2016 SEASON

sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson
The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

THE RITE OF SPRING

Primal

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY
Thursday 4 August 1.30pm

EMIRATES METRO SERIES
Friday 5 August 8pm

GREAT CLASSICS
Saturday 6 August 2pm
Raiders of the Lost Ark
Film with Live Orchestra
The legendary Indiana Jones must find the Ark of the Covenant in the screening of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* with John Williams’ score played live by the Orchestra.
Nicholas Buc conductor
At the Movies
Thu 28 Jul 7pm
Fri 29 Jul 7pm
Sat 30 Jul 2pm
Sat 30 Jul 7pm
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The Rite of Spring – Primal
REICH The Desert Music
STRAVINSKY The Rite of Spring
David Robertson conductor
Synergy Vocals
Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 4 Aug 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 5 Aug 8pm
Great Classics
Sat 6 Aug 2pm

The Firebird – Ravishing
SCULTHORPE Sun Music I
SZYMANOWSKI Violin Concerto No.1
STRAVINSKY The Firebird – Ballet (1910)
David Robertson conductor
Christian Tetzlaff violin
APT Master Series
Wed 10 Aug 8pm
Fri 12 Aug 8pm
Sat 13 Aug 8pm
• A BMW Season Highlight

Petrushka – Immortal
GYGER Acquisition* PREMIERE
TAN DUN The Wolf – Double Bass Concerto
STRAVINSKY Petrushka [1911]*
David Robertson conductor
Alex Henery double bass
Meet the Music
Wed 17 Aug 6.30pm
Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 18 Aug 1.30pm
Tea and Symphony
Fri 19 Aug 11am*
complimentary morning tea from 10am

Mahler 2
Resurrection Symphony
MAHLER Symphony No.2, Resurrection
David Robertson conductor
Kiandra Howarth soprano
Caitlin Hulcup mezzo-soprano
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs
Sat 27 Aug 8pm
Sun 28 Aug 2pm
Sydney Town Hall

Pink Martini
Eclectic and exotic songs in jazz-classical style
Toby Thatcher conductor
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THE TELEGRAPH, UK (2015)
Meet the Music
Thu 15 Sep 6.30pm
Kaleidoscope
Fri 16 Sep 8pm
Sat 17 Sep 8pm

Nelson Freire plays Schumann
Rachmaninoff’s Second Symphony
BEETHOVEN Coriolan Overture
SCHUMANN Piano Concerto
RACHMANINOFF Symphony No.2
Marcelo Lehninger conductor
Nelson Freire piano
APT Master Series
Wed 21 Sep 8pm
Fri 23 Sep 8pm
Sat 24 Sep 8pm

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Barry Brown
Emirates’ Divisional Vice President for Australasia
THE RITE OF SPRING — PRIMAL

David Robertson conductor
Synergy Vocals

STEVE REICH (born 1936)
The Desert Music
with texts from poems by William Carlos Williams
First Movement (fast) –
Second Movement (moderate) –
Third Movement Part One (slow) –
Third Movement Part Two (moderate) –
Third Movement Part Three (slow) –
Fourth Movement (moderate) –
Fifth Movement (fast)
Synergy Vocals
See page 12 for the vocal texts

INTERVAL

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)
Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring)
PART 1  L’Adoration de la terre (Adoration of the Earth)
PART 2  Le Sacrifice
See page 15 for details of each part
From top: Wearing his signature baseball cap, Steve Reich looks on in a rehearsal conducted by Roland Peelman for his residency at the Sydney Opera House in May 2012. Five decades earlier, in 1961, Igor Stravinsky in rehearsal with the SSO on his one and only tour to Australia, with Robert Craft on the podium. Set design by Nicholas Roerich for the original production of *The Rite of Spring* (1913).
INTRODUCTION

The Rite of Spring – Primal

The three great ballet scores that Igor Stravinsky composed for the Ballets Russes in the early years of the 20th century have become staples of the concert hall – they are programmed more often by orchestras than by ballet companies – but in a first for the SSO, this month we’re performing all three in close succession. It’s a chance to discover the rapidly emerging voice of a young composer who would change the world of music forever, from The Firebird (1910), so heavily influenced by Rimsky-Korsakov, to the genius of Petrushka (1911) and ultimately the ground-breaking Rite of Spring.

