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Vladimir Ashkenazy
Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor

2010 SEASON

TCHAIKOVSKY

SPECTACULAR

VIOLIN CONCERTO  SLEEPING BEAUTY

FRI 10 DECEMBER 11AM

TEA & SYMPHONY
PRESENTED BY:


EXCELLENCE SUISSE DEPUIS 1910

WELCOME TO TEA & SYMPHONY



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

In this morning's all-Tchaikovsky program, we welcome Canadian James Ehnes back to Sydney to perform one of the most challenging pieces in the violin repertoire: Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto. Vladimir Ashkenazy appears in his second Tea & Symphony concert for the year, conducting his own suite of pieces from *The Sleeping Beauty*. It's a story that's been passed down through generations – Tchaikovsky was inspired by Charles Perrault's exquisite telling of the fairy tale, but perhaps you know a different version.

From the dazzling virtuosity of the Violin Concerto to the Sleeping Beauty and her prince, there's just something enchanting about Tchaikovsky's music.

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

We hope you enjoy this morning's program with the Sydney Symphony, and look forward to welcoming you to future concerts in the series in 2011.



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

Oscar A. Kambly
Chairman
Kambly of Switzerland

2010 SEASON
TEA & SYMPHONY
PRESENTED BY KAMBLY

Friday 10 December | 11am
Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

TCHAIKOVSKY

SPECTACULAR

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
James Ehnes violin

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)
Violin Concerto Op.35

Allegro moderato
Canzonetta (Andante) –
Finale (Allegro vivacissimo)

TCHAIKOVSKY
The Sleeping Beauty: Suite from the ballet

FROM THE PROLOGUE

Introduction –
March (Entrance of King Florestan and his Court)
Scène dansante (Entrance of the Good Fairies)
Fée aux Miettes (The Breadcrumb Fairy)
Canari qui chante (The Singing Canary)

FROM ACT I

Waltz
Rose Adagio – Coda –
Finale

FROM ACT II

Scène –
Panorama
Entr'acte symphonique (The Sleep) et scène –
Finale

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Music from this concert will be
broadcast across Australia on
ABC Classic FM on Saturday
11 December at 8pm.

Approximate durations:
34 minutes, 50 minutes

The concert will conclude at
approximately 12:35pm


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ABOUT THE MUSIC

TCHAIKOVSKY

Violin Concerto Op.35

James Ehnes violin

The first bad review of a masterpiece has a curious allure. There is something forlorn and fascinating about the French critic of the 1850s who proclaimed that *Rigoletto* 'lacks melody', or George Bernard Shaw's declaration that Goetz was a greater symphonist than Brahms. Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto is a distinguished member of that company of musical masterpieces that survived a traumatic debut to become one of the most beloved works of its kind.

It could almost be described as a love letter. In 1878 the composer was still feeling the repercussions from his short-lived marriage and had begun the lengthy and difficult process of obtaining a divorce. He and his brother Modest took a holiday in Clarens, on Lake Geneva. Here, in March, they were joined by the violinist Josef Kotek, one of Tchaikovsky's pupils at the Moscow Conservatory, who had introduced the composer's music to his future patron, Nadezhda von Meck.

At some point in their long friendship, according to Tchaikovsky biographer Alexander Poznansky, the two men became lovers. Indeed, the composer had already declared, 'I love [him] to distraction...what a lovely, naïve, sincere, tender and kind creature'.

In Clarens, composer and former student spent some time playing over various unfamiliar pieces, including Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*, a new work which Tchaikovsky admired for its piquancy and melodiousness. The combination of Lalo's concerto and Kotek's presence inspired in Tchaikovsky a desire to write a violin concerto himself. He immersed himself in work and had the concerto fully sketched in a few weeks. By the end of April he had orchestrated the whole work.

Kotek's advice and encouragement were crucial in the work's composition. He would play over sections as they were finished, and gave a complete performance from the short score for Tchaikovsky's and Modest's private pleasure. Kotek was originally to have been the concerto's dedicatee, but Tchaikovsky, concerned at the gossip this would cause in Moscow, dedicated the work to Leopold Auer, a renowned performer and teacher, whose pupils were to include Mischa Elman and Jascha Heifetz.

Tchaikovsky's hope that Auer's fame would help promote



PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY
Russian composer (1840–1893)



Kotek (left) with Tchaikovsky

There was a furious mixture of applause, boos and hissing...

the concerto was dashed when Auer claimed, as Nikolai Rubinstein had about the first piano concerto, that the work was technically impossible and structurally weak; in short, that he would not learn it. Then Kotek decided not to play it either, which caused Tchaikovsky to break with him altogether.

