

2017 SEASON



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson

The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

The 'Rach 2'

Adams, Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

Thursday 31 August, 1.30pm

EMIRATES METRO SERIES

Friday 1 September, 8pm

SPECIAL EVENT

Saturday 2 September, 2pm





sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

CLASSICAL

Berthold Fabricius



Beethoven & Bruckner

Simone Young Conducts

BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No.2

BRUCKNER Symphony No.5

Simone Young conductor

Imogen Cooper piano

Thursday Afternoon Symphony

Thu 17 Aug, 1.30pm

Emirates Metro Series

Fri 18 Aug, 8pm

Great Classics

Sat 19 Aug, 2pm

Sydney Opera House

Sussie Ahlburg



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

Jay Fram



New World Memories

Robertson conducts Dvořák 9

MEDELSSOHN The Hebrides

MACKEY Mnemosyne's Pool **AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE**

DVOŘÁK Symphony No.9, New World

David Robertson conductor

APT Master Series

Wed 23 Aug, 8pm

Fri 25 Aug, 8pm

Sat 26 Aug, 8pm

Sydney Opera House

Christie Brewster



Circus Scenes

SSO Fellows

ROTA Nonet

BERIO Sequenza V for solo trombone

EISLER Septet No.2, Circus

POULENC The Misunderstood Gendarme: Suite

2017 Fellows • Roger Benedict artistic director

Sat 26 Aug, 6pm

Utzon Room

Christian Steiner



The 'Rach 2'

ADAMS The Chairman Dances

RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No.2

PROKOFIEV Symphony No.5

David Robertson conductor

George Li piano

Thursday Afternoon Symphony

Thu 31 Aug, 1:30pm

Emirates Metro Series

Fri 1 Sep, 8pm

Special Event

Sat 2 Sep, 2pm

Sydney Opera House

Christie Brewster



Megan Washington and the SSO

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

Benjamin Northey conductor

Megan Washington vocalist

Meet the Music

Thu 21 Sep, 6:30pm

Kaleidoscope

Fri 22 Sep, 8pm

Sat 23 Sep, 8pm

■ A BMW Season Highlight

Sydney Opera House



Saint-Saëns in the Morning

A-Musing Animals

SAINT-SAËNS The Muse and the Poet, for violin, cello and orchestra

SAINT-SAËNS Carnival of the Animals

with words by Bradley Trevor Greive

Toby Thatcher conductor • **Richard Morecroft** narrator

Kirsty Hilton violin • **Catherine Hewgill** cello

Peter De Jager piano • **Laurence Matheson** piano

Tea & Symphony

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In any good partnership, both parties need to grow and strive to improve over the years to form a fruitful relationship. Last year we celebrated 14 years as Principal Partner with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and we are thrilled to announce that we will be extending our partnership until the end of 2019, and potentially beyond.

Looking back on our history with the SSO, we can't help but reflect on how rapidly we have developed. Similarly, the SSO's global reputation continues to grow, and I'm certain the performances in the coming season will be no exception.

Fourteen years ago, the A380 aircraft was but a dream. Today I am proud to say that we fly the A380 out of four of our five Australian cities and onwards to more than forty A380-destinations worldwide, including across the Tasman to both Auckland and Christchurch. This, of course, is only a snapshot of the 150 destinations in 80 countries and territories we serve. It is possible today to step on board an A380 at Sydney Airport and, after a quick refresh in Dubai, connect seamlessly to one of our 38 European destinations.

I am pleased to add that our partnership with the SSO also extends beyond Sydney across the world. Our customers are able to watch key SSO performances on our award-winning *ice* entertainment system which offers over 2,500 channels of entertainment, while at the same time enjoying some of the finest wines available, paired with menus created by leading chefs and being served by Emirates' multilingual Cabin Crew.

We are proud of our long-standing partnership with the SSO and hope you enjoy another world-class experience with the Emirates Metro Series.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Brown".

