

SEASON 2008

**INTERNATIONAL PIANISTS IN RECITAL
PRESENTED BY THEME & VARIATIONS**

GABRIELA MONTERO

Monday 8 September | 8pm
City Recital Hall Angel Place

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)
transcribed by **FERRUCCIO BUSONI (1866–1924)**

Chaconne

from Partita No.2 in D minor for solo violin, BWV1004

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810–1849)

Polonaise-Fantaisie in A flat, Op.61

Allegro maestoso

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

L'Isle joyeuse

INTERVAL

ALBERTO GINASTERA (1916–1983)

Piano Sonata No.1, Op.22

Allegro marcato

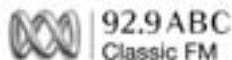
Presto misterioso

Adagio molto appassionato

Ruvido ed ostinato

IMPROVISATIONS

*Gabriela Montero will improvise on themes proposed
by the audience and of her own devising*



This concert will be recorded for broadcast across Australia on ABC Classic FM 92.9.

Pre-concert talk by
Dr Robert Curry at 7.15pm in
the First Floor Reception Room

This year we proudly celebrate
25 years of pre-concert talks,
see page 20 for the story.

Estimated timings:
15 minutes, 14 minutes,
6 minutes, 20-minute interval,
15 minutes, 20 minutes
The performance will conclude
at approximately 9.50pm

Artist biography on page 24

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Dear Music Lover

It's rare to find improvisation featured in a traditional classical piano recital. In fact, a well-known Australian pianist recently said, 'Most classical musicians couldn't improvise a fart at a Hungarian wedding'. While the tradition of improvisation in classical concerts has largely been lost over centuries, it certainly hasn't died.

Bach, Beethoven and Mozart were all famous improvisers and it is lucky for us that they were able to transcribe some of their free thoughts onto manuscript.

A talented pianist as well as a skilled improviser, Gabriela Montero will tonight rejuvenate the tradition of improvisation in a live performance by improvising on themes suggested by the audience.

While taking the time to learn more about Gabriela and her unique performance approach, I came across her interactive website, which is bringing live performance to new audiences in innovative ways. Taking requests through her website, Gabriela improvises on suggested themes from her living room and webcasts her performances live.

So for any of you who become fans of Gabriela tonight, she is but a mouse-click away even once she has left Sydney to return home, and we can all feel just that little bit more assured there is still a lot of innovation going on in the tradition of classical piano performance.



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INTRODUCTION

Gabriela Montero in Recital

There was a time when everything about a piano recital would have been novel. A solo performer, playing an entire program in a large public venue – once this was new. Even sitting side on to the audience was once new. And more often than not the music was new too.

Today the piano recital is an institution – loved, admired and enjoyed, but an institution all the same. It takes a performer such as Gabriela Montero to inject some of that old novelty.

What does she do? She sits side on to the audience, she plays an entire program in a public recital hall, her repertoire includes the staples – great music by Bach, Chopin, Debussy – but also Ginastera. And Montero.

Gabriela Montero improvises. She goes into a space where musical ideas pour from her finger tips, without inhibition or distraction. Each one is new, you'll never hear these fleeting inventions again.

Improvisation is rare in the modern piano recital, but it was once common if not expected. The act of improvising reflected the tradition of the composer-pianist. These composer-pianists would sometimes use their improvisatory instincts to create formal but free-flowing works – fantasias. This is the world of Chopin's Polonaise-Fantaisie. And those same composer-pianists would transcribe music they loved so that it could be heard, in recital: Liszt did this with Beethoven symphonies, Busoni with the great Bach Chaconne.

Transcriptions, character pieces, fantasias, improvisation. These were once as much the backbone of a recital as the formal sonatas. Tonight we hear one sonata – as for the rest, everything old is new again.