Three years later Jurgenson, who had since published the score, informed Tchaikovsky that Adolph Brodsky was planning to play the piece at a Vienna Philharmonic concert under Hans Richter in December 1881. There was a furious mixture of applause, boos and hissing afterwards, with Brodsky acclaimed and the work derided. The Viennese critics were almost universal in their condemnation of the concerto. Hanslick, champion of Brahms and enemy of Wagner, whose tastes were not inclined toward new Russian music anyway, wrote a review of infamous vituperation.

For a while the concerto has proportion, is musical, and is not without genius, but soon savagery gains the upper hand... The violin is no longer played: it is yanked about, it is torn asunder, it is beaten black and blue.

Tchaikovsky read Hanslick's review by chance in a Rome café and was shocked at its vehemence, but Brodsky was not dissuaded and remained the work's most fervent champion. 'You have indeed crammed too many difficulties into it,' he told the composer, '[but] one can play it again and again and never be bored; and this is a most important circumstance for the conquering of its difficulties.' Auer eventually overcame his opposition to the concerto and played it to great acclaim, introducing it to many of his pupils.

The work opens with a kind of scene-setting introduction, after which the soloist enters with a brief flourish, then announces the main theme of the first movement. Soon the second subject appears, a melody of great tenderness that is presented in a setting not dissimilar to those of Tchaikovsky's famous violin solos in *Swan Lake*. From this point the temperature of the first movement rises considerably, with the solo part becoming much more virtuosic and the orchestral writing increasingly colourful. There is a magnificently varied cadenza for the soloist.

Kotek felt Tchaikovsky's original slow movement was too insubstantial and sentimental, and the composer agreed, replacing it with the *Canzonetta*. After a simple chordal introduction for the woodwinds, the soloist takes up a hushed, appropriately song-like theme. The accompaniment to the violin's later decorations of this melody is scored with the utmost delicacy.

The *Finale* follows on without a break, and immediately the soloist has a dazzling, short cadenza, which leads straight into the movement's vigorous main theme, a short, folk-like dance tune. The second theme, introduced over a bagpipe-like drone on the strings, is a temporary lyrical resting-place in the movement's wild infectiousness.

PHILLIP SAMETZ © 1996

The first time the Sydney Symphony performed Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto was in 1938, with Percy Code conducting and Lionel Lawson as the soloist. Our most recent performance of the concerto was in 2006 with Gianluigi Gelmetti conducting and Boris Belkin playing the solo part.

**'...one can play it again
and again and never
be bored...'**

ADOLPH BRODSKY

TCHAIKOVSKY

The Sleeping Beauty: Suite from the ballet

When Tchaikovsky was approached in 1888 to compose music for *The Sleeping Beauty* he was the veteran of the still-unsuccessful *Swan Lake* and his Fourth Symphony, which had been pronounced ‘too balletic’ at a time when ballet music was regarded with disdain.

The invitation came from the Director of the Imperial Theatres, Ivan Vsevolozhsky, who had planned a ballet based on Charles Perrault’s fairytale *La Belle au bois dormant*, from 1697. The sophistication and mythical qualities of Perrault’s tale were well suited to the grandeur and illusion of Russian ballet (itself originating in 17th-century France) and Tchaikovsky responded with enthusiasm. ‘I want to tell you at once that it’s impossible to describe how charmed and captivated I am,’ he wrote to Vsevolozhsky. ‘It suits me perfectly, and I couldn’t want anything better than to write music for it.’ Given such a poetic subject, he lavished great love and care on the music – ‘I have devised several completely new orchestral combinations which I hope will be very beautiful and interesting’.

Tchaikovsky completed the music knowing it was one of his best works. Yet the first production in January 1890 was greeted with only mild enthusiasm – the Tsar dismissed it as ‘Very charming’. In a critical sleight of hand, the reviews were almost unanimous in declaring the ballet score ‘too symphonic’. Tchaikovsky couldn’t win.

Yet the balletic symphonies and the symphonic ballets do share many qualities: the careful treatment of key relationships, a sense of drama, and an unsurpassed melodic quality. This is ballet music of symphonic weight, ballet music that holds its own on the concert platform.

The most commonly performed concert suite from *Sleeping Beauty* was realised by Alexander Siloti after Tchaikovsky’s death. Later, Diaghilev developed a one-act ballet, *Aurora’s Wedding*, drawn primarily from Act III, and another option is to perform Act III in its entirety.

Vladimir Ashkenazy’s suite for this concert omits Act III altogether. This happily-ever-after ‘wedding’ act contains many beautiful and entertaining divertissements and character pieces, but is largely devoid of drama. The real story unfolds before the final act. And so Ashkenazy has devised a dramatic suite, drawing on music from the Prologue, Aurora’s baptism; Act I, the fateful 20th birthday; and Act II, in which the Prince awakens her from sleep.



