

2017 SEASON



**sydney symphony orchestra**

**David Robertson**

The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

## Dutoit conducts Colours of Spain

*Yuja Wang plays Beethoven*

SPECIAL EVENT

PREMIER PARTNER CREDIT SUISSE

Thursday 29 June, 8pm

Friday 30 June, 8pm

Saturday 1 July, 8pm

**CREDIT SUISSE**

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Principal Partner



CLASSICAL

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

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 One Circular Quay by Wanda  
 Thursday Afternoon Symphony  
**Thu 13 Jul 1.30pm**  
 Emirates Metro Series  
**Fri 14 Jul 8pm**  
 Great Classics  
**Sat 15 Jul 2pm**  
 Sydney Opera House

Benjamin Ealovega



**Mahler 3**

*Heartwarming Voices*  
 MAHLER Symphony No.3  
 David Robertson conductor  
 Susan Graham mezzo-soprano  
 Women's Voices of Sydney Philharmonia Choirs  
 Sydney Children's Choir

APT Master Series  
**Wed 19 Jul 8pm**  
**Fri 21 Jul 8pm**  
**Sat 22 Jul 8pm**  
 Mondays @ 7  
**Mon 24 Jul 7pm**  
 Sydney Opera House

Keith Saunders



**Ravishing Ravel**

*Spinning Tales*  
 STRAVINSKY Fireworks, Op.4  
 RAVEL Shéhérazade\*  
 RAVEL Daphnis et Chloé - Ballet\*  
 David Robertson conductor  
 Susan Graham mezzo-soprano  
 Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Thursday Afternoon Symphony  
**Thu 27 Jul 1.30pm**  
 Tea & Symphony  
**Fri 28 Jul 11am\***  
 Great Classics  
**Sat 29 Jul 2pm**  
 Sydney Opera House

Benjamin Ealovega



**Pieter Wispelwey plays the Bach Cello Suites**

JS BACH Cello Suites Nos. 1 to 6  
 Pieter Wispelwey cello

Special Event  
**Sun 6 Aug 2pm**  
**Mon 7 Aug 7pm**  
 City Recital Hall

SSO PRESENTS



**George Michael: Praying for Time**

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 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.

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Principal Partner

*WELCOME*



**Credit Suisse warmly welcomes you to this SSO special event featuring Charles Dutoit with soloist Yuja Wang.**

One of the marvellous things about a symphony orchestra is the way nearly a hundred musicians can work together as one – the result of relationship building over many years as the musicians perform together in countless concerts. For the SSO, that relationship building extends to the bonds the orchestra forms with its guest artists, many of whom have become regular visitors to Sydney.

Swiss conductor Charles Dutoit is one such artist. He first conducted the SSO in 1977 when the Sydney Opera House was still new, and on each return visit Sydney audiences have been able to enjoy the finesse and flair that he brings to his concerts.

The SSO musicians, too, talk of the way Dutoit pushes for technical perfection and challenges them in the wonderful repertoire that he programs.

Also joining the orchestra for these concerts is piano superstar Yuja Wang, returning with Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.1. This is only her second visit to Sydney; it is telling that she was willing to give up a personal break in order to perform with the SSO at such short notice this week.

As premier partner, it brings us great satisfaction to play a part in helping the SSO forge and sustain musical relationships and to see them come to fruition in exciting concerts. We are especially delighted to support these performances in which the SSO celebrates four decades of collaboration with Charles Dutoit.

We hope you enjoy the concert and look forward to seeing you at future performances by the SSO.



**John Knox**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Credit Suisse Australia



**sydney symphony  
orchestra**

**David Robertson**  
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

**SPECIAL EVENT**

**PREMIER PARTNER CREDIT SUISSE**

THURSDAY 29 JUNE, 8PM

FRIDAY 30 JUNE, 8PM

SATURDAY 1 JULY, 8PM

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

# DUTOIT CONDUCTS COLOURS OF SPAIN

*Yuja Wang plays Beethoven*

**Charles Dutoit** *conductor*

**Yuja Wang** *piano*

**IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)**

**Funeral Song, Op.5**

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)**

**Piano Concerto No.1 in C, Op.15**

*Allegro con brio*

*Largo*

*Rondo (Allegro scherzando)*

INTERVAL

**MANUEL DE FALLA (1876–1946)**

***The Three-Cornered Hat: Suites 1 and 2***

*Introduction – Afternoon –*

*The Dance of the Miller's Wife (Fandango) –*

*The Corregidor –*

*The Miller's Wife –*

*The Grapes*

*The Neighbours' Dance (Seguidillas)*

*The Miller's Dance (Farruca)*

*Final Dance (Jota)*

**MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)**

***La Valse – Poème chorégraphique***

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Saturday's concert will be broadcast across Australia on ABC Classic FM.

