

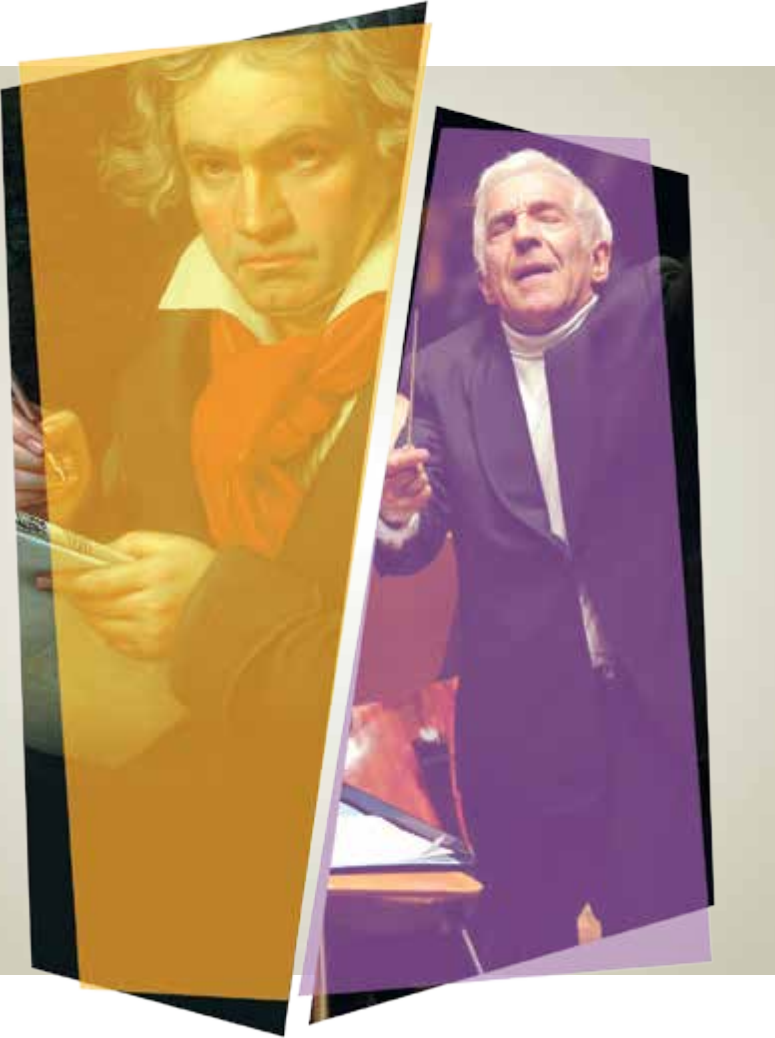


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**2016
SEASON**



Ashkenazy's Beethoven Celebration
BEETHOVEN ASCENDANT

SPECIAL EVENT
PREMIER PARTNER CREDIT SUISSE

Wednesday 17 February 8pm

Thursday 18 February 8pm

Friday 19 February 8pm

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CLASSICAL



Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra
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Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra

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Wed 24 Feb 8pm

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BERNSTEIN Prelude, Fugue and Riffs
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Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra

Meet the Music
Thu 25 Feb 6.30pm
Kaleidoscope
Fri 26 Feb 8pm
Sat 27 Feb 8pm
▪ A BMW Season Highlight



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Her Story Continues

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV Scheherazade
ADAMS Scheherazade.2 – Dramatic Symphony for violin and orchestra **AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE**

David Robertson conductor
Leila Josefowicz violin

Meet the Music
Wed 2 Mar 6.30pm
Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 3 Mar 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 4 Mar 8pm



From the Canyons to the Stars

MESSIAEN Des canyons aux étoiles
[From the Canyons to the Stars]
with visual production by Deborah O'Grady

David Robertson conductor
Pierre-Laurent Aimard piano
Robert Johnson horn • Rebecca Lagos xyloimba
Timothy Constable glockenspiel

APT Master Series
Wed 9 Mar 8pm
Fri 11 Mar 8pm
Sat 12 Mar 8pm



Crossing the Threshold
The SSO at Carriageworks

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DEAN Pastoral Symphony
ILLEAN New Work Premiere
GRISEY 4 Songs for Crossing the Threshold

David Robertson conductor • Jessica Aszodi soprano

SSO at Carriageworks
Sun 13 Mar 5pm
Bay 17, Carriageworks



Pierre-Laurent Aimard in Recital

MESSIAEN Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jesus
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International Pianists In Recital
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Mon 14 Mar 7pm

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WELCOME



Credit Suisse warmly welcomes you to tonight's concert in Ashkenazy's Beethoven Celebration.

During his tenure as Principal Conductor, Vladimir Ashkenazy inspired musicians and audiences with his superb musicianship and it's with great fondness that we see him return to the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall stage this month.

In this concert, Beethoven Ascendant, Ashkenazy and the SSO are joined by Canadian violinist James Ehnes – also returning to the Concert Hall stage – and as Premier Partner of the SSO we are proud to support this collaboration.

