SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Beethoven Symphony No.5
VADIM GLUZMAN PERFORMS PROKOFIEV

3 – 8 JULY
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE
### JULY

**Dohnányi and Shostakovich**

| DOHNÁNYI | Serenade for string trio |
| GRAN | Finnish Tango (after traditional tunes) |
| SHOSTAKOVICH | Two Pieces for string octet |

**Musicians of the Sydney Symphony**

- **Cocktail Hour**
  - Fri 5 Jul, 6pm
  - Sat 6 Jul, 6pm
  - Sun 7 Jul, 3pm
  - Sydney Opera House, Utzon Room

**Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince™ in Concert**

- Experience the music of a live symphony orchestra performing the unforgettable score to the sixth film of the Harry Potter™ Series. **Classified M.**

**Sydney Symphony Presents**

- **Wed 10 Jul, 7pm**
- **Thu 11 Jul, 7pm**
- **Fri 12 Jul, 7pm**
- **Sat 13 Jul, 2pm**
- **Sat 13 Jul, 7pm**

**Sydney Opera House**

**Saint-Saëns’ Organ Symphony**

| SUSAN GRAHAM SINGS SONGS OF THE AUVERGNE |
| CHABRIER | España |
| CANTELOUBE | Songs of the Auvergne |
| SAINT-SAËNS | Symphony No.3 (Organ Symphony) |

**David Robertson conductor**

**Susan Graham mezzo-soprano**

**Thursday Afternoon Symphony**

- **Thur 18 Jul, 1.30pm**
- **Emirates Metro Series**
- **Fri 19 Jul, 8pm**
- **Sydney Opera House**

**David Robertson conducts Britten’s Peter Grimes**

| OPERA IN CONCERT |
| BRITTEN | Peter Grimes |

**David Robertson conductor**

**Cast includes:**

- Stuart Skelton Peter Grimes
- Nicole Car Ellen Orford
- Alan Held Captain Balstrode
- Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

**Sydney Opera House**

**Kirill Gerstein in Recital**

- **Mon 5 Aug, 7pm**
- **City Recital Hall**

**Program includes works by:**

- LISZT, BEETHOVEN, JANÁČEK, ADÈS, DEBUSSY, KOMITAS and RAVEL

**Kirill Gerstein piano**

**Kirill Gerstein performs Grieg**

- **SIBELIUS** En Saga
- **GRIEG** Piano Concerto in A minor
- **BERLIOZ** Symphonie fantastique

**David Robertson conductor**

**Kirill Gerstein piano**

**Abercrombie & Kent Masters Series**

- **Wed 7 Aug, 8pm**
- **Fri 9 Aug, 8pm**
- **Sat 10 Aug, 8pm**
- **Sydney Town Hall**

**Kirill Gerstein performs Ravel and Gershwin**

- **RAVEL** Le Tombeau de Couperin
- **RAVEL** Piano Concerto for the left hand
- **GERSHWIN** Piano Concerto in F

**David Robertson conductor • Kirill Gerstein piano**

**Sydney Town Hall**

**Berlioz’s Symphonie Fantastique**

- **SIBELIUS** En Saga
- **BERLIOZ** Symphonie fantastique

**David Robertson conductor**

**Sydney Town Hall**

**Fri 9 Aug, 11am**
Welcome to the Abercrombie & Kent Masters Series.

Welcome to the fourth instalment in our 2019 Masters Series: Beethoven’s Fifth! This is such a monumental work, built on arguably the most recognisable motif in all of music, and it’s always a thrill to see how a classic of this stature might be interpreted when approached from a fresh perspective. In the masterful hands of Xian Zhang, we’ve been promised shock and awe, and we know the Sydney Symphony Orchestra always delivers.

What a treat to have a Verdi overture and a Prokofiev Violin Concerto on the same program, and to hear the latter played by the virtuoso Vadim Gluzman.

In much the same way as the Sydney Symphony Orchestra scours the music world to bring us evenings filled with extraordinary moments and exquisite talent, at Abercrombie & Kent we’re always on the lookout for emerging travel classics, new destinations and more authentic travel experiences.

