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2010 SEASON

FANTASTIQUE!

WED 10, FRI 12, SAT 13 MARCH 8PM

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MAHLER 8: SYMPHONY OF A THOUSAND

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SEASON OPENING GALA

THU 18 FEB 8PM
SAT 20 FEB 8PM

MAHLER Symphony No.8
(Symphony of a Thousand)

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Marina Shaguch soprano
Sara MacIver soprano
Dagmar Pecková mezzo-soprano
Bernadette Cullen mezzo-soprano
Simon O'Neill tenor
Markus Eiche baritone
Martin Snell bass
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WASO Chorus
Adelaide Symphony Chorus
Gondwana Choirs

NIGEL KENNEDY: AN EVENING OF BACH AND ELLINGTON

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SAT 27 FEB 8PM

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Nocturne in E, Op.62 No.2
Polonaise-fantaisie, Op.61

BEETHOVEN

Sonata No.31 in A flat, Op.110
'Tempest' Sonata, Op.31 No.2
'Moonlight' Sonata, Op.27 No.2

FANTASTIQUE!

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE



ENERGYAUSTRALIA MASTER SERIES

WED 10 MAR 8PM
FRI 12 MAR 8PM
SAT 13 MAR 8PM

Pinchas Steinberg conductor
Louis Lortie piano

FRANCK The Accursed Huntsman
RAVEL Piano Concerto in G
BERLIOZ Symphonie fantastique

THE HALL OF HEROES

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE



MEET THE MUSIC
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WED 17 MAR 6.30PM
THU 18 MAR 6.30PM

TEA & SYMPHONY

FRI 19 MAR 11AM*

Alexander Briger conductor
François-Frédéric Guy piano

LEDGER Arcs and Planes

*BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No.5
(Emperor)

*WAGNER The Ring of the Nibelung:
An Orchestral Suite

DISCOVER MAHLER

CITY RECITAL HALL ANGEL PLACE



DISCOVERY
PRESENTED BY TENIX

MON 22 MAR 6.30PM

Richard Gill conductor
Sam Dundas baritone

MAHLER Songs of a Wayfarer:

"Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht"
"Die zwei blauen Augen von
meinem Schatz"

BRAHMS Symphony No.3:
3rd movement

THE CREATIVE SPIRIT

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE



THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

THU 25 MAR 1.30PM
EMIRATES METRO SERIES
FRI 26 MAR 8PM

GREAT CLASSICS

SAT 27 MAR 2:00PM

Alexander Vedernikov conductor

Johannes Moser cello

BEETHOVEN

The Creatures of Prometheus: Overture

SCHUMANN Cello Concerto

TCHAIKOVSKY

Symphony No.6, Pathétique

PYROTECHNICA

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE



ENERGYAUSTRALIA MASTER SERIES

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FRI 16 APR 8PM
SAT 17 APR 8PM

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Jian Wang cello

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There aren't too many concerts that will chase you to eternity and then immerse you in the wild dreams and visions of a composer tormented by love. But Pinchas Steinberg's program tonight does just that, and we're anticipating a thrilling experience. We're also excited to be hearing Louis Lortie again in this series, once more performing Ravel's energetic whirlwind of a piano concerto.

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We trust that you will enjoy tonight's performance and look forward to seeing you at future concerts in the *EnergyAustralia* Master Series throughout the year.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Maltabarow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

George Maltabarow
Managing Director

2010 SEASON

ENERGYAUSTRALIA MASTER SERIES

Wednesday 10 March | 8pm

Friday 12 March | 8pm

Saturday 13 March | 8pm

FANTASTIQUE!

Pinchas Steinberg conductor

Louis Lortie piano

CÉSAR FRANCK (1822–1890)

Le Chasseur maudit (The Accursed Huntsman) –
Symphonic poem

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

Piano Concerto in G

Allegro moderato

Adagio assai

Presto

INTERVAL

HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803–1869)

Symphonie fantastique, Op.14

Daydreams (Largo) – Passions

(Allegro agitato e appassionato assai)

A Ball (Valse. Allegro non troppo)

In the Fields (Adagio)

March to the Scaffold (Allegretto non troppo)

Sabbath Night Dream (Larghetto – Allegro – Dies irae –

Sabbath Round (Un peu retenu) – Dies irae and

Sabbath Round together)

