



**sydney symphony orchestra**

**David Robertson** The Lowly Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

# Freire plays the Emperor *Runnicles' Wagner*

2018



APT MASTER SERIES

**WED 14 MAR, 8PM • FRI 16 MAR, 8PM • SAT 17 MAR, 8PM**



Principal Partner



**CLASSICAL**



**Anne Sofie von Otter sings Schubert**

*Runnicles conducts Mahler Ten*

**SCHUBERT** Rosamunde: Romanze  
**SCHUBERT** Songs with orchestra:  
 orch. **Britten** Die Forelle  
 orch. **Reger** Gretchen am Spinnrade  
 orch. **Reger** Im Abendrot  
 orch. **Anon** An Sylvia  
 orch. **Reger** Erbkönig  
**MAHLER** Symphony No.10 (completed by Deryck Cooke)  
**Donald Runnicles** conductor  
**Anne Sofie von Otter** mezzo-soprano

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**Thu 22 Mar, 1.30pm**  
 Emirates Metro Series  
**Fri 23 Mar, 8pm**  
 Great Classics  
**Sat 24 Mar, 2pm**



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**JS BACH** arr. Dupré/Drury Cantata No.29: Sinfonia  
**JS BACH** Organ Chorales:  
 'O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross'  
 'Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme'  
**MENDELSSOHN** Organ Sonata No.3  
**GUILMANT** March on a Theme by Handel  
**DURUFLÉ** Scherzo, Op.2  
**VIERNE** Berceuse  
**VIERNE** Carillon de Westminster  
**David Drury** organ

Tea & Symphony  
**Fri 23 Mar, 11am**  
*complimentary morning tea  
 from 10am*



**Mozart and Mendelssohn**

**R STRAUSS** Capriccio: Sextet  
**MOZART** Bassoon Concerto, K191  
**MENDELSSOHN** Symphony No.4, Italian  
**Roger Benedict** conductor  
**Todd Gibson-Cornish** bassoon

Mozart in the City  
**Thu 5 Apr, 7pm**  
 City Recital Hall  
 Tea & Symphony  
**Fri 6 Apr, 11am**  
*complimentary morning tea  
 from 10am*



**Beethoven's Mass in C**

**HAYDN** Symphony No.95  
**BEETHOVEN** Mass in C  
**Masaaki Suzuki** conductor  
**Sara Macliver** soprano  
**Anna Dowsley** mezzo-soprano  
**Benjamin Bruns** tenor  
**Christian Immler** bass  
**Sydney Philharmonia Choirs**

APT Master Series  
**Wed 11 Apr, 8pm**  
**Fri 13 Apr, 8pm**  
**Sat 14 Apr, 8pm**

**SSO PRESENTS**



**Paloma Faith with the SSO**

Brit Award-winning and multi-platinum artist  
 Paloma Faith makes her debut with your SSO  
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 Featuring songs from her new album  
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# WELCOME

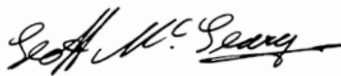


**Welcome to tonight's concert in the APT Master Series. Two years ago we were delighted to see pianist Nelson Freire appear in the Master Series, performing Schumann. This year he returns with Beethoven's 'Emperor' Concerto and it once more gives us great pleasure to be supporting this event.**

Also returning to the SSO is conductor Donald Runnicles, and he has chosen a selection of orchestral highlights from Wagner's *Ring* cycle as the complement to Beethoven. It's an epic program in every way, with music of tremendous grandeur and drama, and performances that are sure to inspire.

The majestic effect of a full symphony orchestra playing great music in an iconic modern concert hall can be awe-inspiring. Similarly, there are destinations in the world that will inspire with their blend of tradition and modernity as well as their sheer beauty. When you travel with APT to China and Japan, for example, you'll experience modern-day wonders alongside ancient traditions and uncover a world of diversity and splendour.

We're delighted to see you at this concert and hope to see you again at APT Master Series performances through the year.



