SPELLBOUND
Stravinsky and Mendelssohn

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Barry Brown
Emirates’ Vice President Australasia
2013 SEASON

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY
Thursday 13 June | 1.30pm

EMIRATES METRO SERIES
Friday 14 June | 8pm

GREAT CLASSICS
Saturday 15 June | 2pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

Spellbound

Charles Dutoit  conductor
Arabella Steinbacher  violin

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

The Song of the Nightingale – Symphonic Poem

Scenario:
The Fête in the Emperor of China’s Palace –
The Two Nightingales –
Illness and Recovery of the Emperor

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Violin Concerto in E minor, Op.64

Allegro molto appassionato –
Andante –
Allegro non troppo – Allegro molto vivace

INTERVAL

Stravinsky

The Rite of Spring

PART 1 L’Adoration de la terre (Adoration of the Earth)
PART 2 Le Sacrifice

See page 15 for details of each part.

These performances celebrate the 100th anniversary of the premiere of The Rite of Spring on 29 May 1913.

ABC Classic FM

Friday’s performance will be recorded by ABC Classic FM for later broadcast across Australia.

Pre-concert talk by Yvonne Frindle in the Northern Foyer, 45 minutes before each performance. Visit bit.ly/SSOspeakerbios for speaker biographies.

Estimated durations:
20 minutes, 27 minutes,
20-minute interval, 33 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 3.25pm (Thu),
9.55pm (Fri) and 3.55pm (Sat).
Study for a portrait of Igor Stravinsky by Jacques-Emile Blanche (1861–1942). Made in 1913, the year of *The Rite of Spring*. 
INTRODUCTION

Spellbound

This program began life with Igor Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*. This thrilling ballet score is always a welcome addition to the orchestra’s season, but this year was special: 29 May marked the 100th anniversary of the Paris premiere in 1913.

Simply as the premiere of a seminal musical creation, this was one of the most important moments in 20th-century music. But the event has also entered musical folklore for the riot it sparked in the audience, and it’s tempting to feel nostalgic for a time when a new work might prompt such a visceral and vocal response!

Much of the abuse was aimed at Nijinsky’s pigeon-toed and jerky choreography – indeed Stravinsky’s ‘blood-curdling’ music was at times rendered inaudible by the catcalls and laughter – and some suggest the riot was a cultivated public relations stunt on the part of the impresario Diaghilev. (The open dress rehearsal the previous day had been received by an entirely calm audience of Parisian high society, musicians and artists.) But of the key creative personalities involved – Nijinsky, the designer Roerich, and Stravinsky – it was the composer whose reputation was truly made by *The Rite of Spring*, and who capitalised on the furore for the rest of his career.

As Diaghilev did in 1913, we’ve chosen to program *The Rite* with music that offers contrasts rather than competition. Completed just a few years after *The Rite*, Stravinsky’s *Song of the Nightingale* takes its inspiration from Hans Christian Andersen – a tale of nature and artifice rather than a story of pagan ritual. And perhaps no greater contrast to *The Rite of Spring* could be imagined than Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto. Where *The Rite* sounds primitive and raw, the concerto is elegance personified. But all three works weave their own kind of magic and cast spells in their own way.

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bravo!

Turn to page 31 to read *Bravo*! – musician profiles, articles and news from the orchestra. There are nine issues through the year, also available at sydneysymphony.com/bravo

We’ve assembled a wealth of images and video relating to the music in this concert. Check out our pinboard: bit.ly/PinboardSpellbound

FRONT COVER: Julia Makhalina as the Chosen One in the Kirov Ballet production of *The Rite of Spring*, reconstructed by Millicent Hodson from original costumes (Roerich) and choreography (Nijinsky).
© Laurie Lewis / Lebrecht Music & Arts
Set design by Henri Matisse (1869–1954) for the Ballets Russes’ 1920 production of the ballet *The Song of the Nightingale*. Matisse conceived it in black, white and turquoise, with the character of Death dressed in scarlet.
Igor Stravinsky

Chant du rossignol

The Song of the Nightingale – Symphonic Poem

SCENARIO:
The Fête in the Emperor of China’s Palace – (including the Chinese March)
The Two Nightingales – (including the Song of the Nightingale and Performance by the Mechanical Nightingale) Illness and Recovery of the Emperor

Tradition has it that the nightingale never repeats itself in song. The nightingale is nature’s composer-improviser, a symbol of creativity. The nightingale could also be taken as a symbol of the story of this music and its composer. Between the time he began work on the opera Le Rossignol in 1908 and the time he completed the symphonic poem Chant du rossignol in 1917, Stravinsky’s style had changed dramatically and it would continue to change – there was to be no repeating himself in song.

Le Rossignol is a short opera based on the story by Hans Christian Andersen. It begins in a wood by the seashore, where the Fisherman enjoys the song of the Nightingale. Its reputation has reached the Chinese Emperor and the bird is invited to the palace. Here, in the second act, the Nightingale sings and the Emperor is moved to tears.

Competition arrives in the form of a gift from the Emperor of Japan: a mechanical nightingale. It has only one song but the courtiers are entranced by its novelty; the real nightingale quietly returns to the wood. The Emperor, noticing its disappearance, banishes it from his realm. In the third act the Emperor is gravely ill, but the Nightingale returns and with its singing banishes Death. The Emperor’s courtiers return, astonished to find him in perfect health.

