

2017 SEASON



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson

The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Don Quixote

Fantastic Variations

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

Thursday 15 June, 1.30pm

TEA & SYMPHONY

Friday 16 June, 11am

GREAT CLASSICS

Saturday 17 June, 2pm



Principal Partner



CLASSICAL

Jose G Cano



Pelléas et Mélisande

Opera in the Concert Hall

DEBUSSY Pelléas et Mélisande
Sung in French with English surtitles

Charles Dutoit conductor
Sandrine Piau soprano (Mélisande)
Elliot Madore baritone (Pelléas)
Marc Barrard (Golaud)
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

APT Master Series
Fri 23 Jun 7pm
Sat 24 Jun 7pm
Wed 28 Jun 7pm
Sydney Opera House

Adriano Heitman



Martha Argerich plays Beethoven
Colours of Spain

STRAVINSKY Funeral Song *Australian premiere*
BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No.1
FALLA The Three-Cornered Hat: Suites
RAVEL La Valse
Charles Dutoit conductor
Martha Argerich piano

SPECIAL EVENT
Premier Partner Credit Suisse
Thu 29 Jun 8pm
Fri 30 Jun 8pm
Sat 1 Jul 8pm
Sydney Opera House

Keith Saunders



Mendelssohn's Octet

BRIDGE Three Idylls for string quartet
BRIDGE Sir Roger de Coverley
MENDELSSOHN Octet for strings
Musicians of the SSO

Cocktail Hour
Sat 1 Jul 6pm
Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House

Christian Steiner



Orli Shaham in Recital

JS BACH French Suite No.6, BWV 817
BRAHMS Six Piano Pieces, Op.118
DORMAN After Brahms
DEAN Hommage à Brahms
BRAHMS Four Piano Pieces, Op.119
Orli Shaham piano

International Pianists in Recital
Mon 3 Jul 7pm
City Recital Hall

Keith Saunders



High Noon

Mozart & Haydn in the City

HAYDN Symphony No.7, Noon
MOZART Piano Concerto No.24 in C minor, K491
Andrew Haveron violin-director
Orli Shaham piano

Mozart in the City
Thu 6 Jul 7pm
City Recital Hall
Tea & Symphony
Fri 7 Jul 11am
Sydney Opera House

Eva Vermandel



Dancing with the Orchestra

Alina in the Spotlight

KODÁLY Dances of Galanta
BARTÓK Violin Concerto No.2
RACHMANINOFF Symphonic Dances
James Gaffigan conductor
Alina Ibragimova violin

Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 13 Jul 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 14 Jul 8pm
Great Classics
Sat 15 Jul 2pm
Sydney Opera House

SSO PRESENTS



George Michael: Praying for Time
A Tribute with your SSO

Join **Diesel**, **David Campbell**, **Sam Sparro**, **Brendan Maclean**, **Jade MacRae**, **Gary Pinto**, **Carmen Smith** and **Natasha Stuart** as they move from *Careless Whisper* through to *Faith*, *Father Figure* to *Praying for Time* and more.

Thu 6 Jul 8pm
Fri 7 Jul 8pm
Sat 8 Jul 2pm & 8pm
Sydney Opera House

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SYDNEY



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

THURSDAY 15 JUNE, 1.30PM

TEA & SYMPHONY*

FRIDAY 16 JUNE, 11AM

GREAT CLASSICS

SATURDAY 17 JUNE, 2PM

.....
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL



DON QUIXOTE

Fantastic Variations

David Robertson *conductor*
Umberto Clerici *cello*
Tobias Breider *viola*

JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)

Symphony No.60 in C, *Il distratto*

Adagio – Allegro di molto

Andante

Menuetto, non presto troppo – Trio

Presto

Adagio [di Lamentazione] – Allegro

Finale [Prestissimo]

ELLIOTT CARTER (1908–2012)

Variations for Orchestra

See page 10 for the list of variations

INTERVAL

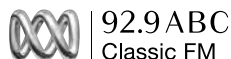
RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)

Don Quixote – Fantastic Variations on a Knightly Theme, Op.35

See page 14 for the list of variations

Umberto Clerici, cello

Tobias Breider, viola



Saturday afternoon's performance will be recorded by ABC Classic FM for broadcast on Saturday 24 June at noon.

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Pre-concert talk by David Robertson in the Northern Foyer, 45 minutes before each performance (Thu and Sat only)

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Estimated durations: 24 minutes, 25 minutes, 20-minute interval, 40 minutes