Barry Brown

Emirates' Divisional Vice President
for Australasia



**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

THURSDAY 31 AUGUST, 1.30PM

EMIRATES METRO SERIES

FRIDAY 1 SEPTEMBER, 8PM

SPECIAL EVENT

SATURDAY 2 SEPTEMBER, 2PM

.....
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

THE 'RACH 2'

David Robertson *conductor*

George Li *piano*

JOHN ADAMS (born 1947)

The Chairman Dances – Foxtrot for orchestra

RACHMANINOFF (1873–1943)

Piano Concerto No.2 in C minor, Op.18

Moderato

Adagio sostenuto

Allegro scherzando

INTERVAL

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891–1953)

Symphony No.5 in B flat, Op.100

Andante

Allegro marcato

Adagio

Allegro giocoso



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Classic FM

Saturday's performance will be recorded by ABC Classic FM for broadcast on Saturday 9 September at noon.

.....
Pre-concert talk by Andrew Aronowicz in the Northern Foyer 45 minutes before each performance. Visit sydney-symphony.com/talk-bios for speaker biographies.

.....
Estimated durations: 12 minutes, 33 minutes, 20-minute interval, 46 minutes

The concert will conclude at approximately 3.30pm (Thu), 10pm (Fri), 4pm (Sat).

.....
COVER IMAGE: Rachmaninoff's hands (Lebrecht Music & Arts)



Principal Partner

ABOUT THE MUSIC

John Adams

***The Chairman Dances* – Foxtrot for orchestra**

John Adams describes *The Chairman Dances* as an ‘out-take’ from Act III of *Nixon in China*. He’d seen part of the opera’s scenario by Peter Sellars and poet Alice Goodman and, even though he had another commission to write first, he couldn’t wait to begin work on it. So the commission – a concert piece for the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra – doubled as a warm-up for the opera.

The music is an orchestral ‘foxtrot’ for Chairman Mao and his bride Chiang Ch’ing, the fabled ‘Madame Mao’ – ‘firebrand, revolutionary executioner, architect of China’s calamitous Cultural Revolution, and [a fact not universally realised] a former Shanghai movie actress’.

Adams describes the surreal final scene this way: ‘Madame Mao interrupts the tired formalities of a state banquet, disrupts the slow moving protocol and invites the Chairman, who is present only as a gigantic 40-foot portrait on the wall, to “come down, old man, and dance”. The music takes full cognisance of her past as a movie actress. Themes, sometimes slinky and sentimental, at other times bravura and bounding, ride above in bustling fabric of energised motives. Some of these themes make a dreamy reappearance in Act III of the actual opera, as both the Nixons and Maos reminisce over their distant pasts.’

According to the Sellars and Goodman scenario, somewhat altered from the final one in *Nixon in China*:

Chiang Ch’ing, a.k.a. Madame Mao, has gatecrashed the Presidential Banquet. She is first seen standing where she is most in the way of the waiters. After a few minutes, she brings out a box of paper lanterns and hangs them around the hall, then strips down to a cheongsam, skin-tight from neck to ankle and slit up the hip. She signals the orchestra to play and begins dancing by herself. Mao is becoming excited. He steps down from his portrait on the wall, and they begin to foxtrot together. They are back in Yenan, dancing to the gramophone...

About the composer...

Born and raised in New England, John Adams learned the clarinet from his father and played in marching bands and community orchestras during his formative years. He began composing at age ten and heard his first orchestral pieces performed while still a teenager. The intellectual and artistic traditions of New England, including his studies at Harvard University and attendance at Boston Symphony Orchestra concerts, helped shape him as an artist and thinker.

Keynotes

ADAMS

Born Worcester, Massachusetts, 1947

John Adams’ best-known orchestral piece is *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* – the kind of exhilarating music that’s as welcome in popular concerts under the stars as it is in concert halls. It carries all the trademarks that reveal Adams’ origins as a minimalist composer: hypnotic repetition; the energy of a steady beat; and a familiar harmonic language emphasising consonance, and coloured by late-Romanticism. The result is a style that’s mesmerising and stirring.

