Alessio Bax in Recital
25 MARCH
CITY RECITAL HALL
CONCERT DIARY

MARCH

Barry Douglas performs Brahms
MILLS Aeolian Caprices
SIBELIUS Symphony No.7
BRAHMS Piano Concerto No.2
Lawrence Renes conductor
Barry Douglas piano

Meet The Music
Wed 27 Mar, 6.30pm
Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 28 Mar, 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 29 Mar, 8pm
Great Classics
Sat 30 Mar, 2pm
Sydney Opera House

Haydn and Beethoven
HILDEGARD OF BINGEN
Improvisation on ‘Ave Generosa’
HAYDN arr. Oguey
Cor Anglais Quintet (after the ‘Gypsy Rondo’ Piano Trio)
BEETHOVEN arr. Boersma Serenade in D, Op.8

Cocktail Hour
Fri 29 Mar, 6pm
Sat 30 Mar, 6pm
Utzon Room,
Sydney Opera House

APRIL

Simone Lamsma performs Beethoven’s Violin Concerto
BEETHOVEN Violin Concerto
TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No.4
Alexander Shelley conductor
Simone Lamsma violin

Abercrombie & Kent
Masters Series
Wed 3 Apr, 8pm
Fri 5 Apr, 8pm
Sat 6 Apr, 8pm
Mondays @ 7
Mon 8 Apr, 7pm
Sydney Opera House

David Drury
CONCERT HALL GRAND ORGAN RECITAL
Program includes:
JS BACH Prelude and Fugue in C minor, BWV 546
SAINT-SAËNS Fantaisie No.1
SAINT-SAËNS arr. Lemare Danse macabre

Tea & Symphony
Fri 5 Apr, 11am
Sydney Opera House

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix™ in Concert
Let the wizarding world enchant you as the fifth film is projected onto a giant screen and the orchestra perform Nicholas Hooper’s wonderful score. Classified M.

International Pianists in Recital
Mon 29 Apr, 7pm
City Recital Hall

Lisa Moore in Recital
GLASS Etude No.2
JANÁČEK In the Mists
BEETHOVEN Sonata in E flat, Op.31 No.3
BRESNICK Iah’s Song
SCHUMANN Waldszenen (Forest Scenes)
RZEWSKI Piano Piece No.4
Lisa Moore piano

International Pianists in Recital
Mon 29 Apr, 7pm
City Recital Hall

MAY

Breakfast at Tiffany’s in Concert
Audrey Hepburn dazzles in her legendary role as the deliciously eccentric Holly Golightly, a New York City socialite determined to marry a millionaire. Relive Henry Mancini’s legendary score, including the beautiful Oscar® and Grammy® winning song Moon River, performed live to film. Brought to you by CineConcerts.

Sat 4 May, 7pm
Sun 5 May, 2pm
Sydney Opera House
We are very proud to present the Sydney Symphony’s International Pianists in Recital series. This four-part series boasts a variety of composers that illustrate each pianist’s individual style and interpretation of these classical masterpieces. We’re thrilled that the pianos being used are in themselves masterpieces of great craft and ingenuity and are delighted that their acoustic beauty supports performances of such brilliance.

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These recitals will be truly unforgettable, and we hope you will be thrilled by the pianistic brilliance in this year’s program. We look forward to sharing this experience with you and congratulate the Sydney Symphony Orchestra once again for bringing these fine, inspirational artists to our city.

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INTERNATIONAL PIANISTS IN RECITAL
PRESENTED BY THEME & VARIATIONS
MONDAY 25 MARCH, 7PM
CITY RECITAL HALL

Alessio Bax in Recital

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)
Concerto in D minor, BWV 974
(after Oboe Concerto in C minor by Alessandro Marcello)

[Andante e spiccato]
Adagio
Presto

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1873–1943)
Variations on a Theme of Corelli
Theme. Andante
1. Poco piu mosso
2. L’istesso tempo
3. Tempo di Minuetto
4. Andante
5. Allegro (ma non tanto)
6. L’istesso tempo
7. Vivace
8. Adagio misterioso
9. Un poco piu mosso
10. Allegro scherzando
11. Allegro vivace

12. L’istesso tempo
13. Agitato
14. Andante (come prima)
15. L’istesso tempo
16. Allegro vivace
17. Meno mosso
18. Allegro con brio
19. Piu mosso. Agitato
20. Piu mosso

Coda. Andante

INTERVAL

LUIGI DALLAPICCOLA (1904–1975)
Quaderno musicale di Annalibera

Simbolo
Accenti
Contrapunctus primus
Linee
Contrapunctus secondus
Fregi
Andantino amoroso
e Contrapunctus tertius
Ritmi
Color
Ombre
Quartina

FRANZ LISZT (1811–1886)
St François d’Assise: La prédication aux oiseaux
Après une Lecture de Dante: Fantasia quasi sonata
(from Années de Pèlerinage: Deuxième Année: Italie, S161)

Tonight’s concert will be broadcast by ABC Classic on 31 March at 5pm.
Pre-concert talk by Scott Davie at 6.15pm in the First Floor Reception Room.
Estimated durations: 10 minutes, 19 minutes, 20 minute interval, 16 minutes, 8 minutes, 18 minutes.
The concert will conclude at approximately 8.45pm.

