

2017 SEASON



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson

The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Symphony, Suite and Slides

Rachmaninoff's Third

MEET THE MUSIC

Wednesday 5 April, 6.30pm

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

Thursday 6 April, 1.30pm



Principal Partner



CLASSICAL



Rachmaninoff's Third
Symphony, Suite & Slides

RACHMANINOFF Symphony No.3
VINE Five Hallucinations for
trombone and orchestra **AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE**
WAGNER Die Meistersinger: Suite
Mark Wigglesworth conductor
Michael Mulcahy trombone *(pictured)*

Meet the Music
Wed 5 Apr 6.30pm
Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 6 Apr 1.30pm



Elgar's Cello Concerto

KNUSSEN The Way to Castle Yonder
ELGAR Cello Concerto
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Symphony No.5
Robert Spano conductor
Harriet Krijgh cello *(pictured)*

Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 20 Apr 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 21 Apr 8pm
Great Classics
Sat 22 Apr 2pm



Tchaikovsky's Pathétique

WAGNER Rienzi: Overture
PROKOFIEV Violin Concerto No.1
TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No.6, Pathétique
Andris Poga conductor
Baiba Skride violin *(pictured)*

APT Master Series
Wed 10 May 8pm
Fri 12 May 8pm
Sat 13 May 8pm
Mondays @ 7
Mon 15 May 7pm



Beethoven's Wind Octet
Cocktail Hour

SCHUMANN ARR. OQUEY Morning Songs, Op.133
BEETHOVEN Wind Octet
Musicians of the SSO

Cocktail Hour
Sat 13 May 6pm
Cocktails from 5.30pm
Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House



Nobuyuki Tsujii plays Chopin

BERLIOZ Le Corsaire - Overture
CHOPIN Piano Concerto No.2
DVOŘÁK Symphony No.8
Bramwell Tovey conductor
Nobuyuki Tsujii piano *(pictured)*

Emirates Metro Series
Fri 19 May 8pm
Special Event
Sat 20 May 8pm
■ A BMW Season Highlight

Nobuyuki Tsujii in Recital

JS BACH Italian Concerto, BWV 971
MOZART Sonata in B flat, K570
BEETHOVEN Moonlight Sonata, Op.27 No.2
BEETHOVEN Appassionata Sonata, Op.57
Nobuyuki Tsujii piano

Special Event
Mon 22 May 7pm
City Recital Hall



Morning Inspiration
Mozart & Haydn in the City

HAYDN Symphony No.6, Morning
MOZART ARR. HAVERON
String Quintet in G minor, K516, for
violin, viola and orchestra
Andrew Haveron violin-director
Roger Benedict viola *(pictured)*

Mozart in the City
Thu 25 May 7pm
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**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

MEET THE MUSIC

WEDNESDAY 5 APRIL, 6.30PM

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

THURSDAY 6 APRIL, 1.30PM

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

**SYMPHONY, SUITE
AND SLIDES**

Mark Wigglesworth *conductor*

Michael Mulcahy *trombone*

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1873–1943)

Symphony No.3 in A minor, Op.44

Lento – Allegro moderato

Adagio ma non troppo – Allegro vivace

Allegro

INTERVAL

CARL VINE (born 1954)

Five Hallucinations for trombone and orchestra

I smell the unicorn

The lemonade speaks

Mama wants some cookies

The Doppelgänger

Hexagons in pink

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

RICHARD WAGNER (1813–1883)

Orchestral highlights from *Die Meistersinger*

Introduction to Act III –

Dance of the Apprentices –

Procession of the Mastersingers –

Prelude to Act I



**92.9 ABC
Classic FM**

Thursday afternoon's performance will be recorded by ABC Classic FM for broadcast on Sunday 9 April at noon.

Pre-concert talk by Jim Coyle in the Northern Foyer 45 minutes before each performance.

Estimated durations:

42 minutes, 20-minute interval,

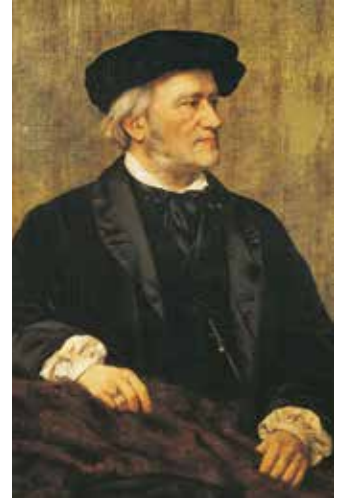
22 minutes, 20 minutes

The concert will conclude at approximately 8.20pm (Wed), 3.20pm (Thu)

Five Hallucinations was commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra with the generous support of Geoff Ainsworth AM and Johanna Featherstone, and Kim Williams AM.



