



# Shefali's Playlist





#### CLASSICAL



## 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



## 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



### Shefali's Playlist

Music by **HAYDN**, **BRITTEN**, **MENDELSSOHN**, and **JS BACH arr. Oguey** Goldberg Variations, BWV988: Selections **Toby Thatcher** conductor

Playlist

Tue 8 Aug 6.30pm City Recital Hall



## **Gnarly Buttons**

ADAMS Gnarly Buttons
NEAL Valley of Lost Things PREMIERE
BOULEZ ...explosante-fixe...
David Robertson conductor
Francesco Celata clarinet
Mark Sparks flute

SSO at Carriageworks
Sun 13 Aug 5pm
Carriageworks



#### Beethoven & Bruckner

Simone Young Conducts
BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No.2
BRUCKNER Symphony No.5
Simone Young conductor
Imagen 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



## 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

International Pianists in Recital

Mon 21 Aug 7pm City Recital Hall



### **New World Memories**

Robertson conducts Dvořák 9
MENDELSSOHN The Hebrides
MACKEY Mnemosyne's Pool AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE
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David Robertson conductor

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## **2017 CONCERT SEASON**

#### PLAYLIST

TUESDAY 8 AUGUST, 6.30PM

CITY RECITAL HALL



## SHEFALI'S PLAYLIST

Toby Thatcher conductor
Shefali Pryor oboe
Lorina Gore soprano

A personal selection of music presented by Shefali Pryor

JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)

4th movement from

Symphony No.44 in E minor, Mourning

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

1st movement from

Symphony No.3 in A minor, Op.56, Scottish

**GIACOMO PUCCINI (1858-1924)** 

'Chi il bel sogno di Doretta' -

Magda's aria from the opera La Rondine

Lorina Gore, soprano

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Aria and three variations from

Goldberg Variations, BWV 988

arranged by Alexandre Oguey

**BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913–1976)** 

Moonlight - Sea Interlude

from the opera Peter Grimes

**GUSTAV MAHLER (1860-1911)** 

4th movement from

Symphony No.4 in G

Lorina Gore, soprano

**JEAN SIBELIUS (1865-1957)** 

3rd movement from

Symphony No.5 in E flat, Op.82



David Robertson

Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Estimated durations: 3 minutes, 9 minutes, 3 minutes, 8 minutes, 5 minutes, 9 minutes, 8 minutes
The concert will be performed without interval and will conclude at approximately 8pm.

Please join us in the foyer following the concert for a chance to mingle with the musicians.

COVER: Tessa Conn (design) and Christie Brewster (photography)



## INTRODUCTION



## Shefali's Playlist

Welcome to Playlist – the series in which individual members of the SSO introduce you to personal selections of music. Tonight, Associate Principal Oboe Shefali Pryor has assembled a program of highlights from the heart of the orchestral repertoire together with some music that might be unfamiliar or unexpected. They are all pieces that give her goose bumps – music that she loves to play and that has powerful associations. And perhaps you'll get a sense of how an oboist can take delight in being in the middle of an orchestra, 'engulfed' by magnificent and inspiring sounds.

Complementing the musical choices, tonight's program cover assembles objects of personal significance to Shefali. Some of these highlight the ways in which she finds personal renewal. The hiking boots (snapshot) take her to places such as the Tasmanian wilderness when she can find space and calm, out of reach of phone reception. The running shoes and the medal from the 2016 New York marathon represent her enthusiasm for longdistance running - she loves the mental side of it. And the iPod and noise-cancelling headphones allow her to retreat into a musical bubble, especially on aeroplanes! Then there's her Marigaux oboe (a 2016 model – oboes don't improve with age) and all the associated paraphernalia: the case of reeds, part of a constant production line, together with the reed tip cutter (a miniature quillotine), a mandrel and a micrometre, as well as reed wire and a cutting block. The paper diary (a classic Moleskine) enables her to keep track of work and life. The New Yorker magazine provides a dose of quality journalism and Roald Dahl's Fantastic Mr Fox was her favourite childhood book. And finally there's evidence of Shefali's "distinct nanna tendencies" as well as her generous personality; baking and knitting for other people.