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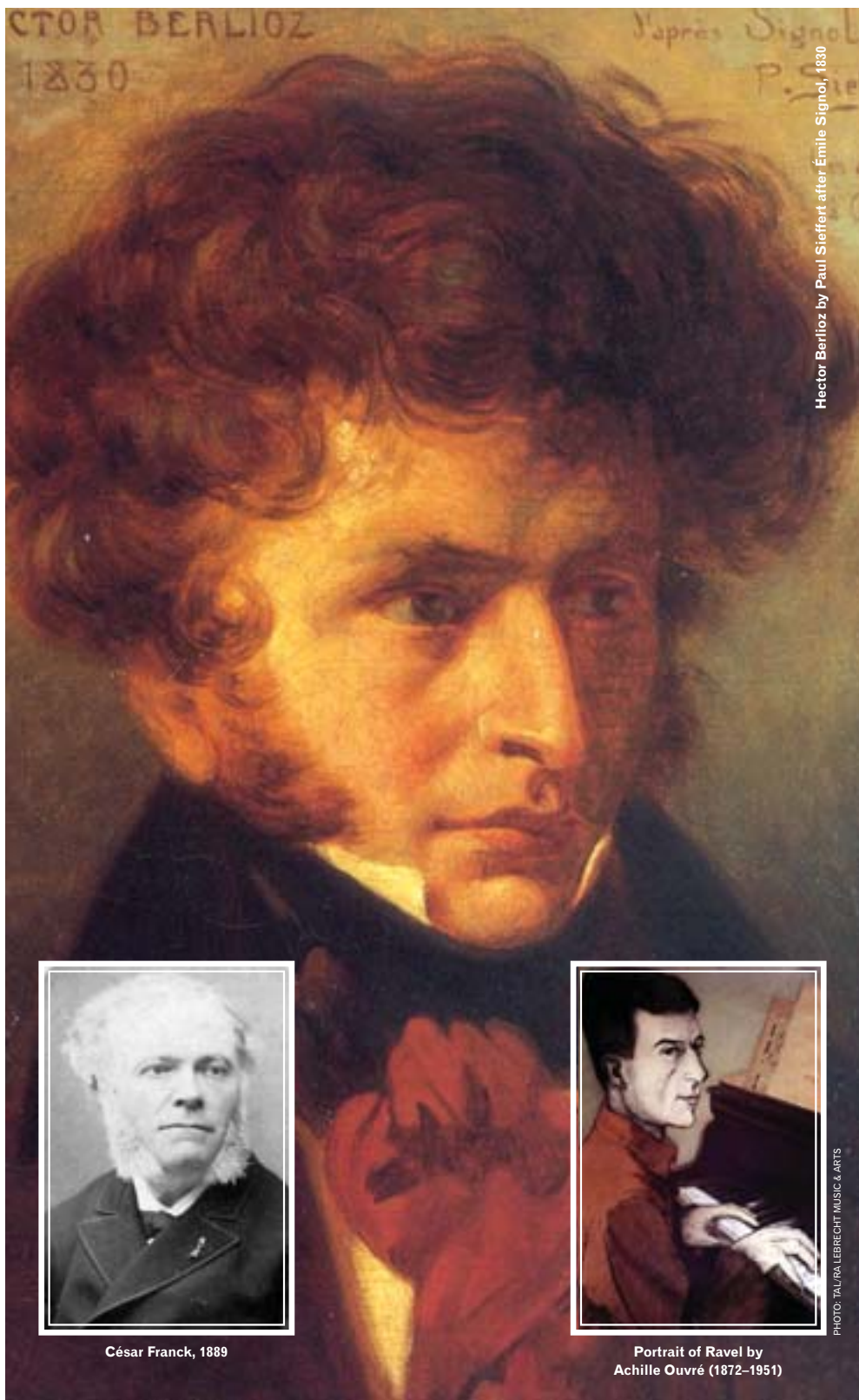
Friday night's performance will be broadcast live across Australia on ABC Classic FM.

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

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

Approximate durations:
15 minutes, 23 minutes,
20-minute interval, 50 minutes
The concert will conclude at
approximately 10pm.





Hector Berlioz by Paul Siefert after Émile Signol, 1830



César Franck, 1889



Portrait of Ravel by Achille Ouvre (1872–1951)

PHOTO: TAL'RA LEBRECHT MUSIC & ARTS

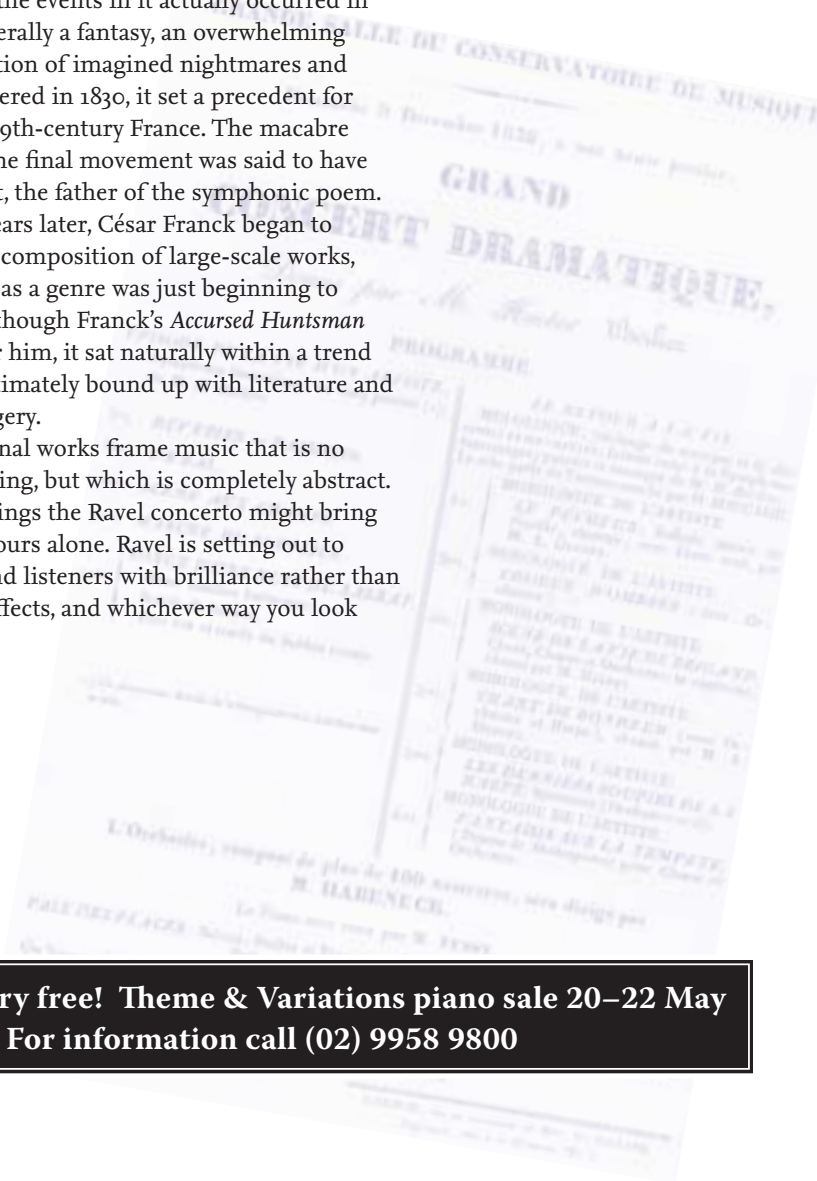
INTRODUCTION

Fantastique!

