

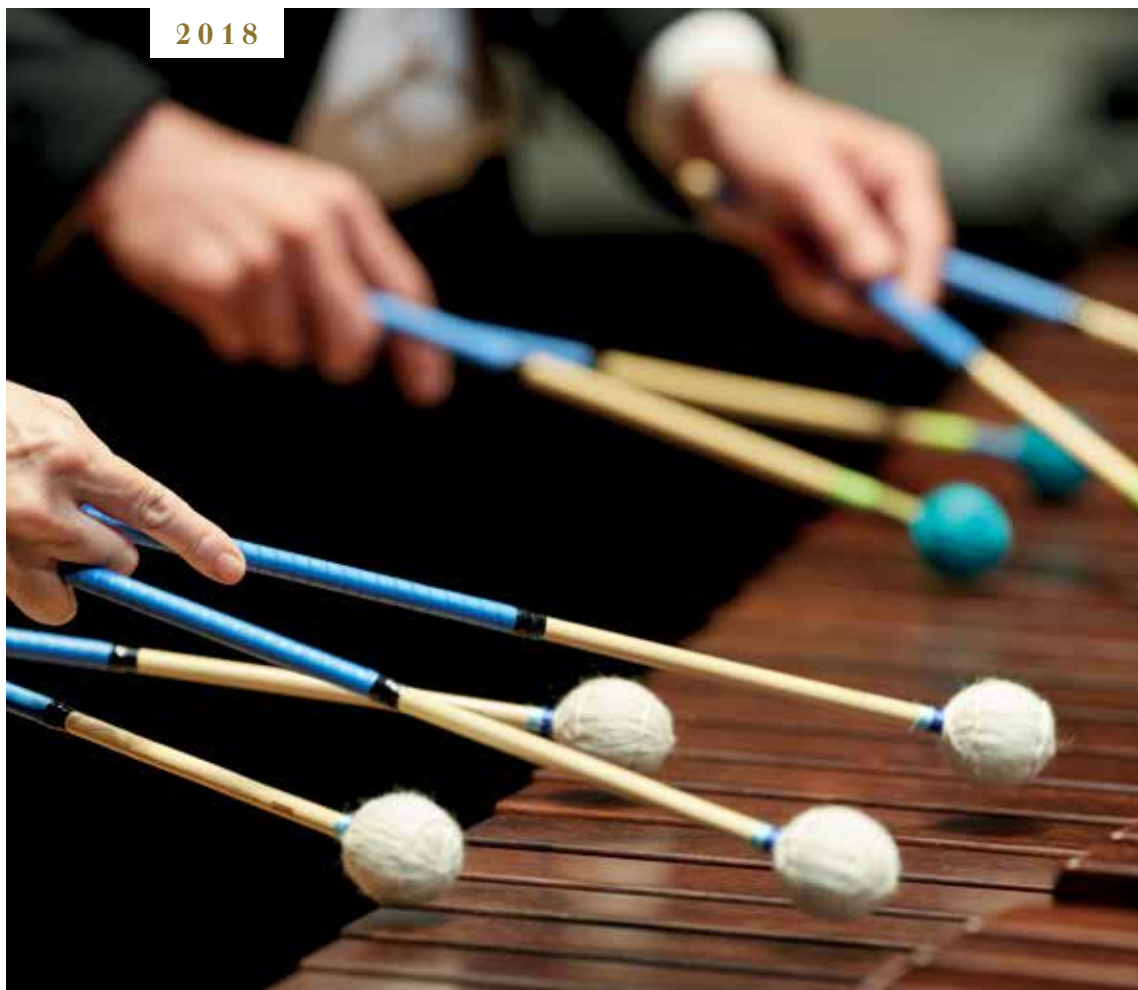


sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

SSO Percussion Stars

2018



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FRI 15 JUN, 11AM



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VERDI Requiem
Oleg Caetani conductor
Angel Blue soprano
Catherine Carby mezzo-soprano
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Jérôme Varnier bass
 Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Meet the Music
Thu 21 Jun, 6.30pm
 Great Classics
Sat 23 Jun, 2pm
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Mon 25 Jun, 7pm
 Sydney Opera House



