



**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
The Lowy Chair of
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

DRAMATIC

MOZART

A Mozart Celebration

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

Thursday 1 February, 1.30pm

EMIRATES METRO SERIES

Friday 2 February, 8pm

GREAT CLASSICS

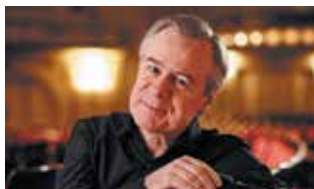
Saturday 3 February, 2pm



Principal Partner



CLASSICAL



Seductive Mozart

MOZART
 Così fan tutte: Overture
 Piano Concerto No.16 in D, K451
 Piano Concerto No.17 in G, K453
 Symphony No.39

David Robertson conductor • Emanuel Ax piano

Mondays @ 7
Mon 5 Feb, 7pm
 APT Master Series
Wed 7 Feb, 8pm
 Sydney Opera House



Magnificent Mozart

MOZART
 The Marriage of Figaro: Overture
 Piano Concerto No.19 in F, K459
 Piano Concerto No.27 in B flat, K595
 Symphony No.41 (Jupiter)

David Robertson conductor • Emanuel Ax piano

APT Master Series
Fri 9 Feb, 8pm
Sat 10 Feb, 8pm
 Sydney Opera House



Taikoz and the SSO

BRITTEN
 The Prince of the Pagodas: Highlights
WATANABE Dreams
LEE & CLEWORTH Cascading Waterfall
CLEWORTH Waves
SKIPWORTH Breath of Thunder **PREMIERE**

Gerard Salonga conductor • Taikoz taiko ensemble
 Ian Cleworth Artistic Director • Riley Lee shakuhachi
 Kaoru Watanabe shinobue, taiko

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 Meet the Music
Thu 22 Feb, 6.30pm
 Kaleidoscope
Fri 23 Feb, 8pm
Sat 24 Feb, 8pm
 Sydney Opera House



Mozart and the French Connection

FAURÉ Pelléas et Mélisande: Suite
DEBUSSY arr. Silvestrini Rhapsody
 for cor anglais and orchestra
MOZART Wind Serenade in E flat, K375
BIZET Symphony in C

François Leleux conductor, oboe, cor anglais

Mozart in the City
Thu 22 Feb, 7pm
 City Recital Hall
 Tea & Symphony
Fri 23 Feb, 11am
 Sydney Opera House

SSO PRESENTS



Evanescence

Two-time GRAMMY award-winners Evanescence will be making their Sydney Opera House debut with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra to celebrate their fourth studio album *Synthesis*.

Amy Lee lead singer-songwriter and piano
 Tim McCord bass • Will Hunt drums
 Troy McLawhorn lead guitar/backing vocalist
 Jen Majura guitar

Tue 13 Feb, 8pm
Wed 14 Feb, 8pm
 Sydney Opera House



Star Wars
A New Hope In Concert

Film Live with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Experience *Star Wars* on the giant screen with John Williams' epic score played live by your SSO.

Nicholas Buc conductor

Fri 16 Feb, 7.45pm
Sat 17 Feb, 5.45pm
 ICC Sydney Theatre^A

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On that note, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Emirates Metro Series and I hope that you enjoy this world-class experience.



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 1 FEBRUARY, 1.30PM

EMIRATES METRO SERIES

FRIDAY 2 FEBRUARY, 8PM

GREAT CLASSICS

SATURDAY 3 FEBRUARY, 2PM

.....
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

Dramatic Mozart

A Mozart Celebration

David Robertson *conductor*

Emanuel Ax *piano*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Don Giovanni: Overture

Piano Concerto No.14 in E flat, K449

Allegro vivace

Andantino

Allegro ma non troppo

INTERVAL

Piano Concerto No.20 in D minor, K466

Allegro

Romanze

Rondo (Allegro assai)

Symphony No.40 in G minor, K550

Molto allegro

Andante

Menuetto (Allegretto)

Allegro assai



**92.9 ABC
Classic FM**

Friday's performance will be broadcast live by ABC Classic FM and again on Sunday 4 February at 2pm.

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

.....
Estimated durations: 7 minutes, 21 minutes, 20-minute interval, 30 minutes, 35 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 3.40pm (Thu), 10.10pm (Fri), 4.10pm (Sat).

.....
COVER IMAGE: Portrait of Mozart by Barbara Krafft [1819]



Principal Partner



This portrait of Mozart by his brother-in-law Joseph Lange is an incomplete enlargement of a miniature, dating from around 1782–83 when the first of the concertos in this program was begun. The outline of the missing portion suggests the finished version would have shown the composer seated at the piano.

