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2010 SEASON

Arabian Nights

THU 4 NOVEMBER 1.30PM

FRI 5 NOVEMBER 8PM

SAT 6 NOVEMBER 2PM

MON 8 NOVEMBER 7PM

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

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A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized Arabic calligraphy.

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2010 SEASON

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

Thursday 4 November | 1.30pm

EMIRATES METRO SERIES

Friday 5 November | 8pm

GREAT CLASSICS

Saturday 6 November | 2pm

MONDAYS @ 7

Monday 8 November | 7pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

ARABIAN NIGHTS

Alexander Lazarev conductor

Jean-Yves Thibaudet piano

ARAM KHACHATURIAN (1903–1978)

Spartacus: Highlights from the ballet

Scene and Dance with Crotala

Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia

Variation of Aegina and Bacchanalia

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921)

Piano Concerto No.5 in F, Op.103 (Egyptian)

Allegro animato

Andante – Allegretto tranquillo – Andante

Molto allegro

INTERVAL

NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (1844–1908)

Scheherazade – Symphonic Suite, Op.35

Largo e maestoso – Lento – Allegro non troppo

(The Sea and Sinbad's Ship)

Lento (The Story of the Kalender Prince)

Andantino quasi allegretto (The Young Prince and the

Young Princess)

Allegro molto – Vivo – Allegro non troppo e maestoso – Lento

(Festival at Baghdad – The Sea – The Ship Goes to Pieces

on a Rock Surmounted by a Bronze Warrior – Conclusion)



Monday's performance will be broadcast live across Australia on ABC Classic FM.



Monday's performance will be webcast by BigPond.

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Pre-concert talk by Yvonne Frindle in the Northern Foyer, 45 minutes before each concert.

Visit sydneysymphony.com/talk-bios for speaker biographies.

Approximate durations:

12 minutes, 29 minutes,

20-minute interval, 42 minutes

The concert will conclude at

approximately 3.25pm (Thu),

9.55pm (Fri), 3.55pm (Sat),

8.55pm (Mon).



Costume design by Léon Bakst for the Ballets Russes production of *Scheherazade* (1910).

INTRODUCTION

Arabian Nights

Music history is full of composers evoking exotic worlds and foreign places. There's Rameau's Persian Flower Festival and Dance of the Peace Pipe in *Les Indes galantes*, the spirit of the noble Turk in Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio*, the Spanish gypsy of Bizet's *Carmen*, and the betrayed geisha in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. These creations don't always bear much resemblance to the 'authentic' article. But it didn't matter that Rameau had never been to the Middle East or the Americas (or that his geography was woefully wrong). It certainly didn't matter that Bizet hadn't set foot in Spain, or that Puccini never saw Japan.

Some composers did go into the field. Khachaturian visited the sites of Roman antiquity before composing *Spartacus*, although he wisely didn't attempt to recreate the lost sounds of the ancient music. (In places *Spartacus* owes more to the music of the composer's native Armenia.) Saint-Saëns travelled widely and allowed the sounds and colours to emerge in pieces such as *Afrique* and his 'Egyptian' piano concerto. Rimsky-Korsakov found the Oriental voice of the princess Scheherazade in the vastness of Russia and the folk songs collected from her expanding borders.

Despite this research, however, these composers take us into a world of musical *imagination*. Khachaturian composed as he 'felt'; Rimsky-Korsakov wanted to give his listeners an 'impression', the *effect* of a fantastic Oriental narrative. Saint-Saëns comes closest to a documentary style, quoting a Nubian love song and depicting the thud of ships' engines and the croaking of frogs. But even here, authenticity is not the point. The pursuit of exoticism offers an escape from conventions and from classical forms. It is, in the end, the pursuit of magic.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Aram Khachaturian

Spartacus: Highlights from the ballet

Scene and Dance with Crotala

Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia

Variation of Aegina and Bacchanalia

There's a famous Mozart piano concerto with a nickname, 'Elvira Madigan'. The name comes from a 1960s Swedish film, which took the poignant slow movement of the concerto for its theme. Nearly fifty years later, fewer and fewer concert-goers have seen the film, but the concerto remains popular and loved in its own right.

Khachaturian's *Spartacus* from 1954 had a similar experience. For a while, Khachaturian was another Soviet composer – important enough, but not wildly popular outside the USSR, despite the intrinsic appeal of his musical style. Then in 1971, as the Decca producer John Culshaw puts it, 'some unacknowledged genius in the BBC' chose the *Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia* as the theme music for a television series, *The Onedin Line*. The series had nothing to do with the Ancient Roman Empire in which the ballet is set, but the music 'somehow *did* fit the image of an old sailing ship on the high seas'. The *Adagio* became an instant hit in England and beyond; Khachaturian's recording of a suite from the ballet sold like hotcakes. If you're under 40, you've probably never seen the series, but the *Adagio* remains popular and loved.

This is unsurprising. The *Adagio* is lusciously scored and intensely felt music that speaks directly to the listener – at

Keynotes

KHACHATURIAN

Born Tbilisi, Georgia, 1903
Died Moscow, 1978

Aram Khachaturian was a Soviet composer, born in Georgia of Armenian parentage. He is best known today for his Violin Concerto (composed for David Oistrakh) and his ballet music – specifically two numbers, the Sabre Dance from his first ballet *Gayaneh* and the Adagio from *Spartacus*. The Sabre Dance features several of his musical trademarks: an exotic folkloric style, compelling rhythms, and vibrant use of orchestral colours. The Adagio has a lyrical, filmic quality, and it was this piece which brought Khachaturian to wide attention and popularity in the West after it was adopted in the 1970s as the theme for the BBC television series, *The Onedin Line*.

