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orchestra**

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The Lowy Chair of
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**2016
SEASON**



**NELSON FREIRE
PLAYS SCHUMANN**
Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony

APT MASTER SERIES

Wednesday 21 September 8pm

Friday 23 September 8pm

Saturday 24 September 8pm



Principal Partner



CLASSICAL



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Film with Live Orchestra

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Nicholas Buc conductor

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Fri 29 Jul 7pm
Sat 30 Jul 2pm
Sat 30 Jul 7pm

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REICH The Desert Music
 STRAVINSKY The Rite of Spring
 David Robertson conductor
 Synergy Vocals

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 Emirates Metro Series
Fri 5 Aug 8pm
 Great Classics
Sat 6 Aug 2pm



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 SZYMANOWSKI Violin Concerto No.1
 STRAVINSKY The Firebird – Ballet [1910]

David Robertson conductor
 Christian Tetzlaff violin

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Wed 10 Aug 8pm
Fri 12 Aug 8pm
Sat 13 Aug 8pm
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GYGER Acquisition* **PREMIERE**
 TAN DUN The Wolf – Double Bass Concerto
 STRAVINSKY Petrushka [1911]*

David Robertson conductor
 Alex Henery double bass

Meet the Music

Wed 17 Aug 6.30pm
 Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 18 Aug 1.30pm
 Tea and Symphony
Fri 19 Aug 11am*
complimentary morning tea from 10am



Mahler 2

Resurrection Symphony

MAHLER Symphony No.2, Resurrection
 David Robertson conductor
 Kiandra Howarth soprano
 Caitlin Hulcup mezzo-soprano
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 THE TELEGRAPH, UK (2015)

Meet the Music

Thu 15 Sep 6.30pm
 Kaleidoscope
Fri 16 Sep 8pm
Sat 17 Sep 8pm



Nelson Freire plays Schumann

Rachmaninoff’s Second Symphony

BEETHOVEN Coriolan Overture
 SCHUMANN Piano Concerto
 RACHMANINOFF Symphony No.2

Marcelo Lehninger conductor
 Nelson Freire piano

APT Master Series

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WELCOME

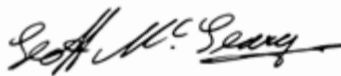


We're delighted to welcome you to tonight's concert in the APT Master Series. In an SSO season that has been filled with highlights, this week is a special treat, with the long-awaited return to Sydney of pianist Nelson Freire.

Tonight's program brings Brazilian artistry (Nelson Freire and conductor Marcelo Lehninger are fellow countrymen) but the music comes from the other side of the Atlantic: Austria, Germany and Russia. Combine great performances with the drama of Beethoven's *Coriolan* overture, the lyricism of Schumann's piano concerto and the heartfelt emotions and glorious tunes of Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony, and the result is the kind of concert that will linger in your memory.

Great music can lead to memorable experiences; so can travel to new and exciting destinations, whether you're cruising the Amazon in South America, the rivers of old-world Europe or even the Mekong in Vietnam. And we're delighted to report that APT has once again been named Best River Cruise Operator for the second year running in the National Travel Industry Awards. When you're travelling with the experts, you can be sure of a truly unforgettable experience.

We hope you enjoy tonight's performance and we look forward to seeing you at future Master Series concerts during the year.



Geoff McGeary OAM
APT Company Owner



**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

APT MASTER SERIES

WEDNESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER, 8PM

FRIDAY 23 SEPTEMBER, 8PM

SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER, 8PM

.....
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

**NELSON FREIRE
PLAYS SCHUMANN**

Marcelo Lehninger *conductor*

Nelson Freire *piano*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Coriolan – Overture, Op.62

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810–1856)

Piano Concerto in A minor, Op.54

Allegro affettuoso

Intermezzo (Andantino grazioso) –

Allegro vivace

INTERVAL

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1873–1943)

Symphony No.2 in E minor, Op.27

Largo – Allegro moderato

Allegro molto

Adagio

Allegro vivace



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.....
Estimated durations:

9 minutes, 32 minutes,

20-minute interval, 60 minutes

The concert will conclude at approximately 10.20pm

.....
COVER IMAGE: Martin Johnson Heade (1819–1904) Hummingbird perched on an orchid plant

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Nelson Freire makes a long-awaited return to Sydney after performing here in 1996.