As the curtain falls, the Fisherman is singing.

When Stravinsky took up this tale in 1908 he was deeply under the influence of his teacher Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and still finding his own voice. Act I of the opera ripples with the colours and melodic gestures of Mussorgsky and especially Debussy: the simple oscillating introduction is Debussy’s Nuages, almost note for note. If this is Stravinsky, it’s the Stravinsky of The Firebird ballet (1910).

It was Diaghilev’s commission for The Firebird which interrupted work on Le Rossignol, with just one act completed. Then came more Diaghilev ballets: Petrushka (1911) and The Rite of Spring (1913). And with each ballet Stravinsky’s style was changing, from the extravagant, colourful fantasy...
of The Firebird to the modernity and pathos of Petrushka, and beyond to the tormented pulsations and fierce, ‘primitive’ harmonies of the game-changing Rite of Spring.

When Stravinsky finally returned to Le Rossignol in 1913, he doubted whether it would be possible to complete it, given the dramatic shift in his musical language. In the end he was swayed by a generous fee and he rationalised the inevitable discontinuity as a way of contrasting the natural habitat of the Nightingale and the exotic atmosphere of the Chinese court, which ‘obviously demanded a different musical idiom’. The opera was completed and premiered in 1914. Designed by Benois, it was visually gorgeous, but after the furore surrounding The Rite, its reception was disappointingly tame.

In 1916 Diaghilev proposed a ballet version of Le Rossignol; Stravinsky countered with his own idea: a symphonic poem for orchestra combining the music of Acts II and III, which could also be used for a ballet. This new music was completed in 1917 but it wasn’t premiered (in the concert hall) until 1919 and the ballet didn’t see the light of day until 1920, with designs by Henri Matisse and choreography by Léonide Massine. Five years later Diaghilev wanted to revive The Song of the Nightingale with new choreography, but Stravinsky had entered his neoclassical phase – think Pulcinella – and he was even less interested. The temptation offered this time was the prospect of working with a talented and extraordinarily musical young choreographer – it was to be the first collaboration between Stravinsky and George Balanchine.

The Song of the Nightingale begins with festivities in the Chinese court – bustling and frenetic! The Nightingale enters, with a solo flute and solo violin taking over its vocal lines from the opera. Soon a Chinese March announces the SONG OF THE NIGHTINGALE

The Song of the Nightingale was conceived as music for the concert hall, a symphonic poem based on Stravinsky’s opera Le Rossignol. Stravinsky omitted all the old-fashioned music from Act I – which he’d begun in 1908 – instead drawing on what he’d written when he returned to the opera five years later. At the same time, The Song of the Nightingale was also composed in the knowledge that it would be turned into a ballet and the music follows a scenario devised in agreement with Diaghilev.

Based on Hans Christian Andersen’s story of the Emperor and the Nightingale, the three continuous scenes are set in the Chinese imperial palace. Three landmark moments are indicated in the score: the Chinese March, the ravishing Song of the Nightingale, which begins with the flute alone, and the Performance by the Mechanical Nightingale. Listen for the trumpet: it takes the role of the Fisherman, commenting on events.

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Emperor’s arrival. This uses the five-note scale that has become cliché for things Chinese: try noodling around on the black keys of a piano and you have the effect. In *Song of the Nightingale* (nearly 6 minutes in), the real bird sings for the Emperor, beginning with the flute alone. He is moved to tears by its beautiful sound.

The **Performance by the Mechanical Nightingale** is the next musical landmark (around the 10-minute mark). Here the oboe competes for attention, as the artificial bird compensates for a lack of invention with its handsome, gilded appearance. In the excitement, the Nightingale flies from the palace and the Fisherman (solo trumpet) sings for joy at its return to the wood.

The third scene in the ballet begins with the orchestral introduction from Act III of the opera: the Emperor is on his death bed and the Nightingale, although banished, returns to plead on his behalf with Death. There is a tiny funeral march, which ends in surprise when the Emperor greets his courtiers (harps and timpani). The music ends with the **Fisherman’s Song** as he welcomes his friend once more.

**YVONNE FRINDLE © 2013**

Stravinsky’s *Song of the Nightingale* calls for two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes (one doubling cor anglais), two clarinets (one doubling E flat clarinet) and two bassoons; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion; celesta, piano and two harps; and strings.

*The Song of the Nightingale* was first performed in 1919 by the Suisse Romande Orchestra in Geneva, with Ernest Ansermet conducting. The Sydney Symphony was the first ABC orchestra to perform *The Song of the Nightingale*, in a 1952 subscription concert conducted by Eugene Goossens. Our most recent performance of the work was in 1989, conducted by Stuart Challender.
Felix Mendelssohn
Violin Concerto in E minor, Op.64

Allegro molto appassionato –
Andante –
Allegro non troppo – Allegro molto vivace

Arabella Steinbacher VIOLIN

The late Hans Keller, one of the most stimulating and opinionated of writers on music, used to say that the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto was the greatest concerto ever written for the instrument. Many violinists share this view, and Jascha Heifetz said: ‘If it is conceivable that the music of Mendelssohn can die, then all music can die.’

