



2024 SEASON
WILLOUGHBY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
DR NICHOLAS MILTON AM



2024

WILLOUGHBY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Willoughby City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we perform, the Gamaragal people. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Bringing artistic integrity and visceral excitement to the cultural heart of the North Shore, united in a shared vision of music and community.

MAYOR'S MESSAGE



Welcome to another year of exceptional symphonic music from the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra.

The dedication of the orchestra's musicians and the support of its subscribers are crucial in bringing exceptional symphonic music to Willoughby.

The 2024 season will be the biggest season ever for the symphony featuring a wide program.

The inclusion of an evening dedicated to James Bond film scores promises to be a thrilling experience, allowing the audience to relive the iconic music from these beloved movies. Additionally, the performance of music from the Coronation of King Charles III presents a unique opportunity to enjoy regal and ceremonial compositions.

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is a timeless masterpiece that has touched the hearts of audiences for centuries. It's wonderful that the orchestra will be presenting this iconic work,

offering a chance to appreciate the brilliance and emotional depth of Beethoven's music.

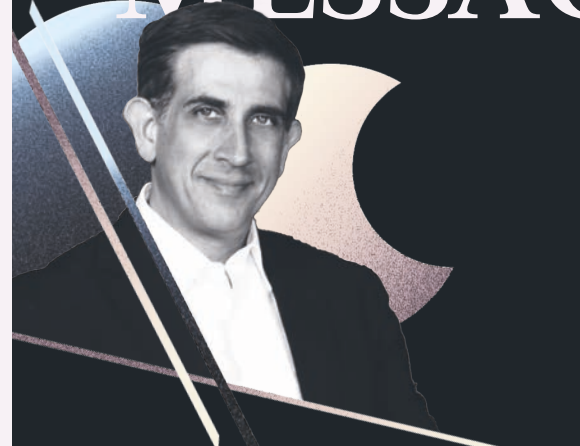
One of the children's concerts in collaboration with Chatswood Culture Bites is the Disney classic Little Mermaid Live to Film. This is an excellent initiative to engage younger audiences and introduce them to the magic of symphonic music through a beloved family film.

Having Artistic Director Dr. Nicholas Milton AM leading the orchestra guarantees an outstanding program of concerts. His expertise and artistic vision will undoubtedly contribute to a memorable season filled with exceptional musical performances.

Congratulations to the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra on delivering a memorable symphonic experience for the community and beyond. I hope that you will join the Orchestra for an unforgettable season.

Tanya Taylor
Willoughby Mayor

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



The Willoughby Symphony has been hailed as one of Australia's most extraordinary orchestras, presenting enthralling community events that deliver intense beauty and unbridled joy. Music can open hearts and enrich souls, and I am constantly reminded of this miracle when I conduct this sensational group of musicians in the stunning concert hall at The Concourse. After a deep and binding musical and personal connection of almost forty years, it continues to be a profound honour for me to make music with these thrilling instrumentalists who perform with such electrifying commitment and enthusiasm and who share such an inspiring vision for our community. I remain deeply grateful to our Willoughby Symphony family – orchestral musicians, choristers, fantastic guest conductors and soloists and to our terrifically vibrant management team at Willoughby City Council.

Our 2024 season-opening Gala concert "An Evening with James Bond" sets the tone for

Image credit Sarah Walker

an exuberant and thrilling year. A massive orchestra brings the most beloved title songs to vivid life in two performances that will blow you away. You will be mesmerised by Beethoven's Fifth – surely the most famous symphonic statement of the entire repertoire, but you'll be equally astounded by the raw emotional impact of Shostakovich's Fifth. We welcome prodigious Australian soloists: Konstantin Shamray, winner of the First Prize at the Sydney International Piano Competition; the dazzling Winnie Su and Edward Walton represent the next generation of Australian musical stars.

Our eternally popular Last Night of the Proms promises colossal spectacle and jubilation in a special edition concert featuring music from the coronation of King Charles III. The powerful Willoughby Symphony Choir, under the direction of one of Australia's leading Choir Masters, the flamboyant Peter Ellis, will also feature in an irrepressible Christmas concert and our brilliant Associate Conductor Dr Sarah Penicka-Smith, will move you to tears in Dvořák's soulful Stabat Mater.