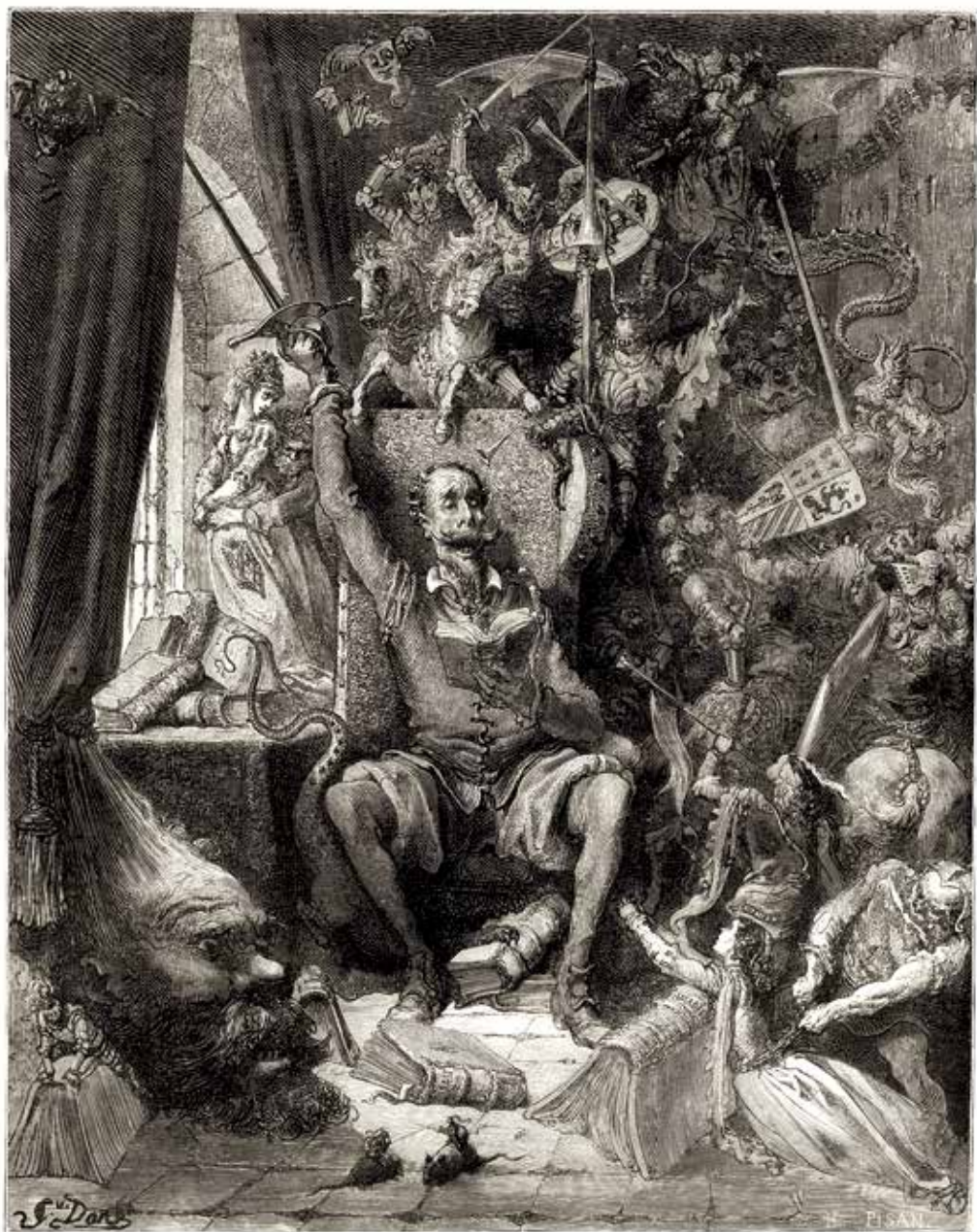
The concert will conclude at approximately 3.30pm (Thu), 12.10pm (Fri), 4pm (Sat).

.....
COVER IMAGE: Don Quixote fighting a windmill on his horse, Rocinante; in the background Sancho Panza next to his donkey (from Gustave Doré's illustrations for the 1863 edition of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*)

* The Tea & Symphony program on Friday will consist of the Haydn and Strauss works, performed without interval



Principal Partner



'A world of disorderly notions, picked out of his books, crowded into his imagination.'

Cervantes' *Don Quixote* was first published at the beginning of the 17th century, but perhaps the most famous edition was the French translation published in 1863 with marvellous engraved illustrations by Gustave Doré (1832–83). In the first plate from that edition, Doré has captured not only the gaunt countenance of Cervantes' 'impossible dreamer' but his crazed imaginings, from the dragon at top right to the giant at bottom left. And on the floor at his feet: two tiny knights joust on mouseback.

Don Quixote: Fantastic Variations

Nowadays, everyone's a curator. You could have stayed home today and programmed your own 'armchair concert'. But we're delighted to welcome you to the concert hall, our community of music lovers, and the literally fantastic program David Robertson has built around Richard Strauss's *Don Quixote*.

Strauss's tone poem has two key elements: in its narrative there are the adventures of the 'Knight of the Woeful Countenance', Cervantes' deluded hero; in its structure is a surprisingly strict theme and variations form. From these strands emerges the rest of today's program.

Echoing the narrative is Haydn's unusual symphony (really a suite). *Il distratto* was inspired by a play about another eccentric hero, although in this case the 'distracted gentleman' is just impossibly absent-minded rather than driven mad by too much reading. The humour and slapstick of the original play provided ample scope for Haydn's famous musical wit, and in turning the music he wrote for it into a 'symphony', he ensured it would be enjoyed long after the play fell out of circulation.

For listeners on Thursday and Saturday, Strauss's musical structure is echoed in the Variations for Orchestra by American Elliott Carter, one of the most original voices of the 20th century (and the 21st – for he kept composing into his 90s and past the age of 100!). Like Strauss, Carter's theme has multiple elements, and like Strauss, the variations that follow offer a thrilling, virtuoso procession of contrasting moods, colours and characterisation. But of course, Carter's music occupies a very different sound world. One of his great innovations, as David Robertson observes, is his 'magical' treatment of time, with subtle layering of metres and shifts of tempo, and one of the great delights of his music is the way 'beautiful, suddenly simple' forms emerge from apparent complexity.

We hope you enjoy today's 'fantastic variations' – a feast of orchestral virtuosity, humour, storytelling and marvellous colours.

READ IN ADVANCE

You can also read SSO program books on your computer or mobile device by visiting our online program library in the week leading up to the concert: sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com/program_library

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Joseph Haydn

Symphony No.60 in C, *Il distratto*

Adagio – Allegro di molto

Andante

Menuetto, non presto troppo – Trio

Presto

Adagio (di Lamentatione) – Allegro

Finale (Prestissimo)

As you listen to Haydn's Symphony No.60, you would be forgiven for thinking that it is the composer himself who is the 'absent-minded one', temporarily forgetting the conventions of the Classical symphony.

