



**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson

The Lowy Chair of

Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

2016
SEASON



**INTERNATIONAL PIANISTS
IN RECITAL** *February–March*

PRESENTED BY
THEME AND VARIATIONS PIANO SERVICES

VOLUME 1

Garrick Ohlsson in Recital

MONDAY 15 FEBRUARY 7PM

Pierre-Laurent Aimard in Recital

MONDAY 14 MARCH 7PM

**THEME &
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INTERNATIONAL PIANISTS IN RECITAL

PRESENTED BY THEME & VARIATIONS PIANO SERVICES
AT CITY RECITAL HALL ANGEL PLACE

VOLUME 1: FEBRUARY – MARCH

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plays Granados and Mussorgsky

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plays Messiaen

Monday 14 March

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This program book for International Pianists in Recital contains notes for the first two recitals in the 2016 series. Copies will be available at every performance, but we invite you to keep your program and bring it with you to the next recital. Volume 2 will be available in September. Please share with your companion.

PRESENTING PARTNER



Principal Partner

WELCOME



Dear Music Lovers

We are again delighted to present the SSO's International Pianists in Recital series for 2016. It is with great pride that we welcome these fine musicians to the City Recital Hall stage.

At Theme & Variations Piano Services we aim to satisfy the musical wish of every pianist with whom we work, amateur and professional. Specialising in tuning, servicing, restoration and sales for over 30 years, we live and breathe pianos around the clock. Having catered for some of the finest pianists in the world, at many of Australia's top performance venues, we aim to deliver the highest possible quality of service to every customer.

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I am constantly amazed at the beauty that can emerge from a piano in the hands of a great pianist. I look forward to sharing this experience with you and I congratulate the Sydney Symphony Orchestra once again for bringing together such fine, inspirational musicians.



Ara Vartoukian
Director, Theme & Variations
Piano Services
Concert Technician



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Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

INTERNATIONAL PIANISTS IN RECITAL
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MONDAY 15 FEBRUARY, 7PM
.....
CITY RECITAL HALL ANGEL PLACE



GARRICK OHLSSON IN RECITAL

ENRIQUE GRANADOS (1867–1916)
Oriental from 12 Danzas españolas

**Goyescas (Los majos enamorados) – Piano pieces after Goya
(The Majos in Love)**

- Los requiebros (The Flirtations)*
- Coloquio en la reja (Dialogue at the Window)*
- El fandango del candil (The Fandango by Candlelight)*
- Quejas ó La maja y el ruiseñor (Complaints, or The Maja and the Nightingale)*
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INTERVAL

MODEST MUSSORGSKY (1839–1881)
Pictures at an Exhibition

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- Con mortuis in lingua mortua (With the Dead in a Dead Language) –*
- The Hut on Hen's Legs (Baba Yaga) –*
- The Great Gate of Kiev*



92.9 ABC
Classic FM

This recital will be recorded by ABC
Classic FM for broadcast on
Wednesday 17 February at 8pm.

.....
Pre-concert talk by Scott Davie at
6.15pm in the First Floor Reception
Room. For speaker biographies visit
sydney-symphony.com/talk-bios
.....

.....
Estimated durations:
4 minutes, 55 minutes,
20-minute interval, 33 minutes
The recital will conclude at
approximately 9.05pm.
.....

PRESENTING PARTNER



Principal Partner

Garrick Ohlsson in Conversation

MARK MCBETH



The idea of music about pictures is, Garrick Ohlsson happily admits, paradoxical.

‘Music is profoundly not visual,’ he says. ‘It’s only about itself.’

And yet the suggestion that he assemble a program for a New York concert series on the subject ‘Seeing Music’ fired his imagination to such an extent that he resolved to bring the pieces in question with him to Sydney.

‘These two pieces are the greatest candidates for music inspired by art,’ he enthuses. ‘I think they fit together brilliantly. They’re so very, very different. The Granados is hyper-romantic, very colourful, sensuous, emotional, operatic and passionate. And although we know the Mussorgsky very well, we forget that at the time it was considered rough and crude, not European enough.’

Ohlsson is intrigued by the relationship that both musical works bear towards the paintings that inspired them, even though he insists that it is not necessary, and in fact does not even particularly help, to see the paintings in question.

‘I think the music stands alone. When I first heard the Granados, I didn’t know the Goya paintings at all, and I was perfectly happy just listening to the music. And in the case of Mussorgsky, lots of people have been thrilled by the music in both the piano and the orchestral versions without ever having seen the paintings.’

The Viktor Hartmann paintings which inspired Mussorgsky are, in Ohlsson’s opinion, not even particularly good.

‘Hartmann was a good friend of Mussorgsky, and I’m sure he was a fine fellow, but he was kind of a third-rate artist, actually. They’d be OK for a hotel or a motel, but they’re not really good enough for the world’s great museums. And yet Mussorgsky was inspired by them to turn out a first-rate masterpiece.’

born

1948 in White Plains, New York

first piano lessons

at the age of eight – ‘which is a bit late, I don’t know if I’ll ever catch up!’

advanced study

studied at the Juilliard School from the age of 13, where his teachers were Sascha Gorodnitzki and then Rosina Lhévinne; also studied with Claudio Arrau

his big break

winning the Gold Medal in the 1970 Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw

but...

not just a ‘Chopin guy’; also noted for his performances of Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, and a wide-ranging concerto repertoire of some 80 works

recent highlights

performed Busoni’s rarely programmed piano concerto in Washington and London, and in 2015 gave a series of recitals featuring the music of Scriabin in Sydney

appeared with the SSO in 2007 (playing Rachmaninoff with Vladimir Ashkenazy), in 2010 (Chopin with David Robertson and an all-Chopin recital), and 2012 (Tchaikovsky with Ashkenazy); last week played Beethoven’s ‘Emperor’ Concerto with Ashkenazy

further listening

See More Music on page 18

Particularly bewildering, says Ohlsson, is the final movement, the imposing *Great Gate of Kiev*.

'Hartmann's painting was an entry into a competition for building a big city gate in Kiev. Not only did his painting not make it, but the gate was never built. When you know the incredible majesty of the music, the painting looks – well, inadequate, shall we say?'

The Goya paintings that inspired Granados are, Ohlsson says, in a completely different class.