Dramatic Mozart

With this set of concerts we plunge into A Mozart Celebration: an intense and stimulating exploration of the genius of Mozart – dramatist, symphonist and piano virtuoso. The piano concertos Mozart composed for Vienna sit at the heart of the programming over these ten days, ranging from the relatively early concerto in E flat heard in this concert to his final piano concerto, which we perform next week. And with two concertos in each program, there’s an opportunity to hear the astonishing breadth and fertility of Mozart’s imagination.

Mozart was acclaimed as one of the finest pianists of his generation – his concertos were all written to provide repertoire for his own concerts – but, as our soloist Emanuel Ax said in a recent interview, ‘above all...he was a man of the theatre, and that’s what makes his concertos so endlessly interesting, so exciting and brilliant’. And as David Robertson points out, the individual movements of the concertos ‘are like mini scenes from an opera’.

Mozart’s theatrical instincts especially come to the fore in this concert, which begins with the ominous and supremely dramatic gestures of the *Don Giovanni* overture and includes the Piano Concerto No.20 in D minor and from Mozart’s last great trilogy of symphonies, No.40 in G minor. These have always been among the best-loved works of Mozart and it’s no accident that they are in minor keys with their attendant stormy emotions and delicious gloom. Even for listeners who tend to think of Mozart as ‘polite’, elegant and cheerful, ‘dramatic Mozart’ will always capture the imagination and move the spirit.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Don Giovanni: Overture

Mozart begins his opera *Don Giovanni* with the crashing D minor chords of the overture – the same chords that will signal the arrival of the Don's stone guest (and his doom) in the final act. Ominous and inexorable, they are juxtaposed with a nervous heartbeat in the strings and hesitant woodwind tones. In every way, they set the tone for the musical drama to follow.

It was the librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte, who suggested the theme to Mozart: the well-known tale of Don Juan, the libertine who seduces woman after woman until, having killed the father of one of his conquests, he is finally dragged off to hell by a stone statue of the dead man. There is a delicious irony in this, as Da Ponte was himself a notorious womaniser, gambler and brothel-keeper, and the stories of his exploits (admittedly taken largely from his own rather self-promoting *Memoirs*) are many. Despite losing all his teeth, reportedly when supplied by a rival with nitric acid to 'cure' a gum abscess, he retained what can only be described as a kind of animal magnetism, and women, it seems, couldn't keep away. Da Ponte more than once found himself on the road, one step ahead of the authorities.



Keynotes

MOZART

Born Salzburg, 1756

Died Vienna, 1791

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart made his name as a child prodigy and to his family and admirers, he was the 'miracle that was born in Salzburg'. But, though he died at 35, he lived long enough to shuck off the prodigy's reputation and make his reputation as a keyboard virtuoso and composer. He produced an unrivalled body of mature work, perhaps most tellingly in a trio of operas that more closely approached perfection than anything anybody had previously done: *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Magic Flute* and *Don Giovanni*.

DON GIOVANNI OVERTURE

An 18th-century opera overture was intended to grab your attention and bring your focus to the stage. The overture to Mozart's *Don Giovanni* certainly does that, with its startling and ominous beginning, but those same crashing chords also anticipate the climactic finale of the opera in a way that was relatively new for overtures of the time.

◀ **Don Juan was a popular subject in the 18th century and well into the 19th. This painting from the 1830s by Alexandre-Évariste Fragonard shows Don Giovanni and the statue of the Commendatore.**

The story of Don Juan was very familiar to 18th-century audiences, and Da Ponte's libretto combines elements from several different versions, including the original Spanish play by Tirso da Molina, *El burlador de Sevilla* (The Playboy of Seville) and Molière's comédie *Dom Juan ou Le Festin de pierre* (Don Juan or The Feast with the Statue). Nor was this the first time the story had been set as an opera: eight months before Mozart, Giuseppe Gazzaniga achieved great success with his one-act opera *Don Giovanni Tenorio ossia Il convitato di pietra* (Don Giovanni, or The Stone Guest). Goethe in 1787 expressed amazement at the way the story could still attract the common folk: 'No one could live until he saw Don Juan roasting in Hell and the Commendatore, as a blessed spirit, ascend to Heaven.'

Mozart's opera, however, is more than a simple morality play. Indeed, there is some question as to exactly how it should be described. Mozart in his thematic catalogue called it an *opera buffa* ('comic opera'), but the score and the libretto both describe it as a *dramma giocoso* or 'playful drama' – a term which some take to be a simple alternative to the term 'opera buffa' but which had also been used to describe the blend of serious and comic characters and turns of plot, in a realistic narrative style, pioneered by librettist Carlo Goldoni from around 1750. Certainly, despite the sober ending and moral epilogue, there are plenty of comic elements. The opera has been described as a 'perilous balance' of humour and tragedy, and the overture establishes this from the start, as the slow and imposing introduction, with its crashing chords and whisperings and murmurings from the violins, emerges into a bright and energetic *Allegro* section in D major. In the context of the opera, Mozart allows the music to glide seamlessly into the opening scene; for concert performances, he composed a 13-bar ending to round off the overture.