A Night at the Speakeasy

Rhapsody in Blue
 Featuring...
GERSHWIN Rhapsody in Blue
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 hits from the 1920s as well as guest cabaret acts!
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George Gershwin piano roll
 and special guests **Ali McGregor** and **Imogen Kelly**

Fri 29 Jun, 8pm
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 Sydney Opera House



Simon Trpčeski in Recital

GRIEG From Holberg's Time (Holberg Suite)
MENDELSSOHN Songs without Words: Selection
RIMSKY-KORSAKOV trans. **Gilson** Scheherazade
Simon Trpčeski piano

International Pianists in Recital
 Presented by
 Theme & Variations
 Piano Services
Mon 2 Jul, 7pm
 City Recital Hall



Spirit Realms – Sacred and Profane

Hough plays Rachmaninoff
EDWARDS Earth Spirit Songs – Symphony No.2
***RACHMANINOFF** Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini
***MENDELSSOHN** Symphony No.5, Reformation
Julian Kuerti conductor
Celeste Lazarenko soprano
Stephen Hough piano

Meet the Music
Wed 4 Jul, 6.30pm
 Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 5 Jul, 1.30pm
 Tea & Symphony
Fri 6 Jul, 11am*
 Sydney Opera House



Mozart's Horn Concerto No.3 & Linz Symphony

SCHUBERT Overture in B flat
MOZART Horn Concerto No.3, K447
MOZART Symphony No.36 (Linz)
Andrew Haveron violin-director
Ben Jacks horn

Thu 12 Jul, 7pm
 City Recital Hall

SSO PRESENTS



Funny Girl: The Musical in Concert

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Thu 12 Jul, 8pm
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86TH SEASON | 2018

TEA & SYMPHONY

FRIDAY 15 JUNE, 11AM

.....
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL



**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson

Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

SSO Percussion Stars

SSO Percussion

**with their colleagues from the
Sydney Symphony Orchestra**

NIGEL WESTLAKE (born 1958)

Kalabash – Marimba Quartet

ECKHARD KOPETZKI (born 1956)

Le Chant du serpent

AKIRA NISHIMURA (born 1953)

Padma in Meditation

MINORU MIKI (1930–2011)

Marimba Spiritual: Part 2

PERCY GRAINGER (1882–1961)

Arrival Platform Humlet

arranged for percussion and strings by
Timothy Constable

Random Round

arranged for percussion and strings by
Michael Askill and Timothy Constable

ISTVÁN MÁRTA (born 1952)

Doll's House Story

Estimated durations:

7 minutes, 7 minutes, 12 minutes,
8 minutes, 5 minutes, 6 minutes,
13 minutes

The concert will conclude at
approximately 12.05pm.

.....
COVER: Photo by Keith Saunders



Principal Partner

ABOUT THE MUSIC

STEPHEN FORREST



Nigel Westlake

Kalabash – Marimba Quartet (2004)

marimbas, log drums, splash cymbals, cowbells, wood block

Nigel Westlake made his SSO debut at age 17, playing bass clarinet in Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. From 21, he spent three years with the Magic Puddin' Band, an electro-acoustic fusion group that brought him to the notice of the Flying Fruit Fly Circus, with which he worked as both performer and composer. After playing with the percussion ensemble Utungen in 1982, he began to explore recordings of traditional African marimba music that led to his first percussion score, *Omphalo Centric Lecture* (1984) for four orchestral marimbas, now widely performed. A short but intensive course at the Australian Film and Television School set him on the path to composing scores for major features like John Weiley's IMAX documentary *Antarctica* (1991) – including the percussion sequence *Penguin circus* – and Chris Noonan and George Miller's *Babe* (1995).

In Canberra in 2004, while recipient of an H.C. 'Nugget' Coombs Fellowship at the Australian National University, he turned his mind to another marimba quartet, destined for a first performance by DRUMatix, the percussion ensemble at the ANU's school of music. The inspiration came from the balofon, an African xylophone with calabash resonators underneath. As he told the group's director, Gary France:

So I began work on *Kalabash*, using traditional African balofon music as a departure point... by listening to traditional kora and xylophone recordings from North Ghana, Gambia and Senegal. Whenever I write for marimba I always think of the balofon...it's not my agenda to

duplicate or re-create the traditional balofon style, it's more about getting in touch with the origins of the marimba which is what interests me.

