

SYDNEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Music from
Swan Lake

BEAUTY & MAGIC

4 & 5 SEPTEMBER
THE CONCOURSE



WEDNESDAY 4 SEPTEMBER, 7PM

THURSDAY 5 SEPTEMBER, 7PM

THE CONCOURSE CONCERT HALL, CHATSWOOD



**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson

The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor
and Artistic Director

Music from Swan Lake

Beauty and Magic

Umberto Clerici *conductor*

GIOACHINO ROSSINI (1792–1868)

The Thieving Magpie: Overture

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

Mother Goose Suite

Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty

Tom Thumb

Laideronette, Empress of the Pagodas

Conversations of Beauty and the Beast

The Fairy Garden

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)

Swan Lake: Selections by Umberto Clerici

Introduction

Scène (Act I No.1)

Scène (Act II No.10)

Valse (Act I No.2)

Danse des Coupes (Act I No.8)

Danse des Cygnes iv. Allegro moderato (Act II No.13)

v. Pas d'action (Odette et le Prince)

Scène (Act III No.18)

Danse espagnole (Act III, No.21)

Danse napolitaine (Act III, No.22)

Czardas – Danse hongroise (Act III, No.20)

Scène finale (Act IV, No.29)

Estimated durations: 8 minutes;
16 minutes; 40 minutes.

The concert will be performed without
interval and will conclude at
approximately 8.10pm.



Cover photography by Nico Fray



Principal Partner

CONCERT DIARY

SEPTEMBER



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

PRESENTATION LICENSED BY



Andreas Brantelid performs Elgar's Cello Concerto

VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY'S MASTERWORKS

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis

*ELGAR Cello Concerto

*ELGAR Enigma Variations

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

Andreas Brantelid cello

Meet the Music
Wed 18 Sep, 6.30pm
Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 19 Sep, 1.30pm
Tea & Symphony*
Fri 20 Sep, 11am
Great Classics
Sat 21 Sep, 2pm
Sydney Opera House



Holst's Planets

VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY'S MASTERWORKS

MEDTNER Piano Concerto No.1

HOLST The Planets

Vladimir Ashkenazy conductor

Alexei Volodin piano

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Abercrombie & Kent
Masters Series
Wed 25 Sep, 8pm
Fri 27 Sep, 8pm
Sat 28 Sep, 8pm
Sydney Opera House



OCTOBER



The Four Seasons

VIVALDI AND PIAZZOLLA

PIAZZOLLA arr. Desyatnikov

The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires

VIVALDI The Four Seasons

Andrew Haveron violin-director

Meet the Music
Thu 10 Oct, 6.30pm
Kaleidoscope
Fri 11 Oct, 7pm
Sat 12 Oct, 7pm
Sydney Opera House



Vivaldi's Four Seasons

A SYDNEY SYMPHONY FAMILY EVENT

VIVALDI The Four Seasons

Andrew Haveron violin-director • Christian Li violin

Sun 13 Oct, 1pm
Sun 13 Oct, 2.45pm
Sydney Opera House



Donald Runnicles conducts Bruckner Symphony No.7

MUSIC OF INSPIRATION

MESSIAEN Les offrandes oubliées

(The Forgotten Offerings)

BRUCKNER Symphony No.7

Donald Runnicles conductor

Thursday Afternoon Symphony
Thu 17 Oct, 1.30pm
Emirates Metro Series
Fri 18 Oct, 8pm
Great Classics
Sat 19 Oct, 2pm
Sydney Opera House



Donald Runnicles conducts Fauré's Requiem

MUSIC OF INSPIRATION

R STRAUSS Death and Transfiguration

R STRAUSS Four Last Songs

FAURÉ Requiem

Donald Runnicles conductor • Erin Wall soprano
Samuel Dundas baritone • Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Abercrombie & Kent
Master Series
Wed 23 Oct, 8pm
Fri 25 Oct, 8pm
Sat 26 Oct, 8pm
Sydney Opera House



CONDUCTOR



@KETH SAUNDERS

Umberto Clerici *conductor*

Principal Cello of the Sydney Symphony, Umberto Clerici started studying the cello with the Suzuki method at the age of five and he continued his studies with Mario Brunello, David Géringas and Julius Berger.

