SIBELIUS 2

Robertson Conducts

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY
Thursday 8 October 2015

EMIRATES METRO SERIES
Friday 9 October 2015

GREAT CLASSICS
Saturday 10 October 2015
CONCERT DIARY

sydney symphony orchestra
David Robertson Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

CLASSICAL

Beethoven’s Missa Solemnis
BEETHOVEN Missa Solemnis
David Robertson conductor
Susanna Phillips soprano
Olesya Petrova mezzo-soprano
Stuart Skelton tenor (PICTURED)
Shenyang bass • Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

APT Master Series
Wed 14 Oct 8pm
Fri 16 Oct 8pm
Sat 17 Oct 8pm
Pre-concert talk by David Garrett 45 minutes before each performance

Mozart and the Brits
MOZART Adagio and Fugue
BRITTEN Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge
ARNOLD Concerto for two violins
Andrew Haveron violin-director
Emily Long & Freya Franzen violin

Mozart in the City
Thu 5 Nov 7pm
City Recital Hall Angel Place
Pre-concert talk by David Garrett at 6.15pm

Audra McDonald sings Broadway
Audra McDonald vocalist

Thu 5 Nov 6.30pm
Kaleidoscope
Fri 6 Nov 8pm
Sat 7 Nov 8pm
Pre-concert talk 45 minutes before each performance

Discover Richard Strauss
R STRAUSS Death and Transfiguration
Richard Gill conductor

Discovery
Tue 10 Nov 6.30pm
City Recital Hall Angel Place

Pictures at an Exhibition
DUKAS La Péri: Fanfare
SAINT-SAËNS Piano Concerto No.2*
HOLLEY Oboe Concerto PREMIERE
MUSSORGSKY orch. Ravel Pictures at an Exhibition*
Miguel Harth-Bedoya conductor (PICTURED)
Vadym Kholodenko piano
Shefali Pryor oboe

Meet the Music
Wed 11 Nov 6.30pm
Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 12 Nov 1.30pm
* Tea & Symphony
Fri 13 Nov 11am
complimentary morning tea from 10am
Mondays @ 7
Mon 16 Nov 7pm
Pre-concert talk 45 minutes before each performance (except Friday)

Thus Spake Zarathustra
WAGNER Lohengrin: Prelude to Act I
JONGEN Symphonie concertante for organ & orchestra
R STRAUSS Thus Spake Zarathustra
WAGNER Lohengrin: Prelude to Act III
Edo de Waart conductor • Olivier Latry organ

APT Master Series
Wed 25 Nov 8pm
Fri 27 Nov 8pm
Sat 28 Nov 8pm
Pre-concert talk by David Larkin 45 minutes before each performance

Pokémon: Symphonic Evolutions
Experience Pokémon brought to life by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra with exciting visuals from recent and classic Pokémon video games and all new arrangements!

Fri 20 Nov 8pm
Sat 21 Nov 2pm
Sat 21 Nov 8pm
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Barry Brown
Emirates Divisional Vice President, Australasia
Saturday’s performance will be broadcast live across Australia by ABC Classic FM.

Pre-concert talk by David Robertson in the Northern Foyer 45 minutes before each performance.

Estimated durations:
- 6 minutes
- 32 minutes
- 20-minute interval
- 48 minutes

The concert will conclude at approximately 3.30pm (Thu), 10pm (Fri), 4pm (Sat).

COVER IMAGE: Pili tornit (Cloud towers, 1904) by Finnish artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865–1931)
Sun Music (1989) by John Coburn (1925–2006) – gouache on paper study for the edition of screen prints to celebrate Peter Sculthorpe’s 60th birthday. National Library of Australia, Peter Sculthorpe Art Collection, 1030088. Coburn also designed the iconic tapestry stage curtains previously in use in the Joan Sutherland Theatre (Curtain of the Sun) and the Drama Theatre (Curtain of the Moon) at the Sydney Opera House.
In this concert, David Robertson has chosen to begin with music by Peter Sculthorpe, whose legacy was the cultivation of a powerful sense of Australian identity in the classical music of our nation. As Peter McCallum wrote last year: Sculthorpe ‘defined what it meant to be an Australian composer to a society that had not previously realised it needed one.’

