

SYDNEY  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

# The Cellos of the Sydney Symphony

FRIDAY 7 JUNE

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE





**sydney symphony  
orchestra**

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

TEA AND SYMPHONY

FRIDAY 7 JUNE, 11AM

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

# The Cellos of the Sydney Symphony

**Cellos of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra**

**Penelope Mills** *soprano*

**GIOVANNI SOLLIMA (born 1962)**

arr. V Dešpalj

*Violoncelles, vibrez!*

**HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS (1887–1959)**

*Bachianas brasileiras No.5*

Aria (Cantilena)

Dansa (Martelo)

**FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)**

arr. Chris Pidcock

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*

*Incidental music, Op.61: Scherzo*

**GUILLAUME CONNESSON (born 1970)**

*Trois Jardins* for seven cellos

English Gardens

Japanese Gardens

French Gardens

**ALESSIO MURGIA (born 1965)**

*Eight Variations for eight cellos on 'Ah! vous dirai-je, maman'*

**ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921–1992)**

arr. Sykora

*Fuga y misterio*



This concert will be broadcast on  
ABC Classic on 18 June at 1pm.

Estimated durations: 13 minutes;  
10 minutes; 5 minutes; 11 minutes;  
11 minutes; 3 minutes.

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

Cover image: Sydney Symphony  
Orchestra String Section  
(Photo by Keith Saunders)



Principal Partner

# CONCERT DIARY

JUNE



## Dvořák's Symphony No.6

**BIZET** L'Arlésienne: Highlights from the Suites  
**CHAUSSON** Poème for violin and orchestra  
**RAVEL** Tzigane for violin and orchestra  
**DVOŘÁK** Symphony No.6

Jaime Martin conductor • Nemanja Radulović violin

Emirates Metro Series  
**Fri 14 Jun, 8pm**  
Great Classics  
**Sat 15 Jun, 2pm**  
Sydney Opera House



## Music of the Oud

JOSEPH TAWDROS WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

**Program includes:**  
**TAWADROS** orch. Wells Oud Concerto  
**MOZART** Symphony No.25 in G minor,  
K183: 1st movement

Benjamin Northey conductor • Joseph Tawadros oud  
James Tawadros Egyptian percussion

Meet the Music  
**Thu 20 Jun, 6.30pm**  
Kaleidoscope  
**Fri 21 Jun, 7pm**  
**Sat 22 Jun, 7pm**  
Sydney Opera House



## Boccherini and Glazunov

**BOCCHERINI** String Quintet in C major, G.378  
**GLAZUNOV** String Quintet in A major, Op.39

Musicians of the Sydney Symphony

Cocktail Hour  
**Fri 21 Jun, 6pm**  
**Sat 22 Jun, 6pm**  
**Sun 23 Jun, 3pm**  
Sydney Opera House,  
Utzon Room



## Lang Lang Gala Performance

WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

**BERIO** after Schubert Rendering  
**SCHUBERT** Symphony No.8 (Unfinished)  
**MOZART** Piano Concerto No.24 in C minor, K491

David Robertson conductor • Lang Lang piano

**Thu 27 Jun, 8pm**  
**Sat 29 Jun, 8pm**  
Sydney Opera House



JULY



## Beethoven Symphony No.5

VADIM GLUZMAN PERFORMS PROKOFIEV

**VERDI** The Force of Destiny: Overture  
**PROKOFIEV** Violin Concerto No.2  
**BEETHOVEN** Symphony No.5

Xian Zhang conductor  
Vadim Gluzman violin

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



## Dohnányi and Shostakovich

**DOHNÁNYI** Serenade for string trio  
**GRAN** Finnish Tango (after traditional tunes)  
**SHOSTAKOVICH** Two Pieces for string octet

Musicians of the Sydney Symphony

Cocktail Hour  
**Fri 5 Jul, 6pm**  
**Sat 6 Jul, 6pm**  
**Sun 7 Jul, 3pm**  
Sydney Opera House,  
Utzon Room



## Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince™ in Concert

Relive the adventure of a curious plot afoot at Hogwarts™ and a new Gryffindor™ Keeper, soaring across the big screen in high-definition! Experience the music of a live symphony orchestra performing the unforgettable score to the sixth film of the Harry Potter™ Series. *Classified M.*

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Sydney Symphony Presents  
**Wed 10 Jul, 7pm**  
**Thu 11 Jul, 7pm**  
**Fri 12 Jul, 7pm**  
**Sat 13 Jul, 2pm**  
**Sat 13 Jul, 7pm**  
Sydney Opera House



