

A Paris Happening

TEA & SYMPHONY WITH THE FELLOWS

25 OCTOBER SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE





2019 CONCERT SEASON

TEA AND SYMPHONY

FRIDAY 25 OCTOBER, 11AM SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL



orchestra David Robertson

The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

A Paris Happening

Tea & Symphony with the Fellows

Roger Benedict *conductor* Nick Russoniello *saxophone*

DARIUS MILHAUD (1892–1974) La Création du monde (The Creation of the World)

JACQUES IBERT (1890–1962)

Chamber Concertino for alto saxophone and eleven instruments

Allegro con moto Larghetto – Animato molto

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

Prélude à 'L'aprés-midi d'un faune' arr. Benno Sachs (1882–1969)

JACQUES IBERT (1890–1962)

Divertissement Introduction: Allegro vivo Cortège: Moderato molto – Animato subito Nocturne: Lento Valse: Animato assai Parade: Tempo di marcia Finale: Quasi cadenza – Vivo: Tempo di galop Estimated durations: 16 minutes, 13 minutes, 10 minutes, 16 minutes.

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The concert will be performed without interval and will conclude at approximately 12 noon.

Cover image: Sydney Symphony Double Bass Fellow David Barlow (Photo by Anthony Geernaert)



CONCERT DIARY

NOVEMBER

















BEHZOD ABDURAIMOV PERFORMS TCHAIKOVSKY TCHAIKOVSKY Piano Concerto No.1 RACHMANINOFF Symphony No.2 Lionel Bringuier conductor

Behzod Abduraimov piano

The Composer is Dead

A SYDNEY SYMPHONY FAMILY EVENT STOOKEY & SNICKET The Composer is Dead Brett Kelly conductor Brendon Taylor The Inspector

Andrew Haveron performs Mozart BEETHOVEN The Ruins of Athens: Overture MOZART Violin Concerto No.5 in A, K219 (Turkish) HAYDN Symphony No.100 (Military)

Andrew Haveron violin-director

Lea Salonga in Concert WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Award-winning Broadway star and Disney legend, Lea Salonga, returns to Sydney following her 2017 sold out tour, performing songs from *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon, Aladdin, Frozen, The Greatest Showman* and more.

Lea Salonga Gerard Salonga conductor

Paul Lewis in Recital SCHUBERT Sonata in G, D894 BEETHOVEN Diabelli Variations Paul Lewis piano

Turangalîla-Symphonie CELEBRATING DAVID ROBERTSON MESSIAEN Turangalîla-Symphonie David Robertson conductor Tengku Irfan piano Jacob Abela ondes martenot

Skyfall in Concert

James Bond on the big screen accompanied by the Sydney Symphony performing Thomas Newman's BAFTA-winning score live to the film!

Nicholas Buc conductor

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American Harmonies

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COPLAND Appalachian Spring: Suite ROUSE Bassoon Concerto Australian premiere ADAMS Harmonielehre

David Robertson conductor Todd Gibson-Cornish bassoon Fri 8 Nov, 8pm Sat 9 Nov, 8pm Sydney Opera House

Sun 10 Nov, 1pm Sun 10 Nov, 2.45pm Sydney Opera House

Mozart in the City Thu 14 Nov, 7pm City Recital Hall Tea & Symphony Fri 15 Nov, 11am Sydney Opera House

Fri 15 Nov, 8pm Sat 16 Nov, 2pm Sat 16 Nov, 8pm Sydney Opera House

International Pianists in Recital Mon 18 Nov, 7pm City Recital Hall

> THEME & VARIATIONS

Thu 21 Nov, 7pm Sydney Opera House

Fri 22 Nov, 8pm Sat 23 Nov, 2pm Sat 23 Nov, 8pm Sydney Opera House



Thursday Afternoon Symphony Thu 28 Nov, 1.30pm Emirates Metro Series Fri 29 Nov, 8pm Great Classics Sat 30 Nov, 5pm Sydney Opera House



THE ARTISTS



Roger Benedict conductor

Roger Benedict's career as a conductor has been enriched by more than two decades as a principal player in some of the world's leading orchestras, by his extensive work as a soloist and chamber musician, and through his deep involvement in orchestral training and development.