Sculthorpe was fascinated by the Australian identity and its sometimes paradoxical connection to place. His Port Essington depicts an alienated European culture trying to survive in Australia’s harsh north. He would tell students, with bemusement, of the colonial buildings in his native Tasmania, oriented with their windows facing south to catch the sun, as they would have been in the northern hemisphere.

His series of Sun Music pieces brings to mind an image of Australia as a sun-baked landscape, and yet the Balinese inspiration behind Sun Music II reveals he was looking not only beyond traditional European models but also beyond Australia itself.

William Walton grew up in the English choral tradition, but he was also formed by the wit and verve of the jazz age. His music could be brooding and nostalgic or it could, as with his entertainment Façade, be smartly turned out. A third influence, Italy, is revealed in the title of the second movement of his Violin Concerto (Presto capriccioso alla napolitana) and it was on Ischia, near Naples, that Walton lived out his final years. (In this concert the solo part is played by Andrew Haveron, another Englishman abroad in a congenial climate.)

As with Sculthorpe, Jean Sibelius sought a new and distinctive voice. His Second Symphony, while still conforming to the expectations of the late Romantic style, shows all the signs of that emerging personal sound and a powerful sense of Finnish identity. No wonder it’s his most popular symphony. And in this concert its nobility and optimism are amplified by the romantic brilliance of a modern concerto and the energy of a ritual dance.
ABOUT THE MUSIC

Peter Sculthorpe

Sun Music II

A sun in me
And a sun in heaven
And beyond that, the immense sun behind the sun

D.H. Lawrence, Sun in Me

Coining the title ‘Sun Music’ in 1965, Peter Sculthorpe charted a new territory for Australian music and claimed it as his own. Critic Roger Covell noted that the first Sun Music (premiered by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra that year on its first visit to London) was ‘not in any sense bronzed, swaggering holiday music...it has more to say about the mystery, fear and lonely glare of the sun than about the pleasures of warmth. This is sun music written by a composer living in a country where the sun can be as much an enemy as a friend’. In his earlier Irkanda series of works, Sculthorpe had drawn inspiration from the ‘sun’ poems of D.H. Lawrence. He would later describe Lawrence’s sun as ‘the symbol of the giving of life, destroying of life, good and God’. Meanwhile, other ‘suns’ suggested themselves, and in the series of four Sun Music pieces (1965–69), Sculthorpe explained, ‘the sun of D.H. Lawrence, the Mexican sun, the Japanese, the Asian and Australian – and my own sun – are ever present’.

Sun Music II was actually the last of the series to be composed. It originated as a new movement Sculthorpe devised to add to the three other Sun Music pieces (and one other vocal movement) when they were strung together to become the score for a 1968 Australian Ballet production, Sun Music, with

Keynotes

SCULTHORPE

Born Launceston, 1929
Died Sydney, 2014

Perhaps no other composer has consciously attempted to make Australian orchestral music so truly Australian as Peter Sculthorpe. His output related closely to the social and physical climate of Australia and to the cultures of the Pacific Basin, and it was influenced by the music of Asia as well as by Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island music and culture.

Born in Launceston, Tasmania, Sculthorpe was educated at Melbourne University and Wadham College, Oxford. He first came to public attention with his String Quartet No.6 (1964) and his reputation was cemented with the Sun Music series for orchestra, with its image of Australia as a sun-baked landscape – a place where the sun can be as much an enemy as a friend.

SUN MUSIC II

The work we now call Sun Music II was the last of the series to be composed, and was initially written for a ballet score, also called Sun Music, for Robert Helpmann and the Australian Ballet. The following year, the SSO premiered the new movement, which had been adapted as an independent concert work, under the name Ketjak. That title referred to the ‘Monkey Dance’ of Balinese tradition, represented in Sculthorpe’s music by prominent passages for bongos and timbales, characterised by interlocking repeated patterns.