The Rite of Spring is notorious for sparking a riot at its Paris premiere in 1913. Although the uproar was as much in response to Nijinsky’s startlingly ‘primitive’ choreography as to the ‘blood-curdling’ music, Stravinsky was the star of the evening and he was to benefit the most from the resulting succès de scandale.

The Rite of Spring isn’t the only work to be credited with ushering in the age of modern music – Pierre Boulez gave the honour to Debussy’s Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun (1894) – but it was especially influential in the primacy Stravinsky’s music gives to rhythm. Boulez again: ‘Before worrying about what chord we are hearing, we are sensitive to the pulse emitted by this chord.’

And so David Robertson’s choice of The Desert Music as companion to The Rite is an inspired one. As a teenager in the 1950s, Steve Reich found rich inspiration from across the centuries. The records on his turntable ranged from the Fifth Brandenburg Concerto and The Rite of Spring to Charlie Parker: ‘Bach, Stravinsky and bebop hit me at the same time, and it was like a door opened.’ Reich’s music doesn’t sound like any of these, but it perhaps comes closest to The Rite in its hypnotic, almost ritualistic, qualities and, above all, in the inexorability of its musical pulse. And as Stravinsky said: ‘There is music wherever there is rhythm, as there is life wherever there beats a pulse.’

Hear David Robertson conduct The Firebird (10, 12, 13 Aug) and Petrushka (17, 18, 19 Aug) in our celebration of the music Stravinsky composed for the Ballets Russes.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Steve Reich

Raised in New York and California, Steve Reich briefly studied piano as a child. At the age of 14, excited by the sounds of jazz, he began to study the rudiments of Western drumming with the intention of becoming a jazz player. At the same time he became fascinated with Bach’s Brandenburg Concertos and Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring. ‘Bach, Stravinsky and bebop hit me at the same time,’ he recalls, ‘and it was like a door opened.’

In 1957 Reich graduated from Cornell University with honours in philosophy. He subsequently studied composition with Hall Overton, and with Vincent Persichetti and William Bergsma at the Juilliard School. He then studied with Darius Mihaud and Luciano Berio at Mills College in California, where he received his MA in Music. But, as the American music journalist Allan Kozinn observes, the influence of this diverse group on his mature works is almost impossible to detect. More overt stylistic influences emerged, however, from Reich’s studies during the 1970s of African drumming, Balinese Gamelan, 12-century organum, and Jewish traditions of cantillation, the chanting of Hebrew scriptures.

From his early taped speech pieces Its Gonna Rain (1965) and Come Out (1966) to the digital video opera Three Tales (2002, with video artist Beryl Korot), his path has embraced not only aspects of Western classical music, but the structures, harmonies, and rhythms of non-Western and American vernacular music, particularly jazz.

In 1966 he formed the group Steve Reich and Musicians, a busy concert and recording ensemble that varies in size from its original three to as many as 40. Around the same time, together with Philip Glass, he became a leading figure of Minimalism. This approach is rarely ‘minimal’ in duration or forces, exploring as it does the processes of gradual extension and elaboration within a context of streamlined simplicity. Reich’s music is especially identified with canonic techniques, a feeling of harmonic stasis, dense textures, rhythmic sophistication (including subtle shifts of metre), and the extended reiteration of a motif or group of motifs.

