RUSSIAN MAESTROS

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY
Thursday 8 May 2014

EMIRATES METRO SERIES
Friday 9 May 2014

GREAT CLASSICS
Saturday 10 May 2014
SSO PRESENTS

STRICTLY LUHRMANN
Music from the movies of Baz Luhrmann including The Great Gatsby, Moulin Rouge, Strictly Ballroom, Romeo + Juliet and Australia.

Matthew Dunkley conductor
Taryn Fiebig soprano
Andrew Jones baritone
Ben Dawson piano
VOX (Sydney Philharmonia Choirs)

Kaleidoscope
Fri 2 May 8pm
Sat 3 May 8pm
Pre-concert talk by Genevieve Lang Huppert

CLASSICAL

Russian Maestros
The ‘Rach 3’
RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No.3
SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No.15
Alexander Lazarev conductor
Lukáš Vondráček piano

Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 8 May 1.30pm
Emerates Metro Series
Fri 9 May 8pm
Great Classics
Sat 10 May 2pm
Pre-concert talk by Scott Davie

Lukáš Vondráček in Recital
HAYDN Sonata in C, Hob.XVI:50
RACHMANINOFF Corelli Variations
BRAHMS Six Piano Pieces, Op.118
PROKOFIEV Sonata No.7 (War Sonata 2)

International Pianists in Recital
Mon 12 May 7pm
City Recital Hall Angel Place
Pre-concert talk by David Larkin

Elijah
MENDELSSOHN Elijah
Paul McCreesh conductor (pictured)
Nicole Car soprano
Deborah Humble mezzo-soprano
Thomas Walker tenor
Andrew Foster-Williams bass-baritone
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs
Conservatorium High School Choir

APT Master Series
Wed 14 May 8pm
Fri 16 May 8pm
Sat 17 May 8pm
Pre-concert talk by David Garrett

Mozart’s Haffner Symphony
MOZART Symphony No.35 (Haffner)
BERNSTEIN Serenade after Plato’s Symposium
MOZART The Abduction from the Seraglio: Overture
Jessica Cottis conductor
Dene Olding violin (Bernstein)

Mozart in the City
Thu 29 May 7pm
City Recital Hall, Angel Place
Tea & Symphony
Fri 6 Jun 11am
Sydney Opera House
Pre-concert talk by David Garrett (Thu)

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Bryan Banston
Emirates’ Vice President Australasia
THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY
THURSDAY 8 MAY, 1.30PM

EMIRATES METRO SERIES
FRIDAY 9 MAY, 8PM

GREAT CLASSICS
SATURDAY 10 MAY, 2PM

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

RUSSIAN MAESTROS

Alexander Lazarev conductor
Lukáš Vondráček piano

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1873–1943)
Piano Concerto No.3 in D minor, Op.30
Allegro ma non tanto
Intermezzo (Adagio) –
Finale (Alla breve)

INTERVAL

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVITCH (1906–1975)
Symphony No.15 in A, Op.141
Allegretto
Adagio –
Allegretto
Adagio

Friday night’s performance will be recorded by ABC Classic FM for broadcast across Australia on Saturday 17 May at 1pm.

Pre-concert talk by Scott Davie in the Northern Foyer, 45 minutes before each performance
Visit bit.ly/SSOspeakerbios for more information

Estimated durations: 45 minutes, 20-minute interval, 50 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 3.35pm (Thu), 10.05pm (Fri) and 4.05pm (Sat)
Shostakovich at work in his home in Moscow during the 1960s. Photo by Greg Tomin.

Portrait of Rachmaninoff at the piano, painted in 1908 by Polish-born artist Jan Ciaglinski (Tsionglinsky) (1858–1912).
INTRODUCTION

Russian Maestros

The ‘Russian Maestros’ of this concert are composers Sergei Rachmaninoff and Dmitri Shostakovich, as well as the maestro on the podium: Alexander Lazarev. As is reflected in the portraits opposite, Rachmaninoff is represented by music written when he was in his 30s and before he left Russia for the West, while Shostakovich is represented by his final symphony, completed when he was 65, just four years before his death.

It’s not too simplistic to say that the concerto is a young man’s music. It makes tremendous demands on the soloist, and for the first 20 years of its existence it seemed the only person who dared play Rachmaninoff’s third piano concerto was the composer himself. But the young Vladimir Horowitz became a champion in 1930 and since then it has emerged as a repertoire staple: no less formidable but now a favourite with performers and audiences.