Peter Sculthorpe playing gamelan in Bali in 1974 – he retained a lifelong interest in the music of Asia.
choreography by Robert Helpmann. In the ballet (performed by the company over 100 times, in Australia and on tour abroad), Sculthorpe originally called the new piece, in second last position, *Energy*, designing it for maximum contrast with the ‘tropical’ movement, called *Growth* (*Sun Music III*) that preceded it, and the harsh ‘desert’ finale, *Destruction* (*Sun Music IV*) that followed.

While the ballet was in rehearsal, Helpmann asked Sculthorpe to write a stronger ending to the finale, but the composer later removed it from the published score of *Sun Music IV*. Along with other slight alterations, it was ultimately added to the end of *Energy* when it was revised and renamed *Ketjak* for its first performance as a free-standing concert piece, at a Sydney Symphony Orchestra Town Hall Prom concert on 22 February 1969, conducted by John Hopkins. It officially became *Sun Music II* later that year, when Sculthorpe began preparing a definitive final version of score and orchestral parts to send to his publisher Faber in London.

In Balinese music, *Kecak* (or *Ketjak*) is also known as the ‘Monkey Dance’ or ‘Monkey Chant’, a partly vocalised group performance piece (developed in the 1930s to appeal to Western tourists) corresponding to part of the *Ramayana*, in which the dancers fall into a kind of collective trance, or *shanghyang* (spirit dance). The *Ramayana* episode recounts the abduction of Rama’s wife, Sita, by the demon Rawana, and her rescue with the help of the Garuda Bird, the White Monkey, and seven monkey armies.

In Sculthorpe’s orchestral score, prominent passages for bongos and timbales represent this type of music, characterised by interlocking ostinato patterns, and its strict rhythmic pulse creates the framework for the even more bizarre and violent percussive sounds produced by the pitched instruments (strings, winds, and brass) of the usually non-percussive ‘normal’ Western orchestra. Sculthorpe described, in abstract terms, the type of piece he was most interested in writing around that time as having ‘a form which breathes freely, but includes conforming rhythms’. Without denying the structural importance of the music’s *kecak* origins, Sculthorpe later insisted: ‘The music isn’t oriental…but without Asia the work wouldn’t have existed.’

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William Walton
Violin Concerto

Andante tranquillo
Presto capriccioso alla napolitana
Vivace

Andrew Haveron violin

Maybe there is something about violin concertos which inspires romanticism in composers. Walton’s Violin Concerto stands as an example of the lyricism still possible in the 20th century, alongside Samuel Barber’s concerto, and Prokofiev’s First, with which Walton’s concerto shares a sognando (‘dreamily’) opening direction.

On the other hand, perhaps the romanticism of this concerto owes something to the playing style of Heifetz, for whom it was written, or to Italy, which was becoming such an influence on Walton. At any rate, according to biographer Michael Kennedy: ‘for sheer beauty of melody, brilliance of detail, and impasioned eloquence...[this] ranks among the greatest of modern violin concertos (few begin more magically or plunge more swiftly to the heart of the matter).’

Keynotes

WALTON
Born Oldham, near Lancashire, 1902
Died Ischia, an island near Naples, 1983

William Walton was the major English composer to emerge between Vaughan Williams and Britten. Born into a family of singers, his early influence was the Anglican choral tradition. He was a student at Oxford, but left without a degree in 1920 having failed to pass an obligatory exam. He became friends with the Sitwells, who gave him encouragement and a ‘lively cultural education’ as well as introducing him to the delights of Italy. By 1936 William Walton had composed a symphony, an entertainment called Façade, a viola concerto, and the cantata Belshazzar’s Feast, and was already regarded as a composer of some stature.

