

SYDNEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Haydn and Beethoven

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE
UTZON ROOM




sydney symphony
orchestra
David Robertson
The Lowy Chair of
Chief Conductor and Artistic Director


Emirates
Principal Partner



Miniature portrait of Beethoven from 1802 by Christian Hornemann.

Haydn and Beethoven

When she was 14 years old, Hildegard's aristocratic parents placed her in an enclosed Benedictine monastery. She shared a cell with another aristocratic woman, who taught her to read and write Latin. As more and more young women joined the community, Hildegard became prioress, and in around 1150 established her own abbey near the Rhineland town of Bingen. In her forties she began experiencing powerful visions. Once, 'Heaven was opened and a fiery light of exceeding brilliance came and permeated my whole brain, and inflamed my whole heart and my whole breast' and on another occasion she 'saw a great star, most splendid and beautiful, and with it an exceeding multitude of falling sparks'. In a surge of creativity as she expounded her theology in writing, art and music; she was made a saint in 1209. Her compositions consist largely of elaborate unaccompanied chants that set her own poems. ***Ave generosa*** is a 'celestial symphony' of joy celebrating the Virgin Mary. The Mother of God is often portrayed standing on the head of a snake that represents the devil; she would probably approve of this hymn being played on the serpent, a kind of bass cornet invented in the 18th century.

In contrast to the devilish serpent, the cor anglais was thought to resemble the 'angelic' (not 'English') trumpets of medieval art. Common in late Baroque music it was less so in the Classical period, a notable exception being Haydn's Symphony No.22, 'The Philosopher', where the instrument sounds a mournful tune in the opening movement.

Haydn and Beethoven were both great recyclers, so Alexandre's arrangement of Haydn's 'Gypsy Rondo' Trio is quite in character. He explains that he got the idea from Haydn's 'little brother Michael's quartet for cor anglais, violin, cello and bass. Very unusual combination and great sound, so I wanted to find something for this group [adding a viola], so I arranged Schumann's late piano work "Gesänge der Frühe" that we performed in the same series a couple of years ago. As the Schumann is a rather depressing piece, I was looking for something more positive to follow. Big brother's music with its humour and freshness felt quite obvious; the double bass in the group could make us groove like a little country band around the Esterhazy court, hence his trio in G major with its gypsy rondo!'

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN (1089–1179)

Improvisation on *Ave generosa*



By the early 1790s Haydn was a pop-star in London after decades in the seclusion of his employer's palace at Eszterhaza, Hungary. His marriage had long been loveless, and in London in 1791 he fell in love with 'an English widow...a beautiful and charming woman and I would have married her very easily if I had been free'. This was Rebecca Schroeter, whom Haydn had begun to teach piano in 1791 and who remained a close friend even after he returned to the continent. Back in Vienna in 1795 Haydn composed several sets of piano trios, and dedicated the set of three (**HobXV24-26**) to her. In this work, which saves the fireworks till last, Haydn reminds us of the importance to him of folk-music.

'Serenade' conjures the image of some guy plucking an instrument under a lady's window, but by the late 18th century it had morphed into a multi-movement work for ensemble, usually winds, played at courtly, outdoor entertainments. The band would march in and out, and in the interim play alternating songlike slow and fast dance movements. **Beethoven's Op.8** had moved indoors, bring for string trio, but maintains that shape. Kees explains how he came to rethink it:

The idea of using the double bass to play the cello part of Beethoven's Serenade in D was suggested to me by an Orchestra colleague a couple of years ago, as we were looking to put together a chamber music program featuring violin, viola and bass.

I had previously enjoyed hugely playing the second cello part in works such as the Schubert C major quintet and the Brahms sextets – the Beethoven Serenade in D was an opportunity to see how well the double bass could fulfil the role of the cello in this work both as the bass voice, and as a more frequent solo contributor.

I'm excited by how well it works in this delightful piece, and it's possible the character of the Serenade is enhanced by the use of the bass, particularly in the Allegretto alla Polacca (in the style of a Polonaise), adding a rustic charm to the work.

GORDON KERRY © 2019



**JOSEPH HAYDN
(1732–1809)**

**arr. Alexandre Oguey
Quintet for cor anglais and
strings**

(after the Trio for piano violin and cello in G major, Hob XV:25)

Andante

Poco adagio

Finale ('Gypsy rondo'): Presto

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
(1770–1827)**

**arr. Kees Boersma
Serenade in D, Op.8**

Marcia. Allegro; Adagio

Minuet. Allegretto Adagio]

Allegretto alla polacca

Tema con variazioni. Andante

quasi allegretto

About the Orchestra

PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS



DAVID ROBERTSON

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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.

Musicians of the Sydney Symphony

Von Bingen

Mark Robinson *percussion*
Scott Kinmont *serpent*
David Campbell *double bass*

Haydn arr. Oguey

Alexandre Oguey *cor anglais*
Sophie Cole *violin*
Sandro Costantino *viola*
Fenella Gill *cello*
David Campbell *double bass*

Beethoven arr. Boersma

Anna Skálová *violin*
Rosemary Curtin *viola*
Kees Boersma *double bass*

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