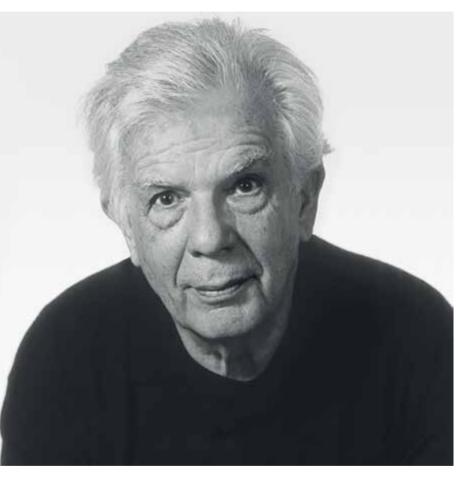


2016 SEASON **David Robertson**The Lowy Chair of
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DOHNÁNYI CONDUCTS BRAHMS An Australian First

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY
Thursday 14 April 1.30pm
EMIRATES METRO SERIES
Friday 15 April 8pm
GREAT CLASSICS
Saturday 16 April 2pm



sydney symphony orchestra David Robertson Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

CLASSICAL



Dohnányi conducts Brahms 2 An Australian First

LUTOSŁAWSKI Funeral Music **BERG** Seven Early Songs BRAHMS Symphony No.2 Christoph von Dohnányi conductor Camilla Tilling soprano

Thursday Afternoon Symphony Thu 14 Apr 1.30pm Emirates Metro Series Fri 15 Apr 8pm Great Classics

Tea & Symphony

Fri 22 Apr 11am



Heavenly creatures

Mozart, Beethoven & Haydn BEETHOVEN

The Creatures of Prometheus: Overture HAYDN Te Deum for the Empress Marie Thérèse MOZART Litany of the Blessed Sacrament, K243 MOZART Ave verum corpus, K618 Brett Wevmark conductor Jacqueline Porter soprano

Sally-Anne Russell mezzo-soprano Andrew Goodwin tenor • David Greco baritone Sydney Philharmonia Choirs Chamber Singers Sat 16 Apr 2pm

Complimentary morning tea from 10am



Babe – Pig at the Symphony

Film with Live Orchestra

That'll do, pig, That'll do,' A screening of the family favourite Babe with Nigel Westlake's score played live and in full. Nigel Westlake conductor and composer

Meet the Music Thu 28 Apr 6.30pm At the Movies Fri 29 Apr 7pm Sat 30 Apr 7pm



Leningrad Symphony

Shostakovich & Tchaikovsky P STANHOPE Dawn and Darkness -Cello Concerto PREMIERE TCHAIKOVSKY Rococo Variations SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No.7, Leningrad Oleg Caetani conductor Narek Hakhnazarvan cello

Meet the Music Wed 4 May 6.30pm Emirates Metro Series Fri 6 May 8pm Great Classics Sat 7 May 2pm



Haydn's Creation

HAYDN Die Schöpfung (The Creation) Sung in German

Masaaki Suzuki conductor Lydia Teuscher soprano • Allan Clayton tenor Neal Davies bass-baritone Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

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THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

THURSDAY 14 APRIL, 1,30PM

EMIRATES METRO SERIES

FRIDAY 15 APRIL. 8PM

GREAT CLASSICS

SATURDAY 16 APRIL, 2PM

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL



David RobertsonChief Conductor and Artistic Director



DOHNÁNYI CONDUCTS BRAHMS

Christoph von Dohnányi conductor Camilla Tilling soprano

WITOLD LUTOSŁAWSKI (1913-1994)

Musique funèbre

(Funeral Music, in memory of Béla Bartók)

Prologue -

Métamorphoses -

Apogée -

Epilogue

ALBAN BERG (1885–1935)

Seven Early Songs

Nacht

Schilflied

Die Nachtigall

Traumgekrönt

Im Zimmer

Liebesode

Sommertage

INTERVAL

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897) Symphony No.2 in D, Op.73

Allegro non troppo Adagio non troppo Allegretto grazioso (Quasi andantino) – Presto ma non assai Allegro con spirito



Friday's performance will be recorded by ABC Classic FM for broadcast on Sunday 24 April at 1pm.

Pre-concert talk by David Garrett in the Northern Foyer 45 minutes before each performance. For more information visit sydneysymphony.com/speaker-bios

Estimated durations: 15 minutes, 18 minutes, 20-minute interval, 42 minutes The concert will conclude at approximately 3.20pm (Thursday), 9.50pm (Friday), 3.50pm (Saturday).

.......

Friday's concert will be followed by a **Night Lounge** performance – please join us in the Northern Foyer.





Helene Nahowski in 1906, the year she met Alban Berg. During this time the young composer was still writing the songs that were later to become the Seven Early Songs and which were dedicated to Helene, by then his wife.

