

Sunday 13 August 2017

**CARRIAGEWORKS** 





#### CLASSICAL



Beethoven & Bruckner Simone Young Conducts **BEETHOVEN** Piano Concerto No.2 **BRUCKNER** Symphony No.5 Simone Young conductor Imogen Cooper piano

Thursday Afternoon Symphony Thu 17 Aug. 1.30pm

Emirates Metro Series

Fri 18 Aug, 8pm

Great Classics

Sat 19 Aug, 2pm Sydney Opera House

International Pianists in Recital

Mon 21 Aug, 7pm City Recital Hall



# Imogen Cooper in Recital

BEETHOVEN 7 Bagatelles, Op.33 HAYDN Sonata in C minor, Hob.XVI:20 BEETHOVEN Variations on 'La stessa, la stessissima' ADÈS Darknesse Visible BEETHOVEN Sonata in A flat, Op.110

#### **New World Memories**

Robertson conducts Dvořák 9 MENDELSSOHN The Hebrides MACKEY Mnemosyne's Pool Australian Premiere DVOŘÁK Symphony No.9, New World David Robertson conductor

APT Master Series

Wed 23 Aug, 8pm Fri 25 Aug, 8pm Sat 26 Aug, 8pm Sydney Opera House



### **Circus Scenes**

SSO Fellows **ROTA** Nonet BERIO Seguenza V for solo trombone EISLER Septet No.2, Circus POULENC The Misunderstood Gendarme: Suite 2017 Fellows • Roger Benedict artistic director Sat 26 Aug. 6pm Utzon Room



The 'Rach 2' ADAMS The Chairman Dances RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No.2 PROKOFIEV Symphony No.5 David Robertson conductor George Li piano

Thursday Afternoon Symphony

Thu 31 Aug, 1:30 pm Emirates Metro Series

Fri 1 Sep. 8pm Special Event

Sat 2 Sep, 2pm Sydney Opera House



### Megan Washington and the SSO

A selection of new material & favourites from albums I Believe You Liar, Insomnia & There There.

Beniamin Northey conductor Megan Washington vocalist

Meet the Music

Thu 21 Sep, 6:30 pm Kaleidoscope

Sat 23 Sep, 8pm ■ A BMW Season Highlight Sydney Opera House

Fri 22 Sep, 8pm

Tea & Symphony

Fri 22 Sep, 11am Sydney Opera House



### Saint-Saëns in the Morning

A-Musing Animals

SAINT-SAËNS The Muse and the Poet. for violin, cello and orchestra SAINT-SAËNS Carnival of the Animals with words by Bradley Trevor Greive

Toby Thatcher conductor · Richard Morecroft narrator Kirsty Hilton violin · Catherine Hewgill cello Peter De Jager piano · Laurence Matheson piano

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8215 4600 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

#### From David Robertson

Today's program at Carriageworks is rich with connections. In the realm of pure sound, you'll hear two wind 'concertos', one featuring flautist Mark Sparks, a colleague from the St Louis Symphony Orchestra, the other featuring the SSO's Acting Principal Clarinet, Frank Celata. But also present in each case are electronics, marrying the traditional and acoustic with the sound of the modern age.

On an emotional level, there is an overarching theme of loss, with its attendant grief, and memory. And yet each composer responds to this theme in strikingly different ways. In Adams you can enjoy the nostalgia and tongue-in-cheek humour. Boulez's piece is more overwhelming in some ways, as it veers between shimmering, seductive music and explosive sounds that live up to its title. Meanwhile, I see Kate Neal's new piece as mediating the conversation between these very different musical perspectives.

It is this opportunity to participate in musical conversations – as performers and as listeners – that makes programming for the SSO at Carriageworks so exciting. I hope you enjoy today's concert and that you'll return on 15 October for Dream Sequence, to be conducted by Brett Dean.



**David Robertson**Chief Conductor and Artistic Director
Sydney Symphony Orchestra

#### From Carriageworks

We are thrilled to be presenting *Gnarly Buttons* at Carriageworks as part of our continuing partnership with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. This contemporary and thought-provoking program, curated by chief conductor David Robertson, includes the world premiere of a new work by Australian composer Kate Neal. The Carriageworks program continues to provide significant support for leading Australian artists and it's through our partnership with the SSO that the work of Australian composers such at Kate Neal can be presented alongside music by internationally renowned artists such as John Adams and Pierre Boulez.