TCHAIKOVSKY, 1888

‘...the music of this ballet will be one of my best creations.’

TCHAIKOVSKY



Gustav Doré's illustration for an 1867 edition of *Les Contes de Perrault*

Drama and symphonic conception is apparent from the outset. In the **Introduction**, Tchaikovsky plays the fierce music associated with the uninvited, and furious, Carabosse, against the lyrical music of the Lilac Fairy. The Introduction segues into an extended **March** as the guests arrive at the palace of King Florestan for the baptism of Princess Aurora. Twice the proceedings are interrupted by the master of ceremonies; at the climax, a horn fanfare announces the entrance of the king and queen.

Among the guests are the Fairies, who've been invited to bless the royal baby with magical gifts. Their entry, a **Scène dansante**, is accompanied by harp arpeggios, delicate string lines and a gentle horn melody.

In the ballet, each of the six fairies presents her gift in a characteristic solo. Among these are beauty and candour, grace, energy and wisdom. In this suite we hear two: **The Breadcrumb Fairy**, where plucked strings evoke the Russian tradition of sprinkling breadcrumbs on the cradle to ensure the child never goes hungry. This is just one instance of Tchaikovsky's imagination in devising new combinations of orchestral colour: the plucking violins are suspended above sustained sounds low in the trombones, and later the smooth singing of the cellos. **The Singing Canary** – the fairy who bestows the gift of eloquence – lives in the stratosphere with piccolo, flutes, tiny bells and more plucked strings.

Twenty years pass. Aurora is now a lovely and graceful woman, and princes from four lands are seeking her hand. The birthday celebrations of Act I begin with a much-loved

Waltz. A highlight of this act, and a tour de force for the ballerina who dances Aurora, is the **Rose Adagio**. After a rippling cadenza for the solo harp, Aurora dances in turn with each of her four suitors to music of formal yet fervent grandeur. As she accepts a rose from each prince, balanced en pointe, Aurora demonstrates perfect poise, even as Tchaikovsky's impassioned music swirls around her.

The **Coda** from this scene sees Aurora distracted by an old woman with a spindle. The princess seizes it and begins to dance. She pricks her finger and her doom is played out in the dramatic action of the **Finale to Act I**. The choreographer Marius Petipa was exacting in his requirements, giving written instructions concerning mood, tempo, metre and exactly how much music was required. For this crucial scene, he specified:

Suddenly Aurora notices an old woman who beats her knitting needles – a 2/4 bar. Gradually she changes to a very melodious waltz in 3/4, but then suddenly a rest. Aurora pricks her finger. Screams, pain. Blood streams, give eight bars in 4/4 – wide. She begins her dance – dizziness... Complete horror – this is not a dance any longer. It is a frenzy. As if bitten by a tarantula she keeps turning and falls unexpectedly, out of breath. This must last from 24 to 32 bars.

Act II begins a century later – Prince Désiré is shown a vision of the sleeping princess, and in a brief but heartfelt **Scène** he begs the Lilac Fairy to take him to Aurora. In its original staging, the Lilac Fairy led the prince through the enchanted wood in front of a scrolling **Panorama** of painted cloth mounted on revolving drums. The music needed to accommodate the precise length of the canvas and Tchaikovsky obliged with a serene melody which floats over a pulsing accompaniment.

In an extended symphonic interlude, **The Sleep**, Tchaikovsky completely transforms the themes of the introduction: Carabosse's fierce chords become sustained woodwind harmonies; further in, the Lilac Fairy's theme is given to a muted trumpet. The role of the music here is to convey atmosphere. Then, with Aurora's awakening in the **Act II Finale**, Tchaikovsky floods our ears with triumphant and vibrant sounds.

ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY YVONNE FRINDLE ©1999

The Sydney Symphony was the first ABC orchestra to perform music from *The Sleeping Beauty*, when the Act I Waltz was included in a 1938 concert conducted by W.G. James. Our most recent performance of music from the ballet was in 2002 when Andrey Boreyko conducted an extended suite devised by Vladimir Fedoseyev.

...Aurora demonstrates perfect poise, even as Tchaikovsky's impassioned music swirls around her.

THIS PROGRAM EDITED
BY ALEXANDRA PINKHAM,
PUBLICATIONS INTERN

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

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

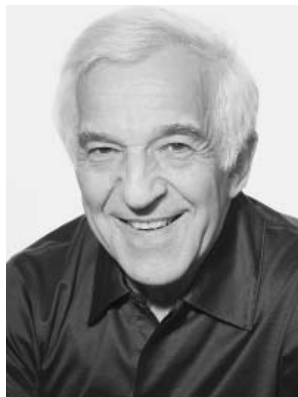
Conducting has formed the largest part of his music-making for the past 20 years. He has been Chief Conductor of the Czech Philharmonic (1998–2003), and Music Director of the NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo (2004–2007). Since 2009 he has held the position of Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of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

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

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

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

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



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James Ehnes violin

James Ehnes was born in 1976 in Brandon, Manitoba, Canada. He began violin studies at the age of four, and studied with Sally Thomas at the Meadowmount School of Music and The Juilliard School. He first gained recognition in 1987 as winner of the Grand Prize in Strings at the Canadian Music Competition, and the following year he won the First Prize in Strings at the Canadian Music Festival, making him the youngest musician ever to do so. At age 13, he made his orchestral solo debut with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra.

