NORTHERN LIGHTS
Adès conducts Sibelius

TEA & SYMPHONY
Fri 3 May 11am

Witold Lutosławski composed his Cello Concerto for Rostropovich, who gave the first performance in London in 1970. On this Australian tour, Pieter Wispelwey is focusing on works composed for Rostropovich, including concertos by Prokofiev and Shostakovich.
2013 SEASON
TEA & SYMPHONY
Friday 3 May | 11am
Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

Northern Lights
Thomas Adès CONDUCTOR
Pieter Wispelwey CELLO

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Overture in C, Op.115, Namensfeier (Name Day)

Witold Lutoslawski (1913–1994)
Cello Concerto
Introduction –
Four Episodes –
Cantilena –
Finale

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957)
Symphony No.6, Op.104
Allegro molto moderato
Allegretto moderato
Poco vivace
Allegro molto

The music on this program was recorded on Thursday 2 May for later broadcast by ABC Classic FM.

Estimated durations:
9 minutes, 23 minutes, 28 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 12.10pm.
Even great composers suffer from the tides of fashion and around 1812 this was Beethoven’s bitter experience. It was not helped by the composer’s depressed state: after completing the Seventh and Eighth symphonies and the G Major Violin Sonata in mid-1812, he effectively stopped composing, and may, according to biographer Maynard Solomon, have attempted suicide. Things improved for Beethoven during the Congress of Vienna, held between September 1814 and June 1815, which was an attempt by Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia – the victorious powers in the Napoleonic Wars – to restore Europe to something like the world that obtained during the Ancien Régime.

Beethoven was feted by various crowned heads for works like the jingoistic Wellington’s Victory; he responded with more patriotic music like the cantata Der glorreiche Augenblick (The Glorious Moment).

The enthusiasm was a bubble that soon burst; the dignitaries loved the cantata but the paying public was sparse. Nevertheless, Beethoven tried to regain popularity by, as Solomon puts it, ‘pursuing musical formulas that had worked so well during the preceding years’. A result of this was the Overture dedicated to Prince Anton Heinrich Radziwill, completed in 1815, but using some material that Beethoven had sketched for a setting of Schiller’s poem, An die Freude. Performed at Christmas 1815, around the name day of the Emperor, it acquired the nickname ‘Namensfeier’.

The ‘musical formula’ of this work is what Baroque composers called the ‘French overture’ – evoking, perhaps, the Ancien Régime. That is, it opens with a stately introductory section marked Maestoso (majestically), where fully-scored chords march slowly to a ceremonial dotted rhythm. The body of the overture, however, is an energetic dance that has some of the skipping vitality of the Seventh Symphony. Beethoven recognised it as a minor work; sadly it failed to lift his popularity or his income.
**LUTOSŁAWSKI Cello Concerto**

When Lutosławski was invited to compose a piece for London’s Royal Philharmonic Society, he requested that he be able to write a piece featuring the great Russian cellist, Mstislav Rostropovich. Naturally the Royal Philharmonic Society was delighted, and the piece was commissioned with the assistance of the Gulbenkian Foundation. The Concerto was first performed on 14 October 1971 at the Royal Festival Hall in London with Rostropovich and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra conducted by Edward Downes.

Lutosławski describes how writing for ‘one of the greatest musicians of our century’ allowed him to forget about ‘technicalities’ and concentrate on the music.

* * * * * *

Most Classical concertos begin with an orchestral introduction of the work’s main themes, which are then taken up by the soloist. Lutosławski, by contrast, begins his Cello Concerto with an unaccompanied *Introduction* for the soloist: the cello repeats the note D in an expressionless (‘indifferent’) manner, then tries out and abandons various ideas that contrast mood and style – ‘gracious’, ‘martial’, ‘comic but elegant’ and so on – while returning to the repeated D.

On their final appearance, these repeated Ds seem about to turn into something more extended, but this is interrupted by a barrage of trumpet calls. This signals the second movement, *Four Episodes*, where the cello takes the lead, ‘inviting’ (to use Lutosławski’s word) groups of instruments to join it. Each time, the brass disrupts the music, bringing the episode to a sudden end.