Music from the Heart

Schumann and Rachmaninoff

From the 19th-century violinist who followed a performance of the Beethoven concerto by playing his instrument upside down to the modern 'symphonic spectacular', there's always been a place in the concert hall for flamboyance and display. The paradox is that often the performances listeners most admire, that touch the heart and which prove to be unforgettable, are not flamboyant at all. They imply rather than declare their brilliance.

With his quiet, friendly way of walking onto the stage and his undemonstrative posture at the piano, Nelson Freire conveys an air of modesty and reserve. The extraordinariness of his playing emerges in the fluency and ease of his technique and the depth of his musicality. All we need to do is bring our ears and our hearts.

Returning to Sydney for his first visit in 20 years, Freire has chosen Schumann's piano concerto. Its inspiration was Schumann's wife Clara, a gifted concert pianist who had been urging her husband for 'a big bravura piece'. The result combines poetry and tenderness of emotion with the thrilling virtuosity expected of a concerto. Clara herself observed of the early draft how 'the piano is interwoven with the orchestra in the most delicate way'. This is a concerto that requires a true partnership between soloist, conductor and orchestra.

Tonight the conductor is Marcelo Lehninger who, like Nelson Freire, is Brazilian born. To frame the concerto, he's chosen Beethoven's *Coriolan* overture – dramatic music that paints a vivid portrait of a tragic hero – and Rachmaninoff's most popular symphony.

Rachmaninoff – man and musician – often came across as deeply insecure and incredibly modest. (He once told the pianist Horowitz that he could make cuts to his Second Piano Sonata if he wished: 'Maybe it's too long!') Perhaps that diffidence contributed to the tremendous sincerity of his music. Despite its massive scale – it lasts about an hour – there are moments in the Second Symphony that feel as if we're inadvertently eavesdropping on a deeply intimate conversation. As with Schumann's concerto, this is truly heartfelt music – fervent, fresh and beautiful. And tonight we have a chance to enjoy extraordinary artistry in a program full of poetry and drama.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

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

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

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

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

When at last the music stabilises, we hear a proper melody – Coriolanus's mother Volumnia makes her pleading appearance. This theme focuses the dramatic conflict of the music, and as

Keynotes

BEETHOVEN

Born Bonn, 1770

Died Vienna, 1827

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



Coriolanus's mother Volumnia, together with his wife and child, pleads with the general to abandon his vengeful attack on Rome. Painting by Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665)

it reappears and is transformed over the course of the overture it provides a sense of the dilemma that faces the play's hero. But the inevitable resolution of this dilemma in the drama prevents the overture from following the model of Beethoven's other 'heroic' works. Unlike the Fifth Symphony, for example, there can be no monumental and triumphant conclusion.

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

But who is that hero? As English speakers in the 21st century, we could be forgiven for assuming that Beethoven was inspired by Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. In fact, Beethoven was inspired by a contemporary play by Heinrich von Collin. The essential story is the same but the two plays are very different. Shakespeare gives us an Elizabethan action hero – depending on the production, *Coriolanus* can be very bloody. Collin's *Coriolan* is more reflective and poetic: we hear about the violence but we don't see the gaping wounds. In Collin we're given a hero who commits suicide rather than a hero who takes deadly action.

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

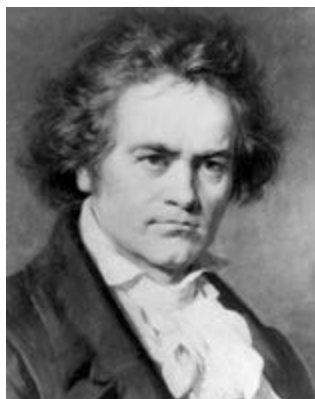
Beethoven's approach to musical characterisation in the *Coriolan* overture is very close to the idea of a Liszt or Strauss tone poem, even though no one was writing 'tone poems' in 1807. It must have seemed unusual, because in the early 19th century there was little expectation that a theatrical overture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

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

YVONNE FRINDLE © 2005

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

The *Coriolan* Overture was first performed in Vienna, in March 1807. The SSO was the first ABC orchestra to perform it, in 1938 with conductor George Szell. Our most recent performance of the overture was in 2012, conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy.



