SEASON 2008
INTERNATIONAL PIANISTS IN RECITAL
PRESENTED BY THEME & VARIATIONS

KIRILL GERSTEIN
Monday 13 October | 8pm
City Recital Hall Angel Place

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810–1849)
Fantasy, Op.49

FERRUCCIO BUSONI (1866–1924)
Sonatina No.6 (Chamber fantasy after Carmen)
Toccata
Preludio (Quasi presto, arditamente) – Fantasia (Sostenuto, quasi allegro) – Ciaccona (Allegro risoluto)

INTERVAL

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810–1856)
Humoreske in B flat, Op.20
Einfach – Sehr rasch und leicht
[Simple – Very fast and light]
Hastig [Hastily]
Einfach und zart – Intermezzo
[Simply and tenderly – Intermezzo]
Innig – Sehr lebhaft – Mit einingem Pomp
[Deep – Very lively – With a certain pomp]
Zum Beschlüß [Towards a resolution]
(The five sections are played without pause)

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)
transcribed SAMUIL FEINBERG (1890–1962)
Scherzo from Symphony No.6 (Pathétique)

This concert will be recorded for broadcast across Australia on ABC Classic FM 92.9.

Pre-concert talk by Scott Davie at 7.15pm in the First Floor Reception Room.

Estimated timings:
14 minutes, 8 minutes, 10 minutes, 20-minute interval, 28 minutes, 9 minutes
The performance will conclude at approximately 9.45pm.

Artist biography on page 24.
Dear Music Lover

During every concert in this series, we meet many piano-loving people (our favourite type of person at Theme & Variations), and the question asked most often is, ‘Do you play the piano?’

This question is met most of the time with a wry smile and a rather melancholy answer: ‘I wouldn’t really call myself a pianist’ or ‘I used to play when I was a child’ or ‘I can play chopsticks’.

Whether you call yourself a pianist or not, what matters most is that you are a good listener, and what would an artist be without an audience to inspire and listeners to appreciate and enjoy the journey on which the music takes us all together.

Enjoy the process of learning and work on being a great listener, which can sometimes be more challenging than being a pianist!

To conclude the 2008 series in spectacular fashion, Steinway Artist Kirill Gerstein will be performing an exciting program of Chopin and other fantasy-inspired works.

Congratulations Sydney Symphony on yet another sublime year – we are very proud once again to continue our partnership in 2009. Thanks also to you, the patrons of the series, for your continued support and appreciative listening.

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Kirill Gerstein in Recital

Kirill Gerstein makes his own best introduction to this recital. Each work has been chosen, thoughtfully and with intent, to build a program that is rich in internal connections and which brings together the familiar and the unfamiliar in intriguing ways.

The overall theme is introduced by Chopin, with the best-known music on the program: his opus 49 Fantasy. That idea of the fantasy, the free-form composition, and the flights of imagination it inspires for composer and listener is then developed with rarely heard music by Busoni – a composer Gerstein strongly believes in – and with Schumann’s Humoreske, music that laughs and cries, ‘all at once’.

In his Chamber Fantasy after Carmen Busoni gives familiar music an unfamiliar guise. The recital ends with a similar gesture: the third movement from Tchaikovsky’s Pathétique Symphony transformed into a brilliant and triumphant ‘Scherzo’ by composer-pianist Samuil Feinberg. As Gerstein says, pianists are not like violinists, they can’t sit in an orchestra and play symphonic music, but they can rise to the challenge of realising symphonic colour and effect at the keyboard.

Read the interview with Kirill Gerstein on page 17.
Common Threads
Notes by Larry Sitsky

The Schumann, Chopin and Busoni works in this piano recital share a common feature: they are all constructed like a mosaic, their overall forms made up of small structures adding up to something that is larger than the sum of these miniature sections. The sub-divisions may be small (as in Schumann’s case) or larger (as in Busoni’s Toccata), but the principle remains the same. The other common thread in tonight’s concert is the demonstration of the historic tradition of the pianist-composer, or composer-pianist, as the case may be. In the past it was both very common and considered highly desirable for the two personas to sit within the one musical personality. A long and distinguished line of great composers who were also great keyboardists begins with Orlando Gibbons and John Bull and goes through such musicians as JS Bach, Couperin, Handel, Scarlatti, Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt, Chopin, Schumann, Busoni, Prokofiev, Bartók and so to our present day, when the line is weakened and probably coming to an end.
Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)
Fantasy, Op.49

Like the other composers represented on this program, Chopin belonged to this tradition of pianist-composers. For a long time in music history, the piano and composition seemed inseparable, and Chopin was a pianist who not only gave concerts all his life but also used the piano to improvise and shape many of his compositions, writing them down after effectively composing them at the keyboard. Chopin gave most of his concerts in salons or small halls. His tone was never big, since from an early age he was weakened by tuberculosis. But in his short life, he pushed the possibilities of the piano to new heights; in that respect, he was born at the right time, as the piano was evolving at what we now know was a great rate. Nevertheless, Chopin’s pianos were not like the pianos of today, and one need only listen to recordings on period instruments to become swiftly informed of that fact. We have sacrificed a certain amount of colour and sensitivity for sheer volume. And, the pedals functioned in a different acoustic way, as did the balance between treble and bass. It would be remiss of me not to mention that Chopin propagated a new style of rubato playing which left some of his more conventional colleagues quite breathless and sometimes angry.