VIOLIN CONCERTO

Walton’s Violin Concerto was commissioned by the great virtuoso Jascha Heifetz and premiered in 1939 by Heifetz and the Cleveland Orchestra. It is organised in the traditional three movements, but follows a non-traditional tempo sequence: the ‘tranquil’ first movement is followed by a fast and capricious dance – designed for show – and then a lively finale, which refers back to the theme of the first movement.
The commission for Walton’s concerto arose in 1936 when the great violinist Jascha Heifetz asked Spike Hughes if he knew ‘a young man by the name of Walton’ (he’d been recommended to Heifetz by the viola virtuoso William Primrose, who later, incidentally, settled in Wollongong). By 1936 Walton, already the composer of a symphony, a viola concerto, a popular entertainment Façade, and the cantata Belshazzar’s Feast, had achieved considerable stature. Hughes introduced Heifetz to Walton at lunch, and as Walton later recalled: ‘I wasn’t all that keen, knowing how difficult it could be. However, we got as far as terms…’

Walton was capable of writing music that was stirringly, quintessentially British (as in Crown Imperial for the coronation of George VI) – music with a festive character and warm tunes. But the Violin Concerto shows the effects of Walton’s burgeoning interest in Italy, a land of dazzling sunshine, of ‘great symphonies of scents and colours’.

Walton wrote the first two movements in early 1938 at the Villa Cimbrone, overlooking the sea at Ravello. Back in London, he tried out the first two movements with the Spanish violinist Antonio Brosa, then sent over to Heifetz in America some examples of the violin writing with Brosa’s alternatives. Heifetz suggested Walton come to the States. Walton was piqued: ‘For tuppence I would give it to you,’ he said to Brosa. Brosa replied: ‘I am not Heifetz. He can play it anywhere he likes. He can make records – I cannot.’

At his Connecticut home, Heifetz added some accents and ‘jazzed…up’, in Walton’s words, the first movement cadenza, which he found too easy. The concerto was completed in June 1939, and premiered in the USA on 7 December 1939, with Jascha Heifetz and the Cleveland Orchestra. The war prevented Heifetz from giving the first British performance to which he had been entitled under the terms of the deal, and his copy of the solo part, with its fingerings and other expression markings, was lost when the ship on which it was being freighted was torpedoed. Fortunately, a copy had been photographed and this was flown over in time for the English premiere.

Listening Guide

The concerto begins magically. Though of less weight than first movements usually are, the Andante tranquillo is deeply felt, and has an almost indefinable allure. On first hearing, for example, the opening clarinet parts seem an unmeasured murmuring.

The second movement, designed for show, provides the clearest evidence of the work’s Italian genesis. The mercurial violin part, though based on the same harmonic under-structure, is subtly different each time. As Frank Howes says: ‘the effect on
the ear is one more example of that sharp, bright, dangerous and flickering tone characteristic of Walton’s music, which one is inclined to attribute to his scoring, but which is really inherent in its substance. The waltz in the middle recalls the composer of *Façade*.

The finale is expanded so that it may contain a long reference to the main tune of the first movement as well as a cadenza which grows out of it. Walton’s structural skills are evident in the way he casts the second subject in such a way as to refer back to the concerto’s very opening theme, and the way the opening theme of the last movement eventually appears as a counterpoint to this movement’s lyrical second subject.

Whether or not Heifetz’s influence had already, in subtler ways, left its mark on the music, this concerto marks ‘a turning point in Walton’s music’. Compared with previous works, says Michael Kennedy, especially the First Symphony, it is less spiky, less brittle, more relaxed, more indulgent.

**ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY GORDON KALTON WILLIAMS**

SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA © 1998

The orchestra for Walton’s Violin Concerto comprises two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes (one doubling cor anglais), two clarinets and two bassoons; four horns, two trumpets and three trombones; timpani and percussion (tambourine, field drum, xylophone and cymbal); harp and strings.

**SSO debut for a 258-year-old violin**

The violin you hear in this performance of the Walton concerto – a 1757 Guadagnini – was recently purchased by SSO patron Vicki Olsson and has been generously loaned to the SSO for the long-term use of concertmaster Andrew Haveron.

