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David Robertson The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Mahler Six

Simone Young Conducts

2018



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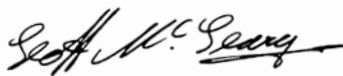
Welcome to this concert in the APT Master Series. This week, two Australian artists of international renown are joining the Sydney Symphony Orchestra on the stage of the Opera House Concert Hall for what promises to be an epic concert.

Simone Young returns to conduct the powerful Sixth Symphony of Mahler, sometimes known as his 'Tragic' Symphony, and tenor Steve Davislim will perform *Les Illuminations* by Britten. It's a program of exquisite contrasts between Britten's vivid and colourful miniatures for tenor and strings and Mahler's monumental and profoundly emotional soundscape.

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David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

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WEDNESDAY 8 AUGUST, 8PM

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.....
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL



Mahler Six

Simone Young *conductor*

Steve Davislim *tenor*

BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913–1976)

Les Illuminations, Op.18

1. Fanfare – 2. Villes – 3a. Phrase – 3b. Antique –

4. Royauté – 5. Marine – 6. Interlude –

7. Being Beauteous – 8. Parade – 9. Départ

Steven Davislim, tenor

INTERVAL

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860–1911)

Symphony No.6 in A minor

Allegro energico, ma non troppo. Heftig, aber markig

[impetuous but plenty of vigour]

Andante moderato

Scherzo. Wuchtig [weighty]

Finale. Allegro moderato – Allegro energico



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.....
Pre-concert talk by David Larkin in the Northern Foyer at 7.15pm.

.....
Estimated durations:
21 minutes, 20-minute interval,
80 minutes The performance will conclude at approximately 10.10pm.

.....
COVER IMAGE: Photo by Monika Rittershaus

PRESENTING PARTNER



Principal Partner

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Benjamin Britten

Les Illuminations for high voice and string orchestra, Op.18

1. Fanfare – 2. Villes – 3a. Phrase – 3b. Antique –
4. Royauté – 5. Marine – 6. Interlude –
7. Being Beauteous – 8. Parade – 9. Départ

Steve Davislim *tenor*

That a composer as fastidious as Britten should be so excited by a poet who cultivated the ‘derangement of all the senses’ seems odd at first. Arthur Rimbaud (1854–1891) wrote all of his influential poetry as a teenager, while scandalising French society by having a tumultuous, drug-fuelled love affair with the poet Paul Verlaine, ten years his senior and, until Rimbaud’s arrival, happily married. Having survived addiction, homelessness and a gunshot wound inflicted by Verlaine, Rimbaud gave up literature at the age of 21 and spent many of his remaining 16 years as a trader and gun-runner in East Africa. Britten had set Verlaine’s poetry in the extraordinary Four French Songs, composed when he was 15, but it was through his friend and mentor, the poet W.H. Auden, that he discovered the work of Rimbaud in 1938.

Britten’s obsession with the corruption of innocence – an aspect of many of his works – and his powerfully ambivalent attitude to sexuality found resonance in Rimbaud’s poetry, with what Michael Kennedy describes as its ‘dark and tormented sexual images’. Paradoxically, though, Britten’s music is far from dark and tormented. Much of the melodic material is derived from the common major chord, as heard in the fanfares of the first section, and the main melody of *Antique*. His writing for the voice (the work is sung by both sopranos and tenors; Britten later stated a preference for Peter Pears’ interpretation) – has a crystalline clarity, and the scoring for string orchestra has numerous touches of brilliance. In his introduction to the vocal score, writer Edward Sackville-West noted that ‘it is always a picture, not an idea, that is evoked, and Britten’s settings have rightly the sharp outlines and vivid colours of a missal’.

