



–embargoed until Wednesday 24 October 12:00 AEDT–

ABC Classic launches new programs, performances and events in 2019

The ABC will start the new year on Australia’s only national classical music network by launching a slate of programs, performances and major events that will bring more of the world’s best music to audiences across the country.

From January 2019, content across ABC Classic FM and its digital services will come together under the new name **ABC Classic**, the home for lovers of classical music in Australia, whether on the radio, online, via the ABC listen app, or album releases under the ABC label.

ABC Classic will build on the success of ABC Classic FM and major events such as the Classic 100, with highlights including:

- Four new series of studio recordings showcasing Australian music, female composers, the development of the piano trio, and the solo piano works of Franz Schubert
- Feature programs exploring the history of musical families, the relationship between music and books, and the moments that changed music history
- Major new national events such as a multi-day celebration of female composers and broadcasts celebrating classical music in rural and regional Australia
- An expanded online offer to include news, videos and features, including the **Classic Australia** series profiling home-grown music content
- The broadcast of hundreds of the finest concerts from Australia and around the world
- The launch of a new online portal to help parents and teachers foster a love of music in young people
- An expert line-up of presenters, including the return of **Ed Ayres** as the new host of Weekend Breakfast, replacing **Christopher Lawrence**, who has announced his intention to retire.

ABC Head of Music & Creative Development Chris Scaddan said: “ABC Classic will be the No. 1 radio and digital destination for every classical music lover in Australia. It represents our continued commitment to celebrating and nurturing classical music and the Australian music industry, which traces back to the orchestral music played in the ABC’s first broadcast in 1932.

“In 2018, ABC Classic FM is on course to reach more Australians than in any year since 2009¹, delivering high-quality and distinctive content to more listeners across the country. In 2019, ABC Classic will build on that success by bringing together all of the ABC’s classical music activity under one banner, delivering the world’s best music to dedicated music lovers and new audiences, wherever and however they listen to, watch or read about classical music.”

Christopher Lawrence, who will retire from weekly broadcasting in January, is one of the ABC’s longest-serving radio presenters across ABC RN, Local Radio and ABC Classic FM, where he is best-known to many listeners for introducing the popular *Swoon* series.

“It has been such a privilege to spend over 40 years sharing my love of music with Australians,” he said. “I’m looking forward to working on some new projects, including writing, and devoting more time to my two small children. I’ll miss being part of the wonderful family that is ABC Classic FM, but I’ll certainly be keeping a connection with the network and our listeners into the future.”

ABC Classic FM Content Manager Toby Chadd said: “Christopher’s deep love and knowledge of music, paired with his wit and eloquence, have been a part of so many of our lives for decades. We’re sorry to see him go but look forward to welcoming him back for special broadcasts from Tasmania. **Weekend Breakfast** will go from strength to strength in 2019 with Ed Ayres as its presenter. Ed has a wonderful ability to bring music to life and I know that our listeners will give him a very warm welcome back.”

Ed Ayres returns after years spent teaching in Afghanistan, travelling, broadcasting for the ABC, and writing an acclaimed book. He will also continue to share his love of visual art on his weekly ABC RN show at 10am each Wednesday.

“Well I’ve changed just a tad since I was last on ABC Classic, but now I have that feeling of seeing family again after a very long time” said Ed Ayres. “Words really cannot express how happy I am to be coming home.”

In 2019, ABC Classic’s weekend radio coverage will introduce a new Saturday afternoon show hosted by **Alice Keath**, featuring highlights from the week’s finest performances alongside interviews with conductors and soloists.

Next year’s radio line-up will also feature:

- **Mairi Nicolson** presenting **Sunday Opera**, a weekly broadcast of a full opera from a world-leading opera house. Her Saturday program **The Opera Show** will extend to two hours
- **Sunday Recital**, hosted by **Genevieve Lang**, will feature the premieres of ABC Classic’s new series of studio recordings
- **For The God Who Sings** will move to the earlier Sunday timeslot of 10pm
- **Classic Flow**, the podcast series bringing together classical music and yoga, will return for another year.

¹ Weekly 5-city average audience reach (000s), 2009-2018 from Nielson & GfK survey data

ABC Classics has been Australia's leading classical music label for over 30 years, winning dozens of ARIA Awards and plaudits in the international press. The label's output will continue under the new **ABC Classic** brand, working with major orchestras and artists to bring Australian music to the world. The label will continue to operate within ABC Commercial.

ABC Classic and the new content lineup will launch on Monday 21 January 2019.

ABC Classic's 2019 presenter line-up is as follows:

- Russell Torrance (*Classic Breakfast, Mon-Fri 6am*)
- Martin Buzacott (*Mornings, Mon-Fri 10am*)
- Mairi Nicolson (*Lunchtime Concert, Weekdays 1pm; Legends, Tues 3pm; The Opera Show, Sat 4pm; Sunday Opera, 7pm*)
- Vanessa Hughes (*Drive, Mon-Fri 4pm*)
- Damien Beaumont (*Evenings, Mon-Fri 8pm, Sat 7pm*)
- Ed Ayres (*Weekend Breakfast, Sat-Sun 6am*)
- Greta Bradman (*Weekend Mornings, Sat-Sun, 9am*)
- Alice Keath (*Lunchtime Concert, Weekdays 1pm; Weekend Afternoons, Sat-Sun 12pm*)
- Margaret Throsby (*Live concert broadcasts*)
- Joel Carnegie (*Music in Time, Mon 3pm*)
- Tamara-Anna Cislowska (*Duet, Weds 3pm*)
- Meena Shamaly (*Game Show, Fri 3pm*)
- Jason di Rosso (*Screen Sounds, Sat 6pm*)
- Genevieve Lang (*Sunday Recital, 4pm*)
- Stephen Watkins (*For The God Who Sings, Sun 10pm*)

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www.abc.net.au/classic