'Granados was madly in love with the paintings. They're beautiful pastels, very graceful, with a touch of erotic frisson – nothing like the dark war-time paintings of Goya. But I'd still say that the relationship between the paintings and the music is more one of inspiration than one of representation.'

'Since I first heard the pieces, I've spent several days at the Prado Museum in Madrid and other Spanish museums, and I've seen lots of Goya. They're wonderful, but they didn't influence my approach to the music at all. What enriched me more was just a general knowledge of Spanish romantic piano music and Spanish culture.'

The playing of legendary Catalan pianist Alicia de Larrocha ('not only one of the greatest Spanish pianists in the second half of the 20th century but one of the greatest, period') was a significant influence on Ohlsson, who grew up with a fascination for Spanish language and culture.

'You must work at these pieces as you would any high romantic works. They're horribly difficult, by the way, which is very apparent when you listen to them, but I enjoy that. Clearly the European composers most important to Granados were Chopin, Schumann and Liszt. That is his vocabulary, but with a Spanish accent.'

All the grace and refinement of the Granados pieces faces a radical juxtaposition in the coarseness of the Mussorgsky, Ohlsson feels.

'Mussorgsky is particularly lacking in nuance in most of these pieces, which are black and white, or strong primary colours. The subjects of some of the paintings are really quite indecorous – the deranged gnome or the Polish ox-cart struggling through the mud. If *Goyescas* is salon music, *Pictures at an Exhibition* is cinéma noir.'

And though the music may have long since transcended the paintings which inspired them, it is perhaps, says Ohlsson, a way to recapture the sense of awe that their original viewers may have felt.

'These paintings were the picture books and TVs of their time. People didn't have computers and they couldn't afford books. But in the 19th century, these Hartmann paintings might have stirred people's imaginations in ways we can't even begin to imagine today.'

'Music is profoundly not visual – it's only about itself.'

GARRICK OHLSSON



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Posthumous portrait of Granados by David Santsalvador (1936)

Granados: Art in Music

Tonight's recital begins with music of inspired simplicity. A flowing motif murmurs in the left hand, outlining the first five notes of a C minor scale – but with the fourth note missing. The mournful 'gapped' effect is just one of the markers that must have prompted Granados' publisher to give the dance a title: **Oriental**. Here, 'Oriental' is code for a kind of conflation of Gypsy and Moorish styles from Andalusia in the south of Spain. The beguiling tune that enters in the right hand is presented in parallel thirds, a device typical of Spanish singing and guitar playing. The contrasting central section of this Spanish Dance (No.2 in the suite of 12) slows from an easy *Andante* to a tender *Lento assai*, and the melody takes on the flexible and ornamented style of flamenco. There might be a pianist on stage, but this music brings to the mind's eye the image of singer and guitarist.

The set of 12 Spanish Dances (*Danzas españolas*) were begun in 1888, when Granados was taking private lessons with the pianist Charles de Bériot in Paris, and published in Barcelona in 1890. They represented Granados' first public success and these charming and imaginative pieces were generously endorsed by the composers of the day to whom he sent copies, including figures such as Camille Saint-Saëns. Albéniz's son reported that his father kept a copy on his piano. Jules Massenet declared

Keynotes

GRANADOS

Born Lleida, Spain, 1867

Died English Channel, 1916

'Granados' is a Castilian name meaning 'distinguished' and, appropriately, Enrique Granados is among the most distinguished of Spanish composers, taking his place with Manuel de Falla and Isaac Albéniz. As a boy he wanted to be an architect, but he was also inspired by a harp-playing neighbour and by the age of 13 showed enough promise as a pianist to embark on a serious program of study in Barcelona. Around this time he discovered the music of Schumann, which he adored; the pianist Alicia de Larrocha described Granados' spirit as 'inextricably bound up' with European Romanticism and the soul of Spain's folkloric traditions. For many music lovers, his idiom is the most characteristically 'Spanish' of all. Granados composed operas and orchestral pieces but is best known for his piano works, in particular the *Spanish Dances* – the work that first brought him to prominence – and his masterpiece *Goyescas*.

GRANADOS

**12 Danzas españolas
(Spanish Dances),
Op.5 No.2 Andante
(known as Oriental)**

Granados 'the Spanish Grieg' – perhaps a reference to the effectiveness of the dances' folkloric characterisation by means of wholly original material.

Twenty years later, a journalist, Gabriel Alomar, wrote: 'No one has made me feel the musical soul of Spain like Granados. *Goyescas* is like a mixture of the three arts of painting, music and poetry, confronting the same model: Spain, the eternal "maja".'

For Alomar, as for many others, Granados had succeeded in capturing the elusive 'essence' of Spain. And he'd achieved this through the inspiration of Francisco Goya (1746–1828), the artist Granados described as 'the representative genius of Spain'.

The Goya captured in **Goyescas** is not the artist of the War Paintings or the Black Paintings – those dark and haunting images made in Goya's final decades – but a younger man, the creator of idyllic court paintings and 'caprichos', etchings that form wry commentaries on the follies of society.

Central to Goya's art of the late 18th century were the *majos* and *majas* – dandies, or perhaps 'gallants', and their vibrant women. The word is tricky to translate but the etymology suggests one who is handsome and nattily dressed. Their costumes are depicted as colourful and fashionable – these are not impoverished people, but they do belong to the lower classes and the women worked, for example as vendors. It was only as a result of Goya's representations of this world, that the Spanish upper classes began to imitate their dress and behaviour in the 19th century.

The *majos* were part of an idealised Castilian world, a romanticised portrait of old Spain that Granados captured in

GRANADOS

Goyescas (Los majos enamorados), Op.11 Piano Pieces after Goya (The Majos in Love)

In 1910, inspired by the early paintings and etchings of Francisco Goya, Granados completed a suite of six piano pieces in two books. A later piece, *El Pelele* (The Straw Man), is often performed and recorded as a seventh number in the suite, but is not heard tonight. These brilliant, graceful and elaborate pieces suggest a vivid musical imagination. Five years later Granados used the thematic material of *Goyescas* as the basis for a short opera of the same name.



