Saint-Saëns’
Organ Symphony

SUSAN GRAHAM SINGS
SONGS OF THE AUVERGNE

18 & 19 JULY
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE
CONCERT DIARY

JULY

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
Thu 25 Jul, 7pm
Sat 27 Jul, 7pm
Sydney Opera House

Kirill Gerstein in Recital
Program includes works by:
LISZT, BEETHOVEN, JANÁČEK, ADÈS, DEBUSSY, KOMITAS and RAVEL
Kirill Gerstein piano
Mon 5 Aug, 7pm
City Recital Hall

Kirill Gerstein performs Grieg
SIBELIUS En Saga
GRIEG Piano Concerto in A minor
BERLIOZ Symphonie fantastique
Kirill Gerstein piano
Fri 9 Aug, 8pm
Sydney Town Hall

Berlioz’s Symphonie Fantastique
SIBELIUS En Saga
BERLIOZ Symphonie fantastique
David Robertson conductor
Fri 9 Aug, 11am
Sydney Town Hall

Mozart’s Symphony No.29
MOZART Sinfonia concertante in E flat for four winds, K297b
MOZART Symphony No.29
Andrew Haveron conductor • David Papp oboe
Francesco Celata clarinet • Euan Harvey horn
Fiona McNamara bassoon
Sydney Symphony Presents
Thu 15 Aug, 8pm
Fri 16 Aug, 8pm
Sat 17 Aug, 2pm
Sat 17 Aug, 8pm
Sydney Opera House

Star Wars: Return of the Jedi in Concert
Luke Skywalker heads a mission to rescue Han Solo from the clutches of Jabba the Hutt and faces Darth Vader one last time, with John William’s iconic score played live to film. Classified PG.
Sydney Symphony Presents
Thu 15 Aug, 8pm
Fri 16 Aug, 8pm
Sat 17 Aug, 2pm
Sat 17 Aug, 8pm
Sydney Opera House

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
Thu 8 Aug, 1.30pm
Sydney Town Hall

Schubert, Liszt and Ledger
SIMONE YOUNG’S VISIONS OF VIENNA
LEDGER Two Memorials
(for Anton Webern and John Lennon)
SCHUBERT arr. Liszt Wanderer Fantasy
LISZT Dante Symphony
Simone Young conductor
Louis Lortie piano • Cantillation
Meet the Music
Wed 21 Aug, 6.30pm
Sydney Opera House
Welcome to a sensational evening with French favourites, the Concert Hall’s Grand Organ and vivid images of the Auvergne.

In this Emirates Metro Series concert, we are delighted to feature opera star Susan Graham, renowned for her insightful performance of French vocal music. Saint-Saëns’ ‘Organ’ Symphony will showcase this impressive instrument as it reverberates throughout the Concert Hall.

The Sydney Opera House Grand Organ is believed to be the world’s largest mechanical tracker-action pipe organ. It has 10,244 pipes and weighs 37.5 tonnes; an Emirates A380 has over 4 million parts and weighs 510-575 tonnes!

With over 155 destinations in 85 countries and territories in its global route network, Emirates flies to over 40 European destinations. This month, we launch our new route to Porto; a great cultural destination and artistic hub.

We like to say that, at Emirates, we conduct ourselves much like an orchestra, bringing together pilots, cabin crew and support teams from around the world to ensure you have a seamless experience every time you fly with us. From world-class aircrafts to award-winning inflight entertainment, and gourmet meals prepared by leading chefs, we do whatever is in our hands to help you fly better.

This year marks the 17th anniversary of our fruitful collaboration with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra as its Principal Partner. On that note, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this Emirates Metro Series concert, Saint-Saëns’ Organ Symphony.

Barry Brown
Emirates’ Divisional Vice President for Australasia
Saint-Saëns’ Organ Symphony

Susan Graham sings Songs of the Auvergne

David Robertson conductor
Susan Graham mezzo-soprano
Joseph Nolan organ

EMMANUEL CHABRIER (1841–1894)
España – Rhapsody

JOSEPH CANTELOUBE (1879–1957)
Songs of the Auvergne
Bailèro (Series 1, no. 2)
La delaïssádo (Series 2, no. 4)
Chut, chut (Series 4, no. 4)
Lou coucut (Series 4, no. 6)
Uno jionto postouro (Series 5, no. 5)
Malurous quo uno fenno (Series 3, no. 5)
Brezairola (Series 3, no. 4)

INTERVAL

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921)
Symphony No.3 in C minor, Op.78 (‘Organ’ Symphony)
Adagio – Allegro moderato – Poco adagio
Allegro moderato – Presto – Maestoso – Allegro

Pre-concert talk by Alastair McKean in the Northern Foyer, 45 minutes before the performance.

