

2009 SEASON
ENERGYAUSTRALIA MASTER SERIES

SENSE AND SENSUALITY

Wednesday 29 April | 8pm

Friday 1 May | 8pm

Saturday 2 May | 8pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

John Nelson conductor

Alban Gerhardt cello

GEORGES BIZET (1838–1875)

Symphony in C

Allegro vivo

Adagio

Allegro

Vivace

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921)

Cello Concerto No.1 in A minor, Op.33

Allegro non troppo –

Allegretto con moto –

Tempo primo

INTERVAL

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

Prélude à 'L'Après-midi d'un faune'

(Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun)

La Mer (The Sea) – Three Symphonic Sketches

De l'aube à midi sur la mer

(From Dawn to Noon on the Sea)

Jeux de vagues (Play of Waves)

Dialogue du vent et de la mer

(Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea)

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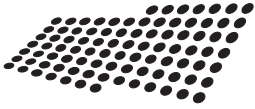
Pre-concert talk by Gordon Kerry at 7.15pm in the Northern Foyer.

Visit sydney-symphony.com/talk-bios for speaker biographies.

Approximate durations: 27 minutes, 19 minutes, 20-minute interval, 10 minutes, 23 minutes

The concert will conclude at approximately 9.50pm


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There is nothing better than hearing a performance by an artist who has a genuine affinity with the music, and tonight we are delighted to welcome you to this concert of French music conducted by John Nelson.

Nelson is an American but it's clear that his long associations with French orchestras and his love of French music have given him a deep insight into its special character.

It's also a special pleasure to welcome cellist Alban Gerhardt in his Sydney Symphony debut. As he performs Saint-Saëns' First Cello Concerto, we think you'll agree that he is an artist who brings a wonderful energy to the music that he plays.

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With one of the most recognised names in the energy industry, we are proud to be associated with the Sydney Symphony, and we're very excited to be linked to the Orchestra's flagship Master Series.

We trust that you will enjoy tonight's performance and hope you also have a chance to experience future concerts in the **EnergyAustralia** Master Series.



George Maltabarow
Managing Director

2009 SEASON
THE VEUVE CLICQUOT SERIES

SENSE AND SENSUALITY

Monday 4 May | 7pm
Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

Benjamin Northey conductor
Alban Gerhardt cello

GEORGES BIZET (1838–1875)
Symphony in C

Allegro vivo
Adagio
Allegro
Vivace

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921)
Cello Concerto No.1 in A minor, Op.33

Allegro non troppo –
Allegretto con moto –
Tempo primo

INTERVAL

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

Prélude à 'L'Après-midi d'un faune'
(Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun)

La Mer (The Sea) – Three Symphonic Sketches

De l'aube à midi sur la mer
(From Dawn to Noon on the Sea)
Jeux de vagues (Play of Waves)
Dialogue du vent et de la mer
(Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea)

PRESENTING PARTNER



This concert has been recorded for later broadcast across Australia on ABC Classic FM 92.9.

Pre-concert talk by Gordon Kerry at 6.15pm in the Northern Foyer. Visit sydneySymphony.com/talk-bios for speaker biographies.

Approximate durations: 27 minutes, 19 minutes, 20-minute interval, 10 minutes, 23 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 8.50pm





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We hope that you enjoy the outstanding talents of the Sydney Symphony this evening, and indulge in a glass of pure pleasure at interval.

A votre santé!

Kate Stevenson
Brand Manager – Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin & Krug



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CHAMPAGNE

2009 Stuart Challender Lecture

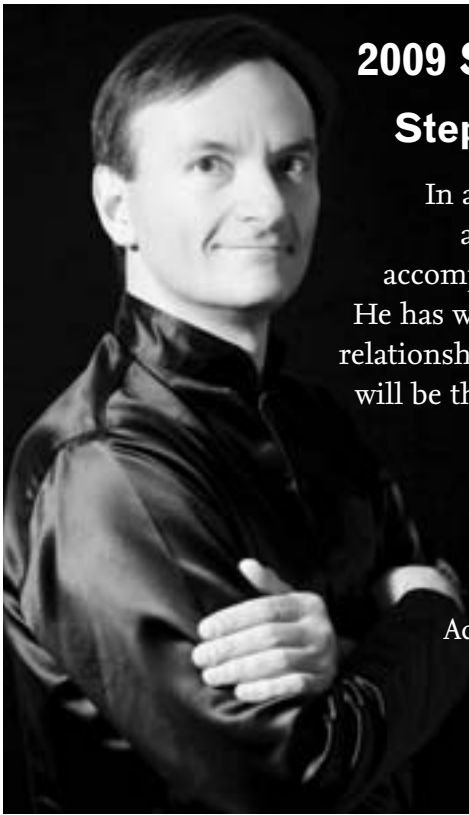
Stephen Hough in Conversation

In addition to his impressive musical career as a concert pianist, Stephen Hough is an accomplished composer, poet, artist and writer. He has written extensively about his faith and the relationship between music and spirituality, which will be the topic of his Stuart Challender address.