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What each of these journeys shares, and also shares with a night in the concert hall with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, is a sense of wonder and adventure, of seeing the world in a new light. I hope you enjoy tonight’s performance and many equally grand adventures in music and travel to come.
Beethoven
Symphony No.5
Vadim Gluzman plays Prokofiev

Xian Zhang conductor
Vadim Gluzman violin

GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813–1901)
The Force of Destiny: Overture

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891–1953)
Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No.2 in G minor, Op.63
Allegro moderato
Andante assai – Allegretto – Andante assai
Allegro, ben marcato

INTERVAL

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)
Symphony No.5 in C minor, Op.67
Allegro con brio
Andante con moto
Scherzo and Trio (Allegro) – Finale (Allegretto)
THE ARTISTS

Xian Zhang conductor

Xian Zhang is currently Music Director with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. She also holds the post of Conductor Emeritus of Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, following her tenure as Music Director (2009–16). She was Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra & Chorus of Wales 2016-2019 and the first female conductor to hold a titled role with a BBC orchestra.

A popular guest conductor throughout the world, her engagements this season and next include the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic at the Concertgebouw, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New World Symphony, Dallas Symphony, National Arts Center Orchestra Ottawa, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre National de Lyon, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, Komische Oper Berlin, Barcelona Symphony, and MDR Sinfonieorchester Leipzig. Further ahead, she works with the Chicago, Washington, Philadelphia and London Symphony Orchestras.

Equally in demand in opera, she conducted a successful production of Nabucco with Welsh National Opera in June 2014, which subsequently transferred to Savonlinna, where she returned in 2016 for Otello. Other notable opera engagements include La traviata with Den Norske Opera (2016) and La bohème with English National Opera (2015). She conducts Rigoletto for National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing in 2020 and will make her Santa Fe Opera debut in Summer 2020 with a world premiere by Huang Ruo. Xian Zhang is a regular conductor in her native China where she works with the NCPA, China Philharmonic, and Guangzhou Symphony orchestras, among others.

A champion of Chinese composers, she has conducted Chen Yi’s Ge Xu (Antiphony) with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Dorothy Chang’s Northern Star with Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (2018), Tan Dun’s The Triple Resurrection with San Francisco Symphony (2018), Qigang Chen’s Er Huang (NCPA Orchestra, 2017) and Iris Dévoilée (BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Proms; and China NCPA Orchestra, 2015).

Working with young musicians plays a major part in Zhang’s life. She held the position of Artistic Director of the NJO, Dutch Orchestra and Ensemble Academy (2010–15), and in 2015 made her hugely successful debut with the European Union Youth Orchestra, conducting them in Grafenegg, Amsterdam, Berlin, Rheingau and Bolzano.
Vadim Gluzman’s wide repertoire embraces new music and his performances are heard around the world through live broadcasts and award-winning recordings.

Vadim Gluzman appears regularly with major orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Israel Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, London Symphony, Orchestre de Paris, Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Royal Concertgebouw. He has enjoyed collaborations with many of today’s leading conductors, including Semyon Bychkov, Riccardo Chailly, Sir Andrew Davis, Christoph von Dohnányi, Neeme Järvi and others. His festival appearances include performances at Lockenhaus, Ravinia, Tanglewood, and Verbier, as well as Chicago’s North Shore Chamber Music Festival, founded by Gluzman and pianist Angela Yoffe, his wife and recital partner.

Highlights of his 2018-19 season included performances with the Chicago Symphony under Osmo Vänskä and Cleveland Orchestra under Michail Jurowski. He led performances with the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra in Columbus, Ohio, where he serves as Creative Partner and Principal Guest Artist.

Mr. Gluzman celebrated the 100th anniversary of the birth of violinist Henryk Szeryng with the Hamburg NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, Warsaw Philharmonic, Jerusalem Symphony and Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México. In 1994, Gluzman was awarded the Henryk Szeryng Foundation Career Award and today performs on a Dominique Peccatte bow from Szeryng’s collection, previously owned by Eugène Ysaÿe.

Brahms’ Violin Concerto with the Lucerne Symphony conducted by James Gaffigan and includes Brahms’ Sonata No.1 for Violin and Piano, performed with Angela Yoffe.

Born in the former Soviet Union, Gluzman began violin studies at age seven. He studied with Roman Šně in Latvia and Zakhar Bron in Russia before moving to Israel in 1990, where he became a student of Yair Kless. In the US, he studied with Arkady Fomin in Dallas and at the Juilliard School with Dorothy DeLay and Masao Kawasaki. Early in his career, he enjoyed the encouragement and mentorship of Isaac Stern.