This concerto is one of the best-loved of all Mendelssohn’s works. Its main rival for top ranking among violin concertos is probably Beethoven’s, and even in Mendelssohn’s day the comparison was already being made. The English pianist-composer William Sterndale Bennett wrote: ‘There seems to me to be something essentially and exquisitely feminine about it, just as there is something essentially and heroically masculine in the Beethoven Violin Concerto.’

Mendelssohn has a reputation in some quarters for facility, even for unthinking note-spinning. The Violin Concerto gives the impression of spontaneous invention, but only through the art which conceals art. The violinist Ferdinand David, the leader of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra under Mendelssohn, helped the composer with the technicalities of the solo part of his concerto, and gave the premiere in 1845. As early as 1838 Mendelssohn wrote to David: ‘I should also like to write a violin concerto for you next winter. One in E minor runs in my head, the beginning of which gives me no peace.’ Over the next six years Mendelssohn peppered David with questions about technical difficulties, and finished: ‘“Thank God this fellow is through with his Concerto,” you will say. Excuse my bothering you, but what can I do?’

Mendelssohn’s thoughtful approach to the challenge of writing this concerto produced a number of structural innovations in the first movement. The first was his solution to the problem of the traditional opening orchestral tutti (already tackled by Beethoven in his last two piano concertos). Mendelssohn abolishes it completely: the violin soars in with the impassioned and lyrical first subject after just a bar-and-a-half of orchestral accompaniment. Another happy find is the single open...
G-string note, which the soloist sustains as a bass to the beautifully contrasted second subject. The next formal innovation shows how the virtuosity of the writing for violin is subordinated to the overall musical purpose: the cadenza, fully written out, occurs in the middle of the movement, and concludes with the recapitulation – a magical moment, as the orchestra states the main theme while the violin continues with figuration from the cadenza.

The bassoon note sustained from the last chord of the first movement, linking it with the second movement, is usually explained as Mendelssohn’s attempt to persuade the audience not to applaud at this point. But it is such a subtle device that he can scarcely have expected it to succeed in that purpose. What it does do is make the music continuous, and emphasise the change of key to C major for the songful slow movement, with its more agitated middle section. Mendelssohn again shows his concern for overall unity by writing an introduction to the last movement, with a theme for violin and strings a little reminiscent of the first movement – the soloist leads the listener in a typically Romantic manner through the unfolding ‘story’ of the concerto.

The last movement has many affinities with Mendelssohn’s ‘fairy scherzo’ vein, first proclaimed in his teenage masterpieces, the Octet and the Midsummer Night’s Dream Overture. It is a movement of entrancing contrasts: between the opening call-to-attention, the substantial second subject, and the violin’s curving lyrical theme while the orchestra plays with scraps of the main theme. The whole concerto reveals how completely Mendelssohn, contrary to received opinion, could recapture the fresh inspiration of his youth in his full musical maturity.

DAVID GARRETT © 1998

Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets; timpani and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed the concerto in its entirety in a 1940 War Funds Concert, conducted by Georg Schnéevoigt with Yehudi Menuhin as soloist, and most recently in 2009 with Hugh Wolff conducting and violinist Isabelle Faust.
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Igor Stravinsky

*Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring)*

**PART 1**

*Adoration of the Earth*  
Introduction  
Danse des adolescentes (Dance of the Young Girls)  
Jeu du rapt (Ritual of Abduction)  
Rondes printanières (Spring Rounds)  
Jeux des cités rivales (Games of the Rival Tribes)  
Cortège du sage (Procession of the Sage)  
*Adoration of the Earth* (Dance of the Earth)

**PART 2**

*Le Sacrifice*  
Introduction  
Cercles mystérieux des adolescentes (Mystic Circles of Young Girls)  
Glorification de l’élue (Glorification of the Chosen Virgin)  
Evocation des ancêtres (Evocation of the Ancestors)  
Action rituelle des ancêtres (Ritual of the Ancestors)  
Danse sacrée – L’élue (Sacrificial dance – The Chosen Virgin)

The first performance of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring)* was one of the greatest scandals in the history of any of the arts, not just music. An evening in 1913 remains the defining date of ‘modern’ music. A century later, there still hasn't been anything to top it.

Stravinsky has often been compared with his near-contemporary Picasso – both men left their native country to become universal symbols of modernism in the arts, yet both were deeply marked by their native culture – Picasso by Spain’s, Stravinsky by Russia's. ‘Not art!, ‘Not music!’ was a common early reaction to both. In the work of both men style became a leading consideration in itself, and both startled their own admirers and dismayed their critics by repeatedly re-inventing themselves. Yet Stravinsky, like Picasso, is immediately recognisable through all his stylistic disguises. He began by crowning the achievements of Russian composers in vivid, colourful music for dance (*The Firebird, Petrushka*). *The Rite of Spring*, a musical earthquake, foretold his break with Russia, enforced by exile after the Revolution. In France in the 1920s and 30s Stravinsky ‘invented’ neoclassicism for music, with *Pulcinella*, and continued to be one step ahead of the avant-garde. His last startling surprise, after he moved to the USA in World War II, was to embrace twelve-tone serial music, in works such as *Threni*. Stravinsky was the most famous ‘serious’ composer of the 20th century, a position into which he leapt at one bound in 1913.

