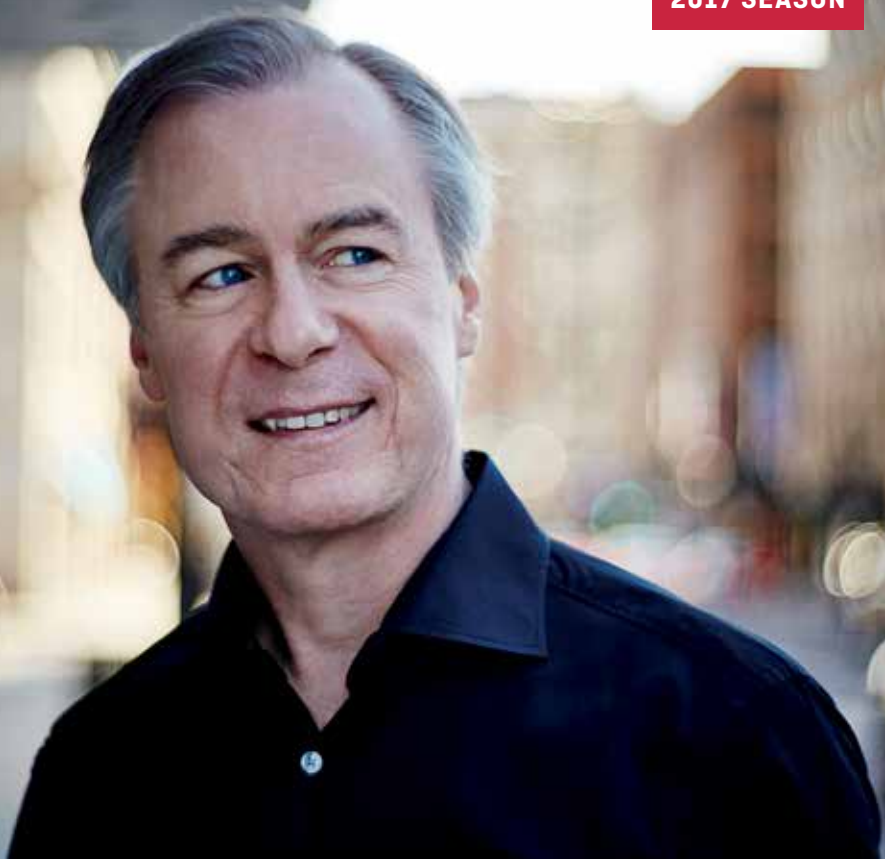


2017 SEASON



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson

The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Vengerov plays Brahms

Robertson conducts Tchaikovsky

SPECIAL EVENT

PREMIER PARTNER CREDIT SUISSE

Friday 17 February, 8pm

Saturday 18 February, 8pm

MONDAYS @ 7

Monday 20 February, 7pm

CREDIT SUISSE

Premier Partner



Principal Partner



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

CLASSICAL



Illustration: Cobby Malpas

Music under the Moon

Lantern Festival Celebration

GUAN XIA A Hundred Birds
Paying Homage to the Phoenix
BARTÓK The Miraculous Mandarin: Suite
TAN DUN Nu Shu – The Secret Songs of Women
Tan Dun conductor • **Liu Wenwen** suona
Louise Johnson harp

Supporting Partner
The University of Sydney
Confucius Institute
Sat 11 Feb 8pm



Organ Grandeur

Joseph Nolan in Recital

LISZT Fantasy and Fugue on 'Ad nos, ad salutarem undam', S.259
WIDOR Organ Symphony No.5
Joseph Nolan organ

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



Vengerov plays Brahms

Tchaikovsky 5

BRAHMS Violin Concerto
TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No.5
David Robertson conductor • **Maxim Vengerov** violin

Special Event
Premier Partner Credit Suisse
Fri 17 Feb 8pm
Sat 18 Feb 8pm



Robertson conducts Tchaikovsky

LIGETI Romanian Concerto
BARTÓK Four Orchestral Pieces
TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No.5
David Robertson conductor

Mondays @ 7
Mon 20 Feb 7pm



Colour & Movement

Ravel's Bolero

LIGETI Romanian Concerto
WESTLAKE Oboe Concerto **PREMIERE**
BARTÓK Four Orchestral Pieces
RAVEL Bolero
David Robertson conductor • **Diana Doherty** oboe

Meet the Music
Wed 22 Feb 6.30pm
Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 23 Feb 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 24 Feb 8pm



Young Russians

Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff & Shostakovich

PROKOFIEV Classical Symphony
RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No.1
SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No.1
Gustavo Gimeno conductor • **Daniil Trifonov** piano

APT Master Series
Wed 1 Mar 8pm
Fri 3 Mar 8pm
Sat 4 Mar 8pm

Daniil Trifonov in Recital

SCHUMANN
Kinderszenen (Scenes from Childhood)
Toccata
Kreisleriana
SHOSTAKOVICH 24 Preludes
and Fugues: selections
STRAVINSKY Three Movements from Petrushka
Daniil Trifonov piano

International Pianists in Recital
Presented by Theme & Variations
Piano Services
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Principal Partner





Credit Suisse warmly welcomes you to this SSO special event featuring Maxim Vengerov in a program conducted by Chief Conductor David Robertson.

