

5 May
Sydney Opera House

SYMPHONY SPECTACULAR



«SYDNEY»
«SYMPHONY»
«ORCHESTRA»

Principal Partner



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PATRON **Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley** AC KC

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.

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 Fremaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdenek Macal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013, followed by David Robertson as Chief Conductor from 2014 to 2019. Australian-born Simone Young commenced her role as Chief Conductor in 2022, a year in which the Orchestra made its return to a renewed Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres, reflecting the Orchestra's versatility and diverse appeal. Its award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, and the Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

Simone Young

Chief Conductor

Donald Runnicles

Principal Guest Conductor

Vladimir Ashkenazy

Conductor Laureate

Andrew Haveron

Concertmaster
Chair supported by
Vicki Olsson

FIRST VIOLINS

Harry Bennetts

Associate
Concertmaster

Fiona Ziegler

Assistant
Concertmaster

Jennifer Booth

Sophie Cole

Claire Herrick

Georges Lentz

Emily Long

Alexandra Mitchell

Alexander Norton

Anna Skálová

Léone Ziegler

Sercan Danis*

Alexandra Osborne*

Benjamin Tjoo*

Andrew Haveron

Concertmaster

Sun Yi

Associate Concertmaster
Emeritus

Lerida Delbridge

Assistant
Concertmaster

Brielle Clapson

SECOND VIOLINS

Kirsty Hilton

Principal

Marina Marsden

Principal

Emma Jezek

Assistant Principal

Alice Bartsch

Victoria Bihun

Rebecca Gill

Shuti Huang

Monique Irik

Wendy Kong

Benjamin Li

Nicole Masters

Maja Verunica

Marianne Edwards

Associate Principal

Emma Hayes

VIOLAS

Tobias Breider

Principal

Justin Williams

Acting Associate Principal

Sandro Costantino

Rosemary Curtin

Jane Hazelwood

Graham Hennings

Stuart Johnson

Felicity Tsai

Amanda Verner

Leonid Volovelsky

Stephen Wright*

Aidan Filshie*

Anne-Louise

Comerford

Associate Principal

Justine Marsden

CELLOS

Catherine Hewgill

Principal

Leah Lynn

Acting Associate Principal

Kristy Conrau

Timothy Nankervis

Miles Mullin-Chivers*

Paul Stender*

Ariel Volovelsky*

Minah Choe*

Fenella Gill

Elizabeth Neville

Christopher Pidcock

Adrian Wallis

DOUBLE BASSES

Kees Boersma

Principal

Alex Henery

Principal

Dylan Holly

Steven Larson

Jaan Pallandi

Benjamin Ward

David Campbell

Richard Lynn

FLUTES

Joshua Batty

Principal

Emma Shall

Associate Principal

Lily Bryant*

Katie Zagorski*

Principal Piccolo

Carolyn Harris

OBOES

Diana Doherty

Principal

Callum Hogan

Alexandre Oguey

Principal Cor Anglais

Shefali Pryor

Associate Principal

CLARINETS

Francesco Celata

Principal

Alexander Morris

Acting Associate Principal

Christopher Tingay

Alexei Dupressoir*

BASSOONS

Matthew Wilkie

Principal Emeritus

Fiona McNamara

James Dodd*

Jordy Meulenbroeks*

Guest Principal

Contrabassoon

Todd Gibson-Cornish

Principal

Noriko Shimada

Principal Contrabassoon

HORNS

David Evans*

Guest Principal

Euan Harvey

Acting Principal

Marnie Sebire

Rachel Silver

Emily Newham*

Geoffrey O'Reilly

Principal 3rd

TRUMPETS

David Elton

Principal

Cécile Glémot

Sophie Spencer*

Brent Grapes

Associate Principal

Anthony Heinrichs

TROMBONES

Ronald Prussing

Principal

Scott Kinmont

Associate Principal

Nick Byrne

William Kinmont*

Brett Page*

Christopher Harris

Principal

TUBA

Steve Rossé

Principal

TIMPANI

Mark Robinson

Acting Principal

PERCUSSION

Rebecca Lagos

Principal

Timothy Constable

Gabriel Fischer*

Joshua Hill*

Alison Pratt*

HARP

Natalie Wong*