The music we will hear tonight has stood the test of time and won its rightful place in the hearts of music lovers, yet these two undisputed masterpieces retain their freshness as each new generation of musicians brings insight and inspiration to the familiar sounds.

We hope you enjoy this evening's concert and we look forward to seeing you at future performances by the SSO.



John Knox
Chief Executive Officer
Credit Suisse Australia



SPECIAL EVENT
PREMIER PARTNER CREDIT SUISSE
WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY, 8PM
THURSDAY 18 FEBRUARY, 8PM
FRIDAY 19 FEBRUARY, 8PM
.....
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL



BEETHOVEN ASCENDANT

Vladimir Ashkenazy *conductor*
James Ehnes *violin*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

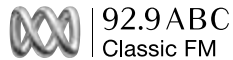
Violin Concerto in D, Op.61

Allegro ma non troppo
Larghetto –
Rondo (Allegro)

INTERVAL

Symphony No.5 in C minor, Op.67

Allegro con brio
Andante con moto
Allegro –
Allegro

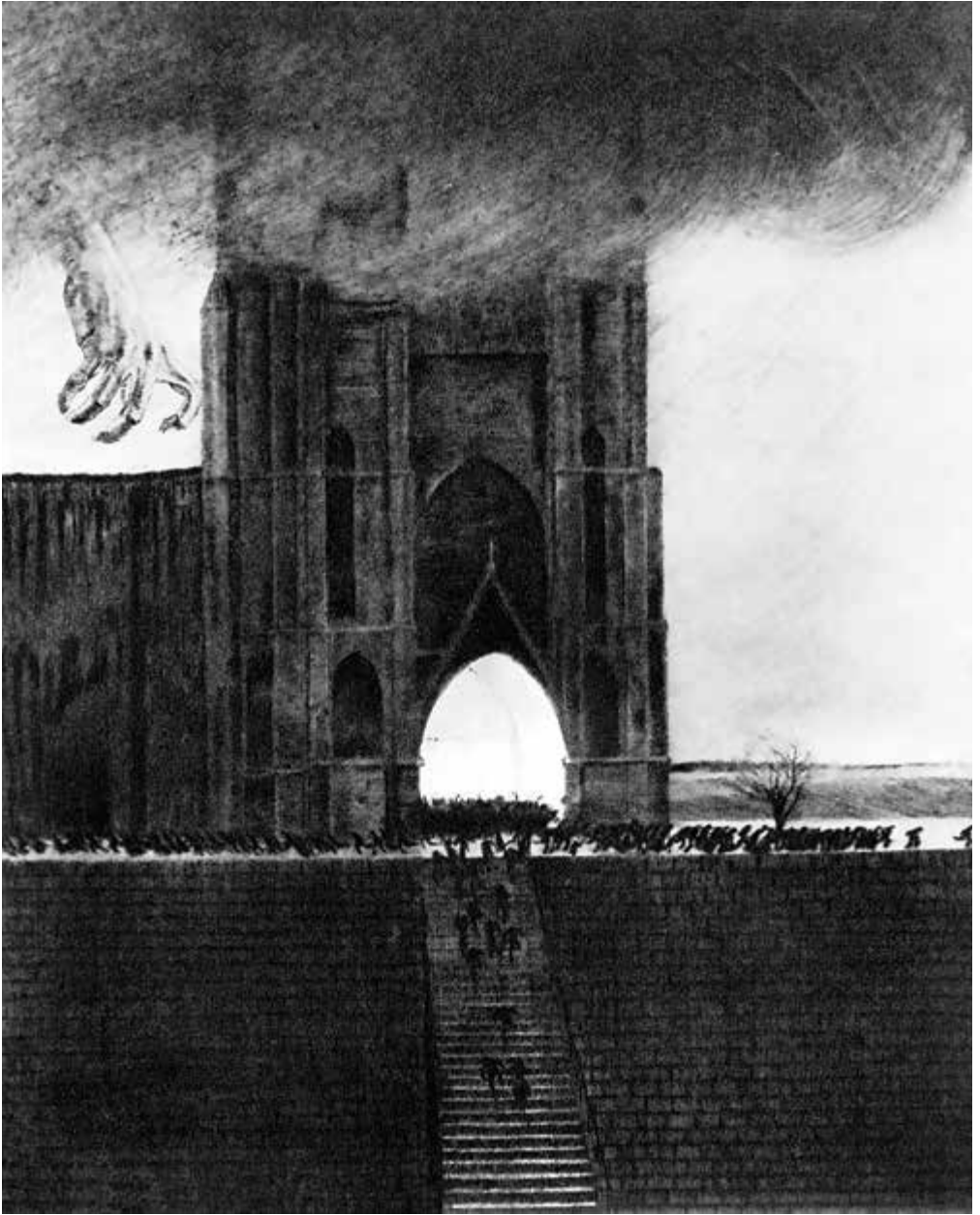


Thursday's performance will be recorded by ABC Classic FM for broadcast across Australia on 20 February at 8pm.

