



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Simon Trpčeski in Recital

2018



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MON 2 JUL 7PM

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Spirit Realms – Sacred and Profane

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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*
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**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
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Pictures at an Exhibition

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV Russian Easter Festival Overture
 HIGDON Violin Concerto **AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE**
 MUSSORGSKY orch. Ravel Pictures at an Exhibition

Giancarlo Guerrero conductor
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Wed 18 Jul, 8pm
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Spanish Nights

DEBUSSY Giggles (from Images)
 J ANDERSON The Imaginary Museum –
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 FALLA Nights in the Gardens of Spain,
 for piano and orchestra
 DEBUSSY Ibéria (from Images)

Ludovic Morlot conductor
 Steven Osborne piano

Thursday Afternoon Symphony
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Produced for the Broadway stage by Ray Stark. New York production supervised by Jerome Robbins. Original production directed by Garson Kann.

Thu 12 Jul, 8pm
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Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back

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WELCOME



Dear Music Lovers,

We are very proud to present the SSO's International Pianists in Recital series this year. It's a memorable series in any concert diary and we hope you will be inspired and enchanted by the level of pianistic virtuosity presented in this year's program.

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I am constantly in awe of the talent and creativity that emerges from a piano in the hands of a great pianist. I look forward to sharing this experience with you and congratulate the Sydney Symphony Orchestra once again for bringing to our city such fine, inspirational artists.



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**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

INTERNATIONAL PIANISTS IN RECITAL
PRESENTED BY THEME & VARIATIONS
MONDAY 2 JULY, 7PM
.....
CITY RECITAL HALL

Simon Trpčeski in Recital

EDVARD GRIEG (1843–1907)

From Holberg's Time – Suite in olden style, Op.40

Praeludium (Allegro vivace)
Sarabande (Andante espressivo)
Gavotte (Allegretto) and Musette
Air (Andante religioso)
Rigaudon (Allegro con brio)

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

Songs without Words

Andante con moto, Op.19b No.1
Molto allegro e vivace, Op.19b No.3
Venetian Gondola Song (Allegretto tranquillo), Op.30 No.6
Allegro non troppo, Op.53 No.2
Allegro non troppo, Op.38 No.2
Andante espressivo, Op.62 No.1
Allegro leggiero, Op.67 No.2

INTERVAL

NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (1844–1908)

Scheherazade, Op.35

Transcribed for solo piano by Paul Gilson

Largo maestoso – Lento – Allegro non troppo
[The Sea and Sinbad's Ship]
Lento – Andantino [The Kalandar Prince]
Andantino quasi Allegretto
[The Young Prince and the Young Princess]
Allegro molto – Vivo – Allegro non troppo e maestoso – Lento
[Festival at Baghdad – The Sea – The Ship Breaks Against
a Cliff Surmounted by a Bronze Horseman – Conclusion]

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Tonight's recital will be recorded by ABC Classic FM for broadcast across Australia on Saturday 28 July at 2pm.

Pre-concert talk by Scott Davie at 6.15pm in the First Floor Reception Room.

.....
Estimated durations:
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The recital will conclude at approximately 9pm.

.....
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SIMON FOWLER

Simon Trpčeski

piano

Macedonian pianist Simon Trpčeski performs with the world's foremost orchestras – including the London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and the New York and Los Angeles philharmonic orchestras – and regularly collaborates with conductors such as Marin Alsop, Lionel Bringuier, Thomas Dausgaard, Gustavo Dudamel, Jakob Hrůša, Vladimir Jurowski, Susanna Mälkki, Vasily Petrenko, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Dima Slobodeniouk and Robin Ticciati. He also gives solo recitals in the world's cultural capitals and performs chamber music at festivals such as Verbier and Aspen as well as the BBC Proms

His engagements during the 2017–18 season have included return visits to the San Francisco Symphony, St Louis Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony, Philharmonia, Zurich Tonhalle and New Zealand Symphony orchestras, and appearances with the Stavanger Symphony, Teatro di San Carlo and BBC Scottish Symphony orchestras. As Artist in Residence at Wigmore Hall he has given solo recitals and concerts with his regular duo partner, cellist Daniel Müller-Schott, as well as the premiere of his folk project, Makedonissimo, celebrating the music and culture of his native Macedonia.