In recent seasons we have played a part in bringing to Sydney audiences some of the world's great violinists, including Anne-Sophie Mutter and Pinchas Zukerman. This year sees the return of Maxim Vengerov to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra for the first time since 2000 and we are delighted to support his performances as part of our premier partnership with the SSO.

In 2000 Vengerov played Beethoven's Violin Concerto – one of the cornerstones of the violin repertoire. On this visit he brings the Brahms concerto, an equally magnificent work that highlights brilliant technique and supreme artistry alike. After interval, the inspiration will continue when David Robertson conducts Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony – music full of emotive power.

It's difficult to imagine a more stirring program to launch the SSO's 2017 subscription season at the Sydney Opera House. In a year that promises many highlights, this one is likely to shine in your memory all year, and we are proud to have played a role in bringing it about.

We hope you enjoy the concert and look forward to seeing you at future performances by the SSO.



John Knox
Chief Executive Officer
Credit Suisse Australia



**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

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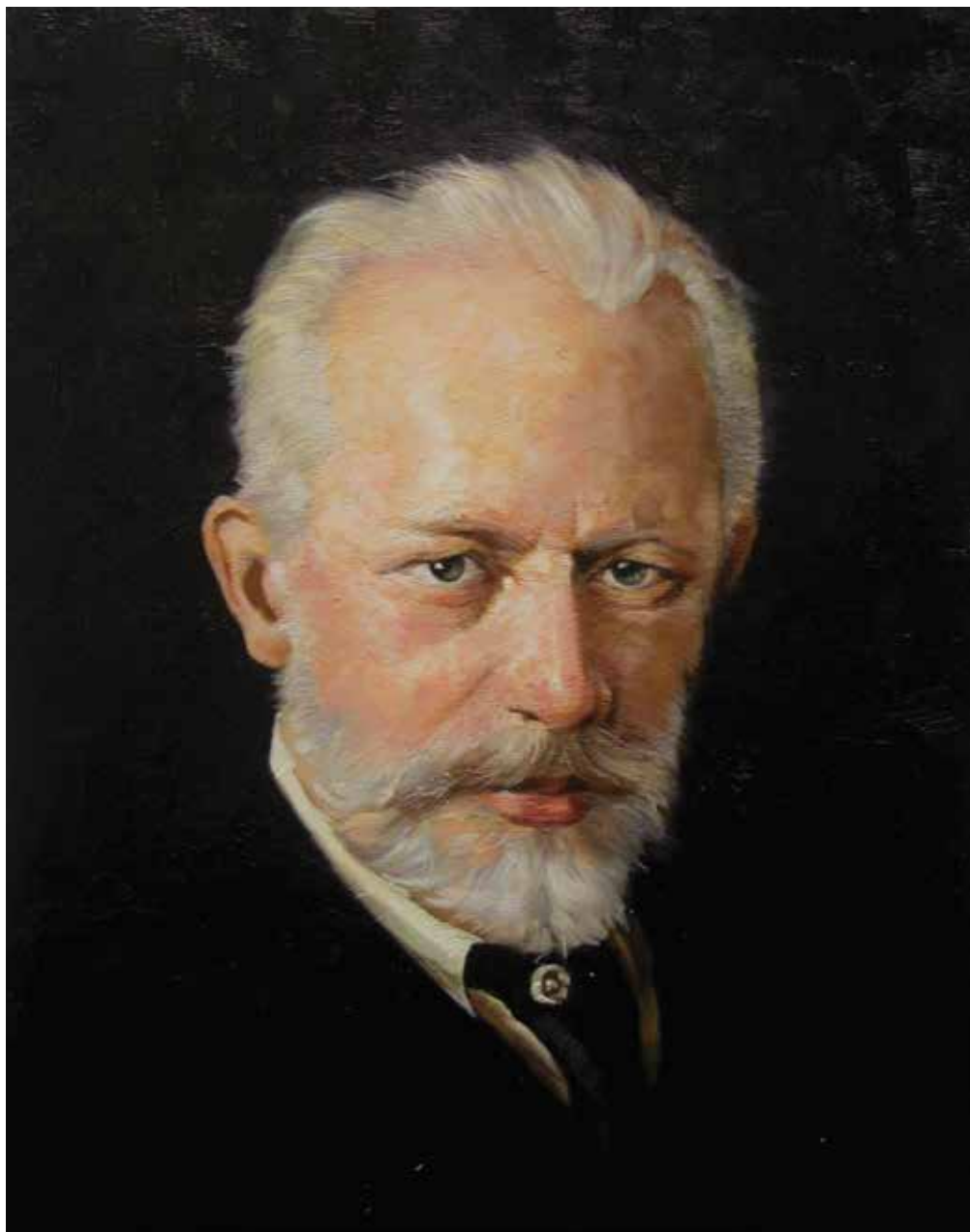
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CREDIT SUISSE 

Premier Partner



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Detail from a portrait of Tchaikovsky by Nikolai Dmitriyevich Kuznetsov – painted in 1893, the last year of the composer's life. It was praised by many, including the composer:

"I made the acquaintance of the painter N.D. Kuznetsov, who wished to paint my portrait, and this he carried out with exceptional success, as others have said and as I, too, think. Those citizens of Odessa who came to look at this portrait during the sittings expressed their extraordinary delight, amazement, and joy over the fact that such a splendid work of art was being painted in their city. The portrait was painted rather hurriedly, and that is why it may possibly not have the desired finish in the details, but in terms of its expression, lifelikeness, and authenticity it really is remarkable."



