RUSSIAN ROMANTICS

MEET THE MUSIC
Wednesday 22 July 2015

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY
Thursday 23 July 2015

EMIRATES METRO SERIES
Friday 24 July 2015
CONCERT DIARY

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
David Robertson Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

CLASSICAL

SSO Chamber Music Cocktail Hour
Echoes: Love & Nostalgia

- DVOŘÁK Five songs from Cypresses, for string quartet
- BRAHMS Clarinet Quintet
- Francesco Celata clarinet
- Lerida Delbridge violin • Marina Marsden violin
- Justin Williams viola • Catherine Hewgill cello

Sat 18 July 6pm
Utzon Room
Sydney Opera House

Meet the Music
Wed 22 Jul 6.30pm
Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 23 Jul 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 24 Jul 8pm
Pre-concert talk 45 minutes before each performance

Russian Romantics

SCHULTZ
Sound Lur and Serpent – Fanfare AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

TCHAIKOVSKY Piano Concerto No.1
RACHMANINOFF Symphony No.1
Vasily Petrenko conductor (PICTURED)
Simon Trpčeski piano

Wed 22 Jul 6.30pm
Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 23 Jul 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 24 Jul 8pm
Pre-concert talk 45 minutes before each performance

Mozart and the Violin

MOZART Rondo in B flat, K269
DVOŘÁK Czech Suite
MOZART Violin Concerto No.4 in D, K218
Isabelle Faust violin-director

Meet the Music
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Dancing with the Devil

Rachmaninoff & Shostakovich

VERDI Macbeth: Ballet Music
RACHMANINOFF Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini
SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No.5
James Gaffigan conductor (PICTURED)
Kirill Gerstein piano

Mon 24 Aug 7pm
Pre-concert talk by Natalie Shea at 7.15pm

Kirill Gerstein in Recital

BARTÓK 3 Pieces from Mikrokosmos
BACH Three-Part Inventions (Sinfonias)
LISZT Transcendental Etudes

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Romeo & Juliet with Bell Shakespeare

PROKOFIEV
Romeo and Juliet: Scenes from the ballet music with excerpts from Shakespeare’s play
Simone Young conductor
John Bell director
Actors from Bell Shakespeare

Meet the Music
Wed 22 Jul 6.30pm
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Rob Gurney
Divisional Vice President Australasia Emirates
MEET THE MUSIC
WEDNESDAY 22 JULY, 6.30PM
THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY
THURSDAY 23 JULY, 1.30PM
EMIRATES METRO SERIES
FRIDAY 24 JULY, 8PM
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

Thursday’s performance will be recorded by ABC Classic FM for broadcast on Saturday 25 July at 1pm.
Pre-concert talk by Scott Davie in the Northern Foyer 45 minutes before each performance. Visit sydneysymphony.com/speaker-bios for more information.

Estimated durations:
4 minutes, 32 minutes, 20-minute interval, 42 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 8.20pm (Wed),
3.20pm (Thu), 9.50pm (Fri).


RUSSIAN ROMANTICS

Vasily Petrenko conductor
Simon Trpčeski piano

ANDREW SCHULTZ (born 1960)
*Sound Lur and Serpent* – Fanfare for brass and percussion, Op.98

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)
Piano Concerto No.1 in B flat minor, Op.23
*Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso – Allegro con spirito*
*Andantino semplice – Prestissimo – Andantino*
*Allegro con fuoco*

INTERVAL

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1873–1943)
Symphony No.1 in D minor, Op.13
*Grave – Allegro ma non troppo*
*Allegro animato*
*Larghetto*
*Allegro con fuoco*
Declaration of Love – oil painting from 1889–91 by Vladimir Egorovich Makovsky (1846–1920)
On this program are two works that the SSO is performing for just the second time. One is very new, the other is more than a hundred years old but fell out of musical circulation through fate and circumstance.

Andrew Schultz’s fanfare *Sound Lur and Serpent* was composed for our tour to China last year and received its first performances abroad, representing Australian music and music-making. Now this short and highly effective piece can be heard at home.