1936 – born in New York
1950 – Bach, Stravinsky and bebop – a door opens
1957 – graduates from Cornell University
1958–61 – studies at the Juilliard School
1963 – graduates from Mills College
1966 – founds Steve Reich and Musicians
1970s – studies African drumming, Balinese gamelan and Hebrew chant
1980s – Reich’s ‘orchestral decade’
1983 – composes The Desert Music
1988 – Different Trains marks a new compositional method in which speech recordings generate musical material for instruments (in 1990 it receives a Grammy)
1994 – elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters
1996, 2006 – major festivals and retrospectives worldwide in celebration of his 60th and 70th birthdays
1999 – wins his second Grammy with Music for 18 Musicians
2002 – premiere of Three Tales, a digital documentary video opera
2006 – awarded the Praemium Imperiale for Music in Tokyo
2007 – awarded the Polar Prize from the Royal Swedish Academy of Music; elected a member of the Academy in 2008
2009 – awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music for his Double Sextet
Steve Reich (born 1936)
The Desert Music for chorus and orchestra
Texts from poems by William Carlos Williams

First Movement (fast) –
Second Movement (moderate) –
Third Movement Part One (slow) –
Third Movement Part Two (moderate) –
Third Movement Part Three (slow) –
Fourth Movement (moderate) –
Fifth Movement (fast)

Synergy Vocals

The Desert Music begins and ends with a pulse. Recurring throughout the music, this pulse is significant both musically and in its response to and commentary on the text itself. Musically, it presents the harmonic cycles of the movements as a kind of pulsing chorale, and it sets up the feeling, structure and harmony of the entire piece. In the text, the vocalise syllables are a wordless response to ‘Well, shall we think or listen?’ in the second and fourth movements. According to Reich, that constant flickering of attention between what words mean and how they sound when set to music is one main focus of The Desert Music.
If the most basic element of music, and of our lives, is pulse, then words and a desire for order and symmetry must rank close behind. Reich discovered the poetry of Dr Williams when he was 16 years old. He picked up a copy of Williams’ long poem *Paterson*, simply because he was fascinated by the symmetry of his name – William Carlos Williams. The poetry itself soon captured his imagination.

The title and some of the texts were taken from Dr Williams’ collection *The Desert Music and Other Poems*. The book contains some of his finest poetry, written between 1954 and his death in 1963 at the age of 80. Reich does not, however, use complete poems. In fact the selection and arrangement of the texts was his first compositional activity, and from this first step emerged a large arch structure in five sections: A – B – C – B – A.

This symmetry is echoed throughout the music. For example, the tempos of the five movements are arranged symmetrically, and the central movement is itself an arch (slow – moderate – slow).

In the orchestration of *The Desert Music*, Reich uses all the orchestral instruments for repeating, interlocking melodic patterns like those found in his earlier music. To give the strings the extra ‘snap’ needed for this kind of polyrhythmic interplay, they are doubled by synthesizers. The chorus is in turn supported by either woodwinds or muted brass, amplified and mixed together. This, says Reich, might be an old technique, but it ‘helps create that mixture of vocal and instrumental sound that I have been working with since my composition *Drumming* in 1971.’ The percussion is omnipresent – with mallet instruments supplying the on-going pulse and energy – and coloured by maracas, clicking sticks, bass drums, timpani and tam-tam.

Reich recalls that, while he was composing the last part of the slow movement in a small town in Vermont during the summer of 1983, the local fire siren went off:

*I thought to myself, ‘That’s it,’ and resolved to put a siren in the last part of the slow movement. After some reflection I decided that instead of a mechanical or electrical siren, the violas, who were not playing at the time, would play glissandos which, with contact microphones attached, would rise and fall over the entire orchestra and chorus.*

The music is constructed from three cycles of harmonies, which serve as the basis for the individual movements. Reich presents these cycles as a series of pulsing chords, chromatic and ‘dark’ in effect. The darkness of the mood is enhanced
by the feeling of increasing ambiguity that drives the music towards its central point and beyond. The Desert Music begins with the possibility of a Dorian mode tonal centre but becomes more and more unstable until the third movement where, as the text would suggest, there is no clear harmonic centre at all. This ambiguity remains well into the final movement when, just before the chorus enters, there is a large orchestral cadence – of a kind – to Dorian mode. The piece then ends with a certain harmonic ambiguity partially, but not fully, resolved.

The poems selected for The Desert Music all date from after World War II and the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Williams was acutely aware of the bomb and his words about it, in a poem about music entitled ‘The Orchestra’, are central to the impact it had on him:

Say to them:
Man has survived hitherto because he was too ignorant to know how to realize his wishes. Now that he can realize them, he must either change them or perish.

