

SYDNEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Keys to the City Festival

WITH KIRILL GERSTEIN

5 – 10 AUGUST

CITY RECITAL HALL
SYDNEY TOWN HALL



THEME
VARIATIONS
PIANO SERVICES



Abercrombie
& Kent

Masters Series

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

Emirates
Principal Partner

CONCERT DIARY

AUGUST



Star Wars: Return of the Jedi in Concert

Luke Skywalker heads a mission to rescue Han Solo from the clutches of Jabba the Hutt and faces Darth Vader one last time, with John Williams' iconic score played live to film. *Classified PG.*

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Sydney Symphony Presents
Thu 15 Aug, 8pm
Fri 16 Aug, 8pm
Sat 17 Aug, 2pm
Sat 17 Aug, 8pm
Sydney Opera House



Schubert, Liszt and Ledger

SIMONE YOUNG'S VISIONS OF VIENNA

LEDGER Two Memorials
(for Anton Webern and John Lennon)
SCHUBERT arr. Liszt Wanderer Fantasy
LISZT Dante Symphony

Simone Young conductor
Louis Lortie piano • **Cantillation**

Meet the Music
Wed 21 Aug, 6.30pm
Sydney Opera House



Schubert and Liszt

SIMONE YOUNG'S VISIONS OF VIENNA

SCHUBERT The Devil's Pleasure Palace: Overture
SCHUBERT arr. Liszt Wanderer Fantasy
LISZT Dante Symphony

Simone Young conductor
Louis Lortie piano
Cantillation

Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 22 Aug, 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 23 Aug, 8pm
Great Classics
Sat 24 Aug, 2pm
Sydney Opera House



Beethoven and Brahms

BEETHOVEN String Quartet in E minor,
Op.59 No.2 (Razumovsky No.2)
BRAHMS String Quintet No.2

Musicians of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Cocktail Hour
Fri 23 Aug, 6pm
Sat 24 Aug, 6pm
Sydney Opera House,
Utzon Room



Shostakovich Symphony No.4

JAMES EHNES PLAYS KHACHATURIAN

KHACHATURIAN Violin Concerto
SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No.4

Mark Wigglesworth conductor
James Ehnes violin

Abercrombie & Kent
Masters Series
Wed 28 Aug, 8pm
Fri 30 Aug, 8pm
Sat 31 Aug, 8pm
Sydney Opera House



SEPTEMBER



Geoffrey Lancaster in Recital

MOZART ON THE FORTEPIANO

MOZART Piano Sonata in B flat, K570
MOZART Piano Sonata in E flat, K282
MOZART Rondo in A minor, K511
MOZART Piano Sonata in B flat, K333

Geoffrey Lancaster fortepiano

Mon 2 Sep, 7pm
City Recital Hall



Star Wars: The Force Awakens in Concert

Set 30 years after the defeat of the Empire, this instalment of the Star Wars saga sees original cast members Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill and Harrison Ford reunited on the big-screen, with the Orchestra playing live to film. *Classified M.*

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Sydney Symphony Presents
Thu 12 Sep, 8pm
Fri 13 Sep, 8pm
Sat 14 Sep, 2pm
Sat 14 Sep, 8pm
Sydney Opera House



WELCOME

THEME
VARIATIONS
PIANO SERVICES



We are delighted to present the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Keys to the City Festival, a week of exquisite concerts showcasing the brilliance of the piano with phenomenal featured artist, Kirill Gerstein.

As proud piano partner to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra for over two decades, it's an enormous honour to provide our continued support, and work with program artists to prepare each piano, as you see before you at this week's concerts.

A well-prepared piano always shines within the mood of a concerto and enriches a solo recital. The piano is a perfectly crafted masterpiece that echoes rich textures and tones to inspire artists and captivate audiences to experience a truly wonderful performance.

At Theme & Variations Piano Services, it's our belief that everyone deserves beautiful music in their lives. As part of our love of music, we extend an invitation to Sydney Symphony patrons to attend our annual weekend piano sale at our Willoughby showroom from 6-8 September. With a variety of upright and grand pianos to suit all means and abilities, there is really something for everyone. With our commitment to excellence, you too can receive the same level of piano care experienced by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

We hope you enjoy these wonderful performances and will be thrilled by Kirill Gerstein's virtuosic talent on this much-loved instrument. We look forward to sharing this experience with you.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ara Vartoukian'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Ara' being more prominent.

Ara Vartoukian OAM
Concert Piano Technician,
Theme & Variations
Piano Services

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David Robertson *conductor*

THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

David Robertson – conductor, artist, thinker, and American musical visionary – occupies some of the most prominent platforms on the international music scene. A highly sought-after podium figure in the worlds of opera, orchestral music, and new music, Robertson is celebrated worldwide as a champion of contemporary composers, an ingenious and adventurous programmer, and a masterful communicator whose passionate advocacy for the art form is widely recognised.

Following the autumn 2018 European tour with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Robertson kicks off his valedictory 2019 season as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director. In the 2018-19 season, Robertson returns to the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, and Czech Philharmonic. He continues rich collaboration with the New York Philharmonic, and conducts the Toronto and Montreal Symphony Orchestras, Cincinnati and Dallas Symphony Orchestras, and the Juilliard Orchestra, where he begins his tenure as Director of Conducting Studies, Distinguished Visiting Professor.

Robertson recently completed his transformative 13-year tenure as Music Director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, where he solidified its status as among the nation's most enduring and innovative, established fruitful relationships with a spectrum of artists, and garnered a 2014 Grammy Award for the Nonesuch release of John Adams' *City Noir*.

Robertson has served in artistic leadership positions at the Orchestre National de Lyon, and, as a protégé of Pierre Boulez, the Ensemble InterContemporain; as Principal Guest at the BBC Symphony Orchestra; and as a Perspectives Artist at Carnegie Hall, where he has conducted numerous orchestras. He appears regularly with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic, Bayerischer Rundfunk, and other major European orchestras and festivals.

In spring 2018, Robertson built upon his deep relationship with The Metropolitan Opera, conducting the premiere of Phelim McDermott's celebrated *Così fan tutte*. Since his 1996 debut, *The Makropulos Case*, he has conducted a breathtaking range of projects, including the Met premiere of John Adams' *The Death of Klinghoffer* (2014); the 2016 revival of Janáček's *Jenůfa*; and many favourites. Robertson has frequent projects at the world's most prestigious opera houses, including La Scala, Théâtre du Châtelet, San Francisco and Santa Fe Operas.

Robertson is the recipient of numerous musical and artistic awards, and in 2010 was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the Government of France. He is devoted to supporting young musicians and has worked with students at festivals ranging from Aspen to Tanglewood to Lucerne.

The position of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director is also supported by Principal Partner Emirates.



Kirill Gerstein *piano*

Kirill Gerstein was born in Voronezh. He studied at Boston's Berklee College of Music where he combined an interest in classical music with jazz, and, later, after shifting his focus more toward classical music, at the Manhattan School of Music with Solomon Mikowsky. He became a US citizen in 2003.