The other piece receiving its second outing is Rachmaninoff’s First Symphony, which we performed for the first time in 2007, even though it was composed and premiered in the closing years of the 19th century when Rachmaninoff was in his early 20s. There’s a story behind the delay, with bad conducting, hostile critics, exile, a lost score and eventually a happy discovery, which led to the second-ever performance – in Moscow – in 1945. It was only 40 years later that it was eventually heard in Australia.

The First Symphony was one of three works that Rachmaninoff said ‘frightened’ him and that he wished to revise. As it happens, he never got the chance to do so, but its strengths and qualities stand for music-lovers today. It’s easy to recognise the mature Rachmaninoff of the later works: there’s the unquestionable beauty of the themes, the dramatic instinct, and a feeling of yearning nostalgia – all qualities that were to make him a ‘Romantic’ of the 20th century.

They were also qualities that he shared with Tchaikovsky – he other Romantic Russian on this program. And from Tchaikovsky we hear one of the most popular of piano concertos. There’s no surprise in its success: it begins with the combined power of piano and orchestra, a characteristic theatrical flourish and a fabulous opening melody – just the first in a concerto richly endowed with wonderful themes that sing and dance – and concludes with a thrilling finale based on a wild Cossack dance.
Top: Composer Andrew Schultz at the Sydney Opera House.

Clockwise, above from left: Bronze Age lur found in Zealand, Denmark. Serpent at Museu de la Música de Barcelona. Display of serpents at the Musical Instrument Museum in Brussels. Display of lurs at the National Museum, Copenhagen.
Andrew Schultz

*Sound Lur and Serpent – Fanfare for brass and percussion, Op.98*

Sound lur and serpent,
Strike drum and gong.
Run!
Fire breathes to swallow,
Flee, while flee you can.

*Sound Lur and Serpent* is a short fanfare that taps into the mythology and drama of brass and percussion and their use to signal, to warn and to celebrate.

In 2010 I came across the wonderful collection of ancient musical instruments in the German Museum in Munich, which includes a Bronze Age lur and some more recent serpents. The lur and serpent are old brass instruments with extraordinary primal shapes drawing on the horns of great beasts and the curves of snakes. While at the German Museum I wrote the above short poem in my sketchbook and made a note: ‘Lur and Serpent – a good starting point for a fanfare.’

A few months before that, in November 2009, the weather bureau in Australia had issued its first ‘Catastrophic’ bushfire danger rating. The ratings of ‘High’, ‘Very High’, ‘Severe’ and ‘Extreme’ were no longer sufficient to cope with the continual and terrifyingly increasing presence of summer bushfires in the world’s driest inhabited continent.

These two things – the presence of fire and the signalling power of brass and percussion – have merged in my mind to lead to this piece.

ANDREW SCHULTZ © 2014

*Sound Lur and Serpent* calls for eight horns, five trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani and four percussionists.

The fanfare was composed for the SSO and premiered during the orchestra’s China tour in 2014. This is its Australian premiere.

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Keynotes

SCHULTZ

*Born Adelaide, 1960*

Andrew Schultz was born in Adelaide and studied at Queensland University, Pennsylvania University and King’s College London. His teachers and mentors included Colin Brumby, George Crumb, David Lumsdaine and Luciano Berio. His music covers a broad range and has been performed, recorded and broadcast by leading ensembles and musicians worldwide.

In addition to three symphonies and other music for orchestra, he has composed several large-scale dramatic works, several of which incorporate parts for Indigenous singers. His three operas (*Black River*, *Going Into Shadows* and *The Children’s Bach*) have been presented live and on film internationally, and his cantata *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* (with a libretto by Gordon Kalton Williams) was premiered and recorded by the SSO in 2003.

