

ADELAIDE WIND ORCHESTRA

Presents

KINGFISHERS CATCH FIRE

7:30PM · Saturday 13 June 2026

Elder Hall, The University of Adelaide

Conductors Sean Renaud / Benjamin Wohlfeil

P R O G R A M M E

JENNIFER JOLLEY *Dune Aurora* (2025)

FRANK TICHELI *Sanctuary* (2006)

ADAM GORB *Pike's Peak* (2017)

INTERVAL – 20 minutes (Drinks available in foyer)

PERCY GRAINGER *Lincolnshire Posy* (1937)

JOHN MACKEY *Kingfishers Catch Fire* (2007)

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Kaurna people, the traditional custodians whose ancestral lands we gather on. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of the Kaurna people to country and we respect and value their past, present and ongoing connection to the land and cultural beliefs. Adelaide Wind Orchestra (AWO) seeks to unite, educate, challenge, and enrich the South Australian public through the engaging and transformative power of music. Please visit our website to read more about our history, vision and our plans for 2025 and beyond. www.awo.org.au/vision

B E N J A M I N W O H L F E I L

Benjamin is conducting our first piece, Jennifer Jolley's *Dune Aurora*. He is a student of our esteemed music director, Bryan Griffiths, and is well known in the band community as both an up and coming conductor as well as a trumpet player, having featured with AWO before. His appearance is part of our ongoing commitment to the development of conductors in Adelaide, in conjunction with the Elder Conservatorium.

S E A N R E N A U D

Born in Denver, Colorado, he holds a Bachelor of Music and Bachelor Music Education degrees from the University of Northern Colorado and a Master of Music from the University of Miami. In the USA he performed in the double bass section of the Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra and as principal bassist of the Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra in Miami, Florida.

Sean's relationship with the Unley Symphony Orchestra started in 2016 performing Serge Koussevitzky's Concerto for Double Bass and Orchestra, Op. 3 as soloist. From there, he has made Adelaide his home, and has performed many times as a casual member of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and is a regular member of the Adelaide Concert Orchestra.

Sean is a passionate music educator, having served Instrumental Music in the Department for Education South Australia as a strings teacher since 2017. As part of his teaching role in the public schools Sean also conducts the Secondary Schools String Symphony, an appointment he has held since 2020. Sean made his conducting debut in 2022 in a concert entitled 'Mozart Spectacular', featuring the Adelaide Concert Orchestra and a host of vocal talents from the Adelaide opera scene performing the overtures and selected arias from *Don Giovanni*, K. 527 and *The Marriage of Figaro*, K. 492.

We are delighted to have him on board to take this lead for this epic concert.

P R O G R A M M E N O T E S

Jennifer Jolley — *Dune Aurora* (2025)

COMPOSER'S NOTE

This ComMission Possible project began with fifteen ideas that students formulated for me, including historical events, mythic settings, abstract experiences, and natural phenomena. I could only choose one idea, which was

difficult because every idea I was given made me think. So I bent the rules a little and selected two ideas. I selected the ideas of "Northern Lights" and "Sounds of Nature" (thanks, Brynlyn, Kenley, and Mason) because, in combination, these ideas pushed each other beyond my initial, isolated interpretations.

The Northern Lights don't produce sounds like the ones we hear in a forest, but they do emit low-frequency radio waves. They also expand our conception of the natural world to include the cosmos. This seems fair, since we are made of star dust after all.

As I read more about the Northern Lights, I discovered the piece's namesake. Dune auroras were first observed by Finnish citizen scientists in 2016. Their existence was officially reported in 2020 and confirmed the following year. Consisting of regularly spaced, parallel stripes of brighter emissions within the green diffuse aurora, dune auroras have an appearance similar to the wind-driven landforms found in desert and coastal environments. It's a great name—a gritty terrestrial form mapped onto the luminous sky. It offered me a new structure to imagine and a different compositional model. Bright patterns throughout the expanses encouraged me to give greater attention to ambient texture rather than structuring my work around a developing motif. Color and timbre distributed throughout the ensemble make melody less a line and more an extended field. I wanted to engulf the listeners in a warm body of texture and timbre, something that would reflect the inspiring and extraordinary beauty of the dune auroras themselves.

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We met Jennifer at WASBE South Korea 2024. She stayed at our hotel and we caught the bus together. It is about time we played more of her music.

Frank Ticheli — Sanctuary (2006)

Frank Ticheli is one of the most celebrated composers writing for wind ensemble today. *Sanctuary* (2006) is a work of profound stillness and inner reflection — a deliberate counterweight to the turbulence of the modern world. Ticheli composed the piece as a personal meditation, drawing on the idea of sanctuary not merely as a physical place of safety, but as a state of the spirit.

