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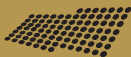
Vladimir Ashkenazy
Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor

2010 SEASON

MAHLER'S SONG OF THE EARTH

WED 26, FRI 28, SAT 29 MAY 8PM

ENERGYAUSTRALIA MASTER SERIES



EnergyAustralia



WELCOME TO THE ENERGYAUSTRALIA MASTER SERIES



Welcome to this evening's concert at the Sydney Opera House and to another performance in the two-year Mahler Odyssey. Earlier in the year, we heard Vladimir Ashkenazy's interpretation of Mahler's first symphony. In this concert he returns to conduct the symphony that Mahler feared might be his last. Mahler was so superstitious, he wouldn't even give it a number: it became *The Song of the Earth*. To sing this poignant and powerful music, we're delighted to welcome back to the stage Lilli Paasikivi – who last appeared in this series in 2008, singing Elgar – and Australian tenor Stuart Skelton.

The sadness and longing of Mahler's *Song of the Earth* is balanced in this concert by the joy and energy of music for the theatre by Richard Strauss and Mozart – it promises to be an inspiring evening of emotional extremes.

With one of the most recognised names in the energy industry, and with more than 1.4 million customers in NSW, the ACT, Victoria and Queensland, we are proud to be associated with the Sydney Symphony, and we're very excited to be linked to the orchestra's flagship Master Series.

We trust that you will enjoy tonight's performance and 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 written in a cursive, flowing style.

George Maltabarow
Managing Director

2010 SEASON

ENERGYAUSTRALIA MASTER SERIES

Wednesday 26 May | 8pm

Friday 28 May | 8pm

Saturday 29 May | 8pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

**MAHLER'S
SONG OF THE EARTH**

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

Lilli Paasikivi mezzo-soprano

Stuart Skelton tenor

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

The Marriage of Figaro: Overture

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)

Der Rosenkavalier: Suite from the opera, Op.59

INTERVAL

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860–1911)

*Das Lied von der Erde (The Song of the Earth) –
A Symphony*

for tenor, contralto (or baritone) and orchestra

*Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde (The Drinking Song of
the Earth's Sorrow)*

Der Einsame im Herbst (The Lonely Man in Autumn)

Von der Jugend (Of Youth)

Von der Schönheit (Of Beauty)

Der Trunkene im Frühling (The Drunken Man in Spring)

Der Abschied (The Farewell)



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

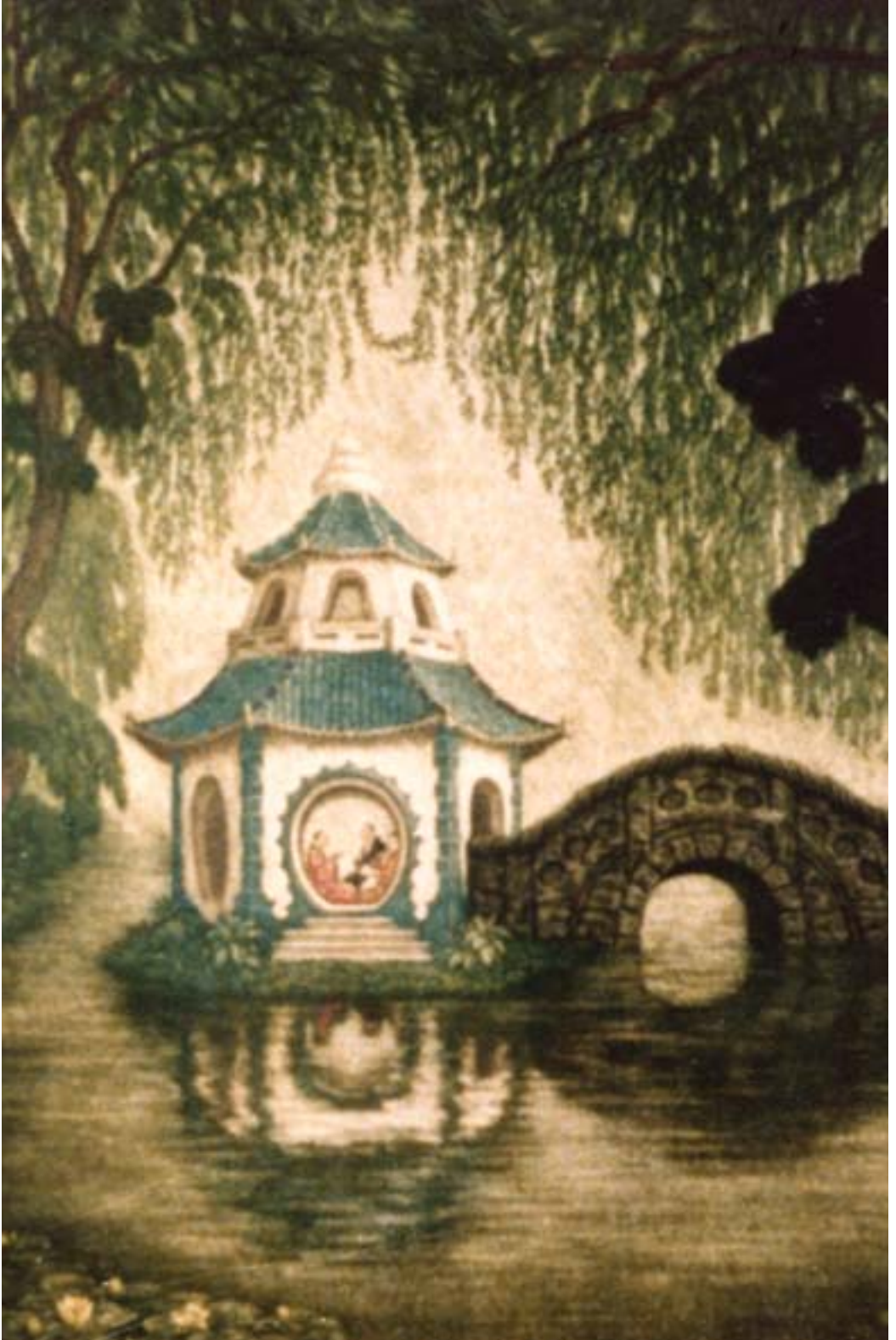
Pre-concert talk by Genevieve Lang at 7.15pm in the Northern Foyer. Visit sydney-symphony.com/talk-bios for speaker biographies.