'Il distratto' is in fact the impossibly absent-minded gentleman from Jean-François Regnard's play *Le distrait*, who misaddresses letters to two female rivals, emerges from the wrong bed to confront a wronged husband, and needs to tie a knot in his handkerchief on his wedding day to remind himself that he is the bridegroom. A German version of the play (*Der Zerstreute*) was brought to the private theatre at Eszterháza by Carl Wahr's visiting troupe early in the summer of 1774. The comedy stimulated Haydn's own superb musical wit and he composed for Wahr's exclusive use an overture and five entr'actes.

Over the next two years this music found its way to Pressburg (now Bratislava), Salzburg and Vienna, where it attracted as enthusiastic a response as the play it accompanied. At around the same time, Haydn assembled the six movements as his Symphony No.60 – recycling the music for the concert hall just as the young Mozart was doing with his early opera overtures.

The result is not at all like the traditional Classical symphony in four movements. The six movements – unconnected by formal or thematic links – give it the character of a divertimento, while the distracted profusion of folk melodies (more than in any other Haydn symphony) has led H.C. Robbins Landon to describe it as a 'madley' of folk tunes.

But in its superb orchestral writing *Il distratto* is truly symphonic. The symphony is scored for two oboes with the 'ceremonial' kettledrums and high horns typical of Haydn's music in C major. Here, for the first time in a Haydn symphony, the violas are divided into two groups for the slow second and fifth movements. [The trumpet parts are optional and may well have been added later, for they simply double the horns.]

Keynotes

HAYDN

Born Rohrau, 1732

Died Vienna, 1809

At the time of his death, Haydn was the most illustrious composer in Europe: more famous than Mozart or Beethoven. Despite spending much of his working life buried in the provincial estate of Eszterháza, he became known for his symphonies and string quartets – Classical forms that he helped develop – and was widely commissioned. From about 1780 Haydn's music was in such demand that his symphonies were increasingly aimed at bigger orchestras and the general public. But most of those composed before 1780, such as today's symphony, were written with the Esterházy court orchestra in mind – small but populated by virtuosos.

SYMPHONY NO.60

This isn't really a symphony in the Classical sense, but a six-movement suite compiled from music that Haydn had written to accompany a comedy for its private presentation at Eszterháza in 1774. The nickname 'Il distratto' (or in German *Der Zerstreute*) refers to the 'distracted' or 'absent-minded' gentleman who is the hero of the play. Haydn, famous for his wit, must have enjoyed devising musical comedy to match the humour on stage. He does it with the musical equivalent of slapstick (in the finale the violins 'neglect' to tune) and by undermining our expectations (as when the slow movement suddenly races to its conclusion).

The first movement is in traditional sonata form prefaced by a majestic slow introduction. Yet even here there is a hint of the high jinks to follow with an unexpected dying away of the theme and a sudden lapse into a passage from Haydn's 'Farewell' Symphony.

The remaining movements are saturated with effects that confound expectations and mirror the particular humour of the play: unexpected harmonic progressions give an indecisive character to the music, while interruptions and absurd changes of mood accommodate a very short attention span indeed. The nervous fourth movement (*Presto*) simply cannot remember whether it is in C minor or C major.

The *Adagio*, a slow movement labelled 'Lamentatione', is paradoxically in a major key, recalling the famous lament from Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, which has Orfeo mourning in a major key. Its gloriously singing theme must vie with fanfares and ironic interjections from plucked strings, as the full gamut of emotional affects follows in mind-wandering succession. Perversely, the movement speeds up to its conclusion.

When it was first performed, the *Finale* had to be repeated 'in response to the incessant applause of the audience'. Here the violins emulate the absent-minded hero by setting off with great vigour, forgetting they've yet to tune their instruments. An excruciating chord reveals their neglect and the movement is brought to a pause while they adjust their G strings.

The symphony shamelessly betrays its comic origins, and it's easy to imagine Haydn striving to outdo Regnard in 'capricious absent-mindedness'. Yet for all the slapstick, this is a sophisticated musical wit, full of high spirits and intelligence: 'The connoisseurs are amazed on the one hand, whilst on the other the public is simply enchanted, for Haydn knows how to satisfy both parties.'

YVONNE FRINDLE © 1999/2017

Haydn's Symphony No.60 calls for two oboes, bassoon, two horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings.

We believe this is the SSO's first performance of the symphony.



The earliest known portrait of Haydn – an engraving from 1781

Elliott Carter

Variations for Orchestra

Introduction (Allegro)

Theme (Andante)

Var. 1 Vivace leggero

Var. 2 Pesante

Var. 3 Moderato

Var. 4 Ritardando molto

Var. 5 Allegro misterioso

Var. 6 Accelerando molto

Var. 7 Andante

Var. 8 Allegro giocoso

Var. 9 Andante

Finale (Allegro molto)

In *Variations for Orchestra* (1955) Elliott Carter adopts a familiar structure – theme and variations – but uses it in a fresh and innovative way. In addition to the main theme, a 74-note meandering melody, there are two striking ideas (Carter calls them *ritornelli*) that also provide material for variation. One of these descends by steps, slowly at first, but picking up in speed each time it appears. The other, more disjointed, gradually becomes slower. Carter's goal was to write a work of 'exhilarating variety' and its complexity is challenging but rewarding. Critic Anthony Tommasini has suggested that 'one way to listen to this piece is to forget everything about the theme-and-variations form and revel instead in the boldly contrasting moods, harmonies, colours and characters of the music'.

The composer writes...

