

Order & Defiance

Shostakovich
Festive Overture

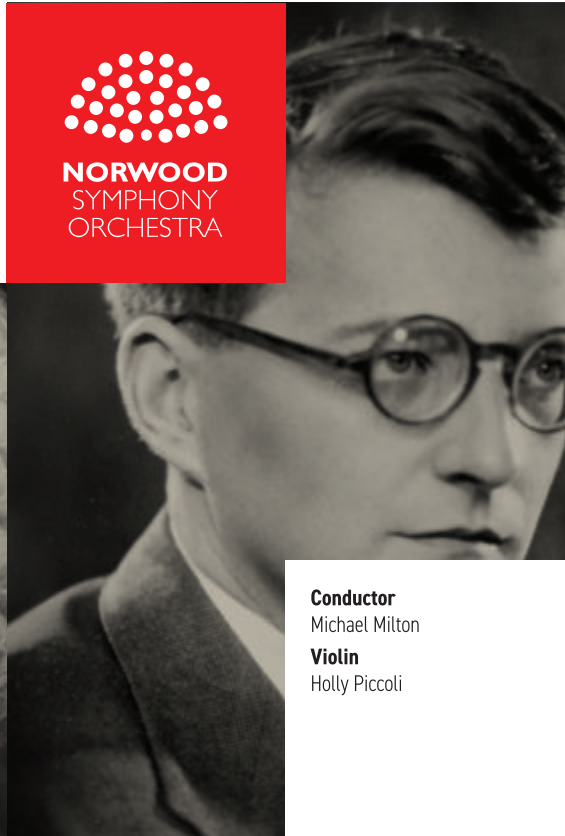
Bach
Violin Concerto in E major

Shostakovich
Symphony No 5 in D minor

2.30pm Sun 29 March 2026
Norwood Concert Hall



NORWOOD
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA



Conductor
Michael Milton
Violin
Holly Piccoli

nso.org.au



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Norwood Symphony Orchestra acknowledges the Kurna people, traditional custodians of the land on which we perform today. We pay respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here today.

Conductor's message

Welcome to the first concert of the Norwood Symphony Orchestra's 2026 season. It is a great pleasure to begin another year of music-making together and to welcome both our loyal supporters and those joining us for the first time.

Our opening program, *Order & Defiance*, explores a fascinating musical contrast. The elegant style, structure and balance of the Baroque tradition, exemplified by the music of Bach, represents a musical world built on clarity, proportion and order.

Set against this, the music of Shostakovich reveals an entirely different expressive landscape—one that can be bold, ironic, playful, tragic, defiant and fiercely individual. By placing these worlds side by side, my hope is to highlight not only the dramatic contrasts between these musical eras, but also the remarkable variety and emotional range within Shostakovich's music .

I would like to thank our wonderful musicians for their dedication each week in rehearsal, our committee for the tireless work behind the scenes, to the City of Norwood Payneham and St Peters for their support, and to our wonderful front-of-house volunteers. Most of all, thank you—our audience, family, and friends. Your enthusiasm and encouragement sustains us. We hope you will enjoy the music today and join us again throughout the year as the Norwood Symphony Orchestra continues its musical journey.

Please enjoy the concert.

Michael Milton

Norwood Symphony Orchestra presents
Order & Defiance

Festive Overture, Opus 96

Dmitri Shostakovich

Violin Concerto in E Major, BWV 1042

Johann Sebastian Bach

- I. Allegro
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro assai

Soloist: Holly Piccoli

INTERVAL

Symphony No 5 in D Minor, Opus 47

Dmitri Shostakovich

- I. Moderato
- II. Allegretto
- III. Largo
- IV. Allegro non troppo

Conductor: Michael Milton

Complimentary tea, coffee and biscuits will be served from the bars during interval.
Other drinks and snacks will be on sale.