Legend would have us believe that Mozart procrastinated so much about the composition of this overture that on the eve of the opera's premiere he still hadn't written it. Another story has Mozart's wife Constanze keeping him awake to write the music and ensuring all was in order for the copyist to work on the day of its first performance. Whatever the case, the overture made it in time for the raising of the curtain on the opera's first performance on 29 October 1787.

ADAPTED IN PART FROM A NOTE BY NATALIE SHEA
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The overture to *Don Giovanni* calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets; timpani and strings.

The SSO first performed the overture in 1939, conducted by Bernard Heinze, and most recently in the 2002 Discovery series, conducted by Richard Gill.

...a 'perilous balance'
of humour and
tragedy...

INTERLUDE

In the Land of the Piano Concerto, Mozart is King

Oh to have been in Vienna in the 1780s! Listening to the orchestra and waiting for Mozart himself to begin playing one of his own concertos... New music, but anticipated with delight by those who had heard Mozart do it before. We, on the other hand, in 2018, will be hearing music we've probably heard before... perhaps – many of us will have heard at least one Mozart piano concerto. For those new to the Mozart experience, there could hardly be a better introduction than his piano concertos, featuring the composer-as-virtuoso on his main instrument. In Mozart's concerts, this was the main event. For us, too: programming in each concert one symphony, but *two* piano concertos.

Something is ephemeral here, remains in the moment. Years ago a pianist and a conductor asked me if they could change the Mozart concerto for their concerts in Sydney. They had been playing it in other cities, and wanted a refresh. I had to say no – the concerto they wanted to play instead had been heard too recently here. So in the (advertised) concerto, the pianist improvised different cadenzas each night. Mozart improvised, too, and not just in cadenzas. At one of his performances in Vienna, an observer was astonished that the music paper Mozart had in front of him was blank!

Although Mozart's piano concertos were performed by himself, his pupils, his sister and his admirers, nothing in the press of his time discusses any one of the concertos as such. His concertos were considered less as individual 'works' than as specimens of a genre, written for performance as part of musical daily business – not 'classics' but popular music, to be enjoyed, used up, then replaced by newer works. Hearing two Mozart concertos one after another, we can recapture some of this immediacy.

Yet these concertos were already on their way to becoming classics. Only three of Mozart's symphonies were published during his lifetime, as against seven of his piano concertos.

Listening to Mozart piano concertos, we hear what makes them classics. It's hard to disagree that 'Mozart enriched the concerto form with a larger number of masterpieces than any other of the great composers'. Or that 'the piano concerto as a significant genre can almost be said to have been invented by Mozart'. And: 'No other department of Mozart's work is quite so rich in productions of the first rank.'

Classics, then, but not bound by rules or carved in stone. In his book *Mozart and his Piano Concertos*, Cuthbert Girdlestone enthused over how their apparent uniformity disappears with familiarity: 'The feeling is never the same from one to the other... each has a personality of its own and the variety of their inspiration shows itself ever greater as we travel more deeply into them.'

'Vienna is the land of
the piano'

MOZART

Hearing more than one Mozart piano concerto reveals common features. The musical dialectic of the Viennese classical style in the 18th century was masterfully evolved by Haydn, primarily in symphonies and string quartets, and by Mozart, in piano concertos as well. It is a style based on dramatic opposition and reconciliation of contrasted but related tonalities or harmonic centres.

In the concertos, this form is defined mainly in the first movements. Many a concerto's beginning sounds as if it could continue as a symphony (e.g., in these Mozart Celebration concerts, K451 in D major and K466 in D minor). But there's a difference: the soloist's entry needs to be prepared. The piano will then take part in the presentation of the themes. Often the piano brings its own musical idea ('solo subject'). After the full 'exposition' – first orchestra, then orchestra with piano – comes a comparatively brief game with the ideas thus far, and often new ones, in a fantasia of virtuosic invention. Then the themes are re-traversed, now all in the same tonal region, leading to the soloist's own fantasia display, elaborating the concluding cadence: the 'cadenza'.

Mozart's concertos incomparably match soloist and orchestra, especially the wind instruments. They interact in an amazing variety of ways, with kaleidoscopically shifting colours. The initial theme is usually in common time, often like a march (K451, K459). K449 (heard in the Dramatic Mozart program) is rarer in being in triple time, giving a more urgently nervous effect. The last concerto of all, K595 (Magnificent Mozart), is one of a kind – beginning, as does Symphony No.40, with accompaniment, then an almost languid theme, rising and falling.