Pre-concert talk by Scott Davie in the Northern Foyer at 7.15pm.

For more information visit [sydneysymphony.com/speaker-bios](http://sydneysymphony.com/speaker-bios)

Estimated durations:

12 minutes, 36 minutes,

20-minute interval, 23 minutes,

12 minutes

The concert will conclude at approximately 10pm

COVER PHOTO: Priska Ketterer

*Last week Martha Argerich advised us with deepest regret that, because of illness, she would be unable to travel to Australia to perform with the SSO and her friend and musical partner Charles Dutoit. We are grateful to Yuja Wang, who generously agreed to cut short a personal break in order to perform in these concerts in her stead.*



Principal Partner



**The Spanish Dancer, a study for *El Jaleo* (1882) by John Singer Sargent**

# Dutoit conducts Colours of Spain

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On his first visit to Australia to conduct the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Charles Dutoit programmed Stravinsky's *Petrushka*, the second of the great early ballets written for Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Now, 40 years later, he begins this celebratory program with 'new', or rather recently rediscovered, Stravinsky – a youthful work that everyone, the composer included, had assumed was lost. The music is an *in memoriam* piece written following the death of Stravinsky's teacher Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and it offers an intriguing insight into the influences and style of a 20-something composer who was on the cusp of international fame. His *Firebird* ballet was to make his name, *Petrushka* confirmed his stature, *The Rite of Spring* brought him notoriety.

The second half of the program springs from the same world, with music written for, or in hope of, a Ballets Russes production. With his colourful and evocative *Three-Cornered Hat*, Manuel de Falla provided the perfect score for the Spanish ballet that Diaghilev wanted. In a starry line-up of creatives, Léonide Massine provided the choreography (also dancing the lead) and Pablo Picasso designed costumes and scenery. Ravel was less fortunate. *La Valse* was rejected by Diaghilev as too symphonic, and this intoxicating, whirling music had to wait nearly a decade before Ida Rubinstein and the choreographer Bronislava Nijinska brought it to the stage. Although written from the outset for dancing, *La Valse* found its true home and popularity in the concert hall, and it makes an exhilarating finale to the concert.

Beethoven may seem out of place in the company of these pieces from the beginning of the 20th century – unless, perhaps, you count Falla's cheeky nod to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony... But, like Stravinsky's Funeral Song, Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.1 is the work by a composer in his late 20s, emerging into the spotlight of fame and notoriety. And with Yuja Wang at the keyboard, we're sure to experience the sheer energy and virtuosity of a concerto that not only hints at what was to come but is magnificent in its own right.

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## 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: [sydneyphilharmonic.com/program\\_library](http://sydneyphilharmonic.com/program_library)

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## PLEASE SHARE

Programs grow on trees – help us be environmentally responsible and keep ticket prices down by sharing your program with your companion.

### Igor Stravinsky Funeral Song, Op.5

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

The rediscovery in 2015 of Stravinsky's youthful Funeral Song (presumed lost in the Russian Revolution) caused a stir in the musical world. It had not been heard since its premiere in St Petersburg in 1909.

Stravinsky described it in his 1960 *Memories and Commentaries* as 'the best of my works before *The Firebird*', but had limited recollection of it. By then living in the US, the 78-year-old composer wished that people in his hometown of Leningrad (as it then was) might look for the parts, as he was curious to be reminded of what he was composing just before the work that had made his name.

Over the years, Russian musicologist Dr Natalia Braginskaya had searched for the Funeral Song. But only when the St Petersburg Conservatory building was being cleaned out for repairs, did parts resembling the work Braginskaya had been looking for surface in a back room. According to the Conservatory's rector Alexei Vasiliev, Braginskaya's report of the find caused the phones to run hot. After discussions between the Stravinsky family who owned the intellectual rights, Stravinsky's publisher Boosey & Hawkes, and the Conservatory (and by extension, the Russian State) who owned the physical material, a new full score was reconstructed and Valery Gergiev finally conducted St Petersburg's Mariinsky Orchestra in the work's second-only performance at the Concert Hall of the Mariinsky Theatre in December 2016. Now, according to the Boosey & Hawkes website, orchestras around the world – from Seoul to Prague – are 'adjusting their programs to allow the work to be heard as soon as possible'.

It is easy to understand the historical significance of this discovery, but what is the Funeral Song like? Stravinsky wrote it as a memorial for his teacher Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, who had died in June 1908. In *Memories and Commentaries*, Stravinsky says that Rimsky-Korsakov was like an 'adopted parent' to him. But he also complained about Rimsky's limited views on composition ('the most important tools of my art I had to discover for myself') and – given the nature of this piece – the way their views on religion and philosophy diverged. 'I remember,' writes Stravinsky, 'someone introducing "Resurrection" as a table topic, and Rimsky drawing a zero on the tablecloth as he said, "there is nothing after death, death is the end".'