The gravity of this text – and its impact on Reich – is amplified by the darkness and harmonic ambiguity of the third movement.

At the outset of The Desert Music, however, the chorus plays a purely musical role. It is as if, says Reich, there are moments when there is no more to be said – there are things that can only be said musically. The text then emerges from a completely non-verbal, abstract sound.

Reich concludes his preface to The Desert Music with a further reference to the third movement, about which the work pivots harmonically, temporally and emotionally. The text of the movement’s own central section, is also taken from ‘The Orchestra’:

…it is a principle of music
to repeat the theme. Repeat
and repeat again,
as the pace mounts. The
theme is difficult
but no more difficult
than the facts to be resolved.

‘Those at all familiar with my music,’ says Reich, ‘will know how apt those words are for me, and particularly for this piece, which, among other things, addresses the basic ambiguity between what the text says, and its pure sensuous sound.’

PREPARED IN PART FROM STEVE REICH’S PREFACE TO THE DESERT MUSIC SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA © 1997

‘...the basic ambiguity between what the text says, and its pure sensuous sound.’

STEVE REICH

In addition to a chorus of 10 (or 27) amplified voices, The Desert Music calls for four flutes (three doubling piccolo), four oboes (three doubling cor anglais), four clarinets (three doubling on bass clarinet) and four bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon); four horns, four trumpets (one doubling on piccolo trumpet), three trombones and tuba; two timpani (doubling on rototoms); a large percussion section (seven players) dominated by mallet instruments such as marimbas, positioned in front of the conductor; two pianos and three synthesizers; and strings divided into three visually distinct groups of 16, each comprising eight violins, three violas, three cellos and two double basses.

The SSO gave the first Australian performance of The Desert Music in 1997, conducted by David Porcelijn and featuring The Contemporary Singers.
The Desert Music

I – fast
‘Begin, my friend
for you cannot,
you may be sure,
take your song,
which drives all things out of mind,
with you to the other world.’

from Theocritus: Idyl I
– A Version from the Greek

II – moderate
‘Well, shall we
think or listen? Is there a sound addressed
not wholly to the ear?
We half close
our eyes. We do not
hear it through our eyes.
It is not
a flute note either, it is the relation
of a flute note
to a drum. I am wide
awake. The mind
is listening.’

from The Orchestra

III A – slow
‘Say to them:
Man has survived hitherto because he was too ignorant
to know how to realize his wishes. Now that he can realize
them, he must either change them or perish.’

from The Orchestra

III B – moderate
‘it is a principle of music
to repeat the theme. Repeat
and repeat again,
as the pace mounts. The
theme is difficult
but no more difficult
than the facts to be
resolved.’

from The Orchestra
III C – slow

‘Say to them:
Man has survived hitherto because he was too ignorant
to know how to realize his wishes. Now that he can realize
them, he must either change them or perish.’

from The Orchestra

IV – moderate

“Well, shall we
think or listen? Is there a sound addressed
not wholly to the ear?
We half close
our eyes. We do not
hear it through our eyes.
It is not
a flute note either, it is the relation
of a flute note
to a drum. I am wide
awake. The mind
is listening.’

from The Orchestra

V – fast

‘Inseparable from the fire
its light
takes precedence over it.
who most shall advance the light –
call it what you may!’