Second and third movements can be variations (the finale of K453) or sonata form (the second movement of K 459). Or what Mozart would call a 'romanze': the second movement of K451, and explicitly in K466 (one of only two Mozart piano concertos in a minor key), where the idyll is interrupted by a furiously rushing episode. In the finale of K466, and in that of the F major concerto K459, there is a blend of virtuosity, entertainment and 'learned' contrapuntal writing. Mozart was shifting the concerto's centre of gravity closer to the end, as he did in his last symphonies.

There are more great Mozart piano concertos than great symphonies. In the interplay of the one with the many, Mozart found something ideally matching his artistic personality. Often the solo piano behaves like a character in an opera, comic, full of sentiment, or serious. His piano concertos epitomize how instinctively made was Mozart for drama in music. Like his operas, the piano concertos make us declare him a genius.

**Mozart's concertos
incomparably match
soloist and orchestra...
They interact in an
amazing variety of
ways...**

Mozart

Piano Concerto No.14 in E flat major, K449

Allegro vivace

Andantino

Allegro ma non troppo

Emanuel Ax *piano*

Mozart wrote to his father that this concerto 'is one of a quite peculiar kind, composed more for a small orchestra rather than a large one' – specifically, it could be 'performed *a quattro* without wind instruments', although the wind parts add greatly to the colour of the music and are rarely omitted. Completed on 9 February 1784, after a year without a new piano concerto from Mozart, K449 begins the amazing series of 12 concertos which Mozart wrote at the rate of about one a month during each of the following winters. Although the concerto was composed for the use of Mozart's pupil Barbara Ployer, Mozart does seem to have played it himself in his benefit concert of 17 March 1784, and he reported that 'it won extraordinary applause'.

This is the first of Mozart's really great concertos composed in Vienna, but it is quite unlike any of the others. The triple time of the opening movement is found in only two other concertos (K413 and K491), but its effect here is quite different. As so rarely in Mozart's music, one is reminded of another composer: of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. Girdlestone, in his study of Mozart's piano concertos, comments on the mood of this first movement: 'unstable, restless...sometimes petulant and irascible'. Another Mozart specialist, Denis Forman, speaks of its 'slightly dotty intensity'.

The instability is in evidence from the beginning of the **first movement**, where the first four bars already suggest three different keys, the second bar hinting at the minor mode. After a fiery, almost ferocious theme, the second subject appears in the dominant key, a procedure unique in Mozart's concertos, where this feature of sonata form comes after the entry of the soloist. This second, yearning subject, in B flat, is underpinned by repetitions of that note. When the tonic key, E flat, is established, there is an assertive new subject, whose trilling conclusion will play an important part later in the movement. After this restless opening, the soloist enters with a straightforward, direct statement of the opening theme, but soon the strings join in; the close collaboration of piano and orchestra allows only the briefest passages of piano virtuosity. The fantasy development begins with a game between the trills and an arpeggio figure from the piano, but the playfulness gives way briefly to broader, less busy earnestness in preparation for

Keynotes

MOZART

In 1781 Mozart moved from Salzburg, where he felt stifled, to Vienna. There he found a fresh audience that was eager to hear him as a composer and as a performer, and in his piano concertos the two opportunities were combined – a sure-fire way to make his name in a new city.

PIANO CONCERTO K449

In 1782 Mozart composed a set of three piano concertos, shrewdly orchestrated so that they could be offered for sale as playable with just a string quartet accompaniment ('*a quattro*'). He seems to have begun this concerto in E flat major around the same time and its wind parts are similarly 'optional', but for some reason he set it aside for more than a year. It was eventually completed in 1784 and dedicated to his student Barbara Ployer, evidently an extremely accomplished musician.

the reprise. Mozart's cadenza, provided for Barbara Ployer, is brief and vigorous.

The Badura-Skodas (pianist Paul and musicologist Eva), in *Interpreting Mozart at the Keyboard*, find a Schubertian intimacy in the **slow movement** of this concerto, a moderately paced *Andantino* consisting of a songful theme in two strains. The orchestra states the first as an introduction; the second is heard only once the piano has entered with a repeat of the first. The pattern is then repeated twice, with subtle variations, in which the accompaniment of the second strain, in broken left hand chords (Alberti bass) plays an important role.

The theme of the **last movement** is, as Girdlestone points out, one of the few Mozart rondo themes which is not tuneful. All the more fascinating are the surprises and diversity Mozart produces, like a conjurer, from this single theme which dominates the movement, making it almost a set of variations. The theme is in swift walking gait, and its main interest is in its rhythm. So simple is its outline that Mozart is able to add to it a kind of embroidery, and also to hint teasingly at its return, making the real returns all the more telling. Twice there is a passage in crossed hands for the soloist, a feature Mozart seems to have enjoyed including when composing for a female virtuoso, as in the finale of the concerto K271, composed in Salzburg for Mlle 'Jeunehomme'. After the cadenza, the theme returns one last time but in a new gait, a skipping 6/8 time. Exploiting this, Mozart gives the soloist one last charming and surprising idea. Orchestral phrases beginning with an empty beat are capped by a clinching piano phrase in the right hand, which affirms the first beat of the bar and the home key. This turns out to be the soloist's last bow, and once the concerto is known, it is anticipated with delight.

