MOZART, SCHUMANN & BEETHOVEN

TEA & SYMPHONY
Friday 14 November 2014

ORANGE CIVIC THEATRE
Saturday 15 November 2014
The Sydney Symphony Orchestra Fellowship is Australia’s leading pre-professional orchestral training program. Over the course of a year, up to 17 talented young musicians have the opportunity to perform alongside and be mentored by musicians of the SSO, honing their skills in the real-world environment of professional rehearsals and concerts. They also present chamber music performances in Sydney and on tour, received guidance from international guest artists in masterclasses, and participate in professional development workshops.
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TEA & SYMPHONY
FRIDAY 14 NOVEMBER, 11AM
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

ON TOUR
SATURDAY 15 NOVEMBER, 7PM
ORANGE CIVIC THEATRE

MOZART, SCHUMANN AND BEETHOVEN

Roger Benedict conductor
Jean-Efflam Bavouzet piano
Sydney Symphony Orchestra
with SSO Fellows and Fellowship alumni

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)
La clemenza di Tito: Overture

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810–1856)
Piano Concerto in A minor, Op.54
Allegro affettuoso
Intermezzo (Andantino grazioso) – Allegro vivace

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1727)
Symphony No.1 in C, Op.21
Adagio molto – Allegro con brio
Andante cantabile con moto
Menuetto (Allegro molto e vivace)
Adagio – Allegro molto e vivace

Estimated durations:
5 minutes, 31 minutes, 26 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 12.15 pm (Fri), 8.15pm (Sat)

COVER IMAGE: Interior of the Estates Theatre in Prague. La clemenza di Tito received its public premiere here in 1791 and it is the only surviving theatre in which Mozart performed. (Photo by Jorge Royan)

Saturday’s performance is presented by the Orange Civic Theatre.

2014 CONCERT SEASON
ABOUT THE MUSIC

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Overture to the opera La clemenza di Tito

Do you have to know an opera to appreciate its overture? For Romantic opera, it helps – Beethoven’s three Leonora overtures, Weber’s Freischütz, Wagner’s Flying Dutchman – all these are unquestionably successful as stand-alone concert pieces, yet they arouse curiosity about the plot to which their music refers. In the 18th century matters were different. The overture was functional: a piece played by the orchestra before the opera began, to show off the skill of the composer and the players, but hardly to prepare the audience for the drama to follow. In conventional 18th-century opera the audience thought it knew what it was in for. No wonder the opera overture, called ‘sinfonia’ by the Italians, and often in more than one movement, lies at the origins of the symphony.

But what of Mozart? Do not his overtures refer to the action: all bustling comedy for Figaro, Stone Guest music for Don Giovanni, Masonic chords for The Magic Flute? To some extent at least, Mozart followed Gluck in the reform of theatrical conventions, which included making the overture a more integral part of the experience.

But La clemenza di Tito, Mozart’s last opera, composed hurriedly on commission for an imperial ceremonial occasion in Prague, was a throwback, or so it was almost universally thought until recently. Yet for many years after Mozart’s death it was one of his most admired operas. Mozart said that the conventional libretto, by the celebrated poet Metastasio, had been revised for him and turned into a ‘real’ opera.

Expressing the new-found admiration for Roman antiquity that was an aspect of neo-classicism, Tito was an opera about relationships and loyalty, and about self-denial. In it no-one gets what they want. Mozart genuinely wants us, it seems, to admire not just Titus’ power, but also his forgiving generosity. For such a timely theme – rulers were under pressure everywhere after 1789 – ‘old-fashioned’ opera seria could be given a new lease of life, and a new kind of music developed.

And so the overture suggests. It has many affinities with the Jupiter Symphony and the overture to The Magic Flute: grand ceremony and imitative writing. The opening, in fact, is a sustained exploration of the chord of C major, only at the last moment moving to G for the contrasting second theme, which soon refers to the opening material. A gradual quietening of

Keynotes

MOZART
Born Salzburg, 1756
Died Vienna, 1791

To his family and admirers, the young Mozart was the ‘miracle that was born in Salzburg’. But, though he died at 35, he lived long enough to shuck off the prodigy’s reputation and produce an unrivalled body of mature work, including a trio of operas that more closely approached perfection than anything anybody had previously done: The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni and The Magic Flute. La clemenza di Tito was his final opera, composed for performance in Prague.
the music leads to an extraordinarily adventurous swinging of the opening flourish through a variety of harmonies. After the most daring of these excursions, instead of the first flourish, the second theme returns, now in C major, the home key. This departure from the usual pattern of so-called sonata form is more characteristic of Haydn than of Mozart, who appears to be in the mood for an experiment. An entirely successful one, which enables him to conclude with the same sequences which made the opening so effective.