He has held senior composition posts and residencies at Guildhall School of Music London, University of Wollongong, London’s Institute of Advanced Musical Studies, Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada and Cité internationale des Arts in Paris. He is currently Professor of Music at the University of New South Wales and Director of the Symphony Australia/TSO Composers’ School.
Tchaikovsky

Piano Concerto No.1 in B flat minor, Op.23

Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso – Allegro con spirito
Andantino semplice – Prestissimo – Andantino
Allegro con fuoco

Simon Trpčeski piano

If it was fortuitous that Tchaikovsky succeeded at his first attempt, writing what some consider the greatest piano concerto of all time, it is surely remarkable that in the same stroke he inaugurated an entire Russian genre. Excepting the earlier examples by his teacher, Anton Rubinstein, of whom critics noted a lack of ‘Russianness’, Tchaikovsky’s First Piano Concerto established a model renowned for drama and an intense lyricism, often marked by extraordinary virtuosity. These attributes can be noted in successive compositions by Rachmaninoff, Medtner, Scriabin, Prokofiev and Khachaturian, to name just a few. For, in Russia, there had been no ‘classical’ tradition that Tchaikovsky could build on. Partly as a result of social hierarchy, and partly due to Europe-leaning tastes of the Imperial court, art music had been an imported commodity until the middle of the 19th century; the distinctive characteristics of the land and its people were yet to be fully explored. It was Anton Rubinstein who had insistently argued for the creation of a Conservatory in St Petersburg, so as to foster native talent, and a young Tchaikovsky who gained the title of ‘free artist’ in its first graduating year.

Written over six weeks late in 1874, the concerto is not Tchaikovsky’s only youthful work to find a permanent place in the repertoire – Romeo and Juliet (1869, later revised) and Swan Lake (1876) are distinguished additions – but it was the first to receive an international premiere. The dedicatee of the concerto, Hans von Bülow, performed the work in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1875 to positive reviews, yet it is difficult to imagine that the small band, consisting of only four first violins, matched the music’s potential. (A critic noted that, after a missed entry of the trombones in the first movement, Bülow cried out ‘the brass may go to hell!’) Rather, it is likely that the scope of the new concerto was first realised in a performance in Moscow by Sergei Taneyev later that year (following an apparently poor performance by Gustav Kross in St Petersburg) – the composer noted that he ‘could not wish to hear a better performance,’ and he was touched that his young Moscow student had dedicated himself to mastering the concerto.

Keynotes

TCHAIKOVSKY

Born Kamsko-Votkinsk, 1840
Died St Petersburg, 1893

Tchaikovsky represented a new direction for Russian music in the late 19th century: fully professional and cosmopolitan in outlook. He embraced the genres and forms of Western European tradition – symphonies, concertos and overtures – bringing to them an unrivalled gift for melody. But many music lovers would argue that it’s his ballets that count among his masterpieces, and certainly it’s Tchaikovsky’s extraordinary dramatic instinct that comes to the fore in all his music, whether for the stage or the concert hall.

PIANO CONCERTO NO.1

This is one of the most popular of concertos (ABC Classic FM listeners voted it into their top ten). One of the reasons is the impressive way it begins and ends: piano and orchestra at full strength for maximum sonority and excitement. And in between Tchaikovsky supplies a glorious mine of melodic invention and piano virtuosity. The concerto appears to follow the traditional three-movement structure, but the middle movement is like a symphonic slow movement and scherzo blended together. The exhilarating finale has a Cossack dance as its theme. It was first performed, by Hans von Bülow in Boston in 1875 and has held its place in listeners’ hearts ever since.
And ‘mastery’ is what is required here of pianists. It had been to Anton Rubinstein’s younger brother, Nikolai – an exceptionally gifted pianist by all accounts – that Tchaikovsky had turned within days of the score’s completion, seeking advice about piano writing that only a professional could offer. Instead – and quite notoriously – Nikolai Rubinstein savaged the composition, devastating its composer with comments suggesting that, in all, only a few pages could be salvaged and that the remainder should be discarded. There has been speculation ever since over his reasons – ranging from jealousy to a tempestuous personality – but the defiant young composer remained true to his word, publishing the work exactly as it stood. In any event, Nikolai soon recanted his position, conducting the first Moscow performance with Taneyev, and performing often as soloist in the years before his early death.