**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

SPECIAL EVENT
PREMIER PARTNER CREDIT SUISSE
FRIDAY 17 FEBRUARY, 8PM
SATURDAY 18 FEBRUARY, 8PM
.....
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

VENGEROV PLAYS BRAHMS

David Robertson *conductor*
Maxim Vengerov *violin*


JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)
Violin Concerto in D, Op.77

Allegro non troppo
Adagio
Allegro giocoso

INTERVAL

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)
Symphony No.5 in E minor, Op.64

Andante – Allegro con anima
Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza
Valse (Allegro moderato)
*Finale (Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace –
Moderato assai e molto maestoso – Presto)*

 | **92.9 ABC**
Classic FM

Saturday's concert will be recorded
by ABC Classic FM for broadcast on
Sunday 5 March at 2pm.

.....
Pre-concert talk by Scott Davie in
the Northern Foyer at 7.15pm.
For more information visit
sydney-symphony.com/speaker-bios

.....
Estimated durations:
38 minutes, 20-minute interval,
50 minutes
The concert will conclude at
approximately 10pm

.....
COVER PHOTO: Jay Fram

CREDIT SUISSE 
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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Johannes Brahms Violin Concerto in D, Op.77

Allegro non troppo
Adagio
Allegro giocoso

Maxim Vengerov *violin*

Cadenza by the soloist

Brahms spent the summers of 1877–79 in the lakeside village of Pörtschach in Carinthia, producing the first of his Op.74 motets, the Ballades and Romances for two voices and piano (Op.75), the Symphony No.2 and his Violin Sonata in G (Op.78) – all works which share an atmosphere of pastoral beauty shot through with nostalgia. But as Brahms scholar Karl Geiringer notes, the ‘crowning masterpiece’ of this time is the Violin Concerto.

The Concerto, like the G major Sonata, was composed for the great virtuoso Joseph Joachim, whom an ecstatic 15-year old Brahms had heard play the Beethoven Concerto. In 1853 their friendship began in earnest, with Joachim writing to Brahms’s parents of how ‘Johannes had stimulated my work as an artist to an extent beyond my hopes...my friendship is always at his disposal’. Brahms similarly admired Joachim – significantly as a composer rather than performer, saying that ‘there is more in Joachim than in all the other young composers put together’.

The Focus Group

In 1878 Brahms sent his friend, the legendary violinist Joseph Joachim, the solo part of his new violin concerto. Joachim told him that, while it was sometimes difficult to tell how a concerto would work from the violin part alone, it appeared at first glance to be a very pleasing and successful work.

‘I wish I could go through it with a violinist less good than you,’ Brahms wrote back, ‘for I am afraid you are not sufficiently blunt and severe.’

The composer then sent music to another friend, the conductor Hans von Bülow, who responded with the quip that Max Bruch had written a concerto *for* the violin, while Brahms had written one *against* the violin.

The violinist Henry Wieniawski, himself the composer of some fiendishly difficult violin concertos, also received a copy and declared it to be simply unplayable.

And when, after the premiere, the violinist Pablo de Sarasate was asked if he intended to play the new concerto, he responded (referring to the beginning of the *Adagio*): ‘I don’t deny that it is very good music, but do you think I could fall so low as to stand, violin in hand, and listen to the oboe play the only proper tune in the work?’

Keynotes

BRAHMS

Born Hamburg, 1833
Died Vienna, 1897

Brahms is often thought reactionary: he valued classical forms, admired composers of the past, and his choral music is firmly rooted in the traditions of the baroque period. Yet his musical language and manner of using the orchestra clearly represents mid-19th-century romanticism in all its richness and emotive power. It took Brahms 15 years to compose his first symphony; he was keenly aware of the looming shadow of Beethoven. But the second symphony followed swiftly four months later in 1877, and the violin concerto soon after.

VIOLIN CONCERTO

Brahms wrote this concerto for his good friend and violin virtuoso Joseph Joachim. Since Brahms was not a violinist, he consulted Joachim as he worked, sending him drafts and urging him to ‘mark those parts that are difficult, awkward, or impossible to play’. A composer himself, Joachim enthusiastically offered suggestions and composed a cadenza, which he performed at the concerto’s premiere. In the second movement *Adagio*, the solo violin steps back from the spotlight and plays ‘second fiddle’, accompanying an exquisitely lyrical solo from the oboe. The virtuosic last movement, an exuberant rondo, has a distinct gypsy character – a tribute by Brahms to his Hungarian violinist friend and collaborator.



While Joachim was intimately involved with the creation of early works of Brahms's chamber music, it was not, strangely enough, until those summers by the lake at Pörtlach in the 1870s that Brahms wrote solo music for his friend. Geiringer notes that, in the case of both concerto and sonata, Brahms 'conscientiously asked his friend's advice on all technical questions – and then hardly ever followed it', but in fact at crucial points Joachim's advice on technical matters was invaluable. This consisted mainly of tinkering with certain figurations to make them more gratifying to play. But Joachim was also a profoundly serious artist – like Brahms – and out of their collaboration came works in which the element of virtuosity never overshadows the musical argument, despite the work's many technical challenges. Joachim also wrote a cadenza for the concerto – still frequently heard today – but tonight's soloist performs his own.