Approximate durations:
4 minutes, 22 minutes,
20-minute interval, 65 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 10pm.

Program notes begin on page 7.
Texts and translations for *The Song of the Earth* begin on page 14.

PRESENTING PARTNER





'Das Lied von der Erde', a painting in the Chinese style by Michel (probably Robert Michel), based on Mahler's music.

INTRODUCTION

Mahler's Song of the Earth

Mahler was obsessed with his own mortality, and in particular he was consumed by the 19th-century idea that a ninth symphony was somehow fatal: Bruckner, Beethoven, Schubert and Dvořák had all died after writing a 'Ninth'. It was as if, in Schoenberg's words, 'something might be imparted to us in the Tenth which we ought not yet to know, for which we are not ready. Those who have written a Ninth stood too close to the hereafter.'

Perhaps Mahler thought he could dodge fate. He refused to number the ninth of his symphonies, instead giving it a name: 'Das Lied von der Erde – A Symphony'. But there was likely an artistic motivation too: *The Song of the Earth* is really a song-symphony, in which the two solo voices and the texts they sing determine the structure and character of the music.

It's easy to forget, listening to the German words in their Mahlerian setting, that the source of the verses was Chinese. But Mahler clearly felt an affinity with their celebration of natural beauty and the ephemeral pleasures of life. There are discreet references to Asian musical gestures, particularly in the third song, 'Of Youth'. This is the song represented in Michel's painting opposite: a green and white pavilion standing in the middle of a small pool. Together, painting and music are a reminder of the attraction of oriental exoticism in early 20th-century Europe.

As a whole, this great song-symphony occupies a world of sadness and longing, nostalgia and regret, even as it evokes beauty and joy. And these qualities are echoed in the first half of the concert. Mozart's fleeting overture might be bubbling over with high spirits, but the opera itself comes to a cathartic conclusion, and in Strauss's music from *Der Rosenkavalier* there can be heard a spirit of nostalgia and of passing beauty.

Mahler Odyssey program covers

The covers for our Mahler Odyssey program books have been designed by Christie Brewster. They feature a stylised typeface characteristic of early 20th-century Viennese posters and publications, and sumptuous patterns inspired by the art of Gustav Klimt (1862–1918).

PLEASE SHARE YOUR PROGRAM

To conserve costs and reduce our environmental footprint, we ask that you share your program with your companions, one between two. You are welcome to take an additional copy at the end of the concert if there are programs left over, but please share during the performance so that no one is left without a program.

If you don't wish to take your program home with you, please leave it in the foyer (not in the auditorium) at the end of the concert so it can be reused at the next performance.

All our free programs can be downloaded from: www.sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com/program_library

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *The Marriage of Figaro: Overture*

The Marriage of Figaro is a long opera, but its overture is short, one of Mozart's shortest. Its bustling, scurrying single-mindedness makes it a favourite concert opener, and a staple of Mozart samplers on disc. To those who know and love the opera, Mozart's richest and most humane comedy, the overture will bring a contented chuckle over the delights to follow. The orchestra's first bassoon will look forward to an exposed 'lick' – or not, depending on the conductor's tempo. To those who know their cultural history, the very title will bring premonitions of the French Revolution, and they will remember the alternative title of the play by Beaumarchais on which the opera is based: *La folle journée* – 'the mad day', a day that seems ideally prefaced by this overture.

Of course the libretto which Lorenzo da Ponte devised, working closely with Mozart, is not Beaumarchais' play – had it been, the opera would not have been allowed on stage in the Vienna of 1786. Nor was the overture originally as short as it is. During the rehearsals, or perhaps even after the first performance, Mozart deleted the middle section, a small slow movement in 6/8 time, a Siciliano with oboe solo. If the deleted section ever turns up, it will be possible to restore the overture to its original form, a typical three-section Italian *opera buffa* overture. But the opera which follows was not typical, but revolutionary. Not politically revolutionary, though the eventual triumph of the servant Figaro over the designs on his betrothed Susanna of his lecherous master, the Count, still contains elements of class conflict. The Emperor Joseph II had forbidden the performance of Beaumarchais' play, and da Ponte, in his memoirs, records (or invents) a conversation he had with the Emperor on this subject:

'Yes sire,' I rejoined, 'but I was writing an opera, not a play. I had to omit many scenes and to cut others quite considerably. I have omitted or cut anything that might offend good taste or public decency at a performance over which the Sovereign Majesty might preside. The music, I may add, as far as I may judge of it, seems to me marvellously beautiful.'

Beautiful, but long and difficult, for the performers and the audience. They probably expected a sequel to Paisiello's *The Barber of Seville*, the most popular opera in Vienna at the time. The story was a sequel, but Mozart's music took *opera buffa* to an altogether new level of richness and structural complexity. Hence the length, more than half as much again as Paisiello's opera. A good practical reason in the theatre

Keynotes

MOZART

*Born Salzburg, 1756
Died Vienna, 1791*

To his family and admirers, the young Mozart was the 'miracle that was born in Salzburg'. But, though he died at 35, he lived long enough to shuck off the prodigy's reputation and produce an unrivalled body of mature work, arguably most tellingly in a trio of operas that more closely approached perfection than anything anybody had previously done: *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute*.