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## ABOUT THE MUSIC



## HAYDN 4th movement from Symphony No.44, *Mourning*

Joseph Haydn, the greatest composer of his age, is regarded as the father of the string quartet and the symphony. Symphonies were not completely new in 1758 when Haydn – suddenly having an orchestra at his disposal – began composing them. But over the next 40 years or so, Haydn developed the genre, gradually adding instruments, and experimenting with the number and order of movements.

The German title *Trauer* (mourning) goes well with Haydn's wish to have the slow movement played at his funeral. This symphony belongs to a group of striking and dramatic works that Haydn wrote in the 1760s and 70s, his so-called 'storm and stress' period. Hence the minor key and the dark tensions in the music. How do you end a compelling symphony such as this? Haydn keeps the emotional temperature high with a fierce and concentrated *Presto* (as fast as possible).

The movement begins in unison (all the instruments playing the same notes). This is typical of the stripped-down style that enabled Haydn to put his more complex music in high relief, as he does in the middle of the movement, with exciting cumulative effect. It's amazing how much inventiveness Haydn manages with basically just one thematic idea.

Mendelssohn's own sketch ▶ showing the view towards the Hebrides and Dunnollie Castle



# MENDELSSOHN 1st movement from Symphony No.3, Scottish

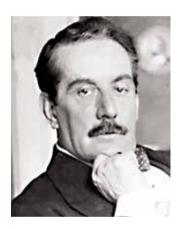
Felix Mendelssohn was born into a privileged German family of Jewish origins. They recognised and encouraged his precocious gifts, perhaps the most remarkable in the history of music. The amazing 17-year-old youth who composed the *Midsummer Night's Dream* Overture was famous as a leading Romantic composer by the time he completed his best-known symphonies, No.3 (Scottish) and No.4 (Italian). A perfectionist, he revised both over many years.

Mendelssohn wrote from Scotland to his family on 30 July 1829:

In darkening twilight today, we went to the Palace [of Holyrood] where Queen Mary lived and loved... The chapel beside it has lost its roof and is overgrown with grass and ivy, and at that broken altar Mary was crowned Queen of Scotland. Everything there is ruined, decayed, and open to the clear sky. I believe that I have found there today the beginning of my Scotch Symphony.



When in 1842 Mendelssohn allowed the completed symphony to be performed, 13 years had passed since he wrote down the opening theme. It gave Mendelssohn the idea for a long, slowish introduction, just as in Beethoven's Seventh and in Schubert's Ninth symphonies. (This is marked Andante con moto, something like a moving walking pace.) An impassioned recitation for the strings subsides into the quietly stated and extensive first subject, in a faster tempo, (agitato or 'a little agitated'). The movement ends with a long coda (tail-piece), containing a stormy outburst, before ending quietly with the theme of the introduction.



## PUCCINI 'Chi il bel sogno di Doretta' Magda's aria from *La Rondine*

La Rondine (The Swallow, 1917) was one of Italian Giacomo Puccini's last operas. It taps into social mores, the uncertain future, and the nature of love. Magda is not one of Puccini's doomed heroines, such as Mimi in La Bohème, Tosca, or Cio-Cio-San in Madama Butterfly. Magda is a courtesan, maintained by a benefactor, a 'kept woman' who enjoys the cachet of high society but also a dubious reputation. Nicole Kidman's character, Satine, in Moulin Rouge (2001) echoes the fate of Magda in La Rondine, right down to her theme song, 'One Day I'll Fly Away'.

Shefali Pryor first encountered Magda's song in the Merchant Ivory screen version of E.M. Forster's A Room with a View. In the opera, during a Paris salon, the poet Prunier recites his latest verse, 'Doretta's Dream' (there's a piano). Doretta rejects a king's advances, saying that gold cannot buy happiness – but there is no ending to the poem. Magda rises to the challenge. In her version Doretta discovers true love with a student. In the film, Magda's song accompanies the scene where Lucy, having found George in a poppy field, is passionately kissed by him. The love of the English couple on holidays in Florence matches the themes of the novel, and those of the opera: 'the swallow flies south for the summer, to love and happiness.'