Rather than using four marimbas, Westlake deploys the four players at two five-octave orchestral marimbas. Their independent movement constrained by having to share 'keyboards', the 'natural' texture of the piece is less a quartet than a double duet. Yet the music also constantly breaks out of the original pairings into solos, duos and trios, as well as a variety of complex 'real' quartet textures. He introduces timbral variation and rhythmic articulation by sometimes calling for the players to use the wooden handles of the sticks, rather than the softer heads, to create a drier clicking sound. As in traditional African music, fast moving ostinatos are the predominant audible feature of the piece, occasionally overlaid with broader melodic jazz-like solos. Further articulation is added by occasional strokes on log drums, cowbells, splash cymbals and a woodblock.



Eckhard Kopetzki

Le Chant du serpent (2000)

bass drum, djembe, congas, bongos

Le Chant du serpent (The song of the snake) channels the intense communal percussion performances still preserved in many traditional music cultures, in Africa and South America, as well as Japan and Indonesia. Each of the four players uses a single pair of successively larger skin drums (bongos, small congas, congas, and standard orchestral drums), played only with the hands, in a dramatic array of rhythmic, and ensemble gambits, solos, counterpoints, and unisons. Rather than just accompanying

some invisible choreography, the drummers' performance becomes a dance in itself, while also utilising the typically wooden interior of modern concert halls as an oversized resonator, the acoustic becoming a ritual space for a shouting, clapping, drumming serpent.

Kopetzki, who was born in Hannover, Germany, studied music and physics in Würzburg, and from 1985 specialised in teaching percussion. As a composer, his percussion works for junior players are well-known, and senior students regularly perform such pieces as the multiple drum solo *Canned Heat* (2002), and, for tuned percussion, *Three movements for a solo dancer* (2003) for marimba.



Akira Nishimura
Padma in Meditation (1988)

marimbas, vibraphones, chimes, tam-tams, Thai gongs, steel drums, Japanese wind bells, crotales

Nishimura was born in Osaka, and studied music at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. In the late 1970s he composed several works that brought him to international attention. One was the percussion sextet, *Kecak* (1979), which uses a large drum array to create an instrumental simulacrum of the dramatic Balinese *ketjak* or monkey dance chant, music that bears a close family relationship to the work by Kopetzki that we've just heard.

Nishimura's other important early work was a 1975 string quartet called *Heterophony* – 'heterophony' being the closest European term for the traditional Japanese practice whereby several musicians typically play or sing the same melody together, not in absolute unison, but with

pitch and rhythm slightly out of phase with each other. Along with his prominent use of tremolos, trills, and shimmering ostinatos, this practice became a centrepiece of Nishimura's mature technique, in works like the sextet *Padma in Meditation*, composed in 1988 for a largely pitched percussion array of vibraphones and marimbas with chimes and bells.