FIGARO OVERTURE

Mozart's *Figaro* overture 'is' the spirit of Europe in 1786. It belongs to an opera about a philandering nobleman who gets his comeuppance (this to the sound of the guillotine being sharpened in Paris). Musically, it brings a new sophistication and individuality – inspired lunacy, even – to the stock-in-trade, off-the-rack operatic overture.

In an opera performance, we hear the overture first, just as tonight in the concert hall. But Mozart composed it last, and his sheer thrill at having completed a full-length opera bubbles through. Part of its brilliance comes from the trumpets and drums. Meanwhile, the scurrying string and bassoon opening seem to anticipate the opera's very last words: 'Let us all run to celebrate.'



The count discovers the page, engraving from the first Paris edition of Beaumarchais' *Le Mariage de Figaro* (1785)

'The music, I may add, as far as I may judge of it, seems to me marvellously beautiful.'

LORENZO DA PONTE

for keeping the overture short? What remains is an overture in sonata form, but without a 'development' section. The bassoon solo completes the link to the clearly contrasted 'second subject'.

Listening Guide

Mozart's orchestra is rich and brilliant, with wind instruments, and especially trumpets and drums, enjoying the key of D major. The impression of the operatic intrigue which is to follow is promoted by the 'lopsidedness' of the scurrying opening theme from the strings and bassoon, seven bars long where the convention leads the listener to expect eight. The key, and the character of this music, recall the very end of the opera, after the dénouement and the Count's accepted plea to his wife for forgiveness. Everyone sings of the 'day of torment, whims and folly', crowned by love with happiness and joy. The last words are, 'Let us all run to celebrate,' and the running music recalls the very beginning of the overture. This may reflect the fact that the overture, which could be copied while the vocal parts were in rehearsal, was the last music to be written. More likely it is a sign of the masterly control Mozart shows over his structure in music. Such an overture should make everyone want to hear the whole opera!

DAVID GARRETT © 2004

The orchestra for the overture comprises pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets; timpani and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed the overture in July 1936 under Bernard Heinze, and more recently in 2006 conducted by Gianluigi Gelmetti.

Richard Strauss

***Der Rosenkavalier*: Suite from the opera, Op.59**

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 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'.

Keynotes

R STRAUSS

Born Munich, 1864

Died Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1949

Though Richard Strauss wrote two of them as a teenager, the symphony was not the orchestral genre that most captured his imagination as an adult. Nor was the concerto, notwithstanding his two fine examples for horn. Instead his most characteristic orchestral music is to be found in his 'tone poems', and in sections of his operas, many of which he sanctioned for performance as free-standing works.

ROSENKAVALIER SUITE

In 1945 Strauss sanctioned the extraction of this suite from his 1911 opera *Der Rosenkavalier*. Set in 18th-century Vienna, *Der Rosenkavalier* tells how the 17-year-old Octavian outwits the bullish baron Ochs in his quest for the hand of Sophie.

Anachronistically, Strauss inserts Viennese waltzes a century too early for the story. The suite, which runs without pause, opens with music depicting the bedroom antics of Octavian with his original mistress, the Marschallin, swirling strings and whooping horns. Representing his new love for Sophie, it segues into music from the 'Presentation of the Rose' scene, with its sugar-ice harmonies. A short transition brings us to Ochs' all-too-creamy waltz, and then to the sublime trio from the end of the opera. It is rounded off with Ochs' humiliation in Act III.

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
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA © 2000

The *Rosenkavalier* Suite is scored for three flutes (one doubling piccolo), three oboes (one doubling English horn), three clarinets (one doubling E flat clarinet), bass clarinet and three bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon); four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and five percussion; two harps and celesta; and strings.

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.



Richard Strauss, 1905

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'.

Gustav Mahler

Das Lied von der Erde (The Song of the Earth) – A Symphony

for tenor, contralto (or baritone) and orchestra

Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde (The Drinking Song of the Earth's Sorrow)

Der Einsame im Herbst (The Lonely Man in Autumn)

Von der Jugend (Of Youth)

Von der Schönheit (Of Beauty)

Der Trunkene im Frühling (The Drunken Man in Spring)

Der Abschied (The Farewell)

Lilli Paasikivi mezzo-soprano

Stuart Skelton tenor

The Song of the Earth ends with repetition of the word 'ewig' (forever) passing into silence in a haze of bells and plucked sounds. The incomparable contralto Kathleen Ferrier was once unable to sing this without weeping. Conductor Bruno Walter is supposed to have said, 'My dear Miss Ferrier, if we were all as professional as you we would all be in tears.' Walter knew the power of this music. It was he that the composer had asked of this work, 'Is it at all bearable?'

In 1907 Mahler had been diagnosed as having a heart condition. In addition, machinations at the Vienna State Opera caused him to resign as Director, his four-year-old daughter died, Alma Mahler's mother died, and Alma herself collapsed under the emotional strain.

Mahler had been given a copy of *The Chinese Flute* by Hans Bethge (1876–1946). Bethge's renditions of 83 Chinese poems were German versions of French translations. Mahler made significant alterations and interpolations to the seven poems he chose to set. Neither poetry nor music claims to be authentically Chinese; philosopher Theodor Adorno argued that the work 'grows eloquent through inauthenticity'.

Broadly speaking the piece expresses an intense love of the physical world through images of wine, love, the moon and everyday life, and an acute sense of our limited time in that world. 'It is filled with indefinable sadness and longing yet ultimately it is not depressing,' says Michael Kennedy.