**Geoff McGeary OAM**  
APT Company Owner



**sydney symphony  
orchestra**

**David Robertson**  
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

**APT MASTER SERIES**

WEDNESDAY 14 MARCH, 8PM

FRIDAY 16 MARCH, 8PM

SATURDAY 17 MARCH, 8PM

.....  
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

**Freire plays the Emperor**  
*Runnicles' Wagner*

**Donald Runnicles** *conductor*

**Nelson Freire** *piano*

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)**

**Piano Concerto No.5 in E flat major, Op.73 (Emperor)**

*Allegro*

*Adagio un poco mosso* –

*Rondo (Allegro)*

INTERVAL

**RICHARD WAGNER (1813–1883)**

**Orchestral highlights from *The Ring*:**

*from Die Walküre*

**Ride of the Valkyries**

*from Siegfried*

**Forest Murmurs**

arranged by Herman Zümpe

*from Götterdämmerung*

**Dawn and Siegfried's Rhine Journey**

**Siegfried's Funeral March**

**Brünnhilde's Immolation**

The five selections will be played without pause.

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

.....  
Estimated durations: 38 minutes,  
20-minute interval, 5 minutes, 9  
minutes, 10 minutes, 8 minutes, 18  
minutes.

The concert will conclude at  
approximately 10.05pm.

.....  
COVER IMAGE: Photo by Benjamin  
Ealovega



In 1823 Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller completed a portrait of Beethoven on commission from the composer's publishers, Breitkopf & Härtel. (The original was destroyed when their Leipzig office was bombed in 1945.) The hair is streaked with grey and the artist has captured some of the irregularities of Beethoven's features, particularly around the nose.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## Ludwig van Beethoven

### Piano Concerto No.5 in E flat, Op.73 (Emperor)

*Allegro*

*Adagio un poco mosso –*

*Rondo (Allegro)*

**Nelson Freire** *piano*

In May 1809 Napoleon's armies occupied Vienna for the second time and with considerable violence. Beethoven took shelter with his brother Caspar Carl and his wife Johanna and to protect his failing hearing spent the bombardment of 11 and 12 May with pillows over his ears in the cellar. Beethoven wrote to his publisher: 'What a destructive, disorderly life I see and hear around me: nothing but drums, cannons and human misery in every form.'

Before, during and after the invasion and despite his misery, Beethoven managed to work. He composed the Op.70 piano trios and three piano sonatas including Op.81a, *Das Lebewohl* (or 'Les Adieux') which reflects Beethoven's sorrow at seeing his young patron the Archduke Rudolf leaving Vienna, as did so many of the aristocracy during the invasion. He also composed the String Quartet Op.74, popularly known as the *Harp* Quartet, and completed the Fifth Piano Concerto (also dedicated to Rudolf).



Beethoven dedicated his Fifth Piano Concerto to his patron Archduke Rudolf of Austria – shown here in his robes as Archbishop of Olmütz. (Portrait by Johann Baptist von Lampi the Elder)

## Keynotes

BEETHOVEN

*Born Bonn, 1770*

*Died Vienna, 1827*

During his lifetime Beethoven was considered of the greatest piano virtuosos of the day, and his first four piano concertos were written with his own performance in mind. But deafness eventually forced him off the concert platform and he was unable to give the premiere of the *Emperor* concerto himself. This concerto was completed in 1809 when Beethoven was in his late 30s. Despite his radically diminished hearing, it was an astonishingly productive time that has become known as his 'heroic' period.

### EMPEROR CONCERTO

The concerto begins in a way that would have surprised its first listeners: with flourishes of ever-increasing length punctuated by grand chords from the orchestra. And it was the first concerto in which the cadenza – traditionally improvised by the soloist – was written out in full. Beethoven would have had the integrity of his music in mind, but there was another motivation: this was the first of his concertos where the premiere would be entrusted to another pianist.

'Emperor' wasn't Beethoven's nickname for the Fifth Piano Concerto – it was bestowed by others responding to the majesty of the work and its often commanding character. The slow second movement continues straight into the finale without pause, emphasising a sense of unity and momentum in the music.



Curiously, most of these are in the key of E flat major – the key of *The Magic Flute* and other music where Mozart sought to create a sense of solemnity, and one that Beethoven used at his most Promethean in works like the *Eroica* Symphony. These works don't bear any obvious resemblance to one another: the transcendent serenity of the Harp Quartet seems miles away from the high style of the outer movements of the *Emperor* concerto. But all of these works break new ground in some way.

