



HORIZON
ORCHESTRAL STUDIO

Impact Report

APRIL 2026 PILOT

Horizon Classical: New Horizons



A NEW MODEL FOR ORCHESTRAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN AUSTRALIA.

Mentored conductor training, paired with audience-centred presentation.

Horizon Orchestral Studio is a new platform addressing two connected gaps in Australia’s classical music ecosystem: the absence of consistent podium experience for emerging conductors, and the limited accessibility of orchestral performance for new audiences.

In April 2026, Horizon presented its inaugural pilot, New Horizons, featuring Haydn’s Symphony No. 6 “Le Matin” and Copland’s Appalachian Spring. The concert was preceded by an open conducting studio with Professor Benjamin Northey.

Delivered under the mentorship of **Susan Collins** and **Benjamin Northey**, the pilot reached more than 120 attendees, engaged professional orchestral musicians, and received independent critical review.



*After the inaugural concert.
Sydney, 23 April 2026.*

April 2026. Sydney. Inaugural pilot, Horizon Classical.

TWO GAPS, ONE CAUSE.

Conductors without orchestras. Audiences without an entry point.

CONDUCTOR TRAINING

In Australia there is no consistent pathway for conductors to train with real orchestras. Emerging conductors lack the practical podium time required to lead at the highest level.

“The biggest problem for young conductors is opportunities to conduct orchestras. Ensemble time is the one thing that makes the biggest difference to outcomes.”

— Professor Benjamin Northey

AUDIENCE ACCESS

Orchestral performance can feel closed to new listeners. Programmes assume prior knowledge, listening cues are absent, and concert formats rarely meet audiences where they are.

The result is a contracting circle: fewer first-time attendees, fewer returning audiences, and reduced demand for the next generation of performers. Both problems share a single cause: a missing connective layer between training, performance, and public engagement.

TWO ARMS, ONE PLATFORM.

Training and performance, designed to inform each other.



TRAINING

HORIZON ORCHESTRAL STUDIO

Intensive concert projects in which advanced conducting fellows work with professional orchestral musicians through rehearsal and public performance, mentored by leading players and experienced conductors.



CONCERTS

HORIZON CLASSICAL

A public concert series in which young leaders and musicians communicate music in an engaging way to new audiences. A listening experience designed for first-time audiences to feel the relevance of classical music in their lives, without compromising the artistic standards of the work.

Inaugural programme

NEW HORIZONS

23 APRIL 2026 · INTERNATIONALREFORMEDEVANGELICALCHURCH SYDNEY

REPERTOIRE

New Beginnings (premiere)

A JSquared Studios film

Symphony No. 6 in D “Le Matin”

Joseph Haydn

Appalachian Spring

Aaron Copland

FORMAT

A one-hour concert designed to invite new audiences into the listening experience. A short film opens the programme, setting thematic and emotional context, with the performance following without interval.



Hans Sangtoki, Inaugural Conducting Fellow.

Wednesday 22 April 2026

THE CONDUCTING STUDIO

OPEN REHEARSAL · FEEDBACK FROM PROFESSOR BENJAMIN NORTHEY

WHAT HAPPENED

On the evening before the concert, Horizon held an open conducting studio at the venue. Professor Benjamin Northey was present to give live feedback as the orchestra rehearsed the programme.

WHO ATTENDED

The session was open to observation. Conducting students from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music attended, along with musicians from Sydney community orchestras, sitting in on the rehearsal and the feedback discussion.

“The rehearsal room becomes a teaching space – for the conductor on the podium, and for everyone else watching from the seats.”



Open rehearsal with Benjamin Northey.
Wednesday 22 April 2026.

PILOT OUTCOMES.

Measured against the goals set for the inaugural cycle.

120+

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

across first-time attendees and seasoned listeners.

18

PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS

engaged for rehearsal, recording and performance.

2

MENTORS

Susan Collins (Concertmaster) and Benjamin Northey.