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INTRODUCTION

Sense and Sensuality

Claude Debussy changed French music forever. It's been said that the first notes of his *Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun* ushered in the 20th century. It was only 1894, but it's no exaggeration to say that this famous flute solo signalled a new world. It was a world where colour and effect – sensuousness, in other words – was given prominence. And it emerged in reaction to the Austro-German tradition of the 19th century, a tradition where structure born of harmony (sense) prevailed.

Tonight's program shows both sides of this musical revolution. In the first half Bizet and Saint-Saëns represent the 19th century. Listen closely and you can hear that they represent something older, too: Classical forms – the symphony and the concerto – and a late 18th-century aesthetic. This is music that embraces elegance of style and tight-knit structures. And yet it appeals to the senses, above all in its smiling tunefulness.

After interval we hear Debussy's musical brand of impressionism. He didn't like the term, but it's stuck by sheer virtue of it being so apt. The parallels between his musical goals and those of the Impressionists in painting are remarkably close: the deliberate blurring, for example, the play of colour and 'light', and evocation rather than sharp depiction. At the same time – and this is especially the case in the *symphonic* sketches of *La Mer* – Debussy's respect for musical structure is never very far away.

Our concert title takes liberties with more than Jane Austen, but we hope it highlights, as does the music, that thought and feeling stem from the same motivation and that all music has the power to move us whether it's classical in its intent or striving for an impression.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Georges Bizet (1838–1875)

Symphony in C

Allegro vivo

Adagio

Allegro

Vivace

All sorts of interesting facts have come to light, long after his premature death, about Georges Bizet: his illegitimate son by his parents' live-in servant, his – possibly intimate – relationship with the *demi-mondaine* and entertainer Céleste Mogador, who redeemed herself through marriage to an aristocrat (who became French envoy to Australia); Bizet's problematic relationship with his wife, and her career, after his death, as the salon hostess who provided one of the models for Marcel Proust's great novel *Remembrance of Things Past*. The fascination with Bizet is, of course, a desire to know more about the man who composed *Carmen* and *L'Arlésienne*.

One thing which was thought to be established about Bizet was that, short though his composing career was, he was not a precocious genius. But for a long time we didn't know the extent of his early talent. His widow gave away his unpublished music. Some of it came into the hands of Reynaldo Hahn (another of Proust's friends), who seems to have shown little interest in it. He deposited the music, including Bizet's Symphony in C, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, where it languished until unearthed by a French musicologist called Chantavoine, whose enthusiastic writing about it, however, aroused little interest. It took Bizet's first English biographer, D.C. Parker, to get this symphony known; he showed the manuscript to the leading conductor Felix Weingartner, who gave its first performance, in Basel, in 1935.

Bizet began to compose the Symphony on 29 October 1855, four days before his 17th birthday. What was heard, 80 years later, made many share the enthusiasm of another Bizet biographer, Winton Dean, for a symphony showing not only sure technical ability, 'but signs of a natural genius never exceeded by a composer of Bizet's years, Mozart, Schubert, and Mendelssohn not excepted'. The verve, tunefulness, elegance and orchestral felicity of this music raise the question why it remained unknown for so long. The answer surely is that if Bizet's Symphony

Keynotes

BIZET

Born Paris, 1838

Died Bougival, near Paris, 1875

Like Mozart and Mendelssohn, Bizet died all too early. He was only 36, and had just completed *Carmen*, the opera that brought him posthumous fame with some of the catchiest tunes ever written. It's not unlikely that he would have become the most prominent French composer of the late 19th century if he had lived. As it is, another opera, *The Pearl Fishers*, and his orchestral music for the play *L'Arlésienne* join *Carmen* as popular mainstays of the repertoire.

SYMPHONY IN C

Bizet wrote this symphony when he was 17. It was then forgotten, or perhaps put away because he thought it too similar to the symphony by Gounod from which he'd taken inspiration. As a result it received its premiere in 1935, 60 years after the composer's death. And what a discovery! There is so much to like in this spirited and unpretentious symphony. It combines the appealing verve of youth with the accomplishment of a great talent. As a teenager, Bizet was clearly influenced by the models available to him: Mozart, Rossini and Mendelssohn. What is so impressive is the deftness with which he assimilates their charm and lyrical gifts in this 'classical' symphony.

Bizet at the age of 22
(Portrait by Felix Henri Giacomotti)



...Bizet's now-famous
imitation outbids
Gounod's symphony in
tunefulness and charm.

had been performed when it was new, listeners would have spotted in it similarities to a symphony by a much more established composer, Charles Gounod, composed and performed in the same year. In Bizet's first movement, in particular, there are ideas also appearing almost note for note in Gounod, and half way through the second movement, each composer resorts to a fugato.