The Violin Concerto has some of the expansive dimensions of Brahms's first piano concerto. This is especially true of the spacious first movement which, like that of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, takes up more than half the work's playing time, and which begins with a long, symphonic exposition of its main themes. Like its companion Second Symphony, the Concerto is in D major, a key which composers like Beethoven, Tchaikovsky

A place where 'so many melodies fly about that one must take care not to tread on them.'

BRAHMS DESCRIBES HIS SUMMER RETREAT IN PÖRTLACH

The First Performance

Joseph Joachim once said that the greatest of the German violin concertos, 'the one that makes fewest concessions', was Beethoven's, and that Brahms's concerto came closest to Beethoven's 'in its seriousness'.

So it's no surprise that he proposed, for the premiere of the Brahms, a program with Beethoven's Violin Concerto at the beginning, and the new concerto at the end. The middle was to be filled with songs, two movements from one of Bach's partitas for solo violin and an overture by Joachim himself.

Brahms had the kinds of doubts that occur to any thoughtful programmer: 'Beethoven shouldn't come before mine – of course, only because both are in D major. Perhaps the other way around – but it's a lot of D major – and not much else on the program.'

Nonetheless, the program went ahead as Joachim had planned. If nothing else, it indicates his great stamina as a performer – performing two such monumental, and for us similar, works on the one program. But Michael Steinberg offers the reminder that to Joachim and his listeners these were not two established masterpieces but 'one classic and a new and demanding work by a composer with a reputation for being difficult'.



Brahms and Joachim, 1855

and Sibelius used for violin concertos as it makes use of the instrument's natural resonance; like the Symphony it has something of a visionary Romantic tone.

Brahms originally thought to write the piece in four movements, making the central pair a scherzo and contrasting slow movement. But he wrote to Joachim that the 'middle movements – naturally the best ones – have fallen through. So I have substituted a feeble adagio'. Feeble is of course hardly the word for this piece: derived from the simplest of musical figures (the falling broken chord with which the oboe introduces the theme and the violin then begins) it evolves into one of Brahms's most soulful but restrained movements. As such it provides a wonderful contrast to the gypsy style finale, with its pyrotechnic solo line and exciting use of displaced accents.

Joachim premiered the piece in Leipzig in 1879, but the response was tepid, and only through Joachim's persistence did it gradually gain its rightful place in the standard repertoire. Brahms and Joachim fell out over the violinist's divorce in 1884, the rift lasting until Brahms wrote the Double Concerto for violin and cello in 1887. But that's another story.

GORDON KERRY © 2006

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

The SSO first performed the concerto in 1939 with soloist Jeanne Gautier and conductor Malcolm Sargent, and most recently in 2015 with conductor Daniel Blandulf and soloist Janine Jansen.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Symphony No.5 in E minor, Op.64

Andante – Allegro con anima

Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza

Valse (Allegro moderato)

Finale (Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace –

Moderato assai e molto maestoso – Presto)

Tchaikovsky might have been unsure about the first half of tonight's program. He is on record with some harsh and unfair criticisms of Brahms – 'scoundrel' and 'self-inflated mediocrity' among others. Ironically, he might have been equally unsure about the second half! By his own account, he found his Fifth Symphony repellent, gaudy and, worst of all, insincere – a tough assessment for a composer who admired the profundity of Beethoven but aspired to the sincerity of Bizet's *Carmen*.

And yet the Fifth Symphony was a public success, only the critics panned it. Tchaikovsky himself was bothered by the finale, which he thought horrible and vulgar. (Brahms, who liked the symphony as a whole, agreed on this point.) The critics prickled at his apparent rejection of the Austro- German symphonic tradition, somehow failing to hear the brilliance of his orchestrations, the compelling rhythms or his irresistible melodic invention.



Keynotes

TCHAIKOVSKY

Born Kamsko-Votkinsk, 1840

Died St Petersburg, 1893

Tchaikovsky represented a new direction for Russian music in the late 19th century: fully professional and cosmopolitan in outlook. He embraced the genres and forms of Western European tradition – symphonies, concertos and overtures – bringing to them an unrivalled gift for melody. But many music lovers would argue that it's his ballets that count among his masterpieces, and certainly it's Tchaikovsky's extraordinary dramatic instinct that comes to the fore in all his music, whether for the theatre or the concert hall.

FIFTH SYMPHONY

Tchaikovsky left this symphony without a narrative scenario or 'program', but his sketches and notes suggest that he'd begun with one in mind. Fate is the theme: doubt, struggle, resignation, faith and ultimately a kind of triumph. The music traces that emotional trajectory by following a harmonic journey first tried by Beethoven in his own Fifth Symphony: it begins in a minor key and ends in the major key.

The thing to keep in your ear is the very opening of the symphony: a motto theme played by two clarinets. This motto will return: as an interruption to the dreamy second movement, sneaking in at the end of the third movement waltz, and in a complete shift of character to begin the finale.

The Fifth Symphony [1888] belongs with those masterpieces written after Tchaikovsky had moved, in 1885, to a country house on the outskirts of Moscow. There, with a strict composing routine and a generous allowance from his friend and patron Nadezhda von Meck, he enjoyed a stable lifestyle and financial security. He had begun travelling, meeting composers and musicians of the day; he'd gained confidence as a conductor; his reputation as a musician was assured; he'd become interested in gardening. He was a new man, and his friends and family noticed.

