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Vladimir Ashkenazy  
Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor

2010 SEASON

# LOVERS AND ENIGMAS

FRI 13 AUGUST 11AM



TEA & SYMPHONY  
PRESENTED BY:



# WELCOME TO TEA & SYMPHONY



It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this concert in the 2010 Tea & Symphony series.

This year Vladimir Ashkenazy conducts two concerts in the series. In December he'll return to conduct an all-Tchaikovsky program; for this concert he gives us a sneak preview of some of the great music the Sydney Symphony will be taking on tour to Europe this month.

One of the highlights of that tour will be a concert in the Lucerne Festival – where Sibelius's *Rakastava* will be on the program – and we're excited to be able to welcome these fine Australian musicians to Switzerland, the home of Kambly.

Kambly has epitomised the Swiss tradition of the finest biscuits for three generations. Each masterpiece from the Emmental Valley is a small thank you for life; a declaration of love for the very best; the peak of fine, elegant taste.

Kambly is a way of life, dedicated to all those who appreciate the difference between the best and the merely good. In this way it is fitting that we partner with the internationally acclaimed Sydney Symphony, whose vision is to ignite and deepen people's love of live symphonic music.

We hope you enjoy this morning's program with the Sydney Symphony, and look forward to welcoming you to future concerts in the Tea & Symphony series in 2010.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read 'Oscar Kambly'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Oscar A. Kambly  
Chairman  
Kambly of Switzerland

**2010 SEASON**  
**TEA & SYMPHONY**  
**PRESENTED BY KAMBLY**

**Friday 13 August | 11am**  
**Sydney Opera House Concert Hall**

## **LOVERS AND ENIGMAS**

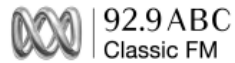
**Vladimir Ashkenazy** conductor

**RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)**  
***Der Rosenkavalier: Suite from the opera, Op.59***

**JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957)**  
***Rakastava (The Lover), Op.14***

*The Lover*  
*The Path of His Beloved*  
*Good Evening!...Farewell!!*

**EDWARD ELGAR (1857–1934)**  
**Variations on an original theme, Op. 36 (Enigma)**



This concert will be recorded for  
later broadcast on ABC Classic FM.

Estimated durations:  
22 minutes, 11 minutes, 29 minutes

The concert will conclude at  
approximately 12.10pm.

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# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## R STRAUSS *Der Rosenkavalier: Suite*

Premiered on 26 January 1911, *Der Rosenkavalier* was the fifth of Richard Strauss' operas, the second written in collaboration with librettist, Hugo von Hofmannsthal. The title (The Knight of the Rose) derives from a scene in the second act, a captivating piece of stage business invented by Hofmannsthal purporting to be an 18th-century Viennese custom whereby a knighted emissary presents a silver rose to a woman on behalf of her suitor. Such a custom never existed, but that is one of the delights of any Hofmannsthal libretto: the convincing mixture of fact and fantasy.

When it first appeared, *Der Rosenkavalier* was seen by many critics as a retreat from the daring tonal modernism of Strauss's two immediately previous stage works – *Salome* and *Elektra*. Strauss had wanted to write a 'Mozartian opera' after the excesses of *Elektra*, but *Der Rosenkavalier* has a sumptuousness which exceeds classicism. Its plot possesses some similarities with *The Marriage of Figaro*, but this 'comedy for music' is elevated by character portraiture that has rarely been surpassed in opera. It remains Strauss' most popular, indeed best-loved, work.

*Der Rosenkavalier*, set in Vienna in 1740, tells how the 17-year-old Octavian outwits the bullish Baron Ochs auf Lerchenau in his quest for the hand of the young convent girl, Sophie, daughter of the nouveau-riche Herr von Faninal. It is a story of the magic of love at first sight; of nostalgia, self-sacrifice and the passing of time. Octavian, the 'Knight', first lays eyes on Sophie during the presentation of the Rose. Strauss's orchestra wonderfully expresses the slow-motion intoxication of the moment. But Octavian must first be given up by his older lover, the Feldmarschallin, who has known all along that one day he would fall for someone his own age, and whose proud surrender is the background for the glorious Trio which climaxes the opera.