Principal

Julie Kim*

KEYBOARDS / EXTRAS

Catherine Davis*

Guest Principal Piano

Bold = Principal

Italics = Associate

Principal

***** = Guest Musician

° = Contract Musician

† = Sydney Symphony

Fellow

Grey = Permanent

Member of the Sydney

Symphony Orchestra

not appearing in

this concert

Friday 5 May, 7pm
Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

SYMPHONY SPECTACULAR

INSIDE/OUT AT THE HOUSE

UMBERTO CLERICI conductor
ANNA-LOUISE COLE soprano
ANDREW HAVERON violin
GENEVIEVE LANG presenter

EUGENE GOOSSENS (1893–1962)
Tam o'Shanter, Op.17a

RICHARD WAGNER (1813–1883)
ARR. HUMPERDINCK
Götterdämmerung – Siegfried's Rhine Journey

RICHARD WAGNER
Tannhäuser – 'Dich, teure Halle'

ROSS EDWARDS (BORN 1943)
Maninyas – ii. Chorale

HOLLY HARRISON (BORN 1988)
Burnout

ELENA KATS-CHEENIN (BORN 1957)
Momentum

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)
Pavane for a Dead Princess

BEDŘICH SMETANA (1824–1884)
Má vlast: Vltava (The Moldau)

RICHARD GEORG STRAUSS (1864–1949)
Der Rosenkavalier: Suite

Holly Harrison's Burnout was made possible through the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's 50 Fanfares Project and was commissioned by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, supported by Geoff Stearn.

ESTIMATED DURATIONS

4 minutes, 10 minutes,
6 minutes, 4 minutes,
4 minutes, 6 minutes,
interval 20 minutes,
6 minutes, 12 minutes,
22 minutes

The concert will conclude at
approximately 8.45pm.

*The Sydney Symphony
Orchestra thanks Phillip
Sametz for his assistance
in the research and
programming of this concert.*

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



CONCERT DIARY

MAY 2023



**STEPHEN HOUGH PERFORMS
RACHMANINOV 2**

GLORIOUSLY EXPANSIVE

RACHMANINOV Piano Concerto No.2

RESPIGHI

Roman Festivals*
Fountains of Rome*
Pines of Rome

**Great Classics performance only*

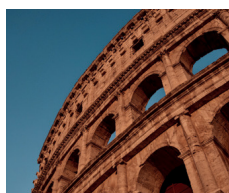
JOHN WILSON conductor

STEPHEN HOUGH piano

Symphony Hour
Great Classics

**Thursday 11 May, 7pm
Sat 13 May, 2pm**

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House



RESPIGHI'S ROMAN TRILOGY
GLORIOUS LANDSCAPES

RESPIGHI

Roman Festivals
Fountains of Rome
Pines of Rome

JOHN WILSON conductor

Tea & Symphony

Friday 12 May, 11am

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House



STEPHEN HOUGH IN RECITAL
GREAT ROMANTICS

MOMPOU Cants màgics

CHOPIN Ballade No.3

CHOPIN Two Nocturnes

DEBUSSY Estampes

STEPHEN HOUGH Partita

LISZT

Années de Pèlerinage:
Three Petrarch Sonnets
Dante Sonata

STEPHEN HOUGH piano

International Pianists in Recital

Monday 15 May, 7pm

City Recital Hall



**STEPHEN HOUGH PERFORMS
RACHMANINOV 1**
PASSIONATE & DRAMATIC

GORDON HAMILTON

a great Big Blue Thing

50 Fanfares Commission

RACHMANINOV Piano Concerto No.1

KORNGOLD Symphony in F-sharp

JOHN WILSON conductor

STEPHEN HOUGH piano

Emirates Masters Series
Emirates Thursday Afternoon Symphony

**Wednesday 17 May, 8pm
Thursday 18 May, 1.30pm
Friday 19 May, 8pm
Saturday 20 May, 8pm**

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

JUNE 2023



MOZART'S GREAT MASS IN C MINOR
VISIONARY & DRAMATIC

MOZART

Don Giovanni: Overture
Symphony No.36, Linz
Mass in C minor, The Great

MASAAKI SUZUKI conductor

SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

Emirates Masters Series
Thursday Afternoon Symphony

**Wednesday 7 June, 8pm
Thursday 8 June, 1.30pm
Friday 9 June, 8pm
Saturday 10 June, 8pm**

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

UMBERTO CLERICI conductor

After a career spanning more than 20 years as a gifted cello soloist and orchestral musician, Umberto Clerici has gained a reputation as an artist of diverse and multifaceted talents.

