

SYDNEY  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

# Music of the Oud

JOSEPH TAWADROS  
WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

20 – 22 JUNE

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE





**sydney symphony orchestra**

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

**MEET THE MUSIC**

THURSDAY 20 JUNE, 6.30PM

**KALEIDOSCOPE**

FRIDAY 21 JUNE, 7PM

SUNDAY 22 JUNE, 7PM

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL

# Music of the Oud

**Benjamin Northey** *conductor*

**Joseph Tawadros** *oud*

**James Tawadros** *Egyptian percussion*

**JOSEPH TAWADROS (born 1983)**

*Taqasim Kord*

*Reason and Passion*

**TAWADROS**

**Concerto for Oud and Orchestra**

orch. **Jessica Wells**

**in three movements**

INTERVAL

**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)**

**Symphony in G minor, K.183/173dB**

*I. Allegro con brio*

**TAWADROS**

*Constellation*

**TAWADROS**

arr. **Tawadros/Tognetti**

*Point of Departure*

**TAWADROS**

arr. **Buckley**

*Eye of the Beholder*

*Permission to Evaporate*

*Constantinople*



Friday's concert will be broadcast live on ABC Classic.

As part of Make Music Day, Friday's performance will also be livestreamed at [watch.sydneyorchestra.com](http://watch.sydneyorchestra.com) (The livestream will be available to view after the concert.) Supported by Optus.

Pre-concert talk by Joseph Toltz in the Northern Foyer, 45 minutes before the performance.

Estimated durations: 5 minutes; 5 minutes; 25 minutes; 20 minute interval; 10 minutes; 4 minutes; 7 minutes; 5 minutes; 5 minutes.

The concert will conclude at approximately 8.20pm (Thursday) and 8.50pm (Friday and Sunday).

Cover image: Joseph Tawadros (Photo by Anthony Lycett)



Principal Partner

# CONCERT DIARY

## JUNE



### 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

CREDIT SUISSE  
Premier Partner

## 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  
Abercrombie & Kent



### 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

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

Emirates  
Principal Partner



### David Robertson conducts Britten's Peter Grimes

OPERA IN CONCERT  
**BRITTEN** Peter Grimes

David Robertson conductor  
Cast includes:

Stuart Skelton Peter Grimes • Nicole Car Ellen Orford  
Alan Held Captain Balstrode • Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

**Thu 25 Jul, 7pm**  
**Sat 27 Jul, 7pm**  
Sydney Opera House

## KEYS TO THE CITY FESTIVAL | SUPPORTED BY



### Kirill Gerstein in Recital

Program includes works by:  
**LISZT, BEETHOVEN, JANÁČEK, ADÈS,**  
**DEBUSSY, KOMITAS** and **RAVEL**

Kirill Gerstein piano

**Mon 5 Aug, 7pm**  
City Recital Hall



## **Benjamin Northey** *conductor*

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Benjamin Northey is Chief Conductor of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and Associate Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. He was previously Resident Guest Conductor of the Australia Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra (2002–2006) and Principal Conductor of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra (2007–2010). He also appears regularly as a guest conductor with all the major Australian symphony orchestras, as well as Opera Australia, Victorian Opera and State Opera of South Australia.

His international appearances include concerts with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, Hong Kong Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, Malaysian Philharmonic, Auckland Philharmonia and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Benjamin Northey studied conducting with John Hopkins at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music; with Leif Segerstam and Atso Almila at the Sibelius Academy and with Jorma Panula at the Stockholm Royal College of Music.

With a progressive and diverse approach to repertoire, he has collaborated with a broad range of artists, including Maxim Vengerov, Julian Rachlin, Karen Gomyo, Alban Gerhardt, Johannes Moser, Piers Lane, Amy Dickson, Slava Grigoryan and Marc-André Hamelin.

He is a regular guest of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra; recent engagements have included an all-Rautavaara program in the 2016 Sydney Festival as well as the 2018 and 2019 Sydney Symphony Under the Stars concerts in Parramatta Park and concerts featuring Simon Tedeschi, Kate Miller-Heidke and Megan Washington.



© ANTHONY LICETT

## Joseph Tawadros

### *oud*

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Joseph Tawadros AM is a multi-award-winning composer and player of the oud, a Middle Eastern lute.

Joseph's music has brought middle-eastern, classical and contemporary jazz together seamlessly and he is considered by peers and music critics to be a truly original performer and an innovative composer.