Roger holds the positions of Chief Conductor and senior lecturer in viola at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and has been Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony Fellowship Program since 2002. From 1991-2000 he was Principal Viola of the Philharmonia Orchestra, London, before taking up the same position in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

A frequent guest conductor with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Roger has conducted the Orchestra in subscription concerts as well as for special events. He regularly conducts the Sydney Symphony Fellows, including their concerts at the Sydney Opera House and on tour. He also appears as a conductor with other orchestras in the region including the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, and in the UK with the Southbank Sinfonia. A devoted orchestral trainer, he has coached the European Union Youth Orchestra since 2000, and is a frequent conductor of Australian Youth Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra (UK) programs.

In his work with the Sydney Symphony Fellows,

Roger has gained admiration for his adventurous and imaginative programming and for his dedication to outreach and community activity – including through presenting concerts and workshops in schools, prisons and corporate settings. Equally passionate about using music to raise awareness and support for charitable causes, Roger conceived and conducted the highly successful Concert for Life at Sydney Town Hall in September 2015, raising nearly \$40,000 for suicide prevention.

As a viola soloist Roger has appeared with the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Ulster Orchestra in the UK as well as the Sydney Symphony, Canberra Symphony, New Zealand Symphony and the Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa.

Roger Benedict's recital CD *Volupté* was selected as one of the 10 best recordings of 2010 by theclassicalreview.com. His recording of Vaughan Williams' *Flos Campi* with the Sydney Symphony was released in 2011, and a disc of music by Hans Gál and Ernst Krenek (*Voices in the Wilderness*) in 2014. His latest recording, *A Winter's Tale*, with pianist Simon Tedeschi, was released in 2018.



Nick Russoniello saxophone

Nick Russoniello, one of Australia's most dynamic young artists, enjoys an exciting and varied performance career both in Australia and abroad. Nick has been the recipient of a number of major awards including the ABC Symphony Australia Young Performer of the Year Award and the Fine Music Kruger Scholarship. Nick has appeared as a soloist with the Adelaide, Canberra, Queensland, Melbourne and Sydney Symphony Orchestras.

Nick appears as a guest musician with Australia's leading ensembles, these include the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Australian World Orchestra, Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, Acacia Quartet, Omega Ensemble, and Sydney Camerata. He is a sought-after chamber musician and performs regularly as a member of Continuum Sax, Duo Histoire and the Golden Age Quartet. Alongside his performance achievements Nick's original compositions for saxophone have been performed internationally, including at the recent world saxophone congress in Zagreb, Croatia. In 2019 Nick composed a new original film score to Charlie Chaplin's *The Immigrant* and will be recording his third studio album. Nick will also be presenting his original music at the Royal College of Music (London), Royal Northern College of Music (Manchester) and is undertaking a composition residency at Strasbourg Conservatoire (France). Nick is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Sydney, and an associate artist of The Australian Music Centre.

Darius Milhaud (1892–1974) *La Création du monde* (The Creation of the World)

Many of the jazz-inspired works of the 1920s by 'serious' composers now strike us as period pieces. Of those that do not, Milhaud's *La Création du monde* stands out as pungently memorable, not only nostalgic, but an ever-fresh concert hall standard. It was composed for a 'jazz' ballet, on a scenario by poet, novelist and journalist Blaise Cendrars. Sets and costumes were by Fernand Léger, and the choreography by Jean Börlin. The commission was from the Ballets Suédois of Rolf de Maré, one of Diaghilev's rivals among Paris impresarios, and the first performance was given in the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées on 15 October 1923.

Cendrars had recently edited a collection of African folk tales, and his ballet scenario portrayed the creation myth as told in African legend. Giant gods, trees which impregnate the earth with their seed, leaves transformed into animals, men and girls emerging from the trees and performing a mating dance, until they disperse, leaving a single couple on stage, united in love. Léger's setting was inspired by primitive African art, with animal costumes in dazzling colours, with strange beaks, and totem figures. The backdrop was cubed and squared, with horned creatures and undulating clouds. Léger had wanted his animal skins to be inflatable, an idea which had to be dropped because the sound of whooshing gas would have drowned out the orchestra!