ABOUT THE MUSIC

Johann Sebastian Bach **transcribed by Ferruccio Busoni** **Chaconne**

from Partita No.2 in D minor for solo violin, BWV1004

Lauded as a pianist, largely neglected as a composer, Ferruccio Busoni is probably best-known to music lovers as the ‘two-headed monster’ we call Bach-Busoni. Even his wife was once introduced by an American society matron as ‘Mrs Bach-Busoni’, so closely aligned was his name with the baroque master’s.

The alignment comes from his transcriptions and arrangements of Bach’s music, as well as the various published editions that he made, but above all from his transcription of the great Chaconne in D minor for solo violin.

Busoni was a child prodigy whose ambitious Italian father, a ‘simple virtuoso clarinetist’, introduced him to the travails of touring life early on. But he also introduced him to Bach. ‘I have my father to thank for my good fortune,’ wrote Busoni, ‘because during my childhood he insisted on my studying Bach at a time and in a country that did not rank the master much higher than a Carl Czerny.’ And not only did Busoni acquire a repertoire of Bach’s music this way, he also discovered the world of the transcription.

A common practice for baroque composers, transcription retained currency in the 19th century as a way of disseminating music in the days before recordings. The results could be utilitarian, and were often criticised or derided, but they could also cast a fresh light on familiar music. In his essay on the ‘Value of Transcription’ Busoni wrote:

It is only necessary to mention J.S. Bach in order, with one decisive blow, to raise the rank of the transcription to artistic honour in the reader’s estimation. He was one of the most prolific arrangers of his own and other pieces, especially as an organist. From him I learnt to recognise the truth that Good and Great Universal Music remains the same through whatever medium it is sounded. But also the second truth, that different mediums each have a different language (their own) in which this music again sounds somewhat differently.

In Busoni’s Chaconne transcription that awareness of ‘medium’ is never very far away. It was made for piano, true, but Busoni himself recognised that his treatment

Keynotes

BACH

Born Eisenach, 1685
Died Leipzig, 1750

In his lifetime Johann Sebastian Bach was renowned as an organist; in the century after his death his name was kept alive by enthusiasts, and then – spurred in part by Mendelssohn’s revival of the Matthew Passion – he gained new and enduring fame as a great master of the baroque era.

BUSONI

Born Empoli, Italy, 1866
Died Berlin, 1924

Busoni was hailed as the greatest pianist to follow Liszt – in Germany not ‘Mr Busoni’ but ‘The Busoni’. He took it for granted ‘that everything is possible on the piano, even when it seems impossible to you, or really is so’. It’s often forgotten that he was also a composer, but no one forgets that he was one of the great transcribers – of Liszt and Mozart and, above all, Bach.

CHACONNE

Of Bach’s six partitas and sonatas for unaccompanied violin from 1720, the best-known is the Partita No.2 in D minor. The final movement is a grand chaconne – a dark and profound take on the repeated patterns of the baroque dance. Beloved of violinists, it has also been transcribed for countless other instruments and ensembles, including the piano version by Busoni.

of texture and colour was ‘from the standpoint of the organ-tone’. It is as if, writes Busoni scholar Larry Sitsky, the Chaconne represents a ‘double transcription’ – imagined for organ then transferred to the piano. ‘There was never any intention to imitate the violin,’ Sitsky continues, ‘so that, although faithful to the original, it maintains its own pianistic integrity as well.’

The original Chaconne (or ‘Ciaccona’ as Bach called it) can be interpreted as an ‘epitaph in music’ for his wife Maria Barbara, not that Busoni or other transcribers of the past would have known this. It is a much more recent thesis, put forward in the 1990s by scholar Helga Thoene.

Can we imagine Bach’s feelings when, on returning from a journey in 1720, he discovered that his first wife ‘had passed away and been buried, although he had left her in the full bloom of health’? If not, they are there for all to hear in the music of the Chaconne, written soon after. But underneath the powerful emotion of this extraordinary music is still more: a communication of Bach’s deep faith through the weaving of musical codes (with sayings such as ‘We are born from God, We die in Christ, We are reborn through the Holy Spirit’) and hidden quotations of Lutheran chorale tunes. Thereby, as Thoene argues, a musical form that was traditionally associated with dancing has been transformed into a musical tombstone.