But this neurotic and tormented composer was still irresistibly attracted – in a characteristically Russian way – to tragic subjects. And it is tragedy on an intimate scale. Even in large forms, such as the symphony, we hear what critic Terry Teachout describes as the joys and sorrows of the individual soul writ large.

In common with many 19th-century symphonies, the Fifth Symphony follows a long-range harmonic plan that embraces the separate movements, which are in turn given coherence by appearances of a unifying motto theme. And, beginning as it does in E minor and ending in E major, the symphony traces a journey of emotions. Although the techniques along the way are different, we could be describing another Fifth Symphony – Beethoven's. And although Tchaikovsky later said that the Fifth Symphony had no program, his preliminary notes reveal a debt, as in the Fourth Symphony, to the fundamental idea of Beethoven's Fifth:

Program of the First Movement of the Symphony:

Introduction. Complete resignation before Fate, or, which is the same, before the inscrutable predestination of Providence.

Allegro. (I) Murmurs, doubts, complaints, reproaches against XXX

(II) Shall I throw myself into the embraces of Faith???

[And in the corner of the page:] A wonderful program, if I could only carry it out.

What Tchaikovsky meant by 'XXX' has been the subject of much discussion. Most scholars believe it refers to the composer's homosexuality, but even those who disagree would surely acknowledge that it is a cause of some kind of profound suffering, from which the invocation of Faith suggests escape, and perhaps transformation. This is heard in the darkness-to-light or minor-to-major journey that Beethoven had first demonstrated and which by the end of the 19th century had come to represent the fundamental theme of man's tragic struggle against an inexorable fate.

It is Fate that is represented by the motto theme – gloomy and pessimistic, with the clarinets in their dark, low chalumeau register. As Gerald Abraham first noticed, the motto is similar to a melody from Glinka's opera *A Life for the Tsar* ('Do not

...tragic struggle
against an exorable
fate.

sadden the hour of our reunion’], which Tchaikovsky would have associated with the themes of resignation and sacrifice. It then reappears in different guises – most often as a kind of fanfare – always coinciding with some structural turning point and playing a symbolic role: interruption, warning, call of triumph.

In the first movement the Fate motto provides a slow introduction, leading to the two contrasting themes of the main movement: an austere march and a succession of graceful, spirited ideas. In these we hear the brilliance of Tchaikovsky’s orchestration, such as the ingenious way he gives characteristic ‘horn calls’ not to the horns but to the clarinets supported by the kind of ‘Harmonie’ wind band sound that Mozart loved.

The second movement – a singing *Andante* – begins with a minor-key chorale, from which emerges a dreamy horn solo in D major, above which Tchaikovsky wrote: ‘Oh, that I love you! O, my love! O, how I love...If you love me...With desire and passion.’ This glorious melody is developed, variation style, with different orchestral colours and ever increasing inventiveness. The blazing fanfares of the motto theme interrupt twice, before the movement dies away to a pulsing conclusion.

The third movement replaces the traditional scherzo with a waltz, which floats and soars over a prevailing mood of melancholy. The motto theme is held back until the end, when it steals into the ballroom, arm in arm with the clarinet and the bassoon.

The motto makes an immediate reappearance at the beginning of the finale, now in E major and played by the full string section. With these simple changes, Tchaikovsky has transformed the resigned and tragic ‘Fate’ theme into something triumphant and imposing. If, as scholar Roland J. Wiley has suggested, the motto theme corresponds to a Russian Easter chant, ‘Christ is risen’, then the finale represents a victory on a bigger scale than usual for the individualistic Tchaikovsky, and the ‘embraces of Faith’ in the composer’s early notes take on a new significance. There is a spirit of optimism and festivity, conveyed through a rich variety of themes, brilliantly elaborated. Even if, as a contemporary critic noted in 1889, those themes are ‘inferior to those of the previous movements’, the wealth of development and the movement’s artistic finish as a whole makes it ‘the work of a master of the first order’.

YVONNE FRINDLE © 2006

Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony calls for three flutes (one doubling piccolo), and pairs of oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and strings.

The SSO first performed the symphony in 1941, conducted by Percy Code, and most recently in 2014 with Thomas Søndergård.

The motto theme reappears in different guises...always coinciding with some structural turning point and playing a symbolic role: interruption, warning, call of triumph.



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**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

MONDAYS @ 7

MONDAY 20 FEBRUARY, 7PM

.....
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

ROBERTSON CONDUCTS TCHAIKOVSKY

David Robertson *conductor*

GYÖRGY LIGETI (1923–2006)

Concert Românesc

(Romanian Concerto for orchestra)

Andantino –

Allegro vivace –

Adagio ma non troppo –

Molto vivace

BÉLA BARTÓK (1881–1945)

Four Orchestral Pieces, Op.12

Preludio

Scherzo

Intermezzo

Marcia funebre

INTERVAL

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)

Symphony No.5 in E minor, Op.64

Andante – Allegro con anima

Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza

Valse (Allegro moderato)

Finale (Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace –

Moderato assai e molto maestoso – Presto)



92.9 ABC
Classic FM

The music in the first half of tonight's concert can be heard again in an SSO concert broadcast on ABC Classic FM on Saturday 4 March at 2pm; and the Tchaikovsky symphony on Sunday 5 March at 2pm. See page 19 for more details.