A few weeks ago in the Sydney Symphony offices there was a debate about whether *'fantastique'* could be translated. The conclusion: not really. Where most English-speakers will read 'fantastic' in the colloquial sense (excellent!), the French encompasses extravagance, fantasy, eccentricity, even the grotesque – the fantastical, in other words. You only have to listen to Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* to know which sense he had in mind, although it's excellent stuff as well.

The 'program' of the *Symphonie* – its narrative outline – emerged from Berlioz's own experience and feelings, even though none of the events in it actually occurred in his own life. It was literally a fantasy, an overwhelming orchestral representation of imagined nightmares and hallucinations. Premiered in 1830, it set a precedent for illustrative music in 19th-century France. The macabre Witches' Sabbath of the final movement was said to have impressed Franz Liszt, the father of the symphonic poem. And by the time, 50 years later, César Franck began to devote himself to the composition of large-scale works, the symphonic poem as a genre was just beginning to flourish in France. Although Franck's *Accursed Huntsman* is uncharacteristic for him, it sat naturally within a trend for music that was intimately bound up with literature and awash with vivid imagery.

These two sensational works frame music that is no less colourful or exciting, but which is completely abstract. Any scenes or imaginings the Ravel concerto might bring to mind for you are yours alone. Ravel is setting out to delight performers and listeners with brilliance rather than profound, dramatic effects, and whichever way you look at it, it's fantastic.



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ABOUT THE MUSIC

César Franck

***Le Chasseur maudit* (The Accursed Huntsman) – Symphonic poem after a ballad of Bürger**

If we find it hard to be stirred by the story Franck outlined in the preface to this symphonic poem, that's because the time of its Romanticism has past, and some of its most thrilling things have lost their power to make us shiver, so that only the stage-trappings remain.

The ballad by Gottfried August Bürger which Franck summarised as his inspiration, *Der wilde Jäger* (1778), concerns a Count from the Rhineland, who, forgetful of his religious duty, goes hunting on a Sunday morning. He defies the pious churchgoers who try to restrain him. In the middle of the forest, he suddenly finds himself alone, his horse refuses to go further. He blows into his horn, but now it will not sound. An other-worldly voice curses him 'Sacrilegious man', it cries, 'be forever hunted by the evil one!' Then flames surround him on every side. To escape, he begins his endless wild ride, pursued by demons, 'by day across the abysses, by night through the air.'

Bürger's poem was one of the most influential of the ballads in which he breathed new life into the genre: it draws on folk elements, and heightens the eerie, ghostly atmosphere. This implied rejection of the rationalism of the Enlightenment appealed to the generation of the 'Storm and Stress' of the 1770s, and later to the Romantics. But why did it appeal to César Franck? On the face of it, his whole artistic imagination was drawn to more spiritualised subjects, and his sense of drama was musical rather than pictorial.

Yet *Le Chasseur maudit* brought Franck the first, and just about the only, unqualified public success of his career. Its premiere, conducted by the composer at a concert of the Société Nationale on 31 March 1883, was greeted by a long ovation. It is quite amusing to notice how Franck's worshipful disciples, notably Vincent d'Indy, seem almost embarrassed by this success. A respectable composer, and especially their revered 'Father', even if he couldn't avoid dabbling in the Lisztian tone poem, should have chosen a loftier subject, and avoided following a literary program so closely. Or so his admirers spun his posthumous legend. It may in fact have been d'Indy himself, more likely Henri Duparc, who drew Franck's attention to Bürger in the first place. Duparc had composed his *Lenore* (1875) on Bürger's most famous ballad, about a young woman who, when her

Keynotes

FRANCK

Born Liège, 1822

Died Paris, 1890

César Franck was of Flemish birth and partly German ancestry, but Paris was his home. (He became a naturalised Frenchman in 1837 in order to enrol in the Paris Conservatoire.) His musical career began as a touring virtuoso organist and from his mid-20s he held various church organ posts. In 1871 he was appointed professor of organ at the Conservatoire, for which he acquired French citizenship. Franck's musical style reflects the complexity of his background and influences: not wholly French but frequently Germanic in his approach to harmony and structure. His most often performed orchestral work is the *Symphony in D minor* (1886–88).

THE ACCURSED HUNTSMAN

Among Franck's works, *The Accursed Huntsman* (1883) is uncharacteristically descriptive and literal in its treatment of the narrative. Its inspiration was a sensational 18th-century ballad, which gave full scope for imaginative, and equally sensational, musical representation.

It begins with horns (the sound of the hunt) and bells (the sound of worship), and ends in a hysterical ride-without-end, the orchestra playing like demons. Along the way the huntsman's horn fails to sound (listen for the wheezy, choked sounds from the horns) and the tuba intones a remorseless curse.



César Franck at the organ

lover failed to return from the war, blasphemed against heaven. Her punishment was to be carried away by her lover on a wild midnight ride, during which he turned into a ghostly skeleton, leaping with Lenore and his steed into an open grave. Franck was probably tempted to rivalry with the tone poems of his younger friends and pupils, especially as his own subtle *Les Eolides* (1877) had been coolly received at a recent Lamoureux concert.