In the context of Bach’s Partita the result is staggering: a rich and complex movement that is as long as the four preceding movements together. This monumental quality, combined with the technical difficulties that it assembles for the violinist, has made the Chaconne a central work in the solo repertoire.



Johann Sebastian Bach



Ferruccio Busoni

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But the attraction has extended beyond the violin, and the music has been transcribed for nearly every instrument and ensemble imaginable.

Last year audiences in this series heard Cédric Tiberghien play Brahms' left hand transcription of the Chaconne. Before Brahms' version, Schumann and Mendelssohn had each composed a piano accompaniment for it, and Joseph Joachim Raff had made a version for orchestra, one of the first ever orchestrations of a Bach work, years before Stokowski came on the scene. But the best-known transcription of all is Busoni's.

Busoni gave the premiere in 1893 at a recital in Boston, alongside music of his own. His transcription was praised by the critic Philip Hale for being 'thoughtful, dignified, and in the true spirit of Bach' while also sounding 'as though it were conceived and worked out originally for a modern piano'. That apparent paradox captures both the aesthetic 'truths' that Busoni maintained: great music remains undiminished by skilful transcription, even as the transcription brings to the music the distinctive sound world of a new medium.

Plotted bar by bar, Busoni's Chaconne remains faithful to Bach's original, with only two small deviations. However, as Sitsky warns, 'the deviations from Bach in terms of fullness, elaboration, and added voices and chords are very extensive and not for the timid at heart...'

YVONNE FRINDLE
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**...great music remains
undiminished by skilful
transcription...**

Frédéric Chopin

Polonaise-Fantaisie in A flat, Op.61

Allegro maestoso

Frédéric Chopin's first published composition, at the age of seven, was a polonaise in G minor, which he dedicated to the Countess Skarbek. One of his last, and greatest, works was the Polonaise-Fantaisie. The polonaise genre was important to him – despite his French descent and French home he always retained a deep love of his native Poland. In his hands the polonaise became an eloquent evocation of the splendour of Poland, especially in 1831 after the fall of Warsaw. The Chopin biographer Arthur Hedley summed it up this way: 'A threefold motive runs through the polonaises: pride in Poland's past, lamentation for her present and hope for her future.'

The polonaise is Poland's most famous dance. But as with many dances that became popular in the 18th century, it slowed down and gained new sophistication and splendour as it made the transition from the countryside to the court. And like the pavane, it is more a processional than a dance, despite being in triple time. This is the genre that Chopin inherited as a boy composer, but, as Stephen Downes has observed, even in the earliest polonaises he reveals a deep connection to the national character of the music. Ultimately Chopin was to raise the genre to new heights, and the Polonaise-Fantaisie was the culmination.

Not everyone understood the Polonaise-Fantaisie at first; even Liszt reflected the general perplexity when he declared it 'unfathomable'. Chopin himself had trouble with its composition, to the extent of not knowing what to call it: the unique double-barrelled name recognises both its dual character and the elision of forms that occurs in the piece.

The early Polonaise in G minor, as did many of the later polonaises, followed a simple ternary form – the trio offering a gentle dance to contrast with the more imposing outer sections. The Polonaise-Fantaisie, however, introduced additional elements from the free-form fantasy. There is the long and rhapsodic introduction, for example, which presents melodic ideas that will be heard later, and the arresting transition to the slow central section (*Poco più lento*).

Keynotes

CHOPIN

*Born Zelazowa Wola,
Poland, 1810*

Died Paris, 1849

Chopin grew up in Warsaw, where he was acclaimed as a teenage piano virtuoso, before heading to Vienna and then Paris in pursuit of a career. His delicate constitution and corresponding style of playing did not lend itself to concert hall success, but his innate elegance gave him entry to the fashionable soirees of Paris, and his fame grew on the back of performances for intimate circles and his many publications. Although he did write concertos and concertante works and a few chamber works and songs, he composed almost exclusively for solo piano and in miniature forms.