CORIOLAN OVERTURE

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

Robert Schumann

Piano Concerto in A minor, Op.54

Allegro affettuoso

Intermezzo (Andantino grazioso) –

Allegro vivace

Nelson Freire *piano*

Following their wedding in September 1840, composer Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck, a prominent piano virtuoso, set up house in Leipzig. The couple soon had children, and finding money to support a growing family was a constant worry. Clara had no intention of abandoning her successful musical life. She took pride in earning money from her performances; she also helped popularise Robert's piano works by including them in her concert programs. Robert revered his wife's extraordinary musicianship, but his pride struggled with the greater fame accorded Clara, especially when they travelled on concert tours together. Though a respected music journalist and an acclaimed composer of piano works, songs and chamber music, he had yet to write the symphonies and large-scale works that would later enhance his artistic reputation.

A piano concerto by Robert that Clara could perform would thus serve several purposes. Before marrying, Robert had experimented with various ideas for piano concertos, none of which evolved beyond sketches. But during the newlyweds' first year, he completed a *Phantasie* for Piano and Orchestra, conceived and orchestrated during 16 days in May 1841. A private performance led to the first of several revisions, but Robert could not find a publisher for his single-movement work.

He set it aside for four years, during which time he wrote more chamber music (including his popular Piano Quintet and Piano Quartet) as well as the *Spring* Symphony, and moved his family to Dresden. From there he undertook a tour to Russia with Clara that left him exhausted and ill, triggering a severe nervous breakdown. He sought therapy by studying the works of Bach and writing fugues. Taking a break from counterpoint exercises, he added two movements – a final rondo and a connecting *Intermezzo* – to the reworked *Phantasie*, and thus created his Concerto for Piano and Orchestra.

Ferdinand Hiller, a conductor to whom Robert dedicated the concerto (hoping to heal a rift in their friendship), led the premiere in his Dresden subscription concert of 4 December 1845 with Clara as soloist. But the true dedicatee is Clara, for whom Robert characterised his devotion in the opening movement's tempo indication of *Allegro affettuoso*, the *Phantasie*'s original title. Clara took pleasure in the results; she had long wanted a more

Keynotes

SCHUMANN

Born Zwickau, Germany, 1810

Died Endenich Asylum, Bonn, 1856

From 1830, Robert Schumann lived in the household of his piano teacher Friedrich Wieck. The daughter of the house was Clara Wieck, a young pianist of prodigious talent. Her concert career had taken her to Vienna and Paris, and won the admiration of Paganini, Chopin and Mendelssohn. Schumann asked for her hand in marriage on her 18th birthday. Clara's father attempted to sabotage the union, among his objections that the marriage might bring her carefully nurtured performing career to an end. The lovers won through and married in September 1840.

PIANO CONCERTO

Schumann had long envisaged a 'newer and more brilliant' type of piano concerto, in which 'the soloist, presiding at the keyboard, may unfold the treasures of the instrument and its art, while the orchestra, no longer merely a spectator, interweaves its many facets'. In 1841, his first attempt at realising this ambition was a single-movement Fantasy (*Phantasie*) for piano and orchestra, which he described as 'something between a symphony, a concerto, and a grand sonata'. With the addition of two more movements in 1845, this became his one and only complete piano concerto, with Clara its champion.

brilliant vehicle for display of her virtuosity than the *Phantasie*. Felix Mendelssohn, the Schumanns' great friend, who expressed highest regard for Clara's playing and supported (with occasional private misgivings) Schumann's work as a composer, organised and conducted the Leipzig premiere on New Year's Day 1846. [Some sources suggest Niels Gade may have conducted this performance.] Thereafter, the concerto was performed in important cities, often with Robert conducting; it remained a central work in Clara's repertoire, and is a lasting testament to the couple's remarkable personal and artistic partnership, cut short by Robert's death at age 46 in the Enderich asylum, where he recalled, in a letter to Clara, the concerto 'that you played so splendidly'.

With an abrupt, chromatic cascade of chords, the soloist's opening entrance commands immediate attention, heralding the oboe's statement of the primary theme, echoed by the piano. The theme's three-note descending motif dominates deliberations between the orchestra and soloist. The opening key of A minor yields, via the second theme, to triumphant C major, then to an expressive reverie in A flat major, showcasing the piano accompanied by radiant strings and plaintive woodwind. A return to earlier debates interrupts this dream, restores the opening theme and launches the soloist into an extended cadenza, capped by a quick coda that ends emphatically.

