

2012 SEASON



# Thus Spake Zarathustra

*Beethoven, Brahms and Strauss*

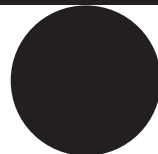
Wed 22 February 8pm

Fri 24 February 8pm

Sat 25 February 8pm



Ausgrid Master Series



## WELCOME TO THE AUSGRID MASTER SERIES



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Welcome to tonight's concert at the Sydney Opera House, featuring Vladimir Ashkenazy and the Sydney Symphony in music by three great masters of the orchestra – Beethoven, Brahms and Richard Strauss.

It promises to be an exhilarating evening, with music that captures the drama of a tragic hero, the virtuosity of the violin and the philosophy of Nietzsche. If you're familiar with the famous opening of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (as featured in Kubrick's film *2001 – A Space Odyssey*) but haven't heard the remaining 30 minutes or so of this wonderful music, then tonight will be an experience to remember.

We're also delighted to welcome back to Sydney and to this series the violinist Lisa Batiashvili. In 2003 she played Sibelius; this year she brings the Brahms Violin Concerto – a true masterpiece, both expansive and electrifying.

The Ausgrid network includes the poles, wires and substations that deliver electricity to more than 1.6 million homes and businesses in New South Wales. Ausgrid is transforming the traditional electricity network into a grid that is smarter, more reliable and more interactive – something we are very proud of.

We're also extremely proud of our partnership with the Sydney Symphony and our support of the orchestra's flagship Master Series. We are supporting the orchestra as a Community Partner, with the goal of bringing great music and exciting performances to an even wider audience.

We trust that you will enjoy tonight's performance and we look forward to seeing you again at Ausgrid Master Series concerts throughout the season.



GEORGE MALTABAROW  
Managing Director

2012 SEASON

AUSGRID MASTER SERIES

Wednesday 22 February | 8pm

Friday 24 February | 8pm

Saturday 25 February | 8pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

## Thus Spake Zarathustra

**Vladimir Ashkenazy** CONDUCTOR

**Lisa Batiashvili** VIOLIN

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)**

**Coriolan – Overture, Op.62**

**Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)**

**Violin Concerto in D, Op.77**

*Allegro non troppo*

*Adagio*

*Allegro giocoso*

INTERVAL

**Richard Strauss (1864–1949)**

**Thus Spake Zarathustra – Symphonic poem,**

**Op.30**

*Introduction: Sunrise –*

*Of the Back-worlds-men –*

*Of the Great Longing –*

*Of Joys and Passions –*

*The Funeral Song –*

*Of Science –*

*The Convalescent –*

*The Dance Song –*

*Night Wanderer's Song*

PRESENTING PARTNER



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

Pre-concert talk by Gordon Kalton Williams at 7.15pm in the Northern Foyer. Visit [sydney-symphony.com/talk-bios](http://sydney-symphony.com/talk-bios) for speaker biographies.

Approximate durations:  
8 minutes, 38 minutes,  
20-minute interval, 33 minutes  
The concert will conclude at  
approximately 9.50pm.



*Paul Hindy*  
1902

# "Also sprach Zarathustra"

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(frei nach Friedr. Nietzsche)

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**MÜNCHEN, JOS. AIBL VERLAG.**

Cover of the first Munich edition of Richard Strauss's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* – a tone poem 'freely after Friedr. Nietzsche' (1896)

### Thus Spake Zarathustra

*Thus Spake Zarathustra*. There is more, of course, to the concert than this one monumental and poetic work by Richard Strauss. We also get to hear Beethoven in the tragic-heroic mode of the theatre and the great Brahms Violin Concerto – an eloquent masterpiece. If there is a connecting theme in this program is might be the idea that music ‘speaks’.

In Beethoven’s *Coriolan* Overture the musical ideas combine to personify a tragic hero – the music itself embodies the drama. For the young Strauss, music stopped with Beethoven, and at first he thought the music of Brahms obtuse and unlovely. But soon he developed such an enthusiasm for Brahms that he was describing him as ‘colossal’, ‘fresh’, ‘energetic’ and ‘demonic’ (a compliment).

Brahms himself rarely departed from the Classical genres – concertos and symphonies among them. But Strauss abandoned them, avoiding the four-movement symphony in favour of the dramatically shaped structures of the symphonic poem (or tone poem). ‘New ideas must search out new forms,’ he said, musical forms that were to be shaped by poetic ideals.

In the case of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, the inspiration is poetry itself. The music has found a niche in popular culture thanks to Stanley Kubrick using the ‘sunrise’ opening for his largely non-verbal 2001: *A Space Odyssey*. But for concertgoers, Strauss’s symphonic poem is much more than this sunrise, however awe-inspiring – the half hour that follows gives one musician’s free interpretation of Nietzsche’s philosophical poem *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Strauss himself was more than a little pleased with the result: ‘of all my pieces, the most perfect in form, the richest in content and the most individual in character’.

## bravo!

This year sees the addition of a new feature to Sydney Symphony program books: we’re incorporating our Bravo! newsletter into the back pages. There will be nine issues over the course of the year, which means we can share orchestra news with you more frequently. The Bravo! pages will also be available for separate download from [sydney-symphony.com/bravo](http://sydney-symphony.com/bravo) so you need never miss an issue, regardless of how many concerts you attend. Meanwhile, turn to page 31 to check out the debut issue in the new format.