Principal Partner



From left: in 1929, not long after Rachmaninoff began composing again, Boris Chaliapin, son of the great Russian bass Feodor Chaliapin, painted this portrait; Carl Vine; portrait of Wagner by Giuseppe Tivoli (1883).



A scene from Wagner's comic opera *Die Meistersinger*. Walter (left) sings while the black-clad Beckmesser (Wagner's caricature of a music critic) gleefully chalks up each error and departure from the rules that will disqualify the young knight from the song contest. Meanwhile, apprentices dance and the beautiful Eva listens from a curtained booth.

Symphony, Suite and Slides

This week's performances offer a program in the 'classic' Meet the Music profile: combining familiar pieces with less well-known works, matching the old and the new, and featuring an Australian composer or soloist – or in this case both.

Conductor Mark Wigglesworth has chosen to begin with Rachmaninoff's Third Symphony, which dates from the 1930s, after the Russian – living in exile in America – had made time in his performance schedule to return to composing. It's boldly conceived music, full of new rhythmic vitality and marvellous orchestral colours, but also very direct in its emotional expression. There are, unsurprisingly, moments of nostalgia, especially in the allusions to Russian Orthodox liturgical music in the mysterious opening motto theme, and in two of Rachmaninoff's musical trademarks: references to bells and the quotation of the 'Dies Irae' chant in the thrilling finale.

For nearly 30 years, Australian trombonist Michael Mulcahy has played in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, one of the world's top ensembles, and it was a co-commission from the CSO and the SSO that brought about Carl Vine's new trombone concerto, inspired by the writings of neurologist Oliver Sacks, in particular his book *Hallucinations*. (Vine, who majored in physics before swapping to music, has said: 'If I had my life over, I would have studied neurology.')

Each of the five 'Hallucinations' in the concerto has a suitably mind-bending title, drawn from a phrase in the book, ending with a spectacular vision of 'pink hexagons'.

This program is 'upside down' by current conventions, but there was a time when it was common to begin with the most substantial work on the program – perhaps to ensure musicians and listeners would be at their freshest? Then, after interval, a concerto, and finally something lighter in the form of an overture or suite. In this concert, Wagner takes final place with orchestral highlights from his comic opera *Die Meistersinger*, and it's the rousing pomp of the Act I prelude that promises to send you home with a spring in your step.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Rachmaninoff

Symphony No.3 in A minor, Op.44

Lento – Allegro moderato

Adagio ma non troppo – Allegro vivace

Allegro

The Romantic melancholy that is supposed to pervade Rachmaninoff's music is not at all the over-riding emotion of his Third Symphony. Rather this, his first symphonic essay since 1908, is rhythmically taut, melodically suave and, harmonically, relatively astringent.

It may be enough to say, in other words, that it does not inhabit the same lush world as that of, say, the Second Piano Concerto. But that is to short-change both works. Any composer's musical development is complex to trace: Rachmaninoff's was waylaid and irrevocably altered by personal upheaval and a major shift in his musical career.

The Opus 39 Etudes tableaux of 1917, his last major work for solo piano before leaving Russia, point the way towards a

Keynotes

RACHMANINOFF

Born Oneg (Novgorod region), 1873

Died Beverly Hills CA, 1943

Before leaving Russia for good in 1917, Rachmaninoff had composed two symphonies, three piano concertos, and several substantial orchestral works. After settling in the West, he shifted his attention to building a career as a concert pianist and composed much less. The Third Symphony dates from his time in America.

SYMPHONY NO.3

Rachmaninoff was convinced that the Third Symphony was 'a good work' – many have gone further, to suggest that it was one of his best works, original and subtle. But it was coolly received at its first performances in 1936, perhaps because it didn't inhabit the 'same lush world' as the wildly popular Second Piano Concerto. Only subsequently did audiences gain an appreciation for the way in which Rachmaninoff combines passionate expression with a new transparency of sound.

The symphony is in three movements rather than the expected four, with the central movement doing duty as both a slow movement and a lively scherzo. The music is often restless, especially in the finale, in which the mood changes frequently and there is an overall sense of rhythmic drive.



newer style – inimitably rhapsodic, yes, but much broader in its emotional implications, particularly in fleet-footed musical settings, than in many of his earlier works. A considerable span of years would elapse before he would follow this new direction more fully.