Who could guess
Doretta's beautiful dream;
Its mystery, how did it ever end?

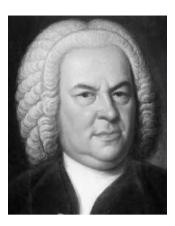
One day a student kissed her on the mouth, And that kiss was a revelation: It was sheer passion!

Mad love! Mad intoxication!
The subtle caress
Of such an ardent kiss,
Who could ever describe it?

Ah! My dream! Ah! My life! Who cares for wealth If in the end happiness flourishes! Oh golden dream, To be able to love like that!

# JS BACH Aria and variations from Goldberg Variations BWV 988 arranged by Alexandre Oguey

Johann Sebastian Bach's works often turn up in versions for instruments other than those he wrote them for. Musicians envy each other – why shouldn't I be able to play that too? And Bach often sounds well in transcription. Tonight's transcription was hatched in the double reed section of the SSO, made by one of their number, Alexandre Oguey, and selected for this concert by the musician he often sits next to in the orchestra. His arrangement is for three members of the oboe family, pitched from high to low – oboe,



oboe d'amore and cor anglais – plus a pair of bassoons.

Count Keyserlingk, a Russian diplomat at the court of Saxony, employed a 14-year-old keyboard virtuoso, Johann Theophilus Goldberg, who had studied with Bach. According to Bach's first biographer Forkel, the count, who often had sleepless nights, said to Bach that he would like to have some pieces for Goldberg to play, and when the sleepless nights came, would say 'Dear Goldberg, do play me one of my variations'. (Scholars regard this story as mostly legend, a tribute to the fame of the music it seeks to 'explain'.)

The theme of Bach's mighty set of 30 variations – the Aria or song on which all the variations are based – is found also in the Notebook of Anna Magdalena Bach, a collection of simple pieces Bach made for his second wife. The variations are based sometimes on the melody, the top line of the music, but more often on the first eight, longer notes, in the left hand, played by the bassoons in Oguey's transcription. The variations often take advantage of the original harpsichord's double keyboard and its contrasting registers.

Oguey has arranged the whole work, and Shefali has selected, in addition to the aria theme, two of the slowest, most expressive variations (13 and 25) followed by Variation 26, a reminder of Bach's scintillating virtuosity. Variation 25 was hailed by harpsichordist Wanda Landowska as 'the supreme pearl of this necklace – the black pearl. In its sombre shimmerings, all the restlessness of the romantics may be already discerned'.



## BRITTEN Moonlight – Sea Interlude from *Peter Grimes*

Peter Grimes, Britten's first full-scale opera, was composed in his late 20s and made his name as a musical dramatist. It is based on The Borough, a poem by Crabbe. Britten and his partner Peter Pears (the tenor singer who first sang the title role) had their interest aroused in the subject by a 1941 article on Crabbe by E.M. Forster, evoking Aldeburgh and England's east coast, the native country of both Britten and Crabbe. Britten said 'my life as a child was coloured by the fierce storms that sometimes drove ships on our coast and ate away whole stretches of neighbouring cliffs.'

Peter Grimes is a fisherman, an outsider, at odds with the community of the borough, who suspect him of mistreating his apprentices, two of whom have died in unclear circumstances. The death of the second boy leads to Peter's sailing his boat out to sea and sinking in it.

The Sea Interludes, often heard in the concert hall, are played during scene changes in the opera. Onstage in Act III, the repose of *Moonlight* is ironic. Another of Grimes' apprentices has died and the audience senses that Grimes is steering unavoidably towards tragedy. With the subtlest of alternations of string and wind instruments, and harp, Britten paints a night-piece with shafts of moonlight.



