composer officially joined the family in 1898 when he married Dvořák's daughter Otilie, also a musician and composer.

Suk established himself as an important voice in the next generation of Czech composers. His *Serenade for Strings*, written in 1892, was published by Fritz Simrock on the recommendation of Johannes Brahms. He was also an accomplished chamber musician and played violin in the Czech Quartet for more than three decades.

Suk wrote his yearning, lyrical *Elegy* in 1902. He originally composed it for string sextet with harp and harmonium, before arranging it for piano trio. He gave it the subtitle 'Under the impression of Zeyer's *Vyšehrad*', a tribute to the poet and playwright Julius Zeyer, who died in 1901. Suk had written incidental music for several of Zeyer's plays and he composed this *Elegy* for a memorial in the writer's honour. Zeyer's epic poem *Vyšehrad*, written in 1880, refers to the same historic fort overlooking Prague that Bedřich Smetana celebrated in the first movement of *Má vlast*.

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# DVOŘÁK

**Antonin Dvořák**  
(1841-1904)

*Songs My Mother Taught Me*,  
from Op.55, B.104

In 1880 Dvořák wrote what would become his most famous song, the haunting and nostalgic *Songs my Mother Taught Me*. The song appeared originally as part of a cycle of seven songs setting words by Czech poet Adolf Heyduk, celebrating the romanticised freedom of Roma life – a stand-in for Czech freedom from the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Dvořák wrote the new song cycle at the request of German tenor Gustav Walter, a star of the Vienna Court Opera, who regularly performed Dvořák's earlier songs at his recitals.

Dvořák set a German translation created by Heyduk, and this was the version published by Fritz Simrock in 1880, but the following year, following a request from Dvořák, it was also published with lyrics in Czech and English.

The beautiful fourth song in the cycle, *Songs my Mother Taught Me*, has become by far the most popular, finding a life outside the cycle in countless instrumental arrangements, and beloved by audiences ever since its premiere.

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# MENDELSSOHN

**Felix Mendelssohn  
(1809–1847)**

Piano Trio No.1 in D minor, Op.49

*Molto allegro ed agitato*

*Andante con moto tranquillo*

*Scherzo: Leggiero e vivace*

*Finale: Allegro assai appassionato*

Despite composing a great deal of chamber music with piano as a youth, it was not until 1839, when Mendelssohn was ensconced in Leipzig, that he wrote his first Piano Trio. It rests on the foundations of the Classical style, and, like Beethoven, Mendelssohn casts his trio in four, rather than three, movements. When he had composed the first draft, though, Mendelssohn showed it to his colleague Ferdinand Hiller who had gravitated towards the music of composers seen to be avant-garde such as Berlioz, Chopin and especially Liszt. Hiller suggested that Mendelssohn consider enriching the piano part of his trio, more in line with the emerging style of Romantic pianism.

The result was what Schumann called ‘the master trio of today ... a lovely composition which years from hence will still delight grand – and great-grandchildren’. It also has the sense of a work that had solved certain problems: the piano, for instance, was now a much louder and more resonant

instrument than it had been for Mozart, Haydn and the early Beethoven in the late 18th century.

In the event, Mendelssohn solves the problems of balance perfectly, as we hear in the opening movement despite its turbulent minor mood. The slow movement is inevitably compared with Mendelssohn’s *Songs Without Words*, and it is supremely lyrical with all three instruments given their chance to sing. Almost as inevitably, the scherzo’s dazzling lightness is compared to that of Mendelssohn’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* score, which rather underplays its more dramatic gestures. Interestingly, Mendelssohn dispenses with the conventional trio section at the heart of this movement, preferring an episode of intricate counterpoint. The ‘fast and passionate’ rondo finale indulges in much Romantic hair-tossing until the final episode (a lovely cello melody), which leads to a sparkling, major-key conclusion.