It was in Sydney in 2018 that Umberto made his conducting debut with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House. A host of acclaimed conducting engagements followed culminating in his recent appointment as the Chief Conductor of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. Simultaneously, Umberto continues to be in high demand with all the major symphony orchestras of Australia and New Zealand.

In addition to his first season as Chief Conductor of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Umberto's 2023 conducting engagements include returns to the podiums of the Sydney, Melbourne and West Australian Symphony Orchestras. Having conducted each of the New Zealand and Dunedin Symphony Orchestras in 2022, Umberto will debut this year conducting the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. In addition, Umberto looks forward to his first collaboration with Opera Queensland for Verdi's *Macbeth*.

Umberto began his career as a virtuoso cellist making his solo debut at the age of 17 performing Haydn's D Major Cello Concerto in Japan. After years of performing on the stages of the world's most prestigious concert halls, Umberto took up the position as Principal Cellist of the Royal Opera House in Turin, which he held for four years. In 2014, he was then appointed as the Principal Cello of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, a position he held until 2021.

As a cellist, Umberto is beloved by Australian audiences. Umberto has performed internationally as a soloist at New York's Carnegie Hall, Vienna's Musikverein, the great Shostakovich Hall of St Petersburg, Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome, the Salzburg Festival and is one of only two Italians to have ever won a prize for cello in the prestigious International Tchaikovsky Competition.



Umberto Clerici
Photo by Jay Patel

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ANNA-LOUISE COLE soprano

Anna-Louise Cole's stunning 2022 debut as Turandot (at the Sydney Opera House) thrilled critics and audiences alike. *Limelight* spoke of her "glorious lush voice with rich depth and warmth. Her top notes are brilliant, but she is impressive across her entire register." Her other appearances with Opera Australia have included the title role in *Aida*, Crobyle in *Thaïs*, Gerhilde in *Die Walküre* and Third Norn in *Götterdämmerung*; she was nominated for a 2017 Green Room Award as Best Female in a Supporting Role for these latter two performances.

In 2022, she appeared as Chrysothemis in *Elektra* for Victorian Opera and as Elsa in *Lohengrin* in Bologna. 2023 engagements include Brünnhilde in Opera Australia's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and Venus in their *Tannhäuser*; she sings Lady Macbeth for Opera Queensland, Mahler's Symphony No.8 in Sydney and his Symphony No.2 in Melbourne.

Her concert work for the national company includes *Great Opera Hits* (in the Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House), *Opera in the Domain* with the Opera Australia Orchestra and *Opera in the Bowl* with Orchestra Victoria.

For Australia's state and local opera companies, Anna-Louise has sung the title role in *Tosca*, First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* and Der Friedensbote in *Rienzi*. As a member of Wiener Staatsoper's Principal Ensemble, she sang Melanie in the children's opera *Patchwork* and covered major roles including *Tosca*, *Amelia* and *Donna Anna*.

Other concert appearances have included the soprano solos in Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Mozart's *Mass in C minor* and recitals of Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*, Berg's *Seven Early Songs* and the works of Richard Strauss and Josef Marx.

Born in Melbourne, Australia, Anna-Louise holds a BA Hons in German and a BMus Hons in Music Performance (Voice) from the University of Melbourne. She has also studied at the Kunst Universität in Graz, Austria and the University of Freiburg through scholarships from Melbourne Abroad and the Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst.



Anna-Louise Cole
Photo by Hugh Stewart/
Halls Lane Portraits

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ANDREW HAVERON violin
*Sydney Symphony Concertmaster,
Vicki Olsson Chair*

Andrew Haveron has established himself as one of the most sought-after violinists of his generation. A laureate of some of the most prestigious international violin competitions, Andrew studied in London at the Purcell School and the Royal College of Music. With his unrivalled versatility, he is a highly respected soloist, chamber musician and concertmaster.