Aldous Huxley wrote: "After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music." Dearest friends, the musicians of our unique orchestra and I are looking forward to having you join our Willoughby Symphony family on an absolutely thrilling odyssey of scintillating concert experiences in 2024.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Nicholas Milton AM
Chief Conductor & Artistic Director



THE ORCHESTRA

ABOUT WILLOUGHBY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Willoughby Symphony Orchestra (WSO) is a world-class ensemble with deep roots in the community. Established in 1965 and proudly managed by Willoughby City Council, the WSO is one of Australia's oldest and most celebrated orchestras, enriching the life of Willoughby with exceptional music-making for over 50 years. A cultural landmark on Sydney's North Shore and beyond, the WSO has earned a reputation for supporting the careers of some of Australia's most exciting emerging musicians and composers.

Performing in its home in the acoustically excellent Concert Hall of The Concourse, Chatswood, the WSO is renowned for its outstanding annual concert series. The series encompasses beloved orchestral classics, innovative music presentation styles, and family-oriented productions that engage and delight audiences of all ages.

The WSO's prestigious Young Composer Award was established in 2004 and celebrates 20 years bringing the best new music to Willoughby audiences in 2024. In partnership with the Willoughby Symphony Choir, the WSO showcases thrilling large-scale choral works alongside orchestral masterpieces.

The WSO has been led since 2001 by internationally celebrated orchestral icon and local legend, Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, Dr Nicholas Milton AM. Dr Milton continues to attract international attention as one of the most outstanding Australian working today.

The Orchestra is proudly managed by Willoughby City Council. The WSO looks forward to performing this exceptional season for you in 2024.

THE CONDUCTORS



CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, DR NICHOLAS MILTON AM

Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra, Dr. Nicholas Milton AM has established an outstanding reputation for his charismatic stage presence and powerful interpretations of an extensive repertoire spanning both concert and opera.

Renowned for his dynamic conducting style and compelling musical integrity, he continues to attract international attention as one of the most outstanding Australian conductors working today. Nicholas also serves as General Music Director of the State Opera House in Klagenfurt, Austria and Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Göttingen Symphony Orchestra in Germany.

Guest engagements in the last years have seen him conduct productions at the Deutsche Oper and Komische Oper (Berlin), Volksoper (Vienna), and in Dortmund, Leipzig, München, Linz, and Innsbruck. In Sydney he has conducted Tosca, La Bohème, and Madama Butterfly for Opera Australia. In the current season, he conducts Tosca at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and a critically acclaimed new production of Wagner's Ring Cycle in Klagenfurt. Nicholas Milton's concert engagements include appearances with leading orchestras in Germany, Austria, Hungary, France, Spain, the Netherlands and Asia.

Nicholas studied with Harry Curby at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and subsequently at Michigan State University and at the Juilliard School. He holds four Master degrees in Violin, Conducting, Music Theory and Philosophy, and has a Doctorate in Music from the City University of New York. Appointed as the youngest-ever concertmaster of a major Australian orchestra, Nicholas enjoyed a distinguished career as a violinist before dedicating himself exclusively to conducting. He was Concertmaster of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and performed for eight years as violinist in one of the country's most well-known chamber music formations, Macquarie Trio Australia. Subsequently

mentored at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki by the legendary Jorma Panula, he won the 1999 Symphony Australia Conductor of the Year Competition and was a prize-winner in the Lovro von Matačić International Competition of Young Conductors. Nicholas served as General Music Director of the State Opera House in Saarbrücken, Germany (2014-2018), Chief Conductor of the Dubrovnik Symphony Orchestra, General Music Director of the Jena Philharmonic Orchestra (2004-2010), and in 2020 concluded a fifteen year tenure as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra.

The only Australian conductor ever nominated for a GRAMMY® Award, Nicholas Milton's discography includes over 60 CD recordings. As chamber musician, he recorded dozens of award-winning CDs with the Macquarie Trio as well as the complete Haydn String Quartets for the Music Minus One label. Numerous orchestral recordings with the Konzerthausorchester Berlin and the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken Kaiserslautern are scheduled for release on the Onyx, CPO and Naxos labels. His recording of the complete symphonies of Johannes Brahms with the Göttinger Symphonieorchester has received numerous prizes including the Pizzicato Magazine's Supersonic award, and was nominated in the 2022 International Classical Music Awards in the category, Best Recording of the Year.

In 2001 Nicholas Milton was awarded the Australian Centenary Medal for Service to Australian Society and the Advancement of Music and in 2016 he was named a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for Significant Service to the Arts as Musician, Conductor and Artistic Director.