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

### Ludwig van Beethoven *Coriolan* – Overture, Op.62

Beethoven's *Coriolan* Overture begins with strident open octaves – all the strings playing the same note, C – three times in succession, with single, dramatic chords in between. These octave Cs can sound angry, proud, imperious and strident – all the characteristics you'd expect for a hero. But the fact that they are empty octaves and not full-voiced chords is significant. When Haydn wanted to suggest chaos at the beginning of *The Creation* he gave the full orchestra a sustained, empty octave. The octave is the closest thing to musical chaos because it means nothing and implies everything. Any kind of chord – even a highly dissonant one – implies harmony and by extension cosmos and order.

The opening of *Coriolan* issues a challenge. An uncompromising hero is demanding a response and Beethoven provides one: each time the octave Cs are played, the orchestra offers a different chord in reply. And with each chord the tension thickens.

The very next musical idea is a kind of stuttering theme. Barely a minute of music has elapsed and, through this musical vacillation, Beethoven has revealed the conflicted personality of his hero. Beethoven goes beyond simply representing his dramatic character with a theme, instead he writes music that embodies the personality of Coriolanus, and in particular what has been described as his 'tragic dithering'.

When at last the music stabilises, we hear a proper melody – Coriolanus's mother Volumnia makes her pleading appearance. This theme focuses the dramatic conflict of the music, and as it reappears and is transformed over the course of the overture it provides a sense of the dilemma that faces the play's hero. But the inevitable resolution of this dilemma in the drama prevents the overture from following the model of Beethoven's other 'heroic' works. Unlike the Fifth Symphony, for example, this can have no monumental and triumphant conclusion.

Instead Beethoven takes the earlier 'stuttering' theme, gives it to the cellos and gradually slows it down until it's barely audible. There are three more octave Cs, very different from the opening. This music shares the fate of its hero – it expires rather than closes.

But who is that hero? As English speakers in the 21st century, we could be forgiven for assuming that Beethoven was inspired by Shakespeare's Coriolanus. In fact, Beethoven was inspired by a contemporary play by Heinrich von Collin. The essential story is the same but the two plays are very different. Shakespeare gives us an Elizabethan action hero – depending on the production, *Coriolanus* can be very bloody. Collin's *Coriolan* is more reflective and poetic: we hear about

### Keynotes

#### BEETHOVEN

*Born Bonn, 1770*

*Died Vienna, 1827*

In Vienna, Beethoven found fame as a pianist and enjoyed support from the city's aristocratic circles, willing to cultivate an innovative composer who matched their romantic aspirations. Beethoven composed in nearly every major genre: concertos, symphonies, string quartets and other chamber music, piano sonatas, and several choral works. In the theatre he is responsible for one opera, *Fidelio*, which took shape between 1805 and 1814, two ballet scores, and overtures and incidental music for plays, including Goethe's *Egmont*.

#### CORIOLAN OVERTURE

The political and human issues in both *Egmont* and *Coriolan* captured Beethoven's imagination and his overtures to these plays seized on the vital principles of conflict, using them to shape powerful dramas in miniature. In this instance, the tragic story of *Coriolan* comes not from Shakespeare but from Heinrich von Collin (1771–1811), a civil servant, minor playwright and friend of Beethoven. The play premiered in 1802, with interludes arranged from Mozart's opera *Idomeneo*, and was popular for a few years before falling into obscurity. Beethoven's overture was first heard in March 1807 at the home of 'Prince L.' (probably Lobkowitz), where it 'received favourable applause from the connoisseur', and in public on 24 April for an occasional performance of the play.



◄ Autograph of the opening page of Beethoven's *Coriolan* Overture. Unlike in modern orchestral scores, the lines for the violins and violas are at the top, the cellos and double basses at the bottom.

the violence but we don't see the gaping wounds. In Collin we're given a hero who commits suicide rather than a hero who takes deadly action.

Whose hero do you hear in Beethoven's *Coriolan*? If you end up voting for Shakespeare you are in excellent company. E.T.A. Hoffmann heard Shakespeare in this music, as did Wagner.

Beethoven's approach to musical characterisation in the *Coriolan* overture is very close to the idea of a Liszt or Strauss tone poem, even though no one was writing 'tone poems' in 1807. It would have been unusual, because in the early 19th century there was little expectation that a theatrical overture would describe the action that followed. Indeed, when Beethoven wrote overtures that *were* descriptive – such as his *Leonore* overtures for the opera *Fidelio* – they frequently didn't work in the theatre.

As it turns out, although Beethoven was inspired by Collin's play, and even though the overture was performed at least once with that play (in April 1807), the *Coriolan* overture was first composed as concert music, as a much-needed fresh overture for Beethoven's orchestral programs. The happy result for modern music lovers is that this overture continues to succeed in the concert hall, and so for ten minutes at the beginning of a program we can be transported to the dramatic atmosphere of the theatre.

YVONNE FRINDLE ©2005

Beethoven's *Coriolan* overture calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets; timpani and strings.

The *Coriolan* Overture was first performed in Vienna, in March 1807. The Sydney Symphony was the first ABC orchestra to perform it, in 1938 with conductor George Szell. Our most recent performance of the overture was in 2005, conducted by Alain Lombard.



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Photo: Brendan Read

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## Johannes Brahms Violin Concerto in D, Op.77

*Allegro non troppo*

*Adagio*

*Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace*

**Lisa Batiashvili** VIOLIN

Cadenza: Fritz Kreisler, arranged Batiashvili

As with several of his greatest works, Brahms composed the bulk of the Violin Concerto at his summer retreat of Pörtlach on the Wörthersee in Carinthia. It was a place, he said, where 'so many melodies fly about that one must take care not to tread on them'. He'd proved that point in the previous year of 1877, when he completed the sublime Second Symphony in D major in Pörtlach. Now, in the summer of 1878, he returned to the same place (and the same key signature) to create the work which many would regard as simply the finest violin concerto in the repertoire.