◀ **Baile a orillas del Manzanares (Dancing on the Banks of the Manzanares, 1777, from the second series of tapestry cartoons, painted on commission for Charles II and Charles V of Spain) – Goya's depictions of the *majos* typically showed scenes of picnicking, games, flirtation, singing and dancing**



***El Quitasol* (The Parasol, 1771, also from the second series of Goya's tapestry cartoons)**

music as Goya had represented in art. (Granados himself made pencil, ink and pastel sketches in his music notebooks: pretty *majas* in flirtatious poses with titles such as 'The Maja on the Balcony' and, tellingly, 'Dialogue at the Window', where a caped *majo*, with his back to us, converses with his *maja* through a *reja*, or iron grill.)

Los requiebros (The Flirtations)

The etching that inspired this lively piece ('Two of a kind', Capricho No.5) was used as the cover illustration for the first edition of *Goyescas* – it shows a *maja* flirting with a man wearing a sword. In the music the flirtatious mood is represented with teasing stops and starts and changing tempos. Granados quotes a popular love song that would have been instantly recognised by his contemporaries.

Coloquio en la reja (Dialogue at the Window)

This was the first of the *Goyescas* pieces to be composed and all the other pieces (with the exception of *Quejas*) draw from its thematic ideas. The title (and sketch) is one of Granados' own, but it is true to the world of Goya. The music begins with an explicit instruction for the left hand's bass line to imitate the guitar. Walter Aaron Clark suggests that the intertwining of thematic material creates an effect resembling the ornamented iron grill through which the lovers are conversing. And the 'whispered' character of the music conveys the private, secretive nature of this flirtation.



Tal para qual* (Two of a kind), No.5 from Goya's *Caprichos* (1799) – the inspiration for *Los requiebros

El fandango del candil (The Fandango by Candlelight)

There is no known painting or etching by Goya depicting this scene, but there is a theatrical intermezzo by Ramón de la Cruz with the same name, to which Granados referred when he turned *Goyescas* into an opera. The title is sufficiently evocative in its own right, conjuring the image of a fandango danced by candlelight – and perhaps when the candle has burned out ‘the dance continues by other means’. In this piece Granados turns the piano into a guitar with the characteristic strumming and plucking figurations of flamenco.

Quejas ó La maja el ruiseñor (Complaints, or The Maja and the Nightingale)

This is perhaps the most famous – and rightly celebrated – piece in *Goyescas*. The scene is a conversation between a heartbroken *maja* and a nightingale, which is given its own virtuosic cadenza at the end, a nod to the tradition that the nightingale never repeats itself in song. Alicia de Larrocha – one of Granados’ most ardent champions at the piano – described this piece as ‘the most tender...and at the same time the most intensely passionate’ of Granados’ creations. In it he quotes a haunting Valencian folk tune he’d heard on his travels, and he offers an interpretative instruction for the pianist: to play ‘with the jealousy of a wife and not the sadness of a widow.’

El amor y la muerte (Love and Death)

This piece – the first in Book 2 – returns to Goya’s caprichos for inspiration: in the ‘Love and Death’ etching, a young woman holds her dying lover in her arms. Granados also returns overtly to the themes from Book 1. There is a strong sense of narrative in this ballade, with the ominous collapse of the lover (has he been duelling?), a melancholy echo of the music from *Complaints...*, a nostalgic reference to the fandango theme of the third piece, and a ‘dramatic recitative’. Clark observes that while Granados might have been indifferent to Goya’s social satire, he ‘responded to the note of tragedy and loss sounded in so many of his paintings and drawings.’

Epilogo: Serenata del espectro (Epilogue: The Ghost’s Serenade)

Following from the previous piece, the spectre of the dead *majo* serenades his beloved. Here the piano takes on the persona of a ghostly guitar. The mood is austere, with dry, angular musical gestures and sparse textures and there is a hint of the macabre that stands in contrast to the elegant representations of Goya heard in the preceding pieces.



El amor y la muerte (Love and Death), No.10 from Los Caprichos

Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition

Pictures at an Exhibition (or 'Pictures from an Exhibition' as it's more properly translated) was not performed in Mussorgsky's lifetime. And even after its publication in 1886 it 'crept' into the repertoire – its unconventional form and character making it a mere pianistic curiosity until it found mid-20th-century champions in Vladimir Horowitz and Sviatoslav Richter. (It was Ravel's phenomenal orchestration, commissioned by Koussevitzky in 1920, that brought this remarkable work to the public eye.)



Ilya Repin's famous portrait of Mussorgsky was painted just days before the composer's death. As Richard Taruskin and others have pointed out, this image of a man in decline has long reinforced the misleading view of Mussorgsky as some kind of 'idiot savant', undermining what is known of his technique and the extreme care he took with his manuscripts as well as his refined and aristocratic personal appearance.

Keynotes

MUSSORGSKY

Born Karevo, Russia, 1839

Died St Petersburg, 1881

With a background in the army and the civil service rather than a conservatorium education, **Modest Mussorgsky developed an idiosyncratic and 'unschooled' musical style. He belonged to the group of five Russian nationalist composers sometimes known as 'The Mighty Handful'. He is at his finest in songs and opera, such as his masterpiece *Boris Godunov*.**

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

Pictures at an Exhibition was conceived as a piano piece in 1874. Mussorgsky took his inspiration from an exhibition in memory of the Russian artist and designer Viktor Hartmann, which included images ranging from portraits and pictorial scenes to costume designs and architectural sketches. The music literally recreates the experience of wandering through the art gallery, with 'promenades' linking the vividly characterised and very Russian pictures. The music is played without pause.

Although the work now holds an accepted place in the piano recital repertoire, it first came to wide attention through the orchestral version made in 1922 by Maurice Ravel, which remains the most frequently heard form of the music today.

An Exhibition

The exhibition in question was a memorial in honour of Mussorgsky's friend, the architect and artist Viktor Hartmann. Hartmann had died the year before, in 1873, at the age of 39. As an architect he was notoriously bad at constructing 'ordinary, everyday things' but, given palaces or 'fantastic' structures, his artist's imagination was capable of astonishing creativity. The St Petersburg exhibition included hundreds of Hartmann's delicate drawings, watercolours and designs. Of these Mussorgsky, in his own tribute, selected ten. Four of these artworks are now lost, but they survive, as does Hartmann's memory and reputation, in music.

Mussorgsky's musical structure is driven by the narrative of his program. *Pictures...* places the listener at the exhibition itself, 'promenading' from picture to picture in 'modo russo' and an alternating five- and six-beat metre. (In these interludes Mussorgsky said his own 'physiognomy' was evident.) Then, pausing before each artwork, the composer uses music to take us into its world.