POLONAISE-FANTAISIE

The Polonaise-Fantaisie is a late work and one of Chopin's finest and most mysterious. It is a strikingly original combination of the Polish national dance and a meditative fantasy. The curtain rises on a series of improvised harmonies. The dance rhythm appears, often interrupted by contrasting sections in which the rhythm founders. The slow central section is a profoundly moving two pages ending in a chain of trills. There are tentative suggestions of a recapitulation of the opening section, and then the final climax of huge proportions, fading to leave the rhythm of the dance suspended somewhere in the air.

SM



A portrait of Chopin, sketched by George Sand

'A threefold motive runs through the polonaises: pride in Poland's past, lamentation for her present and hope for her future.'

ARTHUR HEDLEY

Harmonically, there is a pervasive chromaticism and Chopin avoids closure in this late work. The result is a fluidity and momentum in the music overall and the sense that this is a fantasy – an improvisation – as well as a grand polonaise. The fervent finale is made all the more exciting by the combined inevitability and ambiguity that has preceded it.

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POLONAISE-FANTAISIE KEYNOTE FROM A NOTE
BY STEPHEN McINTYRE ©2002

Claude Debussy *L'Isle joyeuse* (The Isle of Joy)

In the summer of 1904 Debussy put his wife Lilly on a train to visit her parents and eloped to Jersey with the soprano Emma Bardac. In the end he didn't find the domestic bliss he anticipated – Lilly attempted suicide, Emma became a possessive and demanding wife – but for a brief idyll, Jersey was Debussy's own 'Isle of Joy'.

During that dramatic summer *L'Isle joyeuse* took its final shape, making the transition from the finale of a set of three piano pieces inspired by *commedia dell'arte* (a second *Suite bergamasque*) to an independent work, exuberant and intoxicating.

Added to the inspirational mix was Watteau's 'Embarkation for Cythera' (1717), introducing classical mythology (the island of Cythera was the birthplace of Venus) as a parallel to the affair with Emma on the island of Jersey. The connection is perhaps ominous, since it's thought that Watteau's painting shows lovers *departing* from the island – a representation of the brevity of love.

The music itself is ambitious, but it is also one of Debussy's most personal creations – intimate and almost autobiographical.

L'Isle joyeuse sounds brilliant to the ear, right from the trills of the opening, and it is difficult music, pushing both the instrument and the player to the limits by gathering together the technical as well as emotional possibilities of the piano.

Keynotes

DEBUSSY

Born Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1862

Died Paris, 1918

In attempting to establish a palpably 'French' musical style in the face of the Austro-Germanic tradition, Debussy brought about the birth of modern music. It's often said that the flute solo that begins his groundbreaking *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* 'ushered in the 20th century'. He first heard the sound of gamelan music at the Paris Exposition of 1889, and this prompted him to adopt non-traditional scales and free-floating effects. In both his orchestral and his piano music he explored new instrumental and harmonic colours, and his style has often been compared with that of the Impressionists in visual art, even though Debussy himself hated the term 'Impressionism'.

L'ISLE JOYEUSE

'The Isle of Joy' dispels any misconceptions of Debussy as a misty, dreamy composer for piano. It is brilliant and spirited – overflowing with the joy its title suggests. And there's an autobiographical aspect to the music: it was completed under the influence of new love.



Jean Antoine Watteau's *Embarkation for Cythera* (1717)

As Debussy wrote to his publisher: ‘My God! It’s hard to play... This piece seems to me to bring together every different way of striking the piano, since it unites force and grace.’

For a composer whose revolutionary use of the piano is more commonly associated with the pursuit of sonority and colouristic effect, *L’Isle joyeuse* appears to be an uncharacteristic departure into the realm of virtuoso display and overt pianism. It’s said that even Rachmaninov thought it was difficult to bring off.