These were not unconscious reminiscences. Gounod had helped his young admirer Bizet by getting him the job of making a reduction of his symphony for piano four hands. Bizet's debt to Gounod was great, but worried him. A few years later he wrote, 'Gounod is an entirely original composer, and as long as one imitates him one remains on the level of a pupil.'

Gounod's Symphony in D (No.1) is an attractive piece, though Bizet's now-famous imitation outbids it in tunefulness and charm. Neither symphony sounds much like each composer's best-known work, the operas *Faust* and *Carmen* respectively. Writing for the orchestra in concert, both men extend into 19th-century France a classical style based on Haydn and Mozart.

Resemblances to Mendelssohn, whose star was in the ascendant, are understandable. Likewise, in the crescendos of Bizet's first movement, to Rossini. A little more surprising are Bizet's echoes of Schubert – surprising because Schubert's then unpublished symphonies were unknown in France, or indeed anywhere. The handling of key relationships within sonata form gives Bizet's symphony an emotionally affecting harmonic and colouristic tinge – as in Schubert the romantic impulse gives the classical language a different accent.

Listening Guide

Romantic touches include the horn calls evoking, in Bizet's **first movement** (*Allegro vivo*) distance and woodland; there are also some details prophesying the composer of *Carmen*, and especially of *L'Arlésienne*. The symphony's most obvious exotic touch is the oriental tinge of the intervals in the oboe melody of the **slow movement** (*Adagio*). Academically correct, the fugato which forms the centre of the slow movement neatly avoids going on too long. Bizet ingeniously derives the fugal subject from the very opening of this movement, an upward octave interval beginning the oboe theme and the fugato as well. In some ways the **scherzo** (*Allegro*) is the most original achievement of all, Schubert-like perhaps, but with an on-its-toes rhythmic verve which is spiritedly French, a captivatingly sweeping second subject, and a drone musette trio bringing just a whiff of the farmyard dance floor. Some writers on Bizet have imagined, in the lively, *moto perpetuo* elements of the **last movement** (*Vivace*) an anticipation of the final scene of *Carmen*, outside the bullring; and it is true that the springy march to which they lead sounds like the 'real' Bizet. What is most striking, though, in this symphony is its spontaneity, free of any pretension getting in the way of talent. It's sad, in a way, that Bizet censored himself, though understandable. Perhaps if he'd lived, after *Carmen*, he'd have got over his Gounod hang-up. We have – and we can enjoy this Symphony in C with a pleasure unalloyed.

...with an on-its-toes rhythmic verve which is spiritedly French...

DAVID GARRETT ©2007

Bizet's Symphony in C is scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns and two trumpets; timpani and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed the Symphony in C in 1949 with Eugene Goossens, and most recently in a concert in Dubbo in 1985, conducted by Myer Fredman. The most recent performance in Sydney was in 1984, conducted by Verdon Williams.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921) Cello Concerto No.1 in A minor, Op.33

Allegro non troppo –
Allegretto con moto –
Tempo primo

Alban Gerhardt cello

This concerto reveals many of Saint-Saëns' most endearing qualities as a composer. It is a modestly engaging, unpretentiously beguiling work, its most important musical qualities being the tight construction (three movements sounding as if rolled into one) and the subtle orchestration which, with its discreet accompaniment, neatly solves the inherent problems of balancing the solo cello against a symphony orchestra. Composition of this concerto was one of the activities Saint-Saëns threw himself into following the death of his beloved great-aunt in January 1872. At the same time he began writing a regular newspaper column, under the pseudonym Phémius, which promoted French music (composers such as Rameau, Gounod and Bizet) – part of the polemical struggle to bolster French national pride after the demoralising loss to Prussia in the recent Franco-Prussian War.

The A minor Concerto was first performed on 19 January 1873 by the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra with its principal cellist Auguste Tolbecque as soloist. Much later, the work became a particular favourite of the cellist Pablo Casals who played it at his London debut in 1905. And no wonder – as Saint-Saëns' biographer James Harding says, it 'gives the instrument an excellent opportunity to display its resources without straining after needless virtuosity'.

Listening Guide

The **first movement** (*Allegro non troppo*) begins with one sharp chord from the orchestra, immediately ushering in a swirling theme from the solo cello, which will form the main thematic material for the movement. This material is repeated, varied, played on the woodwinds behind long notes on the solo cello and extended. Eventually the cello plays an attractive romantic melody that is dovetailed into cadential material by the swirling theme in the accompaniment. A new sequence continues

Keynotes

SAINT-SAËNS
Born Paris, 1835
Died Algiers, 1921

Saint-Saëns was born three years before Bizet and shared with him a childhood precocity for music, both as a pianist (he performed two concertos from memory at the age of 10) and as a composer. He was a classicist among the French Romantics and emerges best in traditional forms such as concertos and symphonies, but he also wrote the exotic and colourful salon pieces that were popular in his day. Debussy called him 'the musician of tradition'.

