

Barry Douglas performs Brahms

27, 28, 29 & 30 MARCH SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE





CONCERT DIARY

MARCH



APRIL









MAY





Haydn and Beethoven

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN Improvisation on 'Ave Generosa' HAYDN arr. Oguey Cor Anglais Quintet (after the 'Gypsy Rondo' Piano Trio) BEETHOVEN arr. Boersma Serenade in D, Op.8

Musicians of the Sydney Symphony

Simone Lamsma performs Beethoven's Violin Concerto

BEETHOVEN Violin Concerto TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No.4

Alexander Shelley conductor Simone Lamsma violin

David Drury CONCERT HALL GRAND ORGAN RECITAL

Program includes: JS BACH Prelude and Fugue in C minor, BWV 546 SAINT-SAËNS Fantaisie No.1 SAINT-SAËNS arr. Lemare Danse macabre

David Drury organ

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix[™] in Concert

Let the wizarding world enchant you as the fifth film is projected onto a giant screen and the orchestra perform Nicholas Hooper's wonderful score. *Classified M*.

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Lisa Moore in Recital

GLASS Etude No.2 JANÁČEK In the Mists BEETHOVEN Sonata in E flat, Op.31 No.3 SCHUMANN Waldszenen (Forest Scenes) BRESNICK Ishi's Song RZEWSKI Piano Piece No.4

Lisa Moore piano

Breakfast at Tiffany's in Concert

WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

Audrey Hepburn dazzles in her legendary role as the deliciously eccentric Holly Golightly, a New York City socialite determined to marry a millionaire. Relive Henry Mancini's legendary score, including the beautiful Oscar® and Grammy® winning song *Moon River*, performed live to film.

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The Sydney Symphony celebrates Paul Goodchild

*MACENS The Space Between Stars *SIBELIUS Finlandia LOVELOCK Trumpet Concerto NIELSEN Symphony No.4, The Inextinguishable

Jessica Cottis conductor Paul Goodchild trumpet Cocktail Hour Fri 29 Mar, 6pm Sat 30 Mar, 6pm

Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House

Abercrombie & Kent Masters Series Wed 3 Apr, 8pm Fri 5 Apr, 8pm Sat 6 Apr, 8pm Mondays @ 7 Mon 8 Apr, 7pm Sydney Opera House

> Abercrombie & Kent

Tea & Symphony Fri 5 Apr, 11am Sydney Opera House

Wed 10 Apr, 7pm Thu 11 Apr, 7pm Fri 12 Apr, 7pm Sat 13 Apr, 2pm Sat 13 Apr, 7pm Sydney Opera House

International Pianists in Recital Mon 29 Apr, 7pm City Recital Hall



Sat 4 May, 7pm Sun 5 May, 2pm Sydney Opera House

Meet the Music Wed 8 May, 6.30pm[•] Thursday Afternoon Symphony Thu 9 May, 1.30pm[•] Emirates Metro Series Fri 10 May, 8 pm[•] Sydney Opera House

WELCOME



As in everyday life, partnerships are an important part of what we do as they allow us to connect with different parts of Australian communities.

Last year we celebrated 16 years as Principal Partner of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, which continues to be incredibly important for Emirates.

For us, partnerships are all about people, who are more important than ever. This is why we place people at the core of everything we do.

In Australia, Emirates has gone from strength to strength over the past 23 years with the support of this great country. We are thrilled to continue to enhance our footprint in Australia, and in March last year we introduced a fourth daily Sydney service. This has given Australian travellers even more opportunities to connect to our global route network of over 150 destinations in more than 80 countries and territories, including 39 European destinations, via our hub in Dubai.

We strive to offer a superior experience every time our passengers step aboard one of our world-class aircraft. With up to 3,000 channels on our award-winning inflight entertainment system "ice", our passengers are able to watch key Sydney Symphony Orchestra performances from thousands of metres above. This is all while enjoying gourmet meals across each of our classes which are composed by leading chefs.

We are a truly international airline which includes many Australian Pilots, Cabin Crew and support teams. It is these people who work together, much like an orchestra, to ensure that our operations run harmoniously each and every day.

On that note, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Emirates Metro Series and I hope that you enjoy this world-class experience.