Our thanks goes to the NSW Government through Create NSW for their ongoing support of Carriageworks and the SSO's individual donors for supporting this exciting partnership.

#### Lisa Havilah

Director, Carriageworks

#### SSO AT CARRIAGEWORKS

SUNDAY 13 AUGUST, 5PM CARRIAGEWORKS



**David Robertson**Chief Conductor and Artistic Director



# **GNARLY BUTTONS**

PRESENTED BY THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND CARRIAGEWORKS

David Robertson conductor

Mark Sparks flute

Francesco Celata clarinet

**Musicians of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra** 

### JOHN ADAMS (born 1947)

Gnarly Buttons (1996)

for clarinet and chamber ensemble

The Perilous Shore

Hoe-down (Mad Cow)

Put Your Loving Arms Around Me

#### KATE NEAL (born 1972)

Valley of Lost Things (2017)

PREMIERE

INTERVAL

#### **PIERRE BOULEZ (1925-2016)**

...explosante-fixe... [1991/1993]

for flute with live electronics and ensemble

Transitoire VII

Transitoire V

**Originel** 

Estimated durations: 24 minutes, 10 minutes, 20-minute interval, 36 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 6.45pm

Valley of Lost Things was commissioned by the SSO with the generous support of Dr Raji Ambikairajah.





### ABOUT THE MUSIC

### **Gnarly Buttons**

#### Notes by Timothy Munro

In this program, David Robertson celebrates 'the incredible richness of life' expressed in the distinct musical worlds of Pierre Boulez and John Adams. Robertson, a close collaborator with both composers, finds it 'fascinating' that *Gnarly Buttons* and …explosante-fixe… were written around the same time, believing that the two contrasting works speak to each other in revealing ways.

First, both rethink the notion of a wind concerto. Instead of the old-fashioned idea of 'the orchestra as an opponent', says Robertson, here 'the ensemble is anything but an accompaniment'. In Adams' *Gnarly Buttons*, the clarinettist makes the first statement, but later 'it's almost as if the soloist has been forgotten', while in Boulez's ...explosante-fixe..., the flautist generates material to be echoed and transformed by the ensemble.

Also, both employ a similar attitude to technology. Electronic sounds in the two works are 'based on a recognisable instrumental colour', says Robertson, 'enlarging the palette of sounds' of the small ensemble. Adams' keyboards function 'as a known instrument', even imitating the clarinet in 'a playful back and forth', while Boulez's electronic colours are 'developed directly out of flute sounds'.

Finally, both are haunted by loss. *Gnarly Buttons*, dedicated to Adams' late father, ends with 'Put your loving arms around me', both love song and lament, to which 'you can sing the words of the title', says Robertson. *...explosante-fixe...* concludes with an elegy for flautist Larry Beauregard, a close collaborator of Boulez's, whose sudden death at 29 was a deep shock for the composer. 'In a curious way', Robertson observes, the soloist in both pieces is absent.

Those who find comfort in Adams' expression of grief and loss may 'have difficulty hearing the beauty in the Boulez'. But while these two works embrace 'the whole spectrum of how human express themselves', both express 'the same love for someone who has passed away'.

Robertson chose Australian composer Kate Neal to mediate this conversation between musical landscapes. Being 'sandwiched' between Adams and Boulez allowed the composer to 'contemplate the grey spaces between these languages'. Neal says that her title, 'Valley of Lost Things', perhaps 'refers to a sense of finding new things in languages of old, or rummaging through memories to find new things in grey space'.

### **ADAMS Gnarly Buttons**

Adams' title teases us. 'Gnarly' commonly means 'knobbly' or 'misshapen', but it can also mean 'difficult' or, in slang, 'cool'. The composer acknowledges a wry homage to Gertrude Stein's 1914 book of experimental poetry, *Tender Buttons*, in which everyday objects take on new linguistic and sonic life. And, as Adams writes, ours lives are 'largely given over to pressing buttons of one sort or another'.

Gnarly Buttons is a deeply personal piece. As a

O Lord
teenager, Adams learned and played clarinet alongside
his father, who had been part of Depression-era swing
bands. The instrument gave Adams senior joy
throughout his life, until it became part of the waking
nightmare of Alzheimer's disease. When Adams dusted
off these clarinets to write Gnarly Buttons after his father's
death, he was affected by 'the intimate history they embodied'.

