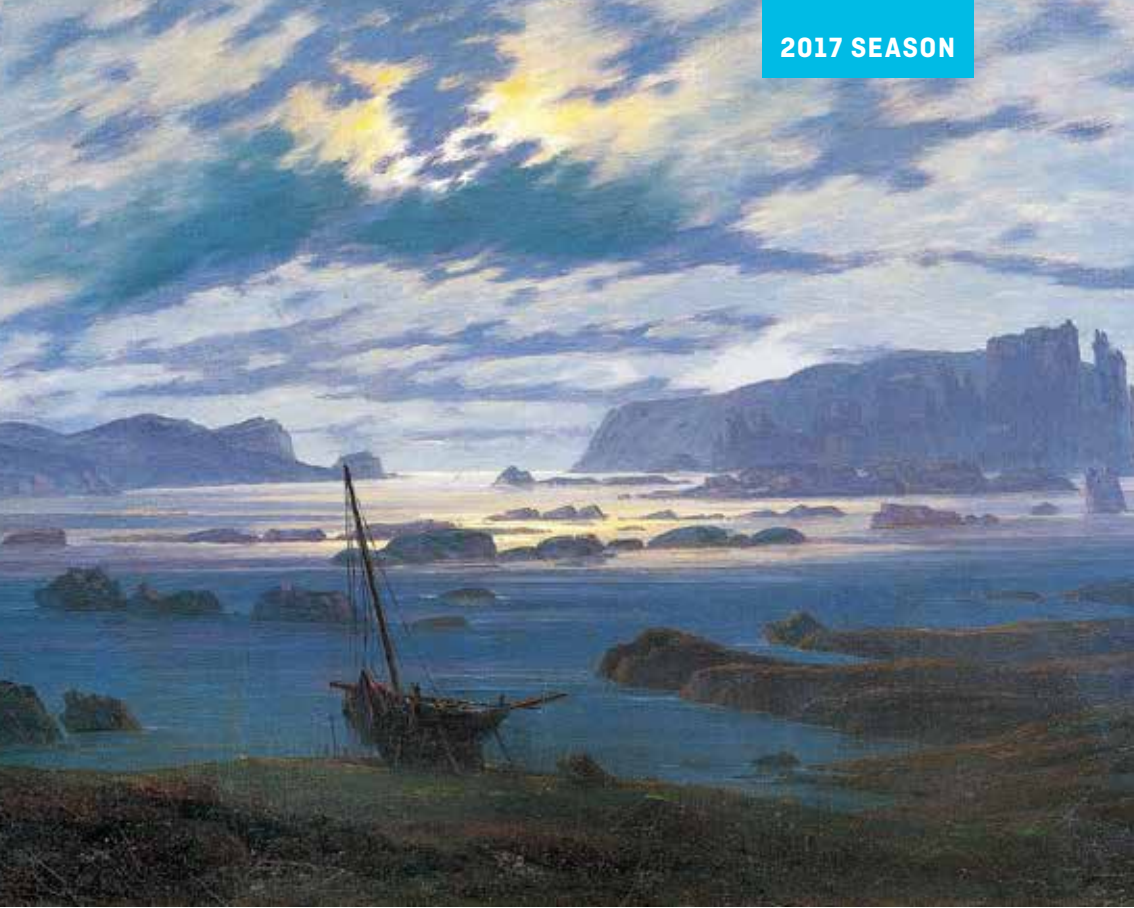


2017 SEASON



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson

The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Sibelius & Mahler

Janine Jansen Returns

APT MASTER SERIES

Wednesday 25 October, 8pm

Friday 27 October, 8pm

Saturday 28 October, 8pm

■ A BMW Season Highlight

MONDAYS @ 7

Monday 30 October, 7pm



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Rachmaninoff on Fire

SIBELIUS Scene with Cranes from Kuolema
DEAN Fire Music
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Brett Dean conductor
Piers Lane piano

Meet the Music
Wed 18 Oct, 6.30pm
 Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 19 Oct, 1:30pm
 Emirates Metro Series
Fri 20 Oct, 8pm



Sibelius & Mahler

SIBELIUS King Christian II: Highlights from the Suite
SIBELIUS Violin Concerto
MAHLER Symphony No.1
Thomas Søndergård conductor
Janine Jansen violin

APT Master Series
Wed 25 Oct, 8pm
Fri 27 Oct, 8pm
Sat 28 Oct, 8pm
 ■ A BMW Season Highlight
 Mondays @ 7
Mon 30 Oct, 7pm



Katie Noonan's Elixir with Michael Leunig

Gratitude and Grief
 Katie Noonan returns to the SSO in a new collaboration with Australia's "poet laureate" Michael Leunig and her trio Elixir.
Iain Grandage conductor • **Katie Noonan** soprano
Stephen Magnusson guitar • **Zac Hurren** saxophone

