JAMES MORRISON'S A–Z OF JAZZ
An evening with Ella, Louis & the Duke

MEET THE MUSIC
Thursday 5 March 2015

KALEIDOSCOPE
Friday 6 March 2015
Saturday 7 March 2015
Discover Beethoven
BEETHOVEN Symphony No.2
Richard Gill conductor
SSO Sinfonia

DownerTenix Discovery
Tue 24 Feb 6.30pm
City Recital Hall Angel Place

Beethoven Nine
BRUCKNER Christus factus est – Motet, WAB 11
BERG Act III of Wozzeck
BEETHOVEN Symphony No.9 (Choral)
David Robertson conductor
Miriam Gordon-Stewart, Michelle DeYoung, Simon O’Neill, Peter Coleman-Wright
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Gondwana Choir

SEASON OPENING GALA
Special Event
Premier Partner Credit Suisse
Fri 27 Feb 8pm
Sat 28 Feb 8pm
Sun 1 Mar 2pm
Pre-concert talk 45 minutes before each performance

An Evening with Ella, Louis and the Duke
James Morrison’s A–Z of Jazz
From Armstrong to Zawinul, James Morrison covers the full trajectory of jazz.
Benjamin Northey conductor
James Morrison jazz trumpet
Hetty Kate vocalist

Meet the Music
Thu 5 Mar 6:30pm
Kaleidoscope
Fri 6 Mar 8pm
Sat 7 Mar 8pm
Pre-concert talk 45 minutes before each performance

Song & Dance
RAVEL Valses nobles et sentimentales*
CANTÉLOUBE Songs of the Auvergne: Set 1
FALLA orch. Berio Seven Popular Spanish Songs*
R STRAUSS Der Rosenkavalier: Suite*
Ward Stare conductor
Daniela Mack mezzo-soprano

Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 12 Mar 1.30pm
Tea & Symphony
Fri 13 Mar 11am*
Complimentary morning tea from 10am
Mondays @ 7
Mon 16 Mar 7pm
Pre-concert talk 45 minutes before the Thu & Mon concerts

Janine Jansen plays Brahms
BRAHMS Violin Concerto
BUTTERLEY Never This Sun, This Watcher
SIBELIUS Symphony No.5
Daniel Blendulf conductor
Janine Jansen violin

APT Master Series
Wed 18 Mar 8pm
Fri 20 Mar 8pm
Sat 21 Mar 8pm
Pre-concert talk at 7.15pm

Tea & Symphony
Fri 27 Mar 11am*
Complimentary morning tea from 10am
Earth Hour Special Event
Sat 28 Mar 8.30pm

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David Robertson conductor
Ladies of the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

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MEET THE MUSIC
THURSDAY 5 MARCH, 6.30PM
KALEIDOSCOPE
FRIDAY 6 MARCH, 8PM
SATURDAY 7 MARCH, 8PM
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

JAMES MORRISON’S A–Z OF JAZZ

Benjamin Northey conductor
James Morrison jazz trumpet
Hetty Kate vocals
with
Carl Dewhurst guitar
Gordon Rytmeister drums
Phil Stack bass

DIXIELAND
Spencer Williams (1889–1965)
Basin Street Blues
Ray Henderson (1896–1970)
The Birth of the Blues
SWING
Benny Goodman (1909–1986)
Seven Come Eleven
Hoagy Carmichael (1899–1981)
Stardust
Fats Waller (1904–1943)
Honeysuckle Rose
BIG BAND
Duke Ellington (1899–1974)
Don’t Get Around Much Anymore
Mood Indigo
Count Basie (1904–1984)
Lil’ Darlin’
Cat Anderson (1916–1981)

BEBO
Dizzy Gillespie (1917–1993)
A Night in Tunisia
Ray Noble (1903–1978)
Cherokee
COOL
Miles Davis (1926–1991)
All Blues
Thelonious Monk (1917–1982)
‘Round Midnight
LATIN JAZZ
Dizzy Gillespie
Manteca
Antônio Carlos Jobim (1927–1994)
Desafinado
FUSION
Herbie Hancock (born 1940)
Chameleon
Joe Zawinul (1932–2007)

INTERVAL

Pre-concert talk by Kevin Hunt in the Northern Foyer 45 minutes before each performance. Visit sydneysymphony.com/speaker-bios for more information.