CELLO CONCERTO NO.1

Saint-Saëns wrote two cello concertos and this one, from 1872, is by far the most popular. It doesn't aspire to weightiness – instead it is charming and unpretentious, elegant and graceful. At every turn it seems determined to give maximum pleasure to both the listener and the soloist. Saint-Saëns is a generous composer, deftly writing for the orchestra so that the cello doesn't need to struggle to be heard (the perennial challenge in cello concertos) and providing just the right balance between appealing lyricism and virtuosity. The concerto is in three sections – two fast movements framing a dance-like movement – which are played without pause to give a tightly unified structure.

to work on the swirling figure, first making use of the half-tone rise and fall of its tailpiece.

A developmental extension of the romantic melody leads imperceptibly into the minuet-like **second movement** (*Allegretto con moto*). Saint-Saëns' structural fluency has been revealed by the clever way in which this movement was introduced, almost as if it were merely another phase of the first movement. A dance-like figure for woodwinds is transformed into an accompaniment for a ruminative cello melody. There is a slightly darker, more lilting middle section, followed by cadenza-like runs in the cello solo which lead to a reprise of the dancing figure over a cello trill.

The movement winds down, and then the cello line forms the link to the final, and longest, movement, *Tempo primo*. The oboe retrieves the first movement's swirling figure, now more swiftly modulating and more intense with other woodwind interjections. After a dramatic development, the cello finally takes back the swirling figure. The cello now introduces a new aria-like theme, built on the rise-and-fall idea of the opening melody. Now, at last, the cello part begins to become more virtuosic, and in the slower section ends up in the instrumental stratosphere, with high harmonics. The music resumes speed after a reprise of the aria-like melody, and with an exciting pick-up, the movement and the symphony come to a close.



GORDON KALTON WILLIAMS
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA ©1997

The concerto calls for an orchestra comprising pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets; timpani and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed the concerto in 1938 with conductor Percy Code and cellist Lauri Kennedy, and most recently in 2001 with Lorin Maazel and soloist Han-Na Chang.

Claude Debussy

Prélude à 'L'Après-midi d'un faune' (Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun)

Pierre Boulez once said that modern music awoke with the premiere of *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*. On 22 December 1894, in the Salle d'Harcourt, Paris, the faun's flute ushered in a new world of structure, rhythm, harmonic relations and colour, and perhaps, more than any other single work, reoriented the development of music in the succeeding century.

Debussy's tone poem is based on Stéphane Mallarmé's symbolist poem *L'Après-midi d'un faune* of 1876. Though Ballets Russes choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky was able to extract a storyline from Mallarmé's atmospheric verse, it was Mallarmé's deliberately blurred descriptions which appealed most to Debussy in the first place.

Those nymphs, I want to perpetuate them.

So bright,

Their light rosy flesh, that it flutters in the air

Drowsy with tangled slumbers.

Did I love a dream?

My doubt, hoard of ancient night, draws to a close

*In many a subtle branch, which, themselves remaining true
wood, prove, alas! that all alone I offered*

Myself as a triumph the perfect sin of roses.

The elusiveness of Mallarmé's text inspired Debussy in his attempt to escape the emphatic and assertive music of the German Romantic masters, and uncover new means of musical narrative.

Debussy's desire to avoid the 'polychromatic putty' of some of the scores of 19th-century giants such as Wagner can be heard in the exposure of individual instrumental sonorities. The opening bars for example are left to the solo flute. A single sustained discord on clarinets and oboes followed by a weaker discord on muted lower strings underlies a mere hint of movement from French horns and a fleeting wash of colour from the harp. Bold declamatory assertions are gone. After the opening 'action' there is a bar of silence. Then the minimal gestures simply resume. No concrete sense of a beat has been established. Within four bars Debussy has circumvented the periodically recurring downbeat, and escaped the 'tyranny of the barline'.

Keynotes

DEBUSSY

*Born St 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'.

THE AFTERNOON OF A FAUN

Debussy's *Prélude...* is a tone poem, inspired by Mallarmé's poem of the same name. The text is elusive and 'blurred', which fitted well with Debussy's goal of forming a fresh musical language against the traditions and structures of German Romanticism (the world of Beethoven and his symphonic successors). Although Debussy was wary about comparisons between his music and the visual arts, instrumental colour is one of the most important and distinctive aspects of his style.

It is easy to see why Debussy allowed his music to be considered pointillistic (though this was mainly to counter the label of Impressionism): dabs of colour piece the opening together; there is no opening rhetorical statement. This music is not going to be argumentative, like symphonic music. More obvious overall form does become apparent later in the piece – the work could be considered to be in a broad ternary form with the accompanied repetition of the Faun melody after the more ‘passionate’ middle section – but it is important to note that this form is not enunciated, as of old, by the sculptured relationship of clear-cut tonalities.