With hindsight, it might have been over concerns for the demanding solo part that Rubinstein voiced opinions, or about sections where piano textures might be lost beneath the...
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orchestration. Or it could have been about structural matters that are still difficult to explain today, chief of which is the famous melody that serves as a grand introduction to the first movement, a theme that, inexplicably, never returns and which is, in technical terms, in the ‘wrong’ key. (In this passage, Tchaikovsky eventually relented to the advice of later interpreters in his revised version of 1889, replacing the lightweight arpeggios that had previously accompanied the soaring string melody with the now-famous double-octave chords.) In terms of the structure, it is the brisk, dotted theme introduced quietly by the piano after the introduction that is the real first subject in this sonata-form movement. And here, as if to indicate to the world the ethnic authenticity of his music, Tchaikovsky follows the lead of the newly formed ‘nationalist’ group of composers – the so-called kuchka – by borrowing a Ukrainian folksong, ‘Oy, kryatshe, kryatshe’.

The simple theme that opens the second movement typifies Tchaikovsky’s innate gift for melody, the solo flute conjuring folk-like affinities. A central section, however – originally marked Allegro vivace assai but later escalated to Prestissimo, no doubt capitalising on the concerto’s virtuosic appeal – briefly quotes a café waltz, ‘Il faut s’amuser, danser et rire’, well-known to the composer’s circle of friends.

And it is to another Ukrainian folksong, ‘Vidy, vidy, Ivan’ku’, that Tchaikovsky turns for the principal theme of the finale, its dance-like cross-rhythms evoking ‘national’ character, often referred to as narodnost’ in Russia. The broadly lyrical melody that provides contrast with this material succeeds in holding back the momentum only momentarily, before the concerto arrives at a seemingly inevitable conclusion: a forceful double-octave passage traverses the entire keyboard, moving headlong into an apotheosised statement of the movement’s lyrical theme, the pianist indefatigably leading the entire orchestra with fortissimo treble chords. It is a famous and satisfying ending well known to audiences now, yet, to more than a few Russian composers from ensuing years, it proved an at times irresistible attraction.

SCOTT DAVIE © 2011

Tchaikovsky’s First Piano Concerto calls for an orchestra comprising pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinet and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets and three trombones; timpani and strings.

The SSO first performed the concerto on 4 June 1938; Allen McCristal was soloist and George Szell the conductor. The orchestra played it most recently in 2013 with pianist Joyce Yang and Charles Olivieri-Munroe.
Rachmaninoff
Symphony No.1 in D minor, Op.13

Grave – Allegro ma non troppo
Allegro animato
Larghetto
Allegro con fuoco

Those of the public who love Rachmaninoff’s music rarely think of him as a composer of symphonies. A great virtuoso pianist, it is by his works with piano that he is usually remembered, especially the second and third piano concertos and the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini. Yet like most Romantic composers, Rachmaninoff longed to be recognised as a symphonist. Two of the very small number of works he composed after leaving Russia are symphonic: the Symphonic Dances and the last of his three symphonies. Although numbered his Third, that work may as well as been his second symphony during his lifetime, for he refused to let his first be published.

On 28 March 1897 in St Petersburg, Rachmaninoff’s First Symphony had one of the most devastatingly discouraging first performances in musical history. Rachmaninoff was so upset that he could compose nothing for three years. Among the hostile critics of that premiere César Cui distinguished himself in the history of musical abuse by writing: ‘if there were a conservatorium in hell and one of its students had been asked to compose a symphony on the subject of the seven plagues of Egypt, and had written a symphony like Rachmaninoff’s, he would have won a prize for it’.

Rachmaninoff was rightly convinced that his symphony was not judged on its merits, and he blamed the terrible performance – many observers suspected Glazunov, who conducted, was drunk. But the composer never followed up his intention of revising the work, and believed it to be lost (the full score was left behind at his country house when he went into exile in 1917). Only after his death were the orchestral parts rediscovered in Leningrad (the former and now again St Petersburg). The second performance was given in Moscow in October 1945, by the USSR State Symphony Orchestra under Alexander Gauk.