Adams composes across many genres, but it is for his stage works that he’s become well-known, in particular his collaborations with director Peter Sellars: *Nixon in China*, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, and *Doctor Atomic*, about the development and testing of the atomic bomb in 1945.

THE CHAIRMAN DANCES

This concert piece, an orchestral foxtrot, was composed in 1985 – before the opera *Nixon in China*, but in response to an early version of its scenario. The imagined scene draws on Madame Mao’s background as a Shanghai movie actress, and the music is sometimes ‘slinky and sentimental’, sometimes bustling and energetic.

In 1971 he moved to San Francisco where he taught at the Conservatory of Music (and later became composer-in-residence of the San Francisco Symphony, during the period when Edo de Waart was music director). The next big thing in music was minimalism, but while Adams felt it was 'the only really interesting, important stylistic development in the past 30 years', he was aware of its expressive limitations. As Anthony Fogg has written:

Instead of the trance-like Eastern rhythms and mechanical repetitiveness of much early minimalism, Adams' music began to establish much clearer directions, with climaxes and more clearly defined structures underlying the minimalist method.

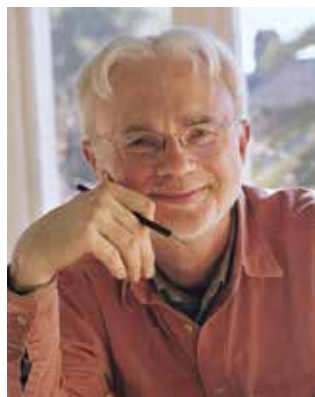
In 1979, Adams began the series of orchestral works that have marked the development of his musical language. Works of the early 1980s such as *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* and *Harmonielehre* spring from a confident, optimistic energy embodied in the use of large-scale fields of stable diatonic harmony. By the early 1990s, in such music as the Chamber Symphony, Adams explores more introspective, and occasionally darker, worlds, encompassing references to Schoenberg, Warner Brothers cartoons and the mediæval mysticism of Meister Eckhardt.

Adams' distinguished career in the opera theatre began in earnest in 1987 with *Nixon in China*, his first collaboration with Alice Goodman and Peter Sellars. This was followed by *The Death of Klinghoffer* – which only recently received its Metropolitan Opera premiere, conducted by David Robertson, and remains as controversial as ever – as well as several other works including *Doctor Atomic* (2005), *A Flowering Tree* (2006) and more recently the Passion oratorio *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* (2012). His latest opera, *Girls of the Golden West* will be premiered by San Francisco Opera in November. The operas all have a direct concern with contemporary life; the essential humanism of Adams' works is also manifest in works such as *On the Transmigration of Souls* of 2002, his response to the appalling events of 11 September 2001.

ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY GORDON KERRY © 2013

The Chairman Dances calls for two flutes (doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets (one doubling bass clarinet) and two bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, two trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion; harp and piano; and strings.

The SSO first performed *The Chairman Dances* in 1992, conducted by Jorge Mester, and most recently in 2010, conducted by Kristjan Järvi.



MARGARETTA MITCHELL

John Adams in Sydney

First Australian performances by the SSO:

- 1986 Shaker Loops
- 1986 Harmonium
- 1988 Short Ride in a Fast Machine
- 1990 The Wound Dresser
- 2000 Naive and Sentimental Music*
- 2001 Century Rolls – Piano Concerto
- 2003 Guide to Strange Places*
- 2004 On the Transmigration of Souls
- 2010 Doctor Atomic Symphony
- 2013 Violin Concerto
- 2013 Saxophone Concerto*†
- 2014 Absolute Jest, for string quartet and orchestra
- 2016 Scheherazade.2 – Dramatic symphony for violin and orchestra*

