

Mozart and the French Connection



MOZART IN THE CITY
THU 22 FEB, 7PM

TEA & SYMPHONY
FRI 23 FEB, 11AM





CLASSICAL



Taikoz and the SSO

Program to include...
BRITTEN
The Prince of the Pagodas: Highlights
WATANABE Dreams
LEE & CLEWORTH Cascading Waterfall
WATANABE Shinobu

SKIPWORTH Breath of Thunder PREMIERE

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

Meet the Music

Presented by

Meet the Music

Kaleidoscope

Fri 23 Feb, 8pm

Sat 24 Feb, 8pm

Sydney Opera House

Premier Partner Credit Suisse

Thu 22 Feb. 6.30pm

Wed 28 Feb, 6.30pm

Thursday Afternoon Symphony **Thu 1 Mar, 1.30pm**Emirates Metro Series

Fri 2 Mar, 8pm Sydney Opera House



Heaven is Closed

Batiashvili plays Prokofiev

KATS-CHERNIN Heaven is Closed PROKOFIEV Violin Concerto No.2 R STRAUSS Don Juan R STRAUSS Till Eulenspiegel

Dmitri Slobodeniouk conductor • Lisa Batiashvili violin



Bach and Beethoven

Cocktail Hour

JS BACH trans. Constable
Violin Partita in B minor, BWV 1002, for marimba
CONSTABLE Quintet for vibraphone and
string quartet: Rondo, Timelapse PREMIERE
BEETHOVEN

String Quartet in F, Op.59 No.1 (Razumovsky No.1)

Musicians of the SSO

Fri 2 Mar, 6pm Sat 17 Mar, 6pm Utzon Room



Who Needs a Conductor Anyway?

An SSO Family Concert

Includes highlights from...
TCHAIKOVSKY Piano Concerto No.1
BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No.5 [Emperor]
RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No.2

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MOZART IN THE CITY

THURSDAY 22 FEBRUARY, 7PM

CITY RECITAL HALL

TEA & SYMPHONY

FRIDAY 23 FEBRUARY, 11AM

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL



David RobertsonChief Conductor and Artistic Director



Mozart and the French Connection

François Leleux conductor, oboe and cor anglais

GABRIEL FAURÉ (1845-1924)

Pelléas et Mélisande, Op.80: Suite

Prelude

Fileuse (The Spinning Girl). Andantino quasi allegretto Sicilienne

Death of Mélisande. Molto adagio

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

Rhapsody for saxophone and orchestra

arranged for cor anglais by Gilles Silvestrini (born 1961)
PREMIERE

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

Serenade in E flat major for wind octet, K375

Allegro maestoso

Menuetto

Adagio

Menuetto II

Allegro

GEORGES BIZET (1838-1875)

Symphony in C major

Allegro vivo

Adagio

Allegro

Vivace



Friday morning's performance will be recorded by ABC Classic FM for later broadcast on Friday 2 March at 1pm and again on Wednesday 26 December 1pm.

Pre-concert talk by David Garrett on Thursday 22 February at 6.15pm in the First Floor Reception Room. Visit sydneysymphony.com/speaker-bios for more information.

Estimated durations: 18 minutes, 10 minutes, 24 minutes, 27 minutes The concert will conclude at approximately 8.30pm (12.30pm Friday).



ABOUT THE MUSIC

Mozart and the French Connection

For Mozart, Paris was a scene of success (reflected in the splendid Symphony No.31) and of sadness (it was there that his mother died). His visits to France were too early for the other composers on this program but all four men find common ground in the sensitivity and refinement, colour, classical charm and youthful spirit that can be heard in their music.

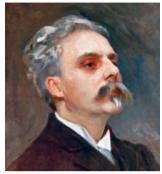
In this concert, the other point of connection is our featured guest artist, François Leleux. Long admired for his oboe playing (which you can enjoy in Mozart's serenade), he is increasingly appearing as a conductor (Fauré and Bizet), and today in the arrangement of Debussy's Rhapsody we also hear him play the cor anglais (the melancholy low-voiced cousin of the oboe).

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) Pelléas et Mélisande, Op.80: Suite

Prélude
Fileuse (The Spinning Girl). Andantino quasi allegretto
Sicilienne
Death of Mélisande. Molto adagio

Of the musical works that have taken inspiration from Maeterlinck's play *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Fauré's incidental music, composed for a stage production in 1898, was the first to be completed. (Debussy's opera setting of the play, which the SSO performed last year, was still in progress.) One of Fauré's few orchestral compositions, it is intrinsically beautiful and moving, and also succeeds, as did Debussy, in capturing the mysteriously elusive and suggestive atmosphere of Maeterlinck's symbolist play. Along with his Requiem, Fauré's suite has introduced many concertgoers to a composer who once claimed to have pushed back the boundaries of refinement. More than Debussy's opera, Fauré's *Pelléas* music exemplifies the fin de siècle, not its decadent or escapist aspects, but its ultra-sensitive subjectivism.

