



adelaide symphony orchestra

PRINCIPAL PARTNER **Santos**

What does a Concertmaster do?

The Concertmaster, also known as the leader of the orchestra, is the violinist who occupies the first violin chair.

The crucial leadership role of the Concertmaster is as a link between the Conductor and musicians, setting a style of playing for the strings which guides the orchestra towards the ideal performance.

In liaison with the Conductor, the Concertmaster sets the “bowings” the strings will use. These are marked on the music, and sometimes during rehearsal, the Concertmaster will demonstrate a particular bow stroke or musical effect. This ensures that all the violins play a passage the same way to achieve the Conductor’s artistic interpretation regarding style and phrasing.

The Concertmaster is responsible for playing any solo passage within an orchestral composition. Other varied aspects of the role include participating on audition panels and artistic meetings, rostering the first violin section, taking responsibility for general orchestral discipline, and conducting the orchestra in rehearsal and performance from time to time.

Above all, the greatest responsibility of a Concertmaster is to lead by setting a standard of excellence in his or her playing. When a concertmaster plays in a manner that is emotionally committed, consistently accurate, rhythmically reliable, and always beautiful, this example exerts a strong positive influence on the overall quality and artistic standard of an orchestra's music making.

A Concertmaster must combine the sensitivity of the solo artist, with the ability to inspire the ensemble as a whole, and in the world of orchestral musicians, they are indeed a special breed.