Milhaud's music was written for a band of 19 soloists, with prominent piano and percussion - the exact instrumentation of the African-American opera Liza, by Maceo Pinkard, which Milhaud had heard in New York's Harlem. From his time in Rio as secretary to Paul Claudel, the French ambassador to Brazil (1916-18), Milhaud had travelled extensively and heard many exotic musics. But all their influences were thoroughly integrated into his evolving personal style. In Paris, Milhaud himself could be considered exotic. The prominent saxophone in La Création du monde, which presents in the prelude a darkly lyrical theme which will return in a kind of rondo structure, has obvious jazz associations. But it also recalls the pioneering saxophone part in Bizet's L'Arlésienne, music for a play set in Milhaud's native Provence. 'Provence,' Milhaud once wrote, 'reaches all the way from Constantinople to Rio.' The major/minor contours of the saxophone theme also recall Milhaud's family origins, suggesting an affinity between the experience of the black and the Jewish races. The jazz fugue which begins the first of the fast sections of the music, led by the double bass and punctuated by staccato chords from piano and 'rhythm', illustrates Milhaud's contention that in La Création du monde he blended jazz style with classical feeling.

DAVID GARRETT © 2003

The *Creation of the World* requires an orchestra of 2 flutes, oboe, 2 clarinets, bassoon, saxophone, horn, 2 trumpets, trombone, timpani, percussion, piano, 2 violins, cello and double bass.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed Milhaud's *The Creation of the World* in June 1960 under Bernard Heinze and most recently in November 2011 under Nicholas Carter.



Darius Milhaud, 1930s

IN BRIEF

Milhaud's *The Creation of the World* is one of the first 'jazz ballets' reflecting what is sometimes called the Parisian jazz age of the 1920s. The work is in six linked movements, although Milhaud pointedly leaves out any descriptive titles in the printed score. The ballet, after an overture, depicted the earth emerging from chaos, the creation of plants and animals, then a human couple and their desire before the coming of the first spring.

<text>

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Jacques Ibert (1890–1962) Divertissement

Introduction: Allegro vivo Cortège: Moderato molto – Animato subito Nocturne: Lento Valse: Animato assai Parade: Tempo di marcia Finale: Quasi cadenza – Vivo: Tempo di galop

Ibert was not closely associated with other groups of composers; even if the close relationships of the group known as Les Six were more imagined than real, those composers shared certain aesthetic concerns from which Ibert remained aloof, though he was friendly with such figures as Honegger and Milhaud. In the 1920s he, like them, no doubt felt a huge sense of optimistic relief after World War I, which many artists expressed in madcap comedy.

In 1928 lbert wrote incidental music for the revival of a popular 19th century farce, *The Italian Straw Hat*, in which a woman's hat is eaten by a horse while she dallies with her lover en route to the wedding of her ex-boyfriend, who generously spends the rest of the play trying to find an identical hat so as to save the woman's honour, while being pursued by his bride to be and all the wedding guests. As it happens the play was made into a film by René Clair that year, but lbert's music was for a stage show, and he soon saw the potential for an amusing concert piece, or *divertissement*, based on it.

The first of the six movements is a *moto perpetuo* whose manner is familiar from numerous contemporary pieces and from Ibert's Chamber Concerto, where blocks of busy material are passed from section to section of the orchestra. The Cortège begins with a short introduction of extreme delicacy, a Debussyan flute answered by a distant horn and a filigree of harmonics from the first violin; this calm is soon shattered by a boisterous faster music which is itself interrupted by familiar 'found objects' including Mendelssohn's 'Wedding March'. The dark colours and soft dynamics of the short Nocturne create a pall that is relieved by a glitter of piano figurations at the movement's end.

In the Valse, Ibert again resorts to parody, taking aim at series of well-known works in the genre, and the subsequent *Parade* makes fun of military marches. The finale begins with a 'literally' striking gesture, a cadenza of cluster chords from the piano that give the impression of a highly frustrated performer, which then launches another break-neck 'perpetual motion' piece. Perhaps the horse gets the last word – the music is marked *tempo di galop*.