It was a time of some professional satisfaction for Brahms. He had now mastered the symphonic form which had given him 20 years of grief, and his reputation was such that he had no shortage of rehearsal and performance opportunities for anything he cared to write. And it cannot have escaped Brahms's notice that he was composing a violin concerto in D major, the same key as his idol Beethoven's own Violin Concerto. It is almost as if Brahms's concerto, following in the wake of the successful first two symphonies, demonstrated that the 'heavy tread of Beethoven marching behind him' no longer held any grave fears for the mature composer.

Crucially, when it came to the composition of concertos, Brahms was by 1878 a significant enough creative figure to be able to write music which satisfied artistic criteria, rather than merely providing technical showpieces for virtuoso soloists. Indeed, a feature of all his concertos is their concentration on symphonic-style argument, rather than mere display – as the lengthy orchestral openings of the First Piano Concerto and the Violin Concerto, and the four-movement form of the Second Piano Concerto demonstrate.

Yet for all his artistic maturity, Brahms remained deeply insecure about his new works, usually ridiculing them to his friends and apparently hoping that they would do the same in return. He seemed disappointed when his colleague, the legendary violinist Joseph Joachim, examined the solo part of the new Violin Concerto in 1878 and announced that, while it was sometimes difficult to tell how a concerto would work from the violin part alone, it appeared at first glance to be a very pleasing and successful work. 'I wish I could go through it with a violinist less good than you,' the frustrated Brahms wrote back to Joachim, 'for I am afraid you are not sufficiently blunt and severe.'

## Keynotes

**BRAHMS**

*Born Hamburg, 1833*

*Died Vienna, 1897*

**Brahms is often thought reactionary: he valued classical forms, admired composers of the past, and his choral music is firmly rooted in the traditions of the baroque period. Yet his musical language and manner of using the orchestra clearly represents mid-19th-century romanticism in all its richness and emotive power. It took Brahms 15 years to compose his first symphony; he was keenly aware of the looming shadow of Beethoven. But the second symphony followed swiftly four months later in 1877, and the violin concerto soon after.**

### VIOLIN CONCERTO

**Brahms wrote this concerto for his good friend and violin virtuoso Joseph Joachim. Since Brahms was not a violinist, he consulted Joachim as he worked, sending him drafts and urging him to 'mark those parts that are difficult, awkward, or impossible to play'. A composer himself, Joachim enthusiastically offered suggestions and composed a cadenza, which he performed at the concerto's premiere in 1878. In the second movement Adagio, the solo violin steps back from the spotlight and plays 'second fiddle', accompanying an exquisitely lyrical solo from the oboe. The virtuosic last movement, an exuberant rondo, has a distinct gypsy character – a tribute by Brahms to his Hungarian violinist friend and collaborator.**



Brahms then sent the score to another friend, the conductor Hans von Bülow, and also to the violinist and composer Wieniawski – and with them he more than satisfied his desire for pithy and merciless abuse. Bülow called it ‘a concerto against the violin’, while Wieniawski, himself the composer of some fiendishly difficult violin concertos, declared it to be simply unplayable. At last Brahms was happy, declaring the work in general to be a ‘failure’ and the slow movement in particular to be ‘feeble’. He immediately set about a savage revision, reducing the original four movements to three, with the intended scherzo being dropped altogether. (Brahms’s long-promised four movement concerto form had to wait until the Second Piano Concerto was completed three years later.) But he left in many of the technical challenges – the wide melodic leaps, the more outrageous double and sometimes triple-stops, and a notorious passage in tenths.

While Brahms was a great admirer of the violin, he didn’t play the instrument himself, and he relied heavily on the advice of Joachim as he completed his revision of the concerto. But even after Joachim gave the premiere on New Year’s Day in 1879 with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Brahms refused to have the score published, concentrating instead on still further revisions. Joachim himself got in on the act, suggesting changes not just to the solo part but also

**After the premiere, violinist Pablo de Sarasate was asked if he intended to play Brahms’s new concerto, he responded (referring to the beginning of the *Adagio*): ‘I don’t deny that it is very good music, but do you think I could fall so low as to stand, violin in hand, and listen to the oboe play the only proper tune in the work?’**

◀ Brahms and Joachim



to the orchestration – often as detailed as the omission of double-bass notes and the shortening of chords – while continuing to perform the work throughout Europe. Nearly a decade later, in 1888, he was still writing to Brahms from England with news of his most recent performances of the work. (The *ma non troppo* attached to the *vivace* of the finale's tempo marking was actually contributed by Joachim!)

Perhaps because of Joachim's significant input, Brahms ensured that this was to be the last great concerto in which the soloist was left to improvise a solo cadenza in the first movement (the practice had been all but abandoned since Beethoven had written out the cadenzas for his *Emperor* Piano Concerto). Joachim's cadenza, written out, soon became the 'standard' cadenza for the concerto, but this hasn't stopped others from creating their own versions. One particularly fine cadenza – admired for its references to the concerto's thematic material – is Fritz Kreisler's, heard in tonight's concert.

**...the last great concerto in which the soloist was left to improvise a cadenza...**

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# Behzod Abduraimov

## and the Sydney Symphony

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## Listening Guide

As in the First Piano Concerto, Brahms allows the orchestra to state the main thematic material of the first movement before the soloist enters. Typically, there is a wealth of thematic material, with the opening eight-bar phrase being extended by the oboe and then a surging forte. The melodic second subject features suspended chords and elaborate figurations in the violas, before the soloist's delayed but unforgettable entry brings a fiery minor-key variation of the opening theme. The development section is initiated by the orchestra, with the soloist weaving a variety of counter-melodies around it. After a restatement of the main themes, the cadenza then leads to a lyrical reworking of the initial theme, and a vigorous coda.

