

SYDNEY
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Celebrating David Robertson

TURANGALÎLA-SYMPHONIE

AMERICAN HARMONIES

21 – 30 NOVEMBER

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE




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


Emirates
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CONCERT DIARY

DECEMBER



All That Jazz

WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY FELLOWS

Program includes:

HINDEMITH Kammermusik No.1

EISLER Overture to a Comedy

SHOSTAKOVICH Jazz Suite No.1

Roger Benedict conductor

Sydney Symphony Orchestra Fellows

Guest Musicians from the Sydney

Conservatorium of Music

Sun 1 Dec, 3pm

**Verbruggen Hall, Sydney
Conservatorium of Music**



Mahler's Klagende Lied

SIMONE YOUNG'S VISIONS OF VIENNA

MAHLER Das klagende Lied (The Sorrowful Song)

Simone Young conductor

Eleanor Lyons soprano

Michaela Schuster mezzo-soprano

Steve Davislim tenor

Andrew Collis bass-baritone

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Abercrombie & Kent
Masters Series

Wed 4 Dec, 8pm

Fri 6 Dec, 8pm

Sat 7 Dec, 8pm

Sydney Opera House



FEBRUARY 2020



The 1950s Latin Lounge

Program includes:

GERSHWIN Cuban Overture

MARQUEZ Danzón No.2

BERNSTEIN West Side Story – Mambo

Guy Noble conductor

Imogen Kelly dancer

Ali McGregor soprano

Wed 5 Feb, 7pm

Thu 6 Feb, 7pm

Sat 8 Feb, 7pm

Sydney Town Hall



The Rite of Spring

RIOT AT THE BALLET

WAGNER Die Meistersinger – Prelude

STRAVINSKY The Rite of Spring

Pietari Inkinen conductor

Symphony Hour

Wed 19 Feb, 7pm

Thu 20 Feb, 7pm

Sydney Town Hall



Debussy and Ravel

THE GREAT IMPRESSIONISTS

RAVEL Piano Concerto in G

MENDELSSOHN The Hebrides

DEBUSSY La mer

Jun Märkl conductor

Alexandra Dariescu piano

Abercrombie & Kent
Masters Series

Wed 26 Feb, 8pm

Fri 28 Feb, 8pm

Sat 29 Feb, 8pm

Thursday Afternoon Symphony

Thu 27 Feb, 1.30pm

Great Classics

Sat 29 Feb, 2pm

Sydney Town Hall



MARCH 2020



Ben Folds

THE SYMPHONIC TOUR

Pop icon and music innovator Ben Folds returns to Sydney following his last sold-out shows with the Sydney Symphony.

Ben Folds

Nicholas Buc conductor

Sydney Symphony Presents

Fri 6 Mar, 8pm

Sat 7 Mar, 8pm

Sydney Town Hall



Scheherazade

HYPNOTIC AND SUBLIME

DEBUSSY Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV Scheherazade

Alexander Shelley conductor

Symphony Hour

Wed 11 Mar, 7pm

Thu 12 Mar, 7pm

Tea & Symphony

Fri 13 Mar, 11am

Sydney Town Hall

It is our pleasure to welcome you to these special concerts as we celebrate six wonderful years of music-making with Chief Conductor and Artistic Director David Robertson.

Every performance with David has been a compelling musical event, a fact reflected perfectly in our final concerts together this year. These performances of Turangalila-Symphonie and his American Harmonies program are a perfect expression of David's musical leadership. Each represents a bold choice with works brought together in such a way as to expose the essence of the music and musicianship in fresh and imaginative ways.

Over the past six years, the highlights have been many – Mozart explored with Emanuel Ax, dazzling performances with Anne-Sophie Mutter, Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Christine Brewer and Christian Tetzlaff as well as music of an astonishing range – from Varèse, Messiaen, Wagner, Ligeti, Bartók to Boulez. He has championed Australian composition as well - the music of Eliot Gyger, Kate Neal and Nigel Westlake have featured prominently in his own programming.

David's revival of our commitment to Operas in Concert with Porgy and Bess, Elektra, Bluebeard's Castle and most recently Peter Grimes have created unforgettable nights in the Concert Hall. All have been musical triumphs. The concerts in the next fortnight are some of our last in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall until 2022. It might be viewed as the end of an era, but like the Concert Hall, David, happily, will return to us in future seasons.