Franck's biographer Jean Gallois suggests there was a deeper reason for Franck's attraction to Bürger's ballad. Noting the obvious, highly-strung Romanticism of the music, he suspects the disquiet of a soul haunted by passion and struggling with itself. It is well known that Franck's Piano Quintet of 1878–79 betrays, in its often unbridled emotionality, the susceptibility of the devout and upright Franck to the talent and other attractions of his youthful pupil, the pianist and composer Augusta Holmès – a suspicion aroused in Mme Franck by the dedication of the Quintet, which seemed confirmed by its music. The tone poem, Gallois thinks, is an after-effect of the crisis revealed by the Quintet. It is noteworthy that whereas Bürger's title *Der wilde Jäger* puts the accent on the Count's wildness, and Sir Walter Scott called his English version *The Chase*, Franck's title emphasises the curse, and the Count's flouting of his religious duty. Did Franck partly identify, guiltily, with the hero of the poem? At any rate, as Gallois observes,

Did Franck partly identify with the hero of the poem?



A 19th-century illustration for Gottfried August Bürger's ballad *Der wilde Jäger*. (Etching by Anton Gareis after Joseph Führich, 1827).

A giant black fist thrusts from the earth and clutches at the huntsman's neck.

The Accursed Huntsman gives the lie to those who want to see in Franck only a man fixed in his meditations or lost in a seraphic complacency.

The Ride!

'Sunday morning'. The hunting horns sound their call, and the cellos, in response, amidst church bells, intone a religious melody. 'What desecration!: the wild count of the Rhine winds his hunting horn...' The second of the four parts into which the symphonic poem falls depicts the chase, the music now in an ominous G minor. Complaints of peasants are heard 'Stop Count, I beg you, Take care – No!', but the chase goes hurtling on its way through them, like a whirlwind. All of a sudden, the Count is alone. Tremolos suggest the shudder of the Count's encounter with the implacable voice. His anxious waiting, his vain attempt to sound his horn, are vividly depicted. The curse is stated, growing in menace, amidst fitful and futile attempts to revive the chase. The flames begin to flicker in truly Wagnerian tones. and as the wild chase begins in earnest, the curse is underlined by the tuba. The ending pans away in truly cinematic fashion – it ends, as even eternal curses must if music is to have its effect, which this did.

DAVID GARRETT ©2006

The Accursed Huntsman calls for two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets and four bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion; and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed *The Accursed Huntsman* in 1940 with conductor Percy Code, and most recently in 1980 with Niklaus Wyss.

Maurice Ravel

Piano Concerto in G

Allegramente

Adagio assai

Presto

Louis Lortie piano

Ravel's Piano Concerto in G begins with the crack of a whip, startling the piccolo into action. The scene seems set for a race – or is it a circus? But there is no question as to the spirit of this concerto. Before a minute has passed, each of its chief characteristics has made a fleeting appearance: joyous brilliance, melancholy lyricism, lively virtuosity, classical economy, evanescent orchestral colour, a hint of American jazz and a trace of Ravel's native Basque country.

Ravel gave many interviews about this concerto, including a famous one with London's *Daily Telegraph*. At times his statements seem contradictory, but several points are made again and again. His wish was to write a 'genuine concerto' – a brilliant work, highlighting the virtuosity of the soloist without claiming to be profound or aiming at dramatic effects.

Ravel was, in part, reacting to the kind of *symphonic* concerto 'conceived not for but against the piano' (here he mentions Brahms). He was also tired of combative concertos in which the piano is pitted against the orchestra, concertos in which there must be a victor and vanquished, or at least bloodshed, for the audience to be satisfied. Instead he took as his musical guides Mozart and Saint-Saëns.

Mozart is present not only in the collaborative relationship between the soloist and orchestra, but in Ravel's use of the classically proportioned ensemble, placing the woodwinds in high relief, often with music as virtuosic as the soloist's. Saint-Saëns emerges in Ravel's neoclassical forms and in the way the musical materials seem calculated to delight.

Also in the spirit of Mozart, Ravel had intended the concerto for his own use, the vehicle for an ambitious world tour. Unlike Mozart, Ravel was no keyboard virtuoso and he wore himself out trying to build the necessary technique (he was in his fifties). But he had also, quite early on, approached pianist Marguerite Long at a dinner party telling her, point blank, that he was writing a concerto for her. In the end it was Long who gave the premiere (14 January 1932, Paris) and subsequently toured the concerto through Europe, Ravel conducting.

Keynotes

RAVEL

Born Ciboure, 1875

Died Paris 1937

Ravel was born to Swiss and Basque parents in a French village near Spain. He was the best-dressed of all the French composers of his day, and he delighted in collecting mechanical toys and exotic ornaments for his home. ('This room,' he would say to his guests, 'is all fake Japanese!') His music shows a corresponding enthusiasm for jewel-like surface detail, delicacy of expression and exotic effect. As a boy he showed talent as a pianist, although his father had to bribe him to practise and it was as a composer that he made his greatest contribution.

PIANO CONCERTO IN G

The Piano Concerto in G was completed in 1931. Even though Ravel was out of practice, he'd intended to play it himself. That didn't happen, but he did achieve his other goal – to write a concerto that would be brilliant rather than profound. Many musical influences race by in this concerto, from folk colours and hints of jazz, to the classical traditions of the past. The slow movement, which begins with a long, serene passage for the soloist alone, was closely modelled on a piece by Mozart. The outer movements are exhilarating, and Ravel allows everyone a moment in the spotlight, giving the winds, especially, important solos to play.



Ravel at the piano

Two sources are claimed for the frolicsome beginning of the **first movement**. A Basque-country friend recognised in it an idea from a long-abandoned 'Basque rhapsody'. Ravel maintained that the theme came to him in 1928 'on a train between Oxford and London'. Nonetheless, this theme, played first by the piccolo and then by the trumpet, does have the character of an old French folk dance.

