



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Ashkenazy's Romeo and Juliet

Steinbacher plays Bruch

2018



APT MASTER SERIES

WED 19 SEP, 8PM • FRI 21 SEP, 8PM • SAT 22 SEP, 8PM



Principal Partner

SEPTEMBER



Tchaikovsky Cello Favourites

Ashkenazy conducts Strauss

TCHAIKOVSKY Andante cantabile
for cello and strings

TCHAIKOVSKY Rococo Variations
R STRAUSS Symphonia domestica

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor
Gautier Capuçon cello

Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 27 Sep, 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 28 Sep, 8pm
Great Classics
Sat 29 Sep, 2pm
Sydney Opera House



OCTOBER



The Last Days of Socrates

Haydn's Philosopher

MENDELSSOHN The Fair Melusina – Overture

HAYDN Symphony No.22 (The Philosopher)

DEAN (Text by Graeme William Ellis)

The Last Days of Socrates

Brett Dean conductor
Peter Coleman-Wright baritone
Andrew Goodwin tenor
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 11 Oct, 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 12 Oct, 8pm
Sydney Opera House



Thibaudet plays the Egyptian Concerto

With Sibelius 2

DEBUSSY Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun

SAINT-SAËNS Piano Concerto No.5 (Egyptian)

SIBELIUS Symphony No.2

Jukka-Pekka Saraste conductor
Jean-Yves Thibaudet piano

APT Master Series
Wed 17 Oct, 8pm
Fri 19 Oct, 8pm
Sat 20 Oct, 8pm
Sydney Opera House



Beethoven Nine

Ode to Joy

HAYDN Symphony No.104 (London)

BEETHOVEN Symphony No.9

Edo de Waart conductor
Amanda Majeski soprano
Caitlin Hulcup mezzo-soprano
Kim Begley tenor
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 25 Oct, 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 26 Oct, 8pm
Great Classics
Sat 27 Oct, 2pm
Sydney Opera House



French Fellowship

Stravinsky's Pulcinella

POULENC Suite française

RAVEL Three Poems by Stéphane Mallarmé

STRAVINSKY Pulcinella: Suite

Roger Benedict conductor
Caitlin Hulcup mezzo-soprano
Sydney Symphony Orchestra Fellows

Fri 26 Oct, 11am
Sydney Opera House



Playlist with Kees Boersma

Program to include:

BEETHOVEN Symphony No.1: 1st movement

PIAZZOLLA Contrabajissimo

R STRAUSS Metamorphosen (septet version)

Kees Boersma double bass

Tue 30 Oct, 6.30pm
City Recital Hall

WELCOME

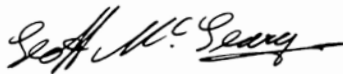


Welcome to this concert in the APT Master Series.

Tonight we welcome back two favourite SSO artists. We are joined by our much-loved former Chief Conductor, Vladimir Ashkenazy in searing masterpieces by Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev that paint the scenes of Shakespeare's tragedy of young love. And Arabella Steinbacher will play Max Bruch's passionate Violin Concerto with that glorious tone that has been compared to 'a river of gold, gleaming and unimaginably rich'.

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With APT, absolutely everything down to the last detail is taken care of, so that you're free to lose yourself in the moment. Our unforgettable luxury travel experiences continue to win us accolades each year at the National Travel Industry Awards. Please enjoy tonight's concert and we hope to see you again at APT Master Series performances through the year.



Geoff McGeary OAM
APT Company Owner



**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

APT MASTER SERIES

WEDNESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER, 8PM

FRIDAY 21 SEPTEMBER, 8PM

SATURDAY 22 SEPTEMBER, 8PM

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

Ashkenazy's Romeo and Juliet

Steinbacher plays Bruch

Vladimir Ashkenazy *conductor*

Arabella Steinbacher *violin*

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)

Romeo and Juliet – Fantasy Overture

MAX BRUCH (1838–1920)

Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor, Op.26

Vorspiel [Prelude] (Allegro moderato) –

Adagio

Finale (Allegro energico)

INTERVAL

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891–1953)

Romeo and Juliet – Highlights from the suites

Montagues and Capulets

Dance of the Antilles Girls

Young Juliet

Romeo and Juliet

Death of Tybalt

Romeo and Juliet Before Parting

Romeo at Juliet's Grave

The Death of Juliet

Friday's performance will be broadcast live by ABC Classic FM across Australia, with a repeat broadcast on Sunday 23 September at 2pm.