By this time Beethoven's deafness made it impossible for him to perform with an orchestra, so the concerto's first performance in Leipzig in 1811 was given by a young organist, Friedrich Schneider. At the Viennese premiere in 1812, Carl Czerny was soloist. Given the political circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the concerto is, in Alfred Einstein's words, the 'apotheosis of the military concept' in Beethoven's music. Biographer Maynard Solomon quotes Einstein as saying that the audience 'expected a first movement in four-four time of a military character; and they reacted with unmixed pleasure when Beethoven not only fulfilled but far surpassed their expectations'.

In the Fifth Concerto, Beethoven solved the problem of how to exploit the soloist's virtuosity without downgrading the role of the orchestra, while constructing the kind of musical argument and drama which was so crucial to the Classical style. This is achieved partly through masterstrokes like the opening gesture of the **first movement**: a single chord is sounded by the orchestra, to which the piano responds in such flamboyant style, creating a sense of uncertainty about how and when the orchestra will rejoin the music, and what form the actual thematic material will take.

A standard practice in much Classical music was to get louder and more agitated in the lead-up to a point of structural significance, but Beethoven made those moments even more dramatic. The overwhelming impression left by the first movement of the Fifth Concerto is of ceremonial grandeur and pomp – hence the nickname (not authorised by Beethoven) of 'Emperor'. But the massive scale of the first movement is made possible by the frequent contrast of the 'military', with its characteristic march rhythms, and the reflective. Moreover, Beethoven prepares the movement's climactic moments with what scholar William Kinderman calls 'the withdrawal of the music into a mysterious stillness'. The piano's opening flourishes, for instance, seem for a moment to be about to wander off into realms of improvisation before the energetic first theme is announced impatiently by the band. To prepare the moment of recapitulation, where the opening material returns, Beethoven again allows the music to become rarefied and serene: a passage



...Beethoven solved the problem of how to exploit the soloist's virtuosity without downgrading the role of the orchestra...

## Dictating the Cadenza

Beethoven's abandonment of the traditional opportunity for an improvised cadenza in his Fifth Piano Concerto was a direct result of his deafness, and it was to have far-reaching consequences for future concertos. Though he had been the first soloist in all four of his earlier concertos, Beethoven was now too deaf to play in public, and it fell to Friedrich Schneider in Leipzig to premiere the *Emperor* Concerto, apparently in November 1811.

Where Beethoven would have performed from mere shorthand sketches of his part, he was now obliged to write the solo part out in full, taking care that no ambitious soloist should have an opportunity for self-aggrandisement at the expense of musical taste or coherence. None of the great concertos since, apart from the Brahms Violin Concerto, has left room for an unwritten cadenza.

of ever-quieter scales and trills gives way to a pastoral dialogue between the winds and the bell-tones of the piano.

The short, central **Adagio** movement, rightly described as dreamlike by one writer, is in B major, which in terms of Classical tonal logic is a fair way away from the 'home' key of E flat. And its mood couldn't be further from the military episodes, despite its material being dominated by the scales and trills that featured in the first movement. It may have been a passage such as this that Australian poet Gwen Harwood was remembering when she wrote:

*Pain breaks upon  
these notes in splintering trills; here, changed to song,  
wears the calm aspect of divinity.*

A justly celebrated instance of 'the withdrawal of the music into a mysterious stillness' occurs at the transition from the slow movement into the **finale**. The transition is almost imperceptible – Beethoven changes a note here or there to subtly change the direction of the music as it seems to fade, and the piano begins ruminating on a common chord which will ultimately flower as the final movement's bounding theme, which again is contrasted with moments of deep calm. Whatever the misery in which Beethoven wrote this work, or its immediate political context, it turns out to be another ode to joy.

GORDON KERRY © 2003

'DICTATING THE CADENZA' FROM A NOTE BY ANTHONY CANE © 1998

The orchestra in Beethoven's *Emperor* Concerto comprises pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and trumpets; timpani and strings.

The SSO was the first ABC orchestra to perform the *Emperor* Concerto, with pianist Artur Schnabel and conductor George Szell in 1939. Our most recent performances of the concerto were in 2014, with soloist Emanuel Ax and conductor David Robertson.