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 Meet the Music
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 Kaleidoscope
Fri 3 Nov, 8pm
Sat 4 Nov, 8pm
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FERGUSON The Bush Concert (based on the book by Helga Visser).
Toby Thatcher conductor
Barry Conrad narrator

Family Concerts
Sun 5 Nov, 2pm



Beethoven One

Marwood and the SSO Fellows
BEETHOVEN Symphony No.1
VASKS Distant Light – Violin Concerto
Anthony Marwood violin-director
SSO Fellows

Tea & Symphony
Fri 17 Nov, 11am
complimentary morning tea from 10am

VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY'S SHOSTAKOVICH TRIBUTE



Dramatic Shostakovich

SHOSTAKOVICH
 Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk: Passacaglia
 Violin Concerto No.1
 Symphony No.5.
Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
Ray Chen violin

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Sat 11 Nov, 2pm
 Mondays @ 7
Mon 13 Nov, 7pm

Gripping Shostakovich

SHOSTAKOVICH
 Cello Concerto No.1
 Symphony No.8.
Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
Daniel Müller-Schott cello

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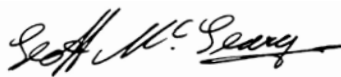


Welcome to tonight's performance in the APT Master Series, which sees the return to Sydney of Dutch violinist Janine Jansen and Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård. As the presenting partner of the SSO's flagship series, we are proud to support programming that brings exciting talent from around the world to the stage of the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

In tonight's concert, Thomas Søndergård is our guide, sharing both a major landmark and something off the beaten track in 'territory' that is close to his heart: the music of Jean Sibelius. There are two major repertoire classics on the program – Sibelius's Violin Concerto and Mahler's First Symphony – but the inclusion of highlights from Sibelius's music for *King Christian II* (music that the SSO has never played before) is a reminder that there is always something to discover in the world of classical music.

Travel offers the same exhilarating mix: that chance to see, first hand, the great destinations of the world, while also making unexpected discoveries. And with APT you can travel in luxury, with expert guides who are committed to providing unforgettable experiences, wherever in the world you choose to go.

We hope you find tonight's performance inspiring and we look forward to seeing you at future concerts in the APT Master Series.



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Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

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MONDAY 30 OCTOBER, 7PM

.....
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL



SIBELIUS AND MAHLER

Thomas Søndergård *conductor*

Janine Jansen *violin*

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957)

Two movements from

King Christian II: Suite, Op.27

Nocturne

Serenade

SIBELIUS

Violin Concerto in D minor, Op.47

Allegro moderato – Allegro molto

Adagio di molto

Allegro ma non tanto

INTERVAL

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860–1911)

Symphony No.1 in D major

*Langsam. Schleppend. 'Wie ein Naturlaut' – Im Anfang sehr
gemächlich* [Slow, dragging. 'Like a sound of Nature' –
Very comfortably]

Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell – Trio. Recht gemächlich
[Forcefully, yet not too fast – Trio. Quite slowly]

Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen
[Solemn and measured, without dragging] –

Stürmisch bewegt [Stormily]

Pre-concert talk by David Larkin in the Northern Foyer, 45 minutes before each performance. Visit sydney-symphony.com/speaker-bios for more information.

.....
Estimated durations: 11 minutes, 35 minutes, 20-minute interval, 54 minutes

The concert will conclude at approximately 10.15pm (9.15pm Mon).

.....
COVER IMAGE: Northern Sea in the Moonlight (1823–24) by Caspar David Friedrich

.....
The performance on 28 September is a BMW Season Highlight



A BMW
Season Highlight

PRESENTED BY





Sketch by Theo Zasche for a caricature of Mahler conducting his First Symphony, first published in the *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* in 1900. Zasche includes some of the key motifs from the symphony, such as the 'cuckoo' motif from the first movement (top left).

Sibelius and Mahler

Tonight's concert brings together two of the great symphonists. In 1907, one of them, Mahler, told the other, Sibelius, that a symphony 'must be like the world; it must be all-embracing'. Sibelius, on the other hand, looked for rigour of form and 'the profound logic that created an inner connection between all the motifs'. At the time, Mahler had just completed his Eighth Symphony, indeed all-embracing, and Sibelius was no doubt thinking of his Third Symphony.

This program takes us back to works from earlier in their respective careers. It begins with music that Sibelius composed for a play, *King Christian II* – predating his first symphony but, as Gordon Williams observes, offering a tantalising foretaste of what was to be Sibelius's first big symphonic success. Six years later, in 1904, the 39-year-old Sibelius composed his Violin Concerto – heartfelt and brilliant. This is music that combines the tradition of the Romantic virtuoso concerto with Sibelius's own distinctive style, and it does so with astonishing success. (It is one of the few major concertos in the violin repertoire by a composer who actually played the instrument, although Sibelius never achieved his dream of becoming a concert violinist.)