As a soloist, Andrew has collaborated with conductors such as Sir Colin Davis, Sir Roger Norrington, Jiří Bělohlávek, Stanislaw Skrowachewski, David Robertson and John Wilson, performing a broad range of the well-known and less familiar concertos with many of the UK's finest orchestras. His performance of Walton's violin concerto with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 2015 was nominated for a Helpmann Award. Andrew's playing has also been featured on many film and video-game soundtracks, including Disney's *Fantasia* game, which includes his performance of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields.

In 1999 Andrew was appointed first violinist of the internationally acclaimed Brodsky Quartet. A busy schedule saw the quartet perform and broadcast in their unique style all over the world. Amassing a repertoire of almost 300 works, they collaborated with outstanding artists and commissioned many new works from today's composers. Also famed for their iconic 'cross-genre' projects, the quartet enjoyed barrier-breaking work with Elvis Costello, Björk, Paul McCartney and Sting. Andrew has also appeared with numerous other chamber groups such as the Nash and Hebrides ensembles, the Logos Chamber Group, Kathy Selby and Ensemble Q.

Andrew is also in great demand as a concertmaster and director and has worked with all the major symphony orchestras in the UK and many further afield. In 2007 he became concertmaster of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, broadcasting frequently on BBC Radio and enjoying many appearances at the BBC Proms including the famous 'Last Night'. Joining the Philharmonia Orchestra in 2012 Andrew also led the World Orchestra for Peace at the request of its conductor Valery Gergiev, and again in 2018 at the request of Donald Runnicles. He has also been the leader of The John Wilson Orchestra since its inception. In 2013, Andrew started in his current position of concertmaster of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. In 2019 Andrew appeared with the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Simon Rattle, and in recitals around Australia with pianists Anna Goldsworthy, Piers Lane and Simon Tedeschi.

Andrew Haveron plays a 1757 Guadagnini violin, generously loaned to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra by Vicki Olsson.



Andrew Haveron
Photo by Keith Saunders

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

GENEVIEVE LANG presenter

Genevieve Lang is well known to Australian audiences as a harpist and broadcaster. You might well have seen her on stage with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and she's enjoyed a long association with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. She's also a founding member of SHE (Seven Harp Ensemble) and has performed as soloist with several orchestras around the country and overseas.

A few years ago, Genevieve became interested in writing and speaking about music and the world of music administration. Since then, she's taken on education projects for Musica Viva, given pre-concert talks to audiences in Sydney and Hobart, led tours for Hayllar Music Tours, and worked with Pinchgut Opera, Gondwana Choirs and the Australian Youth Orchestra.

These days you're more likely to hear her voice than her harp, as a presenter on ABC Classic. Most recently Genevieve co-hosted ABC TV's televised broadcast with Jeremy Fernandez of the re-opening of the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall. For Genevieve, broadcasting and media are the perfect way to share her passion for classical music with the biggest possible audience!



Genevieve Lang
Photo by ABC Classic

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra has been central to the story of the Sydney Opera House, long before the first note was ever sounded inside the Concert Hall. As we celebrate the 50th birthday of this iconic building, *Symphony Spectacular* tells the stories of just a few of the performances, composers and musicians who have made the Opera House what it is today.

It was Eugene Goossens, the Orchestra's Chief Conductor from 1947-1956, who was one of the driving forces behind the public campaign for Sydney to have a world-class concert hall. Goossens had come from 20 years leading orchestras in spectacular, purpose-built halls in America and Europe, but in Sydney the Orchestra was still performing in Sydney Town Hall – a fine building in its own right but not ideal for concerts.

No sooner had Goossens arrived in Sydney than he began advocating for a new concert hall, one that could seat 3,500 people, provide a home for an opera company and provide a space for chamber music. "He said he saw no reason why a city the size of Sydney, with such keen music interest, should not have these," wrote *The Sydney Morning Herald* at the time.

