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SERENADE Mozart and Strauss







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Thu 25 Feb 6.30pm

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Kaleidoscope

Meet the Music

Wed 2 Mar 6.30pm Thursday Afternoon Symphony

Thu 3 Mar 1.30pm Emirates Metro Series Fri 4 Mar 8pm



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The 2016 SSO Fellows with Fellowship Artistic Director Roger Benedict (centre)





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TEA & SYMPHONY

FRIDAY 19 FEBRUARY, 11AM

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL



David RobertsonChief Conductor and Artistic Director



SERENADE

James Ehnes *violin-director*2016 SSO Fellows and
Musicians of the SSO

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791) Violin Rondo in B flat, K269

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)
Serenade in E flat for 13 winds, Op.7

MOZART Violin Rondo in C, K373

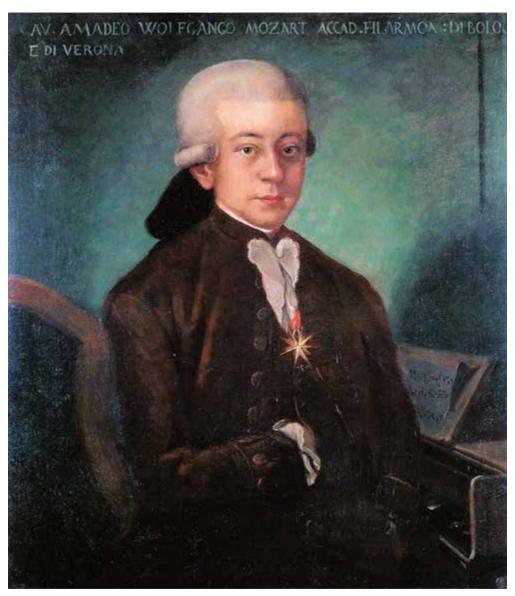
STRAUSS

Metamorphosen – a study for 23 solo strings

Estimated durations: 8 minutes, 10 minutes, 5 minutes, 27 minutes The concert will conclude at approximately 12.05pm

COVER IMAGE: Mozart playing the violin – painting by Jean-Louis Ernest Meissonier (1815–1891). Private collection / Bridgeman Images





In 1770, during a visit to Rome, Mozart was awarded a papal knighthood – the Order of the Golden Spur. This would entitle him to wear a gold cross and be addressed as 'Signor Cavaliere'. Writing home to his sister, the teenage Mozart lost no opportunity to sign himself 'Chevalier de Mozart'. This anonymous portrait from 1777 shows him wearing the insignia.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Two Rondos for violin and orchestra

James Ehnes violin

In 1772, when Mozart was 16 years old, he went on salary as a concertmaster for the new Prince-Archbishop Colloredo in Salzburg. Between then and 1781, when he was literally booted out of the Archbishop's employment, he'd composed five violin concertos, followed by an adagio, the two rondos and the marvellous Sinfonia concertante for violin and viola.

These pieces for violin with orchestra point to Mozart's own taste and skill as a performer. He was a virtuoso who could play anything, but he put musical substance ahead of technical display. Once, when he'd performed his third concerto, he wrote that it had gone as 'smoothly as oil', and everyone had praised his 'beautiful, pure tone'.

His father Leopold often urged him not to neglect his violin practice: 'You have no idea how well you play the violin. If you would only do yourself justice and play with boldness, spirit and fire, you would be the first violinist in Europe.'

In 1776, the Archbishop brought the Neapolitan violinist Antonio Brunetti to Salzburg, appointing him court music director, concert violinist and concertmaster. By this time all of Mozart's violin concertos had been written, but Brunetti played at least some of them. Leopold reported favourably on Brunetti's playing of K216 (Violin Concerto No.3 in G). And we can assume he played K207 (No.1 in B flat) and K219 (No.5 in A) because Mozart provided him with replacement slow movement for the latter and possibly a new finale for the former.

Violin Rondo in B flat, K269 (Allegro)

Although there's no documentary evidence, it seems plausible that this rondo was composed in 1776 or 1777 as a replacement finale for Brunetti to play in a performance of Mozart's first violin concerto (K207), which is in the same key, B flat major. It may well be this piece to which Mozart was referring in 1777 when he wrote to his father about a 'Rondo for Brunetti'.