The symphony, on the other hand, is not only Shostakovich’s final symphony but the creation of a composer who was, writes Gordon Williams, conscious of his own mortality and casting a retrospective gaze over his work. That retrospection turns up in the self-quotations from earlier pieces, and in the gestures that refer to other composers: a death theme from Wagner, a Rossini overture...

True to form, Shostakovich’s quotations and musical associations are at times ambiguous. He said the first movement of Symphony No.15 described ‘childhood – just a toyshop, with a cloudless sky above’. But the innocuous toyshop gestures and the quotations from Rossini (a boyhood favourite) have to be weighed against the disturbing interruptions and strange distortions that keep threatening to upset the music. Optimism is offset by pessimism, innocence by irony. And with the desolate second movement the clouds begin gathering fast.

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bravo!

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Sergei Rachmaninoff
Piano Concerto No.3 in D minor, Op.30

Allegro ma non tanto
Intermezzo (Adagio) –
Finale (Alla breve)

Lukáš Vondráček piano

Having just completed what is now regarded as one of the most famously difficult piano concertos of all time, Rachmaninoff’s resort to the use of a ‘dummy’ keyboard as he worked to master it is, perhaps, darkly ironic. But that he did, as he sailed the Atlantic to America for its premiere. His performance with the New York Symphony and Walter Damrosch on 28 November 1909 was greeted enthusiastically, as was a repeat performance at Carnegie Hall the following January with the New York Philharmonic under Gustav Mahler. However, unlike his Second Piano Concerto, which was taken up by other pianists immediately, the popularity of the Third was slow to build. Arguably, it was not until the young Vladimir Horowitz made his European recording debut with the work in 1930 that it found a wider audience.

The concerto was written on the cusp of the so-called ‘modern’ age, the point at which the maximalist excesses of the Romantic were undercut by a preference for sparseness, as is notable in many later 20th century works. As a composer, Rachmaninoff was very much aware of the changing trend, his own turning-point coming directly after his massive, formally-designed Second Symphony, completed in 1907. While the inflections common in many performances of the Third Concerto often emphasise its extravagances, many modernising twists are to be found, especially in the work’s unique structure.

An example is the treatment of the first movement’s two main themes, which return at various places in later movements. The famous opening melody – about which commentators often relate Joseph Yasser’s unconvincing attempts to connect it to the composer’s subconcious recollection of a liturgical chant – recurs in the second movement as an impassioned outburst in the violins, and as a jaunty clarinet waltz. In the final movement, the cellos reflect on it briefly as the music winds toward a full restatement of the second theme, which is also reincarnated (incognito) as the underlying motto of the central scherzando section.

Rachmaninoff wrote alternative cadenzas for the opening movement, the longer and more extreme being the original of the two. In that reading, the mighty restatement of the main keynotes

RACHMANINOFF
Born Oneg (Novgorod region), 1873
Died Beverly Hills CA, 1943

Before leaving Russia for good in 1917, Rachmaninoff had composed two symphonies, three piano concertos, and several substantial orchestral works. After settling in the West, he shifted his attention to building a career as a concert pianist, and composed much less. The Third Piano Concerto represents the earlier period – one of his ‘pre-revolutionary hits’.

PIANO CONCERTO NO.3

Having been persuaded to tour America, Rachmaninoff needed a new piano concerto – the Third was completed shortly before his departure at the end of 1909, requiring him to practise it on a dummy piano onboard ship! It has since become one of Rachmaninoff’s best-loved concertos, rivalling even the Second Concerto, although there was a time when its physical demands elicited more awe than fondness. (Nearly 20 years ago the Third Concerto’s popularity was further enhanced by its central role in the movie Shine.)

The concerto’s most striking feature is its concision and the way in the musical ideas grow organically through the entire work – it’s a natural extension of the structural and thematic strategies that Rachmaninoff had been exploring as early as his First Symphony.
theme in double-octave chords clearly marks the point of recapitulation, while in the shorter and lighter second cadenza the recapitulation is less obvious. This tendency to recast by cutting back is a harbinger of Rachmaninoff’s uncertainty over issues of length and scope, which becomes increasingly prevalent in his later years. This topic similarly underscores the numerous, often disfiguring, cuts that he made in both performance and recording, truncations that were assiduously followed by many subsequent interpreters. These days the concerto is typically played complete, save for a couple of the more adventurous ossias (or alternative passages), which include variant figurations so demanding that they are close to impossible (such as the suggestion of even faster double-octaves in the closing lines).