### Keynotes

STRAVINSKY

*Born near St Petersburg, 1882  
Died New York, 1971*

One of the 20th century's greatest and most influential composers, Igor Stravinsky was born in Russia, later adopting French and then American nationality. His style is similarly multi-faceted, from the exotic instrumental and harmonic colours of *The Firebird* – his first big hit – to the transparency of his later neoclassical style. His most popular orchestral works include the three ballets created for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, with *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring* following the success of *Firebird*. All three, despite their obvious differences, demonstrate Stravinsky's power as a musical storyteller and composer for orchestra.

FUNERAL SONG

This early orchestral piece was composed following the death of Stravinsky's teacher Rimsky-Korsakov and first performed in 1909 before the performing materials were lost, literally at the back of a shelf in the St Petersburg Conservatory archive. They were rediscovered in 2015 and the Funeral Song received its second performance six months ago. Given its inspiration, the Funeral Song is very different in character from Stravinsky's previous orchestral pieces: his *Scherzo fantastique* (Op.3) and *Feu d'artifice* (Op.4, which we perform next month). Russian musicologist Natalia Braginskaya sees the work as the beginning of 'a line of musical commemoration' that includes the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (in memory of Debussy) and later *in memoriam* works from the 1960s.

It is tempting to see in the opening bars of the Funeral Song a foreshadowing of the atmospheric opening of *The Firebird*, which would launch Stravinsky's international career when presented by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in Paris the following year. The French horn next introduces a modal melody. In later life, Stravinsky remembered that 'all the solo instruments of the orchestra [then] filed past the tomb of the master in succession, each laying down its own melody as its wreath against a deep background of tremolo murmurings simulating the vibrations of bass voices singing in chorus.' But, as it turns out, the horn's modal melody predominates, subjected to colouristic changes.

The slow tread of the Funeral Song is perfectly judged, given the purpose of the piece; in this respect there's no glimpse of the firebird's future flight. The most rhythmically active element is the trumpet's triplet chromatic figure answering the horn melody, a device that becomes structurally important later. What is truly surprising, however, is what the piece reveals about Stravinsky's influences. Of course we might expect the tint of Russian forebears, but there are unmistakable echoes of Wagner, a composer Stravinsky later professed to loathe. [Stravinsky had attended Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* with Rimsky-Korsakov two months before the older composer's death.]

Musicologists are often thrilled when a piece like this re-emerges. It answers questions about a composer's development. But listening to this piece deepens the mystery. Where did the composer of *Firebird*, *The Rite of Spring* and *Petrushka* spring from? Was it the influence of the next father-figure in Stravinsky's life: Diaghilev? Or because Stravinsky, who had already written some effervescent scherzos, discovered the 'tools of my art' for himself?

GORDON KALTON WILLIAMS © 2017

Stravinsky's Funeral Song calls for three flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, cor anglais, three clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet) and three bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon); four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion, two harps and strings.



The young Igor Stravinsky



Detail from a portrait of Rimsky-Korsakov by Valentin Serov (1898)



## Ludwig van Beethoven

### Piano Concerto No.1 in C, Op.15

*Allegro con brio*

*Largo*

*Rondo (Allegro scherzando)*

**Yuja Wang** *piano*

Beethoven's first two mature piano concertos are numbered in reverse chronological order, reflecting not their dates of composition but rather their dates of publication. The first to be published, in March 1801, which we know as No.1 in C, was actually the second in order of composition. The earlier, highly Mozartian concerto in B flat did not appear in print until the following December, and so became known, wrongly, as No.2.

Already, the ambitious 30-year-old Beethoven was tending unreasonably to dismiss both these manifestations of his youthful genius as mere prentice works, insisting in a letter to the publishers Breitkopf & Härtel in April 1801 that neither was among his best compositions.

The C major concerto shows a number of advances over its companion. Even though theoretically it could have been ready at the time Beethoven made his concerto debut in Vienna in March 1795, it was probably little more than sketches at that time, and was most likely completed in 1797. The first performance of it that can be positively identified came during Beethoven's third visit to Prague, in 1798, when it was programmed in the first of two concerts he gave in the Konviktsaal. (He played the B flat major concerto in the second concert.)

The Czech pianist and composer Václav Jan Tomášek, four years Beethoven's junior, later published his indelible recollections of these events: 'Beethoven's magnificent playing and particularly the daring flights of his improvisation moved me strangely; indeed, I felt so humbled that I did not touch my own piano for several days.'