SPARTACUS

Spartacus was composed between 1950 and 1954, following Khachaturian's first ballet success, *Gayaneh* (1942). The idea and the scenario came from Nikolai Volkov, taking the ancient historians Plutarch (for facts) and Appian (for characterisation) as his sources. Spartacus is a Thracian gladiator, leader of the slave uprising in around 73–71 BC; Caius Crassus is his nemesis and the personification of Rome. The theme is the struggle for freedom and the revolt against oppression. In this concert, two numbers from the Orgy at Crassus' Villa (Act I) frame the poignant Adagio from Act III.

© EARL CARTER



Steven Heathcote as Spartacus in The Australian Ballet production.

once tragic and uplifting. Askold Makarov, the first man to dance Spartacus, described it this way:

When Phrygia, after her burst of despair, rises from her knees and stands next to [Spartacus] like a monument to grief, the theme flares up in the orchestra, bursting into flame and spreading like wildfire from one group of instruments to the other. The grieving violins are followed by the pathetic and vibrating voices of the cellos; the theme grows, embracing the entire orchestra. And I – this may sound naïve – I want to rise. I know that my hero is dead, but the very notion that Spartacus may still be alive gives me no peace when I hear the anthem to immortality.

Much of Khachaturian's *Spartacus* music is turbulent and rousing, brilliant and luxuriant – vividly coloured accompaniments to orgies and battles. But if there is one number from *Spartacus* that conveys Khachaturian's vision for the ballet, it is the Adagio with its pathos and nobility. Influenced by the Greek historian Appian, the composer and his librettist Nikolai Volkov saw *Spartacus* as a courageous, intelligent and heroic figure. Their theme was Spartacus's struggle for freedom, the uprising against the chains of slavery, the desire to bring independence to oppressed peoples. And the theme held a contemporary resonance – as Karl Marx had recognised before them, *Spartacus* was a 'true representative of the proletariat of ancient times'.

Although he did visit Italy, Khachaturian wisely made no attempt to recreate the music of the epoch. He composed as he felt, he said. The result was true to his personal style, with traces of music from his native Armenia, and a dramatic quality that reveals his admiration for Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* ballet.

In this concert the *Adagio* is framed by two numbers from the *Orgy at Crassus' Villa* in Act I. The *Dance with the Crotala* begins seductively before evoking ancient castanets (with a tambourine and cymbals!). The wild impetuosity of this number is echoed in the music for the treacherous Greek dancer, *Ægina*, and the *Bacchanalia* she arranges to entertain her Roman lover.

YVONNE FRINDLE, SYDNEY SYMPHONY ©2010

This selection from Khachaturian's *Spartacus* calls for three flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, cor anglais, three clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet) and two bassoons; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion (including bells and xylophone); harp, piano, celesta, and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed music from *Spartacus* (the *Adagio*) in 1975 in a concert conducted by Patrick Thomas, who also conducted the most recent performance on record, in 1980.



Aram Khachaturian

The *Spartacus* ballet had an uneasy beginning, with several unremarkable productions that failed to meet with the composer's satisfaction. 'Writing a ballet is difficult, staging it is ten times worse,' said Khachaturian. But in 1968, Yuri Grigorovich rose to the challenge of restaging the ballet for the Bolshoi in a version that was acclaimed as true to the drama and the music.

Camille Saint-Saëns Piano Concerto No.5 in F, Op.103 (Egyptian)

Allegro animato

Andante – Allegretto tranquillo – Andante

Molto allegro

Jean-Yves Thibaudet piano

Descriptive music, especially of the exotic kind, is unexpected in a concerto. It is unexpected, also, from Saint-Saëns, whose models were usually classical. These are reasons, perhaps, why his Fifth Piano Concerto, tagged ‘Egyptian’, has had to wait until recently to climb back into the concert repertoire.

The concerto was premiered in Paris in 1896, with the composer as soloist, in a concert celebrating the 50th anniversary of Saint-Saëns’s debut as a pianist. He was also heard in the same Mozart concerto he’d played as a ten-year old (when he’d offered to play any one of Beethoven’s 32 sonatas as an encore!). In the new concerto, a critic noted the ‘clarity, logic and form’, remarking that Saint-Saëns, ‘even when he appears to give way to the most bewildering fantasies, building up a thousand witty and exquisite episodes, he coordinates logically the most unexpected elements...’

The celebration of Saint-Saëns’s anniversary followed a period of withdrawal, both physical and spiritual. His increasingly frequent travels outside France were partly an escape from losing battles in the struggles of new French music, against the pupils and disciples of César Franck, not to mention the revolutionary Claude Debussy. More telling was the void left by the death of Saint-Saëns’s two young sons and the break-up of his marriage. Travel was a distraction, if not a balm.