Pre-concert talk by Yvonne Frindle in the Northern Foyer, at 7.15 pm.

Estimated durations: 19 minutes, 24 minutes, 20-minute interval, 42 minutes

The performance will conclude at approximately 10.00pm.

COVER PHOTO: Keith Saunders

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra thanks Tom Breen and Rachael Kohn for their leadership support of Mr Ashkenazy's performances, with additional thanks to Constable Estate Vineyards, Andrew Kaldor AM, Renata Kaldor AO and Penelope Seidler AM.



Principal Partner

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Romeo and Juliet – Fantasy Overture

Despite his internationalist outlook, Tchaikovsky had once been quite friendly with Mili Balakirev, leader of the nationalist ‘Mighty Handful’ of composers, and in 1869 agreed to compose a work to a plan devised by him. Balakirev provided not only a ‘program’ (a sequence of events from Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* which Tchaikovsky would depict) but a formal design of key relations, tempo changes and the like. Late in 1869 Tchaikovsky sent Balakirev his sketches for the work. Balakirev responded in a letter to Tchaikovsky that this was ‘your first composition which draws itself to one in its total beauty’. This conclusion is a little strange when we read what went before: the opening theme, in Balakirev’s view, ‘does not paint fittingly the character of Friar Laurence’... [It requires an] ‘ancient Catholic character, resembling Orthodoxy, while your theme has...the character of a Haydn string quartet, the genius of burgher music, awakening a strong thirst for beer’. And when he hears the big tune with which Tchaikovsky depicts the lovers, Balakirev imagines that Tchaikovsky is ‘lying in the bath and that Artiha Padilla herself is rubbing your tummy with the hot fragrant suds...’ ‘Artiha Padilla’ refers to Désirée Artôt, a Belgian mezzo-soprano whom Tchaikovsky, despite being gay, in 1868 planned to marry.

Russian attitudes to homosexuality (among the upper classes) were more liberal than in Victorian Britain, but the composer had some sense of what ‘forbidden love’ means. His brother Modest wrote of the composer’s ‘luminous and sublime’ love for his school-friend Sergei Kirev, noting that without it ‘the music of *Romeo and Juliet*, of *The Tempest*, of *Francesca da Rimini* is not entirely comprehensible’. Moreover at precisely the time Tchaikovsky was writing *Romeo and Juliet* he was involved with a music student named Eduard Sack, who committed suicide in 1873. Tchaikovsky later wrote ‘It seems that I have never loved anyone so strongly as him...and his memory is sacred to me.’

Tchaikovsky begins by evoking Friar Laurence, whose disastrous intervention is an attempt ‘to turn your households’ rancour to pure love’. Much-feared Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick noted that *Romeo and Juliet* is ‘on such a grand scale that it is practically expanded into the format of the “symphonic poem” as used by Liszt’. After the slow introduction, there are two major subjects or themes: the first evokes the ‘ancient grudge’ between the houses

Keynotes

TCHAIKOVSKY

*Born Kamsko-Votkinsk, 1840
Died St Petersburg, 1893*

Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov were of the same generation. But where Rimsky-Korsakov had been almost entirely self-taught and belonged to a consciously nationalist school, Tchaikovsky represented a new direction for Russian music: fully professional and cosmopolitan in outlook. He embraced the genres and forms of Western European tradition, bringing to them his extraordinary dramatic sense – his ballets count among his masterpieces – and an unrivalled gift for melody.

FANTASY OVERTURE

Tchaikovsky called his *Romeo and Juliet* music a ‘fantasy-overture’ but it is really a symphonic poem, smelling as sweet as it would by any other name. The music adopts a conservative symphonic form and does not follow a strict narrative. At the same time, the form dovetails with the dramatic elements of the play: the kindly optimism of Friar Laurence in a chorale-like introduction; the brawling feud of the Montagues and Capulets, fiery and tumultuous; and the ill-fated passion of Romeo and Juliet portrayed with muted and intertwining melodies. The traditional ‘development’ section combines and opposes these elements – creating musical tensions to mirror those of the play – before bringing the music to a tragic climax.

of Montague and Capulet. The contrasting second subject is the lovers' melody, which Tchaikovsky is careful not to fully elaborate on its first appearance – reflecting the initial frustration of the lovers' passion. These themes are conventionally developed and recapitulated before the work's final pages, which may depict the funeral march of the lovers and 'glooming peace' which descends on the two houses.