In the **opening movement**, we already hear greater economy of melodic ideas compared with the B flat concerto; and, with probably only four distinct themes, greater economy than usual with Mozart, either. As in the earlier concerto, however, Beethoven allows himself to get magnificently carried away in the opening ritornello. Having established the no-nonsense main theme with military crispness, he introduces his second subject 'prematurely' (i.e. before the entry of the soloist) in the remote-sounding, almost exotic, key of E flat. And still to appear in the ritornello – also before the soloist's entry – are

## Keynotes

**BEETHOVEN**

*Born Bonn, 1770*

*Died Vienna, 1827*

During his lifetime Beethoven was considered one of the most brilliant piano virtuosos of the day, although his deafness eventually forced him off the concert platform. His piano concertos were written for himself to play and the early ones, in particular, helped make his name and reputation in the Viennese musical scene.

### PIANO CONCERTO NO.1

This concerto was a virtuoso calling card for Beethoven-the-pianist and it reveals something of his playing style as well as his sheer skill, even though he later came to say that it wasn't his best work.

The Piano Concerto No.1 was probably completed in 1797, was performed for certain in Prague the following year, and in 1800 was most likely the concerto that Beethoven played in his first benefit concert (i.e. a concert from which he took the profits) in Vienna's Burgtheater.

an episode which will later prepare the development and the cadenza, and a third subject, related to the second.

'This is very beautiful,' writer Donald Tovey sniffs, 'but... concerto tuttis will get into difficulties if they often thus digress in search of the picturesque.' As if to prove that this is all immaterial, Beethoven brings in the soloist with a gentle, entirely new theme – which, having had its say, is never heard from again. Nor is it used in any of Beethoven's cadenzas. (He later wrote no fewer than three different cadenzas for this movement, so perhaps he came to feel a degree of affection for the concerto after all.) The third, and longest, of the cadenzas achieves such commanding power and scope that, in Tovey's view, 'it affords a noble pretext for reviving a neglected early masterpiece which it harmoniously lifts to a higher plane of musical thought.'

The **Largo slow movement**, as if emulating the unexpected E flat excursion in the opening ritornello, takes us blissfully into A flat, a sunny world of romantic tenderness. Beethoven here displays a hitherto unsuspected lyrical quality, in which display is an expression of underlying poetry. The rapt ensemble of clarinets and piano in the dreamlike coda evokes memories of Mozart's Piano Concerto in A, K488.

The finale is a happy **Rondo**, in which Haydnish high spirits are overlaid with Beethovenian strength, yet remaining at all times airily light-hearted. The first of the episodes which alternate with the main rondo theme has been said to derive from a popular song of the 15th century, and the second episode juxtaposes a tearaway melody of Tin Pan Alley proclivities with a quiet, chromatic theme. Surprises in the coda highlight the general euphoria.

Though the original score marks the rondo simply *Allegro*, early published editions add *scherzando*, doubtless with the composer's connivance, to underline the lack of solemnity the enterprise demands.

ANTHONY CANE © 2002

The orchestra for Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.1 calls for flute and pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets; timpani and strings.

The first SSO performance on record of this concerto was in a 1940 Young People's concert with Bernard Heinze conducting and pianist Maureen Jones. We performed it most recently in 2014 with soloist Emanuel Ax and David Robertson conducting, as part of a series of programs featuring the Beethoven piano concertos.





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## Manuel de Falla

### **The Three-Cornered Hat: Suites 1 and 2**

*Introduction – Afternoon –*

*The Dance of the Miller’s Wife (Fandango) –*

*The Corregidor –*

*The Miller’s Wife –*

*The Grapes*

*The Neighbours’ Dance (Seguidillas)*

*The Miller’s Dance (Farruca)*

*Final Dance (Jota)*

Falla’s two ballet masterpieces, written in quick succession, could hardly be more different from each other within their common Spanishness. Whereas *Love, the Magician* (El Amor Brujo) of 1915 has been described as the first blending of academic European music with the music of gypsies and captures the smouldering sun-drenched passion of Andalusia, *The Three-Cornered Hat* (El Sombrero de Tres Picos) of 1917–1919 is a manifestation of Spanish humour, biting and ironic.

The original ballet is based on a comic novel by Pedro de Alarcón, written in 1874 but with an 18th-century spirit. Falla had intended to turn it into an opera, but he found that Alarcón had expressly forbidden in his will that any libretto should be drawn from his story (this seems not to have hindered Hugo Wolf, whose opera *Der Corregidor* of 1895 is based on it). Instead, the story became the basis for a mimed play with music, *El Corregidor y la Molinera* (The Governor and the Miller’s Wife), presented in Madrid in 1917.