Viktor Hartmann

A Catalogue

Pictures at an Exhibition was dedicated to Vladimir Stasov, who also provided descriptions and explanations for the 1886 edition. These are included in italics.

Promenade

Gnomus (Gnome) – Promenade

A drawing representing a small gnome walking awkwardly on deformed legs – a design for a nutcracker.

The Gnome is a caricature – at once grotesque and tragic, menacing and pitiful.

Il vecchio castello (The Old Castle) – Promenade

A mediæval castle before which stands a singing troubadour.

The minstrel sings in an Italian siciliano rhythm, but his melody has a mournful Russian character.

Tuileries. Dispute d'enfants après jeux (Tuileries – Children quarrelling at play)

A walk in the gardens of the Tuileries with a group of children and their nurse.

Mussorgsky liked children and he captures perfectly their childish shrieking.

Bydlo (Oxen) – Promenade

A Polish wagon on enormous wheels, drawn by oxen.

Bydlo simply means cattle or oxen in Polish, but Stasov's description gives Mussorgsky's 'secret' away. The melancholy, lumbering music with thick, bass-heavy chords suggest the massive, rumbling wheels of the cart and the ponderous tread of oxen hooves.



Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks

A little picture by Hartmann for the setting of a picturesque scene in the ballet Trilby.

Mussorgsky's imaginary ballet, a twittering scherzino, takes the music up into the treble register of the piano.

'Samuel' Goldenberg and 'Schmuyle' – Promenade

Two Polish Jews, one rich, one poor.

In 1868 Hartmann had given Mussorgsky two life sketches: the rich and the poor Jew from Sandomir. Probably Mussorgsky named them himself: the Germanicised 'Samuel' for the wealthy Goldenberg and its Yiddish equivalent 'Schmuyle'.



The rich Jew



The poor Jew

Goldenberg appears first – assertive, powerful and measured. Then, rapid repeated notes evoke the nervous stuttering of Schmuyle as he begs from the rich man. The coda makes no attempt to reconcile the two and the poor man is sent away with nothing.

Limoges. Le Marché (Limoges Market)

French women arguing furiously in the market place.

Stasov says the women are arguing, but Mussorgsky's sketched scenario suggests they are gossiping – about a lost cow, one neighbour's dentures and another's obtrusive red nose. This miniature is racing and excited, and brilliantly scored – as everyone knows, the big news cannot wait!

Catacombæ Sepulcrum romanum (Catacombs. A Roman Sepulchre) –

Con mortuis in lingua mortua (With the Dead in a Dead Language)

Hartmann's picture represents the artist himself looking at the catacombs in Paris by the light of a lantern



◀ Catacombs

These two movements were inspired by a single image. The catacombs are first represented in literal terms. Then, says Mussorgsky alongside his dodgy Latin, 'The creative spirit of the departed Hartmann leads me to the skulls and invokes them: the skulls begin to glow faintly.' The mood of sombre introspection is sustained with a vaporous evocation of the *Promenade* theme in a minor key.

The Hut on Hen's Legs (Baba Yaga)

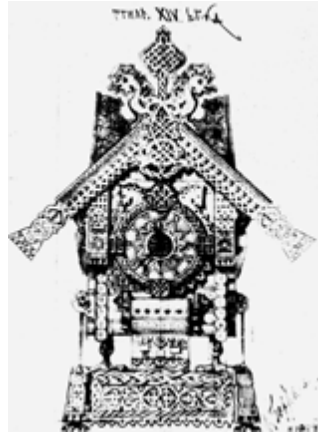
Hartmann's drawing represents a clock in the form of Baba Yaga's Hut on Hen's Legs. Mussorgsky has added the ride of Baba Yaga in her mortar.

Baba Yaga is the Russian witch who lives in a hut mounted on hen's legs and devours children. Unlike Western witches, Baba Yaga travels in a mortar propelled by a pestle – her broomstick is strictly for sweeping over her tracks. As Stasov says, Mussorgsky portrays Baba Yaga's ride as much as her dwelling place with this terrifying and inexorable music.

The Great Gate of Kiev

Hartmann's drawing represented his project for a gate in the city of Kiev, in the massive old-Russian style, with a cupola in the form of a Slavonic helmet.

Hartmann's gate – a competition entry from 1869 – was never built but he considered it his masterpiece. Mussorgsky's music conveys the grandeur of the Hartmann's concept and its suggestion of 'old heroic Russia'. It includes a quotation of a Russian Orthodox chant ('As you are baptised in Christ') and a characteristically Russian peal of bells. Through this the *Promenade* theme rings out.



Design for the Baba Yaga clock



◀ Design for the Kiev gate

ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY
YVONNE FRINDLE © 2008

MORE MUSIC

GARRICK OHLSSON

Among Garrick Ohlsson's most recent releases is a recital disc, *Études*, featuring musical challenges in miniature format by Debussy, Bartók and Prokofiev.

HYPERION 68080

He has also recently recorded the complete poèmes of Scriabin, released in 2015, the centenary of the composer's death.

HYPERION 67988

Garrick Ohlsson has recorded piano concertos with two Australian orchestras: you can hear him play both the Brahms concertos with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Tadaaki Otaka, and with the SSO and Vladimir Ashkenazy he has recorded the original version of Tchaikovsky's Second Piano Concerto.

ABC CLASSICS 481 0409 (Brahms)

SSO LIVE 201301 (Tchaikovsky)

If your imagination was captured by this recital, look for Ohlsson's recording of *Goyescas*, including *El pelele* and filled out with the *Allegro de concierto*.

HYPERION 67846

And *Pictures at an Exhibition* is included in an all-Russian program with Rachmaninoff's Corelli Variations and Prokofiev's Sonata No.2

BRIDGE 9320

Growing up, Ohlsson was deeply influenced by the playing of Alicia de Larrocha – 'one of the greatest pianists, period' – and her brilliant recordings of the music of Granados are considered definitive. You can find both the Spanish Dances and *Goyescas*, together with music by Falla, in the 2014 release *Alicia de Larrocha: 3 Classic Albums*.

