



**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson

The Lowy Chair of

Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

2016
SEASON



LANG LANG
In Recital and Grieg's Piano Concerto

SPECIAL EVENT

PREMIER PARTNER CREDIT SUISSE

Wednesday 8 June 8pm

Friday 10 June 8pm

Saturday 11 June 8pm

CREDIT SUISSE

Premier Partner



Principal Partner



CLASSICAL



Hollywood Rhapsody

Including highlights from:
RAKSIN Laura • **HERRMANN** Psycho, Citizen Kane
KORNGOLD The Adventures of Robin Hood
STEINER Gone With the Wind • **RÓZSA** Ben Hur
John Wilson conductor

Meet the Music
Thu 16 Jun 6.30pm

Kaleidoscope
Fri 17 Jun 8pm
Sat 18 Jun 8pm

Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall



Channel Crossings

Ravel & Vaughan Williams

BAX Tintagel
RAVEL Piano Concerto in G
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS A London Symphony
 [Symphony No.2]

John Wilson conductor • **Jonathan Biss** piano

Thursday Afternoon Symphony

Thu 23 Jun 1.30pm

Emirates Metro Series
Fri 24 Jun 8pm

Great Classics
Sat 25 Jun 2pm

Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall



Romantic Fantasies

Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto

SHOSTAKOVICH Festive Overture
TCHAIKOVSKY Violin Concerto
BERLIOZ Symphonie fantastique

Shiyeon Sung conductor
Vadim Gluzman violin

APT Master Series

Wed 29 Jun 8pm

Fri 1 Jul 8pm

Sat 2 Jul 8pm

▪ A BMW Season Highlight

Mondays @ 7

Mon 4 Jul 7pm

Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall



Pastorale Cocktail Hour

STRAVINSKY Pastorale [1933]
BEETHOVEN Septet in E flat, Op.20
Musicians of the SSO

SOLD OUT

Sat 2 Jul 6pm

Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House



Mahler 4

Sounds of Heaven

EDWARDS Frog and Star Cycle **PREMIERE**
MAHLER Symphony No.4

Lothar Koenigs conductor
Sylvia Schwartz soprano [PICTURED]
Amy Dickson saxophone
Colin Currie percussion

Thursday Afternoon Symphony

Thu 7 Jul 1.30pm

Emirates Metro Series

Fri 8 Jul 8pm

Great Classics

Sat 9 Jul 2pm

Mondays @ 7

Mon 11 Jul 7pm

Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall



From Paris to Prague

Mozart on the Move

MOZART Piano Concerto No.9 in E flat, K271
 [Jeunehomme]

MOZART Symphony No.38 [Prague]
Lars Vogt piano-director

Mozart in the City

Thu 14 Jul 7pm

City Recital Hall

Tea and Symphony

Fri 15 Jul 11am

complimentary morning tea from 10am

Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall

FAMILY



Bugs Bunny at the Symphony II

The world's most 'wascally wabbit' returns to the Concert Hall in this brand new production of Bugs Bunny at the Symphony! Bugs and friends will be visiting our matinee shows!

Conducted by **George Daugherty**
 Created by **George Daugherty & David Ka Lik Wong**

Wed 13 Jul 1pm

Wed 13 Jul 7pm

Thu 14 Jul 1pm

Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall

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WELCOME



Credit Suisse warmly welcomes you to tonight's SSO gala concert featuring pianist Lang Lang.

Lang Lang is returning to Sydney after a triumphant set of concerts here in 2011. We were delighted to support that visit and it gives us great pleasure to once more help bring this extraordinary musician to Australian audiences.

As in 2011, Lang Lang brings a recital program that will enable us to experience the way in which he, as a lone musician on the concert hall platform, can command the rapt attention of nearly 3000 listeners.

Later in the week he performs Grieg's Piano Concerto, possibly one of the best-loved concertos in the repertoire with its blend of exhilarating virtuosity and melodic charm. In the same program you can hear the SSO play Tchaikovsky's deeply emotional *Francesca da Rimini* and evergreen highlights from Grieg's *Peer Gynt*.

This week promises to be a highlight in the SSO's 2016 season and we are proud to have played a role in bringing it about. We hope you enjoy this evening's concert and look forward to seeing you at future performances by the SSO.



John Knox
Chief Executive Officer
Credit Suisse Australia



LANG LANG

with the
Sydney Symphony Orchestra

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*Lang Lang is an Exclusive
Recording Artist of Sony
Music.*

Lang Lang

If one word applies to Lang Lang, to the musician, to the man, to his worldview, it is 'inspiration'. As a United Nations Messenger of Peace and through his Lang Lang International Music Foundation, he brings music into children's lives around the world. *The Today Show* coined the term 'Lang Lang Effect' to describe the 40 million Chinese children inspired by his legacy to study an instrument. Lang Lang's open-hearted, emotive playing on the grandest of stages – such as consecutive performances on the 56th and 57th Grammy Awards, and at the Opening Ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics – has earned him the title 'hottest artist on the classical planet' from *The New York Times*.

Today, his resume reads like a bestseller; indeed, Random House published his autobiography, *Journey of a Thousand Miles*, to critical acclaim in 11 languages. *Time* magazine named Lang Lang one of the 'Time 100', citing him as a symbol of China's future. Steinway Pianos introduced The Lang Lang Piano – their only model named after an individual artist. Lang Lang holds honorary doctorate degrees from Royal College of Music, Manhattan School of Music, New York University, Birmingham City University and China Central Conservatory (the first in the school's 75-year history).

Of many landmark events, Lang Lang has performed for the White House China State Dinner, Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee concert, the United Nations 70th Anniversary celebration, and the Havana, Cuba celebratory concert in 2015.

Whenever he can, Lang Lang tries to give back. In 2008, he launched the Lang Lang International Music Foundation with a mission of bringing music into the lives of children around the world through designing programs that are sustainable, scalable, measurable and meaningful and partnership with nonprofit and community organisations. In 2013, he was designated by the Secretary General of the United Nations as a Messenger of Peace focusing on global education.

www.langlang.com

www.langlangfoundation.org





COMING UP



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

CLASSICAL

NELSON FREIRE PLAYS SCHUMANN

Few pianists are as widely admired as Brazilian Nelson Freire. His long-awaited return to Sydney features a concerto perfectly suited to both the poetry and the virtuosity of his art. Schumann's rhapsodic Piano Concerto is full of irresistible beauty.