Dohnányi conducts Brahms

Brahms's Second Symphony is often regarded as the 'sunniest' of his symphonies – it communicates an expansive, lyrical warmth that brought it, as Clara Schumann predicted, immediate success with its first audiences. At the same time, Brahms told his publisher (only partly in jest) that he had 'never written anything so sad, so minorish: the score must appear with a black border'.

In this concert, Christoph von Dohnányi provides the 'black border' in the form of Lutosławski's *Funeral Music*, a short, intensely felt work composed in memory of Béla Bartók on the tenth anniversary of the composer's death. This is music that makes rich use of the orchestra's string section, dividing the 50-strong ensemble into ten distinct parts (as opposed to the usual five).

Swedish soprano Camilla Tilling makes her Australian debut in Alban Berg's Seven Early Songs, which combine the emerging atonal language of Schoenberg, Berg's teacher, with the rich orchestral colouration of composers such as Mahler and even Richard Strauss. The dedication is to 'Meiner Helene' (referring to Helene Nahowski, later Berg's wife) and this music, too, is intensely felt and full of profound emotion.

And so, after interval, Brahms's symphony does indeed emerge as a shaft of sunlight through clouds on an autumn day. Even when the mood seems shadowy, its congenial and elegant sounds evoke the pastoral serenity of the lakeside resort where it was written, a place where, Brahms said, 'the melodies fly so thick...that you have to be careful not to step on one.'

In this performance the SSO is performing on a tiered stage designed to improve acoustics and sightlines for both audience and orchestra. Because of their benefits, tiered stages are increasingly common in leading concert halls throughout the world. This temporary stage will be used for two weeks (4–16 April) while orchestra members assess its shape and proportions and make suggestions for improvements. Their input will help finalise the design for a permanent, adjustable tiered stage, to be constructed in several years' time as part of the Sydney Opera House Renewal.

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Witold Lutosławski *Musique funèbre* (Funeral Music, in memory of Béla Bartók)

Prologue – Métamorphoses – Apogée – Epilogue

One of the greatest composers of the 20th century, Witold Lutosławski was born in Warsaw in 1913 and died there in 1994. Like his musical forbear Szymanowski, Lutosławski was born into a wealthy landowning family, but his was also politically active. With the invasion of Poland by the Nazis, Lutosławski joined the Polish army but was soon captured. He managed to escape, and returned to Warsaw where he survived partly by playing piano in cafes, initially with a cabaret band, but later in a duo with the composer Andrzej Panufnik. Blacklisted musicians who had not been transported to concentration camps had little opportunity to work in Poland except in such circumstances. His comically energetic Variations on a Theme of Paganini for two pianos (based on the same caprice that Rachmaninoff made famous) is the only surviving work of about 200 pieces that Lutosławski wrote at the time. Knowing the context of the work changes our view of it: the slightly madcap nature of the piece seems less like engaging frivolity and more like a heroic transcendence of a hellish time and place. Just before the uprising of 1944, Lutosławski left Warsaw for the relative safety of the countryside: sadly most of his early work was destroyed in the reprisals which followed.

Having experienced repression at the hands of the Nazis, Lutosławski then had to deal with that of the postwar Communist government, which banned his First Symphony and compelled him between 1949 and 1955 to write nothing but children's songs and radio music based on Polish folksong. He did, of course, continue to compose 'serious' music: his Concerto for Orchestra (1950) is an early masterpiece indebted to the example of Bartók's work of the same title. And in 1955 he was commissioned to write a work to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Bartók's death – the result was *Musique funèbre* for strings, premiered in Katowice in 1958.

In four movements (played continuously), the piece is an important milestone in the development of Lutosławski's style. The opening *Prologue* recalls the opening of Bartók's *Music for strings, percussion and celesta*. The work overall also has a characteristically Bartókian shape: it begins with quiet, simple

Keynotes

LUTOSŁAWSKI Born Warsaw, 1913 Died Warsaw, 1994

Witold Lutosławski offered a distinctive voice in a century characterised by diversity of musical style and often chaotic change. Early influences included the 'intoxicating' sounds of Scriabin and Szymanowski. His Symphonic Variations was well-received in 1939, but his First Symphony from 1947 was banned as 'formalist'. At this point he followed the lead of Béla Bartók and turned to Polish folk song as inspiration - from this period comes the Concerto for Orchestra (1954), one of his most popular works, as well as his Musique funèbre. In 1960, John Cage's piano concerto left a marked impression on his work, introducing the idea of chance and improvisation into his music.

FUNERAL MUSIC

This music was composed in the late 1950s to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the death of Bartók. It starts from a 12-note tone row in the manner of Schoenberg but, not unlike Bera's music, the effect tends towards tonality. The four movements are played continuously. The Prologue and Epilogue are slow and organised as canons (a technique familiar from childhood singing rounds). Metamorphoses begins with plucked notes and literally transforms the 12-note series over 12 sections, 'braiding' musical ideas together with growing intensity. Apogée is only 45 seconds long but it is the climax of the music: a cry of despair.

textures, and seems to go 'into reverse' in the closing pages of the *Epilogue* to return the music to its original state. The two inner movements, by contrast, contain passages of intense harmonic and textural complexity.