DAVID GARRETT © 1991

The overture to La clemenza di Tito calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoon, horns and trumpets; timpani and strings. The SSO first performed this overture in 1946 with conductor Clive Douglas, and most recently in 2004, directed by Dene Olding.

Including the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in your estate plans is a wonderful way to ensure a legacy of artistic excellence for your orchestra. In appreciation of your generosity and vision, you will become a member of the Stuart Challender Legacy Society, bringing you closer to your orchestra.

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Robert Schumann
Piano Concerto in A minor, Op.54

Allegro affettuoso
Intermezzo (Andantino grazioso) –
Allegro vivace

Jean-Efflam Bavouzet piano

Following their wedding in September 1840, composer Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck, a prominent piano virtuoso, set up house in Leipzig. The couple soon had children, and finding money to support a growing family was a constant worry. Clara had no intention of abandoning her successful musical life. She took pride in earning money from her performances; she also helped popularise Robert’s piano works by including them in her concert programs. Robert revered his wife’s extraordinary musicianship, but his pride struggled with the greater fame accorded Clara, especially when they travelled on concert tours together. Though a respected music journalist and an acclaimed composer of piano works, songs and chamber music, he had yet to write the symphonies and large-scale works that would later enhance his artistic reputation.

A piano concerto by Robert that Clara could perform would thus serve several purposes. Before marrying, Robert had experimented with various ideas for piano concertos, none of which evolved beyond sketches. But during the newlyweds’ first year, he completed a Phantasie for Piano and Orchestra, conceived and orchestrated during 16 days in May 1841. A private performance led to the first of several revisions, but Robert could not find a publisher for his single-movement work.

He set it aside for four years, during which time he wrote more chamber music (including his popular Piano Quintet and Piano Quartet) as well as the Spring Symphony, and moved his family to Dresden. From there he undertook a tour to Russia with Clara that left him exhausted and ill, triggering a severe nervous breakdown. He sought therapy by studying the works of Bach and writing fugues. Taking a break from counterpoint exercises, he added two movements – a final rondo and a connecting Intermezzo – to the reworked Phantasie, and thus created his Concerto for Piano and Orchestra.

Ferdinand Hiller, a conductor to whom Robert dedicated the concerto (hoping to heal a rift in their friendship), led the premiere in his Dresden subscription concert of 4 December 1845 with Clara as soloist. But the true dedicatee is Clara, for whom Robert characterised his devotion in the opening movement’s tempo indication of Allegro affettuoso, the

Keynotes

SCHUMANN
Born Zwickau, Germany, 1810
Died Endenich Asylum, Bonn, 1856

From 1830, Robert Schumann lived in the household of his piano teacher Friedrich Wieck. The daughter of the house was Clara Wieck, a young pianist of prodigious talent. Her concert career had taken her to Vienna and Paris, and won the admiration of Paganini, Chopin and Mendelssohn. Schumann asked for her hand in marriage on her 18th birthday. Clara’s father attempted to sabotage the union, among his objections that the marriage might bring her carefully nurtured performing career to an end. The lovers won through and married in September 1840.

PIANO CONCERTO

Schumann had long envisaged a ‘newer and more brilliant’ type of piano concerto, in which ‘the soloist, presiding at the keyboard, may unfold the treasures of the instrument and its art, while the orchestra, no longer merely a spectator, interweaves its many facets’. In 1841, his first attempt at realising this ambition was a single-movement Fantasy (Phantasie) for piano and orchestra, which he described as ‘something between a symphony, a concerto, and a grand sonata’. With the addition of two more movements in 1845, this became his one and only complete piano concerto. Clara was soloist in the first public performance on 1 January 1846.
Phantasie’s original title. Clara took pleasure in the results; she had long wanted a more brilliant vehicle for display of her virtuosity than the Phantasie. Felix Mendelssohn, the Schumanns’ great friend, who expressed highest regard for Clara’s playing and supported (with occasional private misgivings) Schumann’s work as a composer, organised and conducted the Leipzig premiere on New Year’s Day 1846. Thereafter, the concerto was performed in important cities, often with Robert conducting; it remained a central work in Clara’s repertoire, and is a lasting testament to the couple’s remarkable personal and artistic partnership, cut short by Robert’s death at age 46 in the Endenich asylum, where he recalled, in a letter to Clara, the concerto ‘that you played so splendidly’.