## Saint-Saëns' Organ Symphony

SUSAN GRAHAM SINGS SONGS OF THE AUVERGNE

**CHABRIER** España  
**CANTELOUBE** Songs of the Auvergne  
**SAINT-SAËNS** Symphony No.3 (Organ Symphony)

David Robertson conductor  
Susan Graham mezzo-soprano

Thursday Afternoon Symphony  
**Thu 18 Jul, 1.30pm**  
Emirates Metro Series  
**Fri 19 Jul, 8pm**  
Sydney Opera House





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## Penelope Mills *soprano*

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With a Master of Music in Operatic Performance from the Royal Northern College of Music (UK), and BMusEd (Hons) from the Sydney Conservatorium, soprano Penelope Mills has performed with the Sydney, Melbourne, Queensland, West Australian and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras, Australian Youth Orchestra, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Sydney Chamber Choir, Pinchgut Opera, Royal Melbourne Philharmonic, Sydney Concert Orchestra, Sydney Soloists and the Australia Ensemble.

This year Penelope performs *Messiah* with Willoughby Symphony, *St Matthew Passion* at the Sydney Town Hall, *Carmina Burana* at The Concourse, Chatswood, Bach *Cantatas* and Mozart *Requiem* at St Andrew's Cathedral and continues her association with the Sydney Opera House in the *Taste of Opera* series.

Penelope's repertoire ranges from Bach *Christmas Oratorio* and *B minor Mass*, to Poulenc *Gloria*, Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Ashkenazy) and Beethoven Symphony No. 9 (Oleg Caetani and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra). Penelope's operatic roles include Elettra (*Idomeneo*), Euridice (*L'Orfeo*) and Venus (*Dardanus*) for Pinchgut Opera; Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*), and First Lady (*The Magic Flute*), for Pacific Opera; Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*), Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Nedda (*I Pagliacci*) and Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) in the UK.

Penelope has given several world and Australian premiere performances by composers such as Kaija Saariaho, John Peterson, Ib Norholm, Carl Vine and Gordon Kerry, also performing Miranda in *The Tempest* by Thomas Adès with the MSO, conducted by the composer.

A regular guest artist in New Zealand, Penelope has sung Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Scarlatti's *Christmas Cantata* (with Roy Goodman) as well as headlining the Summer Gala and *Last Night of the Proms*, all for the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra.

Penelope can be heard in many live broadcasts for ABC Classic FM and her live recordings for ABC Classics include *Idomeneo* (Mozart), *Dardanus* (Rameau) and *L'Orfeo* (Monteverdi) with Pinchgut Opera.



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## ABOUT THE MUSIC

Giovanni Sollima is an Italian composer and cellist. He studied cello with Giovanni Perriera and composition with his father, Eliodoro Sollima, at the Conservatorio di Palermo, where he graduated with highest honours. He later studied with Antonio Janigro and Milko Kelemen at the Musikhochschule Stuttgart and at the Universität Mozarteum Salzburg.

As a composer, Sollima's influences are wide ranging, taking in jazz and rock, as well as various ethnic traditions from the Mediterranean area. Sollima's music is influenced by minimalism, with his compositions often featuring modal melodies and repetitive structures. Because his works are characterized by a more diverse and eclectic approach to material than the early American minimalist composers, the American critic Kyle Gann has called Sollima a post-minimalist composer.

Sollima has collaborated with the American poet and musician Patti Smith, appearing on her records and performing with her in concert. He also collaborates with the Silk Road Project. He has said that 'the cello is the most connected instrument to the body. Part of the sound comes back at you and you feel it in the stomach; it is a very physical sensation.' This visceral sense is behind ***Violoncelles, vibrez!***, Sollima's most popular work, originally for two cellos and orchestra, which commemorates his teacher's exhortation to make the instruments resonate, which they do, especially in this arrangement for eight cellos.

Villa-Lobos was the most creative Latin-American composer of his generation. His father, a scholar and amateur musician, taught him the cello which remained his main instrument and features in ***Bachianas brasileiras No.5***.

He wrote of the nine *Bachianas brasileiras*: 'These are a special kind of musical composition based on the composer's intimate knowledge of the great works of Bach, and also of the harmonic, contrapuntal, and melodic atmosphere of the folklore of the north-eastern region of Brazil. The composer considers Bach a universal and rich folkloristic source, deeply rooted in the folk-music of every country in the world. 'Bach is a mediator among all races'.

In all *Bachianas brasileiras* the movements have two titles: one traditionally European, showing its baroque derivation, and a characterful, national one. Here, the first movement, *Aria* (*Cantilena*) was written in 1938. The cellos are divided into four pairs, some playing pizzicato, the others doubling the singing line. Over this foundation floats Villa-Lobos' haunting melody, sung at first wordlessly. In the declamatory middle section the singer breaks into the words of a song, then the melody returns, hummed.

In the second movement, composed in 1945, the composer follows the structure of a type of traditional dance-song from north-eastern Brazil featuring very fast delivery of the words. The melody suggests the birds of Brazil, following the poem by Manuel Bandeira.