Kirill Gerstein's 2018-19 season included a return to the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Mark Elder, and performances with the Staatskapelle Dresden, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic, Danish National Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Hungarian National Philharmonic, Orquestra Sinfônica de São Paulo, and Detroit Symphony. He gave recitals in Singapore, Vienna, and Stockholm.

Kirill Gerstein's repertoire ranges from Bach to contemporary composers. In the 2018-19 season he gave the world premiere of Thomas Adès's piano concerto with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the direction of the composer in Boston and at Carnegie Hall. He and Adès gave the European premiere with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchester in April. A recording of his 2017 performance of the Busoni Piano Concerto with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Sakari

Oramo has recently been released. 2018 saw the release of a recording of Scriabin's *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire* with the Oslo Philharmonic and Vasily Petrenko. Other notable recordings include the February 2018 release *The Gershwin Moment (Concerto in F and Rhapsody in Blue)* with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and David Robertson, plus Earl Wild's arrangements of some Gershwin songs and collaborations with Storm Large and Gerstein mentor, vibraphonist, Gary Burton), as well as Liszt's *Transcendental Etudes* (one of *The New Yorker's* notable recordings for 2016), and *Imaginary Pictures*, a coupling of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and Schumann's *Carnaval*.

Among his awards are First Prize in the 10th Arthur Rubinstein Competition and a Gilmore Artist Award which provided him with funds to commission composers such as Chick Corea, Alexander Goehr, and Oliver Knussen.

Gerstein taught at the Stuttgart Musik Hochschule (2007-17), and from autumn 2018 teaches at the Kronberg Academy's Sir Andrés Schiff Performance Programme for Young Pianists which focusses on the study of duets and chamber music.

Kirill Gerstein's appearances are generously supported by the Berg Family Foundation.

MONDAY 5 AUGUST, 7PM

CITY RECITAL HALL



**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson
The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor
and Artistic Director

Kirill Gerstein in Recital

FRANZ LISZT (1811–1886)

Transcendental Étude No.7, 'Eroica'

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1828)

Fifteen Variations and Fugue in E flat major

LEOŠ JANÁČEK (1854–1928)

Piano Sonata, 1.X.1905, *From the Street*

Presentiment

Death: Adagio

INTERVAL

FRANZ LISZT (1811–1886)

Harmonies poétiques et religieuses

VII: Funérailles

THOMAS ADÈS (born 1971)

Berceuse from *The Exterminating Angel*

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1872–1918)

Élégie

Les soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon

KOMITAS (1869–1935)

Six Dances

IV: Shushiki

II: Unabi: Grave et gracieux

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

Le Tombeau de Couperin

Prélude

Fugue

Forlane

Rigaudon

Menuet

Toccata

Pre-concert talk by Zoltán Szabó in the
First Floor Reception Room at 6.15pm.

Estimated durations: 5 minutes,
22 minutes, 13 minutes, 20 minute
interval, 12 minutes, 5 minutes,
2 minutes, 3 minutes, 3 minutes,
3 minutes, 24 minutes.

The concert will conclude at
approximately 9pm.

Keys to the City Festival is generously
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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Liszt's most prolific period of composing for the piano was the mid-1850s, but as scholar Derek Watson notes, many of those pieces had 'along ripening to maturity'. The 'Transcendental Studies' reached theirs in 1851, having been reworked from a set composed in 1837 which in turn was derived from music composed in 1825. The seventh etude of the final set begins with the elaboration of material found in the 1824 *Impromptu on themes of Rossini and Spontini*: terse, isolated chords are sounded in various parts of the keyboard in a gesture answered by Lisztian waterfall of rapid-plunging notes. The main body of the study is an heroic march, in E flat (Beethoven's 'heroic' key), dominated by crisp, dotted rhythms that create dazzling textures of rapidly-moving figurations in octaves.

Less 'serious' than a sonata, variations had traditionally constituted a number of sections in which the theme remained largely intact with greater or lesser degrees of decoration; in Beethoven's Op.35, from 1802, that all changed and he 'included them in the proper numerical series of my greater musical works'. The theme is that of a contredanse, used in the ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus* and again as the theme of the final movement (also a variations set) of his *Eroica* Symphony. Here, as there, he announces the theme by only sounding the bass line, and then adds second, third and fourth parts above it before even thinking of playing the main tune; at points throughout the succeeding sections, the bass line is often treated as the tune. The variations, in other words, often dispense with the theme, and encompass a huge range of moods, from tender to violent, from comic to sublime. There is a certain amount of parody, not least in the final fugue, though here Beethoven tears off the Bachian wig, and treats us to more variations before the end.

In 1905, František Pavlík, like many of the Czech-speakers in Brno, was demonstrating for the establishment of a Czech-speaking university when he was bayoneted to death by Imperial troops. Janáček, appalled, wrote his Sonata almost immediately, but, dissatisfied, tore out and burned the third movement (a funeral march). Soon after he tore up the remaining score, scattering it into the Vltava River. Fortunately, pianist Ludmila Tučková, who had premiered the piece in 1906, had secretly copied the first two movements. Twenty years later she persuaded Janáček to publish it. The mood of the first movement is febrile, with snatches of lyricism, a hint of a patriotic hymn, and much violent hammering. The *Adagio* is dominated by the unadorned five-note motif we hear at the start, which builds to a violent climax and retreats into exhausted silence.



Franz Liszt



Ludwig van Beethoven, 1802



Leoš Janáček

Alphonse de Lamartine believed that ‘music is the literature of the heart; it begins where language is lost’, and the young Liszt responded enthusiastically to Lamartine’s 1830 cycle of poems *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* in a single work of that title, S.154, in 1833 and the set of ten pieces, S.173, published in 1853. *Funérailles*, conceived in 1849, is often regarded as tribute to Chopin, who died that year. It was also Liszt’s response to Austria’s execution of leaders of the Hungarian nationalist movement. There is an introductory section of deep bells, drum rolls and ceremonious dotted rhythms, a *largo* central passage and finally an *Allegro energico assai* in which grief becomes righteous anger.

British-US composer Thomas Adès’ third opera, *The Exterminating Angel*, premiered in Salzburg in 2016. It is based on Luís Buñuel’s 1964 film, a surreal parable in which a group of aristocrats and haut-bourgeois find themselves unaccountably trapped in at an elegant post-opera party. Social relations, and the characters’ sanity are soon besieged: in Act III the aristocratic Silva de Ávila sings a *Berceuse macabre* to a dead sheep, which she thinks is her dead child. This work, for piano, was commissioned by Alexandre Devals and Mimi Durand Kurihara for Kirill Gerstein.

Debussy was horrified by World War I, ‘the youth of France, senselessly mowed down by those merchants of Kultur...’ By the end of 1915 he was gravely ill with cancer but continued to work: his solemn short *Élégie* was published at that time in *Pages inédites sur la femme et la guerre*, helping to support war orphans. Debussy was not above a little gallows humour: his very last piano piece, *Les soirs illuminés par l’ardeur du charbon*, was composed in early 1917 and takes its title (‘Evenings glowing with the heat of the coal’) from the poem *Le Balcon* by Charles Baudelaire which Debussy set in the 1880s. The manuscript was a gift to a coal merchant, M Tronquin, who had kept the ailing composer supplied with coal during the bitter winter.