As if to demonstrate that the concerto is for solo instrument with orchestra, rather than against it, the magnificent **slow movement** features the oboe almost as much as it does the violin. After a chord on bassoons and horns, the oboe introduces one of the greatest tunes which Brahms ever composed, and the soloist never really approaches it directly, preferring instead to weave all manner of counter-melodies and variations around it. While some of his contemporaries criticised Brahms for neglecting the soloist in this movement, the fact remains that these prominent passages for wind instruments serve only to highlight the beauty of the solo part, which can take the breath away on each successive entry.

Brahms (not to mention Joachim) loved nothing more than the gypsy melodies of neighbouring Hungary, and he closes the Violin Concerto with one of his finest appropriations of this joyous, rhythmically vital music. The energetic, bouncing theme of the **finale** is instantly memorable and both soloist and orchestra give it a thorough working-over, keeping just enough in reserve to step up the intensity in the coda. Essentially a rondo (the description *rondo alla zingarese* is applied to similar movements elsewhere in Brahms's music), there is nevertheless enough contrast provided, in passages such as the brief meditative pause just before the conclusion, to remind us that in this finale, there is a distinctive master at work – and at play.

MARTIN BUZACOTT  
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA ©1997

The orchestra for Brahms' Violin Concerto calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed the concerto in 1939 with soloist Jeanne Gautier and conductor Malcolm Sargent. In recent seasons the orchestra has performed it with Viktoria Mullova and conductor Donald Runnicles (2009) and Ray Chen and conductor Peter Oundjian (2011).

...this joyous,  
rhythmically vital  
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## Richard Strauss

### *Also sprach Zarathustra* – Symphonic poem, Op.30

#### (Thus Spake Zarathustra)

*Introduction: Sunrise* –  
*Of the Back-worlds-men* –  
*Of the Great Longing* –  
*Of Joys and Passions* –  
*The Funeral Song* –  
*Of Science* –  
*The Convalescent* –  
*The Dance Song* –  
*Night Wanderer's Song*

In 1891–92 the usually robust Strauss suffered a period of serious illness, including bouts of pneumonia, bronchitis and pleurisy. In the summer of 1892 he took leave of his duties at the Weimar Opera and travelled extensively through Italy, Greece and Egypt, soaking up the sun, but more importantly enjoying the awesome physical remains of the ancient pagan civilisations in those countries. It was at this time that he began to think about a musical response to some of the ideas of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, particularly those expressed in his poem *Also sprach Zarathustra*, though the work's composition had to wait until 1896.

Zoroaster (as he was known to the ancient Greeks) was a Persian prophet living in the sixth century BCE who taught that the universe, and humankind in particular, is subject to the eternal struggle of two gods, represented by light and darkness; his religion survives among the Parsees of modern India. Nietzsche's relationship to Zoroastrian ideas is fairly loose, and as Norman Del Mar puts it, he used these 'as a prop on which to clothe his own ideas on the purpose and destiny of mankind'. The most famous – indeed, notorious – of these is the idea of the *Übermensch* or Superman. 'Man,' in Nietzsche's words, 'is a thing to be surmounted...what is the ape to man? A jest or a thing of shame. So shall man be to the Superman.' While Nietzsche (and, it must be admitted, the younger Strauss) were disdainful of Christianity's compassion for weakness, it is drawing a long bow to make Nietzsche responsible for the atrocities of Nazism. Indeed, Nietzsche scholar Joachim Köhler argues that *Also sprach Zarathustra*, with its celebration of the individual will, partly grew out of the poet's freeing himself from the dominating personality of the composer Richard Wagner. And Wagner's widow Cosima, writing to her son-in-law Houston Stewart Chamberlain (whose racist ideas definitely did influence Hitler), condemned Nietzsche's book for its 'Jewishness'.

## Keynotes

### R STRAUSS

*Born Munich, 1864*

*Died Garmisch-Partenkirchen,  
1949*

Richard Strauss wrote two symphonies as a teenager, but this was not the musical genre that captured his imagination. Instead he made his name in the theatre and with the evocative and storytelling possibilities of the symphonic poem (or tone poem, as he preferred to call it). Even his Alpine 'Symphony' and the 'Symphonia' domestica are large-scale symphonic poems with an underlying narrative.

### THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA

*Thus Spake Zarathustra* was composed in 1896 – a relatively early work – and takes its name from a philosophical poem by Nietzsche. The inspiration is loose, but Strauss does name the individual sections of the music (which are performed without pause) after different chapters in Nietzsche's poem. The famous Sunrise is followed by musical explorations of the tensions between nature and mankind. Although Nietzsche is frequently associated with the concept of the 'Superman' and his poem ends in triumph, Strauss's free interpretation closes in a mysterious and tranquil mood.



◀ Richard Strauss – a drawing by Leonhard Fanto

### Listening Guide

Strauss's work is, as he said, 'freely after Fr. Nietzsche': he takes some of the chapter headings as the defining images for each section of his tone poem. It begins with the famous invocation to the sun (**Introduction: Sunrise**), with low rumbling accompanying the trumpets' simple C-G-C theme (which in much of Strauss represents primeval nature). The increasing blaze of full chords establishes C major as one pole of the work (and as Del Mar notes, the sound of the organ at the end of the section adds a liturgical note). **Of the Back-worlds-men** depicts humanity in its primitive, or rather naïve state (in B minor, significantly – B being the other tonal pole of the piece). Strauss includes those who profess Christianity in this category, quoting a fragment of the plainchant for the *Credo* to underline his point.