Keynotes

BRITTEN

Born Lowestoft, 1913

Died Aldeburgh, 1976

Benjamin Britten was born on St Cecilia’s Day (22 November), and whether the connection with the patron saint of music was an omen or not, he showed great promise and talent as a performer and composer. He studied piano and viola, and by the age of 14 had 100 opus numbers to his credit! As a mature composer, Britten was hailed as ‘the greatest English composer since Purcell’. His opera *Peter Grimes* (1945) made his name as a musical dramatist, but for many music-lovers, the first and vividly remembered encounter with Benjamin Britten has been his *Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*.

LES ILLUMINATIONS

This work sets texts from French poet Arthur Rimbaud’s collection of prose poems *Les Illuminations*, published in 1886 and dedicated to his love Paul Verlaine. The highly charged verses do not tell a clear story, instead painting a kaleidoscope of dream-like scenes and events.

The title can be translated as ‘lights’ or even ‘flashes’ (flashes of inspiration, perhaps?) but Verlaine explains that the title came from English rather than French and that the illuminations in question are those of mediæval scribes: intricately illustrated miniatures, gleaming with gold leaf, vermilion red and ultramarine blue.

1. Fanfare

J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage.

Britten takes this single line from *Parade*, the last poem in Rimbaud's cycle, using it as a point of reference several times during the piece. Here, Britten evokes the sound of brass instruments by having the strings play fanfares 'towards the bridge' of their instruments to produce a distinctly nasal sound.

2. Villes

Ce sont des villes! C'est un peuple pour qui se sont montés ces Alleghanys et ces Libans de rêve! Des chalets de cristal et de bois qui se meuvent sur des rails et des poulies invisibles. Les vieux cratères ceints de colosses et de palmiers de cuivre rugissent mélodieusement dans les feux ... Des cortèges de Mabs en robes rouges, opalines, montent des ravines. Là-haut, les pieds dans la cascade et les ronces, les cerfs têtent Diane. Les Bacchantes des banlieues sanglotent et la lune brûle et hurle. Vénus entre dans les cavernes des forgerons et des ermites. Des groupes de beffrois chantent les idées des peuples. Des châteaux bâtis en os sort la musique inconnue ... Le paradis des orages s'effondre. Les sauvages dansent sans cesse la fête de la nuit.

Quels bons bras, quelle belle heure me rendront cette région d'où viennent mes sommeils et mes moindres mouvements?

Britten, who by the time he set this poem had experienced New York, thought this poem a 'very good impression of chaotic modern city life'; it was probably inspired by Rimbaud's visit to London in the 1870s. The savage parade is depicted in a kaleidoscope of images and the roar of the city dancing its Festival of the Night. At the end of this section, the music becomes calmer as the poet yearns for what Britten called 'a little peace'.

3a. Phrase

J'ai tendu des cordes de clocher à clocher; des guirlandes de fenêtre à fenêtre; des chaînes d'or d'étoile à étoile, et je danse.

Fanfare

I alone hold the key to this wild parade.

Cities

They are cities! They are a people for whom these dream Alleghanys and Lebanons have risen into being! Chalets of crystal and wood moving on invisible pulleys and rails. The ancient craters ringed round by colossi and copper palm-trees roar melodiously in the flames ... Processions of Mabs in opaline and russet robes climb out of the ravines. Up above, their feet in the waterfall and the brambles, the deer suckle at Diana's breast. The Bacchantes of the suburbs are sobbing and the moon burns and howls. Venus visits the blacksmiths' and hermits' caves. Groups of bell-towers sing out the ideas of the nations. Unfamiliar music is coming from castles of bone ... The paradise of storms is collapsing. The savages celebrate the night in endless dancing.

What kind arms, what auspicious hour will restore to me this region, the source of my slumbers and of my slightest impulses?

Phrase

I have hung ropes from bell-tower to bell-tower; garlands from window to window; gold chains from star to star; and I am dancing.