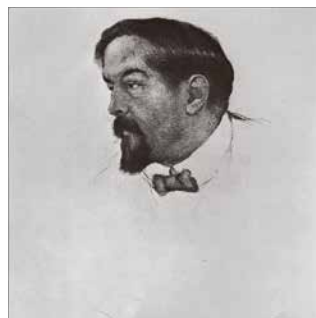
Debussy was trenchant critic, but hearing the song *Adouni* announced that on the strength of it alone, the composer should be regarded as a great artist.

Born Soghomon Soghomonian, the composer was ordained to the priestly rank of vardapet in the Armenian church in 1895 and took the name Komitas. He then studied music in Berlin and upon returning to Armenia set about collecting and arranging folk music for choirs and instruments. Arrested by the Ottoman Government in 1915 he was deeply traumatised, and spent his last decades in mental institutions in Turkey and Paris. His Six Dances, from 1904 are a strikingly forward-looking set of arrangements of various dances from various regions of Armenia, roughly contemporary with Bartók’s similar efforts. No.4 ‘Shushiki’ is from Vagarshapat, near the present-day Turkish border, and evokes the sound of the tar, a narrow waisted guitar from the region. Marked *Grave et gracieux*, ‘Unabi’ weaves two melodies from Shushi in Nagorno-Karabakh (in present-day Azerbaijan).



© MAURICE FOXALL

Thomas Adès



© IVAN THIELE

Claude Debussy



Komitas

Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, a memorial to the great French Baroque composer, began with an idea for a 'French Suite', though, as Ravel assured his friends, '*La Marsellaise* will not be in it, but it will have a forlane and a gigue, no tango though...' (There would, finally, be no gigue, either.) Each movement of the piece was dedicated to a comrade fallen in the Great War. In 1914 Ravel began caring for the wounded as a volunteer; by the March 1915 he was a military driver, who, with his truck *Adelaïde* faced a number of potentially fatal dangers before he was invalided out of the army in 1916.

The *Prélude*, with its Rococo ornaments has an improvisatory flourish, especially compared with the more formal *Fugue*, characterised by a Ravellian tension between duplet and triplet rhythms. The *Forlane*, contains quirky 'wrong-note' harmony but maintains a stately 6/8 metre, [and in fact follows the shape of the forlane from a particular work of Couperin's] where the *Rigaudon* begins with fast and extroverted music 2/4 time, though with a reflective central section that barely takes hold before the fast material returns. The *Menuet* contains typically limpid modal harmony, though Ravel told pianist Marguerite Long, who premiered the suite in 1919, that it should be played at the speed of the *Menuetto* in Beethoven's Op.31 No.3. The final *Toccata* is dedicated to the memory of Long's husband, Joseph de Marliave.

Shortly after the first performance in 1919, Ravel orchestrated four of the six movements — he omitted the *Fugue* and, no doubt because it is so idiomatically pianistic, the *Toccata* — in an orchestral suite claimed by many to surpass the original in its ingenuity and variety.

GORDON KERRY © 2019



Maurice Ravel in uniform



sydney symphony orchestra

David Robertson
The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

ABERCROMBIE & KENT MASTERS SERIES

WEDNESDAY 7 AUGUST, 8PM

FRIDAY 9 AUGUST, 8PM

SATURDAY 10 AUGUST, 8PM

SYDNEY TOWN HALL

Kirill Gerstein plays Grieg's Piano Concerto

David Robertson *conductor*

Kirill Gerstein *piano*

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957)

En Saga (A Saga)

EDVARD GRIEG (1843–1907)

Piano Concerto

Allegro molto moderato

Adagio –

Allegro moderato molto e marcato

INTERVAL

HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803–1869)

Symphonie fantastique

Daydreams (Largo) – Passions (Allegro agitato e appassionato assai)

A Ball (Valse Allegro non troppo)

In the Fields (Adagio)

March to the Scaffold (Allegretto non troppo)

Sabbath Night Dream (Larghetto – Allegro – Dies irae – Sabbath Round

(Un peu retenu) – Dies irae and Sabbath Round together)



Friday evening's concert will be broadcast on ABC Classic on 21 August at 1pm and again on 2 November at 12 noon.

Estimated durations: 20 minutes, 30 minutes, 20 minute interval, 49 minutes.

The concert will conclude at approximately 10.30pm.

Keys to the City Festival is generously supported by Dr Rachael Kohn AO & Mr Tom Breen.

Kirill Gerstein's appearances are generously supported by the Berg Family Foundation.

THEME
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& Abercrombie & Kent



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WELCOME



Welcome to the Abercrombie & Kent Masters Series.

A Sydney Symphony Orchestra performance always excites in me both the lover of fine music and the incorrigible traveller. The Nordic elements in tonight's program – the pride of Finland Jean Sibelius and Bergen's immortal Edvard Grieg – have me pining (pun intended) for the Norwegian fjords and the Baltic Sea.

Add a genius Russian-born pianist and a French Romantic composer who met with his greatest successes in London and Germany, and we're covering many of Abercrombie & Kent's very favourite destinations in Northern Europe.

I don't think it's too early for me to say the prize for one lucky subscriber to next year's season covers several of the same bases, and then some – London and Reykjavik before Bergen, Berlin and St Petersburg – on an extraordinary, all-luxury Abercrombie & Kent and Emirates journey worth more than \$55,000. You need to subscribe to be in it to win it as they say.

Of course, everyone's a winner at any Masters Series performance, especially in the hands of the incomparable David Robertson. I trust you'll enjoy tonight's performance – I know I will, the music is sure to be extraordinary – and good luck in the subscriber prize draw.

Of course, if a Northern European adventure is in your plans – especially after tonight – and you'd rather not leave one of life's great travel experiences to chance, check out our Luxury Small Group Journey to Scandinavia, or our new Luxury Expedition Cruise in the Baltic Sea (Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsinki and St Petersburg), our Limited Edition 'Journey to the Heart of Europe', or work in concert with your travel agent and one of our Luxury Travel Specialists, drawing on the local expertise of our Europe office, to compose your very own European tour.

Enjoy exploring!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sujata Raman'.

Sujata Raman
Regional Managing Director
Australia & Asia Pacific
Abercrombie & Kent

ABOUT THE MUSIC

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957)

En Saga (A Saga) – Tone-Poem, Op.9

The title, marvellously vague yet suggesting something epic, is inevitably intriguing, and many have wondered what it might mean. Sibelius never explained what the ‘saga’ in question might be, even though many people asked him. *En Saga* premiered in 1893 and became one of Sibelius’ most enduring successes: it helped make his name in his native Finland and a decade later became important to his success in Europe, when Busoni invited him to conduct it in Berlin. Fanciful theories have been put forward about the work’s alleged hidden meaning: that it is intended to evoke the work of the ‘Gaelic bard’ Ossian or that it refers to an episode in the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*, (which, after all, was a central source of Sibelius’ inspiration.) Five decades after its premiere, Sibelius told his secretary: ‘*En Saga* is the expression of a state of mind. I had undergone a number of painful experiences at the time and in no other work have I revealed myself so completely. It is for this reason that I find all literary explanations quite alien.’

