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Vladimir Ashkenazy  
Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor

2010 SEASON

# RHAPSODY IN BLUE

FRI 8 & SAT 9 OCTOBER 8PM

KALEIDOSCOPE

We welcome George Benson, making his debut appearance with the Sydney Symphony at the Sydney Opera House on 11, 12 and 13 November. He replaces Burt Bacharach who has withdrawn for health reasons.

  
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# GEORGE BENSON

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**2010 SEASON**

**KALEIDOSCOPE**

Friday 8 October | 8pm

Saturday 9 October | 8pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

**RHAPSODY IN BLUE**

Kristjan Järvi conductor

Michael Kieran Harvey piano

Francesco Celata clarinet

**JOHN ADAMS (born 1947)**

*The Chairman Dances* – Foxtrot for orchestra

**DARIUS MILHAUD (1892–1974)**

*The Creation of the World*

**GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898–1937)**

*An American in Paris*

**INTERVAL**

**LEONARD BERNSTEIN (1918–1990)**

*Prelude, Fugue and Riffs* for clarinet and jazz ensemble

Francesco Celata clarinet

**GERSHWIN**

orchestrated Ferde Grofé (1892–1972)

*Rhapsody in Blue*

Michael Kieran Harvey piano

**EDWARD KENNEDY 'DUKE' ELLINGTON (1899–1974)**

arranged John Mauceri (born 1945)

*Harlem – A Tone Parallel to Harlem*



Friday night's performance will be recorded for later broadcast on ABC Classic FM.

Pre-concert talk by Robert Murray at 7.15pm in the Northern Foyer. Visit [sydnaysymphony.com/talk-bios](http://sydnaysymphony.com/talk-bios) for speaker biographies.

Approximate durations: 12 minutes, 16 minutes, 16 minutes, 20-minute interval, 9 minutes, 6 minutes, 18 minutes  
The concert will conclude at approximately 9.55pm.



Set design by Fernand Léger for Milhaud's *Création du monde*, premiered in 1923 at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées in Paris.

# INTRODUCTION

## Rhapsody in Blue

### An experiment in modern music?

In February 1924, the bandleader Paul Whitehead presented 'An Experiment in Modern Music' at Aeolian Hall, New York. The grandly titled concert had a gimmick: the works were to be adjudicated by a panel of experts who would decide which piece was the most 'authentically' American. The experts were Sergei Rachmaninoff, the violinists Jascha Heifetz and Efrem Zimbalist and his wife, Alma Gluck (three Russians and a Romanian – excellent credentials!).

Most of the works on the program are remembered only as footnotes to the main event: Gershwin's galvanising performance of *Rhapsody in Blue*. From its first gesture – a clarinet slide from low rumble to sleazy shriek, *con licenza* (with 'licence', i.e. freely) – it is the indelible sound of Jazz-age America, squalid dives and shining skyscrapers. However, it's filtered through an Old World orchestral style that Rachmaninoff would have recognised immediately – the Lisztian virtuoso showpiece. Gershwin infiltrated the bastion of high art by disguising his jazzy bomb as a wedding cake, so well in fact, that Rachmaninoff paid him the sincerest compliment with a jazzy Rhapsody (on a Theme of Paganini) of his own.

Of all the jazz-classical hybrids before or since, *Rhapsody in Blue* remains the most iconic (think of the opening of Woody Allen's *Manhattan* – all Gershwin and impressionistic shots of New York). Tonight's program is a dazzling sample of cross-breeds, from the chic neo-primitivism of Milhaud's *Création du monde* (which reminds us that orchestral jazz was actually born in France) to John Adams' glittering minimalist Foxtrot. For jazz musicians, the 'real' America was and always will be Manhattan, more specifically, the northern end of it, so we'll hear from Harlem too.

This, then, is our own experiment in modern music. Which pieces represent the true America? You be the judge.

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# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## John Adams

### *The Chairman Dances* – Foxtrot for Orchestra

John Adams describes *The Chairman Dances* as an ‘out-take’ from Act III of *Nixon in China*. He’d seen part of the opera’s scenario by Peter Sellars and poet Alice Goodman and, even though he had another commission to write first, he couldn’t wait to begin work on it. So the commission – a concert piece for the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra – doubled as a warm-up for the opera.

The music is an orchestral ‘foxtrot’ for Chairman Mao and his bride Chiang Ch’ing, the fabled ‘Madame Mao’ – ‘firebrand, revolutionary executioner, architect of China’s calamitous Cultural Revolution, and (a fact not universally realised) a former Shanghai movie actress’.

Adams describes the surreal final scene this way: ‘Madame Mao interrupts the tired formalities of a state banquet, disrupts the slow moving protocol and invites the Chairman, who is present only as a gigantic 40-foot portrait on the wall, to “come down, old man, and dance”. The music takes full cognisance of her past as a movie actress. Themes, sometimes slinky and sentimental, at other times bravura and bounding, ride above in bustling fabric of energised motives. Some of these themes make a dreamy reappearance in Act III of the actual opera, as both the Nixons and Maos reminisce over their distant pasts.’

According to the Sellars and Goodman scenario, somewhat altered from the final one in *Nixon in China*:

*Chiang Ch’ing, a.k.a. Madame Mao, has gatecrashed the Presidential Banquet. She is first seen standing where she is most in the way of the waiters. After a few minutes, she brings out a box of paper lanterns and hangs them around the hall, then strips down to a cheongsam, skin-tight from neck to ankle and slit up the hip. She signals the orchestra to play and begins dancing by herself. Mao is becoming excited. He steps down from his portrait on the wall, and they begin to foxtrot together. They are back in Yenan, dancing to the gramophone...*

*About the composer...*

One of America’s most admired and frequently performed composers, John Adams is a musician of enormous range and technical command. His many operatic and symphonic works are notable for their depth of expression, their sonic brilliance, and the profoundly humanist nature of their themes.