Mr. Gluzman serves as Distinguished Artist in Residence at Baltimore’s Peabody Conservatory and teaches at Israel’s Keshet Eilon International Music Center. He performs on the legendary 1690 ‘ex-Leopold Auer’ Stradivari on extended loan to him through the generosity of the Stradivari Society of Chicago.
Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

La forza del destino: Overture

La forza del destino (The Force of Destiny), composed by Verdi in 1862 to a libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, is based on a Spanish tragedy by the third Duke of Rivas that depicts the murder of the Marquis di Calatrava and the consequent deaths of the other principal characters in the play: his daughter, Leonora; his son, Don Carlo; and Leonora’s lover, Don Alvaro.

Calatrava is accidentally killed by Don Alvaro when he, Calatrava, discovers that Leonora and Don Alvaro are about to elope. Don Carlo swears to avenge his father’s death, and his pursuit of Don Alvaro finally ends in a duel in which Don Carlo is mortally wounded. Leonora appears from her nearby refuge and casts herself sobbingly upon her brother’s body, but remembering his vow, he stabs her. Thus is a grim destiny fulfilled.

The overture is based on themes which appear at various points in the opera. The brass peals out dramatically, leading to a restless melody that is used several times in the opera; first, when the father discovers the lovers and later when he meets his death. Next comes the poignant air of Alvaro’s plea to Don Carlo (from the last act), and then the theme of Leonora’s prayer to the Virgin for protection. Then follows another melody, taken from Leonora’s thanks to God for being given sanctuary, after which the music becomes agitated, menacing and peaceful in turn, and builds to a dramatic conclusion.

Forza was composed for St. Petersburg after a four-year lull after Verdi’s previous opera, A Masked Ball. It is, in the eyes of Roger Parker in The New Grove Dictionary of Opera, Verdi’s most daring ‘patchwork drama’, only loosely linear and a precursor of Russian operas such as Prince Igor and Boris Godunov. The overture, which dates from the 1869 revision of the work for La Scala, expresses this juxtaposing quality, the reappearances of the so-called ‘fate’ motif unifying the music but at the same time revealing the exciting disparateness of the themes.

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The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed Verdi’s La forza del destino Overture on 30 January 1949 under Franco Ghione, its network premiere. The Orchestra mostly recently performed it in October 2012 under Miguel Harth-Bedoya.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No.2
in G minor, Op.63

Allegro moderato

Andante assai – Allegretto – Andante assai

Allegro, ben marcato
Prokofiev had left the Soviet Union in 1918 and based himself in Paris, with determined forays into the United States. By mid-1936, after a series of return visits, he had returned, permanently, to Moscow.

In Soviet Russia there was a huge audience coming to ‘classical’ music for the first time. We should be wary of imputing cynical motives to Prokofiev; after all, it required no radical change in style for him to produce works of immediately engaging character. Nevertheless, it does seem that in Lieutenant Kijé, Romeo and Juliet and the Violin Concerto No.2, Prokofiev was making a special effort to write music of formal clarity and emotional directness, as if to prepare the ground for his homecoming.

In 1935, Prokofiev was approached by a group of admirers of the French violinist Robert Soetens to write a concerto. It was Prokofiev’s intention to make this concerto ‘altogether different from No.1 in both music and style’. It was composed during an extensive concert tour which Prokofiev and Soetens made. As Prokofiev notes in his autobiography:

“The principal theme of the first movement was written in Paris, the first theme of the second movement in Voronezh, the orchestration I completed in Baku, while the first performance was given in Madrid in December 1935.”

The piece stakes an immediate claim to simple, comprehensive tunefulness. The soloist, alone, establishes the key of G minor unequivocally with a disarmingly simple melody. Some busy passage-work leads to a new lyrical theme in B flat, reminiscent both of La Vie en rose and the Gavotte from Prokofiev’s Classical Symphony. Both themes are developed in a varied central section characterised by Prokofiev’s lively rhythmic manipulation and deft touches of orchestration. The movement ends curiously, with rapid virtuosic writing brought to a halt by peremptory plucked chords from the soloist.