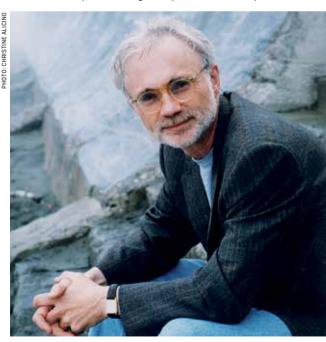
Ease my soul through tempest's roar.

Satan's leering help me firmly turn away
Hurl me singing into that tremulous day!
from a 19th-century hymnal, The Footsteps of Jesus
er's

O Lord steer me from that Perilous Shore

Each movement of *Gnarly Buttons* is 'based on a "forgery" or imagined musical model'. Music of the past is misremembered or misunderstood, sometimes with a sly wink, sometimes with wistful nostalgia. Interlopers intrude on the band: two electronic keyboards denature the acoustic ensemble, while plucked instruments (banjo, mandolin and guitar) knock each movement slightly askew.

In **The Perilous Shore**, the clarinet weaves a tune based on a Protestant shape-note hymn: 'O Lord steer me from that Perilous Shore/ Ease my soul through tempest's roar.' The open-hearted



optimism of the Puritan clarinettist lures the ensemble, who, as hubbub breaks out, might discover that ideals are easier to believe than to live by.

**Hoedown (Mad Cow)** has travelled far from its Appalachian roots, laying down a square, restrained groove. Terror over mad cow disease was at its height when *Gnarly Buttons* was composed in the mid-1990s, and a pained electronic 'moooo' at the movement's centre could hint at Adams' own attitude towards the future of global trade.

Following these tongue-in-cheek romps, **Put Your Loving Arms Around Me** brings us to the heart of the composer's relationship with his father. The two men sing a simple, sincere expression of love, at first 'tender', then growing progressively 'gnarled', whether at pain before death, or at grief after loss.

### **NEAL Valley of Lost Things**

For more than 20 years, Australian artist Kate Neal has travelled the globe as an award-winning composer, arranger, teacher and artistic director. Neal began her studies as an early music performer, studying recorder at the Victorian College of the Arts. She moved to composition after she found herself taking old instruments 'somewhere new', and has since worked with an array of artists across three continents.



In the past decade, her work has tended towards the collaborative and multidisciplinary, focused on issues of language and communication. *Permission To Speak* 'fuses pre-recorded documentary fragments, speech, song and movement' to give voice 'to the unvoiced', while APRA's 2016 Instrumental Work of the Year, *Semaphore*, is an 'exploration of signalling, communication and miscommunication'.

Valley of Lost Things is a departure for Neal, an opportunity to explore what the composer calls 'a straight music piece'. Here, blocks of musical material 'grow and then diminish, grow and diminish'. Teeming, grooving strings find themselves swallowed by chirping woodwinds and sliding brass, who soon lose themselves to savage attacks from the strings. Each new action causes us to wonder: Have we been here before? If so, would we even remember?

The tears of lovers and their endless sighs,
The moments lost in empty games of chance,
Vain projects none could ever realize,
The fruitless idleness of ignorance,
And unfulfilled desire – which occupies
More room than all the rest and more expanse:
In short, whatever has been lost on earth
Is found upon the moon, for what that's worth.
from Ariosto's Orlando Furioso

Neal found a relevant image in the influential epic poem of 1516 by Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*. (Handel wrote no fewer than three operas drawn from this poem.) Two knights set out for the moon, and come upon a valley where all things that are lost on Earth can be retrieved. 'These things include lost ideals, flattery, unkept vows, and essences of sanity and wit,' writes Neal.

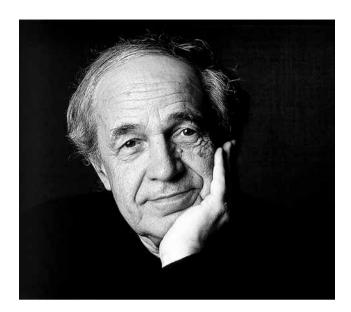
Ariosto's image emerged during Neal's research for a collaboration with animator Sal Cooper, a project investigating 'the condition of dissociative fugue'. In this state, 'familiar objects become forgotten, and the journey with the unfamiliar becomes repetitive; objects and ideas return again and again, transformed, re-configured and re-contextualised'.