This program note cites several Mozart authorities, all advocates of a concerto still too little known. Arthur Hutchings, in his *Companion to the Mozart Piano Concertos*, headed his list of those he considered unjustifiably neglected with this one. Since he wrote in 1948, the situation hasn't changed much – this orchestra has performed it only once before, in 2009. Perhaps pianists fear that audiences will agree with Denis Forman that this is 'a strange wanderer among the concertos'. Once heard, however, it is not easily forgotten.

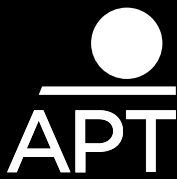
DAVID GARRETT © 2002/2018

The concerto K449 calls for an orchestra comprising two oboes, two horns, and strings.

The SSO first performed this concerto in 2009 with soloist Amir Farid and Michael Dauth directing from the violin.



Mozart with his sister Nannerl at the piano. Detail from the Mozart family portrait, painted by Della Croce in 1780–81.



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Mozart

Piano Concerto No.20 in D minor, K466

Allegro

Romanze

Rondo (Allegro assai)

Emanuel Ax piano

Cadenzas by Beethoven (*Allegro*) and Hummel (*Rondo*)

Of all Mozart's piano concertos there is one that has long been counted as more popular than its fellow masterpieces. In our own time, the D minor concerto (K466) dominates the concert hall and especially the recording studio.

The fondness of musicians and audiences for the Piano Concerto in D minor is an old one. When we declare a liking for its drama and passion we're in good company: Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Brahms, just to begin. And this is the only Mozart concerto that has never slipped in popularity. Beethoven played it in a 1795 concert to benefit the composer's widow, and in the years that followed, the concerto was revered alongside *Don Giovanni* and the Requiem – dark, brooding passions and turbulent musical gestures being the key to the 19th-century imagination.

The D minor concerto represented a profoundly romantic conception of Mozart, a Mozart who found his 'native soil' in 'the realm of grandeur, of turmoil...whose everlasting tempests and earthquakes must needs have sealed his early doom'. The major key concertos did not fit this 'romantic stylisation' of the composer, and they languished in the early years of the 19th century.

Around the 1830s, perceptions shifted and Mozart became the epitome of rococo charm and a nostalgic classicism. Schumann could listen to the stormy G minor symphony (K550), for example, and hear nothing but 'cheerfulness, placidity, grace – hallmarks of the art of Antiquity'! Although the D minor concerto was never supplanted, concertos such as the exuberant 'Coronation' (K537 in D) became enormously popular, and by the 1860s the Concerto in A (K488) was in the repertoire of the young Johannes Brahms.

As modern listeners, we're inclined to side with the Romantics and admire the D minor concerto for its subjective effect on us. The key of D minor evokes the world of *Don Giovanni* (completed two years later in 1787), and suggests an emotional theme of vengeance, death and the demonic. The concerto itself is a theatrical experience, and its drama is found not only in its affective gestures – the turbulence, the passion – but in its intrinsic musical contrasts. But while we notice the drama and

Keynotes

MOZART

At the time of composing his D minor piano concerto, Mozart, recently turned 29, was approaching the height of his popularity and success in Vienna, establishing himself as the best keyboard player in town. Central to his reputation were self-promoted subscription concerts, which showed him as both composer and performer before the widest possible audience. The D minor concerto was premiered by the composer at one of these on 11 February 1785, just one day after Mozart had entered it into his catalogue.

PIANO CONCERTO K466

The D minor concerto is the first of just two that Mozart composed in a minor key. The mood is already unsettled at the outset, with the panting, off-beat pulsations of the upper strings and the harmonically unstable sweeping motions of the lower strings beneath them. When the piano enters, it does so with a gentle, despairing melody that it never shares with the rest of the orchestra. The slow movement too, despite its famously beautiful main theme, is torn apart by a turbulent middle section. At the end of the concerto, Mozart seems to stick out his tongue with an abrupt, happy ending in D major.

tension in the D minor concerto, what Mozart's father Leopold considered remarkable was its artfulness, its delightful construction and *its exceptional difficulty*.