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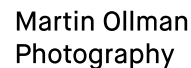
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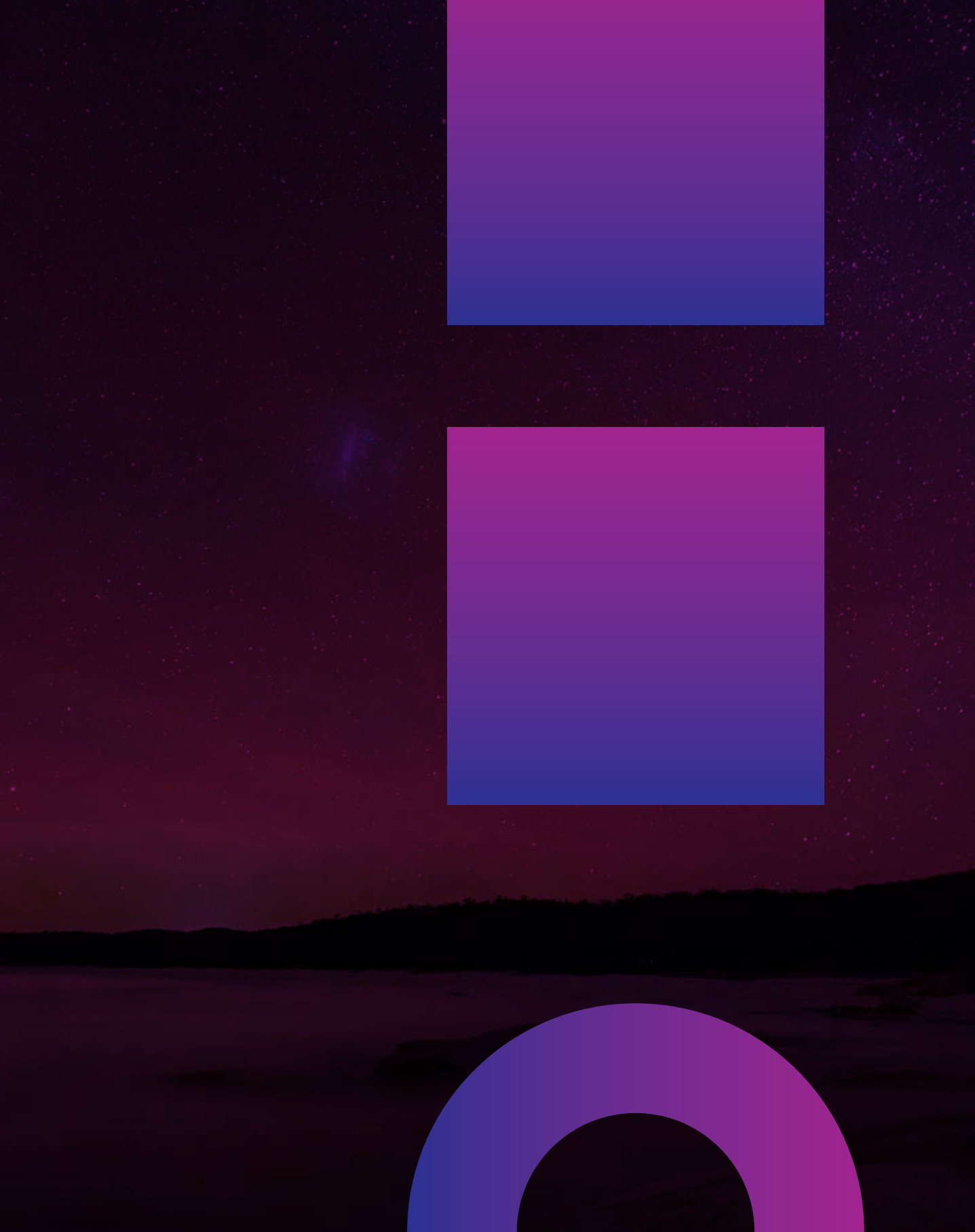
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