ASSOCIATE CONDUCTOR

A passionate advocate for music as a force for change, Dr Sarah Penicka-Smith is a Western Sydney-based conductor with a socially-engaged arts practice. She is Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of River City Voices and the Associate Conductor for Willoughby Symphony. With her wife Melanie, Sarah founded the Lifehouse Volunteer Orchestra, bringing music to patients and their families at the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse.

They also run Pacific Pride Choir, and have toured Germany, Poland, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Sarah made her international debut in Dallas in 2018 through the Hart Institute for Women Conductors at The Dallas Opera. She has conducted a number of operas with Sydney companies, as well as guest conducting for many Sydney orchestras. Sarah works extensively with choirs, including previously holding positions with Macquarie Singers, St Andrew's College, Sydney Gay & Lesbian Choir, Sydney Philharmonia, and Willoughby Symphony Choir.

Sarah was selected for the inaugural CASE Incubator program for socially engaged artists in 2022 and her 2023 creative projects include creating a new structured improvisation for voices inspired by James Turrell's 'Amarna' at MONA for Hobart's Festival of Voices, where she will also direct the Pride Choir workshop. She is creating new works with The Cad Factory and other artists in collaboration with the townships of Narrandera (NSW) and Pinnaroo (SA), and also continues creative development on *OCDiva*, a new one-woman opera by Eve Klein for Yasmin Arkininstall, which tours in 2023.



GUEST CONDUCTOR

An acclaimed Violist and chamber musician, Luke Spicer is now establishing himself as one of Australia's foremost young conductors. Graduating with a Masters of Conducting from the Sydney Conservatorium, he has furthered his studies in Freiburg, and Manchester; and attended the Fondazione Musicale Chigiana, Siena, working under Maestro Gianluigi Gelmetti. Luke became a participant in the Symphony Services International Conductor Development Program during 2016 working with Johannes Fritzsich, Giordano Bellincampi, and Marco Letonja.

Luke has been a regular conductor and music director with Opera Australia and has appeared as guest conductor of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Canberra Symphony Orchestra. He has also been guest Assistant Conductor at The Bruckner Orchestra Linz, the Saarländisches Staatstheater of Saarbrücken, and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, working under Simone Young and Vladimir Ashkenazy. Luke has worked extensively with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra and Sydney University Symphony Orchestra, as well as conducting the inaugural gala concert of Coast Opera Australia, featuring Jose Carbo and Sally-Anne Russell.

In 2014 Luke was appointed Principal Conductor of the Sydney University Symphony Orchestra, in 2016 he became Music Director of Blush Opera in Sydney and was the Associate Conductor of the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra for several

years. Luke made his operatic debut in 2015 with an innovative production of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, directed by Shannon Murphy and featuring Silvia Colloca, Stacey Alleaume, and Catherine Bouchier in the principal roles, as part of the Spectrum Now Festival within the art gallery of NSW, and in 2016 conducted a powerful sell-out production of Puccini's *il Tabarro*, directed by Constantine Costi.

In 2022 Luke conducted Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for Opera Australia's National Tour.



Image Credit Lucien Fisher

AN EVENING WITH JAMES BOND

A SPECIAL PERFORMANCE BY THE WSO

GALA



Nobody does it better than the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra as they launch their 2024 season with a thrilling night of spycraft and suspense. Join Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Dr Nicholas Milton AM and the WSO in a celebration of themes from the iconic James Bond films from the late 1960s to the 21st century. Relive the adventures of the world's greatest spy in this electrifying musical experience featuring classics like *Goldfinger*, *Diamonds are Forever* and *Moonraker* through to modern masterpieces like Adele's *Skyfall* and Billie Eilish's *No Time to Die*.

**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND
CHIEF CONDUCTOR,
DR NICHOLAS MILTON AM**

SATURDAY 3 FEBRUARY, 7PM
SUNDAY 4 FEBRUARY, 2PM

DISNEY THE LITTLE MERMAID IN CONCERT LIVE TO FILM

PERFORMED LIVE BY THE WILLOUGHBY
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



©Disney

**CONDUCTOR,
VANESSA SCAMMELL**

SATURDAY 9 MARCH, 7PM
SUNDAY 10 MARCH, 2PM

PRESENTATION LICENSED BY



Perfect for the entire family. Join Ariel and friends for an adventure “under the sea” as Disney’s animated classic, “*The Little Mermaid*” projects onto the big screen at The Concourse Concert Hall while the score is performed live by the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra.