.....
Pre-concert talk by Scott Davie in the Northern Foyer at 6.15pm. For more information visit sydneysymphony.com/speaker-bios

.....
Estimated durations:
13 minutes, 22 minutes,
20-minute interval, 50 minutes
The concert will conclude at
approximately 8.55pm



Principal Partner

György Ligeti

Concert Românesc

(Romanian Concerto for orchestra)

Andantino –

Allegro vivace –

Adagio ma non troppo –

Molto vivace

It's difficult to imagine that this tuneful, vibrant music was once banned in Ligeti's native Hungary. But it *was* banned – Ligeti was granted only a single rehearsal in Budapest in 1951 and the work didn't receive a public performance until 1971.

What harm did a communist government see in music such as this, based on genuine folk melodies and drawing on the spirit of village bands? Surely that was the kind of music that would meet with approval? Ligeti explains: 'Under Stalin's dictatorship, even folk music was allowed only in a 'politically correct' form, in other words, if forced into the straitjacket of the norms of socialist realism...' Major-minor harmonisations were welcome and modal orientalisms à la Khachaturian were allowed, but 'Stravinsky was excommunicated'.

Ligeti's problem was that he had transcribed folk songs from their sources and had immersed himself in the authentic sounds and style of traditional music-making. But, he said, the 'peculiar way in which village bands harmonised their music, often full of dissonances and "against the grain", was regarded by the authorities as incorrect. A single 'wrong' note (in this case a foreign F sharp heard in the context of F major in the fourth movement) was reason enough for the apparatchiks to ban the entire piece.

This 'concerto for orchestra' is in four movements, played without pause, that alternate between slower, vocally inspired music and lively (*vivace*) dance-inspired music. In that contentious fourth movement you can hear a village fiddler in toe-tapping mode. In the plaintive third movement (*Adagio ma non troppo*, 'slow but not too much') a trio of horns is required to play without the aid of their valves – using only lip pressure to change notes – perhaps to evoke the sound of the alphorns Ligeti had heard in his childhood.

YVONNE FRINDLE © 2011

Ligeti's Concert Românesc calls for two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes (one doubling cor anglais), two clarinets and two bassoons; three horns and two trumpets but no lower brass; two percussionist and strings.

According to our records, this is the first time the SSO has performed the Concert Românesc.

Keynotes

LIGETI

Born Transylvania, 1923

Died Vienna, 2006

During the 20th century, musical style changed more rapidly than ever before. Ligeti's own journey as a composer mirrored that **diversity and change, and his musical language embraced the simplicity of folk song, the complexity of avant-garde techniques, and much in between.** His prominence jumped in 1968 when Stanley Kubrick used several of his pieces in the film **2001 – A Space Odyssey**, including ***Atmosphères*, *Aventures*, *Requiem***, and the luminous ***Lux æterna*** for 16 singers. The **Romanian Concerto**, composed in 1951, reflects the rich influence of folk dance on his music.



Béla Bartók

Four Orchestral Pieces, Op.12

Preludio

Scherzo

Intermezzo

Marcia funebre

Frustrated by the stodgy prevailing musical establishment, a disillusioned Béla Bartók withdrew from public musical life in Budapest in 1912. The New Hungarian Musical Society he had helped to found had folded after just four concerts owing to a lack of public support. His opera *Bluebeard's Castle* had been overlooked by the adjudicators of two competitions. Was it all worth the effort?

Bartók didn't stop composing but, as he wrote to a friend, 'I have resigned myself to write for my writing-desk only.' With little hope of a performance, the Four Orchestral Pieces were first written up in a shorthand version for two pianos, and were not fully orchestrated until 1921 when a performance actually beckoned. Partly because of the large orchestra that is required, the Four Pieces have remained rarely heard, and in fact were virtually unknown until Pierre Boulez began conducting them in the 1970s.

Unusually, given the Bartók we have come to know, the Four Orchestral Pieces contain few traces of the folk music that the composer had been researching since 1905. The title suggests the influence of Schoenberg and Webern, who had both recently written sets of 'Pieces for Orchestra', but the music itself is more indebted to Debussy, the great liberator who stands behind so many developments in 20th-century music. Bartók had become enthusiastic about Debussy after his friend and fellow composer Zoltán Kodály visited Paris for two months and returned with several Debussy scores. Bartók never met Debussy, but he devoured his music – he pored over the orchestration of *La Mer* and played several of Debussy's piano pieces in recitals.

In the Four Orchestral Pieces, Debussy's influence is most apparent in the texture and orchestration – the building up of a hazy, unfocused sound, a delicate blurring of many layers. But what makes the Four Pieces interesting and unique is the way these 'impressionistic' principles collide with hard-core 'expressionist' musical ideas.