This Fantasy is ranked very highly by many writers on Chopin. It is certainly not the ‘sickroom talent’ that John Field said describes Chopin. It is a strong, robust work embodying many moods and key changes. The great Chopin pianist Vladimir de Pachmann reported that Franz Liszt told him the hidden program of this work, according to Chopin. This is of course third-hand, and the story that is presented by Pachmann is rather pedestrian: at the close of one day, the composer was at the keyboard at a fairly low ebb. Suddenly there came a rapping on the door, which one can hear echoed in the opening bars, with the composer’s invitation to enter. Then, the doors open wide to admit a group of friends including the writer George Sand, Liszt, Camille Pleyel and others. Then a number of episodes are described, including George Sand falling on her knees in front of the composer, begging forgiveness for a recent quarrel. Eventually, they all leave and serenity is restored.
There may well be a grain of truth in this domestic scene; but what interests me far more is the formal cohesion that Chopin achieves. A slow chorale-like section divides the work in the middle. The opening march has its counterpart near the end in another march – this time more Schumann-esque. The second idea of the work, a quasi-improvisational arpeggiating idea, also reappears near the end; and the thrice-played outburst with double-note patterns is one of the composer’s most memorable inspirations. It is a large-scale canvas that Chopin paints here, and although the work does consist of discrete smaller units, an overall grandeur is accomplished, with no sense of awkwardness in the handling of a large form, which one sometimes perceives in Chopin. Another unifying idea is the passage in contrary motion octaves, which occurs twice in the piece. All these features could be well illustrated by a diagram of themes and keys, which would clearly show the symmetry of the Fantasy. Although the work is in F minor, Chopin chose to close it in A flat major, with great poise and gentleness.

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Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924)  

Sonatina No.6 (Chamber fantasy after Carmen)  

Toccata  

Preludio (Quasi presto, arditamente) –  
Fantasia (Sostenuto, quasi allegro) –  
Ciaccona (Allegro risoluto)  

These two late works by Busoni belong to the phase of his compositional career that had his opera Dr Faust as a chief focus; many of his late works were either partially used in this great unfinished opera, or were at least stylistically related.  

The Sonatina is a lineal descendant of the Lisztian operatic paraphrase. The successful Liszt opera paraphrase did much more than just present a potpourri of the more popular tunes from an opera, combined with showy display passages, and often incorporating that trick peculiar to many romantics writing for the piano – the apparent ‘third’ hand playing its melody in the middle register of the piano. What distinguished Liszt from his horde of imitators was his ability to understand the opera,  

Keynotes  

BUSONI  

Born Empoli, Italy, 1866  
Died Berlin, 1924  

Busoni was hailed as the greatest pianist to follow Liszt – in Germany not ‘Mr Busoni’ but ‘The Busoni’. He took it for granted ‘that everything is possible on the piano, even when it seems impossible to you, or really is so’. Nowadays he is best known as one of the great transcribers – of Liszt, Mozart and Bach – but it’s often forgotten that he was also a composer.  

CHAMBER FANTASY  

Busoni was familiar with the tradition of paraphrases, transcriptions and virtuoso encores inspired by opera, but his ‘chamber fantasy’ on Bizet’s Carmen is much more than a showy potpourri of tunes. Instead it is a psychological portrait or commentary on the opera.  

TOCCATA  

The exhilarating Toccata is in three continuous sections, each loosely reflecting the ancient forms of keyboard music, to which the toccata genre itself belongs. The Preludio and Ciaccona are propulsive, while the central Fantasia is more lyrical.
and then present the drama in a compressed form for the piano. The melodies were often subject to variation and interspersed with cadenza passages.

By the time Busoni composed this Sonatina, he had long passed the stage of showy virtuosity, even though he was one of the greatest pianists of all time. Here we have a composer who comes home from the opera, and sits at his piano, brooding about what he has just experienced. What emerges is Carmen seen through his mystic vision. The familiar melodies acquire strange colours, as though distorted by a camera lens.