Musique funèbre is actually the first of Lutosławski's works in which he explores the 12-note method of Arnold Schoenberg. Put simply, before beginning, the composer arranges the 12 notes of the chromatic scale into a fixed order or series; no note can be repeated before all the other 11 have been sounded, either as part of a melody or in the accompanying chords. Those simple textures at the opening and closing of the work, with melodic shapes that twist and turn without finding any apparent repose, are a result of this serial ordering of the notes. They stress the semitone (the narrowest interval) and the tritone (the most unstable), further intensifying the emotional feel of the music.

This process is carried to a greater pitch of intensity in the second movement, *Métamorphoses*. Here, and in the following *Apogée*, one hears the 12 notes piled up into chords of varying degrees of dissonance. After the climax of the work, at the end of the *Apogée*, we hear a classic Lutosławski gambit: these dense, dissonant chords gradually converge on a single note played by all instruments. This remained a distinctive feature of his style, even though Lutosławski didn't use serial techniques again after this work. Paradoxically, he found serialism unsatisfactory because 'it removes music from the realm of human sensibility', and yet in this work the technique serves to express a heartfelt sense of mourning for the great Hungarian composer whom the work celebrates.

GORDON KERRY SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA © 2001

Lutosławski's *Musique funèbre* is scored in ten parts: four violins, two violas, two cellos and two double basses. It can be performed as chamber music (one player per part) or by a string orchestra of 50 players, as in this concert.

The SSO first performed this work in 1974, conducted by Robert Pikler, and most recently in 2002, conducted by Edo de Waart. The only other performance by the SSO was in 1987 in a concert conducted by the composer and also including Lutosławski's Symphony No.3.



'What I have achieved in this work is rather a set of ways which enable me to move with some sense within the 12 tones, naturally apart from the tonal system and dodecaphony.... It is a beginning of a new period and a result of my long experience. I tried to create a range of means that would become my own.

And it is the first word – though obviously not the last one – spoken in what is a new language for me.'

WITOLD LUTOSŁAWSKI, 1958

Alban Berg Seven Early Songs

Nacht Schilflied Die Nachtigall Traumgekrönt Im Zimmer Liebesode Sommertage

Camilla Tilling soprano

By 1928 Alban Berg had achieved fame, or at least notoriety. In 1913 two of his Altenberg Lieder had provoked a riot (1913 was a good year for music-inspired riots) at an infamous concert in Vienna; in 1925 his first opera *Wozzeck* finally had its premiere after bitter political jockeying. In 1928 Berg began working on the opera *Lulu*, based on two still-controversial plays by Frank Wedekind, but not before publishing his Seven Early Songs in both the original piano version and a new orchestral guise.

Berg had composed these songs between 1904 and 1908 in a Vienna dominated by Mahler. In 1904 he had begun studying with Arnold Schoenberg, whose initial assessment was that the 19-year-old could only write songs, and was 'absolutely incapable of writing an instrumental movement or inventing an instrumental theme'. Berg would, of course, soon prove himself a master of instrumental writing and the large-scale architecture of opera; moreover his development of atonality, and subsequently the 12-note method of composition, would by Schoenberg's own admission be equal to his own.

Appearing 20 years after their composition, the Seven Early Songs provoked two opposing reactions according to philosopher Theodor Adorno: some were shocked that Berg could release a work so different from his 'true' style; others were convinced that this was the 'real' Berg, before his corruption by the nasty modernism of Schoenberg.

The songs are those of a young composer, and as such display both influence (if not always fully assimilated) and promise (if not always fulfilled). The orchestration reflects music that had been composed after the songs' original version. And yet, Berg resists the urge to recompose the work; its harmony and figurations stay remarkably close to those of the piano.

The poems are largely by Berg's contemporaries, though two (Lenau and Storm) are early 19th-century classics. The set makes no claims to be a cycle, though there are several literary

Keynotes

BERG

Born Vienna, 1885 Died Vienna, 1935

A student of Arnold Schoenberg. Berg followed his teacher's lead from the rich tonality of the late 19th century to free atonality and the formal processes of 12-tone music. His greatest works include the Lyric Suite for orchestra. the operas Wozzeck and Lulu. and the Violin Concerto, his last composition. As a result of his lyrical inclinations and an apparent lack of absolute strictness in his use of 12-tone technique, he has always been more popular with audiences than either Schoenberg or his fellow pupil Anton Webern.

