



SEASON 2009
DISCOVERY PROGRAM
PRESENTED BY TENIX

DISCOVER MENDELSSOHN

Monday 9 February | 6.30pm
City Recital Hall Angel Place

Richard Gill conductor
Sydney Sinfonia

MENDELSSOHN

The Hebrides (Fingal's Cave), Op.26

Saltarello

4th movement from Symphony No.4 in A, Op.90 (Italian)

JAMESON

Pebbles and Stuff

ORCHESTRAL VERSION PREMIERE



Pebbles and Stuff was composed for the 2008 Sinfonietta Project; this version was made possible through a commission funded by Ars Musica Australis.



This concert will be recorded for later broadcast in the summer on ABC Radio National.

The ABC Classics DVD of the Discovery Program is now available. Buy online at sydneyorchestra.com/shop

Discover more Mendelssohn in 2009 with the Sydney Symphony:
A Midsummer Night's Dream (15 Feb–2 Mar)
Bach Voices (11–13 Mar)
Flower of Youth (4 Jun)
Romantic Perfection (11–13 Jun)

PRESENTING PARTNER



ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR

RICHARD GILL conductor

SANDRA & PAUL SALTERI CHAIR OF ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, EDUCATION

Richard Gill is the Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony's Education Program. In 2006 he was appointed Music Director of the then newly formed Victorian Opera Company, where his performances have since included *Les Noces*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Così fan tutte*, Puccini's Mass, *The Coronation of Poppea* and *Sing Your Own Opera*. He has also been Artistic Director of OzOpera, Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and the Adviser for the Musica Viva in Schools Program.

Richard has frequently conducted for Opera Australia and OzOpera, and in recent seasons has conducted Meet the Music concerts with the Sydney Symphony, Discovery concerts with the Sydney Sinfonia; the Melbourne, Canberra, Queensland and Tasmanian symphony orchestras; *Sing Your Own Opera* at the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts; and the Brisbane and Melbourne premiere seasons of *The Love of the Nightingale* by Richard Mills.

His operatic repertoire includes *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *Faust*, *The Gondoliers*, Moya Henderson's *Lindy*, *The Eighth Wonder* by Alan John and Dennis Watkins, *Macbeth*, *Rigoletto*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Il trovatore*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *La Périchole*, *The Merry Widow*, *Fidelio*, *Turandot*, *The Pearl Fishers*, *The Force of Destiny*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, *The Love for Three Oranges*, *Julius Caesar* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. For OzOpera he has conducted *Carmen*, *The Magic Flute*, *La bohème*, and *The Barber of Seville*. His music theatre repertoire includes Jonathan Mills' *Ghost Wife*, which he has conducted in Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and London, and *Eternity Man* for the Sydney Festival.

Richard Gill has received numerous accolades, including an Order of Australia Medal, the Bernard Heinze Award, an Honorary Doctorate from the Edith Cowan University of Western Australia, the Australian Music Centre's award for Most Distinguished Contribution to the Presentation of Australian Composition by an individual, and the Australia Council's prestigious Don Banks Award.



JEFF BUSBY

ABOUT THE MUSIC

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

(born Hamburg, 1809; died Leipzig, 1847)

If you've been following the musical news you might have read the recent story about Mendelssohn's infatuation for 'the Swedish nightingale', soprano Jenny Lind. There's a suggestion that this mild-mannered composer, with his privileged life and sunny disposition, may have harboured suicidal tendencies. But there's also no doubt that his death was the result of a series of strokes: the family predisposition to aneurisms was called 'Moses Brain', after Felix's philosopher grandfather.

From Moses came culture and intellectual prestige; from Felix's father, Abraham (a banker), the family acquired money and social status. Felix himself was endowed with tremendous musical talent and he was the luckiest of prodigies, enjoying comfortable surroundings, every conceivable opportunity, and sensible parents.

Among the opportunities was the chance to travel. And when he was 20, Felix set off on a Grand Tour of Europe. Both tonight's pieces are fruits of this long and leisurely journey.

One of Mendelssohn's earliest stops was Scotland's Hebridean islands. He wrote home: 'In order to make you realise how extraordinarily the Hebrides have affected me, the following came into my mind there' followed by a detailed sketch of the famous descending motto for the violas and cellos. The visit to Fingal's Cave left Mendelssohn feeling extremely seasick, but his travelling companion described its 'strange basalt pillars and caverns' looking like 'the inside of an immense organ, black and resounding'. Later, in Vienna, these impressions were woven into *The Hebrides*, capturing a moody sense of solitude, bleakness and wild desolation.

No Grand Tour was complete without a visit to Italy. Venice, Rome, Florence and Naples were on Mendelssohn's itinerary, and the land of 'bright skies and warmth' inspired the sunny effervescence of the *Italian* Symphony, although it wasn't finished until after Mendelssohn had returned to the grey skies of Berlin.

The finale features not one but two Italian dances: the leaping *saltarello* to begin and end, and in the middle a *tarantella*, supposedly danced by victims of the tarantula spider. The music has such an irresistible and joyous energy that it's easy to overlook that it's actually in a *minor* (sad?) key nearly to the end, when it returns to the symphony's home key, A major. The *Italian* Symphony sounds effortless and fresh, and yet Mendelssohn thought it was 'the most mature thing' he had ever done.