Fauré composed his *Pelléas et Mélisande* for a staging of the play in London. Debussy, busy with his opera, had turned down a request from the actress Mrs Patrick Campbell for music to go with the English translation she had commissioned, so that she could play Mélisande. Her second choice of composer was an inspired one, but Fauré, pressed by his duties as a government music official, didn't have time to orchestrate his music, leaving the task to his pupil Charles Koechlin. In London the play, production and music were much admired, not least by



Gabriel Fauré



Pelleas and Melisande (1913) by Sidney Meteyard

Maeterlinck himself. Later Fauré made his own orchestration of the entr'actes, for the symphonic suite played in this concert.

The **Prélude** anticipates the drama: dark mysterious forests, the elusive gentleness of Mélisande, the power of tragic destiny, and as the curtain rises, the horn call of Golaud's hunt. Debussy omitted Mélisande's scene at the distaff; with **Fileuse** Fauré gives it a spin that is charming, artless – just right. Fauré had already written the **Sicilienne** for another play; here its brightness is in telling contrast with the prevailing sombreness. Beloved of flautists, this item precedes the scene for Pelleas and Mélisande by the well, where Mélisande plays with and loses the ring Golaud has given her. The **Death of Mélisande** is a slow funeral march, ending with a rising figure, surely the departure from life of the little being old King Arkel commemorates: 'so quiet, so shy, so silent'.

Claude Debussy (1862–1918) Rhapsody for saxophone and orchestra

arranged for cor anglais by Gilles Silvestrini (born 1961)

This music was not originally for cor anglais. Rarely heard, it is one of the few masterpieces for saxophone and orchestra. The commission came to Debussy from a French-born American lady, Mrs Elise (or Eliza) Hall, wife of a Boston surgeon, and president of the Boston Orchestral Club. She had been advised to take up a musical instrument to help with an asthmatic complaint and chose the alto saxophone. Debussy spent the money, then dithered on the commission, for years. On 8 June 1903, he wrote to his friend André Messager: 'The Americans are proverbially tenacious. The saxophone lady landed in Paris...and is inquiring about her piece. I have to set to work on it.' (After hearing Mrs Hall in 1904, Debussy thought a lady in a pink frock looked ridiculous playing her ungainly instrument. He admitted he wasn't well acquainted with the saxophone.)

But it wasn't until 1911 that Debussy set to work and even then he only got to the stage of sending a rough draft to Mrs Hall. Her asthma prevented her from sustaining the long phrases and so Debussy had to reduce the saxophone's music, putting chunks of it into the piano (or orchestra) part. Debussy never finished the job, and after his death the composer Roger-Ducasse filled in some bridge passages and completed the orchestration.

Originally the title was to have been 'Rapsodie Orientale', later 'Rapsodie Mauresque' (Moorish Rhapsody). The rhythms, such as that of the habañera, indicate that Debussy was thinking of

Pelléas et Mélisande

In the misty, dark, ancient kingdom of Allemonde, Prince Golaud, lost while hunting. encounters by a spring the waiflike Mélisande. She deflects all questions about where she has come from and what harm has been done to her. Golaud marries her, but becomes furiously iealous of her relations with his vounger half-brother Pelléas. Mélisande endures ill-treatment at Golaud's hands, and dies in childbirth, still denying that anything she and Pelléas may have done is bad.





Mozart & Mendelssohn

Two of music's most famous prodigies – Mozart and Mendelssohn – and the SSO's youngest principal musician, Todd Gibson-Cornish, are the stars in this sublime program featuring Mozart's lively Bassoon Concerto and Mendelssohn's popular Italian Symphony.

Dates

Thu 5 Apr 7pm

City Recital Hall

Fri 6 Apr 11am

Sydney Opera House

Program

R STRAUSS Capriccio: Sextet

MOZART Bassoon Concerto, K191

MENDELSSOHN

Symphony No.4, Italian

Artists

Roger Benedict conductor

Todd Gibson-Cornish bassoon

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the Moorish aspects of Spanish culture (his *Ibéria* was also composed between 1905 and 1912).

The Rhapsody begins in a languid nocturnal atmosphere, and the soloist begins to rhapsodise. A Spanish-oriental dance begins, but the sultry opening mood returns, until the music stirs by gradual degrees into more sustained dance measures, the soloist outlining a series of different melodic ideas, developed and amplified by the orchestra. Finally a degree of energetic forward motion is achieved, but many of the main phrases remain arabesques.