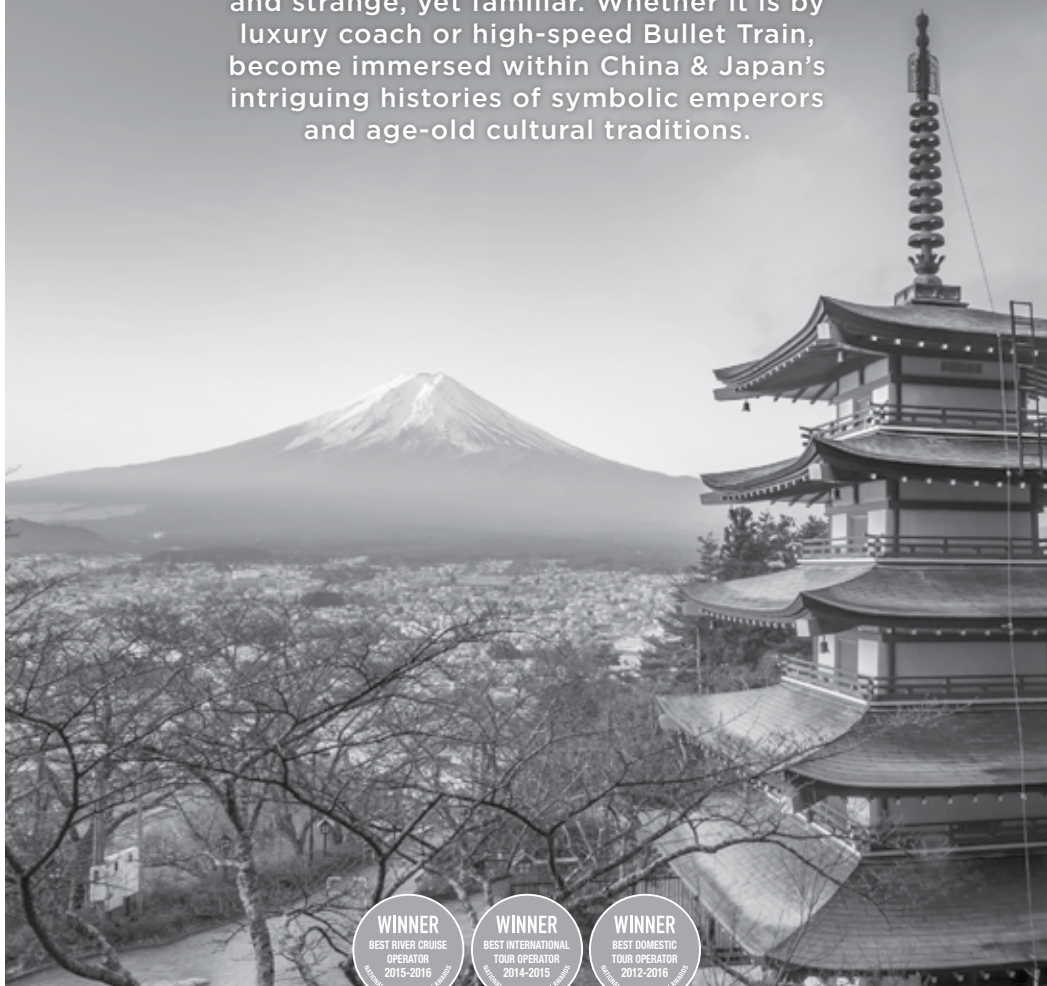
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## Richard Wagner

### Orchestral highlights from *The Ring of the Nibelung*

*Ride of the Valkyries*

*Forest Murmurs*

*Dawn and Siegfried's Rhine Journey*

*Siegfried's Funeral March*

*Brünnhilde's Immolation*

The five selections will be performed without pause.

The *Ring* cycle (more formally *The Ring of the Nibelung*) took Wagner 26 years to write, from his initial synopsis in 1848 to the date on the final bars of *Götterdämmerung*: 21 November 1874. When you consider that the entire cycle takes 15 or so hours to perform (over four nights), and that Wagner took a 12-year break in the middle of *Siegfried*, to compose *Tristan und Isolde* and *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg* (each five hours long themselves), you can understand why *The Ring* had such a long gestation.

And the cycle of four operas – *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung* – weren't just meant to entertain. Inspired by the social purposes of Ancient Greek drama, Wagner aimed to change German society through a re-invocation of Teutonic myth.

At first he planned to write an opera based on the murder of the dragon-slayer, Siegfried, by his in-laws, and his wife Brünnhilde's revenge, as described in the first quarter of the *Nibelungenlied*. But he found that he needed to tell more backstory, to locate the origins of the story in the realm of the gods and other immortals, and combed through the Nordic myths to engineer a series of 'prequels', writing the librettos in reverse order: *Siegfried*, *Die Walküre* and *Das Rheingold*. He then composed his music in order.