The Song of the Earth was originally conceived as a song cycle. Alma Mahler wrote in her often unreliable memoirs that 'at first [Mahler] wrote *The Song of the Earth* as the ninth, but crossed the number out...it was a superstition

Keynotes

MAHLER

Born Kalischt, 1860

Died Vienna, 1911

Mahler is now regarded as the great symphonist of the turn of the 20th century. But during his life his main work was as a conductor, and he was effectively a 'summer composer'. For Mahler, a symphony must 'embrace the world'. His are large-scale, requiring huge orchestras and often also voices. They cover a tremendous emotional range, 'Janus-like' in the way they address romanticism and modernism, self-obsession and universality, idealism and irony.

SONG OF THE EARTH

Mahler called this 1909 work a 'symphony' too. For the texts of the six movements, he selected seven of Hans Bethge's twice-removed (German via French) translations of ancient Chinese poems about wine, love and the moon. In *The Drinking Song of the Earth's Sorrow* we hear a muscular fanfare from the horns, flutter-tonguing in the flutes, and the audacious use of the tenor's high register. *The Lonely Man in Autumn* is a long slow movement. *Of Youth* is the first of the three short intermezzos, followed by *Of Beauty*. *The Drunken Man in Spring* harks back to the opening song. The Farewell, almost as long as the other movements combined, sets two poems. Meng Hoaran describes the beauties of evening; Wang Wei's poem about a farewell drink with a friend is greatly extended by Mahler.



Gustav Mahler, 1907

of Mahler's that no great writer of symphonies got beyond his ninth.' Adorno has said: 'symphonic expansion bursts the limits of the song'. Formally the work recalls Mahler's Third Symphony in its use of six movements of which the last is a long adagio preceded by shorter intermezzos.

The first song, *The Drinking Song of the Earth's Sorrow*, wastes no time in signalling the power and subtlety of Mahler's art. We hear a muscular fanfare from the horns, flutter-tonguing in the flutes, and the audacious use of the tenor's high register at full volume. The text laments that in the face of the eternity of earth and sky we have less than a hundred years each to enjoy it, so should do so with wine and music.

The Lonely Man in Autumn is a long slow movement. It begins with a three-note motif from the oboe which in fact pervades the whole work.

Of Youth is the first of the three short intermezzos which bridge the extended slow movements. *Of Beauty* presents

a tableau of young women picking flowers and young men riding horses. The 'drunken man' of the fifth song is perhaps the same one introduced in the first; if life is but a dream, he is now a happier drunk.

The Farewell is almost as long as the other movements combined and sets two poems. Meng Haoran describes the beauties of evening. A second section reduces the orchestral sound to almost nothing as night falls and the poet waits for his friend to whom he must bid farewell. Mahler introduces a mandolin (the poet's 'lute') in a way which manages to be self-consciously exotic without being kitsch. This section leads to an ecstatic section of anticipation. Then the orchestra plays a long passage without the singer, based on the emotive 'turn' sounded by the oboe at the start of the movement.

The final section is based on a poem by Wang Wei, heavily modified and extended by Mahler himself. The friend arrives and takes a ritual farewell drink. He explains that he must ride in search of his homeland. A whole-tone chord seems to dissolve in the air, introducing the final moments, where 'the dear earth everywhere blooms in spring'. These elements take on a comforting and redemptive quality. Adorno said that the music 'weeps without reason like one overcome by remembrance...'. No wonder Kathleen Ferrier wept too.

ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY GORDON KERRY © 2002

The orchestra for *The Song of the Earth* calls for four flutes (two doubling piccolo), three oboes (one doubling English horn), three clarinets (one doubling E flat clarinet), bass clarinet and three bassoons (one doubling contra bassoon); four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and three percussion; two harps, celesta and mandolin; and strings.

Though *The Sydney Morning Herald's* music critic during World War II, Neville Cardus, was a great advocate of Mahler and *The Song of the Earth*, the music was known here only in commercial recordings, until Eugene Goossens programmed the Australian premiere, with the Sydney Symphony, on 21 August 1954.

Mahler enthusiast (and cricket commentator) Neville Cardus remembered that when he played 'The Farewell' on his Sunday night ABC radio program on 8 October 1944: 'From all over the continent, from the outback, from Alice Springs, came requests for prompt repeats. Something in *Das Lied von der Erde* sought out a deep spot in Australia's fundamental loneliness'.

Das Trinklied von Jammer der Erde

Schon winkt der Wein im gold'nen Pokale,
doch trinkt noch nicht, erst sing' ich euch ein
Lied!

Das Lied vom Kummer
soll auflachend in die Seele euch klingen.
Wenn der Kummer naht,
liegen wüst die Gärten der Seele,
welkt hin und stirbt die Freude, der Gesang.
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod.

Herr dieses Hauses!
Dein Keller birgt die Fülle des goldenen Weins!
Hier, diese Laute nenn' ich mein!
Die Laute schlagen und die Gläser leeren,
das sind die Dinge, die zusammen passen.
Ein voller Becher Weins zur rechten Zeit
ist mehr wert, als alle Reiche dieser Erde!
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod!

Das Firmament blaut ewig und die Erde
wird lange fest steh'n und aufblüh'n im Lenz.
Du aber, Mensch, wie lang lebst denn du?
Nicht hundert Jahre darfst du dich ergötzen
an all dem morschen Tande dieser Erde!
Seht dort hinab! Im Mondschein auf den Gräbern
hockt eine wildgespenstische Gestalt.
Ein Aff ist's! Hört ihr, wie sein Heulen
hinausgellt in den süßen Duft des Lebens!
Jetzt nehmt den Wein! Jetzt ist es Zeit, Genossen!
Leert eure gold'nen Becher zu Grund!
Dunkel ist das Leben, ist der Tod!

Der Einsame in Herbst

Herbstnebel wallen bläulich überm See,
vom Reif bezogen stehen alle Gräser;
man meint, ein Künstler habe Staub von Jade
über die feinen Blüten ausgestreut.