Born and raised in New England and educated at Harvard, Adams moved in 1971 to California, where he

## Keynotes

### ADAMS

*Born Worcester, Massachusetts, 1947*

John Adams’ best-known piece is *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* – the kind of exhilarating music that’s as welcome in popular concerts under the stars as it is in concert halls. It carries all the trademarks that reveal Adams as a minimalist composer: hypnotic repetition; the energy of a steady beat; and a familiar harmonic language emphasising consonance, and coloured by late-Romanticism. The result is a style that’s mesmerising and stirring.

Adams composes across many genres, but it is for his stage works that he’s become well-known, in particular his collaborations with director Peter Sellars: *Nixon in China*, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, and *Doctor Atomic*, about the development and testing of the atomic bomb in 1945.

### THE CHAIRMAN DANCES

This concert piece, an orchestral foxtrot, was composed in 1985 – before the opera *Nixon in China*, but in response to an early version of its scenario. The imagined scene draws on Madame Mao’s background as a Shanghai movie actress, and the music is sometimes ‘slinky and sentimental’, sometimes bustling and energetic

taught for ten years at the San Francisco Conservatory. His innovative concerts led to his appointment as contemporary music adviser to the San Francisco Symphony and then as the orchestra's composer-in-residence between 1979 and 1985, the period in which his reputation became established with the success of such works as *Harmonium* and *Harmonielehre*.

Adams's operatic works include *Nixon in China*, *The Death of Klinghoffer* and *Doctor Atomic*, all created in collaboration with director Peter Sellars. *On the Transmigration of Souls*, written for the New York Philharmonic to mark the first anniversary of the World Trade Center attacks, received the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Music, and won a rare triple crown of Grammy awards: Best Classical Recording, Best Orchestral Performance and Best Classical Contemporary Composition.

Nonesuch Records released Adams's *Harmonielehre* in 1985, and all of his works since then have appeared first on that label. A ten-CD set, *The John Adams Earbox*, documents his recorded music to 2000, and the most recent release features the *Doctor Atomic* Symphony with David Robertson conducting the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra.

Adams's autobiography *Hallelujah Junction* was named one of the 'most notable books' of 2008 by the *New York Times*, and *The John Adams Reader: Essential Writings on an American Composer* (2006), edited by Thomas May, is the first in-depth anthology of texts dealing with more than 30 years of creative life.

John Adams is also a conductor, appearing with the world's leading orchestras. A regular guest at the BBC Proms, in recent seasons he has also conducted the London Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and New York Philharmonic, as well as orchestras in Atlanta, Stockholm, Pittsburgh, Montreal, San Francisco and Detroit.

ADAPTED IN PART FROM A NOTE BY JOHN ADAMS ©1999

*The Chairman Dances* calls for an orchestra of two flutes (doubling piccolos), two oboes, two clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet) and two bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, two trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion; harp and piano; and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed *The Chairman Dances* in 1992 with Jorge Mester conducting, and most recently in the 2007 Symphony in the Domain concert, conducted by Charles Hazlewood.



### John Adams in Sydney

The Sydney Symphony has a long history of performing music by John Adams, including more than a few Australian premieres.

*Harmonium* (1986) – Edo de Waart, the work's dedicatee, will conduct its 30th anniversary performances in Sydney in 2011.

*Shaker Loops* (1986)

*Short Ride in a Fast Machine* (1988)

*The Wound-Dresser* (1990)

*Naive and Sentimental Music* (2000) – co-commissioned by the Sydney Symphony.

*Century Rolls* (2001)

*Guide to Strange Places* (2003) – co-commissioned by the Sydney Symphony.

*On the Transmigration of Souls* (2004 Sydney Festival)

*Doctor Atomic Symphony* (July 2010)

OFFICIAL WEBSITE: [www.earbox.com](http://www.earbox.com)

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## Darius Milhaud

### *La Création du monde* (The Creation of the World) – Suite

Many of the jazz-inspired works of the 1920s by ‘serious’ composers now strike us as period pieces. Of those that do not, Milhaud’s *Création du monde* stands out as pungently memorable, not only nostalgic, but an ever-fresh concert hall standard. It was composed for a ‘jazz’ ballet, on a scenario by one-armed poet, novelist and journalist Blaise Cendrars. Sets and costumes were by Fernand Léger, and the choreography by Jean Börlin. The commission was from the Ballets Suédois of Rolf de Maré, one of Diaghilev’s rivals among Paris impresarios, and the first performance was given in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on 15 October 1923.

Cendrars had recently edited a collection of African folk tales, and his ballet scenario portrayed the creation myth as told in African legend. Giant gods, trees which impregnate the earth with their seed, leaves transformed into animals, men and girls emerging from the trees and performing a mating dance, until they disperse, leaving a single couple on stage, united in love. Léger’s setting was inspired by primitive African art, with animal costumes in dazzling colours, with strange beaks, and totem figures. The backdrop was cubed and squared, with horned creatures and undulating clouds. Léger had wanted his animal skins to be inflatable, an idea which had to be dropped because the sound of whooshing gas would have drowned out the orchestra!