In 1894, Saint-Saëns made the long journey to Saigon in French Indo-China. He had travelled by way of Spain and Egypt, where he returned in January 1896, beginning his Fifth Piano Concerto on an expedition to Luxor, and completing it in a Cairo hotel room. The concerto soon received the epithet ‘Egyptian’, but Saint-Saëns pointed to other sources for its ‘Eastern’ colour:

The second movement is a kind of journey eastward, which in the F sharp episode actually extends to the Far East. The passage in G is a Nubian love song that I heard boat operators sing on the Nile as I travelled downriver.

The exoticisms of this concerto are to some extent a veneer. After prelude wind chords and plucked strings,

Keynotes

SAINT-SAËNS

Born Paris, 1835 Died Algiers, 1921

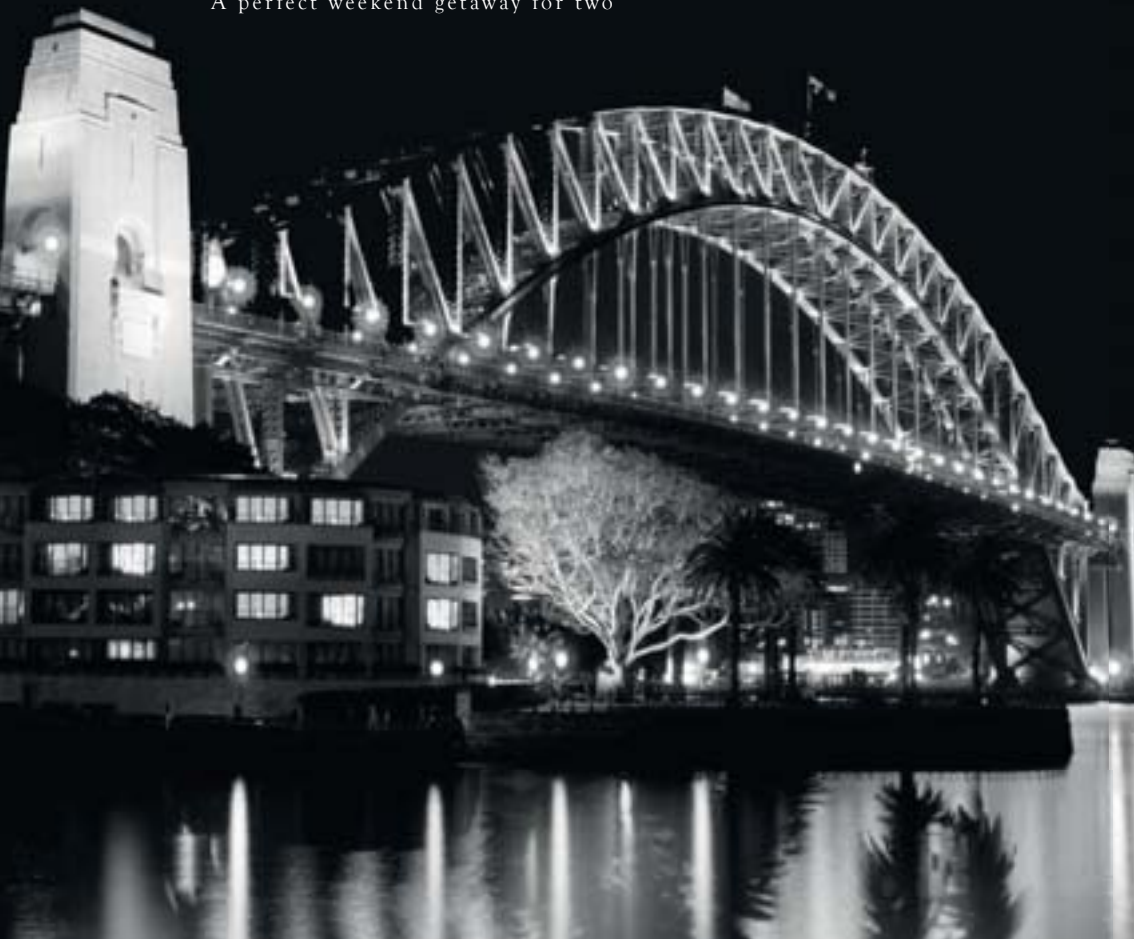
Camille Saint-Saëns is known today as a composer – the creator of the much-loved works such as the ‘Organ’ Symphony, his warhorse Second Piano Concerto, and *The Carnival of the Animals*, which the composer tried to suppress. But the Frenchman was also a pianist of great accomplishment – Berlioz described him as an ‘an absolutely shattering master-pianist’ – and for most of his long life he was active as a performer. In 1896, at the age of 61, he was the soloist in the premiere of his Fifth Piano Concerto.

‘EGYPTIAN’ CONCERTO

This concerto is characteristically French in being inspired by poetry and place. It’s in part a kind of musical travelogue, distilling impressions from the composer’s extensive travels. The lilting opening theme of the classically organised first movement is immediately captivating. The second movement is the most illustrative, and therefore the most episodic. The marvellously innovative piano writing includes swirls evoking north African string instruments and passages that evoke Eastern vocal style. The sound of ships’ propellers (as heard by the composer on the Nile) marks the final movement, which gives the sense of a swift gliding through a changing panorama.

The concerto was dedicated to the virtuoso pianist, Louis Diémer.