My *Variations for Orchestra* was written for the Louisville Orchestra during 1955 from sketches made in 1953 and 1954. The project of writing such a work had interested me for some time as I was eager to put into concrete musical terms a number of ideas I had about this old form. Traditionally, of course, this type of composition is based on one pattern of material, a theme or a succession of harmonies out of which are built many short contrasting pieces or sections of music. The theme and each little section form musical vignettes usually presenting one single, unchanging mood or character and often only one musical idea or technique. Viewed as a series of separate pieces of sharply defined character, a set of musical variations resembles certain old literary works such as the collection of brief, trenchant delineations of *Ethical Characters* by Theophrastus, held together by one

Keynotes

CARTER

Born New York City, 1908

Died New York City, 2012

Elliott Carter enjoyed a privileged upbringing in New York, where he heard an early performance of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* in 1924 and decided he wanted to be a composer. What followed is a career that Pierre Boulez described as the 'résumé of the century'. Carter found a mentor in Charles Ives, studied with Walter Piston at Harvard, and in 1932 went to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger. Other admitted influences included the rhythmic layers in jazz (especially Fats Waller), the 'continually evolving motion' of choreographer Balanchine, and the cinematic montages of Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*.

In the 1950s Carter discovered his true, modernist, voice and for the next few decades wrote music that was highly complicated (and time-consuming to develop), often featuring intricate rhythmic gear-changes known as metric modulations. By the 1980s, his language internalised, he began to compose 'free-style, by ear', and knotty density gave way to a style that was even more inventive but in some ways less complicated, although it still demands a listener's complete attention.

One of the longest-lived (and continuously active) composers in history, Carter thought of each piece as an adventure: 'I tried to discover something new that I hadn't written before.' His musical legacy is characterised by tremendous vitality, matchless invention and uncompromising seriousness.

common idea or purpose. Such a set implicitly gives expression to the classical attitude toward the problem of 'unity in diversity'.

In this work I was interested in adopting a more dynamic and changeable approach. The general characteristics of the form are maintained – one pattern of material out of which a diversity of characters come – but the principle of variation is often applied even within the scope of each short piece. In some, great changes of character and theme occur; in others, contrasting themes and characters answer each other back and forth or are heard simultaneously. By these and other devices, I have tried to give musical expression to experiences anyone living today must have when confronted by so many remarkable examples of unexpected types of changes and relationships of character uncovered in the human sphere by psychologists and novelists, in the life cycle of insects and certain marine animals by biologists, indeed in every domain of science and art. Thus the old notion of unity in diversity presents itself to us in an entirely different guise than it did to people living even a short while ago.

THE THEMES

Musically, the work is based on three ideas. The first two, *ritornelli*, are repeated literally here and there throughout the work in various transpositions of pitch and speed, while the third is a theme that undergoes many transformations. Of the *ritornelli*, the first, rising rapidly shortly after the opening, becomes progressively slower at each restatement (Variations 1, 3, 8 and the Finale). The material of the main theme is used in many different ways and its characteristic motif is frequently referred to. The large plan consists in a presentation of degrees of contrast of character and their gradual neutralisation during the first four variations. In the Fifth Variation, contrast is reduced to a minimum, and from there on there is increasing definition and conflict of character until in the Finale, the restatement of the notes of the theme by the trombones re-establishes unity.

THE VARIATIONS

Each variation has its own shape, since shape, too, as a mode of musical behaviour, helps to define character. For instance, the First Variation and the Finale are both rapid dialogues of many contrasting motives in contrasting rhythms. The Second Variation presents contrast of character by quoting the theme almost literally and confronting it with its own variants derived alternately by intervallic expansion and intervallic diminution. The Third contrasts textures of dense harmony and expressive lines with transparent fragmentary motives. The Fourth Variation

Carter Remembered

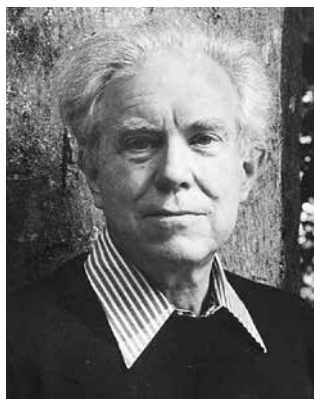
Elliott Carter's music is the closest metaphor, in sound, to our conscious experience of life. At times so complex that we are not sure how to find an order while immersed in its stimulation, there will be beautiful, suddenly simple forms that we grasp fleetingly as they fly past us, leaving traces in our memory. Elliott loved the way music could contain different qualities at the same time. He explored this simultaneity in deep ways no other composer has. I have often been struck by how exquisitely he could set a text to music and effortlessly add endless layers of meaning in the sounds. His poetic voice changed the way I think about intervals, rhythm, texture, and time. After Elliott, you look differently at a Rossini or Mozart opera accompaniment having lived with the subtle shades of speed in his magical metric modulations. Your sense for the unique personality of an interval changes after the experience of works like *Penthode* or the *Clarinet Concerto*. In discussion with him you often felt that he was the definition of mental genius. That he was such a generous person in addition to all his talents and abilities makes him a model to emulate. Thank goodness he left us a lifetime of music. We are lucky indeed to have his take on music, on culture, literature and life.

DAVID ROBERTSON

is a continual ritardando, and the Sixth an accelerating series of imitations. The Fifth obliterates contrast in a succession of chords using the notes of the theme. The Seventh is an antiphonal variation presenting three different ideas played in succession by the strings, brass and woodwinds, and representing cession three different rhythmic planes. The line the woodwinds play in Variation 7 is continued and developed in Variation 8 while ideas of a much lighter musical nature are presented against it. The same idea is carried over into Variation 9, where it is rejoined by the other two ideas from Variation 7, now played simultaneously. The Finale is a rapid interplay of different characters, finally called to order by the trombones, who restate the notes of the first half of the theme while the strings softly play those of the second half.