* SSO co-commission

† World premiere



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

18

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Sergei Rachmaninoff

Piano Concerto No.2 in C minor, Op.18

Moderato

Adagio sostenuto

Allegro scherzando

George Li *piano*

The story of the creation of Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto is often told: the young composer – star student of the Moscow Conservatory, favourite of Tchaikovsky – had achieved considerable success getting his earliest works published, but in 1897 his ambitious First Symphony was disastrously premiered in St Petersburg, resulting in vicious attacks in the press, notoriously from César Cui who compared it to a program symphony based on the Seven Plagues of Egypt. Supposedly, the ordeal led Rachmaninoff into a three-year period of deep depression in which he was unable to compose, and ended only after a course in hypnotherapy with the viola-playing Dr Nikolai Dahl. The doctor's treatment apparently persuaded the young composer that he would be able to write a new concerto, and the resulting work – dedicated to Dahl – has become one of the most famous in the piano repertory.

It's an attractive tale, yet despite Rachmaninoff's obvious disappointment with the reception of his symphony, the so-called 'creative hiatus' was a relatively busy period for him. In 1898 he took up the baton professionally for the first time, conducting numerous performances for the newly established Mamontov Private Opera Company in Moscow, and directing the young Chaliapin in roles for which he would later become so famous. Such was his conducting skill that within a few years he would hold a position at the Bolshoi Theatre. The period also heralded a subtle but significant change in his outlook on composition once he started writing larger works again. From 1900, Rachmaninoff favoured a more conservative style than that of his symphony, and one that, ironically, became the source of some personal consternation as he sought to evolve his creative voice in following years.

Whether due to the hypnotherapy or simply the passage of time, there is no doubting the sense that something was unleashed within the composer in the works that followed. In the concerto and other compositions of the period (the second suite for two pianos and the cello sonata are the closest), a new assuredness of style is evident and there is an almost overwhelming abundance of melody. These new works were also created quickly: the second and third movements of the concerto were completed within a few months and were performed in

Keynotes

RACHMANINOFF

*Born Oneg (Novgorod region),
Russia, 1873*

Died Beverly Hills, USA, 1943

Rachmaninoff found success as a composer, pianist and conductor – but rarely in more than one field of endeavour at a time. Performing provided a major source of income in later life after he moved to America, but this interfered with his composing and skewed perceptions of his work. He was one of the finest piano virtuosos of his day and his own compositions reveal the extent of his formidable technique. Tonight's concerto was composed when Rachmaninoff was in his 20s.

PIANO CONCERTO NO.2

The Second Piano Concerto was completed in 1901, Rachmaninoff's first orchestral work after the compositional hiatus that followed the premiere of his First Symphony. Its three movements follow a typical concerto structure, although Rachmaninoff departs from tradition by omitting the solo cadenza from the first movement and placing it at the climax of the second. The concerto is characterised by assuredness of style and exuberance of spirit.



...a new assuredness of style is evident, and there is an almost overwhelming abundance of melody.

December 1900 in Moscow. The first complete performance of the new concerto occurred on the 27 October 1901 (Old Style) in Moscow, with the composer at the piano and his cousin, the pianist Alexander Siloti, conducting.

The famous opening notes of the **first movement** (*Moderato*) are essentially an extended cadence: slightly varied chords over bell-like bass notes gradually increase in volume, before the notes A flat, F, G – the basis of a motif that appears throughout the concerto – resolve to the home key of C minor, whereon the orchestra introduces the expansive principal subject. The second theme is by contrast given almost exclusively to the piano. The development section begins with material based on the motif, while a fragment of the second subject in the violins propels the movement to its climax. The recapitulation follows, with the orchestra again stating the main theme while the piano provides a martial-like accompaniment based on material extrapolated from the motif. The opening phrase of the second subject is recalled by the French horn, and, rather than providing a complete restatement, Rachmaninoff shares fragments of the melody gently between the soloist and the orchestra. The reverie is soon broken, however, and the movement comes to a fiery close.