# MAHLER 4th movement from Symphony No.4

Mahler is now regarded as one of the greatest symphonic composers. But his major career was as a conductor – he was a 'summer composer' and his Fourth Symphony was completed in his tiny composing hut, by the shores of the Wörthersee in Austria. Mahler's symphonies usually require huge orchestras and last more than an hour. They blend romantic and modern values, self-obsession and universal expression, idealism and irony.

By Mahler's standards, the Fourth Symphony, first heard in 1901, is short, uncomplicated and accessible. The text sung by the soprano soloist in the final movement echoes the tone of the whole work: 'We taste the joys of heaven'. Taken from the collection of German folksongs and poetry, The Youth's Magic Horn, this is a child's vision of heaven. Variations (often featuring oboe and cor anglais) allow Mahler to keep spinning new and fascinating sounds. The mood of childish innocence includes the sounds of wind instruments and sleigh bells, first heard at the very beginning of the symphony. Various saints carry on their earthly tasks to produce the gastronomic delights of the afterlife: St Martha cooks, of course: St Peter fishes, Herod (somehow admitted through the pearly gates) is the butcher. After a tribute to St Cecilia, patron saint of music, this 'homely and comfortable' movement (Mahler marks it Sehr behaglich) ends quietly.

We taste the joys of Heaven leaving behind all that is earthly. No worldly strife is heard in Heaven.

We live here in sweetest peace!

We live an angelic life,

yet we are merry as can be.

We dance and spring

and skip and sing

while St Peter in heaven looks on.

St John lets the lamb go running, the butcher Herod is waiting for it.
We lead the patient, meek, guiltless dear little Lambkin to death!
St Luke is slaughtering the oxen without care or consideration, The wine is free in the heavenly tavern, and the angels, they bake the bread.

Fine vegetables of every kind grow in the gardens of Heaven, good asparagus and beans, whatever we fancy, big bowls are prepared for us!
Good apples and pears and grapes!
The gardeners let us take all!
Do you want a roebuck or hare?
Here in the open streets
they run about!

And when there is a fast day the fish come swarming in merrily! St Peter, he runs with net and with bait to fish in the heavenly pond. St Martha is the cook, who else?

No music on earth can compare with ours.
Eleven thousand virgins come forward to dance!
Even St Ursula laughs to see that!
No music on earth can compare with ours.
Cecilia and her relations are excellent court musicians!
The angelic voices lift our spirits and all things awaken to joy!



SIBELIUS 3rd movement from Symphony No.5

Sibelius was Finland's first major composer and remains its greatest. What he brought to music in his seven symphonies is suggested in his diary entry from 10 April 1915:

Spent the evening with the [Fifth] symphony.
Arrangement of the themes... It's as if God the
Father had thrown down the tiles of a mosaic from
heaven's floor and asked me to determine what
kind of picture it was. Maybe a good definition of
composing.

Building up musical paragraphs by developing tiny melodic fragments, creating his own solutions to the problems of harmonic language and symphonic form - these were always features of Sibelius's music. The Fifth Symphony, which Sibelius revised from 1915 to 1919, may be his most admired symphony, and the third movement - its finale - is its crown. It opens with a whirlwind passage for the strings (marked Allegro molto, 'very fast'), leading to one Sibelius' most famous themes - it made English writer Donald Tovey think of the Norse god Thor swinging his hammer. Sibelius tells what inspired him: 'Today I saw 16 swans. God, what beauty! They circled over me for a long time. Disappeared into the solar haze like a silver ribbon.'

The middle of the movement becomes more 'mysterious' and the end comes in a broad tempo. Finally, six jubilant, decisive chords, separated by silences. Don't clap until you've counted six!

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA © 2017

Adapted in part from notes by Anthony Cane (Haydn); David Garrett (Mendelssohn); Raff Wilson (Puccini); Gordon Kalton Williams (Britten); Gordon Kerry (Mahler); Phillip Sametz (Sibelius); editing and additional material by David Garrett. Mahler text translation by Hedwig Roediger, ABC/Symphony Australia © 1986



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## THE ARTISTS



**Shefali Pryor** oboeAssociate Principal Oboe, Emma & David Livingstone Chair Artistic Director, SSO Vanquard

Shefali Pryor grew up in Sydney where she graduated with first class honours from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. She subsequently studied with Stefan Schilli at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg. [It was Schilli who introduced her to the book of daily studies shown on the cover of this program.] Shefali joined the SSO as 2nd oboe in 2003 and was appointed Associate Principal Oboe in 2005.