Estimated durations:
55 minutes, 20-minute interval, 55 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 10.10pm (8.40pm Thursday).
Take the J Train

*Rita Williams spoke to James Morrison ahead of this week’s concerts*

The presenter of tonight’s masterclass in jazz history possesses a prodigious talent that was evident from the age of seven, when he first learnt how to blow on a cornet and push its buttons at Mona Vale Public School. Within the space of one lesson he discovered it took only three notes to play a tune – ‘Mary Had a Little Lamb’ – and by the time his parents arrived to take him home, he had taught two of his friends how to do the same. ‘They all clapped and smiled and were amazed and said, “Wow, it’s their first day and they’re playing songs.” It means that on the first day, I learnt to play the instrument, I put a band together, I rehearsed them and then we did a show, and we got a reaction and actually got through to them. All I’ve done since that day is get better at it.’

James Morrison tells the story 45 years later as he is driving a bus loaded with instruments from Sydney to his new music academy in Mount Gambier. In the intervening years he has nursed and rehearsed his rare gift as a student at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and under the mentorship of the great Australian jazz musician Don Burrows, who introduced the teenager to audiences in Australia and overseas as a member of the Don Burrows Quintet. He performed with Dizzy Gillespie at the Monterey Jazz Festival in California when aged only 16 and at the Montreux festival in Switzerland, and they recorded an album together. In 1984 *A Night in Tunisia*, Morrison’s first album with
the Morrison Brothers Big Bad Band, was named after Dizzy’s bebop hit.

By 1988 Morrison was joining American jazz bassist Ray Brown on the road and subsequently made a number of albums with him. ‘Ray Brown was just a walking groove machine,’ he says. ‘And when he started to play you instantly felt good.’

Emma Pask, the Australian vocalist whom Morrison took under his wing when she was 16, has performed with him for the past 20 years. ‘Both of us have a really strong passion for swing and groove, and if it feels good, that’s what we like,’ Pask says. ‘I think that’s one of his mottos: if it makes you feel good, then that’s a great thing.’ Morrison is the son of a preacher man, a Methodist minister, and he once felt a calling to the ministry himself but stuck with music because he figured it was how he could ‘bring the most joy to the world’. The sentiment that springs to mind for Australia’s most popular jazz musician, whether playing originals or masters of the past, is ‘feel good’.

That generosity of spirit flows through his work with other musicians, passing on what he has received not only through mentorships such as the one with Pask but now through the James Morrison Academy of Music in South Australia. This year the Academy will host as visiting teacher the US jazz saxophonist Jeff Clayton. ‘I like to quote Jeff,’ says Morrison: ‘Music is not mine, to have and to hold. I’ve got to give what’s been so freely given to me. Pass it on.’

He prepares young musicians at the Academy and on the road, and he offers audiences an insight into rich musical history with concerts such as the A to Z of Jazz, where he starts at the very beginning, with Louis Armstrong and Basin Street Blues.
Louis Armstrong (1901–1971)

Louis Armstrong is regarded as the most important influence in the foundation of jazz. He gave artistic legs to a provincial folk music rooted in the blues and transformed it into a global entertainment sensation, inventing the art of the improvised solo along the way. As trumpeter Max Kaminsky put it, Armstrong was ‘the heir of all that had gone before and the father of all that was to come’.

Born into poverty a stone’s throw from New Orleans’ fabled Storyville district, Armstrong learnt to play the cornet during a stint in the New Orleans Home for Colored Waifs. Upon his release, he honed his already formidable skills in local bands, quickly becoming the hottest thing in town. From 1925 he began recording under his own name, backed by his Hot Five and Hot Seven. In these recordings Armstrong cut loose the ambitions of the improvised solo from stop-time breaks to a new creative idiom in its own right, his solos forming a template for jazz musicians from then on.

By the 1930s Armstrong’s bravura virtuoso style and unique vocal delivery had made him jazz’s first superstar. Hollywood cameos followed, and his transformation from jazz innovator into showbiz icon was complete. His status as jazz’s foremost ambassador was officially sanctioned by a series of US State Department-sponsored overseas tours.