**Of the Great Longing**, which follows a gorgeous climax for the strings, is a depiction of humanity's search for something beyond mere superstition, but Strauss's music dramatises the conflict between nature (the trumpet theme) and humanity's tendency to create dogma with more hints of plainchant and the unresolved conflict between the keys of C and B. A new chromatic motif leads into the **Of Joys and Passions** section with a theme that Strauss described as 'A flat (brass: dark

...humanity's search for something beyond mere superstition...

blue}'. Actually the section tends to be in C minor, linking it to the idea of nature, whereas the following **Funeral Song** is in B minor, and therefore linked to the idea of man.

**Of Science** is based on a deep-voiced fugue that Strauss described as 'spine-chilling' and Del Mar regards as having a 'strangely mysterious quality' despite its dour timbre. In **The Convalescent**, part of which Mahler sets in his Third Symphony, Nietzsche describes Zoroaster's spiritual and physical collapse, after which he emerges as the Superman. **The Dance Song** of the Superman is, like the 'Dance of the Seven Veils' in *Salome*, a Viennese waltz – a Straussian joke, perhaps. Here poet and composer part company: Strauss's Zoroaster displays none of the triumphalism that Nietzsche's does, and the work closes with a mysterious and tranquil **Night Wanderer's Song** in which the keys of nature and man still quietly contend.

After the final rehearsal for the premiere, Strauss, with characteristic modesty, wrote to his wife: '*Zarathustra* is glorious...of all my pieces, the most perfect in form, the richest in content and the most individual in character... I'm a fine fellow after all, and feel just a little pleased with myself.'



**Photo of Friedrich Nietzsche in 1882 (Gustav Schultze)**

GORDON KERRY ©2004

*Thus Spake Zarathustra* calls for four flutes (doubling piccolo), three oboes (doubling cor anglais), four clarinets (doubling E flat clarinet), four bassoons (doubling contrabassoon); six horns, four trumpets, three trombones and two tubas; timpani and percussion; two harps, organ and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed the complete symphonic poem in 1947 under Bernard Heinze and most recently in 2007 in Charles Mackerras's final concerts with the Sydney Symphony.

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## MORE MUSIC

### Selected Discography

#### CORIOLAN

Vladimir Ashkenazy's concept of the *Coriolan* overture – capturing the hero's nobility and the weightiness of the tragedy – can be heard in his recording with the Philharmonia Orchestra. The main work on the disc is Beethoven's Seventh Symphony and the *Egmont* overture completes the program. Currently out of print, it can be obtained as an ArkivCD from arkivmusic.com.

DECCA 411 491

For a collection of (nearly) all the Beethoven overtures, try Kurt Masur's recording with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. All that is missing is the final overture to the opera *Fidelio*.

DECCA 468 1012

#### BRAHMS VIOLIN CONCERTO

Vladimir Ashkenazy recommends the recording by the great Russian violinist David Oistrakh, whose interpretations are an inspiration to many musicians and listeners. Oistrakh recorded the concerto several times – the one to look for is the 1954 monophonic recording with the Dresden Staatskapelle and Franz Konwitschny in a generous 2CD 'DG Originals' collection that also includes the Tchaikovsky violin concerto, Beethoven romances and several Bach concertos.

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 447 4272

#### ZARATHUSTRA

Also recommended by tonight's conductor is Herbert von Karajan's 1959 recording of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* with the Vienna Philharmonic. You can find it in a Decca 'Legends' release, together with *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Don Juan* and the Dance of the Seven Veils from *Salome*.

DECCA 466 3882

Or you can seek out Ashkenazy's own recording of the tone poem with the Cleveland Orchestra, paired with *Death and Transfiguration*. It's out of print but can be obtained as an ArkivCD from arkivmusic.com.

DECCA 425 942

#### LISA BATIASHVILI

Last year Lisa Batiashvili released *Echoes of Time*, a recording with Esa-Pekka Salonen and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No.1 is programmed with shorter pieces by Giya Kancheli and Arvo Pärt, and Rachmaninoff's Vocalise (accompanied by pianist Hélène Grimaud).

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 477 9299

One of the composers Batiashvili has championed is Frenchman Nicolas Bacri, described by one critic as 'one of those living composers who offer hope for the future'. Four of his works for soloist and orchestra are included on *Sturm und Drang*, the recording of his Fourth Symphony, all with the Tapiola Symphony and Jean-Jacques Kantorow. Batiashvili can be heard with her husband, François Leleux, in *Le Printemps*, a concerto amoroso for violin and oboe.

BIS 1579

### Broadcast Diary

#### February–March



Friday 24 February, 8pm

**THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA**  
Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor  
Lisa Batiashvili violin  
Beethoven, Brahms, R Strauss

Wednesday 7 March, 8pm

**AN ALPINE SYMPHONY**  
Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor  
Stephen Kovacevich piano  
Beethoven, Richard Strauss

Saturday 17 March, 8pm

**STRAVINSKY REMEMBERED**  
Matthias Pintscher conductor  
Isabelle Faust violin  
Ravel, Pintscher, Stravinsky

Friday 23 March, 8pm

**FIREWORKS & FANTASY**  
Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor  
Behzod Abduraimov piano  
Roger Benedict viola  
Gyger, Prokofiev, Berlioz

2MBS-FM 102.5

Tuesday 13 March, 6pm

**SYDNEY SYMPHONY 2012**

Musicians, staff and guest artists discuss what's in store in our forthcoming concerts.