.....
Pre-concert talk by David Larkin in the Northern Foyer at 7.15.
For more information visit sydneysymphony.com/speaker-bios

.....
Estimated durations:
42 minutes, 20-minute interval,
32 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 9.50pm





'Beethoven's Fifth Symphony' – etching by Austrian artist Arthur Paunzen (1890–1940) from his *Fantasies on Beethoven Symphonies*, published at the end of World War I. In this image, dark clouds descend on a Gothic façade and masses of people flee from its portal as a huge claw-like hand reaches down.

Ashkenazy's Beethoven Celebration: Beethoven Ascendant

This week offers the third program in Vladimir Ashkenazy's cycle of Beethoven symphonies – a celebration of a great composer under the leadership of a great musician. There is no questioning Beethoven's popularity, and tonight we hear two of his most famous creations of all: the Violin Concerto and his Fifth Symphony.

Beethoven's Violin Concerto stands alone as the only major concerto for the instrument between those of Mozart from 1775 and Mendelssohn's concerto of 1844. It's a mighty work of symphonic proportions and, like the Fifth Symphony, it begins with a motif (in this case five timpani taps) that permeates the whole first movement. The symphony with its 'da da da dum' opening needs little introduction. That striking motif has long been thought of as the hand of Fate knocking at the door – an appropriate image, even if it's apocryphal.

The Fifth Symphony is the kind of music that works powerfully on the imagination. On the facing page is one artist's response to, presumably, the dark and tempestuous sounds of the first movement. In a famous passage from EM Forster's novel *Howard's End*, six different listeners are characterised through their response to Beethoven's Fifth. Margaret ('who can only see the music') and Tibby (who follows the score on his knee) represent the kind of listening that came to be highly regarded in the 20th century – pure and unadulterated. But in the 19th century the 'sophisticated listener' was more like Helen ('who can see heroes and shipwrecks in the music's flood'). Critics such as ETA Hoffmann (see page 18) allowed their imaginations and emotions to take flight in response to music in a way that a modern critic might find a little embarrassing. But even today, in the communal stillness of the concert hall there's scope for Beethoven's timeless art to bring pictures to the mind's eye, to let us step away from all that's mundane and to celebrate the genius of a master.

Beethoven Leadership Circle

The SSO thanks the following patrons who have generously supported Ashkenazy's Beethoven Celebration:

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Ludwig van Beethoven Violin Concerto in D, Op.61

Allegro ma non troppo

Larghetto –

Rondo (Allegro)

James Ehnes *violin*

cadenzas by Fritz Kreisler

Beethoven wrote only a small number of concertos, but his five piano concertos and the violin concerto have become, every one of them, standards of the repertoire. Beethoven's only violin concerto was preceded by a partially complete first movement for violin and orchestra from his youth in Bonn, and the two romances for violin and orchestra, from 1795 and 1800–02 (and also by the first nine of his ten sonatas for violin and piano, including the Kreutzer Sonata). These were Beethoven's preparation for the great concerto he was to write, apparently with speed and certainty, in 1806. The soloist for whom he wrote it, Franz Clement (1780–1842), had been a child prodigy who made his debut aged nine, and was by then the popular leader of the orchestra at the Theater an der Wien.

Nothing had been written for the violin on this scale before, no work in which the soloist and orchestra shared in so elaborate and symphonic a discourse. Even now, when the greatness of Beethoven's Violin Concerto is not in question, it remains a supreme challenge for violinists. At first the audience and critics in Vienna failed to understand the concerto, perhaps not surprisingly given the circumstances in which it was first

Keynotes

BEETHOVEN

Born Bonn, 1770

Died Vienna, 1827

Beethoven wrote only a small number of solo concertos, but his five concertos for piano (his own instrument) and the violin concerto have become repertoire standards. He also completed the Triple Concerto for violin, cello and piano, and during his youth he began a violin concerto and composed two romances for violin and orchestra. These works, together with his violin sonatas, laid the groundwork for the great masterpiece that he composed with such assurance in 1806.

VIOLIN CONCERTO

Beethoven's Violin Concerto was composed for its first soloist, Franz Clement (1780–1842). After the premiere, the critics praised the concerto's originality and beauty, but they were puzzled too. They were used to the brilliantly virtuosic concertos of composer-violinists such as Viotti and Spohr, and Beethoven's elegant concerto tends to highlight the inherent drama of its lyrical themes rather than the expected confrontation between virtuoso and orchestra.

The concerto begins with five taps from the timpani, and this motif turns out to be an important gesture, dominating the radiant first movement. The second movement is a set of variations on a theme, and Beethoven links it seamlessly to the finale with a transition for the soloist. Tradition has it that Clement suggested the leaping main theme for the finale himself.



Franz Clement

Beethoven's Violin Concerto was composed for a virtuoso, the Austrian violinist Franz Clement (1780–1842). Clement first gained renown as a child prodigy. By 1806 he was the leader of an orchestra and had been a professional performer for more than half his life. He was famous for his astonishing memory, and his style was characterised by clarity and elegance. It was Clement who commissioned the concerto from Beethoven, intending it as the mainstay of a benefit concert.