DECCA 478 7155

PIERRE-LAURENT AIMARD

Pierre-Laurent Aimard's *Hommage à Messiaen*, released in 2008, the Messiaen centenary, is an affectionate tribute to a composer with whom Aimard has a close connection. For this program he chose the 8 Préludes, two movements from the *Catalogue d'oiseaux* and two of the études.

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 477 7452

In 1999 Aimard recorded *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus* for Teldec. The original release is out of print, but you can find it in the 6-CD set *Pierre-Laurent Aimard: The Warner Recordings*, together with signature performances of music by Debussy, Ravel, Boulez, Berg, Ives, Ligeti and Carter.

WARNER CLASSICS 256 466 0448

Or look for the recording of *Vingt Regards...* by Yvonne Loriod, Aimard's teacher and the work's dedicatee. Find it in the iTunes Store or reissued in the 18-CD *Messiaen Edition* from Warner.

WARNER CLASSICS 62162

Among Aimard's recent recital releases is *The Liszt Project*, a beautifully curated program, juxtaposing music by Liszt with compositions by his contemporaries and successors. Liszt's ambitious B minor sonata and other pieces keep company with Wagner, Berg, Scriabin, Bartók, Stroppa and Messiaen.

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 477 9439

Also look for Book 1 of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, and the Debussy Préludes, both on Deutsche Grammophon.

International Pianists in Recital September–October

Monday 26 September

Nelson Freire plays music by Bach, Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich and Chopin

Monday 24 October

Jayson Gillham plays music by Bach, Handel, Beethoven and Schumann

Broadcasts



92.9 ABC
Classic FM

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SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 2016

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**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

**INTERNATIONAL PIANISTS IN RECITAL
PRESENTED BY THEME & VARIATIONS**

MONDAY 14 MARCH, 7PM

CITY RECITAL HALL ANGEL PLACE

PIERRE-LAURENT AIMARD IN RECITAL

OLIVIER MESSIAEN (1908–1992)

Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus

(20 Contemplations of the Christ Child)

1. *Regard du Père* (Contemplation of the Father)
2. *Regard de l'étoile* (Contemplation of the Star)
3. *L'échange* (Exchange)
4. *Regard de la Vierge* (Contemplation of the Virgin)
5. *Regard du Fils sur le Fils* (Contemplation of the Son upon the Son)
6. *Par Lui tout a été fait* (Through Him Everything was Made)
7. *Regard de la Croix* (Contemplation of the Cross)
8. *Regard des hauteurs* (Contemplation of the Heights)
9. *Regard du temps* (Contemplation of Time)
10. *Regard de l'Esprit de joie* (Contemplation of the Joyful Spirit)
11. *Première communion de la Vierge* (The Virgin's First Communion)
12. *La Parole toute-puissante* (The All-Powerful Word)
13. *Noël* (Christmas)
14. *Regard des Anges* (Contemplation of the Angels)
15. *Le Baiser de l'Enfant-Jésus* (The Kiss of the Christ Child)
16. *Regard des prophètes, des bergers et des Mages* (Contemplation of the Prophets, the Shepherds and the Magi)
17. *Regard du silence* (Contemplation of Silence)
18. *Regard de l'Onction terrible* (Contemplation of the Dread Anointing)
19. *Je dors, mais mon cœur veille* (I Sleep, But My Heart is Awake)
20. *Regard de l'Eglise d'amour* (Contemplation of the Church of Love)



**92.9 ABC
Classic FM**

This recital will be recorded for later broadcast by ABC Classic FM.

Pre-concert talk by David Garrett at 6.15pm in the First Floor Reception Room. Visit sydney-symphony.com/talk-bios for speaker biographies.

The recital will be performed without interval and will conclude at approximately 9.10pm.

PRESENTING PARTNER



Principal Partner

Pierre-Laurent Aimard in Conversation

MARCO BORGREVE / DG



In wintry Berlin, Messiaen's stained-glass colours and ecstatic bird-song seem a long way away. But then, so does Australia. Pierre-Laurent has not been there since 1988, when he toured with the Ensemble Intercontemporain under the direction of the late Pierre Boulez, himself a composition student of Messiaen. Does that make a sort of triangle between Boulez, Messiaen and Aimard in the context of his forthcoming Australian performances of *Vingt Regards*...?

'I've played Messiaen with Pierre, of course,' Aimard reflects. 'But there was no relationship between Pierre and this piece. I don't think he liked it very much. What he loved in Messiaen were the modernist dimensions. All the F sharp major sugar kitsch aspect was something he didn't like at all. Let's say that the heritage of Massenet in this was not his cup of tea.'

The heritage of Massenet? In Messiaen?

'...that was a joke,' says Aimard, looking pained.

But I can't let it go. Is Aimard really flying all the way to Australia in order to perform a two-hour piece of Messiaen that he considers to be kitsch?

'There are many moments of kitsch, of course. It's a strange piece. Because you have things that are looking into the future. His work in time and with dimensions is amazing, like what you have in the *Regard du Silence*, and some polymodalities that are really dealing with the border between harmony and timbre.'

But still... kitsch? Is that another way of saying that he thinks it is harder to interpret Messiaen for those who do not share the composer's religious fervour?

'Of course I think it's possible to approach Messiaen's music without sharing his beliefs,' says Aimard, relaxing a little. 'As with

born

Lyon, France

studied with

Yvonne Loriod at the Paris Conservatoire and in London with Maria Curcio

early success

won the 1973 Messiaen Competition at the age of 16

big break

in 1976 Pierre Boulez appointed him as Ensemble Intercontemporain's first solo pianist

in Australia

last visited Australia in 1988; last week he performed Messiaen's *From the Canyons to the Stars...* with the SSO

recent career highlights

world premieres of music by Harrison Birtwistle and Elliott Carter (*Epigrams*, the composer's final work). Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival

solo recordings

range from Bach's Art of Fugue to the complete piano works of Ligeti, and include the award-winning *Hommage à Messiaen* and Charles Ives' *Concord Sonata* – see **More Music** on page 18

read more

www.pierrelaurentaimard.com

any piece of art, you appreciate what you appreciate in it. And you take the richnesses that speak to you. For some people that would be the prophetic dimensions, for others the historical context, for others it would be more personal.'

In the case of *Vingt Regards...*, the historical context is intriguing. Messiaen wrote the piece from occupied Paris in 1944, just before the end of World War II. Rather than describing the context, the piece seems to completely ignore it.