GORDON KERRY © 2019

Ibert's Divertissement calls for a band of flute (doubling piccolo), clarinet, bassoon (doubling contrabassoon), horn, trumpet, trombone, percussion, piano/celesta, 3 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos and double bass.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed lbert's *Divertissement* in March 1946 under Percy Code and most recently in May 1979 under Louis Fremaux.



Jacques Ibert

IN BRIEF

Ibert's Divertissement dates from the 1929, and is drawn from the incidental music to a madcap farce involving a wedding, a horse and an Italian straw hat. Ibert takes the opportunity to make fun of several musical sacred cows along the way.

Claude Debussy (1862–1918) *Prélude à 'L'aprés-midi d'un faune'* arr. Benno Sachs (1882–1969)

Published in 1876, Stéphane Mallarmé's eclogue *L'après-midi d'un faune* is a monument of symbolist poetry, reflecting in its sumptuous but fragmentary language the erotic fantasies of a drowsy faun – a mythical half-man, half-goat – on a hot, languid Sicilian afternoon. Running like a thread through the imagery of fruit and flowers and naked nymphs are references to music, specifically to the syrinx. This instrument, the 'pan-pipes', was fashioned by the god Pan from reeds into which a young nymph, desperate to escape his amorous attentions, had been transformed.

One such reference, to the syrinx's 'sonorous, airy, monotonous line', would become the kernel of Debussy's musical rendering of the poem. (Debussy hated hearing his music described as 'what imbeciles call impressionism' and preferred his work to be compared to Symbolist poetry.) Inviting Mallarmé to hear the work in 1894, he described 'the arabesque which ... I believe to have been dictated by the flute of your faun'.

In fact the work's genesis was in a proposal by Mallarmé to present a staged version of his poem at an avant-garde theatre in 1891. By now he knew and admired some of Debussy's vocal music, and went so far as to announce in the newspaper that the staged version would include music by the young composer 'M de Bussy'. The project fell through, but Debussy's imagination had been whetted. The orchestral piece that finally appeared made an immediate and positive impact with the audience, if not the critics, and may be said to be Debussy's breakthrough work. In 1910 it was choreographed and danced by Nijinsky, whose erotic performance caused one of those typically evanescent Parisian fracas.

The first phrase of the solo flute arabesque with which the piece begins has rightly been described as a founding moment in modern music. Its chromatic, rhythmically ambiguous line traces and retraces the equally ambiguous interval of the tritone: like the material elsewhere in the work that is derived from the whole-tone scale, it is in no clearly discernible key, as is shown by the varied ways in which it is harmonised on its subsequent reappearances. The second half of the melody provides more 'conventional' motifs that are taken up from time to time by the rest of the orchestra.



Claude Debussy

IN BRIEF

Debussy's Faune has been hailed as the fount of modern music, doing away with goal-directed harmony and complex counterpoint in favour of the sensual pleasure of individual sound and melodies that have no discernible key. It is, after all, music to accompany a day-dream. Mallarmé's poem rhymes, but otherwise avoids traditional forms or a narrative line; similarly, Debussy's piece avoids the goal-directed development and tonal architecture that informs 19th century symphonism. As Pierre Boulez puts it, 'What was overthrown was not so much the art of development as the very concept of form itself.' Musical events, like the vivid splashes of colour that first answer the flute, are there for the immediate pleasure they give; climaxes are approached by simple repetition of motifs; the most extended melody is a rich, Massenet-like tune at the work's midpoint (played by unison strings in this version, accompanied by layered, rocking ostinatos in the winds.

The faun's dream is overcome by sleep and the 'proud silence of noon', fading to nothingness.

This arrangement for 11 players was made for the Society for Private Musical Performance founded by Arnold Schoenberg in Vienna in 1918 to give good quality performances of works ignored by the city's major concert givers at the time. Debussy's 'Faune' was one of numerous contemporary orchestral works rescored for a smaller band that might still give a flavour of the original. The arrangement, made in 1920, was often assumed to be Schoenberg's own, though it is now understood to have been made by his student Benno Sachs, possibly under Schoenberg's guidance. It maintains the primacy of the flute, and uses piano to suggest the sounds of harp and tuned percussion, while a harmonium supports the tutti ensemble.