Der süsse Duft der Blumen ist verfliegen;
ein kalter Wind beugt ihre Stengel nieder.
Bald werden die verwelkten, gold'nen Blätter
der Lotosblüten auf dem Wasser zieh'n.

Mein Herz ist müde. Meine kleine Lampe
erlosch mit Knistern, es gemahnt mich an den
Schlaf.

Ich komm' zu dir, traute Ruhestätte!
Ja, gib mir Ruh', ich hab' Erquickung not!

Ich weine viel in meinen Einsamkeiten.
Der Herbst in meinem Herzen währt zu lange.
Sonne der Liebe, willst du nie mehr scheinen,
um meine bittern Tränen mild aufzutrocknen?

The Drinking Song of the Earth's Sorrow

TENOR

The wine is already beckoning in the golden
goblet,
but do not drink yet – first, I will sing you a song!
The song of sorrow
shall resound laughingly in your soul.
When sorrow draws near,
the gardens of the soul will lie desolate,
joy and song will wilt and die.
Dark is life, dark is death.

Lord of this house!
In your cellar is stored the richness of golden wine!
Here, this lute I call my own!
Strumming on the lute and emptying glasses –
these are the things that go together.
A full glass of wine at the proper moment
is worth more than all the riches of this world!
Dark is life, dark is death.

The heavens are forever blue and the earth
will long stand firm and bloom in spring.
But you, Man, how long will you live then?
Not a hundred years are you allowed to enjoy
all the rotten triviality of this earth!
Look down there! In the moonlight, on the graves
crouches a wild, ghostly figure –
It is an ape! Hear how its howls
resound piercingly in the sweet fragrance of life!
Now take the wine! Now is the time, friends!
Empty your golden goblets to the bottom!
Dark is life, dark is death!

The Lonely Man in Autumn

CONTRALTO

Blue autumn mists undulate over the lake,
the grass is standing stiff with frost;
one might think an artist had strewn jade dust
over the fine blossoms.

The flowers' sweet fragrance has flown away;
a cold wind bends their stems low.
Soon the wilted golden leaves
of lotus flowers will drift upon the water.

My heart is weary. My little lamp
has gone out with a splutter; it reminds me of
sleep.

I am coming to you, cosy resting place!
Yes, give me rest – I have need of refreshment.

I weep much in my solitude.
The autumn in my heart has lasted too long.
Sun of love, won't you ever shine again
to gently dry my bitter tears?

Von der Jugend

Mitten in dem kleinen Teiche
steht ein Pavillon aus grünem
und aus weissem Porzellan.

Wie der Rücken eines Tigers
wölbt die Brücke sich aus Jade
zu dem Pavillon hinüber.

In dem Häuschen sitzen Freunde,
schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern,
manche schreiben Verse nieder.

Ihre seidnen Ärmel gleiten
rückwärts, ihre seidnen Mützen
hocken lustig tief im Nacken.

Auf des kleinen Teiches stiller
Wasserfläche zeigt sich alles
wunderlich im Spiegelbilde.

Alles auf dem Kopfe stehend
in dem Pavillon aus grünem
und aus weissem Porzellan;

wie ein Halbmond steht die Brücke,
umgekehrt der Bogen. Freunde,
schön gekleidet, trinken, plaudern.

Von der Schönheit

Junge Mädchen pflücken Blumen,
pflücken Lotosblumen an dem Uferrande.
Zwischen Büschen und Blättern sitzen sie,
sammeln Blüten in den Schoss und rufen
sich einander Neckereien zu.

Gold'ne Sonne webt um die Gestalten,
spiegelt sie im blanken Wasser wider.
Sonne spiegelt ihre schlanken Glieder,
ihre süßen Augen wider,
und der Zephyr hebt mit Schmeichelkosen
das Gewebe ihrer Ärmel auf,
führt den Zauber
ihrer Wohlgerüche durch die Luft.

O sieh, was tummeln sich für schöne Knaben
dort an dem Uferrand auf mut'gen Rossen,
weithin glänzend wie die Sonnenstrahlen;
schon zwischen dem Geäst der grünen Weiden
trabt das jungfrische Volk einher!
Das Ross des einen wiehert fröhlich auf
und scheut und saust dahin,
über Blumen, Gräser wanken hin die Hufe,

Of Youth

TENOR

In the middle of the small pool
stands a pavilion of green
and white porcelain.

Like the back of a tiger
the jade bridge arches
across to the pavilion.

In the little house sit friends,
beautifully dressed – drinking, chatting;
many are writing verses down.

Their silk sleeves slip
back, their silk caps
are perched merrily down on their necks.

On the small pool's still
surface, everything appears
strangely upside down.

Everything is standing on its head
in the pavilion of green
and white porcelain.

The bridge stands like a half moon,
its arch inverted. Friends,
beautifully dressed, are drinking and chatting.

Of Beauty

CONTRALTO

Young girls pick flowers,
pick lotus flowers at the edge of the shore.
Among bushes and leaves they sit,
gathering blossoms in their laps and calling
to one another teasingly.

Golden sunlight weaves among the figures,
mirroring them in the shiny water.
The sun reflects their slender limbs,
their sweet eyes,
and the zephyr with playful flattery lifts
the fabric of their sleeves,
wafting the magic
of their fragrance through the air.

O look how the handsome lads are romping
around
there along the shore on their lively steeds,
shining out like sunbeams;
already among the branches of the green willows,
the fresh young band are trotting closer!
The horse of one whinnies merrily
and shies and dashes away;

sie zerstampfen jäh im Sturm die
hingesunk'nen Blüten.

Heil! Wie flattern im Taumel seine Mähnen,
dampfen heiss die Nüstern!
Gold'ne Sonne webt um die Gestalten,
spiegelt sie im blanken Wasser wider.