The Sonatina falls naturally into five sections: (1) the brilliant octave and canonic treatment of the chorus from Act 4; (2) The Flower Song from Act 2, Scene 2, in free paraphrase, the melody in the middle ‘third’ hand, surrounded by chords in the bass and florid ornamentation in the right hand. Up to this point, except for the odd unexpected harmonic turn and predominantly linear writing, the Sonatina is Lisztian. But in section 3, something that is typical Busoni happens: (3) the Habañera from the first act becomes a foreshadowing of the final tragedy, an articulate death-wish. This spectral treatment is pursued through a number of transformations, one of them marked ‘fantastico’; (4) the Prelude to Act 1 is now heard as a relief from the preceding section, but even this infectious melody is darker at times than one expects, until it leads to the magical last page; (5) ‘Andante visionario’ – the theme of fate, already heard at the end of the second section, is here set in full and finally sobs itself into silence.

The term ‘visionario’ is appropriate to much of Busoni’s late music. The muted dynamics that occur so often are not to be confused with the half-defined world of the impressionist. With Busoni, the mystic vision, the glimpse into another world, is the key to understanding.

Kaikhosru Sorabji, critic and composer, wrote about: "...that profoundly enigmatic and disturbing genius, Ferruccio Busoni. In his work I feel the metapsychic element to be present to a degree and intensity unparalleled in music. Every bar of his mature work seems to be permeated by it, for he not only speaks through the other composer but melts, dissolves the other composer’s thoughts into his own while preserving intact and fully recognisable all the original outer lineaments. Power such as this is rather terrifying..."
Sorabji then goes on to say, specifically about this Sonatina: “The gay and occasionally rather trivial Bizet tunes become indescribably charged and even sinister, undergoing a sort of dissolution and transformation in a manner that is fascinating and haunting to the mind of the suitably attuned listener, so that at the end one almost says to oneself – such is the impression of the ineluctable and immense power behind the whole business – this is psychical invasion in musical terms.”

Busoni similarly invades the ancient world of the toccata form and makes it his own. The Toccata is subdivided into Preludio, Fantasia, Ciaccona, but is played as one. This was Busoni’s last major work for piano; prefaced by an ironic quotation from Girolamo Frescobaldi (“without any difficulty I arrive at the end”), the Toccata is one of Busoni’s most advanced pieces, both musically and technically. Powerful, darkly coloured, often gloomy, rotating round the key of A flat minor, with little pedal in fast passages and much staccato, it embodies the style of Busoni’s last period of piano playing.

The concept of the Toccata is the old one, there are no fugal sections (apart from a hint of fugato in two instances) and it is a demonstration piece for the accomplished virtuoso. It is also Busoni’s final statement concerning the possibilities of the true neoclassicism; old and new are successfully wedded here, the seams are invisible and the potentialities for the future are given. Often, common chords are amalgamated to create totally new combinations. The inexorable logic of the piece, all of which grows from a minor third and a dotted rhythm heard at the onset, reminds us of the neo-classic Bartók yet to come.

Busoni’s Toccata is prefaced by an ironic quotation from Girolamo Frescobaldi: ‘without any difficulty I arrive at the end’
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Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Humoreske in B flat, Op.20

Einfach – Sehr rasch und leicht
  [Simple – Very fast and light]

Hastig [Hastily]

Einfach und zart – Intermezzo
  [Simply and tenderly – Intermezzo]

Innig – Sehr lebhaft – Mit einigem Pomp
  [Deep – Very lively – With a certain pomp]

Zum Beschlüß [Towards a resolution]

(The five sections are played without pause)

Schumann’s life was an endless struggle against misunderstanding and, in the end, against his own mind. It is essentially a tragic story, ending in madness as well as attempted suicide. But what seems to me to be the saddest posthumous fate of Schumann’s music is that, though it is now universally performed and beloved, we somehow have failed collectively to recognise Schumann as the ultimate Romantic: his avant-garde excursions into form, his complete subjectivity and inter-relationship with literature as well as with note-symbolism deeply embedded in much of his music; his fearless activities as a writer on music as well as a champion of young up-and-coming composers, the most famous being Brahms.

Schumann began by wanting to be a virtuoso pianist. Tradition has it that, with typical single-mindedness, he subjected his hands to an evil-looking machine with pulleys and straps in an attempt to improve their strength and flexibility. This may have been the source of an injury to his right hand – scholars are in dispute about this. But in any case he abandoned thoughts of a pianistic career. We are, as a result, richer, since he then devoted most of his time to composition. The piano remained his primary love, and most of the piano pieces that have remained in the repertoire came from his early years.