In 1892 Sibelius’ relationship with his first great patron, Martin Wegelius, was becoming strained because of Sibelius’ more progressive political views and, as always, the composer was broke, his love of carousing costing him more than he could afford. The most painful problem confronting him around this time was how to earn a living. He had just married the woman who was to be his wife for 65 years, and had scored the first great public success of his composing career, the massive *Kullervo*, a symphonic poem for soloists, chorus and orchestra (which is based on the *Kalevala*.) He did not want to teach and, although he was an accomplished violinist, he did not want to earn his living as an orchestral musician. He re-joined his old string quartet, temporarily, but with some of his songs soon to be published, and with a commission in the wings for an orchestral work that would become *En Saga*, his ambition to compose full-time seemed not altogether fanciful.

En Saga has the high colour and romantic rhetoric from which Sibelius would turn away in time, but it is as masterly in design as any of the more mature tone poems. If you wanted to be extreme, you could call it ‘variations on a rising and falling semi-tone’, for this interval, which we hear on horn and bassoon at the very beginning, informs every melodic idea, from the woodwinds’ step-by-step theme that we hear next (and notice its narrow tonal compass, suggestive of something ancient) to the broad, epic theme announced immediately thereafter on bassoon. All of this is in the slow introduction; the *Allegro* that follows serves as a gigantic development section. It does actually contain two new themes: an insistent, stamping motif introduced by the strings and a flighty roundelay given to the flute, which comes to be repeated in a kind of loop pattern. There is also a glorious moment of repose, in which four



Jean Sibelius in his early 30s

solo violins and viola recall the very opening, now harmonised with a new radiance.

Yet Sibelius' transformation of each strand in his thematic tapestry is so masterly that it is possible to imagine that one theme is simply a different facet of another, as if, throughout, we are looking at a sculpture from different perspectives.

En Saga, as we know it today, is the result of revisions Sibelius made to it in preparation for the Berlin performances in 1902. The earlier, wilder version roamed through different keys even more freely than this one, was more rhapsodic and contained an episode with soaring strings against pulsating woodwind figures redolent of a Tchaikovsky pas de deux. In the 'new' *En Saga* – a creation of the period of the Second Symphony – the signature Sibelian pedal points are longer, the themes more uniformly narrow in their range of melodic movement, and the transitions between sections far smoother. In the intervening decade, Sibelius had become more discerning and less impulsive, and he shortened the work by more than 100 bars, while refining its orchestral palette to more closely match his current thinking. The unusual absence of timpani is common to both versions and, like the 'original' *En Saga*, the revised one ends as the piece seems to move inexorably back into the world of legend from which it came.

PHILLIP SAMETZ © 2008

Sibelius' *En Saga* calls for an orchestra of 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), pairs of oboes, clarinet and bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones and tuba, 2 percussion and strings.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed *En Saga* in March 1946 under John Farnsworth Hall, and most recently under Bryden Thomson in March 1990.

Fanciful theories have been put forward about the work's alleged hidden meaning: that it is intended to evoke the work of the 'Gaelic bard' Ossian or that it refers to an episode in the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*.

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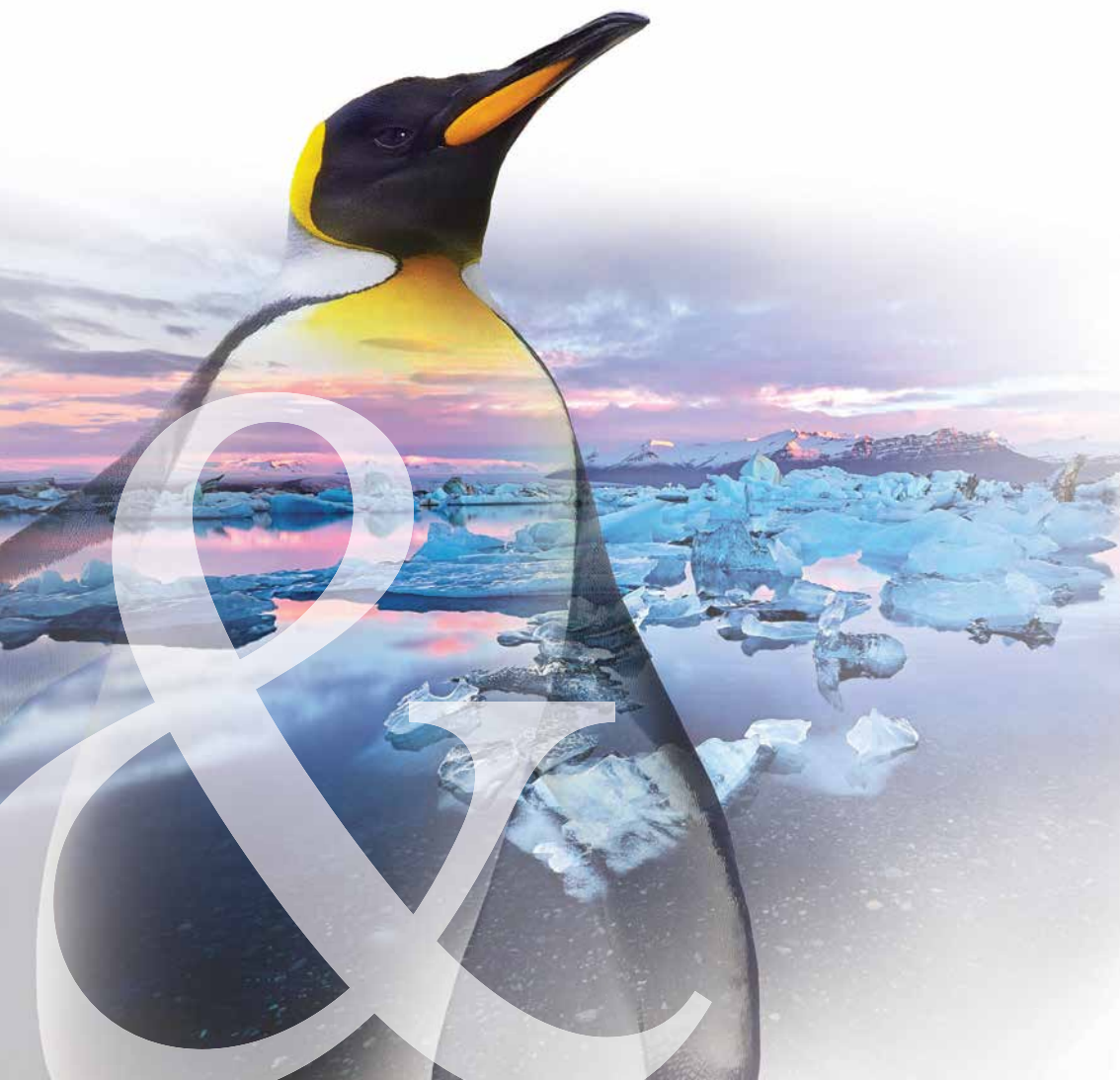
“The land looks like a fairytale.” – Roald Amundsen

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2021-22 voyages also open for registration of interest.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

EDVARD GRIEG (1843–1907)

Piano Concerto in A minor, Op.16

Allegro molto moderato

Adagio –

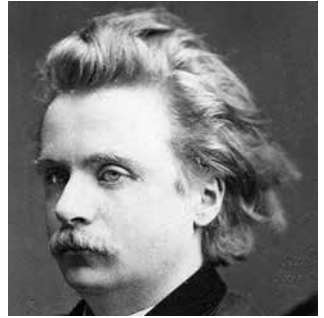
Allegro moderato molto e marcato

After hearing a performance of Grieg's piano concerto, Arnold Schoenberg is supposed to have remarked: 'That's the kind of music I'd really like to write', and one can't help but feel that there was a wistful sincerity buried in the remark. Grieg's concerto is, with good reason, popular – a fate not enjoyed by Schoenberg's music.