It has been claimed that Debussy alone among the musicians of his time heard the music of the Javanese and Annamese musicians at the Paris World Exhibition in 1889 as speaking intimately to him. Perhaps this was because he, uniquely among his European peers, was ready to conceive of a music that was free from the conventions of the symphonic tradition. Debussy’s music, when it was first heard, was considered ‘vague’, ‘insubstantial’, even ‘morbid’ – but that is an understandable complaint from those who have not yet adjusted to a new range of aesthetic values.

GORDON KALTON WILLIAMS, SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA ©1997
EXCERPT FROM MALLARMÉ’S AFTERNOON OF A FAUN
TRANSLATED BY ALAN EDWARDS

Debussy’s *Prélude...* calls for three flutes, two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets and two bassoons; four horns; percussion (crotales); two harps and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed the *Prélude...* in 1941 under Percy Code, and most recently in 2008 under David Robertson.



**...the faun’s flute
ushered in a new sound-
world...**

Claude Debussy

La Mer – Three Symphonic Sketches

De l'aube à midi sur la mer

(From Dawn to Noon on the Sea)

Jeux de vagues

(Play of Waves)

Dialogue du vent et de la mer

(Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea)

'Never before had that marvellous music La Mer appeared so seductive and yet mysterious at the same time, so imbued with the enigmatic life of the Cosmos, than on that evening when her great creator, with a gentle hand, was ruling over her waves.'

So wrote a young Russian composer, Lazare Saminsky, on hearing Debussy conduct *La Mer* in St Petersburg in 1913. But the work's greatness had by no means seemed self evident when it had first appeared in 1905. Debussy himself was weathering a personal scandal, having left his second wife, and part of the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Parisian public may have stemmed from its disapproval. The first performance, too, was by all accounts under-rehearsed and the conductor Camille Chevillard unsympathetic to Debussy's style. The composer and conductor Lalo complained that he could neither hear, see nor feel the sea, and a reviewer in Boston wrote that 'we clung like a drowning man to a few fragments of the tonal wreck, a bit of theme here, a comprehensible figure there, but finally this muted-horn sea overwhelmed us'.

The point missed by the authors of such remarks, however, is that Debussy's music (both generally speaking and in regard this work) is not intended as visual imagery, or the soundtrack to some imaginary film. (This is what Debussy's colleague Satie was burlesquing when he praised the first movement, 'From dawn to noon on the sea', by saying he particularly liked the bit 'around a quarter to eleven'.) The composer may have invited such misinterpretations: in titling the work 'Three Symphonic Sketches' he of course evokes the media of visual art; moreover, he often used terms like 'colour' and 'shading' when discussing his music. But in 1903, when he began work on *La Mer*, Debussy wrote to a friend from the Burgundian countryside:

Keynotes

DEBUSSY

Claude Debussy once told an enquirer that if he hadn't been a musician he would have become a sailor. He wasn't being flippant: he loved the sea, and on one occasion he even persuaded a ship's captain to take him out to sea in a fierce storm. As a composer he resented the label 'Impressionist' and the inevitable analogies between his music and the visual arts, but he did share with the painters a fascination with water. And it's possible he was influenced by Monet's attempts to depict the changing effects of light with a series of pictures of the same subject, even though he was less interested in literal *representation* than in communicating an idea.

LA MER

The titles of Debussy's three symphonic sketches of 'The Sea' are evocative but not pictorial – not to be taken too literally, as Satie's famous joke about liking the bit 'around a quarter to eleven' reveals. In fact, it's possible to hear these 'sketches' as pure symphonic music: a carefully developed opening movement full of imaginative orchestral effects; a playful and inventive interlude; and an almost Romantically structured 'finale' with references back to the first movement providing a sense of unity to the whole.

You may not know that I was destined for a sailor's life, and that only chance led me in another direction... You will say that the ocean does not exactly bathe the hills of Burgundy, and my seascapes may be studio landscapes, but I have an endless store of memories, and in my mind they are worth more than reality, whose beauty often weighs heavily on the imagination.

The work, then, is about the *idea* of the sea rather than being a representation of it; significantly, much of the composition of the work took place away from the coast.

Debussy's genius for orchestration and subtle rhythmic organisation certainly make for an evocative work where it is possible to imagine the crash of waves, the call of seagulls and the protean movement of light on water. The final climactic moments of the first movement, for instance, somehow create a sense of emerging from the deep into the light.

Other masterly touches abound: the unusual timbre of the cello section divided into four parts; the use of muted horns (which Debussy admitted to taking from the music of Weber) to evoke space; the soloistic use of wind instruments and harp.

But *La Mer* is as much 'symphonic' as it is 'sketch'. Its three movements are by no means simply rhapsodic, but rather show Debussy's subtle and careful approach to form. In the first movement his careful development of short motifs is perfectly symphonic; the second movement, 'Play of Waves', is, among other things, a symphonic scherzo; and the third movement – which has one of the rare 'big finishes' of any work by this composer – is a symphonic finale. (This movement, with its references back to the first, also show Debussy's adherence to the notion of cyclical form that he learned from César Franck and applied in such works as his String Quartet.)

