

## ANAM RECITAL: LYDIA SAWIRES (VIOLIN)

### An afternoon of lyrical, passionate and expressive melodies

THURSDAY 12 JUNE 1.30PM

ROSINA AUDITORIUM, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

**Johannes BRAHMS (1833-1897)** Violin Sonata No. 1 in G Major, op. 78 26'  
'Regensonate' (1878-1879)  
i. *Vivace ma non troppo*  
ii. *Allegro – Più andante – Adagio*  
iii. *Allegro molto moderato*

**Ella MACENS (b. 1991)** *Silent Night (Christmas Without You)* (2025)\* 8'

**Felix MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)** Concerto for Violin in E Minor, op. 64 14'  
(1844)  
i. *Allegro molto appassionato*

**Lydia Sawires** (NSW) violin  
**Daniel Le** (ANAM Associate Faculty) piano

*Approximate duration: 55 minutes*

#### ABOUT LYDIA SAWIRES

Born and raised in Sydney, Lydia started playing violin at the age of nine. Growing up in a large musical family, she knew that music was the path she wanted to take.

Lydia completed her Bachelor of Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where she studied with Janet Davies. Since 2014, she has participated in Australian Youth Orchestra programs, Sydney Youth Orchestra, Ensemble Apex programs, and was concertmaster of The Arts Unit Symphony Orchestra. In 2025 Lydia is a third-year musician at ANAM under Adam Chalabi.

When she's not playing classical repertoire, Lydia performs in many musical projects including Arabic, tango, and contemporary chamber music. Some highlights include performing with 'The Middle East', GODTET, Rahim AlHaj and partnering with NIDA and SBS Australia.

*Lydia is supported by ANAM Syndicate donors Jannie Brown, M. Elizabeth Douglas, Jennifer Gilchrist, Nadene Gilmore and Chris Ferdinands, Judith and John Middleton, Traudl Moon.*

*Lydia plays a Peter Goodfellow 2022 violin, on loan to ANAM from Jannie Brown.*

*\* World premiere of 2025 ANAM Set commission supported by the Anthony and Sharon Lee Foundation.*

*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

**Johannes Brahms** called op. 78 his first violin sonata, however his well-documented perfectionistic tendencies support the common belief that at least four sonatas were written before this one was finally deemed good enough to keep. Composed in the summers of 1878 and 1879 in Pörtschach-am-Wörthersee, a picturesque lakeside town in southern Austria, this masterpiece is one of Brahms's most melodic and expressive. The piano is the violin's equal partner as both instruments weave between melodic and accompaniment lines. Unlike the typical four-movement structure, this sonata has just three. Brahms even joked with his publisher that he'd take a pay cut since he came up one movement short.

One of the defining features of the work is a three-note motif heard in each movement. This motif is closely related to the melodic ideas from his song "Regenlied" (Rain Song), hence the sonata's nickname: the Rain Sonata.

The first movement has a warm, reflective tone; the second is darker and more intense; and the third circles back to earlier themes. Musician and composer Clara Schumann was so moved by the piece that she told Brahms she wished its final movement could carry her from this world to the next.

**Ella Macens'** *Silent Night (Christmas Without You)* is one of eighteen works commissioned for the ANAM Set 2025, and will be premiered in today's recital. Macens is quickly gaining recognition as one of Australia's leading young composers, with her music - regularly commissioned and performed by top Australian and international ensembles - spanning orchestral, choral, chamber, and solo works. Drawing on her Latvian heritage and a deep appreciation for both classical and popular music, she creates a distinctive sound known for its emotional depth and sensitivity, earning her growing acclaim at home and abroad.

On *Silent Night*, Macens comments/says: "The idea for this piece came to me in the lead up to Christmas 2023 as I reflected on what it means to experience Christmas in the absence of loved ones passed. I thought about my grandfather Jānis Mačēns who had passed away a few months prior, and about my grandmother Ilga Mačēna who that year would spend her first Christmas in almost 70 years of married life without him.

"Originally this piece was titled 'First Christmas Without You'. As the music unfolded, I began to consider the experience as a 'silent night' – an honouring of those absent, of the silence and space created by the loss of those with whom Christmas was once shared."

Even after nearly two centuries, **Felix Mendelssohn's** Violin Concerto in E minor remains a beloved staple of the violin repertoire. Composed in 1844 for Mendelssohn's friend and Gewandhausorchester concertmaster Ferdinand David, this concerto blends Romantic expressiveness with Classical clarity.

The first movement is marked *Allegro molto appassionato* ("very passionate and lively"), conveying a range of dramatic contrasts and soaring melodic lines. Mendelssohn's gift for elegant structure and emotional immediacy transports the listener between moments of introspection and passages of virtuosic brilliance.

The work opens not with a long orchestral introduction but with the soloist entering almost immediately. This was an innovative move for its time and one that grabs the listener's attention from the very first note. Another distinctive feature of the first movement is the placement of the cadenza. Rather than saving it for the end, which was traditional, Mendelssohn integrates it into the heart of the movement which creates a seamless flow between the soloist and orchestra and adds to the feeling of continuous momentum.

*Written by Lydia Sawires*