Keynotes

**THE RITE OF SPRING**

At its premiere in Paris in 1913, *The Rite of Spring* sparked a riot – and a mythology to go with it – bringing its young composer notoriety as well as success. The music begins with a hauntingly contorted bassoon solo (the seeds of spring pushing their way through the frosty earth?) but its real trademark is its elemental rhythms, often savage in effect. This spring awakening as conceived by Stravinsky, choreographer Nijinsky and the original designer Nicholas Roerich, is ancient, primitive and fierce. The ballet is in two main parts, each divided into brief, continuously played scenes of a few minutes each.
The power and originality of Stravinskly's music can still be felt, even now that its lessons have been absorbed...

The ballet, whose completely novel choreography was part of the offence it gave to traditionalists, is only occasionally re-staged. It is Stravinsky's music which has endured as an icon of modernism, and its power and originality can still be felt, even now that its lessons have been absorbed by so much music that followed. Stravinsky's assistant Robert Craft called *The Rite of Spring* the prize bull that inseminated the whole modern movement. Although Stravinsky later composed two orchestral works called symphonies, it is his music for this ballet which has achieved 'symphonic' status in the world's concert halls.

*The Rite of Spring* is composed for a very large orchestra, including five of each of the wind instruments, eight horns and five trumpets. The Russian impresario Sergei Diaghilev had very generous financial backing for the 1913 season of his Ballets Russes in Paris, and Stravinsky had an orchestral palette even richer than for his two previous full-scale ballets for Diaghilev, *The Firebird* and *Petrushka*. Even so, and in spite of the clear acoustic of the then-new
Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, the playing of the music was almost drowned out by the noise which broke out in the auditorium, as people shouted insults, howled and whistled. There were even punches thrown, as the supporters of artistic novelty confronted well-dressed patrons who were shocked by what they heard and saw. The dancers could hardly hear the music, and the choreographer of *The Rite*, Nijinsky, had to shout numbers to them from the wings. Conductor Pierre Monteux, with admirable sang-froid, piloted his musicians through to the end.

The curtain had risen on Nicholas Roerich's setting for the tableaux of pagan Russia which were his scenario (argument, sets and costumes) for the ballet. He and Stravinsky were later to dispute who first had the idea of a primitive, pagan sacrifice as a subject for a ballet, with Stravinsky's vision (in a dream) of a maiden sacrificed and dancing herself to death given priority. But *The Rite* was a collaborative project, and Nijinsky's choreography was, in its way, as radical as Stravinsky's music. The stylised gestures, the spare, restricted dancing, with heads in profile contrasted with bodies full-on, elbows hugged into the waist, the convulsions of the Chosen Virgin, the renouncing of conventional dance ensembles and storytelling in favour of primitive immediacy – these were Nijinsky's inventions, and many of the public thought he was pulling their leg – or that the dancers were imitating epileptic fits. Admirers accepted Nijinsky's choreography as Spring seen from inside: biological ballet, with surges, spasms and fissions.

Stravinsky's music had required Nijinsky to develop a new way of rehearsing the dancers by numbers, and his preparations seemed to one observer like arithmetic classes. Stravinsky claimed later that the music, which broke every mould of convention, had to be written that way, that it transcended him: 'I was the vessel through which *The Rite* passed.' Rhythm was one basis of *The Rite*'s innovation, not surprisingly since it developed within the bosom of an adventurous ballet company. Stravinsky was to say, 'There is music wherever there is rhythm, as there is life wherever there beats a pulse.' The rhythmic novelties in *The Rite of Spring* include its static ostinatos: compulsively repeated figures, which are nevertheless not regular, but additive in rhythm, so that the strong beats are irregularly spaced, and the time-signature for the musicians is constantly changing, often from bar to bar. Even the composer was baffled as to how to write out the final *Danse sacrale*. These patterns, thrillingly projected with
almost unprecedented orchestral impact, reach a state of hypnotic motion, which can only be broken by the start of the next dance.

This was music which made a quantum leap into a new sound-world. The discordant effect heard through the growing fracas in the theatre resulted from Stravinsky’s harmonic innovations. These are linked to his rhythmic inventions, since they also function by accumulation: of notes and chords, creating polyharmonies which textbook writers have been busy trying to codify ever since. The paradox is that this complexity was really simplicity – the reduction of harmonic language to essentials allowed rhythmic subtlety to claim a dominant place. As a modernist composer much influenced by Stravinsky, Pierre Boulez, explains, ‘Before worrying about what chord
we are hearing, we are sensitive to the pulse emitted by
this chord.’

It was clever of Diaghilev to capitalise on fashionable
Paris’ fascination with the Russian and the primitive.
Stravinsky later emphasised the newness and musical
necessity of _The Rite of Spring_, and played down its
Russianness. But this work, the fountainhead of
international modernism, with which Stravinsky left
Russia for good, was Russian in every way, and the leading
revisionist among students of Stravinsky’s works, Richard
Taruskin, has proved this against Stravinsky’s own
mythologising.

The bad reception _The Rite_ received in Russia, his home,
where he expected it to be received with joy, was, according
to Stravinsky himself, the greatest rebuff of his career. It
was this which encouraged him to deny its Russianness.
The opening bassoon solo, said Stravinsky, ‘is the only
folk melody in _The Rite_’, concealing the indebtedness of
most of its musical material to Russian folksongs, to
which Taruskin traces the limited range of the melodies,
the ostinato structure, and the modal formulas. Even the
instrumentation is based on Stravinsky and Roerich’s
ethnological research, particularly the ‘reed pipes’ of the
Introduction scored for wind instruments.