SEVEN EARLY SONGS

This group of songs – composed between 1905 and 1908, then reworked in 1927–28 – sets German texts by seven different poets, including Rainer Maria Rilke. At the time of their original composition, Berg was a student of Schoenberg; in the later revision with orchestra the influence of Mahler is also evident.

The first and last songs use the full orchestra, while the evennumbered songs (2, 4, 6) use reduced and often muted forces. Two of the songs feature just one section of the orchestra: The Nightingale (No.3) only strings and In the Room (No.5) only brass.

The songs are dedicated to Helene Nahowski, whom Berg later married.

themes that bind the poems together: essentially the set begins and ends with the solitary poet addressing his own soul in the presence of a sublime landscape.

Carl Hauptmann's **Nacht** (Night) has the poet alone. In Berg's music, which has more than a hint of Debussy (whom Berg admired more than did Schoenberg) in its harmony and early Stravinsky in its woodwind orchestration, he is overwhelmed by sudden radiance. In Nikolaus Lenau's **Schilflied**, the 'song of the reeds' at evening, represented by shimmering *sul ponticello* figures in the strings, reminds the poet of his absent beloved. The song of Theodor Storm's **Die Nachtigall** (The Nightingale) creates the ecstasy-inducing scent of roses at night, triggering the image of the beloved walking in a garden in brilliant sunlight with simple counterpoint between the voice and low strings.

Rainer Maria Rilke's **Traumgekrönt** (Crowned in a Dream) begins in bright sunlight with white chrysanthemums, but the poet falls into a dream of the beloved, where Berg magically creates the sense of 'the night resounding with a fairy-tale song' with music based on a four-note cell.

In the two songs that follow, the beloved is physically present. Johannes Schlaf's **Im Zimmer** (In the Room) evokes a moment of domestic bliss in a room on an autumn evening, with Berg's music providing the glitter and crackle of the warming fire. Otto Erich Hartleben's **Liebesode** (Ode to Love) has the lovers falling asleep, to a hypnotic texture of three-note figures, as the summer wind (also the title of an early, Romantic work by Berg's colleague Anton Webern) and scent of roses inspires dreams of yearning. Berg, naturally, responds in the language of post-Wagnerian Romanticism.

A prominent phrase from Wagner's *Tristan* is almost quoted in Berg's setting of Paul Hohenberg's **Sommertage** (Summer Days), where the poet is now alone again, contemplating the blue eternity of the summer wind by day and the wreath of stars at night. The 'images upon images' that fill his mind also describes Berg's gorgeous score.

GORDON KERRY © 2016

The orchestra for Berg's Seven Early Songs comprises two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes (one doubling cor anglais), two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon; four horns, one trumpet and two trombones; percussion, harp, celesta and strings.

The SSO gave the first Australian performance of this work in 1965 in a concert conducted by John Hopkins with Heather McMillan as soloist. Our most recent performance was in 1984, conducted by Elgar Howarth with soloist Susan Kessler.



Turn to page 12 to follow the texts and translations.

BERG Seven Early Songs

1. Nacht

Dämmern Wolken über Nacht und Tal, Nebel schweben, Wasser rauschen sacht. Nun entschleiert sich's mit einem Mal: O gib acht! gib acht!

Weites Wunderland ist aufgetan, Silbern ragen Berge traumhaft gross, Stille Pfade silberlicht talan Aus verborg'nem Schoss.

Und die hehre Welt so traumhaft rein. Stummer Buchenbaum am Wege steht Schattenschwarz, ein Hauch vom fernen Hain Einsam leise weht.

Und aus tiefen Grundes Düsterheit Blinken Lichter auf in stummer Nacht. Trinke Seele! trinke Einsamkeit! O gib acht! gib acht! Carl Hauptmann (1858–1921)

2. Schilflied

Auf geheimem Waldespfade Schleich' ich gern im Abendschein An das öde Schilfgestade, Mädchen, und gedenke dein!

Wenn sich dann der Busch verdüstert, Rauscht das Rohr geheimnisvoll, Und es klaget und es flüstert, Dass ich weinen, weinen soll.

Und ich mein', ich höre wehen Leise deiner Stimme Klang, Und im Weiher untergehen Deinen lieblichen Gesang. Nikolaus Lenau (1802–1850)

Night

The clouds embrown the night and valley; the mists float above, the water rushing gently. Now all at once they unveil themselves: O listen! pay heed!

A broad land of wonder has opened up.
Silver mountains rise up, fantastically huge,
quiet paths lit with silver lead toward the valley
from some hidden place;

And the noble world is so dreamily pure.

A mute beech stands by the path,
black with shadows; a breeze from a distant,
lonely grove
wafts gently by.

And from the deep darkness of the valley flash lights in the silent night.
Drink, my soul! Drink in this solitude!
O listen! pay heed!

Reed Song

Along a secret forest path I like to creep in the evening light; I go to the desolate, reedy banks, and think, my maiden, of you!