Estimated durations: 8 minutes, 25 minutes, 20 minute interval, 36 minutes.

The concert will conclude at approximately 3.10pm (Thursday) and 9.40pm (Friday).

Cover image: David Robertson
(Photoby Keith Saunders)
David Robertson – conductor, artist, thinker, and American musical visionary – occupies some of the most prominent platforms on the international music scene. A highly sought-after podium figure in the worlds of opera, orchestral music, and new music, Robertson is celebrated worldwide as a champion of contemporary composers, an ingenious and adventurous programmer, and a masterful communicator whose passionate advocacy for the art form is widely recognised.

Following the autumn 2018 European tour with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Robertson kicks off his valedictory 2019 season as its Chief Conductor and Artistic Director. In the 2018-19 season, Robertson returns to the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, and Czech Philharmonic. He continues rich collaboration with the New York Philharmonic, and conducts the Toronto and Montreal Symphony Orchestras, Cincinnati and Dallas Symphony Orchestras, and the Juilliard Orchestra, where he begins his tenure as Director of Conducting Studies, Distinguished Visiting Professor.

Robertson recently completed his transformative 13-year tenure as Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, where he solidified its status as among the nation’s most enduring and innovative, established fruitful relationships with a spectrum of artists, and garnered a 2014 Grammy Award for the Nonesuch release of John Adams’ City Noir.

Robertson has served in artistic leadership positions at the Orchestre National de Lyon, and, as a protégé of Pierre Boulez, the Ensemble InterContemporain; as Principal Guest at the BBC Symphony Orchestra; and as a Perspectives Artist at Carnegie Hall, where he has conducted numerous orchestras. He appears regularly with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic, Bayerischer Rundfunk, and other major European orchestras and festivals.

In spring 2018, Robertson built upon his deep relationship with The Metropolitan Opera, conducting the premiere of Phelim McDermott’s celebrated Così fan tutte. Since his 1996 debut, The Makropulos Case, he has conducted a breathtaking range of projects, including the Met premiere of John Adams’ The Death of Klinghoffer [2014]; the 2016 revival of Janáček’s Jenůfa; and many favourites. Robertson has frequent projects at the world’s most prestigious opera houses, including La Scala, Théâtre du Châtelet, San Francisco and Santa Fe Operas.

Robertson is the recipient of numerous musical and artistic awards, and in 2010 was made a Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the Government of France. He is devoted to supporting young musicians and has worked with students at festivals ranging from Aspen to Tanglewood to Lucerne.

The position of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director is also supported by Principal Partner Emirates.
Texas-raised, Susan Graham made her international début at Covent Garden in 1994, playing Massenet’s *Chérubin*. Her repertoire covers four centuries from Monteverdi’s *Coronation of Poppea* to world premieres at the Metropolitan Opera in works such as John Harbison’s *The Great Gatsby* and Tobias Picker’s *An American Tragedy*. She created the role of Sister Helen Prejean in the world premiere of Jake Heggie’s *Dead Man Walking* at San Francisco Opera in 2000. Susan Graham is a noted exponent of French repertoire and of songs by contemporary American composers. Her Charles Ives recital CD is a Grammy Award winner while the breadth of her repertoire can be gauged from the tracklist of works by composers ranging from Purcell to Sondheim on her recital CD, *Virgins, Vixens and Viragos*. She appears on the DVD of William Kentridge’s production of Alban Berg’s *Lulu*, conducted by Lothar Koenigs.

Susan Graham has appeared regularly with orchestras such as the Boston Symphony, London Symphony and Orchestre de Paris, and at venues ranging from Paris’ Théâtre du Châtelet to Santa Fe Opera. She has performed with companies such as the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Paris Opera, La Scala, Bavarian State Opera, Vienna State Opera and the Salzburg Festival.

Recent highlights have been Berlioz’s *Nuits d’été* with the Houston Symphony and the Witch in Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel* with Los Angeles Opera, as well as the Class of 2019 commencement address and receipt of an honorary doctorate at her alma mater, Texas Tech University and appearing in the centennial concert of the Manhattan School of Music where she also studied.

British-Australian organist Joseph Nolan has been hailed by ABC Classic as ‘an extraordinary musician’, by BBC Radio 3 Record Review for ‘his miraculous playing’, by Limelight Magazine as ‘a Colossus’ and by Gramophone for his ‘towering technique, vivid virtuosity and inspired interpretive insight’.