On stage Joseph is an engaging and articulate story-teller with quick humour and astute observations. His charismatic style and banter bring another dimension to the performance beyond the music.

Born in Cairo in 1983 and brought up on Sydney, Joseph brings a musical tradition inherited from his grandfather, Mansi Habib, a composer who played oud and violin, and his uncle, Yacoub Mansi Habib, a fine Egyptian trumpet player. He was encouraged to explore the musical parameters of the oud and the traditional Egyptian taqasim (an intensive solo improvisational practice). This resulted in Tawadros' unusual, instinctive style in his music's improvised content, eliciting performances described as "sumptuous, simultaneously haunting and warm, elegant and earthy" (Sydney Morning Herald).

Completing a Bachelor of Music with Honours from the University of NSW in 2005, Joseph worked to broaden the oud's presence and popularity in mainstream western culture and music. Always willing to push the boundaries and challenge traditional forms and rhythms, Joseph's musical adventures have led to unique collaborations across many genres, performing with artists such as tabla master Zakir Hussain, sarangi master Sultan Khan, his friend the late John Abercrombie, Roy Ayers,

Richard Bona, Joey DeFrancesco, Jack DeJohnette, Bela Fleck, John Patitucci as well as the Grigoryan brothers, Neil Finn, Lior and Katie Noonan and several orchestras.

Joseph became a Member of the Order of Australia in 2016 for significant service to music as an accomplished oud performer, composer and recording artist.

Joseph has recorded 14 albums of original music, received 14 ARIA nominations and won 4 ARIA Awards for Best World Music Album and Best Soundtrack Album.

## James Tawadros

### *Egyptian percussion*

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James Tawadros, born 1987 in Sydney, is a virtuoso percussionist specialising in the Egyptian instruments – Bendir and Riq. He has performed traditional Arabic and Egyptian music alongside Joseph's own music with his brother since he was 16. With Joseph, James has performed and recorded in London and New York and appeared at the BBC Proms, Dubai Opera, Sydney Opera House and concerts and festivals throughout Australia. James is also a skilled Biomedical Engineer and research scientist at the University of Technology Sydney.

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

### Joseph Tawadros (born 1983)

*The composer writes:*

My early music education was based on the Arabic *maqam* system, a set of 50 or so core modes which branch out to hundreds (some including quarter tones, actual notes that appear between semitones, not just when ornamenting or sliding) and are used for composition and improvisation.

Improvisation in Arabic music is called *taqsim*. Usually it is a solo, free-time genre, but can appear in certain parts of some structured pieces where a soloist will use their improvisational creativity with intent of attaining *tarab* – a type of musical ecstasy reached by the player and audience, through phrasing, rhythmic variation and seamless modulation to relating *maqamat* (plural of *maqam*).

Although my journey with the oud and passion for the instrument has led me to some interesting collaborations and places, the first encounter that drew me to 'Western' Classical music was the music of the Baroque, in particular that of Vivaldi and Bach. I have always found that the music of the Baroque shared many similarities with Arabic music: chordal progressions, its diatonic nature, its use of ornamentation and phrasing, so you will hear such

influences in my music and particularly the first movement of my Concerto.

*Point of Departure* and three pieces at the end of the second half 'arranged by Jules Buckley' come from my album *Permission to Evaporate* which I recorded in 2014. This was a tough time for me, the years prior saw the passing of my beautiful mother, Rose in 2012 and in 2013, the passing of my father, Nabil. Both were wonderful characters and storytellers and big influences on my music.

It is not easy losing anyone, let alone two very inspiring and encouraging figures in the space of a year.

At times like this, my oud is my refuge, my comfort and true friend. And, although it is already a very big part of my everyday life, it is also a metaphysical outlet and healer, a link between my reality and my aspirations. Its charismatic sound reminds me of my parents: my father's voice in the bass and my mother's in the treble. So the pieces from *Permission to Evaporate* mean a lot to me.

The music covers a range of diverse voices, compounding all that I've learnt in my first 35 years on this planet and converting those experiences to sound – a compositional diary, if you will...



# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## **Taqasim Kord**

A *taqasim* is an improvisational form in Arabic music. It is usually in free time and is about the ability to build a piece through modal melodic improvised phrases. In this case I have chosen the Arabic mode *kord*, the equivalent to the Phrygian mode in Western music with its unique semitone step up from the tonic. It starts slow and spacious and builds up through a crescendo while modulating into other related modes before returning back to *kord*.