GORDON KERRY © 2007

Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* fantasy overture calls for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, cor anglais and two bassoons; four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and percussion (cymbals, bass drum); harp and strings.

The *Romeo and Juliet* fantasy overture was first performed in Moscow on 16 March 1870, conducted by Nikolai Rubinstein. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed it in 1940 under Thomas Beecham, and most recently in 2013 under Vladimir Ashkenazy.



‘Oh tarry, night of
ecstasy! Oh night of
love, stretch thy dark
veil over us’

◀ **Frank Dicksee**
‘Romeo and Juliet’ –
Southampton City Art Gallery

Max Bruch

Violin Concerto No.1 in G minor, Op.26

Vorspiel [Prelude] (Allegro moderato) –

Adagio

Finale (Allegro energico)

Max Bruch's First Violin Concerto is one of the greatest success stories in the history of music. The violinist Joseph Joachim, who gave the first performance of the definitive version in 1868, and had a strong advisory role in its creation, compared it with the other famous 19th Century German violin concertos, those of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. Bruch's, said Joachim, is 'the richest, the most seductive.' (Joachim was closely associated as performer with all four of these concertos, and with the creation of Brahms's Concerto, which he premiered in 1879). Soon Bruch was able to report that his concerto 'is beginning a fabulous career'. With his first important large-scale orchestral work, the thirty year-old Rhinelander from Cologne had a winner. Joachim thought the first version, when Bruch sent it to him, 'very violinistic', and singled out the slow movement, 'which I shall especially enjoy hearing'. Indeed this is the core of the work, hailed by a leading German concert guide as 'perhaps the most rewarding piece of music that has ever been written for the violin'.

The success of this concerto was to be a mixed blessing for Bruch. Few composers so long-lived and prolific are so nearly forgotten except for a single work (*Kol Nidrei* for cello and orchestra is Bruch's only other frequently performed piece, its use of Jewish melodies having erroneously led many to assume that Bruch himself was Jewish). Bruch followed up this violin concerto with two more, and another six pieces for violin and orchestra. But although he constantly encouraged violinists to play his other concertos, he had to concede that none of them matched his first. This must have been especially frustrating considering that Bruch had sold full rights in it to a publisher for the paltry sum of 250 thalers.

In 1911 an American friend, Arthur Abell, asked Bruch why he, a pianist, had taken such an interest in the violin. He replied 'because the violin can sing a melody better than the piano can, and melody is the soul of music.'

It may have been instinctive, as Donald Tovey observed, for Bruch to write beautifully. Nevertheless, this violin concerto was the result of long preparation and careful revision. He did not feel sure of himself, regarding it as 'very audacious' to write a violin concerto, and reported that between 1864 and 1868 'I rewrote my concerto at least half a dozen times, and conferred with x violinists'. The most important of these was Joachim. Many years later Bruch had reservations about the publication of his correspondence with Joachim about the concerto, worrying that 'the public would virtually believe when it read all this that Joachim composed the concerto, and not I'.

Keynotes

BRUCH

Born Cologne, 1838

Died Berlin, 1920

More than any other German composer, Bruch was the true successor of Mendelssohn, and their respective violin concertos share a family likeness. Bruch's next best-known work is his *Kol Nidrei*, an Adagio on Hebrew Melodies for cello and orchestra. On the strength of that work alone (Bruch was a Protestant Christian), his music was later banned by the Nazi party.

VIOLIN CONCERTO NO.1

After Mendelssohn's concerto, Bruch's first is probably the most popular Romantic concerto in the repertoire. Bruch conducted the first performance in 1866, then revised it substantially in 1868. Bruch sold the work outright to the publisher Simrock for a pittance and never received another penny from the growing number of performances. Sadly, though he composed two more violin concertos, neither caught the public imagination in the same way as the first.

Unusually, not just the opening section but the whole of the first movement is cast as an introductory *Vorspiel* (Prelude), which the violin begins and ends with cadenzas. A held note for the orchestral violins leads to the memorable *Adagio* that forms the concerto's emotional centre. The finale is by turns lyrical and virtuosic, and takes on a decidedly Hungarian Gypsy feel.