Rather than using a formally structured theme as the basis for the second movement, as he typically did, Rachmaninoff provides the melodic impetus with a short four-note motif. The writing is some of his most idiosyncratic, and a high level of craft can be discerned in the way each iteration differs in length, allowing successive moments of ever-greater impact to be reached. In the Finale, the outer portions of the threefold structure offer pianists some of the most physically challenging passages in the repertoire, an exceptional degree of strength being a prerequisite. The second subject – an ebullient, fast-flowing melody – offers only momentary respite.

Around the time he was composing his third piano concerto, Rachmaninoff wrote to a friend: ‘…I would like to buy an automobile! I want one so much, I just cannot tell you! All I need is a secretary and an automobile! Otherwise I have everything I need.’ As it turned out, the proceeds of his forthcoming American concert tour allowed the acquisition of the automobile.
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With the release of the film *Shine* in 1996, the concerto witnessed even higher levels of fame (or infamy, depending on one’s view). While its iconic status now seems entrenched, it is perhaps worth noting that Rachmaninoff’s success as a pianist was built on ideals novel for the time, including understatement, an abhorrence of virtuosity, and faithfulness to the score. A subtle illustration of this perhaps lies in the closing moments, where the music returns (in the style of Grieg and Tchaikovsky’s earlier models) to the lyrical second subject. In this instance, however, Rachmaninoff does not allow for wallowing excess; rather, the concerto proceeds to its conclusion in a forthright and headlong manner.

SCOTT DAVIE © 2012

The orchestra for Rachmaninoff’s Third Piano Concerto calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drum) and strings.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed this concerto in 1941, with Percy Code conducting and soloist Alexander Sverjensky, and most recently in 2011 with Edo de Waart and soloist Joyce Yang.

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**Rehearsing with Mahler**

*Rachmaninoff’s third concerto was first performed in New York City under Walter Damrosch in November 1909, followed, in January 1910, by a third New York performance under Gustav Mahler, of which Rachmaninoff recalled:*

He touched my composer’s heart straight away by devoting himself to my concerto until the accompaniment, which is rather complicated, had been practised to the point of perfection…’

The rehearsal began at 10 o’clock. I was able to join at 11 and arrived in good time, but we did not begin to work until 12, when there was only a half hour left, during which I did my utmost to play through a composition which usually lasts 36 minutes. We played and played. Half an hour was long past, but Mahler did not pay the slightest attention to this fact…Forty-five minutes later Mahler announced, ‘Now we will repeat the first movement.’ My heart froze…I expected a dreadful row, or at least a heated protest from the orchestra…but…I did not notice a single sign of displeasure. The musicians played the first movement with a keen or perhaps even closer application than the previous time. I went up to the conductor’s desk, and together we examined the score. The musicians in the back seat began quietly to pack up their instruments and to disappear. Mahler blew up.

‘What is the meaning of this?’ The concertmaster: ‘It is after half past one, Maestro.’

‘That makes no difference! As long as I am sitting, no musician has a right to get up!’
Dmitri Shostakovich

Symphony No.15 in A, Op.141

Allegretto
Adagio –
Allegretto
Adagio

Dmitri Shostakovich, arguably the greatest symphonist of the 20th century, produced this 15th symphony in his 65th year, returning to a standard four-movement instrumental form after the more unconventional symphonies, Nos. 13 and 14. Shostakovich’s music embodies some of the most fascinating exercises in musical expression in our history, and his 15 symphonies – the greatest repertoire of works in this genre since Bruckner and Sibelius – deserve detailed attention.

What Shostakovich’s music appears to be about on the surface isn’t always so. Some of the symphonies have overt programs. Two, in fact, chronicle particular years: 1905 and 1917, significant years in the development of the Soviet state. But others are unclear in meaning. There are works with cryptic musical quotes (a parody of Stalin’s favourite song, Suleika, for example, or the recollection of a melody which previously accompanied an acerbic line in a song cycle), as if Shostakovich was saying something ‘on the inside’, according to the technique of inner programs which Russian composers learnt to develop – for the sake of their lives. Sometimes Western listeners misunderstand, as when they once assumed that the Fifth Symphony was very obviously a penitent Soviet citizen’s ‘reply to just criticism’.