Milhaud’s music was written for a band of 19 soloists, with prominent piano and percussion – the exact instrumentation of the African-American opera *Liza*, by Maceo Pinkard, which Milhaud had heard in New York’s Harlem. From his time in Rio as secretary to Paul Claudel, the French ambassador to Brazil (1916–18), Milhaud had travelled extensively and heard much exotic music. But all these influences were thoroughly integrated into his evolving personal style. In Paris, Milhaud himself could be considered exotic. The prominent saxophone in *La Création du monde* – presenting in the prelude a darkly lyrical theme which will return in a kind of rondo structure – has obvious jazz associations. But it also recalls the pioneering saxophone part in *L’Arlésienne*, Bizet’s music for a play set in Milhaud’s native Provence. ‘Provence,’ Milhaud once wrote, ‘reaches all the way from Constantinople to Rio.’

## Keynotes

### MILHAUD

*Born Marseilles, 1892*  
*Died Geneva, 1974*

Darius Milhaud was a well-travelled and highly prolific composer. His catalogue of works stretches to opus 443 and covers almost every classical genre – symphonic, chamber, piano, choral, vocal, film, ballet, theatre music and opera. He grew up in Provence, spent nearly two years in Brazil as a young man, and was a composition teacher in both France and the USA for the latter part of his life.

### THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

Written in 1923, the year before Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*, this is the first work to integrate jazz so explicitly with classical music. *The Creation of the World* is a short ballet based on African creation myths. There are five sections that flow into each other without a break. A slow introduction featuring the alto saxophone leads to the interweaving lines of a fugue, begun by the double bass – a true blending of jazz style with classical form. This represents the chaos out of which the world is created, and in the following *Romance* and lively *Scherzo*, plants and animals are brought to life. Finally, a clarinet solo introduces the groovy final section, in which man and woman are created.



...blended jazz style  
with classical feeling.

The major/minor contours of the saxophone theme also recall Milhaud's family origins, suggesting an affinity between the experience of the black and the Jewish races.

The jazz fugue which begins the first of the fast sections of the music, led by the double bass and punctuated by staccato chords from piano and 'rhythm', illustrates Milhaud's contention that in *La Création du monde* he blended jazz style with classical feeling. As James Harding has written: 'Moving swiftly from incantation to frenzy and back to peace again, the music beautifully expresses the mystery and sweetness of its theme.'

A genial and lovable personality, Milhaud was one of the 20th century's most fertile composers, who lived to compose. As a member of Jean Cocteau's circle of composers, the *Groupe des Six*, he made his worldwide reputation with music well-attuned to the chic Parisian fashions of the 1920s, which the depths of his imagination and skill often transcended. Among his well over 400 works, however, the most fascinating and compelling remain those based on his experiences as a young man: the ballet *L'Homme et son désir* (1918), inspired by the mysterious Brazilian forest at nightfall, and *La Création du monde*, where he used jazz to create the hypothetical music of prehistoric black Africa.

DAVID GARRETT ©2003

Milhaud's *Creation of the World* calls for a small orchestra of two flutes, oboe, two clarinets, bassoon and alto saxophone; horn, two trumpets and trombone; timpani and percussion; a prominent piano part and a quartet of strings (two violins, cello and double bass).

The Sydney Symphony first performed *The Creation of the World* in 1960, conducted by Bernard Heinze, and most recently in 1996, conducted by John Harding.



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## George Gershwin

### *Rhapsody in Blue*

Michael Kieran Harvey piano

### *An American in Paris*

It is now commonplace for composers to move between the disciplines of classical music and jazz. Leonard Bernstein, Gunther Schuller and André Previn are just three who, in the last quarter of the ‘American century’, helped blur the distinctions. But in this respect Brooklyn-born George Gershwin was a pioneer.

He started out on Tin Pan Alley, churning out what he hoped would be hit tunes. His first published piece was the song *When you want 'em, you can't get 'em, when you got 'em, you don't want 'em* (lyrics by Murray Roth), but he struck gold – royalties of \$10,000 in the first year alone – with *Swanee*, recorded in 1919 by Al Jolson.

Gershwin, however, always wanted to be recognised as a ‘serious’ composer. He had begun taking harmony lessons with Edward Kilenyi in 1915, and composed a lullaby for string quartet in the same year as *Swanee*. In 1924, band leader Paul Whiteman commissioned him to write a piano concerto for a projected concert ‘An Experiment in Modern Music’. Whiteman convinced Gershwin that he truly had the talent to write the piece in less than a month (!) and reassured him that he could delegate the orchestration to Ferde Grofé, the band’s arranger.

The piece, **Rhapsody in Blue**, falls clearly into the three-movement fast–slow–fast pattern standard for classical piano concertos, but has a popular feel in the cast of its melodies and the odd blues inflection. The opening clarinet cadenza is probably the most obvious ‘jazz’ feature.

Themes for the concerto began spontaneously to run through Gershwin’s head on a train trip to Boston for the premiere of his musical comedy *Sweet Little Devil*. The clinkety-clack of the long-distance trip inspired rhythms which we recognise to be as American as anything which came out of Hollywood or Broadway in the 1920s. Gershwin himself heard the piece as ‘a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America – of our vast melting pot, of our unduplicated national pep, of our blues, our metropolitan madness’. *Rhapsody in Blue* is probably more likely to be criticised these days for not really being jazz, rather than not being ‘serious’. But we could ask if any of this criticism is much to the point. The piece is almost profoundly American.