APT MASTER SERIES

■ WED 21 SEP 8PM ■ FRI 23 SEP 8PM

■ SAT 24 SEP 8PM

BEETHOVEN Coriolan Overture

SCHUMANN Piano Concerto

RACHMANINOFF Symphony No.2

Marcelo Lehninger conductor / Nelson Freire piano



ASHKENAZY'S BEETHOVEN CELEBRATION



BEETHOVEN HEROIC

Jayson Gillham performs
Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.4

Hear rising star on the international piano scene, Australian Jayson Gillham perform Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, the very same concerto he won first prize for at the 2014 Montreal International Music Competition!

APT MASTER SERIES

■ WED 12 OCT 8PM ■ FRI 14 OCT 8PM

■ SAT 15 OCT 8PM ■ MON 17 OCT 7PM

BEETHOVEN

Piano Concerto No.4

Symphony No.3, Eroica

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

Jayson Gillham piano

BEETHOVEN PASTORAL

Nobuyuki Tsujii performs
Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.3.

Beethoven's Third Concerto is brilliant, elegant and audience-pleasing. The pianist is Nobuyuki Tsujii, blind from birth, who caused a sensation in the 2009 Van Cliburn Competition and has acquired a devoted following in his native Japan.

■ THU 20 OCT 1.30PM

EMIRATES METRO SERIES

■ FRI 21 OCT 8PM

■ SAT 22 OCT 2PM

BEETHOVEN

Piano Concerto No.3

Symphony No.6, Pastoral

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor / Nobuyuki Tsujii piano

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**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

SPECIAL EVENT

PREMIER PARTNER CREDIT SUISSE

WEDNESDAY 8 JUNE, 8PM

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

LANG LANG IN RECITAL

Lang Lang *piano*

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)

The Seasons, Op.37b

January. At the Fireside

February. Russian Carnival (Shrovetide)

March. Song of the Lark

April. Snowdrop

May. White Nights

June. Barcarolle

July. The Song of the Reaper

August. Harvesting

September. The Hunt

October. Autumn Song

November. Sleigh-ride (Troika)

December. Christmas

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Italian Concerto, BWV 971

[Allegro]

Andante

Presto

INTERVAL

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810–1849)

Scherzo No.1 in B minor, Op.20

Scherzo No.2 in B flat minor, Op.31

Scherzo No.3 in C sharp minor, Op.39

Scherzo No.4 in E major, Op.54



**92.9 ABC
Classic FM**

This recital will be recorded by ABC Classic FM for later broadcast on Sunday 19 June at 5pm.

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

Estimated durations:
45 minutes, 13 minutes,
20-minute interval, 11 minutes,
11 minutes, 8 minutes, 12 minutes
The recital will conclude at
approximately 10.25pm.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) The Seasons – 12 Characteristic Pieces, Op.37b

Unlike Bach and Chopin, Tchaikovsky was not a keyboard virtuoso, and without the motivation of his own needs as a performer, his output of major concert works for piano was small: principally his three piano concertos, the piano trio and the Grande Sonate, Op.37. The larger part of his piano music comprises miniatures for the salon, and collections intended for children and students. Of these one of the best known is *The Seasons*.

The set was commissioned for publication in serial form: one short piece per month to appear in the St Petersburg musical-theatrical gazette *Nuvellist*. The titles were suggested by the magazine's publisher Nikolai Bernard, who also chose verses by leading Russian poets to illustrate the months.

In his *Reminiscences of Tchaikovsky*, Nikolai Kashkin reported that 'so as not to miss any of the dates on which it had been agreed that the pieces should be delivered, [Tchaikovsky] charged his servant to remind him, in a certain day of each month, of his commission...and Pyotr Ilyich wrote a piece at a single sitting and sent it off'. Tchaikovsky may well have set out in this manner after composing the first piece in December 1875. But according to David Brown, manuscript evidence suggests the commission was finally completed in a single burst in May 1876, not long after Tchaikovsky had completed *Swan Lake*.

Bernard's brief for short, simple pieces could easily have led to banality; these were potboilers after all, with no greater aspiration than to be tuneful and picturesque. And yet *The Seasons* includes masterly pianistic miniatures, sometimes surprising in their technical demands, and Tchaikovsky is never at a loss for an attractive idea or an arresting gesture.

January. At the Fireside

*Night has covered peace's cosy
corner with a cloak of dark
The candle burns down lower and
the flame fades in the hearth*
(Alexander Pushkin, *The Dreamer*, 1815)

The smooth sonority of this wistful piece suggests an orchestral imagination. The languishing idea that begins the middle section turned up later in Tatyana's letter scene in *Eugene Onegin*.

February. Russian Carnival (Shrovetide)

*Soon the lively feast of Shrovetide
will be bubbling in repasts
with liqueurs and fresh-cooked pancakes
all good folk will break their fasts*
(Pyotr Vyazemsky, *Maslenitsa*, 1853)

This dashing piece takes us into the same world as Stravinsky's *Petrushka* – the bustle and high spirits of the Shrovetide Fair. (This



is one of several pieces from *The Seasons* that was orchestrated for the score of John Cranko's ballet *Onegin*.)

March. Song of the Lark

*Flowers shimmer in the field
Waves of light whirl in the sky
With their singing do the spring larks
Fill the blueness up on high*
(Apollon Maykov, 1857)

In just two pages, Tchaikovsky establishes a haunting, rhapsodic mood.

April. Snowdrop

*Blue and pure, a snowdrop flower,
By its side, the last, clear snow
The final tears of grief of old,
And the very first dreams for hope to unfold*
(Maykov, Snowdrops – Spring, 1857)

The music for April's snowdrop continues the lyrical and heart-warming mood even as its waltz-like rhythms provide impetus.

May. White Nights

*What a night
All is covered in bliss
Thank you my homeland at midnight!
From the kingdom of ice and blizzards and snow
How freshly and purely does your
May wing its flight*
(Afanasy Fet, 1857)

St Petersburg is sufficiently far north that it enjoys that magical summer phenomenon: the sky stays light nearly all night. This tender and expressive piece suggests the world of Schumann's *Kinderszenen*.

June. Barcarolle

*Let's walk all the way to the shore
There the waves our feet will caress
And above us the stars will shine
With the mystery of unfathomed sadness*
(Aleksey Plesheyev, 1845)

Written in 4/4 time, this piece departs from the true barcarolle of the Venetian gondoliers, but Tchaikovsky gives it a lilting feel with a left-hand accompaniment that gently rocks across the bar lines, and the melody that sings above it is as enchanting as anything he ever wrote.