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the piano states a simple theme. It took a German musicologist, Michael Stegemann, to point out that these lilting chords in the **first movement** are really a broken chorale. The feeling could well be, as another writer finds, 'a feeling of well being under a warm, tropical sky'. But there is a classical, rather objective lucidity here, as imitative procedures lead to the second theme with a rhapsodic broadening of tempo. The piano begins to dominate the weightier matters of the development, and contributes glittering cascades in the ingeniously varied reprise, before a serene coda.

With noisy folkloric intensity, the journey eastward begins in the **second movement** – not yet in Egypt, but perhaps the Moorish, Arab-influenced part of Spain. Next comes the love song from the Nile (the piano's right hand figures painting the watery setting), then a tune with a Chinese scale, complete with gong. Saint-Saëns told the dedicatee, pianist Louis Diémer, that this passage, with its repeated notes high in the piano, and sustained note for muted violins, portrayed the croaking of frogs at twilight – impressions from the near and the far East have mingled. These elements are juggled, in a free fantasia, full of delicate orchestral effects and brief cadenza-like musings for the soloist.

Saint-Saëns said the **finale** expresses 'the joy of a ship's journey', beginning with an imitation of the thud of the engines. He also wrote 'It is virtuosity itself I mean to defend. It is the source of the picturesque in music...' He succeeded – so much so that this finale, bristling with difficulties, was for many years a test piece at the Paris Conservatoire. The first subject's anticipation of the ragtime style of Scott Joplin may be the 'little turd' which fastidious French musicians claim Saint-Saëns left somewhere in each of his compositions. Those less inclined to severity will find it another of the features which make this concerto so unpretentiously entertaining.

DAVID GARRETT ©2004/2010

The orchestra for Saint-Saëns' 'Egyptian' concerto calls for two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets and two bassoons; four horns, two trumpets and three trombones; timpani and strings.

Our records suggest that this is the Sydney Symphony's first performance of Saint-Saëns' Piano Concerto No.5.



'I was made to live in the tropics...I have missed my vocation.'

SAINT-SAËNS

ITINERARY

The Arabian Nights Tour



Days 1–2
Depart Sydney on flight SSO30
Arrive Alexandroupoli 1900; train to Komotini
Your guide:
Aram Khachaturian

Day 3
Komotini

Day 4
Train to Alexandroupoli 0900; depart Alexandroupoli on SSO31
Arrive Capua, Italy 1400

Days 5–6
Depart Capua at 0800 on SSO32
Arrive Reggio Calabria 1030

Days 7–9
Depart Reggio Calabria at 1030 on SSO33
Arrive Cairo at 1300
Your guide:
Camille Saint-Saëns

Shake off your jetlag with a morning walk around this historic Thracian city. Your tour will take in the ruins of the Byzantine fortress, built in the fourth century AD by the Emperor Theodosius and located near the city centre; after lunch in the old commercial centre, join us for a visit to the local Archaeological Museum.

Take a walk around the city or a bus tour to Santa Maria Capua Vetere (the site of ancient Capua) and watch the sun set over the remains of the amphitheatre.

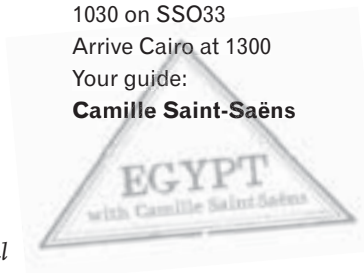
Aram says: This whole region is steeped in history and legend. There are a myriad of ancient sites waiting to be explored, and Spartacus – the Thracian king-cum-rebel slave – is believed to have trained at the gladiatorial school just near Capua.

Spend some time exploring region of Calabria over the next few days. Aram suggests a trip to Strongoli, believed to be near the site where Spartacus met his end.

Aram says: Before I composed my ballet Spartacus, I visited Italy. I saw the structures of ancient Rome, the triumphal arches built by the slaves, I saw the barracks of the gladiators and the coliseum. Some of Spartacus' battles against the Romans took place in this region of Strongoli and Rhegium (now Reggio Calabria), and I often strolled through the places where the gladiator had walked with his comrades.

While away the hours with a trip down the Nile on a felucca, or try your hand at a riddle when you visit the Great Sphinx and the Pyramids at Giza. For the more adventurous travellers, Camille is offering to take a group to the site of the ancient city of Thebes to marvel at the ruins of the temple complexes at Luxor and Karnak and, of course, the Valley of the Kings.

Camille says: What a fantastic country! Full of ancient sites to stir the musical imagination – I should know, I composed my Fifth Piano Concerto when I visited Luxor. It's quite a pictorial work and you'll hear the sounds of Africa scattered throughout. The second part takes us on a journey to the East and even, in





The Great Pyramid of Giza, Egypt

the F sharp passage, to the Far East; and the G major passage is a Nubian love song which I heard sung by the boatmen on the Nile as I went down the river in a dahabieh.

Check in at the hotel and enjoy some light afternoon refreshments with Camille as he speaks exclusively with our travel group about his love for Northern Africa.

Camille says: Of all the places I've visited, Algiers would have to be my favourite. I've even written a piece of music dedicated to this wonderful place, my Suite algérienne for orchestra, into which I wound a few traditional North African melodies. If there's time, we'll also have a listen to Africa, my fantasy for piano and orchestra – a piece I composed while on holidays in the Canary Islands.

Spend the next few days exploring the sights and sounds of this city in the north of Spain, founded in the eighth century AD. Your guide is perfect for the job – he spent three years as a midshipman on a Russian man-o'-war and is a seasoned traveller.