## Keynotes

### GERSHWIN

*Born Brooklyn, New York, 1898*

*Died Hollywood, California, 1937*

As well as being a fine pianist, George Gershwin pursued a double composing career. At first his melodic gift had drawn him into the popular music industry – churning out songs in Tin Pan Alley, and then writing for Broadway and Hollywood. But he also longed to be accepted as a ‘serious’ composer for the concert hall, and works such as the *Piano Concerto in F* and the opera *Porgy and Bess* fuse American popular music with classical forms.

### RHAPSODY IN BLUE

In 1924, Paul Whiteman asked Gershwin to write a ‘jazz concerto’ for an upcoming concert. Whiteman was the leader of an odd ensemble, somewhere between an orchestra and a jazz band, and the concert was called ‘An Experiment in Modern Music’ – a chance for Gershwin to present himself as a composer of concert music. *Rhapsody in Blue* is in one continuous movement, but still has the traditional fast–slow–fast structure of a concerto. The premiere was a great success – the audience was captivated by the work’s distinctly American tone, Gershwin’s brilliant performance of the solo part, and Ferde Grofé’s orchestration (beginning with that unmistakeable clarinet slide).



#### AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

Gershwin had visited Paris several times in the 1920s, and often thought of writing a piece based on his impressions. *An American in Paris* was completed in 1928, and Gershwin proudly referred to it as a 'tone poem for orchestra' – a piece which suggests a scenario through music. The opening evokes the busy streets of Paris (complete with honking taxi horns), but after strolling around enjoying the sights, the American tourist of the title succumbs to homesickness (appropriately conveyed by the 'blues'), before the sudden sound of a Charleston, belted out by a trumpet, raises his spirits, and he heads out to enjoy the loud Parisian nightlife.

The 1920s, however, saw a great deal of cross-fertilisation between America and France in the musical sense. In Paris in the spring of 1928 Gershwin sought out Ravel, Milhaud, Georges Auric, and Poulenc as well as Russian émigrés such as Stravinsky and Prokofiev. Unsure of his own abilities, he sought instruction. But his main focus was a 'rhapsodic ballet' which had first occurred to him on a previous visit. He was sufficiently advanced with the score in mid-1928 to offer it to the New York Philharmonic, who premiered it under Walter Damrosch at Carnegie Hall on 13 December that year.

According to Gershwin, *An American in Paris* is meant to reflect the impressions made by that city on a wide-eyed American visitor. There is local flavour, even down to the use in the first few minutes of klaxon horns, meant to represent Paris taxicabs. Gershwin described the piece in a program note:

*My purpose here is to portray the impressions of an American visitor in Paris as he strolls about the city, listens to various street noises, and absorbs the French atmosphere.*

The opening gay section is followed by a rich 'blues' with a strong rhythmic undercurrent. Our American friend, perhaps after strolling into a café and having a couple of drinks, has succumbed to a spasm of homesickness. The harmony here is both more intense and simple than in the preceding pages.

This 'blues' rises to a climax followed by a coda in which the spirit of the music returns to the vivacity and bubbling exuberance of the opening part with its impressions of Paris. Apparently the homesick American, having left the café and reached the open air, has downed his spell of blues and once again is an alert spectator of Parisian life.

At the conclusion, the street noises and French atmosphere are triumphant.

An *American in Paris* premiered in New York during the run of Gershwin's latest Broadway show *Treasure Girl*, containing hit songs such as 'Feeling I'm Falling' and 'I've Got a Crush on You'. It is reasonable to ask how successfully the Broadway composer was making the transition to the concert hall. How successfully had Gershwin crossed over into the concert hall sphere with this 'divertissement'? While *American in Paris*'s sequences may lack the 'structural inevitability' of much concert music, its combination of sophisticated orchestration with catchy melodies is the key to its charm. Significantly, unlike *Rhapsody in Blue*, this was the first work Gershwin himself orchestrated, as if proving his mastery.

*An American in Paris* has attained classic status, in that other meaning of the term. It is quintessentially American, and not just because the ending is a Charleston 'without a trace of Gallic flavour' (Deems Taylor's description), or because the lead trumpet must 'swing' like a native when it comes to the Charleston's particular *notes inégales*. It's American in the sense Leonard Bernstein meant when he said:

*I don't think there's anyone in the country – or, in the world, for that matter – who wouldn't know right away that Gershwin's music – say, An American in Paris – is American music. It's got 'America' written all over it – not just in the title, and not just because the composer was American. It's in the music itself: it sounds American, smells American, makes you feel American when you hear it. This too might be considered an example of 'our unduplicated national pep, of our blues, our metropolitan madness.'*

ADAPTED FROM NOTES BY GORDON KALTON WILLIAMS  
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA ©2010

***An American in Paris* has attained classic status, in that other meaning of the term.**

Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* calls for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, bass clarinet and two bassoons; two alto saxophones and tenor saxophone; three horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion; banjo and strings. *An American in Paris* calls for three flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, bass clarinet and two bassoons; alto, tenor and baritone saxophones; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion; celesta and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed *Rhapsody in Blue* on 22 May 1950 conducted by Eugene Goossens with Maureen Jones as soloist, and most recently in 2004 conducted by Steven Mercurio with Simon Trpčeski. We first performed *An American in Paris* in the same concert in 1950, and most recently in 2001 conducted by Peter McCoppin.

## Leonard Bernstein

### Prelude, Fugue and Riffs

Francesco Celata clarinet

Written in 1949 for clarinet and jazz ensemble, Bernstein's *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs* was commissioned by Woody Herman, one of the all-time great exponents of jazz clarinet. Herman wanted to initiate a fusion between jazz and classical elements – he not only commissioned Bernstein but other composers such as Stravinsky (*Ebony Concerto*) to write for this genre. Herman's band was larger than the average jazz ensemble, and incorporated more traditionally 'classical' instruments such as harp.