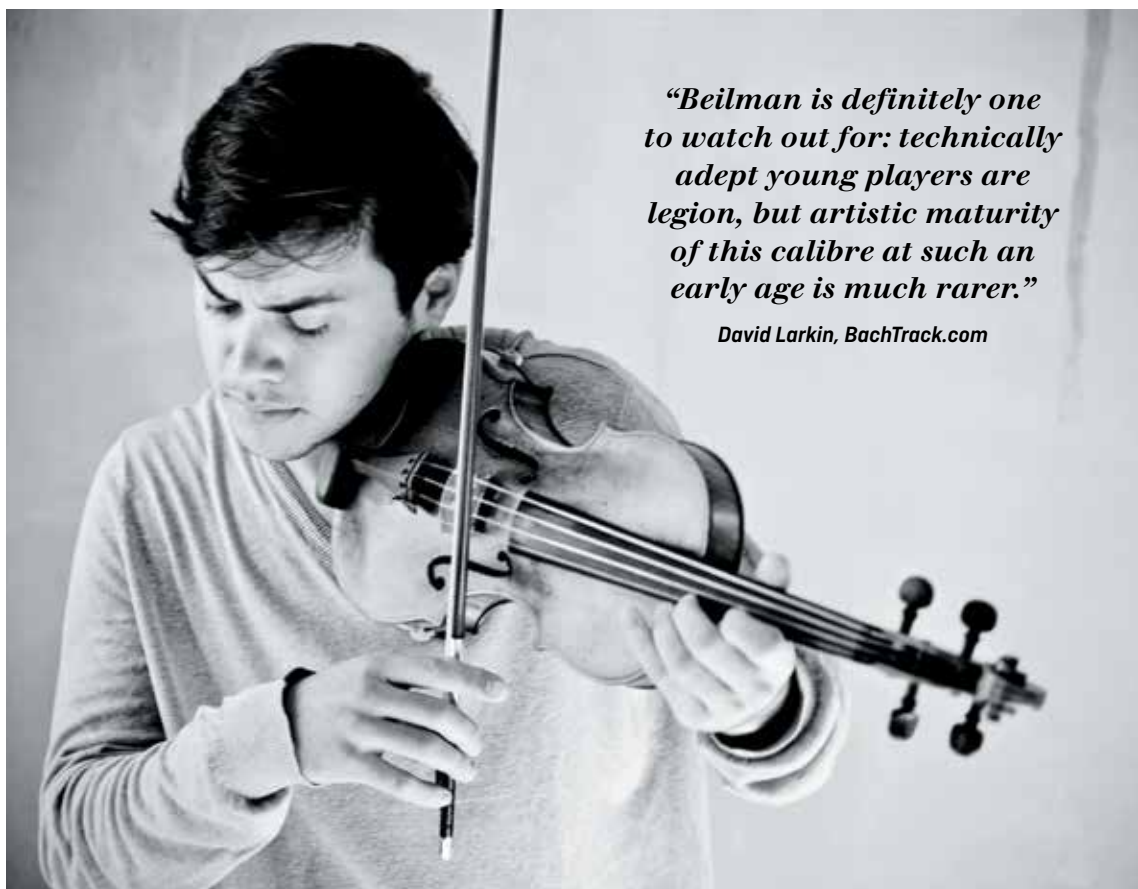
The padma is a crimson lotus flower, sacred in Buddhism. A slowly morphing procession of tranquil tremolos forms a drone-like background to the piece's entire span, the composer thereby inviting the listener to enter into a meditative state. Tiny fragments of heterophonic melodies begin to emerge from, and then merge back into, this background, the melodies gradually becoming longer and more elaborate, a melodic flowering like witnessing the petals of the padma break free from their bud and come fully into bloom.



Minoru Miki
Marimba Spiritual: Part 2 (1984)

solo marimba, three shimedaiko, okedo, nagado, yoko, chanchiki, binsasara

Born on Shikoku island, Miki was a leading figure in the middle generation of 20th-century Japanese composers that also notably included Tōru Takemitsu and Ryōhei Hirose. Emerging in the 1950s, most of this generation began writing exclusively for western instruments and ensembles. But in the early 1960s, Miki became one of the first to explore working also with Japanese traditional instruments, both as a performer and composer. His experience directing the traditional performing group Ensemble Nipponia during the 1960s and 1970s also fed back into



“Beilman is definitely one to watch out for: technically adept young players are legion, but artistic maturity of this calibre at such an early age is much rarer.”

David Larkin, BachTrack.com

Pictures at an Exhibition

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HIGDON

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MUSSORGSKY orch. Ravel

Pictures at an Exhibition

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Benjamin Beilman violin

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the works he continued to write for western instruments, especially those composed for marimba player Keiko Abe. The first of these, *Time for marimba* [1968] has since become one of the most widely played and recorded pieces in the instrument's solo repertoire.

Fifteen years later, at Abe's request, Miki composed another work, this time for marimba in ensemble with three other percussionists playing un-pitched and semi-pitched instruments. *Marimba Spiritual* was created in three weeks around New Year 1984. From the depths of Japan's winter, Miki had been following the confronting news coverage of the terrible famines in Africa. Having personally experienced Japan's great suffering at the end of the World War II, he composed the work as an expression of his sorrow and anger at the situation in Uganda and Ethiopia, and hope for its resolution by rain and international aid.