The opening is marked by a long, unfolding melodic line in the upper woodwinds, evolving into rich harmonic clusters that suggest both shelter and vulnerability. The work avoids dramatic climax, preferring instead a quality of sustained contemplation that asks the listener to be still. AWO was privileged to collaborate with Ticheli at the WASBE International Conference in Gwangju, South Korea in July 2024.

SANCTUARY was composed for conductor H. Robert Reynolds as a symbol of our enduring friendship. The work was commissioned in his honor, and received its premiere performance by the band he conducted for 26 years. As a personal tribute to Mr. Reynolds, who was a horn player in his earlier days, I chose the solo horn to be the work's main musical messenger. The opening prologue grows out of a set of

pitches that were derived from the letters of his first name (Harrah), an idea I first used fifteen years ago in Postcard (commissioned by Reynolds in memory of his mother.) Vivid college memories of Mr. Reynolds conducting Grainger's HILL SONG NO. 2 and COLONIAL SONG — both well known favorites of his — were also in the back of my mind, as the sounds that I created in some ways echo the lyrical mood of these works.

The word, sanctuary, conjures a rich array of images. It can imply a place of solitude, comfort, rest, prayer, protection. It can suggest a place that is strong and imposing or one that is very small and private. I believe all of these images are suggested at one point or another in the music. The opening bell sounds suggest peace and joyful reverence. The main horn melody is at once reflective and reassuring.

There is also an underlying hint of nostalgia — a wistfulness, perhaps suggested by the simple three-chord progression which threads the entire work. But there is also an expression of strength and power in the work's dark and imposing climax.

After the climax recedes, the main melody disappears for a period of time, replaced by flute and clarinet solo episodes which create repose, space, and distance.

But in the end, the three-chord harmony returns and serves as a doorway for the final appearance of the main horn theme. The work ends with a quiet echo of the opening bells.

Sanctuary was commissioned by the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association in honor of H. Robert Reynolds. The premiere performance was given by the University of Michigan Symphony Band, Michael Haithcock, conductor, at Hill Auditorium on October 22, 2005.

Adam Gorb — Pike's Peak (2017)

Adam Gorb is a British composer whose work spans concert music, opera, and film. Pike's Peak (2017) was inspired by the 4,302-metre summit that dominates Colorado's Front Range — a mountain accessible yet magnificently prominent, described by Gorb as "standing over the eastern plains with a kind of democratic majesty, visible to all." The work opens with broad, expansive gestures that paint the mountain's scale before launching into passages of rhythmic energy that capture the exhilaration of the summit. There is a lyricism in Gorb's writing that never allows technical display to crowd out genuine feeling: the listener is invited not merely to observe the peak, but to feel its pull.

Pike's Peak is the highest summit (14,115 foot) of the southern Front Range of the Rocky Mountains in the USA. It is the second most visited mountain in the world after Mount Fuji. This ten-minute work for wind ensemble written in 2017 is in three movements:

Cog Railway This is the most practical way of getting up to the top of the mountain — the music is mainly relaxed with a constant chugging rhythm, but there are some tense moments that reflect some of the twists and turns of the journey. The panoramic aspect of the ascent comes more into focus at the end of the movement.

Climb Dance The title is taken from a short film featuring the Finnish rally driver Ari Vatanen driving up Pike's Peak in record time in a Peugeot 405 Turbo 16-GR. By the time you've read this the movement will be finished.

Summit The slow movement of the work, a grandiose celebration of some of the most spectacular views where on a clear day you can see five states (Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Kansas) and even the curvature of the earth fading into the distance.

We were conducted by Adam performing this piece a few years ago. I've met Adam about 5 times now. He has been a regular to Adelaide since being invited by Bob Hower and Charles Bodman Rae. His music is spectacular. We are glad to be playing more of his music again.

Percy Grainger — Lincolnshire Posy (1937)

Percy Grainger (1882–1961) was born in Brighton, South Australia — and you can still visit his grave at Adelaide's West Terrace Cemetery. Lincolnshire Posy (1937) stands as one of the most important and beloved works in the wind ensemble canon. Far from a literal collection of flowers, it is Grainger's personal arrangement of six traditional folk tunes collected from labourers, shepherds, and fishermen of Lincolnshire, England, in the early twentieth century.

Grainger's orchestrations are remarkable for their rhythmic complexity and freedom, often employing "elastic scoring" that allows the conductor and performers considerable latitude. Each movement bears the name of the folk singer from whom it was gathered, anchoring the music in the lives of real people. The result is a work fragrant and diverse, rich with character and contrast — a tribute to a vanishing world preserved in sound.

Movements: I. Lisbon · II. Horkstow Grange · III. Rufford Park Poachers · IV. The Brisk Young Sailor · V. Lord Melbourne · VI. The Lost Lady Found

Here are some more notes from the Berlin Philharmonic.