July. The Song of the Reaper

*Find your freedom O shoulder
Take full swing O hand
Blow your scent in my face
O wind from midday land*
(Aleksey Koltsov, 1836)

In this piece Tchaikovsky creates a folk-like mood, brisk and rustic.

Even though there are not so many notes compared to more virtuosic pieces, the harmony that Tchaikovsky creates within these notes is incredible. His timeless melodies have a kind of pain that he always turns into beauty, whether the music is peaceful or energetic. He presents his heart, and he holds your heart.

LANG LANG ON THE SEASONS

August. Harvesting

*People in families
Are ready to reap
To scythe at the root
The tallest of rye
In plentiful stacks the sheaves
have been gathered
The carts' creaky music
Screeches out all night long*
(Koltsov, 1835)

Amateurs must surely have blanched when they received their August issue of *Nuvellist*. This movement calls for fleet fingers and tremendous assurance.

September. The Hunt

*It's time, it's time, the liveried coursers
Are ready on horseback since dawn,
The hounds on their leashes strain and pull
At the strident blare of the horn*
(Pushkin, Count Nulin, 1825)

Fanfares [Ta-ra Ta-ra!] and characteristic horn calls announce the arrival of September and the hunting season in this exuberant piece.

October. Autumn Song

*Autumn, our meagre garden is losing its leaves,
yellow and faded, blown away on the breeze*
(Aleksey Tolstoy, 1858)

October's *Autumn Song* evokes nostalgia and desolation – Tchaikovsky marks it 'doloroso'.

November. Sleigh-ride (Troika)

*Don't stare at the road wistfully,
And don't chase the sleigh on its way,
And forget forever
The burning sadness in your heart.*
(Nikolai Nekrasov, Troika, 1846)

Tchaikovsky largely ignores the underlying bleakness of the verse and instead opts for a catchy, sparkling effect with a suggestion of sleigh bells in the middle. When the opening theme returns it's given the aural equivalent of a dusting of snow.

December. Christmas

*On the eve of Epiphany
Some girls were foretelling their fate
They would take off a shoe
And fling it over the gate*
(Nikolai Zhukovsky, Svetlana, 1813)

Bernard's chosen poem refers to Svyatki (the 12 days of Christmas) and its fortune-telling traditions. According to Russian lore, the girl whose shoe was picked up would be the first to marry. For this final piece Tchaikovsky writes a signature waltz, the kind of flowing number that suggests satin slippers are being thrown rather than sturdy country shoes.

YVONNE FRINDLE
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
© 2016
VERSE TRANSLATIONS BY
PHILLIP SHOVK

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Italian Concerto, BWV 971

(Concerto after the Italian taste)

[Allegro]

Andante

Presto

Swept up in this music's energy and virtuosity, moved by its expressiveness, we can hardly resist the impulse to dance, then sing, while admiring the display from composer and performer. We say to ourselves 'this must be what Bach means by concerto'. Then a niggling voice asks 'can a concerto be for a single instrument?' and 'why an *Italian* concerto? Bach was German...'

This is one of Bach's best-known and most admired keyboard works, along with the Goldberg Variations. Even Johann Adolf Scheibe, usually the most nitpicking of Bach's contemporary critics, admitted this Italian Concerto provoked envy and vain imitation: 'a perfect model of a well-designed solo concerto.'

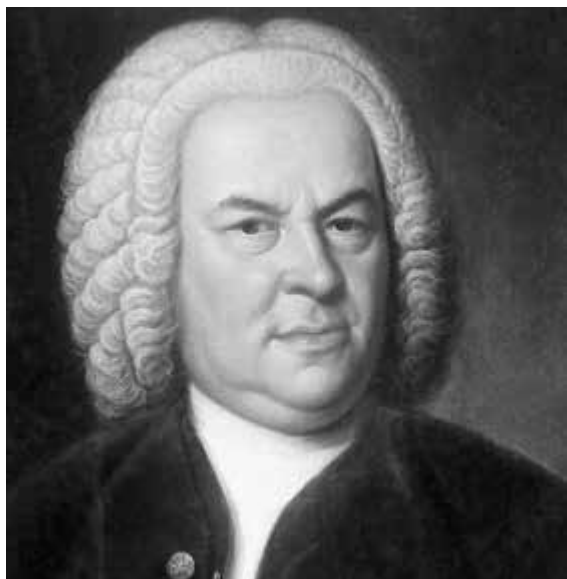
A concerto for just one instrument was not a novelty. The idea of imitating the interplay of solos and tutti (ensemble), one of a concerto's defining features, was to make a single instrument give the same pleasure as, say, a concerto for violin and strings. When Bach began providing such music for keyboard, the concertos he had in mind would most likely have been by Vivaldi or some similar Italian. While in the service of the Duke of Weimar from 1709 to 1717 Bach transcribed a number of Italian violin concertos, re-creating them at the keyboard to make them concerto-like.

Many years later Bach published the only one of his concertos for a single keyboard instrument not based on anyone else's music. Here's part of Bach's title:

Second part of the Keyboard Exercise [Clavier-Übung], consisting of a Concerto after the Italian taste [Italiaenischen Gusto] and an Overture in the French manner for a harpsichord with two manuals. Composed for amateurs to delight their spirits by Johann Sebastian Bach...

'Exercise' was meant to stretch the player. Two manuals (keyboards) are specified, indicating a big harpsichord, to give richness of sound, but – even more importantly – to make obvious the 'concerto' or contest between the few and the many, by contrasts of dynamics and texture. The music as first published in 1735 shows alternating markings of *piano* (soft) and *forte* (loud). Often, especially in the slow movement, the solo line is to be played by one hand, the accompaniment by the other. The two parts sometimes nearly bump into each other, so having two manuals makes it easier to keep the hands apart. This poses

**'can a concerto
be for a single
instrument?'**



a challenge when playing the music on the piano, but not an insurmountable one.

In marking 'forte' then 'piano', Bach usually meant a change of manual, changing color as well as loudness. Some passages marked 'forte' are accompanied, on the other manual, 'piano'. A pianist needs to find an equivalent on a single keyboard, taking advantage of the expanded range of dynamics for which the 'pianoforte' is named.

Bach gives instruction as well as pleasure. He juxtaposed an exemplary piece 'after the Italian taste' with 'An Overture in the French manner' (imitating an orchestral French overture and its suite of dances). Both pieces are pure Bach, not arrangements. He had practised well in those splendid transcriptions of concertos by Vivaldi and others.