Now 44 years old, his decision to settle in the West – specifically, at least for the time being, the United States – meant a flight from his homeland with his family, the loss of his estate and Russian assets and a seismic career shift from principally composer and conductor to concert pianist. The massive effort involved in the creation of a new life for himself was not conducive to the creation of new music. Through a combination of the new discipline required to maintain his performing career, a frenetic performance schedule and the effort involved in acclimatising to a new culture while lamenting the one he left behind, he also made it known that he was incapable of composition. ‘How can I compose without melody?’ he told his friend, fellow composer Nicholas Medtner. To a correspondent he wrote: ‘To begin something new seems unattainably difficult.’

Yet beneath this facade of despair he never gave up on the idea of composing, and in the 1925/26 concert season gave himself a sabbatical. Always paranoiacally insecure about his own music, Rachmaninoff began work on his Fourth Piano Concerto in secret during this self-imposed exile from the concert platform. But the failure of this work with public and critics led to another long period of silence, broken five years later with the Variations on a Theme of Corelli, his first solo piano work composed in the West. This too failed to find an audience, but in 1934 he finally created a piece of great public and critical appeal, with his Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, and, on a rare compositional ‘high’, began work on the Third Symphony in June 1935.

Rachmaninoff was described by Stravinsky as a ‘very old’ composer. In the 1930s he was what might be called a progressive conservative. Had he repeated himself – created replicas of his old pre-revolutionary ‘hits’ such as the Second and Third Concertos and the Second Symphony – his American audiences would probably have been delighted. But he re-thought his musical language in a manner that alienated both audiences and critics. The supple, gently pulsating melody which opens this symphony’s **first movement**, for example, is a case study of the subtleties in the work that puzzled its first audiences and annoyed critics. [Rachmaninoff was a fine conductor, too, and, in his recording of this work, he brings to this theme a uniquely ‘breathing’ rubato.]

‘Personally, I’m convinced that [the Third Symphony] is a good work. But... sometimes composers are mistaken too! Be that as it may, I am holding to my opinion so far.’

RACHMANINOFF, WRITING TO HIS FRIEND VLADIMIR WILSHAW IN 1937



The twin gods of contemporary music, Stravinsky and Schoenberg, had made the critical fraternity impatient with a composer who used a highly chromatic tonal idiom to convey emotional expression, no matter how subtly. The passage that leads to the next major melodic idea suggests that we are going to be treated to a full-blown Romantic 'love theme'. But the gently lyrical, artfully shaped theme we hear confounds these expectations. The development section likewise, with the thematic fragments darting hither and thither with great rhythmic freedom between the bassoons, the percussion, muted trumpets and the quick march for the strings, is hardly the Rachmaninoff of old. Still, nobody was listening. The piece received reviews ranging from the hostile to the polite in the USA; then, after its London premiere, the critic Richard Capell referred to Rachmaninoff building palaces that nobody wanted to live in.

Of course Rachmaninoff was not interested in being 'up to date'; and in fact expressed a general disdain for new music, but the Third Symphony illustrates that he had his own internal impulses that made it impossible for him to stagnate. The first movement is constructed in a highly conventional sonata form – there is even an exposition repeat (not always observed). The innovations here lie in the newer, subtler quality of his harmonic

ideas, a much greater freedom in his writing for the woodwind, brass and percussion instruments, and the interplay he creates between them.

The **second movement** is a different matter. Here Rachmaninoff telescopes the idea of slow movement and scherzo together with great beauty and vividness, beginning with a rhapsodic succession of short lyrical ideas – a Bardic transformation of the first movement’s main theme for solo horn with harp accompaniment, then the ‘slow’ movement’s main theme for solo violin, which is in turn given to the flute, to be worked out passionately by the strings. It might appear at first hearing that he divides the movement neatly in half, as a scurrying passage on the strings introduces a figure of martial demeanour (that actually alternates between duple and triple metre). But the lyrical music returns by way of a brilliant *tremolo* passage. There is tremendous passion here but scored with great clarity and precision. This transparency of sound, which now seems so captivating in Rachmaninoff’s later music, seemed only to bewilder the work’s first audiences.

The finale of the Second Symphony found Rachmaninoff in unbuttoned mood and the Third Symphony’s **finale** opens in the same spirit. But the succession of ideas is rapid and restless, now epically Romantic (a gorgeous lyrical theme for strings *divisi*) now gently comic (a characterful bassoon solo), now propulsive (a dashing fugue). It soon becomes clear that rhythmic drive and orchestral virtuosity are Rachmaninoff’s greatest interests here. In fact you might leave this concert remembering how much swiftly-moving music this symphony contains relative to its length. Certainly, the third movement’s final pages, rhythmically scintillating and scored with enormous skill, are a superb demonstration of how vital a composer Rachmaninoff was in his 60s. It was his tragedy to be writing this piece at so unresponsive a historical moment – four years would pass before he could summon the courage to bring another major work, his Symphonic Dances, before the public.

ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY PHILLIP SAMETZ © 2003

Rachmaninoff’s Third Symphony calls for two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon; four horns, two trumpets, alto trumpet, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion (bass drum, cymbal, snare drum, triangle, tam-tam, xylophone); harp, celesta and strings.

The SSO gave the first Australian performance of the symphony in 1955, conducted by Eugene Goossens. The most recent performance was in 2011, conducted by Edo de Waart.

Rachmaninoff was not interested in being ‘up to date’... but he had his own internal impulses that made it impossible for him to stagnate.

Carl Vine

Five Hallucinations for trombone and orchestra

I smell the unicorn

The lemonade speaks

Mama wants some cookies

The Doppelgänger

Hexagons in pink

Michael Mulcahy *trombone*

The composer writes...

In his book *Hallucinations*, the acclaimed British-American neurologist Oliver Sacks chronicles a wide range of hallucinatory conditions reported by his patients throughout his illustrious career. I have chosen five of those cases as the inspiration for this concerto, creating an imaginary musical representation of each mental state. These particular hallucinations were comparatively benign for those who experienced them, and in some cases were positively welcome.

Hallucinations are fascinating phenomena – instantaneous random inventions of our brains overlaid on the sensation of common reality and indistinguishable from it. Many of us will experience them in some way during our lives. When we sleep for example, we are aware that our brain is in free flight and its muddled dream scenarios are not real. On the edges of sleep however, we can confuse random mental impressions with reality, and are hallucinating. A typical example is hearing one's name spoken by an unknown person; another is when the tail end of a dream impinges on perceived reality.

Sufferers of brain damage or a range of neurological disorders regularly hallucinate. Others without mental illness but under great stress or fatigue can also hallucinate, as of course can those who use psychotropic drugs. It is this bridge between the real world and some of the surprising ways in which our brains interpret the mundane reality around us that I find endlessly fascinating.

The hallucinations:

1. I smell the unicorn

One of Sacks' patients frequently hears complete sentences spoken outside herself while drifting off to sleep. The phrases have no special personal meaning, and bear witness to the extraordinary and unexpected creative power of the brain as it freewheels into sleep.

2. The lemonade speaks

Hearing voices is a hallucination common in schizophrenia, especially as threats or curses. Less threatening versions may be experienced by just about anybody on waking up, either disembodied



Carl Vine

KAREN STEANS © 2008

or from inanimate objects. In this case an effervescent beverage has discovered the power of speech. What it says is not clear.

3. Mama wants some cookies

Sufferers of Charles Bonnet Syndrome often hallucinate text or other visual material superimposed repeatedly across their entire field of vision. The sentence 'Mama wants some cookies' is actually another auditory hallucination like 'unicorn' above, but I've used some poetic licence to imagine that incongruous sentence as text filling one's entire visible world.

4. The Doppelgänger

Many people have experienced the sense of being followed when it is clear that it isn't happening. A special version of this hallucination is the sense of being followed by oneself – a permanent mirror aping one's every motion, and in extreme cases affording such close identification with the simulacrum that the individual swaps places with the Doppelgänger (literally 'double goer').

5. Hexagons in pink

Hallucinating repeated visual patterns like arabesques and hexagons is common to many conditions including extreme migraine and the use of psychotropic drugs, and can be detected, for instance, in the repetitive decorations on Persian rugs. Losing control of one's visible universe to a randomly reinvented geometrical animation can be disturbing, but it can also be pleasurable.

CARL VINE © 2016

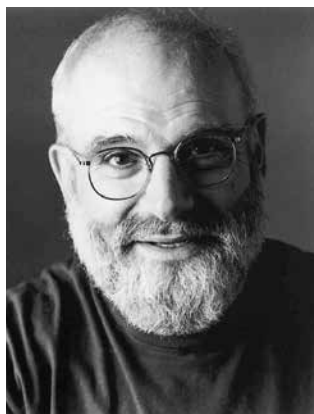
The orchestra for *Five Hallucinations* comprises two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani and two percussionists; harp and strings.

Five Hallucinations was commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Edward F Schmidt Family Commissioning Fund) and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra with the generous support of Geoff Ainsworth AM and Johanna Featherstone, and Kim Williams AM. It was written for and is dedicated to trombonist Michael Mulcahy and was premiered by him with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and James Gaffigan on 6 October 2016. These are the first Australian performances.