## Keynotes

FALLA

*Born Cadiz, 1876*

*Died Alta Gracia, Argentina, 1946*

Manuel de Falla (pronounced ‘fire’) was one of the leading Spanish composers of the first part of the 20th century. He studied in Paris, where he was influenced by the colouristic and harmonic techniques of Debussy and Dukas, and the emerging trend for reviving classical forms from the past. His reputation was made by the piano and orchestra work *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, originally conceived for solo piano. In addition to his two ballets, Falla composed an opera, *La vida breve*. The Spanish Civil War prompted him to leave Granada for Argentina in 1939.

### THE THREE-CORNERED HAT

Based on a 19th-century comic novel, *The Three-Cornered Hat* began life as a pantomime.

Towards the end of World War I, Falla was persuaded to adapt it as a ballet score for Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes. (In this version it included an offstage soprano.) Later he published two concert suites, which we combine for this performance.

The music mirrors the light-hearted mood of the story and the coquettish personality of its female lead. The plot turns on the mutual devotion of a miller and his beautiful wife, and the hapless attempt of the town’s amorous corregidor (governor) to seduce her. Most of the dances are based on authentic Spanish types.

◀ Manuel de Falla in Paris



◀ Manuel de Falla (left) and choreographer Léonide Massine at the Fountain of the Lions in the Alhambra, Granada

When he heard Falla's pantomime music, Sergei Diaghilev, who had been considering producing a Spanish ballet for his Ballets Russes, encouraged him to adapt it for a ballet, *The Three-Cornered Hat*. This required extensive reorchestration by Falla and new material, including the thrilling *Final Dance*. One new number, *The Miller's Dance*, was composed literally overnight, when the choreography of Léonide Massine required it. Thus Falla for once belied his reputation as a slow worker. (Stravinsky had teasingly dubbed him 'the Liadov of Spain', after the Russian composer whose tardiness had led to Stravinsky receiving the *Firebird* commission.) Falla can be seen in a famous photograph with Massine leaning against the Fountain of the Lions in the Alhambra of Granada, the city where the composer made his home during those years.

The Diaghilev company, fascinated by Spain, had gone to considerable trouble to absorb its culture: Picasso's costume and scenery designs, Falla's music and Massine's choreography are one of the most genuine tributes ballet has paid to Spain. The result is a masterpiece of passion, colour and spirited comedy – satirical but delicate.

The plot is simple: the miller's attractive young wife is being pursued by the pompous old governor or magistrate (the *corregidor*), whose amorous designs are eventually confounded by the miller.

## Listening Guide

The first suite – as does the ballet – begins with an introductory fanfare suggestive of the toreadors' parade into the bull-ring. This leads to a depiction of the Miller and his wife whiling away a hot June afternoon by the edge of their millstream. The suite then jumps to the Dance of the Miller's Wife, her capricious charm captured in a fandango with its characteristic juxtaposition of rhythmic metres: two slow beats alternating with three quick. When the pompous Corregidor arrives at the mill (a stiff, old-fashioned tune for the bassoon), she plays a game with him: dancing with a bunch of grapes which he must attempt to eat, hands clasped behind his back. When he loses his balance and falls he realises the couple have simply made him a butt for their fun and he departs swearing vengeance!

The second suite of three dances comes from Part II of the ballet; each movement is based on a traditional Spanish dance type. In the seguidillas – the classic dance of Andalusia – the Miller's neighbours arrive to celebrate a festival. The Miller shows his dancing prowess with a farruca, fiery and impressive, its natural vigour gradually building to a frenzy. Olé! Soon, however, he is arrested by the henchmen of the Corregidor, who is determined to seduce the Miller's wife. (You may notice the Corregidor's bodyguard has a rather Beethovenian way of knocking on the door!)

The Corregidor returns and chases the Miller's Wife, but the doddering old fool ends up in the millstream. He hangs up his clothes and three-cornered hat to dry off and the Miller, having escaped, returns and puts on the Corregidor's clothes and hat, leaving a teasing note: 'Your wife is no less beautiful than mine.' The Corregidor ends up in the Miller's clothes and is promptly 're-arrested'. Eventually the confusion is sorted out, and an effigy of the Corregidor is tossed in a blanket as the townspeople dance an exhilarating jota with castanets – the despotic reign of the three-cornered hat is at an end.

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

The suites from *The Three-Cornered Hat* calls for three flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets and two bassoons; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and a large percussion section; harp, piano (doubling celesta) and strings.

The premiere of the ballet took place in London in 1919, conducted by Ernest Ansermet. The SSO first performed music from *The Three-Cornered Hat* in 1938 under Joseph Post, and most recently in 2010 in concerts conducted by Miguel Harth-Bedoya.