By the time Bernstein completed *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs*, however, Herman's ensemble had disbanded and he had abandoned his plans for an extended series of new works. In fact he never performed the piece Bernstein wrote for him. It was first performed on 16 October 1955 in a television program entitled *What is Jazz?*, with Bernstein conducting and Benny Goodman playing the solo clarinet part. (A recording of Bernstein and Goodman playing this piece with the Columbia Jazz Combo recorded at a concert in 1963 is available on CD in various releases.)

Influenced by Stravinsky and Copland, Bernstein speaks the language of contemporary music, and especially jazz, with great ease. 'Improvisation is the real core of all jazz,' said Bernstein, and some say that he perfected the idea of an American music based on jazz. This is demonstrated in this raucous, lively and inventive piece derived from swing. *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs* could easily be called 'From Bach to Jazz' because it interprets the baroque genres of the prelude and fugue using elements of jazz.

Bernstein's **Prelude** is characterised by off-beat rhythms on the trumpets and trombones, which are juxtaposed with the big band sound. This is followed by the **Fugue** for saxophone quintet. The **Riffs**, sounding like a 'jam session' combine repeated rhythmic variations with the two fugue subjects, each retaining its own character in the contrapuntal mix. This is music that understands improvisation and swing, the result being a reconciliation between the baroque and jazz elements.

JULIE SIMONDS

SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA ©1998

In addition to the solo clarinet, *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs* calls for a jazz ensemble of two alto saxophones, two tenor saxophones, baritone saxophone, five trumpets, four trombones, percussion, double bass and piano.

The Sydney Symphony first performed this piece in 1998, with Mark Elder, and most recently in 2001, with Richard Mills. Lawrence Dobell was the soloist on both occasions. Francesco Celata performed it with Edo de Waart in 2000.

## Keynotes

### BERNSTEIN

*Born Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1918  
Died New York, 1990*

**Bernstein was an all-round musician: composer, conductor and pianist – and a gifted communicator as well. He was the first American to be appointed to a chief conductor post in a major orchestra (the New York Philharmonic) and his achievements made him the most famous native-born musician in the history of American classical music. Most significant of all, as a conductor and a composer he thrived equally on Broadway and in the world of 'serious' concert hall music.**

### PRELUDE, FUGUE AND RIFFS

**The title is the clue to this short piece for solo clarinet and jazz ensemble. 'Prelude' and 'Fugue' are both baroque genres, best known from Bach's 48 preludes and fugues for keyboard. 'Riffs' points to the jazz-inflected language of the music. Heard in this concert, the fugue echoes the similar fugal section in Milhaud's *Creation of the World*.**

## Edward Kennedy ‘Duke’ Ellington arranged by John Mauceri

### *Harlem – A Tone Parallel to Harlem*

In 1923, the 24-year-old bandleader Edward Kennedy Ellington moved from his home in Washington DC to Harlem, the famous African-American community in New York. Occupying the northern section of Manhattan Island, its borders are loosely drawn between 110th Street, St Nicholas and Fifth Avenues, and the Harlem River.

Harlem is a bubbling gumbo of communities; Italian, Jewish, Latino and elite Protestant have each staked their own claim to it, no more so than the African-American community who have declared it their ‘national capital’. No wonder Bill Clinton raised eyebrows in 2001 when he set up his post-presidential office on West 125th Street, slap-bang in the middle of the ‘economic empowerment zone’ designated for urban renewal by his administration in 1993.

No doubt the saxophone-playing ex-Prez found himself at home in the Cotton Club and among those other great temples of jazz, theatres like the Lincoln, Lafayette and Apollo. Duke Ellington and his Orchestra were born at a recording session there on 26 November 1926. They once played under the pseudonym The Harlem Footwarmers, and knew all those Harlem venues intimately. The Duke was on first-name terms with its celebrities and down-and-outers, its dazzling nightlife and sobering daytime squalor, its glittering potential and everyday depression, its fervour and resilience. ‘There is so much to see in Harlem,’ the great black poet Langston Hughes once declared. Duke Ellington became Harlem’s tour guide in music.

From the early 30s, Ellington created a number of short pieces celebrating his neighbourhood: *Drop me off in Harlem*, *Echoes of Harlem*, *Blue Belles of Harlem* and especially the ‘Sugar Hill Penthouse’ section of the last movement of *Black, Brown and Beige*, the 50-minute suite that he subtitled ‘A Tone Parallel to the History of the American Negro’. All these became preliminary sketches for the most extensive musical tour of them all, the suite *Harlem*, subtitled ‘A Tone Parallel to Harlem’.

In 1950, Arturo Toscanini had commissioned Ellington to write a piece for his NBC Symphony Orchestra. Returning from a European tour, Ellington composed the work on his trans-Atlantic crossing in the *Ile de France*. Inexplicably, the Toscanini performance never materialised, and Ellington premiered his new *Harlem* suite with his own orchestra in the Metropolitan Opera House in January 1951.