The original finale was cast in sonata form, a fairly seriousminded form to adopt for a concerto finale. This rondo, with its skipping, jig-like rhythms, has a witty and lively demeanour that Brunetti might have found more gratifying to play.

What makes this rondo special is its compact sense of unity within diversity, what scholar Alec Hyatt King calls the 'taut intermittent dialogue between soloist and orchestra' and the 'neat interlocking between solo and first violins' – all signs, he thinks, of a more mature approach to the concerto style.

Keynotes

MOZART

Born Salzburg, 1756 Died Vienna, 1791

Mozart spent the first part of his career as a servant-musician in the court of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg. His duties included composition and performing, and in addition to being a virtuoso at the keyboard, he was a very accomplished violinist, capable of leading an orchestra and playing concertos. His father assured him if he kept practising he could be one of the finest violinists in Europe. But Mozart had other plans...

VIOLIN RONDOS

Mozart's two rondos for violin and orchestra were composed before he left Salzburg to make his name in Vienna. The Rondo in C major (K373) was written for a colleague at the Salzburg court, the violinist Antonio Brunetti, and was first performed on the occasion of the Archbishop's visit to Vienna in 1781. The earlier rondo, in B flat major, dates from the late 1770s and may well have been written at Brunetti's request as a substitute finale for one of Mozart's violin concertos. The rondo genre could function in two ways: as a standalone concert piece or as the finale for a concerto, since these were often cast in rondo form. The structure is not unlike the verse-chorus pattern of popular music, with a recurring theme (the rondo theme) and contrasting episodes in between.



Violin Rondo in C, K373 (Allegretto grazioso)

The C major rondo was written in April 1781 for Brunetti to perform at a reception given in Vienna by the Archbishop Colloredo at the home of his father Prince Rudolf Colloredo, the Imperial Vice-Chancellor. This reception was part of a series of concerts intended to show off the talents of the Archbishop's court musicians – or, to be blunt, his musical servants.

Mozart, still in the service of the Archbishop, was chafing more and more under the restrictions his employer sought to impose on him. In June, after a violent quarrel, Mozart asked for his dismissal; the request granted, he was booted from the room by the Chief Cook Count Arco, and thus freed, he lived for the rest of his life in Vienna.

The Rondo in C, however, reflects nothing of this disturbed background; it is, as Einstein put it, 'a work full of charm, sensuous delicacy and grace'. Nor does the music reveal anything of the low esteem in which Mozart held his colleague Brunetti. It is perhaps telling, though, that following the dramatic departure from his Salzburg employment, Mozart wrote no more solo music for violin.

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA © 2016
ADAPTED IN PART FROM NOTES BY BRUCE BROWN AND DAVID GARRETT
Both Mozart's violin rondos call for an orchestra of two oboes, two horns and strings.

The SSO's most recent performance of a Mozart violin rondo was in 2015 when Isabelle Faust played K269 in the Mozart in the City series.

The Mozart family in a painting by Johann Nepomuk della Croce from 1780–81. Mozart's mother, who had died during their trip to Paris in 1778, is represented by the portrait on the wall.

A Disgrace...

Mozart and his father considered Antonio Brunetti a very fine violinist, but they did not much admire him personally – they found him coarse and deplored his womanising. He had made Michael Haydn's sister-in-law pregnant, and although he later married her, he had also been involved with another local woman. Mozart called him 'a thoroughly ill-bred fellow' and 'a disgrace to his master, to himself and to the whole orchestra'.

Richard Strauss Serenade in E flat for 13 wind instruments, Op.7

Late in life, Richard Strauss would occasionally conduct his Opus 7 Serenade, muttering that it wasn't 'too bad for a music student'. He was only 17 at the time he composed this work, but he had been a music student of one sort or another for well over a decade: he began piano lessons at the age of four and violin at eight. He began composing at the age of six and when he was 11 began taking formal lessons. And of course he had grown up in the household of one of Germany's most eminent musicians, his father Franz Strauss.