EUGENE GOOSSENS (1893–1962)

***Tam o'Shanter*, Op.17a**

Goossens was already a world-famous figure when, in 1947, he accepted a dual role as the Sydney Symphony's Chief Conductor and Director of the Sydney (then NSW) Conservatorium. During his nine years in Sydney he brought about significant improvements in teaching standards, hugely expanded the Orchestra's repertoire, and worked tirelessly for the construction of the Sydney Opera House – also nominating Bennelong Point as the perfect site. Through his programming policies and forceful and charismatic advocacy he dramatically increased Sydney's appetite for concert music. He left the city a more sophisticated place than he had found it.



Eugene Goossens

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Even up to this time, he had been an eventful conducting career. Its highlights included conducting the first British concert performance of *The Rite of Spring*, accepting the invitation of George Eastman (founder of Kodak) to become the first Chief Conductor of the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra and, during his subsequent tenure as Chief Conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony, commissioning Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*.

All this time Goossens was a prolific composer, and in his 20s was widely regarded as one of the leading composers on the British scene. Written in 1919, *Tam o'Shanter* is a bracing setting of a poem by Scotland's Robert Burns, which describes a drunken ride by Tam on his horse, Maggie. The rhythm of Maggie's gallop dominates proceedings. In the poem horse and rider are chased by witches, who get so close to Maggie that she loses her tail as she and Tam leap the river to safety. The orchestral texture becomes wilder and more colourful as the ride progresses, until the suspenseful final pages.

RICHARD WAGNER (1813–1883)

ARR. HUMPERDINCK

Götterdämmerung – Siegfried's Rhine Journey

RICHARD WAGNER

Tannhäuser – 'Dich, teure Halle'

This music takes you back to the night of 29 September 1973 – one of the biggest nights in the history of Australian music, when Charles Mackerras (not yet Sir) conducted the first public concert in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, an all-Wagner program featuring soprano Birgit Nilsson. The two excerpts you hear tonight were played on that occasion.

In *Tannhäuser*, 'Dich, teure halle' ('Dear hall, I greet thee!') is Elisabeth's salutation to the Minnesingers' Hall in the Wartburg castle, where the opera's song contest is soon to take place. This joyous aria is often used to honour the opening of new concert halls.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

DICH TEURE HALLE

Dich, teure Halle, grüss ich wieder,
froh grüss ich dich, geliebter Raum!
In dir erwachen seine Lieder
und wecken mich aus düstrem Traum.

Da er aus dir geschieden,
wie öd erschienst du mir!
Aus mir entfloh der Frieden,
die Freude zog aus dir.

Wie jetzt mein Busen hoch sich hebet,
so scheinst du jetzt mir stolz und hehr.
der mich und dich so neu belebet,
nicht weilt er ferne mehr.

Wie jetzt mein Busen,
Sei mir gegrüsst! Sei mir gegrüsst!
Du, teure Halle, sei mir gegrüsst!

YOU, PRECIOUS HALL

You, precious hall, again I greet you,
Happily I greet you, beloved room!
In you his songs are awakened
and they rouse me from my
ominous dream.

Once he was parted from you
how bleak you appeared to me!
Peace fled from me,
Joy went out of you.

Yet now my heart is lifted high,
For you shine again, proud and majestic.
You and I are given new life for
no longer does he remain far away.

I give you greeting, you precious Hall,
I give you my greetings.

Translation © Symphony Australia

Siegfried's Rhine Journey also forms a powerful link to Edo de Waart's tenure as Chief Conductor (1993-2003); between 1996 and 2000 he conducted all four *Ring* operas at the Sydney Opera House, with the Sydney Symphony performing alongside some of the world's finest Wagner singers. Now, starting in November 2023 with *Das Rheingold*, a new generation of singers will join Simone Young and the Orchestra in concert presentations of these epoch-making music dramas.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ROSS EDWARDS (born 1943)

Maninyas – ii. Chorale

HOLLY HARRISON (born 1988)

Burnout

ELENA KATS-CHERNIN (born 1957)

Momentum

The Sydney Symphony has a rich and important relationship with Australian composition. New music (by Nigel Butterley, John Antill and Don Banks, among others) featured in the Orchestra's opening seasons in the Sydney Opera House, and the extensive list of Australian works premiered by the Orchestra since 1973 includes Peter Sculthorpe's *Kakadu*, *Mangrove* and *Nourlangie* (with guitarist John Williams); Richard Mills' concertos for cello (with Raphael Wallfisch) and flute (with James Galway); and Graeme Koehne's *Elevator Music* and concerto *Inflight Entertainment* (written for by Diana Doherty). In 1988, the Orchestra's then co-concertmaster, Dene Olding, was soloist in the world premiere of Ross Edwards' *Maninyas*, under David Porcelijn's direction. Thanks to Olding's many subsequent performances around Australia, and his ABC Classics recording with Stuart Challender and the Orchestra, the work soon became iconic.