Nikolai says: You might wonder what a Russian is doing in sunny Spain, but in fact, I've been here before. There are so many things to see and hear, and a composer can't help but soak it all up – my Capriccio espagnol for instance, uses traditional melodies from the Asturias principality in the north of the country. I love seeing new places and while in the Russian navy I visited London, New York, Rio de Janeiro, Cadiz – and even a trip to the Niagara Falls.

This historic city will form our base as we explore the region that was once part of the vast Persian Empire. The ancient city of Persepolis is located just 70kms northeast of Shiraz, and the ruins of the Apadana Palace will form the

Day 10

Depart Cairo at 1130 on SSO34

Arrive Algiers at 1500

Days 11–13

Depart Algiers at 0900 on SSO35

Arrive Oviedo, Asturias 1300

Your guide:

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov



Days 14–16

Depart Oviedo at 0930 on SSO36

Arrive Shiraz, Iran 1500

backdrop for Nikolai's talk on *Scheherazade*, his orchestral piece inspired by the Persian Queen and narrator of *One Thousand and One Nights*.

Nikolai says: What a woman! And her story is a gold mine of inspiration for any artist. The program I'd been guided by in composing Shekherazada consisted of separate, unconnected episodes and pictures from The Arabian Nights, scattered through all four movements of my suite: the sea and Sinbad's ship, the fantastic narrative of the Prince Kalender, the Prince and the Princess, the Bagdad festival and the ship dashing against the rock with the bronze rider upon it.

Days 16–17
Depart Shiraz at 0900 on
SSO37
Arrive Sydney 1130

The author is convinced that Aram, Camille, and Nikolai would indeed have made excellent tour leaders, and every effort has been made to include first-hand accounts of their travelling experiences.

ALEXANDRA PINKHAM, PUBLICATIONS INTERN

Ahem! – Who said that?

1. Stillness is our most intense mode of action.
2. I know two kinds of audience only – one coughing and one not coughing.
3. I was guided by the coughing of the audience. Whenever the coughing would increase, I would skip the next variation. Whenever there was no coughing, I would play them in proper order. In one concert the coughing was so violent played only ten variations (out of twenty).
4. A cough is something that you yourself can't help, but everybody else does on purpose just to torment you.

A. Ogden Nash, B. Leonard Bernstein, C. Artur Schnabel, D. Sergei Rachmaninoff

Answers: 1B 2C 3D 4A

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

***Scheherazade* – Symphonic Suite, Op.35**

Largo e maestoso – Lento – Allegro non troppo

(The Sea and Sinbad's Ship)

Lento (The Story of the Kalender Prince)

Andantino quasi allegretto (The Young Prince and the Young Princess)

*Allegro molto – Vivo – Allegro non troppo e maestoso – Lento
(Festival at Baghdad – The Sea – The Ship Goes to Pieces
on a Rock Surmounted by a Bronze Warrior – Conclusion)*

The Sultan Shahriyar, convinced of the duplicity and infidelity of all women, had vowed to slay each of his wives after the first night. The Sultana Scheherazade, however, saved her life by the expedient of recounting to the Sultan a succession of tales over a period of a thousand and one nights. Overcome by curiosity, the Sultan postponed from day to day the execution of his wife, and ended by renouncing altogether his sanguinary resolution.

Many were the marvels recounted to Shahriyar by Scheherazade. For the telling of these she drew from the verses of the poets and the words of folk songs and tales, connecting her stories one with the other.

Rimsky-Korsakov conceived the idea of a symphonic suite based on episodes from *Scheherazade* in the middle of winter 1887–88, while he and Glazunov were engrossed in the completion of Borodin's unfinished opera *Prince Igor*. The following summer he completed the suite – 'a kaleidoscope of fairytale images and designs of Oriental character'.

'All I had desired,' he later wrote in *My Musical Life*, 'was that the hearer, if he liked my piece as symphonic music, should carry away the impression that it is beyond doubt an Oriental narrative describing a motley succession of fantastic happenings and not merely four pieces played one after the other and composed on the basis of themes common to all the four movements. Why then, if that be so, does my suite bear the name, precisely, of *Scheherazade*? Because this name and the title *The Arabian Nights* connote in everybody's mind the East and fairytale wonders; besides, certain details of the musical exposition hint at the fact that all of these are various tales of some one person (who happens to be Scheherazade) entertaining therewith her stern husband.'

Rimsky-Korsakov considered *Scheherazade* one of those works in which 'my orchestration had reached a considerable

Keynotes

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

Born Tikhvin, 1844

Died Lyubensk, 1908

Rimsky-Korsakov was the most prolific and successful member of the Russian 'nationalist' composers known as 'The Mighty Handful' or 'The Five'. Largely self-taught, he formalised much of his musical technique only after being appointed professor at the St Petersburg conservatory in 1871. As a young naval officer he travelled widely soaking up the sounds and colours of the Orient, influences which subsequently emerged in *Scheherazade* in 1887–88.

SCHEHERAZADE

Rimsky-Korsakov took the idea of *Scheherazade* and the *Arabian Nights* as his starting point, and at first he gave the movements titles that would bring to mind particular characters or stories. But the end result was a 'kaleidoscope of fairytale images and designs of Oriental character' and the title was chosen more for the connotations of the East that it brings to mind. He even withdrew the movement titles to avoid constraining his listeners' imaginations.