Strauss's score is Mozartian in the level of musical beauty which is maintained no matter what the situation, even in scenes of raw burlesque such as Ochs' lecherous adventures with a group of 'orphans' claiming to be his children. The use of 'Viennese waltzes' throughout, though anachronistic (such waltzes belong to the century



**RICHARD STRAUSS**  
German composer (1864–1949)

© LEONHARD FANTO

after the action takes place!), are of such a quality that Richard Strauss could almost challenge his unrelated namesake for the title of 'Waltz King'.

Such was the popularity of *Der Rosenkavalier* that, in the 1920s, Strauss agreed to rework his score as accompaniment for a silent film. Strauss also made his own arrangements of two waltz sequences in 1934 and 1944. Finally, in 1945, Strauss sanctioned the making of this suite version by an unknown hand.

## Listening Guide

The suite presents without pause some of the best-known passages of the opera. It opens, as does the opera, with music depicting the bedroom antics of Octavian and the Marschallin, the swirling strings depicting the couple rolling around in the sheets, and the virile whooping of the horns. The suite segues into the 'Presentation of the Rose' music, and eventually to one of the few really modern touches, the sugar ice harmonies played by flutes, harp, celesta and solo violins (heard again toward the end of the opera, they give intimations of mortality).

A short transition brings us to Ochs' all-too-creamy waltz, and then to the Trio music from the end of the opera. With Octavian sung by a woman, this Trio provides one of the most ravishing intertwinings of female voices in the opera house. However, even without the singers, we are still entranced by Strauss' seamless, ever-enriching melody.

The suite is then rounded off with music from Ochs' humiliation in Act III and a recall of the vaunting leaps of the opening horn motive. It's called 'the knight of the rose' after all.

GORDON KALTON WILLIAMS  
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The Sydney Symphony first programmed a sung extract from *Der Rosenkavalier*, with soloist Lotte Lehmann, in May 1937, and the *Rosenkavalier* Suite under Eugene Goossens on 14 August 1947, only two years after it was sanctioned by Strauss. Our most recent performance of this suite was in a Mahler Odyssey concert in May, conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy.

Strauss' score is Mozartian in the musical beauty maintained no matter what the situation, even in scenes of raw burlesque such as Ochs' lecherous adventures with a group of 'orphans'. The use of 'Viennese waltzes' throughout, though anachronistic, is of such a quality that Richard Strauss could almost challenge his unrelated namesake for the title of 'Waltz King'.

## SIBELIUS *Rakastava (The Lover)*, Op.14

They say no one ever remembers the runners up, only the champions – that might be true in sport, but in music posterity often takes a different view. Sibelius's *Rakastava* was originally composed as a short, unaccompanied choral work and entered in a competition organised by the YL Male Voice Choir of Helsinki University in 1893. It came second. Nowadays, and especially in its later form, dramatically revised for chamber orchestra in 1912, it's regarded as a minor masterpiece – fresh, unique and lovely.

*Rakastava* (The Lover) takes its inspiration from the *Kanteletar*, a collection of nearly 700 poems and ballads originating from the ancient Finnish oral tradition. First compiled in 1840 by Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884), these sagas, some of which are more than a thousand years old, tell of the joys and sorrows of everyday ancient Finnish life. Coupled with Lönnrot's latter compendium, (the *Kalevala*, completed in 1849), this collection provides a unique insight into the religious, cultural and philosophical beliefs important to early Finnish society.

As with many Finns of his generation, Sibelius spoke Swedish as his first language and it was through the study of the *Kanteletar* that he came to extend his spoken Finnish and understand the depth of his native culture. So it was that many pieces by Sibelius were inspired by the texts from these two archives of Finnish lore and legend.

The text of the original choral version of *Rakastava* fell into three sections: 'Where is my fair one?', 'Here my darling has walked' and an evening song and farewell. The poetry set the mood: yearning optimism, gentle vigour, and a mournful atmosphere to finish. Even though the final chamber orchestra arrangement is a purely instrumental piece, there is no escaping the sense that words are 'there' in the string arrangement.