During Schumann’s lifetime, his wife Clara became the great champion of his music – including in her labours an edition of all his piano music. She was one of the most popular pianists of her time, but nevertheless failed to win over the mass audience. Schumann was of course extremely well-known and admired by professionals and the various avant-garde circles of his day; but even a pianist such as Liszt failed to convince audiences, and there are many letters from him to

Keynotes

SCHUMANN
Born Zwickau, 1810
Died Endenich, near Bonn, 1856

Schumann was a child of Romanticism: not only are his creations vividly imaginative and deeply lyrical, but he was aligned with the literary concerns of the Romantic era. It is no accident that he was a critic as well as a musician. At first he aspired to be a writer; he then pursued music under the guise of a law degree, eventually studying piano with Friedrich Wieck in Leipzig. Wieck’s star pupil was his daughter Clara, and she and Robert fell in love, eventually marrying despite Wieck’s objections. Along the way Schumann injured his hand – exactly how and how much is disputed – thwarting his performing hopes but leaving the way open for him to focus on composition.

HUMORESKE
This is one of Schumann’s most distinctive and original compositions. It’s an extended work – rivalling his sonatas in length – organised in five contrasting sections that are played seamlessly to create a single organic impression.
Schumann apologising for not including more of his music in his concert programs.

What confused the general listener was Schumann’s great departure from classical form: the sonata was now abandoned in favour of a series of miniatures that made up the final piece. Sometimes there remained vestiges of the variation form, which was familiar from the just-gone Classical era, but generally there was what seemed to be a series of unrelated small pieces, a tendency to literal repetition and a lack of flashiness in the piano writing. Add to that Schumann’s love of syncopations, harmonic suspensions, sudden modulations, cross-rhythms and polyphonic voices lurking within a sometimes fairly busy pianistic texture, and the general public was lost.

Today, we marvel at these things; we love the beautiful melodic lines and the individual voice that speaks to us, shot through with the romantic poetry that is at the heart of all of Schumann’s music, including, of course, the wonderful songs. It seems to me that Schumann, more than his other famous contemporaries, best exemplified that revolutionary thought of his age.

The Humoreske is no exception. Here is a typical suite-like construction, which Schumann himself described in a letter as ‘twelve sheets composed in a week’. Most commentators on this work write about its five main sections, each in its own ternary form. My advice is to give yourself up to the great diversity of the piece and not even try to count where these sections might be. The work is played without a break anywhere, and if one performs all the repeats, approaches half-an-hour in duration.

I have been all week at the piano, composing, writing, laughing and crying, all at once. You will find this state of things nicely described in my Op.20, the ‘Grosse Humoreske’, which is already at the printers.

SCHUMANN IN A LETTER TO CLARA (1839)

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Not Funny?

Language likes to play tricks on us. The modern English-speaker might be forgiven for thinking that a ‘humoreske’ (*humoresque* in French) has something to do with humour. It does, but not humour as in funny-ha-ha, or even funny-peculiar. Think instead of the mediæval humours that described human disposition or temperament: the phlegmatic, the sanguine, the choleric and the melancholic humour.

Schumann was the first to adopt the term ‘humoreske’ for music and his letters suggest that it’s very possible he had the old humours or temperaments in mind when he did so. Kirill Gerstein also draws attention to the verb form ‘humouring’ (that is, indulging) and suggests that Schumann is ‘humouring himself’ in this music. It was only later on, with composers such as Dvořák and Grieg, that the humoreske genre adopted the character of a light-hearted, melodious scherzo – all in good fun, if not funny.
Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
transcribed Samuil Feinberg

Scherzo from Symphony No.6 (Pathétique)

Samuil Feinberg was a great pianist and teacher who lived during the Soviet era. His compositional career was sadly stunted because, as a disciple of Scriabin, he was composing in an advanced chromatic idiom during the early years of the Soviet regime. This was tolerated at first, but gradually, after the death of Lenin and the assumption to power by Stalin (which was achieved in the time-honoured method by show trials, assassinations, firing squads and expulsions) composers found themselves under severe scrutiny and those of them who were working in experimental ways were deemed decadent and, eventually, anti-Soviet.

Feinberg concertised extensively, presenting his own music and those of his contemporary Russian colleagues, composers such as Scriabin, Stanchinsky, Aleksandrov, Myaskovsky, Prokofiev, Polovinkin, Goedicke and Catuar. As he was being squeezed by the regime, so his pianistic repertoire became more and more standardised, and I suspect that his recordings of music by his more experimental contemporaries disappeared from the archives; those that are readily available are by more mainstream composers. He was certainly an important pianist and teacher, and his output as a composer was almost exclusively for the piano, so he belonged to the tradition of the pianist-composer. His playing had a kind of ecstasy reminiscent of the playing of Scriabin, although wilder and less disciplined. His book on piano playing was published soon after his death.

His few song settings of the symbolist poets were considered to be fine examples, capturing the essential spirit of poets such as Alexander Blok. The writer Sabaneev declared that Feinberg was similar to Schumann, Poe and Dostoevsky, thus suggesting that he was an obsessed personality as a composer. Like Scriabin, Feinberg used the full sweep of the keyboard. His series of solo sonatas are important works and there are also three concertos for piano and orchestra; it must surely be only a question of time before he receives full recognition for his contribution to the original piano repertoire.