The second-movement *Intermezzo (Andantino grazioso)*, hosts a more congenial but equally passionate dialogue. Short musical ideas are exchanged politely between soloist and orchestra, but as they warm to their topic, an eloquent contrasting theme sings out richly from the cellos, ornamented expansively by the piano. As the conversation fades, clarinets and bassoons recall the opening movement's three-note motif, first in A minor, then in A major. Without pause, the piano seizes the major motif and launches into a robust, triple-metre rondo marked *Allegro vivace*, driven by the soloist's extensive bravura passagework. The third-movement theme (itself a transformation of the primary first-movement theme, subtly strengthening the concerto's structural unity) surfaces buoyantly through harmonic sequences that build to an exhilarating conclusion.

SAMUEL C DIXON © 2003

Schumann's Piano Concerto calls for an orchestra of two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, and two bassoons; two horns, and two trumpets; timpani; and strings

The Australian premiere of the first movement only was given in Sydney in 1885 by Alice Charbonnet-Kellermann and an orchestra conducted by Leon Caron. The SSO first performed the concerto on 3 August 1940 with Eunice Gardiner as soloist and Thomas Beecham as conductor, and most recently in 2014 with soloist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet and Roger Benedict conducting.



Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann in 1839, the year before their marriage. (Portraits by Andreas Staub and Joseph Kriehuber)

...a lasting testament to the couple's remarkable personal and artistic partnership, cut short by Robert's death at age 46 in the Enderich asylum, where he recalled, in a letter to Clara, the concerto 'that you played so splendidly'.



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Rachmaninoff

Symphony No.2 in E minor, Op.27

Largo – Allegro moderato

Allegro molto

Adagio

Allegro vivace

This fervent, warm-hearted symphony has never been out of fashion with the public that loves Rachmaninoff's music, but between the two world wars, perhaps until the 1970s, its emotional grandeur was mistrusted by many critics. It was also, for many years, the usual practice to perform it with disfiguring cuts. (Nowadays it is nearly always performed complete, though usually without the repeat of the exposition in the first movement.)

The symphony is now established as one of the most popular of all Russian orchestral works. Max Harrison's words about musical fashion seem particularly apt: 'Composers great and less great win their place in music history through having ideas of their own, and as time passes it counts for little whether these were cast in an advanced or traditional language.'

The circumstances of the symphony's composition are unremarkable: between 1906 and 1909 Rachmaninoff and his family spent much of each year in Dresden, where there was time to compose in peace, where he could hear fine performances in the city's opera house, and where the concerts of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra were only a short journey away. These Dresden years were his most consistently fruitful as a composer: his First Piano Sonata and the tone poem *The Isle of the Dead* are among the works that date from this productive period.

A secretive composer at the best of times, he was particularly reluctant to discuss his work on this symphony with colleagues. The premiere of his Symphony No.1 in 1897 was a fiasco so shattering to Rachmaninoff that he composed almost nothing for three years. He was now cautious about its successor, and before he had finished orchestrating it in the first months of 1907 he told friends that it was a repulsive work, that he was already sick of it, and that he did not know how to write symphonies anyway. But its first performances, which Rachmaninoff conducted himself, were great successes, and the work was awarded a major Russian composition prize in 1908.

The Second is Rachmaninoff's only symphony to date from the years of his full-blown Romantic style, the period which might be said to end with the growing astringency evident in the

Keynotes

RACHMANINOFF

Born Oneg (Novgorod region), 1873

Died Beverly Hills CA, 1943

In 1892 Rachmaninoff graduated from the Moscow Conservatory with the Great Gold Medal. His future as a performer and a composer promised to be equally golden, and he did indeed find success as a composer, pianist and conductor. Before leaving Russia in 1917, Rachmaninoff had already composed two symphonies and three piano concertos, among other works. Once in the West, he shifted his attention to building a career as a concert pianist and composed much less.

SYMPHONY NO.2

The premiere of Rachmaninoff's First Symphony had been a debacle; the Second Symphony, ten years later in 1907, was warmly greeted in both St Petersburg and Moscow. It remains the best-loved of Rachmaninoff's symphonies, and it would be so even if one of its most gorgeous gestures hadn't been appropriated for a pop song.