Ian McDonald, writing in The New Shostakovich says of the Symphony No.15: ‘In terms of ambiguity, it is generally agreed that [here] Shostakovich surpassed himself: And let’s face it, why does he quote the William Tell Overture? Or the trumpet call from Mahler’s Fifth? What is the meaning of the strange mix of cheerfulness and turmoil in the first movement? Is it really cheerfulness? The last movement opens clearly enough, it seems, with a premonition of death – the ‘Announcement of Death’ theme from Wagner’s Walküre, another quote – but what is the enigmatic ticking that ends the work?

Shostakovich wrote this symphony when conscious of his own mortality, and though it may be hindsight to say that a composer summarises his achievement in his last symphony (for how did he know he was going to die?), in this case there probably really was a retrospective gaze. It is interesting that Shostakovich had so perfected his style by this stage that it could easily subsume the music of such contrasting…

Keynotes

SHOSTAKOVICH
Born St Petersburg, 1906
Died Moscow, 1975

Now recognised as one of the greatest composers of the 20th century, Shostakovich had a career marred by government interference and persecution. Despite his music being officially denounced twice (in 1936 and 1948), Shostakovich continued to reflect his disenchantment with the Soviet regime through his music.

SYMPHONY NO.15
Symphony No.15 (Shostakovich’s last) was completed in 1971 and, like many of his works, it includes musical quotations, sub-texts and in-jokes. The first movement quotes pieces by Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky and a certain Rossini overture. Any light-heartedness left over from the first movement is quickly dispelled in the second: it opens with the chorale theme from Shostakovich’s 11th symphony (played by the brass), and the themes of death and fate that pervade that symphony make their presence felt. The third movement follows the second without pause, beginning with restless woodwind melodies, later imitated by the strings. The finale opens with the ‘death’ theme from Wagner’s Walküre, and finishes with an unusual coda – a sustained note from the strings over which the percussion section solo, before one solitary bell-like note from the celesta and glockenspiel brings the work to a close.
forerunners as Rossini and Wagner. There is certainly a climax of craftsmanship here.

Shostakovich usually completed a work in about two months. The Fifteenth Symphony was sketched in April 1971, and Venyamin Basner, coming to pick up Shostakovich for their daily walk, witnessed the composer completing and dating the final bars on 29 July 1971. Shostakovich suffered a second heart attack during rehearsals for the piece, which was premiered on 8 January 1972 under the baton of his son Maxim. In the autumn and winter of 1972 he was hospitalised again with renal colic and lung cancer and underwent radiation therapy. Although he created orchestral versions of his superb last two song cycles – the *Six Poems of Marina Tsvetayeva* (1973) and the Suite on *Verses of Michelangelo* (1974), Shostakovich never returned to the symphonic form.

According to Ian McDonald, the basic problem confronting the listener to the Symphony No.15 is identifying its tone. The composer himself described the *first movement* as ‘childhood – just a toy-shop, with a cloudless sky above’. The innocuous chimes and the opening flute melody, even the *William Tell* quote on a *Boutique fantasque*-like trumpet, may indeed represent this; but what about the nightmarish polyrhythmic passages of the development section? This is music from Brezhnev’s USSR, a country populated not so much by wind-up
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dolls as by wind-up people, paralysed by ‘conformist mediocrity, rampant corruption, and alcoholism’, in McDonald’s words. ‘Anyone feeling cheerful after the opening allegretto of the Fifteenth Symphony will find the rest of the work rather bemusing.’

The **second movement** is shocking in its desolation. Solemn brass chords preface a series of statements by a solo cello, which could almost be an outpouring of the solo player’s personal grief. The mood is bleak, as is proven by the blasts of high winds. There is no way to go but further inwards, and a funeral march initiated by the trombone leads to a huge full orchestral climax – the symphony’s very bitter heart. The remaining scene is as consoling as a moonscape: heartless taps on the woodblock, chill winds, cold celesta and vibraphone.

The brief **third movement** is a humoresque, but is it a respite? Towards the end Shostakovich enters his by-now familiar musical signature – his name in the notes D, E flat, C, B natural (which, in German musical nomenclature, spells DSCH for Dmitri Schostakowitsch).