A short orchestral passage serves to move the **second movement** (*Adagio sostenuto*) to the warmer key of E major where, over an arpeggiated figure in the piano (material composed some years earlier for a six-hand piano Romance), the first subject is given to the flute, then taken over by the clarinet. After a second statement of the theme by the soloist, the melody is developed as the music builds. A faster *scherzando* section – perhaps recalling the analogous section in Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto – leads the movement to a climax, at which point Rachmaninoff provides a cadenza (lacking from its traditional place in the first movement). The violins restate the opening melodic material, before sustained piano chords accompany a passage of gradual melodic descent as the movement dies away.

The **final movement** (*Allegro scherzando*) begins quietly on low strings before a dramatic keyboard cadenza introduces the principal theme. A short period of development, including a brief shift to waltz-time, leads to an abrupt key change and the announcement of the lyrical second subject by the oboe and violas. Perhaps one of Rachmaninoff's most famous melodies, the literature suggests it may have been 'borrowed' from a friend. However, if there is any truth to this story it is more likely that the reference is only to the opening notes, its expansive treatment bearing too many of the composer's inimitable hallmarks. A trance-like section over a held bass note leads to a development section where Rachmaninoff, with youthful exuberance, replaces a recapitulation of the first subject with a fugue based on its opening notes. The second subject is then heard again in the distant key of D flat major, before a short coda leads to a final *fortissimo* restatement of the melody by the full orchestra, underpinned by massive chords on the piano. In characteristic fashion, the concerto concludes with a spirited dash to the end.

ABRIDGED FROM A NOTE BY SCOTT DAVIE © 2007

The orchestra for Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto comprises pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion (bass drum, cymbal); and strings.

The SSO first performed Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto in 1938 with Valda Aveling as soloist and conductor Malcolm Sargent. Our most recent performance was in 2012 with Alexander Gavrylyuk and conductor Thomas Sanderling.

What tune is that?

Eric Carmen used the theme from the slow movement of the Second Piano Concerto for the verse of his song 'All By Myself' in 1976. The song found new popularity when it was used in the film *Bridget Jones's Diary*.

Buddy Kaye and Ted Mossman turned the 'big tune' from the third movement into 'Full Moon and Empty Arms', recorded by Frank Sinatra in 1945.

And in *The Seven Year Itch* (1955) Marilyn Monroe 'goes to pieces' every time she hears the concerto.



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Sergei Prokofiev

Symphony No.5 in B flat, Op.100

Andante

Allegro marcato

Adagio

Allegro giocoso

As Prokofiev raised his baton to conduct the premiere of his Fifth Symphony, Moscow shook with the sound of cannon-fire. It was January 1945, and the fusillade announced to the citizens that the Red Army had crossed the Vistula River in its rout of the invading Germans. Pianist Sviatoslav Richter, who was there, remembered the symbolism of the moment well: 'a common borderline had come for everyone.' If the cannon-fire was announcing the turn of the war's tide, the symphony announced a new beginning. Its epic scale and optimistic trajectory perfectly reflected the mood of the time. Prokofiev later wrote that in this work 'I wanted to sing of the free, happy man, his mighty power, his chivalry and his purity of spirit...I wrote the kind of music that grew ripe within me and finally filled up my soul.'

We need, of course, to understand the deliberate ambiguity of such remarks: Prokofiev, like anyone else, was well aware of the lack of freedom and happiness under Joseph Stalin; his description might sound like that of the new 'Soviet man', but can equally be read as a subtle denunciation of the regime. The composer, moreover, had first-hand experience of the precariousness of favour in the Soviet Union. Perhaps expecting to profit from Shostakovich's recent fall from grace, Prokofiev had permanently returned to Russia in 1936 after living mainly in Paris since 1918. He soon found that when he tried to compose in the officially sanctioned way he would be accused of writing music that was 'pale and lacking in individuality'; if he continued on the course he had begun in Western Europe he was derided as a 'formalist'.