The **Preludio** begins in a shimmering major tonality, darkened by an ominous horn call. This simple melody proves very flexible throughout the movement, providing the material for anguished high violin lines, a gentle flute solo... Although the orchestration glows with creamy string chords and rippling harps and piano, something shadowy underpins the music, prefiguring the 'night

Keynotes

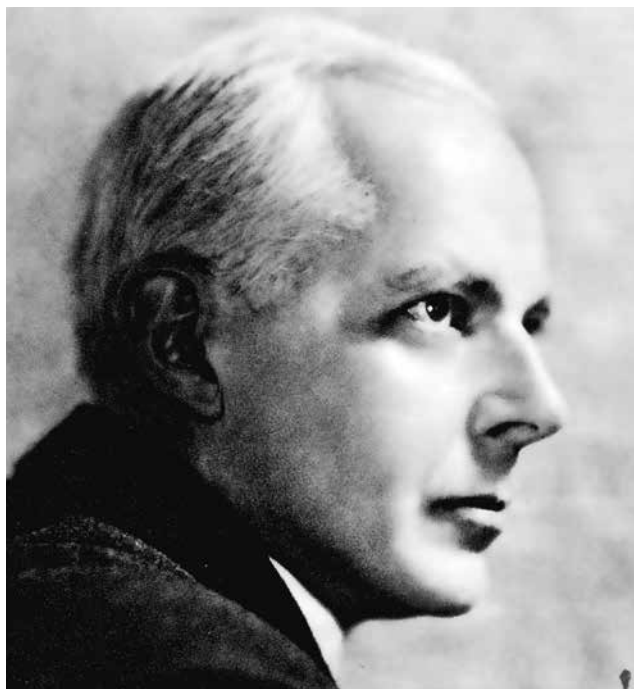
BARTÓK

*Born Nagyszentmiklós (Hungary)
now part of Romania, 1881
Died New York City, 1945*

Bartók is one of Hungary's most famous composers and an important figure in 20th-century music. He was also a collector and student of folk music (an early ethnomusicologist) and this influenced many of his works, especially in his use of melody, ornamentation and compelling, non-standard rhythms. He was also influenced by Debussy, Stravinsky and even Schoenberg. While piano students will probably recall his *Mikrokosmos*, he is best-known in the concert hall for his brilliant and evocative *Concerto for Orchestra*, one of his few symphonic works.

FOUR PIECES

In this work Bartók departs from his reputation as collector of folk songs to immerse himself in the influence of the French composer Debussy. The music began life in a shorthand version for two pianos and was orchestrated nine years later, revealing Bartók's grasp of orchestral colour and some magical sonic effects. Each of the four movements has a distinct character from the radiant and shimmering *Intermezzo* to the fierce *Scherzo*.



music' atmosphere Bartók would develop in several later compositions.

The following **Scherzo** gives us hard, uncompromising Bartók. Its beginning is particularly ferocious, with strings swarming around threatening brass motifs. The toughness, wild dissonance and dance-quality of this music look forward to the street music of the ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin*.

This violence is answered by what almost sounds like a gently rocking lullaby. But the tender siciliano is no more than a flickering light in an atmosphere of foreboding – Kodály called the **Intermezzo** a melancholy echo of *Bluebeard's Castle*.

The tragic epilogue to the set is a funeral march (**Marcia funebre**), a solemn procession that grows to an unbearable intensity with each reluctant step. There is a final call from the horns; it is as if a flame sputters twice, and we are left in darkness.

DAVID LANG © 2011

Bartók's *Four Orchestral Pieces* calls for a large ensemble of four flutes (two doubling piccolo), three oboes (two doubling cor anglais), four clarinets (two doubling both E flat clarinet and bass clarinet) and four bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon); four horns, four cornets, four trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion; two harps, celesta and piano; and strings.

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra gave the Australian premiere of the *Four Orchestral Pieces* in 2011; this is the SSO's first performance of the work.

'Debussy's great service to music was to reawaken among all musicians an awareness of harmony and its possibilities. In that, he was just as important as Beethoven, who revealed to us the meaning of progressive form, and Bach, who showed us the transcendent significance of counterpoint.'

BARTÓK

Turn to page 11 for the note on Tchaikovsky's *Fifth Symphony*.

MORE MUSIC

VENGEROV PLAYS BRAHMS

Maxim Vengerov's 1997 recording of the Brahms concerto with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Daniel Barenboim is available in a pairing with Brahms's Op.108 Violin Sonata in D minor, with Barenboim at the piano.

TELDEC 17144

TCHAIKOVSKY SYMPHONIES

Among the recent issues of the complete symphonies is the 6CD set from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Claudio Abbado. It's a treat for Tchaikovsky fans, with all the symphonies, the suite from *Nutcracker*, several tone poems, the *Romeo and Juliet* fantasy overture and the *1812* overture.

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LIGETI

For a thrilling and diverse selection of Ligeti's orchestral music, including the Concert Românesc, look no further than Volume II of *The Ligeti Project*, with the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Jonathan Nott. It also includes *Atmosphères*, which was used in the soundtrack for *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

TELDEC 88261

ROBERTSON CONDUCTS BARTÓK

David Robertson recorded the Four Pieces for Orchestra with the Orchestre National de Lyon, in an all-Bartók album from 2002 that was re-released last year. It also includes Bartók's Dance Suite for orchestra and his marvellous ballet score *The Miraculous Mandarin*.

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**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

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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.



BENJAMIN EALOVEGA

Maxim Vengerov

violin

Widely regarded as one of the world's most dynamic artists, Grammy award-winning violinist Maxim Vengerov has performed sold-out concerts with the world's most eminent orchestras and given solo recitals in every major city in the world.