Cover image: Alessio Bax
(Photo by Lisa-Marie Mazzucco)
Official Piano Partner of the Sydney Symphony
International Pianist in Recital Series
Alessio Bax came to world prominence with First Prize wins at both the Leeds and Hamamatsu International Piano Competitions. He is known now on four continents, not only as a recitalist and chamber musician, but as a concerto soloist who has appeared with more than 100 orchestras, including the London and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, Dallas Symphony, NHK Symphony in Japan, St. Petersburg Philharmonic with Yuri Temirkanov, and the City of Birmingham Symphony with Sir Simon Rattle. Recent appearances have included Brahms’ Second Piano Concerto with the Fort Worth Symphony under Miguel Harth-Bedoya and Samuel Barber’s concerto with the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra and Edo de Waart.

This season, Bax revisits the two concertos heard on his album, Alessio Bax Plays Mozart. He made his Boston Symphony Orchestra debut in January playing Mozart’s C minor concerto (K.491) with Sir Andrew Davis. On this tour, he leads Mozart’s B flat concerto (K.595) from the keyboard in his first performances with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Bax completes his Australia-NZ tour with solo recitals and the Grieg concerto with Tadaaki Otaka that marks his Auckland Philharmonia debut. Other forthcoming appearances include four-hand recitals with Lucille Chung in Connecticut and São Paulo, Brazil, a chamber concert at Alice Tully Hall for the Chamber Society of Lincoln Center, New York, and a concerto appearance with the Pensacola Symphony Orchestra, Florida [Grieg Piano Concerto]. Summer sees his appearance at Tuscany’s Incontri in Terra di Siena festival, where he serves as Artistic Director.

Alessio Bax’s recordings include Beethoven’s Emperor Concerto with the Southbank Sinfonia, a four-hand piano recording of music by Poulenc with Lucille Chung, and Lullabies for Mila [works by Bach, Beethoven, Grieg, Mozart, Rachmaninoff and Scriabin].

Alessio Bax graduated with top honors at the age of 14 from the conservatory of Bari, his hometown in Italy, where his teacher was Angela Montemurro. He studied in France with Francois-Joël Thiollier and attended the Chigiana Academy in Siena under Joaquin Achúcarro. In 1994 he moved to Dallas to continue his studies with Achúcarro at Southern Methodist University’s Meadows School of the Arts, where he is now the Johnson-Prothro Artist-in-Residence.
Bach hardly ventured outside his native Saxony, yet wrote some of the greatest Italian music ever. While employed by the Duke of Weimar (1708–1717), Bach made an intensive study of the music of Venetian composers, transcribing for keyboard versions of scores brought from Amsterdam. The greatest of these composers was Antonio Vivaldi, but Bach also made transcriptions of works by the brothers Alessandro and Benedetto Marcello.

The D minor concerto for solo harpsichord, BWV974, is based on a work attributed at various times to Albinoni, Vivaldi, and Benedetto Marcello; research in the mid-20th century has established it as based on a C minor Oboe Concerto by Alessandro Marcello. The piece follows the Vivaldian concerto design, which Bach would make his own, and which would become standard, of two fast(ish) movements framing a lyrical slow one.

The opening has a tensile momentum provided by a unison ritornello that consists of wide-leaping intervals. This is answered by more elaborate, harmonised material that, naturally derives from the oboe part. This is even starker in the Adagio, where simple repeated chords in the left hand support an ever more ornate and ecstatic song sounded in the right. The piece concludes with a lively gigue in which Bach distributes the rapid passagework equally between the two hands.

Bach’s Italian influence was mainly Venetian and Vivaldian, while his great colleague, Handel, had worked in Rome with Arcangelo Corelli, the second most influential composer of his generation. Corelli’s D minor Violin Sonata, Op.5 No.12 (1700) is based on contrasting movements, each derived from a popular repetitive dance tune (known by the Portuguese name La folia) in triple metre with a simple series of chords that outline four-bar phrases. Violinist Fritz Kreisler introduced the sonata to Rachmaninoff, who, in 1931 produced his last original solo work for piano, the ‘Corelli Variations’. Like Corelli and numerous Baroque composers, and later Liszt, Rachmaninoff used La folia as a musical cell to generate a huge number of often tiny, but strongly profiled variations. Rachmaninoff himself affected to hate the piece, describing it to his colleague Nikolai Medtner as ‘boring’ and admitting that he freely left out variations if the audience coughed or was otherwise restive. This rather spoils the architectural effect that the composer no doubt intended: the theme and first 13 variations are in D minor, but an Intermezzo, which begins like a Bach toccata and morphs into Lisztian cascades, modulates into the distant key of D flat, from which the work makes its way back to the original key and theme.