Wagner's musical style changed throughout the period of composition. At the beginning he had planned to marry music to words in an attempt to heighten the drama. He got rid of the set numbers (arias, duets and choruses) of traditional opera to facilitate dramatic flow. By the time of *Götterdämmerung*, his music, and what he was doing with his orchestra, complemented and even surpassed the action.

Wagner's preferred term for opera was 'music drama' and he pursued an artistic goal of *Gesamtkunstwerk* or the 'complete work of art'. For him the integration of music (vocal and instrumental), text and every aspect of staging into a unified art form was all-important. So for some music-lovers the presentation of music from Wagner's operas as orchestral

## Keynotes

WAGNER

*Born Leipzig, 1813*

*Died Venice, 1883*

As a composer of opera, writer and conductor, Wagner was one of the most influential creative personalities of his generation. He was also one of the most controversial – polarising listeners even as he changed the nature of opera forever. He cultivated an almost symphonic conception of opera (or 'music drama'), and his monumental creations were sustained by long-range harmonic thinking. One of Wagner's most important contributions to music was the ingenious linking of musical motifs – *Leitmotiven* or 'leading motifs' – to specific characters and situations; the influence of this technique continues to be profoundly felt in most film soundtracks.

THE RING

Wagner's *Ring* cycle is opera on an epic scale. It took 26 years to write and comprises more than 15 hours of music over four operas. It begins at the bottom of the Rhine river and ends in the heights, in Valhalla, taking in gods, heroes, love, greed, treachery and self-sacrifice along the way. Wagner wrote the text as well as the music, drawing on Norse mythology. Stolen gold from the Rhine is forged into a magic ring, which is cursed to bring death to all who possess it. Siegfried is the warrior destined to recover the ring and put an end to its evils, but he pays with his life, and with the life of his beloved Brünnhilde, daughter of Wotan, the chief of the gods.

highlights without singers flies in the face of the composer's own artistic goals. The practice has a long tradition, however, beginning with Wagner himself, who approved specific excerpts for concert performance. In the 19th century, before the existence of recordings, concert excerpts would have allowed more people to hear the music. Many conductors and arrangers since have prepared concert highlights and orchestral suites, and today, concert highlights enable us to appreciate the imagination and symphonic character of Wagner's orchestral writing.

### Synopsis and Listening Guide

The cycle begins in the depths of the Rhine, with the Rhine-maidens singing of the treasured Rhine-gold. As long as the gold is on the bottom of the Rhine, the world is in balance. By renouncing love, the gnome Alberich is able to steal the gold, and he forges a ring and helmet: the ring giving power over the world, the helmet allowing its wearer to assume any shape. Wotan, king of the gods, in turn steals Alberich's ring to pay the giants who built his citadel, Valhalla, and Alberich curses the ring.

In *Die Walküre* (The Valkyries), Siegmund rescues Sieglinde from a forced marriage. But they are siblings (humans fathered by Wotan) and so guilty of incest as well as adultery. Wotan must kill Siegmund, but not before Brünnhilde, Wotan's Valkyrie daughter, defies him and saves Sieglinde, who is pregnant with Siegfried.

**The Ride of the Valkyries** (which functions as the Prelude to Act III) is easily the most famous moment from the *Ring* cycle. The Valkyries are Wotan's daughters, who bring the fallen heroes to Valhalla on horseback. These fearsome females fly through the air to the exhilarating trilling of Wagner's music. You can imagine their cry: 'Ho jo to ho!'

Wotan strips Brünnhilde of her immortality as punishment for her disobedience and she is cast into a magic sleep within a ring of fire which only the bravest hero, Siegfried, may penetrate.

At the beginning of the third opera, Siegfried learns of his origins from Alberich's brother Mime, who has been raising him as a foster child after Sieglinde died in childbirth. In Act II Mime leaves Siegfried alone in the forest, and in **Forest Murmurs** a flood of birdsong suggests to Siegfried the mother he has never known. He attempts to imitate the birds but can manage no better than to play a call on his horn. A blast of the horn wakes Fafner (one of the giants from *Das Rheingold* who has since transformed into a dragon and taken possession of the ring); the fearless Siegfried plunges his sword into Fafner's heart. Siegfried takes the ring and the helmet and a Woodbird leads him to a beautiful woman asleep on a rock, surrounded by fire, awaiting a hero to overcome the flames and win her.