In the music the concertmaster takes on the role of *Scheherazade*: the many beautiful violin solos represent the storyteller herself, spinning her tales. These are told with brilliant orchestral colours, richly coloured fantasies that suggest (perhaps!) the sea, a beggar prince, two young lovers, and vibrant festival and a ship in the storm.

degree of virtuosity and bright sonority without Wagner's influence, within the limits of the usual make-up of Glinka's orchestra'. So formidable is his instinct, that with surprisingly modest forces (adding to the traditional orchestra only piccolo, cor anglais, harp and percussion) Rimsky-Korsakov can convince his listeners of the raging of a storm at sea, the exuberance of a festival, and the exotic colour of the Orient.

As if repeating in music Scheherazade's feat of narrative woven from poetry and folk tales, Rimsky-Korsakov drew on isolated episodes from *The Thousand and One Nights* for his suite. At first Rimsky-Korsakov was persuaded to assign to specific movements the fragments that had caught his imagination – 'the sea and Sinbad's ship, the fantastic narrative of the Kalender Prince, the Prince and Princess, the Baghdad festival, and the ship dashing against the rock with the bronze rider upon it'. But within a year of the first performance, he'd withdrawn the descriptive headings, which, he said, were intended to 'direct but slightly the listener's fancy on the path which my own imagination had travelled, and to leave more minute and particular conceptions to the will and mood of each'.

According to the composer, it is futile to seek in *Scheherazade* leading motifs that are consistently linked with the same poetic ideas and conceptions. Instead, these apparent leitmotifs were 'nothing but purely musical material...for symphonic development'. The motifs unify all the movements of the suite, appearing in different musical guises so that the 'themes correspond each time to different images, actions and pictures'. The ominous octaves representing the stern Sultan in the opening, for example, appear in the tale of the Kalender Prince, although Shahriyar plays no part in that narrative. And the muted fanfare of the second movement returns in the otherwise unconnected depiction of the foundering ship. Rimsky-Korsakov also cites the appearance of both the Kalender Prince's theme and the theme of the Young Princess in the Baghdad festival although 'nothing is said about these persons taking part in the festivities'.

Rimsky-Korsakov did admit, however, that one of his motifs was quite specific, attached not to any of the stories, but to the storyteller: 'The unifying thread consisted of the brief introductions to the first, second and fourth movements and the intermezzo in movement three, written for violin solo and delineating Scheherazade herself as telling her wondrous tales to the stern Sultan.' It is this



idea – an intricately winding violin theme supported only by the harp – which soothes the thunderous opening and embarks upon the first tale: the sea and Sinbad’s ship. For Rimsky-Korsakov, who was synaesthetic, the choice of E major for the billowing cello figures can have been no accident: his ears ‘saw’ it as dark blue.

A cajoling melody played by solo bassoon represents a Kalender (or ‘beggar’) Prince in the second movement. (Rimsky-Korsakov, perhaps deliberately, neglects to tell us which of the beggar princes in *The Arabian Nights* he had in mind.) The dramatic middle section features muted fanfares, based on the Sultan’s theme. The third movement opens with a sinuous violin melody – it is easy to imagine that Scheherazade is telling this story in her own voice. The similarity between the two main themes of the third movement (for violin and then flute and clarinet) suggests that the Young Prince and Princess are perfectly matched in temperament and character.

An agitated transformation of the Sultan’s theme, in dialogue with Scheherazade’s theme, prefaces the final tale. The fourth movement combines the Festival in Baghdad and the tale of the shipwreck, described by one writer as a ‘confused dream of oriental splendour and terror’. Triangle and tambourines accompany the lively cross-rhythms of the carnival; and the mood builds in intensity before all is swamped by the return of the sea theme from the first movement. But after the fury of the shipwreck, it is Scheherazade who has the last word. Her spinning violin solo emerges in gentle triumph over the Sultan’s bloodthirsty resolution.

YVONNE FRINDLE ©1998/2009

Scheherazade calls for an orchestra of two flutes, piccolo, two oboes (one doubling cor anglais), two clarinets and two bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and a large percussion section; harp and strings.

The Sydney Symphony was the first ABC orchestra to perform this work, in 1938 with Malcolm Sargent, and our most recent performance was in 2005, conducted by Tugan Sokhiev.

SULTAN: ‘Oh, Scheherazade... you have taught me many lessons, letting me see that every man is at the call of Fate...I have listened to you for a thousand nights and one night, and now my soul is changed and joyful; it beats with an appetite for life.’

GLOSSARY

CADENZA – a virtuoso passage for the soloist alone, traditionally inserted towards the end of a concerto's first movement and marking the final 'cadence'.

CHORALE – a hymn tune for congregational singing; or instrumental music with a hymn-like character.

CODA – literally 'tail', a small section at the end of a movement or work that 'rounds off' the music.

CROSS-RHYTHMS – occurs when rhythms are 'shifted' so their strong beats fall at unexpected points in the basic pulse of the music. For example, a basic pulse of 3 beats + 3 beats might be overlaid with a rhythm made up of 2+2+2. The effect is usually complex but compelling.

DEVELOPMENT – in classical forms, the development is the section of music where the composer expands on and develops the principal musical ideas and themes.