The pianist and Debussy expert Roy Howat has also shown how Debussy's structure corresponds to the ancient Greek idea of the Golden Section where a line is divided so that the ratio of the shorter portion to the longer portion forms the same ratio as the longer portion does to the whole length. (The façade of many a classical temple is built such that the ratio between its height and width corresponds to these divisions.) By applying this formula to time, a composer can plot where significant events (changes of speed, colour moods

Debussy's music is not intended as visual imagery, or the soundtrack to some imaginary film.



Cover of the first-edition score for *La Mer*, showing a detail from Hokusai's *The Great Wave at Kanagawa* (A. Durand & fils, 1905)

or metre) will have the greatest dramatic effect. Howat has argued persuasively that the moment in the last movement of *La Mer* where the violins play a soft, impossibly high harmonic represents the Golden Section of the piece.

By a nice paradox, Debussy's marvellous musical reflection on the constant flux of the sea is achieved by the most painstaking and careful calculation. Not for nothing did the published score carry the intricately designed woodcut *The Hollow Wave* by the Japanese artist Hokusai.

GORDON KERRY ©2005

KEYNOTES ADAPTED IN PART FROM A NOTE BY
G.K. WILLIAMS

La Mer calls for two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, three bassoons and contrabassoon; four horns, three trumpets, two cornets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion (glockenspiel, tam-tam, cymbals, triangle, bass drum); two harps, celesta and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed *La Mer* in 1948 with Eugene Goossens, and most recently in 2005, conducted by Gianluigi Gelmetti.

GLOSSARY

CADENZA – a virtuoso passage for a solo instrument, traditionally inserted towards the end of a concerto movement and marking the final ‘cadence’.

CYCLIC FORM – refers to the use, in multi-movement works, of thematic material in more than one movement. This can happen through the reappearance of earlier theme in a finale, or through the use of a theme (often transformed) in each of the movements. Berlioz was one of the first to do this in a major way, as was César Franck, and since the 19th century this method of achieving thematic unity in a large-scale work has become common.

FUGATO – in the style of a fugue (but without following its strict form), characterised by imitation between different parts or instruments, which enter one after the other. The Latin word *fuga* is related to the idea of both ‘fleeing’ and ‘chasing’. A **FUGAL SUBJECT** is a theme on which a fugue is based.

HARMONICS – in string playing, a harmonic is achieved by touching the string lightly while bowing, thereby affecting its frequency of vibration. The resulting sound is ethereal and flute-like.

MINUET – a French court dance from the baroque period. During the 18th century, in the hands of composers such as Haydn, it became a dance-like movement in a moderately fast triple time and a regular element in the four-movement symphony.

MODULATING – a transition from one key to another within the course of a movement or section of music.

MUSETTE – this term has been given to several musical instruments with a rustic character (a simple bagpipe in the 17th and 18th centuries, a basic oboe in the mid-19th century); it can also refer to an 18th-century dance piece with a pastoral mood, usually

evoking the sound of the bagpipe-musette by use of a drone bass.

OCTAVE – the interval between two notes that are eight scale steps apart (and which effectively share the same pitch name). Acoustically, an octave leap is achieved by doubling the frequency of a note, for example, the A at which an orchestra tunes (440 Hz) becomes the A one octave higher when the frequency is increased to 880 Hz. The first two notes of ‘Somewhere over the rainbow’ are an octave apart.

ORCHESTRATION – the way in which an orchestral work employs the different instruments and sections of the ensemble; it provides the musical equivalent of colour.

SONATA FORM – 19th-century term describing the harmonically based structure most classical composers had adopted for the first movements of sonatas and symphonies. Although the underlying harmonic structure is in two main parts, the surface structure is typically in three parts: exposition, in which the main themes are presented; development, in which those ideas are explored and expanded; and recapitulation.

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 – slow

Allegro – fast

Allegro con moto – fast, with movement

Allegro non troppo – fast, not too much

Allegro vivo – fast, lively

Tempo primo – in the first (original) tempo

Vivace – lively

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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The Sydney Symphony's own recording of *La Mer*, conducted by Gianluigi Gelmetti, is available in the 5-CD *75th Anniversary Collection*.

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His other concerto recordings include two volumes under the title *The Romantic Cello Concerto*. With Carlos Kalmar and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra he performs Dohnányi, Enescu and d'Albert (Vol.1) and with Hannu Lintu and the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra concertos by Dietrich, Gernsheim, Volkmann and Schumann (Vol.2).

