

## ANAM RECITAL: JAMES ARMSTRONG (VIOLIN)

FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER 1.30PM

ROSINA AUDITORIUM, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

Franz SCHUBERT (1797-1828) Rondo in A Major, D. 438 (1816) 14'

Johannes BRAHMS (1833-1897) Violin Sonata No. 1 in G Major, op. 78  
'Regensonate' (1878-1879) 26'

- i. Vivace ma non troppo*
- ii. Allegro – Più andante – Adagio*
- iii. Allegro molto moderato*

Camille SAINT-SAËNS (1835-1921) Introduction and rondo capriccioso, op. 28 (1863) 10'

James Armstrong\* (NSW) violin  
Louisa Breen (ANAM Associate Faculty) piano  
Natalie Mavridis\* (NSW) violin  
Liam Pilgrim\* (NSW) violin  
Sebastian Coyne (VIC) viola  
Noah Lawrence\* (VIC) cello

*Approximate duration: 60 minutes*

### ABOUT JAMES ARMSTRONG

James is currently in his second year of training at ANAM under the tutelage of Adam Chalabi. In 2023 he studied with Sophie Rowell. He obtained a Bachelor of Music Performance with Honours from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where he studied with Janet Davies and was the recipient of the Ted and Susan Meller Memorial Scholarship Fund. Find out more at [anam.com.au/musicians](http://anam.com.au/musicians)

*James is fully supported by ANAM Syndicate donors the Anthony and Sharon Lee Foundation.*

*James plays an A.E Smith violin jointly owned by ANAM & Janet Homes a' Court AC. It was purchased for ANAM with the support of Christina Katsimbaridis, and with donations from Gilbert George, George Georgiou, Peter Ingram, Maria Kailis & an anonymous benefactor.*

*Louisa Breen's Associate Faculty position is generously supported by Igor Zambelli.*

*\* Denotes a musician supported by ANAM Syndicate*



ANAM relies on the generous support of donors to help us develop our young and talented musicians. To provide the very best performers for your concert experience today and in the future, please donate to ANAM now via this link, call (03) 9645 7911 or speak to our Box Office staff at today's concert.

ANAM respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands spread across Australia on which we work and live. We uphold and honour their continued relationship to these sites, we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

## PROGRAM NOTES

I am delighted to have the opportunity today to share these fabulous works from Schubert, Brahms, and Saint-Saëns. All the works on today's program were composed during the 19th century and show an interesting trajectory of development in innovation and aesthetics in violin playing from a period in history where Europe underwent immense social and industrial change. These works encapsulate how composers were innovative and built upon pre-existing musical structures and explored new ways of playing as instruments and technique developed along with the changing musical tastes.

**Franz Schubert** creates a sweet melange of retrospective Classical writing and forward-thinking Romantic lyricism — undoubtedly of trademark of the Lieder composer — in his Rondo in A major for solo violin and strings. Starting with a slow introduction full of charm and elegance, Schubert demonstrates his mastery of the Classical style. Once the solo violin enters, the phrases are longer and emulate a singing style, for which Schubert is renowned. What makes this opening so special is how Schubert uses harmony to surprise the listener and evoke ideas of joy and love and the spectrum of feelings that are associated with them. The rondo mixes together humour and drama — whilst the theme is full of buoyancy and joy, Schubert develops intensity out of the theme through long singing lines, even creating moments of uncertainty. Structurally, Schubert uses the rondo form in an innovative way which mirrors the works from Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven but also encompasses Schubert's own musical language. The solo violin part is very virtuosic and makes it a joy to play for the soloist!

Besides Schubert, **Johannes Brahms** is a composer who also springs to mind when I think about Lieder. The influence of Lieder is very much at the heart of Brahms' Violin Sonata No. 1 in G major, to the point where one of his own Lieder has made its way into the third movement of this sonata. Also known as the 'Regensonate', this sonata quotes directly quotes Brahms' own wistful 'Regenlied' ('Rain Song') which is the third of his 8 Lieder, Op. 59. He wrote this sonata during the summers of 1878 and 1879 in picturesque Pörschach am Wörthersee, Austria. The first movement, lyrical and full of nostalgia and gentleness, begins with lush chords in the piano before the violin plays the theme, a dotted rhythmic motif which appears throughout all movements of the sonata. The second movement evokes a sense of solemnity, where the melodic line, introduced by the piano, tries to ascend and develop but always falls back before it finally resolves. In this movement, the dotted rhythm motif appears in the middle section with a sense of a funeral march, before returning to the theme as a richer and more emotional outpouring, driven by Brahms' characteristic two-against-three rhythms. The final movement is in a rondo form (seems to be a running theme in this program!) where finally the material from the previous movements and from the 'Regenlied' unite. The theme of the second movement returns before the final iteration of the Regenlied theme. This sonata is sublime both in how Brahms writes for both piano and violin, and in the way that he develops the themes and ties them together throughout the whole sonata.

*Introduction et rondo capriccioso* is a gem in violin showpiece repertoire. **Camille Saint-Saëns** dedicated this piece to the Spanish violinist, Pablo de Sarasate, who performed its premiere in 1867 — and it definitely is written in a way that seems fitting for violinist who was famous for his virtuosity and composed many virtuosic works for the violin. This capricious piece possesses rhythmic features which convey a Spanish flavour. The solo violin part fights against the strict rhythm of the orchestra (or piano in this case!), in one section the solo part is in a duple meter while the accompaniment remains in compound timing, creating an interesting rhythmic texture. On top of this masterfully written work, the flamboyant technical demands from the soloist make this piece one of the most sparkly jewels in the repertoire.

I am so pleased to embark on this musical journey with you all and to be joined by the fabulous musicians of the Rosina String Quartet and Louisa Breen.

*Written by James Armstrong*