Simon Trpčeski's many recordings have won him widespread acclaim. His first recording (2002) received both the Editor's Choice and Debut Album at the Gramophone Awards.

His interpretations of the Rachmaninoff concertos and Paganini Rhapsody (with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Vasily Petrenko) received Classic FM, Gramophone Editor's Choice, and Diapason d'Or accolades. Last year his most recent recording, of Prokofiev Piano Concertos No.1 and No.3, won him another Diapason d'Or.

With the support of KulturOp – Macedonia's leading cultural and arts organisation – and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia, Simon Trpčeski works regularly with young Macedonian musicians, cultivating that country's next generation of artists. Born in the Republic of Macedonia in 1979, Simon Trpčeski is a graduate of the School of Music in Skopje, where he studied with Boris Romanov. He was previously a BBC New Generation Artist and received the Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist Award in 2003.

Simon Trpčeski is a regular visitor to Australia. His most recent appearance for the SSO was in 2015, when he performed Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No.1 with Vasily Petrenko conducting.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Edvard Grieg

From Holberg's Time – Suite in olden style, Op.40

Praeludium (Allegro vivace)

Sarabande (Andante espressivo)

Gavotte (Allegretto) and Musette

Air (Andante religioso)

Rigaudon (Allegro con brio)

In 2003 the University of Bergen in Norway instituted a prize to commemorate one of the city's most famous sons, Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754). The Holberg Prize honours achievements in humanities, science, theology and law – all areas in which this extraordinary polymath excelled. Norway was, at the time of his birth, still a part of the Danish kingdom, and Holberg unsurprisingly spent much of his adult life in the capital, where he held the Chairs of Metaphysics and Logic, Latin Rhetoric and History at the University of Copenhagen. There he wrote scholarly works that remained in use for a century or more, and a number of successful plays. He also spent considerable periods abroad, notably in Rome and Oxford, and is credited as bringing the ideas of the Enlightenment back to Scandinavia. Holberg never married, but out of the considerable fortune he amassed he helped to transform Denmark's Sorø Academy from an aristocratic riding school into a new university.

For the bicentenary of Holberg's birth, Grieg (another of Bergen's famous sons) was commissioned to compose a cantata to be sung at the unveiling of a monument to the great man. The resulting *Holberg Cantata* for baritone and male chorus, setting a text by Nordahl Rolfsen, was an onerous duty for

Keynotes

GRIEG

Born Bergen, 1843

Died Bergen, 1907

Grieg excelled in the art of the musical miniature in an era when there was a huge demand for charming and evocative music that could be played at home – sophisticated, yet not too difficult for amateurs. Although he is best known for his incidental music to Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* and for his Piano Concerto in A minor (championed by Australian Percy Grainger), the most significant part of his output comprises sets of piano pieces and songs – deftly characterised and always sparkling with congeniality. This is the spirit that permeates the *Holberg Suite*.

HOLBERG SUITE

This music takes its name from Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754), the Norwegian-born Danish dramatist whose comedies led him to be known as 'Molière of the North'. Written for Holberg's bicentenary in 1884, Grieg's suite is a 'costume piece' – a skilful and melodious baroque pastiche that uses courtly dance forms to evoke a gracious and witty past.

◀ Ludvig Holberg in the coffee shop of Madame N.N. – detail from an oil sketch by Danish artist Wilhelm Marstrand (1810–1873), who, like Grieg, found inspiration in the 'Molière of the North', painting many scenes from his plays.