Double reed players who regret that Debussy composed no solo piece for them have seized gratefully on this Rhapsody. The range of the alto saxophone and the character of the music suit the cor anglais, a lower-pitched member of the oboe family. The arrangement heard in this concert is by Gilles Silvestrini, a French oboist and composer, who has written several pieces premiered by his colleague François Leleux, including an oboe concerto.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) Serenade in E flat major for wind octet, K375

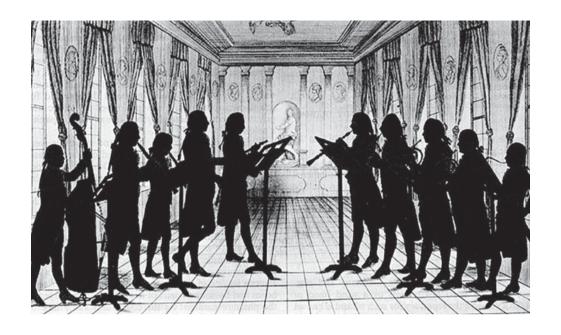
Allegro maestoso Menuetto Adagio Menuetto II Allegro

Mozart's mastery of writing for winds is obvious in his operas, piano concertos, and symphonies, and he was the first great composer to exploit fully the recently developed clarinet.

There were excellent wind players in Vienna, fed by a craze among competitive aristocratic music lovers to have their own wind ensembles. Writing to his father on 3 November 1781, Mozart describes a surprise serenade: 'At eleven o'clock I was treated to a Nacht Musick performed by two clarinets, two horns and two bassoons – and that too of my own composition.' The players were in the courtyard. Mozart tells his father he composed the music very carefully, because he wanted to impress Herr von Strack, the valet of the Emperor Joseph II. Mozart knew that the Emperor was planning to form his own 'Harmonie', or wind ensemble.

The music played that night was probably what we know as the 'Serenade' K375, in which two oboes have been added to pairs of clarinets, horns and bassoons. When, in early 1782, the Emperor formally constituted his Harmonie, it was for such an





octet. The following summer Mozart composed the Serenade in C minor (K388) for this enlarged ensemble, and added oboes to the Nacht Musick in E flat major.

The term 'Nacht Musick', the Italian 'Notturno' and 'Serenade' all mean 'music to be played at night'. This sophisticated entertainment music was heard in the open air, or would have alluded to al fresco performance. K375 is typical in having two minuets, and begins with a suggestion of the march to which the musicians could be imagined arriving. The majestic opening, and the rich sonority, recall other Mozart works in E flat, such as the Sinfonia concertante for violin and viola, K364, the Concertante for wind instruments and orchestra K297b and Symphony No.39. The main part of the first movement has a very broad lead-back to the recapitulation, in which the first horn has a blithe new theme, and an extensive coda. The two minuets and their contrasting trios are amazingly varied in character and texture. The slow movement (Adagio) features songful themes for each instrument in turn, and sometimes in dialogue, accompanied by ever-shifting patterns, combinations, and rhythms. Clarinettist Eric Hoeprich imagines it played in a room lit by candles. The finale is brilliant and energetic.

Georges Bizet (1838–1875) Symphony in C major

Allegro vivo Adagio Allegro Vivace

Short though his composing career was, Bizet was not considered a precocious genius, and his widow gave away his unpublished juvenilia. Some of it came to composer Reynaldo Hahn, who showed little interest, and deposited the music, including the Symphony in C, in the Bibliothéque Nationale. There it languished until unearthed by a French musicologist, whose enthusiasm, however, aroused little interest. It took Bizet's first English biographer, D.C. Parker, to get this symphony known; he showed it to the leading conductor Felix Weingartner, who gave the first performance, in Basel, in 1935.

What was heard revealed not only sure technical ability but, in the words of Bizet biographer Winton Dean, 'signs of a natural genius never exceeded by a composer of Bizet's years, Mozart, Schubert, and Mendelssohn not excepted'. Audiences, then as now, delighted in the music's sheer verve, tunefulness, elegance and colour.

Bizet began to compose the Symphony on 29 October 1855, four days before his 17th birthday. Why did it remain unknown for so long? Perhaps because, if Bizet's Symphony had been performed when it was new, listeners may have spotted similarities to a symphony by an established composer, Charles Gounod, composed and performed in the same year. In Bizet's first movement there are ideas appearing almost note for note in Gounod, and half way through the second movement, each composer resorts to a fugato.