With an abrupt, chromatic cascade of chords, the soloist’s opening entrance commands immediate attention, heralding the oboe’s statement of the primary theme, echoed by the piano. The theme’s three-note descending motif dominates deliberations between the orchestra and soloist. The opening key of A minor yields, via the second theme, to triumphant C major, then to an expressive reverie in A flat major, showcasing the piano accompanied by radiant strings and plaintive woodwind. A return to earlier debates interrupts this dream, restores the opening theme and launches the soloist into an extended cadenza, capped by a quick coda that ends emphatically.

The second-movement Intermezzo (Andantino grazioso), hosts a more congenial but equally passionate dialogue. Short musical ideas are exchanged politely between soloist and orchestra, but as they warm to their topic, an eloquent contrasting theme sings out richly from the cellos, ornamented expansively by the piano. As the conversation fades, clarinets and bassoons recall the opening movement’s three-note motif, first in A minor, then in A major. Without pause, the piano seizes the major motif and launches into a robust, triple-metre rondo marked Allegro vivace, driven by the soloist’s extensive bravura passagework. The third-movement theme (itself a transformation of the primary first-movement theme, subtly strengthening the concerto’s structural unity) surfaces buoyantly through harmonic sequences that build to an exhilarating conclusion.

SAMUEL C DIXON © 2003

The concerto calls for an orchestra of two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, and two bassoons; two horns, and two trumpets; timpani; and strings.

The Australian premiere of the first movement only was given in Sydney in 1885 by Alice Charbonnet-Kellermann and an orchestra conducted by Leon Caron. The SSO first performed the concerto on 3 August 1940 with Eunice Gardiner as soloist and Thomas Beecham as conductor, and most recently in 2011 with soloist Ingrid Fliter and Pinchas Steinberg conducting.
Ludwig van Beethoven

Symphony No. 1 in C, Op. 21

Adagio molto – Allegro con brio
Andante cantabile con moto
Menuetto (Allegro molto e vivace)
Adagio – Allegro molto e vivace

In 1998 Mark Taylor was set to smash Don Bradman’s record for the most number of runs scored by an Australian in a Test match innings when he declared at 334 not out. People were astonished. The Pakistan wicket was a batter’s paradise, but Taylor didn’t want to destroy the magic number. Composers seem to have felt the same way about going beyond nine symphonies. Ever since Beethoven established the symphony as the prime form for musical argument, his nine symphonies seem to have set the limit for the number anyone should write.

The First Symphony, however, strikes many people as uncharacteristic. It fulfils the prophecy of his teacher Christian Gottlob Neefe, who wrote when Beethoven was 11 years old: ‘If he goes on as he has begun, he will become a second Mozart.’ But it gives only a suggestion of the path that would take him beyond classical rhetoric. In fact, the unsettled, discordant opening to this symphony is a red herring, rather like the Mark Taylor story. It leads us to ask ‘where is this going?’ until Beethoven resolves it a few bars later by clearly announcing the home key of C major. In 25 years’ time, such tonal wanderings would give us the vast clouds of harmonic uncertainty that open his Ninth Symphony.

Beethoven was already at the top of the Viennese heap when Symphony No.1 was first performed in 1800. In those days an artist who made it in Vienna could make it anywhere, and after he arrived in the Austrian capital from Bonn in 1792 Beethoven quickly established his credentials. He took lessons from Joseph Haydn for a year, and with introductions from Count Waldstein made the acquaintance of the aristocrats whose patronage would help him to become not a second Mozart but the first Beethoven. Among these were the dedicatee of this symphony, Baron Gottfried van Swieten, a former diplomat for the Austrian Empire who was then Prefect of the Imperial Library.