As we have seen, Joachim thought Bruch was on the right track from the first. Like Mendelssohn, Bruch had brought the solo violin in right from the start, after a drum roll and a motto-like figure for the winds. The alternation of solo and orchestral flourishes suggests to Michael Steinberg a dreamy variant of the opening of Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto. With the main theme launched by the solo violin in sonorous double-stopping, and a contrasting descending second subject, a conventional opening movement in sonata form seems to be under way. The rhythmic figure heard in the plucked bass strings plays an important part. But at the point where the recapitulation would begin, Bruch, having brought back the opening chords and flourishes, uses them instead to prepare a soft subsiding into the slow movement, which begins without a pause. Bruch called the first movement *Introduzione-Fantasia*, then changed its heading to *Vorspiel* (Prelude), and asked Joachim rather anxiously whether he shouldn't call the whole work a Fantasy rather than a Concerto. 'The designation "concerto" is completely apt', replied Joachim. 'Indeed, the second and third movements are too fully developed for a Fantasy. The separate sections of the work cohere in a lovely relationship, and yet – and this is the most important thing – there is sufficient contrast.'

The songful character of the violin is to the fore in Bruch's Adagio. Two beautiful themes are linked by a memorable transitional idea featuring a rising scale. The themes are artfully and movingly developed and combined, until the second 'enters grandly below and so carries us out in the full tide of its recapitulation' (Tovey).

Although the second movement comes to a quiet full close, the third begins in the same warm key of E flat major, with a crescendo modulating to the G major of the Finale, another indication of an overarching unity. The Hungarian or Gypsy dance flavour of the last movement's lively first theme must be a tribute to the native land of Joachim, who had composed a 'Hungarian' Concerto for violin. Bruch's theme was surely in Brahms's mind at the same place in the concerto he composed for Joachim. Bruch's writing for the solo violin, grateful yet never gratuitous throughout the concerto, here scales new heights of virtuosity. Of the bold and grand second subject, Tovey observes that Max Bruch's work 'shows one of its noblest features just where some of its most formidable rivals become vulgar'. In this concerto for once Bruch was emotional enough to balance his admirable skill and tastefulness. The G minor Violin Concerto is just right, and its success shows no sign of wearing out.

© DAVID GARRETT 2004

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

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the Bruch Violin Concerto in 1941 with Percy Code conducting and soloist Phyllis McDonald; its most recent performance took place on the 16 November 2013 with Pinchas Zukerman, violin, and Vladimir Ashkenazy, conductor.

'Because the violin can sing a melody better than the piano can, and melody is the soul of music.'

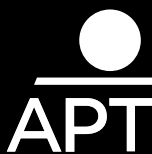
BRUCH, A PIANIST, EXPLAINING WHY HE SO LOVED THE VIOLIN



The concerto's success was a mixed blessing for Bruch, since he'd sold full rights in it for a paltry sum.

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Sergei Prokofiev

Romeo and Juliet: Highlights from the suites

Montagues and Capulets

Dance of the Antilles Girls

Young Juliet

Romeo and Juliet

Death of Tybalt

Romeo and Juliet Before Parting

Romeo at Juliet's Grave

Juliet's Death

Between 1932 and 1936 Prokofiev spent increasingly long periods back in the USSR, having left to pursue his career abroad in 1918. Aware that the Soviet system had created a vast new, but largely inexperienced, audience for classical music, he said in an interview with *Izvestia* in 1934 that what the USSR needed was:

‘light serious’ or ‘serious light’ music; it is by no means easy to find the term which suits it. Above all, it must be tuneful, simply and comprehensively tuneful, and must not be repetitious or stamped with triviality.

Prokofiev may often have regretted the decision to return. Many of his first attempts to write for the new Soviet man and woman were derided as ‘simplistic’ or, at the same time, ‘formalist’ (Soviet-speak for ‘nasty and modern’). Certain works, however, achieved the ideal of ‘light serious’ music and ensured a precarious period of grace for the composer at the end of the 1930s.

The greatest among them was the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, yet it had a difficult birth. Leningrad’s Kirov Theatre rejected the proposal because of the tragic ending (‘the dead cannot dance’), leading Prokofiev to consider a happy ending. Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre commissioned the work, but found it too complicated, so the premiere was given in Brno, Czechoslovakia in 1938. After much revision it finally made it to the Moscow stage in 1940.