It was the Russian spring which Stravinsky celebrated –
that spring which bursts out so quickly with a terrifying
noise. The ballet’s libretto really boiled down to the
succession of episodes described by the titles in the score,
and listed above. The music took over, and created the
dance. As Boulez says, the composition doesn’t depend
on the argument of the ballet, which is why it transfers
so well to the concert hall: ‘This ritual of “Pagan Russia”
attains by itself a dimension quite beyond its formal point
of departure: It has become the ritual – and the myth – of
modern music.’

DAVID GARRETT © 1999/2013

_The Rite of Spring_ calls for a large orchestra of five flutes (including
piccolos and alto flute), five oboes (including cor anglais), five clarinets
(including E flat clarinet and bass clarinets) and five bassoons (including
contrabassoons); eight horns (one doubling Wagner tuba); five trumpets
(one doubling bass trumpet); three trombones and two tubas; a large
percussion section and strings.

The Sydney Symphony was the first ABC orchestra to perform _The Rite
of Spring_, in 1946 with Eugene Goossens conducting. Our most recent
performance of this music was in 2010, conducted by Kristjan Järvi.

‘The most essential characteristic of _Le Sacre du Printemps_ is that it
is the most dissonant and the most discordant composition yet written.
Never was the system and the cult of the wrong note practised with
so much industry, zeal and fury.’

LE TEMPS, PARIS, 1913
FROM NICOLAS SLONIMSKY’S
LEXICON OF MUSICAL
INVECTIVE (1952)
MORE MUSIC

STRAVINSKY’S NIGHTINGALE

Charles Dutoit’s recording of The Song of the Nightingale with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra was released with Stravinsky’s ballet Petrushka and the Four Etudes for orchestra. Out of print, but available as an ArkivCD from arkivmusic.com or as a download from iTunes or deccaclassics.com

DECCA 417 6192

Even though The Song of the Nightingale is an independent concert work, it’s worth getting to know the opera on which it was based, if only to hear the magical beginning of Act I, which was dropped entirely from the symphonic poem. Look for Christian Chaudet’s gorgeous film of the opera, melding live action and animation. It’s based on the 1999 EMI recording (in the original Russian) with James Conlon conducting the Paris National Opera Orchestra and Chorus and Natalie Dessay singing the Nightingale. It can be found on YouTube (visit bit.ly/PinboardSpellbound for a link) but the DVD is worth the investment.

VIRGIN CLASSICS 4424

MENDELSSOHN VIOLIN CONCERTO

Itzhak Perlman, with the Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Bernard Haitink, delivers a sparkling performance of Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto. It’s paired with Bruch’s undeniably appealing Violin Concerto No.1.

EMI CLASSICS 47074

Daniel Hope and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe have released an acclaimed recording of Mendelssohn’s Octet and the Violin Concerto, both billed as premiere recordings – of the original 1844 version of the concerto and of the Mendelssohn-Ausgabe’s revised edition of the Octet.

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 477 6834

THE RITE OF SPRING

For the Rite of Spring tragi, Decca has released a 100th Anniversary Collector’s Edition featuring 38 recordings of the ballet, made between 1946 and 2010 for the Decca, Deutsche Grammophon and Philips labels. They range from historically significant interpretations from conductors who were there at the beginning, Pierre Monteux and Ernest Ansermet, to the new blood of Gustavo Dudamel and the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela. Charles Dutoit conducts the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. At the end of this 20-CD extravaganza are three recordings of the piano duet version of 1913, offering a taste of what Nijinsky and the first dancers would have heard in the rehearsal room.

DECCA 478 3729

‘But what about Stravinsky?’ you ask. His recording of The Rite of Spring was made for CBS with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra. You can find it coupled with another Ballets Russes creation, Petrushka.

CBS MASTERWORKS 42433

ARABELLA STEINBACHER

Over the past decade, Arabella Steinbacher has been busy recording some of the most gorgeous, and interesting, violin concertos in the repertoire. The names include Khachaturian and Milhaud, Shostakovich, a pairing of Beethoven and Berg, Dvořák, Szymanowski, Bartók, Prokofiev, Bruch, and two concertos Sydneysiders will remember: Brahms and Korngold. Hot off the press is her recording of Bruch’s Violin Concerto No.1, the Korngold and Chausson’s Poème, with the Gulbenkian Orchestra and Lawrence Foster.

PENTATONE 518 6503

www.arabella-steinbacher.com/discography.html

Broadcast Diary

June–July

abc.net.au/classic

Saturday 22 June, 8pm

DAME EDNA WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

Benjamin Northey conductor

Dame Edna Everage

Dukas, Saint-Saëns, Falla, Prokofiev, Haslam

Thursday 27 June, 1.05pm

BEETHOVEN’S PASTORAL

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

Kirsty Hilton violin

Catherine Hewgill cello

Clemens Leske piano

Grosse Fuge, Triple Concerto, Pastoral Symphony

Tuesday 2 July, 1.05pm

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Thomas Adès conductor

Pieter Wispelwey cello

Beethoven, Lutosławski, Adès, Sibelius

Fine Music 102.5

SYDNEY SYMPHONY 2013

Tuesday 9 July, 6pm

Musicians, staff and guest artists discuss what’s in store in our forthcoming concerts.