## **Reason and Passion**

This is inspired by Kahlil Gibran's poem by the same title: 'Reason and Passion are the rudder and sails of your seafaring soul'.

The piece is melancholic and tender, starting in the lower register, its ornamentation quite mournful and possessing a vocal quality. There is a simple melody in lower register which is repeated an octave higher as the piece progresses. There is then a short improvisation (*taqasim*) before returning to the original melody.

## **Concerto for Oud and Orchestra orch. Jessica Wells in three movements**

For the past 20 years, I have done my best to push the oud onward from its traditional Arabic music platform into unorthodox areas, through cross-cultural collaborations and composing innovative works which challenge the instrument.

In this concerto, my aim is to showcase the oud in a new light and I hope this work might be a technical benchmark for future players. It's also important to me that the music is true in intention – not just a showcase of technical ability but emotionally engaging, beautiful and full of energy. I wanted it to be modern while paying homage to the beauty of the instrument's traditions. I want it to be another bridge between Western Classical Music and Eastern Music, with a classical concerto framework.

The concerto is primarily in the Arabic mode called *nawa athar* which is like a harmonic minor scale (here built on C) but with a raised 4th (F#).

This is a Middle Eastern sound, but the scale gives flexibility to change on other scales also from the tonic of C.

There are three movements in a traditional Fast, Slow, Fast structure but within each movement there are considerable changes in tempo and meter. The three movements are all in the key of C. This is intentional as I wanted the concerto to possess an element of the *wasla*. This, in Arabic music (particularly traditional Egyptian music), is a set of pieces grouped together due to them being in the same mode. You might have an instrumental introduction in C major, then a song, an instrumental interlude, an improvisation then another song – all in C major. It's an Eastern concerto format, if you will. So I have consolidated both these forms within the piece, along with improvisation that is characteristic of the *wasla* form.

This is the first concerto for a seven-course oud. Popular modern ouds are six courses (five double strings and one single string). The seven-course instrument (five double strings and two single strings) gives more range. Melodies are rarely played on the bass strings, which are mostly used for ornaments and colour, yet in this concerto, the whole range and fingerboard is utilized. The oud's first entry in the opening movement features a melody played on the lowest bass string - a unique element that is quite challenging in terms of fingering, especially at a brisk pace!



## INTERVAL

### WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

#### Symphony in G minor, K.183/173dB

##### *I. Allegro con brio*

Knowing Paris' insatiable love for symphonies Mozart wrote to his father to send some scores. Leopold's response was brutal:

It is better that whatever does you no honour should not be given to the public. That is the reason why I have not given any of your symphonies to be copied, because I suspect that when you are older and have more insight you will be glad no-one has got hold of them, though at the time you composed them you were quite pleased with them.

Leopold may have had a point. Mozart had written a number of symphonies in the early 1770s, when he was in his late teens, as he assimilated the lessons of Haydn, J.C. Bach and others. Few of them are 'great', and indeed Mozart was, for most of his career, temperamentally better suited to the concerto than the symphony. But there are two indisputably important pieces among the early symphonies: the serenely gracious A major Symphony K.201 and its polar opposite, the 'little' G minor work, K.183.

Minor key symphonies were relatively rare at the time, given the genre's usually ceremonial function, and Mozart only wrote two: this and the late K.550 (also in G minor). But composers like Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and Joseph Haydn had experimented with 'extreme' modes of expression – a number of Haydn's symphonies from around 1770 are characterised by minor tonality, dramatic gestures including syncopation (insistent off-beat patterns), hefty unison passages, sudden changes of volume, and a self-conscious use of Baroque counterpoint. They are now often known as *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) works, a term retrospectively borrowed from a literary movement that occurred a few years later.

Mozart's first G minor Symphony displays many of the stylistic traits of Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* work, and its orchestration – including two pairs of horns (for extended tonal and dynamic range) and the independent use of the bassoons (that is, not merely to stiffen the bass line) – gives the work its dark colour and rhetorical force. It opens with driving

syncopations that outline, in unison, a jagged falling 'baroque' figure that is answered by a phrase built on an emphatic minor arpeggio. The second group of themes is in the relative major key, B flat – a contrast to which Milos Forman provided a brilliant visual analogy in the film *Amadeus*: Mozart's (fictional) nemesis, the mad, wounded composer Salieri is carried through snow-bound streets in the minor key sections, while dancers whirl in a bright ballroom to the major key themes. As the movement's recapitulation unfolds, the major-key themes appear in the minor, with disturbing new implications.