Barry Brown Emirates' Divisional Vice President for Australasia

2019 CONCERT SEASON

MEET THE MUSIC WEDNESDAY 27 MARCH, 6.30PM THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY THURSDAY 28 MARCH, 1.30PM EMIRATES METRO SERIES FRIDAY 29 MARCH, 8PM GREAT CLASSICS SATURDAY 30 MARCH, 2PM SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Barry Douglas performs Brahms

Lawrence Renes conductor Barry Douglas piano

RICHARD MILLS (born 1949) Aeolian Caprices

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957) Symphony No.7 in C, Op.105

INTERVAL

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897) Piano Concerto No.2 in B flat, Op.83 Allegro non troppo Allegro appassionato Andante Allegretto grazioso – Un poco più presto



Saturday's concert will be broadcast live across Australia on ABC Classic.

Pre-concert talk by Genevieve Lang 45 minutes before the performance in the Northern Foyer.

Estimated durations: 6 minutes, 21 minutes, 20 minute interval, 46 minutes.

The concerts will conclude at approximately 8.15pm (Wednesday), 3.15pm (Thursday), 9.45pm (Friday), 3.45pm (Saturday).

Cover image: Barry Douglas (Photo by Benjamin Ealovega)



THE ARTISTS



Lawrence Renes conductor

2018-19 marks an exciting season for Dutch-Maltese conductor Lawrence Renes. He began the season in Japan with the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra before going on to premiere George Benjamin and Martin Crimp's opera Written on Skin in China with the Beijing Music Festival and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra. Upcoming highlights besides these appearances with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra include Mozart and Mahler for his return to the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo; and Benjamin Britten's Billy Budd with the San Francisco Opera.

Having conducted many of the world's greatest orchestras and opera companies in recent seasons, Renes was Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Royal Swedish Opera until the summer of 2017. During his time there, productions included Parsifal, Madam Butterfly, Idomeneo, The Rite of Spring, Tristan und Isolde, Die Walküre, Peter Grimes, Turandot, Salome, Der Rosenkavalier, and Jenůfa amongst others. A champion of John Adams, Renes has conducted productions of Nixon in China at San Francisco Opera and Doctor Atomic at both the English National Opera and De Nederlandse Opera. The DVD of the Nederlandse Opera production was named as one of the Ten Best Classical Recordings of the Year for 2008 in The New Yorker. Renes has conducted Adams' orchestral works with the London, Oslo and Hong Kong philharmonic orchestras, with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra. Lawrence Renes' other recordings include Henk de Vlieger's *The Ring – An Orchestral Adventure* and orchestral music from Franz Schreker's operas, both with the Royal Swedish Orchestra.

Highlights of the 2017-18 season included engagements with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, and Mahler Chamber Orchestra at the Holland Festival.



Barry Douglas piano

Barry Douglas has established a major international career since winning the Gold Medal at the 1986 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition, Moscow. As Artistic Director of Camerata Ireland and the Clandeboye Festival, he continues to celebrate his Irish heritage while also maintaining a busy international touring schedule.

Recent performances have included Brahms' Second Piano Concerto with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (Ireland) and Jaime Martín; Mozart's concertos K.488 and K.503 with the Szeczecin Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra in Poland, Britten's Piano Concerto with the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra of Moscow conducted by Vladimir Fedoseyev, and Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No.2 with the Russian State Symphony Orchestra (RSSO) in Edinburgh and Rachmaninoff's First Piano Concerto with the RSSO in Cambridge.

Barry Douglas opened his 2017-18 season performing Tchaikovsky with the Hallé Orchestra, after which he began new collaborations with both the Endellion String Quartet and the Borodin Quartet. He toured in recital in the UK and USA and performed with orchestras across the globe from Canada to Europe to China to Russia. He has appeared with orchestras such as the BBC Scottish Symphony, London Symphony, Berlin Radio Symphony, Orchestre National de France, Seattle Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Hong Kong Philharmonic orchestras, among others.

Barry Douglas's recordings include the complete works for solo piano of Brahms. Other recording projects include the complete solo piano music of Schubert (the third volume was released last year) as well as recordings exploring Irish folk music through his own arrangements. Last year also saw the release of Tchaikovsky Plus One (Tchaikovsky's The Seasons coupled with Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition). He has recorded music of Penderecki with the Warsaw Philharmonic and Antoni Wit. of Nino Rota with the Filarmonica '900 del Teatro Regio (Turin) conducted by Gianandrea Noseda and also recorded Corigliano's Piano Concerto with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Leonard Slatkin. He has recorded Beethoven concertos with Camerata Ireland, the orchestra he founded in 1999. and given world premieres of Kevin Volans' Piano Concertos Nos. 3 and 4.