Webcasts

BIGPOND

Selected Sydney Symphony concerts are webcast live on BigPond and Telstra T-box and made available for later viewing On Demand. Our next webcast:

DAME EDNA WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

From Saturday 22 June 8pm and on demand for a limited period following.

Visit: bigpondmusic.com/sydneysymphony

Live webcasts can also be viewed on our free mobile app, now optimised for the iPad.
Sydney Symphony Live

The Sydney Symphony Live label was founded in 2006 and we’ve since released more than a dozen recordings featuring the orchestra in live concert performances with our titled conductors and leading guest artists, including the Mahler Odyssey cycle, begun in 2010. To purchase, visit sydneysymphony.com/shop

Glazunov & Shostakovich
Alexander Lazarev conducts a thrilling performance of Shostakovich 9 and Glazunov’s Seasons. SSO 2

Strauss & Schubert
Gianluigi Gelmetti conducts Schubert’s Unfinished and R Strauss’s Four Last Songs with Ricarda Merbeth. SSO 200803

Sir Charles Mackerras
A 2CD set featuring Sir Charles’s final performances with the orchestra, in October 2007. SSO 200705

Brett Dean
Brett Dean performs his own viola concerto, conducted by Simone Young, in this all-Dean release. SSO 200702

Ravel
Gelmetti conducts music by one of his favourite composers: Maurice Ravel. Includes Bolero. SSO 200801

Rare Rachmaninoff
Rachmaninoff chamber music with Dene Olding, the Goldner Quartet, soprano Joan Rodgers and Vladimir Ashkenazy at the piano. SSO 200901

Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliet
Vladimir Ashkenazy conducts the complete Romeo and Juliet ballet music of Prokofiev – a fiery and impassioned performance. SSO 201205

Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto
In May this recording with James Ehnes and Ashkenazy was awarded a Juno (the Canadian Grammy). Lyrical miniatures fill out the disc. SSO 201205

MAHLER ODYSSEY

During the 2010 and 2011 concert seasons, the Sydney Symphony and Vladimir Ashkenazy set out to perform all the Mahler symphonies, together with some of the song cycles. These concerts were recorded for CD and the set is now complete, together with a special disc of historical SSO Mahler performances. Available individually or as a handsome boxed set.

Mahler 1 & Songs of a Wayfarer SSO 201001
Mahler 2 SSO 201203
Mahler 3 SSO 201101
Mahler 4 SSO 201102
Mahler 5 SSO 201003
Mahler 6 SSO 201103
Mahler 7 SSO 201104
Mahler 8 (Symphony of a Thousand) SSO 201002
Mahler 9 SSO 201201
Mahler 10 (Barshai completion) SSO 201202
Song of the Earth SSO 201004

From the archives:
Rückert-Lieder, Kindertotenlieder, Das Lied von der Erde SSO 201204

LOOK OUT FOR...

Forthcoming releases featuring music by Brett Dean and Garrick Ohlsson playing Tchaikovsky.

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Charles Dutoit  CONDUCTOR

Charles Dutoit is one of today’s most sought-after conductors, having performed with all the major orchestras of the five continents. He has been a visitor to Sydney since 1977, and his most recent appearance with the Sydney Symphony was in 2008, when he conducted Mozart, Strauss and Berlioz.

He is Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and recently celebrated his 30-year artistic collaboration with the Philadelphia Orchestra, receiving the title of Conductor Laureate. He collaborates each season with the orchestras of Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles.

For 25 years, he was Artistic Director of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, a dynamic musical team recognised the world over, in part for its extensive array of acclaimed recordings. Other titled posts have included Music Director of the Orchestre National de France (1991–2001) and Principal Conductor then Music Director of the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo (1996–2003).

Supporting the development of a younger generation of musicians, Charles Dutoit has been Music Director of the Sapporo Pacific Music Festival and Miyazaki International Music Festival in Japan as well as the Canton International Summer Music Academy in Guangzhou. In 2009 he became Music Director of the Verbier Festival Orchestra.

When still in his early 20s, he was invited by Herbert von Karajan to conduct the Vienna State Opera. He has since conducted at Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera, Deutsche Oper in Berlin, Rome Opera and Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires.

His honours and accolades include Grand Officier de l’Ordre national du Québec, Commandeur de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France), Honorary Officer of the Order of Canada, and honorary doctorates from the universities of McGill, Montreal and Laval and the Curtis School of Music. In 2007 he received the Gold Medal of the city of Lausanne, his birthplace.

Charles Dutoit’s musical training included violin, viola, piano, percussion, history of music and composition at the conservatoires and music academies of Geneva, Siena, Venice and Boston.

A globetrotter motivated by his passion for history and archaeology, political science, art and architecture, he has travelled in all 196 nations of the world.
**Arabella Steinbacher**  
**VIOLIN**

Arabella Steinbacher’s career was launched in 2004 with an extraordinary debut in Paris, performing the Beethoven Violin Concerto at short notice. Since then she has established herself as one of today’s leading violinists, performing with the world’s major orchestras and most prominent conductors. In addition to all of the major concertos of the Classical and Romantic periods, her diverse repertoire includes the concertos of Barber, Bartók, Berg, Glazunov, Khachaturian, Milhaud, Prokofiev, Schnittke, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Szymanowski, Hindemith and Hartmann, and Gubaidulina’s *Offertorium*.