Musicologist Stephen Walsh calls the ballet a ‘brilliant fusion of post-Imperial romanticism and scuttling, unpredictable Prokofievism’. The score is notable for its clarity of orchestration – not that this precludes moments of great opulence, such as the pile-up of sonority which opens Act III and presages the tragic events about to unfold, or the divided string groups which give the young lovers a halo of rich sound. Prokofiev’s characterisation is masterful, whether in the arrogance of the march which depicts the Capulets at their ball, the tenderness of the lovers.

Keynotes

PROKOFIEV

Born Sontsovka, Ukraine, 1891

Died Moscow, Russia, 1953

Sergei Prokofiev left the Soviet Union soon after the October Revolution in 1917. He returned nearly 20 years later to discover new audiences flocking to concert halls. ‘The time is past when music was composed for a circle of aesthetes. Now, the great mass of people in touch with serious music is expectant and enquiring...’ He played a significant role in Soviet culture, combining his innate traditionalism with the astringent neo-classical style he helped invent.

ROMEO AND JULIET

Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet* ballet music first reached the public ear in 1936, through concert suites that Prokofiev devised, carefully selecting and re-working the music, often fusing several episodes from the ballet to create a single movement. The Soviet premiere of the ballet itself took place later, in 1940, overcoming protests from the dancers – including Galina Ulanova as Juliet – that the music was ‘undanceable’. For this concert, Vladimir Ashkenazy has assembled his own selections from the three suites Prokofiev prepared from the ballet.

TIMELINE

ROMEO AND JULIET

- 1934** Friend and chess partner Sergei Radlov approaches Prokofiev with the idea of a ballet based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. A contract is signed with the Moscow Bolshoi after the Kirov Theatre backs out.
- 1935** Radlov and Prokofiev work out the scenario: a morality tale of 'young, strong and progressive people fighting with feudal traditions'. The music is completed by summer but the Bolshoi declares it impossible to dance to.
- 1936** Despite large-scale revisions, the music is criticised for its difficulty and its deviation from the play (Prokofiev originally planned a happy ending). The Bolshoi cancels the production.
- 1936–37** The first concert suites (two for orchestra and one for piano) are favourably received.
- 1938** The stage premiere of the ballet (using the concert suites) is given in Brno, Czechoslovakia.
- 1939** The Kirov takes up the ballet and assigns it to Leonid Lavrovsky. Much to Prokofiev's annoyance, Lavrovsky sets about making changes to the score and requests the addition of bravura variations and more group dances.
- 1940** On 11 January the ballet receives its Soviet premiere in Leningrad (St Petersburg) and is declared an unqualified success.
- 1945** Prokofiev prepares a third concert suite.
- 1946** The ballet is transferred to Moscow at Stalin's request.
- 1954** A feature film is made.
- 1956, 59** The ballet reaches the West with British and American premieres.
-

The complete ballet contains more than 50 numbers and lasts well over two hours. Prokofiev created from it three concert suites, two in 1936 and a third ten years later, and the music was first heard in concert rather than in the theatre. (In this the ballet shares a point in common with Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*.)

Montagues and Capulets (known in the ballet as the Dance of the Knights) comes from the second of Prokofiev's three concert suites. The scene is Capulet's ball in Act I and the solemnity of the dance is overlaid by a stormy atmosphere suggestive of the aggressive and uncompromising rivalry between the two families. The music also includes the Duke's warning to the brawlers from the beginning of the ballet.

The **Dance of the Antilles Girls** depicts maidens who dance in Juliet's chamber after she has taken Friar Laurence's potion and fallen into a deathlike sleep ('a cold and drowsy humour'). The dance is a symbolic vision suggesting Juliet's drugged state even as the character herself slumbers. The lilies are no ordinary ones, therefore, but a species grown in the Antilles and renowned for their narcotic powers.

Young Juliet is wonderfully characterised by Prokofiev as she playfully teases her nurse. At the entrance of Juliet's mother and a discussion of the arranged marriage to Paris, the music turns subdued and stately, with a hint of the troubles to come.

The first act ends with the soaring love music of **Romeo and Juliet** – the balcony scene pas de deux.

In Act II of the ballet, the plot takes a tragic turn and reaches a crux when Romeo, against his will, kills Tybalt in a duel. Prokofiev's own scenario makes a key distinction between the duel between Tybalt and Mercutio and the one that follows, when Romeo avenges Mercutio's death. 'Unlike the duel between Tybalt and Mercutio, in which the opponents did not take account of the seriousness of the situation and fought because of their high spirits, here Tybalt and Romeo fight furiously, to the death.' In **Death of Tybalt** the volatile music builds to a peak of intensity with Prokofiev boldly repeating the same chord, 15 times, stark silence between each – musical death throes. The ominous thudding timpani beats then continue, underpinning the distraught funeral march that concludes Act II of the ballet.