3b. Antique

Gracieux fils de Pan! Autour de ton front couronné de fleurettes et de baies, tes yeux, des boules précieuses, remuent. Tachées de liès brunes, tes joues se creusent. Tes crocs luisent. Ta poitrine ressemble à une cithare, des tintements circulent dans tes bras blonds. Ton cœur bat dans ce ventre où dort le double sexe. Promène-toi, la nuit, en mouvant doucement cette cuisse, cette seconde cuisse et cette jambe de gauche.

One of the complications in Britten's love-life in England was a young man called Wulff Scherchen whom the composer had met as a teenager – Britten, as Dorothy Parker said of Verlaine, was always chasing Rimbauds. Antique is dedicated to Scherchen. Britten conceived of the piece as a dance, and this is clear in performance. Over the the plucking of low strings – which evoke the 'cithare' or ancient lyre – the first violins enter in stages. Britten seems, at this point in the piece, to want to present sexuality in a relatively positive light.

4. Royauté

Un beau matin, chez un peuple fort doux, un homme et une femme superbes criaient sur la place publique. 'Mes amis, je veux qu'elle soit reine!' 'Je veux être reine!' Elle riait et tremblait. Il parlait aux amis de révélation, d'épreuve terminée. Ils se pâmaient l'un contre l'autre.

En effet ils furent rois toute une matinée où les tentures carminées se relevèrent sur les maisons, et toute l'après-midi, où ils s'avancèrent du côté des jardins de palmes.

In this poem we are back on the city streets, where a possibly mad, but happy couple announce that they wish to be king and queen. As Rimbaud tells us, and Britten's affectionate parody of ceremonial music makes clear, their wish, or delusion, becomes reality – for a whole day.

Antique

Graceful son of Pan! Around your brow crowned with little flowers and berries, your eyes, those precious globes, are moving. Your cheeks, stained with wine-dregs, grow hollow. Your fangs gleam. Your chest is like a cithara, tinkling sounds circulate in your blond arms. Your heart beats in that belly where two sexes sleep. Walk, at night, gently moving that thigh, then the other, and that leg, the left one.

Royalty

One fine morning, in a land of very gentle people, a superb man and woman were shouting in the town square. 'My friends, I want her to be queen!' 'I want to be queen!' She was laughing and trembling. He was telling their friends about a revelation, an ordeal now over. They were swooning, one against the other.

And they were monarchs for a whole morning, as crimson hangings were hoisted on the houses, and then all afternoon, as they made their way towards the palm gardens.

5. Marine

Les chars d'argent et de cuivre –
Les proues d'acier et d'argent –
Battent l'écume, –
Soulèvent les souches des ronces.
Les courants de la lande
Et les ornières immenses du reflux
Filent circulairement vers l'est,
Vers les piliers de la forêt,
Vers les fûts de la jetée,
Dont l'angle est heurté par des tourbillons de lumière.

Marine is a tour-de-force of energy and evocative scoring, where Britten uses numerous inventive touches to bring to life Rimbaud's imagery of the constant motion of the sea and its 'whirlpools of light'.

6. Interlude

J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage.

For this appearance of the 'motto' Britten writes a sober interlude, which, as he told Swiss soprano Sophie Wyss (the work's dedicatee and first performer), was 'a reproof for the exaggeratedly ecstatic mood of *Marine*'.

7. Being Beauteous

Devant une neige un Être de Beauté de haute taille.
Des sifflements de mort et des cercles de musique
sourde font monter, s'élargir et trembler comme un
spectre ce corps adoré; des blessures écarlates et
noires éclatent dans les chairs superbes. Les
couleurs propres de la vie se foncent, dansent, et se
dégagent autour de la Vision, sur le chantier. Et les
frissons s'élèvent et grondent, et la saveur forcenée
de ces effets se chargeant avec les sifflements
mortels et les rauques musiques que le monde, loin
derrière nous, lance sur notre mère de beauté, – elle
recule, elle se dresse. Oh! nos os sont revêtus d'un
nouveau corps amoureux.

Ô la face cendrée, l'écusson de crin, les bras de
cristal! Le canon sur lequel je dois m'abattre à travers
la mêlée des arbres et de l'air léger!