In rapid succession Ravel introduces four more themes: the cor anglais strolls across the border into languid Spanish strumming from the piano, and the clarinet introduces the first of a series of jazz-inspired gestures. The development of this thematic material is capricious and buoyant, with vivid contrasts. Ravel may not have been much of a pianist and little better as a conductor, but he was a virtuoso of the orchestra. The distinctive qualities of high bassoon, muted trumpet, the plaintive cor anglais, and subtle effects from the percussion – in this concert the orchestra is featured as much as the piano. Indeed, the harp takes the first cadenza and the soloist must wait still further for the woodwinds to demonstrate their brilliance before the piano's own cadenza. When this arrives there is no trace of thundering chords or dramatic effects. This is discreet virtuosity – fiendishly difficult, not least because of its subtlety.

Ravel was a virtuoso of the orchestra.

Ravel had promised Marguerite Long that the concerto he was writing for her would end *pianissimo* and with trills. When she received the score, just two months before the scheduled premiere, she immediately turned to the last page to look for the *pianissimo* and the trills: 'they had become a *fortissimo* and percussive ninths!' But Ravel was true to his word, after a fashion.

The slow **second movement** begins with piano alone, with one of the most expressive and finely crafted melodies Ravel ever wrote. As Long observed, it 'flows so easily'; there's no evidence of the painstaking effort that went into sculpting this perfectly poised music, modelled, we are told, directly on the slow movement of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet. 'How I worked over it bar by bar!' claimed Ravel. 'It nearly killed me!'

Although the music is in a major key (E), the mood is coolly wistful and melancholy. The designated tempo is hypnotically slow (Ravel and Long took it faster in their performances) but Ravel creates a feeling of impulse by superimposing a stately sarabande rhythm in the right hand above a slow waltz in the left. Once the orchestra enters, the mournful tones of the cor anglais take pride of place in a tenderly poetic dialogue that leads to the promised *pianissimo* trills, at the close of the *second* movement.

The **third movement** – a whirlwind *presto* barely four minutes long – is launched with a drum roll and a fanfare. We are back in the world of races and circuses – the world of Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and Satie's *Parade*. It's also the world of Gershwin's syncopation and Prokofiev's perpetual motion. The music plays out a game, says Long, in which two themes are pursued between soloist and orchestra. The *Presto* is more overtly jazzy than the first movement, with piercing clarinet flourishes, sliding trombones and a boisterous atmosphere. Through all this the nimble piano darts and weaves until the dazzling movement is brought to a sudden and abrupt end, exactly as it began.

YVONNE FRINDLE ©2000/2009

The orchestra for Ravel's Piano Concerto in G calls for flute, piccolo, oboe, cor anglais, clarinet, E flat clarinet and two bassoons; two horns, trumpet and trombone; timpani and percussion, harp and strings.

The Sydney Symphony gave the first performance of this concerto by an ABC orchestra with pianist Peter Cooper and conductor Joseph Post in 1953, and our most recent performance was in 2005 with Gianluigi Gelmetti and pianist François-Joel Thiollier. Last year the London Philharmonic Orchestra played the concerto in Sydney with Vladimir Jurowski and soloist Jean-Yves Thibaudet.



PHOTO: LEBRECHT MUSIC & ARTS

Pianist Marguerite Long gave the premiere of Ravel's Piano Concerto in G



Photograph Credit: Ben Symons

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Hector Berlioz

Symphonie fantastique, Op.14

Daydreams (Largo) – Passions

(Allegro agitato e appassionato assai)

A Ball (Valse Allegro non troppo)

In the Fields (Adagio)

March to the Scaffold (Allegretto non troppo)

Sabbath Night Dream (Larghetto – Allegro – Dies irae –

Sabbath Round (Un peu retenu) – Dies irae and

Sabbath Round together)

The first performance of the *Symphonie fantastique* on 5 December 1830 marked a turning point in Berlioz's career. It was through this work that he first became known; his extensive influence on 19th-century composers dates from it. For those in the audience it was also a significant event, which opened a new era in music. For despite its apparent obeisance to classical procedures, this music sounded like no music ever heard before.

The actual music of the *Symphonie fantastique* is surrounded by a thick hedge of literary and biographical associations. Berlioz himself is largely responsible for this. Firstly there is the tale of Harriet Smithson, a hapless English actress whose portrayal of Ophelia had captured Berlioz's imagination. In 1830 he wrote to a friend that the *Symphonie* was to depict the development of his 'infernal passion' for Miss Smithson. 20 years and two disastrous marriages later, he wrote in his *Memoirs* that the work had been written under the influence of Goethe's *Faust*. But the early association stuck well. If there is one thing everyone knows about Berlioz and the *Symphonie fantastique*, it is the sad tale of his relationship with Harriet Smithson!

A more imposing literary obstacle is the elaborate program which Berlioz himself devised, and which he originally directed should accompany the *Symphonie* whenever it was played. The program bristles with literary allusions: to Chateaubriand, to Shakespeare, Goethe, Hoffmann, De Quincey. In brief, it deals with a young musician, in the toils of a desperate passion for a woman who embodies his romantic ideal. The vagaries of feeling occasioned by his passion are the subject of the first movement. In the following movements we see him in various situations: at a ball, in the midst of nature in the country, in the grip of an opium dream witnessing his own execution, and partaking in a Witches' Sabbath, where his beloved appears transformed into a demon's harlot.

Keynotes

BERLIOZ

Born La Côte-Saint-André, 1803

Died Paris, 1869

Berlioz set off for Paris when he was 18, ostensibly to study medicine (his father's preference) but in reality following a musical path that would result in him becoming the 'arch-Romantic' composer of his age. Despite the fact that his main instrument was the guitar (he also played piano and flute, but badly), he became a master in the innovative use of the orchestra (he literally wrote the book) as well as a conductor.