At its premiere, a Benefit Concert (or Akademie) that Beethoven himself staged, the First Symphony garnered praise. A critic wrote in the Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung: ‘...this was the most interesting Academy held for a long

Keynotes

BEETHOVEN

Born Bonn, 1770
Died Vienna, 1827

Beethoven began his symphonic career at the age of 30. He had inherited the musical language of the 18th century and the symphonic style of Mozart and Haydn, and this first effort in the genre followed in their tradition: ‘a new Grand Symphony with complete orchestra’. But it was adventurous, too, and audiences noticed. Nonetheless, they willingly followed as with each new symphony Beethoven took the genre to new places, breaking classical boundaries with works that were longer, more dramatic and more adventurous than anything heard before.

FIRST SYMPHONY

The First Symphony is classical on the surface but everywhere it ‘breaks with the past’: beginning with what would have been a shocking opening, and inching the third movement from its traditional dance-like minuet character to something more like a wild Beethovenian scherzo. Beethoven’s emerging boldness is heard in the broad lines and his imaginative treatment of the most fundamental musical ideas.

The First Symphony was premiered on 2 April 1800. It was well-received, and the critics approved of its novelty and wealth of ideas. One, however, thought that the prominence Beethoven had given to the wind instruments made the symphony sound more like band music than a ‘proper orchestral work’.
While…the symphony] revealed much art, novelty and a wealth of ideas.

The critic Robert Simpson has drawn parallels between the conception in art of seeing space not only as empty (or negative) but also positive and how Beethoven made ‘a use of almost empty spaces in harmonic architecture’. In the composer’s hands the symphony would contain more than balanced melodies and an orderly harmonic movement from and towards the home key. The coda to the first movement in this symphony, for example, is excessively long compared to those of Mozart and Haydn, as though the composer wanted to take it beyond its function as a place of arrival and explore it as a place to dwell. The cult of the individual had begun to inform the arts; Napoleon had been lionised as a man who would change the course of history; and Beethoven wanted to make his own mark on music.

‘With Beethoven,’ wrote Dylan Evans in *The Guardian* in 2005, ‘we leave behind the lofty aspirations of the Enlightenment and begin the descent into the narcissistic inwardness of Romanticism. Mozart gives you music that asks to be appreciated for its own sake, and you don’t need to know anything about the composer’s life to enjoy it. Beethoven’s music, on the other hand, is all about himself – it is simply a vehicle for a self-indulgent display of bizarre mood swings and personal difficulties.’

This symphony is not renowned for its mood swings – its feet are firmly in the Enlightenment; but there are idiosyncrasies. The second movement begins with melodies in keeping with the classical era, but Beethoven toys with fragments of the music, as if breaking it down into its constituent elements and emptying the space. In the third movement he takes the graceful dance form of a minuet and quickens the pulse, removing it from its original context. It may not be called as such but Beethoven has just invented the symphonic scherzo. His expansionary mindset can be heard too in the movement’s asymmetrical structure: the opening eight-bar phrase (repeated) is answered not by eight bars but 71.

At the beginning of the fourth movement Beethoven is said to be paying homage to Haydn, who was famous for musical pranks; here Beethoven plays one of his own. After a giant G major chord, the violins slowly tiptoe towards the opening theme. As he did with the slow start to the opening movement, Beethoven delays the inevitable. In fact, some conductors in the early 1800s would omit the opening bars.
and begin straight at the first violin melody. Musicologist
Antony Hopkins noted that ‘Beethoven may well have been
29 or so when he wrote it, but this music is filled with the
spontaneous happiness of children at play. Hindsight may
easily lead us to regard it as less than representative of the
Master; but if we share the joy he obviously felt in writing it the
reward is rich indeed.’

Beethoven’s First Symphony is not regarded with the same
awe as his Third, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Ninth, perhaps
because it is more classical than romantic, but it was popular
in his day. In June 1801, barely a year after its first performance,
Beethoven wrote to his friend Franz Gerhard Wegeler, a medical
doctor who lived in Bonn:

‘My compositions bring in a considerable amount, and I can
truthfully say that I receive more offers of commissions
than I can possibly accept. Moreover, for every composition
I have six or seven publishers and could have more if I should
want them. People no longer bargain with me: I state my
price and they pay.’

And so one might easily suggest that the symphony is
resonant with the happy spirit of a composer reaching his
prime. But that would be to overlook other confidences in the
same letter to Wegeler: ‘...my ears continue to hum and buzz
day and night. I must confess that I lead a miserable life. For
almost two years I have ceased to attend any social functions,
just because I find it impossible to say to people: I am deaf.’