...one of the most genuine tributes ballet has paid to Spain.

## Maurice Ravel

### *La Valse* – Poème chorégraphique

In the space of 120 years the waltz evolved from sturdy rusticity through elegant whirling to intoxicating sumptuousness – everyone from Mozart to Richard Strauss took a turn on the dance floor. Then World War I crushed the society that danced in three-quarter time, and the waltz became a thing of the past. For Ravel, himself traumatised by the war, this could only have made the waltz more irresistible; the composer of the *Menuet antique* and the *Pavane pour une infante défunte* was drawn, as always, to the past and to the dance.

In 1911 Ravel began to toy with the idea of a grand work for two pianos capturing the essence of Vienna through various aspects of the waltz. But Ravel didn't write 'Wien', as it was to be called. When war broke out he headed to the front, driving lorries because he was too slight of stature to be admitted to the fighting forces. After the armistice he completed something quite different: *La Valse* – a choreographic poem for orchestra.

*La Valse* is a tribute to 'An Imperial Court, around 1855', a court in which the Strausses are the kings. Ravel imagined the music as 'a sort of apotheosis of the Viennese waltz', associated in his mind with 'the impression of a fantastic, fatal whirling'. The effect is achieved through the simplest of structures, based not so much on themes or harmony but on something very simple: the crescendo, or building of sound from soft to loud. In this respect it is not unlike *Bolero*, but instead of one long overwhelming crescendo, *La Valse* offers two.

#### Listening Guide

The music begins with a grumble – a muted double bass section divided into three separate groups that share eerie tremolos and ominous plucked notes. Ravel's scenario for his choreographic poem describes eddying clouds that part from time to time, offering fleeting glimpses of waltzing couples. Bassoons, horns and clarinets join in...Ravel's beloved harps and more trembling strings...all is low and all is muted. This is the waltz viewed from a distance, each intimate couple in its own private world.

But we cannot stay voyeurs for long – the mists gradually disperse to reveal a huge ballroom in red and gold, brilliantly lit with chandeliers, and the waltzing couples have become a whirling crowd. The music embarks on a chain of waltzes that capture the verve of Johann Strauss, the opulence of Richard, and the frenzy of the ballroom. 'I'm waltzing frantically,' wrote Ravel when working on the piece – and if we were not sitting in a concert hall we might be too.

## Keynotes

### RAVEL

*Born Ciboure, 1875*

*Died Paris 1937*

Ravel was born to Swiss and Basque parents in a French village just a stone's throw from Spain. Although short in stature, he was the best-dressed of all the French composers of his day, and he delighted in collecting mechanical toys and exotic ornaments for his home. His music shows a corresponding enthusiasm for jewel-like surface detail, delicacy of expression and exotic effect. And above all, he had an enduring fascination for Spain. His other passions included dance and times past. These loves take different forms and are sometimes combined, as in *La Valse*.

### LA VALSE

After World War I, in the years 1919–20, Ravel wrote *La Valse*. It was a 'choreographic poem for orchestra': a concert piece, but a ballet too. Ravel imagined it this way:

'Swirling clouds afford glimpses, through rifts, of waltzing couples. The clouds scatter little by little; one can distinguish an immense hall with a whirling crowd. The scene grows progressively brighter. The light of the chandeliers bursts forth at the fortissimo. An imperial court, around 1855.'

To Ravel's frustration the music was rejected by the very person who had commissioned it: the impresario Sergei Diaghilev. But it eventually made it to the stage and meanwhile it established itself as a colourful and exhilarating concert work.

The themes are sophisticated and volatile by turn – one moment the crowd of dancers is all glittering elegance, the next it is caught up in the fatal whirling that Ravel imagined. The fantastic melodic invention is matched by scintillating orchestral effects such as sweeping glissandos from the harps and divisions of the string groups into as many as 16 separate parts. But the potential of Ravel’s huge orchestra of more than 90 players is kept in reserve – we are overwhelmed by its exquisite colours before we are overwhelmed by its power. By the time Ravel brings on his second crescendo, shorter and more turbulent, we are completely intoxicated.

Not all were intoxicated, however. Sergei Diaghilev of the Ballets Russes was offered this spectacular music for a ballet but rejected it as too symphonic and lacking in choreographic variety. In doing so he lost the friendship of the composer who had created *Daphnis et Chloé* for his company in 1912. Ironically *La Valse* was one of the few Ravel ballet scores that had been conceived for dancing and for orchestra: *Ma Mère l’Oye* (Mother Goose), *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and *Valses nobles et sentimentales* all became ballets, but only after they had first appeared as music for piano. In the end it was Ida Rubinstein who produced *La Valse*, some nine years later, with choreography by Bronislava Nijinska. But the music was first performed in the concert hall and it is there that its exhilarating momentum and surging climaxes continue to sweep us away. Pre-war Vienna may have waltzed itself into fatal oblivion but *La Valse* whirls on.