Grieg composed the concerto at the age of 25 while relatively inexperienced in orchestral writing and tinkered endlessly with the orchestration between the time of the work's (triumphant) premiere and his death in 1907. He had studied at the Leipzig Conservatory from the age of 15 with the initial intent of becoming a concert pianist. Dissatisfied with his first teacher, Grieg began lessons with E F Wenzel, a friend and supporter of Schumann's; under his tutelage Grieg began writing piano music for his own performances and wrote passionate articles in defence of Schumann's music.

The influence of Schumann's Piano Concerto, also in A minor, has been remarked on frequently, but apart from their similar three-movement design and opening gesture the style of each is markedly different. Grieg's Concerto is replete with exquisite tunes. Many of these echo the Norwegian folk music with which Grieg had become familiar in 1864. The piano's opening gesture, for instance, recalls folk music in its use of a 'gapped' scale, and the origins of the finale in folk dance are clear.

Grieg was unable to attend the premiere of his concerto in Copenhagen in 1869, but it was an outstanding success and was recognised as a youthful masterpiece. Anton Rubinstein, for instance, described it as a 'work of genius'. A year later, Grieg met Liszt for the second time. Liszt allegedly sight-read Grieg's concerto and said 'you have the real stuff in you. And don't ever let them frighten you!'



The young Edvard Grieg

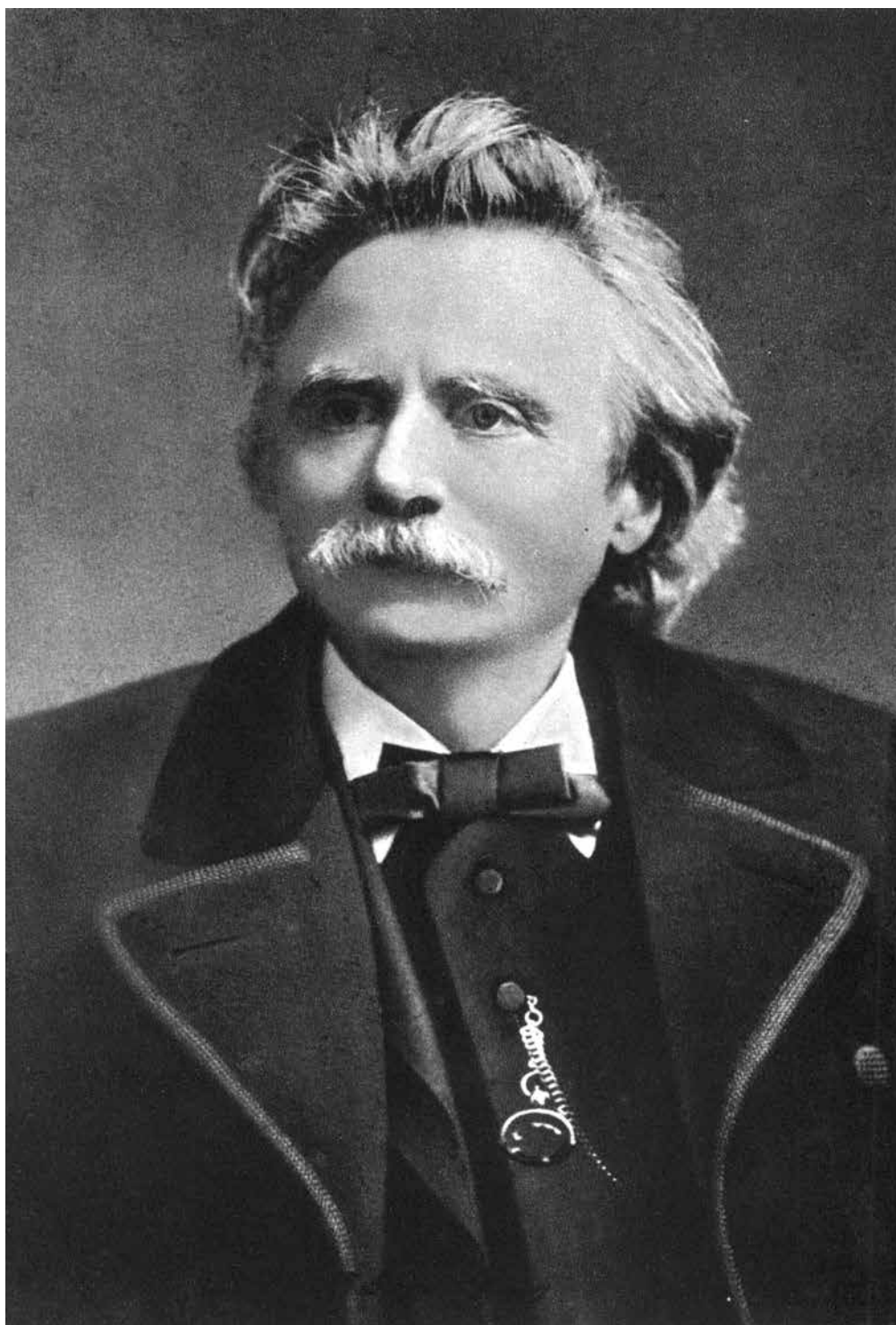
'...fascinating melancholy which seems to reflect in itself all the beauty of Norwegian scenery'

Grieg didn't let them frighten him, and the Piano Concerto went on to establish his reputation throughout the musical world. Audiences responded, as they still do, to the charm of Grieg's melodies, the balance of, it must be said, Lisztian virtuosity and Grieg's own distinctive lyricism, and what Tchaikovsky, who adored the work, described as the work's 'fascinating melancholy which seems to reflect in itself all the beauty of Norwegian scenery'. One of Grieg's greatest admirers described the 'concentrated greatness and all-lovingness of the little great man. Out of the toughest Norwegianness, out of the most narrow localness, he spreads out a welcoming and greedy mind for all the world's wares'. This was, of course, the Australian-born pianist/composer Percy Grainger who became one of the Concerto's most celebrated exponents and one of the dearest friends of Grieg's last years. Not only that – Grainger spent time with Grieg working on the concerto before the composer's death at which time Grieg was making the final adjustments to the orchestration; with such 'inside knowledge' Grainger was able to publish his own edition of the work in later years. Sadly, a proposed tour with Grieg conducting and Grainger playing the Concerto sadly never transpired.