YVONNE FRINDLE
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ©2009



In London Mendelssohn learned how to dress like an English dandy. Portrait by James Warren Childre (1829).



The basalt caverns of Fingal's Cave, an etching from 1850.

For more music inspired by the composer's travels, listen to the audio feature *Mendelssohn's Grand Tour* at www.sydney-symphony.com/podcasts

PHIL JAMESON (born London, 1993)

About the composer

Phil Jameson attends Sydney Grammar School, where he is currently in Year 10 with a music scholarship. He studies piano with Ransford Elsley, organ with Robert Wagner, jazz with Dave Levy and composition with Richard Gill. He is in a variety of ensembles at Sydney Grammar School, especially in the jazz department, and has written a number of works for these ensembles over the years. In 2008, as well as being selected to take part in the Sydney Symphony's Sinfonietta Project, he co-wrote with a fellow student *Sandy: the Musical*, which was performed at Sydney Grammar School in November. He is keen to pursue conducting, and has long been interested in the art of the film score. He is thrilled to have been asked to rework *Pebbles and Stuff*, and wishes to thank ARS Musica Australis, Richard Gill, and his wonderful family for all their support.



About the music

Retrospect is a wonderful thing, isn't it? According to me eight months ago, *Pebbles and Stuff* is about 'the descending semitone, subtle syncopation, and dominant (#5 #9) chord'. Clearly, at some point in the past eight months, I have come to terms with the fact that nobody cares about any of these things. In this same program note for the 2008 Sinfonietta Project, I also happened to mention that I didn't have enough pencils, which is of course wildly more interesting and useful than anything else I wrote in that paragraph. Except for perhaps one word: 'sleaziness'. Yes, sleaziness. Back then, *Pebbles and Stuff* was essentially a little montage of musical winks and nudges, which suited the seven-piece Sydney Symphony Sinfonietta really well. In adapting it for the Sydney Sinfonia, I didn't want to lose that cheekiness, but with the addition of a flute, another clarinet (doubling bass clarinet), two trumpets, another horn and percussion, not to mention about eight times as many string players, I figured that *Pebbles and Stuff* had to be mellowed. It was a path that I never expected the piece to take, and I am still coming to terms with its new mood. But that's the great thing about opportunities like this: they give you the freedom to grow in any direction you like, regardless of whether you have any idea where it will lead you. It's like blindfolding yourself and going on a hike – you could end up anywhere, but at least you know you're moving. Happily, there are people like Richard Gill to make sure you don't walk in circles.

THE SYDNEY SINFONIA

KEITH SAUNDERS



The Sydney Sinfonia is a specialist ensemble combining the experience of Sydney Symphony musicians and Australia's most accomplished tertiary music students. The Sydney Sinfonia performs throughout New South Wales and provides music students with the chance to be mentored by Sydney Symphony musicians. The Sydney Sinfonia is part of the Sydney Symphony's Education Program and is supported by Leighton Holdings and the NSW Ministry for the Arts.

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The Sydney Symphony is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council and by the NSW Ministry for the Arts.

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The Sydney Sinfonia's unique structure and format drives a dynamic culture of professional development and innovative performance, benefiting not only the young musicians involved but also contributing to a greater understanding of classical music within the community regardless of age.

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Richard Gill, the Sydney Symphony's acclaimed educator and musician, has worked with Australia's leading musicians and music teachers to create our innovative and world-renowned Education Program. We bridge the gap between classroom and concert hall by producing high quality resources and offering development programs to assist teachers, giving inspiring concerts to school children and awarding fellowships to postgraduate musicians.

To support our activities and help enrich our community with the wonder of music, please contribute by making a donation.

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The Sydney Symphony Education Program

Our range of programs encourages people to respond to music in a number of ways. They include: **School Concerts** for all ages, with supporting educational materials and teacher seminars; **Playerlink** and **Regional Tours**, bringing the orchestra to children in regional areas; **Sydney Sinfonia**, tonight's ensemble, providing a career pathway and mentoring for emerging professional musicians; **Sydney Symphony Sinfonietta**, an elite ensemble drawn from the Sinfonia to perform contemporary repertoire and nurture young composers; **Sydney Symphony Fellowship Program**, providing opportunities for young professional musicians to work closely with the Orchestra and to enhance their skills through work on chamber music repertoire; and **Discovery**, a concert series for adults that examines how orchestral music works.

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Tenix warmly welcomes you to the 2009 Discovery Program of concerts. We are confident you will find them musically exciting, and that they will open up for you a new understanding of the featured composers and works.

Tenix's sponsorship of the Sydney Symphony's Education Program is now in its fifth year. As a company with a commitment to technology and innovation, we support education and training across a range of fields, and we are proud to support not only the Discovery Program but also the Sydney Symphony's extensive Schools program, which brings the world of classical music to primary schools across the State.

Sydney Symphony's Discovery Program is a wonderfully innovative and exciting experience. We hope you enjoy it as much as we enjoy our Education partnership with the orchestra.

Paul Salteri
Chairman, Tenix Pty Ltd



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