As Rachmaninoff's first symphony after the creative hiatus that followed Symphony No.1, the Second Symphony reflects a new-found confidence of style and a powerful new lyricism. It is imbued with the Romantic spirit: expansive, intense, and direct in its emotions. At the same time Rachmaninoff retained the unifying strategies he'd adopted for his First Symphony, and the proportions and orchestration are classically inclined.



**Rachmaninoff's
Second...is more
direct in its expressive
ambitions, throwing
itself without
reservation into
each successive
emotion.**

Etudes-Tableaux, Op.39, and with his flight from Russia shortly thereafter. At roughly 65 minutes, Rachmaninoff's Second is as expansive as the symphonies of his contemporaries Mahler and Elgar, but it is not of their kin – it is more direct in its expressive ambitions, throwing itself without reservation into each successive emotion. Although it has the emotional extravagance of the big Richard Strauss tone poems, this symphony declares less interest in their contrapuntal virtuosity. Rachmaninoff's counterpoint is concerned primarily with establishing a fitting context for a wealth of melodic writing; and formally, there is none of the radical compression with which Sibelius was experimenting. In the boldness of its profile and intensity of feeling, this symphony is the work of a profoundly original mind.

In one important characteristic, the Second is typical of its time – it is, like the symphonies of Bruckner, Mahler and Elgar, post-Wagnerian in its time-scale and ambitions, particularly in its frequent changes of key within movements, the long span of its melodies, the way Rachmaninoff creates harmonic tension by refusing to return to established keys at expected moments, and the use of motto themes to bind the individual movements together. Yet, structurally, the symphony is quite conventional: a first movement in sonata form (complete with a slow

introduction); a scherzo and trio; and, following the *Adagio*, a vigorous finale of well-bred Classical proportions.

Its orchestration, too, is classically inclined. 'The weight of the argument is given to the strings' is a phrase used repeatedly by annotators to describe Rachmaninoff's scoring of the Second Symphony, but this remark disguises the sensitivity with which the string voicings are placed. There is much expressive, high writing for the violas, particularly in the first movement; the wealth of warm *divisi* writing for the violins is one of the symphony's hallmarks; and the colours of the low strings vary with remarkable sensitivity.

It is the cellos and basses we hear first, in the quiet opening bars of the Largo introduction. This is our initial encounter with the symphony's three inter-related motto themes, and when the Allegro proper begins, we see that the movement's main theme – a yearning, winding idea given to the violins – has been derived from the third of these.

There is also a short, suave second subject for oboes and clarinets, which is answered and extended by the strings. The development begins with brief solos for violin and clarinet – reminiscences of the movement's main theme – that emerge between fragmentary orchestral quotations and transformations of the other themes we have already heard. The atmosphere becomes seriously tempestuous before we reach the recapitulation. The movement ends with a force and power very different from the dark brooding with which it began.

The physical energy of the scherzo is a bright light after the shifting orchestral perspectives of the opening movement. In the middle of its festivities, a clarinet solo leads us to one of Rachmaninoff's glowing Romantic melodies, written in characteristic step-wise fashion, and stretching itself luxuriantly across 23 bars of music before we return to the scherzo music proper.

Rachmaninoff then pauses before announcing the beginning of the trio with a startling tutti exclamation. A vivid fugue, in which the movement's main theme is passed fleetingly around the whole orchestra, leads to a restatement of all the major scherzo material until, in the coda, the jaunty atmosphere is interrupted by solemn brass chantings of the symphony's second motto theme, after which the movement seems to slither off into its own dark corner.

The glorious *Adagio* is indebted to Tchaikovsky, but at times it sounds like a Russian meditation on the world of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. This is Rachmaninoff the composer and conductor of operas, and here is perhaps the greatest love duet never written for the stage. The movement begins mid-phrase,

The glorious *Adagio* is...perhaps the greatest love duet never written for the stage.

almost as if we are eavesdropping, with the violins playing what we think will be the movement's main tune. It is, in fact, the last phrase of the melody we are about to hear: one of Rachmaninoff's greatest creations, a long, sinuous clarinet solo, captivating in its ingenuity and length, floating on a bed of shifting, weaving harmonies. The violins then take up the theme we 'overheard' at the *Adagio's* opening, before the cor anglais and oboe adopt an equally 'vocal', interrogative theme. At this point we are engulfed in a richly ambiguous, *Tristan*-esque world, with floating harmonies and key relationships. After a passionate climax, the dream continues with beautiful solos for violin, horn, flute, oboe and clarinet. The movement ends tranquilly.