Barry Douglas received the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to music.

Louise Johnson

We pay tribute to our Principal Harp on the occasion of her retirement.

Louise Johnson first played harp with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra when she was 14, showing up in school uniform and with braces on her teeth. Fifty years later – during which time she has played under the baton of 10 of the 13 chief conductors in the orchestra's history – she's stepping down as Principal Harp, a position she has held since 1985. "How's that possible – I feel like a nice old antique!"

Among many achievements over these years, she has performed Mozart's *Flute and Harp Concerto* with James Galway in 1990 and Tan Dun's *Nu Shu – The Secret Songs of Women* in 2017, and has been an integral part of our music-making, both here and overseas. "It's such an honour to play in the great concert halls of the world, and to know that we can hold our own," she says.

However, Louise herself finds it impossible to pinpoint standout moments. "To me the high point has been the whole time – the privilege of doing what I do, working with all the amazing musicians I've worked with."

A highly regarded teacher who also has a solo career and is involved in chamber music, Louise first came across the harp on a family holiday to Perisher Valley when she was eight. "I thought it was the most beautiful thing I had ever heard or seen in my life." She knew immediately she wanted to spend her life with "this extraordinary instrument", which she describes as having a greater range than any other, from the very delicate to the highly percussive. "It's extraordinary the noises you can get out of it," she says.

Being onstage, "sitting in the heart of the orchestra would have to be my favourite place in the world – I love the energy of the sound. Music is my life source – it makes my blood flow, helps me to breathe, and my heart to beat."

Louise says she'll miss "the orchestral family, and we really are a family – we spend an inordinate amount of time together, and very odd hours". She plans to travel and, as well as her other music commitments, do more composing, pick up her blue electric harp and get into some jazz. She believes she's leaving the orchestra "in great shape. As with athletes, there's an expectation that we'll always get better and better, and we do." Given her time over, she says, "I'd do it all again – absolutely no doubt." And we'd happily have you, Louise – you'll always be part of the Sydney Symphony family.

- Musicians and Staff of the Sydney Symphony

Richard Mills (born 1949) Aeolian Caprices

In recent years Richard Mills has pursued a diverse career as a composer and conductor, which has seen him working with a large number of the nation's music organisations.

Richard is currently Artistic Director of Victorian Opera, having most recently conducted an acclaimed production of *Parsifal*. He held the post of Artistic Director of the West Australian Opera from 1997 to 2012. In 2008 he was Musica Viva's Featured Composer, and from 2002 to 2008 held the post of Director of the Australian Music Project for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, he works as a freelance conductor throughout Australia and overseas and in 2007-8 was awarded an Ian Potter Foundation Fellowship.

Richard's music has found wide acceptance and popularity with musicians and the concert-going public, and his works are regularly performed throughout the world. Compositions range from Concerto for Violin and Viola, Flute Concerto commissioned by James Galway, *Earth Poem-Sky* for Aboriginal Dancers, Singers, electronic sound and the Darwin Symphony (also given at the 1998 Adelaide Festival), *Soundscapes* for Percussion and Orchestra performed by Evelyn Glennie at the City of Birmingham Symphony Proms and also filmed with Dame Evelyn and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, music for the ballet *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* premiered by The Australian Ballet and later recorded for CD and *Fantastic Pantomimes* written for the Melbourne Symphony's tour of Japan.

Some of Richard Mills' most recent compositions include a Double Concerto for the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra (2018), an opera based on the medieval *Play of Herod*, and his *Passion According to St. Mark* which premiered around Australia in 2009. His song cycle *Songlines of the heart's desire* received its European premiere at the 2010 Edinburgh Festival and his Organ Concerto was premiered with Calvin Bowman and the Melbourne Symphony in August 2011.

His operas include *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, which premiered in Melbourne in 1996. *Batavia*, commissioned by Opera Australia, premiered at the Melbourne Festival in 2001 to great critical acclaim, consequently receiving a number of Green Room and Helpmann Awards including Best Opera and Best New Australian Work. Richard Mills' third opera, *The Love of the Nightingale*, premiered at the 2007 UWA Perth International Arts Festival, conducted by him with further performances in Melbourne for Victorian Opera and Brisbane for Opera Queensland that year.

Aeolian Caprices was written for the Queensland Youth Orchestra, for the opening concert of the International Festival of Youth Orchestras held in Brisbane in 1988.