from Asphodel, That Greeny Flower


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Igor Stravinsky

*Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring)*

**PART 1  L’Adoration de la terre (Adoration of the Earth)**

*Introduction*

*Danse des adolescentes (Dance of the Young Girls)*

*Jeu du rapt (Ritual of Abduction)*

*Rondes printanières (Spring Rounds)*

*Jeux des cités rivales (Games of the Rival Tribes)*

*Cortège du sage (Procession of the Sage)*

*L’Adoration de la terre (Adoration of the Earth)*

*Danse de la terre (Dance of the Earth)*

**PART 2  Le Sacrifice**

*Introduction*

*Cercles mystérieux des adolescentes (Mystic Circles of Young Girls)*

*Glorification de l’élue (Glorification of the Chosen Virgin)*

*Evocation des ancêtres (Evocation of the Ancestors)*

*Action rituelle des ancêtres (Ritual of the Ancestors)*

*Danse sacrale – L’élue (Sacrificial dance – The Chosen Virgin)*

The first performance of Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring)* was one of the greatest scandals in the history of any of the arts, not just music. An evening in 1913 remains the defining date of ‘modern’ music. More than a century later, there still hasn’t been anything to top it. The ballet, whose completely novel choreography was part of the offence it gave to traditionalists, is only occasionally re-staged. It is Stravinsky’s music which has endured as an icon of modernism, and its power and originality can still be felt, even now that its lessons have been absorbed by so much music that followed. Stravinsky’s assistant Robert Craft called *The Rite of Spring* the prize bull that inseminated the whole modern movement. Although Stravinsky later composed two orchestral works called symphonies, it is his music for this ballet which has achieved ‘symphonic’ status in the world’s concert halls.

*The Rite of Spring* is composed for a very large orchestra, including five of each of the wind instruments, eight horns and five trumpets. The Russian impresario Sergei Diaghilev had very generous financial backing for the 1913 season of his Ballets Russes in Paris, and Stravinsky had an orchestral palette even richer than for his two previous full-scale ballets for Diaghilev, *The Firebird* and *Petrushka*. Even so, and in spite of the clear acoustic of the then-new Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the playing of the music was almost drowned out by the noise...
The power and originality of Stravinsky’s music can still be felt, even now that its lessons have been absorbed...

which broke out in the auditorium, as people shouted insults, howled and whistled. There were even punches thrown, as the supporters of artistic novelty confronted well-dressed patrons who were shocked by what they heard and saw. The dancers could hardly hear the music, and the choreographer of The Rite, Nijinsky, had to shout numbers to them from the wings. Conductor Pierre Monteux, with admirable sang-froid, piloted his musicians through to the end.

The curtain had risen on Nicholas Roerich’s setting for the tableaux of pagan Russia which were his scenario (argument, sets and costumes) for the ballet. He and Stravinsky were later to dispute who first had the idea of a primitive, pagan sacrifice as a subject for a ballet, with Stravinsky’s vision (in a dream) of a maiden sacrificed and dancing herself to death given priority. But The Rite was a collaborative project, and Nijinsky’s choreography was, in its way, as radical as Stravinsky’s music.

The stylised gestures, the spare, restricted dancing, with heads in profile contrasted with bodies full-on, elbows hugged into the waist, the convulsions of the Chosen Virgin, the renouncing of conventional dance ensembles and storytelling in favour of primitive immediacy – these were Nijinsky’s inventions, and many of the public thought he was pulling their leg – or that
Stravinsky has often been compared with his near-contemporary Picasso – both men left their native country to become universal symbols of modernism in the arts, yet both were deeply marked by their native culture – Picasso by Spain’s, Stravinsky by Russia’s. ‘Not art!’, ‘Not music!’ was a common early reaction to both. In the work of both men style became a leading consideration in itself, and both startled their own admirers and dismayed their critics by repeatedly re-inventing themselves. Yet Stravinsky, like Picasso, is immediately recognisable through all his stylistic disguises. He began by crowning the achievements of Russian composers in vivid, colourful music for dance (The Firebird, Petrushka). The Rite of Spring, a musical earthquake, foretold his break with Russia, enforced by exile after the Revolution. In France in the 1920s and 30s Stravinsky ‘invented’ neoclassicism for music, with Pulcinella, and continued to be one step ahead of the avant-garde. His last startling surprise, after he moved to the USA in World War II, was to embrace twelve-tone serial music, in works such as Threni. Stravinsky was the most famous ‘serious’ composer of the 20th century, a position into which he leapt at one bound in 1913.

the dancers were imitating epileptic fits. Admirers accepted Nijinsky’s choreography as Spring seen from inside: biological ballet, with surges, spasms and fissions.