## Webcasts



Selected Sydney Symphony concerts are webcast live on BigPond and Telstra T-box and made available for later viewing On Demand. Our most recent webcast:

### BEETHOVEN 9 (SEASON OPENING GALA)

Visit: [bigpondmusic.com/sydneysymphony](http://bigpondmusic.com/sydneysymphony)

## Sydney Symphony Live

The Sydney Symphony Live label was founded in 2006 and we've since released more than a dozen recordings featuring the orchestra in live concert performances with our titled conductors and leading guest artists, including the Mahler Odyssey cycle, begun in 2010. To purchase, visit [sydneysymphony.com/shop](http://sydneysymphony.com/shop)



### Glazunov & Shostakovich

Alexander Lazarev conducts a thrilling performance of Shostakovich 9 and Glazunov's *Seasons*. SSO 2



### Strauss & Schubert

Gianluigi Gelmetti conducts Schubert's *Unfinished* and R Strauss's *Four Last Songs* with Ricarda Merbeth. SSO 200803



### Sir Charles Mackerras

A 2CD set featuring Sir Charles's final performances with the orchestra, in October 2007. SSO 200705



### Brett Dean

Brett Dean performs his own viola concerto, conducted by Simone Young, in this all-Dean release. SSO 200702



### Ravel

Gelmetti conducts music by one of his favourite composers: Maurice Ravel. Includes *Bolero*. SSO 200801



### Rare Rachmaninoff

Rachmaninoff chamber music with Dene Olding, the Goldner Quartet, soprano Joan Rodgers and Vladimir Ashkenazy at the piano. SSO 200901

## MAHLER ODYSSEY ON CD

During the 2010 and 2011 concert seasons, the Sydney Symphony and Vladimir Ashkenazy set out to perform all the Mahler symphonies, together with some of the song cycles. These concerts were recorded for CD, with eight releases so far and more to come.

### Mahler 7 OUT NOW

The most recent addition to the catalogue is Symphony No.7, sometimes known as the 'Night Music' symphony. SSO 201104

ALSO CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

### Mahler 1 & Songs of a Wayfarer

SSO 201001

### Mahler 8 (Symphony of a Thousand)

SSO 201002

### Mahler 5 SSO 201003

### Song of the Earth SSO 201004

### Mahler 3 SSO 201101

### Mahler 4 SSO 201102

### Mahler 6 SSO 201103



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## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### Vladimir Ashkenazy

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). This is his fourth season as 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. In 2009 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. In 2010–11 he conducted the Mahler Odyssey concerts and live recordings, and his artistic role with the orchestra also includes annual international touring.



KEITH SAUNDERS

**In 2011 *Limelight* magazine named Vladimir Ashkenazy Music Personality of the Year. To watch his acceptance speech on YouTube, go to [bit.ly/AshkenazyLimelight](http://bit.ly/AshkenazyLimelight)**

## Lisa Batiashvili

VIOLIN

Born in Georgia, Lisa Batiashvili studied with Mark Lubotsky and then with Ana Chumachenco at Hamburg's Musikhochschule. In 1995 – the youngest-ever competitor, aged 16 – she was awarded second prize in the Sibelius Competition. Four years later she became one of the first of the BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists. Since then she has appeared frequently with many of the world's greatest orchestras, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Berliner Philharmoniker, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

This season her engagements include the Cleveland Orchestra (with Franz Welser-Möst), New York Philharmonic (Alan Gilbert) and NHK Symphony Orchestra (Charles Dutoit), as well as a European tour with Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra (Sakari Oramo), concerts with the London Philharmonic and Rotterdam Philharmonic orchestras (both with Yannick Nézet-Séguin), and with the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich and Orchestre National de France (David Zinman).

Chamber music has always played an important part in her schedule, with appearances at festivals such as Salzburg, Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Tanglewood, Schleswig-Holstein and Verbier. This season she tours as part of a quartet with oboist François Leleux, violist Lawrence Power and cellist Sebastian Klinger. Other chamber music partners include cellist Adrian Brendel and pianist Till Fellner. Her commitment to new music has seen her give several world premieres in recent seasons, including Magnus Lindberg's Violin Concerto and Nicolas Bacri's *Le Printemps*, a concerto for violin, oboe and chamber orchestra.

Her accolades include the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival's Leonard Bernstein Award (2003); the Beethoven Ring Prize from the Beethoven Festival Bonn; the MIDEM Classical Award and a Choc de l'année for her recording of the Sibelius and Lindberg concertos (2008). She was recently announced as the winner of the International Accademia Musicale Chigiana Prize in Siena, and received an ECHO Klassik award for her recording of Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No.1 with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Lisa Batiashvili made her Australian debut in 2003, during which she performed the Sibelius Violin Concerto with the Sydney Symphony.



ANJA REERS / DG

**Lisa Batiashvili plays the 1709 Engleman Stradivarius kindly loaned by the Nippon Music Foundation.**

# MUSICIANS



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Principal Conductor  
and Artistic Advisor  
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**Dene Olding**  
Concertmaster



**Nicholas Carter**  
Associate Conductor  
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## FIRST VIOLINS

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**Sun Yi**

Associate Concertmaster

**Katherine Lukey**

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# THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY



JOHN MARMARAS

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, 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, most recently in the 2011 tour of Japan and Korea.

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, Gordon Kerry and Georges Lentz, and a 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 orchestra has recently completed recording the Mahler symphonies, and has also released recordings with Ashkenazy of Rachmaninoff and Elgar orchestral works on the Exton/Triton labels, as well as numerous recordings on the ABC Classics label.