This is the most explicitly sexual of the songs in its imagery of tumescence and shuddering, of wounds appearing on swelling flesh, and the mention of the 'raucous music of the world' reminds us of the second song, *Villes*. The use of plucked strings recalls the dance of *Antique*, a song dedicated to a love that was passing; this song, with what Donald Mitchell has described as 'its feeling of spaciousness and long farewell' was dedicated to Peter Pears with whom Britten would spend the rest of his life.

Seascape

Chariots of silver and copper –
Prows of silver and steel –
Beat the foam, –
Uproot the bramble-stumps.
The currents of the moor
And the huge ruts of the ebb-tide
Speed in circles towards the east,
Towards the pillars of the forest, –
Towards the shafts of the jetty,
Its corner whipped by whirlwinds of light.

Interlude

I alone hold the key to this wild parade.

Being Beauteous

Against snow a tall Figure of Beauty. Deathly
whistling and circles of muffled music make this
beloved body rise, expand and tremble like a
ghost; black and scarlet wounds burst open in the
magnificent flesh. The true colours of life darken,
dance and stand out against the Vision as it takes
shape. The shudders rise and rumble, and the
frenzied flavour of these effects as they become
heavy with the deathly whistling and raucous
music which the old world, left far behind us, hurls
at her, our mother of beauty; she recoils and rears
up. Oh! Our bones are clothed in loving new flesh.

Oh, the ashen face, the coarse thatch in the
shape of a shield, the crystal arms! The cannon
upon which I must fall through the skirmish of
trees and the soft air.

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8. Parade

Des drôles très solides. Plusieurs ont exploité vos mondes. Sans besoins, et peu pressés de mettre en œuvre leurs brillantes facultés et leur expérience de vos consciences. Quels hommes mûrs! Des yeux hébétés à la façon de la nuit d'été, rouges et noirs, tricolores, d'acier piqué d'étoiles d'or; des facies déformés, plombés, blêmis, incendiés; des enrouements folâtres! La démarche cruelle des oripeaux! – Il y a quelques jeunes...

Ô le plus violent Paradis de la grimace enragée! ... Chinois, Hottentots, bohémiens, niais, hyènes, Molochs, vieilles démences, démons sinistres, ils mêlent les tours populaires, maternels, avec les poses et les tendresses bestiales. Ils interpréteraient des pièces nouvelles et des chansons 'bonnes filles'. Maîtres jongleurs, ils transforment le lieu et les personnes, et usent de la comédie magnétique...

J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage.

Parade, however, is distinctly sinister in its evocation of 'rogues, who have exploited your world', their eyes the same red and black as the sexual wounds of *Being Beauteous* indulging in 'bestial poses and caresses' in this 'violent paradise'. While Britten excised a line about 'catamites...rigged out in revolting luxury', the identification of sexuality with corruption and violence is clear.

9. Départ

Assez vu. La vision s'est rencontrée à tous les airs.
Assez eu. Rumeurs des Villes, le soir, et au soleil,
et toujours.

Assez connu. Les arrêts de la vie. – Ô Rumeurs et
Visions!

Départ dans l'affection et le bruit neufs!

The poet, and composer, have 'seen enough' and experienced enough of the world's noise, and resolve to depart in 'new affection'. Despite what Peter Pears described as 'jaded nostalgia' in the final section, *Les Illuminations* is a watershed work for Britten. As musicologist Arnold Whittall puts it, this is one of the 'first works in which maturity as well as mastery are unmistakably present.'

ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY GORDON KERRY © 2002

ORIGINAL FRENCH TEXTS BY ARTHUR RIMBAUD [1854–1891]

ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY BRIAN NELSON © 2016

The SSO first performed *Les Illuminations* in 1954 with conductor Alceo Galliera and soprano Suzanne Danco. (The Boyd Neel Orchestra and soprano Peggy Knibb had given the Australian premiere in 1947.) Our most recent performance was in 2016 with Roger Benedict conducting and tenor Brenton Spiteri.