The **finale** begins with three statements of Wagner’s ‘Announcement of Death’ motif, followed by violins playing the first three yearning notes from *Tristan und Isolde*. Without lingering long enough for the listener to ponder the meaning, Shostakovich slides into a tender and lyrical D minor theme. Another quote here is Glinka’s song *Do Not Tempt Me Needlessly*. Could this be a reference to the rewards the post-Stalinist government might have offered Shostakovich for writing the sort of music that could come to him easily?

The movement builds to a climax in a passacaglia founded on a deconstructed version of the march theme from the *Leningrad* Symphony, but there is no easy conclusion. As McDonald says, ‘Shostakovich’s last symphonic movement tapers gradually away to the spasmic twitch of puppet-strings, the dispiriting click and whirl of clockwork.’

Assuming artists such as Shostakovich gain greater insight and wisdom the more they advance in years, how shall the listener interpret the fact that the greatest symphonic cycle of the century ends not with a bang but a whimper?

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This is music from Brezhnev’s USSR, a country populated not so much by wind-up dolls as by wind-up people...
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SHOSTAKOVICH SYMPHONIES
Our previous performance of Shostakovich Symphony No.15 was conducted by Mark Wigglesworth in 2010, and his recording of it, with the Netherlands Radio Symphony Orchestra, was released just last month. The disc couples Shostakovich’s final symphony with his first symphony.

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And every Shostakovich fan should know the dedicated website: dschjournal.com

ALEXANDER LAZAREV
On a previous visit, Alexander Lazarev made an exciting concert recording with the SSO, pairing Shostakovich’s Ninth Symphony and Glazunov’s ballet The Seasons. This was one of the first releases on the SSO Live label and only a few copies remain, so call (02) 8215 4600 if you want to add it to your collection.

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Among his more recent recordings is Rodion Shchedrin’s music for the ballet The Seagull (after Chekhov’s play), recorded with the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra. Lazarev also conducts on the DVD recording of the ballet, released in 2009 on the Arthaus Musik and Video Artists International labels.

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May

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Saturday 17 May, 1pm
RUSSIAN MAESTROS
Alexander Lazarev conductor
Lukáš Vondráček piano
Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich

Saturday 17 May, 8pm
MENDELSSOHN’S ELIJAH
Paul McCreesh conductor
Gillian Webster, Deborah Humble, Thomas Walker, Andrew Foster-Williams vocal soloists
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs
Sydney Conservatorium High School Choir
A recreation of the 1846 Birmingham premiere

Monday 19 May, 8pm
LUKÁŠ VONDRAČEK IN RECITAL
Haydn, Prokofiev, Brahms Piano Sonata No.3

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 2014
Tuesday 13 May, 6pm
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**Mahler 7** SSO 201102
**Mahler 8 (Symphony of a Thousand)** SSO 201002
**Mahler 9** SSO 201201
**Mahler 10 (Barshai completion)** SSO 201202
**Song of the Earth** SSO 201004

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Alexander Lazarev is one of Russia’s foremost conductors. He studied in Moscow and went on to win first prize in the Soviet Union’s national competition for conductors and, in 1972, first prize and gold medal at the Karajan Competition in Berlin.

From 1987 to 1995 he was Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Bolshoi Theatre, the first person in more than 30 years to hold both positions concurrently. His leadership marked a period of intensive activity, with the Bolshoi Opera undertaking an unprecedented program of prestigious foreign tours that included Tokyo (1989), La Scala, Milan (1989), the Edinburgh Festival (1990 and 1991) and the Metropolitan Opera in New York (1991). He now holds the title of Conductor-in-Residence.

From 1992 to 1995 he was Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and from 1997 to 2005 Principal Conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, where the highlight of his tenure was the complete cycle of Shostakovich symphonies. He has also conducted the Berlin Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw, St Petersburg Philharmonic, Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala, Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Orchestre National de France, Oslo Philharmonic, Swedish Radio Symphony, NHK Symphony Tokyo, Cleveland Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra and London Philharmonic Orchestra. As an opera conductor he has appeared with companies such as the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Arena di Verona, Opéra Bastille, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Bavarian State Opera and Netherlands Opera.

Since 2008 Alexander Lazarev has been Principal Conductor of the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra. His work with the orchestra is extensively represented on Octavia Records, and they are currently performing and recording complete cycles of the Prokofiev and Rachmaninoff symphonies.