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Broadcast Diary



MAY

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Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
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Mark Tucker tenor,
David Wilson-Johnson baritone,
James Ehnes violin,
Jian Wang cello,
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

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Cello Concerto, Symphony No.1

9 May, 12.05pm
Serenade, Sea Pictures, Symphony No.2

16 May, 12.05pm
Violin Concerto, Pomp & Circumstance Marches,
Enigma Variations

23 May, 12.05pm
The Dream of Gerontius

11 May, 8pm

GOFFREY LANCASTER IN RECITAL

Haydn sonatas performed on fortepiano

15 May, 8pm

RUSSIAN TRIBUTE

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
Sasha Rozhdestvensky violin
Shostakovich, Mussorgsky/Ashkenazy

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SYDNEY SYMPHONY 2009

12 May, 6pm

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

John Nelson conductor

(29 April, 1 May, 2 May)

Born in Costa Rica, American conductor John Nelson studied at the Juilliard School where he won the Irving Berlin prize in conducting. He has been music director of the Indianapolis Symphony, the Opera Theatre of St Louis, and the Caramoor Music Festival in New York. He has also been principal guest conductor of the Orchestre National de Lyon and artistic adviser to the Nashville and Louisville Orchestras. He is now Music Director of the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris.

As a guest conductor he has appeared with all the major American orchestras. In Britain he has conducted the London Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hallé Orchestra, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. His European engagements include the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the radio orchestras of Hamburg, Munich and Berlin, the Suisse Romande in Geneva, the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, the orchestras of Oslo, Rotterdam and The Hague and all the major orchestras in France.

He made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1974, stepping in to replace an ill Rafael Kubelik in *The Trojans* by Berlioz. This led to his European debut at the Geneva Grand Theatre (*The Trojans*) and his French debut at the Berlioz Festival in Lyon (*Béatrice et Bénédict*). Since then he has conducted companies such as the Chicago Lyric Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Bastille Opera, Lyon Opera, Rome Opera, La Monnaie, Netherlands Opera and Welsh National Opera.

Central to his work is the interpretation of the great sacred choral literature – music such as the Bach Passions, *Messiah*, *A German Requiem*, and Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*. His commitment to this repertoire led him to found Soli Deo Gloria, a non-profit organisation promoting the composition and performance of great sacred works in our time.

He has made many recordings with the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, including the complete Beethoven symphonies, and his awards include a Grammy for Handel's *Semele* and a Diapason d'Or de l'année for *Béatrice et Bénédict*.

John Nelson has conducted all the Australian symphony orchestras. In his most recent Sydney appearance he conducted Berlioz's *Requiem*.



Alban Gerhardt cello

Alban Gerhardt was born in 1969 in Berlin. Since his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Semyon Bychkov, he has performed with more than 170 orchestras worldwide, collaborating with conductors such as Kurt Masur, Christoph von Dohnányi, Christoph Eschenbach, Neville Marriner, Marek Janowski, Colin Davis, Leonard Slatkin, Fabio Luisi, Sakari Oramo, Paavo Järvi and Neeme Järvi.

Highlights of recent seasons have included performances with the Berlin Philharmonic; the Frankfurt, Munich, Hamburg and Berlin radio orchestras; Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra; and his Carnegie Hall debut with the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra. In North America he made debut appearances with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Washington, San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Philadelphia Orchestra; in Asia he appeared with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra and KBS Seoul; and in Europe he performed with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe under Frans Brüggen.

In the 2008/09 season he has returned to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and made debut appearances with the Oslo Philharmonic, Finnish Radio Symphony, the Saarbrücken and Helsinki radio orchestras, Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra and the China Philharmonic Orchestra.

Alban Gerhardt's repertoire includes nearly 60 concertos and he enjoys rescuing lesser-known works from undeserved obscurity. He is also committed to enlarging the cello repertoire, collaborating with composers such as Peteris Vasks, Brett Dean, Osvaldo Golijov and Matthias Pintscher (he will give the Australian premiere of Pintscher's *Reflections on Narcissus* with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra next week).

As a chamber musician he appears frequently at the BBC Proms, Edinburgh Festival and leading venues such as the Wigmore Hall, performing with Steven Osborne, Lars Vogt, Christian Tetzlaff, Arabella Steinbacher, Tabea Zimmermann and Emmanuel Pahud among others.

His recordings have won two ECHO Classic Awards, and include the *Romantic Cello Concertos* series of releases as well as two discs of sonatas for cello and piano, with Steven Osborne and Markus Becker.

This is Alban Gerhardt's Sydney Symphony debut.



Following the theft of his Guaragnini cello in 2003, Alban Gerhardt now plays a unique instrument by Venetian maker Matteo Gofriller (1569–1742).

Read Alban Gerhardt's blog at www.albangerhardt.com

Benjamin Northey conductor
(4 May)

Benjamin Northey is Principal Conductor of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra. In addition to orchestral appearances, his professional experience spans opera, ballet and contemporary music. Winner of the 2001 Symphony Australia Young Conductor of the Year competition, he studied under John Hopkins, Jorma Panula and Leif Segerstam at the Sibelius Academy and Stockholm Royal Academy of Music.