Similarly, Valley of Lost Things deals with 'how we lose things and find things, and remember things', says Neal, 'and the shadow of disturbance that precedes a memory or a loss of memory'. There's a pattern 'of starting a thought again, or starting a memory again, or starting a journey again'.

As a child, Neal had a friend who was deaf, so Neal learned sign language, enjoying the 'experience of communicating with someone in a different way'. Valley of Lost Things continues this interest in music as a form of non-verbal communication. Neal says that D major is 'a kind of syntax through the piece', which is obscured by the accumulation of 'crunchy, crashing dissonances'.

### BOULEZ ... explosante-fixe...

From above, a hedge maze is beautiful, its intricate plan satisfying to the eye. On entering the maze, we may feel anticipation and fear. Right turn or left? Our eyes and ears play tricks on us. Retracing steps, our memory stalls. Is this turn familiar, or have we not seen this row before?



For Boulez, Venice is: 'the most anxiety-ridden city, and this is what constitutes a city for me. Because a city is a labyrinth. And I believe that a work should be fundamentally a labyrinth.' In the composer's musical mazes, 'ideas come back, but you can never foresee when they come back'. He sought musical analogues for Marcel Proust's 'continuous narration', a world with 'no compartments', where a continuous journey can unfold.

...explosante-fixe... began with the sound of the flute. Boulez visited a castle in Scotland that had once belonged to the Duchess of Argyll, and there overheard an amateur flautist improvising, his tone echoing through the halls. The man 'did not know what to do with his life', and later committed suicide; the image of a lonely flute sound ringing in a cavernous space remained with the composer.

The surrealist André Breton's book L'Amour fou [Mad Love] gave Boulez his title. Breton's wideranging, book-length essay is both a reminiscence of an affair and an extravagant veneration of love. The composer was drawn to one cryptic sentence in particular: 'Convulsive beauty will be veiled-erotic, fixed-explosive ['...explosante-fixe...'], magic-circumstantial, or it will not be.'

Indeed, Boulez's own ...explosante-fixe... shimmers with a magical, veiled quality, hovering like a mirage, trembling with eroticism. The composer admired the 'energy' of Breton's writing, and the composition similarly 'explodes' out of the gate, hitting listeners, says Robertson, 'like you're standing on the

This young woman who just entered appeared to be swathed in mist - clothed in fire? Everything seemed colourless and frozen next to this complexion imagined in perfect concord between rust and green: ancient Egypt, a tiny, unforgettable fern climbing the inside wall of an ancient well, the deepest, most sombre, and most extensive of all those that I have ever leaned over [...] This colour, taking on a deeper hue from her face to her hands, played on a fascinating tonal relation between the extraordinary pale sun of her hair like a bouquet of honeysuckle - her head bent, then raised, unoccupied – and the notepaper she asked for to write on in relation to the colour of the dress. from Breton's Mad Love

runway of a major airport', aeroplanes 'careering towards you at great speeds'.

At the centre is a flute soloist, whose sound is electronically processed and transformed. Flute morphs into air, into bell tones, into percussive attacks. This 'MIDI flute' is shadowed by two other flautists, echoing, mimicking and amplifying the soloist's sound. At times, the effect is of being trapped inside a giant flute, battered by keys, seduced with tone, carried on the breeze.

...explosante-fixe... is cast in three sections: two Transitoire movements, followed by a short coda, Originel. Robertson says the teeming, 'scherzo-like' Transitoire movements are full of 'incredible electricity and energy', gears shifting unexpectedly: wild to eerie, calm to assaultive. Transitoire translates roughly as 'transitory', but the word may imply a 'path', one through a tunnel or hallway. Or through a maze.

Carried on a long, intricate journey, we come to Original, the end of Boulez's labyrinth, the work's soft, mournful crux. Originally called Memoriale, this short final section guiets commotion, turning inward, mourning the flautist Larry Beauregard. Aching flute questions are answered only by empty electronic echoes. A lonely flute in a cavernous castle.

TIMOTHY MUNRO @ 2017

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

> Clocktower Square, Arayle Street.