As the bushes grow dark, the reeds hiss mysteriously, and lament and whisper, and thus I have to weep and weep.

And I think that I hear wafting the gentle sound of your voice, and down into the pond sinks your lovely song.

3. Die Nachtigall

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall Die ganze Nacht gesungen; Da sind von ihrem süssen Schall, Da sind in Hall und Widerhall Die Rosen aufgesprungen.

Sie war doch sonst ein wildes Blut, Nun geht sie tief in Sinnen, Trägt in der Hand den Sommerhut Und duldet still der Sonne Glut Und weiss nicht, was beginnen.

Das macht, es hat die Nachtigall Die ganze Nacht gesungen; Da sind von ihrem süssen Schall, Da sind in Hall und Widerhall Die Rosen aufgesprungen. Theodor Storm (1817–1888)

4. Traumgekrönt

Das war der Tag der weissen Chrysanthemen, Mir bangte fast vor seiner Pracht ... Und dann, dann kamst du mir die Seele nehmen Tief in der Nacht.

Mir war so bang, und du kamst lieb und leise,

Ich hatte grad im Traum an dich gedacht. Du kamst, und leis' wie eine Märchenweise Erklang die Nacht.

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926)

5. Im Zimmer

Herbstsonnenschein.

Der liebe Abend blickt so still herein.
Ein Feuerlein rot
Knistert im Ofenloch und loht.
So, mein Kopf auf deinen Knie'n,
So ist mir gut.
Wenn mein Auge so in deinem ruht,
Wie leise die Minuten zieh'n.

Johannes Schlaf (1862–1941)

The Nightingale

It happened because the nightingale sang the whole night long; from her sweet call, from the echo and re-echo, roses have sprung up.

She was but recently a wild blossom, and now she walks, deep in thought; she carries her summer hat in her hand, enduring quietly the heat of the sun, knowing not what to begin.

It happened because the nightingale sang the whole night long; from her sweet call, from the echo and re-echo, roses have sprung up.

Crowned in a Dream

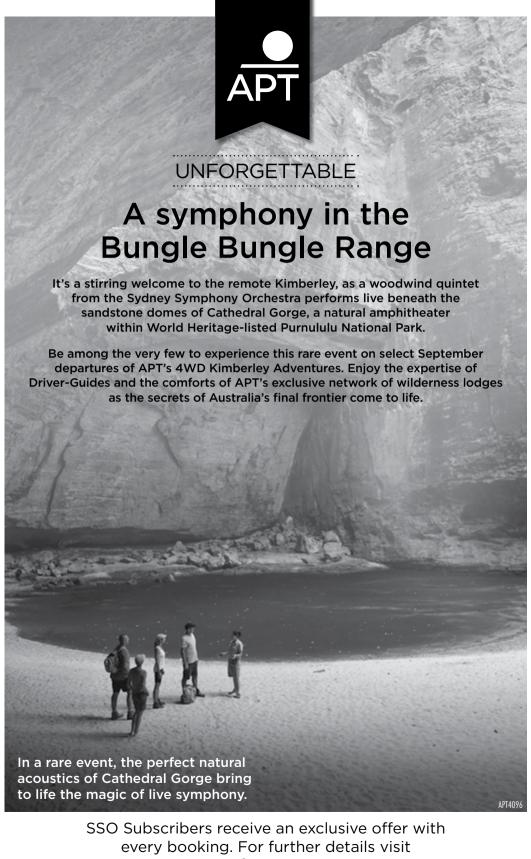
That was the day of white chrysanthemums; I almost trembled before its glory ... And then, then you came to me to take my soul Deep in the night.

I felt so anxious, and you came so lovingly and gently;

I had just been thinking about you in a dream. You came, and softly, like a fairy tale, the night resounded.

In the Room

Autumn sunlight.
The lovely evening peers so quietly in.
A little red fire
crackles in the stove and flares up.
And with my head upon your knee,
I am contented.
When my eyes rest in yours,
how gently do the minutes pass!



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6. Liebesode

Im Arm der Liebe schliefen wir selig ein, Am offnen Fenster lauschte der Sommerwind, Und unsrer Atemzüge Frieden Trug er hinaus in die helle Mondnacht. –

Und aus dem Garten tastete zagend sich Ein Rosenduft an unserer Liebe Bett Und gab uns wundervolle Träume, Träume des Rausches – so reich an Sehnsucht! Otto Erich Hartleben (1864–1905)

7. Sommertage

Nun ziehen Tage über die Welt,
Gesandt aus blauer Ewigkeit,
Im Sommerwind verweht die Zeit.
Nun windet nächtens der Herr
Sternenkränze mit seliger Hand
Über Wander- und Wunderland.
O Herz, was kann in diesen Tagen
Dein hellstes Wanderlied denn sagen
Von deiner tiefen, tiefen Lust:
Im Wiesensang verstummt die Brust,
Nun schweigt das Wort, wo Bild um Bild
Zu dir zieht und dich ganz erfüllt.
Paul Hohenberg (1885–1956)

Ode to Love

In the arms of love we fell blissfully asleep; at the open window the summer wind listened and carried the peacefulness of our breath out into the bright, moonlit night. –

And out of the garden, feeling its way randomly, the scent of roses came to our bed of love and gave us wonderful dreams, dreams of intoxication, rich with yearning.