The finale immediately establishes an atmosphere of frenetic jollity; indeed, the fizzing triplets given to bassoons, flutes, clarinets and strings seem to mimic the sound of laughter. Was Rachmaninoff ever again this unbuttoned? The mood soon becomes conspiratorial, however, as a march theme is announced by the brass. Then the main theme returns, before ascending stratospherically in preparation for a new melody of great lyrical beauty, given to the strings (minus the double basses) to play as a kind of impassioned chorale against throbbing triplets by the wind and brass. Then themes from previous movements are

What tune is that?

The opening gesture of the *Adagio* of the *Second Symphony* was borrowed by songwriter Eric Carmen for his 1975 hit 'Never Gonna Fall in Love Again' – it made it to No.11 on the charts.

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recalled before we reach a remarkable passage in which, gradually, the whole orchestra creates a vortex of scales, evoking the bell sounds so frequently heard in this composer. The exhilarating conclusion gives great and embracing prominence to the finale's second theme, before racing to its shining, emphatic coda.

When this symphony was new, music critic Philip Hale declared that its early popularity revealed 'a weakness in its composition', and that one day the work would be 'buried snugly in the great cemetery of orchestral compositions'. The increasing popularity of Rachmaninoff's Symphony No.2 since the 1970s is a victory for the broad commonwealth of music-lovers over the small, influential critical fraternity who once declared it obvious and naïve. It might even be a signal that a concern for human feeling is the primary value most audiences seek in music old and new.

ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY
PHILLIP SAMETZ ©1996/2007

The Second Symphony calls for three flutes (one doubling piccolo), three oboes (one doubling cor anglais), two clarinets, bass clarinet and two bassoons; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion (bass drum, cymbal, snare drum, glockenspiel); and strings.

The SSO first performed Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony in 1939 with Bernard Heinze. Our most recent performances have been conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy, in 2007 and 2011.

Lost and Found

Rachmaninoff's manuscript score for the Second Symphony was long thought lost, but in 2004 it turned up in a Swiss cellar – missing its binding, title page and the opening pages of the music as well as the last page, but otherwise a complete score in the composer's hand. The manuscript was authenticated by Geoffrey Norris – Rachmaninoff specialist, critic and lecturer at Goldsmiths College London – and is now on display at the British Library.



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

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MORE MUSIC

BEETHOVEN OVERTURES

For a collection of Beethoven overtures, you can't go past Nikolaus Harnoncourt and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. *Coriolan* begins the album, which includes *The Creatures of Prometheus*, *The Ruins of Athens* and *Egmont* as well as *Fidelio* and the three *Leonore* overtures.

TELDEC 0631-31402

If period instrument performance is to your taste we recommend the recently issued Beethoven Collectors Edition from Decca, featuring recordings by the Orchestra of the 18th Century and Frans Brüggen. In addition to the *Egmont* and *Coriolan* overtures, the 7-CD set includes the complete symphonies, the violin concerto (with soloist Thomas Zehetmair) and the *Creatures of Prometheus* ballet.

DECCA 478 7436

FREIRE PLAYS SCHUMANN

In 1968 the young Nelson Freire made an admired recording of the Schumann and Grieg piano concertos, with Rudolf Kempe conducting the Munich Philharmonic. Its most recent reissue was as part of a 7-CD box set from Sony: *Nelson Freire: The Complete Columbia Album Collection*. You can also find the pair on an ArkivCD release from arkivmusic.com and the recordings are available for download/streaming from Spotify and iTunes.

SONY CLASSICAL 88875002282
CBS ODYSSEY 46269 (ArkivCD)

Much less frequently heard in concerts is Schumann's Concert Allegro with Introduction, Op.134. Freire himself has played it only once, a performance with Reinhard Peters and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra that can be found on *Nelson Freire Radio Days – The Concerto Broadcasts 1968–1979*, released in 2014 to mark his 70th birthday. Also in the 2CD set: concertos by Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, Liszt and Rachmaninoff.