GORDON KERRY © 2006

Grieg's Piano Concerto calls for an orchestra of solo piano, pairs of woodwinds, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and strings.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the piece in 1939, with George Szell conducting, and soloist Laurence Godfrey Smith, and most recently in June 2016 under Manuel López-Gómez with soloist Lang Lang.



Grieg in later life

HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803–1869)

Symphonie fantastique, Op.14

Daydreams (Largo) – Passions (Allegro agitato e appassionato assai)

A Ball (Valse Allegro non troppo)

In the Fields (Adagio)

March to the Scaffold (Allegretto non troppo)

Sabbath Night Dream (Larghetto – Allegro – Dies irae – Sabbath Round (Un peu retenu) – Dies irae and Sabbath Round together)

'The most bizarre monstrosity one can possibly imagine.'

– Concert review, *Figaro*

'A milestone in the memory of lovers of true music...a symphony...no less remarkable for the boldness and originality of its ideas than for the novelty of its form.' – Concert review, *Le national*

'I owe my fiancée to it.' – Letter, Hector Berlioz

Three descriptions of the concert at which, it has been said, French Romanticism was born: the premiere of Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique*, on 5 December 1830. Romanticism, yearning to experience higher, more spiritual things, had little time for established traditions, and it is not surprising that much of the musical establishment reacted with anger or scorn to artists who seemed to think themselves above rules. But the audience loved the *Symphonie fantastique*, greeting it with shouts and the stamping of feet.

From Berlioz' point of view, the best 'review' of all came from one Madame Moke, who finally granted permission for him to marry her daughter Camille. The irony was that it was Camille who had passed on to Berlioz the gossip about his earlier idol, Irish actress Harriet Smithson, which had provoked the fit of jealous rage which inspired the whole symphony – and it was Harriet whom Berlioz married two years later.

Berlioz' passion for Smithson had been consuming him for three years. It was a single-minded, overpowering adoration of the kind beloved of Romantic writers – and entirely one-sided. Even so, when Berlioz heard the rumours about Smithson and her manager, he was overwhelmed, and composed the *Symphonie fantastique* or 'Episode in the Life of an Artist' to express his emotional turmoil and exorcise his feelings of betrayal.

'She is now only a prostitute, fit to take part in [a Satanic] orgy,' Berlioz wrote in his first draft of a program for this symphony. The act of exorcism appears to have worked, however, as in subsequent versions of the program the hostile references to Smithson mellow into the more generic expression 'a fit of despair about love'.

The program as originally printed tells of a young Musician tossed on a sea of passions who falls hopelessly in love with a woman who is everything he has ever dreamed of. He tries to go on as usual, but



Hector Berlioz,
thought to be by Ingrès, 1830s

The program was meant to make it possible for the listener to live the same emotional experiences he himself had had, by providing settings that give those emotions an individual flavour.



Harriet Smithson, 1828

BY CLAUDE DUBUFE

is obsessed by the image of his beloved and by a melody which invariably accompanies any thoughts of her – a double *idée fixe* constantly intruding on his peace of mind. Convinced that his love is unappreciated, he poisons himself with opium, but the dose is not strong enough to kill him and in his drugged sleep he has nightmarish visions: he has killed his beloved and is led to the scaffold and beheaded; he sees himself in a hideous crowd of ghosts and monsters at his own funeral, which becomes a grotesque devilish orgy in which his beloved takes part. By the second performance in December 1832, however, Berlioz had turned the whole story into a drug-induced fantasy by having the Musician poison himself at the very beginning of the program.

Since the music was not rewritten to ‘match’ the altered story, it seems reasonable to wonder to what extent we should ‘believe’ the program. Which is the ‘right’ program? Will the music ‘work’ if the listener is unaware of it? Clearly, the program is linked to Berlioz’ own experience – yet not one of the events described in it had actually occurred in his own life. Berlioz however was quite adamant that his art was intended to express ‘passions and feelings,’ not paint pictures. The program was meant to make it possible for the listener to live the same emotional experiences he himself had had, by providing settings that give those emotions an individual flavour. The program is not a documentary to be judged on its accuracy; it is a journey that Berlioz wanted his audience to take with him.

The symphony begins gently and delicately with the sighing of melancholy *Daydreams* alternating with flurries of ‘groundless joy’, until a sudden Beethoven-like outburst ushers in the *Passions* and the melody which will recur throughout the work, representing the woman of his dreams, whom the young Musician now sees for the first time. This *idée fixe* appears in many guises, as the mood swings through fury, jealousy, tenderness, tears and the consolation of religion.

The second movement takes us to a ball, where the Musician catches sight of his beloved. The *idée fixe* appears twice, once as a central episode in the movement’s rondo structure, and again towards the end before the brilliant, swirling coda.

In the Fields begins with a duet between cor anglais and off-stage oboe: ‘two shepherds in the distance piping a *ranz des vaches* (shepherds’ song) in dialogue’. Here Berlioz made effective use of many of the standard onomatopoeic devices to establish the rural setting, such as bird calls in the woodwinds, and tremolos in the strings representing ‘the slight rustle of trees gently stirred by the wind’. There are clear resonances with the slow movement of Beethoven’s *Pastoral* Symphony, but Berlioz’ country scene lacks the serenity that Beethoven achieves, as the Musician is caught between hope of being with his beloved, and fear that she will deceive him. The *idée fixe* appears in the midst of passionate surges: ‘thoughts of

happiness disturbed by dark forebodings'. The Musician's sense of loneliness is symbolised musically when the cor anglais finally takes up the *ranz des vaches* again and the oboe does not answer; the sound of 'distant thunder' from the timpani brings the music to an uneasy close.

In the *March to the Scaffold*, sinister mutterings from the timpani finally erupt in a savage theme first beaten out by the cellos and double basses. The tune is simplicity itself – a descending scale passage – but it mismatches with the aggressive rhythm so that the melody disorients us by not 'landing' on the tonic. Bassoons and then low strings weave a mocking counterpoint around it until the grotesque march theme bursts out over deep blaring pedal tones from the trombones. The *idée fixe* appears at the end of the movement, 'like a last thought of love interrupted by the fatal stroke'.

Berlioz did not invent the idea of a Satanic orgy – it had been described in full technicolour in the Witches' Sabbath scene in Goethe's *Faust* and Victor Hugo's poem *La Ronde du sabbat*. Berlioz however added another layer of meaning by giving the place of honour to the ghost of the young Musician's beloved, whose *idée fixe* theme here appears encrusted with grace notes and trills of mocking laughter. His scorn for her is unmistakable.

The movement opens with a soft tremolo from the upper strings, punctuated with sudden jabs of sound and mysterious 'calls' from around the orchestra. The *idée fixe* is now 'a common dance tune, trivial and grotesque'. Church bells sound and the plainsong *Dies irae* theme from the requiem mass is sounded solemnly by the brass before it is caught up in the demonic revelry. The dance theme becomes the subject of a fugue: when combined with the *Dies irae* theme the impression of sacrilegious revelry is complete.