The **Allegro** first movement rivals the 'little G minor' symphony (No.25) in its atmosphere. From the outset, throbbing syncopations are undercut by a menacing 'slide' figure in the basses; the winds steal in individually; and 'lightning' strikes. This music is inherently orchestral in character and quite unsuitable for the piano – the stage has been set for a concerto in which the soloist and orchestra stand in contrast. Rather than compete with the dramatic gestures of the opening, the piano enters with its own theme, at once lyrical and pensive, and it's only later that the soloist's themes are connected with those of the orchestra.

With this concerto Mozart is breaking new ground: his first concerto in a minor key and the first of what are sometimes described as his 'symphonic concertos'. Mozart gives more musical material to the orchestra; he occasionally places the soloist in an accompanying role; and he enriches the sound with trumpets and drums.

In other respects, Mozart is simply being fashionable, not least with his second movement, entitled **Romanze**. This genre was increasingly taking the place of the customary adagio slow movement, but despite its newness it represented pure nostalgia: archaic in its style, simple in its ideas, poignant and noble in its expression. Mozart's *Romanze* is no exception: an innocent rondo in the unexpected but relaxed key of B flat major. The piano begins unaccompanied, the mood is genteel. But the drama of the theatre intrudes midway, with a violent shift to G minor and a return of the instability of the first movement.

The **finale** is also introduced by the piano alone, and this time it is the soloist who has the 'symphonic' gesture: a vigorous opening outlining a chord, suggestive of the 'Mannheim rocket' so admired in orchestral music of the time. It is enough to shatter the mood of the *Romanze* and launch us into one of Mozart's few minor-key rondos. Reminiscent of the first movement, powerful and typically 'orchestral' ensemble passages are set against lyrical solo themes, which in turn allude to themes from the *Allegro*. The movement is full of ambiguities and quirks until the opportunity for a miniature cadenza, or *Eingang*, returns the music to D major for a Classical conclusion.

ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY YVONNE FRINDLE © 2004

Mozart's Piano Concerto in D minor calls for an orchestra of flute with pairs of oboes, bassoons, horns and trumpets; timpani and strings.

The SSO first performed the concerto in 1939 with Kathleen Herbert as soloist and Bernard Heinze conducting, and most recently in 2012 with Angela Hewitt as soloist and Hannu Lintu conducting.

February 1785

An unrehearsed premiere...

The D minor piano concerto was premiered on 11 February 1785. It was an 'incomparable' concert, according to Leopold Mozart, and attended by a 'vast concourse of people of rank'. The orchestra was excellent – a fortunate thing since the copyist was still writing out the parts for the superb new concerto when Mozart's family arrived and the composer 'had not even found time to play through the Rondo because he had to supervise the copying'.



Mozart

Symphony No.40 in G minor, K550

Molto allegro

Andante

Menuetto (Allegretto)

Allegro assai

A Puzzle

The genesis of the trilogy of Mozart symphonies that 19th-century cataloguers labelled Nos. 39–41 has long puzzled Mozart experts. Mozart himself tells us that he completed the three over the summer of 1788, in close succession between 26 June and 10 August, this one on 25 July. So the problem is not when they were composed, but *why*.

During his Viennese years, Mozart seldom took up his pen without the prospect of a fee, a performance, or publication (ideally all three). And yet, no certain proof has emerged of any such prospects awaiting these symphonies.

So why did Mozart bother to write three new symphonies at all, at a time when his interest in the form seemed all but dead? By 1788, he had been living in Vienna for seven years. Yet he had composed only three new symphonies in this time (Nos. 35, 36 and 38), compared with well over a dozen piano concertos, half-a-dozen operas, and numerous chamber works. Moreover, all three previous symphonies were in answer to out-of-town requests, from Salzburg, Linz and Prague respectively. Vienna itself had asked for no new symphonies from Mozart at all.

Following Haydn?

So perhaps the spur for Mozart's unexpected renewal of interest in the symphony was his older friend, Joseph Haydn (though, if so, it took a Haydn expert, David Wyn Jones, thinking outside the square, to suggest it). In December 1787, the Vienna firm of music engravers, Artaria, with which both Haydn and Mozart dealt, announced the publication of Haydn's six 'Paris' symphonies. They were issued in two sets of three, the first containing symphonies in the keys of C major, G minor, and E flat major. Was it a coincidence that Mozart chose precisely these keys in the same order for his new symphonic trilogy? Scientific dating of the paper he used suggests that Mozart began composing them in the same month the Haydn publication appeared.

There were several reasons why Mozart might have been induced to follow Haydn's lead. He'd done the same with a set of string quartets a few years earlier, in which he freely acknowledged his emulation of the older composer. Mozart was

Keynotes

SYMPHONY NO.40

Mozart didn't know that the three great symphonies he composed in 1788 (Nos. 39–41) would be his last. And we don't know for sure whether they were performed in his lifetime. But there's good reason to think that they were, or at least that Mozart had performances in mind, especially since he later went to the trouble of revising No.40 to include a pair of clarinets. After Mozart's death, these symphonies quickly became some of his best-loved works. In particular, the sombre, stormy character of No.40 captured the Romantic imagination of the 19th century.