© ELLIOTT CARTER

Variations for Orchestra was conceived taking into account the exact size of the Louisville Orchestra with its limited string group. It calls for two flutes (one doubling piccolo) and pairs of oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion; one or two harps and strings (9 first violins, 6 second violins, 6 violas, 4 cellos and 4 double basses).



ASSOCIATED MUSIC PUBLISHERS

The SSO gave the Australian premiere of Variations for Orchestra in the 1991 20th Century Orchestra series, conducted by Matthias Bamert. This is our first performance of the work since then.



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FAREWELL ROBERT JOHNSON

On Saturday 17 June, Robert Johnson will give his final performance as Principal Horn of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. After a brief period as SSO Associate Principal Horn in the late 1970s – followed by overseas study and five years as Principal Horn in what is now the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra – he returned to the SSO as Principal Horn in 1986.

His colleague, Principal Trombone Ronald Prussing, speaks for us all...

This Saturday will mark the end of a remarkable contribution to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. One of our finest will take his final bow as a member of our orchestra. After 31 years as our Principal Horn, Rob Johnson has decided to retire.

Rob is a remarkable player. Coming to the SSO from the WASO in 1978, Rob brought a fresh approach, a different sound, and amazing musicianship to the Horn section. His playing has always been characterised by a beautiful sound, wonderful technique and impeccable musicianship.

The lyricism displayed in his playing of the beautiful solo in Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, in the Nocturne from Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and in Ravel's *Pavane pour une infante défunte*, have rarely been equalled – never surpassed. Through countless performances, his pure sound, beautiful phrasing, and superlative musical skills have combined to bring to the orchestra playing of an exemplary quality through the entire French Horn repertoire.

It has been my privilege to also play chamber music with Rob on many occasions. Again, his adaptation to the smaller ensemble environment has revealed his mastery of musical style, a skill he also brought to the playing of the smaller, Classical repertoire that the SSO often performs.



KEITH SAUNDERS

Rob has been an exemplary colleague, a wonderful player and a leader of great insight – an example of true professionalism. He leaves behind a truly great legacy of great horn playing and wonderful musicianship.

Rob's contributions to the musical vitality of Sydney will be much missed – by those who share the stage with him, by those behind the scenes, and by those who have enjoyed his many performances from the audience.

We thank you Rob – may you enjoy your well-earned retirement!

Richard Strauss

Don Quixote – Fantastic Variations on a Knightly Theme, Op.35

Introduction (Moderate tempo) Don Quixote loses his sanity after reading novels about knights, and decides to become a knight-errant

Theme (Moderate) Don Quixote, knight of the woeful countenance – [Major] Sancho Panza

Var. 1 (Leisurely) Adventure at the windmills

Var. 2 (Warlike) The victorious struggle against the army of the great emperor Alifanfaron [actually a flock of sheep]

Var. 3 (Moderate tempo) Dialogue between knight and squire

Var. 4 (A little broader) Unhappy adventure with a procession of pilgrims

Var. 5 (Very slow) The knight's vigil

Var. 6 (Quick) The meeting with Dulcinea

Var. 7 (A little quieter than before) The ride through the air

Var. 8 (Leisurely) The unhappy voyage in the enchanted boat

Var. 9 (Fast and stormy) Battle with the magicians

Var. 10 (Very broad) Duel with the knight of the bright moon

Finale (Very peaceful) Coming to his senses again – Death of Don Quixote

Umberto Clerici *cello*

Tobias Breider *viola*

Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are two of the greatest characters in all literature – up there with Faust, Hamlet and Milton's Satan. And the number of musical settings over the years has surely adorned this 16th-century comic classic beyond its author's humblest dreams – suites by Purcell and Telemann, song cycles by Ravel and Ibert, operas by Mendelssohn, Donizetti, Massenet and Paisiello, a musical by Mitch Leigh, as well as works by fellow Spaniards Roberto Gerhard and Manuel de Falla.

Richard Strauss's tone poem, the most popular orchestral work on the subject, was his third character study after *Don Juan* and *Till Eulenspiegel*, and (unusually for a tone poem) takes the form of a strict theme and variations. Strauss's designation of the work as being for *groses Orchester* [large orchestra] belies the extent of soloistic work, especially the solo cello (often played these days by a virtuoso soloist, but originally designated for the section principal) representing the Don, and the solo viola as his squire, Sancho Panza. Other sides to both these characters are presented by a solo violin (for the Don), and bass clarinet and tenor tuba, Sancho's alter-egos.

Keynotes

R STRAUSS

Born Munich, 1864

Died Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1949

Richard Strauss wrote two symphonies as a teenager, but this was not the musical genre that captured his imagination. Instead he made his name as a composer of operas and with the evocative and storytelling possibilities of the symphonic poem (or 'tone poem', as he preferred to call it) as invented by Liszt. And since his day job was conducting, he knew precisely how to use the instruments of the orchestra to create the marvellous pictorial effects that his descriptive tone poems required.

DON QUIXOTE

Don Quixote was composed in 1897 and is one of the most explicitly pictorial of Strauss's tone poems. The music is organised in theme and variation form: the introduction sets the scene and themes (there are several) introduce his main characters, while the variations illustrate some of the most memorable episodes in Cervantes' picaresque novel. Strauss's genius as an orchestrator is evident at every turn, most memorably in Variation 2, where the bleating of an 'army' of sheep is achieved by flutter-tonguing on muted brass instruments and clarinets. The 'casting' is inspired: a cello takes the part of Don Quixote, the would-be knight-errant, and a viola is his loyal squire, Sancho Panza.