Richard Mills

The composer writes:

Aeolian Caprices is a short and vibrant show piece based on a harmonic system derived from the tones of the Aeolian mode. The title 'caprice' is usually used for a composition based on instrumental figurations. However, this piece, whilst employing many of the traditional procedures of the instrumental caprice, has the added dimensions of the capricious and playful transformations into a complete harmonic system of the relations between the tones of the Aeolian mode.

RICHARD MILLS © 1989

Aeolian Caprices calls for an orchestra of 3 flutes [1 doubling piccolo], 3 oboes [1 doubling cor anglais], 3 clarinets [1 doubling bass], 3 bassoons [1 doubling contra], 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani and 3 percussion, harp, piano and strings.

The first performance of *Aeolian Caprices* by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra was under Richard Mills in 1990. The piece was most recently performed in 2010 under Paul Kildea.

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) Symphony No.7 in C, Op.105 in one movement

Gustav Mahler visited the Finnish capital of Helsinki in 1907, and met Jean Sibelius. In the course of their conversation, Sibelius expressed his view that the essence of symphonic composition was a 'severity of style and the profound logic that creates an inner connection between all the motifs'. Mahler's famous retort was, 'No! The symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything.' As if to bear this out, Mahler's symphonies, never overly concise, became progressively more expansive, where the history of Sibelius' symphonies is, broadly speaking, one of increasing compression and economy, culminating in the single-movement, 22-minute Seventh Symphony composed in 1924.

In fact to contrast Sibelius and Mahler in this way is misleading, as Sibelius' symphonies from the Fourth onward are as much about questions of existence as are Mahler's. The difference, apart from that of scale, is that Sibelius expresses his world view through an increasing sense of unity, where Mahler's theme is the broken nature of human experience. In this respect, Sibelius' music is much closer in some respects to that of Anton Bruckner.

As a student in Vienna in 1890 Sibelius heard the Third Symphony of Bruckner whom he declared 'the greatest living composer'. While his youthful enthusiasm was eventually tempered, Sibelius did learn a great deal from Bruckner about structuring orchestral music on a large scale, and the use of ostinati, or repeated rhythmic patterns. While he was in Vienna, paradoxically, Sibelius also became more and



Jean Sibelius

more interested in the folk history of his native country. A member of Finland's Swedish-speaking minority, Sibelius had had little contact with the literature and mythology of the Finns until his engagement to Aino Järnefelt, whose family were very pro-Finnish, in the same year. In the collection of myths and legends known as the *Kalevala*, Sibelius found great inspiration: the stories themselves fired his imagination in works such as *The Swan of Tuonela*, and the diction of the poetry found its way into his rhythmic and melodic writing.

Sibelius' most obviously nationalistic works are those based on the *Kalevala* and the celebrated *Finlandia*, written at a time of increasing repression of the Finns by their Russian overlords. By the time of the last three symphonies and the tone poem *Tapiola*, Sibelius' interest in mythology seems less to do with simple nationalism than with a nature-based mysticism. Since 1904 Sibelius and his family had lived among the conifers and lakes of rural Finland, some 40 kilometres from Helsinki. 'Here,' said Sibelius, 'the silence speaks.' And through his music it spoke of the cosmos.

This nowhere truer than in the Seventh Symphony, which, as Donald Tovey said of Beethoven's Eighth, is 'tiny but vast'. It was to have been a three-movement piece culminating in a 'Hellenic' rondo, though what we hear is decidely more Nordic than Greek. Having decided on the one-movement form, Sibelius himself was diffident about calling it a symphony at first, preferring 'Symphonic Fantasia', which also suggests some extra-musical intention. In some respects it is tempting to see the piece as a symphony in miniature, and we can isolate elements which correspond to a Classical symphony's exposition, development and recapitulation of themes, as well as sections which stand in for slow introduction, scherzo and so on. But the measure of Sibelius' genius and craft is that it is almost impossible to tell where one section ends and another begins, and his technique, termed 'rotational form' by one writer, of exactly repeating thematic material gives the music a sense of potentially endless invention.



It is almost impossible to tell where one section ends and another begins, and his technique...of exactly repeating thematic material gives the music a sense of potentially endless invention.