Ravel, after reading through it, called it ‘an orchestral reduction for the piano’. It’s probably no coincidence that *L’Isle joyeuse* was completed around the same time as the orchestral work *La Mer*, and Debussy scholar Roy Howat draws a connection with the piano work’s ‘symphonic breadth and unusually weighty textures’ as well as its extended structure.

That structure is a complex and unorthodox one, combining aspects of simple three-part form and of rondo form, supported by the many thematic returns. The cheerful, rocking sections provide a foil for more lyrical and romantic gestures. Viewed from a dynamic and textural point of view, however, *L’Isle joyeuse* follows a wedge shape similar to Ravel’s *Bolero*, beginning with a single-line texture, played quietly, and mounting to a combined climax and resolution in the coda. As Howat observes, this wedge shape is foreshadowed in the very opening bar, with its tiny crescendo and the expanding shape of its cadenza-like melodic figuration. By the end that single line has overflowed into a joyous flurry of notes.

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‘My God! It’s hard to play...’

DEBUSSY

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Alberto Ginastera

Piano Sonata No.1, Op.22

Allegro marcato

Presto misterioso

Adagio molto appassionato

Ruvido ed ostinato

Alberto Ginastera was described by Aaron Copland, who taught him at Tanglewood in the early 1940s, as the 'great white hope of Argentinean music'. Ginastera had come to national attention when he was only 21 years old with a performance of music from his ballet *Panambí*; by 1958 his international stature was assured with the premiere of his Second String Quartet by the Juilliard Quartet. He remains one of the best known of all Argentinean composers.

Born in Buenos Aires in 1916 to parents of Catalan and Italian ancestry, Ginastera began formal musical studies at the age of seven. In 1936, he enrolled at the National Conservatory in Buenos Aires, studying with José André, a pupil of d'Indy and Roussel. Ginastera himself became a teacher: in 1941 he joined the faculties of the National Conservatory and the San Martín Military Academy, but the Perón regime forced him to resign from the academy after he signed a petition in support of civil liberties. It was around this time that Ginastera met Copland, travelling to the United States on a Guggenheim Foundation grant. He returned to take up a position at the University of La Plata, which he was again forced to resign, only regaining his position in 1956. Two years later Ginastera was granted a full professorship at La Plata but left later that year to organise the faculty of musical arts and sciences at the National Catholic University of Argentina. In 1971 Ginastera married for the second time (the cellist Aurora Nátola) and they settled permanently in Switzerland. In all this time, Ginastera was active in the international contemporary music scene and played a key role in organising the Argentine chapter of the International Society for Contemporary Music in 1948.

Ginastera himself identified three periods in his compositional life. The first, lasting from 1934 to 1947, he called 'objective nationalism'. It was characterised by the presentation of overt Argentine musical materials

Keynotes

GINASTERA

Born Buenos Aires, 1916

Died Geneva, 1983

Argentinean music's 'great white hope' found success early. His ballet *Panambí* won him acclaim at the age of 21 and eventually the opportunity to study in the United States with composers such as Aaron Copland. His style matured through what he defined as three periods, taking him from a straightforward nationalistic style with overt folkloric effects to a highly original modernist style.

PIANO SONATA NO.1

This sonata was composed in 1952 and belongs to Ginastera's second period, 'subjective nationalism', a distinctly personal style coloured by Argentinean musical gestures. With the exception of the meditative third movement, Ginastera gives the piano an almost percussive role, built on exciting, driving rhythms.

in a direct, tonal manner. Next, 'subjective nationalism', which saw the sublimation of Argentine musical materials and symbols in a more personal language, beginning with his String Quartet No.1 (1948) and reaching its culmination in the *Pampeana* No.3 for orchestra (1954). A concern for strict construction and the influence of composers such as Schoenberg, marked the third period, which Ginastera designated 'neo-expressionism'. But the problem with Ginastera's compositional periods is that he identified them with many years of composing still ahead of him, and some commentators have suggested a fourth, unremarked period, in which he could be thought to have synthesised innovation and tradition.