With works like *Peter and the Wolf* and *Romeo and Juliet*, Prokofiev's stocks revived, and during the early 1940s he received the Stalin Prize several times and was evacuated to safety when the Soviet Union entered World War II in 1942. He spent the summer of 1944 with composers Khachaturian, Shostakovich and Miaskovsky in the relative luxury of a government-run artists' colony and in a mere two months (and with a little recycling) had composed and orchestrated his Fifth Symphony.

The Fourth Symphony, composed some 14 years earlier, was a not entirely successful cobbling together of off-cuts from the *Prodigal Son* ballet. In the Fifth, Prokofiev produced a much more

Keynotes

PROKOFIEV

Born Sontsovka (Ukraine), 1891

Died Moscow, 1953

In 1936, after nearly two decades in the West, Prokofiev returned to Russia. His Fifth Symphony was completed in 1945, following such successes as *Peter and the Wolf*, the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* and his film music, later a cantata, for Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*. The symphony was composed over the summer of 1944, during which Prokofiev and other composers enjoyed the seclusion and relative comfort of a government-run artists' colony.

FIFTH SYMPHONY

In some ways the Fifth Symphony has a classical character, at least in its outlines. It is in the traditional four movements, but the first is expansive rather than fast and energetic, and the slow movement sits in third spot rather than second. Prokofiev indulges in some recycling in the second movement: taking up impulsive and colourful music that he'd discarded while writing *Romeo and Juliet*. The third movement shows him in lyrical mode, with broad woodwind themes at the beginning and an intensely felt middle section. The finale offers a surprise by bringing back a theme from the first movement before giving us the 'expected' triumphant conclusion.

A House of Rest and Creativity

In 1943 the Union of Soviet Composers opened a House of Rest and Creativity at Ivanovo, west of Moscow. On this rundown country estate, the Union offered the families of prominent composers – weary of wartime constraints – a modest summer vacation, leaving the composers themselves to work in relative peace. Khachaturian recalled: 'It is a remarkable fact, but while we were at Ivanovo our work seemed to progress without any hitches. Were we influenced by nature and our surroundings? Or was it the feeling of victory round the corner? Or simply that we were getting properly fed?'

In return, Union composers were expected to produce their own 'war work', like Khachaturian's spectacular war-inspired Second Symphony, and Glière's *War Overture*. There was, however, one notable failure: Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony proved fatalistic rather than galvanising in tone and was received coldly by the Party's artistic accountants.

Prokofiev had been working with Sergei Eisenstein's film crew in east Kazakhstan during most of 1943. In 1944, however, he was back in Moscow and able to join his colleagues for the second Ivanovo summer.

'classical' work, of four movements, but one in which his material is superbly integrated and tightly argued. Like Shostakovich in a number of works, Prokofiev composed a first movement whose tempo is broad and stately rather than traditionally fast. (Significantly, in his Piano Sonata No.8 – also in B flat – which dates from this time, he adopts the same strategy.) This enables an epic treatment of the material. Beginning with a simple theme on flute and bassoon, the movement unfolds gradually but inexorably, with passages of characteristic wit, high lyricism and overpowering full scoring until, in its final cadence, a radiant B flat chord emerges from tense dissonance.

The **second movement** provides the first really fast music, its balletic quality partly explained by the use of material discarded during the composition of *Romeo and Juliet*. This recalls the Prokofiev of *The Love for Three Oranges* – fast, incisive, colourful – and provides a foil to the extended and beautiful **slow movement** which follows. What musicologist Arnold Whittall calls the 'obsessive ticking' rhythms of the second movement give place to a gently pulsating accompaniment over an arching main theme, which contrasts with an emotive central section.