On behalf of all of us, thank you David.

Musicians, Board and Staff of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra



2020 Classics in the City at City Recital Hall

Delight in the wonders of masterpieces from the Baroque, Classical and Romantic eras in the intimate City Recital Hall.



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Fountains and Fireworks
Handel and Telemann

1 & 2 APR 2020, 7PM

CITY RECITAL HALL

Early music expert David Stern conducts Handel's *Water Music* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks* in the gilded intimacy of City Recital Hall.



The Italian Baroque
Rebel, Gabrieli and Vivaldi

10 & 11 JUN 2020, 7PM

CITY RECITAL HALL

Conductor Benjamin Bayl is our guide to music from Venice and beyond – Monteverdi, Vivaldi, Corelli, Gabrieli and Rebel.



Drama and Romance
Mozart and Beethoven

19 & 20 AUG 2020, 7PM

CITY RECITAL HALL

Violinist Henning Kraggerud leads a program of transcendent music: Mozart's Symphony No.40 and Beethoven's Romances for violin.



A Serenade for Strings
Tchaikovsky and Elgar

7 & 8 OCT 2020, 7PM

CITY RECITAL HALL

Andrew Haveron performs Elgar's virtuosic Introduction and Allegro and directs Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings, a symphony in miniature.

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SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PHOTO: KEITH SAUNDERS



DAVID ROBERTSON

THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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.

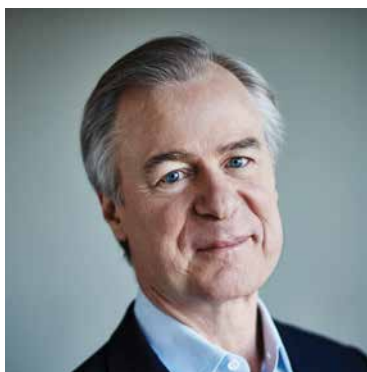
Well on its way to becoming the premier orchestra of the Asia Pacific region, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has toured China on five occasions, and in 2014 won the arts category in the Australian Government's inaugural Australia-China Achievement Awards, recognising ground-breaking work in nurturing 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 and final season as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.



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, Bayerischen 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 our Principal Partner Emirates.

THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER, 7PM

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL



**sydney symphony
orchestra**

David Robertson

The Lowy Chair of Chief Conductor
and Artistic Director

Turangalîla-Symphonie

David Robertson *conductor*

Tengku Irfan *piano*

Jacob Abela *ondes Martenot*

OLIVIER MESSIAEN (1908–1992)

Turangalîla-symphonie

I. Introduction

II. Chant d'amour 1

III. Turangalîla 1

IV. Chant d'amour 2

V. Joie du sang des étoiles

VI. Jardin du sommeil d'amour

VII. Turangalîla 2

VIII. Développement de l'amour

IX. Turangalîla 3

X. Final



Tonight's concert will be broadcast on ABC
Classic on 30 November at 8pm and again on
21 January 2020 at 8pm.

Pre-concert talk by Raff Wilson at 6.15pm in
the Northern Foyer.

Estimated duration: 1 hour and 20 minutes.

The concert will be performed without interval
and will conclude at approximately 8.30pm.