Twice nominated for Artist of the Year in 2016 and 2018, Limelight Magazine has also awarded Joseph its coveted ‘Recording of the Month’ for his ninth disc for Signum Records from St Etienne du Mont, Paris, the church and organ of Maurice Duruflé. This is the first time in the history of the magazine that an organ disc has been awarded this distinction.

Joseph enjoys widespread international acclaim as a recording artist for Signum Records for whom he has recorded the complete organ works of Widor on France’s most revered organs. These discs have received innumerable five star reviews and awards in Gramophone, BBC Music Magazine, Limelight and Musicweb International.

A scholarship student of the legendary organist Marie Claire Alain in Paris, Joseph was then appointed to Her Majesty’s Chapels Royal, St James’ Palace in 2004. Joseph performed on numerous occasions at Buckingham Palace, most notably giving the opening concert of the refurbished Grand Ballroom organ to a distinguished audience.

Joseph has played in concerts across the globe and made his solo debut at Sydney Opera House in the 2017 Sydney Symphony Orchestra Season to great critical acclaim. Nolan has also performed as a concerto soloist with the Malaysian Symphony Orchestra at Petronas Concert Hall, Kuala Lumpur, and with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra at Perth Concert Hall.

Nolan was invited to take up the position of Organist and Master of Music at St George’s Cathedral, Perth, Western Australia in 2008. Under Joseph’s leadership the Cathedral music programme has been described as ‘elite’ and ‘world-class’ in The Australian and The West Australian newspapers.

Joseph Nolan was made a Chevalier l’ordre des arts et des Lettres by the French Government for services to French music in 2016 and became an Honorary Fellow of the University of Western Australia in 2013. The University awarded Joseph its prestigious higher doctorate, the Doctor of Letters, in 2018.

Joseph will be returning to the famous church of La Madeleine, Paris, to record the complete organ works of Charles-Valentin Alkan for Signum Records in June 2020.
ABOUT THE MUSIC

Emmanuel Chabrier (1841–1894)

España – Rhapsody

At first a lawyer, Chabrier studied piano and harmony privately and resigned from legal work in 1880, becoming an administrator and composer with a natural gift for melodic invention, genial humour and modal harmonies.

In 1882 he returned from a Spanish holiday with musical souvenirs, including flamenco rhythms and traditional folk melodies which would colour his compositional style thereafter. Such influences inspired and informed his popular rhapsody on Spanish tunes, España. He is regarded as the founder of the vogue for Hispanic-flavoured compositions by French composers: notably Ravel’s Rapsodie espagnole and Debussy’s Iberia.

Writing from Spain to a friend, he confidently declared that, ‘my rhythms, my tunes will arouse the audience to a feverish pitch of excitement; everyone will embrace his neighbour madly – and you too will be obliged to hug Dancla [the leader of the orchestra] in your arms, so voluptuous will be my melodies!’

The first performance of España in November 1883 established Chabrier’s status as a professional composer, rather than – as he had been seen to that point – a gifted amateur. The audience and critics alike were excited by España’s vitality, wit and brilliant orchestration. Although they are not reported to have hugged each other madly as Chabrier predicted, they did call for an encore, and the work had to be repeated on various occasions later in the season.

ADAPTED FROM A NOTE JILLIAN HARDING © 1996

España requires an orchestra of 3 flutes (one doubling piccolo), pairs of oboes and clarinets, 4 bassoons, 4 horns, pairs of trumpets and cornets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 4 percussion, 2-harps and strings.

Sydney Symphony Orchestra first played España in August 1940 under Thomas Beecham, and most recently in September 2001 under Guy Noble.

Joseph Canteloube (1879–1957)

Songs of the Auvergne

Bailéro (Series 1, no. 2)
La delaïssádo (Series 2, no. 4)
Chut, chut (Series 4, no. 4)
Lou coucut (Series 4, no. 6)
Uno jionto postouro (Series 5, no. 5)
Malurous quo uno fenno (Series 3, no. 5)
Brezairola (Series 3, no. 4)

Susan Graham soprano

The Auvergne, in central France, had by virtue of geography maintained its cultural and linguistic independence from Paris until the 17th century. Surrounded by the mountainous Massif Central, the valleys of the Auvergne were very difficult to invade and easy to defend: each hilltop has a medieval castle watching over a small stone village. As a result the local language (related to Provençal rather than French), folk song and customs survived until relatively recently.