By the late 1940s the writing was on the wall for the big bands and in 1947 Armstrong established his All Stars, a flexible six-piece ensemble who remained his backing band until his death. In his later years he mined the popular song repertoire with stunning success and in 1964 won a new generation of fans with Hello, Dolly, which became his biggest hit.

Armstrong’s enormous commercial appeal was a double-edged sword: his charismatic screen and stage presence and performing traits drew criticism as well as acclaim during the politically charged mid-century. However, as is the revisionist way of such things, later generations of musicians, including Wynton Marsalis, have acknowledged the profound debt modern music owes to Armstrong.

‘That’s sort of a signature song for me,’ he says. ‘It’s the first jazz piece I ever learnt when I was seven. It’s also the piece he wants played at his funeral, with a big band of course.

He’s known as a trumpeter, but some critics yet prefer Morrison on trombone. In this concert he plays both instruments, and a few more. It’s the trombone in The Birth of the Blues, from the 1941 film featuring Jack Teagarden. ‘As a young trombonist it was really inspiring for me to see Jack Teagarden out front and on the trombone, because it was usually the trumpet player in that era of jazz that was out the front, and later on it was saxophone players who were often the stars,’ he says.

In all, Morrison plays about 18 instruments – like the number of cars he’s owned, it’s hard to keep count. In addition to trumpet and trombone, he plays the various types of saxophone, French horn, flugelhorn, euphonium, tuba, piano and double bass.

This evening’s program moves through the decades from traditional jazz of the 1920s to the fusion of the ’70s. For the 1930 Duke Ellington hit Mood Indigo, Morrison plays soprano saxophone, using an instrument made for him by Austrian company, Schagerl. Soprano saxophones are renowned for being temperamental, but Morrison says his version, more curved like a tenor saxophone, but smaller ‘so it almost looks like a toy’, has a mellow sound that many sopranos lack. ‘But all sopranos are hard to play in tune,’ he says – unlike the piano, which Morrison
WILLIAM P GOTTLIEB

Duke Ellington (1899–1974)

If Louis Armstrong codified the musical language of jazz, Duke Ellington elevated it to an art form. Throughout his life Ellington refused to be restricted by narrow genre boundaries and racial stereotypes and continually strove to create music that was, to quote his own favourite phrase, ‘beyond category’. Not for nothing did Australian composer Percy Grainger declare him one of the three greatest composers who ever lived, alongside JS Bach and Delius. In a career spanning 50 years he produced thousands of original compositions and amassed a recorded legacy that will probably never be surpassed.

Born into a middle-class family in Washington DC, Ellington started out in local dance bands before moving to New York and obtaining a breakthrough residency at the Cotton Club. It was at this time that he started to assemble some of the musicians who would form his Famous Orchestra and shape its unmistakable sound.

Radio broadcasts brought commercial success and the 1930s saw long tours across the US and to Europe. Ellington composed with his musicians’ idiosyncrasies in mind, and the long-term tenures of his bandsmen provided an experimental palette with which he developed his groundbreaking concepts of an orchestral jazz sound.

Ellington was instrumental in bringing jazz out of the nightclub and into the concert hall, initiating a series of annual concerts at Carnegie Hall from 1943. Eager to progress beyond the three-minute format of 78 records, he pioneered the extended jazz composition, using his Carnegie Hall performances to showcase a succession of suites.

Following the demise of the big bands, a triumphant appearance at the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival sparked an upturn in the band’s declining fortunes, and resulted in one of the most famous and successful recordings of Ellington’s career. He continued to perform and record at a relentless pace until cancer claimed him in 1974.
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Dizzy Gillespie (1917–1993)

Born in South Carolina, Dizzy Gillespie moved to New York in 1937 where he played with Teddy Hill and Cab Calloway. It was in the latter’s band that he met Mario Bauzá, an encounter that would spark his lifelong attraction to Afro-Cuban music and his collaboration with Latin percussionist Chano Pozo. It was during after-hours jams with Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk and Kenny Clarke at Minton’s nightclub in the early 1940s that bebop was born.