* * * *

About the composer...

Carl Vine AO is one of Australia's best-known and most frequently performed composers, with an impressive orchestral catalogue featuring seven symphonies and 11 concertos. His piano music is performed worldwide and recordings of his music on more than 60 albums play regularly on Australian radio. (The SSO has recorded his first six symphonies.) He has also composed an extensive range of chamber music alongside various works for film, television, dance and theatre. Although primarily a composer



Oliver Sacks

of modern art music, he has undertaken such diverse tasks as arranging the Australian National Anthem and writing music for the Closing Ceremony of the Olympic Games (Atlanta, 1996).

Born in Perth, he studied piano with Stephen Dornan and composition with John Exton at the University of Western Australia. Moving to Sydney in 1975, he worked as a freelance pianist and composer with a wide range of ensembles, theatre and dance companies over the following decades.

Since 2000, Carl Vine has been the Artistic Director of Musica Viva Australia, the world's largest presenter and promoter of chamber music. Since 2006, he has also been the Artistic Director of the Huntington Estate Music Festival, Australia's most prestigious chamber music event.

Amongst his most acclaimed scores are *Mythologia* (2000), Piano Sonata (1990) and *Poppy* (1978) for the Sydney Dance Company, and his Choral Symphony (No.6, 1996) for the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. In addition to *Five Hallucinations*, his most recent compositions include *Wonder* for Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, *Our Sons* for the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and Concerto for Orchestra for the WASO. In 2014 Carl Vine was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia.

www.carlvine.com



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PAPER
PARTNER

K.W.DOGGETT Fine Paper

Richard Wagner

Orchestral highlights from *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (The Mastersingers of Nuremberg)

Introduction to Act III –

Dance of the Apprentices –

Procession of the Mastersingers –

Prelude to Act I

The four movements are played without pause

Orchestral Wagner

Wagner's preferred term for opera was 'music drama' and he pursued an artistic goal of *Gesamtkunstwerk* or the 'complete work of art'. For him the integration of music (vocal and instrumental), text and every aspect of staging into a unified art form was all-important. He brought this vision to full realisation in the four music dramas that make up his *Ring* cycle.

So for some music-lovers the presentation of music from Wagner's operas as orchestral highlights without singers flies in the face of the composer's own artistic goals. The practice has a long tradition, however, beginning with Wagner himself, who approved specific excerpts for concert performance. In the 19th century, before the existence of recordings, concert excerpts would have allowed more people to hear the music. Many conductors and arrangers since have prepared concert highlights and orchestral suites, and even ambitious symphonic narratives.

In many cases – as in this concert – concert suites are drawn from those parts of Wagner's operas that were purely, or principally, orchestral to begin with: preludes, dances and interludes. And so they provide an opportunity to focus on the imagination and symphonic character of Wagner's marvellous orchestral writing.

In this concert

Mark Wigglesworth has chosen to perform the published suite of excerpts from Act III, arranged by Wouter Hutschenruyter (1859–1943), making a seamless transition into the Prelude to Act I.

The Prelude to Act III sets a decidedly un-comical tone, its subdued opening blossoming to music of solemn nobility, suggestive of spiritual happiness through renunciation. The music shifts to Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer mode with the *Dance of the Apprentices*. The mood is merry and the scene is populated by apprentices and tradesmen: the middle classes from whom the mastersingers are drawn. Never mind that the waltz wasn't danced in the 16th century! The *Procession of the Mastersingers* then returns to the wonderful pomp and grandeur first heard in the Prelude to Act I, which concludes these highlights