Premiered in 1952, the Piano Sonata No.1 falls within Ginastera's second, subjective nationalist period, with its definite but not overt references to the rhythms and melodies of the pampas. While still highly tuneful, it reveals a new maturity of style and imagination after the earlier nationalist works. In particular, the sonata's second movement integrates the principles of serialism in beguiling ways. As Ginastera described it:

The Sonata is written with polytonal and 12-tone procedures. The composer does not employ any folkloric material, but instead introduces in the thematic texture rhythmic and melodic motives whose expressive tension has a pronounced Argentine accent.



LEBRECHT MUSIC & ARTS

Listening Guide

The **first movement** (*Allegro marcato*) suggests a Latin Bartók, with driving syncopated rhythms and constantly shifting meters within an unrelenting pulse. The *moto perpetuo* style places it within the toccata tradition; Ginastera's Argentinean language provides the passion.

The fleet-fingered **second movement** (*Presto misterioso*) offers a more playful approach, akin to the player piano experiments of Conlon Nancarrow. Its melodic material is based on a 12-tone row, but the patterns of rhythms and textures give the movement its drive.

The **third movement** (*Adagio molto appassionato*) begins with a six-note evocation of a tuning guitar, followed by strumming and pensive 'noodling' in the free form of a fantasia. Despite the slower tempo and more lyrical style the dramatic expression of the music is intensified by subtle shifts in tempo and texture.

The sonata's **finale** (*Ruvido ed ostinato*) returns to the driving rhythms of the earlier movements with a characteristically Latin hemiola pattern, alternating groups of two and three beats. Here the music takes on a dance character, adopting the style of the *malambo*. This is the dance in which gauchos compete to show their strength with increasingly vigorous steps; in Ginastera's hands the red-blooded competitiveness of the *malambo* enters the music itself.

SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA,
 SYDNEY SYMPHONY ©2008

Ginastera's Piano Sonata No.1 was commissioned by the Carnegie Institute and the Pennsylvania College for Women for the 1952 Pittsburgh International Contemporary Music Festival, where it was premiered by Johana Harris. The sonata was subsequently chosen for the 27th Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music in Oslo, 1953



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Improvising at the Piano

People improvise all the time – throwing together a meal with the contents of the pantry, speaking off the cuff, emergency repairs with cork and toothpicks. Every time we do something like that we draw on the innate resourcefulness and creativity that makes us human. Musicians improvise all the time, too, except within the modern Western tradition, where the natural act of extemporising has come to be regarded as something arcane and largely inaccessible. Did your piano teacher encourage you to make things up on the spot? There's a good chance the answer is no.

Yet improvisation sits at the heart of music-making, and for a long time it was integral to the musician's craft: baroque ornamentation and the spontaneous variation of repeats, continuo accompaniments, the cadenzas of classical concertos, preluding and free fantasias in the 18th and 19th centuries (some written down, giving us a glimpse of improvisations past). Improvising was part of being a musician and you were expected to be able to do it. A virtuoso earned the title by demonstrating invention as well as technique.

What happened? In our musical culture, where the idea of the 'composition' (fixed by being written down) reigns, improvisation has taken on a negative aspect, representing a departure from the [holy] text, or suggesting an absence of preparation or planning. As Western composers included more detail in their scores, leaving less to chance or the performer's whim (even writing out cadenzas for concertos), improvisation was marginalised.

This is reflected in the training of most classical musicians today, at least some of whom must cast envious sideways glances at their counterparts in the jazz world. It's telling that Gabriela Montero, who has improvised at the piano since childhood, for a long time felt that it was somehow an 'improper' thing to do in public. It took Martha Argerich's endorsement (scolding actually!) to give her the confidence to include improvisations in her recitals as she does tonight.