By the time Mahler's First Symphony reached its final form and was published, he too was 39. But it first appeared ten years earlier and this is music that has the confidence and boldness of youth. The caricature opposite shows an appreciation for Mahler's symphony: its musical motifs, the cuckoo call, and 'Brother Martin' asleep near the composer's right foot. But it shows something else: lightning bolts, confusion, listeners with hands over their ears! Mahler's symphony polarised audiences as he pushed at the boundaries of the orchestral medium. It reveals a voice as distinctive as Sibelius's, although very different in its ambitions. Even in this first effort, you can hear the awakening of the universe – all-embracing indeed!

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: sydneyssosymphony.com/program-library

PLEASE SHARE

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

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Jean Sibelius

Two movements from

King Christian II: Suite, Op.27

Nocturne

Serenade

In 1898, Sibelius agreed to write the incidental music for *King Christian II*, a play by his friend Adolf Paul, which had been accepted for production by Helsinki's Swedish Theatre. It seems to have been an enjoyable experience. Paul later recalled how Sibelius composed some of the pieces during the morning and played them to him later at Nymark's coffee house. 'It's supposed to be a bagpipes and chalumeau you understand,' said Sibelius when demonstrating the bassoons-and-clarinets effect of the folk-like *Musette* movement. It seems that Sibelius was spurred into hurrying up and writing the *Elegy* to open the play when Paul suggested using as curtain-raiser instead 'the Song of the Spider', a song not usually heard in the concert suite.

Paul's subject was ripe for drama. King Christian II (1481-1559) had been ruler of Norway, Denmark and Sweden during the Kalmar Union. Arguments rage over his legacy. Some credit him with the rise of the bourgeoisie; the Swedes remember him for bloody repression. The play, however, concerns Christian's love for Dyeveke Sigbritsdatter, a pretty Norwegian girl of Dutch origin,

Keynotes

SIBELIUS

Born Hämeenlinna, 1865

Died Järvenpää, 1957

Sibelius was a force in the creation of a distinctive Finnish voice at the turn of the 20th century, and much of his music was based on themes from the Finnish folk epic, the *Kalevala*. He made his name with the stirringly patriotic *Finlandia*. His symphonies and his only concerto (for violin, his own instrument) represent more 'abstract' works. Stylistically, Sibelius takes the language of Tchaikovsky and the Romantic nationalists and puts his distinctive stamp on it.

KING CHRISTIAN II

The music in the *King Christian II* suite was originally composed as incidental music (intended to accompany and underpin a theatre production) for a historical play by Sibelius's friend Adolf Paul. The subject was the 16th-century ruler of Denmark, Sweden and Norway, and his love for a commoner. The two movements performed tonight were written as additional numbers after the initial success of the play in Helsinki, and were first heard in Leipzig.



◀ A 19th-century painting by Wilhelm Rosenstand depicting Christian II and his mistress Dyeveke Sigbritsdatter

who was poisoned at his court under mysterious circumstances, unleashing Christian's wrath and resulting in the execution of one of his noble courtiers Torben Oxe.

Paul's play premiered on 24 February 1898. It was later recalled how Sibelius, standing nervously, baton poised behind the curtain, told Paul: 'I shall give you a success.' Paul certainly did well with this work – its 24 repeat performances were a good record for Finnish theatre at that time.

At the end of February Sibelius and his wife, Aino, went to Berlin. Aino returned to Finland in April, but Sibelius stayed on and Paul joined him in Germany. He asked Sibelius for some more musical numbers, and, with prospects for his play in Sweden and Germany, felt he could become something of a champion of the composer. Together they went to Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig. Sibelius remembered being overwhelmed by the size of the publishing house, and later said that when he saw the head of the firm 'enthroned at a monumental desk under Beethoven's autograph portrait', he would have been ready to give them his music for nothing.

By June the homesick Sibelius was back with his family in Lohja and there composed the remaining three movements (*Nocturne*, *Serenade* and a dramatic *Ballade*). Paul forwarded them to Leipzig to be performed in a concert suite. Sibelius was concerned about making his debut in the city of Bach with such 'light' pieces, and indeed the *Leipziger Zeitung* spoke condescendingly of the music's 'Mascagni-like lyricism'. But Sibelius's first big symphonic success, the First Symphony, was not far off, and this work is a tantalising foretaste of it.

The *Nocturne*, which in places sounds like the Sibelius of the first two symphonies, is love music from the play. The *Serenade* rises to unexpected heights of eloquence after its bucolic opening.

Sibelius was already Finland's most important composer by the time he wrote the *King Christian II* music but he was still anxious about his international reputation. *King Christian II* is the work by which he secured a German publisher, even if in spite of its 'Mascagni-like lyricism'.

ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY
GORDON KALTON WILLIAMS © 2011

These two movements from the *King Christian II* suite call for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets and three trombones; timpani and percussion; and strings.

This is the first time the SSO has performed music from *King Christian II*.