The frenetic pace of this music, along with its complex harmonic and rhythmic underpinnings (the tune almost seemed to be beside the point), was a turn-off for many of jazz’s dancehall devotees who had turned on to swing in the 1930s. The jazz being created by Dizzy and his cohorts demanded attentive listening and was as challenging as any piece of art music composed by the great classical masters.

Like Armstrong, Dizzy was a showman, his breathtaking technical prowess and sophisticated harmonic awareness notwithstanding. As he matured, his good-humoured manner endeared him to audiences, and the young lion of bebop mellowed into the elder statesman of jazz. The style of playing that he developed is still emulated by aspiring trumpet soloists today.

will play for the 1957 Count Basie standard Li’l Darlin’, a ‘meditative’ lull in the big band bracket of the program before Duke Ellington’s hot and wild El Gato closes the first half with – no doubt – plenty of high notes.

Morrison points out that the traditional jazz, swing and big band styles that comprise the first half of tonight’s concert were the musical mainstream of their day, before rock’n’roll stole the thunder from jazz in the 1950s. With the advent of rock, jazz went underground into bebop. ‘That was the first jazz that wasn’t pop music,’ he says. ‘It was a subversive music. Even jazz players said they didn’t like it.’ With Dizzy Gillespie’s A Night in Tunisia and Cherokee, which Charlie Parker recorded,
Miles Davis (1926–1991)

It’s a curious feature of Miles Davis’ creativity that, despite his seemingly endless pursuit of the new and unfamiliar, he nevertheless forged one of the most distinctive and instantly recognisable sounds in modern music. His was a highly – and at times painfully – personal voice and, although he eschewed trends and formula-driven clichés, he brought jazz to a wider audience once more in the aftermath of the bebop revolution.

Early formal studies at the Juilliard School took second place to 52nd Street and an apprenticeship playing with the likes of Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. But Davis grew restless with the rhythmic and harmonic strictures of bebop and began his lifelong pursuit of seeking out talented innovators who could help realise his artistic vision. The first of these was arranger Gil Evans, with whom he collaborated on the albums Birth of the Cool, Miles Ahead, Porgy and Bess and Sketches of Spain.

He was deeply influenced by pianist Bill Evans’ sophisticated tonal and harmonic sensibilities, and on Milestones and Kind of Blue he explored modal jazz, experiments which John Coltrane would take further in an almost spiritual quest. Davis’ 1963–68 rhythm section, comprising Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams, displayed astounding levels of interaction and technical virtuosity and was augmented in 1964 by Wayne Shorter, whose compositions increasingly pushed the boundaries of song construction. As rock music and soul tightened their grip he recruited guitarist John McLaughlin and keyboardists Chick Corea and Joe Zawinul for the fusion albums In a Silent Way and Bitches Brew.

Davis was a relentless experimenter and his inexhaustible ability to re-imagine the jazz landscape places him in an eminent line of pioneers that began with Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington.
João Gilberto version of the bossa nova-inflected *Desafinado* reached Number 15 on Billboard’s pop chart in 1962, while Joe Zawinul’s *Birdland* – furnishing the Z of the program title – enjoyed major chart success in 1977.

Morrison tours and plays so often that practice sessions are unnecessary to stay at the peak of his powers. And if he finds a wide spell between gigs, there is always the readymade band at home: sons Sam, William and Harry all play, the latter two providing a good rhythm section on guitar and double bass during jam sessions. Morrison has never been interested in technique for its own sake. ‘The technical ability that I’ve got just followed the passion,’ he says.

Passion was the tiger that made his musical legs run. And it’s what he aims to draw out the students who come through his new Academy, under the auspices of the University of South Australia, in Mount Gambier. ‘If you’re going to learn jazz, don’t learn some theory that you’ve got to think about later on,’ he says. ‘Listen. Get a feeling. And then try and play it and find it.

‘For me it’s all about how I’m feeling and the emotion of the music. You have a feeling, you convert it into music, people hear the music and it gets converted back into a feeling. That for me is the process of music, and it’s certainly the process of jazz as opposed to any other music. I might have taken Duke Ellington’s tune, but I improvised on it what I feel right now.’

Duke Ellington may have taken James Morrison on the A Train, but Morrison is no slouch at pulling people aboard the J Train.