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

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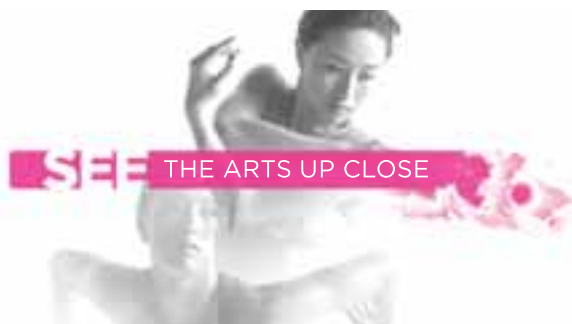
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## SHEFALI PRYOR

*The family that plays together...*

Good relationships, says Associate Principal Oboe Shefali Pryor, make for great music-making.

The oboe section of the Sydney Symphony makes for an interesting study in lineage: Shefali Pryor (Associate Principal) is a former student of Alexandre Oguey (Principal Cor Anglais), who, in turn, is married to Diana Doherty (Principal Oboe), whose former student was David Papp (Second Oboe). Simple!

Those close relationships, says Shefali, have a three-fold positive impact on the oboe section: 'We all have a very similar concept of sound, which is vital in a section. And having a strong rapport translates into a fabulous sense of cam-

raderie. It's *so* much fun to make music with people whose company you also enjoy – the oboe section really feels like a family. And even though I've graduated from the role of student, I continue to learn from all my colleagues.'

When Shefali won her first job (Second Oboe) with the orchestra, making the transition from student to colleague was tricky. 'It did pose some challenges, because the teacher / student line was blurred.' But taking a year out to study overseas 'made it easier to renegotiate that paradigm'.

Ironically there was a degree

“

If I could offer one piece of advice to my younger self, it would be to 'be braver'.

”

of regret about later securing the Associate Principal position (a promotion, in effect). 'I had – and still have – such a great friendship with Diana. And always *really* enjoyed playing second oboe to her, playing with an old friend who I really know and understand. But now I'm glad for the extra responsibility that comes with playing Associate Principal. It really developed my playing, and my personality. The more I expect from myself, the more I'm able to achieve.'

'If I could offer one piece of advice to my younger self, it would be to "be braver". I was quite shy and retiring as a student, and that translated into my playing; I was a little afraid to give it my all, in case my "all" was wrong. But I now know that there's no right or wrong in music. Diana has been a great inspiration to me in that regard – she just puts it all out there, wears her heart on her sleeve when she plays. And I believe that musicians' personalities are very much reflected in their playing.'

*The Associate Principal Oboe Chair is supported by Rose Herceg*



## Your Say

I wanted to thank you for the Sydney Symphony Brass Ensemble's very moving tribute to Japan during your visit here [Nov 2011]. The audience was tremendously moved and emotional. I have lived in Japan for over 20 years and I was ever so proud to be an Australian here, sharing the incredible spirit of solidarity your musicians displayed. Best wishes for a stable and peaceful 2012.

*Melanie Brock*

I would like to congratulate the Sydney Symphony, concertmaster Dene Olding and conductor Mark Wigglesworth for the thrilling performance of Lutosławski's Symphony No.4 [Oct 2011]. I had enjoyed the piece in recordings, but the impact of this live performance was far greater.

Since the publicity for this concert emphasised the Mozart and Dvořák pieces, I wanted to assure you that, as much as I enjoyed hearing the excellent performances of those well-known works, the chance to hear the Lutosławski was the reason that I bought the tickets.

*Anthony Henderson*

The visiting conductors and soloists last year were wonderful. In recent months two British conductors Mark Wigglesworth and Jonathan Nott brought new freshness to old favourites like Dvořák and Schubert. And having Brett Dean's brilliant and

complex violin concerto brought to this town in such a dazzling way by Frank Peter Zimmermann rounded out the year's programs wonderfully.

*Alex Kan*

Wow! What a great concert today [Signature Sounds, Dec 2011]. The orchestra was on fire, Zimmermann was consummate and Jonathan Nott was brilliant to watch. Please can we have more of Jonathan Nott in the future if you can lure him down here? He was so expressive it reminded me of Louis Frémaux, who was always a joy to watch.

*Alexander Stitt*

## From the Managing Director

Welcome to the Sydney Symphony's 2012 season, and to *Bravo!* a new feature of our program books. *Bravo!* is our way of staying in touch with you, offering insights into our behind-the-scenes activities, musician profiles, and the latest news and views about the Sydney Symphony.

This year offers a tremendous variety of performances. I'm particularly looking forward to presenting stellar artists such as violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter in her Australian debut, young Australian saxophonist Amy Dickson and jazz trumpeter Chris Botti. We also welcome back conductors such as David Robertson, Donald Runnicles and young Russian firebrand Tugan Sokhiev.

The Sydney Symphony is going from strength to strength under the inspiring leadership of Vladimir Ashkenazy, with international tours and remarkable cycles of music by Mahler, Prokofiev and Rachmaninoff. 2012 promises to be another great year of music-making. Outstanding performances are built on the excitement of connection between musicians and audience – and we look forward to you being a part of these in this our 80th anniversary year.

RORY JEFFES

**We like to hear your comments, questions and stories about the Sydney Symphony. Please write to us at *Bravo!* Reply Paid 4338, Sydney, NSW 2001, or email [yoursay@sydneyphilharmonic.com](mailto:yoursay@sydneyphilharmonic.com) Please note that letters may be edited for length.**



*Brett Dean*



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## Education Focus



Clockwise from top left: Rowena Watts, Sharn McIver, Melissa Woodroffe, Neil Thompson.