## Keynotes

### ELLINGTON

*Born Washington DC, 1899  
Died New York, 1974*

**He was christened Edward Kennedy Ellington in 1899; by the time he was 12 years old his innate elegance and aplomb had already given rise to a new name, ‘Duke’. He was destined to be musical royalty, a household name, a musician with a lasting influence and an enduring appeal.**

**Ellington’s band was his instrument, but he found a voice in the concert hall, too, with music conceived for orchestra. And one of his mentors was Will Marion Cook, who’d studied with Dvořák at the pioneering National Conservatory of Music in the 1890s, and had become the ‘grand old man of African-American music’.**

### HARLEM

***Harlem* was commissioned by the conductor Arturo Toscanini for the NBC Symphony Orchestra, although it was premiered in 1951 by Ellington’s own orchestra. It can be heard as a stroll through the sights and sounds of Harlem, and has been compared to a film montage. In this concert it’s performed in an orchestral arrangement by John Mauceri.**

Ellington's design takes the listener on a musical stroll of the sights and sounds of Harlem. Somewhat akin to Mussorgsky's linking Promenades in *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Ellington's tour is announced in a succession of falling minor thirds, perhaps an onomatopoeic singing of the word 'Harlem'. In his liner notes to *Ellington Upstage*, originally issued on a 1953 LP, Stanley Dance compares the process to that of film montage techniques, where scenes 'follow one another with bewildering rapidity, overlapping and dissolving [to] illustrate the different facets of the city within a city'.

In the *International Dictionary of Black Composers* (1999), Mark Tucker cautions the listener not to expect large-scale structural control and intricate craft, but rather 'the visceral impact of a particular urban landscape...[revealing] Ellington at his most sensational, bombarding the listener with musical images, vividly evoking the rhythms of the community and the complex, richly textured lives of its inhabitants'.

Mostly in its symphonic version by Maurice Peress, *Harlem* has enjoyed more performances in the concert hall than any other of Ellington's more extended cycles. Beyond his death in 1974, it has been performed extensively by the Ellington Orchestra, directed first by his son Mercer and now by grandson Paul. In 1995 it was the subject of extended analysis in performance by Wynton Marsalis and the 17-piece Jazz Orchestra of Lincoln Center in Marsalis' *Making of Music* series for National Public Radio.

In 1979 the pianist Bobby Short launched The Ellington Project, designed to erect a memorial to Duke Ellington in New York. It would become the city's first monument to an African-American artist, and the first memorial to Ellington anywhere in the USA. On 1 July 1997, practically every civic dignitary in the Big Apple gathered to watch the unveiling of Robert Graham's Duke Ellington Memorial, on the north-eastern corner of Central Park.

A few blocks away, 14 floors above number 55 West 125th Street, Bill Clinton has a fine view of it from his office window.

VINCENT PLUSH ©2003

The Mauceri orchestral arrangement of *Harlem* calls for two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, bass clarinet and two bassoons; two alto saxophones, two tenor saxophones and baritone saxophone; four horns, five trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion; harp, keyboard and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed *Harlem* in 1999 in a Sydney Festival Proms Concert conducted by Sian Edwards, and most recently in a Meet the Music concert in 2001, conducted by Peter McCoppin.



Over time, *Harlem* has come to exist in three versions. Well into the 1970s, Ellington often performed the work with his own jazz orchestra. In 1955, Ellington and the Symphony of the Air performed a version for jazz and symphony orchestras together at Carnegie Hall. For this, the Duke had engaged Luther Henderson to re-orchestrate some numbers. Beyond this, in 1988, the conductor Maurice Peress, whose principal enthusiasm lies with revivals of jazz-inspired American orchestral masterworks, premiered his version for symphony orchestra alone.

# GLOSSARY

**CADENZA** – a virtuoso passage for a solo instrument

**CHARLESTON** – a fast *foxtrot* named for the city in South Carolina but popularised in 1920s New York, reaching ballrooms via music hall revues such as the *Ziegfeld Follies*. It was an athletic dance, involving twisting on each foot, sharp side kicks, off-beat steps and swinging arms.

**CONTRAPUNTAL** – a style of music in which two or more independent musical lines or melodies are played at the same time (counterpoint). See *fugue*.

**FOXTROT** – a social dance originating around 1910 from American ragtime dances and popular into the 1920s, and related to dances such as the *Charleston*. The basis of the foxtrot was a smooth walk at two beats per step and a fast ‘trot’ at one beat per step, with tempos that ranged between 30 and 40 bars per minute. Its appeal stemmed in part from the fact that it could be done to almost any popular tune with regular four-bar phrases.

**FUGUE** – a musical form in which a short melody, the subject, is first sounded by one part or instrument alone, and is then taken up in imitation by other parts or instruments one after the other. The Latin *fuga* is related to the idea of both ‘fleeing’ and ‘chasing’. Its golden age was the 18th century, when it became a formalised genre, and J.S. Bach counts as the greatest writer of fugues in musical history.

**GROUPE DES SIX** – also known as *Les Six*, a group of French composers, active in the early 1920s: Auric, Durey, Honegger, Milhaud, Poulenc and Tailleferre. With Satie as inspiration, Cocteau as promoter, and an *enfant terrible* sensibility, *Les Six* aimed for brevity and wit, and sought out whimsical subject matter.

**MINOR THIRD** – the interval between the first and third notes of a minor scale (e.g. the notes A and C in A minor). The interval bell here at the Sydney Opera House oscillates over a minor third, and traditionally the call of the cuckoo is a falling minor third.

**NOTES INÉGALES** – in baroque music this is the French term for a rhythmic device in which notes that are *written* as having equal values are in fact played in a gentle long–short–long–short pattern. It is, in effect, the baroque ancestor of jazz swing and requires the same subtlety of rhythmic judgement and instinct in performance.