At the same time, Sibelius expanded on the musical themes of the original in ways that were wholly determined by the sounds and techniques of a string orchestra. As a violinist, he had a formidable understanding of the capabilities of strings, particularly in the use of *divisi* (dividing the string sections into smaller groups, each with their own parts) and *tremolo*



**JEAN SIBELIUS**  
Finnish composer (1865–1957)

(a shimmering effect). This is no longer music that you could sing, even though it has lost none of its lyrical character.

*Rakastava* is filled with a tender longing. The first movement, **The Lover**, is wistful, as the string sonority mixes with passages of energetically fraught *tremolo*. Sibelius makes subtle use of the timpani, in delicate ‘outbursts’ of long, soft drum rolls that appear like disquieting thunder. Originally this piece was a commentary on a lover as he walks through the woods, musing as to where his beloved could be.

In the second movement, **The Path of the Beloved**, an insistent rhythm draws the lover onward as if devoid of his own volition, so powerful is the allure of his lover. There is a feeling of perpetual motion, with rapid notes in the hushed and restless melody and a plucked accompaniment. Sudden switches to the minor key and unexpected dissonances emphasise the urgent nature of the lover’s search. Just before the end of the movement the triangle is given its only notes to play: six bell-like taps.

The third movement, **Good Evening!...Farewell!**, reveals a trace of the original: what would have been the tenor solo in the choral version emerges as poignant solo for violin. The Lover wonders where his beloved is now. The entry of a solo cello with veiled dissonance presages some dark conclusion to his search. The timpani’s sinister drum rolls return for an ominous, faster-moving section in the middle of this melancholy and mysteriously atmospheric music. When the solo cello returns with a slow lament – the upper strings muted and the lower strings richly divided – Sibelius, in dark D minor, closes the tale. We’re left unsure whether the beloved still lives; but we know for certain she will not return.

ADAPTED FROM NOTES BY DAVID VIVIAN RUSSELL,  
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AND YVONNE FRINDLE ©2009

The Sydney Symphony first performed *Rakastava* in 2000 in concerts conducted by John Harding.

## ELGAR Enigma Variations

*'Dedicated to my friends pictured within,' and dated from Malvern, 1899, this work brought Elgar international fame. It consists of an 'Enigma' and fourteen variations. 'The Enigma I will not explain,' said the composer; 'its dark saying must be left unguessed.' Many guesses have been made but no one so far has been able to explain the enigma. Each variation is headed by initials or by a nickname belonging to a friend or to Elgar's wife or himself.*

### Theme

- |      |             |  |
|------|-------------|--|
| I    | (C.A.E.)    | Caroline Alice Elgar, the composer's wife                      |
| II   | (H.D.S.-P)  | Hew David Steuart-Powell, pianist in Elgar's trio              |
| III  | (R.B.T.)    | Richard Baxter Townshend, author                               |
| IV   | (W.M.B.)    | William Meath Baker, nicknamed 'the Squire'                    |
| V    | (R.P.A.)    | Richard Penrose Arnold, son of Matthew Arnold                  |
| VI   | (Ysobel)    | Isabel Fitton, viola player                                    |
| VII  | (Troyte)    | Arthur Troyte Griffith, architect                              |
| VIII | (W.N.)      | Winifred Norbury   |
| IX   | (Nimrod)    | August Johannes Jaeger, reader for the publisher Novello & Co. |
| X    | (Dorabella) | <i>Intermezzo</i> . Dora Penny, later Mrs Richard Powell       |
| XI   | (G.R.S.)    | Dr G.R. Sinclair, organist of Hereford Cathedral               |
| XII  | (B.G.N.)    | Basil G. Nevison, cellist in Elgar's trio                      |
| XIII | (***)       | <i>Romanza</i> . Lady Mary Lygon, later Trefusis               |
| XIV  | (E.D.U.)    | <i>Finale</i> . Elgar himself ('Edu' being his nickname)       |

One evening in October 1898 Elgar, exhausted by a day of teaching, sat down at the piano as he often did and began to fashion the tune later known as 'Enigma'. It is an oddly hesitant theme; in its first and last parts each bar begins with a rest, and the melody is typically angular and full of melancholy which is only partly dispelled by the warm feeling of the middle four bars. It is indeed an enigma that such a gloomy theme should give rise to a succession



**EDWARD ELGAR**  
English composer (1857–1934)

of such brilliant and for the most part cheerful portraits – Elgar’s portrait of himself being the most festive and magnificent of all! The *Enigma* theme seems to represent the composer in a mood of the deepest depression which his friends, coming in one after another, do their utmost to dispel – and succeed in doing so.