Strauss based his score on incidents in Cervantes' epic novel, but altered their order for the sake of musical effectiveness. In the Introduction, a galloping wind flourish and then a galant violin theme, suggest the chivalric obsessions of the impoverished nobleman, Don Alonso Quixano. The clarinet expresses his dreamy personality. Violas alone play a variant of the opening theme which, in its increasingly chromatic meanderings, depicts the growing delusions of his mind until the oboe presents to him his idealised woman, the farm girl Aldonza Lorenzo, whom the Don has christened Dulcinea del Toboso, an ideal of womanhood who summons him (with trumpets) to his exploits as Don Quixote de la Mancha. Muted strings and brass add a certain nightmarish quality. The Don imagines himself singing a duet with Dulcinea, and her devotion inspires new protestations. New thoughts begin to crowd in, a mêlée of musical material, until his brain snaps.

Strauss now presents his **themes for variation** in a character study of this famous 'Knight of the Woeful Countenance'. The solo cello takes over the flourishing theme from the beginning and turns it into a personification of knight-errantry. The clarinet ushers in Sancho Panza's three themes: a sturdy figure on bass clarinet and tuba; a scampering theme on viola; and finally, musical depictions of Sancho's proverbs and platitudes (strings of stock figures on solo viola).

Variation 1 comes from the famous episode where Don Quixote, mistaking windmills for giants, launches a ludicrous attack on them. The Don and Sancho set out on their travels (cello and bass clarinet), with the vision of Dulcinea (violins taking over the oboe theme) leading them forth. The appearance of the windmills is unmistakable, as is the breeze which gently stirs their arms (quick repeated notes on piccolo and flute and trilling violins). The Don's failure is sharp as he receives a severe setback, and the music depicts his limping recovery, but the clarinet once more announces his dream, and we are launched with renewed enthusiasm into another adventure.

Variation 2. Against a background of jarring flutter-tonguing on clarinets and brass, a pastoral theme suggests the flocks of sheep which the Don mistakes for the mighty armies of Alifanfaron, Emperor of Trapobana, and Pentapolin, King of the Garamantas. Strauss gives this episode a victorious outcome, unlike Cervantes who has the shepherds 'saluting the pate' of his hero with great stones, breaking two of his ribs and knocking out his teeth.

Strauss called **Variation 3** 'Sancho's conversations, questions, demands and proverbs; Don Quixote's instructing, appeasing and promises'. One can see the two carrying on like this for

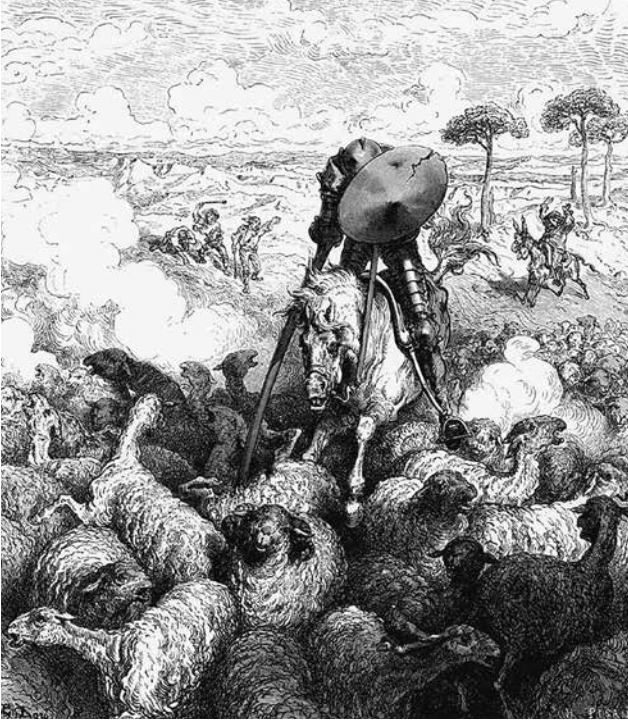


Richard Strauss, 1904



Sancho Panza and Don Quixote set out (Gustave Doré, 1863)

◀ Don Quixote battles an army of sheep (Gustave Doré, 1863)



miles, with the Don (here a violin solo) at one stage barely able to get two words (or notes) in edgewise. In an orchestral fury, he 'spits the dummy' – and Strauss, beautifully shifting scene and sympathy, gives us a portrait of knight-errantry through Don Quixote's eyes. The variation ends with celestial idealism, though Sancho cannot resist one last objection.

Variation 4. Off goes Rocinante, Quixote's tired old nag, at a decrepit gallop. The Don mistakes a group of penitents carrying a statue of the Virgin Mary for 'villainous and unmannerly scoundrels' abducting a lady. When the Don intervenes, the penitents set upon him. As the procession fades into the background, Sancho lets out a whoop of joy on discovering his master is still alive.

Variation 5 takes us back to an early part of the story: the Don's vigil over his armour. The Dulcinea theme appears shrouded in magical figures from the harp.

In **Variation 6** the Don sets off with Sancho for Dulcinea's home town, charging Sancho to find his Lady; at his wits' end, Sancho points out three peasant girls on donkeys who, he says, are Dulcinea and two serving girls. Two oboes in thirds evoke, in Norman Del Mar's words, 'the brash garlic-smelling wench who has appeared in place of the noble aristocratic lady of the knight's expectations'. The Don pays court to the alarmed ladies nonetheless but they dash off, leaving him perplexed.

Variation 7 comes from the long episode where the Don and Sancho are subjected to a series of leg-pulls. One of these requires the Don to travel 9,681 leagues on a flying horse. The Don and Sancho both submit to being blindfolded, and the orchestra takes us away on an entertaining ride. Strauss slyly reveals the true state of affairs (that the flying horse is a toy; that the impression of wind is really created by bellows) by continuously sounding a pedal note of D.

Variation 8 depicts the 'Enchanted Boat' which, taken from the riverbank by the Don and Sancho, drifts towards a weir amidst some water mills and is smashed to pieces. One can almost hear the Don and Sancho shaking off the last drops of water after they are fetched ashore – it is extraordinary 'just how wet' the succession of plucked notes and chords sound, says Del Mar.