RITA WILLIAMS © 2015
SUPPLEMENTARY BIOGRAPHIES BY LORRAINE NEILSON
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‘For me it’s all about how I’m feeling and the emotion of the music. You have a feeling, you convert it into music, people hear the music and it gets converted back into a feeling.’

MORRISON
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JAMES MORRISON
You can repeat the ‘guided tour’ experience of tonight’s concert with James Morrison’s A to Z of Jazz album, recorded last year with Hetty Kate and Benjamin Northey conducting the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

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ABC MUSIC 59790

Gordon Webster Meets Hetty Kate
This one’s for dancers and lovers of swing: a lovingly created, crowd-funded Lindy Hop album, with Gordon Webster at the piano and a five-piece band. Available though CD Baby and iTunes.

Kissing Bug
Five of Hetty Kate’s favourite songs from the 1940s and 50s, recorded one snowy afternoon in Brooklyn with Art Hirahara (piano), Tal Ronen (bass) and Dan Aran (drums). Available through CD Baby and iTunes.

More at: www.hettykate.com/discography

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March

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abc.net.au/classic

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BRAHMS & SIBELIUS
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Janine Jansen violin
Brahms, Butterley, Sibelius

Saturday 21 March, 1pm
SONG & DANCE
Ward Stare conductor
Daniela Mack mezzo-soprano
Ravel, Canteloube, Falla orch. Berio, Richard Strauss

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

**Brett Dean**

Two discs featuring the music of Brett Dean, including his award-winning violin concerto, *The Lost Art of Letter Writing*. SSO 200702, SSO 201302

**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 2013 this recording with James Ehnes and Ashkenazy was awarded a Juno (the Canadian Grammy). Lyrical miniatures fill out the disc. SSO 201206

**Tchaikovsky Second Piano Concerto**

Garrick Ohlsson is the soloist in one of the few recordings of the original version of Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No.2. Ashkenazy conducts. SSO 201301

**Stravinsky’s Firebird**

David Robertson conducts Stravinsky’s brilliant and colourful *Firebird* ballet, recorded with the SSO in concert in 2008. SSO 201402

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**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

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Yan-Pascal Tortelier conductor
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Since returning to Australia from Europe in 2006, Benjamin Northey has rapidly emerged as one of the nation’s leading musical figures. He has been Associate Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra since 2011, and this year he took up the post of Chief Conductor of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra.

Benjamin Northey studied with John Hopkins at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and then with Jorma Panula and Leif Segerstam at the Sibelius Academy in Finland. In 2009, he was selected as one of three conductors worldwide for the Allianz International Conductor’s Academy where he conducted the London Philharmonic and the Philharmonia orchestras under the mentorship of Vladimir Jurowski and Christoph von Dohnányi.

Since then he has conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, the New Zealand and Christchurch symphony orchestras, Auckland Philharmonia and the Southbank Sinfonia of London.

In Australia he has made his mark through critically acclaimed appearances as a guest conductor for concerts and recordings with the Australian state symphony orchestras as well as opera productions including L’elisir d’amore, The Tales of Hoffmann and La sonnambula for State Opera of South Australia, and Don Giovanni and Cosi fan tutte for Opera Australia.

Highlights from 2014 included Carmen for Opera Australia, Into the Woods for Victorian Opera, and concerts with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, NZSO, Auckland Philharmonia, and Christchurch Symphony Orchestra as well as the Melbourne, Queensland, Tasmanian and West Australian symphony orchestras. Most recently for the SSO he has conducted a stage-and-screen presentation of West Side Story. This year his engagements include the HKPO, NZSO and a production of Turandot for Opera Australia.

Benjamin Northey is an Honorary Fellow of the University of Melbourne Conservatorium, where he is also a lecturer in conducting.
James Morrison is a virtuoso in the true sense of the word. He plays trumpet and many other instruments, including trombone, piano and saxophones. He was given his first brass instrument at the age of seven; at nine he formed his first band; and at 13 he was playing professionally in nightclubs. When he was just 16, he made his US debut at the Monterey Jazz Festival.

Following this were performances at the big festivals in Europe, including Montreux, playing with Dizzy Gillespie, Cab Calloway, Woody Shaw, Red Rodney, George Benson, Ray Charles, B.B. King, Ray Brown, Wynton Marsalis and other jazz legends. There were also gigs in the world’s famous jazz clubs – the Blue Note and Village Vanguard in New York, the New Morning in Paris and Ronnie Scott’s in London.