'His way of dealing with the world was not the way of somebody who observes and feels and then says what he feels or observes, but rather of somebody who escapes. In fact Messiaen was always like that. He was not living in this world. He was escaping.'

Later, Messiaen would move completely away from human influences and concentrate entirely on non-human musical inspiration. Birdsong was increasingly central to his music, so much so that he spent an entire month in Australia – coincidentally also in 1988 – noting the live song of birds in the wild and including them in his orchestral work *Éclairs sur l'au-delà*.

'That was something I liked very much about him,' says Aimard, 'that he had the capacity to cross the entire planet for one thing like that, to hear birdsong. He had this capacity for wonder, and an ability to be touched by the world – and this freshness, too.'

Aimard first met Messiaen as a 12-year-old piano student. He already knew and greatly admired his music, and would go on to study with Yvonne Loriod, Messiaen's wife and the person for whom he composed *Vingt Regards...* Aimard's friendship with Messiaen lasted until the composer's death a quarter of a century later.

'I was extraordinarily lucky to know him so well. We travelled together, and I went with him to many concerts and rehearsals. I always say that I have two mother languages – one is Messiaen and the other is Mozart – because this music is permanently with me.'

After his 1988 visit to Australia, Aimard resolved to visit later, when he had a little more time. 'And it happened that this later is now. So if you go there, what can you bring that makes sense? Not just a mainstream thing that anybody could play. It wouldn't make sense to bring somebody so far to do something common. So I thought that this was a way to bring something more personal.'

Messiaen 'had this capacity for wonder, and an ability to be touched by the world – and this freshness, too.'

PIERRE-LAURENT AIMARD

Contemplating Messiaen

Note by Timothy Munro

An epic journey

Vingt Regards sur l'enfant-Jésus comprises 20 pieces for solo piano, intended by Olivier Messiaen to be performed as a vast cycle. For pianists, the scope, duration and technical demands of the cycle make it almost without equal in the piano repertoire. There are unending strings of hand-scrunching chords, complex rhythmic patterns, multiple simultaneous layers and extreme contrasts. Almost superhuman concentration is essential, as is a musical imagination capable of communicating a unique vision to audiences.

For a first-time listener, *Vingt Regards...* can be overwhelming. The cycle is piled high with hymns, birdsong, wild dances, plainchant, dissonant chords, clangorous bells and infinite vistas. It is easy to feel lost in this singular world, like a bustling market in an unfamiliar culture: full of enticing new sounds, colours and rhythms, but perhaps baffling and alien.

Regarding the title

Messiaen's title is virtually untranslatable. The culprit is *Regard*, a word that appears in dictionaries as 'look', but is more penetrating, like 'gaze'. Adding the word *sur*, as in *Regards sur* ('gazes on'), gives the gaze a meditative, analytical quality, like 'contemplation'.

Translated as 'gazes', *Vingt Regards...* becomes almost film-like. The baby Jesus is viewed from myriad angles, and an intimate nativity scene unfolds with richness and complexity. Gazes fall from familiar persons or groups ('Gaze of the Father', 'of the Virgin', 'of the Prophets'); from non-material or symbolic figures ('of the cross', 'of time', 'of silence'); from unexpected places ('of the terrible Unction', 'of the Church of Love'). These gazes are variously quiet, intense, ecstatic, violent and joyful.

Using 'contemplations', the cycle takes on a mystic quality. Dom Marmion, a 19th-century Irish Catholic mystic, believed that through contemplation of the baby Jesus we can share in his divine nature, achieving union with God. Marmion was Messiaen's central inspiration for *Vingt Regards...* and, more than any of his previous works, this cycle disregards clock-time in favour of long, slow, ecstatic 'contemplations' that frequently evoke the infinite.

Maurice Toesca

Vingt Regards... began with an ill-fated idea. Maurice Toesca, a full-time civil servant and enthusiastic writer, was commissioned by Radio France to create a radio play about the nativity, *Les douze Regards*. Messiaen was to provide music for the play; he began work in March 1942, and conceived much of the cycle

Keynotes

MESSIAEN

Born Avignon, 1908

Died Paris, 1992

Composer, organist and teacher, Olivier Messiaen was without doubt one of the most influential musicians of the 20th century. Debussy was an early model, but he quickly developed a distinctive harmonic style based on a system of artificial modes. Other influences included the French organ tradition and his profound Catholic faith, which emerges in works such as *Vingt Regards...*

20 CONTEMPLATIONS...

Messiaen's *Vingt Regards...* is a monumental and demanding work for piano solo – two hours in performance, it ranks with Bach's Goldberg Variations in the stamina it requires. It was written in 1944 for Messiaen's student, and later wife, Yvonne Loriod, a pianist whom he described as 'unique, sublime and brilliant'. (Tonight's soloist was a student of Loriod.) *Vingt Regards...* is a study in technical and musical virtuosity, but it is also an expression of faith and, for Messiaen, the tremendous joy he found in his faith. It comprises 20 miniatures, which range from two or three to ten minutes, each one a musical meditation on some aspect of faith.

Turn to page 26 for a detailed movement listing and listening guide.

with no access to even the play's outline. The two artists had essentially no contact, yet seemed convinced the collaboration would be a success. Radio France, belatedly realising the work was doomed, cancelled the project. But Messiaen, overtaken by creative inspiration, had already completed work on his *Vingt Regards...*, a stand-alone work that massively overstepped the original commission.

Love

Olivier Messiaen met the pianist Yvonne Loriod in 1942. Messiaen was 33, a newly appointed professor at the Paris Conservatoire who was recovering from privations as a prisoner of war in 1940–41. Claire Delbos, his first wife (a violinist and composer), was showing the first signs of a debilitating mental illness that would see her institutionalised for much of her remaining 20 years.

Loriod was 17, a student in Messiaen's harmony class. Soon she was his musical partner, proofreader, driver, cleaner. And muse. For Messiaen, Loriod was a 'unique, sublime and brilliant pianist, who transformed my writing for the piano, style, vision of the world and thought'. *Vingt Regards...* was written for Loriod's hands, for her sensibility and for her talents, full of complex rhythms, fast chord sequences, virtuoso passagework and demands for total concentration.