**PRELUDE** – originally an improvised piece preceding other music in the same key or mode, with the rhetorical function of catching attention and introducing a ‘topic’ and the practical function of checking an instrument’s tuning on the fly. The **PRELUDES AND FUGUES** of Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* are the high baroque manifestation of this practice.

**RONDO** – a musical form in which a main idea (refrain) alternates with a series of musical episodes. Not dissimilar in concept to the verse and chorus structure of many songs.

**STACCATO** – a crisp style of musical articulation in which the notes of a phrase are played shorter than their notated duration and are detached from each other. (Think of the idiom: the staccato sound of a machine-gun.)

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.

In this program: Gershwin and Milhaud keynotes by David Lang, 2010 AYO Music Presentation Fellow.

# MORE MUSIC

## Selected Discography

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### AMERICA...

Simon Rattle conducts the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the London Sinfonietta in a box set which includes Adams' *Chairman Dances*, Bernstein's *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs*, Duke Ellington's *Harlem* and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Michael Collins is the clarinetist in the Bernstein, and Wayne Marshall takes the solo in *Rhapsody in Blue*.

EMI CLASSICS 15014

For another recording of *The Chairman Dances*, try the one by Edo de Waart and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, on an all-Adams disc.

NONESUCH 79144

If you're looking for some authentic Ellington, there's also a digitally re-mastered version of a live recording of *Harlem* (and other pieces) from a concert by Duke Ellington and his band in Stockholm in 1964.

PABLO 2308245

Leonard Bernstein conducts and plays Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and *An American in Paris* in recordings with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic. The disc is completed with Gershwin's *Piano Concerto in F*, with André Previn as soloist and the André Kostelanetz Orchestra.

SONY 78768

And Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Marin Alsop have recorded Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in its original arrangement for jazz band with members of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

DECCA 478 2189

### ...AND THE WORLD

For Milhaud's *Creation of the World*, nothing beats Arthur Weisberg's recording with the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble on a disc which also includes a suite of orchestral pieces from Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera*.

NONESUCH 71281

### KRISTJAN JÄRVI

Kristjan Järvi's latest recording is *Cantique*, a CD of works by Estonian composer Arvo Pärt with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra and the RIAS Chamber Choir. The disc includes Pärt's *Stabat Mater*, and the premiere recording of his *Cantique des degrés*.

SONY CLASSICAL 7723342

He has also recorded Bernstein's *Mass* with Austrian musicians and Randall Scarlata as the Celebrant.

CHANDOS 5070

### MICHAEL KIERAN HARVEY

Michael Kieran Harvey's most recent release is a disc of solo piano pieces by Carl Vine. Released in 2007, the CD includes Vine's First and Second Piano Sonatas and several smaller works.

TALL POPPIES 190

## Broadcast Diary

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### OCTOBER–NOVEMBER

Saturday 16 October, 8pm

#### BEETHOVEN & STRAVINSKY MASTERPIECES

**Kristjan Järvi** conductor

**Renaud Capuçon** violin

Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, Stravinsky

Thursday 28 October, 1.05pm

#### TCHAIKOVSKY'S FIRST PIANO CONCERTO

**Richard Gill, Thomas Adès** conductors

**Maxwell Foster** piano

Paul Stanhope, Tchaikovsky, Adès, Tchaikovsky

Wednesday 3 November, 8pm

#### BEST OF BERNSTEIN

**David Robertson** conductor

**Amelia Farrugia** soprano, **James Egglestone** tenor

**Orli Shaham** piano

Monday 8 November, 7pm

#### ARABIAN NIGHTS

**Alexander Lazarev** conductor

**Jean-Yves Thibaudet** piano

Khachaturian, Saint-Saëns, Rimsky-Korsakov

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#### SYDNEY SYMPHONY 2010

Tuesday 12 October, 6pm

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

## Webcast Diary

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## Sydney Symphony Online

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

## Have Your Say

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## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### **Kristjan Järvi** conductor

Estonian-born and American-raised, Kristjan Järvi is a distinctive musical personality who has combined his classical roots and affinity for traditional repertoire with an infectious enthusiasm for creating original programs. He studied piano at the Manhattan School of Music and conducting at the University of Michigan, and began his career assisting Esa-Pekka Salonen at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, before appointments as Chief Conductor of the Norrlands Opera and Symphony Orchestra, Sweden, and the Tonkünstler Orchestra, Vienna.

He is Artistic Advisor to the Basel Chamber Orchestra, and Founder and Music Director of New York's Absolute Ensemble. His commitment to all genres is reflected in collaborations with Arvo Pärt, Tan Dun, John Adams, Esa-Pekka Salonen, HK Gruber, Renée Fleming, Joe Zawinul, Benny Andersson, Goran Bregovic, Paquito d'Rivera, Eitetsu Hayashi and Marcel Khalife, and he has been responsible for the commissioning of more than a hundred new works.

He regularly conducts the London Symphony Orchestra, with whom he has toured Europe and Asia, as well as appearing with the Staatskapelle Dresden, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, NDR Hamburg, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre de Paris, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia Rome, National Symphony Orchestra Washington, and NHK Symphony Japan.

Kristjan Järvi is a dynamic and enterprising music educator. In 2006 he founded the Absolute Academy in Bremen, and he is the founding conductor and music director of the Baltic Youth Philharmonic. He is also co-founded of the Muusikaselts Estonian Orphanage Program and he has worked with Japan's Hyogo Youth Orchestra, the Norwegian Youth Orchestra, Junge Deutsche Philharmonie, National Repertory Orchestra, Colorado, and with the Sydney Symphony's Sinfonia.