Und die schönste von den Jungfrau'n sendet
lange Blicke ihm der Sehnsucht nach.
Ihre stolze Haltung ist nur Verstellung.
In dem Funkeln ihrer grossen Augen,
in dem Dunkel ihres heissen Blicks
schwingt klagend noch die Erregung ihres
Herzens nach.

Der Trunkene im Frühling

Wenn nur ein Traum das Leben ist,
warum denn Müh' und Plag'?
Ich trinke, bis ich nicht mehr kann,
den ganzen, lieben Tag!

Und wenn ich nicht mehr trinken kann,
weil Kehl' und Seele voll,
so tauml' ich bis zu meiner Tür
und schlafe wundervoll!

Was hör ich beim Erwachen? Horch!
Ein Vogel singt im Baum.
Ich frag' ihn, ob schon Frühling sei.
Mir ist als wie im Traum.

Der Vogel zwitschert: 'Ja! Der Lenz
ist da, sei kommen über Nacht!'
Aus tiefstem Schauen lauscht' ich auf,
der Vogel singt und lacht!

Ich fülle mir den Becher neu
und leer' ihn bis zum Grund
und singe, bis der Mond erglänzt
am schwarzen Firmament!

Und wenn ich nicht mehr singen kann,
so schlaf' ich wieder ein.
Was geht mich denn der Frühling an!?
Lasst mich betrunken sein!

over flowers and grass, hooves are dancing,
trampling up a sudden storm of fallen blossoms.

Ah, how their manes flutter in a frenzy,
how hot their nostrils steam!
The golden sun weaves among the figures,
mirroring them in the shiny water.

And the fairest of the young women sends
long gazes of yearning after him.
Her proud attitude is only a pretence.
In the flash of her large eyes,
in the darkness of her hot glance,
the excitement of her heart leaps after him,
lamenting.

The Drunken Man in Spring

TENOR

If life is only a dream,
why then the misery and torment?
I drink until I can drink no more,
the whole, dear day!


And when I can drink no more,
because my stomach and soul are full,
I stagger to my door
and sleep amazingly well!

What do I hear when I awake? Listen!
A bird is singing in the tree.
I ask him whether it is spring –
it's like a dream to me.

The bird twitters, 'Yes! Spring
is here, it has come in the night!'
With deep concentration I listen,
the bird sings and laughs!

I fill my goblet again
and drain it to the bottom
and sing, until the moon shines
in the dark firmament!

And when I can sing no more,
I fall asleep again.
What does Spring have to do with me, then?
Let me be drunk!



Today, you'll be taken
away to Vienna by
Gustav Mahler. Have
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VIENNA
NOW OR NEVER

Der Abschied

Die Sonne scheidet hinter dem Gebirge.
In alle Täler steigt der Abend nieder
mit seinen Schatten, die voll Kühlung sind.
O sieh! wie eine Silberbarke schwebt
der Mond am blauen Himmelssee herauf.
Ich spüre eines feinen Windes Weh'n
hinter den dunklen Fichten!

Der Bach singt voller Wohllaut durch das Dunkel.
Die Blumen blassen im Dämmerchein.
Die Erde atmet voll von Ruh' und Schlaf.
Alle Sehnsucht will nun träumen,
die müden Menschen geh'n heimwärts,
um im Schlaf vergess'nes Glück
und Jugend neu zu lernen!
Die Vögel hocken still in ihren Zweigen.
Die Welt schläft ein!

Es wehet kühl im Schatten meiner Fichten.
Ich stehe hier und harre meines Freundes.
Ich harre sein zum letzten Lebewohl.
Ich sehne mich, o Freund, an deiner Seite
die Schönheit dieses Abends zu genießen.
Wo bleibst du? Du lässt mich lang
allein!

Ich wandle auf und nieder mit meiner Laute
auf Wegen, die von weichem Grase schwellen.
O Schönheit! O ewigen Liebens, Lebens
trunk'ne Welt!

Er stieg vom Pferd und reichte ihm den Trunk
des Abschieds dar. Er fragte ihn, wohin
er führe und auch warum es müsste sein.
Er sprach, seine Stimme war umflort:
Du, mein Freund,
mir war auf dieser Welt das Glück nicht hold!
Wohin ich geh'? Ich geh', ich wand're in die
Berge.

Ich suche Ruhe für mein einsam Herz.
Ich wandle nach der Heimat, meiner Stätte.
Ich werde niemals in die Ferne schweifen.
Still ist mein Herz und harret seiner Stunde!

Die liebe Erde allüberall
blüht auf im Lenz und grünt aufs neu!
Allüberall und ewig
blauen licht die Fernen,
ewig, ewig!

GERMAN TEXTS: HANS BETHGE (1876–1946)
ADAPTED BY GUSTAV MAHLER; AFTER CHINESE
ORIGINALS BY LI BAI (701–762) (SONGS 1–4), ZHANG
JI (8TH CENTURY) (SONG 5), MONG HAORAN
(691–740) AND WANG WEI (699–759) (SONG 6).

The Farewell

CONTRALTO

The sun departs behind the mountains.
In all the valleys, evening descends
with its shadows, full of coolness.
O look! Like a silver boat,
the moon floats on the blue sky-lake above.
I feel a fine wind wafting
behind the dark spruces.

The brook sings in full voice through the darkness.
The flowers stand out palely in the glow of evening.
The earth breathes, full of peace and sleep,
and all yearning wishes to dream now.
Weary folk go home,
to learn again in sleep
forgotten happiness and youth.
The birds crouch silently in their branches.
The world falls asleep!

It blows coolly in the shadows of my spruce.
I stand here and wait for my friend;
I wait for his last farewell.
I yearn, my friend, to enjoy at your side
the beauty of this evening.
Where have you got to? You leave me alone for
so long!

I wander up and down with my lute,
on paths swelling with soft grass.
O beauty! O world drunk with eternal love and
life!