After Romeo has slain Tybalt he is doomed to exile and the music portrays the secret visit of **Romeo and Juliet Before Parting**. Later, Juliet fakes her death with the help of Friar Lawrence's potion, and is entombed by her mourning family. Prokofiev uses the music from this scene again for **Romeo at Juliet's Grave**, where conveys Romeo's epic grief when he discovers Juliet, apparently dead, and takes his own life. The music recalls the themes used in the earlier love scenes. The ballet ends with the sublimely poignant **Death of Juliet**. She awakes in the tomb where she has been laid, to find Romeo's body beside her. In despair she takes his dagger and the act of stabbing herself is clearly portrayed in the music.

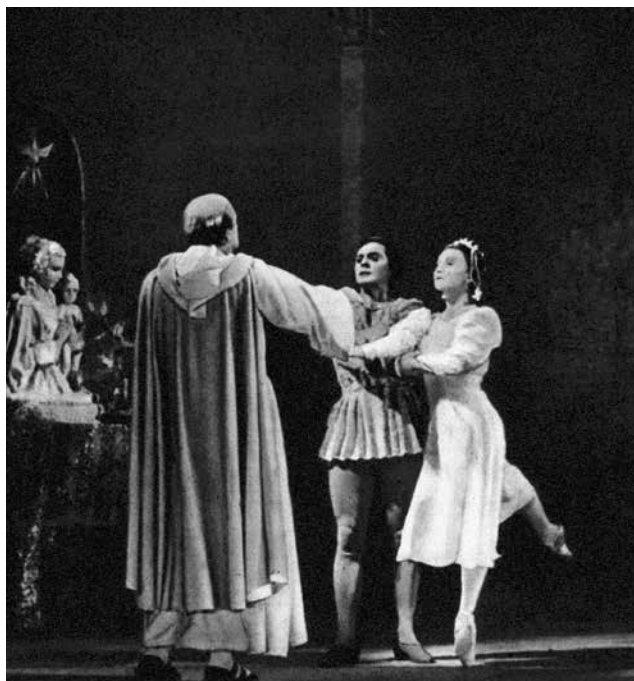
ADAPTED FROM NOTES BY GORDON KERRY ©2005 AND BRUCE BROWN

Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* music calls for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon; four horns, two trumpets, cornet, three trombones and tuba; tenor saxophone; timpani and percussion (glockenspiel, tambourine, cymbals, snare drum, bass drum, maracas and triangle); harp and piano (doubling celesta); and strings (with the addition of an optional viola d'amore in some performances).

The Sydney Symphony first performed selections from *Romeo and Juliet* in 1953 with Eugene Goossens conducting, and most recently in 2009 under Vladimir Ashkenazy. The orchestra's most recent performance of the complete ballet music was in 2004 as a live accompaniment to the 1966 film starring Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn, with Carl Davis conducting.



Prokofiev 1918 in New York
Library of Congress



◀ **Scene from Act II of Romeo and Juliet, with Galina Ulanova in the role of Juliet.**

The photo is probably from the Soviet premiere of the work in 1940. From Sergei Prokofiev *Autobiography – Articles – Reminiscences* (Moscow 1955)

A young woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a black off-the-shoulder dress, is the central focus. She is holding a violin and looking slightly to her right with a thoughtful expression. In the background, several other people in formal attire are visible, including a man in a tuxedo and a woman in a black dress. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the woman's face and the violin.

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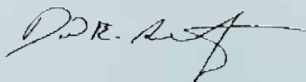
The music we share with you in the Concert Hall tonight is the artistic realisation of pen and ink, ideas on paper – it may be a bit different to how it was in rehearsal, or how it sounds on other nights. That's one of the gifts of live music-making – the shared energy, here and now, makes each performance special.

It's exactly what we strive to achieve each time we present a new season to you – a season that is special, that anticipates the enthusiasm you bring as a music lover, that stimulates your curiosity and inspires you to enjoy more music with us.