Norwood Concert Hall, 29 March 2026

Program Notes

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)



Dmitri Shostakovich was one of the most influential composers of the 20th century. Born in St Petersburg, he showed exceptional musical talent from an early age and studied at the Petrograd Conservatory. His early success came with his Symphony No 1, written as his graduation piece when he was only 19. The work gained international attention and established him as a major new voice in classical music.

Shostakovich composed a wide range of works, including 15 symphonies, 15 string quartets, operas, film scores, and concertos. His music is known for its dramatic contrasts, powerful emotional depth, and use of irony and satire. However, his career was deeply shaped by the political climate of the Soviet Union under the rule of Joseph Stalin. In 1936, after criticism in the newspaper *Pravda*, Shostakovich feared arrest and had to carefully balance artistic expression with government expectations.

Despite these pressures, he continued composing major works such as the Symphony No 5 and the Symphony No 7 (Leningrad), which

became symbols of resilience during World War II. Today, Shostakovich is remembered for music that reflects both personal struggle and the complex history of his time.

Festive Overture, Opus 96

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Today's opening piece was written in a flurry of activity, when the conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra found himself without a suitable introductory work for the 37th anniversary concert of the October Revolution. Shostakovich was contacted, and within 3 days had completed the *Festive Overture*, ready for the 1954 premiere. Thought to be based on Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla* overture (1842), it employs the same style of rapid-fire theme, while retaining Shostakovich's unique symphonic colour.

An ostentatious fanfare from the brass begins the work, followed by the winds swirling through the sprightly main theme. The strings accent this with syncopated interjections until the violins take up the theme. The cellos and horns introduce the second theme, a more lyrical melody, which Shostakovich then uses in counterpoint with the main theme, before the fanfare returns, winding up to a breakneck conclusion to the work.

Violin Concerto in E major, BWV1042

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

In the 18th century, musicians sought posts at the courts of various noblemen, or gained employment at the churches of prosperous cities. The role of director of music meant that the composer was informed of what to write, be it secular music for the court (keyboard and orchestral works), or sacred works for the church (cantatas and masses). Bach was employed in both these capacities during his long career. After difficulty leaving the court of the Duke of Weimar in 1717, he joined Prince Leopold of Köthen as *Kapellemeister* of his

court orchestra. The Prince was himself a musician, and valued Bach's talents, giving him much more latitude in composing and performing. Bach flourished here, and wrote several of his most famous works, including the Cello Suites, Violin Partitas, and the Brandenburg Concertos.



The E major violin concerto is believed to have been written during this period. The *concerto* form grew out of the Italian *concerto grosso* in the Baroque period. In the *concerto grosso*, a smaller group of instruments (*concertante*) alternates playing with the full orchestra (*ripieno*). As the form developed, composers began to write for smaller *concertante* groups, until it became a solo part. The solo became more elaborate, allowing the player to display their skills in contrast with the *ripieno* or *tutti* sections, with the soloist often accompanied by solo cello and/or harpsichord (*basso continuo*).

Composed in the Venetian three movement style, this concerto uses a fast—slow—fast pattern. The *Allegro* comprises a *ritornello* form, with the main theme recurring periodically, interleaved with ever increasing virtuosic solo sections. The second, *Adagio* movement is in the relative key of C# minor, using a slow ground bass under the soaring violin melody. Returning to E major, the final movement is a bouncy *Allegro assai*, in a dance-like rondo form. The solo violin shines through with graceful swooping passages over the thematic material.

Symphony No 5 in D minor, Opus 47

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

During the 1930s, under Stalin's rule, Russian culture was closely monitored to see that it conformed to the State-approved *Socialist Realism* doctrine. The guidelines were that artistic work had to be relevant to workers, contain everyday scenes, represent realism, and support the aims of the government.