Quietly and secretly, they fell in love. Loriod and Messiaen were chaste during Delbos' life, but the two 'cried for nearly 20 years until we could marry'. After *Vingt Regards...*, most of Messiaen's works were written for or inspired by Loriod. It is



◀ Yvonne Loriod and Olivier Messiaen in the 1950s

surely no coincidence that his next major project was a trilogy inspired by the story of Tristan and Isolde, star-crossed lovers doomed to illicit love, public shame and tragic deaths. Can we read *Vingt Regards...* as an illicit love letter? For Messiaen, human desire and spiritual love were one and the same, and in his music he aimed to bring forth 'Love in all forms: of nature, of women, of Childhood, but above all Divine Love'.

Theme of God

Sometimes it seemed as if France was set on eradicating the Catholic church. Much of the educated middle class loathed the church and its believers, and a long campaign of attrition reached its zenith in Messiaen's youth. A Catholic resurgence occurred in the 1920s, but serious damage had been done. Messiaen was an outsider in his own culture.

Messiaen cannot be understood separate from his Catholic faith. The composer said he was born a believer, and never experienced religious doubt. Faith drove Messiaen to write 'a true, spiritual music, which may be an act of faith, which may touch on all subjects without ceasing to touch on God.' Messiaen fought his hyper-rational modern world with mystical visions, like the contemplations in *Vingt Regards...*, that would bring the listener into a closer relationship with God.

Vingt Regards... ends a long string of major religious works by Messiaen, and he wouldn't write another for 20 years. Something had changed. Perhaps the composer's hidden love for Loriod turned him toward Tristan and Isolde. Perhaps Messiaen at the time considered *Vingt Regards...* his ultimate spiritual contemplation. Perhaps Messiaen wanted to escape his 'outsider' box of religious music, and enter the mainstream.

'Lunatic curator'

Messiaen's music is utterly unique. It draws elements from an array of sources, a heady brew of Catholic mystics, Balinese gamelan, surrealist poets, Indian rhythmic cycles, plainchant, invented modes, stained glass windows, birdsong, numerology. The influences themselves were not unusual in 1920s Paris, but their combination and deployment was strikingly new. *Vingt Regards...* is among the first truly mature manifestations of Messiaen's musical language.

Soon after completing *Vingt Regards...*, Messiaen published a book-length defence of his techniques, *The Technique of My Musical Language*. He was safeguarding himself against a growing crowd of antagonists. One critic wrote that *Vingt Regards...* is 'muddled literature and music, smelling of the hair shirt', and the composer is 'like a lunatic curator of a vanished museum'. *Le cas Messiaen*, a vicious war of words in the nation's newspapers, would continue for two years, causing the composer great distress.



Olivier Messiaen

Liberation

Messiaen wrote *Vingt Regards* between March and September of 1944. He began the cycle in occupied Paris and completed it in a city liberated. The composer was not politically active, yet questions remain of his relationship to the reviled Vichy regime. For several months after release from Stalag VIII-A, Messiaen worked in Vichy's cultural department, then replaced the Paris Conservatoire's harmony professor, who may have been dismissed under strict anti-Jewish laws. Messiaen did not participate in the French resistance, only later expressing solidarity with resistance fighter Charles de Gaulle.

The composer drew no connections between *Vingt Regards* and the prevailing political conditions, but links are unavoidable. British poet Michael Roberts writes: 'Not only does the nativity story take place under Roman occupation, but 'occupation' is not a bad metaphor for 'annunciation', even if it starts with a willing 'yes'. And in Christian theology, the arrival of God the creator into his own world as a helpless baby is both a huge risk and – ultimately – an act of liberation.'

Final gazes

Messiaen's fear was being misunderstood, by non-believers, non-synæsthetes, non-nature-lovers: 'How are they supposed to understand me?'

What 'gazes' can we secular, city-dwelling, general listeners bring to this cycle? First, *Vingt Regards...* is a welcome balm in modern times, demanding a rare and rapt internal gaze for more than two hours. Second, *Vingt Regards...* allows a gaze into Messiaen's unusual mind: his internal struggles, conflicted wartime thoughts, fertile musical inspiration, spiritual certainty and passionate new love. 'Much love, joy, suffering and meditation are at the origin of [my] work.' Finally, *Vingt Regards...* is an act of immersive virtuosity, for audience and performer. Two gazes are especially intense in a concert hall: the audience on the performer, and the performer on their instrument.

'I have always been struck by the fact that God is happy – and that this continuous, indescribable joy inhabited the soul of Christ. A joy which for me is a transport, an intoxication, in the wildest sense of the word.'

MESSIAEN

Hearing colour

Messiaen experienced something like synæsthesia: his hearing and vision were united in a sort of 'colour hearing', giving chords a physical dimension. The simple opening of *Vingt Regards* appeared to Messiaen as blue-violet. At other points there are flashes of bright gold, orange, royal blue, deep red. Since for Messiaen chords (rather than single notes) conjure colour, the score of *Vingt Regards* is often black with heavy-fisted sequences of chords. These chords can sound jarringly dissonant but, for Messiaen, their complex colour combinations transformed into dazzling stained glass windows.

Listening Guide

The 20 *Regards* divide into two equal halves, which in turn divide into two. These four sections are each framed by two *Regards* featuring the same hymnlike tune, called by Messiaen the 'Theme of God' (*Regards* 1 and 5, 6 and 10, etc.). The framing *Regards* are the foundations on which the cycle is built, planets around which small satellite *Regards* orbit. The satellites are shorter in general, full of contrast, character and colour.

Throughout this guide, titles and quotations are Messiaen's, while the section subtitles and commentaries are mine. TM

Regards 1–5: Hearth and manger

Intimate scenes of the nativity draw us close to mother and child. This section comprises 20 minutes of unbroken slow music.

1. *Regard du Père (Contemplation of the Father)*

'And God said: "This is my beloved Son."

A soft hymn rings in tolling bells: the 'Theme of God' to which the cycle returns again and again. Time stills, the atmosphere rapt, a quiet thrill at journey's beginning.

2. *Regard de l'étoile (Contemplation of the Star)*

'The fall of Grace. The Star surmounted by a Cross.'

Zigzagging interjections frame a slow central section, meditations on a new theme: the creeping, plainchant-like Theme of the Star and Cross.

3. *L'échange (Exchange)*

'Descending in a spray, rising in a spiral; the terrible trade between humans and God.'