The 2019 season is wonderfully diverse. The Season Opening Gala places Diana Doherty – a musical treasure – centre stage with Nigel Westlake's *Spirit of the Wild* oboe concerto, reprising one of the most exciting premieres of my time in Sydney. The operas-in-concert continue with Britten's *Peter Grimes*, headlined by a powerhouse duo – Stuart Skelton and Nicole Car. And, in a first for Australia, an amazing piece of theatre-with-music: Tom Stoppard and André Previn's satirical *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*.

My final program in 2019 – American Harmonies – brings together all-American showstoppers: the lyrical beauty of Copland's *Appalachian Spring*; a new concerto by Christopher Rouse that showcases the incredible talent of one of our own musicians, bassoonist Todd Gibson-Cornish; and *Harmonielehre* by John Adams – one of the greats and a very dear personal friend. That spirit of warm friendship between you, me and the musicians is so important to our musical community.

Please join us in 2019 and let's celebrate together.



David Robertson

The Lowy Chair of
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Highlights – David Robertson Conducts

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| FEBRUARY | Season Opening Gala – Diana Doherty performs Westlake
The Sydney Symphony Orchestra
and Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra |
| JUNE | Lang Lang Gala Performance – Mozart Piano Concerto No.24 |
| JULY | Britten's <i>Peter Grimes</i>
with Stuart Skelton and Nicole Car |
| AUGUST | Keys to the City Festival
Kirill Gerstein – piano concertos by Grieg, Ravel and Gershwin |
| NOVEMBER | André Previn and Tom Stoppard's <i>Every Good Boy Deserves Favour</i> – A play for actors and orchestra
with Mitchell Butel and Martin Crewes

American Harmonies – Adams, Copland and Rouse |





Jean-Yves Thibaudet Saint-Saëns' Piano Concerto No.5 The Egyptian

Jean-Yves Thibaudet is no stranger to the Sydney Symphony, and each and every performance over the past three decades of our musical partnership has been memorable. Now, after a five-year absence, he returns to perform Saint-Saëns' *Egyptian* piano concerto, full of colour and evocative themes and demanding the utmost in dazzling virtuosity. Jukka-Pekka Saraste returns to Sydney with the music of fellow Finn Jean Sibelius. Prepare for a night of power, poetry and revelation.

DEBUSSY Prelude to the
Afternoon of a Faun
SAINT-SAËNS
Piano Concerto No.5 (Egyptian)
SIBELIUS Symphony No.2

Jukka-Pekka Saraste
conductor
Jean-Yves Thibaudet piano

Wednesday 17 October, 8pm
Friday 19 October, 8pm
Saturday 20 October, 8pm
Sydney Opera House



Presented as part of the
APT Master Series



Playlist with Kees Boersma

Behind every great work of music is a great story, and the same goes for great musicians. Our Dutch-born Principal Double Bass Kees Boersma has enjoyed a fantastically rich career with prestigious orchestras and ensembles around the world, so it's not surprising that his playlist is suitably cosmopolitan.

With music from the European tradition of Beethoven, Bartók and Richard Strauss, to music from the Tango king Astor Piazzolla, Kees' musical story is one that's sure to inspire and entertain.



TUESDAY 30 OCTOBER 6.30PM
City Recital Hall



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

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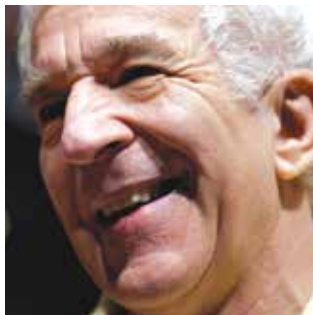
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KEITH SAUNDERS

Vladimir Ashkenazy *conductor*

Russian-born Vladimir Ashkenazy inherited his musical gift from both sides of his family: his father David Ashkenazy was a professional light music pianist and his mother Evstolia (née Plotnova) was daughter of a chorus master in the Russian Orthodox church. He first came to prominence in the 1955 Chopin Festival in Warsaw and after winning the 1956 Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels. He established himself as one of the premier pianists of the 20th century before expanding his musical interests to include conducting.

A regular visitor to Sydney, Vladimir Ashkenazy first came to Australia, as a pianist, in 1969. Since then he has conducted the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in subscription concerts and composer festivals. He was the orchestra's Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor from 2009 to 2013. Highlights of his tenure were the Mahler Odyssey, a concert performance of Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* and several international tours.