INTERMEZZO – 'in the middle'; in the 18th century an intermezzo was a short comic opera inserted between the acts of a serious opera. In later symphonic music, it can refer to a section or movement within a larger work.

LEITMOTIF – from the German *Leitmotiv* or 'leading motif', a musical idea (not always a full-fledged theme) intended to represent a person, object, place, state of mind, or any other dramatic element. Wagner was the first composer to adopt the technique, using it in his operas to establish unity and shape musical structure as well as convey dramatic effect.

OCTAVES – a technique in composition where the melody is doubled (played simultaneously) in different octaves or registers. This gives increased power and emphasis to the melodic line.

RAGTIME – a style pre-dating jazz, and especially associated with the piano,

characterised by a striding bass-and-chord accompaniment in the left hand and right-hand melodies full of unexpected accents that fall against the prevailing beat (syncopations).

SYNÆSTHESIA – the crossing or mixing of sensations in which the stimulation of one sensory pathway (say, the aural pathway when listening to music) results in an automatic and involuntary experience in an unrelated sensory pathway (say, vision or smell). Many musicians have reported seeing colours when they hear music – Rimsky-Korsakov, for example, 'heard' the key of E major as dark blue – but it's a very personal experience and there's rarely agreement between individuals as to how they 'see' the music they hear.

In classical music, movement titles are usually taken from standard musical terminology (drawn from Italian) indicating basic tempo, and mood. Terms used in this concert include

Andante – at an easy walking pace
Andantino quasi allegretto – livelier than

Andante

Allegretto tranquillo – not so fast as *Allegro*,
tranquilly

Allegro animato – fast, animated

Allegro molto – very fast

Allegro non troppo – fast, not too much

Allegro non troppo e maestoso – ...and
majestically

Largo e maestoso – slow and majestically

Lento – very slow

Molto allegro – very fast

Vivo – very 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.

MORE MUSIC

Selected Discography

SPARTACUS

Alexander Lazarev has recorded highlights from *Spartacus* (including the numbers heard in this concert) with the Bolshoi Symphony Orchestra. Music from *Gayaneh* and the waltz and mazurka from *Masquerade* round out the disc.

APEX 89237

Khachaturian himself recorded music from *Spartacus* several times, including four movements with the Vienna Philharmonic, released with music from *Gayaneh*. Possibly out of print but available as an ArkivCD from arkivmusic.com
DECCA LEGENDS 460 315-2

'EGYPTIAN' CONCERTO

Jean-Yves Thibaudet has recorded the 'Egyptian' concerto and the popular Second Concerto with the Suisse Romande Orchestra conducted by Charles Dutoit.

DECCA 974402

For a performance from closer to home in a release that also includes *Les Djinnis* by Franck, look for Duncan Gifford's recording with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and Sebastian Lang-Lessing.

ABC CLASSICS 476 192-8

SCHEHERAZADE

Scheherazade is Rimsky-Korsakov's most popular work and there are many recordings to choose from. An arrangement of Balakirev's *Islamey*, and Borodin's *In the Steppes of Central Asia* continues the oriental theme in a 'red-blooded' Kirov Theatre Orchestra recording conducted by Valery Gergiev.

PHILIPS 470 840

Or for an approach that marries period-instrument sensibility with orchestral richness of sound, try the recording by the Anima Eterna Orchestra conducted by Jos van Immerseel. The disc also includes Rimsky-Korsakov's *Russian Easter Festival Overture*, and two Borodin works: *In the Steppes of Central Asia* and *Polovtsian Dances*.

ZIGZAG 50502

ALEXANDER LAZAREV

Alexander Lazarev conducts the Sydney Symphony in Shostakovich's Ninth Symphony and Glazunov's ballet score *The Seasons* in one of our earliest releases on the Sydney Symphony Live label.

SSO 2

To hear Lazarev in other Rimsky-Korsakov orchestral works, look for his recording of *Capriccio espagnol*, the *Golden Cockerel* suite, and several overtures with the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra. Available as an ArkivCD from arkivmusic.com

ERATO 94808

JEAN-YVES THIBAUDET

Jean-Yves Thibaudet's most recent release is a recording of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, Piano Concerto in F and the 'I Got Rhythm' Variations with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra conducted by Marin Alsop.

DECCA 478 2189

He has also released *Aria – Opera Without Words*, a disc of piano transcriptions, including a medley from Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila*.

DECCA 475 7668

Broadcast Diary



NOVEMBER

Monday 8 November, 7pm

ARABIAN NIGHTS

Alexander Lazarev conductor

Jean-Yves Thibaudet piano

Khachaturian, Saint-Saëns, Rimsky-Korsakov

Tuesday 9 November, 2.30pm

DVOŘÁK VIOLIN CONCERTO (2009)

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

Janine Jansen violin

Tuesday 16 November, 3.20pm

DEBUSSY IMAGES (2007)

Yannick Nézet-Séguin conductor

Friday 26 November, 8pm

MAHLER 4

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

Emma Matthews soprano

Dimitri Ashkenazy clarinet

Richard Strauss, Mozart, Mahler

2MBS-FM 102.5

SYDNEY SYMPHONY 2010

Tuesday 9 November, 6pm

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Webcast Diary



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We invite you to tweet with us at concerts, but not during the performance itself – as one of our followers said recently, "If it's tweetworthy, it's worthy of undivided attention."