After the fourth episode, and fourth interruption, the cello plays some plucked notes, as if thinking about what comes next, and then launches into a beautiful, long, slow *Cantilena* that gradually unfolds using the instrument’s highest, ‘singing’ register; the music condenses into a brief passage of unison melody but is brutally disrupted by the brass and the rest of the orchestra in a feverish tutti.

In this way the *Finale* begins, where, once again, the cello’s fast and brilliant solo passages are repeatedly ‘attacked’ (Lutosławski’s word again), by different groups of orchestral instruments. The climax of the work comes with brutal *forte* chords and a kind of collapse, after which we hear the cello in a falling quarter-tone gesture that suggests weeping. But all is not lost, the cello rises through the texture to play another repeated pattern – this time of As – loud and triumphant near the top of its range.
Lutosławski’s harmony often uses all available 12 notes, but deployed so there is huge contrast between chords which are stable and consonant and those that are dissonant. His colours and textures are frequently derived from using small groups within the orchestra, which change from moment to moment. One of his most dramatic features is the contrast between sections played in strict time, and others where individual instruments repeat phrases with rhythmic freedom and independence to create a fluid but motionless effect.

**About the composer...**

Born into an aristocratic Polish family, Lutosławski was one of many Polish intellectuals marked out for extermination by the occupying Nazis during World War 2. He fared rather better under the Communist regime, though his First Symphony, completed in 1947, was denounced as ‘formalist’ (the catch-all Soviet-era criticism) and banned. But his Concerto for Orchestra, developing his love of both folk-based material and rich orchestral sound, earned him rehabilitation at home and contributed to his growing reputation elsewhere.

By the 1960s, that international reputation was assured. He was now able to invent his own very personal modernist style, and he went on to compose three more symphonies, and concertos for piano and for oboe and harp, for soloists and orchestras around the world. He developed particular relationships with American orchestras such as the Chicago Symphony under George Solti and the Los Angeles Philharmonic and its then Music Director, Esa-Pekka Salonen.

GORDON KERRY © 2013


American composer Steven Stucky neatly encapsulates five hallmarks of Lutosławski’s music:

1. beauty of sound and mastery of colour
2. renewal of harmony
3. clarity of form
4. drama
5. eloquent communication
SIBELIUS Symphony No.6

Although Sibelius' Sixth can be experienced (and is frequently discussed) as an exercise in reaching for homogeneity of form and purity of musical utterance, its emotional landscape is far from serene. In fact the work is enigmatic even for this composer, hardly known for making his meanings clear. Compared to the symphonies on either side of it, it could not be called popular.

The orchestration looks to be modest on paper, but it has striking colouristic features, specifically a propensity for divisi writing in the strings and particularly prominent parts for bass clarinet and harp.

One point of colour is also one of musical content: there is very little slow music in this symphony. This seems to be integral to another feature of the instrumentation: the long pedal points that feature so prominently in Sibelius’ music are, on this occasion, given rarely to the double basses but more frequently to the woodwind, the lower brass or the timpani. The sparsity of slow music and lower sustained string sound gives the work a curiously weightless sound at times, as if the whole structure could loosen its moorings.

The work also has a deceptive shape. Allied to its modest-seeming orchestral forces are its Classical-seeming dimensions. The Sixth Symphony is less than 30 minutes long and contains a number of formal flourishes that seem to pay homage to past symphonic styles: the ‘slow’ introduction before the first movement proper begins, the ‘hunt’ atmosphere of the third movement and the Haydn-esque cut of the phrase with which the finale begins.

Sibelius’s music often has a modal flavour, but the air of modality (particularly Dorian – the mode achieved by playing the white keys on the piano from D to D) is strong in both melody and harmony here. Allied to the work’s relatively lean texture, this gives much of this symphony its sense of clarity and restraint. The Sixth Symphony was, after all, the work which Sibelius referred to as ‘spring water’ in relation to the ‘gaudy cocktails’ being served by his contemporaries.

It must be confessed that knowing all this does not prevent the symphony from humbling even the most inquisitive listener. Why, for example, does the first movement traverse a musical landscape so varied in texture but emotionally, at best, allusory; and why, after a dramatic climax, does the movement end with four bars marked, almost as a non-sequitur, Poco tranquillo?