Arabella Steinbacher was born in Munich in 1981 to a German father and a Japanese mother (both musicians), and began studying violin at the age of three. At nine she became the youngest violin student of Ana Chumachenko. She received further guidance from Ivry Gitlis. In 2001 she won the sponsorship prize of the Free State of Bavaria and was awarded a scholarship by the Anne-Sophie Mutter Foundation.

Since her most recent visit to Sydney, she has recorded Dvořák’s Violin Concerto in A minor and Romanze in F minor and Szymanowski’s Violin Concerto No.1, as well as the violin concertos of Bartók and Prokofiev. Her growing discography has been honoured with two ECHO-Klassik Awards, Les Chocs du Mois from *Le Monde de la Musique* magazine, two German Record Critics Awards and the *Gramophone* Editor’s Choice Award.

Highlights of the 2012–13 season have included performances with the San Francisco Symphony, Boston Symphony Orchestra, São Paulo State Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Munich Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France, and the Philharmonia Orchestra as well as debut appearances with the National Symphony Orchestra, Washington DC and the New York Philharmonic. In recent seasons she has also made her Cleveland Orchestra and Israel Philharmonic debuts and her Carnegie Hall debut (with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra). And in 2009 she made her BBC Proms debut, performing with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra and Jonathan Nott.

She first performed with the Sydney Symphony in 2005 (Brahms Violin Concerto), returning in 2008 to play Korngold.

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*Arabella Steinbacher plays the ‘Booth’ Stradivarius (1716), generously provided by the Nippon Music Foundation*
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The men of the Sydney Symphony are proudly
outfitted by Van Heusen.
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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I think of the piccolo as the icing on the cake in the orchestra.

from decades of experience of playing with an orchestra that plays in tune. I know I can’t make them tune to me.’ Rose explains that on the piccolo, some notes are more ‘flexible’ than others. For instance, at the end of the Elegia movement in Bartók’s Concerto for Orchestra, the piccolo, harp and violins (playing harmonics) play a unison D flat. ‘I remember when I went to Chicago on a Friends [of the SSO] scholarship, I was working through all the orchestral excerpts with Walfrid Kujala, who was the Principal Piccolo of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the time. When we got to that very note in the Bartók, he turned to me and asked quite sincerely, “Do you have any luck with that note?”’ It seems piccolo players the world over are facing the same musical challenges. Though perhaps not all of them are doing it in between marathons…

RUNNING ROSE
Principal Piccolo Rosamund Plummer knows no fear

‘It’s all about the food,’ jokes Rosamund Plummer, Principal Piccolo. ‘I do it so I can eat more.’ This is the first explanation she gives for her relatively newfound love of long-distance running. Actually, running was something that she’d tried on and off for decades, but it never stuck. ‘I used to think I wasn’t built for it, couldn’t do it. That I’d only end up hurting my knees. When I turned 50, I thought I’m either going to go down the drain, or choose not to. I did a course in learning to run at a community college and learnt so much. In nearly four years, I’ve never been injured, and I’ve run two marathons!’

‘The experience of getting older,’ reflects Rose, ‘is kind of the opposite of what most people think. You actually get tougher. You get over all your earlier hang-ups.’

So how does Rose’s newly acquired habit affect her performance in the orchestra? ‘I’ve found that it makes me fearless. If I can run a marathon, I know I can do anything. Tchaikovsky’s Fourth five times in a row? Sure. Shostakovich Ten in every concert in China? Doesn’t faze me. As a piccolo player, it’s quite handy to be fearless.’

‘I think of the piccolo as the icing on the cake in the orchestra. I love it. I’ve learnt
Sponsorship Highlight

Deconstructing the Steinway

Ever wondered about the mechanism behind the sound of a glorious grand piano? At a recent event at Theme & Variations Piano Services showroom, an audience of patrons, guests and Sydney Symphony friends witnessed the ‘deconstruction’ of a Steinway grand before their very eyes!

Theme & Variations director Ara Vartoukian has years of experience here and in Europe – tuning, voicing and regulating these instruments and in the course of the evening he shared his vast knowledge, shining a light on the evolution of the iconic sound of the Steinway, explaining the intricacies of the mechanism and how technology has changed the instrument.

Theme & Variations is the presenting partner of our International Pianists in Recital series. Jonathan Biss performs Beethoven sonatas on 29 July at City Recital Hall Angel Place.

Ask a Musician

What’s the difference between a concertmaster, an associate concertmaster and an assistant concertmaster?

Traditionally, the concertmaster’s role was to take over from the conductor if he fell ill, though that’s less likely these days because we’re lucky enough to have assistant conductors who train to do that. The concertmaster is expected to liaise with the conductor, determine the bowings, demonstrate phrasing and monitor ensemble in the first violins, and in the orchestra more broadly. In a tricky acoustic environment, lots of people will keep an eye on the leader’s bow, to know exactly when to play.

The associate and assistant concertmasters are also required to lead the orchestra from time to time, if the concertmaster falls ill or is away. More often, though, we’re there to support the concertmaster. I often have to pass information back to the rest of the section, or resolve any seating issues. We also play the front-desk solos when required.