'One must draw the line somewhere,' wrote Edward Dannreuther in the first edition of Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1879). 'Bloodthirsty delirious passion such as is here depicted may have been excited by gladiator and wild beast shows in Roman arenas; but its rites...are surely more honoured in the breach than in the observance.' Popular taste seems to have ignored this advice, and we are now quite used to seeing this and more on our television screens, but Berlioz' music still has the power to send a chill down our spines.

'Bloodthirsty delirious passion such as is here depicted may have been excited by gladiator and wild beast shows in Roman arenas; but its rites...are surely more honoured in the breach than in the observance.'

NATALIE SHEA © 2002 SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA

Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique* is scored for pairs of flutes (1 doubling piccolo), oboes (1 doubling cor anglais), clarinets (1 doubling E flat clarinet), 4 bassoons, 4 horns, pairs of trumpets and cornets, 3 trombones, 2 tubas (doubling ophecleide), 4 timpani, 2 percussion, 4 harps and strings.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first played the *Symphonie fantastique* in 1938, conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent and most recently in July 2016 under Rafael Payare.

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THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

THURSDAY 8 AUGUST, 1.30PM

SYDNEY TOWN HALL

Kirill Gerstein plays Ravel and Gershwin

David Robertson *conductor*

Kirill Gerstein *piano*

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

Le Tombeau de Couperin

Prélude

Forlane

Menuet

Rigaudon

For notes on Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, please turn to page 12 in your program book.

RAVEL

Piano Concerto in D for the Left Hand

Lento –

Andante –

Allegro –

Tempo primo

INTERVAL

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898–1937)

Concerto in F for piano and orchestra

Allegro

Andante con moto

Allegro agitato



This concert will be broadcast on ABC Classic on 18 August at 2pm and 30 December at 12 noon.

Estimated durations: 17 minutes, 19 minutes, 20 minute interval, 31 minutes.

The concert will conclude at approximately 3.15pm.

Keys to the City Festival is generously supported by Dr Rachael Kohn AO & Mr Tom Breen.

Kirill Gerstein's appearances are generously supported by the Berg Family Foundation.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

Piano Concerto in D for the Left Hand

Lento –

Andante –

Allegro –

Tempo primo

Ravel's Concerto for the Left Hand is of such ferocious technical difficulty that its dedicatee and first performer, Paul Wittgenstein, begged the composer for some simplification. Ravel, however, was a little too fond of his 'neat and nice labours', according to the *London Musical Times*, and refused outright.

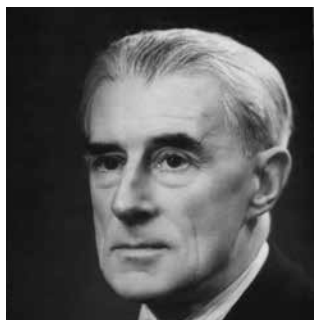
The first performance occurred not with the composer at the helm, but with Robert Heger conducting, in Vienna, prompting much speculation about 'artistic personalities'. It was not until 1933 that the concerto was heard in Paris. All differences apparently resolved, Ravel conducted the Orchestre Symphonique de Paris, while Wittgenstein performed.

We can be glad today of Ravel's pride in his 'neat and nice labours', as the Concerto for the Left Hand occupies a unique place in the repertoire. But Wittgenstein can hardly be accused of faint-heartedness. Brother of the philosopher Ludwig, he lost his right arm at the Russian front in 1914, but resolved to continue his career as concert pianist. He commissioned works for left hand alone from Richard Strauss, Prokofiev, Hindemith and Britten. Ravel's Left Hand Concerto was published in 1931, as Wittgenstein's 'exclusive property'.

Compositions for the left hand were not without precedent – pianists, it seems, had been losing their arms or hands or disabling themselves since time immemorial. And for some reason the right hand was always the first to go. Schumann famously ruined his right hand through 'overdone technical studies', perhaps involving the use of a mechanical device; in the 19th century a Count Geza Zichy contributed a concerto for left hand after losing his right arm hunting. Leopold Godowsky, who lost the use of his right hand in a stroke, had by good fortune previously composed 22 studies on Chopin etudes for left hand alone.

Ravel studied Saint-Saëns' *Six Studies for the Left Hand* in his preparation for this concerto, and may have been exposed to Scriabin's *Prelude and Nocturne for Left Hand Alone*. Ravel's solutions to the problem of 'half a pianist', however, are entirely his own. The difficulty, he claimed, was 'to avoid the impressions of insufficient weight in the sound-texture', something he addressed by reverting to the 'imposing style of the traditional concerto.'

The Left Hand concerto and the G major concerto for both hands were composed simultaneously, in the years 1929 to 1931, but the two works could scarcely be more different. The Concerto in G is a popular and enduring work, but essentially a *divertissement* – a good-hearted rollick. Perversely, the composer saves his deepest statements, and his



Maurice Ravel, 1935

Here the soloist really is tragic hero, triumphing against the orchestra.

greatest virtuosity, for his 'lame' work. It unfolds almost as a Concerto Grosso, with the pianist responding to the orchestra in dazzling cadenzas. Here the soloist really is tragic hero, triumphing against orchestra and handicap.

The concerto begins with cellos and double bass in their lowest register, creating less a sound than mere a feeling of darkness. A contrabassoon in its lowest range introduces fragments of the theme. (This passage, incidentally, was originally scored for the historical curiosity of the sarrusophone – a bizarre hybrid of saxophone and bassoon, designed for use in military bands.) Other instruments gradually enter the fray until the texture builds to an enormous climax, and the piano enters, in a cadenza of extraordinary virtuosity. The orchestra responds and builds to an even greater plane, before the piano returns, and surprises us with transparent lyricism.

This introduces the central section, of distinct jazz influence. Parallel triads skid downwards through the piano; a tarantella recalls the opening melody. Finally, Ravel returns to his opening material, and a yet more dazzling piano cadenza. The piece ends almost too abruptly, with what the composer described as a 'brutal peroration'.

Probably the supreme work, musically, for left hand alone, the concerto is also one of the most difficult. Ravel makes few concessions to single-handedness, and the piano part is expressed in virtuosic, stereo sound. The pianist Alfred Cortot suggested that a two-handed arrangement would do nothing to diminish the music, but would rather allow it a more permanent place in the repertory. The Ravel family refused. The concerto exists as unique piece of musical illusion, and perhaps they wished to preserve this.

The first performances received an excited audience and critical response, not least because of the work's outpouring of sentiment. The concerto's overt emotionalism refutes Stravinsky's dismissal of the composer as 'the Swiss watch-maker'. Prunières noted wistfully that he should have liked Ravel to have 'been able to let us observe more frequently what he was guarding in his heart, instead of accrediting the legend that his brain alone invented these admirable sonorous fantasmagorias. From the opening measures [of the concerto], we are plunged into a world to which Ravel has but rarely introduced us.'

It was to be short-lived introduction. Ravel soon exhibited symptoms of the debilitating brain disease that was to end his life. He composed three songs for a projected film about Don Quixote which, along with the two piano concertos, became his unexpected swansong.