In **Variation 9** the Don sees a Basque lady travelling to Seville to join her husband. Preceding this group are two Benedictine monks; close-weaving melodies for two bassoons convey their intense conversation. Convinced that the monks, masked against a dust storm, are sorcerers bearing off a princess, the Don creeps up on them and puts them to flight.

Variation 10 follows without a break – the Don's battle with the Knight of the White Moon – fellow-villager Sampson Carrasco, who, in disguise, hopes to defeat the Don and in doing so exact a promise from him to give up his foolish quests and return home. The orchestra depicts the jousting of the two contenders, but most graphic and moving is the Don's leaden-footed return, a powerful pedal point reinforced by regular timpani strokes. The Don considers taking up a pastoral life (the shepherd's piping is heard), but at least the worst of his delusions is over, and he is becoming restored to clarity.

The work closes with a depiction of the Don's death. It begins with a beautifully moving melody for cello. Subtle tremors of impending death, recalling the tone poem *Death and Transfiguration*, are heard. The soloist often ends up slumped over his cello at the conclusion of the dying glissando.

ABRIDGED FROM A NOTE BY GORDON KALTON WILLIAMS
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA © 1998

In addition to the solo cello and viola parts, Strauss's *Don Quixote* calls for two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets (one doubling E flat clarinet), bass clarinet, three bassoons and contrabassoon; six horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tenor and bass tubas; timpani and percussion; harp and strings.

The SSO first performed *Don Quixote* in 1947 with Eugene Goossens conducting and soloists Lauri Kennedy (cello) and Robert Wood (viola). Our most recent performance was in 1999, when Carlo Rizzi conducted, and cellist Ralph Kirshbaum and violist Esther van Stralen played the solo parts.



This portrait of a Spanish gentleman from 1600, attributed to Juan de Jáuregui y Aguilar, was for a long time thought to depict Cervantes

THE MADNESS OF DON QUIXOTE

'...he became so absorbed in his books that he spent his nights from sunset to sunrise, and his days from dawn to dark, poring over them; and what with little sleep and much reading his brains got so dry that he lost his wits. His fancy grew full of what he used to read about in his books, enchantments, quarrels, battles, challenges, wounds, wooings, loves, agonies, and all sorts of impossible nonsense; and it so possessed his mind that the whole fabric of invention and fancy he read of was true... In short, his wits being quite gone, he hit upon the strangest notion that ever madman in this world hit upon... that he should make a knight-errant of himself, roaming the world over in full armour and on horseback in quest of adventures, ...righting every kind of wrong, and exposing himself to peril and danger from which, in the issue, he was to reap eternal renown and fame.'

CERVANTES

MORE MUSIC

IL DISTRATTO

Outside of the boxed sets of complete Haydn symphonies, his Symphony No.60, *Il distratto*, has not been much recorded. One interesting album collects it together with No.12 and No.50 under the title *Haydn: Three Theatrical Symphonies* (No.50 began life as the overture for a marionette opera). The performances, on period instruments, are by the Haydn Sinfonietta Vienna, conducted by Manfred Huss.

BIS 1815

Or look for Ivor Bolton's recording with the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra, which programs it with the more famous (if misnamed) 'Miracle' Symphony (No.96) and Symphony No.88.

OEHMS 736

ELLIOTT CARTER

In 2009 the Nonesuch label released an Elliott Carter retrospective album [effectively a celebration of the 'first one hundred years' of this long-lived composer]. Presented over four discs as a chronological survey, it includes his Piano Sonata, one of his Pulitzer Prize-winning string quartets, the Double Concerto for harpsichord, piano and two chamber orchestras, and *Night Fantasies* from 1980, as well as the Variations for Orchestra, performed by James Levine and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

NONESUCH 510893

The same Levine/CSO performance is available in an album that places the Variations in the company of other American composers: Gunther Schuller's *Spectra*, Milton Babbitt's *Correspondences* and John Cage's *Atlas eclipicalis*. Out of print, but available as a reissue from arkivmusic.com

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 431 6982

DON QUIXOTE IN MUSIC

For Richard Strauss's *Don Quixote* – and a whole lot more – you can't go past the 5-CD Collectors Edition set, *Richard Strauss Orchestral Works*, released by Deutsche Grammophon. Herbert von Karajan conducts the Berlin Philharmonic in the Strauss tone poems (mostly in performances from the 1980s) and the soloists in *Don Quixote* are Antonio Meneses (cello) and Wolfram Christ (viola).

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 477 9814

For an older take on the Don Quixote story, there's Telemann's suite, *Don Quichotte auf der Hochzeit des Comacho*. The Cleveland baroque orchestra Apollo's Fire is directed from the harpsichord by Jeannette Sorrell in an all-Telemann album.

AVIE 2353

From the 20th century there's Ravel's *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée*, which is paired with his miniature opera *L'Heure espagnole*. François Le Roux is the baritone

in *Don Quichotte* and Leonard Slatkin conducts the Orchestre National de Lyon.

NAXOS 8.660337

Even more recent is Jan Sandström's second trombone concerto *Don Quixote* composed for Christian Lindberg in 1994. It is paired with Sandström's equally theatrical *Motorbike Concerto*, also for Lindberg. He's accompanied by Osmo Vänskä and the Lahti Symphony Orchestra.

BIS 828

Broadcast Diary

June–July



92.9 ABC
Classic FM

abc.net.au/classic

Saturday 24 June, noon

DON QUIXOTE: FANTASTIC VARIATIONS

David Robertson conductor

Umberto Clerici cello

Tobias Breider viola

Haydn, Carter, Richard Strauss

Monday 26 June, 10pm

BEETHOVEN'S MISSA SOLEMNIS (2015)

David Robertson conductor

Susanna Phillips soprano

Olesya Petrova mezzo-soprano

Stuart Skelton tenor

Shenyang bass-baritone

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

SSO Radio

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

sydney-symphony.com/SSO_radio



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HOUR

Tuesday 11 July, 6pm

Musicians and staff of the SSO talk about the life of the orchestra and forthcoming concerts.