ABRIDGED FROM A NOTE BY RITA WILLIAMS
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA © 2005

Beethoven’s First Symphony calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets,
bassoons, horns and trumpets; timpani and strings.

The SSO first performed the symphony in 1940 under Georg Schnéevoigt
and most recently in 2008, conducted by Lothar Zagrosek.

‘...if we share the
joy he obviously felt
in writing it the
reward is rich indeed.’
ANTONY HOPKINS
JEAN-EFFLAM BAVOUZET
This year Bavouzet has released several new recordings, including three Haydn keyboard concertos with the Manchester Camerata conducted by Gábor Takács-Nagy. CHANDOS 10808
He also released a 2CD set of the five Prokofiev piano concertos with the BBC Philharmonic and Gianandrea Noseda. This recording won the Concerto category in the 2014 Gramophone Awards. CHANDOS 10802
Bavouzet is also partway through a recorded cycle of the complete Beethoven sonatas. A near chronological approach has brought him to Op.49 No.1 (Sonata No.19 in G minor) and the Waldstein Sonata, Op.53 (No.21 in C). CHANDOS 10720 (Vol.1), 10798 (Vol.2)

ROGER BENEDICT
As a viola soloist, Roger Benedict has made three recordings for the Australian Melba label, most recently Voices in the Wilderness, featuring music for viola and piano by Hans Gál and Ernst Krenek, who were both forced into exile from Nazi Germany. Timothy Young plays piano. MR 301145
Also with Timothy Young, you can hear Roger Benedict in Volupté, featuring music by Belgian composer Joseph Jongen and Frenchman Charles Koechlin. MR 301126
And he plays the solo in Vaughan Williams’ Flos Campi, in a live recording made with the SSO and conductor Mark Wigglesworth. From a disc of British music: Arcadia Lost. MR 301131

Broadcast Diary
November–December

92.9 ABC
| Classic FM |
Saturday 29 November, 1pm
Sculthorpe’s 70th Birthday (1999)
Lawrence Foster conductor
John Williams guitar
Sculthorpe, Dvořák
Monday 1 December, 8pm
Symphonic Firsts
Donald Runnicles conductor
Yefim Bronfman piano
Brahms, Mahler
Saturday 6 December, 8pm
Jean-Efflam Bavouzet in Recital
Beethoven, B Mantovani, Ravel
(From the Melbourne Recital Centre)
Saturday 13 December, 8pm
Variations on an English Theme (2013)
James Gaffigan conductor
Vilde Frang violin
Haydn, Britten, Brahms

Wednesday 17 December, 8pm
Anne-Sophie Mutter Plays Mozart
Anne-Sophie Mutter playing and directing Mozart violin concertos
Saturday 20 December, 1pm
Vänskä Conducts Brahms
Osmo Vänskä conductor
Colin Currie percussion
Beethoven, Aho, Brahms
Wednesday 31 December, 8pm
Enigma Variations
Donald Runnicles conductor
Frank Peter Zimmermann violin
Britten, Sibelius, Elgar

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HOUR
Tuesday 9 December, 6pm
Musicians and staff of the SSO talk about the life of the orchestra and forthcoming concerts. Hosted by Andrew Bukenya.
Roger Benedict’s career as a conductor has been informed and enriched by more than two decades as a principal player in some of the world’s leading orchestras, by his extensive work as a soloist and chamber musician, and through his deep involvement in orchestral training and development.

In 1991 he was appointed Principal Viola of the Philharmonia Orchestra, and in 2002 Principal Viola of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. As Artistic Director of the SSO Fellowship, he has been responsible for building it into the leading professional training program for orchestral musicians in Australasia, and is admired for his imaginative programming and dedication to outreach and community activity.

He has conducted the SSO at the Sydney Opera House, City Recital Hall Angel Place, and in regional centres. He regularly conducts SSO Fellowship concerts in Sydney and on tour. He has also collaborated with the Auckland Philharmonia and other orchestras in Australia and New Zealand. In the UK he has conducted the National Youth Orchestra in London and Aldeburgh, and recently appeared with the Southbank Sinfonia in London.

A devoted orchestral trainer, he has coached the European Union Youth Orchestra since 2000 and worked with the National Youth Orchestra (UK), Australian Youth Orchestra and YouTube Symphony Orchestra, as well as conducting orchestras at the Sydney Conservatorium and the Australian National Academy of Music.