Summer Days

Now the days drag through the world, sent forth from blue eternity; time dissipates in the summer wind.

Now at night the Lord weaves with blessed hand wreaths of stars above the wandering wonderland.

In these days, 0 my heart, what can your brightest wanderer's song then say about your deep, deep pleasure?

In meadowsong the heart falls silent; now there are no words, and image upon image visits you and fills you entirely.

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Johannes Brahms Symphony No.2 in D, Op.73

Allegro non troppo Adagio non troppo Allegretto grazioso (Quasi andantino) – Presto ma non assai Allegro con spirito

Defending Brahms against a common charge, American composer Charles Ives observed that:

...to think hard and deeply and say what is thought, regardless of consequences, may produce a first impression either of great translucence or of great muddiness, but in the latter there may be hidden possibilities... The mud may be a form of sincerity.

In fact, Brahms's music sounds 'muddy' only where we move too far from the original disposition of the orchestra he used. Brahms wrote for a modest band of two of each wind and brass instrument (using the latter sparingly), though with four horns and a matching compliment of strings. He uses forceful orchestral effects to be sure, but if ever proof were needed that Brahms's orchestration could be of the most refined, we need go no further than the Second Symphony.

Brahms took a long time to produce his First Symphony, and to have it described as Beethoven's 'Tenth', as conductor Hans Richter implied, might well have been a recipe for crippling stage fright; nonetheless the Second followed almost immediately. The relationship between the two offered another irresistible comparison with Beethoven, one which the great British writer Donald Tovey and others have seized upon: in the case of Beethoven's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies and Brahms's First and Second we have pairs of works where the first is a strenuous, dramatic, maybe even tragic, work in the key of C minor whose trajectory traces a metaphorical journey from darkness to light, whereas the second is a contrastingly serene, happy, Apollonian work in a major key with certain elements that we might describe as pastoral. Brahms sneered at such suggestions (which is not to say they have no merit), and it is true that his orchestration in this work relies more heavily than usual on wind solos particularly the bucolic sounds of oboe and horn, and that in the third movement, in particular, there is that reliance on vernacular music which reminds us of the peasants' merry-making in Beethoven's Sixth.

But as Brahms well knew, 'et in Arcadia ego': he joked to his publisher that this was the saddest piece he had ever written, and it is significant that the symphony begins, and ends, with

Keynotes

BRAHMS

Born 1833, Hamburg Died 1897, Vienna

Having finally completed his first symphony after a 14-year struggle, Brahms almost immediately began work on a second, completing it the following year, in 1877. He did much of the work in a lakeside resort in Austria's Carinthia region, where 'the melodies fly so thick...that you have to be careful not to step on one.'

SECOND SYMPHONY

Brahms's First Symphony was dubbed 'the Tenth' and his Third 'Brahms's Eroica' - both references to Beethoven. In another reference, his Second Symphony came to be known as 'Brahms's Pastoral'. This annoyed Brahms, but it is hardly surprising: the Second is the most melodic of his symphonies, and its lyrical and radiant character assured its place as the most popular during his lifetime. But it has a darker side as well, which Brahms half-ioked about, saying that the music should be printed with a black border. We can hear that, for example, in the way he introduces the sombre sounds of timpani and trombones very early in the first movement.



'The melodies fly so thick here that you have to be careful not to step on one.'

Brahms, writing to Eduard Hanslick from Pörtschach, where he was writing his second symphony.

the sound of trombones, instruments only dragged out of the church by Mozart (in *Don Giovanni*) and into the concert hall by Beethoven.

The scoring at the beginning is 'dark', thanks to the trombones, creating a slightly ominous atmosphere that is swept away by the more high-spirited material, with its hint of the famous 'Brahms lullaby' stated first by the lower strings. The overall vector of the movement is upwards to the high wind scoring at its centre, which gives way to some intensely Brahmsian counterpoint, two-against-three rhythmic figures and veiled warnings from the trombones. The movement ends introspectively, paving the way for one of Brahms's most beautiful adagios. The lovely, endless opening melody is stated in the low strings and answered by simple falling scale passages from the higher instruments. (Paradoxically, in this movement there are moments that sound like Brahms's rival Bruckner.) But again, there is no serenity without the possibility of conflict, and the pastoral calm is more than once challenged by emotionally charged outbursts, particularly as the movement reaches its final moments.