Parade

Strange-looking, strapping fellows. Some of them have exploited your worlds. Self-satisfied, in no hurry to use their brilliant gifts and their knowledge of the way you think. What mature men! Eyes intense as a summer night, red and black, tricoloured, steel-blue dotted with golden stars; features deformed, leaden, ashen, burned-up; hoarse jollity! The cruel swagger of their tawdry finery! – Some of them young men...

A violent Paradise of mad rage! ... Chinese, Hottentots, gypsies, half-wits, hyenas, Molochs, ancient lunacies, sinister demons, they mix popular turns, learnt at their mother's knee, with bestial posturings and cajolery.

They would happily put on new acts and sing sentimental songs. Master-jugglers, practising hypnotic entertainment, they transform place and character...

I alone hold the key to this wild parade.

Departure

Seen enough. The vision encountered in every light.
Had enough. The noise of cities, by night and by
day, and never-ending.

Known enough. The still-points of life. Tumult and
Visions!

Departure, by way of new affection and new sounds!

Gustav Mahler Symphony No. 6 in A minor

Allegro energico, ma non troppo. Heftig, aber markig
[impetuous but plenty of vigour]

Andante moderato

Scherzo. Wuchtig [weighty]

Finale. Allegro moderato – Allegro energico

Mahler was worried. His Sixth Symphony had just received its first performance in the German city of Essen, and his colleague Richard Strauss had made the offhand remark that the work was 'overscored'. Strauss's remark may have been facetious; after all the orchestration of his own *Salome* sounded to Giacomo Puccini like a 'badly mixed Russian salad'. But Mahler was worried. According to the young conductor Klaus Pringsheim (who witnessed the exchange) Mahler kept coming back to Strauss's comment. He asked 'almost humbly, reverently, what might be the reason why everything came so easily to the other composer and so painfully to himself.

In his monograph on Mahler, Theodor Adorno caricatured Strauss as a 'blond Siegfried, a balanced harmonious individual who is supposed, singing like a bird, to shower as much happiness on his listeners as is falsely ascribed to him'. By contrast, Adorno argued, Mahler's music reflects the increasing impotence of the individual in late bourgeois society; Mahler's best music dramatises the discontinuity of the world.

Unlike Strauss, Mahler was suspicious of music which needed the explanatory prop of a 'program', but this is not say that Mahler's music is not at some level about non-musical ideas. In many ways Mahler's Sixth Symphony is comparable to Strauss's tone poem *A Hero's Life*: Mahler himself conceded that the work has a 'hero' who faces an inexorable fate – but the crucial difference is that Mahler's music acknowledges the fear of inevitable oblivion. So the answer to Mahler's own question about why everything came so much more easily to Strauss might be that in Mahler's music much more is at stake. According to the composer's widow Alma 'none of his works moved him so deeply at its first hearing as this'. Mahler's emotions at having composed such as work as this must have been intense.

Mahler first four symphonies mine his many song-settings of folk poetry and three of them contain significant vocal elements. His three central symphonies are all works of 'absolute' rather than programmatic music. Nevertheless, his Fifth, Sixth and Seventh symphonies derive some of their thematic material from two sets of songs to poetry by Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866), including the cycle *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs on the Death of

Keynotes

MAHLER

Born Kalischt, 1860
Died Vienna, 1911

Mahler is now regarded as one of the greatest symphonists of the late 19th century. But during his life his major career was as a conductor – he was effectively a 'summer composer'. He believed that a symphony must 'embrace the world'. His are large-scale, requiring huge orchestras and often lasting more than an hour; they cover a tremendous emotional range; and they have sometimes been described as 'Janus-like' in the way they blend romantic and modern values, self-obsession and universal expression, idealism and irony.