The pizzicato writing is carried over into the rocking triplet accompaniment of the second movement, which supports a long-breathed, yearning melody for the soloist who travels through a number of musical landscapes. The plucking of strings may suggest the guitars of Spain, where the work was to be premiered; in the final movement the Iberian flavour becomes explicit with the use of castanets. This grotesque waltz reminds us of Prokofiev’s brilliance as a ballet composer, and he draws yet more arresting colours from the solo part, notably in the use of melodies played high on the violin’s lowest string. For all Prokofiev’s nomadism during the work’s composition, the overwhelming impression is of Russianness in its balance of wild energy, humour and melancholy.
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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Symphony No.5 in C minor, Op.67

Allegro con brio
Andante con moto
Scherzo and Trio (Allegro) –
Finale (Allegretto)

‘Blazing shafts of light shoot through the deep night of this realm, and we become aware of giant shadows which surge and heave, closing in on us and destroying everything in us except the pain of unending longing.’ Thus, in 1810, music critic E.T.A. Hoffmann described Beethoven’s music in his review of the Symphony No.5.

A little more than a century later, a young German student writing from the front lines of World War I described the work more pragmatically as ‘truly the symphony of war. The introductory measures in fortissimo are the mobilisation orders. Then the measures in piano: anxiousness before the tremendous events ahead. Then the crescendo and again fortissimo: the overcoming of all terror and fear and the summoning of courage and unity, rising to a unified will to victory…’

Two radically different visions, but the message is the same: Symphony No.5 is founded on an essential dynamic of struggle. It is the work of a Beethoven preoccupied with the heroic ideal and the triumph of the inner will.

The first sketches for the work were made in early 1804, only a few months after completing Symphony No.3, which Beethoven had dedicated to Napoleon in admiration of his republican ideals. (In disgust at the news that Napoleon had declared himself emperor, Beethoven tore up the dedication and the work was renamed ‘Sinfonia Eroica: in celebration of the memory of a great man.’) The opera Leonore (later, in much revised form, to achieve enormous success as Fidelio), which was composed in 1804-05, draws its strength from the heroism of Leonore herself, her astounding devotion and physical courage.

Symphony No.5, however, presents a different kind of heroism, and has often been interpreted in the context of Beethoven’s struggle to live with his worsening deafness. Faced with the humiliation and misery of being unable to hear the sound of a flute playing in the woods, Beethoven sought to overcome his despair through personal disciplines of patience, resignation and determination, recommending virtue as the only source of happiness.

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony has no text or program, unlike the Sixth [Pastoral], written at the same time, in which each movement bears a description of the scene it ‘portrays’. The music itself, however, plays out its struggle on many levels. The opening bars – that famous
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motto, used as a signal of victory in World War II – refuse to establish clearly either key or metre: it is not until the seventh bar that we hear the bass C, on which the whole chord of C minor relies, or have a clear sense of the rhythmic framework of the music. The opening motif, thrown down like a gauntlet, is transformed in the ghostly third movement into an ominous march that returns as a sinister echo in the midst of the confident finale. Extremes of *pianissimo* particularly in the second movement are shattered by militant *fortissimo* interjections, and the fourth movement itself bursts in on the third as it holds us in suspense (the celebrated passage of violins winding their way into increased dissonance against a persistent tapping timpani).

The heroic victory wrought from this struggle is revealed perhaps dramatically in the choice of key. C minor and its relationship with C major had become something of an obsession for Beethoven around this time, with the four large-scale vocal works composed between 1802 and 1808 (*Leonore*, the *Choral Fantasy*, the oratorio *Christus am Oelberge* and the Mass in C, especially the Agnus Dei) all making a feature of the tension between these two parallel keys. In Symphony No.5, however, the triumphant fourth movement in C major ultimately sweeps away the turmoil of the opening movement in C minor in a blaze of sound which, as Beethoven wrote, makes ‘more noise than 6 timpani, and a better noise at that’.

NATALIE SHEA © 2001

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed Beethoven’s Fifth on 17 June 1936 under Maurice Abravanel, and most recently under Vladimir Ashkenazy in February 2016.
Shostakovich Symphony No.4

Violin virtuoso James Ehnes performs Khachaturian’s extravagantly tuneful Violin Concerto, and Shostakovich expert Mark Wigglesworth leads the Orchestra in Shostakovich’s electrifying Fourth Symphony.

Mark Wigglesworth conductor
James Ehnes violin

28, 30 & 31 August
Sydney Opera House

Masters Series

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SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

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