Clement probably gave Beethoven advice on technical matters – just as Joseph Joachim was to do for Brahms and Ferdinand David for Mendelssohn. But he may have provided other inspiration too: Clement had written his own violin concerto, also in D major, which was premiered in 1805, sharing the program with Beethoven's new *Eroica* Symphony in another benefit concert for Clement; and tradition has it that Clement supplied the leaping theme for the 'hunting rondo' that concludes Beethoven's concerto. This theme is first played entirely on the G string, bringing to mind Clement's favourite party trick: performing variations of his own, on one string, while holding the instrument upside down!



Portrait of Franz Clement as an 8-year-old violin prodigy

performed in 1806. Franz Clement played the first movement in the first part of the program, and the slow movement and finale in the second. In between he played a sonata of his own, on one string with the violin held upside down. The concerto can hardly have been adequately rehearsed, since Beethoven was late with the manuscript, and Clement virtually had to read it at sight (although not entirely, because he had probably advised the composer on the technicalities of the solo part).

Beethoven, making a dreadful pun, offered it as a 'concerto per clemenza pour Clement', meaning either that he presented it with apologies, or that he had mercy ('clemency') on the violinist! Beethoven's Violin Concerto established itself as a supreme masterpiece only when later soloists, from Joseph Joachim in the mid-19th century onwards, made its case with the thorough preparation it deserved.

Listening Guide

There are affinities in this concerto with Beethoven's Fifth and Seventh Symphonies. The opening contains a motif which runs right through the **first movement**: the four quiet drum taps which are heard before the woodwind enter with the first theme. (Actually there are five taps: the fifth is heard under the first wind note.) The figure recurs both in its four-note form (in which it seems to move the music on), and as five notes, with the fifth emphasised as it sounds the first beat of the next bar, giving a feeling of finality.

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The three themes which follow are each derived from the basic idea of a rising scale. The solo violin's wonderful first entry comes, in contrast, in a rising arpeggio, each note preceded by a grace note an octave below. Beethoven is in an expansive mood: even when the music is at its most forceful, it is serene, ordered and of elevated beauty. This is in contrast with the concentrated power and dynamism of – say – the Fifth Symphony of 1807–08. Perhaps the most typical passage of the first movement of the Violin Concerto comes just before the recapitulation, where an episode in G minor, in the words of one admirer, 'distils the quintessence of the concerto's subjective poetry'.

In the recapitulation itself, the subtlety of Beethoven's orchestration, especially for the bassoons and horns, can be appreciated as it could not in the exposition, when the listener's attention was on the themes themselves. Beethoven did not compose a cadenza himself, but many great violinists, including Joachim and Kreisler, have remedied the deficiency. The coda which follows presents the theme in all its simplicity, played by the soloist over plucked strings, then wafts it to the heights, both literally and metaphorically, in increasingly rhapsodic arabesques.

The secret of the stillness Beethoven achieves in the **slow movement** is exposed with superb insight by Sir Donald Tovey: the use of varied repetition to express a sublime inaction. The muting of the strings and the soft interventions of the orchestra, particularly the bassoons and horns, put the improvisatory musings of the solo violin in timbral high relief.

As in so many of his works, Beethoven leads directly from the slow movement through a cadential passage to the **finale**. At first this is a complete contrast to what has gone before, with a boisterous, good-humoured theme leaping through wide intervals whereas most of the concerto's melodies up to then had moved step by step. But the episodes, in this *Rondo* poised on the edge of jocularly, have the breadth and lyricism of the earlier parts of the concerto – thus Beethoven maintains the mood of this supremely well-balanced work.

DAVID GARRETT © 1999

The orchestra for this concerto comprises flute; pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets; timpani and strings.

Beethoven's Violin Concerto received its premiere in Vienna on 23 December 1806 in a benefit concert for the soloist, Franz Clement. The SSO first performed Beethoven's Violin Concerto in 1938 with George Szell conducting and Nathan 'Tossy' Spivakovsky as soloist, and most recently in 2012 with Anne-Sophie Mutter and conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy.

The excellent violinist Klement also played...a violin Concerto by Beethoven, which on account of its originality and many beautiful passages, was received with much approbation. Klement's genuine art and gracefulness, his power and perfect command of the violin – which is his slave – were greeted with deafening applause. As regards Beethoven's Concerto, the verdict of the experts is unanimous; while they acknowledge that it contains some fine things, they agree that the continuity often seems to be completely disrupted, and that the endless repetition of a few commonplace passages could easily prove wearisome.

Johann Nepomuk Mäser reports on the 1806 premiere for a Viennese theatrical journal

MORE MUSIC

BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH

There are more recordings of Beethoven's Fifth than of any other of his symphonies, so choosing just one is near-impossible. Osmo Vänskä's recording with the Minnesota Orchestra is especially well-regarded, praised for its dynamic and emotional range, attention to interpretative detail and cogent drama. Available paired with the Fourth Symphony or in a set of all nine symphonies.