As a viola soloist, he has appeared with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra Ulster Orchestra, Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa in Japan and the Canberra Symphony Orchestra as well as the SSO. He has performed Strauss’s *Don Quixote* many times, and with the SSO he has performed Mozart’s Sinfonia concertante, Berlioz’s *Harold in Italy*, Ford’s *Unquiet Grave* and Vaughan Williams’ *Flos Campi*.

He is frequently heard on ABC Classic FM, and has released two solo recital recordings – *Volupté* and *Voices in the Wilderness* – as well as a recording of *Flos Campi* with the SSO.

gaberbenedict.com
Jean-Efflam Bavouzet  
*piano*

French pianist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet studied with Pierre Sancan at the Paris Conservatoire. He won first prize in the International Beethoven Competition in Cologne as well as the Young Concert Artists Auditions in New York in 1986, and in 1995 was invited by George Solti to make his debut with the Orchestre de Paris. He now enjoys a prolific recording and international concert career, and is also Artistic Director of a new biennial piano festival set in Norway’s Lofoten Islands.

He recently performed with the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and returned to the Tivoli Orchestra in Copenhagen to perform concertos by Haydn and Beethoven, directing from the keyboard. Last month he toured the USA with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski, which included a performance at Carnegie Hall. Other highlights of the 2014–15 season include debuts with the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg and Emmanuel Krivine, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (Louis Langrée) and the Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano (Vladimir Ashkenazy). He also returns to the Orchestre National de France, the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Japan.

Recent highlights have included concerts with the Pittsburgh and Beijing symphony orchestras, the Bavarian State Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Manchester Camerata and the Warsaw Philharmonic, where he performed a complete Beethoven piano concerto cycle.

An active recitalist, Bavouzet returns this season to the Louvre in Paris and London’s Wigmore Hall, and gives recitals in Munich, Budapest and Taiwan. He has worked closely with Pierre Boulez, Maurice Ohana and Bruno Mantovani and is also a champion of lesser-known French music, notably that of Gabriel Pierné and Albéric Magnard. He regularly collaborates with the Palazzetto Bru Zane and has devised a chamber music program dedicated to the music of Magnard.

His recent recordings include a disc of Haydn keyboard concertos, and the complete Prokofiev piano concertos, which won the Concerto category in the 2014 *Gramophone* Awards. Current recording projects include cycles of the Beethoven sonatas and Haydn sonatas.

Jean-Efflam Bavouzet made his SSO debut in 2011 and returned in 2013. On this visit to Australia he will also appear with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and give recitals in Melbourne and Brisbane.

www.bavouzet.com
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra 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 SSO 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 orchestra’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. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013. The orchestra’s history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

The SSO’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, Lee Bracegirdle, Gordon Kerry, Mary Finsterer, Nigel Westlake and Georges Lentz, and the orchestra’s recordings of music by Brett Dean have been released on both the BIS and SSO Live labels.

Other releases on the SSO Live label, established in 2006, include performances with Alexander Lazarev, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Sir Charles Mackerras, Vladimir Ashkenazy and David Robertson. 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 ABC Classics.

This is the first year of David Robertson’s tenure as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.

DAVID ROBERTSON
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

PATRON Professor The Hon. Dame Marie Bashir ao cvo

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You have to be truthful to yourself, and truthful to your section.

Lerida is often pinching herself at her luck in securing a job with the SSO, not least because her husband, violist Justin Williams, also works with us. For both of them to gain jobs in the same orchestra ‘wasn’t easy’, says Lerida.

Both had previously held jobs in Melbourne, as well as being founding members of the Tinalley String Quartet. ‘But we’re loving exploring Sydney together now. It’s a very outward looking city, with so many international visitors. Melbourne has a real cultural pride, but I think that means it rests on its laurels a bit.’ Regular swims at Bondi and Balmoral are a particular highlight of Lerida’s new Sydney life, as exercise is really important to her. ‘I think musicians often really underestimate how much exercise can help with playing. I want to be able to fill my days with playing violin for as long as I possibly can, so it’s really important to keep myself fit and healthy.’

Lerida Delbridge’s Assistant Concertmaster Chair is supported by Simon Johnson.