Keynotes

WAGNER

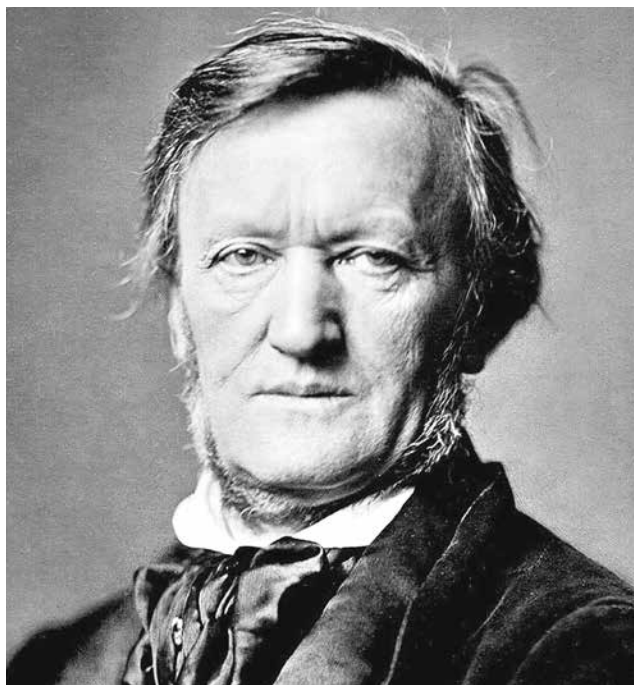
Born Leipzig, 1813

Died Venice, 1883

As a composer of opera, writer and conductor, Richard Wagner was one of the most influential creative personalities of his generation. He was also one of the most controversial: a composer who polarised listeners even as he changed the nature of opera (or 'music drama') forever. He cultivated an almost symphonic conception of opera, and his monumental creations were sustained by long-range harmonic thinking. One of his most important contributions to music was the ingenious linking of musical motifs (*Leitmotiven* or 'leading motifs') to specific characters and situations; the influence of this technique continues to be profoundly felt in most film soundtracks.

DIE MEISTERSINGER

The Mastersingers of Nuremberg (1867) is Wagner's only comic opera and is regarded by many as his masterpiece. The story is set in the 16th century and concerns a song festival held by the Mastersingers Guild. Walther, a young knight, is in love with Eva, whose father has promised her hand to the winner of the song contest. According to the Mastersingers' rules, Walther is eliminated on his first attempt at a song. Fortunately, Hans Sachs, the philosophical, middle-aged cobbler who comes to realise that his own suit with Eva is hopeless, assists Walther in composing a prize song. This song is so inspired it sweeps away the Guild's obsession with rules. The young knight wins the contest and Eva becomes his bride.



◀ Richard Wagner by Franz Hanfstaengl, 1871

The Music of Die Meistersinger

Richard Wagner was never one to do things by halves. So it is not altogether surprising that his comic opera *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (The Mastersingers of Nuremberg) should turn out to be well over four hours long and include no fewer than 17 named roles, one of which, Hans Sachs, is one of the largest and most challenging in all opera.

That said, Wagner did not set out to write a monumental work with a hugely demanding principal part. Like many of his projects, *Meistersinger* sat at the back of his mind for a good number of years, gradually making its way to the front when he felt that the time was right. It ended up being the second of two works that he wrote (the first was *Tristan und Isolde*) when he broke off work on the epic *Der Ring des Nibelungen* to devote his time to smaller projects that might have some chance of being staged in conventional opera houses (he was saving the four-part *Ring* for a specially built festival theatre). But whereas he dashed off *Tristan* in a couple of years, *Meistersinger* took no less than six. Completed in 1867, it was premiered to rapturous acclaim in Munich the following year.

Part of the reason why *Meistersinger* proved a challenge to Wagner is that it is set in a real place, Nuremberg, at a specific time, the mid-16th century, involving people who actually existed, such as the aforementioned Hans Sachs, and a musical tradition that likewise existed, the poet-composer mastersinger tradition.

The difficulty for Wagner was to come up with a musical idiom that referenced, to some degree, the conventions of 16th-century music while also adhering to the musico-dramatic requirements of a modern opera with full orchestral accompaniment. Also, in writing a comedy, Wagner had to 'lighten up' his normally intense musical language and attend to the crucial matter of comic timing.

One of the things that is noticeable in *Meistersinger* – and we hear it right from the start of the **Prelude to Act I** – is the reasonably 'clean' harmonic palette. The Prelude opens in a blaze of resplendent and unambiguous C major. It also opens with a big tune and, remarkably for Wagner, one that makes no attempt to subvert its time signature (it is in a march-like 4/4). In the course of the opera this grand and imposing theme will be associated with the mastersingers guild, an elite association of poet-composers (**Procession of the Mastersingers**). Also noticeable in *Meistersinger* is Wagner's use of counterpoint – the art of combining different melodies at the same time – which is one of the ways in which he casts a nod in the direction of music of the 16th century. There are three main themes in the Prelude – one of which is Walther's prize song – and at one point (about two thirds of the way through) Wagner executes a stunning coup when he superimposes all three.

Another of Wagner's self-consciously archaic touches appears in the **Dance of the Apprentices** in Act III. Here he makes use of a drone bass, which is a very simple and unsophisticated accompaniment type. It is also a very ancient technique. While lacking in regal splendour (these are apprentices after all, not masters), the *Dance of the Apprentices* is full of naive charm and winning simplicity.