Joseph Canteloube was born in the region, and his earliest musical education was as a pianist, studying with an elderly Polish woman who had been a pupil of Chopin. He went to Paris in 1906 to study at the Schola Cantorum with Vincent D’Indy, whom he had met in 1901 and who encouraged Canteloube’s interest in the folk songs of various French provinces, but particularly his native Auvergne.

As he wrote:

‘The songs of the Auvergne no doubt form the largest, greatest and most varied collection of folk music that exists in France. Like those from other provinces, they fall into just a small number of types: songs based on history or legend; anecdotes; songs about love, marriage, children; work songs; songs of celebration, songs for the open air; dancing songs.’

Where some composers, notably among the English, tended to smooth the rough edges of the songs they realised, Canteloube, like Percy Grainger, seems to have sought to capture the vital and earthy aspects of the raw material. The orchestration is always colourful (and, interestingly, uses the piano where we might expect a harp) with particularly exuberant wind writing. Canteloube justified his elaborate settings, saying:
‘Just because the peasant sings without accompaniment, that is not sufficient reason to imitate him. When the peasant sings at his work, or during the harvest, there is an accompaniment which surrounds his song which would not be felt by those whose interest is purely academic. Only poets and artists will feel it...It is nature herself, the earth which makes this, and the peasant and his song cannot be separated from this...If you suppress this atmosphere, you lose a large part of the poetry. Only the immaterial art of music can evoke the necessary atmosphere, with its timbres, its rhythms and its impalpable, moving harmonies.’

**Shepherd’s Song**

Shepherd, across the water,
you’re not having much of a good time!
Sing Bailero lero, bailero, lo!
No I’m not and you, are you?
Bailero lero, bailero, lo!
Shepherd, the meadows are in flower,
you should come here to graze your flock!
Sing Bailero lero, bailero, lo!
The grass is finer in the meadows here!
Bailero lero, bailero, lo!
Shepherd, the river separates us,
And I cannot get across!
Sing Bailero lero, bailero, lo!
Then I shall come down and fetch you!
Bailero lero, bailero, lo!

**Abandoned**

A shepherdess is waiting on the hill
among the trees for her lover, but he doesn’t come!
‘Ah, he has abandoned me!
For I don’t see my sweetheart;
I was sure he loved me, and I love him so!’
The evening star shines
and the poor shepherdess
remains there, crying...

**Hush, hush**

My father set me the task
of looking after the cattle.
Shh, shh, hush! Shh, hush,
don’t say anything!
Shh, hush, Don’t make so much noise!
I hadn’t been there long
when my lover met me.
Shh, hush ...
I nearly melted
from all the kisses he gave me!
Shh, hush ...
There may be girls with neater hair
te aren’t any who’ve been better kissed!
Shh, hush ...

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**Canteloube’s orchestra for the Songs of the Auvergne**

consists of mezzo-soprano, 3 flutes (one doubling piccolo),
3 oboes (one doubling cor anglais), pairs of clarinets,
baassetoons, horns and trumpets, timpani, 3 percussion, harp,
piano and strings.

The first performance of music from Songs of the Auvergne by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra was in a 1967 Proms concert with soloist Kiang Hwa and conductor John Hopkins. The most recent Sydney Symphony performances were in March 2015 with Ward Stare, conducting and Daniela Mack, soloist.

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La Delaissádo

Uno pastourèlo èsper olaï al capt del bouès Lou galan doguélo, mè né bèn pas!
‘Ay! souï délaïssado!
Qué n’ai pas vist lou mio galant;
Crésio qué m’aïmábo, è ton l’aïmé iéu!’

Luziguèt l’estèlo, aquèlo qué marco la nuèt, e lo pauro pastoureletto
Démouret à ploura...

Chut, chut

Mon pairé mé n’o lougado,
Per ona gorda lo bacado,
Chut, chut, chut! Chut, chut,
que z’o cal pas diré!
Chut, chut, mènès pas ton dè brut!
Né l’i soui pas to lièu estado,
Què moun golont m’o rencountrado.
Chut, chut ...
N’ai pas ièu fatso de fuzados
Cou m’o fat guel de poutounados!
Chut, chut ...
Sé n’io bè de miliour couóïfado
N’io pas de miliour embrassado!
Chut, chut ...
The cuckoo

The cuckoo is a beautiful bird, 
There is none so beautiful 
As the cuckoo who sings, 
it's my cuckoo, it's your cuckoo, 
it's my cuckoo, it's your cuckoo, 
The cuckoo of all others! 
Say? Did not you hear the cuckoo sing? 
Over there, at the end of the meadow 
There is a tree with flowers like garnet, 
And the cuckoo sings, 
it's my cuckoo, it's your cuckoo, 
it's my cuckoo, it's your cuckoo 
The cuckoo of all others! 
Say? Did not you hear the cuckoo sing? 
And of course, all the cuckoos 
Pealing like bells 
Ah! They would sound like five hundred trumpets! 
Say? Did not you hear the cuckoo sing? 
it's my cuckoo, it's your cuckoo, 
it's my cuckoo, it's your cuckoo 
The cuckoo of all others!