There are, nonetheless, a few signposts. The piece begins slowly with a simple, unaccompanied rising scale which is topped by an unexpected chord. The ensuing section is dominated by 'blurred' chords and short motifs (notably from the woodwinds) as the music aradually gains momentum for the next four or so minutes. A spacious passage for divided strings introduces the main theme of the work, a majestic and extended melody for trombone. This gives way, imperceptibly yet again, to a kind of scherzo, dominated by terse rhythmic fragments passed back and forth from woodwinds to strings; suddenly there appears an oceanic swell in the lower strings above which the trombone theme returns in the minor mode. This galvanising moment marks the halfway point of the symphony. There follows a section which sounds like new material but is in fact based on transformations of what has gone before, and which aradually morphs into another scherzo-like section, before a third statement of the trombone theme. The blurred harmonies of the opening dominate the work's last pages: even the final C major chord is not achieved without difficulty.

English composer Robert Simpson once wrote that Sibelius' Seventh Symphony 'is like a great planet in orbit, its movement vast, inexorable, seemingly imperceptible to its inhabitants.' As it happens, a version of the trombone melody appears in Sibelius' sketch for another, unfinished work, labelled 'Where the stars dwell', but even without that 'clue' it is hard not to hear this work as cosmic in its endlessly changing details and underlying unity.

GORDON KERRY © 2002

Sibelius' Seventh Symphony calls for an orchestra of 2 flutes [both doubling piccolo], 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and strings.

The first Sydney Symphony Orchestra performance of this symphony took place in December 1945 with conductor Bernard Heinze; the most recent was given in June 2008 under Robin Ticciati.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) Piano Concerto No.2 in B flat, Op.83

Allegro non troppo Allegro appassionato Andante Allegretto grazioso – Un poco più presto

Barry Douglas piano

Brahms wrote the bulk of his Second Piano Concerto while on holiday in Italy in 1878 and completed it shortly after another such visit to Italy in 1881. While there is nothing essentially 'Italian' about this monumental and generously-dimensioned piano concerto, there is no doubt that when Brahms returned to Vienna with the completed



Johannes Brahms in 1880s

score, he was still very much in holiday humour. To Elisabet von Herzogenberg he talked of 'a little piano concerto with a teenyweeny wisp of a scherzo'. To his longtime supporter Theodor Billroth he announced the completion of 'a few small piano pieces'. To the public at large he presented the work as it truly was: an immense, quasi-symphonic, four-movement concerto filled with massive chords and wide stretches in the piano part and an orchestration filled with richness and variety.

The contrasts between this work and the First Piano Concerto in D minor could not be stronger. The earlier work was in a minor key while this is in the major; the D minor began with a lengthy orchestral ritornello before the soloist entered, whereas here the soloist begins in the second bar; the D minor was impassioned and youthful, while the B flat tends more toward reflection, nostalgia and lyricism. Additionally, the First Piano Concerto had been a resounding failure at its premiere in Leipzig, prompting Brahms to note that 'a second [piano concerto] will sound quite different.' Twenty years later he proved the point. But the two Brahms piano concertos are united by their 'symphonic' conception and the undeniable mastery of their piano writing and orchestration, not to mention the sheer force of their musical impact.

Brahms might have felt some trepidation in writing a Second Piano Concerto. But by the time he turned his attention to it he had finally conquered the two major instrumental forms which had always given him the most trouble: the string quartet and the symphony. Now, with Violin Concerto and *German Requiem* also behind him, it was time to revisit the piano concerto with newfound confidence and a proven virtuoso compositional technique. Indeed the Second Piano Concerto seems to employ the style of these other forms from time to time. While the four-movement form without cadenzas is clearly symphonic, the scherzo is actually based on a movement intended originally for the Violin Concerto. And the instrumental textures sometimes have a chamber music feel to them, with ideas tossed back and forth in an intimate manner between soloist and orchestra.

The Second Piano Concerto was written at the time when Brahms was forming an association with Hans von Bülow, who conducted the Meiningen Court Orchestra. Brahms had a standing invitation to rehearse his music and perform as piano soloist with the orchestra, and his intention was to do both these things in the case of the Second Piano Concerto. But before approaching Bülow with the new score, Brahms first played it for Clara Schumann in Frankfurt. Then he and Ignaz Brüll performed 'the long terror' (his working nickname for the concerto) for 'the victims' (Brahms-speak for his private audience) Billroth and the critic Eduard Hanslick. When it passed muster, it was let loose on Bülow who, doubting his orchestra's ability to do the work justice, asked Brahms to come to Meiningen to rehearse it. He presented the work as it truly was: an immense, quasisymphonic, fourmovement concerto filled with massive chords and wide stretches in the piano part and an orchestration filled with richness and variety. The public premiere, with Brahms himself as soloist, occurred in Budapest in November 1881, with further performances soon afterwards in Stuttgart and Meiningen. The following February, Liszt heard a performance in Vienna and wrote to Brahms:

... Frankly speaking, at the first reading this work seemed to me a little grey in tone; I have, however, gradually come to understand it. It possesses the fertile character of a distinguished work of art, in which thought and feeling move in noble harmony.