The slow movement (*Andante*) is like that of a Vivaldi concerto, but emotionally more intense. The solo line is richly elaborated with ornamentation, as it has to be on a non-sustaining keyboard instrument. In the Italian Concerto's flanking fast movements it may be futile to try to hear frequent alternations of solo and tutti. More obvious, and typically Italian, are the ritornellos: music for the 'ensemble' that 'returns', separating the more soloistic episodes.

The musical textures of this piece demonstrate what Bach understood by a concertante style. He learnt it from Italian concertos, and re-thought it for a single instrument. There are more conversations going on than in Bach's Italian models, a complex and even surprising argument between the parts. And that's delightful, for players and listeners alike.

DAVID GARRETT © 2016

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Scherzo No.1 in B minor, Op.20

Scherzo No.2 in B flat minor, Op.31

Scherzo No.3 in C sharp minor, Op.39

Scherzo No.4 in E major, Op.54

Frédéric Chopin was not only one of the greatest composers for the piano, he was also one of the greatest performers of his age. Ill health limited his presence on the public concert scene, and temperament too. But he was the darling of the aristocratic salons in an age when these more intimate performances were considered worthy of attention and reporting. After a concert in the home of Lord Falmouth in London in 1848, the *Daily News* reported how his program of etudes, preludes, mazurkas, waltzes, a nocturne, the Berceuse and his Op.31 Scherzo (No.2) 'showed very strikingly his original genius as a composer and his transcendental powers as a performer'. The critic continued in his enthusiasm:

His music...is highly finished, new in its harmonies, full of contrapuntal skill and ingenious contrivance; and yet we have never heard music which has so much the air of unpremeditated effusion. The performer seems to abandon himself to the impulses of his fancy and feeling, to indulge in a reverie and to pour out unconsciously, as it were, the thoughts and emotions that pass through his mind. He accomplishes enormous difficulties, but so quietly, so smoothly and with such constant delicacy and refinement that the listener is not sensible of their real magnitude. It is the exquisite delicacy, with the liquid mellowness of his tone, and the pearly roundness of his passages of rapid articulation which are the peculiar features of his execution, while his music is characterised by freedom of thought, varied expression and a kind of romantic melancholy which seems the natural mood of the artist's mind.

Chopin had inherited the scherzo tradition of Beethoven: a piece in triple time with a symmetrical three-part structure, a (very) fast tempo and a forceful character, but with just enough good-humoured energy to justify the label (literally a 'joke'). In addition, the Beethoven scherzo belonged as a movement within a larger work, and Chopin included scherzos such as these in his mature sonatas.

Chopin's four standalone scherzos, however, were very different – sufficiently new in conception to confuse not only his contemporaries but following generations. They preserve the triple metre and the impulsive tempo (each one is marked *Presto*, 'as fast as possible'); the symmetrical design is there, although





Chopin performing in the salon of Prince Radziwill (October 1829), after a painting by H. Siemiradzki

more complex and with the addition of a brilliant coda; as is the forcefulness and energy.

But the expressive range is greatly expanded – Chopin’s scherzos are no joking matter. They convey drama, poetry and often tragic struggle in music that is full of dynamism and extremes of contrast. Gone are the pleasantries of the earlier salon pieces; instead the scherzos transport the listener into a world of intensely felt emotion. The first three scherzos in particular – all of them in minor keys – see Chopin in his darkest and least humorous moods.

Although performed tonight as a set, the four scherzos were composed as independent and uniquely characterised works over a period of more than a decade, beginning most probably with Chopin’s time in Vienna before his move to Paris and extending to the illness of his final years.

Of the four, **Scherzo No.1 in B minor, Op.20** is the fiercest as well as the most uncompromising in its harmonies. It may have been conceived following the November uprising in Warsaw in 1830. Chopin was in Vienna that Christmas: ‘...if I could, I would set in motion all the sounds which could release me from my blind, angry, unleashed feelings.’ Perhaps the presence in the middle section of a well-known Polish carol (*Lulajże Jezuniu*, ‘Sleep, little Jesus’) was prompted by the season as well as nostalgia. This furious and turbulent music is now assigned by many scholars to the years 1834–35; if the original inspiration stands, then time and distance in no way weakened the relentless feeling of pain and rage.

Scherzo No.2, Op.31 (in B flat minor or D flat major, depending on your analysis) was composed in 1837 and quickly became

one of Chopin's most popular works, ranking with the waltzes and nocturnes and the third ballade. In Warsaw it was even transcribed for orchestra.

The opening of the second scherzo offers a clear demonstration of Chopin's focus on extremes of contrast: a subdued, furtive melodic fragment in the bass, a pause, fierce chords in the treble. (Hearing this immediately after the first scherzo highlights the dissonances that distinguish both beginnings.) The scene is set for tension: between unison ideas and chords, between different registers, between soft and loud. And above all between B flat minor, in which key the scherzo clearly begins, and D flat major, which is how it will end after a journey of alternations between these two tonal centres.

Chopin began the **Scherzo No.3 in C sharp minor, Op.39** in 1838 on the island of Majorca where he and George Sand had hoped to enjoy the Mediterranean sun (in fact it rained). Its most memorable material could well have been prompted by their stay in the monastery in Valldemossa: a solemn 'organ' chorale that makes its first appearance about a minute and a half in. The chorale is set out in four measured phrases, each separated by a shimmering cascade of notes

Equally distinctive is the introduction, which is daringly opaque and ambiguous harmony. Anticipating the strategies of Schoenberg nearly a century later, Chopin introduces all 12 tones of the chromatic scale in the opening moments, interspersing the unharmonised notes with crashing chords. Also notable is the way this relatively large scale piece is built from just two contrasting ideas – a brusque and angular theme followed by the chorale-and-cascades – which are set out in striking opposition, alternating in a struggle between the dramatic and the lyrical. The coda signals a win for drama.

Heard after the first three, the **Scherzo No.4 in E major, Op.54** comes as a complete surprise. Gone are the dramatic contrasts and wild, impassioned gestures; instead this piece approaches the 'fairy scherzos' of Mendelssohn, with its sparkling fingerwork and quietly sunny disposition. It was composed in 1842 when Chopin's health had already begun to decline, and yet this radiant music suggests less pain and suffering than the earlier scherzos.

It begins with a succession of fragmentary and impressionistic ideas, separated by silence or by chords. The effect is subtle and often mysterious, the dynamic rarely goes above *piano*. The central section offers an elegantly swaying melody in C sharp minor. Only in the coda, following the return of the opening thematic ideas, does the music approach the extroversion of the other scherzos.