Wagner's representation of **Dawn** the following day and **Siegfried's Rhine Journey** – often played together in concerts – are drawn from the Prologue to *Götterdämmerung*, in which Siegfried and Brünnhilde reaffirm their love and Siegfried departs on new adventures after having given the ring of power to Brünnhilde as a token of fidelity. The languid depiction of sunrise begins with horns and cellos. The rapturous music of the Rhine Journey functions as an orchestral interlude between the Prologue and Act I – Siegfried's horn call just one of the key motifs it presents. Siegfried meets his fate: unwittingly entangled in dark intrigues, he is drugged, betrayed and killed by Hagen (among other things, Alberich's son). His body is returned to the Hall of the Gibichungs accompanied by the solemn pageant of **Siegfried's Funeral March**. Only Brünnhilde's self-sacrifice will return the ring to its natural place and restore order in the world. She builds a pyre around Siegfried's body, sets it ablaze and, mounting her horse, rides into the flames (**Brünnhilde's Immolation** – at nearly 20 minutes, the longest excerpt in this suite).

The fire blazes up, filling the entire space, and dies down forming smoke which lies like a fogbank along the Rhine. The river wells up and pours its waters over the pyre. The Rhine-maidens reappear (their motif played by the clarinet), drowning Hagen who has made one last-ditch effort to retrieve the ring. A melody expressive of Brünnhilde's love emerges from the tail-end of the Rhine-maidens' melody, which is dove-tailed into the Valhalla theme which soon flares up in a final blaze of glory. Through the cloud bank appears a red glow. In its light the Rhine can be seen to have returned to its bed, the Rhine-maidens playing with the ring in calmer waters. Spectators gaze awestruck on the distant sight of the gods sitting in Valhalla, in flames.

ADAPTED IN PART FROM NOTES © GORDON KALTON WILLIAMS

This orchestral suite calls for four flutes (with piccolo doubling), three oboes, cor anglais, three clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons and contrabassoon; eight horns (who sometimes play Wagner tubas), three trumpets, bass trumpet, four trombones; tuba; two timpanists, three percussionists; four harps (two to a part); and strings.

Significant performances by the SSO of highlights from Wagner's *Ring* cycle include transcriptions by Eugene Goossens, which Goossens himself conducted with the SSO in the 1947 Benefit Fund concert, and which Edo de Waart conducted in the 1996 Benefit Fund concert. Edo de Waart also conducted concert performances of the operas from the *Ring* cycle with the SSO over a period of six years, culminating with *Götterdämmerung* in the 2000 Olympic Arts Festival. The SSO has also performed *The Ring – An Orchestral Adventure* (a symphonic arrangement by Henk de Vlioger) on several occasions, most recently in 2013.

## CHRONOLOGY

**1848:** Wagner begins work on *The Ring of the Nibelungen*: an epic cycle of four music dramas. He spends the first four years writing the libretto.

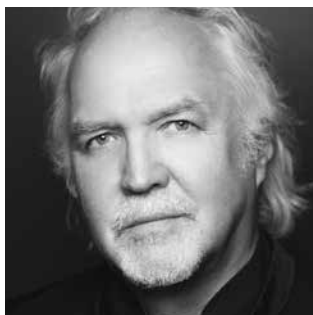
**1857–59:** Wagner takes a break from his work on the *Ring* cycle to compose *Tristan und Isolde*, based on an ancient, tragic love story.

**1861–67:** Still procrastinating on the *Ring*, Wagner composes *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*.

**1871–74:** Wagner completes the final opera in the *Ring* cycle, *Götterdämmerung*, or *The Twilight of the Gods*. The premiere takes place in Wagner's purpose-built theatre in Bayreuth.

## SPEEDY WAGNER

An orchestral concert suite is one way of discovering some of the beauties and drama of *The Ring* in a single evening. For a whirlwind tour of the story, check out our video *Wagner's Ring Cycle... in two-and-a-half minutes* [bit.ly/ring-cycle](http://bit.ly/ring-cycle)



SIMON PAULY

## Donald Runnicles *conductor*

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Conductor Donald Runnicles is the General Music Director of the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Music Director of the Grand Teton Music Festival (Jackson, Wyoming), as well as the Principal Guest Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. He was recently named Conductor Emeritus of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, having served as its Chief Conductor from 2009 to 2016.