Alexander Lazarev’s most recent appearance with the SSO was in 2010, when he conducted a program of Khachaturian, Saint-Saëns and Rimsky-Korsakov.
Lukáš Vondráček made his first public appearance at the age of four. After studies at the Academy of Music in Katowice in Poland and at the Vienna Conservatoire, he obtained an Artist Diploma at Boston’s New England Conservatory, where he studied with Hung-Kuan Chen and graduated with honours in 2012. His natural and assured musicality, together with a remarkable technical ability, mark him out as a gifted and mature musician.

His debut as a 15 year old in 2002 with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and Vladimir Ashkenazy, performing in Prague and Italy, was followed by a major tour of the United States in 2003 and concerts in Cologne, Vienna, Lucerne and Birmingham. He went on to work with leading orchestras throughout Europe, North America and Asia, including the Philharmonia, London Philharmonic and BBC Symphony orchestras, the St Petersburg Philharmonic, Wiener Symphoniker, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, NDR Sinfonieorchester Hamburg, NHK Symphony Tokyo, and the Baltimore, Washington, Cincinnati and Colorado Symphony orchestras. He made his Australian debut here in Sydney in 2007, performing the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini in Vladimir Ashkenazy’s Rachmaninoff festival.

A regular performer in both concerto and recital repertoire, Lukáš Vondráček has performed in the world’s major halls, including the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and Carnegie Hall, and festivals such as Gilmore and Ravinia Rising Stars series. He gave his British recital debut in the Queen Elizabeth Hall’s International Piano Series – the youngest pianist to have featured in this series. He has released two recital recordings, most recently a disc of music by Haydn, Rachmaninoff and Prokofiev.

Highlights of the 2013–14 season include concerts with the Sarasota, New Jersey and Charlotte Symphony orchestras in the United States, and the Philharmonia Orchestra in London. He will also give recitals at the Wigmore Hall in London and Casa da Música in Porto (Portugal) as well as the Prague Spring and Klangraum Waidhofen festivals. On this visit to Australia he will also perform with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra.

LUKÁŠ VONDRÁČEK IN RECITAL
Monday 12 May at 7pm
City Recital Hall Angel Place

Hear Lukáš Vondráček play one of Haydn’s great London sonatas, Prokofiev’s Sonata No.7 (the second in his series of War Sonatas) and Brahms’s Sonata No.3 in F minor.
sydneysymphony.com
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

DAVID ROBERTSON
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

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.

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§ PETER MILLER (TRUMPET) APPEARS COURTESY OF THE WEST AUSTRALIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The men of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra are proudly outfitted by Van Heusen.

To see photographs of the full roster of permanent musicians and find out more about the orchestra, visit our website: www.sydneysymphony.com/SSO_musicians

If you don’t have access to the internet, ask one of our customer service representatives for a copy of our Musicians flyer.
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<td>IN-HOUSE COUNSEL</td>
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I’d practise trumpet in the off season.

Paul is a good friend of the Barmy Army’s mascot trumpeter, Bill. The Army covers Bill’s expenses, and in return he leads many of the tunes they sing. You’ve no doubt heard him on the ABC Grandstand broadcasts. ‘Bill and I were introduced via text message by a mutual friend who happened to be in Switzerland when we were at the Sydney Cricket Ground. He suggested we should meet up, so we did – didn’t talk much about the trumpet, mostly talked about cricket and drank wine.’

The two have stayed in touch. Last year when the Ashes was played at Lords, Paul took great delight in texting Bill from the comfort of his couch on the other side of the world with suggestions about what he should play next, only to hear those tunes coming through the television moments later.

There are two things for sure: technology makes the world a smaller place, and music knows no boundaries!

GOOD SPORT

Music and sport. Who says the two can’t go hand-in-hand? Certainly not Paul Goodchild, the SSO’s Associate Principal Trumpet…

In the summertime, there’s one place you’re guaranteed to find trumpeter Paul Goodchild – watching the cricket. At the ground or via the telly, Paul follows cricket with a passion. ‘My love of cricket comes from two of my uncles, who used to talk about it so passionately.’ Cricket was Paul’s game of choice at his very sporty high school. ‘I didn’t play a winter sport because I had to protect my teeth, but cricket in the summer was safe. I’d practise trumpet in the off season!’