She has performed extensively as guest principal with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Melbourne and West Australian symphony orchestras, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. Her solo engagements have included concertos with the Melbourne, Tasmanian and Canberra symphony orchestras, as well as the SSO, and performances of double concertos by Bach and Vivaldi with violinist Nigel Kennedy (SSO and TSO). In 2015 with the SSO she premiered Alan Holley's concerto A Shaft of Light, which was written specially for her.

Shefali Prvor was twice a finalist in the Symphony Australia Young Performers awards, winning the Other Instrumental category in 2006. As a chamber musician she performs with the Australia Ensemble, Sculthorpe Quintet, Southern Cross Soloists, Sydney Soloists and the staff of the Sydney Conservatorium, where she teaches oboe. She is a director on the board of the Australian Youth Orchestra and has been involved. with AYO on many occasions as tutor. She is also the Artistic Director of SSO Vanguard, an innovative membership program for Gen X and Gen Y arts lovers who want to ensure a vibrant future for their orchestra. In this role, she programs pop-up chamber music performances in unexpected venues around Sydney, challenging traditional perceptions of classical music.



Lorina Gore soprano

Lorina Gore completed postgraduate voice studies at the Australian National University and National Opera Studio, London. Award highlights include the Dame Joan Sutherland Scholarship, the Opera Awards, Covent Garden National Opera Studio Scholarship, and winner of the Australian National Aria Competition. Her Opera Australia roles include: Violetta (La Traviata), Musetta (La bohème), Queen of Night (The Magic Flute), Die Fiakermilli (Arabella), Amina (La sonnambula), Leila (The Pearlfishers), Tytania (A Midsummer Night's Dream), Honey B (Brett Dean's Bliss) and Woglinde (Wagner's Ring). Overseas she has appeared for New Zealand Opera (Violetta), Iford Arts (title role in Lucia di Lammermoor), Garsington (Fiakermilli), and English Touring Opera (including Unulfo in Rodelinda, Marzelline in Fidelio and Blonde in The Abduction from the Seraglio).

In concert she has appeared with Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Royal Melbourne Philharmonic, Melbourne Bach Choir and the Australian state symphony orchestras, including Beethoven Nine with the SSO and Vladimir Ashkenazy. She has also performed throughout China and in Tokyo, and has recorded highlights from *Der Rosenkavalier* with Yvonne Kenny and an album of Strauss waltzes with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. Recent highlights have included a tour with the TSO (Ode to Nellie Melba) and Roxana in OA's production of *King Roger*, for which she earned a Helpmann Award.



**Toby Thatcher** conductor SSO Assistant Conductor, supported by Rachel & Geoffrey O'Conor and Symphony Services International

Toby Thatcher was born in Melbourne and raised in Sydney, where he studied at the Conservatorium of Music and participated in the Symphony Australia Young Conductor Development Program. He subsequently completed a Master's degree at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he studied oboe as well as participating in international conducting masterclasses. In his final year of studies he performed with the Philharmonia Orchestra and London Sinfonietta and was offered a trial with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra for the position of Principal Cor Anglais.

After graduating, he was a finalist and prize winner at the 2015 Georg Solti International Conducting Competition. That same year he won a Neeme Järvi Prize at the Menuhin Festival and was appointed Assistant Conductor to the SSO. In 2016 he received Sydney University's Outstanding Achievements of Young Alumni Award and the Brian Stacey Award for Australian Conductors, and he was recently invited by the Salzburg Festival to apply for their prestigious Young Conductors Award. He is founder and director of the London-based Ensemble Eroica and conductor of contemporary music group Ensemble x.y.

## 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.

## THE ORCHESTRA



**David Robertson** THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



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