He dismounted and handed him the cup
of parting. He asked him where
he would go, and also why it must be.
He spoke, his voice was choked:
My friend,
on this earth, fortune has not been kind to me!
Where do I go? I will go, wander in the
mountains.
I seek peace for my lonely heart.
I walk in search of my homeland, my own place.
I will never stray far afield.
My heart is quiet and awaits its hour!

The dear earth everywhere
blooms in spring and grows green afresh!
Everywhere and for ever,
distant places have blue skies,
for ever, for ever!

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS:
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA © 2003

GLOSSARY

DEVELOPMENT – usually at the centre of a movement, a section in which the main themes and motifs are ‘worked over’, usually building toward a climactic return of the opening theme.

FLUTTER-TONGUING – on a woodwind or brass instrument, a rapid tongue vibration that produces a characteristic ‘Prrrrrrr’ sound; especially effective on a flute or trumpet

INTERMEZZO – ‘in the middle’; originally an operatic term, in the 19th century an intermezzo was an independent instrumental piece usually of a lyrical character.

KEY – in European music traditions there are two main categories of scale and key: major and minor. Aurally, a major key or mode will sound ‘brighter’ or more cheerful (‘Happy Birthday’), while a minor one will sound melancholy or mournful (funeral marches). The tonic or home note of a scale gives it its name (e.g. C minor, a minor scale beginning on the note C, or E flat major, a major scale beginning on E flat).

LIED – German for ‘song’; *Lieder* is the plural.

MOTIF – shorter than a full melody or theme, an easily recognisable fragment of tune, sometimes as few as two notes, that is repeated in different contexts throughout a movement or work.

OVERTURE – an orchestral piece to open an opera or incidental music for stage play; in the 19th century the custom of playing operatic overtures separately to begin the first or second half of a concert also led composers to write independent concert overtures (like Tchaikovsky’s 1812 Overture).

SICILIANO – originally a slow Italian dance or song form, not unlike a barcarolle; often applied to any nocturnal sounding slow movement in 6/8 time characterised by a lilting long-short, long-short rhythm.

SUITE – a ‘set’ of instrumental or orchestral pieces, or of orchestral extracts from an opera often strung-together into a new continuous piece; suites were often originally made at the urging of publishers keen to earn back some of the money they had outlaid on an opera’s publication.

TONE POEM – (also ‘symphonic poem’) a genre of orchestral music that is symphonic in scope but adopts a freer structure in order to follow or describe an extra-musical narrative or scene. Liszt was the first to use the term and Richard Strauss also championed the genre in preference to writing regular symphonies.

TONAL CENTRE – another way of referring to key.

WHOLE-TONE CHORD – belonging to no major or minor key, this chord was often used in early modernist works to represent some sort of altered state (like eternity); you can most easily recreate one for yourself on a keyboard by playing together five or more adjacent black notes (only).

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

FIGARO OVERTURE

Incredibly, even Mozart has had to be 'revived' several times in the past, rescued from greater obscurity than he enjoys today; before the 1956 Mozart year (200th anniversary of his birth), Thomas Beecham was one of the staunchest Mozartians, as his *Figaro* overture shows. PEARL 9094

To hear those trumpets and drums 'naturally' as Mozart would have heard them, try Frans Brüggen's recording with the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century (coupled with the 'Prague' Symphony). PHILIPS 426231

ROSENKAVALIER SUITE

A vintage recording (and vintage sounding, for those who can bear it that way) is that conducted by William Steinberg with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, recorded in 1957.

EMI CLASSICS 65610

For a less reverential, but still not inappropriate take on Strauss that has a little more in common with his 'waltz king' namesake, you might like to try Quartetto Gelato's 'al fresco' cover version of the *Rosenkavalier Suite*, rescored for string trio and piano accordion! LINUS 270056

SONG OF THE EARTH

Until Goossens performed it with the Sydney Symphony in 1954, the recording that Australian Mahler fans swore by dated from 1936, with the Vienna Philharmonic and Kerstin Thorborg and Charles Kullman, under Bruno Walter (who also conducted the world premiere in 1911). NAXOS HISTORICAL 8.110850

Gordon Kerry's program note mentions the incomparable Kathleen Ferrier, who recorded *The Song of the Earth* in 1952 with tenor Julius Patzak and Bruno Walter conducting the Vienna Philharmonic. This truly legendary performance, sensitively re-issued by Decca in 2000, appears to be out of print, but can be purchased as a download from iTunes or BigPondMusic, and on CD through ArkivMusic.com LONDON/DECCA LEGENDS 466576

LILLI PAASIKIVI

Lilli Paasikivi has recorded the complete orchestral songs of A. Mahler (Alma, that is), most of which were sketched before she met Gustav in 1901; with the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra under Jorma Panula. ONDINE 1024

STUART SKELTON

Stuart Skelton recorded Mahler's *The Song of the Earth* live in 2007 with baritone Thomas Hampson and the San Francisco Symphony, under Michael Tilson Thomas. SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY 60019

From his Siegmund with the State Opera of South Australia's Wagner *Ring* cycle under Asher Fisch, sample the four-discs of *Die Walküre*. MELBA SACD MR 301091-94

Broadcast Diary



MAY–JUNE

29 May, 8pm

MAHLER'S SONG OF THE EARTH

(See this program for details)

10 June, 7pm

SERENADE FOR STRINGS

Dene Olding violin-director

Simon Tedeschi piano

Paul Goodchild trumpet

Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich

18 June, 8pm

MUSIC ON THE BRINK

Oleg Caetani conductor

Daniel Hope violin

Haydn, Bruch, Schoenberg, Beethoven

26 June, 8pm

DANCE OF THE IMAGINATION

Oleg Caetani conductor

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Schubert, Grainger, Ravel

2MBS-FM 102.5

SYDNEY SYMPHONY 2010

Tuesday 9 June, 6pm

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC ADVISOR

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*. Last year he released a disc of French piano duo works with Vovka Ashkenazy.