Here as elsewhere Brahms replaces the traditional scherzo with a lighter dance-movement. The *Allegretto grazioso* consists

of three statements of a genial dance with two faster, possibly Slavic or Hungarian-inspired, episodes.

The finale returns us to a purely Arcadian world, with the memory of the darker implications that have surfaced earlier, and an electrifying conclusion. It is formally straightforward, notionally a sonata design but with no especially rigorous development. Brahms balances the impulse to Lisztian Romantic rhapsody with a strong sense of formal design. The Second Symphony is conceived on a large scale, within classical norms; but Brahms never allows an idea to stand, or to be simplistically repeated. His technique of developing variation made him an unlikely hero to Schoenberg, and therefore a kind of grandfather to modern music. But Brahms doesn't just transform his themes: his treatment of forms transforms them. As such it is one solution to the problem of late Romanticism.

GORDON KERRY © 2015

Brahms's Second Symphony calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons (it is the only Brahms symphony not to use the contrabassoon); four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and strings.

Hans Richter conducted the premiere of the Second Symphony with the Vienna Philharmonic on 30 December 1877. The SSO first performed it in 1938 under Joseph Post and most recently in 2012, conducted by Hugh Wolff. On hearing Brahms play parts of the score on piano, Clara Schumann remarked that the new symphony was more original than its predecessor, and she predicted correctly that the public would prefer it. The premiere by the Vienna Philharmonic under conductor Hans Richter on 30 December 1877 was a resounding success, with critics praising the work as 'attractive', 'understandable' and refreshingly un-Beethovenian.



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LUTOSŁAWSKI

Christoph von Dohnányi's recording with the Cleveland Orchestra of Lutosławski's Funeral Music, was released in the 1990s in a London/Decca Double Decker 2CD collection that also included Szymanowski's Second and Third symphonies and his Second Violin Concerto, together with Lutosławski's popular Concerto for Orchestra and other pieces with a variety of performers. An exciting collection and still available as an ArkivCD reprint.

DECCA 448 258

Alternatively, look for the release (CD and download) pairing it with Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony.

And for two thrilling concertos for orchestra: look for Dohnányi and the Cleveland Orchestra playing Bartók and Lutosławski.

DECCA 452 6942

BERG

If you're curious to hear Berg's Seven Early Songs in the version with piano accompaniment, one of the most recent recordings available brings together Dorothea Röschmann and pianist Mitsuko Uchida – an illustrious partnership. The Berg songs are framed by Schumann song cycles: Liederkreis (0p.39) and Frauenliebe und Leben.

DECCA 478 8439

Reinbert de Leeuw's ensemble Het Collectief offers a chamber-sized transcription with soprano Katrien Baerts in a heady album that also includes Busoni's *Berceuse élegiaque*, Zemlinsky's 6 Songs, Op.13, and Webern's Passacaglia, Op.1.

ZIG ZAG 345

Alternatively, if you're seeking a Berg 'immersion', look for the 2CD collection of his major orchestral and chamber works with a variety of artists, including Frank Peter Zimmermann and Gianluigi Gelmetti, who conducted the Violin Concerto in Sydney in 2007 (the orchestra on the recording is the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra). Also in the set: Three Pieces for orchestra, the Lyric Suite, the suite from *Lulu* and the Piano Sonata Op.1.

EMI CLASSICS 07211

BRAHMS SYMPHONIES

Dohnányi recorded all four Brahms symphonies with the Cleveland Orchestra, and they have been released together with Brahms's Haydn Variations, Academic Festival and Tragic overtures, and the Violin Concerto (with soloist Thomas Zehetmair) in a 4-CD collection that's well worth seeking out.

WARNER CLASSICS 64159

CAMILLA TILLING

In her most recent release, Camilla Tilling is a soloist in Mendelssohn's overture and incidental music for A Midsummer Night's Dream, recorded by the Swedish Chamber Orchestra with Thomas Dausgaard. Two more Mendelssohn overtures fill out the disc: Die schöne Melusina and The Hebrides.

To date, Camilla Tilling has released three recital discs with pianist Paul Rivinius, and the most recent of these, *I Skorgen* (In the Forest), brings together Nordic songs by Sibelius, Grieg, Alfvén and Stenhammar. Also recommended is *Bei dir allein!*, her disc of Schubert songs (again with Rivinius).

BIS 2154 (I Skorgen) BIS 1844 (Schubert)

BIS 2166

Broadcast Diary

April-May



92.9 ABC

abc.net.au/classic

Sunday 17 April, 1pm

JANINE JANSEN PLAYS BRAHMS (2015)

Daniel Blendulf conductor

Janine Jansen violin

Brahms, Bach, Butterley, Sibelius

Sunday 24 April, 1pm

DOHNÁNYI CONDUCTS BRAHMS

See this program for details.