The Allegretto moderato movement is, likewise, not at all straightforward. It begins on flutes and bassoons almost like
an other-worldly minuet, slowly, gracefully, indeterminately, before the emotions darken and the textures thicken. An extended, fleet-footed passage near the end (virtually a long crescendo) suggests the beating of giant wings, but just as it seems this music will come to a climax, it collapses. Once again, the final bars are a cessation rather than a conclusion.

Following the short ‘hunt’ movement, the finale is perhaps the richest and strangest movement of all. Having begun in a manner suggestive of Classical propriety, it launches itself, over long pedal points and restless instrumental textures, onto a musical journey suggesting a passionate quest; but about half way through there is a grinding moment of collapse. Although the main musical ideas seem to recover, the governing sense of movement leads us down, not up, and the path to the work’s famously provisional ending seems, in retrospect, to be inevitable. If the Fourth Symphony ends with a shrug, this ends, with, at best, a willingness to accept loss or defeat without anguish or agony; it is well to remember that, in Sibelius’ universe, the fall of a leaf may be as significant as the death of a loved one.

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Thomas Adès CONDUCTOR

Thomas Adès was born in London in 1971. He studied piano and composition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and read music at King’s College, Cambridge. In 2000 his orchestral work *Asyla* won him the prestigious Grawemeyer Award.

Renowned as both a composer and performer, he works regularly with the world’s leading opera companies and festivals. He has been Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival (1999–2008) and Music Director of the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (1998–2000). He was also featured as composer and performer at Carnegie Hall (2007–08) and in the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra’s 2009–10 season.

His conducting engagements have included Gerald Barry’s opera *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Birmingham Contemporary Music Group), and his own opera *The Tempest* (Metropolitan Opera). He has also conducted many leading orchestras throughout Europe and the United States, including the London Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and he has developed a close relationship with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Thomas Adès made his Sydney Symphony debut in 2010, conducting *Asyla* and a suite from Tchaikovsky’s *Nutcracker*.

Pieter Wispelwey CELLO

Pieter Wispelwey belongs to a generation of performers who are equally at ease on modern or period cello. His stylistic awareness, originality and technical mastery has won hearts in repertoire ranging from JS Bach to works composed for him.

Highlights among his current concerto projects include a tour of Australia in which he is focusing on cello concertos dedicated to Rostropovich. Recital highlights include performances in Vienna (Konzerthaus), Paris (Louvre), London (Wigmore Hall), Amsterdam (Concertgebouw), Brussels (Flagey), Boston (Celebrity Series) and San Francisco, as well as Tokyo, Beijing and Seoul. Pieter Wispelwey also recently formed a string quartet, Quartet-Lab, with Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Pekka Kuusisto and Lilli Maijala.

He has made more than 20 recordings, and recent releases include his third recording of the Bach Cello Suites, Walton’s Cello Concerto (recorded with the Sydney Symphony and Jeffrey Tate in 2007), Prokofiev’s Symphony-Concerto, Britten’s Cello Symphony, and music for cello and piano by Schubert recorded on period instruments.

Pieter Wispelwey’s most recent appearance with the Sydney Symphony was in 2011.
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Vladimir Ashkenazy, Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor

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Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony has evolved into one of the world’s finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world’s great cities.

Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, where it gives more than 100 performances each year, the Sydney Symphony also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales. International tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence, most recently in the 2012 tour to China.

The Sydney Symphony’s first Chief Conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. David Robertson will take up the post of Chief Conductor in 2014. The orchestra’s history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

The Sydney Symphony’s award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. The orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program. Recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards, Liza Lim, Lee Bracegirdle, Gordon Kerry and Georges Lentz, and the orchestra’s recording of works by Brett Dean was released on both the BIS and Sydney Symphony Live labels.

Other releases on the Sydney Symphony Live label, established in 2006, include performances with Alexander Lazarev, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Sir Charles Mackerras and Vladimir Ashkenazy. In 2010–11 the orchestra made concert recordings of the complete Mahler symphonies with Ashkenazy, and has also released recordings of Rachmaninoff and Elgar orchestral works on the Exton/Triton labels, as well as numerous recordings on the ABC Classics label.

This is the fifth year of Ashkenazy’s tenure as Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor.

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The Sydney Symphony is assisted by the NSW Government through Arts NSW.
...taking responsibility, passing around the inspiration

INTRODUCING ANDREW

This month we welcome co-concertmaster Andrew Haveron to the Sydney Symphony. Here’s your chance to get to know the guy sitting at the pointy end.