Andrew Haveron chose the violin over a three-week period, during which he tried more than 30 instruments. In the end he returned to the very first violin he’d tried. ‘I had started to develop a real connection with this violin,’ he says, ‘as if I already knew it and it already knew me, and it revealed things in my playing of which I didn’t know I was capable.’

Vicki Olsson – a regular concertgoer – says purchasing a fine violin had been in the back of her mind for a long time. ‘Buying an instrument to loan to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra...it just made perfect sense to me and it came together very naturally.’

Italian luthier Giovanni Battista Guadagnini (1711–1786) is considered one of the finest violin makers in history, in the company of his older contemporaries Antonio Stradivari and Giuseppe Guarneri.

Watch Andrew Haveron playing the 1757 Guadagnini: bit.ly/Guadagnini1757video
MORE SCULTHORPE

For a selection of classic Sculthorpe orchestral works, look for the SSO recording with former chief conductor Stuart Challender. Re-released last year, it features Kakadu, Mangrove, Earth Cry, Irkanda IV (with violinist Donald Hazelwood) and Small Town (with oboist Guy Henderson).

ABC CLASSICS 426 4812

You can find the four Sun Music pieces in a recording by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and David Porcelijn in a comprehensive 11-disc memorial collection, Peter Sculthorpe: The ABC Recordings. (The set also includes the SSO’s Sculthorpe recordings with Challender, Edo de Waart and Porcelijn.) The ASO’s Sun Music recordings are also available individually through iTunes.

ABC CLASSICS 481 1293

WALTON CONCERTOS

Jascha Heifetz himself recorded the Walton Violin Concerto in 1950, with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by the composer. There have been various releases, including one that couples the Walton with Elgar’s concerto (in which Heifetz is accompanied by the London Symphony Orchestra and Malcolm Sargent).

RCA VICTOR GOLD SEAL 7966

Among more recent recordings of the concerto is Tasmin Little’s performance with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Edward Gardner. It also offers a chance to get to know Walton’s symphonic voice, with Symphony No.1 filling out the album.

CHANDOS 5138

Several years ago the SSO recorded the Walton Cello Concerto with Pieter Wispelwey and conductor Jeffrey Tate. The concerto is programmed with unaccompanied cello pieces by Ernest Bloch, Benjamin Britten and György Ligeti, together with Walton’s Passacaglia for solo cello.

ONYX 4042

SIBELIUS SYMPHONIES

Osmo Vänskä’s acclaimed recordings of the Sibelius symphonies with the Lahti Symphony Orchestra are available as a complete 4-CD set and in individual releases.

BIS 862 (Symphony No.2 & No.3)
BIS 1286/8 [complete symphonies]

Or if you were lucky enough to hear Vladimir Ashkenazy’s Sibelius festival with the SSO in 2004, you might be interested in his 5-CD set of the Sibelius symphonies and tone poems, recorded with the Philharmonia Orchestra. (The set also includes Sibelius’s Violin Concerto with Boris Belkin as soloist.)

DECCA 473 5902

Broadcast Diary

October

| 92.9 ABC Classic FM |
| abc.net.au/classic |
| abc.net.au/classic |

Saturday 10 October, 2pm
SIBELIUS 2
See this program for details.

Please note that the previously listed broadcast of Beethoven’s Missa Solemnis (on Tuesday 20 October) will no longer take place.

SSO Radio

Selected SSO performances, as recorded by the ABC, are available on demand:

sydneysymphony.com/SSO_radio

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HOUR

Tuesday 13 October, 6pm
Musicians and staff of the SSO talk about the life of the orchestra and forthcoming concerts. Hosted by Andrew Bukenya.

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Sir Charles Mackerras
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

MAHLER ODYSSEY

The complete Mahler symphonies (including the Barshai completion of No.10) together with some of the song cycles. Recorded in concert with Vladimir Ashkenazy during the 2010 and 2011 seasons. As a bonus: recordings from our archives of Rückert-Lieder, Kindertotenlieder and Das Lied von der Erde. Available in a handsome boxed set of 12 discs or individually.