Umberto received several international prizes: at the Janigro Competition in Zagreb, at the Rostropovich in Paris and, in 2011, at the Čajkovskij in Moscow (this making him the second Italian cellist ever being honoured in the history of the Čajkovskij Prize, after Mario Brunello).

As soloist he debuted at the age of 17, playing Haydn's D Major cello concerto in Japan, and has since played with an array of renowned orchestras internationally including St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Philharmonia Wien, Russian State Orchestra of Moscow, I Pomeriggi Musicali (Milan) and Zagreb Philharmonic.

Umberto has performed as soloist at the Carnegie Hall in New York, the Musik Verein in Vienna, the great Shostakovich Hall of St Petersburg and Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome. In 2003 he debuted at the Salzburg Festival and in 2012 he performed Tchaikovsky's *Rococo variations* conducted by Valery Gergiev.

In 2014 he was appointed as Principal Cello of the Sydney Symphony after he had been Principal Cello at the Royal Opera House in Turin for four years.

Since 2017 he has been exploring conducting as a natural evolution of his career and as result of his collaborations with orchestras as principal cellist and soloist.

In 2018 Umberto made his conducting debut with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House and for the 2019/2020 season his main conducting appearances will include: a series of concerts with Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Canberra Symphony as Artist in Residence, State orchestras of Izmir and Istanbul in Turkey, the Turin Philharmonic and Orchestra della Valle d'Aosta.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868)

La gazza ladra (The Thieving Magpie): Overture

Rossini's semi-serious opera, *The Thieving Magpie*, was first produced at La Scala, Milan, in 1817. The libretto, an adaptation by del Testa of a French play of the same name by Charles Caigniez and Jean Marie Baudouin, is the story of a servant girl who is condemned to death on circumstantial evidence for stealing a silver spoon. As she is being taken to the scaffold, someone in the crowd catches sight of a magpie overhead making off with a silver spoon in its beak. The girl is released amid great jubilation.

The opera, which was immensely successful, represented in some respects a new departure for the composer. Rossini, two of whose works had previously failed in Milan, made a point of settling in that city two months before the new piece was produced, to study at first hand the taste of the Milanese. This public, which prided itself on its intellectual superiority, had developed a strong liking for German opera, with its emphasis on orchestral values. The composer accordingly resolved to elaborate his instrumentation beyond his usual custom.

Stendhal remarked that the premiere was the most successful first night he had ever attended and told of listeners growing so excited after the overture that, contrary to habit, 'everybody began talking to a neighbour.' The opera became the most popular feature of La Scala's repertoire throughout the season. 'Owing to the variety of its moods,' says Francis Toye, 'it could scarcely fail to please in one respect or another. There was something for everyone: pathos, tragedy, tenderness and gaiety. Things of startling originality were presented in a manner that everybody could follow and understand.'

The overture, widely considered Rossini's best (after *William Tell*), opens with loud rolls on two snare drums, which are heard frequently in the course of the piece. After the drum rolls, the overture launches into a swinging march tune. The chief theme of the overture is taken from a duet in the third act of the work. The rest of the melodic material is typical of the composer in character. There are striking examples of the 'Rossini crescendo', particularly as the pace of the music quickens in a brief coda for a thrilling curtain raiser.

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The *Thieving Magpie* Overture calls for an orchestra of 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), pairs of oboes, clarinets and bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, trombone, timpani, 3 percussion and strings.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the Overture to *The Thieving Magpie* under John Barbirolli in December 1950 and most recently in January 2013 under André de Ridder.