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ©2008

'They are all improvisations because they arose out of the same white void that I inhabit when I do this, and I cannot stress enough how the process that these improvisations go through are as much a puzzle to me as they are to everyone who asks me, "How do you do it?"'

GABRIELA MONTERO

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PRE CONCERT TALKS SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The ABC is pleased to announce the introduction of pre-concert talks. These will be held in the Northern Foyer of the Concert Hall of the Sydney Opera House, on the Mural level, from 7.25 to 7.50 p.m. each evening prior to the ninth and tenth concerts of the Red, Blue and White series.

Come and enjoy an informal talk by Music Planning Officer, Anthony Fogg, who will explain, with recorded examples, some of the more interesting details about the works with which you are familiar, and highlights of the works which may be new to you.

Watch for further details in your next program.





This year the Sydney Symphony celebrates the 25th anniversary of pre-concert talks, initiated in 1983 by the ABC Concert Department to support the artistic vision of the concert programmers and bring further understanding and enjoyment to our audiences.

Those first talks were such a success – even though the late timing in the budget year obliged us to charge \$3 for entry – that they were continued, with free admission, in 1984 and have remained a vital part of the Orchestra's concert presentations ever since.

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the other ABC orchestras soon followed suit. And in Sydney today nearly every concert-presenting organisation offers pre-concert talks as a result of the ABC's initiative.

The earliest speakers included Tony Fogg, now Artistic Administrator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and other staff of the ABC, including Tony Cane and David Garrett, setting a standard for talks that reveal an engagement with concert planning and the artistic thinking behind musical programs as well as a radio-influenced approach with imaginative use of audio examples and thematic connections.

If you've yet to experience a Sydney Symphony talk, join us in the Northern Foyer (Sydney Opera House) or the Reception Room (City Recital Hall) next time you come to a concert. We offer talks 45 minutes before all our subscription concerts, with the exception of Tea & Symphony and Discovery.

GLOSSARY

CHACONNE – also known as the **PASSACAGLIA**, the chaconne is a musical form with baroque origins, which, since its revival in the 19th century, has been characterised by its recurring ground bass, providing the support for an extended set of variations, and its serious tone. Many composers have taken inspiration from the impressive but atypical passacaglias of Bach and Handel, including Brahms in the finale of his Fourth Symphony.

FANTASY – also **FANTASIA**, a style of free-form composition that may adopt its own form and has an improvisatory character.

HEMIOLA – a rhythmic pattern in which groups of two and three beats alternate, i.e. 1 2 3 1 2 3 | 1 2 1 2 1 2 | 1 2 3 1 2 3... One well-known use of hemiola can be heard in 'I like to be in America' from *West Side Story*.

PAVANE – a stately court dance from the 16th and early 17th centuries. The steps were simple and the function was closer to a processional than to a dance. One theory suggests that the name comes from the Spanish for peacock (pavón), given the resemblance to the bird's display.

POLYTONAL – used to describe the simultaneous use of three or more keys or tonal centres.

RONDO – a musical form in which a main idea (refrain) alternates with a series of musical episodes. Not dissimilar in concept to the verse and chorus structure of many songs.

SERIALISM – serialism commonly refers to the technique (devised by Arnold Schoenberg) of organising a musical composition by means of a tone row, in which each of the 12 available notes in the octave ('black' and 'white' notes) must be played in the given sequence before any note can be repeated.

Rows can be transposed, inverted, mirrored and so on, giving an almost limitless number of pitch combinations. The goal in a 'pure' use of the 12-note technique is to undermine conventional tonality and to thwart the ear's natural inclination to hear tonal relationships between different pitches.

TRANSCRIPTION – the process of arranging or reworking a piece of music for a new medium, e.g. a piano work can be transcribed for orchestra, or a violin work for piano.

In much of the classical repertoire, movement titles are taken from the Italian words that indicate the tempo and mood. A selection of terms from this program is included here.