SIXTH SYMPHONY

The Sixth Symphony was composed during a happy period for Mahler, and yet it is one of his darkest symphonies – the only one to end so grimly and without a hint of optimism. It has a tight 'classical' logic, with a traditional structure, firmly anchored in the key of A minor. Yet beneath the abstract formality are hints of autobiography. A soaring theme in the first movement could be Mahler's wife Alma; children can be heard in the *Andante*.

In the finale 'the hero' is struck down by 'three hammer blows of fate'. Mahler later reduced these to two; Simone Young restores the third hammer blow. Composed during 1903 and 1904, the symphony was premiered in Essen on 27 May 1906, the composer conducting.

Children). (Alma describes the *Kindertotenlieder* and Sixth Symphony as premonitions of the death of their daughter and the onset of Mahler's heart-condition.)

Listening Guide

For all its epic scale, the Sixth is the work, as Mahler put it, of 'an old fashioned composer' in that it is cast in a traditional four-movement design. Its tone – which led to the occasional use, even in Mahler's time, of the nickname 'Tragic' – is unambiguous. A fully scored A major chord, underpinned by an obsessive rhythmic motif from the timpani, fades and, as it fades, changes to the minor mode. This is music which will end in darkness. The first movement begins as a march – not triumphant or doom-laden but, as scholar Michael Kennedy describes it, 'modern music [that] marches in with this sinister tramping start'.

The movement's starkly contrasting second subject is a lyrical tune which rises and falls largely by step. Alma describes how, after Mahler had drafted the first movement, 'he came down from [his study] to tell me he had tried to express me in a theme'. The yearning lyricism provides a perfect foil for the implacable march of the beginning – 'change and conflict are the secret of effective music', as Mahler said. Another unique aspect of this work is the celebrated evocation of alpine scenery first heard toward the end of the movement. This striking sound world was said by Mahler to represent the 'last earthly sounds heard from the valley below by the departing spirit on the mountain top'. He noted that 'the cowbells should be played with discretion – so as to produce a realistic impression of a grazing herd of cattle, coming from a distance...'

In what we must accept as Mahler's preferred order, the *Andante* represents a complete contrast with both the first movement and the following *Scherzo*, but the tone is hardly tragic. Rather, with its horn calls and reminiscence of the cowbells, it is poignant and romantic, a relaxation of the work's dramatic tension.

Like the first movement, with which it shares some thematic material, the *Scherzo* has an insistent rhythm to begin with (which may have prompted Mahler to delay it). There is much Mahlerian irony in this movement, both in the dry clattering of the xylophone and in what Kennedy calls the 'delicate pastiche Haydn'. The oboe conjures up an innocent, rustic world, recalling a Bohemian folk song. As a caution against over-interpreting, it should be noted that the scherzo has been interpreted as 'diabolical' and 'catastrophic' on one hand, where Alma's reminiscences insist that it depicts the 'tottering' of their children at play before the intrusion of tragedy at the end of the movement.

The ordering of the two central movements has a complicated history. In his manuscript, the *Scherzo* followed the first movement, but Mahler then felt that the piece worked better with the *Andante* second and *Scherzo* third. The first edition placed the *Scherzo* before the *Andante* but Mahler himself always performed the piece using the *Andante-Scherzo* order that we hear tonight. Then, in 1919, the conductor Willem Mengelberg asked Mahler's widow Alma for clarification, and in a four-word telegram she insisted 'First *Scherzo*, then *Andante*' (What she intended by this is unclear, as her *Memories and Letters* confirms Mahler's own order!) Mengelberg, acting in good faith, used that order, and it became enshrined in 1963 with the publication of the International Gustav Mahler Society's Critical Edition. Only as recently as 2004 did the IGMS state a new official position: that the correct order of the inner movements is *Andante-Scherzo*.