Having worked out his theme, Elgar then began to imagine what various acquaintances of his might have done with it ‘if they were asses enough to compose’ (a typical piece of self-deprecation). Jotting down the names, a set of variations took shape, each in some way revealing the personality of a friend. This was a congenial task, and less than four months later the score was completed; the first performance took place in London under Hans Richter on 19 June 1899.

## Listening Guide

The **first variation** leads straight out of the theme, and reveals the gracious personality of the future Lady Elgar.

**No.2** attempts the almost impossible – an orchestral rendering of a light scampering piano scherzo. **No.3** is a caricature of an amiable eccentric, cycling around Oxford on his tricycle. **No.4** is noisy and assertive. **No.5** is a person of two different moods – introspective and distinctly gloomy (string melody), but also given to somewhat inconsequential chattering and laughter (woodwind phrases). **‘Ysobel’** is as elegant and refined as **‘Troyte’** is brusque and argumentative.

**‘W.N.’ (No.8)** lived in a fine half-timbered house, standing in its own spacious garden at the foot of the Malvern Hills. We get a feeling of the glorious expanse of the countryside. Elgar also preserves for us W.N.’s ‘little trilly laugh’, which is heard on the oboe. **‘Nimrod’** is a play on the name of Jaeger (German for ‘hunter’); it is a wise composer who so honours his publisher, and the music is a noble tribute to the man who more than any other was responsible for Elgar’s success.

The **Intermezzo**, ‘Dorabella’, alias Dora Penny, was a very close friend of Elgar, and so she has the central place among the Variations. It was perhaps rather cruel of Elgar to include in this dainty, fluttering and decidedly sentimental portrait Dora’s slight stammer, which is somewhat more noticeable than the soulful viola solo.

As Mrs Richard Powell, ‘Dorabella’ wrote charmingly and informatively of the ‘friends within’ in her *Edward Elgar: Memories of a variation* (1937).

**No. 11 (G.R.S.)** shows Elgar rather more interested in Dr Sinclair’s bulldog than in his organ-playing. Elgar had a great affection for dogs, and on one occasion at least was heard to address his dog at the conclusion of a broadcast talk: ‘Good night, everyone...good night, Marco!’ **No. 12** is self-explanatory. **No. 13, Romanza**, has a quotation from Mendelssohn’s *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*, heard twice on the clarinet and once on the trumpets and trombones – alluding to a voyage taken by the lady referred to as Lady Mary Lygon, later Trefusis.

Lastly, the **Finale** – one could guess the composer was a violinist and a conductor, and also an organist. The *Enigma* theme now rises to its full stature; Elgar does not hesitate to give the music a strong flavour of *Pomp and Circumstance*. A mysterious quiet episode in the middle shows another side of his character, and the rich, sonorous peroration makes a truly Elgarian conclusion.

Altogether, the *Enigma* Variations are remarkably successful as portraits, and they are equally good as pure music. Elgar’s gift for melody-writing of all sorts, his command of the orchestra, and his resourcefulness in devising variations make this a memorable work quite apart from considerations of portraiture.

© DONALD PEART

*Donald Peart (1909–1981) was an English music administrator and from 1947 to 1974 Chair of Music at Sydney University.*

The Sydney Symphony first performed the *Enigma* Variations in 1939 under Malcolm Sargent, and most recently in the 2008 Elgar festival, with Vladimir Ashkenazy conducting.

# ABOUT THE ARTIST

## Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

In the years since Vladimir Ashkenazy first came to prominence on the world stage in the 1955 Chopin Competition in Warsaw he has built an extraordinary career, not only as one of the most renowned and revered pianists of our times, but as an inspiring artist whose creative life encompasses a vast range of activities.