Meistersinger reaches its climax in a song contest in which a young and charismatic upstart, Walther von Stolzing, wins the hearts of his listeners and the hand of the woman he loves, Eva. But the hero of the opera is the somewhat older and wiser mastersinger, Hans Sachs, one of the adjudicators of the song contest. Early in Act III Sachs delivers one of the key scenes in the opera, the 'Wahn monologue'. Here he ruminates on the extent to which 'Wahn' (which can mean both 'illusion' and 'madness') impacts upon our lives and on the workings of our communities. Sachs's monologue is a serious and reflective episode, and the dramatic function of the **Prelude to Act III** is to establish the solemn and thoughtful mood. Wagner at this point deepens the character of Sachs and deepens the opera as a whole. The happy ending will come, but not just yet.

ROBERT GIBSON © 2014 (THE MUSIC OF DIE MEISTERSINGER)
OTHER NOTES © SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA/SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA



The central role in *Die Meistersinger* is the historical figure Hans Sachs (1494–1576): poet, playwright, shoemaker and mastersinger (engraving by Micheal Ostendorfer, 1545)

The orchestra for these highlights comprises two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets and two bassoons; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion; harp and strings.

The SSO first performed music by Wagner in concert as early as 1933, when the Brahms and Wagner Festival was conducted by Bernard Heinze. More recently, we have performed orchestral highlights from *Die Meistersinger* in the Wagner Madness program conducted by Nicholas Carter in 2013, and Simone Young conducted the Act I Prelude in Wagner *Under the Sails*, our recreation in 2012 of the official opening concert of the Sydney Opera House in 1973.

MORE MUSIC

RACHMANINOFF SYMPHONIES

Former SSO chief conductor Edo de Waart has recorded the three Rachmaninoff symphonies and *The Rock* with the Rotterdam Symphony Orchestra. Available in a 2-CD Philips DUO release.

PHILIPS 438 724

For the complete Rachmaninoff symphonies and concertos there's a 5-CD Deutsche Grammophon Collectors Edition set with pianist Tamás Vásáry and Yuri Ahronovitch conducting the London Symphony Orchestra in the concertos, and Lorin Maazel conducting the Berlin Philharmonic in the symphonies and orchestral works.

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 479 3631

Or to hear the composer himself conducting the Third Symphony (with the Philadelphia Orchestra) look for the 10-disc historical set *Sergei Rachmaninoff: Complete RCA Recordings*, which also features Rachmaninoff as pianist in his concertos and concert repertoire.

RCA 88843073922

CARL VINE

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra has recorded Carl Vine's first six symphonies and *Celebrare Celeberrime* with conductors Edo de Waart and Stuart Challender, Synergy Percussion and the Sydney Philharmonia Motet Choir. As Vine describes the cycle: they trace concisely the evolution that brought him back to the original symphonic tradition that modernity temporarily curtailed.

ABC CLASSICS 476 7179

For more recordings of Carl Vine's music visit his website: www.carlvine.com

ORCHESTRAL WAGNER

For a comprehensive collection of Wagner highlights at an excellent price, you can't go past the 5-CD set *Ultimate Wagner*. Featuring important vocal scenes as well as preludes and orchestral interludes, it's a great place to begin exploring *Die Meistersinger* and other major Wagner operas.

DECCA 478 0229

If you've heard the SSO perform *The Ring – An Orchestral Adventure* and enjoyed Henk de Vlieger's symphonic approach to bringing Wagner into the concert hall, you might like his *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg – An Orchestral Tribute*, recorded by Neeme Järvi and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, together with some intriguing Wagner rarities.

CHANDOS 5092

MARK WIGGLESWORTH

Among Mark Wigglesworth's recent releases is a pairing of Shostakovich's first and final symphonies,

performed by the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra – part of a complete Shostakovich symphony cycle.

BIS 1643

With Stephen Hough and the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra he has recorded the two Brahms piano concertos.

HYPERION 67961

And you can hear him conducting the SSO on the album *Arcadia Lost* in Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem* and music by Vaughan Williams: *Flos campi* with violinist Roger Benedict and Cantillation, and *The Lark Ascending* with violinist Michael Dauth.

MELBA MR 301131

Broadcast Diary

April



92.9 ABC
Classic FM

abc.net.au/classic

Sunday 9 April, noon

SYMPHONY, SUITE & SLIDES

See this program for details.