His recording accolades include a Grammy nomination, and a *Gramophone* magazine 'Editor's Choice' for his recording of Bernstein's Mass. Other releases include Haydn's Paris symphonies, Mahler's arrangement of Beethoven's Ninth, Absolute Zawinul (the late Joe Zawinul's final studio recording), and *Cantique*, a recording of Pärt's new Stabat Mater and other works.

Kristjan Järvi's most recent appearance with the Sydney Symphony was in 2008.



## Michael Kieran Harvey piano

Michael Kieran Harvey was born in Sydney and studied piano with Alan Jenkins and Gordon Watson, and at the Liszt Academy in Budapest under Sándor Falvai. Based in Tasmania, his career has been notable for its diversity and wide repertoire. He has especially promoted the work of Australian and contemporary composers and recorded more than thirty solo CDs on various labels.

His awards include the Grand Prix in the Ivo Pogorelich Competition, USA (1993), the Debussy Medal, Paris (1986), the Australian Government's Centenary Medal (2002), and the 2009 APRA award for Distinguished Services to Australian Music. The Michael Kieran Harvey Scholarship was established in 2006 to encourage future directions in Australian keyboard art music. He is currently on staff at the Australian National Academy of Music.



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## Francesco Celata

ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL CLARINET

Francesco Celata graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 1987. Following studies in Amsterdam with Piet Honingh of the Concertgebouw Orchestra, and in Siena with Giuseppe Garbarino, in 1991 he returned to Australia, where he was appointed Principal Clarinet with the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra.

He has been a member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra since 1993, and has appeared as soloist on numerous occasions, including performances of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto; Bernstein's *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs*; Krommer's Double Clarinet Concerto with Lawrence Dobell; and a concerto written for him by Australian composer Gordon Kerry. He has also appeared as soloist with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and the Auckland Philharmonia, and regularly performs as guest principal with the Melbourne, Tasmanian and Queensland symphony orchestras.

Since 2003, he has also appeared on a number of occasions as guest principal clarinet with the London Symphony Orchestra. His performances with the LSO have included concerts at the Salzburg Festival, the Yehudi Menuhin Festival in Gstaad, Switzerland, and the Olympic Cultural Festival prior to the Athens Games, as well as recordings.

Francesco Celata is an active chamber musician and is a founding member of one of Sydney's leading chamber ensembles, the Sydney Soloists. He has taught clarinet at the Sydney Conservatorium since 1994, and earlier this year he was appointed Artistic Director of the Australian International Symphony Orchestral Institute, which attracts Australia's finest young orchestral players.



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# MUSICIANS

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## Performing in this concert...

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Associate Concertmaster

#### Kirsten Williams

Associate Concertmaster

#### Fiona Ziegler

Assistant Concertmaster

#### Julie Batty

Jennifer Booth

Brielle Clapson

Sophie Cole

Amber Gunther

Georges Lentz

Nicole Masters

Alexandra Mitchell

Emily Qin#

Martin Silvertown\*

Robin Wilson\*

Jane Hazelwood

Justine Marsden

Felicity Tsai

Leonid Volovelsky

Jacqueline Cronin#

Arabella Bozic†

Jennifer Curl\*

### CELLOS

#### Leah Lynn

Assistant Principal

Kristy Conrau

Elizabeth Neville

David Wickham

Rowena Crouch

William Hewart†

Emma-Jane Murphy\*

Rachael Tobin\*

### CLARINETS

#### Lawrence Dobell

Christopher Tingay

#### Craig Wernicke

Principal Bass Clarinet

### BASSOONS

#### Roger Brooke

Fiona McNamara

### SAXOPHONES

Christina Leonard\*

Martin Kay\*

James Nightingale\*

Andrew Smith\*

Jarrold Whitbourn\*

### HORNS

#### Ben Jacks

#### Geoffrey O'Reilly

Principal 3rd

Marnie Sebire

Euan Harvey

Francesco Lo Surdo†

### TRUMPETS

#### Daniel Mendelow

#### Bob Coassin\*

#### Paul Goodchild

John Foster

Anthony Heinrichs

### TROMBONES

#### Ronald Prussing

#### Scott Kinmont

Nick Byrne

#### Christopher Harris

Principal Trombones

### TUBA

#### Steve Rossé

### TIMPANI

#### Richard Miller

### PERCUSSION

#### Rebecca Lagos

Colin Piper

Mark Robinson

### DRUM KIT

Brian Nixon\*

### HARP

#### Louise Johnson

### SECOND VIOLINS

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#### Jennifer Hoy

Assistant Principal

Susan Dobbie

Principal Emeritus

Maria Durek

Emma Hayes

Shuti Huang

Benjamin Li

Emily Long

Philippa Paige

Manu Berkeljon\*

Mariana Green†

Belinda Jezek\*

### DOUBLE BASSES

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#### Alex Henery

Neil Brawley

Principal Emeritus

David Campbell

Steven Larson

David Murray

### FLUTES

#### Emma Sholl

#### Rosamund Plummer

Principal Piccolo

Bridget Bolliger\*

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# 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, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and, most recently, Gianluigi Gelmetti. The orchestra's history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

The Sydney Symphony's award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. The Sydney Symphony promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program. Recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards, Liza Lim, Lee Bracegirdle and Georges Lentz, and the orchestra's recording of works by Brett Dean was released on both the BIS and Sydney Symphony Live labels.

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

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

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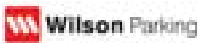
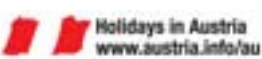


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