Franz had overcome the social stigma of illegitimacy to become the leading horn player in the German-speaking world, and had married into a wealthy brewing family in Munich, where he was principal horn in the Court Orchestra. He was, therefore, well connected both socially and musically, a situation which was of undeniable help to the career of his son. Like Leopold Mozart, perhaps, Franz sought to influence Richard's musical development, and in particular to keep him from being



Keynotes

STRAUSS

Born Munich, 1864 Died Garmisch-Partenrkirchen, 1949

Strauss was the son of one of Europe's leading horn players, and as a young man he'd been strongly influenced by his father's Classical tastes, raised on a nutritious if conservative diet of Havdn, Mozart and Beethoven. Although he wrote several chamber works and two symphonies when he was in his teens and early twenties, these abstract genres were not what captured his imagination as an adult. Instead he made his name with the evocative and storytelling possibilities of the orchestral 'tone poem' and in opera.

WIND SERENADE

Strauss completed his Opus 7 Serenade when he was just 17 vears old. Late in life he would occasionally conduct it, muttering that it wasn't 'too bad for a music student'. While the aura of Mozart serenades is present in Strauss's work, a distinctive and sensuous voice also begins to emerge. Unlike a Mozart serenade always a multi-movement work this is in a single movement. Strauss doesn't spend much time developing themes in a symphonic sense, but rather takes great pleasure in generating beautiful melodies and warm sonorities.

 As a teenager, Richard Strauss was immersed in the 'musical trinity' of his father: Mozart (above all), Haydn and Beethoven. contaminated by the music of Wagner. As Richard later wrote: Franz's 'musical trinity was Mozart (above all). Haydn and Beethoven. To these were added Schubert, as a song-writer. Weber and, at some distance, Mendelssohn and Spohr.' In other words Franz was an unapologetic classicist and Wagner's music was anathema to him. But not Wagner's money; Franz was a frequent member of the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra, playing in the first performances of such works as Parsifal and losing no opportunity to bag Wagner's music in public. Wagner, for his part, was uncharacteristically tolerant, knowing that it was one way to have a great virtuoso playing music in which the horn is indispensable.

Franz's aesthetic influence is clear in this early serenade, though the work is by no means faux-Mozart. The scoring for winds is in accordance with the Classical serenade; it was after all, a form developed for outdoor performance. Here Strauss uses two flutes, oboes and clarinets, four horns, two bassoons, with the bass provided by contrabassoon or bass tuba (there is an optional double bass part in the last two bars!). Unlike the Classical serenade - always a multi-movement work - this is in a single movement, though it might be likened to the Andante

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movements of some of Mozart's serenades. Like Mozart's, Strauss's sonata design doesn't spend much time developing themes in the symphonic sense, but rather takes great pleasure in generating beautiful melodies.

The Serenade had great consequences for young Strauss. It was the first of his works which had its premiere outside of Munich, being launched by the Dresden Tonkünstlerverein under Franz Wüllner in 1882. Wüllner had conducted the premieres of two Wagner operas, and would introduce several new works of Strauss's over the next few years. More importantly, the piece found its way into the repertoire of the Meiningen Orchestra. conducted by the legendary Hans von Bülow. A publisher who had brought out two of Strauss's early works had been fobbed off by Bülow who wrote that Strauss was 'not a genius, at best a talent, 60 per cent calculated to shock. As a one-time intimate of Wagner's, Bülow had himself come in for some tongue-lashings from Strauss's father so may have been understandably prejudiced, but he did like the Serenade and performed it widely. The Meiningen Orchestra included some extremely fine musicians: horn player Gustav Leinhos must have enjoyed playing a part written with the expertise that Franz had taught his son; the principal clarinettist was Richard Mühlfeld, for whom Brahms wrote his late clarinet-based masterpieces. In addition, Bülow commissioned a new piece. the Suite Op.4 for the same combination, which he arranged for Strauss to conduct in the younger man's podium debut. Bülow also brought Strauss to a deeper understanding of contemporary music, notably that of Brahms. The Serenade, then, was a pivotal work in many ways for the young composer. And it was a work that Strauss kept in his own repertoire.

GORDON KERRY © 2007

Richard Strauss's Serenade, Op.7 calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons, with contrabassoon and four horns.