Fragments alternate or 'exchange' (a soft flourish, rotating chords, stalking bass notes), whisper-soft at the opening, full-throated by the terrifying close.

4. *Regard de la Vierge (Contemplation of the Virgin)*

'Innocence and tenderness.'

Chords circle with infinite patience, a mother's uncomplicated love. The atmosphere is ruffled only by needling, squawking birds.

5. *Regard du Fils sur le Fils (Contemplation of the Son upon the Son).*

'Mystery, rays of light in the night, the person of the Word made flesh.'

Hearth and manger, the Theme of God surrounded by mysterious halos of distant, refracted light and graceful, brilliant birdsong.

Regards 6–10: Creation and the infinite

The camera suddenly zooms back to the creation of the universe, the gaze of Time, a gaze from on high. *Regard* 10 provides a thrilling, uninhibited mid-point for the cycle.

Numbers, numbers!

Messiaen found fascination and comfort in the symbolism of numbers. Below are some examples from *Vingt Regards*:

- **Figures of 'divinity' recur every 5 numbers**
- **'Cross' is No.7 ('a perfect number, because the crucifixion restored order')**
- **'Angels' is No.14 (two times seven)**
- **'Time' is No.9 (for the nine months of pregnancy)**
- **'Creation' is No.6 (for the days of creation)**
- **'Divine government of creation' is 12 (two times six)**

6. Par Lui tout a été fait (Through Him Everything Was Made)

'Galaxies, photons, contrary spirals, inverted lightning.'

The wildness of creation destroys the manger's calm. This *regard* is the cycle's most pianistically challenging, a convoluted head-scratcher, full of complex rhythms, inversions, full-fisted clusters and frequent twists.

7. Regard de la Croix (Contemplation of the Cross)

'The Cross said to Him: "You will be a priest in my arms."'

The Theme of the Cross and Stars is shouted in bald, brazen octaves, leaving beseeching chords to sob quietly.

8. Regard des hauteurs (Contemplation of the Heights)

'The Heights descend to the manger like the song of a lark.'

A raucous aviary! Songs of the nightingale, blackbird, goldfinch and canary join the lark in this dawn chorus, the busiest birdsong-driven *Regard*.

9. Regard du temps (Contemplation of Time)

'The mystery of the infinity of Time.'

Messiaen takes on the unknowable nature of time with a rhythmic experiment: three layers of the same pattern, piled one on the other.

10. Regard de l'Esprit de joie (Contemplation of the Joyful Spirit)

'Violent dance, joyous sound of horns, rapture of the Holy Spirit.'

The party that everyone wants to attend, full of frenzied triumph, heaven-storming perorations, psychedelic colours and gaudy dance-tunes (like dissonant Liberace). We stagger to intermission, pulse racing.

Regards 11–15: Christmas.

The virgin celebrates Christ, Christmas bells ring, angels blast trombones. Jesus places a soft kiss on our cheek in *Regard 15*, the heart of the cycle.

11. Première communion de la Vierge (The Virgin's First Communion)

'After the Annunciation, Mary adores Jesus within her.'

Beloved hearth and manger. Mother and child alone in a night-scene of tenderness and beauty. Mary celebrates the infant child with a hearty Magnificat.

12. La Parole toute-puissante (The All-Powerful word)

'This Child is the Word who sustains all things through the power of His voice.'

A dark and threatening *regard*, delighting in the off-kilter rhythmic patterns that Messiaen learned from Hindu traditions.

13. Noël (Christmas)

'The Christmas bells say with us the sweet names of Jesus, Mary, Joseph.'

Bells. Clangorous bells, gentle bells, singing bells.



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14. *Regard des Anges* (Contemplation of the Angels)

'Sparkling, beating; a powerful blast from immense trombones.'

A chaotic vision: swirling winds, stormy outbursts, trembling surges, surprising little dances and plenteous birdsong. Twists and turns aplenty.

15. *Le Baiser de l'Enfant-Jésus* (The kiss of the Infant Jesus)

'The Infant Jesus sleeps with us, coming forth in a blaze of light to embrace us.'

The beating heart of the whole cycle. An achingly tender, songful lullaby quietly rocks the sleeping Jesus, and even as this *Regard* rises to a massive climax, the music retains its warm glow.

Regards 16–20: Cumulation

The longest section of the cycle. These five *regards* grow in length, culminating in the epic, 15-minute-long *Regard 20*.

16. *Regard des prophètes, des bergers et des Mages*

(Contemplation of the prophets, the shepherds and the Magi)

'Tamtams and oboes, a vast, buzzing chorus.'

A loud, untidy scene, peopled with unfamiliar strangers from strange lands.

17. *Regard du silence* (Contemplation of silence)

'An upside-down rainbow...music and colours of the mysteries of Jesus Christ.'

Unknowable Time becomes a mathematical experiment, whispered quietly. According to the composer himself, this *Regard* is 'inscrutable'.

18. *Regard de l'Onction terrible* (Contemplation of the Dread Anointing)

'The choice of the flesh of Jesus by the awesome Majesty of God.'

Another mathematical experiment (simultaneous rising/falling, speeding/slowing) frames an extended piece of unstoppable, clanging power.

19. *Je dors, mais mon cœur veille* (I Sleep, But My Heart Is Awake)

'It is the sleeping Jesus who loves us and brings us forgiveness.'

An F-sharp major triad (the chord that opens *Vingt Regards...*), is stretched out for two minutes, initiating a final, long song of love. Home and hearth for the last time.

20. *Regard de l'Eglise d'amour* (Contemplation of the Church of Love)

'Bells, glory and the kiss of love. Our arms around the Invisible one.'

One final cataclysmic hurrah. The Theme of God thunders again and again, threatening the strings of the piano. This *Regard*, the longest in the cycle, can't quite bear to say goodbye.

TIMOTHY MUNRO © 2016

Tim Munro is a Brisbane-born, Grammy-winning flautist based in Chicago.

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



DAVID ROBERTSON

THE LOWY CHAIR OF
CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

.....
PATRON Professor The Hon. Dame Marie Bashir *AD CVO*
.....

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities.

Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, where it gives more than 100 performances each year, the SSO also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales. International tours to Europe, Asia and the USA – including three visits to China – have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The orchestra's first Chief Conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013. The orchestra's history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures

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

The SSO's award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people.

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

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

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

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Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

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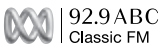


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