The first movement has one of the most striking beginnings in all of music – the violins playing the theme over a pulsating viola accompaniment. It's no less tragic for being so elegant, and the balance between turbulent passion and refined style lends the symphony enduring appeal. Wagner commented on its 'indestructible beauty', Schumann on its 'floating Grecian grace'.

The slow movement would be serene if Mozart did not unsettle it continually, with dissonant clashes and disrupted rhythms. The central section of the minuet is like a ray of sunlight through dark clouds. And an agitated energy reigns supreme in the finale.

also desperately in need of money (possibly to pay gambling debts), and may well have thought that if Haydn could cash in on symphonies, he might as well try too. And while nobody else was offering to perform them, he at least had opportunities to present them himself. In 1788 Mozart again presented his own mid-year concert series, and despite scant details of dates and programs, he may well have aired the new works then. Later, they probably also featured in Mozart's plans for a tour to England in 1789 (cancelled), and tours to Dresden, Berlin, Leipzig and Frankfurt in 1789–90 (which did eventuate).

Listening Guide

Minor keys, like inclement weather, are natural phenomena in the music of Beethoven and his successors. In Mozart's overwhelmingly sunny output, however, they seem like unseasonal intrusions, explanation for which must be sought outside of the composer's usual inspirations. Early in his career, the occasional minor-key pieces can sometimes be linked with a desire to be taken seriously by older musical colleagues. In his first and only previous minor-keyed symphony, No.25, also in G minor, written in 1773, the 17-year-old Mozart 'borrowed' the key from a symphony by his London-based contact, Johann Christian Bach. And 15 years later, he may well have 'borrowed' the key again, this time from Haydn, for this symphony.

Yet Symphony No.40, if only for its romantically mysterious opening, also seems to require a less prosaic explanation. And if a minor key can denote depression or fatalism, then causes are easy enough to find in the months leading to the work's completion. The Vienna premiere of *Don Giovanni*, that Mozart hoped would lift him out of debt and keep him high in the public's estimates, was a flop. That was in May 1788. Then at the end of June his six-month-old daughter, Theresia, died. Could any of this explain why the symphony's **first movement** begins with one of Mozart's most unusual and haunting themes? Whatever its inspiration, this widely sampled opening probably ranks behind only Beethoven's 'Moonlight' Sonata opening as an all-weather 'sombre' standard.

By comparison, its other three movements are less familiar, and perhaps more likely still to surprise. But after Mozart's death, the Symphony's second movement, the luminous **Andante** in E flat major, was probably better known, at least in Vienna. Perhaps it's not surprising that Vienna preferred the Symphony's only major-keyed movement. What the Romantics thought of as the high-minded *angst* of minor keys, proved all too often to be anathema to the Viennese, as Beethoven was later to discover.



Minor keys, like inclement weather, are natural phenomena in the music of Beethoven. In Mozart's overwhelmingly sunny output, they seem like unseasonal intrusions, explanation for which must be sought outside of the composer's usual inspirations

G MINOR

By the end of the 18th century the key of G minor was regarded by many musicians as not merely a 'sad' key, but one which conveyed lamentation, discontent and pathos, even the 'bad-tempered gnashing of teeth'. It was well suited, wrote an Italian theorist in 1796, to 'frenzy, despair and agitation'.

For Mozart, G minor was a special key. He reserved it for powerful and intense emotions, as palpably demonstrated in Pamina's tormented aria from *The Magic Flute*, 'Ach, ich fühl's'. His earlier symphony in G minor (No.25) made wonderfully turbulent title music for the film *Amadeus*, while No.40 is probably the greatest example of all.

The **Menuetto**, back in G minor again, is not the well-balanced, poised and courtly copybook example that might have been expected. This one is energetic and eventful, with dissonant notes and syncopated rhythms – quite as unusual, in its own small way, as the opening movement. The **finale** gives every impression of being an orchestral tour-de-force, designed to sweep the audience along into a state of increasing nervous excitement, were it not for the weirdness of a couple of brief moments, audibly quite disconcerting, when Mozart perversely avoids any clear sense of key for rather longer than is comfortable [listeners should have no trouble finding them!]

ABRIDGED FROM A NOTE BY GRAEME SKINNER © 2010

This performance uses Mozart's revised scoring for his Symphony No.40: flute, pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns, and strings.

The SSO first performed this symphony in 1942, conducted by Edgar Bainton, and more recently in concerts in 2010, conducted by Antonello Manacorda, and in the 2014 Discovery Series, conducted by Richard Gill.