This symphony came relatively late to the repertoire of Australian orchestras (the West Australian Symphony Orchestra gave the first Australian performance as recently as 1985). In the meantime, this First Symphony by the 22-year-old Rachmaninoff has been found fully worthy to stand alongside

Keynotes

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

Rachmaninoff found success as a composer, pianist and conductor – but rarely in more than one field of endeavour at a time. Performing provided a major source of income in later life after he moved to America, but this interfered with his composing and skewed perceptions of his work. He was one of the finest piano virtuosos of his day and his own compositions reveal the extent of his formidable technique.

SYMPHONY NO.1

This was the symphony that caused all the trouble.
Rachmaninoff – with an impressive first piano concerto, The Rock and the Capriccio on Gypsy Themes already under his belt – completed the bulk of the First Symphony in 1895. It was premiered in Moscow in 1897 in what was by all accounts a dreadful performance that failed to do justice to the music: the critics were scathing, his friends embarrassed, the composer mortified. He went through a period in which he composed almost nothing – the so-called ‘creative hiatus’. Although he later intended to revise the symphony, in the end it was lost and only rediscovered after his death.
its two successors. In some respects, indeed, it could be regarded as the most adventurous and satisfyingly structured of the three. It is direct and powerful in its expression of the emotion; Rachmaninoff, without explaining, placed at the head of the score the biblical quotation ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay’, which Tolstoy had used for his novel *Anna Karenina*. But if Rachmaninoff’s symphony has a program, it is hidden.

What is more obvious is that many of the themes of the work are derived from the traditional chants of the Russian Orthodox Church, which Rachmaninoff adapts to form symphonic themes. The same motifs are used in all four movements of the symphony, a technique used by Tchaikovsky, whose influence is to be heard throughout, notably in the opening of the first movement, with its motto theme (a melodic germ, little more than an inverted turn), and the explosion of sound which begins the development, as in Tchaikovsky’s *Pathétique* Symphony. This is a fugal combination of two chant-like phrases, the first of which immediately followed the motto in the introduction. Meanwhile there has been a strongly contrasted second subject, described by Patrick Piggott as of languorously chromatic and exotic character. The broad hymn-like climax of the first movement is a reminder of the influence of religious chant.

The ghostly and mysterious scherzo which is the second movement is derived from the music in the introduction to the whole symphony. Instead of the usual trio, there is a long and
A premiere to end all premieres...?

The disastrous premiere of his First Symphony on 15 March 1897 plunged Rachmaninoff into deep depression. Most of the blame could be pinned on the apathetic performance of the conductor Alexander Glazunov, competent enough but unsympathetic to the music.

*The performance was raw, unthought-out, unfinished, and it produced the impression of a slovenly play-through and not of the realisation of a definite artistic idea, which the conductor clearly lacked. Rhythmic vitality, so essential in the works and performances of Rachmaninoff, withered. Dynamic shadings, gradations of tempo, nuances of expression – everything in which this music is so rich – disappeared. A kind of shapeless, turbid sound-mass dragged on interminably. The torpid character of the conductor completed the whole agonising ghastliness of the impression.*

Alexander Ossovsky, critic and musicologist

One of Rachmaninoff’s friends recalled that the composer could do nothing but squirm on the staircase, ‘unable to forgive himself for not conducting his composition himself’.

rather harsh central section based on themes from the first movement. It was this passage which probably prompted Cui’s attack, the only time in Rachmaninoff’s career when he was accused of being an advanced modernist!

The Larghetto contains a romantic melody first stated by the clarinet, and a middle section where the motto is gloomily recalled. The last movement is fast and fiery, as the tempo marking indicates. The exuberant main theme, a transformation of its counterpart in the first movement, is both festive and martial. Although the momentum is broken several times and the direction altered by reminiscences of earlier movements, the insistent character of this music can seem prophetic of Shostakovich. After a huge climax cut short by a crash of the gong, a slow ending draws out the sombre implications of the motto.

© DAVID GARRETT

The First Symphony calls for three flutes (one doubling piccolo) and pairs of oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion (bass drum, cymbal, side drum, triangle, tambourine, tam tam) and strings.