My job requires a different kind of leading to sitting in the concertmaster’s seat, where you’re the one who’s initiating any translation of the conductor’s beat. I see my role as transmitting a lot of what else is going on in the orchestra, particularly from the second violins because I sit so close to them. Sometimes too, people in our section can’t actually see the concertmaster, and so they watch me instead. It’s vital that I don’t move in a direction contrary to what the concertmaster is showing.

Kirsten Williams, Associate Concertmaster

In May we visited Canberra and Albury for concerts and workshops. During the tour the Fellowship Quartet performed in the Great Hall of Parliament House.

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Outreach Focus

THANK YOU CONCERT

Recently our musicians took their (hard) hats off to the men and women working on improvements to the Sydney Opera House.

It’s not every day that SSO musicians are required to don hard hats and high visibility vests to go to work. In May, however, it was entirely appropriate concert clobber as our musicians performed for construction workers at the Sydney Opera House. This special concert was our way of saying thank you to the crews for all their work in improving the orchestra’s home behind the scenes.

This wasn’t the first time such a concert had been arranged. ‘The Sydney Symphony gave the very first performance in the Concert Hall in December 1972,’ said Managing Director Rory Jeffes. ‘This was almost one year before the official opening of the Opera House, for an audience of construction workers and their families, in a concert designed to test the acoustics of the Concert Hall.’

This time it was the acoustics of the excavated site deep beneath the Opera House forecourt that was given a work out. Five of our brass musicians performed some of the music that was played at that 1972 concert: an Allegro from Handel’s Water Music together with a brass fanfare by French composer Paul Dukas.

‘I’m delighted this tradition continues today. Our musicians asked for an opportunity to thank the John Holland employees who are working to improve the conditions of our home,’ continued Rory.

Due to be completed late next year, the new underground loading dock and tunnel will give all Opera House users vastly improved access to the Concert Hall and allow us to move large instruments and other equipment in and out of the venue more efficiently. Wholly funded by the NSW Government, the work is being completed by John Holland, a subsidiary of Leighton Holdings.

Hamish Tywhitt, Chief Executive Officer of Leighton Holdings, said: ‘Leighton Holdings is extremely proud of its ten-year partnership with the Sydney Symphony. It’s based on supporting young and emerging talent, a theme very much in line with our philosophy of fostering the development of our employees.’

The Score

How I learn a piece

Jonathan Biss: The most important thing, which does not vary, is that I learn in phases. I first start looking seriously at a new piece more than a year in advance of the performance and with the knowledge that I’ll go away from it at least twice before then. I find the time I spend away from a piece of music is almost more important than the practice schedule and initial practising – there’s a strange osmosis that happens. I’ll spend ten months really getting something into my fingers – dealing with the essential problems and looking for solutions to things that are tricky for my fingers. Then I’ll come back to it three months later not having thought about it so much and find the problems have magically resolved themselves. It usually then it reveals a whole new set of problems! I try to go through that process at least twice. I find my whole relationship with a piece is so much deeper than it would be otherwise. Let’s say I spend three months working on a piece before going on stage – I’m much happier knowing that those three months of work took place over 12 months.

Jonathan Biss plays Beethoven

International Pianists in Recital
29 July | 7pm

Jonathan Biss plays Mozart

Thursday Afternoon Symphony
25 July | 1.30pm

Emirates Metro Series
26 July | 8pm

Great Classics
27 July | 2pm
VALE HAZEL HAWKE
We were saddened to learn recently of the death of Hazel Hawke. Her tremendous legacy includes her role as a patron of the arts, and specifically of the ABC Young Performers Awards. Many of us in the orchestra remember the time she performed with us as a piano soloist! It was in a pair of Meet the Music concerts in 1990, conducted by John Hopkins, in which Hazel Hawke was joined by two former YPA winners, Rebecca Chambers and Duncan Gifford, in Mozart’s Concerto in F for three pianos, K242.

EMERGING ARTISTS 2014: APPLICATIONS OPEN
Sydney Sinfonia and Fellowship applications are closing on Friday 19 July. More information, including online applications, is available through our website at bit.ly/EmergingArtists Application2014

ASKHENAZY’S FAVOURITE THINGS
Recently Vladimir Ashkenazy joined us for a fortnight of concerts, including a program we dubbed ‘Ashkenazy’s Favourites’. While he was in town he shared a few of his favourite things in a series of videos. Enjoy the full playlist for Ashkenazy’s favourite joke, favourite clothing, favourite food and a top restaurant recommendation should you ever find yourself in Iceland! bit.ly/AshkenazyFavesPlaylist

YOUR SAY
A concertgoer response we simply had to share...
Stuck in a rainstorm traffic snarl on the M4, I sometimes wonder in this age of high-fidelity recordings why we concert-goers haul ourselves up to 160 kilometres round trip to attend a live concert. The performance of Carmina Burana on 22 March provided the answer, especially when directed with the rhythmic subtlety and excitement of Long Yu. Sitting 10 metres away from massed choirs, gongs, drums and brass during ‘O Fortuna’ is an experience you cannot re-create with a CD or a DVD.

Now I must admit that Carmina Burana is a guilty pleasure, because it is about as profound as an icec Vo-Vo, and when listening to it, I feel like a scholar skipping a visit to the British Museum to go pole dancing. On the other hand, which other orchestral piece features as much sex, booze and gambling, along with cameo appearances by the Pope and the Queen? No wonder the percussionists had such broad smiles on their faces at the end. They probably felt the earth move, too.

David Potter