Percy Grainger, born in 1882 in Melbourne, Australia, came to Europe in 1895 to study in Frankfurt am Main. He later settled in Britain and made a name for himself as a pianist, performing in the elegant salons of London. Around the same time that Zoltán Kodály and Béla Bartók were collecting folk songs in Hungary, Grainger began to take an interest in the vernacular musical traditions of his adopted English homeland. In 1905 and 1906 he set out to find people still familiar with this repertoire – travelling from village to village, at first with pencil and notebook, later equipped with a phonograph. The collection that emerged from these encounters became a treasure chest of musical ideas and provided the foundation for one of his most popular works: Lincolnshire Posy.

Grainger meticulously recorded from whom and under what circumstances he had heard each song. Of the first movement of Lincolnshire Posy, for instance, he wrote about a certain Mr Deane: "I found him in the hospital ward of the workhouse, with a great gash in his head – he having fallen down stairs. He was very proud of his wound, and insisted that he was far too weak to sing. 'All right, Mr Deane,' I said to him, 'you needn't sing yourself; but I would like you to hear some records made by other singers in these parts.' He had not heard half the record through before he said, impulsively: 'I'll sing for you, yoong mahn.' So the phonograph was propped up on his bed, and in between the second and third verse he spoke these words into the record: 'It's pleasein' muh.' Which shows how very much folksinging is part of the folksinger's natural life."

In 1914, Grainger emigrated to the United States. When he was commissioned in 1937 to compose a work for the upcoming American Bandmasters Convention, he turned to six of these folk songs. In doing so, he strove to preserve the singers' original diction and expressive nuances: "Each number is intended to be a kind of musical portrait of the singer who sang its underlying melody – a musical portrait of the singer's personality no less than of his habits of song – his regular or irregular wonts of rhythm, his preference for gaunt or ornately arabesqued delivery, his contrasts of legato and staccato, his tendency towards breadth or delicacy of tone."

The melodies in Lincolnshire Posy – with the exception of the final song – sound less "folksy" than one might expect, for Grainger enriched them with lush and often daring harmonies. For him, the old folk singers were nothing less than "kings and queens of song": "No concert singer I ever heard approached these rural warblers in variety of tone-quality, range of dynamics, rhythmic resourcefulness and individuality of style."

John Mackey — Kingfishers Catch Fire (2007)

The concert's title work, by American composer John Mackey, takes its name from a line in Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem *As Kingfishers Catch Fire* (1877): "As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame." Hopkins' poem celebrates the intrinsic nature of every created thing – each creature expressing, in its very being, something essential and irreplaceable.

Mackey's music opens in the early morning stillness just after a heavy rainstorm: the kingfisher emerges slowly from its nest, cautious and shimmering, before launching out into dazzling sunlight. The work builds from intimate fragility to incandescent brilliance, with a rhythmic vitality in its final pages that is among the most exhilarating in the wind ensemble repertoire. It is a fitting conclusion to a concert devoted to nature, colour, and the full spectrum of what music can express.

I. Following falls and falls of rain
II. Kingfishers catch fire

A “kingfisher” is a bird with beautiful, brilliantly colored feathers that look in sunlight as if they are on fire. Kingfishers are extremely shy birds and are rarely seen, but when they are seen, they are undeniably beautiful.

The first movement, “Following falls and falls of rain,” is suspended in tone, but with hope, depicting the kingfisher slowly emerging from its nest in the early morning stillness, just after a heavy rain storm. The second movement, “Kingfishers catch fire,” imagines the bird flying out into the sunlight.

DISCOVER MORE

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Our next concerts in 2026

Gloriosa – 7:30pm Saturday 19 September – Elder Hall

Twisted Rivers – 7:30pm Saturday 5 December – Elder Hall

Flutes

Melanie Walters
Tegan Beck
Madeleine Stewart
Gemma Vice
Sam Taylor

Oboes

Jo Bridgman
Louise Dellar
Maria Lin

Clarinets

Terry Bickley
Jacki Hatcher
Steve Jarman
Michaela Scherer
Anna Day
Katie Marshall
Zac Serghis
Daniel Hurst
Amber Bader-Hayes

Bassoons

Timothy Rosen
Kathy Bickley
Ethan Li

Saxophones

Daniel Burgess
Daniel Webber
Olivia Marton
Alisha Roberts
Kate Flint
Rachel Banham

French Horn

Lauren Owens
Lucy Rattigan
Ben Bersten
Lex Bailiht

Trumpet

Will Madden
William Smith
Angelo Valdivia
Henry Bradley
Paul Monaghan
Xavier Russell

Trombone

Adam Draper
Matthew Madden
Charlie Makaev

Euphonium

BJ O'Donovan
Anthony Rogers

Tuba

Sian Watt
Chris Venning

String Bass

Madeleine Harris-Kinloch

Piano

Martin Cheney

Percussion

Amber Watkins
Isabella van Loenen
Cameron Edmiston
Sasha Molotchnikova
Oadly Vongphaky
Damon Ashworth
Levi Whitworth



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