Since the Australian premiere in 1985 (WASO), Rachmaninoff’s First Symphony has been presented by the Tasmanian (1991) and Melbourne (1996) symphony orchestras, and again by the WASO in 2012. The Adelaide Symphony Orchestra will give its first performance of the symphony next week with Vasily Petrenko. The SSO first performed it in Ashkenazy’s Rachmaninoff festival in 2007.

...the only time in Rachmaninoff’s career when he was accused of being an advanced modernist!
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MORE MUSIC

MORE SCHULTZ
One advantage of having premiered Andrew Schultz’s fanfare on tour is that we have video footage to share. Head to our YouTube channel for an excerpt recorded in the Shandong Grand Theatre in Jinan: bit.ly/SoundLurSerpent

In 2003 the SSO premiered and recorded the cantata Journey to Horseshoe Bend by Andrew Schultz and librettist Gordon Kalton Williams. David Porcelijn conducted the orchestra and the guest artists included the Ntaria Ladies Choir and actors Aaron Pederson and John Stanton.

ABC CLASSICS 476 2266

TCHAIKOVSKY CONCERTOS
If you’ve enjoyed this performance, look for the recording Vasily Petrenko and Simon Trpčeski have made of the first two Tchaikovsky piano concertos. The orchestra is the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic.

ONYX 4135

In August our guest artists will include conductor James Gaffigan and pianist Kirill Gerstein. They’ll be performing Rachmaninoff in our concerts, but they’ve recently collaborated on the premiere recording of the 1879 edition of Tchaikovsky’s First Piano Concerto – sharing with the world the composer’s original ideas for the piece, including a very different take on the piano’s first entry.

MYRIOS CLASSICS MYR 016

RACHMANINOFF SYMPHONIES
Vasily Petrenko’s discography is dominated by Shostakovich and Rachmaninoff, including the three Rachmaninoff symphonies and the Symphonic Dances as well as shorter pieces – all with his orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. The first symphony has been paired with the symphonic poem Prince Rostislav, one of Rachmaninoff’s earliest surviving orchestral works.

WARNER CLASSICS 959627

Or look for the release on the Exton label of the SSO’s own recording of Rachmaninoff’s complete symphonies and orchestral works, conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy.

EXTON 18

VASILY PETRENKO
Among Petrenko’s most recent recordings is the first classical concert work by film composer James Horner (Titanic, Avatar – sadly there will be no more from this composer as Horner was recently killed in a plane crash). Pas de Deux is a concerto for violin and cello, performed by Mari and Hakon Samuelsen with the RLPO.

MERCURY 232 4302

Petrenko’s Shostakovich cycle on the Naxos label came to a conclusion last year with a recording of Symphony No.13 [Babi Yar]. The RLPO was joined by bass Alexander Vinogradov with the Huddersfield Choral Society and RLP Choir.

NAXOS 573218

SIMON TRPČESKI
In addition to his Tchaikovsky concertos recording, Trpčeski has released a recital disc, recorded live at the Wigmore Hall in London. The program includes Schubert’s Wanderer Fantasy and music by Liszt, with a Chopin prelude to finish.

WIGMORE HALL LIVE 58

Broadcast Diary
July–August

92.9 ABC Classic FM
abc.net.au/classic
Saturday 25 July, 1pm
RUSSIAN ROMANTICS
See this program for details.

Sunday 26 July, 5pm
YUJA WANG IN RECITAL
Yuja Wang piano
Chopin, Scriabin, Balakirev

SSO Radio
Selected SSO performances, as recorded by the ABC, are available on demand:
sydeensymphony.com/SSO_radio

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HOUR
Tuesday 11 August, 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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SSO Live Recordings

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra Live label was founded in 2006 and we’ve since released more than two dozen recordings featuring the orchestra in live concert performances with our titled conductors and leading guest artists. To buy, visit sydneysymphony.com/shop

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

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

Brett Dean
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 Rückerieder, Kindertotenlieder and Das Lied von der Erde. Available in a handsome boxed set of 12 discs or individually.