Sibelius was already Finland's most important composer by the time he wrote the *King Christian II* music.

Jean Sibelius

Violin Concerto in D minor, Op.47

Allegro moderato – Allegro molto

Adagio di molto

Allegro ma non tanto

Janine Jansen *violin*

By his very nature, Sibelius was not the sort of composer one would expect to compose a concerto. The conception of a concerto as a show-off work for the soloist was anathema to Sibelius, who increasingly throughout his compositional career sought to employ the purest, most unselfconscious forms of musical expression, eventually resulting in the astonishing economy of utterance and organic structure of his last two symphonies (Nos 6 and 7).

And yet for all that reluctance to indulge in merely 'gestural' instrumental effects, throughout his musical career Sibelius maintained a love of the violin. As a young man he had harboured ambitions of becoming a virtuoso violinist himself, but a comparatively late start to his training, together with a shoulder injury and severe stage fright, meant that this career option was not viable in the longer term.

Instead, Sibelius had to content himself with his famous improvisation sessions as he sat high on a rock overlooking a lake, and occasional appearances as a second violinist in a string quartet at the Helsinki Conservatory. But his frustrated ambitions must have been compensated at least in part by his composition in 1903 of his only concerto of any kind, the Violin Concerto, which is now acknowledged alongside the Beethoven, Brahms, Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky concertos as indisputably one of the greatest works ever written in the form.

Written between the second and third symphonies, the Violin Concerto demonstrates just how successfully Sibelius managed to adapt the virtuoso vehicle to his own expressive needs. For the listener, the concerto is not so much a demonstration of fiendish virtuosity, but rather an organic musical whole in which every note – even the most fleeting – contributes to the overall expressive intent. In other words, its technical demands emerge from its artistic purpose.

The concerto had been inspired by Willy Burmester, former leader of the Helsinki Orchestra, a disciple of the great violinist Joseph Joachim and a long-time admirer of Sibelius's music. As early as 1902 Burmester had been enquiring by letter as to the concerto's progress, and he made various offers of technical assistance and advice. In September 1903 Sibelius sent Burmester

Keynotes

VIOLIN CONCERTO

Sibelius composed his Violin Concerto in 1904 when he was 39. The concerto received mixed reactions at first, but eventually, in the 1930s, Jascha Heifetz became an advocate and it has since found an undisputed place in the concert repertoire.

The concerto fulfils nearly all expectations: it is a virtuosic showcase for a brilliant soloist, its rhythms energise and its melodies soar to powerful effect.

The music is also organised in the usual three movements, following the pattern of fast – slow – fast. The first movement is by far the longest and the most muscular in character. It is followed by the tenderness of the poignant, almost regretful, slow movement, and a dazzling finale.

a short score, to which Burmester replied: 'I can only say one thing: wonderful! Masterly! Only once before have I spoken in such terms to a composer, and that was when Tchaikovsky showed me his concerto.'

But when Sibelius finished the work, his anxiety to arrange a first performance as soon as possible and Burmester's unavailability in the short term, meant that he offered the first performance to Viktor Nováček, an unexceptional Helsinki musician who was so slow to learn it that the concert had to be delayed. When on 8 February 1904 the flushed and perspiring Nováček premiered the concerto with Sibelius conducting, it was not a success, despite some favourable reviews. 'The public here is shallow and full of bile,' wrote Sibelius soon afterwards, and he threatened to withdraw the work.

Burmester had heard of the critical reactions, but was still offering to perform the concerto, promising the composer: 'I shall play the Concerto in Helsinki in such a way that the city will be at your feet.' Sibelius set about revising it, completely reworking the first movement and pruning many of the more ornamental and virtuosic elements.

The new version was completed in June 1905, just in time to be included in Richard Strauss's concert series in Berlin. But again Burmester's schedule was already fully booked and he was once more passed over, with the solo part going to Karl Haliř, leader of the Berlin Orchestra.

Amidst the general wrangling and bitterness, Burmester vowed never to perform the concerto, while Joachim, on hearing the Berlin premiere, damned it. 'Joachim seems no longer in tune with the spirit of our time,' wrote Sibelius in response. Fortunately the Berlin press was rather more enthusiastic, but even so, the work didn't really establish itself in the repertoire until the 1930s, when Jascha Heifetz began to perform it. Since that time it has been regarded as a yardstick by which violinists are measured.

The opening of the **first movement** is one of the most unmistakable in all music. Over the murmur of muted violins, the soloist enters immediately with an unforgettable, intense and brooding first subject, soon echoed and developed in the woodwind. This *Allegro moderato* theme is set against a series of fragmentary figures which form a kind of second subject emerging out of the depths of the cellos and bassoons. The movement itself doesn't sit well with standard sonata principles, however. The traditional development and recapitulation sections are combined, and the cadenza precedes them both, effectively taking the place of the development. And yet there is a clear organic structure within the movement, with the soloist



Sketch of Sibelius by Albert Engström (1904)

'I can only say one thing: wonderful! Masterly! Only once before have I spoken in such terms to a composer, and that was when Tchaikovsky showed me his concerto.'