FANTASTIC SYMPHONY

This symphony was premiered in 1830 as 'An Episode in the Life of an Artist' and its five movements are structured around a synopsis or 'program' that traces the increasingly feverish opium dream of a young Romantic artist. The final form of Berlioz's program can be found on page 18 but, as he said himself, the titles should be enough to guide you through this vividly imagined music. Berlioz didn't invent program music – but he made an important contribution through his use of an *idée fixe* or 'fixed idea', a theme (representing the Artist's Beloved) that keeps returning in increasingly frantic guises.

The program is of considerable interest in itself as an index of artistic preoccupations at that time: the discovery of the unconscious (the opium dream), the interest in the demoniac, the fascination with the monstrous and bizarre – the ‘fantastic’ of the work’s title. In actual fact, the label ‘fantastic’ only applies directly to the last two movements, and it is worth noticing that trombones and tubas are silent until these last two movements, where their entry reinforces the change of atmosphere.

Despite its inherent literary interest, much debate has centred on the relevance of the program to the actual music of the *Symphonie*. There is no doubt that Berlioz captured the contemporary imagination very well with it, and, more practically, that it helped the audience to accept more readily the strangeness of the music in those early performances. But is the program anything more than a ‘promotional aid’? Does it add to, or distract from, our appreciation of the music of the *Symphonie*?

Berlioz revised the program no less than four times, modifying it quite significantly in the process. He also modified his view of its usefulness, finally directing that, whenever the *Symphonie* is played alone, without its stage sequel *Lélio*, the program was not to be distributed. However, as in *Harold in Italy*, the titles of the movements must be retained. The composer sensed rightly that the music was coherent and comprehensible in its own terms, and did not need any added literary explanation.

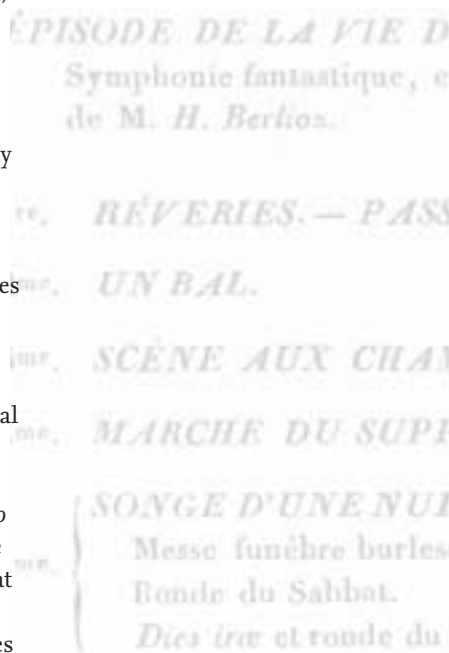
The true originality of the *Symphonie fantastique* lies in the music itself. The many novelties of its melody, harmony and orchestration strike our ears even today. Most significantly, however, the work embodies an entirely new conception of dramatic instrumental music. In formulating this new dramatic ideal, Berlioz drew equally on the examples of Beethoven and Shakespeare – seen in the light of his own beliefs about the expressive capabilities of instrumental music. In realising the new dramatic ideal in his music, Berlioz significantly modified classical symphonic practices in several respects: the number and grouping of the movements, the character of the individual movements and the treatment of the main theme.

The ‘hero’ of Berlioz’s symphonic drama is not the musician of the program, but the first theme of the *Allegro* (*Passions*) section of the **first movement**. This theme is the subject and source of action in the whole work. Notice that it reappears – like an actor in a play, but unlike the theme of a Classical symphony – in each of the subsequent scenes



Berlioz in the 1830s – the drawing is thought to be by Ingres

The program of the *Symphonie fantastique* is linked to Berlioz’s own experience – yet not one of the events described in it had actually occurred in his own life.



of the drama. Berlioz uses solo instruments to complete the identity of the theme, to ‘characterise’ it. After the first movement, it appears most often on solo clarinet, though flute and oboe are also used in the Waltz and particularly in the pastoral third movement.

Development of the theme is projected into five specific ‘situations’ – another unusual feature, and one which again has more in common with drama than with classical symphonic practice. Time and place are suggested by the movement titles. But the situations are evoked by the music itself, in the introduction that precedes each movement.

The movements are grouped symmetrically on either side of the central movement, the **Scene in the Fields**. The drama develops in an arc. It rises to its point of crisis with the appearance of the *allegro* theme in the *Adagio* third movement, **In the Fields**. From there it descends to the catastrophe in the last movement, the **Dream of the Witches’ Sabbath**, where the original identity of the *allegro* theme is destroyed by the forces of parody that are so potent in this movement. The most important dramatic events occur in the first, third and fifth movements. The other two movements, **A Ball** and **March to the Scaffold**, complement each other as episodes, or interludes, between the main movements.

Berlioz continued to develop his dramatic symphonic ideal in *Harold in Italy* – with its solo viola ‘hero’ – and in *Roméo et Juliette*, where symphonic form is further enlarged to embrace a play by Shakespeare. But perhaps he never again succeeded as perfectly as he does here in the *Symphonie fantastique*.

© KAY DREYFUS

The *Symphonie fantastique* calls for two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes (one doubling cor anglais), two clarinets (one doubling E flat clarinet) and four bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones and two tubas (or ophicleides), two timpani and a large percussion section that includes church bells; two harps and strings.