A pretty shepherdess

A pretty shepherdess, one of these mornings, 
was on the grass crying for her great love. 
‘Now it must be time for him to come back! 
But to some other shepherdess 
He may have given his heart!’

Ah! Poor shepherdess! 
Here I am abandoned 
Like the turtledove 
Who lost her companion!

Unhappy he who has a wife

Unhappy he who has a wife, 
Unhappy he who hasn’t! 
He who hasn’t wants one, 
He who has, doesn’t! 
Tradèra, ladèri dérèro 
Ladèra ladèri déra.

Happy the woman who has the man she needs! 
But happier still she who has none! 
Tradèra etc.

Lullaby

Come, O sleep, 
sleep, come now! 
Come, O sleep, 
sleep, come from wherever you are! 
Sleep will not come, poor little one! 
The baby doesn’t want to sleep! Oh! 
Come, O sleep, 
sleep, come now! 
Sleep won’t come, 
the child won’t sleep! 
Come, O sleep, 
come to the child! Oh! Oh! 
Come, O sleep... 
Here it is now, poor little one! 
Here it is now, 
the baby is falling asleep...
**Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)**

**Symphony No.3 in C minor, Op.78 ('Organ' Symphony)**

*Adagio – Allegro moderato – Poco adagio*

*Allegro moderato – Presto – Maestoso – Allegro*

In 1887 Charles Gounod heard the Parisian premiere of Saint-Saëns’ ‘Symphony No. 3 in C minor, with Organ and Two Pianos’ and famously gushed, ‘there goes the French Beethoven’. Hyperbole, of course, but the work has remained hugely popular ever since. The reasons for its continued currency are easy to find: Saint-Saëns believed that ‘the time has come for the symphony to benefit by the progress of modern instrumentation’ and his orchestration is masterly, with a dramatic range of sounds from the diaphanous to the massive. The ‘Organ’ Symphony is, moreover, replete with memorable tunes and intricate counterpoint, traversing an emotional landscape from deepest melancholy to sheer joy.

It was commissioned and first performed under the composer’s baton by the London Philharmonic Society in 1886. During the composition Saint-Saëns’ old friend Liszt visited him and admired the score; sadly, Liszt died weeks before the premiere, inspiring Saint-Saëns to dedicate the symphony to his memory. Liszt had been a great mentor ever since 1857 when, hearing Saint-Saëns improvising at the organ of the Madeleine church, he had declared the young Frenchman to be ‘the finest organist in the world’. Saint-Saëns for his part fought for the due recognition of the older man as composer as well as pianist, leading Debussy grudgingly to admit, ‘we are indebted to him for having recognized the tumultuous genius of Liszt’.

Perhaps, though, there is more than just hyperbole to the Beethoven comparison. Like many a symphony of Beethoven’s, especially the Fifth, the ‘Organ’ Symphony begins in darkness and turbulence and only toward the end does it reach the bright affirmation of C major. And like Beethoven in the Fifth, Saint-Saëns is remarkably economical with his thematic material: it is possible to trace almost all those melodies back to the motifs heard in the work’s introduction and the opening of the following *Allegro moderato*. How the composer elaborates these into such a contrasting abundance of melodies is by the principle of thematic transformation developed by Liszt.

In his program note for the first performance, Saint-Saëns wrote that ‘this symphony is divided into two parts. Nevertheless, it embraces in principle the four traditional movements, but the first is altered in its development to serve as the introduction to the *Poco adagio*, and the scherzo is connected by the same process to the finale.’ In other words, the four movements are grouped in pairs, with the main dramatic weight carried by the second of each.