2

PUBLIC EVENTS

open conducting studio (22 April) and concert (23 April).

3

WORKS PROGRAMMED

Haydn, Copland, and a premiere short film.

1

INDEPENDENT REVIEW

published by SoundsLike Sydney.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS.

AUDIENCE

“I really didn’t expect to feel that much from classical music. What an experience. I’ll definitely come again.”

FIRST-TIME ATTENDEE, APRIL 2026

MUSICIANS

“It really feels like a collaboration in the community. As a young musician, this is the kind of working environment we need now.”

NATALIE LIU, VIOLIN

INDUSTRY

“Immediately, the ensemble impressed with an unanimity of purpose and expression. Sangtoki is both a disciplined leader and an expressive and emotional conduit allowing the orchestra to find much expression through dynamics and tempi.”

VICTORIA WATSON, SOUNDS LIKE SYDNEY

ARTISTIC MENTORSHIP.



Susan Collins, Concertmaster.

Susan Collins

*Concertmaster &
Artistic Mentor*

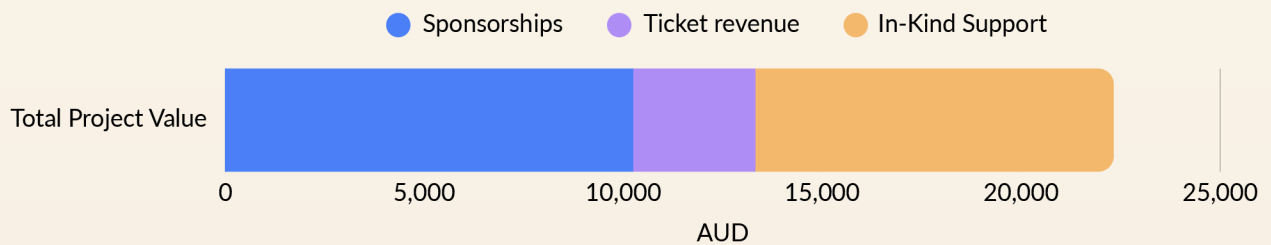
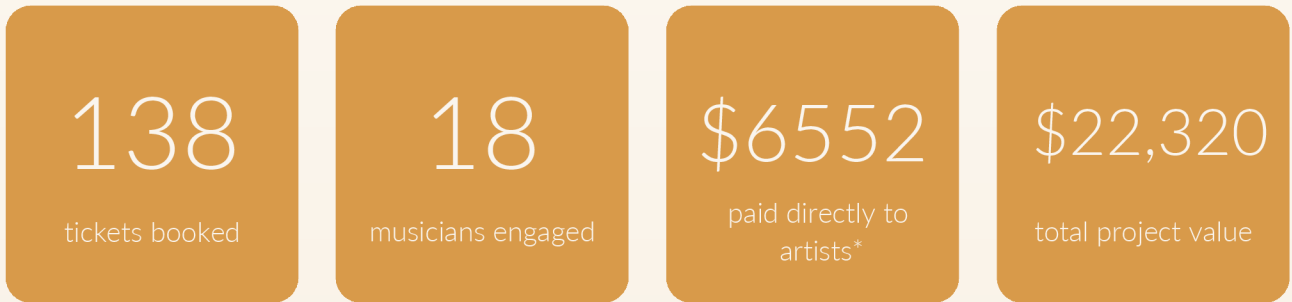
An experienced violinist with extensive orchestral leadership credits across many fine ensembles, Collins led the strings and shaped musical direction across the pilot. Her presence in rehearsal and on stage anchored the ensemble.