Gioachino Rossini

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

***Ma Mere l'Oye: Cinq Pieces Infantines* (Mother Goose: Suite)**

Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant

(Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty)

Petit Poucet (Tom Thumb)

Laideronnette, Impératrice des pagodes

(Laideronette, Empress of the Pagodas)

Les Entretiens de la Belle et la Bête

(Conversations of Beauty and the Beast)

Le Jardin féerique (The Fairy Garden)



Ravel, 1907

In some exasperation, Ravel once asked a friend, 'Doesn't it ever occur to those people that I can be "artificial" by nature?' He was responding to the criticism that his music was more interested in technique than expression. There is some truth in the charge: Stravinsky described him – affectionately – as the 'Swiss watchmaker of music', and Ravel's stated aim was indeed 'technical perfection'. In fact, his love of mechanical intricacy led Ravel to collect various automata and other small machines, and he dreamed, as he put it in a 1933 article, of 'Finding Tunes in Factories'. Many of his pieces are exquisite simulacra of earlier or other forms and styles – Renaissance dances, Spanish music, jazz, or the music of the French Baroque.

Scandalously, between 1900 and 1905 Ravel failed several times to secure the prestigious award for composers, the Prix de Rome, ostensibly because of musical 'errors' and despite his already having established himself as a major new voice. In 1909, partly in response to his outsider status, he helped to found the Société Musicale Indépendante – independent, that is, of the Parisian musical and academic establishment – and its inaugural concert saw the premiere of the first version, for piano duo, of the *Ma Mère l'Oye* (Mother Goose) Suite.

Ravel was born in south-western France to a Basque mother and Swiss father but spent his entire life in Paris. Like Tchaikovsky, he saw a strong connection between childhood and enchantment. In his opera *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, for instance, a destructive child learns the value of compassion when furniture, trees and animals in the garden all come magically to life. The evocation of 'the poetry of childhood' in the original piano duo version of *Mother Goose* led Ravel to 'simplify my style and refine my means of expression' – or so he said. Certainly we can hear echoes of the deceptively simple piano music of Erik Satie, whose music Ravel championed.



Beauty and the Beast – engraving by Edmund Evans after the watercolour by Walter Crane, 1874.

Mother Goose began life as the 'Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty' for piano, four hands. Ravel composed it for Mimie and Jean Godebski (aged six and seven respectively), to whose parents he had dedicated his Sonatine for piano. Ravel then composed four more *pièces enfantines*, depicting characters from the fairy-tales anthologised by three 17th -century authors: Charles Perrault ('Sleeping Beauty' and 'Tom Thumb'), the Baroness d'Aulnoy ('Laideronette') and the Prince of Beaumont ('Beauty and the Beast'). 'The Fairy Garden' was an original inspiration. Mimie later recalled:

neither my brother nor I was of an age to appreciate such a dedication and we regarded it rather as something entailing hard work. Ravel wanted us to give the first public performance but the idea filled me with a cold terror. My brother, being less timid and more gifted on the piano, coped quite well. But despite lessons from Ravel I used to freeze to such an extent that the idea had to be abandoned.

Nevertheless, the work's premiere at the SMI concert in 1910 was given by two children, Jeanne Leleu (later a professor at the Paris Conservatoire) and Geneviève Durony. In 1911 Ravel made this orchestral version of the suite.

The 'Pavane' is a slow and stately Renaissance dance (which Ravel also used for his *Pavane for a Dead Infanta*) with gently repeated motifs and modal harmony that establishes Ravel's characteristic use of pungent dissonances on the strong beats of the bar. 'Tom Thumb' is shown at the moment where he realises that he is lost; the breadcrumb trail he left has been eaten by the birds. 'Laideronette' ('little ugly girl') is represented in music where glinting pentatonic ('black-note') figures give the piece its 'oriental' flavour. Much closer to home, 'Beauty and the Beast' is a waltz where any menace is dispelled by the Beast's eventual transformation, graphically depicted, into Prince Charming. Finally, 'The Fairy Garden' is imagined in music that gathers power through simple repetition until an ecstatic climax of rippling scales.