ABRIDGED FROM A NOTE BY YVONNE FRINDLE © 2005

*La Valse* calls for an orchestra of three flutes (one doubling piccolo), three oboes (one doubling cor anglais), two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion (bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, triangle, tambourine, tam-tam, glockenspiel, crotales, castanets); two harps and strings.

The SSO first performed *La Valse* in 1939 with Antal Dorati, and most recently in 2012 conducted by Miguel Harth-Bedoya.



Ravel in World War I uniform

‘the impression of a fantastic, fatal whirling’

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## MORE MUSIC

### YOUNG STRAVINSKY

It's only a matter of time before Stravinsky's Funeral Song is released in a commercial recording. Meanwhile, it's possible to find performances, as well as discussions of the work, on YouTube. To listen visit [bit.ly/StravinskyFuneralSong](http://bit.ly/StravinskyFuneralSong)

The SSO and former chief conductor Edo de Waart recorded Stravinsky's Opus 3, *Scherzo fantastique* [1908] for inclusion with the complete *Firebird* ballet music, released in 2000.

ABC CLASSICS 456 6702

Another other early orchestral work is his Opus 4, *Feu d'artifice* (Fireworks). You can find it in Decca's Collector's Edition, *Stravinsky: Complete Ballets and Symphonies*, in a performance by Vladimir Ashkenazy and the St Petersburg Philharmonic. In the same 7CD set, you can hear Charles Dutoit and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra perform the ballet that made Stravinsky's name: *The Firebird*.

DECCA 478 3028

For another comprehensive collection, performed by Dutoit and his Montreal Orchestra, look for the 4CD set *Stravinsky: Orchestral Works*. In addition to the *Scherzo fantastique*, *Fireworks*, the three early ballets (*Firebird*, *The Rite of Spring* and *Petrushka*) and many other key works, you can hear the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (like the *Funeral Song*, a memorial piece).

NEWTON CLASSICS 8802013

### YUJA WANG

Yuja Wang's most recent recordings have focused on the music of Ravel. She's recorded both the piano concertos with Lionel Bringuier and the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra and these can be found in two releases: a boxed set (4 CDs), *Ravel: Complete Orchestral Works*, or just the concertos, together with Fauré's *Ballade* for piano and orchestra

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 479 5524 (4CDs)

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 479 4954 (Ravel and Fauré)

You can hear her play Rachmaninoff (Piano Concerto No.3) and Prokofiev (No.2) with Gustavo Dudamel and the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra.

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 479 1304

And there's more exciting Rachmaninoff (the second concerto and the Paganini Rhapsody) with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and Claudio Abbado.

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 477 9308

And in her 2010 recital album, *Transformation*, she plays a solo piano transcription of *La Valse*, concluding a thrilling program of Scarlatti, Brahms (Paganini Variations) and Stravinsky (Three Movements from *Petrushka*).

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 477 8795

### DUITOIT CONDUCTS FALLA & RAVEL

If you're curious to hear the complete *Three-Cornered Hat*, with voice, look for *The Essential Falla*, an excellent 2CD introduction in the Double Decca series. Dutoit and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, together with soprano Colette Boky, are the performers. The same collection includes *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* with Alicia de Larrocha at the piano, *Love, the Magician*, the harpsichord concerto, and the memorial piece *Homenaje (Le tombeau de Claude Debussy)*.

DECCA 466 1282

Also in the Double Decca series is a Ravel collection with Dutoit and the Montreal orchestra. The first of the two CDs begins with *Bolero*, the second begins with *La Valse*. You can also hear the *Mother Goose* suite, the second of the *Daphnis et Chloé* suites, *Valses nobles et sentimentales* and *La Tombeau de Couperin* as well as other shorter orchestral pieces.

DECCA 460 2142

## Broadcast Diary

### July



92.9 ABC  
Classic FM

[abc.net.au/classic](http://abc.net.au/classic)

ABC Classic FM regularly broadcasts SSO concerts and recitals, from both the current season and an archive of past concerts. Check the listings on the Classic FM website for the latest details.

### SSO Radio

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

[sydneyphilharmonics.com/SSO\\_radio](http://sydneyphilharmonics.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](http://finemusicfm.com)



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PRISKA METTERER

## Charles Dutoit *conductor*

---

Charles Dutoit is one of today's most sought-after conductors, having performed with all the major orchestras of the five continents. He has been a regular visitor to Sydney since 1977, when he conducted Stravinsky's *Petrushka* in the then new Sydney Opera House, and this year represents his 40th year of collaborations with the SSO.