In June, Donald Runnicles will conduct the complete *Ring* cycle at the San Francisco Opera, and last December he returned to the Metropolitan Opera to conduct *Hansel and Gretel*. Also in the 2017–18 season he guest conducts the Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra and Toronto Symphony Orchestra. In Europe he returns to the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Staatskapelle Dresden and BBC Scottish Symphony. Opera productions include the premiere of *L'Invisible* by Aribert Reimann, a new production of *Die Fledermaus* with the Deutsche Oper Berlin and *Salome* at the Hannover Staatstheater.

Donald Runnicles enjoys close and enduring relationships with several of the most significant opera companies and symphony orchestras.

His previous posts include Music Director of the San Francisco Opera (1992–2008), Principal Conductor of the Orchestra of St Luke's in New York City (2001–2007), and General Music Director of the Theater Freiburg and Orchestra (1989–1993).

His extensive discography includes complete recordings of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, Mozart's Requiem, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Britten's *Billy Budd*, Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, and Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. His recording of Wagner arias with Jonas Kaufmann and the Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper Berlin won the 2013 *Gramophone* prize for Best Vocal Recording, and his recording of Janáček's *Jenůfa* with the Orchestra and Chorus of the Deutsche Oper Berlin was nominated for a 2015 GRAMMY award for Best Opera Recording.

Donald Runnicles was appointed OBE in 2004. He holds honorary degrees from the University of Edinburgh, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

His most recent appearance with the SSO was in 2014 when he conducted programs including Mahler's First Symphony and Elgar's Enigma Variations.



FABRICE BOISSERE

## Nelson Freire

*piano*

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Born in Boa Esperança, a small town in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, Nelson Freire is a universally acclaimed artist. He has received international honours and decorations, and regularly collaborates with top orchestras and conductors worldwide as well as appearing in recital and making recordings that explore the piano repertoire with deep insight and unique creative power.

At 12, a finalist in the first International Piano Competition of Rio de Janeiro, he received a grant from Brazilian president Juscelino Kubitschek and went to study in Vienna under Bruno Seidlhofer, teacher of Friedrich Gulda. At 19, he was awarded the Dinu Lipatti Medal in London and later won First Prize at the International Vienna da Motta Competition in Lisbon. He made a sensation with his London debut at 23, and the following year made an equally acclaimed New York debut with the New York Philharmonic.

Nelson Freire has performed with many of the world's major conductors, such as Valery Gergiev, Yuri Temirkanov, Seiji Ozawa, Pierre Boulez, Riccardo Chailly, Charles Dutoit, Eugen Jochum, André Previn, Lorin Maazel, Rudolf Kempe, Rafael Kubelik, David Zinman, Kurt Masur and Colin Davis.

He has appeared with the greatest orchestras, including the Berlin, London, Brussels, New York and Israel philharmonic orchestras, and the London and BBC symphony orchestras, as well as the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, and the orchestras of Munich, Paris, Tokyo and St Petersburg (including the Mariinsky Orchestra), Vienna, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Chicago and Montreal.

His recent releases include an all-Brahms album, *Brasileiro* (featuring the music of Villa-Lobos and other Brazilian composers), *Radio Days: Concerto Broadcasts 1968–79*, Chopin's Piano Concerto No.2 with solo piano works, Beethoven's Emperor Concerto and Piano Sonata Op.111, and his first-ever album devoted to the music of JS Bach, recorded in his 70th birthday year.

Nelson Freire's most recent appearance with the SSO was in 2016 when he performed Schumann's piano concerto and appeared in a solo recital.

# 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.



# THE ORCHESTRA



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THE LOWY CHAIR OF  
CHIEF CONDUCTOR  
AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



**Brett Dean**  
ARTIST IN RESIDENCE  
SUPPORTED BY  
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CONCERTMASTER  
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ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER

**Fiona Ziegler**  
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orchestra**  
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Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

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## MORE MUSIC

### NELSON FREIRE

Hear Nelson Freire perform Beethoven's Emperor Concerto in his recording with Riccardo Chailly and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchester. The concerto is paired with Beethoven's final piano sonata, No.32 in C minor, Op.111.