Giovanni Sollima



Villa-Lobos

## Aria (Ruth V. Correa)

Tarde, uma nuvem rosea lenta e transparente,  
sobre o espaço sonhadora e bela!  
Surge no infinito a lua docemente,  
Enfeitando a tarde, qual meiga donzela  
que se apresta e alinda  
sonhadoramente,  
Em anseios d'alma para ficar bela,  
Grita ao ceo e a terra, toda a Natureza!  
Cala a passarada aos seus tristes queixumes,  
E reflete o mar toda a sua riqueza...  
Suave a luz da lua desperta agora,  
A cruel saudade que ri e chora!  
Tarde, uma nuvem rósea lenta e transparente,  
sobre o espaço sonhadora e bela!

A rosy, transparent cloud wanders  
over the spacious sky, dreamlike and beautiful.  
Gently the moon rises from a boundless depth  
ornating the evening like a lovely maiden  
who prepares and adorns herself,  
as in a dream,  
and, anxious to reveal her beauty,  
evokes heaven and earth and all Nature!  
The little bird has ceased its mournful lament,  
the sea displays her silvery treasures,  
and now the moonlight awakens  
the bitter-sweet pain of piercing desires!  
A rosy, transparent cloud wanders  
over the spacious sky, dreamlike and beautiful.

## Dansa (Manuel Bandeira)

Irerê, meu passarinho do Sertão do Cariri,  
Irerê, meu companheiro, Cadê vióla?  
Cadê meu bem? Cadê Maria?  
Ai triste sorte a do violeiro cantadô!  
Ah! Sem a vióla em que cantava o seu amô,  
Ah! Seu assobio é tua flauta de Irerê:  
Que tua flauta do Sertão q uando assobia,  
Ah! A gente sofre sem querê!  
Ah! Teu canto chega lá do fundo do sertão,  
Ah! Como ua brisa amolecendo o coração, ah!  
Irerê, Solta teu canto!  
Canta mais!  
Pra alembra o Cariri!

Canta, cambaxirra! Canta, juriti!  
Canta Irerê! Canta, canta sofrê,  
Patativa! Bemtevi!  
Maria acorda que é dia  
Cantem todos vocês  
Passarinhos do sertão!  
Bemtevi! Eh! Sabiá!  
La! liá! liá! liá!  
Eh! Sabia da mata cantadô!  
Liá! liá! Liá!  
Eh! Sabiá da mata sofredô!  
O vosso canto vem do fundo do sertão  
Como uma brisa amolecendo o coração  
Irerê, meu passarinho do Sertão [...]

Irerê, my little nestling from the wilds of Carira,  
Irerê, my loved companion,  
My singing sweetheart! Where goes my dear? Where goes Maria?  
Ah, sorry is the lot of him who would sing!  
Ah! without his flute no song of gladness can he bring,  
Ah! His whistle shrill must be his flute for Irerê:  
But yours the flute that once in forest wilds was sounding,  
with its message of grief and woe!  
Ah! your song came from out of the depths of the forest wilds, Ah!  
Like summer winds that comfort every mournful heart.  
Ah! Irerê! Sing and enchant me!  
Sing once more!  
Bring me songs of Cariri!

Sing! My lovely songbird, sing your  
Song again, sing, my Irerê! Sing of  
pain and sorrow,  
as the birds of the morning  
wake Maria in the dawning.  
Sing with all your voices  
birds of the woods and of the wilds  
sing your songs, ye forest birds!  
La, liá, liá!  
Ye nestlings of the singing forest wilds.  
Oh yours the songs that comes from the depths of the  
forest wilds  
like summer winds that comfort every mournful heart.  
Irerê my little nestling...

With the rise of Romanticism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and its love of the Gothic and the supernatural, the poets Schlegel and Tieck began translating Shakespeare into German; their version of ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** inspired Mendelssohn to write his celebrated Overture in 1826. Many years later Ludwig Tieck suggested that Mendelssohn add incidental music for a production of the play at Potsdam in 1843.

The play begins in Athens where Theseus and Hippolyta are preparing for their wedding, and where four young nobles are caught up in various unrequited relationships. Hermia and Lysander elope to a nearby wood followed by Demetrius, who loves Hermia, and Helena who loves Demetrius. Here Oberon, aided by the mischievous goblin Puck, is preparing revenge on Titania who won't give up her boy, and the fortuitous arrival of both the lovers and a bunch of tradesmen ('rude mechanicals') who are rehearsing a play for the ducal wedding sets off the subsequent comedy of magic and errors. This is ultimately resolved by the noble couples' finally being wed in Athens, where they watch the mechanicals disastrously perform a play, and, as they depart for bed, are blessed by the reunited Oberon and Titania.

Mendelssohn leaves the Athenian scenes without music, as if to emphasise the prosaic nature of the 'real world'. The *Scherzo* introduces the fairy kingdom, with his characteristic featherlight energy.