In the **finale**, Prokofiev initially defies expectations by quoting the melody from the first movement, this time scored for the rarified sound of divided cellos. Whether or not this represents what Prokofiev's 'official' biographer Israel Nestyev calls the 'theme of man's grandeur and heroic strength', it is dramatically



effective of the composer not to plunge immediately into the expected triumphal finale. As Whittall remarks, the movement avoids the 'naively life-enhancing' clichés of Soviet music but the subtle use of dissonance, and the uneasy sense right at the end, suggest that the energy of the music has outlived its meaning.

The timing of the symphony was, however, perfect, seeming to sing of Soviet victory. Sadly, it would not be long before Prokofiev would feel the weight of disfavour once more; moreover, concussion sustained in a fall shortly after the premiere meant that the Fifth Symphony would be the last work he would ever conduct.

GORDON KERRY © 2003

'A HOUSE OF REST AND CREATIVITY' ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY
GRAEME SKINNER © 1997

Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony calls for two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, bass clarinet, E flat clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and a large percussion section; harp, piano and strings.

Prokofiev conducted the USSR State Symphony Orchestra for the premiere of his Fifth Symphony, in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory on 13 January 1945. The SSO and Eugene Goossens gave the first Australian performance on 5 August 1948. Our most recent performance of the symphony was in 2013, conducted by James Gaffigan.

Before emigrating to America, Nicolas Slonimsky had been a fellow student of Prokofiev's at the St Petersburg Conservatory. He describes, in his inimitable style, the climactic moments of the Fifth Symphony:

"...an apotheosis, marked by an ovation of trumpets, an irresistible advance of trombones, and the brandished oriflamme of horns reinforced by a cotillion of drums, and nailed down by a triumphant beat of the bass drum."



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JAY FRAM

David Robertson

THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

David Robertson is a compelling and passionate communicator whose stimulating ideas and music-making have captivated audiences and musicians alike. A consummate musician and masterful programmer, he has forged strong relationships with major orchestras throughout Europe and North America.

He made his Australian debut with the SSO in 2003 and soon became a regular visitor to Sydney, with highlights including the Australian premiere of John Adams' *Doctor Atomic* Symphony and concert performances of *The Flying Dutchman*. In 2014, his inaugural season as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, he led the SSO on a seven-city tour of China. More recent highlights have included presentations of *Elektra*, *Tristan und Isolde*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, and *Porgy and Bess*; the Australian premiere of Adams' *Scheherazade*. 2 violin concerto, Messiaen's *From the Canyons to the Stars* and Stravinsky ballet scores (also recorded for CD release), as well as the launch of the SSO at Carriageworks series.

Last year he began his 12th season as Music Director of the St Louis Symphony. Other titled posts have included Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Music Director of the Orchestre National de Lyon and resident conductor of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. An expert in 20th- and 21st-century music, he has been Music Director of the Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris (where composer and conductor Pierre Boulez was an early supporter).

He is also a champion of young musicians, devoting time to working with students and young artists.

David Robertson is a frequent guest with major orchestras and opera houses worldwide, conducting the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia and Cleveland orchestras, Berlin Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Dresden, BBC Symphony Orchestra and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as conducting at La Scala, Opéra de Lyon, San Francisco Opera and the Bavarian and Hamburg state operas. In 2014 he conducted the controversial but highly acclaimed Metropolitan Opera premiere of John Adams' *Death of Klinghoffer*.

His awards and accolades include Musical America Conductor of the Year (2000), Columbia University's 2006 Ditson Conductor's Award, and the 2005–06 ASCAP Morton Gould Award for Innovative Programming. In 2010 he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 2011 a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

David Robertson was born in Santa Monica, California, and educated at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he studied French horn and composition before turning to conducting. He is married to pianist Orli Shaham.

The position of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director is also supported by Principal Partner Emirates.



SIMON FOWLER

George Li

piano

George Li possesses brilliant virtuosity and effortless grace far beyond his years. He was awarded the Silver Medal at the 2015 International Tchaikovsky Competition and was the recipient of the 2016 Avery Fisher Career Grant.