Stravinsky’s music had required Nijinsky to develop a new way of rehearsing the dancers by numbers, and his preparations seemed to one observer like arithmetic classes. Stravinsky claimed later that the music, which broke every mould of convention, had to be written that way, that it transcended him: ‘I was the vessel through which The Rite passed.’ Rhythm was one basis of The Rite’s innovation, not surprisingly since it developed within the bosom of an adventurous ballet company. Stravinsky was to say, ‘There is music wherever there is rhythm, as there is life wherever there beats a pulse.’ The rhythmic novelties in The Rite of Spring include its static ostinatos: compulsively repeated figures, which are nevertheless not regular, but additive in rhythm, so that the strong beats are irregularly spaced, and the time-signature for the musicians is constantly changing, often from bar to bar. Even the composer was baffled as to how to write out the final Danse sacrale. These patterns, thrillingly projected with almost unprecedented orchestral impact, reach a state of hypnotic motion, which can only be broken by the start of the next dance.

‘There is music wherever there is rhythm, as there is life wherever there beats a pulse.’
STRAVINSKY

Vaslav Nijinsky – his choreography was, in its way, as radical as Stravinsky’s music.
This was music which made a quantum leap into a new sound-world. The discordant effect heard through the growing fracas in the theatre resulted from Stravinsky’s harmonic innovations. These are linked to his rhythmic inventions, since they also function by accumulation: of notes and chords, creating polyharmonies which textbook writers have been busy trying to codify ever since. The paradox is that this complexity was really simplicity – the reduction of harmonic language to essentials allowed rhythmic subtlety to claim a dominant place. As a modernist composer much influenced by Stravinsky, Pierre Boulez, explains, ‘Before worrying about what chord we are hearing, we are sensitive to the pulse emitted by this chord.’

It was clever of Diaghilev to capitalise on fashionable Paris’ fascination with the Russian and the primitive. Stravinsky later emphasised the newness and musical necessity of The Rite of Spring, and played down its Russianness. But this work, the fountainhead of international modernism, with which Stravinsky left Russia for good, was Russian in every way, and the leading revisionist among students of Stravinsky’s works, Richard Taruskin, has proved this against Stravinsky’s own mythologising.

The bad reception The Rite received in Russia, where he expected it to be received with joy, was, according to Stravinsky himself, the greatest rebuff of his career. It was this which encouraged him to deny its Russianness. The opening bassoon solo, said Stravinsky, ‘is the only folk melody in The Rite’, concealing the indebtedness of most of its musical material to Russian folksongs, to which Taruskin traces the limited

Dancers from the original production of The Rite of Spring adopt a characteristic pose in Nicholas Roerich’s ‘primitive’ costumes. Marie Rambert, second from left, helped Nijinsky teach the choreography. (Originally published in The Sketch, 1913)
le temps, paris, 1913
from nicolas slonimsky’s lexicon of musical invective (1952)

‘The most essential characteristic of Le Sacre du Printemps is that it is the most dissonant and the most discordant composition yet written. Never was the system and the cult of the wrong note practised with so much industry, zeal and fury.’

David Garrett © 1999/2013

The Rite of Spring calls for a large orchestra of five flutes (including piccolos and alto flute), five oboes (including cor anglais), five clarinets (including E flat clarinet and bass clarinets) and five bassoons (including contrabassoons); eight horns (one doubling Wagner tuba); five trumpets (one doubling bass trumpet); three trombones and two tubas; a large percussion section and strings.

The SS0 was the first ABC orchestra to perform The Rite of Spring, in 1946 with Eugene Goossens conducting. Our most recent performance of this music was in 2013, conducted by Charles Dutoit.

The ballet's libretto really boiled down to the succession of episodes described by the titles in the score, and listed above. The music took over, and created the dance. As Boulez says, the composition doesn’t depend on the argument of the ballet, which is why it transfers so well to the concert hall: ‘This ritual of “Pagan Russia” attains by itself a dimension quite beyond its formal point of departure: It has become the ritual – and the myth – of modern music.’