The Rocks NSW 2000

Telephone (02) 8215 4644

Box Office (02) 8215 4600

Facsimile (02) 8215 4646

GPO Box 4972,

Sydney NSW 2001



David Robertson

Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

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Head Office: Suite A. Level 1. Building 16.

Fox Studios Australia, Park Road North, Moore Park NSW 2021 PO Box 410, Paddington NSW 2021

Fax: +61 2 9449 6053 Telephone: +61 2 9921 5353 E-mail: admin@playbill.com.au Website: www.playbill.com.au

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### THE ARTISTS



**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 Poray 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.



Mark Sparks flute

Mark Sparks is an American solo flautist, orchestral artist, teacher and writer. He was appointed Principal Flute of the St Louis Symphony Orchestra in 2000, and has appeared as a soloist with the SLSO numerous times – most recently in Bach's Orchestral Suite No.2. He has also performed with many of the great American orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic and the Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Cincinnati, Houston and Pittsburgh symphony orchestras.

His discography includes recordings with various orchestras, and he is a soloist in the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (David Zinman) recording of Michael Daugherty's *Metropolis Symphony*. As a solo artist he has recorded two albums with pianist Clinton Adams, and recently released his third solo recording, *French Album*, with pianist Peter Henderson.

He is a faculty member of DePaul University in Chicago, the Aspen Music Festival and School, and Flauti al Castello, an annual masterclass in Tuscany. He frequently coaches at the world's top orchestral training programs, including the New World Symphony, the National Youth Orchestra, NOI and the Pacific Musical Festival. He is a contributing editor of *Flute Talk* magazine, and has also published flute and piano arrangements of music by Bruch and Fauré.

Mark Sparks graduated with honours from Oberlin Conservatory as a student of Robert Willoughby.



Francesco Celata clarinet
Acting Principal Clarinet, Karen Moses Chair

Francesco Celata joined the SSO as Associate Principal Clarinet in 1993 and has appeared as soloist with the orchestra on several occasions, including performances of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, Bernstein's Prelude, Fugue and Riffs (most recently in 2016, conducted by David Robertson), Frank Martin's Concerto for seven winds (conducted by Charles Dutoit), Krommer's Double Clarinet Concerto, and a concerto written for him by Gordon Kerry. He has also appeared as soloist with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and Auckland Philharmonia, and will be performing *Gnarly Buttons* again later this year on the SSO's China tour.

On a number of occasions between 2003 and 2009 he appeared with the London Symphony Orchestra as guest Principal Clarinet, performing on international tours and in recordings. More recently he has performed as guest principal with the Philharmonia Orchestra, London, and will appear with them again in 2018. He is also Principal Clarinet with the Australian World Orchestra, and is a founding member of the Sydney Soloists and the Sydney Wind Quintet.

He is a Lecturer in Clarinet at the Sydney Conservatorium, has given masterclasses at the Shanghai Conservatorium and Trinity College, London, and was Artistic Director of the Australian International Symphony Orchestra Institute (AISOI).

### SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



#### DAVID ROBERTSON

THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PATRON Professor The Hon. Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, 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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#### NEAL

Carolyn Harris flute Rosamund Plummer flute Shefali Prvor oboe Francesco Celata clarinet Craig Wernicke clarinet Todd Gibson-Cornish bassoon Ben Jacks horn Euan Harvey horn Paul Goodchild trumpet Scott Kinmont trombone Steve Rossé tuba Lerida Delbridge violin Sophie Cole violin Claire Herrick violin Emma Jezek violin Anne-Louise Comerford viola Sandro Costantino viola Leah Lynn cello Timothy Nankervis cello Alex Henery double bass Susanne Powell\* piano

#### **BOULEZ**

Carolyn Harris flute Rosamund Plummer flute Shefali Prvor oboe Alexandre Oguey oboe Francesco Celata clarinet Craig Wernicke clarinet David McGregor† clarinet Todd Gibson-Cornish bassoon Christopher Haycroft† bassoon Ben Jacks horn Euan Harvey horn Paul Goodchild trumpet Yosuke Matsui trumpet Scott Kinmont trombone Christopher Harris trombone Steve Rossé tuba Lerida Delbridge violin Sophie Cole violin Claire Herrick violin Anne-Louise Comerford viola Sandro Costantino viola Leah Lynn cello Timothy Nankervis cello Alex Henery double bass with Mark Sparks flute Gilbert Nouno electronic sound artist

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17

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