His career has been diverse and perhaps not typical of most jazz musicians. He has recorded *Jazz Meets the Symphony* with the London Symphony Orchestra, and performed concerts at the Royal Albert Hall with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and in the Hollywood Bowl. He has given royal command performances on two occasions for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and played for US Presidents Bush and Clinton at Parliament House in Australia. He has also performed his own Euphonium Concerto at the Musikverein in Vienna, and he composed and performed the opening fanfare for the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000.

He relaxes by flying his private plane and driving in rally championships. His love of cars is well known and he has been a host on Top Gear Australia.

James Morrison has been artistic advisor for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra’s Kaleidoscope series and his concerts with the SSO have included the premiere of Lalo Schifrin’s Concerto for Jazz Trumpet and Piano (2007), performances of Graeme Koehne’s *High Art* concerto, and tributes to Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong.

He is deeply involved in education, conducting masterclasses and workshops in many countries and presenting the James Morrison Jazz Scholarship at Generations in Jazz. Recently he established in Mount Gambier the James Morrison Academy of Music, a school dedicated to the teaching of jazz and offering diplomas and degrees through the University of South Australia.
Born in Hampshire, England, Hetty Kate began her musical education with piano and violin lessons. As a little girl, she was taken to see West End musicals and at home she listened to Doris Day and Frank Sinatra records. Little did she know she would later forge a career sharing the music she loved with audiences around the world.

After arriving in Australia, she began classical singing lessons and also became interested in the poetry and melodies of her childhood, the Great American Songbook. Her formal studies were interspersed with frequent trips to New York, leading to her performing debut in 2007.

Since then she has performed in sold-out shows in North and South America, across Europe and throughout Asia, and has often been compared to a young Peggy Lee or to present-day chanteuses such as Stacey Kent and Sijie Nergaard. Now based in Melbourne, she has become a fixture on the jazz scene there, and has appeared at the Melbourne International Jazz Festival as well as festivals in New Zealand and Japan. She has performed with a number of Australia’s musical luminaries including James Morrison, Joe Chindamo and pianist Simon Tedeschi.

Hetty Kate is equally at home fronting symphony orchestras and big bands or serenading intimate jazz clubs. Her sweet sound and clear tone lends itself perfectly to the music she loves to sing.

Last year she performed with James Morrison and the Melbourne and Tasmanian symphony orchestras in the program you hear tonight, A to Z of Jazz, as well as appearing at the Wangaratta, Stonnington and Noosa jazz festivals. In 2013 she trod the boards as Ava Gardner in Eric McCusker’s musical Ava at the End of the World at The Famous Speigeltent in Melbourne, and she has appeared on 11 albums, including her latest release, Dim All The Lights, and the live recording of James Morrison’s A to Z of Jazz with the MSO.
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 – including three visits to China – have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

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 second year of David Robertson’s tenure as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.
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

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Mrs Barbara Murphy (right) first fell in love with Shefali Pryor’s oboe playing during her performances with violinist Nigel Kennedy and the SSO in 2010. After getting to know each other, they bonded over a mutual love of travel and knitting.

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Stuart Challender, SSO Chief Conductor and Artistic Director 1987–1991

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Together, we have an ambition to foster a love of orchestral music in school children of all ages, and to equip their teachers with the skills they need to develop this in our young people...

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You have to find a way in music to grab people...

Jerusalem (after Blake) is the most recent work completed in Georges' magnum opus Caeli enarrant…. Based on the poetry and visual art of William Blake, ‘this piece is somewhat psychedelic, even apocalyptic. Blake is a visionary, his poetry and art are very intense and direct. I too would like to grab people, take them by the throat. From a fortissimo darkness, through the most gentle serene moments. You have to find a way in music to grab people, not to leave them uninvolved.’

Georges Lentz’s Jerusalem (after Blake) was commissioned with the assistance of an anonymous donor. It receives its first Australian performances in February.