Born in 1974, he began his career as a solo violinist at the age of five, won the Wieniawski and Carl Flesch international competitions aged 10 and 15 respectively, made his first recording at the age of ten, and went on to record extensively for high-profile labels, earning Grammy and *Gramophone* artist of the year awards, among others.

In 2007 he followed in the footsteps of his mentor, the late Mstislav Rostropovich, and turned his attention to conducting, and has since conducted major orchestras around the world. In 2010 he was appointed the first chief conductor of the Gstaad Festival Orchestra and in June 2014 graduated with a diploma of excellence from the Moscow Institute of Ippolitov-Ivanov with professor Yuri Simonov.

In the past few seasons Maxim Vengerov has appeared with many major orchestras – including the New York Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra and BBC Symphony Orchestra – often performing a major violin concerto in the first half and conducting a symphonic work in the second. 2013 saw the launch of the annual Vengerov Festival in Tokyo,

and an artist residency at the Barbican Centre London. That season he also accepted the position as Artist in Residence with the Oxford Philharmonic.

As well as many worldwide concerts and recitals the highlights of the 2015–16 season saw him perform in concert with the New York Philharmonic and Munich Philharmonic, and complete recital tours in Canada, East Asia, Europe and South America, as well as the fourth year of his Vengerov Festival in Japan. In 2015 is also toured Australia, performing in recital for Musica Viva. His previous appearances with the SSO were in 2000, performing in the Brisbane Festival and the Sydney 2000 Olympic Arts Festival, and in 1999 he appeared for the Melbourne Festival.

In 1997 Maxim Vengerov became the first classical musician to be appointed International Goodwill Ambassador by UNICEF. He plays the 1727 ex-Kreutzer Stradivarius.

Maxim Vengerov performs with the SSO on 17 and 18 February.

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.

THE ORCHESTRA



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Stuart Challender, SSO Chief Conductor and Artistic Director 1987–1991

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Jonathan Chissick
Ms Simone Chuah
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Dom Cottam & Kanako Imamura
Mr Tony Cowley
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 Mark Dempsey & Jodi Steele
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 E Donati
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 Ms Lyn Gearing
 Peter & Denise Golding
 Mrs Lianne Graf
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 Robert Havard
 Mrs Joan Henley
 Dr Annemarie Hennessy AM
 Roger Henning
 Mrs Jennifer Hershon
 In memory of my father,
 Emil Hilton
 A & J Himmelhoch
 Mr Aidan Hughes
 Mr & Mrs Robert M Hughes
 Susie & Geoff Israel
 Dr Mary Johnson
 Mr Michael Jones
 Mr Ron Kelly & Ms Lynne Frolich
 Margaret Keogh
 In memory of
 Bernard M H Khaw
 Dr Henry Kilham
 Jennifer King
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 Kevin & Susan McCabe
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 Mr Graham North
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 Ms Theanne Walters
 Mr Michael Watson
 Mr John Whittle sc
 Peter Williamson
 M Wilson
 Dr Wayne Wong
 Sir Robert Woods
 Ms Roberta Woolcott
 Dawn & Graham Warner
 Ms Lee Wright
 Paul Wyckaert
 Anne Yabsley
 Mrs Robin Yabsley
 Anonymous (36)

SSO Patrons pages correct as of 1 January 2016

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

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 Hilary Goodson
 Tony Grierson
 Sarah L Hesse
 Kathryn Higgs
 Peter Howard
 Jennifer Hoy
 Katie Hryce
 James Hudson
 Jacqui Huntington
 Matt James
 Amelia Johnson
 Virginia Judge
 Paul Kalmar
 Bernard Keane
 Tisha Kelemen
 Aernout Kerbert
 Patrick Kok
 Angela Kwan
 John Lam-Po-Tang
 Robert Larosa
 Ben Leeson
 Gary Linnane
 Gabriel Lopata
 Amy Matthews
 Robert McGrory
 Elizabeth Miller
 Matt Milson
 Dean Montgomery
 Marcus Moufarrige
 Sarah Moufarrige
 Julia Newbould
 Nick Nichles
 Edmund Ong
 Olivia Pascoe
 Jonathan Perkinson
 Stephanie Price
 Michael Radovnikovic
 Katie Robertson
 Dr Benjamin Robinson
 Alvaro Rodas Fernandez
 Prof. Anthony Michael Schembri
 Benjamin Schwartz
 Ben Shipley
 Toni Sinclair
 Patrick Slattery
 Tim Steele
 Kristina Stefanova
 Ben Sweeten
 Randal Tame
 Sandra Tang
 Ian Taylor
 Cathy Thorpe
 Michael Tidball
 Mark Trevarthen
 Michael Tuffy
 Russell van Howe &
 Mr Simon Beets
 Sarah Vick
 Mike Watson
 Alan Watters
 Jon Wilkie
 Adrian Wilson
 Yvonne Zammit

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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
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 Enrique Antonio Chavez Salceda
 Louis Chien
 Colin Clarke
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 Claire Cooper
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 Asha Cugati
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 Jennifer Drysdale
 Karen Ewels
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SALUTE

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Principal Partner

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OFFICIAL CAR PARTNER



TECHNOLOGY PARTNER



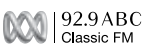
GOLD PARTNERS



SILVER PARTNERS



MEDIA PARTNERS



VANGUARD PARTNER



REGIONAL TOUR PARTNER