Adagio molto appassionato – slow and very impassioned

Allegro maestoso – fast and majestic

Allegro marcato – fast and marked

Poco più lento – a little slower

Presto misterioso – as fast as possible, mysteriously

Ruvido ed ostinato – rough and repetitive (literally 'obstinate')

This glossary is intended only as a quick and easy guide, not as a set of comprehensive and absolute definitions. Most of these terms have many subtle shades of meaning which cannot be included for reasons of space.



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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Gabriela Montero piano

Born in Caracas, Venezuela, Gabriela Montero made her concerto debut with the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra at the age of eight and received a Venezuelan Government scholarship to study in the United States. At 12 she won the AMSA Young Artist International Piano Competition, performing Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No.1 with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. Her teachers included Lyl Tiempo, Andrez Esterházy and Professor Hamish Milne at the Royal Academy of Music, and in 1995 she won the Bronze Medal at the 13th International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw.

This season she makes concerto appearances with the WDR Symphony Orchestra in Cologne, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Geneva Chamber Orchestra, as well as with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, Pittsburgh Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Nashville Symphony and the Pacific Symphony.

Her recital appearances include the Wigmore Hall, Cologne Philharmonie for the Cologne Musiktriennale 2007, Kennedy Center in Washington DC, National Arts Center Ottawa, Orchard Hall Tokyo, Teatro Colon Buenos Aires, Herkulessaal Munich, Musikhalle Hamburg, and the Berlin Konzerthaus. Last month she performed in a recital for the Edinburgh Festival. As a chamber musician she performs throughout the world with French cellist Gautier Capuçon.

Gabriela Montero has always improvised at the piano, but it was Martha Argerich who encouraged her to make it a part of her public performances. Now she often invites her audiences to suggest a melody for improvisation by way of an encore; the themes can range from a Haydn symphony to *Star Wars* or original melodies.

Her first recording mixed classic piano music by composers such as Chopin and Liszt with the improvisation that plays such an important part in her musical life. This was followed by *Bach and Beyond*, improvisations on themes by Bach, which won a 'Choc' from *Le Monde de la Musique* in 2006. That year she was also named Keyboard Instrumentalist of the Year at the ECHO Preis Awards in Munich.

Last week Gabriela Montero made her Australian debut, performing Grieg's Piano Concerto with the Orchestra.



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Founded in 1932, the Sydney Symphony has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Last year the Orchestra celebrated its 75th anniversary and the milestone achievements during its distinguished history.

Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, where it gives more than 100 performances each year, the Sydney Symphony also performs concerts in a variety of venues around Sydney and regional New South Wales. International tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra world-wide recognition for artistic excellence.

Critical to the success of the Sydney Symphony has been the leadership given by its former Chief Conductors including: Sir Eugene Goossens, Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Stuart Challender and Edo de Waart. Also contributing to the outstanding success of the Orchestra have been collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

Maestro Gianluigi Gelmetti, whose appointment followed a ten-year relationship with the Orchestra as Guest Conductor, is now in his fifth and final year as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony, a position he holds in tandem with that of Music Director at Rome Opera. Maestro Gelmetti's particularly strong rapport with French and German repertoire is complemented by his innovative programming in the Shock of the New concerts.

The Sydney Symphony's award-winning Education Program is central to the Orchestra's commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. The Sydney Symphony also maintains an active commissioning program promoting the work of Australian composers, and recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards and Brett Dean, as well as Liza Lim, who was composer-in-residence from 2004 to 2006.

In 2009 Maestro Vladimir Ashkenazy will begin his three-year tenure as Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor.

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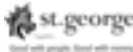
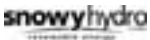
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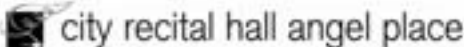
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This is a PLAYBILL/SHOWBILL publication

Publisher
Playbill Proprietary Limited /
Showbill Proprietary Limited
ACN 003 311 064 ABN 27 003 311 064

Head Office:
1017 Pacific Highway, Pymble, NSW 2073

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Operating in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Hobart and Darwin

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