BIS 1416 (4th and 5th)
BIS 1825/6 (5-CD set)

Among older recordings of the Fifth, it's worth seeking out Carlos Kleiber's 'articulate and incandescent' recording, made in 1974 with the Vienna Philharmonic and re-issued on Deutsche Grammophon with the irrepressible Seventh Symphony.

DG THE ORIGINALS 447 4002

Or try the more recent recording of the complete symphonies by the Royal Flemish Philharmonic, conducted by Philippe Herreweghe, who brings period instrument insight to a modern instrument performance distinguished by its clarity and energy.

PENTATONE 518 6312

And for some creative and entertaining takes on the Fifth Symphony – including the famous 'argument' between a married couple devised for the Caesar Hour in 1954, and PDQ Bach's sports-style commentary – check our Pinterest account:
bit.ly/Beeth5Pinboard

ASHKENAZY'S BEETHOVEN

Vladimir Ashkenazy has recorded Beethoven's Fifth Symphony with the Philharmonia Orchestra. The original release (in a pairing with *Leonore* Overture No.3) is out of print but available as an ArkivCD. Or you can find it, together with Beethoven's Seventh, in the 50-CD set *Ashkenazy: 50 Years on Decca*.

DECCA 478 5093

JAMES EHNES & THE SSO

James Ehnes has made two recordings with the SSO: in 2010 he recorded the Tchaikovsky concerto live in concert with Vladimir Ashkenazy conducting. The Canadian release on Onyx (4076) won a Juno Award, the Canadian Grammy. You can find it in Australia on the SSO's own label.

SSO 201206

More recently, in 2014, he recorded Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* with members of the SSO, released on Onyx with two baroque sonatas including Kreisler's arrangement of the famous 'Devil's Trill' Sonata by Tartini. This album is now available locally on SSO Live.

SSO 201601

Broadcast Diary

February–March



92.9 ABC
Classic FM

abc.net.au/classic

Friday 19 February, 8pm

BEETHOVEN ALIVE

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
Symphony No.1, No.8, No.7

Saturday 20 February, 8pm

BEETHOVEN ASCENDANT

See this program for details.

Sunday 21 February, 1pm

BEETHOVEN TRIUMPHANT

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
Garrick Ohlsson piano

Piano Concerto No.5, Symphony No.4

Wednesday 24 February, 9:30pm

VÄNSKÄ CONDUCTS BRAHMS

Osmo Vänskä conductor
Colin Currie percussion

Beethoven, Aho, Brahms

Wednesday 2 March, 8pm

RUSSIAN ROMANTICS (2015)

Vasily Petrenko conductor
Simon Trpčeski piano

Schultz, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff

Friday 4 March, 8pm

SIBELIUS 2 (2015)

David Robertson conductor
Andrew Haveron violin
Sculthorpe, Walton, Sibelius

SSO Radio

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Brett Dean

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Ravel

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



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



Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet

Vladimir Ashkenazy conducts the complete *Romeo and Juliet* ballet music of Prokofiev – a fiery and impassioned performance. SSO 201205



Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto

In 2013 this recording with James Ehnes and Ashkenazy was awarded a Juno (the Canadian Grammy). Lyrical miniatures fill out the disc. SSO 201206



Tchaikovsky Second Piano Concerto

Garrick Ohlsson is the soloist in one of the few recordings of the *original* version of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No.2. Ashkenazy conducts. SSO 201301



Stravinsky's Firebird

David Robertson conducts Stravinsky's brilliant and colourful *Firebird* ballet, recorded with the SSO in concert in 2008. SSO 201402

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Mahler 3 SSO 201101

Mahler 4 SSO 201102

Mahler 5 SSO 201003

Mahler 6 SSO 201103

Mahler 7 SSO 201104

Mahler 8 (Symphony of a Thousand) SSO 201002

Mahler 9 SSO 201201

Mahler 10 (Barshai completion) SSO 201202

Song of the Earth SSO 201004

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Ludwig van Beethoven

Symphony No.5 in C minor, Op.67

Allegro con brio
Andante con moto
Allegro –
Allegro

The most famous four notes in all music are just the beginning. The striking motto that opens Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is the first of two portentous phrases that launch a compelling emotional and musical journey. The journey is a familiar one now – this is the best-known symphony in the repertoire – but at its premiere Beethoven's contemporaries would have boarded the trusted vehicle of the Classical symphony only to discover new and noisy sounds, fresh sights along the way, and an unexpected destination.

Even the modern listener can sense the shock value of this music, responding to its no-longer startling but still powerful innovations. It's apparent from the start: the rapid repercussions and dramatic pauses of the opening theme might be surface features – musical rhetoric – but, in the words of musicologist Joseph Kerman, 'they release primal, unmediated emotional energies' that had previously been buried in the traditional Viennese Classical style.

Fate knocks at the door...