The work is in two parts, slow and fast. Today we hear Part 2. Whereas the first part is a free meditation on the tragedy, in which the marimba takes the lead, the fast second section brings the other percussion into the foreground, drawing on sounds and rhythms from *taiko* drumming performances traditionally associated with an annual winter night festival in Chichibu, north-west of Tokyo. Imagine a joyous celebration at the breaking of drought and famine. The score allows for either western orchestral or traditional Japanese drums to be used.

Percy Grainger
Arrival Platform Humlet (1908–16)
Random Round (1912–15)

Arrangements by Timothy Constable and Michael Askill

vibraphones, marimbas, xylophone, glockenspiel with four violins, two violas, two cellos and double bass

As a boy, Grainger received the best music tuition his native Melbourne had to offer, before undertaking five years of serious study in Frankfurt, Germany. He then spent the first decade of the new century based in London. It was as a pianist, not yet publicly committed to composition, that he formed decisive



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relationships with the composers Grieg, Delius and Cyril Scott; likewise as a pianist he returned twice that decade to tour Australia with soprano Ada Crossley. Only in the three years before World War I did he begin to publish his first comparatively modest pieces: quirky reinterpretations of British folk music, like his 'clog dance' *Handel in the Strand* (1912), and of other traditional and national musics, like his Australian *Colonial Song* (1912).

A piece with the title *Arrival Platform Humlet* must also have seemed to be offering something sentimental or folksy, an impression not lessened by Grainger's description of it as: 'the sort of thing one hums to oneself as an accompaniment to one's tramping feet as one happily, excitedly paces up and down the arrival platform...awaiting the arrival of a belated train bringing one's sweetheart from foreign parts.' Yet the music itself is arrestingly modern, a sinewy tune 'with a healthy somewhat fierce go' and lots of very un-hum-like 'tuneful percussion', recalling the frenzied activity of London's Liverpool Street and Victoria stations, where he got the original idea for the piece in 1908. It was also one of his early experiments in flexible scoring, one version performable by between 4 and 8 percussionists with full orchestra, and one of the many alternative later versions for nothing more than a solo viola!

Grainger began experimenting with what he called 'free music' around the same time. According to his own characteristic turn of phrase, *Random Round* was 'tone wrought [i.e. composed] around 1912–15 in Holland and tried out in England not very hopefullingly soon after'. Later, in more conventional terms, Grainger

described it as arising 'out of the possibility of modern musicians being capable of combining the communal improvisation of South Sea Islanders with the harmonic consciousness of our written art-music...I set out to embody some of the experience I had gleaned from familiarity with the primitive polyphony of the Rarotongan part songs...A fairly large range of personal choice was allowed to everyone taking part, and the effectiveness of the whole thing would depend primarily on the natural sense for contrasts of form, colour and dynamics displayed by the various performers, and their judgment in entering and leaving the general ensemble at suitable moments.'

TÓTH LÁSZLO



István Márta **Doll's House Story (1985)**

marimbas, xylophone, chimes, timpani, bass drum, tenor drums, tom-toms, snare drum, suspended cymbals, wood blocks, cowbells, triangle, Peking Opera gong, Thai gongs, tam-tam, whip, toy piano, assorted musical toys

Born in Budapest, István Márta was a student at the Franz Liszt Academy in the 1970s. Though he initially worked there under one of the most conservative composition teachers, Rezső Sugár, he became actively involved in Budapest's Young Artists Club, an important sponsor of new and experimental exhibitions and performances under the so-called 'benign dictatorship' of the country's ruling Socialist Workers' Party. Attendance at a summer course taught by Polish composer Witold Lutosławski encouraged his growing identification with modern music, furthered as a leader of the Young Composers' section of the