Benjamin Northey

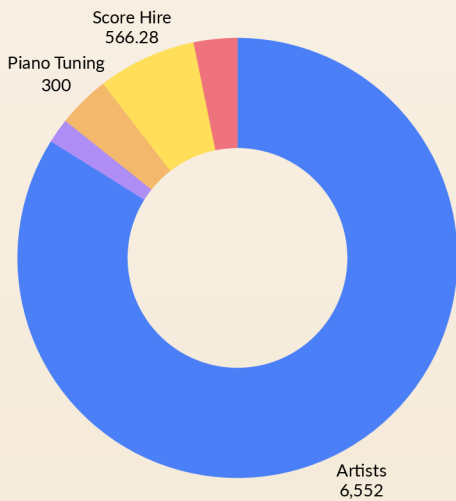
Mentor Conductor

Australian conductor and Professor of Conducting at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Mentor to the inaugural conducting fellow, and feedback presence at the open rehearsal of 22 April.

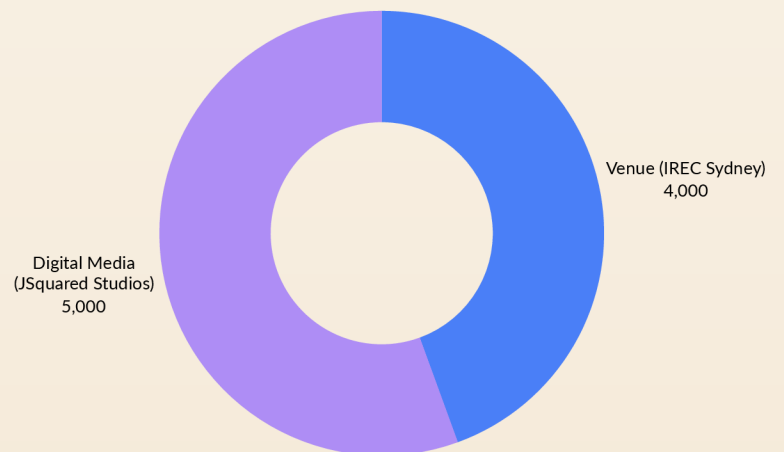
FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT.



Expenses to Artist Investment Ratio
Operational cost subtotal: \$7810.78



In-Kind Support
approx. value: \$9000



SUMMARY

This pilot converted seed funding, ticket revenue and in-kind support into paid artist opportunities, audience engagement and future project capacity. After direct project costs, remaining funds were carried forward to support Horizon’s next stage of artist development and public concerts.

Total cash income	\$13,320
Total cash expenses	\$8,376
Funds carried forward	\$4,944

*including superannuation at 12%

FORWARD.

From pilot to programme.

NEXT CONCERT CYCLE

RAPTURE & RUIN

Glinka · Tchaikovsky · Rachmaninoff

7:30 PM 24 JULY 2026 | VERBRUGGHEN HALL,

Rapture & Ruin expands Horizon's artistic ambition through a larger symphonic programme, giving conducting fellows a deeper rehearsal, leadership, and interpretive development. Centred on Romantic drama and Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto, it creates a powerful new opportunity to connect emerging artists with wider audiences.

FEATURED SOLOIST

Calvin Abdiel
Pianist

Indonesian-Australian pianist Calvin Abdiel is rapidly gaining international recognition for his extraordinary virtuosity and expressive artistry, and was the first Australian in nearly two decades to reach the grand final of the Sydney International Piano Competition. His debut album, Themes and Variations, was released by Decca Australia in 2024.

calvinabdiel.com



This programme will support:

OPEN REHEARSALS

Continuing the open studio model — public rehearsals with mentor feedback, observed by students and community musicians.

ASSISTANT FELLOW

Horizon will seek a suitable candidate to appoint as assistant conducting fellow, who will receive mentorship and potential rehearsal podium time.

YOUNG SOLOISTS

A standing commitment to feature emerging Australian soloists, beginning with Calvin Abdiel performing Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto.



HORIZON
ORCHESTRAL STUDIO

*New audiences. New opportunities.
A new musical future.*

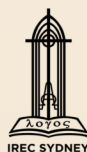
Horizon Orchestral Studio is building a sustainable model for conducting training and orchestral presentation in Australia. We are seeking partners, mentors, and supporters who share that aim.

HORIZONORCHESTRAL.COM
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