He is Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and is Conductor Laureate of the Philadelphia Orchestra following a 30-year artistic collaboration. Each season he conducts the orchestras of Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles, as well as in major cities worldwide. His discography of more than 200 recordings has garnered him many awards, including two Grammys.

For 25 years, he was Artistic Director of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. Other titled posts have included Music Director of the Orchestre National de France (1991–2001) and Principal Conductor then Music Director (1996–2003) of the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo, where he is now Music Director Emeritus. For ten years he was Music Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra's annual season at the Mann Music Center and for 21 years at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center.

Supporting the development of young musicians, Charles Dutoit has been Music Director of the Sapporo Pacific Music Festival and Miyazaki International Music Festival in

Japan as well as the Canton International Summer Music Academy in Guangzhou. In 2009 he became Music Director of the Verbier Festival Orchestra.

When still in his early 20s, he was invited by Herbert von Karajan to conduct the Vienna State Opera. He has since conducted at Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera, Deutsche Oper in Berlin, Rome Opera and Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires.

His honours and accolades include Grand Officier de l'Ordre national du Québec, Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France), Honorary Officer of the Order of Canada, Honorary Citizen of the City of Philadelphia, and honorary doctorates from the universities of McGill, Montreal and Laval and the Curtis School of Music. In 2007 he received the Gold Medal of the city of Lausanne, his birthplace, and in 2014 he was given the Lifetime Achievement Award in the International Classical Music Awards.

Charles Dutoit's musical training included violin, viola, piano, percussion, history of music and composition at the conservatoires and music academies of Geneva, Siena, Venice and Boston.

A globetrotter motivated by his passion for history and archaeology, political science, art and architecture, he has travelled in all 196 nations of the world.



KIRK EDWARDS

## Yuja Wang

*piano*

---

Yuja Wang's singular blend of technical prowess, keen musical insight and exceptional stage presence has established her one of the world's finest performers in a repertoire that ranges from Mozart to Gershwin and beyond. Her music-making connects with a broad demographic, from classical music newcomers to devoted piano fans, and her love for fashion has also contributed to the popular appeal of an artist who is willing to challenge the status quo and welcome fresh converts to the concert hall.

Yuja Wang studied at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing with Ling Yuan and Zhou Guangren, before moving to North America to study at the Mount Royal Conservatory in Calgary and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia with Gary Graffman. By the time of her graduation in 2008, she had already made a spectacular debut with the National Arts Center Orchestra in Ottawa and attracted international attention when she replaced Martha Argerich at short notice in performances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. She was soon working with orchestras and conductors of the highest calibre and in 2010 received an Avery Fisher Career Grant.

In the 2017–18 season she will give recitals and perform in concert series and tours with some of the world's most venerated ensembles and conductors. Highlights include a tour with the London Symphony Orchestra and Michael Tilson Thomas (Brahms Piano Concerto No.2)

and an appearance at the Ravinia Festival with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Lionel Bringuier (Brahms No.1). She will also perform with the Munich Philharmonic and Valery Gergiev, the New York Philharmonic and Jaap van Zweden, the Rotterdam Philharmonic and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, on tour in Germany with the St Petersburg Philharmonic, and at the Verbier Festival. In addition she will play-direct concerts with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and she will reunite with violinist Leonidas Kavakos for a European chamber tour.

Her debut album, *Sonatas and Etudes*, won her *Gramophone* magazine's 2009 Young Artist of the Year accolade, and her Rachmaninoff concerto recording with Claudio Abbado and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra was nominated for a Grammy. Her discography also includes an album of Prokofiev and Rachmaninoff concertos with Gustavo Dudamel and the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra, Brahms violin sonatas with Leonidas Kavakos and, most recently, an acclaimed coupling of Ravel's piano concertos with Fauré's Ballade (Lionel Bringuier and the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra).

Yuja Wang first performed in Australia as a child, giving a recital in Perth. She made her Australian concerto debut and Sydney recital debut in 2015, and we are delighted and grateful to be able to welcome her back to Sydney this week.

# 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.

# THE ORCHESTRA



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*Janet and Robert Constable with Associate Principal Flute Emma Sholl. 'When we first met her in the Green Room at the Opera House,' recalls Robert, 'it was a lovely hug from Emma that convinced us that this was not only an opportunity to support her chair but to get involved with the orchestra and its supporters. It has been a great experience.'*



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*Stuart Challender, SSO Chief Conductor and Artistic Director 1987–1991*

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SSO Patrons pages correct as of 1 January 2017

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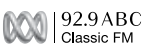
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