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.



© SASHA GUSOV/DECCA

Lilli Paasikivi mezzo-soprano

Since making her debut with Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker as Fricka in the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence's *Ring* cycle, Wagner roles have become central to Lilli Paasikivi's operatic work. House debuts have included La Monnaie, as Brangäne; Hamburg State Opera, as Fricka; and as Kundry (also a role debut) for Frankfurt Opera. As a concert artist she is known for her performances of Mahler's song cycles and symphonies. She has sung *Das Lied von der Erde* and in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Esa-Pekka Salonen, Symphony No.3 for her London Symphony Orchestra debut under Paavo Järvi, and *Kindertotenlieder* with the New World Symphony Orchestra and Michael Tilson Thomas. She has also recorded the Third Symphony with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Benjamin Zander, and the Eighth Symphony with the LSO under Valery Gergiev. She made her New York Philharmonic debut in the premiere of Shchedrin's opera *The Enchanted Wanderer*, and her BBC Proms debut with Osmo Vänskä and the Lahti Symphony Orchestra in Sibelius's music for *The Tempest*. At home in Finland she is a valued member of Finnish National Opera. Lilli Paasikivi's most recent appearance with the Sydney Symphony was in the 2008 Elgar Festival.



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Stuart Skelton tenor

One of the finest heroic tenors of his generation, Australian-born Stuart Skelton sings a repertoire that embraces such roles as Wagner's Lohengrin and Parsifal, Strauss's Kaiser and Bacchus, Saint-Saëns' Samson and Beethoven's Florestan. He won the inaugural Lauritz Melchior Prize for best Heldentenor on CD for his performance as Siegmund in *Die Walküre* from the State Opera of South Australia's *Ring* cycle (2004). In recent seasons he has sung Siegmund in Hamburg, Zurich, Seattle and at the Metropolitan Opera; Parsifal in London; Don José in *Carmen* at the Hollywood Bowl; Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* and Kodály's *Psalmus Hungaricus* with the Cleveland Orchestra, and Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*. In 2009 he sang Peter Grimes for English National Opera and Opera Australia, Erik in *The Flying Dutchman* for SOSA, and Mitch in *A Streetcar Named Desire* for Opera Australia. He also sang in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Tanglewood) and *Das Lied von der Erde* (Chicago Symphony Orchestra). This season he sings Boris (*Kátya Kabanová*) for English National Opera, Laca (*Jenůfa*) for Opera National de Bordeaux, *Das Lied von der Erde* with RTÉ Symphony Dublin, *Das Klagende Lied* with the Residentie Orchestra Amsterdam and returns to West Australian Opera. His most recent appearance with the Sydney Symphony was in 2002 in Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*.



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MUSICIANS

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Dene Olding
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Performing in this concert...

FIRST VIOLINS

Dene Olding

Concertmaster

Sun Yi

Associate Concertmaster

Goetz Richter*

Associate Concertmaster

Fiona Ziegler

Assistant Concertmaster

Julie Batty

Jennifer Booth

Marianne Broadfoot

Brielle Clapson

Sophie Cole

Amber Gunther

Georges Lentz

Nicola Lewis

Nicole Masters

Alexandra Mitchell

Léone Ziegler

Dimity Hall*

SECOND VIOLINS

Kirsty Hilton

Marina Marsden

Jennifer Hoy

Acting Assistant Principal

Maria Durek

Emma Hayes

Shuti Huang

Stan W Kornel

Benjamin Li

Emily Long

Philippa Paige

Biyana Rozenblit

Maja Verunica

Claire Herrick†

Alexander Norton*

VIOLAS

Roger Benedict

Tobias Breider*

Anne-Louise

Comerford

Yvette Goodchild

Assistant Principal

Robyn Brookfield

Sandro Costantino

Jane Hazelwood

Graham Hennings

Stuart Johnson

Mary McVarish

Felicity Tsai

Leonid Volovelsky

CELLOS

Catherine Hewgill

Emma-Jane Murphy*

Fenella Gill

Timothy Nankervis

Elizabeth Neville

Adrian Wallis

David Wickham

Rowena Crouch#

Eszter Mikes-Liu*

Emma-Jane Murphy*

Patrick Murphy#

DOUBLE BASSES

Alex Henery

Steven Larson#

Neil Brawley

Principal Emeritus

David Campbell

Richard Lynn

David Murray

Benjamin Ward#

FLUTES

Emma Sholl

Associate Principal

Rosamund Plummer

Principal Piccolo

Lina Andonovska*

Bridget Bolliger*

OBOES

Diana Doherty

David Papp

Alexandre Oguey

Principal Cor Anglais

CLARINETS

Lawrence Dobell

Francesco Celata

Associate Principal

Christopher Tingay

Craig Wernicke

Principal Bass Clarinet

BASSOONS

Roger Brooke

Fiona McNamara

Noriko Shimada

Principal Contrabassoon

HORNS

Ben Jacks

Robert Johnson

Geoffrey O'Reilly

Principal 3rd

Lee Bracegirdle

Marnie Sebire

Euan Harvey

TRUMPETS

Daniel Mendelow

John Foster

Anthony Heinrichs

TROMBONES

Ronald Prussing

Nick Byrne

Christopher Harris

Principal Bass Trombone

TUBA

Mark Shearn

TIMPANI

Richard Miller

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Rebecca Lagos

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John Douglas*

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Bold = Principal

Italic = Associate Principal

= Contract Musician

* = Guest Musician

† = Sydney Symphony

Fellow

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 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 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, 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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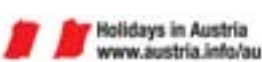
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