Saturday 15 April, noon

YOUNG RUSSIANS

Gustavo Gimeno conductor

Daniil Trifonov piano

Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich

Friday 21 April, noon

SYMPHONY FOR THE COMMON MAN

Benjamin Northey conductor

Simon Tedeschi piano

Ford, Rachmaninoff, Copland

SSO Radio

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

sydneyssomusic.com/SSO_radio



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HOUR

Tuesday 11 April, 6pm

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

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Mark Wigglesworth *conductor*

Born in Sussex, England, Mark Wigglesworth studied music at Manchester University and conducting at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Shortly after leaving the RAM, he won the Kondrashin International Conducting Competition, and since then has forged enduring relationships with many top-level orchestras and opera houses worldwide in repertoire ranging from Mozart to Tippett.

While still a student, he formed The Premiere Ensemble, committed to performing a new piece in every program. In 1992 he became Associate Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and subsequent appointments have included Principal Guest Conductor of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Music Director of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

In addition to concerts with most of the British orchestras, he has conducted throughout Europe, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, La Scala Filarmonica Milan, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia Orchestra Rome, Stockholm Philharmonic, Gothenburg Symphony, Oslo Philharmonic, Finnish Radio Symphony, Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra, Salzburg Camerata and the Budapest Festival Orchestra.

In North America he has conducted the Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony and the Chicago,

Montreal, Toronto and Boston symphony orchestras. He regularly visits the Minnesota Orchestra and also has a continuing relationship with the New World Symphony in Miami.

Mark Wigglesworth began his operatic career as Music Director of Opera Factory, London. Since then he has worked regularly at Glyndebourne (including a recording of *Peter Grimes*), Welsh National Opera and English National Opera, and has conducted for Netherlands Opera, La Monnaie in Brussels, the Metropolitan Opera in New York and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. For Opera Australia he has conducted *Peter Grimes* and *Don Giovanni* (also recorded for commercial release).

His recordings have centred around an acclaimed Shostakovich symphony cycle. He has also recorded Mahler's Sixth and Tenth symphonies with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, music by Vaughan Williams and Britten with the SSO, and most recently the Brahms piano concertos with Stephen Hough and the Mozarteum Orchestra, Salzburg.

In Australia he has worked regularly with the Sydney and Melbourne symphony orchestras and enjoys a special relationship with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. His most recent appearance with the SSO was in 2013.

www.markwigglesworth.com



Michael Mulcahy

trombone

Michael Mulcahy began studying trombone with his father, Jack Mulcahy, and completed his studies with Baden McCarron of the SSO and Geoffrey Bailey at the Sydney Conservatorium. His orchestral career began in 1976 as principal trombone of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra; the following year he was appointed principal of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In 1980 he was the Other Instruments winner in the ABC Instrumental and Vocal Competition. He left Australia in 1981 to pursue his career in Europe, where he became solo trombone of the Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra.

In 1989 Georg Solti appointed him to his current post with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; since then he has served three CSO music directors: Daniel Barenboim, Bernard Haitink and Riccardo Muti. He is also principal trombone with the Australian World Orchestra and the Grand Teton Music Festival (where he also regularly conducts), and he has appeared as a concerto soloist with orchestras worldwide.

Michael Mulcahy made his solo debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Daniel Barenboim in Leopold Mozart's Alto Trombone Concerto. Other solo appearances include music of Elliott Carter with the CSO and Pierre Boulez, as well as with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Hilversum Radio Symphony Orchestra and the MSO.

He is the winner of several international competitions, including the ARD International Music Competition in Munich, the Viotti International Competition in Italy and the International Instrumental Competition in Markneukirchen, in the former East Germany.

He was named Senior Lecturer of the Canberra School of Music at the Australian National University in 1987, in 1999 he was appointed Professor of Music at Northwestern University, and in 2016 he became a visiting artist for the Australian National Academy of Music. He has been an Artist in Residence at Indiana University, and the Wiley Housewright Scholar at Florida State University, and regularly appears at universities worldwide. He has also taught and conducted at Daniel Barenboim's East West Divan workshop for young Arab and Israeli musicians in Seville, and every July leads his Summer Trombone Performance Master Class at Northwestern University.

Michael Mulcahy is a regular visitor to Australia and his most recent appearance with the SSO was as the conductor of a brass program in 2015.

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



DAVID ROBERTSON

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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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Long-term SSO subscriber Audrey Blunden first met Associate Principal Trombone Scott Kinmont when in search of a euphonium for her grandson to play. Since then the pair have become the best of friends, who love discussing the ins and outs of the trombone repertoire.

KEITH SAUNDERS



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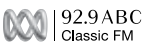
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