In his compendious The Art of Fugue, Bach famously used the letters of his name (which in English correspond to the notes B flat–A–C–B natural) to create a musical motif. Numerous composers, such as Schumann, Liszt and Brahms, used the motif in homage, but its tightly wound semitone-tone-semitone shape made an especially perfect fit for composers of atonal and serial music in the 20th century.
In 1935 Italian composer Luigi Dallapiccola heard a performance of Webern’s Concerto, Op.24. He was stunned that there was an artist who could ‘express the greatest number of ideas in the fewest possible words’. Twelve-note serialism, he decided was not a ‘blind chain, as so many say...but rather a language that comprises in itself the possibility of the most diverse differentiations’. The composer once wrote that ‘if one side of my nature demanded tragedy, the other attempted an escape towards serenity’ and musical serenity for him included not only the lapidary textures of Webern but the music of the Baroque. His absorption of twelve-note technique had been gradual, but by the early 1950s he was composing confidently by fusing serialism and his own native lyricism. The title of his Musical Notebook for Annalibera of 1952 is a reference to Bach’s Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach, and the musical material that underpins the whole work stresses the B-A-C-H motif. The pieces that make up the set are all short, averaging a minute or so to play, and mostly crystallise a single image or idea. The opening ‘Symbols’ is in a ternary form, using a rhetoric of repeated motifs. The title of ‘Accents’ is self-explanatory, while the third movement is one of three abstract pieces in canon. This one, as scholar Jacqueline Ravensbergen has noted, is a mensuration canon: at first we hear the 12-note theme stated in lines that move in parallel but at different speeds to create a sense of echoing space. The play of lines is the subject of the following movement, and this is followed by a canon in inversion. The immobility of ‘Friezes’ forms a foil to the hybrid seventh movement, whose form is a ‘crab canon’, where the themes move in seemingly opposite directions. ‘Rhythms’, ‘Colours’ and ‘Shadows’ are evoked in techniques which range from forceful to Debussyan delicacy, and the set concludes with a reflective ‘Quatrain.’

In later life Franz Liszt forwent his career as a virtuoso, and his then-scandalous domestic arrangements, and in 1863, after the untimely deaths of two of his children he retreated to the monastery of Madonna del Rosario outside of Rome. He experienced the revival of his childhood Catholicism (and would in due course take minor orders in the Church) and was visited in his cell by none other than Pope Pius IX soon after moving in. When asked to play something, Liszt obliged with the first of his two ‘Franciscan’ Legends, which depicts St Francis of Assisi preaching to the birds. (The Pope responded by singing ‘Casta Diva’ from Norma to Liszt’s accompaniment.) Scholar Alan Walker retails the story that Liszt was inspired by the clouds of sparrows that frequented the mountain nearby; Liszt’s imaginary birdsong, which we hear at the start of the piece, is much more euphonious, before some recitative, and then more chorale-like textures, represent the saint’s admonition to the birds to praise God all the time.
What happens to those who don’t, and those who do, is evoked in Liszt’s ‘Dante Sonata’ begun in Italy in 1839. Here Liszt provides musical expression of isolated imagery from Dante’s account of his voyage through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise in his *Commedia*. Reflecting the grim ‘Abandon hope all ye that enter here’ inscribed above the gates of Hell, Liszt offers a baleful fanfare stressing the tritone (A-E flat), which theorists once regarded as ‘the devil in music.’ Liszt left no descriptive program, but the music might evoke the raining fire, the endless gales, the various tortures of hell, the hope of Purgatory and the serene beauty of heaven. After the fanfare, which recurs structurally, we hear ‘horrible cries’ of the damned in a *presto agitato* – notionally in D minor but using all twelve notes of the chromatic scale. The second theme, or subject, is in complete contrast, a chorale, sounded first among deafening cascades in octaves. This, Walker speculates, is a vision of Hell’s Monarch, ‘the creature eminent in beauty once’. This theme later seems to depict, after much roiling anguish, a glimpse of heaven. The piece closes with the fanfare, now in a stable D major.

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- Eight important education and regional touring programs.
- Continued artistic excellence and helping to sustain important education and regional touring programs.
- Playing Your Part: The Sydney Symphony Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the music lovers who donate to the Orchestra each year. Each gift plays an important part in ensuring our continued artistic excellence and helping to sustain important education and regional touring programs.

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- Additional information available upon request.

- For more information, contact the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Philanthropy Team at 8215 4674.

- Donors acknowledged include: Paul & Ms Cecilia Tsai, Mrs Helen Webb, Mrs W Stening, David Robertson & Orli Shaham, and more.

- Past performers include: Anthony Whelan MBE, Kim Williams AO, Carina Wilson, and many others.

- Support from various foundations and organizations, including The Berg Family Foundation, Crown Resorts Foundation, and Donus Australia Foundation Limited.

- Contributions from notable individuals such as Sir Frank Lowy AO, Robert Albert AO, and others.


- Opportunities for bequests, with a special mention of June & Alan Woods Family Bequest.

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- Additional details on contact and further information available.
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