A Russian pianist and composer during Stalin’s regime, Feinberg’s recognition and subsequent reputation was hampered by his ‘avant garde’ tendencies – he was a disciple of Scriabin and toyed briefly with serialism – and his Jewish heritage. He wrote three piano concertos and some chamber music as well as numerous song settings (with texts by Pushkin and the Russian Symbolists), but his main output was music for solo piano, including a dozen sonatas and many virtuoso transcriptions.

SCHERZO

Feinberg’s ‘Scherzo’ is the third movement (Allegro molto vivace) from Tchaikovsky’s Pathétique Symphony. The orchestral original is less playful than brilliantly malevolent: a fierce juxtaposition of a feverish, whirling dance and a spiky march tune. In performances of the symphony this is the movement that seems determined to elicit applause rather than the more subdued conclusion to the finale. This virtuoso transcription, shorn of the ambiguity of its symphonic context, only heightens the triumphant effect of Tchaikovsky’s music.
Feinberg was the recipient of a State Award in 1937 and a doctorate in 1940. He taught at the Moscow Conservatoire from 1922 until his death, and was head of the keyboard department from 1936 on. In this capacity he was often a member of the various international juries judging piano competitions. His piano repertoire was wide-ranging and encompassed huge chunks of the standard repertoire as well as what has been listed above.

Being Jewish, he had to be doubly careful under Stalinism in full flight, and so it is not surprising that his compositional activities tapered off and became more and more conventional, in parallel to his choice of performing repertoire. It was simply better for his health not to be seen as a problem. It was thus that his fairly long list of virtuoso transcriptions came about. He transcribed and published four chorale preludes of Bach, an organ concerto by Bach (arranged from Vivaldi) and various transcriptions of Italian composers of the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as concert versions of works by Beethoven, Mussorgsky, Borodin and Tchaikovsky (we have an example tonight). There are also cadenzas to concertos by Mozart and Beethoven.

Feinberg’s transcriptions are fairly literal and close to the original. He did not, like Liszt, indulge in bravura connecting passages or much deviation from the original text. However, they require a fierce pianism and large hands to cope with the ongoing demands, and this movement from a Tchaikovsky Symphony is no exception!

PROGRAM NOTES BY LARRY SITSKY ©2008

Larry Sitsky is internationally known as a composer, pianist, scholar and teacher. He is acknowledged as a world expert on the music of Busoni, and his book *Busoni and the Piano* is about to be reissued in its revised second edition. He has recently provided a new ending to Busoni’s unfinished opera *Dr Faust*. Larry Sitsky has been a lifelong champion of Australian music.
The great Bulgarian pianist Alexis Weissenberg once said to Kirill Gerstein: 'Nothing tells the personality of the pianist more than the programs he puts together and the height of the piano stool in relation to the instrument.' And it is one of the beauties of the piano recital that, apart from avoiding works that have appeared recently in the same series, the pianist has virtually free rein in shaping the program. In a recital, more than in a concerto, the pianist's personality is revealed.

As the New York Times reported last year, Kirill Gerstein is an artist who can ‘turn the tried-and-true piano recital into something startlingly fresh’. That may be in part the result of Gerstein’s distinctive musical upbringing. Alongside the tried-and-true path of studies at an academy for talented children ran a parallel endeavour: Kirill taught himself jazz piano from his parents’ record collection.

‘I liked the sound of this kind of music,’ he says, ‘and started fooling around, trying to imitate that on the piano. I was lucky that both my parents – my mother’s
a musician – and also my teachers at the music school were open minded and encouraged me. I don't think it made a difference as far as playing the actual instrument. The piano is played the way the piano is played. But definitely having experienced the feeling of music being made live and on the spot...has enriched me and changed my way of approaching any piece of music.'

Making music on the spot isn't exclusive to jazz, of course. You don't have to look too far back (or sideways) in the classical piano tradition to find musicians improvising, extemporising. Or writing down music that's intended to give that impression.

The fantasy falls into that category. This is the genre that shows the composer's imagination at play, untrammelled by set forms. And it's a fantasy that provides the starting point, literally and philosophically, for tonight's program.

'What's very important to me,' says Gerstein, 'are the connections between pieces. So in the first half the idea of the fantasy is a kind of centrepiece. The idea was to surround the Chopin fantasy, which is the well-known piece, with two other “fantastic” or “phantasmic” pieces by Busoni. The Carmen sonatina is not a fantasy of the kind like Sarasate wrote for violin, or Waxman, or the famous Horowitz encore. This is like a six or seven-minute psychological portrait or reaction of a great artist going to see the opera and then ruminating on that. What's interesting is the order in which Busoni places the themes, which in itself makes a commentary on the opera's conditions and the ultimate outcome and fate.'