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Mahler 3 SSO 201101
Mahler 4 SSO 201102
Mahler 5 SSO 201103
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

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Jean Sibelius
Symphony No.2 in D, Op.43

**Allegretto**
Tempo andante, ma rubato
Vivacissimo – Lento e suave – Tempo primo –
  Lento e suave –
**Finale (Allegro moderato)**

‘It is as if the Almighty had thrown down pieces of a mosaic from Heaven’s floor and asked me to put them together.’ Sibelius’s description of the process of symphonic composition might refer specifically to the first movement of his Second Symphony, which exemplifies the notion of a series of fragments being drawn together to create a coherent musical unit.

This was considered an unusual approach to the use of symphonic structure, but no longer seems so because the popularity of this symphony long ago tamed whatever strangeness it once possessed. This opening movement would have sounded unusual to audiences used to the symphonic writing of Brahms or Dvořák. In most of their symphonic first movements, they present a series of themes in the opening minutes (the exposition). In the following section, the themes are broken up and re-examined (the development), before their primacy is re-asserted at the movement’s conclusion (recapitulation).

In the opening Allegretto of his Second Symphony, Sibelius approaches this structure in a manner that was to be characteristic of his later work, but new for him at this point: he presents us with a series of fragmentary musical ideas at the outset then uses the development section to illustrate their capacity for unity. In the movement’s final minutes, he draws the ideas apart again until they are reduced to their essentials.

Much of the literature about this work is focused on Sibelius’s achievements in this movement, which have obscured the many other facets of the work that mark it out as transitional rather than radical. However, we see the future Sibelius in his telescoping of the third movement into the fourth. Here he re-shapes symphonic externals in a manner that would contribute to the distinctiveness of his later symphonies.

But there are many other ways in which the work is linked strongly to its predecessor. In his wildly successful First Symphony, Sibelius had taken the language of Tchaikovsky and the Romantic nationalists and put his own stamp on it.

Keynotes

**SIBELIUS**

*Born Hämeenlinna, Finland, 1865*
*Died Ainola, Finland, 1957*

In his early symphonies, Sibelius takes the language of Tchaikovsky and the Romantic nationalists and put his own stamp on it. Emotionally, it is possible to feel a ‘darkness to light’ progression in these works, and to imagine they must be ‘about’ something. Finland was in a political crisis caused by Russian claims on the country’s independence, but Sibelius, already a national figure, rejected attempts to project a specific nationalist agenda onto the music. He intended it to speak for, and about, itself.

**SYMPHONY NO.2**

‘It is as if the Almighty had thrown down pieces of a mosaic from Heaven and asked me to put them together.’ Sibelius’s description of the process of symphonic composition might refer specifically to the first movement of his Second Symphony, which exemplifies the notion of a series of fragments being drawn together to create a coherent musical unit.

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But there are many other ways in which the work is linked strongly to its predecessor. In his wildly successful First Symphony, Sibelius had taken the language of Tchaikovsky and the Romantic nationalists and put his own stamp on it.
Much of the Second Symphony inhabits the same emotional territory: in terms of strong feeling, the opening movement is not as significant as the andante which follows it; in its powerful extremes of expression, this is the work’s centre of gravity. Likewise, a Romantic fervour dominates the mood of the finale.

At the conclusion of the work, it is possible to feel that the ‘darkness to light’ progression of the musical events must be ‘about’ something. Sibelius was already a national figure at this time, and an artist of some international standing: En Saga, the First Symphony, The Swan of Tuonela, Finlandia and the King Christian music were finding increasing success in Europe and the United States. With Finland in the middle of a political crisis caused by Russian claims on the country’s independence, a bold new symphony by a famous compatriot that concluded, so to speak, with the scent of victory in its nostrils, was bound to create the impression that it was a portrayal of Finland’s struggle to assert its identity.