Elena Kats-Chernin and Holly Harrison are two of the composers taking part in one of the most ambitious commissioning initiatives in Australian orchestral history, the Sydney Symphony's *50 Fanfares* project. This looks to the future of Australian music, providing a platform that amplifies and elevates new and established compositional voices, from composers who have never worked with the Orchestra before to others who are old friends and frequent collaborators. That range of voices is perfectly represented here by featuring Kats-Chenin, one of Australia's most celebrated and performed composers and a longtime-friend of the Orchestra alongside Harrison, a fast-rising talent from Western Sydney whose work has already graced all of Australia's major concert halls in just a few short years. These 50 composers reflect the diversity and talent that underpins our creative culture.



Ross-Edwards
Photo by Bridget Elliot



Holly Harrison
Photo by Steve Broadbent



Elena Kats-Chernin
Photo by Vicki Lauren

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Both works received their world premieres in October 2022 - Kats-Chernin's *Momentum* conducted by Johannes Fritzsch, and Harrison's *Burnout* by Eduardo Strausser.

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

Pavane for a Dead Princess

In 1973 the Dutchman Willem van Otterloo (1907-1978) was the Orchestra's Chief Conductor, and it was before his concert with the Sydney Symphony on October 20 that Her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth II officially opened the building. Otterloo's tenure (1971-78) was distinguished by fine performances of the symphonies of Bruckner and Mahler, and of an increasing sophistication in the Orchestra's performance of French music, as evidenced by their 1977 recording of music from Ravel's ballet *Daphnis and Chloe*.

BEDŘICH SMETANA (1824–1884)

Má vlast: Vltava (The Moldau)

Long before Sir Charles Mackerras (1925-2010) became one of the world's great conductors he was the Sydney Symphony's Principal Oboe (at the age of 19!). Fast forward to 1982 and he begins his short but memorable tenure as the Orchestra's Chief Conductor (1982-1985) – the first Australian to take up the role. His programs were dynamic and ambitious, and included concert performances of Wagner's *Ring* operas and Berlioz's *The Trojans*; other highlights included Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet*, Elgar's *The Music Makers*, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, and the Australian premiere of Shostakovich's 14th Symphony.

No-one was a more passionate advocate for Czech music than Mackerras, and his complete cycle of Smetana's *Má Vlast* in May 1983 was a signature event of his tenure.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)

Der Rosenkavalier: Suite

One of the first big works by Richard Strauss to be heard in the Sydney Opera House was *Ein Heldenleben* (A Hero's Life), which Otterloo and the Sydney Symphony took on the Orchestra's first European tour, in 1974. Since then the Orchestra has been blessed with Chief Conductors who are also great advocates for Strauss' music, including Edo de Waart, Vladimir Ashkenazy and now Simone Young. Stuart Challender's special way with this repertoire is memorialised in a 1989 all-Strauss album on ABC Classics which includes this suite. (Challender was Chief Conductor from 1987 until his death in 1991.) In fact his last performance of any kind was an Australian Opera performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* in the Sydney Opera House Opera Theatre, in September 1991.

All notes © Phillip Sametz 2023

SUPPORTING THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

The Sydney Symphony has more than 90 years of history in our community, with 50 magical years calling the Sydney Opera House home. It is our great privilege to bring music to you both on and off the Concert Hall stage and we hope you have as many beautiful memories on this journey as we do.

With a rich history behind us we are looking ahead to an exciting and bold future of music under the baton of Chief Conductor Simone Young and our 100 musicians of the Orchestra. Your support of the Orchestra is key to the future of sharing music in our community and allows us to continue bringing the world's leading artists to Sydney.