Recent and upcoming concerto highlights include performances with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony, Hamburg Philharmonic with Manfred Honeck, St Petersburg Philharmonic with Yuri Temirkanov, Philharmonia Orchestra with Long Yu, Oslo Philharmonic, Orchestre National de Lyon, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Malmö Symphony, Verbier Festival Orchestra, DSO Berlin, Seattle Symphony, Utah Symphony and Frankfurt Radio Symphony, as well as a tour of Asia with the London Symphony Orchestra and Giandrea Nosedà. He frequently appears with Valery Gergiev and the Mariinsky Orchestra, including performances at the Paris Philharmonie, Luxemburg Philharmonie, New York's Brooklyn Academy of Music, Graffenegg Festival and in venues throughout Russia.

Recital highlights include performances at Carnegie Hall, Davies Hall in San Francisco, the Mariinsky Theatre, Munich's Gasteig, the Louvre, Seoul Arts Center, Tokyo's Asahi Hall and Musashino Hall and NCPA Beijing, and appearances at the Ravinia, Lanaudière,

Edinburgh and Montreux festivals. Later this year he will release his debut solo album, recorded live at the Mariinsky.

An active chamber musician, George Li has also performed chamber music with James Ehnes, Noah Bendix-Balgley, Benjamin Beilman, Kian Soltani, Pablo Ferrandez and Daniel Lozakovich.

George Li gave his first public recital when he was ten years old, performing at Steinway Hall in his native Boston. In 2010 he was the First Prize winner of the Young Concert Artists International Auditions. The following year he performed for President Obama at the White House in an evening honouring Chancellor Angela Merkel. And in 2012 he received the Gilmore Young Artist Award; at 17 years old, the youngest ever recipient. He is currently in the joint program of Harvard University and the New England Conservatory, studying with Wha Kyung Byun. This is his first appearance with the SSO.

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



DAVID ROBERTSON

THE LOWY CHAIR OF
CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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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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In memory of Rosemary Boyle,
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Mrs H Breckveldt
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Debby Cramer & Bill Caukili
Michel-Henri Carriol
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Mrs JM Chapman
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Mrs Linda Gerke
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Michael & Rochelle Goot
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Akiko Gregory
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Sandra Paul Pottinger
Mark Pearson
Mr Stephen Perkins
Almut Piatti
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Dr John Wynter
Mr Patrick Quinn-Graham
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Christine Rowell-Miller
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Jorie Ryan for Meredith Ryan
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 Sir Robert Woods
 Ms Roberta Woolcott
 Dawn & Graham Warner
 Ms Lee Wright
 Paul Wyckaert
 Anne Yabsley
 Mrs Robin Yabsley
 Anonymous (42)

SSO Patrons pages correct as of 1 January 2017

SSO Vanguard

A membership program for a dynamic group of Gen X & Y
 SSO fans and future philanthropists

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 Belinda Bentley
 Alexandra McGuigan
 Oscar McMahon
 Bede Moore
 Taine Moufarrige
Founding Patron
 Shefali Pryor
 Seamus Robert Quick
Founding Patron
 Chris Robertson &
 Katherine Shaw
Founding Patrons

VANGUARD MEMBERS

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 Elizabeth Adamson
 Xander Addington
 Clare Ainsworth-Herschell
 Simon Andrews
 Charles Arcus
 Phoebe Arcus
 Luan Atkinson
 Dushko Bajic *Supporting Patron*
 Scott Barlow
 Meg Bartholomew
 James Baudzus
 Andrew Baxter
 Belinda Besson
 James Besson
 Dr Jade Bond
 Dr Andrew Botros
 Peter Braithwaite
 Andrea Brown
 Nikki Brown
 Prof Attila Brungs
 CBRE
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 Dharmendra Chandran
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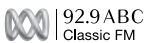
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