The SSO's most recent performance of the Serenade was in an all-Strauss chamber music concert in the Utzon Room in 2014. ...the work is by no means faux-Mozart.

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MOZART'S VIOLIN MUSIC

For a selection of music from Mozart's Salzburg period, including the Violin Rondo K373, look for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's album *Mozart Serenades*, directed by violinist Alexander Janiczek. The two works from the outdoor serenade tradition (Divertimento, K113 and Serenade K185) are preceded, appropriately, by a march. Buried in K185 is a miniature violin concerto and the album concludes with the violin rondo and an Adagio for violin and orchestra (K261).

German violinist Lena Neudauer has recorded Mozart's five violin concertos, the K261 adagio and both rondos from this morning's concert with the German Radio Philharmonic Orchestra Saarbrücken Kaiserslautern conducted by Bruno Weil.

HÄNSSLER CLASSIC 93316

RICHARD STRAUSS

For a comprehensive collection of Strauss's orchestral and large chamber works, including *Metamorphosen* and both the Serenade and the Suite for winds, you can't go past the 13-CD Collector's Edition *Richard Strauss: Complete Tone Poems and Concertos*.

Herbert Blomstedt conducts the strings of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and former SSO chief conductor Edo de Waart conducts the Netherlands Wind Ensemble.

DECCA 478 6480

For an Australian take on *Metamorphosen*, look for Simone Young's recording with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. The rest of the disc, *Transcendent Love: The Passions of Wagner and Strauss*, features soprano Lisa Gasteen, singing Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder* and songs by Strauss.

ABC CLASSICS 4766811

JAMES EHNES & THE SSO

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

SSO 201206

More recently, in 2014, he recorded Vivaldi's Four Seasons with members of the SSO, released on Onyx with two baroque sonatas including Kreisler's arrangement of the famous 'Devil's Trill' Sonata by Tartini. This album is now available locally on SSO Live. SSO 201601

Broadcast Diary

February-March



92.9 ABC

abc.net.au/classic

Friday 19 February, 8pm

BEETHOVEN ALIVE

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

Symphony No.1, No.8, No.7

Saturday 20 February, 8pm

BEETHOVEN ASCENDANT

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

James Ehnes violin

Violin Concerto, Symphony No.5

Sunday 21 February, 1pm

BEETHOVEN TRIUMPHANT

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

Garrick Ohlsson piano

Piano Concerto No.5, Symphony No.4

Wednesday 24 February, 9:30pm

VÄNSKÄ CONDUCTS BRAHMS

Osmo Vänskä conductor

Colin Currie percussion

Beethoven, Aho, Brahms

Wednesday 2 March, 8pm

RUSSIAN ROMANTICS (2015)

Vasily Petrenko conductor

Simon Trpčeski piano

Schultz, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff

Friday 4 March, 8pm

SIBELIUS 2 (2015)

David Robertson conductor

Andrew Haveron violin

Sculthorpe, Walton, Sibelius

SSO Radio

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

sydneysymphony.com/SSO_radio



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HOUR

Tuesday 8 March, 6pm

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

finemusicfm.com

Richard Strauss

Metamorphosen – a study for 23 solo strings

In October 1943 the National Theatre in Munich was destroyed in an air raid. This was the opera house where Strauss had conducted, more than anywhere else, his own operas and those of other composers, including Wagner; Strauss's father had for years played first horn in its orchestra – no wonder the octogenarian composer regarded its destruction as the greatest catastrophe of his life. He jotted down a few bars of sketch under the title 'Mourning for Munich'. In May 1944 the Goethe House in Frankfurt – 'the most sacred place on earth' – was bombed. In February 1945 Dresden was destroyed, and in March the Vienna State Opera – the symbols of the Germanic culture which had nurtured Strauss and his music were disappearing in the fiery twilight of the Third Reich.

Between 13 March and 12 April 1945, Richard Strauss composed the work which is the weightiest of his remarkable Indian summer (which had already given birth to the Second Horn Concerto, and was to include the Oboe Concerto and the Four Last Songs). It was a piece of expanded chamber music, described by its subtitle: 'A Study for 23 Solo Strings'. There are ten violins, five each of violas and cellos, and three double basses. Each of these players is given individual responsibility, and all but the last player of violas, cellos, and basses have moments of solo work. The texture is almost self-defeatingly complex, and every line is significant.