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**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

SPECIAL EVENT

PREMIER PARTNER CREDIT SUISSE

FRIDAY 10 JUNE, 8PM

SATURDAY 11 JUNE, 8PM

.....
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

LANG LANG PLAYS GRIEG

Manuel López-Gómez *conductor*

Lang Lang *piano*

EDVARD GRIEG (1843–1907)

Peer Gynt: Suite No.1, Op.46

Morning Mood

Death of Åse

Anitra's Dance

In the Hall of the Mountain King

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)

Francesca da Rimini – Symphonic fantasia after Dante

INTERVAL


GRIEG

Piano Concerto in A minor, Op.16

Allegro molto moderato

Adagio –

Allegro moderato molto e marcato

 | **92.9 ABC
Classic FM**

Saturday's performance will be recorded by ABC Classic FM for later broadcast on Saturday 18 June at 1pm.
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Pre-concert talk by Scott Davie at 7.15pm in the Northern Foyer. For more information visit sydney-symphony.com/talk-bios
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Estimated durations:
15 minutes, 22 minutes,
20-minute interval, 30 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 9.45pm.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Edvard Grieg (1843–1907)

Peer Gynt: Suite No.1, Op.46

Morning Mood

Death of Åse

Anitra's Dance

In the Hall of the Mountain King

Everyone knows Grieg's *Peer Gynt* music, even if they don't realise it. Hardly anyone knows the play by Ibsen for which it was written. Like Bizet's incidental music for *L'Arlésienne*, Grieg's for *Peer Gynt* has become very popular apart from the play. The success of Ibsen's play with its early audiences was greatly helped by Grieg's music. Ironically, Grieg at first was unenthusiastic about the project, considering the subject unmanageable, and commenting later on the dance of the Mountain King's daughter:

I have written something...which smacks so much of cow dung, ultra-Norwegianism and self-satisfaction that I quite literally cannot bear to listen to it. But I imagine that the irony will also be apparent, especially when afterwards Peer Gynt, against his will, is forced to say, 'I swear the dance and the music are, by God, quite beyond compare.'

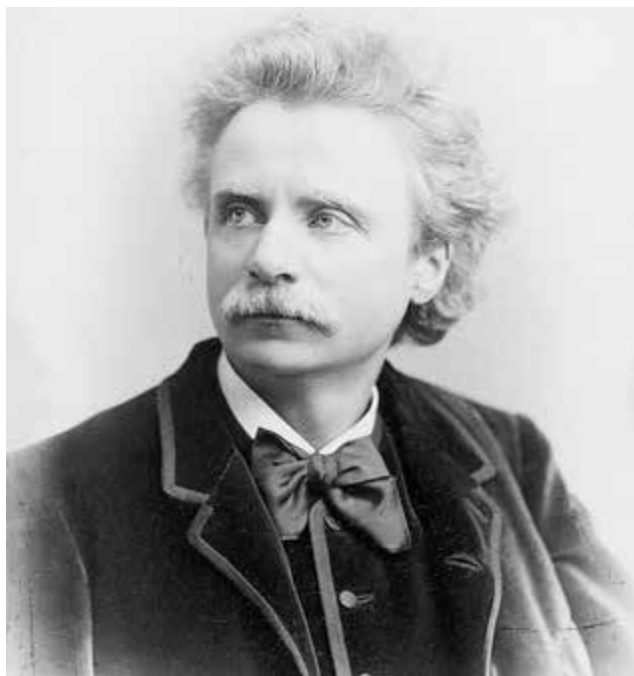
The forceful side of Ibsen's story, such as the Mountain King episode, is not what most people expect from Grieg. This composer's music was wickedly described by Debussy as 'a pink sweetmeat stuffed with snow'. But Grieg's range was greater than Debussy suspected, notably in *Peer Gynt*. The two familiar orchestral suites, made by Grieg for the concert hall, give only eight of the 23 numbers, and in an order quite unrelated to their place in the drama.

It was Ibsen himself, the Norwegian dramatist, who asked Grieg in 1874 to write the music for a revised and staged version of his poetical drama *Peer Gynt*. The central character, Peer, is reckless, irresponsible, boastful, and a storyteller full of imagination. He lives with his aged mother Åse, until he elopes with an heiress, Ingrid, on her wedding day. Deserting Ingrid, Peer becomes an outlaw, and in the mountains meets the daughter of the Troll King. Peer rejects her father's demand that, to marry her, he become a troll. He is attacked by the trolls, and saved only by the sound of church bells which puts them to flight.

Hiding in a hut in the wood, he is found by the gentle Solveig, who loves him. But he cannot stay with her until he has cast off the load of his past. Peer goes to his mother, who is dying, and 'rides her into heaven' in an imaginary sleigh ride to the gates of Paradise. Then he is off again, to adventures in America, Morocco



Henrik Ibsen invited Grieg to provide the music for a production of his poetical drama *Peer Gynt*



and Egypt, lasting a quarter of a century. He tries to seduce and is robbed by Anitra, a Bedouin chief's daughter.

When he returns home, he is older, more wasted, but no wiser nor more truthful than before, though he still firmly believes he has lived with truth to himself. Death comes to claim him, because he has never lived according to his self, but in the search for one more chance to redeem himself, Peer finds Solveig, now old and blind. She has waited for his return, and affirms that Peer has lived as Himself, in her faith, hope and love. At the end, she cradles him in her arms and sings him to rest.

Morning Mood

The Prelude to Act IV is immensely popular and has acquired Scandinavian travelogue associations along the way. But it is intended to evoke sun breaking, not on Norwegian fjords and mountains, but on the Sahara desert where Peer's adventures have taken him. Grieg wrote, 'This piece should be regarded as pure music.'

Death of Åse

This poignant elegy for muted strings is played as Peer's mother, in the hut stripped bare of Peer's forfeited possessions, dies peacefully after reminiscing with her son of happier times. Grieg intended the music to be played twice, first as an interlude before Act III, and later at the death of Åse, extremely faintly.

**'Morning Mood
should be regarded
as pure music.'**

GRIEG



◀ **Peer Gynt in the Hall of the Mountain King – watercolour by Theodor Kittelsen 1913**

Anitra's Dance

Muted strings are joined by triangle, in a *tempo di mazurka*. Wandering in the Sahara Desert, Peer arrives at an oasis and the tent of an Arab sheik where he is mistaken for a prophet and is entertained by singing and dancing girls. The most beautiful of them, Anitra, does a special dance for him. Peer is fascinated, but Anitra, having won his heart, will rob him of his riches. Grieg wanted this dance performed 'in a really nice and delicate manner...treated like a little pet'.