DECCA 478 6772

And then there is the wealth of solo piano music... Among Freire's more recent releases is a gorgeous all-Schumann album with *Carnaval*, *Papillons*, *Kinderszenen* and the *Arabeske*.

DECCA 473 9022

For more of Nelson Freire's recent recordings, visit deccaclassics.com/freire

RACHMANINOFF SYMPHONIES

The Second is by far Rachmaninoff's most frequently recorded symphony, so there are plenty of releases

to choose from – most coupling it with the Vocalise! If you're looking to get to know the complete symphonies, try former Principal Conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy and the Concertgebouw Orchestra in a 2-CD set of all three.

DECCA 448 1162

For even more Rachmaninoff there's the 5-CD Complete Symphonies and Piano Concertos, with Lorin Maazel conducting the Berlin Philharmonic. (In the concertos, Tamás Vásáry is the soloist with the London Symphony Orchestra and Yuri Ahronovitch.)

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 479 3631

Closer to home is the 'live in Japan' recording of the Second Symphony made by the SSO on tour with Edo de Waart in 1996. The program includes Graeme Koehne's Powerhouse and the Prelude to Act III of Wagner's Lohengrin, and although the original ABC Classics release is out of print, you can still download or stream the album from sources such as iTunes and Spotify.

ABC CLASSICS 462 0122

Broadcast Diary

September–October



92.9 ABC
Classic FM

abc.net.au/classic

Monday 26 September, 8pm

TCHAIKOVSKY 5 (2014)

Thomas Søndergård conductor

James Ehnes violin

Stenhammar, Prokofiev, Bach, Tchaikovsky

SSO Radio

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

sydneyssomusic.com/SSO_radio



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HOUR

Tuesday 11 October, 6pm

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

finemusicfm.com

SSO Live Recordings

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra Live label was founded in 2006 and we've since released more than two dozen recordings featuring the orchestra in live concert performances with our titled conductors and leading guest artists. To buy, visit sydneyssymphony.com/shop



Strauss & Schubert

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



Sir Charles Mackerras

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



Brett Dean

Two discs featuring the music of Brett Dean, including his award-winning violin concerto, *The Lost Art of Letter Writing*. SSO 200702, SSO 201302



Ravel

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



Rare Rachmaninoff

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



Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet

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



Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto

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



Tchaikovsky Second Piano Concerto

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



Stravinsky's Firebird

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

MAHLER ODYSSEY

The complete Mahler symphonies (including the Barshai completion of No.10) together with some of the song cycles. Recorded in concert with Vladimir Ashkenazy during the 2010 and 2011 seasons.



As a bonus: recordings from our archives of *Rückert-Lieder*, *Kindertotenlieder* and *Das Lied von der Erde*. Available in a handsome boxed set of 12 discs or individually.

Mahler 1 & Songs of a Wayfarer SSO 201001

Mahler 2 SSO 201203

Mahler 3 SSO 201101

Mahler 4 SSO 201102

Mahler 5 SSO 201003

Mahler 6 SSO 201103

Mahler 7 SSO 201104

Mahler 8 (Symphony of a Thousand) SSO 201002

Mahler 9 SSO 201201

Mahler 10 (Barshai completion) SSO 201202

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SSO 201204

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Our recording of Holst's *Planets* with David Robertson. Available now!

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PAOLO LACERDA

Marcelo Lehninger *conductor*

Brazilian-born Marcelo Lehninger studied violin and piano before dedicating his career to conducting. He holds a Master's degree from the Conductors Institute at New York's Bard College, where he studied conducting under Harold Farberman and composition with Laurence Wallach, and his mentors have included Kurt Masur, Leonard Slatkin and Roberto Tibiriçá. A dual citizen of Brazil and Germany, he is the son of pianist Sônia Goulart and violinist Erich Lehninger.

Recently appointed Music Director of the Grand Rapids Symphony, he was previously Music Director of the New West Symphony Orchestra in Los Angeles (where in 2014 he was awarded the Helen M Thompson Award for Emerging Music Director by the League of American Orchestras). At the Boston Symphony Orchestra he has held the posts of Assistant Conductor (which included stepping in for James Levine on short notice in Boston and on tour at Carnegie Hall) and Associate Conductor.