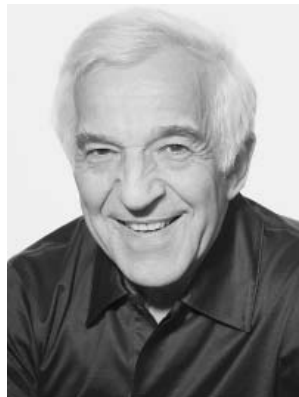
Conducting has formed the largest part of his music-making for the past 20 years. He has been Chief Conductor of the Czech Philharmonic (1998–2003), and Music Director of the NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo (2004–2007). Since 2009 he has held the position of Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Sydney Symphony.

Alongside these roles, Vladimir Ashkenazy is also Conductor Laureate of the Philharmonia Orchestra, with whom he has developed landmark projects such as *Prokofiev and Shostakovich Under Stalin* (a project which he toured and later developed into a TV documentary) and *Rachmaninoff Revisited* at the Lincoln Center, New York.

He also holds the positions of Music Director of the European Union Youth Orchestra and Conductor Laureate of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. He maintains strong links with a number of other major orchestras, including the Cleveland Orchestra (where he was formerly Principal Guest Conductor), San Francisco Symphony, and Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin (Chief Conductor and Music Director, 1988–96), as well as making guest appearances with orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic.

Vladimir Ashkenazy continues to devote himself to the piano, building his comprehensive recording catalogue with releases such as the 1999 Grammy award-winning Shostakovich Preludes and Fugues, Rautavaara's Piano Concerto No.3 (which he commissioned), Rachmaninoff transcriptions, Bach's *Wohltemperierte Klavier* and Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*. His most recent release is a recording of Bach's six partitas for keyboard.

A regular visitor to Sydney over many years, he has conducted subscription concerts and composer festivals for the Sydney Symphony, with his five-program Rachmaninoff festival forming a highlight of the 75th Anniversary Season in 2007. Vladimir Ashkenazy's artistic role with the Sydney Symphony includes collaborations on composer festivals, recording projects and international touring.



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**Kirsten Williams**  
Associate Concertmaster  
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Assistant Concertmaster  
Julie Batty  
Jennifer Booth  
Marianne Broadfoot  
Brielle Clapson  
Sophie Cole  
Amber Gunther  
Georges Lentz  
Nicola Lewis  
Nicole Masters  
Alexandra Mitchell  
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### SECOND VIOLINS

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**Marina Marsden**  
**Emma West**  
Assistant Principal  
**Jennifer Hoy**  
A/Assistant Principal  
Susan Dobbie  
Principal Emeritus  
Maria Durek  
Shuti Huang  
Stan W Kornel  
Benjamin Li  
Emily Long  
Philippa Paige  
Biyana Rozenblit  
Maja Verunica  
Katherine Lukey#

### VIOLAS

**Roger Benedict**  
**Anne-Louise**  
**Comerford**  
Robyn Brookfield  
Sandro Costantino  
Jane Hazelwood  
Graham Hennings  
Stuart Johnson  
Justine Marsden  
Mary McVarish  
Arabella Bozic†  
Jacqueline Cronin#  
Rosemary Curtin#

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**Julian Smiles\***  
Fenella Gill  
Timothy Nankervis  
Elizabeth Neville  
Adrian Wallis  
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Rowena Crouch#  
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Principal Contrabassoon

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Lee Bracegirdle  
Marnie Sebire  
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**Daniel Mendelow**  
**Paul Goodchild**  
John Foster  
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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\\_musicians](http://www.sydneysymphony.com/SSO_musicians) If you don't have access to the internet, ask one of our customer service representatives for a copy of our Musicians flyer.

# THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

Vladimir Ashkenazy PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC ADVISOR

PATRON Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of New South Wales



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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 Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional NSW. International tours 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, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and 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, and the orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

The Sydney Symphony Live label has captured performances with Alexander Lazarev, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Sir Charles Mackerras and Vladimir Ashkenazy. The orchestra has also released recordings with Ashkenazy on the Exton/Triton labels, and numerous recordings for ABC Classics.

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