GORDON KERRY © 2017

Benno Sachs' arrangement of Debussy's piece calls for flute, oboe, clarinet, percussion, piano, harmonium, 2 violins, viola, cello and double bass.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed Debussy's *Prélude* à 'L'après-midi d'un faune' in March 1941 under Percy Code and most recently in October 2018 under Jukka-Pekka Saraste. This is its first performance of the Sachs arrangement.



Nijinsky in Afternoon of a Faun

Jacques Ibert (1890–1962) Chamber Concertino for alto saxophone and eleven instruments

Allegro con moto Larghetto – Animato molto

Ibert became one of the most-performed French composers of his age-cohort and yet remained something of an outsider in French music, despite an illustrious career that also included the Directorship of the Paris Opera and Opéra Comique from 1955.

He had won the Prix de Rome in 1919 immediately after four years of active service as a nurse and stretcher-bearer in World War I. Controversially he was named Director of the Académie de France in Rome from 1937, a post he nominally held until 1960 and was thus absent from Parisian life for significant periods. Shortly after his appointment to Rome, Ibert's music was banned by the Vichy Government, so the composer spent much of World War II in Switzerland and in 'internal exile' in rural France, only returning to Paris in 1944.

When Adolphe Saxe invented the saxophone in the 1840s, it was to form a bridge between wind and brass instruments in military bands and orchestras, and as such it found its way into 'classical' works like Ambroise Thomas' Hamlet in the 1860s and, more famously, Bizet's incidental music for L'Arlésienne a decade later - its use in iazzderived music dates from the 1920s. When Ibert composed his Chamber Concerto in 1935 for the German-American virtuoso Sigurd Rascher, he chose to make a piece that is demotic in style, though not explicitly jazz-based except perhaps in certain syncopated figures in the first movement's second theme. That Allegro con moto begins as a typically Gallic piece of perpetual motion, largely carried by the relentless semiguavers of the solo line while the orchestra makes occasionally forceful commentary though never overwhelming the soloist; the second theme is much more lyrical. The slow movement begins with a 'quasi recitative' for the saxophone before the strings enter with the simplest accompaniment of gently repeated chords. A beautiful duet between the saxophone and trumpet invites the other winds to join in before the movement thins out again leaving just the soloist. The finale follows without a break and, like the first movement, cultivates the sort of chirpy lyricism and boisterous rhythm we also hear in contemporaries like Francis Poulenc.

GORDON KERRY © 2019

Ibert's Chamber Concertino requires solo alto saxophone and an orchestra of flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, 2 violins, viola, cello and double bass.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed Ibert's Chamber Concertino in July 1938 under Malcolm Sargent with the original soloist, Sigurd Raschèr, and most recently in November 1959 under Nikolai Malko again with Sigurd Raschèr, saxophone.



Albert Préjean and Olga Tschechowa in René Clair's film version of *The Italian Straw Hat,* 1928.

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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Under the guidance of Sydney Symphony Orchestra Principal Viola and Fellowship Artistic Director Roger Benedict, the Fellows are provided with the training and experience they need to secure full-time positions in professional orchestras. This training includes rehearsing and performing with the orchestra, coaching from touring international artists in masterclasses and professional development workshops. The Fellows also perform together in extensive chamber music series and participate in a variety of outreach projects. Each of the Fellows receives a bursary and professional support to allow them to fully commit to their year with the Sydney Symphony. Since the program's beginnings in 2001, Fellowship alumni have won positions in some of the finest orchestras in Europe, Asia and Australia, including 12 former Fellows who now hold permanent positions with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

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"I will be forever grateful for the support that Jane Mathews gave the Orchestra, and to The Friends of Jane Mathews who have been inspired by Jane in the support of my Chair. We will never forget her, or the significant impact that she had on our music community." — Paul Goodchild, Associate Principal Trumpet

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