In the Hall of the Mountain King

Grotesquery and power depict the King surrounded by troll courtiers, and witches. There is uproar in the underground palace (with chorus in the original version) as the trolls set on Peer to slay him.

DAVID GARRETT © 1998

The first suite from *Peer Gynt* calls for two flutes, piccolo, and pairs of oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion; and strings.

The SSO was the first ABC orchestra to perform this suite, in 1938 conducted by Percy Code; our most recent performances were in 2003, conducted by David Robertson, and in our 2011 Parramatta Park concert, conducted by Hans Graf. In 2011 the SSO also performed the complete incidental music, together with narration and dramatisations by John de Lancie after Ibsen's play.



Anitra's Dance – illustration by Arthur Rackham, c1900

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Francesca da Rimini – Symphonic fantasia after Dante

Abandon all hope, ye who enter here...

Tchaikovsky's symphonic fantasia after Dante begins at the mouth of Hell itself, the gloomy, ominous introduction hinting at the dark and nameless terrors that inhabit the poet's *Inferno*. In 1876, when *Francesca da Rimini* was composed, Tchaikovsky was in a kind of personal hell. Struggling with his sexuality, the composer had entered into a disastrous, farcical marriage, but he had not abandoned all hope of convincing himself and those around him that he was not homosexual. *Francesca da Rimini*, with its overtly heterosexual theme, was perhaps a 'final desperate attempt' to quash the rumours. Equally, it allowed Tchaikovsky to identify with the tragedy of illicit love – love tainted by sin – and the fantasia's emotional outpourings are as much about the composer's agony as his subject's.

Brooding and despondent, Tchaikovsky had already been attracted to Bizet's opera *Carmen*, and decided that, on finishing the ballet *Swan Lake*, he would embark on an opera. Although several themes presented themselves, the story of Francesca da Rimini appealed most strongly, and Tchaikovsky had begun to like the 'very cleverly written' libretto by critic K.I. Zvantsev. But Zvantsev was a fanatical devotee of Wagner and insisted that the opera be developed according to Wagnerian principles. This was not acceptable to Tchaikovsky – he had recently written home from the first Bayreuth Festival that Delibes' *Sylvia* was a hundred thousand times nicer than the Ring cycle – and the project was abandoned.

Meanwhile Tchaikovsky's brother Modest had suggested Francesca da Rimini – along with Othello and Hamlet – as a subject for a purely orchestral work. With this in mind, the composer re-read the Fifth Canto of Dante's *Inferno* on the journey from Palavas to Paris. 'This morning, when I was in the train,' he wrote to his brother, 'I was seized with a burning desire to write a symphonic poem on Francesca.'

The Tragedy of Francesca da Rimini

The story of Francesca da Rimini was a popular one (Rachmaninoff was just one of several who wrote operas on the subject), especially following its dramatisation early in the 19th century. It is the most famous episode from the *Divine Comedy*, of which the *Inferno* forms the first part, and was based on an historical event familiar to Dante's readers.



‘I was seized with a burning desire to write a symphonic poem on Francesca.’

TCHAIKOVSKY



Francesca's hand in marriage is sought by a famous but irredeemably ugly soldier, Gianciotto Malatesta. He woos her by proxy through his handsome younger brother, Paolo, and so she is oblivious to Gianciotto's hunched-back and unpleasant nature until the marriage has been solemnised and it is too late. Inevitably, love blossoms between Francesca and Paolo, and they are discovered by Gianciotto, who murders them in a jealous rage. Their souls are sent – together – to the eternal darkness of the second circle of hell, where the lustful are tossed by raging whirlwinds. (As a murderer, Gianciotto would have ended up in the *seventh* circle of hell – a river of blood.)

It is in hell that Dante encounters the tormented lovers and hears Francesca's piteous story. And it was in Dante's portrayal of the scene that Tchaikovsky encountered his inspiration. While this symphonic fantasia is program music in that it has a clearly set out 'program' or narrative, the actual events are less important that you might expect. It is Francesca and her *telling* of the story that dominates the music rather than the story itself. The result is less a musical drama – as in the fantasy-overture *Romeo and Juliet* – and more a portrait, framed by the tempests of hell.

The turmoil of Hades

Tchaikovsky's raging whirlwinds – inspired by Gustave Doré's famous illustrations from his 1861 edition of the *Divine Comedy* and the storms of Liszt's *Dante Symphony* – form the fast outer

The Lovers' Whirlwind, Francesca da Rimini and Paolo Malatesta. (Sketch in ink and watercolour by William Blake, 1757–1827)

In the *Inferno*, the poet Dante hears the tragic tale of Francesca and her lover, doomed to the whirlwind of the second circle of hell. Her agonies move him to weeping and, he writes, 'I swooned away as if I had been dying. And fell, even as a dead body falls.'

sections of an elegant three-part structure. At the heart of the fantasia Francesca makes her poignant appearance – *con amore*. 'I wrote it with love,' said Tchaikovsky, 'and I think that the love has come through quite well.'

Tchaikovsky's genius for precision of instrumental effect – musical ideas perfectly coloured by orchestral timbres – is evident in the central section of *Francesca da Rimini*, where the clarinet's 'capacity for melancholy introspection' is put to use in a beautiful drawn-out melody above plucked strings. Elsewhere soft horn fanfares and the conspicuous sweetness of three flutes in close harmony above a broad cello theme reveal Tchaikovsky's unerring instinct. In all three sections agitated syncopations of rhythm and disruptions to the pulse capture the distraught mood and build dramatic atmosphere.

The craftsmanship is impeccable; the expression explicit. The result is music that is completely controlled yet emotionally unrestrained. With its weakness and its strength – and listeners are divided as to which is which! – Tchaikovsky's *Francesca da Rimini* has met with a mixed reception almost from the beginning.

Its Moscow premiere in 1877 was an immediate success and performances in St Petersburg, Paris, Cambridge and New York were greeted just as enthusiastically. Although there were reservations about the length, the resemblance to Liszt, and about particular themes, most of Tchaikovsky's musical colleagues praised the work and the audience's applause went on 'for ever'. Ironically, given Tchaikovsky's reasons for abandoning his opera on the theme, the pervasive influence of Wagner was detected – and admitted to.