Sibelius rejected all attempts by his well-meaning champions to project a nationalist agenda onto the music. His methodology, particularly in the symphony’s first half, is subtle and intricate, and does not suggest itself as the work of someone out to write musical propaganda. His evident ability to strike out on a distinctive artistic path of his own is indication enough that he was not interested in becoming the popular musical face of Finnish nationalism. As Sibelius’s most authoritative biographer, Erik Tawaststjerna, put it: ‘His conviction that the time for national-romantic symphonies was drawing to an end was growing. One might say that Sibelius experienced the romantic crisis intuitively.’

It was a trip to Italy in February 1901 that got him going on the composition of the Second Symphony. His mentor and patron, Axel Carpelan, felt the composer had sat at home long enough and that Italy would inspire him as it had inspired Tchaikovsky and Richard Strauss before him. The composer used his Italian sojourn, spent mostly in Rapallo, to begin sketches for a piece based on the exploits of Don Juan, and created other material for a four-movement symphonic fantasy.

On returning home Sibelius realised that it was no symphonic fantasy he was creating but a fully-fledged symphony. It caused him some difficulty. ‘I have been in the throes of a bitter struggle with this symphony. Now the picture is clearer and I am now proceeding under full sail. Soon I hope to have something to dedicate to you,’ he wrote to Carpelan in November 1901. But he continued to revise the work so that its premiere in Helsinki had to be twice postponed. Sibelius himself conducted these first performances in March 1902, at which the work was an immediate success.

‘It is as if the Almighty had thrown down pieces of a mosaic from Heaven’s floor and asked me to put them together.’

SIBELIUS
**Listening Guide**

The initial theme of the **first movement** might be called unassuming – a simple rising and falling 11-note theme for the strings. It is one of those rhythmic figures Sibelius contrives to behave like a tune, and soon blossoms into one, a pastoral theme given to the woodwinds. The horns then give out a slower, more lyrical version of the idea. Soon we encounter a more passionate, wide-ranging tune for the strings, punctuated by long pauses, and a theme for the woodwind emerging from a note held for nearly four bars. There is also a marvellous sequential theme for the strings, played pizzicato.

These individual thematic events are gradually dovetailed, superimposed and juxtaposed as Sibelius brings them closer together. And this is the meaning and purpose of this music: the creation of a logical musical argument out of the seemingly disparate fragments he at first presented to us. Where Sibelius’s tone poems are often descriptive, or at least based on external narratives, the drama here is all in the music.

The movement climaxes in the development section – remember, this was unusual for a symphony at this time – after which the musical texture is gradually filleted away until all that is left is the theme-like rhythm with which the movement began.

The striking opening of the **second movement** – a timpani roll followed by the pizzicato tread of lower strings – is followed by a haunting chant-like figure marked *lugubre*, played by the bassoons. This is the dark world Sibelius was to explore more fully in his Fourth Symphony. A feverish transformation of this bassoon theme leads to a passage of great intensity. The brass writing is notably dark and craggy, with particularly telling music for the tuba (this is the last time he would use this instrument in a symphony). The coda is magnificently bleak and abrupt.

The **Vivacissimo** movement contains two striking ideas: the scurrying string theme at the outset that suggests Bruckner while being far more fleet-footed, and a wonderfully lyrical idea – commencing with nine repeated notes – first heard on the oboe and which soon bursts forth passionately on the strings.

The first two movements have ended quietly. Now Sibelius ends his **Vivacissimo** by linking it directly to the **Finale**. A rocking three-note figure forms a bridge to the final movement, and then turns out to be its main theme, played out over a grinding accompaniment, and followed by heroic trumpet fanfares. A wonderfully harmonised woodwind theme is then transformed into a lyrical passage for the upper strings. The atmosphere
of pomp, ceremony and high-flown romance is interrupted only by a wistful woodwind theme given over a murmuring accompaniment by the lower strings. The sense of triumph renews itself, however, by way of exhaustive sequential development, and the symphony ends with grand rhetorical re-statements of the final three-note theme, now joyous and resplendent.