In the 2016–17 season he will make conducting debuts with the Colorado, Hawaii, Toledo and Portland symphony orchestras; the Colorado Springs Philharmonic and the Symphony Nova Scotia, as well as returning to the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra, Minas Gerais Philharmonic (where he has served as Associate Conductor), Slovenian Philharmonic, New Mexico Philharmonic, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and the Bard Orchestra.

As a guest conductor in the United States, his engagements have included the Chicago, Houston, Detroit, Baltimore, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, National, Jacksonville, New Jersey, Indianapolis, Omaha, Chautauqua, Hartford and Fairfax symphony orchestras, the Florida and Louisville orchestras, and the Rochester Philharmonic. In Canada, he has appeared with the Toronto, Winnipeg and Kitchener-Waterloo symphony orchestras, the Calgary Philharmonic and the Hamilton Philharmonic. European highlights include engagements with the Lucerne Symphony, Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and a tour with the Concertgebouw Orchestra assisting Mariss Jansons.

Marcelo Lehninger has conducted all of Brazil's leading orchestras, as well as conducting regularly in Argentina. During the 2007–08 season he was music advisor of the Youth Orchestra of the Americas and toured South America with the YOA and Nelson Freire, conducting concerts in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay.

On this Australian debut visit Marcelo Lehninger will also conduct the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

www.marcelolehninger.com



JAMES McMILLAN / DECCA

Nelson Freire

piano

Born in Boa Esperança, a small town in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, Nelson Freire is now a universally acclaimed artist. He has received honours and decorations in numerous countries – including Chevalier (Knight) of the Légion d'Honneur, the French government's highest award to a foreigner – and regularly collaborates with top orchestras and conductors worldwide as well as appearing in recital and making recordings that explore the piano repertoire with deep insight and unique creative power.

When he was five, Nelson's parents moved the family to Rio de Janeiro in search of music teaching conditions that would bring to fruition the precocious talent of their son. Under the guidance of Nise Obino and Lucia Branco, he quickly achieved mastery of the piano. At 12, a finalist at the first International Piano Competition of Rio de Janeiro, he received a grant from Brazilian president Juscelino Kubitschek which enabled him to study in Vienna under Bruno Seidlhofer, teacher of Friedrich Gulda. At 19 he was awarded the Dinu Lipatti Medal in London and later won First Prize at the International Vienna da Motta Competition in Lisbon. He caused a sensation with his London debut at the age of 23, and the following year made his New York debut with the New York Philharmonic.

In the five decades since then, Nelson Freire has performed in more than 70 countries and become a star in the international music world. He has worked with many of the world's major conductors, including Valery Gergiev, Yuri Temirkanov, Seiji Ozawa, Pierre Boulez, Riccardo Chailly, Charles Dutoit, Eugen Jochum, André Previn, Lorin Maazel, Rudolf Kempe, Rafael Kubelik, David Zinman, Kurt Masur and Colin Davis. And he has appeared with the greatest orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic and Israel Philharmonic, as well as with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Tonhalle-Orchestra Zurich, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and the orchestras of Munich, Paris, Tokyo, St Petersburg (including the Mariinsky Orchestra), Vienna, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Chicago and Montreal.

Nelson Freire previously appeared for the SSO in 1994 and 1996, giving solo recitals and performing Rachmaninoff's Paganini Variations.

Nelson Freire in Recital

Monday 26 September, 7pm

City Recital Hall

Beethoven, Debussy and Chopin,

with transcriptions of music by Bach

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



DAVID ROBERTSON

THE LOWY CHAIR OF
CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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PATRON Professor The Hon. Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO
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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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This year we are bidding farewell to two longstanding members of the SSO. Dene Olding will give his final performances as Concertmaster on 26, 28 and 29 October; Principal Flute Janet Webb will give her final performances on 10, 11 and 12 November.

www.sydneyssosymphony.com/SSO_musicians

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Principal Double Bass Kees Boersma holds the SSO Council Chair. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra Council is a group of dedicated donors and subscribers, who, when the opportunity arose, were delighted to support one of the SSO's long-standing musicians. Kees Boersma with members of the SSO Council (from left): Eileen Ong, Danny May, Simon Johnson, John van Ogtrop and Gary Linnane (full Council listing opposite).



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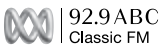
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