Gounod helped his young admirer Bizet earn some extra income by making a reduction of his symphony for piano four hands. 'Gounod,' wrote Bizet, 'is an entirely original composer, and as long as one imitates him one remains on the level of a pupil.' Even after completing L'Arlésienne in 1872, Bizet confessed to Gounod: 'You were the beginning of my life as an artist... I can now admit that I was afraid of being absorbed.'

Gounod's symphony (No.1 in D) is attractive, but Bizet's imitation is even more charming and memorable. Both men show a debt to German music, a style based on Haydn and Mozart, extended into the 19th century by Mendelssohn, and Rossini (the crescendos of Bizet's first movement). Surprisingly, Bizet's symphony echoes Schubert, whose unpublished symphonies were then unknown. Bizet's novel harmonic and



Bizet wrote his Symphony in C when he was 17. It was then forgotten, or perhaps put away because he thought it too similar to the symphony by Gounod from which he'd taken inspiration. As a result it wasn't performed until 1935, 60 years after the composer's death. And what a discovery! There is so much to like in this spirited and unpretentious symphony. It combines the appealing verve of youth with the accomplishment of a great talent. As a teenager, Bizet was clearly influenced by the models around him: Mozart, Rossini, Mendelssohn and even Schubert. What is so impressive is the deftness with which he assimilates their charm and lyrical gifts in this 'classical' symphony.

colouristic tinges reveal the romantic impulse - the same instincts that led Schubert to speak the classical language with a new accent.

Romantic also are the horn calls in Rizet's first movement evoking distance and woodland. And exotic touches suggest the composer of Carmen, and especially of L'Arlésienne, as in the oriental tinge of the intervals in the oboe melody of the symphony's slow movement (Adagio). The academically correct fugato in the slow movement, unlike Gounod's, is not a moment too long. Bizet cleverly derives its theme from the movement's opening, which also uses the octave interval with which the oboe theme begins. The Scherzo is perhaps the most original movement: Schubert-like, but with a very French on-the-toes rhythmic verve, a sweeping second subject, and a drone musette trio - just a whiff of the farmyard dance floor.

The lively moto perpetuo elements of the last movement anticipate the final scene of Carmen, outside the bull ring. The springy march to which they lead is the 'real' Bizet. It's sad, though understandable, that Bizet censored this wondrously spontaneous-sounding symphony. Perhaps if he'd lived, after Carmen, he'd have got over his Gounod hang up. For us it's no problem, so our enjoyment of this Symphony in C can be unalloyed.

NOTES ON THE MUSIC BY DAVID GARRETT © 2018

It's sad, though understandable. that Bizet censored this wondrously spontaneoussounding symphony.



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

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ABOUT THE ARTIST



François Leleux conductor, oboe and cor anglais

Renowned for the larger-than-life personality of his performances, François Leleux regularly appears as soloist, conductor and player-director with the world's leading orchestras, festivals and concert series. His pre-eminence as an oboist is internationally recognised, but in recent seasons he has also established a significant reputation as a conductor, working with orchestras such as the hr-Sinfonieorchester in Frankfurt, Camerata Salzburg, Tonkünstler-Orchester Niederösterreich and Swedish Radio and WDR symphony orchestras.

In previous seasons he has been Artist-in-Residence with the hr-Sinfonieorchester (2016–17), Guest Artistic Leader of the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra (2014–15), and Artist in Association with the Orchestre de Chambre de Paris (2012–14). He also performs chamber music worldwide with sextet Les Vents Français and with recital partners Lisa Batiashvili, Isabelle Moretti, Eric Le Sage and Emmanuel Strosser.

The 2017–18 season includes appearances as conductor-and-soloist with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre de Chambre de Paris and on tour with Hungarian National Philharmonic. He made conducting debuts with BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Gulbenkian Orchestra, and returned to the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra

as conductor. Concerto performances include a debut with Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and a return to Hong Kong Philharmonic. In his residency with Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg he will appear as soloist, conductor and chamber musician.

Committed to expanding the oboe's repertoire, François Leleux has premiered commissioned works, including Michael Jarrell's oboe concerto Aquateinte and – together with his wife Lisa Batiashvili – Thierry Escaich's Double Concerto for violin and oboe with the New York Philharmonic and NDR Symphony Orchestra Hamburg.

His recent recordings include an album of works by Hummel and Haydn recorded with the Munich Chamber Orchestra, which was awarded an Echo Klassik prize in 2016.

François Leleux is a Professor at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München.

When François Leleux visited Australia with Lisa Batiashvili in 2003, he was invited to perform with the SSO as guest principal oboe. He returned in 2012, appearing as soloist and director in the Mozart in the City series. On this visit he will also perform with the SSO in Orange.

www.francoisleleux.com

ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA



DAVID ROBERTSON

THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PATRON Professor The Hon. Dame Marie Bashir AD cvo

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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