Saturday 7 May, 2pm

LENINGRAD SYMPHONY

Oleg Caetani conductor Narek Hakhnazaryan cello

Stanhope, Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich

SSO Radio

Selected SSO performances, as recorded by the ABC, are available on demand:

sydneysymphony.com/SSO_radio



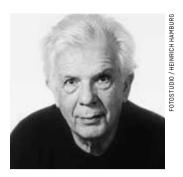
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HOUR

Tuesday 10 May, 6pm

Musicians and staff of the SSO talk about the life of the orchestra and forthcoming concerts. Hosted by Andrew Bukenya.

finemusicfm.com

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Christoph von Dohnányi conductor

Christoph von Dohnányi is recognised as one of the world's most distinguished conductors. He began his career as assistant to George Solti in Frankfurt and after four years became the youngest General Music Director in Germany, in Lübeck in 1957. He was later opera director and GMD at the Frankfurt Opera, and Intendant and Chief Conductor at Hamburg State Opera. He has been chief conductor at the WDR Sinfonie Orchestra in Cologne and the NDR Sinfonieorchester Hamburg, and Principal Guest Conductor and Artistic Advisor of L'Orchestre de Paris. He has been named Honorary Conductor for Life by the Philharmonia Orchestra, where he was Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser in a partnership that began in 1994.

He served as the Cleveland Orchestra's sixth Music Director from 1984 to 2002, and was the first conductor to be named Music Director Laureate of the orchestra. Since his tenure in Cleveland, he has been a regular guest conductor with the Boston Symphony Orchestra (including conducting at the Tanglewood Music Festival), New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra (also conducting at the Ravinia Festival) and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, as well as the Cleveland Orchestra.

His distinguished career as an opera conductor includes productions at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Opéra National de Paris, Opernhaus Zürich, Vienna State Opera, and at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris with the Philharmonia Orchestra. During Herbert von Karajan and Gerard Mortier's years at the Salzburg Festival, he conducted the Vienna Philharmonic in many new opera productions and premieres, as well as concerts and recordings.

Born in Berlin, Christoph von Dohnányi studied law in Munich from the age of 16. After two years he changed to music, studying composition, piano and conducting at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater. On graduation, he was awarded the Richard Strauss Prize for conducting by the City of Munich. He continued his studies in the United States with his grandfather, Ernst von Dohnányi, at Florida State University and the Tanglewood Music School. His many awards and recognitions include Doctor of Music degrees from the Royal Academy of Music, Eastman School of Music and Oberlin College of Music. This is his Australian debut.



Camilla Tilling soprano

Since her acclaimed 1999 debut as Corinna (Rossini's *Il viaggio a Reims*) at New York City Opera, Swedish soprano Camilla Tilling's mix of vocal quality, musicality and winning stage personality has launched her onto the stages of the world's leading opera houses and concert halls.

A graduate of the University of Gothenburg and London's Royal College of Music, she made an early debut at the Royal Opera House as Sophie (Der Rosenkavalier), a role she has subsequently sung in Chicago, Moscow, Brussels and Munich. She has since returned to the ROH as Pamina (Die Zauberflöte), Dorinda (Orlando). Oscar (A Masked Ball), Arminda (La finta giardiniera), Gretel (Hänsel und Gretel) and Susanna (Le nozze di Figaro). As Susanna she has also appeared for San Francisco Opera. Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, Baverische Staatsoper and Opéra National de Paris. At the Metropolitan Opera she has sung Zerlina (Don Giovanni) and Nannetta (Falstaff). Last season she returned to Opéra National de Paris as Pamina and sang her first Contessa (Figaro) at Drottningholm. She has also enjoyed success in such diverse roles as the Governess (The Turn of the Screw), Mélisande (Pelléas et Mélisande) and Euridice (Orfeo ed Euridice).

As a concert performer, she is a regular guest of the Orchestre de Paris, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. She also appears with the Berlin Philharmonic, most recently in Beethoven Nine (Simon Rattle), *La resurrezione* (Emmanuelle Haīm) and Peter Sellars' production of Bach's St Matthew Passion in Lucerne, London and New York. Recent highlights include Berg's Seven Early Songs with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Lionel Bringuier (which she also sings this season with the London Symphony Orchestra), and Strauss's Four Last Songs with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Christoph von Dohnányi (Salzburg Festival).

Current season highlights include Schumann's Scenes from Faust, Brahms's A German Requiem (conducted by Bernard Haitink), and concerts with the New York Philharmonic and Dohnányi. She returns to the Los Angeles Philharmonic to sing Dutilleux and Pelléas et Mélisande under Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Her many recordings include three recital discs with Paul Rivinius. She has also recorded *Die Schöpfung* with Haitink and Mozart's Mass in C Minor with Paul McCreesh, and her La Scala performance of Ilia (*Idomeneo*, conducted by Daniel Harding) was recorded for DVD.

This is Camilla Tilling's Australian debut.

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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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