But in Germanic lands reactions to *Francesca da Rimini* were strongly divided. Hans von Bülow thought it a better work than *Romeo and Juliet*, yet he advised Tchaikovsky to remove it from the program for his concert in Magdeburg. When Tchaikovsky eventually conducted it in Berlin there were whistles among the clapping, despite the Philharmonic's magnificent performance. The critic there described it as having neither subject nor ideas,

'Love led us both to death; one death we measured.
A deeper place in hell our murderer merits.'
These words [Francesca] gave us, and these words we treasured.
When I had heard these strangely wounded spirits,
I kept my face held low until my poet
Said, 'Say what part of grief your thought inherits.'
When I could speak, I began, 'Ah! could one know it!
What deep sweet thoughts, what deepest sweetest longing
Led them to such a pass; if they would show it!'

DANTE ALIGHIERI, *INFERNO*, CANTO V:106

◀ Illustration by Gustave Doré for the 1861 edition of Dante's *Inferno* (Canto V. The Second Circle... Francesca da Rimini).



being only a mass of sounds which seemed to him too much even for hell itself!

To listeners eager to hear the latest symphony of, say, Brahms, Tchaikovsky's simple structure and extravagant expression may have seemed crude. For 20th-century critics of a similar bent *Francesca da Rimini* has seemed obsessive, relentless, beyond the pale.

Do we agree with the Berlin critic? Or with Saint-Saëns, who saw in *Francesca da Rimini* evidence of the composer's great talent and astounding technique, and Balakirev, who considered it the apogee of Tchaikovsky's output? Even Tchaikovsky disagreed with Balakirev. But without doubt, this fantasia is a masterful realisation of the intentions of a composer who was pouring his own emotional whirlwinds into one of the most moving of love stories. If we find the vividness of the experience unbearable, so did he.

YVONNE FRINDLE © 1999

Francesca da Rimini calls for three flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets and two bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, two cornets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and a large percussion section; harp and strings.

The SSO first performed *Francesca da Rimini* in 1940, conducted by Thomas Beecham, and most recently in 2012, conducted by Thomas Sanderling.

Edvard Grieg

Piano Concerto in A minor, Op.16

Allegro molto moderato

Adagio –

Allegro moderato molto e marcato

Lang Lang *piano*

After hearing a performance of Grieg's piano concerto, Arnold Schoenberg is supposed to have remarked: 'That's the kind of music I'd really like to write.' It wouldn't have been the first time that Schoenberg's facetious humour was apparent, but one can't help but feel that there was a wistful sincerity buried in the remark. Schoenberg, after all, believed that his experiments, first in atonality and later the twelve-note serial method, were forced upon him by historical destiny rather than being the result of his own wishes. He also remarked that there was 'still plenty of good music to be written in C major' and his last word was, according to legend, 'Harmony!' Grieg's concerto, while not in C major, is in its close relative, A minor, and is certainly full of good music. And it is, with good reason, popular – a fate not enjoyed by Schoenberg's music.

Grieg himself was not so sure however. He composed the concerto at the age of 25 while on holiday in Denmark with his wife and young child, and he was at that stage relatively inexperienced in orchestral writing. In fact the only orchestral works dating from his early life are an 'Overture' which has been lost, and a Symphony in C minor which is hardly ever heard. Grieg tinkered endlessly with the orchestration of his concerto between the time of the work's (triumphant) premiere and his death in 1907.

Grieg had studied at the Leipzig Conservatory from the age of 15 with the initial intent of becoming a concert pianist. Dissatisfied with his first teacher, Grieg began lessons with E.F. Wenzel, a friend and supporter of Schumann's; under his tutelage Grieg began writing piano music for his own performances and wrote passionate articles in defence of Schumann's music.

The influence of Schumann's Piano Concerto, also in A minor, on Grieg's work has been remarked on frequently, but apart from their similar three-movement design and opening gesture (in both works a full tutti chord of A minor releases a florid response from the keyboard soloist) the style of each is markedly different. Both composers were, however, primarily lyricists, and Grieg's Concerto is certainly replete with exquisite tunes. Many of these echo some of the shapes of Norwegian folk music with which Grieg had become deeply familiar in 1864 when he had also become active in a society for the support of

**...Grieg's Concerto
is certainly replete
with exquisite tunes.**



◀ Percy Grainger became one of the Grieg Concerto's most celebrated exponents

Scandinavian music. The piano's opening gesture, for instance, recalls folk music in its use of a 'gapped' scale, and the origins of the finale in folk dance are clear.

Grieg was unable to attend the premiere of his concerto in Copenhagen in 1869, but it was an outstanding success, no doubt in part because Grieg's cultivation of folk music struck a chord with the increasingly nationalist Scandinavian audiences. But in large part it was because the concerto was recognised as a youthful masterpiece.

No less an artist than Anton Rubinstein, who attended the performance, described it as a 'work of genius'. A year later Grieg and his wife travelled to Italy where Grieg met Liszt for the second time. Liszt had been encouraging of Grieg's work some time before; now he allegedly sight-read Grieg's concerto and said: 'you have the real stuff in you. And don't ever let them frighten you!'

Grieg didn't let them frighten him, and the Piano Concerto went on to establish his reputation throughout the musical world. Audiences responded, as they still do, to the charm of Grieg's melodies, the balance of, it must be said, Lisztian virtuosity and Grieg's own distinctive lyricism, and what Tchaikovsky, who adored the work, described as the concerto's 'fascinating melancholy which seems to reflect in itself all the beauty of Norwegian scenery'.

One of Grieg's greatest admirers described the 'concentrated greatness and all-lovingness of the little great man. Out of the toughest Norwegianness, out of the most narrow localness, he spreads out a welcoming and greedy mind for all the world's wares'. This was, of course, the Australian-born pianist-composer

Percy Grainger who became one of the Grieg Concerto's most celebrated exponents and one of the dearest friends of Grieg's last years. Not only that – Grainger spent time with Grieg working on the concerto before the composer's death, at which time Grieg was making the final adjustments to the orchestration; with such 'inside knowledge' Grainger was able to publish his own edition of the work in later years. Sadly, a proposed tour with Grieg conducting and Grainger playing the Concerto never transpired.

GORDON KERRY © 2006

Listening Guide

Right from the famous opening piano flourish, Grieg's grasp of the melodic inflections of Norwegian folk music is in evidence. The first movement itself juxtaposes multiple themes without developing them in any formal sense. The prominent main theme is a typically haunting melody, which is stated first in the strings and woodwinds before the piano takes it over to head in new directions. The secondary themes include a poignant melody that arises in the cellos before the soloist elaborates on it. The cadenza, which Grieg writes out in the score, is based on the main theme.