WILLY BURMESTER, THE CONCERTO'S DEDICATEE



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◀ At one point Sibelius was advertising his services as a teacher of violin and music theory.

dominating and the rhythm driving on through a series of orchestral climaxes.

The mood of the **Adagio** is more restrained, but the characteristic intensity remains, as does the poignancy and sense of regret. The soloist's entry is prefaced by the woodwinds weaving a series of instrumental lines in thirds, and the strongly accented second subject also derives from this opening idea. After a more agitated middle section, the movement ends with a return of the main thematic material, intensified now and with an apparent reluctance to conclude the proceedings.

The **finale** is a polonaise in all but name. (We owe to the great annotator Donald Tovey the unbeatable description: a polonaise for polar bears!) It's a bravura showpiece for the soloist and Sibelius noted: 'It must be played with absolute mastery. Fast, of course, but no faster than it can be played perfectly.'

It begins with a stamping figure low down in the timpani and strings and the solo part then shoots up heavenwards, with amazingly difficult passages of thirds, harmonics, arpeggios, double-stops – indeed all the pyrotechnics available to the soloist, but at the same time without any sense of self-indulgence or self-conscious display. The wild dance gathers momentum until a series of majestic flourishes from the violin leads to the final, sharp decisive chords from the full orchestra.

ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY MARTIN BUZACOTT
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA © 1998

The orchestra for Sibelius's Violin Concerto calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets and three trombones; timpani and strings.

The SSO first performed the concerto in 1938, with soloist Guila Bustabo, conducted by Joseph Post, and most recently in 2014 with soloist Frank Peter Zimmermann, conducted by Donald Runnicles.

Gustav Mahler

Symphony No.1 in D major

Langsam. Schleppend. 'Wie ein Naturlaut' – Im Anfang sehr gemächlich (Slow, dragging. 'Like a sound of Nature' – Very comfortably)

Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell – Trio. Recht gemächlich (Forcefully, yet not too fast – Trio. Quite slowly)

Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen (Solemn and measured, without dragging) –

Stürmisch bewegt (Stormily)

The opening of Mahler's First Symphony places the listener on the conductor's podium. It's as if Mahler has slowed down time itself, allowing us to hear with tremendous clarity every detail of colour and effect. Listen, and you're immersed in the 'sound of Nature'; watch, and you can see the delicate threads of the texture enter and interact.

The first notes float into the hall: fluting sounds from the strings, all founded on the same note, A. From the primeval shimmer emerges a descending two-note motif: a 'cuckoo' call. It's played over and over, interrupted only by fleeting fanfares heard in the distance; a clarinet gives it birdlike colour. In three-and-a-half minutes of mostly very quiet and subtly shaded music, Mahler engrains in our ears the single most important motif of the entire symphony.

The motif is echoed and shared through all the registers of the orchestra until it springs into the easy gait of a joyful, pastoral theme from the second of Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer*. The mood is spirited: the singer is walking through the fields on a fine, bright day, the birds are in a cheerful mood. And the very first notes of the theme outline the same descending interval as the 'cuckoo' call.

This simple, joyous theme is in some ways the heart of the symphony. Not only is it the source for the cuckoo motif, but it becomes the source for aspects of the exuberant second movement and the heroic theme of the finale. It also points to the twin strands of Mahler's creative output – symphony and song – and to the intimate connections between his work on *Songs of a Wayfarer* and the first symphony, both begun in 1884.

The quotations from the *Songs of a Wayfarer* – there will be another in the third movement – emphasise the deeply personal character that was to permeate all of Mahler's symphonies. The heartfelt songs were prompted by a failed love affair with the soprano Joanna Richter. And perhaps the affair inspired the symphony, too, if Mahler's later qualifications are any guide: 'the symphony is greater than the love affair on which it is based...the external experience formed the work's *motivation*, not its content.'

Keynotes

MAHLER

*Born Kalischt, 1860
Died Vienna, 1911*

Mahler is now regarded as one of the greatest symphonists, but during his life his major career was as a conductor – he was effectively a 'summer composer'. Mahler's symphonies are large-scale, requiring huge orchestras and often lasting more than an hour. They cover a tremendous emotional range, blending romantic and modern values, self-obsession and universal expression, idealism and irony.

FIRST SYMPHONY

The beginning of Mahler's First Symphony is crucial – don't be caught napping as the first notes of the symphony float into the hall. From these emerge the sound of a flute: two notes outlining the single most important motif of the whole work, a descending 'cuckoo'-like idea. Hold that motif in your ears: this simple idea will be echoed and shared through the orchestra until the music bursts into a joyful, pastoral theme.