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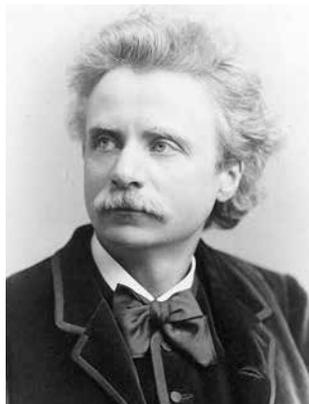
Grieg who claimed to be writing ‘poor music’ but at least having some success fishing. But in a sudden *jeu d’esprit*, he composed a brilliant suite for piano of dances of the kind that Holberg might have known – a ‘suite in the old style’ as he described it to a friend – though they are far from neo-baroque pastiche. Grieg himself performed the suite in Bergen at the time of the Holberg festivities and it proved so popular that he soon made a version for string orchestra. The music of the ‘Holberg Suite’ – in both versions – has become one of his best-known works, together with his Piano Concerto in A minor and the music for *Peer Gynt*.

Listening Guide

This ‘costume piece’, as Grieg dubbed the suite, is introduced by a **Praeludium** – an effervescent flurry of notes evoking the keyboard toccata style contrasts at times with a simple, sighing melody in the left hand. The refined **Sarabande** conforms to the baroque model of a triple-time dance with emphasis on the second beat, but the passionately nostalgic harmonies and might remind us of other works of Grieg. The **Gavotte** adopts the rhythmic trademark of this lively French dance: its momentum stems from the way each melodic phrase begins halfway through the bar, always tipping the music onto the downbeat of the following full bar. Its ornamental flourishes give it an aristocratic elegance; in the middle, lords and ladies pause to enjoy the ‘rustic’ mood of a sophisticated **Musette**, named for a kind of French bagpipe, the source of its drone bass.

The **Air** (marked ‘religioso’) is the solemn, introspective heart of the suite. It brings to mind Bach’s ‘Air on a G string’, with an intricate melody that sighs and sings over a pulsing accompaniment. The final movement returns to the virtuosity of the opening with a **Rigaudon**, a Provençal dance type that has affinities with the hornpipe. Marked *con brio* (with spirit), this music sparkles with good-humoured wit – Holberg would have approved. A more tranquil section in the middle offers a moment of repose.

ADAPTED FROM A NOTE BY GORDON KERRY © 2015
LISTENING GUIDE BY YVONNE FRINDLE



Felix Mendelssohn

Lieder ohne Worte (Songs without Words)

‘There is so much talk about music, and yet so little is said.’ Sobering words for a program book like this. Mendelssohn continues: ‘I believe that words are not enough at all, and if I should find they were enough, I would stop making music altogether.’

This often quoted point of view turns up in a letter to the composer’s cousin-in-law, Marc-André Souchay, who had been trying to invent titles for Mendelssohn’s songs without words (‘Resignation’ for Op.19 No.1, for example, or ‘Longing’ for Op.53 No.2). Mendelssohn tells him that while some might complain that music is too ambiguous – that ‘what they should be thinking as they hear it is unclear’ – for him it is the reverse, that the thoughts conveyed to him by music are in fact too *definite* to be put into words: ‘If you ask me what I was thinking when I wrote it, I would say: just the song as it stands.’

It’s no surprise that Souchay wanted to articulate the moods of these instrumental ‘songs’. This is music that speaks powerfully to the imagination. Others tried to write poetry that would fit with the melodies, including the writer, painter and onetime musician Johann Peter Lyser. But he soon abandoned the effort, declaring that the *Lieder ohne Worte* might be more aptly labelled ‘Empfindung wofür es keine Worte gibt’ (Feelings for which there are no words). Mendelssohn’s sentiments exactly.

The song without words, or *Lied ohne Worte*, was a specific type of lyrical piano miniature, an experiment in transferring vocal idioms to the piano, making the instrument singer and accompanist all in one. The genre was the creation of Mendelssohn and his sister Fanny, emerging as the reverse form of a childhood game in which they’d devised lyrics for their instrumental pieces.