‘I really didn’t see that one coming.’ Andrew Haveron, our newly appointed co-concertmaster, is talking about the phone call some 14 years ago inviting him to join the Brodsky Quartet. ‘They were an established quartet of 25 years, who suddenly rang up out of the blue.’ There followed eight fabulous years. ‘I would have played 250 to 300 different quartets. I could bore the back legs off a donkey talking about rare and obscure quartets!’ But when he made the switch to the world of orchestral music, Andrew recognised there was a huge gap in his knowledge. ‘I hadn’t even played Beethoven 5!’

Living in London, Andrew found those gaps were filled pretty quickly. ‘Given the speed with which that city operates, I’ve got several Beethoven cycles under my belt now. His music is always rewarding to play. Brahms too, though he didn’t bend to string players’ techniques much.’

Andrew sees little difference between making music on an intimate chamber scale and that of larger orchestral playing. On a recent tour with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, performing Haydn symphonies without conductor, he enjoyed observing the responsibility taken by each of the musicians. ‘In a symphonic situation, we all too easily give up responsibility and hand it all over to the conductor. I find that a little frustrating at times. If everyone takes responsibility, the results can be electrifying.’ When accompanying an orchestral oboe solo, for example, Andrew will try to have direct contact with the oboist, keeping the conductor only in his peripheral view. ‘That’s where the truth of the music is coming from. I think conductors enjoy seeing people take that responsibility for themselves, passing around the inspiration.’

Having made the transition from pure chamber music to leading orchestras, Andrew says it took a little while to appreciate the role of a concertmaster. ‘I know that different orchestras require different things. One thing I’m not is a dictator. I just don’t see the point. My leadership style is to spread confidence and freedom for people to enjoy playing to their best. An enthusiastic orchestra always sounds better than an uninspired one.’
If you could describe music in words, you wouldn’t need music.’ So says conductor Benjamin Northey, who will conduct our Stage 3 Schools Concerts in August. ‘Nevertheless, as a teacher, that’s your challenge. You need to find a way to engage young people’s minds so that they can find their own way to the music.’

Enter the Sydney Symphony’s accredited professional learning workshops for teachers. ‘We help them become familiar with the music their children will hear when they come to the schools concerts later in the year,’ says Kim Waldock, our Head of Education. ‘We do a number of crazy activities and frolicking around, and learning ways of introducing children to orchestral music.’

‘The most daunting thing for non-music specialists is reading music. It can be like reading another language,’ says workshop presenter Vanessa South. ‘We’re giving them strategies: learning the rhythms, learning the rhymes.’ Harriet Muston of Neutral Bay Public School offers the teacher’s perspective: ‘It’s nice to be able to be a student for a change and participate in the activities.’

Interested in finding out more about schools concerts and teacher training? Call Kim Waldock on (02) 8215 4684 or watch the video: bit.ly/SSOSchoolsConcerts
Recently, two SSO musicians – Marina Marsden (Principal Second Violin) and Marnie Sebire (Horn) – packed their bags and headed off overseas for a study break.

In crafting her schedule, Marina Marsden reflected on the needs of her section and identified some areas where she could benefit from mentoring. ‘There’s a certain amount of training we receive, but besides mentoring young people in our Sinfonia [the Sydney Symphony’s training orchestra], as leaders we also need to motivate and support the people in our own section.’

Marina’s jam-packed international trip included everything from instrumental lessons with violin guru David Takeno in London to study with ‘flow’ technique specialist Andreas Burzik in Bremen. “Flow” is a way of playing where you become totally inside the music. I’ll use the method to improve my performing, mentoring and teaching skills.’ Marina also met with several mediation and orchestral leadership experts.

Marnie Sebire’s trip was about refocusing and regaining her inspiration for the French horn, and included lessons with living legend Hector McDonald in Vienna and Sarah Willis in Berlin. ‘Sarah was the first female brass musician accepted into the Berlin Phil,’ says Marnie. ‘We were fortunate to have her join the SSO horn section last year for performances of Bruckner 8 and she blew me away!’ Also on her schedule were lessons on Wagner tuba. Describing it as an ‘unwieldy instrument’, Marnie explains that Wagner designed it with the sound of a horn crossed with trombone in mind. ‘Unfortunately it’s a bit of a devil to play. I’m hoping to gain some insights from those musicians in Berlin who play the thing relatively regularly.’