The Busoni Toccata – another late work – includes a fantasy, or Fantasia, as its central movement. And both Busoni works reveal Gerstein's special interest in a composer he believes in greatly but whose original music is rarely heard in recital. 'There's nothing wrong with playing the warhorses of the repertoire,' says Gerstein, 'but there should be a balance between the warhorses and things that people might not know but hopefully will enjoy. That's what you try to do as a performer: to take a piece that's not necessarily familiar or easily accessible at first glance and make that come across and make it understandable to the audience.'

Schumann's Humoreske continues the fantasy theme into the second half. Its title – misleading to English-speakers – has nothing to do with being funny, but can lead to unintended humour. 'In America I had two reviews...the idea of the fantasy is a kind of centrepiece.'
from the same concert. One said that the longer the Humoreske went on the less funny it got, and the other said that it was a very good performance because there was so much humour in it."

Gerstein goes on to explain that the title is more to do with the idea of ‘humouring’ yourself. ‘In that way it’s definitely a fantasy or fantasy-like because it’s not really in a conventional form of any kind. It’s not a sonata and it’s not a rondo…it falls in the category of a composer fantasising.’

Did Schumann have a narrative in mind? ‘It does seem that for Schumann and his vivid, not to say inflamed, imagination, there was often a story in the background somewhere, but I don’t think he shared a story with us for this piece. He was very much into secrets and I do believe that the piece is “about” something, which is as it should be. But I think it is up to the imagination. And that’s the wonderful thing about music – the fact that we know it’s definitely “about” something but that what it is about is up to the individual imagination.’

Like Busoni, Samuil Feinberg deserves some championing. ‘Part of the point in playing something by Feinberg,’ says Gerstein, ‘is that he’s unjustly unknown outside of Russia.’ The piece is a transcription rather than an original work, and so its musical material is very well known: Tchaikovsky’s Pathétique. It’s also ‘incredibly brilliant’. ‘Obviously there’s some thought always to how you end a recital,’ he says, ‘and often pianists and violinists choose some kind of showpiece. [The Scherzo] is an exact translation of a symphonic movement so there are interesting challenges as far as thinking in terms of orchestration and imitating certain orchestral sonorities. We’re not like violinists who can sit in the orchestra, but we can play symphonic things. So yes, it is a technical tour de force, but for me it has additional interesting intellectual and musical challenges.’

And that, he says, is the program for you in a nutshell. If you’ve formed the conclusion that here is a thoughtful, intelligent pianist with a dry sense of humour and bucket-loads of technique, you’d be right. As for the piano stool – you’ll have to watch and decide for yourself.

YVONNE FRINDLE
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*Booking fee may apply. Festival pass B&C reserves and only available through Sydney Symphony while stocks last. Not valid in conjunction with any other offer or via agents.
GLOSSARY

ARPEGGIATED – an arpeggio is a musical gesture in which the notes of a chord are ‘spread’, or played one after the other instead of simultaneously. Many arpeggios in succession create an ‘arpeggiated’ texture.

CANONIC – in the style of a CANON, music in which a melody is presented by one ‘voice’ and then repeated by one or more other voices, each entering before the previous voice has finished.

CIACCONA (or CHACONNE) – a musical form with baroque origins, which, since its revival in the 19th century, has been characterised by its recurring ground bass, providing the support for an extended set of variations, and its serious tone. Many composers have taken inspiration from the impressive but atypical passacaglias of Bach and Handel.

CROSS-RHYTHM – occurs when rhythms are ‘shifted’ so their strong beats fall at unexpected points in the basic pulse of the music. For example, a basic pulse of 3 beats + 3 beats might be overlayed with a rhythm made up of 2+2+2. The effect is usually complex but compelling.

DOTTED RHYTHM – a dotted rhythm is a pattern of alternating long and short notes where the long note is three times as long as the short one – the musical effect is often considered majestic or sprightly, depending on the tempo.

FUGAL and FUGATO – in the style of a fugue, characterised by imitation between different parts or instruments, which enter one after the other. The Latin word fuga is related to the idea of both ‘fleeing’ and ‘chasing’.

INTERMEZZO – ‘in the middle’; originally an operatic term, in the 19th-century an intermezzo was an independent instrumental work of lyrical character.

MODULATION – a harmonic transition from one key to another within the course of a movement.

POLYPHONIC – a musical texture in which the parts move independently, with their own melodic shapes and rhythms, and ‘vertical’ harmonies are created almost incidentally through the coming together of the different ‘horizontal’ lines. Canon is a simple form of polyphony.

RUBATO – literally ‘robbed’; performing a tempo rubato involves altering rhythm and tempo for expressive ends.

SONATINA – a ‘little’ sonata, often in just one movement and with a simplified structure.