Hosted by Andrew Bukenya.

finemusicfm.com



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JAY FRAM

David Robertson

THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

David Robertson is a compelling and passionate communicator whose stimulating ideas and music-making have captivated audiences and musicians alike. A consummate musician and masterful programmer, he has forged strong relationships with major orchestras throughout Europe and North America.

He made his Australian debut with the SSO in 2003 and soon became a regular visitor to Sydney, with highlights including the Australian premiere of John Adams' *Doctor Atomic* Symphony and concert performances of *The Flying Dutchman*. In 2014, his inaugural season as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, he led the SSO on a seven-city tour of China. More recent highlights have included presentations of *Elektra*, *Tristan und Isolde*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, and *Porgy and Bess*; the Australian premiere of Adams' *Scheherazade*. 2 violin concerto, Messiaen's *From the Canyons to the Stars* and Stravinsky ballet scores (also recorded for CD release); as well as the launch of the SSO at Carriageworks series.

Last year he began his 12th season as Music Director of the St Louis Symphony. Other titled posts have included Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Music Director of the Orchestre National de Lyon and resident conductor of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. An expert in 20th- and 21st-century music, he has been Music Director of the Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris (where composer and conductor Pierre Boulez was an early supporter).

He is also a champion of young musicians, devoting time to working with students and young artists.

David Robertson is a frequent guest with major orchestras and opera houses worldwide, conducting the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia and Cleveland orchestras, Berlin Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Dresden, BBC Symphony Orchestra and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as conducting at La Scala, Opéra de Lyon, San Francisco Opera and the Bavarian and Hamburg state operas. In 2014 he conducted the controversial but highly acclaimed Metropolitan Opera premiere of John Adams' *Death of Klinghoffer*.

His awards and accolades include Musical America Conductor of the Year (2000), Columbia University's 2006 Ditson Conductor's Award, and the 2005–06 ASCAP Morton Gould Award for Innovative Programming. In 2010 he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 2011 a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

David Robertson was born in Santa Monica, California, and educated at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he studied French horn and composition before turning to conducting. He is married to pianist Orli Shaham.

The position of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director is also supported by Principal Partner Emirates.



KEITH SAUNDERS

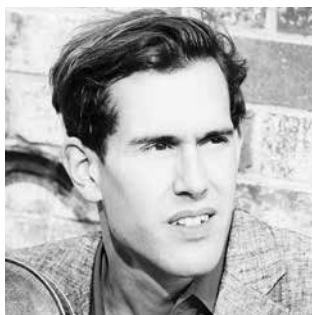
Umberto Clerici *cello*

PRINCIPAL CELLO, GARY & SHIVA RICH CHAIR

Umberto Clerici began studying the cello at the age of five with Antonio Mosca in Torino; later he studied with Mario Brunello, David Geringas, Steven Isserlis and Julius Berger, and he holds a Soloist Diploma from the Augsburg and Nürnberg University. In 2011 he was the second Italian cellist to win a prize at the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. Before taking up the post of Principal Cello with the SSO in 2014, he was Principal Cello with the Teatro Regio, Torino.

He made his solo debut at 17 playing Haydn's D major concerto in Japan and has since performed with orchestras throughout Europe, including the St Petersburg Philharmonic, State Symphony Orchestra of Russia [Moscow], Vienna Philharmonic, I Pomeriggi Musicali in Milan, and the Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as in Istanbul and Ankara. In 2012 he performed Tchaikovsky's Rocooco Variations under Valery Gergiev in Turin. He has also appeared as a soloist in the Vienna Musikverein, Shostakovich Great Hall (St Petersburg), Auditorium Parco della Musica [Rome] and Carnegie Hall, and at the Salzburg Festival. His recordings include the Saint-Saëns and Shostakovich concertos, and music for cello and orchestra by Tchaikovsky, and he has recently released a solo album inspired by the Bach cello suites.

He plays a Matteo Goffriller cello (Venice, 1722) and a Carlo Antonio Testore cello (Milan, 1758).



Tobias Breider *viola*

PRINCIPAL VIOLA

Tobias Breider was born in Münster and began his music studies with violin and piano. He studied viola with Rainer Moog in Cologne, completing his Master's degree, and a German Academic Exchange Service scholarship enabled him to study in New York with Michael Tree of the Guarneri Quartet. On returning to Germany, he completed the Soloist Program in Lübeck with Barbara Westphal.

Before moving to Australia in 2011, he held principal positions at the Rhine Opera Düsseldorf, the Konzerthaus Berlin and in the Hamburg Philharmonic State Orchestra under Simone Young. He has also appeared as guest principal with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Berlin, Vienna and Cologne radio symphony orchestras, the Qatar Philharmonic and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

As a soloist he has performed at the Sydney Opera House, the Domain and City Recital Hall, as well as the Melbourne Recital Centre. He regularly tours Queensland giving recitals and has recently joined Ensemble Q in Brisbane. He is in demand as a chamber musician, and has performed at numerous festivals in the USA, Germany, the UK and South Africa. In Australia he has collaborated with ensembles such as Wilma Smith & Friends, Kathryn Selby & Friends, Charmian & Friends, the Australia Octet and the OMEGA Ensemble. He currently teaches at the Sydney Conservatorium and at ANAM [Melbourne].

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



DAVID ROBERTSON

THE LOWY CHAIR OF
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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 fourth year as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.

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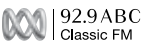
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