The opening *Adagio* is deliberately vague in direction, containing almost inconsequential motifs that, as we have noted, become transformed in the course of the work. The static nature of the introduction enhances the release of energy in the *Allegro moderato* whose febrile theme begins with the same notes as the plainchant for the Dies irae. Saint-Saëns had, after all, been trained as a church musician and taught at the Ecole Niedermeyer, a school whose founder was an authority on how ‘modern harmony is submitted to the form of the ancient modes’. This fast music, however, seems to peter out, subsiding into the beautifully sombre and emotionally searching *Poco adagio*. It is here that the organ makes an appearance, providing a velvet backdrop for the questing second theme of the movement.

Part II opens with a turbulent scherzo punctuated by timpani. It too builds in sound and fury but mysteriously winds down to a quiet, simple texture built on another chant-like motif. Only now does Saint-Saëns unleash the full power of the organ. A shattering C major chord opens onto a world of sparkling piano figurations, chorale melodies and an overpoweringly joyful peroration.

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The 'Organ' Symphony calls for an orchestra of 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes, (1 doubling cor anglais), 3 clarinets (doubling bass), 3 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 2 percussion, organ, piano (4 hands) and strings.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed Saint-Saëns’ Organ Symphony in June 1948 under Eugene Goossens. Its most recent performances were in June 2013 under Charles Dutoit with David Drury, organ.
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
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 Sydney Symphony Orchestra 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 Sydney Symphony Orchestra has toured China on five 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 Sydney Symphony’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.

2019 is David Robertson’s sixth season as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.
FIRST VIOLINS
Natalie Chee*
CONCERTMASTER
Harry Bennetts
ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER
Lerida Delbridge
ASSISTANT CONCERTMASTER
Fiona Ziegler
ASSISTANT CONCERTMASTER
Jenny Booth
Brielle Clapson
Sophie Cole
Claire Herrick
Georges Lentz
Nicola Lewis
Emily Long
Alexandra Mitchell
Alexander Norton
Anna Skálová
Léone Ziegler
Emily Qin*
Andrew Haveron
CONCERTMASTER
Sun Yi
ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER
Kirsten Williams
ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER
EMERITUS
SECOND VIOLINS
Kirsty Hilton
PRINCIPAL
Marina Marsden
PRINCIPAL
Marianne Edwards
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Emma Jezek
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
Alice Bartsch
Victoria Bihun
Rebecca Gill
Shuti Huang
Monique Irik
Wendy Kong
Stan W Kornel
Benjamin Li
Nicole Masters
Maja Verunica
Emma Hayes
VIOLAS
Tobias Breider
PRINCIPAL
Anne-Louise Comerford
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Justin Williams
ACTING ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Sandro Costantino
Rosemary Curtin
Jane Hazelwood
Felicity Tsai
Amanda Verner
Leonid Volovelsky
Beth Condon†
Andrew Jezek*
Stephen Wright*
Roger Benedict
PRINCIPAL
Graham Hennings
Stuart Johnson
Justine Maraden
CELLOS
Umberto Clerici
PRINCIPAL
Catherine Hewgill
PRINCIPAL
Leah Lynn
ACTING ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Kristy Conrau
Fenella Gill
Timothy Nankervis
Christopher Picdock
Adrian Wallis
David Wickham
Eliza Sdraulig†
Elizabeth Neville
DOUBLE BASSES
Kees Boersma
PRINCIPAL
Alex Henery
PRINCIPAL
David Campbell
Steven Larson
Richard Lynn
Jaan Pallandi
Benjamin Ward
Axel Ruge*
FLUTES
Joshua Batty
PRINCIPAL
Rebecca Johnson*
Diomedes Demetriades*
GUEST PRINCIPAL
Emma Sholl
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Carolyn Harris
OBOES
Diana Doherty
PRINCIPAL
David Papp
Alexandre Oguey
PRINCIPAL COR ANGLAIS
Shefali Pryor
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
CLARINET
Francesco Celata
ACTING PRINCIPAL
Christopher Tingay
Alexander Morris
PRINCIPAL BASS CLARINET
BASSOONS
Todd Gibson-Cornish
PRINCIPAL
Matthew Wilkie
PRINCIPAL EMERITUS
Fiona McNamara
Melissa Woodroffe*
Noriko Shimada
PRINCIPAL CONTRABASSOON
HORNS
Katy Woolley*
GUEST PRINCIPAL
Geoffrey O’Reilly
PRINCIPAL 3RD
Marnie Sebire
Rachel Silver
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The Hon. Jane Mathews AO pictured with percussionist Timothy Constable, who says “the Orchestra is very lucky to have a dear friend like Jane! For many years she has been our champion, commissioning new music and personally supporting my chair. What a legend!”

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(1 July, 2019)