TOCCATA – a fast and brilliant solo instrumental piece displaying a keyboardist’s ‘touch’ and technique.

STACCATO – a style of musical articulation in which the notes of a phrase are played shorter than their notated duration and are detached from each other.

SUSPENSION – a device in which a chord is played and one note is sustained while the other parts move to the next chord, creating a temporary dissonance or ‘clash’. The dissonance is usually resolved with the foreign note falling a step to a note that belongs to the new chord.

SYNCOPE – unexpected accents, especially falling against the prevailing beat.

In much of the classical repertoire, movement titles are taken from the Italian words that indicate the tempo and mood. A selection of terms from this program is included here.

Quasi presto, arditamente – in the manner of a presto (as fast as possible), boldly
Sostenuto, quasi allegro – sustained, in the manner of an allegro (fast)
Allegro risoluto – fast and resolute

This glossary is intended only as a quick and easy guide, not as a set of comprehensive and absolute definitions. Most of these terms have many subtle shades of meaning which cannot be included for reasons of space.
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<tr>
<th>Music Courses exclusively for adults</th>
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<td>The Music Practice Choir! JOIN NOW!</td>
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<th>The ‘Tone Deaf’ Clinic</th>
<th>Jazz Saxophone</th>
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<td>Ever been told to ‘just mime the words dear’?</td>
<td>It’s an incredible improvisation!</td>
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<tr>
<th>The Resonant Voice</th>
<th>Jazz Voice</th>
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<tr>
<td>Find it, tune it, train it and relish the pleasure of hearing it really sing.</td>
<td>Perfect for shower singers who want to come out of the closet.</td>
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<th>With Two Hands</th>
<th>Blues Guitar</th>
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<td>If you’ve always wanted to play piano or improve your rusty skills.</td>
<td>For profoundly talented air guitarists … Relax and let it happen!</td>
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<th>First Fiddle</th>
<th>All That Jazz</th>
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<td>Jump over the moon when you hear yourself play Pachelbel’s Canon.</td>
<td>Experiment, improvise; how far (out) can you go?</td>
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<th>The Convivial Cellist</th>
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<td>For the ultimate in swoon…</td>
<td>Learn the frets without fretting.</td>
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<th>Chamber Music</th>
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<td>It’s smooth, it’s velvety, it’s delicious and it’s not fattening!</td>
<td>A very civilised way to spend an evening.</td>
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<th>Seriously Saxophone</th>
<th>The Magic Flute</th>
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<td>Indulge yourself – you know you want to!</td>
<td>Pan’s legacy – and still a romantic instrument.</td>
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Selected Discography

CHOPIN
Ivan Moravec’s Chopin interpretations are acclaimed and his 2002 recording of the Fantasy, Op.49, is programmed with mazurkas, the fourth ballade, and the ‘Funeral March’ Sonata in an all-Chopin disc.
VOX CLASSICS 7908

BUSONI
Australian pianist Geoffrey Tozer has released a disc of Busoni piano compositions and transcriptions, including both pieces on tonight’s program.
CHANDOS 9394

SCHUMANN
Radu Lupu’s distinguished recording of the Humoreske is available with the more often heard Kinderszenen, Op.15, and Kreisleriana, Op.16 – three major pieces that avoid the traditional sonata structures.
DECCA 440 496

FEINBERG
Tonight’s Scherzo is included on Vladimir Leyetchkiss’ disc Great Piano Transcriptions.
CENTAUR RECORDS CRC 2088
And also in the 7-CD Lazar Berman Edition.
BRILLIANT CLASSICS 93006
It’s worth seeking out Feinberg’s original works. The piano sonatas, recorded by Christophe Sirodeau and Nikolaos Samaltanos, are available in two volumes on the BIS label.
BIS 1413, 1414
Of historical interest: Samuil Feinberg plays Bach as well as Schumann, Liszt, Scriabin, and his own Suite for Piano No.1.
ARBITER 118

Webcast Diary

Selected Sydney Symphony concerts are recorded for webcast by BigPond and are available On Demand. Visit: sydneysymphony.bigpondmusic.com

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GELMETTI’S FAREWELL
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sydneysymphony.com
Visit the Sydney Symphony online for concert information, podcasts, and to read the program book in advance of the concert.