Having completed his major ballet *Daphnis et Chloé* in 1912, Ravel revisited *Mother Goose* to make it the basis for a ballet score in which the movements, in rearranged order and with new prelude and interludes, represent the Sleeping Beauty's enchantment, dreams, and her awakening by Prince Charming.

GORDON KERRY © 2010

The *Mother Goose* Suite calls for an orchestra of 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (1 doubling cor anglais), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons (1 doubling contrabassoon), 2 horns, timpani, 3 percussion, harp, celesta and strings.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the *Mother Goose* Suite under Bernard Heinz in April 1952, and most recently under Richard Gill in August 2015.



The Sleeping Beauty and her Prince, depicted by Noel Paton on the title page of Mrs Craik's *Fairy Book* (1863)

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Swan Lake, Op.20:

Selections by Umberto Clerici

In Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* the young Prince Siegfried falls in love with Princess Odette, who has been enchanted by the evil sorcerer von Rothbart and must live part of each day as a swan. Rothbart tricks the Prince into rejecting Odette in favour of his own daughter, Odile, causing the Prince to drown himself in his anguish. Tonight we hear the following excerpts from the ballet:

Act I No.1 Scène (Allegro giusto)

A magnificent park with a castle is visible in the distance. Prince Siegfried and his friends are seated at tables drinking. A crowd of peasants comes to congratulate the prince on his birthday and entertain him with dances.

Act II No.10 Scène (Moderato)

In a mountain landscape at dusk, a lake is shimmering in the moonlight – the gloomy abode of the princess Odette and her maidens, transformed by day into swans by Baron von Rothbart.

Act I No.2 Valse. For the corps de ballet

Act I No.8 Danse des Coupes

This dance 'with goblets' takes us back to the Prince's birthday celebrations.

Act II No.13. Dances of the swans

(iv) (Allegro moderato)

(v) Pas d'action. Odette and the Prince (Andante – Andante non troppo – Tempo I – Allegro)

The Prince is disarmed by the grace and beauty of the swan maidens. He declares his love for Odette and invites her to attend the ball at which he must choose his bride.

Act III No.18 Scène

No.21 Danse espagnole

No.22 Danse napolitaine

No.20 Czardas – Danse hongroise

In Act III the Prince has invited Odette to attend the ball at which he must choose his bride, imploring her not to reject his love. In the Scène the Prince's mother takes him aside and asks which of the young girls he likes best; this is interrupted by the arrival of the evil Rothbart and Odile. The ball brings together diplomats and princesses from Hungary, Spain, Naples and Poland. The maidens and their attendants seek to impress the Prince with characteristic dances.



Tchaikovsky brings his mastery of orchestration and instrumental colour to the characterisations in the ballet.

Act IV No.29 Scène finale (Andante – Allegro agitato – Alla breve. Moderato e maestoso – Meno mosso – Moderato)

The Prince begs Odette's forgiveness, but she dies of grief in his arms. He casts her coronet on the waters, which rise and engulf the lovers. As the scene calms, the swans are seen gliding across the calm surface of the lake.

THE BACKGROUND TO THE SCORE

At the premiere performance of *Swan Lake* the theatre was full – 'explained solely,' offered one review, 'by the interest of the public in hearing the new musical creation of one of the distinguished and quite popular Russian composers.' At a time when ballet was held in some disdain and ballet music was the province of minor composers, Tchaikovsky's first foray into the genre attracted considerable attention. But ballet audiences accustomed to routine and shallow accompaniments were astonished, and possibly perplexed, by the refinement this major composer brought to the beleaguered genre.



**From an early performance of Swan Lake.
John Warrack, Tchaikovsky, (Hamish Hamilton, 1973)**

The astonishment would have been immediate. Instead of securing the audience's attention in the conventional way with a lively curtain-raiser, Tchaikovsky floats the melancholy sound of the oboe and then the clarinet through the auditorium. When the violins enter, they are supported by a descending bass line, long associated in music with 'Fate'. This tiny Introduction is a perfect miniature – encapsulating the emotional content of the drama, as well as the composer's infallible instinct for colour and atmosphere. It leads us directly from the mournful sounds of B minor – associated throughout the ballet with the swans – to majestic D major (a related key), associated with Prince Siegfried and therefore his birthday party of the opening Scène.