Beethoven is said to have later described the opening: 'Thus Fate knocks at the door.' This story might be dubious, but it's completely in character with Romantic sensibility and lasting perceptions of the symphony. 'Beethoven's music sets in motion the lever of fear, of horror, of suffering,' wrote E.T.A. Hoffmann in his famous 1810 review of the symphony [see page 18], 'and wakens just that infinite longing which is the essence of Romanticism. He is accordingly a completely Romantic composer...'

But in one respect, the opening of Beethoven's Fifth is completely Classical. An assertive unison opening was a common way of commanding the attention of an audience – Mozart used the device to great effect in his *Paris* Symphony. But where Mozart's opening assures the listener of a clear D major, Beethoven undermines the very convention he is observing with deliberate ambiguity. Are we in E flat major or C minor? There is no way of knowing from the opening motif. Only seven bars into the music, when the cellos deign to offer the tonic note C, can we orient ourselves to the defiant and sometimes terrifying expression of C minor.

Keynotes

BEETHOVEN
Born Bonn, 1770
Died Vienna, 1827

Beethoven is one of the best-known and most influential composers of symphonies. He pushed musical boundaries, making the symphony bigger in scope, introducing new forms, and experimenting with ways to achieve greater thematic unity. His Fifth Symphony was completed in 1808 when he was 28 and belongs in his so-called 'heroic' period of composition.

FIFTH SYMPHONY

'Fate knocks at the door' – even if those aren't Beethoven's words, it's an apt description of the beginning of the Fifth Symphony. The symphony plays out a sense of struggle and it does that on the larger scale by setting out in one key (C minor) and ending in another (C major), something that hadn't been done before. The shift of key is also a journey in mood, from tempestuous and troubled to a feeling of triumph, an embodiment of Beethoven's 'heroic' style.

The symphony is in four movements: the first is dominated by the famous 'fate motif' (da da da dum!); the second is more poised and lyrical; then the gloomy and impetuous third movement runs without pause into the finale – a stunning transition poised above menacing drum beats. The finale is famous, too, for introducing trombones into symphonic music for the first time.



Transforming journey

The choice of key was significant for Beethoven. Abandoning the languishing, *pathétique* sentiments of earlier C minor works such as the Opus 13 piano sonata, he began using the key again and again in music of a heroic or threatening nature: the *Eroica* funeral march, the *Coriolan* Overture, and now the Fifth Symphony. In this, Beethoven is again the innovator: one of the first to take the idea of the 'heroic' manner – tempestuous and ridden with conflict – and fuse it with cool, Classical forms.

But despite the turbulent and disintegrative forces that dominate this music, the Fifth Symphony conveys an unprecedented sense of unity. From the first it was recognised that Beethoven had transformed the multi-movement symphony into an organic whole. Hoffmann described his admiration for Beethoven's ability to 'relate all the secondary ideas and all transition passages through the rhythm of that simple [opening] motif'. It is the motif's very ambiguity (rhythmic as well as tonal) that provides the impetus for development – the motif becomes the protagonist, metamorphosing during the course of the symphony to emerge in a noble and heroic guise.

The opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, in the composer's handwriting

Beethoven is again the innovator...

It is in this evolutionary and transforming journey – beginning in one key (C minor) and ending in another (C major) – that the Fifth Symphony was truly innovative. It is as if the joy and triumph of the finale can be expressed only against the background of fear and awe that Beethoven creates in the first movement and in the third movement, the ‘dream of terror which we technically call the scherzo’ (Tovey). The Fifth Symphony enacts Schiller’s laws of tragic art: the first to represent suffering nature, the second to represent the resistance of morality to suffering.

Triumph over despair

The expression of triumph over despair through a transition from minor to major is familiar today – the Ninth Symphony and subsequent symphonies by other composers ensure that we no longer assume a symphony will end in the key in which it began – but it would have astonished Beethoven’s contemporaries. The struggle for supremacy between major and minor begins early in the symphony, with the tonal ambiguity of the opening preparing the way for an appearance of C major in the recapitulation of the first movement.

The *Andante* second movement – a double variation in which we hear Beethoven-student-of-Haydn – begins in a poised and lyrical A flat major, only to be interrupted by forceful C major fanfares with martial trumpets and drums. The provocative and gloomy scherzo with its ‘spectral’ double basses returns to the home key of C minor, but the struggle continues: its entire central trio section is a good-humoured but impatient C major.

Beethoven further emphasises the sense of unity in the Fifth Symphony with a seamless link between the scherzo and the finale. This stunning transition provides a moment of hushed suspense with menacing and insistent drum beats underneath



A candid pencil drawing of Beethoven by Ludwig Ferdinand Schnorr von Carolsfeld, made around the time of the Fifth Symphony

Vladimir Ashkenazy's

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sustained string writing. Berlioz recognised that such an unusual device, stark and arresting in its impact, provided a hard act to follow: 'To *sustain* such a height of effect,' he wrote, 'is already a prodigious effort.'