Vladimir Ashkenazy's associations with other orchestras include the Philharmonia Orchestra (London) which made him their Conductor Laureate in 2000. The Philharmonia's *Voices of Revolution: Russia 1917* at London's Southbank was a recent project. He is also Conductor Laureate of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and of the NHK Orchestra, Tokyo, and Principal Guest Conductor of the Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana. Previous posts included Music Director of the European Union Youth Orchestra and Chief

Conductor of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. He maintains strong links with the Cleveland Orchestra and Deutsches Symphonie-orchester Berlin (where he held titled positions).

Ashkenazy maintains his devotion to the piano, these days mostly in the recording studio. Recent recordings include Bach's French Suites. His discography also records his work as a conductor, including direction of Rachmaninoff's orchestral music. Milestone recordings include *50 Years on Decca* - a box-set celebrating his long-standing relationship with the label.

Beyond performing and conducting Ashkenazy has been involved in many TV projects, inspired by a vision of music maintaining a presence in the mainstream media and reaching as wide an audience as possible.

Vladimir Ashkenazy most-recently appeared with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in November 2017 conducting an all-Shostakovich concert with Ray Chen as soloist.



SAMMY HART

Arabella Steinbacher

violin

Born into a family of musicians, Arabella Steinbacher has played the violin since the age of three and studied with Ana Chumachenco at the Munich Academy of Music from the age of nine. Arabella Steinbacher came to international attention when she made her debut with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France under Sir Neville Marriner in Paris in 2004.

Since then she has appeared in her native Germany with orchestras such as the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Staatskapelle Dresden, West German Radio Symphony Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic and North German Radio Symphony Orchestra under conductors such as the late Lorin Maazel, Christoph von Dohnányi, Riccardo Chailly, Herbert Blomstedt, Christoph Eschenbach, Charles Dutoit, Marek Janowski, Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Thomas Hengelbrock.

Internationally, Arabella Steinbacher appears with orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, London Symphony, São Paulo Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra and NHK Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo. She has appeared at festivals such as Salzburg and the 'Proms'.

Recent recordings include a pairing of the Hindemith and Britten Violin Concertos with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by

Vladimir Jurowski and *Fantasies, Rhapsodies and Daydreams* with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo and Lawrence Foster. She has recorded the Bruch concerto with the Gulbenkian Orchestra and Lawrence Foster.

Recent performances have included appearances with the Copenhagen Philharmonic at the Tivoli Concert Hall, with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseilles and Lawrence Foster at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, at the ACAPO festival in the Canary Islands, with the Philharmonia in London, and with the Dresden Philharmonic and Michael Sanderling in Edinburgh.

As CARE ambassador Arabella Steinbacher continually supports people in need. In December 2011 she toured though Japan commemorating the tsunami catastrophe of the same year. The DVD *Arabella Steinbacher – Music of Hope* with recordings of this tour was later released.

Arabella Steinbacher first performed with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 2005 (Brahms' Violin Concerto), returning in 2008 to play Korngold's concerto. Her most recent performance with the orchestra took place in 2013, when she played Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto. Arabella Steinbacher plays the 1716 'Booth' Stradivari, generously loaned by the Nippon Music Foundation.

ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA

PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS



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 five 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.

2018 is David Robertson's fifth season as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.

THE ORCHESTRA



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THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF CONDUCTOR
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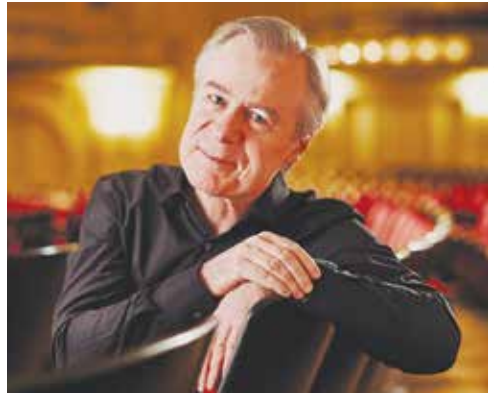


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'Knowing that there are such generous people out there who love music as much as I do really makes a difference to me. I have been so lucky to have met Fran and Tony. They are the most lovely, giving couple who constantly inspire me and we have become great friends over the years. I'm sure that this experience has enriched all of us.'
Catherine Hewgill, Principal Cello



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Premieres in 2018...

JULIAN ANDERSON *The Imaginary Museum* – Piano Concerto with soloist Steven Osborne
2, 3, 4 August (Australian premiere)

BRETT DEAN *Cello Concerto* with soloist Alban Gerhardt
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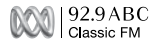
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