Keynotes

METAMORPHOSEN

Strauss borrowed the title for this music from Goethe – a pair of scientific works in verse form called *The Metamorphosis of Plants* and *The Metamorphosis of Animals*. Alongside the philosophy is deeply felt emotion. Composed in 1944–45 and one of Strauss's last creations, *Metamorphosen* can be heard as a lament: for a 'lost Germany', for a bombed opera house...

There's a string orchestra on stage, but what we'll hear is more like chamber music – each of the 23 musicians has his or her own part to play and the sound is intimate, as the four slow themes of this heart-wrenching music undergo subtle transformation and variation. At the very end one of his themes transforms into the *Eroica* Funeral March.

 Strauss denied that he consciously quoted the funeral march from Beethoven's Eroica Symphony, claiming 'it escaped from my pen'.





 Strauss meeting with music critic Willi Schuh (at left) and Paul Sacher (right) in Zurich, to discuss Metamorphosen (1945).

Forty-five years after Schoenberg composed his *Transfigured Night*, for string sextet, Strauss similarly expands the chamber music medium into a kind of symphonic poem, bearing a great weight of emotion, with intensity heightened by allocating that weight to the many single strands of a complex texture. Both works are based on continuous development of themes, but, as Norman del Mar demonstrates in his study of Strauss, the 'metamorphoses' of the title refer not to the Lisztian principle of thematic transformation, but to Goethe's use of the term in his old age, where the metamorphoses are developments of Goethe's own mind in works (such as *Faust*) conceived over a great period of time, and the parallel processes in nature. Clearly Strauss, who had set himself in old age the task of reading Goethe's works from cover to cover, found Goethe's experience illuminating of his own.

'the endless range and resourcefulness of invention...'

In the main theme of *Metamorphosen* Strauss hit unintentionally on a reminiscence of the Funeral March from Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony. He claimed it had 'escaped from his pen' as he was working on the 'Mourning for Munich' sketch, and was only gradually recognised. In the very last bars of *Metamorphosen* the whole Beethoven theme is quoted by the cellos and basses, and at this point the words in memoriam are written in the score. The central section of the work is a free fantasia in which little by little the pace of this extended slow movement is stepped up, and it becomes more fluid. Norman del Mar marvels at 'the endless range and resourcefulness of invention maintained without any of the props of classical form and within a single element of expression as well as of instrumental texture'.

There is a shortened reprise of the opening material, and a long coda, a kind of threnody. The unswerving feeling is tragic,

but without self-pity; not just a mourning for the passing of German culture, but an expression of the death agony of late Romanticism. In this context the apparent references to the style if not to actual phrases from Wagner's Tristan und Isolde is apt: this was the seminal work of the late Romantic style. and its first performance was in the Munich National Theatre.

Metamorphosen is an extraordinary, indeed unparalleled piece, one whose form and emotional content compels a search for deep meanings. Yet the stimulus to compose in this form, as so often for the supremely craftsmanlike Strauss, was a practical one. Paul Sacher, the conductor of the Zurich Collegium Musicum, had been pressing Strauss for some time to accept a commission for his string chamber orchestra. In mid-1944 Strauss accepted, and the first sketches date from September. On 25 January 1946 Sacher conducted the first performance in Zurich, supervised by Strauss.

DAVID GARRETT © 2003

Metamorphosen calls for ten violins, five violas, five cellos and three double basses.

The SSO was the first ABC orchestra to perform Metamorphosen, in a concert conducted by Eugene Goossens in 1952. Our most recent performance was in 2012 conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy, and in 2014 we performed the septet version, derived from Strauss's original working score.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST



James Ehnes

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

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

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

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

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

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

www.jamesehnes.com

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



DAVID ROBERTSON

THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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

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

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

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

The SSO's award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. The orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program. Recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards, Lee Bracegirdle, Gordon Kerry, Mary Finsterer, Nigel Westlake and Georges Lentz, and the orchestra's recordings of music by Brett Dean have been released on both the BIS and SSO Live labels.

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

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

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

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