The *Finale* is one of Mahler's largest and most complex structures, and it bears the weight of the symphony as a whole, recalling material from earlier in the work. Its introductory section contains material that will be developed as the movement unfolds, particularly the impassioned melody heard first high in the violins. The movement depicts a nightmarish world, where the *allegro energico* strains towards climactic release, only to be brutally interrupted on three occasions. Mahler originally included a sickening thud 'like an axe-stroke' at each of these points, but later omitted the third out of superstition. Adorno wrote that in Mahler 'happiness flourishes on the brink of catastrophe'. Mahler himself said that the movement describes 'the hero on whom falls three blows of fate, the last of which fells him as a tree is felled'. The piece ends in dissolution. No wonder Mahler was worried.

ABRIDGED FROM A NOTE BY GORDON KERRY © 2007

Mahler's Sixth Symphony calls for five flutes (three playing piccolo), five oboes (three playing cor anglais), three clarinets, E flat clarinet, bass clarinet, four bassoons and contrabassoon; eight horns, six trumpets, four trombones and tuba; two sets of timpani and percussion (glockenspiel, xylophone, tam-tam, bass drum (also played with a rute or bunch of twigs), cowbells, hammer, three triangles, snare drum, cymbals, and deep bell sounds offstage); two harps, celesta and strings.

The SSO first performed Mahler's Sixth Symphony in the 1971 Town Hall Proms, conducted by John Hopkins, and most recently in the 2011 in Vladimir Ashkenazy's Mahler Odyssey, which was also recorded for the SSO Live label.



Emil Orlik's portrait of Mahler, made in 1902, the year before the composer began work on the Sixth Symphony.



◀ Alma Mahler with her daughters Maria ('Putzi') and Anna ('Gucki'). In the summer of 1907 both girls contracted scarlet fever and Maria, the elder of the two, did not survive. It was at this time, too, that Mahler learned of his heart condition.

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 (tuxedos and black dresses) are visible, suggesting a high-end event or concert. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

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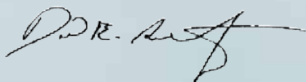
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The 2019 season is wonderfully diverse. The Season Opening Gala places Diana Doherty – a musical treasure – centre stage with Nigel Westlake's *Spirit of the Wild* oboe concerto, reprising one of the most exciting premieres of my time in Sydney. The 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
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Highlights – David Robertson Conducts

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| 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 |



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Monday 13 August, 1pm

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STEVEN OSBORNE IN RECITAL

Debussy, Prokofiev

Sunday 2 September, noon

Tuesday 25 September, 1pm (repeat)

BRAHMS REVELATION: SYMPHONY NO.4

David Robertson conductor

Alban Gerhardt cello

Elgar, Dean, Brahms

Monday 3 September, 8pm

SIMON TRPČESKI IN RECITAL

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sydney symphony orchestra

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BERTHOLD FABRICIUS

Simone Young *conductor*

Simone Young AM was General Manager and Music Director of the Hamburg State Opera and Music Director of the Philharmonic State Orchestra Hamburg from 2005 to 2015 and is currently Principal Guest Conductor of the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra. She has conducted complete cycles of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Vienna, Berlin and Hamburg state opera companies, and her Hamburg recordings include the *Ring* cycle, *Mathis der Maler* (Hindemith) and the symphonies of Bruckner, Brahms and Mahler. Her 2012 Hamburg Opera and Ballet tour to Brisbane (*Das Rheingold* in concert and Mahler's *Resurrection* Symphony) won her the 2013 Helpmann Award for the Best Individual Classical Music Performance.

The current season sees Simone Young return to the Bavarian, Berlin and Vienna state opera companies and to Zurich Opera. She will also conduct the Los Angeles, Stockholm and New Japan philharmonic orchestras; Detroit, Chicago and Melbourne symphony orchestras; and the MDR Symphony and Deutsches Sinfonie Berlin; and returns to the Australian National Academy of Music.

She has also conducted leading orchestras such as the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Berlin, Vienna, Munich, Dresden, London and New York philharmonic orchestras, the Staatskapelle Dresden, Bruckner Orchestra in Linz, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and the Monte Carlo, Cincinnati and Dallas symphony orchestras, as well as the Wiener Symphoniker.