### Tawadros

#### *Constellation*

This piece uses techniques that I picked up playing with a number of different instruments which I wanted to combine in one piece; slide guitar, Japanese koto, the African kora and banjo. My piece is in a call and response fashion, where slide phrases are met with a melodic phrase played on harmonics. There are bends like the koto, flurries like the kora, multiple chordal voices like the banjo and sliding like a slide guitar. The third section has a talking drum quality to it. Although these are techniques inspired by these instruments, it is important the oud maintains its integrity from its tone and timbre.

#### *Point of Departure*

This is quite a melancholic piece, which I composed in memory of my parents. I see the melody as a farewell waltz, a final dance between a couple. The time signature changes in the second and third sections to cause a little tension and to break away from the waltz, but it is always there in the structure. The final section before the reprise features an improvisation over a slow-moving, sleepy ostinato before gaining pace, back into the waltz to complete the dance.

#### *Eye of the Beholder*

My inspiration for this piece was very much the intersection between Vivaldi and Egyptian music. The slow introduction is almost a *passacaglia* in nature and is very Baroque-sounding, but it is anchored in the traditions of Egyptian music. It's a fun and exciting piece to play with some techniques I've been developing to bring that string-crossing



octave effect that Vivaldi uses in his violin concertos to the oud. Although it is an original composition, I guess a good way to think about it would be: 'If Vivaldi were Egyptian'. I believe the strongest link in this collaboration is the energy, passion, and shared vision of this music. It's not about placing it in any genre, culture or time, but how it moves us as humans and that a tear or a smile can be shared together regardless of our background. It's not about being adventurous, experimental or creating incongruity in the hope of being pioneering, but rather demonstrating a type of restraint which stays true to an emotion and a moment in time.

### ***Permission to Evaporate***

This is the title track from my latest album. Each section is melodically linked in progression with some odd rhythmic twists here and there. But essentially it's a very melancholic piece where I imagine spreading my arms and being lost in a breeze. My dear friend Michael Leunig wrote some words based on it. This beautiful poem is included on this page.

### ***Constantinople***

Being the frustrated rocker that I am, this is my attempt at writing a heavy metal tune for the oud. Written with a heavy metal rock guitarist in mind, I was lucky enough to record it with American jazz/rock legend Mike Stern in New York in 2014 on my album *Permission to Evaporate*. I will take his role here and James on percussion will be playing *riq'* but playing as if he had a full drum kit. The second section is in 7/8 with call and response passages before moving into a Bach-esque fugal section.

Notes © Joseph Tawadros and Gordon Kerry (Mozart)

### ***Michael Leunig***

#### ***Permission to Evaporate***

On a theme by Joseph Tawadros

Unexpectedly,  
It disappeared one night –  
This need of mine;  
This need to be,  
This need to make it right,  
The necessity to see,  
To know, to care, to find and understand,  
To feel, to give, to make, to doubt,  
To laugh or weep,  
To keep on being me –  
The whole thing just wore out  
And I was free it came to be,  
it fell out of the blue –  
Permission to evaporate came through.

I suddenly became thin air,  
Or even less;  
Neither here nor there,  
But everywhere I guess,  
And nowhere too.  
I turned to spirit;  
The perfect shooting-through.  
Beyond all space and time  
A lifetime's wear and tear  
Was made sublime.  
A quick and airy little gasp was done  
As up I went into the moon and sun  
Like some fading floating song.  
It made such perfect sense;  
No stain, no trace, no evidence.  
No need to leave or to belong.  
No need to think or calculate;  
I simply just accepted it for free.  
What life had given me –  
Permission to evaporate.

© Michael Leunig, 2014



Joseph and his brother, James



**sydney symphony orchestra**

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# SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS



## DAVID ROBERTSON

THE LOWY CHAIR OF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PATRON Professor The Hon. Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

Well on its way to becoming the premier orchestra of the Asia Pacific region, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has toured China on five occasions, and in 2014 won the arts category in the Australian Government's inaugural Australia-China Achievement Awards, recognising 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**

THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF  
CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC  
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Maja Verunica

Riikka Sintonen\*

Marina Marsden

PRINCIPAL

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Wendy Kong

Nicole Masters

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PRINCIPAL

**Justin Williams**

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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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 Neil Power  
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 John Quinn

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