He made his professional conducting debut with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in 2003 and this year took on a new role as Conductor of the MSO's Education Program. He made his debut with State Opera South Australia in *The Elixir of Love* in 2007, and returns this year to conduct *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Last year he conducted Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* and Peter Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King* for Monash University. He also made his ballet debut with the Queensland Ballet, conducting *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

In 2005 he made his European debut conducting the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg. In 2006 he conducted the Futurum Ensemble Sinfonietta in a concert of music by Salvatore Sciarrino for the Stockholm New Music festival and toured Sweden with the Södra Hälsinglands Orkesterförening. He has assisted Leif Segerstam in Latvia with the Leipaja Symphony Orchestra and in Austria with the Graz Symphony Orchestra.

In the 2007/08 season he was selected as one of three conductors worldwide to participate in the International Conductors' Academy of the Allianz Cultural Foundation. This involved a mentorship with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra and conductors Vladimir Jurowski and Christoph von Dohnányi, culminating in a performance with the LPO in the Royal Festival Hall.

Benjamin Northey was a recipient of the 2003 Brian Stacey Memorial Trust Award for emerging Australian conductors and the 2001 Nelly Apt Scholarship for studies in Israel. In 2007 he was awarded the *Limelight* magazine award for Best Newcomer in any field of classical music, and in 2008 won *Limelight's* Best Classical Recording for Slava and Leonard Grigoryan's *Baroque Guitar Concerti* with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

His most recent appearance with the Sydney Symphony was in the 2008 Kaleidoscope series.



THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

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PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS

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.

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. Last year the Sydney Symphony toured Italy, and in October 2009 will tour to Asia.

The Sydney Symphony's first Chief Conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by conductors such as Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and, most recently, Gianluigi Gelmetti. 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 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 and promotes the work of Australian composers through performances and recordings. Recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards, Liza Lim, Lee Bracegirdle and Georges Lentz, and the Orchestra's recording of works by Brett Dean was released last year on the BIS and Sydney Symphony Live labels.

Other releases on the Orchestra's own label, established in 2006, include performances with Alexander Lazarev, Gianluigi Gelmetti and Sir Charles Mackerras, as well as a boxed set of Rachmaninov orchestral works, conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy.

This year Vladimir Ashkenazy begins his tenure as Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor.

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- 02 Kirsten Williams
Associate Concertmaster
- 03 Kirsty Hilton
Assistant Concertmaster
- 04 Fiona Ziegler
Assistant Concertmaster
- 05 Julie Batty
- 06 Sophie Cole
- 07 Amber Gunther
- 08 Rosalind Horton
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- 10 Jennifer Johnson
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- 12 Nicola Lewis
- 13 Alexandra Mitchell
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- 14 Léone Ziegler
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A/Associate Principal
- 03 Shuti Huang
A/Assistant Principal
- 04 Susan Dobbie
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- 05 Maria Durek
- 06 Emma Hayes
- 07 Stan W Kornel
- 08 Benjamin Li
- 09 Nicole Masters
- 10 Philippa Paige
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- 12 Maja Verunica

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- Alexandra D'Elia
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- Charlotte Burbrook
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Violas



Cellos



Double Basses



Harp

Flutes

Piccolo



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Andrew Turner and
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Associate Principal
- 03 Yvette Goodchild
Assistant Principal
- 04 Robyn Brookfield
- 05 Sandro Costantino
- 06 Jane Hazelwood
- 07 Graham Hennings
- 08 Mary McVarish
- 09 Justine Marsden
- 10 Leonid Volovelsky
- 11 Felicity Wytthe

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- Timothy Walden
Principal
- 02 Timothy Walden
Principal
- 03 Leah Lynn
Assistant Principal
- 04 Kristy Conrau
- 05 Fenella Gill
- 06 Timothy Nankervis
- 07 Elizabeth Neville
- 08 Adrian Wallis
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Principal
- 02 Alex Henery
Principal
- 03 Neil Brawley
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- 05 Steven Larson
- 06 Richard Lynn
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- 02 Emma Sholl
Associate Principal
- 03 Carolyn Harris

Piccolo

- Rosamund Plummer
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MUSICIANS

Oboes



Cor Anglais



Clarinets



Bass Clarinet



Bassoons



Contrabassoon



Horns



04



05



06



Trumpets



Trombones



Percussion



Piano



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Principal Oboe
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Renata Kaldor Ao Chair
- 02 Shefali Pryor
Associate Principal

Cor Anglais

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Principal

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Associate Principal
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- Craig Wernicke
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Associate Principal
- 03 Fiona McNamara

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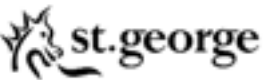
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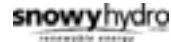
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Moon Design

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