Schumann, reviewing Mendelssohn’s second book of songs without words, imagined how such music might be invented: perhaps, he speculated, they were twilight improvisations at the piano (for at least one of them, Op.30 No.6, this was true); or perhaps a text was chosen and then, eliminating the words, inspiration shaped the music.

While Mendelssohn’s fifty or so songs without words cover a wide range of moods, the first song in the first published set (1832) is in some ways a prototype for the genre. Beautifully lyrical and entirely idiomatic for the keyboard, **Op.19b No.1 (E major, Andante con moto)** is as perfect a song as can be achieved without text or singer. The right hand carries a singing melody, the left hand provides the bass line, and both hands

Keynotes

MENDELSSOHN

Born Hamburg, 1809

Died Leipzig, 1847

The son of a banker and grandson of one of Europe’s most famous philosophers, Felix Mendelssohn travelled widely, studied with some of the most respected musicians of his day, and counted Goethe as a friend. This economic security and intellectual stimulation, combined with natural genius, allowed him to reach maturity as a composer while in his teens.

Mendelssohn is often called the 19th-century Mozart: he was a child prodigy, composing youthful masterpieces such the *Octet* and the *Midsummer Night’s Dream Overture*; his music has a classical sensibility; and he died in his 30s, his tremendous activity as composer, pianist, conductor and administrator having taken its toll on a fragile constitution.

SONGS WITHOUT WORDS

Together with his sister Fanny, Mendelssohn invented the genre of *Lieder ohne Worte*, literally ‘songs without words’, and he composed more than 48 of these pieces over the course of his life. They are piano miniatures – typically only two or three minutes long – with a lyrical character that distils a particular mood or personality. They are extremely evocative, yet Mendelssohn himself evidently thought of them in the abstract and gave pictorial titles to only a handful.

contribute to a third voice: broken chords rippling in the middle.

The second song in tonight's selection, **Op.19b No.3 (A major, *Molto allegro e vivace*)**, soon acquired the nickname *Jagdlied* or 'Hunting Song'. It has all the tell-tale musical gestures: urgent, galloping rhythms, emphatic chordal textures and characteristic horn calls!

The **Venetian Gondola Song, Op.30 No.6 (F sharp minor, *Allegretto tranquillo*)** is a lilting but moody barcarole. Mendelssohn specifies the pedalling, ensuring an elegant blurring of harmony from the left hand's undulating figurations, which underpin the poignant melody. It was composed, or rather improvised and then set down, for the Leipzig pianist and salonnière Henriette Voigt.

Haunting simplicity is replaced by the richer and more ardent character of **Op.53 No.2 (E flat major, *Allegro non troppo*)**. The music begins 'intimissimo' (most intimate) and builds to heightened drama at its centre. Its fluid texture is created by setting left-hand triplets against pairs of notes in the right hand – 'two against three' as pianists call it. It was composed in 1835 for the 16-year-old Clara Wieck – 'a bit quiet and shy' thought Mendelssohn, but already a 'magnificent' pianist.

Texture is again a point of distinction in **Op.38 No.2 (C minor, *Allegro non troppo*)**. As with the first of tonight's songs, the exquisite melody and supporting bass are filled out by broken chord patterns shared between the hands and, in this piece, falling always off the beat. Ironically, it was composed for a singer, the soprano Henriette Grabau.

The entire opus 62 collection (the fifth volume to be published) was dedicated to Clara Wieck, or Mme Clara Schumann as she had become by 1844. The dreamy **Op.62 No.1 (G major, *Andante espressivo*)** is a superb example of lyrical writing and deft harmonic colour, proof that the piano can indeed be made to sing.

Simon Trpčeski's selection concludes with the agile and quirky **Op.67 No.2 (F sharp minor, *Allegro leggiero*)**. The dominant gesture is the spiky staccato accompanying figure – the piano's answer to pizzicato strings!