Robertson conducts La Mer
Wed 18 Feb, 6.30pm
Schumann 3 & 4
Sat 21 Feb, 2pm

AN EXCEPTIONAL MUSICIAN

First violinist Georges Lentz straddles the complementary professions of composer and performer

Once upon a time, performing composers were the norm. Sadly, these days they’re the exception. And our very own exception is first violinist Georges Lentz, also an internationally celebrated composer who originally hails from Luxembourg.

How do performing and composing inform each other? ‘I’ve always liked to do both,’ says Georges. ‘It gives a nice balance. When one thing is not going so well, there’s always the other to fall back on. Also, performing gives you insight into the practicalities of writing for musicians: you know what musicians like to see, you know what annoys them.’

‘It can sometimes be difficult – as a composer who is also an orchestral musician – to play Tchaikovsky all day long and then go home and write your own music. Sure, as musicians we have a responsibility to play the music of Tchaikovsky, or Walton, or even Elton John, in such a way that it is relevant and alive.’ But as a composer, he sighs, ‘it’s not always what you need to hear.’

Of his own music, Georges is extremely self critical. ‘Before a rehearsal process starts on a new piece, I am always full of doubts and fear. When I write a piece, I quite literally believe it’s the last piece I ever write.’ It’s a torturous path. ‘Every time I think “this is my last piece. I may as well pour everything I’ve got into this one.” It makes it quite an intense thing when I get to rehearsals. I’ve invested all of myself in that and what if, after all that, it’s no good?’

Photo: Tobias Bohm

SSO Bravo! #1 2015 Insert_2.indd   1
6/02/15   2:14 PM
I noticed in a recent concert that the clarinets seemed to keep swapping instruments, which, to the naked and distant eye, more or less looked exactly the same. What's the reason for this?

What a great question! Let me first say, it’s not because we’re extremely indecisive! Mostly we’re switching between two clarinets – the ‘B flat’ and ‘A’ clarinets. Physically, they’re about 2 cms different in length, with the A clarinet the longer of the two, and therefore sounding a semitone lower.

There are subtle, but important differences in tone colour between the two instruments. The B flat is slightly brighter, whereas the A clarinet has a more mellow, rounded tone. Sometimes we have to change between clarinets really quickly, especially in the music of Mahler and Strauss.

The mouthpieces are interchangeable, and we use cork grease to ensure the mouthpiece can come out easily and then be inserted into the other barrel.

There’s a danger in a really quick clarinet change that you might accidentally rip the reed out too.

Clarinets are considered transposing instruments. From a clarinettist’s point of view, using two different clarinets has the advantage of keeping key signatures to just four sharps or flats. Fully explaining transposition would take more space than I have here, but basically, if composers are nice then we don’t have to play in horrible key signatures.

Christopher Tingay, clarinet

Ask a Musician

I noticed in a recent concert that the clarinets seemed to keep swapping instruments, which, to the naked and distant eye, more or less looked exactly the same. What's the reason for this?

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The mouthpieces are interchangeable, and we use cork grease to ensure the mouthpiece can come out easily and then be inserted into the other barrel.

Yes, that’s our concertmaster Andrew Haveron – nine storeys high on the Sydney Opera House!

If you were near the Sydney Opera House on 4 February you would have seen spectacular projections, bringing our Greatest Hits from Vienna concert from inside the Concert Hall to viewers, not just on the foreshore, but watching from around the world. The dynamic footage of our musicians in performance was complemented by gorgeous imagery inspired by Vienna’s rich culture. The awe-inspiring result represented a true cross-city cultural collaboration, and we thank the Vienna Tourist Board for presenting the event. Enjoy the webstream via YouTube: bit.ly/VisionsViennaOnDemand
ANZAC SPIRITS

‘War is horrible,’ says Australian composer James Ledger. ‘The extent of its casualties goes well beyond the horrific number of people who die on the battlefields.’

On 24 April, the Sydney and New Zealand symphony orchestras are commemorating the centenary of the Gallipoli landings with simultaneous concerts featuring two world premieres by Australian and New Zealand composers. The SSO commissioned James to write War Music, which features words by Australian musician and storyteller Paul Kelly; the NZSO has commissioned Kiwi composer Michael F Williams to write Letters from the Front.

‘Paul’s new text is written from the point of view of the souls and spirits of the diggers who died there,’ explains James. ‘One of the lines in it was: “We died in smoke and noise. We died alone.” That’s the line that really hit me – “We died alone.” That just got me.’