Assistant Concertmaster Lerida Delbridge has been a presence in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra for a while now, though you’ve probably never been formally introduced. The process of securing a position with the orchestra involves an initial audition and then a trial period, during which a musician is not yet a fully confirmed member of the orchestra. These probation periods are a chance for the orchestra to get to know better an individual’s playing style, their personality, and the way they affect the dynamic in a section (interpersonal, that is, not forte or piano).

‘It’s not something you’re really aware of, but it does feel like there’s a little “cloud” floating above you,’ says Lerida. She tried not to think about it too much. ‘If you let your concerns get out of control, then you don’t play your best. Your best chance at showing what you can do is to carry on as though everything is completely normal. You have to be truthful to yourself, and truthful to your section, so that they can see the real you.’
Culinary concertos

Hearts, minds, music and food combined for a recent evening hosted by renowned chef Peter Gilmore and Roger Benedict, Artistic Director of our Fellowship program. Between them, Peter and Roger crafted a five-course degustation menu that was carefully paired with a program of chamber music. ‘Actually, we decided early on that it would be better that I didn’t create the menu,’ joked Roger, ‘and that Peter didn’t choose the music.’

Guests of our Premier Partner, Credit Suisse, were held spellbound by our Fellows and several SSO musicians in a program that ranged from Prokofiev to Elgar. In selecting the music, Roger took inspiration from three perspectives common to both music and food: colour, texture and mood.

‘The entrée was a startlingly vivid combination of beetroot and goat’s cheese, frozen in liquid nitrogen. I chose the Prokofiev Quintet for oboe, clarinet, violin, viola and double bass to accompany, because it’s full of bright and arresting colours.’

‘The back end of sticks can catch in the cuffs,’ she says. ‘Buttons and belts can be a problem for cymbals and other instruments that make a noise if you accidentally touch them!’ Rebecca continues, ‘and men’s ties get caught in a cymbal crash!’ And other sections? ‘One peril are lacy concoctions,’ says Rosamund Plummer, Principal Piccolo. ‘Lace can catch keys and all the other fiddly bits that stick out of a flute when we rest the flute on our laps in the bars rest.

If we’re not careful, the flute gets tangled in the material and you can’t get the instrument to your face in time!’

Have a question about music, instruments or the inner workings of an orchestra?
‘Ask a Musician’ at yoursay@sydneysymphony.com or by writing to Bravo! Playerlink, our annual three-day pop-up music camp for regional school-aged musicians, was held this year in Bathurst, hosted by the Mitchell Conservatorium and St Stanislaus’ College. Sixty-nine students – some from as far away as Lismore – joined 13 SSO musicians to form an 82-piece symphony orchestra, conducted by Daniel Carter. Students studied orchestral parts in sectional groups, focusing on aspects of posture, intonation, articulation, ensemble playing and interpretation. Everyone then came together to rehearse as a whole orchestra, finishing with a free family-style presentation and workshop.
The Score

Structured Procrastination

You’ve probably heard the story of how it took Brahms more than 14 years to write his first symphony. So what was he doing in the meantime? It was a classic case of what John Perry calls ‘structured procrastination’. (Google it, it’s an entertaining read for when you’re meant to be doing something else…)

A symphony appeared on Brahms’s to do list soon after his mentor Robert Schumann wrote an influential article hailing him as a second Beethoven. The praise was welcome; the inevitable pressure much less so. Everyone expected Brahms to write a symphony. Instead he spent nearly two decades composing plenty for orchestra but no symphonies.

Around 1855, for example, he began a symphony in D minor. This was his first attempt at an orchestral work. Three years later it was finished: we know it as his First Piano Concerto, which begins our Symphonic Firsts program. (The First Symphony was begun for real in 1862.)

Mahler had a different problem, also known to procrastinators and perfectionists: he was perpetually editing. His First Symphony went from idea to (first) premiere in a mere five years. But a second version was premiered four years later, and by the time the symphony was published in 1899 he’d revised it still further, including dropping a whole movement.

You can hear both these ‘first attempts’ at symphonic writing at the end of November in concerts conducted by Donald Runnicles, with pianist Yefim Bronfman.

Symphonic Firsts

Thursday Afternoon Symphony
27 November, 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
28 November, 8pm
Great Classics
29 November, 2pm
Mondays @ 7
1 December, 7pm

We don’t often hear all of the Schumann symphonies, as they aren’t as powerful or grand as many of the Romantic symphonies, but their lyrical strength and delicacy will be interesting to listen to, under the baton of our still-new chief.