ANNA GOLDSWORTHY © 1999

Ravel's Concerto for the Left Hand requires solo piano, and an orchestra of 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (1 doubling cor anglais), 4 clarinets (2 doubling E flat clarinet and bass clarinet), 3 bassoons, (1 doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 4 percussion, harp and strings.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the Concerto for the Left Hand in August 1950 under Charles Groves with pianist György Sándor, and most recently in February 2013 under Vladimir Ashkenazy with soloist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet.



Paul Wittgenstein, who commissioned numerous pieces for piano left hand, including this concerto.

Probably the supreme work, musically, for left hand alone, the concerto is also one of the most difficult.



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ABOUT THE MUSIC

GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898–1937)

Concerto in F for piano and orchestra

Allegro

Andante con moto

Allegro agitato

Rhapsody in Blue, the music in which Gershwin first crossed the tracks from jazz and popular music to 'serious' music, caused a sensation and a controversy. When all the dust had settled, the pungent, memorable tunes and rhythms were still there: the *Rhapsody* is likely to remain Gershwin's most popular piece of instrumental music. But Gershwin composed it for Paul Whiteman's big band, which played what Whiteman, at least, called jazz. *Rhapsody in Blue* comes off best, many believe, in its original scoring for band rather than in the inflated orchestral version. Actually, the neophyte composer made neither scoring himself – he and Whiteman called in the services of the band's arranger, Ferde Grofé. That was in 1924. Meanwhile, the jazz craze was sweeping America, and the quite venerable but still enterprising conductor of the New York Symphony Society, Walter Damrosch, had an idea which would at one stroke further his aim of encouraging American composers and bring some jazz flavour into the concert hall. In the spring of 1925 his Society commissioned Gershwin to compose a concerto and to appear as soloist in seven concerts with the New York Symphony beginning in December of that year.

It is said that the brashly self-confident Gershwin, after accepting the commission, had to find out what a 'concerto' was. Be that as it may, Gershwin was determined to orchestrate the work himself, and bought a textbook of orchestration. His original title for the work was *New York Concerto*, and he began to write it in the Gershwin family home at 103rd Street; or, when that became too crowded with distracting friends and relatives, in the seclusion of a room at the nearby Whitehall Hotel. The Australian-born pianist Ernest Hutcheson, then a staff member and later president of the Juilliard School, made available to Gershwin a studio at out-of-town Chautauqua, where he conducted masterclasses in the summer months. Some of the concerto was composed there.

Gershwin's original plan for the concerto was expressed in his typically laconic style. The three movements were to be:

1. Rhythm
2. Melody
3. More Rhythm

Because of the title 'concerto', much attention has focussed on how Gershwin met conventional demands of form. Critics were quick to point out supposed 'structural deficiencies', although some have countered with the claim that Gershwin adopted sonata form in the first movement, rondo form in the third. It is doubtful whether this approach to the concerto is much to the point. Gershwin biographer



George Gershwin

It is said that the brashly self-confident Gershwin, after accepting the commission, had to find out what a 'concerto' was.



Gershwin at the keyboard 1935

Charles Schwartz surely has it right: 'Doing what came naturally to him, Gershwin created his own personal version of a concerto, though hardly one that would conform to textbook models.' After all, what popular 20th-century concerto do those models fit? Certainly not Rachmaninoff's.

The Concerto in F is in fact a string of highly effective melodies, involving a certain amount of repetition (including reminiscences of the first movement in the third), not much development, and some quasi-symphonic linking passages between the big tunes. The anxious care Gershwin gave to this work was surely due to his sense that the music would have to stand the test of durability and repetition, not the ephemeral success of a Broadway show. By that test he succeeded: the Concerto in F is certainly the most often played American concerto and one of the most frequently-heard concertos of our century.

In the Carnegie Hall premiere's mixed audience of jazz buffs, classical elite, and Damrosch's worshipful following of Society ladies, there were those who were shocked, those who were puzzled, and those who were disappointed – because the concerto was not as musically raffish as *Rhapsody in Blue*. Critic Samuel Chotzinoff caught the reaction which has endured: 'Of all those writing the music of today...Gershwin alone expresses us.' The original title, *New York Concerto*, is an apt indication of its character: 'a mixture of New York musical vernacular and the concert hall' (Schwartz). Gershwin's own program note makes no claims about the form of the piece, but gives a good description of its contents:

The first movement employs the Charleston rhythm. It is quick and pulsating, representing the young enthusiastic spirit of American life. It begins with a rhythmic motif given out by the kettledrums, supported by other percussion instruments, and with a Charleston motif...The principal theme is announced by the bassoon. Later, a second theme is introduced by the piano.

The second movement has a poetic nocturnal atmosphere which has come to be referred to as the American blues, but in a purer form than that in which they are usually treated.

The final movement reverts to the style of the first. It is an orgy of rhythms, starting violently and keeping to the same pace throughout.

DAVID GARRETT © 1987/2003

Gershwin's Concerto in F calls for solo piano and an orchestra of pairs of flutes (1 doubling piccolo), oboes, (1 doubling cor anglais), clarinets and bassoons, 2 horns, trumpet, harp and strings.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first played the Gershwin Concerto in April 1976 under Elyakum Shapirra with soloist Isador Goodman, and most recently in February 1995 under William Southgate with soloist Geoffrey Tozer.

The anxious care Gershwin gave to this work was surely due to his sense that the music would have to stand the test of durability and repetition, not the ephemeral success of a Broadway show.

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A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a brown long-sleeved top, white trousers, and black high-heeled shoes, is walking on a narrow ledge of a modern glass skyscraper. She is holding a smartphone in her right hand, looking up at it. The building's facade is composed of large glass panels with dark frames. The sky is a clear, light blue.

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TEA AND SYMPHONY
FRIDAY 9 AUGUST, 11AM
.....
SYDNEY TOWN HALL



Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique*

David Robertson *conductor*

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957)
En Saga (A Saga)

HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803–1869)
Symphonie fantastique

Daydreams (Largo) – Passions (Allegro agitato e appassionato assai)

A Ball (Valse Allegro non troppo)

In the Fields (Adagio)

March to the Scaffold (Allegretto non troppo)

*Sabbath Night Dream (Larghetto – Allegro – Dies irae – Sabbath Round
(Un peu retenu) – Dies irae and Sabbath Round together)*

For notes on Sibelius' *En Saga* and Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique*,
please turn to pages 15 and 21 respectively in your program book.



Friday evening's concert will be
broadcast on ABC Classic on
21 August at 1pm and again on
2 November at 12 noon.

.....
Estimated durations: 20 minutes,
49 minutes.

.....
The concert will be performed without
interval and will conclude at
approximately 12.15pm.

.....
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supported by Dr Rachael Kohn AO &
Mr Tom Breen.



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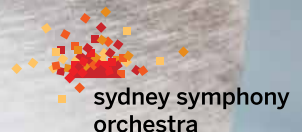
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.....

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 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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PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS

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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PHOTO: ANTHONY GEERNAERT

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