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Alexander Lazarev conductor

Alexander Lazarev studied with Leo Ginsbourg at the Moscow Conservatory. In 1971 he won first prize in the Soviet Union's national competition for conductors, and the following year he won first prize and gold medal in the Karajan Competition in Berlin.

From 1987 to 1995 he was Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Bolshoi Theatre, the first person for over 30 years to hold both positions concurrently. His leadership marked a period of intense activity, with an unprecedented program of prestigious foreign touring. Several of the most successful productions – including Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar*, Tchaikovsky's *The Maid of Orleans*, and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Mlada* – were filmed for video, and the Bolshoi Symphony Orchestra made a number of acclaimed recordings. He has also conducted opera for the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, Arena di Verona, Opéra Bastille, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Netherlands Opera and the Bavarian State Opera.

In recent years he has appeared regularly with London's Philharmonia Orchestra and the St Petersburg Philharmonic. He has also conducted the Berlin Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw, Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Orchestre National de France, Oslo Philharmonic, Swedish Radio Symphony, NHK Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Montreal Symphony and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

A regular visitor to Japan since 1994, in 2008 he was appointed Principal Conductor of the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra. He is also Conductor-in-Residence of the Bolshoi Theatre. He has been Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra (1992–1995), and Principal Conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (1997–2005).

His repertoire ranges from the 18th century to the avant-garde, and in 1978 he founded the Ensemble of Soloists of the Bolshoi Theatre, with the aim of promoting contemporary music by both Soviet and foreign composers.

Alexander Lazarev is a prolific recording artist – in addition to the Bolshoi Symphony, he has recorded with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the RSO. He has recorded the Tchaikovsky symphonies with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra and is currently recording the Prokofiev symphonies with the Japan Philharmonic.

He works regularly with the Sydney Symphony, and he directed the 2002 Shostakovich Project in the Sydney Town Hall. His most recent appearance with the orchestra was in 2006.



Alexander Lazarev's performances in 2006 of Glazunov's *Seasons* and Shostakovich's Ninth Symphony were recorded for the Sydney Symphony Live label.

Jean-Yves Thibaudet piano

Jean-Yves Thibaudet captivates audiences worldwide with his thrilling performances and poetic interpretations. A charismatic and versatile musician, he is sought after by leading orchestras, conductors and festivals, and in June he was inducted into the Hollywood Bowl Hall of Fame.

Following performances at the Festival del Sole, Aspen, Saratoga, and Tanglewood festivals, he began the 2010–11 season in Switzerland with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Charles Dutoit. This season he also tours China with the London Symphony Orchestra (September 2010), and a German tour with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra (March 2011). His concerto engagements will include concerts throughout Europe, including with the leading French orchestras; with the Malaysian Philharmonic; in Canada and the United States.

Next year he will embark on a two-continent recital tour, with performances in Berlin, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Spain, California, Missouri, Colorado, Michigan, Florida, and New York's Carnegie Hall. Chamber music dates in Los Angeles, France and Belgium round out his schedule. He has released more than 40 albums, and his awards include the Schallplattenpreis, Diapason d'Or and Choc de la Musique, a Gramophone Award, two Echo awards, and the Edison Prize.

Of French and German heritage, Jean-Yves Thibaudet was born in Lyon, France, where he began his piano studies at the age of five and made his first public appearance two years later. At age 12, he entered the Paris Conservatoire where he studied with Aldo Ciccolini and Lucette Descaves, a friend and collaborator of Ravel. At 15 he gained a premier prix from the Conservatoire, and three years later won the Young Concert Artists Auditions in New York. In 2001, the Republic of France named him *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*.

Jean-Yves Thibaudet's most recent appearance with the Sydney Symphony was in 2006, performing Ravel and Liszt as well as a solo recital, and last year he performed with the London Philharmonic Orchestra during its Australian tour. On this visit he also performs with the Melbourne and West Australian symphony orchestras.



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Kirsten Williams
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Jennifer Booth
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Amber Gunther
Georges Lentz
Nicola Lewis
Nicole Masters
Alexandra Mitchell
Léone Ziegler
Katherine Lukey#
Emily Qin*
Martin Silverton*

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Shuti Huang
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Benjamin Li
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Anne-Louise
Comerford
Robyn Brookfield
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In response to audience requests, we've redesigned the orchestra list in our program books to make it clear which musicians are appearing on stage for the particular performance. (Please note that the lists for the string sections are not in seating order and changes of personnel can sometimes occur after we go to print.)

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Vladimir Ashkenazy PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC ADVISOR

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Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 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 in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales. International tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence, and in 2009 it made its first tour to mainland Asia.

The Sydney Symphony's first Chief Conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and, 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 its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. The Sydney Symphony promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program. 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 on both the BIS and Sydney Symphony Live labels.

Other releases on the Sydney Symphony Live label, established in 2006, include performances with Alexander Lazarev, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Sir Charles Mackerras and Vladimir Ashkenazy. The Sydney Symphony has also released recordings with Ashkenazy of Rachmaninoff, Elgar and Prokofiev orchestral works on the Exton/Triton labels, and numerous recordings on the ABC Classics label.

This is the second year of Ashkenazy's tenure as Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor.

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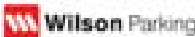


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04



05



06

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08



09



06
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07
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