PHILLIP SAMETZ © 2002/2004

Sibelius’s Second Symphony calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and strings.

The SSO first performed this symphony in 1940 under Georg Schneevoigt, an important advocate for Sibelius’s music in Australia, and most recently in 2011, conducted by Jahja Ling.

At the conclusion of the work, it is possible to feel that the ‘darkness to light’ progression of the musical events must be ‘about’ something.
David Robertson is a compelling and passionate communicator whose stimulating ideas and music-making have captivated audiences and musicians alike. A consummate musician and masterful programmer, he has forged strong relationships with major orchestras throughout Europe and North America.

He made his Australian debut with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 2003 and soon became a regular visitor to Sydney, with projects such as The Colour of Time, a conceptual multimedia concert; the Australian premiere of John Adams’ Doctor Atomic Symphony; and concert performances of The Flying Dutchman with video projections. In 2014, his inaugural season as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, he led the SSO on a seven-city tour of China.

Last year he launched his tenth season as Music Director of the St Louis Symphony. Other titled posts have included Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Music Director of the Orchestre National de Lyon and resident conductor of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. An expert in 20th- and 21st-century music, he has also been Music Director of the Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris (where composer and conductor Pierre Boulez was an early supporter). He is also a champion of young musicians, devoting time to working with students and young artists.

David Robertson is a frequent guest with major orchestras and opera houses throughout the word and in recent seasons he has conducted the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and the Philadelphia and Cleveland orchestras, as well as the Berlin Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Dresden, BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. Last year he conducted the controversial but highly acclaimed Metropolitan Opera premiere of John Adams’ Death of Klinghoffer.

His awards and accolades include Musical America Conductor of the Year (2000), Columbia University’s 2006 Ditson Conductor’s Award, and, with the SLSO, the 2005–06 ASCAP Morton Gould Award for Innovative Programming. In 2010 he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 2011 a Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

David Robertson was born in Santa Monica, California, and educated at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he studied French horn and composition before turning to conducting. He is married to pianist Orli Shaham.

The position of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director is also supported by Principal Partner Emirates.
Andrew Haveron joined the SSO as Co-Concertmaster in 2013, arriving in Sydney with a reputation as one of the most sought-after violinists of his generation. With his unrivalled versatility, he is highly respected as a soloist, chamber musician and concertmaster.

As a soloist, he has played concertos with conductors such as Colin Davis, Roger Norrington, Jiří Bělohlávek, Stanisław Skrowaczewski and John Wilson, as well as David Robertson, performing a broad range of well known and less familiar repertoire with many of the UK’s finest orchestras.

As first violinist of the internationally acclaimed Brodsky Quartet (1999–2007), his work included collaborations with artists ranging from Anne Sofie von Otter and Alexander Baillie to iconic crossover work with Elvis Costello, Björk, Paul McCartney and Sting. He recorded more than 15 albums with the quartet, many of which won awards such as Diapason d’or and Choc du Monde de la Musique. He has also appeared with numerous other chamber groups, such as the Nash and Hebrides ensembles, the Logos Chamber Group, Kathy Selby, and the Omega Ensemble.

Andrew Haveron is in great demand as a concertmaster and director, and has worked with all the major symphony orchestras in the UK and many others around the world. In 2007 he became concertmaster of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and in 2012 he joined the Philharmonia Orchestra. He also led the World Orchestra for Peace at the request of Valery Gergiev, and he has been the leader of the John Wilson Orchestra since its inception. In addition to his work in Australia this season, he will be appearing with orchestras in Singapore, Hong Kong and London, and touring with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields.

Born in London in 1975, Andrew Haveron studied at the Purcell School and the Royal College of Music and in 1996 was the highest British prize winner at the Paganini Competition for the past 50 years. In 2004 he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Kent for his services to music.

Andrew Haveron plays a 1757 Guadagnini violin, generously loaned to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra by Vicki Olsson. [Read more on page 13.]
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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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.
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