@sebasu102
I’d have to say the boldest programming decision for 2015, from my point of view, is the continuing staging of large-scale late Romantic opera – and so, after a superlative Elektra, and a thrilling Flying Dutchman (that I was lucky enough to sing in!), the thought of Tristan with a powerhouse Brewer and scintillating Skelton really, really excites me!

In terms of high-profile returns, two wonderfully talented violinists stand out – of course, Anne-Sophie Mutter – who’s probably the most famous violinist in the world today – playing central, but slightly less well-known repertoire (yay!), and one of my all-time favourites, Gil Shaham. I have Shaham to thank for introducing me to the Barber and Korngold concerti two decades ago.

Another favourite program would have to be Sculthorpe, Sibelius 2 and the Walton Violin Concerto – heartfelt, exultant and spiky. I’m not kidding when I say I’m regretting having to miss most of the SSO season due to my plans to live and work overseas next year… I may have to make a few sneaky return visits at judicious times!

There’s so much to rave about in our 2015 season. But rather than hear it from us, we thought you might enjoy some other perspectives on what’s coming up. So, like the Andrew L Urban of the classical world, your editor took to the social media ‘streets’ to find out what a couple of our most avid concert-going Twitter fans were looking forward to in the coming season.

@prestonptowers

Yuja Wang’s recital is the one I am most looking forward to in the year – her YouTube videos are fantastic and are a great way of introducing new people to the piano repertoire. The pieces on her program also bring a fresh breeze into the concert hall – it’s always fun to listen to the slightly unhinged music of Scriabin’s later years.

I’m a bit of a fan of Charles Dutoit’s conducting, so his concert of French works, including Berlioz’ Te Deum should be a cracker – it’s not often that we get a chance to hear much non-Fantastique Berlioz!

And lastly, the Schumann cycle conducted by David Robertson.

Yuja Wang

Gil Shaham

Charles Dutoit

Artistic Focus

IN ANTICIPATION…

Charles Broede / DG

Felix Broede / DG

Christian Steiner

Felix Broede / DG

Artistic Focus

IN ANTICIPATION…
HEARTFELT THANKS
On Wednesday 5 November the SSO will host the inaugural Stuart Challenger Legacy Society Luncheon. This is an opportunity to show our gratitude to donors who have included the SSO in their estate plans, and to celebrate their vision and foresight in helping to secure a bright future for the orchestra.

MUSICAL WORKOUT
The Sinfonietta Project is a national composition project for high school students. Students submit work based on a model or given focus, and the most outstanding students are invited to Sydney to work with Richard Gill and the SSO Fellows. This year, ten students from Tasmania, Victoria, the ACT and NSW were selected to come to the Sydney Opera House to workshop their compositions with Richard Gill and the Fellows. During the Sinfonietta residency, the students met composer Brett Dean, and attended an SSO rehearsal and the Dramatic Trumpet concert.

A SPECIAL LADY
Our Associate Concertmaster and all-round beautiful person Kirsten Williams has received the 2014 Volunteer of the Year award at The Children’s Hospital at Westmead. Kirsten regularly plays her violin for the sick babies in their neonatal ward. Congratulations Kirsten!

2014 FELLOWS FINALE
The 2014 Fellows will finish the year on a mysterious note with a program that, says Roger Benedict, echoes Roald Dahl’s Tales of the Unexpected. On the program: a chamber arrangement of The Sorcerer’s Apprentice by Dukas, the suite from Stravinsky’s Soldier’s Tale and an arrangement of Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition. Come and enjoy some rich musical storytelling on Saturday 29 November at 7.30pm in the Sydney Opera House Utzon Room.

CODA
AN INSPIRING PATRON
We are delighted to announce that Dame Marie Bashir, who has been the SSO Patron as part of her responsibilities as Governor of NSW, has graciously agreed to remain in this role. Given her longstanding affection for the orchestra and her outstanding contribution to the arts, it is wonderful that we retain such an extraordinary and inspirational figure as SSO Patron.

SOMETHING TO SING ABOUT
We were the delighted recipients of two ARIA gongs recently. Compassion – a collaboration between Lior, Nigel Westlake and the SSO – was awarded the ARIA for Best Classical Album, while Gurrumul – His Life and Music won Best Original Soundtrack/Cast/Show Album. Huge congratulations to our fellow musicians Lior, Nigel and Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu – it was a privilege to work with you!