Thank you for attending our concert and for your continued support of all that we do! If you are interested in learning more about making a gift to the Orchestra, please contact us by email at Philanthropy@sydneyssymphony.com or by ringing **(02) 8215 4625**.

THE VIEW FROM THE STAGE

The Orchestra's Principal Trombone, Ron Prussing, performed in the very first concert in the Sydney Opera House in 1973. Fifty years on, he reflects on what the Opera House has meant to the Orchestra, and highlights from his remarkable career.

By Hugh Robertson

2023 marks an important anniversary in the cultural life of Australia – the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Sydney Opera House.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra had been an integral part of the Opera House even before Jørn Utzon drew his celebrated designs, and the pieces chosen for tonight's concert represent that rich history, vital present and exciting future.

One man who spans that entire period is Ron Prussing, the Orchestra's long-serving Principal Trombone, who performed in the very first public concert in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall in 1973 – one particularly memorable event in an event-filled career.

Prussing had already been performing with the Sydney Symphony for several years by the time the Opera House opened. "My first job with the Orchestra was when I was called up from the Conservatorium High School," he recalls. "I got the phone call through the headmistress – the second trombone at the time was ill, so I went and played second trombone under Moshe Atzmon who was conducting Tchaikovsky's *Romeo & Juliet* – I was in my school uniform!"

As a young boy in Sydney in the 1960s, and an aspiring musician, Prussing was fascinated by the tumultuous process to actually build the Opera House, from delays to cost blowouts to Utzon's departure from Australia. But all the while, he could sense that something big was happening.



Ron Prussing
Photo by Keith Saunders

THE VIEW FROM THE STAGE

“I was very young,” recalls Prussing, “But I just had this incredible sense that something of an occasion was going to happen, something very significant. And you know, it turned out looking not exactly like the design that Utzon submitted, so there was this this real air of mystery about it.”

Prussing performed with the Sydney Symphony frequently throughout the late 60s and early 70s, and remembers vividly the feeling in the Orchestra during the build-up to the Opera House opening.

“The Orchestra was in good form [in 1973],” he says. “But there was an anticipation that this was maybe going to lead us into a new, somewhat uncharted era. We weren't quite sure what was going to happen.

“You've got to pay a lot of respect to the players of the time of the move from the Town Hall into the Opera House. They moved into a new building, new surroundings, a lot more focus on them worldwide than had been in the Town Hall. I've said to many people in recent times that I believe the Orchestra stands on the shoulders of giants.”

When the big night finally arrived, that sense of occasion was palpable.

“The opening night concert was a spectacular event,” says Prussing with a smile. “Everybody was keen to move into their new home. And of course, we had Australia's pre-eminent conductor of the day in Charles Mackerras. He came back from Europe, and we had Birgit Nilsson singing Wagner that night. She was such an incredible soprano, the quintessential Wagnerian soprano of the day, and she just brought the house down.”

“I was so privileged to be part of that that night,” he continues. “I was so young and naïve, I was just revelling in this music. I just remember enjoying the spectacular nature of that incredible music. And it was music that I ultimately very quickly fell in love with.”

THE VIEW FROM THE STAGE

Having performed in the Sydney Opera House since Day One, Prussing is perhaps better qualified than anyone to speak about the difference between the old Concert Hall and the new, following its re-opening in July 2022 – another important milestone shared by the Opera House and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

“I think the sound is spectacular,” Prussing says enthusiastically. “I have both played in it, obviously, and I try and get to a lot of concerts when I’m rostered off. I enjoy listening to it, and I have had seats right up the back and it’s as clear as clear can be – they are almost some of the best seats, now.”



Sir Charles Mackerras conducts the Sydney Symphony at the opening of the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, 1973.

THE VIEW FROM THE STAGE

“The balance is so much better – it has improved exponentially for the strings and the bass end of the Orchestra, and I think the blend of the orchestra is better because we can hear everybody, and we’re getting used to the hall. It’s a wonderful hall to play in.”

Here’s to many more years of memorable Sydney Symphony performances in the Sydney Opera House.



Ronald Prussing performs with the Sydney Symphony at the opening of the 2023 Concert Season, when Simone Young conducted Mahler’s First Symphony. Photo by Craig Abercrombie.

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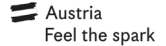
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