Shostakovich was well versed in this party line, having written several patriotic works already, and being internationally acclaimed for his *First Symphony*. He was working on his more modern *Fourth Symphony* in 1936 when trouble struck, after Stalin attended a performance of his opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. The state-run newspaper *Pravda* ran an editorial, entitled 'Muddle Instead of Music', in which the popular work was called 'formalist', 'bourgeois' and 'vulgar'. After another two critical articles were printed in the following weeks, the composer's friends and colleagues started urging him to withdraw his current work from its upcoming performance. He eventually did, and the symphony was not premiered until 1961, well after Stalin's death.

In the meantime, Shostakovich's star had dimmed, and he was desperate to find a way back to the Party's support and security. The following year, he composed his *Fifth Symphony*, and at its premiere, was rewarded with a standing ovation lasting over half an hour. The Party put its stamp of approval on the work, noting that it was 'a Soviet artist's creative response to just criticism'. The music appealed to the public, hearing its air of pathos and suffering under the iron fist of Stalin, while officials were pleased at the way they had made the composer bow to the Party's demands.

In an authorised review by Party writer Alexei Tolstoy, this symphony is described as 'the formation of a personality'—in other words, of a Soviet personality. In the first movement, the composer-

hero suffers a psychological crisis giving rise to a burst of energy. The second movement provides respite. In the third movement, the personality begins to form:

Here the personality submerges itself in the great epoch that surrounds it, and begins to resonate with the epoch.

With the finale, Tolstoy wrote, came victory, 'an enormous optimistic lift'. As for the ecstatic reaction of the audience to the work, Tolstoy claimed it showed Shostakovich's Socialism to be sincere.

Our audience is organically incapable of accepting decadent, gloomy, pessimistic art. Our audience responds enthusiastically to all that is bright, clear, joyous, optimistic, life-affirming.

In Shostakovich's own words, from the biography *Testimony*,

The rejoicing is forced, created under threat. It's as if someone were beating you with a stick and saying, "Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing", and you rise, shaky, and go marching off, muttering, "Our business is rejoicing, our business is rejoicing"

Shostakovich was reinstated as one of the most important composers of the Socialist movement, with concert performances and commissions once again flowing, and an appointment at Leningrad Conservatory to teach composition.

Guest artist—Holly Piccoli (Violin)

Violinist Holly Piccoli recently returned to Australia after being appointed Principal 1st Violin of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. She enjoys a diverse international career spanning modern and historical performance.

Holly has toured extensively throughout Australia and abroad with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and has performed internationally with Apollo's Fire: The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra. In the United

States Holly also served as Assistant Concertmaster of the Omaha Symphony.

Career highlights include travelling to remote communities in Western Australia with the Australian Chamber Orchestra while touring The Reef; performances at Carnegie Hall with Apollo's Fire; appearing as concertmaster and soloist in Bach's St Matthew Passion with the Trinity Baroque Orchestra



on Wall Street; and more recently performing original songs with and by Nathan May, arranged by Julian Ferraretto for string quartet, at Nexus Arts for the Adelaide Fringe Festival.

Holly trained as a modern violinist at the Australian National Academy of Music and the Yale Schools of Music. While at Yale she specialised in baroque violin as a fellow of the Yale Baroque Ensemble, developing a deep interest in historically informed performance.

Holly performs on a 2012 Jay Haide *violon à l'ancienne* baroque violin modeled after an instrument by Tommaso Balestrieri, and on a modern violin made by Alessandro Di Matteo in Cremona, Italy in 2004. Holly is an alumna of both the Australian National Academy of Music and the Yale School of Music.

Player profile—Jenny How

Jenny How studied cello with John Painter at the *Sydney Conservatorium of Music* and played in the Australian Youth Orchestra 1971-1974. Jenny joined the *Adelaide Symphony Orchestra* in 1973 and played at the opening of the *Adelaide Festival Centre*. In 1975 she moved to Europe with her husband and pursued further study with Radu Adulescu in Paris. Jenny found diverse opportunities to perform in Oxford, Munich and Aix-en-Provence. She returned to Adelaide and joined the *Norwood Symphony Orchestra* in 2022.