The journey of this symphony moves through rustic exuberance in the second movement and the macabre funeral-march parody of 'Frère Jacques' in the third movement – a rare solo moment for the double bass. The funeral march is repeatedly broken up by street musicians (klezmer style) and eventually the whole thing is interrupted by a heartrending cry. This is the transition to the 20-minute finale, morphing from that stormy, apocalyptic opening into a radiant conclusion.



◀ Gustav Mahler in 1902, a portrait sketch by Emil Orlik

Mahler's assessment seems plausible in the first movement, where the quotations from 'Ging heut morgen übers Feld' (I went out this morning into the fields) are apparently unsystematic and unconnected with the specific images of the song, except in the broadest sense of evoking Nature. But at the centre of the third movement, where Mahler quotes 'Die zwei blauen Augen von meinem Schatz' (The two blue eyes of my sweetheart), it's difficult not to draw meaning from the profound sadness of the gentle tune and its original text – longing for peace, or is it death? 'By the road stands a linden tree, and there for the first time I slept peacefully.' As Zoltan Roman describes it, the episode has a "song without words" character' and its placement in the middle of a funeral march suggests a resolution to the ambiguity of the song.

The question of content versus motivation was a serious matter. Mahler had mixed feelings as to whether a symphony could or should have a program, a narrative, and the relationship between extra-musical inspiration and the music itself balanced uneasily in his creations. He distanced himself from composers such as Richard Strauss – whose innovations were to be found in dramatic forms and a new genre, the symphonic poem. At the same time, he couldn't completely deny the programmatic motivations of his symphonic music.

At its premiere in 1889, the First Symphony was billed as a 'Symphonic Poem in Two Parts'. Its five movements were given abstract tempo headings, with the exception of one marked 'In the style of a Funeral Ceremony'. There was no official program, other than a simple outline, leaked to the newspaper in advance: spring, happy daydreams, and a wedding procession; a funeral march representing the burial of the poet's illusions, and the achievement of spiritual victory.

For the second version of the symphony (Hamburg, 1893), Mahler's friends persuaded him that the audience would find the music easier to understand if he gave the symphony a program. So, for a short while, it became a 'tone poem in the form of a symphony' with the name *Titan*, after a novel by Jean Paul. The individual movements were given descriptive titles and detailed explanations. The first three took Nature and Youth as the theme, with the charming *Blumine* movement at the centre; the fourth and fifth movements represented Human Comedy, with the funeral march and the finale, *Dall'Inferno*.

But Mahler couldn't win: he was criticised for presenting the music as an abstract symphonic poem, and criticised for presenting it as a programmatic symphony. By 1899, when the symphony was first published, he had not only dropped the *Blumine* movement, but he had firmly rejected the *Titan* name and the elaborate program, dismissing it as 'anti-musical', inadequate and misleading.

His 1893 description for the first movement had been 'Spring Without End', and he'd explained that the introduction depicts the awakening of nature from its long winter sleep. The main part of the movement remained unexplained, although the song quotation invites a mood of hope and optimism, and only later does the music take on a darker, more ominous tone, sighing, as the singer does at the end of the song: 'Will my happiness blossom again like the spring?'

Happiness does indeed blossom in the relaxed simplicity of the second movement, the shortest section of the symphony and the movement that received the warmest reception from early listeners. Originally it was dubbed a 'scherzo', the trademark playful character emerging in the easygoing rhythms of the Ländler, rustic ancestor to the waltz. The main theme – both stamping bass line and melody – is constructed around the cuckoo motif. Later a horn introduces the swaying elegance of the central Trio section – the Ländler has been invited into the ballroom.

Mahler eventually dropped the 'funeral march' designation from the third movement, but his original inspiration survives in the detailed description he gave of a satirical illustration in a book of fairy tales, 'The Hunter's Funeral Procession':

...Mahler couldn't win: he was criticised for presenting the music as an abstract symphonic poem, and criticised for presenting it as a programmatic symphony.



The Huntsman's Funeral Procession (woodcut after an illustration by Moritz von Schwind)

...the beasts of the forest accompany the dead hunter's coffin to the grave, with hares carrying a small banner, with a band of Bohemian musicians, in front, and the procession escorted by music-making cats, toads, crows, etc., with stags, roes, foxes, and other four-legged and feathered creatures of the forest in comic postures.

This is a topsy-turvy scene – an inversion of power as the hunted now lead the hunter to his grave. At this point, says Mahler, the mood is now ironically merry, now weirdly brooding – an effect brilliantly achieved in what is perhaps the most famous feature of the First Symphony. Mahler takes a popular student song, 'Bruder Martin' (it's still well-known, even to Australians in the 21st century, as the singing round 'Frère Jacques'), moves it into a mournful minor key and slows it to a dirge. And in a stroke of genius – not, incidentally, his first idea – he gives this distorted theme to a solo double bass, accompanied only by the timpani.