Anyone who’s ever followed an Ashes Series will be familiar with the Barmy Army – the jolly mob of fanatical cricket fans who travel from Blighty to wherever the English team is playing. This summer past, Paul found himself fraternising with members of the Army. ‘I wanted to make them feel welcome on hostile soil. The Barmy Army’s an institution. They’re great fun and they all love to sing. Every player on the field will have his own “anthem” that they sing. Some are very tongue in cheek, like singing “Your next queen is Camilla Parker Bowles” to the tune of Yellow Submarine to goad the Aussie side.’
Music and travel have gone hand in hand since Mozart’s time. ‘I assure you that without travel,’ he wrote to his father Leopold, ‘we are miserable creatures. A man of mediocre talent will remain mediocre whether he travels or not; but one of superior talent…will go to seed if he remains continually in one place.’

Mozart’s words are music to our ears as we announce our new partnership with luxury cruise and tour operator APT as the presenting partner of our Master Series. ‘We’re delighted to be working with one of Australia’s leading cultural institutions,’ says APT General Manager of Marketing and Sales, Debra Fox, ‘and look forward to sharing some outstanding concerts with music lovers from Sydney and across Australia.’

SSO Managing Director Rory Jeffes adds, ‘The SSO and APT are focused on excellence in all our offerings, be it a performance at the Sydney Opera House or a river boat cruise in Europe. Our organisations share a belief in experiences of the highest quality.’

Sponsorship Highlight

Perfect Partners

In July, we’re giving the premiere of a new cantata by composer Paul Stanhope and librettist Steve Hawke: Jandamarra: Sing for the Country, Ngalanyba Muwayi. We asked Paul about the creative and collaborative process of writing such a large-scale work.

In 2011 Paul Stanhope first contacted Steve Hawke (son of former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke) about setting his existing play, Jandamarra, to music. ‘He really liked the idea’, says Paul, ‘and thought it was important to involve the Bunuba community, which he’s worked with for years.’

Paul’s cantata will incorporate the music of the Bunuba people. ‘It’s a really important part of how the story is told.’ A junba (traditional song from the West Australian Kimberly region) will be performed by members of the Yilimbirri ensemble from Fitzroy Crossing, and adapted into the musical fabric of the cantata.

Paul has also had assistance from June Oscar AO, an ambassador for the Bunuba community: ‘She’s helped me to come up with song lyrics, and given me advice on how to set the language.’

With around 500 performers (including singers and dancers and 400 young choristers), there will be huge musical forces to marshal: a challenge even for a seasoned composer such as Paul. ‘It’s quite huge!’ he says. ‘It’s the biggest and most complicated project I’ve ever been involved in.’

‘This is our chance to really tell the story of one of the few organised armed insurrections documented against European settlement in Australia to a whole lot of people who otherwise would never have known about it.’

Perfect Partners

In March, the SSO again joined with Emirates Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa for the annual Symphony under the Stars chamber music weekend – three days of food, wine and fine music. More than 70 resort guests mingled with SSO musicians and enjoyed chamber music ranging from Mozart, Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky to Broadway favourites. You can register your interest in the 2015 event by contacting Wolgan Valley on (02) 9290 9733.
The early months of the SSO's annual Fellowship program are a process of learning and discovery, revealing as much about personalities as musicianship and talent. Tim Murray, bassoon Fellow, is not afraid to take a lighter look at serious subjects: ‘When I think about my expectations for the Fellowship program,’ he says with a grin, ‘I expect to get really good at sight-reading!’ Tim knows already that the musical demands of this year’s Fellowship program will require him and the seven other young musicians in the program to juggle practising and rehearsal of solo repertoire, chamber music and orchestral music.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra Fellowship is an intensive year-long program that introduces aspiring young instrumentalists to the world of full-time music-making at the highest level. Every year, up to nine Fellows are selected from hundreds of applicants through a rigorous audition process. The successful candidates then enter a world of professional concert-giving, mentoring by SSO musicians, masterclasses with visiting guest artists, and a series of chamber music recitals. This year’s Fellows are Liisa Pallandi and Nicholas Waters (violin), Carl Lee (viola), James sang-oh Yoo (returning on cello), Aurora Henrich (double bass), Georgina Roberts (oboe), Alexei Dupressoir (clarinet) and Timothy Murray (bassoon).

‘I’m really looking forward to getting stuck into some chamber music,’ says Liisa. ‘I feel that’s something that you often miss out on at university if you’re always preparing for recitals or auditions. Even if you’re freelancing you’re often playing in big groups, so chamber music gets overlooked.’