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The Rite of Spring

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The Rite of Spring

The music took over, and created the dance. As Boulez says, the composition doesn’t depend on the argument of the ballet, which is why it transfers so well to the concert hall: ‘This ritual of “Pagan Russia” attains by itself a dimension quite beyond its formal point of departure: It has become the ritual – and the myth – of modern music.’

David Garrett © 1999/2013

The Rite of Spring calls for a large orchestra of five flutes (including piccolos and alto flute), five oboes (including cor anglais), five clarinets (including E flat clarinet and bass clarinets) and five bassoons (including contrabassoons); eight horns (one doubling Wagner tuba); five trumpets (one doubling bass trumpet); three trombones and two tubas; a large percussion section and strings.

The SS0 was the first ABC orchestra to perform The Rite of Spring, in 1946 with Eugene Goossens conducting. Our most recent performance of this music was in 2013, conducted by Charles Dutoit.

The ballet's libretto really boiled down to the succession of episodes described by the titles in the score, and listed above. The music took over, and created the dance. As Boulez says, the composition doesn’t depend on the argument of the ballet, which is why it transfers so well to the concert hall: ‘This ritual of “Pagan Russia” attains by itself a dimension quite beyond its formal point of departure: It has become the ritual – and the myth – of modern music.’
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 SSO 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 11th 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 world 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. In 2014 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.
Synergy Vocals
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Synergy Vocals specialises in close-microphone singing and is often associated with the music of Steve Reich, Louis Andriessen, Steven Mackey and Luciano Berio. The London-based ensemble performs regularly with Ensemble Modern, Ictus, Ensemble InterContemporain, London Sinfonietta and the Colin Currie Group.

Synergy gave its first concert in 1996, performing Steve Reich’s *Tehillim* with the London Symphony Orchestra and David Robertson. Since then, the group has given concerts all over the world with orchestras and ensembles including the Boston and Chicago symphony orchestras, St Louis Symphony, New World Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, and the Los Angeles and New York philharmonic orchestras, as well as Nexus, Steve Reich and Musicians, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra and all the BBC orchestras. The group has also collaborated with dance companies including the Royal Ballet, Rosas and Opéra de Paris.

The group has premiered works such as Steve Reich’s *Three Tales* and *Daniel Variations*, Mackey’s *Dreamhouse*, Andriessen’s *Commedia*, David Lang’s *Writing on Water* and James MacMillan’s *Since it was the Day of Preparation…*, as well as giving the UK premiere of Nono’s monumental *Prometeo* on London’s South Bank.

Synergy has undertaken educational projects in the UK, the Netherlands, the USA and South America. Micaela Haslam also coaches ensembles for Steve Reich in the preparation of his *Music for 18 Musicians*.

Synergy Vocals also features on a variety of TV and film soundtracks and appears both live and in studio with pop artists such as Steven Wilson, Kompendium, Rob Reed and Anna Calvi.

www.synergyvocals.com

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The 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, the SSO also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

Well on its way to becoming the premier orchestra of the Asia Pacific region, the SSO has toured China on four occasions, and in 2014 won the arts category in the Australian Government’s inaugural Australia-China Achievement Awards, recognising ground-breaking work in nurturing the cultural and artistic relationship between the two nations.

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 Learning and Engagement 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 commissions. Recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards, Lee Bracegirdle, Gordon Kerry, Mary Finsterer, Nigel Westlake, Paul Stanhope and Georges Lentz, and 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 conducted by Alexander Lazarev, Sir Charles Mackerras and David Robertson, as well as the complete Mahler symphonies conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy.

This is David Robertson’s third year as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.
This year we are bidding farewell to two longstanding members of the SSO. Dene Olding will give his final performances as Concertmaster on 26, 28 and 29 October; Principal Flute Janet Webb will give her final performances on 10, 11 and 12 November.

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Principal Double Bass Kees Boersma holds the SSO Council Chair. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra Council is a group of dedicated donors and subscribers, who, when the opportunity arose, were delighted to support one of the SSO’s long-standing musicians. Kees Boersma with members of the SSO Council (from left): Eileen Ong, Danny May, Simon Johnson, John van Ogtrop and Gary Linnane (full Council listing opposite).

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