Ironic merriment arrives when a kind of sentimental klezmer music breaks in on the funeral-march parody. But the ultimate effect of the paired woodwinds and trumpets above the boom-chick of plucked strings is to intensify the 'weirdly brooding' mood it interrupts. Mahler is mixing laughter and tears.

At the heart of the third movement there is another interruption – not schmalzy or raucous but extraordinarily beautiful. This is the quotation from the final *Wayfarer* song, and it arrives, sad and eloquent, with muted strings, harp and just a few soft woodwinds. There is more to this movement than the bleak satire of the huntsman's funeral, and this 'song without words' at its heart adds to the compelling impression of music with a story.

But Mahler later insisted that even in the funeral march the situation being represented was irrelevant, the important thing was the *mood* to be expressed. So, he said, the fourth movement, the finale, should bolt out, like lightning from a dark cloud. 'It is simply the cry of a deeply wounded heart, preceded by the spooky, ironically brooding oppressiveness of the funeral march.' That heartrending shriek from the full orchestra – its dissonance

the equivalent of playing a cluster of three adjacent keys on the piano – explodes into the stormy, apocalyptic opening of the 20-minute finale.

The finale is the movement that can seem most troublesome, to listeners and even to the greatest of interpreters. In particular, it gives the feeling that it has arrived at its conclusion about halfway in. It's easy to be deceived into expecting that the transcendent chorale will bring the final chords, only to discover that the finale is far from finished and the composer is setting out all over again. When Strauss questioned this 'premature triumph', Mahler explained:

At the place in question the solution is merely apparent (in the full sense of a 'false conclusion'), and a change and breaking-down of the whole essence is needed before a true 'victory' can be won after such a struggle. My intention was to show a struggle in which victory is furthest from the protagonist just when he believes it is closest. This is the nature of every spiritual struggle. For it is by no means simple to become or to be a hero.

The nature of the spiritual struggle is suggested in the finale's rejected programmatic title – from the Inferno to Paradise. Musically, the movement is struggling to regain the symphony's home key of D major, which hasn't been heard since the first movement. The finale has begun in despairing F minor: 'Again and again, the music had fallen from brief glimpses of light into the darkest depths of despair. Now, an enduring, triumphal victory had to be won.' Mahler then explains in harmonic terms the 'considerable vain groping' he went through in order to make the arrival at D major seem inevitable, 'to sound as though it had fallen from heaven, as though it had come from another world'.

D major falls from heaven at that first, false conclusion, and from this point on, according to an early analysis from 1921, we experience an extended coda of 'such gigantic proportions...it could pass for a finale itself'. The remainder of the movement does in fact behave like a coda: significant transformation of musical motifs ceases, and it is as if Mahler is retracing the course of the whole symphony, from the shimmering 'sound of Nature' to the radiant chorale. The journey now complete, Mahler instructs the horns to stand in order to achieve the greatest possible sound (and, he adds in the score, to drown out even the trumpets!). The hero has come home and it is music itself.

ABRIDGED FROM A NOTE BY YVONNE FRINDLE © 2010

Mahler's First Symphony calls for four flutes (three doubling piccolo), four oboes (one doubling cor anglais), four clarinets (with bass clarinet and E flat clarinet doublings) and three bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon); seven horns, four trumpets, three trombones and tuba; two timpani and percussion (bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tam-tam); harp and strings.

'...to sound as though
it had fallen from
heaven...'

The SSO gave the first performance by an ABC orchestra of Mahler's First Symphony in 1948, conducted by Eugene Goossens. The most recent performance was in 2014, conducted by Donald Runnicles.

NEWS FROM THE SSO

In recent months we've been delighted to announce the extension of David Robertson's term as Chief Conductor and the appointment of new CEO, Emma Dunch.



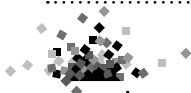
PHOTO: JAY FRAY

David Robertson, who took up his position with the SSO in 2014, has extended his term until the conclusion of 2019. Sydney, he says, is 'among a handful of cities where it is possible to realise projects that are difficult to accomplish anywhere else. Combined with the virtuosity and ambition of the musicians of the SSO, this makes the job of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director such a joy!' Although his tenure will finish, his relationship with the orchestra will continue: 'I look forward to returning (as much as they'll have me!) in 2020 and 2021 as a guest conductor.'



PHOTO: RICHARD BLINKHOFF

In August, we announced the appointment of **Emma Dunch** as CEO, who will take up her new role with the SSO in January 2018. With degrees in opera performance and journalism, she began her arts management career at the SSO in 1996. Since then she has forged an illustrious career in the United States and in 2008 founded DUNCH, a New York-based cultural management firm. 'I am truly inspired by this opportunity to come full circle,' she says, 'returning to my home city and to the organisation that first fostered my love of symphonic music.'



sydney symphony orchestra

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OLE KALLAND

Thomas Søndergård conductor

Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård is Principal Conductor of BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and in 2018 he will take up the post of Music Director of the RSNO. He was previously Principal Conductor and Musical Advisor of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra (2009–2012).