Simone Young was Music Director of Opera Australia from 2001 to 2003, Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra (1999–2002) and Principal Guest Conductor of the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Lisbon (2005–2012). Her many accolades include a Professorship at the Musikhochschule in Hamburg; honorary doctorates from Griffith University, Monash University and the University of New South Wales; the French Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, the Goethe Institute Medal and the Sir Bernard Heinze Award. In 2004 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

Simone Young's most recent appearance with the SSO was in 2017, conducting Beethoven and Bruckner. She returns in 2019 to conduct several programs, including Mahler's early work, *Das klagende Lied*.



ROSA FRANK

Steve Davislim

tenor

Twice awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee award and Australia Council scholarship, Steve Davislim is among the leading tenors of his generation. He began his musical training as a horn player, then studied voice at the Victorian College of the Arts under Dame Joan Hammond before beginning his professional career as an ensemble member of the Zurich Opera. Acclaimed throughout the world for his beautiful lyric voice, strong stage presence and remarkable agility, he is in demand internationally on both concert and operatic stages.

Concert highlights include Beethoven Nine (London Symphony Orchestra and Bernard Haitink, Berlin Philharmonic and Simon Rattle), Mahler's *Song of the Earth* (Bordeaux), Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* (Basilique Cathédrale de Saint-Denis, Paris), Bruckner's *Te Deum* (Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Riccardo Muti), *Elijah* (Gewandhaus Orchestra, Leipzig), Mozart's *Requiem* with Thielemann (Salzburg), orchestral songs by Richard Strauss (the Hallé and Mark Elder) and the Italian Singer in *Der Rosenkavalier* (National Symphony Orchestra, Kennedy Center and Christoph Eschenbach), and in Australia Mozart's *Requiem* (West Australian

Symphony Orchestra), Haydn's *Creation* (Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra), and *Winterreise* at the Adelaide Festival. Recent opera engagements include Baron Kronthal in *Der Wildschütz* (Semperoper Dresden) and Tom in *The Rake's Progress* (Finnish National Opera).

His extensive discography includes Bach cantatas with John Eliot Gardiner, Martinů's *Giulietta* with Charles Mackerras, Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* with Colin Davis and the LSO, Brahms's *Rinaldo* with Michel Plasson, and Richard Strauss songs with Orchestra Victoria and Simone Young.

Recent engagements have included *Die erste Walpurgisnacht* and *Elijah* conducted by Thomas Hengelbrock, Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* in Berlin, Beethoven's *Christ on the Mount of Olives* at the Beethoven Festival Bonn, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* in Geneva, Tamino in *The Magic Flute* in Dresden (and later this year in Tokyo), and the title role in *La clemenza di Tito* in a new production at the BBC Proms. He will also conduct and sing Haydn's *Creation* with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra.

Steve Davislim's most recent appearance with the SSO was in 2016, singing Beethoven Nine with David Robertson conducting.

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS



DAVID ROBERTSON

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Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the SSO also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

Well on its way to becoming the premier orchestra of the Asia Pacific region, the SSO has toured China on 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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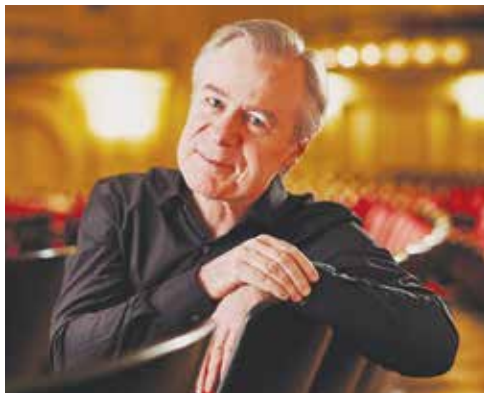


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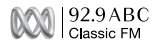
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