Mahler 1 & Songs of a Wayfarer SSO 201001
Mahler 2 SSO 201203
Mahler 3 SSO 201101
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Vasily Petrenko was born in 1976 and studied at the St Petersburg Capella Boys Music School – the oldest music school in Russia – before attending the St Petersburg Conservatoire and participating in masterclasses with Ilya Musin, Mariss Jansons, Yuri Temirkanov and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

He began his career as Resident Conductor (1994–1997) at the St Petersburg State Opera and Ballet Theatre in the Mussorgsky Memorial Theatre (now the Mikhailovsky Theatre) and remains the Principal Guest Conductor. Following success in international conducting competitions, he was appointed Chief Conductor of the State Academy Orchestra of St Petersburg (2004–2007). He has since conducted many key orchestras in Russia, including the St Petersburg Philharmonic and the Moscow Philharmonic.

In 2006 he was appointed Principal Conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and in 2009 he assumed the title of Chief Conductor. From 2009 to 2013 he was also Principal Conductor of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. In 2013 he took up the position of Chief Conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra.

Vasily Petrenko works with major orchestras including the London Symphony, London Philharmonic and Philharmonia orchestras, the Russian National Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Czech Philharmonic, Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, NHK Symphony Tokyo and Accademia di Santa Cecilia, as well as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Chicago and Boston symphony orchestras, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. He also appears annually at the BBC Proms, and recently released the full cycle of Shostakovich symphonies, recorded with the RLPO, to great critical acclaim.

His wide operatic experience includes Glyndebourne Festival Opera (Macbeth) and the Opéra de Paris (Eugene Onegin), The Queen of Spades at Hamburg State Opera, Boris Godunov at the National Reisopera, La Bohème and Carmen at the Mikhailovsky Theatre, Tosca and Parsifal with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Carmen at Zurich Opera and performances of The Flying Dutchman with the Oslo Philharmonic and at the Mikhailovsky Theatre.

Vasily Petrenko made his SSO debut in 2011, conducting Shostakovich’s Leningrad Symphony.
Simon Trpčeski
piano

Born in Macedonia in 1979, Simon Trpčeski studied with Boris Romanov at the University of St Cyril and St Methodius in Skopje, and over the past decade has established himself as an international recitalist and concerto soloist, performing with leading orchestras and conductors and captivating audiences worldwide.

The 2014–15 season saw him performing at the highest level around the world, including regular to visits London for performances with the London Symphony and Philharmonia orchestras, as well as performing chamber music at the Wigmore Hall. He also returned to play with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, St Louis Symphony and the Minnesota Orchestra. And in Europe his concerto engagements included the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, RSO Berlin and NDR Hamburg, Russian National Orchestra, St Petersburg Philharmonic, Armenian Philharmonic, Barcelona and Galicia symphony orchestras, Strasbourg Philharmonic, Orchestra of the Teatro Regio in Turin, Ulster Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Suisse Romande Orchestra and Iceland Symphony Orchestra.

Simon Trpčeski has made two award-winning recordings of music by Rachmaninoff with Vasily Petrenko and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, with whom he has recently recorded the first two Tchaikovsky piano concertos. He has also received widespread acclaim for his solo recital recordings.

He performs chamber music as often as possible, appearing at such festivals as Aspen, Verbier and Risör. He has a regular duo partnership with cellist Daniel Müller-Schott, and enjoys performing with a variety of other soloists. He also works regularly with young musicians in Macedonia to cultivate the talent of his country’s next generation of artists. As a result, he has been awarded with the Presidential Order of Merit and the first-ever title National Artist of Macedonia.

Simon Trpčeski’s most recent appearance with the SSO was in 2008 when he performed Saint-Saëns’ Second Piano Concerto. On this current tour he will also perform with the Adelaide, Melbourne and New Zealand symphony orchestras.
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world’s finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world’s great cities.

Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, where it gives more than 100 performances each year, the SSO also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales. International tours to Europe, Asia and the USA – 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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