Showcasing the Academy Award®-winning score by Alan Menken and featuring the beloved characters Ariel, Flounder, Sebastian, King Triton and Ursula on the big screen, the uplifting score is brought to life by the WSO in a magical performance led by conductor Vanessa Scammell.

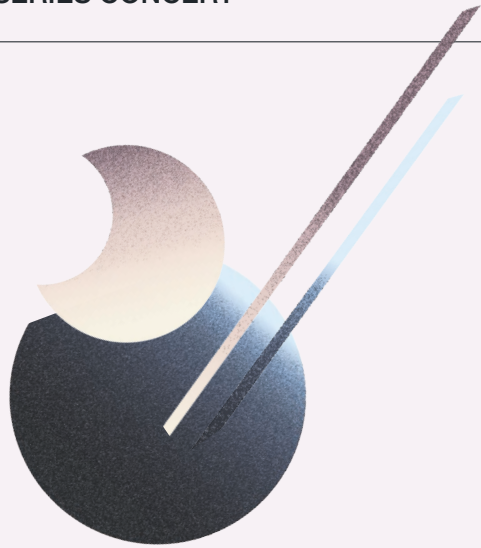
Enjoy all the beloved songs from the iconic film including “*Under the Sea*,” “*Part of Your World*” and “*Kiss the Girl*” as you re-live this classic tale of Ariel and her magical world under the sea.

This event is part of Chatswood Culture Bites, Willoughby City Council’s innovative program of music, theatre, comedy and more in Chatswood CBD.

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EMPEROR

SUBSCRIPTION SERIES CONCERT



Ludwig van Beethoven wrote his Fifth Piano Concerto, the 'Emperor', at the height of his powers, demonstrating the grandeur and exhilarating musical possibilities of the piano. Hear this iconic work in the hands of rising star Australian pianist Winnie Su, who joins conductor Luke Spicer and the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra for an unmissable night of music. Be there for the unveiling of a brand new work by the winner the of the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra's Young Composer Award for 2024 alongside Gustav Holst's *A Somerset Rhapsody* and Ralph Vaughan Williams' exquisite *Benedicite*, sung by the scintillating Willoughby Symphony Choir.

CONDUCTOR, LUKE SPICER
PIANO, WINNIE SU
WILLOUGHBY
SYMPHONY CHOIR

SATURDAY 20 APRIL, 7PM
SUNDAY 21 APRIL, 2PM

PROGRAM

HOLST *A SOMERSET RHAPSODY OP. 21*
VAUGHAN-WILLIAMS *BENEDICITE*
BEETHOVEN *PIANO CONCERTO NO. 5*
IN E-FLAT MAJOR OP. 73



RHAPSODY

SUBSCRIPTION SERIES CONCERT

**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND
CHIEF CONDUCTOR,
DR NICHOLAS MILTON AM**
**PIANO, KONSTANTIN
SHAMRAY**

SATURDAY 27 JULY, 7PM
SUNDAY 28 JULY, 2PM

PROGRAM

BORODIN *PRINCE IGOR*
POLOVTSIAN DANCES

RACHMANINOV *RHAPSODY ON A
THEME OF PAGANINI OP. 43*

SHOSTAKOVICH *SYMPHONY NO. 5
IN D MINOR OP. 47*

Internationally renowned concert pianist Konstantin Shamray joins the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra for a stunning showcase of Russian music. Hear the prize-winning Australian-based, Russian-born pianist perform Sergei Rachmaninov's brilliant *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op.43, a glittering showpiece of astounding virtuosity, under the baton of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Dr Nicholas Milton AM. Alongside this showstopper, the WSO performs Alexander Borodin's lively *Polovtsian Dances* from *Prince Igor* and one of the 20th-century's most fascinating works, Dmitri Shostakovich's mighty Fifth Symphony, written amidst the danger and oppression of Stalin's Russia.



LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS

SUBSCRIPTION SERIES CONCERT



**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND
CHIEF CONDUCTOR,
DR NICHOLAS MILTON AM
WILLOUGHBY
SYMPHONY CHOIR**

SATURDAY 10 AUGUST, 7PM
SUNDAY 11 AUGUST, 2PM

Mark your calendar for a night of musical revelry as The Last Night of the Proms returns to The Concourse, Chatswood, in a special edition concert featuring music from the coronation of King Charles III. Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Dr Nicholas Milton is Master of Ceremonies in this wildly popular annual tradition, which will include stirring performances of music by Sir Edward Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Percy Grainger, Peter Sculthorpe and much more. Enjoy orchestral favourites alongside popular classics in spirited performances by the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra, with plenty of opportunities to sing along and get those flags waving!