The Sydney Symphony gave the first performance of the *Symphonie fantastique* by an ABC orchestra in 1938, conducted by Malcolm Sargent. The orchestra’s most recent performance of the work was in the 2007 Master Series, conducted by Tugan Sokhiev.



Harriet Smithson as Ophelia

AN EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF

The fantastic Symphony

EXPLANATORY

The following program must be distributed among the audience whenever the Fantastic Symphony is played dramatically and it is followed by the lyric monodrama [*Lélio*], which latter supplements and closes the episode in the life of an artist. When such a performance is given, the orchestra must be invisible and placed on the stage of a theatre behind the lowered curtain.

When the Symphony is given by itself in concerts these directions are superfluous and, strictly speaking, the distribution of this program may be dispensed with. In such cases it is only necessary to retain the titles of the five movements. The composer indulges himself with the hope that the symphony will, on its own merits and irrespective of any dramatic aim, offer an interest in the musical sense alone.



PROGRAM of the Symphony

A young musician of unhealthily sensitive nature and endowed with vivid imagination has poisoned himself with opium in a paroxysm of love-sick despair. The narcotic dose he had taken was too weak to cause death but it has thrown him into a long sleep accompanied by the most extraordinary visions. In this condition his sensations, his feeling and memories find utterance in his sick brain in the form of musical imagery. Even the beloved one takes the form of melody in his mind, like a fixed idea [*idée fixe*] which is ever returning and which he hears everywhere.

1st Movement

Visions and passions

At first he thinks of the uneasy and nervous condition of his mind, of sombre longings, of depression and joyous elation without any recognisable cause, which he experienced before the beloved one had appeared to him. Then he remembers the ardent love with which she suddenly inspired him, he thinks of his almost insane anxiety of mind, of his raging jealousy, of his awakening love, of his religious consolation.

ISODE OF AN ARTIST

and the lyric Monodrama

2nd Movement

A ball

In a ballroom, amidst the confusion of a brilliant festival, he finds the loved one again.

3rd Movement

In the country

It is a summer evening. He is in the country musing when he hears two shepherd-lads who play the *ranz des vaches* (the tune used by the Swiss to call their flocks together) in alternation. This shepherd-duet, the locality, the soft whisperings of the trees stirred by the zephyr-wind some prospects of hope recently made known to him, all these sensations unite to impart a long unknown repose to his heart and to lend a smiling colour to his imagination. And then she appears once more. His heart stops beating, painful forebodings fill his soul. 'Should she prove false to him?' One of the shepherds resumes the melody, but the other answer him no more...Sunset...distant rolling of thunder...loneliness...silence.

4th Movement

The procession to the stake

He dreams that he had murdered his beloved, that he has been condemned

to death and is being led to the stake. A march that is alternately sombre and wild, brilliant and solemn, accompanies the procession... The tumultuous outbursts are followed without modulation by measured steps. At last the fixed idea returns, for a moment a last thought of love is revived – which is cut short by the death-blow.

5th Movement

The witches' Sabbath

He dreams that he is present at a witches' dance, surrounded by horrible spirits, amidst sorcerers and monsters in many fearful forms, who have come to assist at his funeral. Strange sounds, groans, shrill laughter, distant yells, which other cries seem to answer. The beloved melody is heard again but it has its noble and shy character no longer, it has become a vulgar, trivial and grotesque kind of dance. She it is who comes to attend the witches' meeting. Friendly howls and shouts greet her arrival...She joins the infernal orgy...bells toll for the dead...a burlesque parody of the 'Dies irae'...the witches' round-dance...the dance and the 'Dies irae' are heard at the same time.

A tribute to Ralph Lane OAM

ABC Classic FM Senior Music Producer (NSW)

Listeners to ABC Classic FM often hear the Sydney Symphony's concerts in broadcasts from the Sydney Opera House. One of the producers who has contributed to turning so many homes into concert halls has been Ralph Lane, who retires this year and whose last orchestral recordings for the ABC are taking place at this week's concerts.

Ralph Lane started with the ABC on 16 October 1978. With 30 years of recording the Sydney Symphony in concert and for disc, it's difficult to pick just one highlight, but he recalls the 1994 Sydney Town Hall performance of Olivier Messiaen's *Eclairs sur l'au delà* – the Australian premiere – which was broadcast live and for which he also produced the interval feature. As an organist, Ralph is a great fan of Messiaen and 'a Francophile to boot',



PHOTO: ILIA USUNOSKI

so it's especially appropriate (and no coincidence) that his final bow in the recording booth is for an all-French program.

Listeners, musicians and colleagues in broadcasting have enormous respect and gratitude for Ralph's contributions to our musical life. We wish him all the best for a happy retirement!

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Selected Discography

PINCHAS STEINBERG

Among Pinchas Steinberg's recent recordings is a disc of French song, with Berlioz's *Les Nuits*, Ravel's *Shéhérazade* and Chausson's *Poème de l'amour et de la mer*. Vesselina Kasarova is the soprano and Steinberg conducts the Austrian Radio Symphony Orchestra.

RCA 805319

LOUIS LORTIE PLAYS RAVEL

Louis Lortie has recorded both the Ravel piano concertos, together with Fauré's *Ballade for piano and orchestra*. The London Symphony Orchestra is conducted by Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos.

CHANDOS 8773

More recently, in 2004, he released a 2-CD set of Ravel's complete solo piano music.

CHANDOS 10142

FRANCK

To hear more of Franck's orchestral music try Charles Munch and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, playing the *Symphony in D minor* and *Le chasseur maudit*. On the same disc, Leonard Pennario is the piano soloist in the *Symphonic Variations*, with Arthur Fiedler conducting.

RCA VICTOR RED SEAL 65833

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE

For a performance that combines 'passion, spontaneity and incredible ensemble clarity' try Roger Norrington's 2003 live recording with the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra. The overture *Les francs-juges* fills out the disc.