Association of Hungarian Musicians, and as a member with Group 180, a collective of composers and performers with a special interest in minimal music. Graduating in 1981, he began teaching classical music subjects to jazz students at the Bartók Music High School, while also performing professionally with the Mendel Quartet, an ensemble specialising in mediæval and renaissance music as well as contemporary music. The first album dedicated entirely to Márta's own music, *Hearts*, was issued by Hungaroton in 1984. One of his best-known works, *Doom – a sigh* (1989), uses folk song recordings he made in an ethnic Hungarian enclave in Romania in 1973, and appears on the Kronos Quartet's 1990 album *Black Angels*. His other best-known work, *Doll's House Story* (Babaházi története) was composed for the Amadinda Percussion Group, formed in 1984 by four fellow graduates from the Liszt Academy, and recorded by them in 1987. The following is a precis of Márta's original program note:

Revolution broke out overnight in the toy department, erupting, without rhyme or reason, over some petty matter. Plastic dolls, tin soldiers, chimney sweeps, police officers, and clowns, engaged in a pitched battle of unprecedented cruelty. The very first minute claimed nine lives (including a Pierrot, a Columbine and an heroic Harlequin), and in the next five minutes, six more deaths occurred. The combatants froze when a night watchman briefly shone his torch on the scene, only for fighting to continue even more bitterly once he was gone. The floor was overrun by toy ambulances with shrieking sirens, and model tanks firing shells, until the mechanised riot troops did their work, and the rebels and fighters fled back to the shelves, leaving a dead silence, occasionally disturbed by the fumbling of a doll, groping in the dark for its lost limbs or head. In the morning, the shop assistants incredulously viewed the mess, looking in vain for signs of burglary or theft. Later in the morning, a tiny wind-up guillotine swung into action, but, by then, nobody was taking any notice.

PROGRAM NOTES BY GRAEME SKINNER © 2018

MORE MUSIC

WESTLAKE

To enjoy *Kalabash* again after the concert, search YouTube for «Touch Percussion Quartet Kalabash» for a performance from the 2015 Luxembourg International Percussion Competition. And if you're interested in Westlake's classic percussion work *Omphalo Centric Lecture*, look for Michael Askill's recording (in which he plays all the parts) on the album *Onomatopoeia* (Tall Poppies TP047).

KOPETZKI

The Berlin Philharmonic streams a 2007 video performance of *Le Chant du serpent* by the orchestra's percussion section – see the trailer on its official YouTube channel.

NISHIMURA

A 2013 Australian performance of *Padma in Meditation* by the QCGU Percussion Ensemble (Queensland Conservatorium) can be streamed for free listening on soundcloud.com.

MIKI

Minoru Miki's *Time for marimba* (1968) has become one of the most widely played and recorded pieces in the solo marimba repertoire and is currently represented in dozens of student and professional performances on YouTube.

Today we performed just Part 2 of *Marimba Spiritual*. If you're interested in hearing the complete work, there is a fine performance from 2014, by the percussionists of the WDR Sinfonie-orchester Cologne on YouTube.

GRAINGER

Percy Grainger's experimented with the idea of flexible scoring and one version of *Arrival Platform Humlet* can be performed by between four and eight percussionists with full orchestra – see the 2011 performance by the SSO on YouTube.

MÁRTA

The first album devoted entirely to Márta's music, *Hearts*, was originally released on the Hungaroton label in 1984 and is now streamed by Apple Music. For one of his best-known works, *Doom – a sigh*, look for the Kronos Quartet album *Black Angels* (on the Nonesuch label and available for download). Today's work by Márta, *Doll's House Story*, was composed for the Amadinda Percussion Group, who recorded it in 1987 (Hungaroton, now on Apple Music).

In 2008 Australian choreographer Stanton Welch made a 'combative' staging of Márta's music for Houston Ballet, inspired by the composer's highly theatrical scenario (see page 10). Search YouTube for «Stanton Welch's A Doll's House» for a taste.