To perform War Music, the SSO will be joined by singers from Gondwana Chorale, whose members are aged 17–25. Lyn Williams, Artistic Director and Founder of Gondwana Choirs, says there is a real impact in using young voices for a work like this.

‘If you think of soldiers at Gallipoli, they would have been in their late teens, early 20s; that’s exactly the age of our singers,’ says Lyn. ‘To me, there’s a power in that.

For the centenary commemorations of the 1915 Gallipoli landing, choristers from Turkey, France and New Zealand will augment the Australian Gondwana Chorale. ‘The idea was to represent many of the nations that were there in Gallipoli,’ Lyn explains. ‘It makes a lot of sense for these choristers to come together – especially with what’s going on in the world,’ says Lyn. ‘While there is conflict in the world, our young choristers can come together to present a positive affirmation of peace.’

Writing the piece also gave James pause for thought about war and conflict. ‘I deliberately chose the title War Music, rather than specifically addressing the Gallipoli landing, I think anybody who has lost their lives through a political decision in the name of their country – not just in 1915 – deserves to be commemorated.’

Gondwana Choirs is looking for host families to billet the visiting international choristers for these performances. If you are able to extend the ANZAC spirit in this way, please contact Tessa Kay at tessa@gondwanachoirs.com.au or call (02) 8274 7003.

Farewell Bravo! – till we meet again

Since 2012, we’ve been publishing Bravo! as an in-program magazine. But this has been just one manifestation of our audience newsletters over the years. If you’ve been a subscriber for long enough you’ll probably remember the quarterly Bravo! that was mailed to homes and the various newsletters – Notations, Symphony – that preceded it going back to the 1990s and even earlier.

One of the reasons we moved Bravo! to the program books was a desire to reach everyone in our audience, not just those who were on our subscriber mailing list. And for the past three years Bravo! has functioned as our way of sharing news and insights with anyone who attended a concert.

Recently we’ve found that the news we’d like to share and the musical personalities we want to introduce to you are too much for the few pages available at the back of the program. We’re also realising that printed booklets aren’t the best way to share music, talk or video in an increasingly multimedia world.

So even though this is the final issue of Bravo! as you’ve known it in recent years, stay tuned as we expand the offerings on our website, and continue to bring you a wealth of news and stories from behind the scenes.

Finally, we’d like to extend a huge thank you to Bravo! editor Genevieve Huppert, who has shepherded more than 30 issues of Bravo! into being. We especially admire the grace and imagination she has brought to the musician feature-profiles.

Past issues of Bravo! can be downloaded from sydneysymphony.com/bravo
SSO featuring his new piano concerto, he told audiences to come back to the concert hall and listen to the music that makes their orchestra shine. ‘My stuff’s not bad,’ he said, but orchestras are the ‘highest form of civilisation’.

TRADE SECRETS

Someone asked us recently if we use real cannons for the performance of Tchaikovsky’s 1812 Overture, which traditionally concludes Symphony in the Domain. As this is the final print issue of Bravo, we’re in the mood to spill a few trade secrets. Each cannon has pyrotechnics attached to the muzzle and is fired via a wireless remote. There are usually two special guests invited to ‘light’ the cannons with sparklers. For best effect, our stage manager cues the VIPs to touch the sparkler to the cannons at the appropriate moment. The pyro technician who is doing the actual ‘firing’ is also cued. Needless to say, after so many years of the 1812 Overture, the stage manager’s score is starting to look a little dog-eared...

DISCOVERY

If you haven’t yet been to one of our DownerTenix Discovery series concerts, then quite simply you’ve been missing out. Richard Gill, Artistic Director of the series, is communicator par excellence, and unpacks music in such a way that everyone can understand. This is his final year of leading these illuminating and inspiring presentations, so come along and begin by discovering Beethoven’s Second Symphony with Richard and the Sydney Symphony Sinfonia on 24 February. Discover Mahler Tue 5 May Discover Ravel Tue 25 Aug Discover Richard Strauss Tue 10 Nov City Recital Hall Angel Place

WELCOME

We welcome Jennifer Drysdale, our new Philanthropy Manager.