Highlights of recent seasons have included performances with the RSNO and Janine Jansen of the Sibelius Violin Concerto, and Stravinsky's *Firebird* ballet with BBC NOW, as well as guest engagements with leading orchestras in Europe and North America.

In the 2017–18 season he makes debut appearances with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bern Symphony Orchestra, SWR Baden-Baden and Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, as well as returning to the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic and Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse. With the RSNO he conducts Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* and Strauss's *A Hero's Life*, and with BBC NOW a program with pianist Stephen Hough and performances of Shostakovich's Symphony No.12 and Sibelius's Symphony No.5

He is a champion of the music of Carl Nielsen, and his recent performance of Nielsen's Fifth Symphony with the Swedish Radio Symphony

Orchestra was widely praised. In 2015 he conducted many of the world's top orchestras in music by both Sibelius and Nielsen for the anniversary celebrations of these two composers.

Thomas Søndergård is also an experienced opera conductor, at home in mainstream and contemporary repertoire. Recent seasons have included Bavarian State Opera (*Turandot*), Deutsche Oper Berlin (premiere of Scartazzini's *Edward II*), Royal Danish Opera (*Il viaggio a Reims*), Royal Swedish Opera (*Dialogues des Carmélites*) and his Norske Opera debut (*The Magic Flute*, which he will revive in 2017–18).

With BBC NOW he has recorded four Sibelius symphonies (2, 7, 1 and 6). His discography also includes the Sibelius and Prokofiev violin concertos (Vilde Frang and the WDR Köln orchestra), and Poul Ruders' Second Piano Concerto, which was nominated for a Gramophone Award in 2011. That same year he was awarded the Queen Ingrid Foundation Prize for services to Music in Denmark.

Thomas Søndergård made his SSO debut in 2014, conducting music by Stenhammar, Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky.



HARALDHOFFMANN / DECCA

Janine Jansen

violin

Dutch violinist Janine Jansen works regularly with the world's leading orchestras and conductors. In the 2017–18 season she is Perspectives Artist at Carnegie Hall, performing a variety of concerto and chamber music programs including Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*, and the US premiere of Michel van der Aa's violin concerto with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Other highlights include tours with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (conducted by Daniele Gatti, London Symphony Orchestra (Michael Tilson Thomas and Semyon Bychkov) and Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie (Paavo Järvi). She will also perform with the Berlin, Munich, Rotterdam, Czech, Oslo and Royal Stockholm philharmonic orchestras, the Staatskapelle Dresden, and the Vienna, Iceland, Singapore and New Zealand symphony orchestras.

A devoted chamber musician, this season she joins Mischa Maisky, Martha Argerich, Itamar Golan and Lily Maisky for a major European chamber music tour and will perform recitals throughout Europe. Her concerts at Carnegie Hall will include a program with Jean-Yves Thibaudet and the Dover Quartet.

Janine Jansen records extensively and, since her release of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* in 2003, has been extremely successful in the digital music

charts. Her most recent release, conducted by Antonio Pappano, features Bartók's Violin Concerto No.1 (LSO) and the Brahms concerto (Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia). Other highlights in her discography include Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No.2 (London Philharmonic Orchestra with Vladimir Jurowski), Beethoven and Britten (conducted by Paavo Järvi), Mendelssohn and Bruch (Riccardo Chailly), Tchaikovsky (Daniel Harding) and an album of Bach concertos with her own ensemble.

Her prizes and awards include four Edison Classical Awards, three ECHO Classical awards, the German Record Critics' Prize, the NDR Music Prize for outstanding artistic achievement, and the Concertgebouw Prize. She was awarded a Dutch Theatre and Concert Association (VSCD) Classical Music Prize for individual achievement, a Royal Philharmonic Society Instrumentalist Award for performances in the UK, and the Bremen MusikFest Award. From 2003 to 2016 she was the founding artistic director of the hugely successful International Chamber Music Festival in Utrecht.

Her most recent appearance with the SSO was in 2015, when she played the Brahms concerto.

Janine Jansen plays the 1707 'Rivaz – Baron Gutmann' Stradivarius kindly loaned to her by Dextra Musica.

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Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the SSO also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

Well on its way to becoming the premier orchestra of the Asia Pacific region, the SSO has toured China on four occasions, and in 2014 won the arts category in the Australian Government's inaugural Australia-China Achievement Awards, recognising ground-breaking work in nurturing the cultural and artistic relationship between the two nations.

The orchestra's first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux,

Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013. The orchestra's history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

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

Other releases on the SSO Live label, established in 2006, include performances conducted by Alexander Lazarev, Sir Charles Mackerras and David Robertson, as well as the complete Mahler symphonies conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy.

This is David Robertson's fourth year as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.

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KEITH SAUNDERS

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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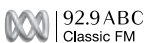
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