## THE NEXT GENERATION

Each year the Sydney Symphony Fellowship program takes nine of Australia's most talented young musicians under its wing to help them achieve their dreams. We talk to four.

Every year, hundreds of instrumentalists graduate from tertiary institutions across Australia hoping to join an orchestra. But as 2012 Sydney Symphony Fellow Neil Thompson explains, 'There's lots that *can't* be taught at university.' And this violist knows that only a handful – the best of the best – will ever enter the profession. 'The Fellowship gives me the chance to ask the pros every question I can think of. Even though I've done casual work with a few of the orchestras, that's not really the time or place to be asking. But I'm sure the SSO musicians will be anticipating my questions.'

Now in its 11th year, the Fellowship program is a world leader in orchestral training and has been supported since 2011 by Premier Partner Credit Suisse. Through intense training and mentoring, the Fellows develop their orchestral technique and musicianship, while preparing for life as a professional musician.

This year's Fellows come from all corners of the country.

'Growing up in Whyalla, I hadn't even heard a French horn until I went to university,' explains Sharn McIver. 'But I heard Barry Tuckwell, who's a legend, in a masterclass and switched to horn from trumpet straight away; my embouchure [the shape of the mouth] and sound quality immediately improved.' Now, just four years later, Sharn has been selected for the Fellowship. 'This is the real deal. I know I need a serious, professional mindset to work alongside the Sydney Symphony musicians.'

Clarinetist Rowena Watts and bassoonist Melissa Woodroffe so valued the Fellowship in 2011 that they applied again this year. 'The variety of opportunities offered to the Fellows is just invaluable. I'm an "old hand" now,' jokes Melissa, 'but I'm so looking forward to playing more chamber music, and working in the orchestra again.'

Visit [sydnaysymphony.com/fellowship](http://sydnaysymphony.com/fellowship) to find out when you can hear the 2012 Fellows in concert.

## The Score

### Harold in Italy

1834. Niccolò Paganini, violinist extraordinaire, had taken possession of a marvellous, century-old Stradivarius viola, but he had nothing to play on it. So he approached the French composer Hector Berlioz and asked him to write a viola concerto.

Berlioz recalled it this way: 'No sooner was the first section completed than Paganini wanted to see it. At the sight of all the viola's rests in the *Allegro*, he exclaimed: "This won't do!... I must be playing the whole time." ... Now realising that my scheme could not suit him, I thought of writing a series of orchestral scenes in which the solo viola would be involved like a character... By placing it amid poetic recollections of my wanderings in the Abruzzi, I intended to turn the viola into a sort of melancholy dreamer in the style of Byron's *Childe Harold*. Hence the title of the symphony...'

The result is a strange hybrid: it's a symphony, but with a viola soloist, and a narrative that contains not one incident from Byron's poem. The viola-hero – introduced at the beginning with his own motto theme – wanders through the mountains, encounters pilgrims, witnesses a lover's serenade and (finally) a frenetic orgy of brigands.

### Fireworks and Fantasy with Roger Benedict, viola

Thursday Afternoon Symphony  
Thu 22 March | 1.30pm

Emirates Metro Series  
Fri 23 March | 8pm

Great Classics  
Sat 24 March | 2pm  
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# CODA

## NEW FACES ON STAGE

Over the new year we welcomed three new musicians to the Sydney Symphony: Alexander Norton as a member of the First Violins; Christopher Pidcock in the Cellos; and David Elton, who comes to us from the West Australian Symphony Orchestra as our new Principal Trumpet. Among new contracts, Adam Szabo and Tara Houghton have been appointed to the Cellos and Violas respectively.

Musicians who win their audition for a permanent place in the orchestra join us on what's known as a 'trial' – a period of three months to a year, during which musician and orchestra determine whether there's a good fit of musicianship and style for the section.

## STUDENTS TURNING PROFESSIONAL

You might recognise three of the names above from our Fellowship program. Alexander Norton was a violin Fellow in 2006; Adam Szabo and Tara Houghton were in last

year's Fellowship program. Their achievement of a place in the orchestra is a common one for program alumni – oboist David Papp is another musician who joined us after his Fellowship year.

Among other recent Fellowship and Sinfonia alumni achievements: Francesco Lo Surdo, a 2010 horn Fellow, has been awarded a trial with the WASO, and Lisa Bucknell, a Sinfonia violist in 2010 and 2011, is heading to London to take up a position with the Southbank Sinfonia, an orchestra of young, emerging professionals.

## NEW SOUTH WALES – ONE BIG MUSIC CLASSROOM

On Friday 17 February the first of our Meet the Music professional learning seminars will be streamed to regional conservatoriums, using the Sydney Opera House's connected classroom network.

By harnessing technology in this way, the 400 teachers and students from Sydney will be joined by teachers and students from all over New South Wales – not just as observers but able to participate and ask questions of their own.

In this first session, composers Matthew Hindson, Peter Sculthorpe and Barry Conyngham will be talking about their music.

## NEW PARTNER

We're delighted to welcome Roses Only as a Silver Partner.

## CONCERT AT ST JAMES'

The Chanterelle Quartet will give a free lunchtime concert at St James' King St on Wednesday 29 February at 1.15pm – performing music by Bach and Mozart's String Quartet in D, K575.

## NEW FACES OFF STAGE

We recently welcomed two very small newcomers to the orchestra family. Congratulations to cellists Kristy Conrau and Elizabeth Neville, on the arrival of Asha and Louis respectively.

*Find out more about our Education and Artist Development programs:  
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BRAVO EDITOR *Genevieve Lang*

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