Broadcast Diary

June–July



abc.net.au/classic

Saturday 16 June, 8pm

Sunday 17 June, noon (repeat)

ANNE-SOPHIE MUTTER PLAYS TCHAIKOVSKY

David Robertson conductor

Anne-Sophie Mutter violin

Kalinnikov, J Williams, Tchaikovsky

Thursday 21 June, 6.30pm

Sunday 24 June, 2pm (repeat)

VERDI'S REQUIEM

Oleg Caetani conductor

Angel Blue, Catherine Carby, Diego Torre,

Jérôme Varnier soloists

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Friday 22 June, 1pm

YULIANNA AVDEEVA IN RECITAL

Yulianna Avdeeva piano

Chopin, Liszt

Saturday 30 June, 8pm

ROYAL FIREWORKS MUSIC

Robert Johnson conductor

SSO Brass Ensemble

Britten, Barber, Gabrieli, Hartley, Debussy, Elgar, Handel

Sunday 15 July, noon

Wednesday 8 August, 1pm (repeat)

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Celeste Lazarenko soprano

Stephen Hough piano

Edwards, Rachmaninoff, Mendelssohn



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SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

SSO Percussion

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra Percussion section and its regular guests comprise some of Australia's finest percussionists.

Over the years they have played a featured role in the SSO's performances of major works in the orchestral repertoire, including, most recently, Messiaen's *From the Canyons to the Stars...* (in which Rebecca Lagos played solo xyloimba and Timothy Constable solo glockenspiel), as well as Takemitsu's *From me flows what you call Time*. Mark Robinson has also performed the solo percussion part in Yoshimatsu's *Cyberbird* for thousands of listeners in Symphony in the Domain, Timothy Constable has performed his own music in the SSO's Cocktail Hour series in the Utzon Room, and the ensemble is a favourite of the young philanthropists at SSO Vanguard concerts.

Other highlights have included the premieres and recordings of Carl Vine's Percussion Symphony, in which Ian Cleworth and Rebecca Lagos appeared as members of Synergy Percussion

with the SSO, and Ross Edwards' *Yarrageh – Nocturne* for solo percussion and orchestra, in which Ian Cleworth was the soloist. And in 2006 Rebecca Lagos premiered Nigel Westlake's percussion concerto *When the Clock Strikes Me*, also commissioned by the SSO.

Members of today's ensemble have met and performed in the presence of such luminaries as Olivier Messiaen and Tōru Takemitsu, and in 2012 appeared in the Sydney Opera House's epic Steve Reich concert, in which Timothy Constable also performed *Clapping Music* with the composer.

In addition to their work with the SSO, most of today's performers have performed with the leading ensembles in Sydney and beyond, most significantly with Synergy Percussion, as core members or as guests, and with Taiko. As a result, they have participated in the premieres of numerous important works by composers such as Nigel Westlake, Carl Vine, Ross Edwards and Peter Sculthorpe.

Today's Musicians

Rebecca Lagos

Principal Percussion

Timothy Constable

Mark Robinson

A/ Principal Timpani

Sami Butler†

Ian Cleworth*

Joshua Hill*

With their colleagues from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra

FIRST VIOLINS

Léone Ziegler

Jenny Booth

SECOND VIOLINS

Marianne Edwards

Associate Principal

Benjamin Li

VIOLAS

Felicity Tsai

Amanda Verner

CELLOS

Timothy Nankervis

Christopher Pidcock

DOUBLE BASS

Richard Lynn

* = Guest Musician

† = SSO Fellow

Read more about today's performers...

SSO Percussion bit.ly/percussion-and-timpani

SSO Fellowship www.sydneyssmphony.com/fellowship

Ian Cleworth www.taiko.com/company-members/ian-cleworth

Joshua Hill www.synergypercussion.com/about

www.sydneyssmphony.com/SSO_musicians

Special thanks to Synergy Percussion and Taiko for the loan of some of the instruments used in this concert.

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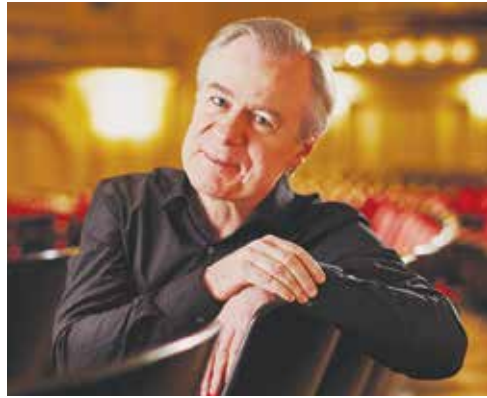


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Associate Principal Trombone Scott Kinmont with
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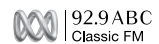
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