Yet this is precisely what Beethoven does, releasing the accumulated tension in a C major march, likened by Hoffmann to 'radiant, blinding sunlight which suddenly illuminates the dark night'. But the gloom has not been entirely dispelled and Beethoven introduces a fragment of the scherzo in the middle of the finale – a ghost of scherzos past that must be swept away a second time by the march theme. (This was not a completely new idea; Haydn had done something similar nearly 40 years earlier with the minuet of his Symphony No.46. But where Haydn was almost certainly aiming for a witty surprise, Beethoven's gesture intensifies the implied drama of the music in a new way.)

And better noise at that!

It is in the finale that the trombones – taken from the church and the theatre (think Mozart's Requiem and *Don Giovanni*) – appear in a symphony for the first time in musical history. Beethoven counted on those trombones (together with the contrabassoon and a shrill piccolo) to 'make more noise than six timpani, and better noise at that'. The noise, of which Beethoven would have heard virtually nothing, contributes to a resplendent and festive march, all the more triumphant for the struggle that has gone before.

YVONNE FRINDLE ©2002/2010

Beethoven's Fifth Symphony calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings, introducing in the finale a piccolo, contrabassoon and three trombones.

The Fifth Symphony was premiered on 22 December 1808 in an all-Beethoven benefit concert of epic proportions that also included the *Pastoral* Symphony (No.6). The SSO's earliest known performance of the Fifth Symphony was in 1936 with conductor Maurice Abravnel. The most recent mainstage performance was in 2014, conducted by Pinchas Steinberg.

**'radiant, blinding
sunlight which
suddenly illuminates
the dark night'**

E.T.A. Hoffmann reviews the Fifth Symphony

In July 1810 the Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung – one of the most influential music journals of the day – published ETA Hoffmann’s rhapsodic review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, which had been completed and premiered two years earlier. Here are excerpts from that review:

Beethoven’s instrumental music opens to us the realm of the colossal and the immense. Blazing shafts of light shoot through the deep night of this realm, and we become aware of giant shadows which surge and heave, closing in on us and destroying in us everything except the pain of unending longing, in which every desire that rose up swiftly in sounds of rejoicing sinks down and is overwhelmed, and only in this pain which, consuming but not destroying love, hope and joy, seeks to burst our breast with the sound of all the passions crying out together in full voice – only in this pain do we live on and gaze, captivated, on the spirits.

Romantic taste is rare; Romantic talent even rarer. That is why there are so few who are capable of playing on that lyre which unlocks the miraculous realm of the infinite. Haydn had a Romantic conception of the human in human life; he is more appropriate for the majority. Mozart claims the superhuman, the miraculous, that which lives in the inmost soul. Beethoven’s music turns the wheels of horror, fear, terror and pain, and awakens that endless longing that is the essence of Romanticism. Beethoven is a pure Romantic (and therefore also a truly musical) composer, and so it may be that he is less successful with vocal music, which admits of no indefinite longings and, of all the affects

‘No instrument has difficult passages to perform, but only an extremely secure, practised orchestra can dare attempt this symphony. Any moment in which the slightest mistake were made would irrecoverably ruin the whole work. The constant exchanges between strings and winds, the single chords to be struck after rests, etc. require the highest precision. The conductor, therefore, should be advised to watch his orchestra and to keep it constantly in hand rather than simply to play the first violin part louder than it ought to be played, as is so often the practice.’

ETA HOFFMANN

◀ **Self-portrait by the multi-talented ETA Hoffmann**



experienced in the realm of the infinite, represents only those which can be put into words; his Romanticism may also be the reason why his instrumental music seldom appeals to the masses. Still, these same masses who do not understand the depths of Beethoven's music do not deny that he has a high degree of imagination. Indeed, his works are commonly seen as no more than the products of a genius who, unconcerned with form and the selection of ideas, surrenders himself to his burning passion and to the spontaneous inspirations of his powers of imagination. Nevertheless, when it comes to level-headedness, he ranks beside Haydn and Mozart. He separates his 'I' from the inner realm of the notes and rules over it with absolute authority.

...For many people, the whole work rushes by like an ingenious rhapsody. The heart of every sensitive listener, however, will certainly be deeply and intimately moved by an enduring feeling – precisely that feeling of foreboding, indescribable longing – which remains until the final chord. Indeed, many moments will pass before he will be able to step out of the wonderful realm of the spirits where pain and bliss, taking tonal form, surrounded him. The reviewer believes it possible to summarise his judgement of this work of art in a few words by saying that it was conceived by a genius, it was executed with profound self-possession, and it expresses the romantic nature of music very strongly.

...conceived by
a genius...

TRANSLATION BY NATALIE SHEA
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KEITH SAUNDERS

Vladimir Ashkenazy

conductor

One of the few artists to combine a successful career as a pianist and conductor, Vladimir Ashkenazy inherited his musical gift from both sides of his family: his father David Ashkenazy was a professional light music pianist and his mother Evstolia (née Plotnova) was daughter of a chorusmaster in the Russian Orthodox church.

He first came to prominence in the 1955 Chopin Competition in Warsaw and as winner of the 1956 Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels. Since then he has built an extraordinary career, not only as one of the most outstanding pianists of the 20th century, but as an artist whose creative life encompasses a vast range of activities and continues to offer inspiration to music-lovers across the world.