YVONNE FRINDLE

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Theodor Hildebrandt's portrait of Mendelssohn, painted in 1835

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Scheherazade, Op.35

Transcribed for solo piano by Paul Gilson

Largo maestoso – Lento – Allegro non troppo

[*The Sea and Sinbad's Ship*]

Lento – Andantino [*The Kalandar Prince*]

Andantino quasi Allegretto

[*The Young Prince and the Young Princess*]

Allegro molto – Vivo – Allegro non troppo e maestoso – Lento

[*Festival at Baghdad – The Sea – The Ship Breaks Against
a Cliff Surmounted by a Bronze Horseman – Conclusion*]

A surprising fact perhaps knowable only to pianists who work as accompanists is the identity of composers who created their orchestral works at the piano. Playing through the vast repertory of transcribed orchestral accompaniments to concertos, the fact becomes immediately apparent.

Almost all of Haydn's orchestral music, for example, fits comfortably over the piano's keys. Yet, by contrast, Mozart appears to have composed away from the piano when writing for orchestra, as barely a bar can be transcribed without considerable reworking. [And this from a composer who was a master of keyboard style when writing for the instrument.]



Keynotes

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

Born Tikhvin, 1844

Died Lyubensk, 1908

Rimsky-Korsakov was the most prolific and successful member of the Russian 'nationalist' composers known as 'The Mighty Handful' or 'The Five'. Largely self-taught, he formalised much of his musical technique only after being appointed professor at the St Petersburg conservatory in 1871. As a young naval officer he travelled widely, soaking up the sounds and colours of the Orient, influences which subsequently emerged in his symphonic suite *Scheherazade* in 1887–88.

SCHEHERAZADE

Rimsky-Korsakov took the *idea* of *Scheherazade* and the *Arabian Nights* as his starting point, and at first he gave the movements titles that would bring to mind particular characters or stories, for example the story of the kalandar or 'beggar' prince. But the end result was a 'kaleidoscope of fairy tale images and designs of Oriental character' and the title was chosen more for the connotations of the East that it brings to mind. He even withdrew the movement titles in an attempt to avoid constraining his listeners' imaginations.

◀ Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov



◀ Rimsky-Korsakov's music inhabits the same sumptuous world as Ferdinand Keller's *Scheherazade and the Sultan Shahriyar* (1880)

The opening phrases of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestral masterpiece, *Scheherazade* (1888), indicate that, like Haydn, he composed at the keyboard. From the initial motif stated in bare unisons (popularly assumed to represent the Sultan), to the gentle chords that follow, and even the famous violin solo and its harp-like accompaniment (Scheherazade's main theme) – all of these fit under the hand with a satisfying and uncanny sense of pianistic ease. Indeed, it is the case throughout the entire piece.

Playing through this celebrated work on the piano can reward in a variety of ways. For instance, the swelling chords that suggest the rolling of Sinbad's ship, first heard in the opening movement, can appear perplexing under analysis. Based on the apparent 'misuse' of a pivotal chord, the recurring passage has a rootlessness that seems apt as a metaphor for the sea. But an overriding sense of logic is brought to the progression by the way its myriad lines of notes move under the fingers.

Similarly, a pianist's attention is drawn to the inner voice accompanying the main melody of the third movement, which features a gentle oscillation over a small range of notes. This type of melodic movement (moving chromatically between the fifth and sixth degrees of the scale) is said to be a marker of Russian musical style, yet under the hand it strikes as a logical use of the thumb and forefinger.

The tremendous difficulty of rendering the final movement on the piano might undermine the case for composition at the keyboard, until one recalls the great history of Russian virtuosos. Indeed, the hugely talented Nadezhda Rimskaya-Korsakova, prior to marrying the composer, acted as accompanist for the operatic play-through sessions of his circle, the *kuchka*; such was her skill, she was known as 'our orchestra'.