Broadcast Diary

OCTOBER–NOVEMBER

25 October, 8pm
A TRIBUTE TO DUKE ELLINGTON
Hamish McKeich conductor
James Morrison Quartet

27 October, 1pm
Edo de Waart conductor
BARTÓK Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta
R STRAUSS Metamorphosen
Performances recorded in 1997 and 2001

31 October, 1pm
MIDORI GALA (2006)
Miguel Harth-Bedoya conductor
Midori violin
Britten

ELGAR FESTIVAL BROADCASTS
Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

3 November, 7pm
Jian Wang cello
Cello Concerto, Symphony No.1

8 November, 8pm
Lilli Paasikivi mezzo-soprano
Sea Pictures, Serenade, Symphony No.2

12 November, 8pm
James Ehnes violin
Violin Concerto, Enigma Variations, Pomp and Circumstance Marches

20 November, 8pm
Lilli Paasikivi, Mark Tucker, David Wilson-Johnson vocal soloists
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs
The Dream of Gerontius

2MBS-FM 102.5
SYDNEY SYMPHONY 2008
Tue 14 October, 6pm
What’s on in concerts, with interviews and music.
Special guest: Raff Wilson, Artistic Manager
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kirill Gerstein piano

Kirill Gerstein was born in Voronezh, Russia, where he attended a school for gifted children. In his early teens he also taught himself to play jazz and appeared in jazz festivals. This led to studies at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, and later at the Manhattan School of Music, where he earned both his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees by the age of 20. In 2001 he won First Prize in the Arthur Rubinstein Competition in Tel Aviv. Today he continues his studies in Madrid with Dmitri Bashkirov and in Budapest with Ferenc Rados.

Recent concerto appearances have included the Philadelphia Orchestra (with Charles Dutoit), San Francisco Symphony and Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela (Gustavo Dudamel), Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (Vasily Petrenko), Munich and La Scala Philharmonics (Semyon Bychkov), South West Radio Orchestra of Baden-Baden and Freiburg Symphony (Michael Gielen), Dallas Symphony (Gilbert Varga), Finnish Radio Symphony (Yannick Nézet-Séguin), Swedish Radio Symphony (Susanna Mälkki), and return engagements with the Houston and Baltimore Symphony Orchestras (Hans Graf), Gürzenich Orchestra (Emmanuel Krivine), and the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra (Marin Alsop).

The 2008/09 season sees debut performances with the Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra, as well as return invitations to orchestras in England and Germany. Following his successful Wigmore Hall recital debut this year, he will return to London to perform at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. He also performs at the Rubinstein Piano Festival in Lodz, Poland.

His chamber collaborations have included performances with cellist Steven Isserlis, a piano trio with Kolja Blacher and Clemens Hagen, and two collaborative projects with András Schiff at the Salzburg Festival. He received a Gilmore Young Artist Award in 2002 and was named Carnegie Hall’s Rising Star for the 2005/06 season. Kirill Gerstein is also a professor at the Stuttgart Musikhochschule.

Kirill Gerstein’s Australian tour debut has included concerts with the Tasmanian, Adelaide and West Australian Symphony Orchestras as well as tonight’s recital.
Founded in 1932, the Sydney Symphony has evolved into one of the world’s finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world’s great cities. Last year the Orchestra celebrated its 75th anniversary and the milestone achievements during its distinguished history.

Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, where it gives more than 100 performances each year, the Sydney Symphony also performs concerts in a variety of venues around Sydney and regional New South Wales. International tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra world-wide recognition for artistic excellence.

Critical to the success of the Sydney Symphony has been the leadership given by its former Chief Conductors including: Sir Eugene Goossens, Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Stuart Challender and Edo de Waart. Also contributing to the outstanding success of the Orchestra have been collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

Maestro Gianluigi Gelmetti, whose appointment followed a ten-year relationship with the Orchestra as Guest Conductor, is now in his fifth and final year as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony, a position he holds in tandem with that of Music Director at Rome Opera. Maestro Gelmetti’s particularly strong rapport with French and German repertoire is complemented by his innovative programming in the Shock of the New concerts.

The Sydney Symphony’s award-winning Education Program is central to the Orchestra’s commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. The Sydney Symphony also maintains an active commissioning program promoting the work of Australian composers, and recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards and Brett Dean, as well as Liza Lim, who was composer-in-residence from 2004 to 2006.

In 2009 Maestro Vladimir Ashkenazy will begin his three-year tenure as Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor.
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<td>Lisa Mullineux</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orchestral Coordinator</td>
<td>Greg Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical Manager</td>
<td>Derek Cou tts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production Coordinator</td>
<td>Tim Dayman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production Coordinator</td>
<td>Ian Spence</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Business Services</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Director of Finance</td>
<td>John Horn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance Manager</td>
<td>Ruth Tolentino</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts Assistant</td>
<td>Li Li</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Administrator</td>
<td>Rebecca Whittington</td>
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<td>Payroll Officer</td>
<td>Usef Hoosney</td>
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<td><strong>Human Resources</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resources Manager</td>
<td>Ian Arnold</td>
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<td><strong>Commercial Enterprises</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial Enterprises Manager</td>
<td>David Pratt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recording Enterprises Executive</td>
<td>Philip Powers</td>
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Publisher
Playbill Proprietary Limited / Showbill Proprietary Limited
ACN 003 311 064  ABN 27 003 311 064

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