A regular visitor to Sydney since his Australian debut, as a pianist, in 1969, Vladimir Ashkenazy subsequently conducted subscription concerts and composer festivals for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and from 2009 to 2013 he was Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor. Highlights of his tenure included the Mahler Odyssey project, concert performances of Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* and annual international touring.

Conducting has formed the larger part of his activities for the past 30 years and he appears regularly with major orchestras around the world. He continues his longstanding relationship with the Philharmonia Orchestra, which appointed

him Conductor Laureate in 2000, and he is also Conductor Laureate of both the Iceland and NHK symphony orchestras. He has recently stepped down from the Music Directorship of the EUYO, a post he has held with great satisfaction for 15 years, and he previously held the post of Chief Conductor of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. He maintains strong links with other major orchestras including the Cleveland Orchestra (where he was formerly Principal Guest Conductor) and Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin (Chief Conductor and Music Director 1988–96).

Ashkenazy maintains his devotion to the piano, these days mostly in the recording studio. His comprehensive discography includes the Grammy award-winning Shostakovich Preludes and Fugues, Rautavaara's Piano Concerto No.3 (which he commissioned), Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, Rachmaninoff Transcriptions and Beethoven's Diabelli Variations. Milestone collections include *Ashkenazy: 50 Years on Decca* – a 50-CD box set (2013) and his vast catalogue of Rachmaninoff's piano music, which also includes all of his recordings as a conductor of the composer's orchestral music (2014).

Beyond his performing schedule, Vladimir Ashkenazy has also been involved in many TV projects, inspired by his passionate drive to ensure that serious music retains a platform in the mainstream media and is available to as broad an audience as possible.



BENJAMIN EALOVEGA

James Ehnes

violin

Canadian virtuoso James Ehnes has performed in more than 30 countries on five continents, appearing regularly in the world's great concert halls and with many of the most celebrated orchestras and conductors.

In the 2015–2016 season he performs concerts with the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France, National Symphony Orchestra (Washington DC) and Danish National, Melbourne, Sydney and San Diego symphony orchestras. He returns to London's Wigmore Hall for two recitals, embarks on an extensive national recital tour of Canada, and appears with the Ehnes Quartet on tour in Europe, Korea and North America. He also leads the winter and summer festivals of the Seattle Chamber Music Society, where he is the Artistic Director.

James Ehnes has an extensive discography of more than 40 recordings featuring music ranging from JS Bach to John Adams. Recent projects include Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* (recorded with the SSO), an album of Franck and Strauss sonatas, a recording of Aaron Jay Kernis's *Two Movements (with Bells)*, music by Berlioz, Janáček, Khachaturian, Shostakovich and Britten, the complete violin works of Prokofiev and four CDs of the music of Béla Bartók, as well as a recording of Tchaikovsky's complete works for violin.

Future releases will include music by Debussy, Respighi, Elgar and Beethoven. His recordings have been honoured with many international awards and prizes, including a Grammy, a Gramophone and ten Juno Awards, including a Juno for his recording with the SSO and Vladimir Ashkenazy of the Tchaikovsky concerto.

Born in 1976 in Brandon, Manitoba, James Ehnes began studying violin aged four and at nine became a protégé of Canadian violinist Francis Chaplin. He studied with Sally Thomas at the Meadowmount School of Music and from 1993 to 1997 at the Juilliard School. James Ehnes is a Member of the Order of Canada.

James Ehnes plays the Marsick Stradivarius (1715). His most recent visit to the SSO was in 2014 when he played Prokofiev's second violin concerto and Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*.

www.jamesehnes.com

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Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra 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 SSO also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales. International tours to Europe, Asia and the USA – including three visits to China – have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The orchestra'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. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013. The orchestra's history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures

such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

The SSO'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 orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program. Recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards, Lee Bracegirdle, Gordon Kerry, Mary Finsterer, Nigel Westlake and Georges Lentz, and the orchestra's recordings of music by Brett Dean have been released on both the BIS and SSO Live labels.

Other releases on the SSO Live label, established in 2006, include performances with Alexander Lazarev, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Sir Charles Mackerras, Vladimir Ashkenazy and David Robertson. In 2010–11 the orchestra made concert recordings of the complete Mahler symphonies with Ashkenazy, and has also released recordings of Rachmaninoff and Elgar orchestral works on the Exton/Triton labels, as well as numerous recordings on ABC Classics.

This is the third year of David Robertson's tenure as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.

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Long-term SSO patron Vicki Olsson and Concertmaster Andrew Haveron with the 1757 Guaragnini violin that she has generously loaned to the orchestra. Vicki said that purchasing a fine violin had been in the back of her mind for a long time. 'Buying an instrument to loan to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra...it just made perfect sense to me and it came together very naturally.' Andrew chose the violin over a three-week period, during which he tried more than 30 instruments. In the end he returned to the very first violin he'd tried!

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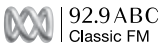
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