PARADISE

SUBSCRIPTION SERIES CONCERT

**ASSOCIATE CONDUCTOR
DR SARAH PENICKA-SMITH**

**WILLOUGHBY
SYMPHONY CHOIR**

SATURDAY 12 OCTOBER, 7PM
SUNDAY 13 OCTOBER, 2PM

PROGRAM

DVOŘÁK STABAT MATER

Experience the sublime beauty of one of the most profoundly moving choral works ever written when Associate Conductor Dr Sarah Penicka-Smith leads the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra and Choir in Antonín Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*. The Czech master of melody wrote this soul-stirring music in response to devastating personal tragedy, creating a transcendent work of healing that continues to resonate with audiences today. Don't miss this incredible choral masterpiece.



Image credit Karen Almond

WONDER

SUBSCRIPTION SERIES CONCERT



**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND
CHIEF CONDUCTOR,
DR NICHOLAS MILTON AM
VIOLIN, EDWARD WALTON**

SATURDAY 23 NOVEMBER, 7PM
SUNDAY 24 NOVEMBER, 2PM

PROGRAM

*BRAHMS VIOLIN CONCERTO
IN D MAJOR OP. 77*

*BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO. 5
IN C MINOR OP. 67*

Australian violinist Edward Walton won his first international competition in Italy at the age of 13 and has gone on to win awards around the world. Hear one of classical music's most exciting young stars perform Johannes Brahms' monumental Violin Concerto with Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Dr Nicholas Milton AM and the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra. Then the most famous four notes in music history launch Ludwig van Beethoven's magnificent Fifth Symphony, a beloved cornerstone of the orchestral repertoire. Experience this remarkable symphony in the hands of the WSO in a concert celebrating the wonder and passion of music.

THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS

A SPECIAL PERFORMANCE BY THE WSO



CONDUCTOR, PETER ELLIS
WILLOUGHBY SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA
WILLOUGHBY SYMPHONY
CHOIR

SUNDAY 8 DECEMBER, 2PM

Celebrate the magic of Christmas at this delightfully jubilant concert performance for the whole family. Sing along to your favourite Christmas classics with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra and Choir as they perform your favourite carols in this memorable celebration that will fill your heart with the joy of the festive season!

MINI MAESTROS

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM



Join Maestro George Ellis and Willoughby Symphony Orchestra as they take you on a musical journey through the orchestra with plenty of laughs along the way!

CONDUCTOR, GEORGE ELLIS
WILLOUGHBY SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

SATURDAY 6 JULY, 11AM

Willoughby Symphony Choir

with Willoughby Symphony Orchestra

Peter Ellis
Conductor

2pm Sun
2 June 2024

The Concourse
Chatswood

HAYDN

Creation



willoughbychoir.com.au



WILLOUGHBY
SYMPHONY
CHOIR

MAKE A DONATION TODAY

Your gift helps bring the beauty and vitality of orchestral music to the area and maintain its role as a vital part of the community. With your assistance the orchestra have been able to:

- Commission new works by emerging Australian composers
- Purchase a new set of timpani in 2019
- Purchase a new contrabassoon in 2020

BE A PART OF THE MUSIC

Thank you to our 2023 donors for their financial contributions to the Willoughby Symphony.

Symphony: \$5000+	Sonata: \$500+	Overture: \$50+
Oratorio: \$2000+	Aria: \$250+	Prelude: \$50 and under
Concerto: \$1000+	Fantasia: \$100+	

SYMPHONY

Daniel Park-Dean
Drs Keith and Eileen
Ong Mark Wakely

ORATORIO

Graeme Cruise

ARIA

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Wilhelmina Brown

Thank you to our many Fantasia, Overture and Prelude sponsors.

If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to Willoughby Symphony Orchestra please contact the Cultural Operations Coordinator at wsoc@willoughby.nsw.gov.au or call 02 9777 7634

TICKETS

SUBSCRIPTION SERIES CONCERTS ONLY

INDIVIDUAL CONCERT PRICES

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- **THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS**

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MINI MAESTROS CONCERT

ALL TICKETS	\$30.00
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willoughbysymphony.com.au

[theconcourse.com.au/visit/
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This program was correct at the time of publication and is subject to change.



FIND US AT

THE CONCOURSE CONCERT HALL
Level 1, 409 Victoria Ave Chatswood
theconcourse.com.au

wsoc@willoughby.nsw.gov.au
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