The concerto was dedicated to Eduard Marxsen, Brahms' 'dear friend and teacher' – as if to indicate that only now did Brahms feel confident enough to honour his revered mentor. But even then he retained his characteristic self-doubt. Shortly before publication, he wrote to his publisher, Simrock, suggesting that the scherzo be dropped. It wasn't. In fact, that scherzo in D minor is the only movement not in the tonic key – Brahms called the key of B flat 'this udder which has always yielded good milk before', in reference to its employment in his 0p.18 Sextet and 0p.67 Quartet.

The expansive first movement begins romantically with a horn call reminiscent of that in Weber's *Oberon* Overture. The piano enters immediately, embroidering the melody and soon indulging in the closest thing to a cadenza to be found in the concerto. From here an orchestral tutti introduces the main thematic material. Rather than restating the main themes, the piano enters into a free, organicallydeveloping dialogue with the orchestra, often becoming impassioned and occasionally visiting distant keys like B minor. There is a particularly elaborate preparation for the recapitulation with one of the main themes being played by the orchestra while the piano weaves arpeggio figures around it: one of the more majestic moments in a memorable opening movement.

As self-deprecating as ever, Brahms described the first movement as 'innocuous', which is why, he said, he took the bold step of inserting the fiery *Allegro appassionato* as the second of the four movements. Here the drama is increased still further in a D minor movement originally intended for the Violin Concerto, but also bearing some resemblance to the equivalent movement in the 0p.11 Serenade. The 'trio' of the movement is in D major, featuring sotto voce octaves in the piano, and in typical Brahmsian fashion it serves more as a development section than a simple contrasting episode. Following this, the return of the main theme again varies rather than repeats all that has gone before.

The tonic key of B flat is re-established at the beginning of the slow movement, where a solo cello introduces one of Brahms' most sublime melodies. The soloist enters in an improvisatory style, leading into a passionate middle section where tremolo figures on the strings accompany virtuoso trills and fanfares on the piano. Towards the recapitulation, the key of F sharp is established as the melody takes wide leaps, before the original key returns and the cello and piano lead the movement into a final duet. Throughout this Andante, the textures are intimate, almost like chamber music, and the soloist and orchestra participate as equal partners.

The mood lightens in the final rondo, where the spirit of Mozart is invoked. At the opening, the tripping Hungarian-style tune sets the prevailing mood, then in quick succession new ideas emerge: a more restrained melody on woodwinds and then strings, a stately theme for piano followed by clarinets, and a cheeky one for piano with pizzicato strings. There are no trumpets and drums in this movement, and the soloist is left to shine through some extraordinarily difficult and surprisingly elaborate passages, even, at the transition to the coda in a section marked *Un poco più presto*, pre-empting the kind of metrical modulation which was to become synonymous with much 20th-century music. But nothing can hold back the sway of the gypsy dance rhythms and the music drives on to its emphatic conclusion.

MARTIN BUZACOTT, SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA © 2001

Brahms' Second Piano Concerto calls for an orchestra of 2 flutes [1 doubling piccolo], 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings, and solo piano.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed Brahms' Second Piano Concerto on 26 July 1939 with Artur Schnabel, piano, and Georg Szell, conductor. Its most recent performances were in July 2015 with Yuja Wang, piano, and Lionel Bringuier, conductor.



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DAVID ROBERTSON

THE LOWY CHAIR OF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR PATRON Professor The Hon. Dame Marie Bashir AD cvo

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra 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 Sydney Symphony Orchestra has toured China on five occasions, and in 2014 won the arts category in the Australian Government's inaugural Australia-China Achievement Awards, recognising groundbreaking 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 Sydney Symphony'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.

2019 is David Robertson's sixth season as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.

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David Robertson

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Justice Jane Mathews AO pictured with percussionist Timothy Constable, who says "the Orchestra is very lucky to have a dear friend like Jane! For many years she has been our champion, commissioning new music and personally supporting my chair. What a legend!"

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Each year – both alone and in collaboration with other orchestras worldwide – the Sydney Symphony Orchestra 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.

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