HÄNSSLER CLASSIC 93103

Charles Munch's 1954 recording with the Boston Symphony Orchestra continues to hold its own. In the recent SACD-hybrid release it's combined with the *Love Scene* from *Roméo et Juliette*.

RCA VICTOR LIVING STEREO 67899

To explore the symphony and Berlioz's world in multimedia depth, visit the San Francisco Symphony's acclaimed *Keeping Score* site for background information, musical scores, discussion of Berlioz's creative technique and a video documentary featuring Michael Tilson Thomas.

www.keeping_score.org

And if you're curious about the sequel to the *Symphonie fantastique*, the monodrama *Lélio (or the return to life)*, then seek out the recording by Thomas Dausgaard and the Danish National Orchestra and Chorus. The disc also includes Berlioz's *Roman Carnival Overture* and *Hélène*, for voices and orchestra.

CHANDOS 10416

Broadcast Diary



FEBRUARY–MARCH

17 March, 6.30pm

THE HALL OF HEROES

Alexander Briger conductor
François-Frédéric Guy piano

Ledger, Beethoven, Wagner

3 April, 9.15pm

TWO SYMPHONIES AND A FUNERAL (2009)

Michael Dauth violin-director
Clemens Leske piano

JC Bach, Mozart, Haydn

5 April, 8pm

ORGAN SPLENDOUR (2009)

David Drury organ

Solo organ works: Bach, Jongen, Dupre, Widor

6 April, 1.05pm

RAVEL'S BOLERO (2008)

Gianluigi Gelmetti conductor

2MBS-FM 102.5

SYDNEY SYMPHONY 2010

13 April, 6pm

What's on in concerts, with interviews and music.

Webcast Diary



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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Pinchas Steinberg conductor

Pinchas Steinberg has distinguished himself for many years as a regular guest of the leading opera houses and concert halls throughout Europe, and more recently, in the United States, making his debut with the Cleveland Orchestra in 2001 and now returning there regularly. He is also a regular guest conductor of the Dallas Symphony.

Born in Israel, he studied violin under Joseph Gingold and Jascha Heifetz. In 1974 he made his conducting debut with the RIAS Symphony Orchestra in Berlin. Since then he has conducted orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, the London Symphony, the London Philharmonia, Israel Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Orchestra National de France, Santa Cecilia Orchestra Roma, Czech Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, and the Orchestra de Paris. He also appears regularly for the Budapest Festival Orchestra, and has conducted at the Salzburg, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Verona, Orange and Flanders festivals.

From 1988 to 1993 he was the Permanent Guest Conductor at the Vienna State Opera. He was also Chief Conductor of the Radio Symphony Orchestra in Vienna (1989–1996) and Music Director of the Orchestra de la Suisse Romande in Geneva (2002–2005).

His recordings include Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer*, Catalani's *La Wally*, Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*, and Richard Strauss's *Die schweigsame Frau*, and his RCA recording of Massenet's *Chérubin* was awarded the Grand Prix du Disque, the Diapason d'Or, the German Critics Prize and the Caecilia Prize Bruxelles.

Recent concert engagements have included performances in Italy, the Czech Republic and Spain, and return visits to the Cleveland Orchestra. Earlier this year he made his debut at La Scala conducting performances of Schumann's *Scenes from Faust* with the Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala. He will return to the Opera Bastille in Paris to open the 2011–12 opera season with Strauss's *Salome*.

Pinchas Steinberg's most recent appearance with the Sydney Symphony was in the 1993 Master Series, when his program included Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*.



Louis Lortie piano

Canadian pianist Louis Lortie studied in Montreal with Yvonne Hubert (a pupil of Alfred Cortot), in Vienna with the Beethoven specialist Dieter Weber, and subsequently with Leon Fleisher, among others. He made his debut with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra at 13 and with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra three years later. In 1984 he won First Prize in the Busoni Competition and was a prize-winner at the Leeds Competition.

Although Sydney audiences will recognise him as an interpreter of Ravel, in particular, he is also known for his interpretations of Beethoven, having performed the complete sonatas in London, Toronto, Berlin and Milan, and the complete piano concertos with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra.

Engagement highlights include the San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Cleveland Orchestra, and in Europe the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Warsaw Philharmonic, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Dresden Philharmonic, a tour of Spain with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Ulster Orchestra, Beethoven Bonn Orchestra, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. Among his collaborations, he works extensively with Kurt Masur; he also frequently directs performances from the piano.

As a recitalist his appearances include the Vienna Konzerthaus, the International Piano Series and the International Chamber Music Season at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, Aldeburgh Festival, Milan *Serate Musicali*, 14th Beethoven Festival, Festival Pianistico Internazionale Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli di Brescia e Bergamo, Valencia and Bilbao.

He has made more than 30 recordings, ranging from Mozart to Stravinsky, and his many accolades include the Edison Award, for his recording of Beethoven's *Eroica* Variations. In 1992 he was named Officer of the Order of Canada, and received both the Order of Quebec and an honorary doctorate from Laval University.

Louis Lortie's most recent Sydney visit was in 2005, when he played Schumann, an all-Chopin recital and a program in the Mozart in the City series. His most recent appearance in the Master Series was in 2001, when he played the Ravel Piano Concerto in G.



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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.)

To see photographs of the full roster of permanent musicians and find out more about the orchestra, visit our website: www.sydneysymphony.com/SSO_musician If you don't have access to the internet, ask a Sydney Symphony customer service representative for a copy of our Musicians flyer.

THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

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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 world-wide 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, Zdenek 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 and Elgar orchestral works on the Exton label, 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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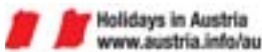
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