Jenny recalls that she played Shostakovich's Symphony No 5 with the *South Australian Symphony Orchestra* (as the ASO was then called) in 1975. Resident conductor Elyakum Shapirra had stepped aside to make way for guest conductor Maxim Shostakovich—Dimitri's son and renowned pianist and conductor in his own right.

During rehearsals, Maxim shared inside stories about the subversive intent cloaked in his father's music. He became concerned that he may have said too much and reports of his indiscretions might find their way back to the Soviet authorities.

News that his father was gravely ill suddenly obliged Maxim to return to Russia. He was unable to conduct the concert and cancelled the rest of his Australian tour. Maxim Shostakovich defected to the West in 1981.



Norwood Symphony Orchestra

Conductor—Michael Milton

First Violins

Perrin Walker
Melanie Harrald
Matthew Hong
Tori Spooner
Charles Newland
Julie Czarnecki
Rebecca Kemp
Emily McDonald
Naomi Cain
Therese Janus

Second Violins

Emily Nordestgaard
Lai Wei
Catherine Loye
Amanda Roeger
Chris Rawlinson
Anthony Miller
Christina Blair
Emily Lancaster
Sebastian Joseph
Bek Blacket
Ann Miao Ng
Xuan Vu
Suzanne Edwards
Hedley Hansen

Violas

Samantha Thorne
Iarla Bastians
Shelley Walker

James Zhang
Timothy Cheel
Christine Batty
Eve Tancibudek
Oliver Williams

Cellos

Theo Tran
Brandon Cooper
Jenny How
Rosalie Day
Ingrid Asenstorfer
Annie Schilling
Charli Datson
Chelsea Tabart
Janis Svilans
Kathy Wozniczka

Double Basses

Ella Conboy
David Schilling

Flutes/Piccolo

Jasmin Feneley
Masako Kondo
Amelia Wang

Oboes

Anthony Radogna
Jill Noble

Clarinets

Sheryl Fox
Madison Lasscock

Jacki Hatcher

Bassoons

Josie Hawkes OAM
Kathryn Lucas
Anne Tonkin

Horns

Lauren Owens
Kerry Hewett
Joshua Liu
Peter Webb

Trumpets

Stuart Jones
Ian Roberts
John Kerry

Trombones

Daniel Shephard
Nick Vladcoff
Darren Ormsby

Timpani

Michael Holland

Percussion

Belinda Allevi
Reuben Elmualim
Leon Thorne

Harp

Joyce Kwok

Piano/Celeste

Daniel Milton

Credits and acknowledgements

NSO Committee

President – Jasmin Feneley; **Secretary** – Amanda Roeger;

Treasurer – Jill Noble; **Librarian** – Samantha Thorne;

Conductor – Michael Milton

Committee members: Iarla Bastians, Andrew Heitmann, Stuart Jones, Anthony Radogna, Ian Roberts

NSO Artistic Team

Poster/flyer designs – Naomi Cain; **Web manager and photography** – Anthony Radogna; **Program notes** – Samantha Thorne;

Friends of NSO – Suzanne Edwards

NSO Concert Team

Front-of-house volunteers: Mike Gray, Michael Janus, Paul Roeger, Alison Sims, Bill Sims, Andrew Spargo, Keith Stuart, Rosa West, Jasmine Zhang

Norwood Concert Hall Management Norwood Symphony Orchestra thanks the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters for their generous support.

NSO 2026 Season Dates (Norwood Concert Hall)

2.30pm Sunday 29 March 2026 *Order & Defiance*

2.30pm Sunday 28 June 2026 *Symphonic Adiemus*

2.30pm Sunday 27 September 2026 *Fire & Fiesta*

2.30pm Sunday 6 December 2026 *Classics & Confetti*

To learn about our upcoming concerts, join our mailing list and donate to our development fund, please visit our website nso.org.au. To stay in touch regarding upcoming NSO concerts, please contact us with your name, address and email address.

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