An early critic wrote, 'Nothing could be more lovely than the orchestral introduction to the slow movement... a prelude illustrating Grieg's gift of creating emotional atmosphere with the simplest means.' The muted strings are joined by bassoons and horn at the beginning of this magnificent Adagio; the piano enters with a series of elaborate figures and eventually the soloist and orchestra work their way around to a full restatement of the main theme.

A fanfare and a descending scale passage from the soloist lead without pause from the Adagio into the finale. In rondo form, this final movement is inspired by the spirited Norwegian dance known as a halling. The boisterous theme is contrasted with a more lyrical passage played first by a solo flute. A brief cadenza leads to the return of the main rondo theme, now in triple time, and the flute theme reappears during the coda.

LISTENING GUIDE ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY MARTIN BUZACOTT
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA © 1997

The orchestra for Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor comprises pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and strings.

The SSO first performed the complete Grieg Piano Concerto in 1939 with George Szell conducting and Laurence Godfrey Smith as soloist, and most recently in 2011 with pianist Evgeny Kissin and Vladimir Ashkenazy conducting.

**'fascinating
melancholy which
seems to reflect in
itself all the beauty
of Norwegian
scenery'**

TCHAIKOVSKY

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A signature trait of Lang Lang's career has been collaborations and cross-pollination between artforms. One such project in 2013 saw him working with Australian choreographer Stanton Welch, combining a piano recital with ballet. The result – *The Chopin Dance Project* – was filmed at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées with dancers from Welch's Houston Ballet and music by Chopin, chosen by Lang Lang 'for its visual nature and dance potential'. That music includes ballades, etudes, waltzes, nocturnes and the Andante spianato et Grande polonaise brillante. (At least one of the waltzes is recognisable from *Les Sylphides* but the creators perhaps wisely steered clear of the musical selections in Jerome Robbins' *The Concert*.)

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Lang Lang also makes cameo appearances on two albums by the Croatian classical-rock duo 2Cellos: *Celloverse* (playing Paul McCartney's 'Live and Let Die') and *In2tition* (in Coldplay's 'Clocks').

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Since then, his numerous Sony releases have included *The Mozart Album*: sonatas and concertos with the Vienna Philharmonic and Nikolaus Harnoncourt, and a recording of Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto and Bartók's Second with the Berlin Philharmonic and Simon Rattle.

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Many of Lang Lang's Sony releases are available in multiple formats: standard audio CD, CD with DVD (deluxe edition), as video on DVD/blu-ray, and occasionally on vinyl. For a comprehensive discography, visit langlang.com/en/music

THE LANG LANG STORY

Lang Lang's autobiography, *Journey of a Thousand Miles: My Story*, first appeared in 2008 to great acclaim, and has since been published by Random House in 11 languages. He has also released a version of the book specifically aimed at younger readers, entitled *Playing with Flying Keys*.

Broadcast Diary

June

 92.9 ABC
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Saturday 11 June, 8pm
SYMPHONIC INSPIRATION (2014)

David Robertson conductor
Vadim Repin violin
Brahms, Lalo, Janáček

Saturday 18 June, 1pm
LANG LANG PLAYS GRIEG
See this program for details.

Sunday 19 June, 1pm
Hear Lang Lang play Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and conductor Carlos Miguel Prieto.

Sunday 19 June, 5pm
LANG LANG IN RECITAL
See this program for details.

Tuesday 28 June, 1pm
CHANNEL CROSSINGS
John Wilson conductor
Jonathan Biss piano
Bax, Ravel, Vaughan Williams

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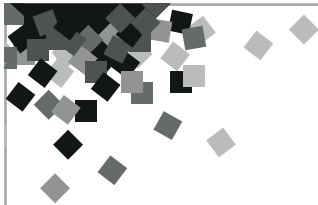
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Manuel López-Gómez *conductor*

Manuel López-Gómez is taking the musical world by storm as one of the most exciting talents to emerge from Venezuela's internationally renowned music program, El Sistema.

He began his musical life playing violin and piano, making chamber music and composing. He performed in the violin section of the Simón Bolívar Orchestra for many years, where his talent for conducting was noticed early on and nurtured by his mentor José Antonio Abreu, the founder of El Sistema. Early projects included assisting Gustavo Dudamel with symphony orchestra concerts and opera productions (*La bohème*, *La traviata* and *Don Giovanni*). He has since distinguished himself as a conductor in his own right, and following hugely successful debuts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and Gothenburg Symphony, he is increasingly recognised as a guest conductor of visionary and inspiring capabilities.

Active also in opera, Manuel López-Gómez recently conducted in Lima the premiere of the newly orchestrated opera *Atahualpa* by 19th-century Italian-Peruvian composer Carlo Enrico Pasta, returning to conduct a production of Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*.

In October 2014, he assembled and conducted an orchestra of El Sistema musicians for a televised performance at the UN General Assembly in New York City, with Lang Lang as soloist. Other highlights from the 2014–15 season included his return to the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France as well as performances with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Brussels Philharmonic, Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie and Württembergische Philharmonie. He began the season with his debut at the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, conducting Wagner and Dvořák, and he conducted a production of *Il viaggio a Reims* at the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro, Italy. The season came to a triumphant close with a highly successful debut with Washington's National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center, in a program of North and South American music.

Conducting engagements in the current season include the San Francisco Symphony, Pacific Symphony, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra.

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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, the SSO also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

Well on its way to becoming the premier orchestra of the Asia Pacific region, the SSO has toured China on four occasions, and in 2014 won the arts category in the Australian Government's inaugural Australia-China Achievement Awards, recognising ground-breaking work in nurturing the cultural and artistic relationship between the two nations.

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 Learning and Engagement 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 commissions. Recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards, Lee Bracegirdle, Gordon Kerry, Mary Finsterer, Nigel Westlake, Paul Stanhope and Georges Lentz, and 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 conducted by Alexander Lazarev, Sir Charles Mackerras and David Robertson, as well as the complete Mahler symphonies conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy.

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

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Leah Lynn (with cello) and Vanguard Collective members (from left) Shefali Pryor, Chris Robertson, Belinda Bentley, Bede Moore and Alexandra McGuigan. Leah's Assistant Principal Cello Chair is supported by the passionate members of Vanguard, which provides Gen X/Y with a new look at classical music, creating a strong and vibrant future for the SSO.



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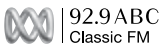
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