Tchaikovsky brings his mastery of orchestration and instrumental colour to the characterisations in the ballet. The oboe presents the poignant swan theme in the opening Scène of Act II (Tchaikovsky's favourite act), and is associated with the swans throughout. When Odile arrives at the Act III ball, the swan theme is presented in a harsh and edgy coloration with all the winds: at once conveying her resemblance to Odette while revealing her true nature. Elsewhere the insinuating clarinet takes on the role of the 'black swan'. And when Odette and the Prince declare their love in the famous *Pas d'action* of Act II, they are presented as violin (soprano) and cello (baritone) in a duet rescued from an abandoned opera *Undine*.

But if Tchaikovsky's ballet music shares the many strengths of his symphonies, it also shares their supposed weaknesses. Tchaikovsky was the first to admit an 'inability in general matters of form', with which he struggled. 'I have in my music a vast amount of padding,' he wrote to the Grand Duke Konstantinovich, 'the thread in the seams is always noticeable to the experienced eye, and it is impossible to do anything about it.'

Ironically it is Tchaikovsky's themes – marvellous, full-blown melodies that dancers find so grateful – that resist the traditional techniques of development we might expect in a symphony. Tchaikovsky's melodies are self-sufficient, and so he draws on the techniques familiar to Russians of the 19th century: repetition and variation. In the *Pas d'action*, for example, Tchaikovsky develops the oboe's swan theme with increasingly impassioned orchestration to mirror the emotional intensity of the scene. With the arrival of Rothbart and Odile [No.18], he transforms it from waltz time to a four-square metre.

But it is the oboe's swan theme that ties the ballet together – repeated in different guises to trace the action and changes of atmosphere in the libretto. When it returns for the last time in the Scène finale, it moves from B minor to an apparently triumphant B major, a gesture sometimes compared to the forced mood of triumph that concludes the Fifth Symphony. As commentator John Warrack observes: for Tchaikovsky the truer ending is the enigmatic close on a long-held B, coloured only by an open fifth and therefore neither major nor minor, neither victory nor loss.

At every turn in this music we can hear evidence of the profound love Tchaikovsky felt for his task, infusing the whole score with sophisticated and expressive symphonic elements without ever losing sight of the practical and stylistic demands of ballet music. Swan Lake is no symphony, then, but the quintessential ballet. Its scenario has all the right ingredients: a handsome if melancholy prince, a tragic heroine and her malevolent double, an evil sorcerer, a glittering royal court...and enchanted swans. Its score – written by a composer armed not with experience but with an unerring natural instinct – is luminous and deeply emotional.

ADAPTED FROM YVONNE FRINDLE © 2003

The *Swan Lake* Suite requires an orchestra of 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), pairs of oboes, clarinets and bassoons, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, 3 percussion, harp and strings.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the suite from *Swan Lake* in February 1938 under Percy Code, and most recently played excerpts from the ballet in April 2012 under Andrew Grams.



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SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS



DAVID ROBERTSON

THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF 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 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.

THE ORCHESTRA



David Robertson
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PRINCIPAL GUEST CONDUCTOR



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PRINCIPAL

Alexandre Oguey
PRINCIPAL COR ANGLAIS

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PRINCIPAL

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Christopher Harris
PRINCIPAL BASS TROMBONE

Scott Kinmont
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL

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Steve Rossé
PRINCIPAL

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GUEST PRINCIPAL
Mark Robinson
ACTING PRINCIPAL

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Timothy Constable
Tim Brigden*
Philip South*
Rebecca Lagos
PRINCIPAL

HARP

Julie Kim*
GUEST PRINCIPAL

PIANO

Catherine Davis*
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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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