Guillaume Connesson is one of the most widely performed French composers with works that include *Pour sortir au jour*, commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (2013) and *Les Trois Cités de Lovecraft* (co-commission of the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra and the Orchestre National de Lyon). His discography includes *Lucifer*, which obtained awards from *Classica* magazine, and *Pour sortir au jour*, which won numerous critical distinctions such as the 'Diapason d'Or de l'Année'.

He has been professor of orchestration at the Aubervilliers-La Courneuve Conservatory since 1997 and held residencies with the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestre National de Lyon and the Orchestre national d'Ile-de-France. Connesson is composing of an opera, *Les Bains macabres* (on a libretto by Olivier Bleys), commissioned by the Opéra National de Bordeaux.

Describing the three movements of his ***Trois Jardins***, the composer writes:

### **English Gardens**

Century-old shade trees, winding paths leading up to artificial ruins and secluded groves where lovers exchange tender confidences suggest a nostalgic reflection on the passing of time. A melancholic contrapuntal Adagio seemed best suited to convey the seductive appeal of such artists' gardens.



**Mendelssohn by Eduard Magnus**



**Guillaume Connesson**

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## Japanese Gardens

Like an enigmatic musical haiku, this short piece evokes the atmosphere of a Japanese garden: traditional 'flying stones' draw the visitors' attention as they carefully mind their steps across patches of moss while the gentle sound of water accompanies their meditation. Silences play an important role in this movement, interrupted by rebounding bow patterns, harmonic glissandi, biting 4- and 6-part harmonies and, at one point, the nasal, resonant voice of a cello...

## French Gardens

Perfect symmetry, grand perspectives reaching to the horizon and elaborate parterres epitomize the French formal garden. Following a short introduction featuring typical dotted rhythms, musical 'water displays' add a lively interplay of spaces and volumes. A celebration of light and joy, this Allegro con brio brings *Trois Jardins* to a close.

Born in Sardinia, Alessio Murgia graduated in violin from the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory of Turin in 1986. In 2004, he co-founded the chamber ensemble 'Once upon a time ... the Cinema', with which he performed some of the most famous film music soundtracks, which he arranged. The ensemble has also recorded a disc with music by Ennio Morricone, John Williams, Nino Rota and others. This experience inspired a new musical journey as a composer, arranger and orchestrator.

In 2018, cellist Umberto Clerici, Principal Cello of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, performed the world premiere of Eight variations for cello and orchestra, dedicated to him.

Murgia has worked with The Eight Cellos of Turin for whom he composed a Fantasia on the overture of Verdi's Nabucco, and his Eight Variations on the theme of the French song 'Ah, vous dirais-je maman', a tune familiar to English speakers as 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star'.

Each of the variations pays tribute to one of eight 'geniuses of music of all time.' He describes how he followed 'the Ariadne's thread of this French popular song of the second half of the eighteenth century "Ah, vous dirais-je, Maman", already used by Mozart for his variations for piano K.256, changing the theme according to the manner and the poetic intention' of the eight composers, Vivaldi, Handel, Haydn, Beethoven, Johann Strauss II, Brahms, Prokofiev and Piazzolla.

In 1954 Astor Piazzolla won a scholarship to study with the



Alessio Murgia

legendary Nadia Boulanger in Paris. He was by this stage acknowledged as a great composer of tangos and performer on the bandoneón in his native Buenos Aires (though, incidentally, he spent many of his earliest years in New York) and had already studied with Alberto Ginastera. But Piazzolla, like Gershwin, yearned to be a serious composer and played down the importance of tango at first. Boulanger, however, showed her usual perspicacity. Hearing Piazzolla play tango on the bandoneón she famously said 'Astor, your classical pieces are well written, but the true Piazzolla is here, never leave it behind' echoing Ravel's advice to Gershwin that there was nothing he could teach the American.

Piazzolla took Boulanger's advice, as one would, but at the same time his interest in 'classical' music allowed him to enrich his tango composition and move freely between popular and 'serious' musical worlds. He composed for Rostropovich, the Kronos Quartet and Gidon Kremer among other, maintaining an interest in 'classical' genres. *The Fuga y misterio* is from the 'operita' *Maria de Buenos Aires*.

ADAPTED FROM NOTES BY GIOVANNI SOLLIMA, DAVID GARRETT, GORDON KERRY, GUILLAUME CONNESSON AND ALESSIO MURGIA.



**Astor Piazzolla**



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# SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS



## DAVID ROBERTSON

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PATRÓN 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 ground-breaking work in nurturing the cultural and artistic relationship between the two nations.

The Orchestra's first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart

Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013. The Orchestra's history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

The 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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*The Hon. 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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*Sydney Symphony Orchestra 2019 Fellows*

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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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