The Artistic Director of the SSO Fellowship program, Roger Benedict, says there’s a shared hunger in this crop of Fellows ‘for the experiences that take them to the next stage, that really prepare them for a career in music’. ‘After 13 years of a wonderfully successful program,’ he continues, ‘we have members in the SSO who were Fellows, and in orchestras all over the world now. The program has grown from strength to strength, and largely due to the support of Credit Suisse and our supporters.’

These generous supporters include Mrs W Stening, Tenix, Kim Williams AM & Catherine Dovey, Robert Albert AO & Elizabeth Albert, Sandra & Neil Burns, Mrs T Merewether OAM, and a donor who has given in memory of Matthew Krel, as well as anonymous donors.

Strictly Luhrmann
Kaleidoscope
2, 3 May | 8pm

Strictly Luhrmann: Strictly Musical

Baz Luhrmann’s boyhood might not have included music lessons but he’s a deeply musical person, someone who listens. Arranger and conductor Matt Dunkley, who’s worked on several Luhrmann films, says the director has ‘a real sensibility for music and he understands what it can do – the music’s there in the script from the beginning’.

Dunkley (pictured) is well placed to develop a concert around the soundtracks of the five Luhrmann movies. All the music is good – he recalls the cutting-edge choices in Romeo + Juliet, including early Radiohead. The challenge for an orchestral concert is that Luhrmann’s taste is so eclectic.

‘Naturally if we start trying to reinvent all the pop tracks that’s not going to work orchestrally,’ says Dunkley, ‘the result will be cheesy, like “Hooked on Classics”.’ Instead he’s tried to suggest the story of each movie, finding the heart of the scores, the big orchestral moments, and marrying these with the songs that people remember and the concert hall classics. The result mixes original music such as O V erona, written by Craig Armstrong for Romeo + Juliet, with popular vocal sequences such as the ‘Elephant Love Medley’ from Moulin Rouge, and classics such as Rhapsody in Blue (The Great Gatsby) and The Blue Danube (Strictly Ballroom).
BUSY FELLOWS

In March our 2014 Fellows gave a private backstage concert for SSO Fellowship and Education patrons. The Fellows performed music by Mozart, Nielsen and Hindson, then met with their supporters over drinks.

In April the Fellows will be making a visit to the South Coast Correctional Centre, combining a one-hour chamber music performance with a workshop led by Roger Benedict exploring communication, conflict resolution and teamwork in the context of chamber music. The Fellows will also have lunch with 30 specially selected inmates, who are all taking part based on their good behaviour and enrolment in education classes.

HEALING POWER

Last month we launched the 2014 season of our music4health program at Sydney Children’s Hospital, Randwick. Since starting this program six years ago, we’ve visited hospitals throughout NSW, performed at retirement homes and given concerts at the Powerhouse Museum as part of Disability Awareness Week, and we perform each year to hundreds of autistic children in a special event in conjunction with the Autism Advisory and Support Service. This year music4health will include visits to Westmead Children’s Hospital and the Randwick and Hunters Hill campuses of the Montefiore Home.

If you would like more information or to join our musicians on a music4health visit to see firsthand the power of music, contact Amelia Morgan-Hunn at amelia.morgan-hunn@sydneysymphony.com

SUPPORTING OUR FUTURE

The SSO has received a generous bequest of $50,000 from the late Dr Lynn Joseph. Dr Joseph, a survivor of World War II, was a long-time SSO subscriber until passing away last year at the age of 94. We are deeply grateful to Dr Joseph for supporting the orchestra in such a meaningful way.

If you’d like more information about leaving a gift to the SSO in your will, contact Luke Gay on (02) 8215 4625.

JOAN MACKENZIE SCHOLARSHIP

Last year a generous bequest and gift from the late Joan MacKenzie and her family allowed us to set up an annual scholarship for an out-of-state violinist in the SSO’s Sinfonia program. This year the scholarship has been awarded to 22-year-old violinist Brett Yang, from Sunnybank Queensland, and will cover his travel to Sydney as well as private lessons with SSO musicians.

SYMPHONY IN THE PARK

On 22 March we gave our seventh annual concert in Parramatta Park, performing music by Dvořák and Wieniawski, and Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, under the baton of Pinchas Steinberg, with violin soloist Karen Gomyo. On the night we announced future plans for the event, which will incorporate primary and high school music education activities in the Parramatta region.

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