DECCA 478 6771

For more Beethoven sonatas, look for Freire's earlier release featuring No.21 (Waldstein), No.26 (Les adieux), No.14 (Moonlight) and No.31, Op.110.

DECCA 457 8155

Last year, Freire released an all-Brahms recital album, reflecting the breadth of Brahms's output for solo piano. It begins with the Piano Sonata No.3 (Op.5) and features a selection of the late intermezzos.

DECCA 483 2154

Also among his recent releases is Freire's first-ever recording devoted to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. It begins with the brilliant and majestic Partita No.4 in D and concludes with a selection of chorale preludes. Also on the program, the English Suite No.3 and the Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue.

DECCA 478 8449

For more recordings from his extensive discography, visit [deccaclassics.com/Freire](http://deccaclassics.com/Freire)

### DONALD RUNNICLES

You can relive Donald Runnicles' *Ring* cycle selection via his live concert recording with the Staatskapelle Dresden, originally released on Teldec. In a slightly amplified version of the suite, it also includes *Wotan's Farewell and Magic Fire Music* from *Die Walküre*, and Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll* functions as an epilogue.

APEX 2564680434

Among more recent Wagner releases is his recording with tenor Jonas Kaufman and the Berlin Deutsche Oper Orchestra of highlights from *Tannhäuser*, *Rienzi*, *Lohengrin*, *Die Meistersinger* and *The Ring* as well as the *Wesendonck Lieder*.

DECCA 478 5189

Or look for Runnicles' recording with soprano Christine Brewer of Richard Strauss's *Four Last Songs* and the *Prelude and Liebestod* from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. The album begins with Runnicles and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in Strauss's *Death and Transfiguration*.

TELARC 80661

With the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra he has recorded James MacMillan's Fourth Symphony and Violin Concerto (soloist Vadim Repin).

ONYX 4157

[www.donaldrunnicles.org](http://www.donaldrunnicles.org)

## Broadcast Diary

### March–April



92.9 ABC  
Classic FM

[abc.net.au/classic](http://abc.net.au/classic)

Friday 16 March, 8pm

#### BLUEBEARD'S CASTLE

David Robertson conductor

Michelle DeYoung, John Relyea, David Greco  
vocal soloists

#### Opera Australia Chorus

Brahms, JS Bach, Bartók

Saturday 24 March, 2pm

#### SCHUBERT SONGS & MAHLER 10

Donald Runnicles conductor

Anne Sofie von Otter mezzo-soprano

Schubert in various orchestrations

Mahler completed by Deryck Cooke

Sunday 25 March, 7pm

#### PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE

Charles Dutoit conductor

Cast including...

Michaela Selinger, Elliot Madore  
and Marc Barrard

Debussy

Monday 26 March, 8pm

#### SONGS AND VISTAS

Asher Fisch conductor

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Dorman, Brahms, Richard Strauss



#### SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HOUR

Tuesday 10 April, 6pm

Musicians and staff of the SSO talk about the life of the orchestra and forthcoming concerts.

Hosted by Andrew Bukenya.

[finemusicfm.com](http://finemusicfm.com)

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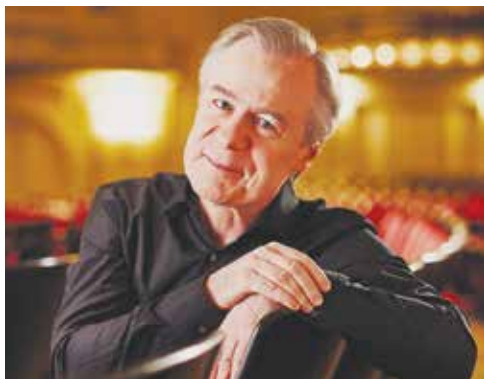


PHOTO: JAY FRAM

David Robertson

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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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PHOTO: Keith Saunders



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Each year – both alone and in collaboration with other orchestras worldwide – the SSO commissions new works for the mainstage concert season. These commissions represent Australian and international composers, established and new voices, and reflect our commitment to the nurturing of orchestral music.

*Forthcoming premieres...*

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

BRETT DEAN *Cello Concerto* with soloist Alban Gerhardt  
22, 24, 25 August (Premiere)



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

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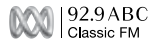
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