Since then, he has performed in more than 30 countries on five continents and appears regularly with many of the world's best-known orchestras and conductors. His 2010–2011 season features a mix of concerto concerts, chamber music, and recitals in Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Europe, the UK, South America, and throughout Canada and the USA.

He has recorded more than 25 CDs with ensembles all over the world, playing repertoire from Bach to John Adams. His recordings have been honoured with many international awards and prizes, including a Grammy, a Gramophone, and six Juno Awards. His latest disc is a recording of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto with Vladimir Ashkenazy and the Philharmonia Orchestra, and other recent releases include Paganini's 24 Caprices (2009) and Elgar's Violin Concerto with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Sir Andrew Davis (2007).

He has won numerous awards and prizes, including the first Ivan Galamian Memorial Award, the Canada Council for the Arts' prestigious Virginia Parker Prize, and a 2005 Avery Fisher Career Grant. In 2005, he was awarded a Doctor of Music degree (*honoris causa*) by Brandon University and in 2007 he became the youngest person ever elected as a Fellow to the Royal Society of Canada. In 2010 the Governor General of Canada appointed him a Member of the Order of Canada.

James Ehnes' most recent appearance with the Sydney Symphony was in 2008, when he performed the Elgar Violin Concerto with Vladimir Ashkenazy.

James Ehnes plays the 'Marsick' Stradivarius of 1715 and gratefully acknowledges its extended loan from the Fulton Collection.



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Sun Yi

Associate Concertmaster

Kirsten Williams

Associate Concertmaster

Fiona Ziegler

Assistant Concertmaster

Julie Batty

Marianne Broadfoot

Brielle Clapson

Sophie Cole

Amber Gunther

Georges Lentz

Nicola Lewis

Nicole Masters

Alexandra Mitchell

Léone Ziegler

Emily Qin#

Martin Silverton*

SECOND VIOLINS

Kirsty Hilton

Marina Marsden

Jennifer Hoy

A/Assistant Principal

Shuti Huang

Susan Dobbie

Principal Emeritus

Maria Durek

Emma Hayes

Stan W Kornel

Benjamin Li

Emily Long

Biyana Rozenblit

Maja Verunica

Alexandra D'Elia#

Belinda Jezek*

Katherine Lukey*

VIOLAS

Roger Benedict

Anne-Louise

Comerford

Robyn Brookfield

Sandro Costantino

Jane Hazelwood

Graham Hennings

Stuart Johnson

Justine Marsden

Leonid Volovelsky

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Rowena Crouch*

Rachael Tobin*

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Neil Brawley

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David Campbell

Steven Larson

Richard Lynn

David Murray

Benjamin Ward

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Carolyn Harris

Rosamund Plummer

Principal Piccolo

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Shefali Pryor

David Papp

Alexandre Oguey

Principal Cor Anglais

CLARINETS

Lawrence Dobell

Craig Wernicke

Principal Bass Clarinet

BASSOONS

Roger Brooke

Fiona McNamara

HORNS

Ben Jacks

Geoffrey O'Reilly

Marnie Sebire

Euan Harvey

Francesco Lo Surdo†

TRUMPETS

Daniel Mendelow

Paul Goodchild

John Foster

Anthony Heinrichs

TROMBONES

Scott Kinmont

Nick Byrne

Christopher Harris

Principal Bass Trombone

TUBA

Steve Rossé

TIMPANI

Richard Miller

PERCUSSION

Rebecca Lagos

Colin Piper

Mark Robinson

Brian Nixon*

HARP

Louise Johnson

Bold = Principal
Italic = Associate Principal
= Contract Musician
***** = Guest Musician
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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.sydney-symphony.com/SSO_musicians If you don't have access to the internet, ask one of our customer service representatives for a copy of our Musicians flyer.

THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

Vladimir Ashkenazy PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC ADVISOR

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



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Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the Sydney Symphony has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities.

Resident at the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional NSW. International tours have earned the orchestra world-wide recognition for artistic excellence, and in 2009 it made its first tour to mainland Asia.

The Sydney Symphony's first Chief Conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi

Gelmetti. The orchestra's history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

The Sydney Symphony's award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, and the orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

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

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