While the ease with which this work fits under the fingers informs us about Rimsky-Korsakov's compositional method, the

Russia and the 'Orient'

From the time of Ivan the Terrible, Russia expanded through the acquisition of territories spanning both the near- and far-east. In the 19th century, composers frequently based their works on Oriental themes as an expression of their Russianness, notable in works such as Borodin's *Prince Igor* and Balakirev's *Islamey*. In *Scheherazade*, Rimsky-Korsakov took inspiration from *The Arabian Nights*.

act of playing orchestral works on the piano (with one or more pianists) highlights an often forgotten part of music history. Before the advent of recording, the only way music-lovers could hear music in their homes was by performing it themselves. From this practical need arose a flourishing market for piano and chamber ensemble transcriptions of orchestral works.

In the case of *Scheherazade*, Rimsky-Korsakov published a transcription for two pianos within a year of its composition. A reduction such as this allowed the work to be played with relative ease by keen amateurs – possibly even ‘at sight’ given the extra pianist. A piano transcription could also act as an advocate for the new work with conductors and concert programmers, and was useful in the rehearsal room should the work be choreographed (as Michel Fokine did with *Scheherazade* for the Ballets Russes in 1910).

The version of *Scheherazade* we hear tonight, however, was created for solo piano in 1918 by Belgian composer Paul Gilson (1865–1942). This prompts perhaps a deeper question: why, with a work that is renowned for the flair and virtuosity of its orchestration, would one wish to perform it in the concert hall alone at the piano?

The history of solo keyboard transcriptions is long, and ranges from efforts by JS Bach and Clementi, to Liszt, Busoni and beyond. Naturally, it can be assumed that these transcribers revelled in the capacity of their instruments to convey music of great scope and force, and were likely further motivated by the attraction of forming personal interpretations. Yet in reality there is only one reason why pianists do such things: it’s because we can!

SCOTT DAVIE © 2018

THE SCENARIO

The Sultan Shahriyar, convinced of the duplicity and infidelity of all women, had vowed to slay each of his wives after the first night. The Sultana Scheherazade, however, saved her life by the expedient of recounting to the Sultan a succession of tales over a period of a thousand and one nights. Overcome by curiosity, the Sultan postponed from day to day the execution of his wife, and ended by renouncing altogether his sanguinary resolution.

Many were the marvels recounted to Shahriyar by Scheherazade. For the telling of these she drew from the verses of the poets and the words of folk songs and tales, connecting her stories one with the other.

The unifying thread of Scheherazade, explained Rimsky-Korsakov, consists of the brief introductions to the first, second and fourth movements and the intermezzo in movement three, delineating Scheherazade herself as she tells her wondrous tales to the stern Sultan.

The Kuchka

The *kuchka* (literally ‘mighty little handful’) was the group of nationalist composers centred around Mily Balakirev in Russia in the 1860–70s, and included Alexander Borodin, César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky and – the youngest – Rimsky-Korsakov. With the help of their chief promoter, Vladimir Stasov, they challenged the ‘foreign’ model of music education that had been introduced into Russia by Anton Rubinstein.



Paul Gilson

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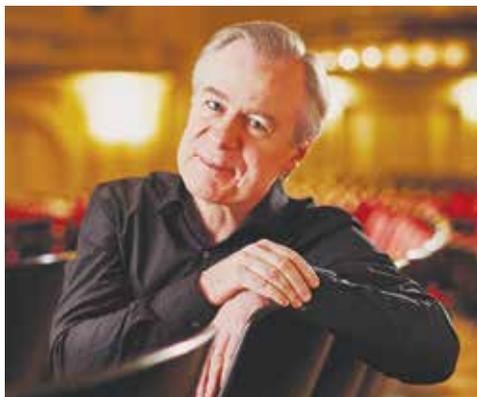


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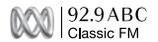
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