Both Marina and Marnie were supported in their study travel by the Symphony Friends and Michael & Mary Whelan Trust scholarships. Any musician who has been a member of the Sydney Symphony for more than two years is eligible to apply for assistance with airfares, tuition fees and living expenses for a period of study, usually overseas. ‘It’s so great to know that the opportunity exists in the orchestra…to be supported and encouraged to go and gain inspiration,’ says Marina.

Playing Favourites

Ask Vladimir Ashkenazy outright about his favourite composers or musical works and the response is usually tactfully non-committal: ‘How could I possibly name one? – they are all so great!’ Genuinely awed by the wonder of musical creation, he comes across like an unwaveringly fair parent – refusing to play favourites.

But, of course, there are composers and pieces that are close to his heart, that make his eyes light up, that prompt him to enthusiastic discussion and wonderful anecdotes. And he has chosen three such works for the second of his programs in May.

There’s Russian romanticism in Tchaikovsky’s Romeo and Juliet – the heartfelt storytelling that Ashkenazy does so well. And there’s elegant neoclassicism in the form of Richard Strauss’s late oboe concerto, with soloist Hansjörg Schellenberger. But the real highlight is Walton’s First Symphony.

The choice of an English symphony might seem unexpected, until you remember Ashkenazy’s Elgar festival in 2008, when Russian and English sensibilities met to powerful effect. ‘I love Walton’s First,’ says Ashkenazy, ‘it’s an absolute favourite.’ The appeal is in its ‘tremendous energy’ and Walton’s distinctive style – nostalgic sometimes, but spirited and colourful. And the anecdote? Stay tuned for the story of the trumpet solo…

Ashkenazy’s Favourites

Master Series

15, 17, 18 May | 8pm
We’re sad to report that Linda Vogt Evans, a former member of the Sydney Symphony, passed away in April, aged 90. Linda played in the flute section from 1942 to 1952. She was the second female wind player to be appointed to any ABC orchestra and was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1989 for her services to music. She attended our performance of Shostakovich’s Tenth Symphony last year just before we toured to China and was thoroughly excited by the music as always and extremely complimentary about the orchestra. She will be sadly missed.

**PROGRAM IN YOUR POCKET**

Want to do some last-minute cramming before the concert? Download the Sydney Symphony’s free mobile app to get quick access to the program book, available in the week of the performance. You can also browse events, music, news and blog posts, and watch our live webcasts.

**WATCH THE MICHAEL HILL INTERNATIONAL VIOLIN COMPETITION**

Co-concertmaster Dene Olding wears several musical hats – many Sydney-siders will know his work with the Goldner Quartet and the Australia Ensemble. Less well-known is his role as artistic advisor of the Michael Hill International Violin Competition in New Zealand. All the public events of the 2013 competition (31 May–8 June) will be streamed and you can follow along by visiting the competition website: www.violincompetition.co.nz

**FOR YOUNG MUSICIANS**

Sydney Sinfonia and Fellowship applications will open on Monday 20 May. More information, including online applications, will be available through our website from this date. Any questions? Call Mark Lawson on (02) 8215 4652.

300,000 HITS AND COUNTING

In the model of Carlton’s Big Beer Ad, we invited our Facebook fans to devise their own lyrics for the iconic opening chorus of *Carmina Burana*, ‘O Fortuna!’ The prize: the fabolous Sydney Philharmonia Choirs would sing the winning entry. We received a huge number of entries about a diverse range of topics, and Matthew Hodge’s entry, ‘Ode to Sleep Deprived Parents and Terrorising Toddlers’ was declared the winner by popular acclaim! You can chuckle along here: bit.ly/OdeToSleepDeprivedParents

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**THAT’S PINTERESTING**

Did you know the Sydney Symphony is on Pinterest? We set up Pinterest boards for selected concerts – assembling pictures, video, and weird and wonderful information relating to the music. Some of our fans are finding it an interesting and fun way to get to know the music we perform – what do you think?

pinterest.com/sydneysymphony/

**VALE LINDA VOGT EVANS**

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