Mozart prepared two different versions of this symphony, one without clarinets and one with. It's been suggested that the clarinets may have been added in April 1791 when an orchestra under Antonio Salieri and featuring the great clarinetists Johann and Anton Stadler performed an unidentified 'grand symphony' by Mozart. [If this is the case, then this would also be the only documented instance of the symphony being performed.] Nowadays it is usually performed with the clarinets.



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PHOTO: JAN FRAM

David Robertson

THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

David Robertson – conductor, artist, thinker and American musical visionary – is a highly sought-after figure in the worlds of opera, orchestral music and new music. A consummate and deeply collaborative musician, he is hailed for his intensely committed music-making and celebrated worldwide as a champion of contemporary composers, an ingenious and adventurous programmer, and a masterful communicator and advocate for his art form.

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 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 SSO at Carriageworks series (2016–17).

Currently in his farewell season as Music Director of the St Louis Symphony, David Robertson has served as artistic leader to many musical institutions, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de Lyon, and – as a protégé of Pierre Boulez – Ensemble Intercontemporain. With frequent projects at the world's leading opera houses, including the

Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Bavarian State Opera, Théâtre du Châtelet and San Francisco Opera, he is also a frequent guest with major orchestras worldwide, conducting the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston and Chicago symphony orchestras, Philadelphia and Cleveland orchestras, Berlin Philharmonic, Staatskapelle Dresden, BBC Symphony Orchestra and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra.

David Robertson is devoted to supporting young musicians and has worked with students at the Aspen, Tanglewood and Lucerne festivals; as well as the Paris Conservatoire, Juilliard School, Music Academy of the West, National Orchestral Institute (University of Maryland) and the National Youth Orchestra of Carnegie Hall.

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.



PHOTO: LISA MARIE MAZZUCCO

Emanuel Ax

piano

Born in Lvov, Poland, Emanuel Ax moved to Canada with his family when he was a boy. He studied at the Juilliard School, and subsequently won the Young Concert Artists Award; he also attended Columbia University, where he majored in French. He captured public attention in 1974 when he won the first Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Competition in Tel Aviv. Five years later he won the coveted Avery Fisher Prize.

He began the 2017–18 season with performances of six Mozart concertos, in partnership with frequent collaborator David Robertson and the St Louis Symphony. Other season highlights include opening the Philadelphia Orchestra's season with Yannick Nézet-Séguin; appearances with the orchestras in Cleveland, New York, San Francisco and Boston; and a Carnegie Hall recital. In Europe he performs in Stockholm, Vienna, Paris and London, and on tour with the Budapest Festival Orchestra.

He is a committed exponent of contemporary composers, with works written for him by John Adams, Christopher Rouse, Krzysztof Penderecki, Bright Sheng and Melinda Wagner and, most recently, HK Gruber's Piano Concerto and Samuel Adams' *Impromptus*.

Emanuel Ax has been a Sony Classical exclusive recording artist since 1987 and recent releases include Strauss's *Enoch Arden* narrated by Patrick Stewart, and piano duo music by Brahms and Rachmaninoff with Yefim Bronfman. He has received Grammy Awards for two volumes

of his Haydn piano sonatas cycle, and he has made Grammy-winning recordings with Yo-Yo Ma of the Beethoven and Brahms cello sonatas. Other recordings include the Liszt and Schoenberg concertos, solo Brahms albums, Piazzolla tangos, and John Adams' *Century Rolls*. In the 2004–05 season he contributed to an award-winning BBC documentary commemorating the Holocaust. In 2013, his album *Variations* received the Echo Klassik Award for Solo Recording of the Year (19th-century music/Piano).

As a committed chamber musician, he has worked regularly with such artists as Young Uck Kim, Cho-Liang Lin, Yo-Yo Ma, Edgar Meyer, Peter Serkin, Jaime Laredo and the late Isaac Stern. Recent chamber music recordings include trios by Brahms (with Yo-Yo Ma and Leonidas Kavakos) and Mendelssohn (Yo-Yo Ma and Itzhak Perlman).

Emanuel Ax is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and holds honorary doctorates of music from Yale and Columbia Universities. His most recent appearances with the SSO were in 2014, when he performed a Beethoven piano concerto cycle with David Robertson conducting.

www.emanuelax.com

ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA

PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS



DAVID ROBERTSON

THE LOWY CHAIR OF
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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.

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PHOTO: CHRISTIE BREWSTER

Nora Goodridge with Tutti Second Violin Nicole Masters. Nicole says she feels incredibly privileged to have this connection with someone who wants to support her chair in the orchestra. 'I feel really grateful that there are people like Nora still in this world.' For her part, Nora sums it up: 'It's my choice, and it's a joy!'

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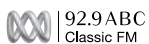
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