Cover image: David Robertson
Photo credit: Keith Saunders



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GUEST ARTISTS



Tengku Irfan *piano*

Tengku Irfan, 21-year-old Malaysian pianist, composer and conductor, debuted at eleven performing *Beethoven's Piano Concerto Wo04*, improvising his own cadenzas with Claus Peter Flor and the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra. He has performed as soloist with orchestras worldwide under conductors Neeme Järvi, Kristjan Järvi, David Robertson, Robert Spano, George Stelluto, Jeffrey Milarsky, among others. Tengku has also performed with AXIOM, MDR Sinfonieorchester, the Singapore Symphony, São Paulo State Youth, Estonian National Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, and Peoria Symphony Orchestras. He won the 2013 Aspen Music Festival Prokofiev Piano Concerto No.2 Competition and served four consecutive years as pianist for the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble. Tengku received the 2012 ASCAP Charlotte Bergen Award and the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award in 2012, 2014 and 2017. His compositions have been premiered by the New York Philharmonic, MDR Sinfonieorchester, New York Virtuoso Singers, MusicaNova, Malaysian Philharmonic and the Singapore Symphony Orchestras. Tengku debuted as a conductor with the MusicaNova Orchestra in 2015 and conducted the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra for their 20th Anniversary Gala Concert. He is a double major in piano and composition, under Veda Kaplinsky and Robert Beaser respectively at Juilliard, and studying conducting with George Stelluto and Jeffrey Milarsky. Tengku is a proud recipient of a Kovner Fellowship at The Juilliard School, and was recently appointed as Youth Ambassador of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra.



Jacob Abela *ondes Martenot*

Jacob is a multi-instrumentalist and composer dedicated to contemporary performance practice. With a focus on electronic keyboard instruments, he is one of Australia's leading specialists of the ondes Martenot. He has performed as a soloist under the baton of Simone Young in Messiaen's *Turangalîla-Symphonie* (Australian World Orchestra/ANAM Orchestra, 2017). He has also collaborated in the commissioning of new works for the ondes, including a major solo work by Chicago-based performance maker and composer Jenna Lyle. Jacob is a core member of Rubiks Collective, a Melbourne-based contemporary art music ensemble critically acclaimed for their contribution to the Australian new music scene and presentation of rarely-performed works. In 2020, Rubiks Collective are travelling to the USA to collaborate with composer collective Kinds of Kings for their residency at National Sawdust.

Recent projects include *REACH*, a solo performance of works for keyboard at the 2018 Bendigo International Festival of Exploratory Music; *While You Sleep* by Kate Neal and Sal Cooper at Arts House in 2018; and *TARZAN* with Viennese experimental theatre company God's Entertainment at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse 2018. Jacob has also featured as a guest performer with leading Australian ensembles including Ensemble Offspring, Speak Percussion, Synergy Percussion, and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

THE ORCHESTRA



David Robertson
THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF
CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR



Donald Runnicles
PRINCIPAL GUEST
CONDUCTOR



Vladimir Ashkenazy
CONDUCTOR LAUREATE



Andrew Haveron
CONCERTMASTER
SUPPORTED BY VICKI OLSSON

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Harry Bennetts
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Sun Yi
ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER
Lerida Delbridge
ASSISTANT CONCERTMASTER
Fiona Ziegler
ASSISTANT CONCERTMASTER
Kirsten Williams
ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER
EMERITUS
Jenny Booth
Sophie Cole
Claire Herrick
Georges Lentz
Nicola Lewis
Emily Long
Alexandra Mitchell
Alexander Norton
Anna Skálová
Léone Ziegler
Emily Qin*
Brielle Clapson
Emily Long

SECOND VIOLINS

Kirsty Hilton
PRINCIPAL
Marina Marsden
PRINCIPAL
Marianne Edwards
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Emma Jezek
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
Alice Bartsch
Victoria Bihun
Emma Hayes
Shuti Huang
Monique Irik
Wendy Kong
Stan W Kornel
Benjamin Li
Nicole Masters
Maja Verunica
Rebecca Gill

VIOLAS

Tobias Breider
PRINCIPAL
Anne-Louise Comerford
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Justin Williams
ACTING ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Sandro Costantino
Rosemary Curtin
Jane Hazelwood
Graham Hennings
Justine Marsden
Felicity Tsai
Amanda Verner
Leonid Volovelsky
Stephen Wright*
Roger Benedict
PRINCIPAL
Stuart Johnson

CELLOS

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Catherine Hewgill
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Leah Lynn
ACTING ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Kristy Conrau
Fenella Gill
Elizabeth Neville
Christopher Pidcock
Adrian Wallis
Rowena Macneish*
Paul Stender*
Timothy Nankervis
Adrian Wallis

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Steven Larson
Richard Lynn
Jaan Pallandi
Benjamin Ward
David Barlow†
Robin Brawley*
Alex Henery
PRINCIPAL

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PRINCIPAL
Carolyn Harris
Katie Zagorski*
Emma Sholl
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL

OBOES

Diana Doherty
PRINCIPAL
Alexandre Oguey
PRINCIPAL COR ANGLAIS
Eve Osborn†
Shefali Pryor
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
David Papp

CLARINETS

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Alexander Morris
PRINCIPAL BASS CLARINET
James Julian†
GUEST PRINCIPAL BASS CLARINET
Francesco Celata
ACTING PRINCIPAL

BASSOONS

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PRINCIPAL EMERITUS
Noriko Shimada
PRINCIPAL CONTRABASSOON
Jordy Meulenbroekst
Todd Gibson-Cornish
PRINCIPAL
Fiona McNamara

HORNS

Ben Jacks
PRINCIPAL
Geoffrey O'Reilly
PRINCIPAL 3RD
Euan Harvey
Rachel Silver
Jenny McLeod-Sneyd*
Marnie Sebire

TRUMPETS

David Elton
PRINCIPAL
Anthony Heinrichs
Fletcher Cox*
Daniel Henderson*
Colin Grisdale*
Paul Goodchild
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
TROMBONES
Scott Kinmont
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Nick Byrne
Christopher Harris
PRINCIPAL BASS TROMBONE
Ronald Prussing
PRINCIPAL

TUBA

Steve Rossé
PRINCIPAL

PERCUSSION

Rebecca Lagos
PRINCIPAL
Mark Robinson
ACTING PRINCIPAL TIMPANI
Timothy Constable
Tim Brigden*
Ian Cleworth*
Richard Gleeson*
Joshua Hill*
Alison Pratt*
Philip South*
Hugh Tidy*
Adam Cooper-Stanbury†

PIANO

Catherine Davis*

* = GUEST MUSICIAN

† = SYDNEY SYMPHONY FELLOW

Grey = PERMANENT MEMBER OF
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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992)

Turangalîla-symphonie

I. Introduction

II. Chant d'amour 1

III. Turangalîla 1

IV. Chant d'amour 2

V. Joie du sang des étoiles

VI. Jardin du sommeil d'amour

VII. Turangalîla 2

VIII. Développement de l'amour

IX. Turangalîla 3

X. Final

Although the whole of Messiaen's oeuvre continues to be held in high regard, it is principally his works of the 1940s which have entered the repertoire. Interestingly many of them have proved atypical of their composer. An example is his only chamber work, the *Quartet for the End of Time* (1941). The three instalments of his *Tristan* trilogy (*Harawi* [1945], the *Turangalîla-symphonie* [1948] and *Cinq Rechants* [1949]) are virtually unique in being concerned neither with birdsong nor with the expression of religious truths.

Despite its daunting length and peculiarities of instrumentation, *Turangalîla* has carved itself a regular niche on concert programs. While it served as a summary of Messiaen's technique and vocabulary to that time, the size and range of the forces enabled Messiaen to consolidate two far-reaching advances in the way he manipulated his material. Firstly, ideas and even styles could be cross-cut with great rapidity and flexibility, accentuating the music's eclecticism (already an essential feature of his creative personality); and secondly, it became possible to superimpose several discrete layers of music, and to use the accumulation and recombination of such layers as a new means of formal construction.

At the same time, the *Turangalîla-symphonie* is one of Messiaen's most traditional works. It has generally been asserted that the word 'symphony' in the work's title is not to be understood in any conventional sense. On the other hand, viewed in the context of Messiaen's output as a whole, this is by far the composer's closest approach to that tradition. There are clear echoes of symphonic structures (Paul Griffiths has suggested that the first, fifth, sixth and tenth movements constitute a conventional four-movement design). Much more importantly, there are elements of thematic construction and transformation (though not true development), and of a goal-directed symphonic argument, especially in movements II, IV and VIII. This kind of conflict and progression, absent elsewhere in Messiaen, is surely a response to the subject matter – the pain and ecstasy of human love, as expressed in one of Western culture's most potent myths.

Perhaps Messiaen's greatest achievement in this work is his fusion of these elements with a profound non-Western influence as symbolised by the other word in his title. 'Turangalîla' is a Sanskrit compound word: *turanga* – literally the speed of a horse – denotes rhythm or the passage of time, while *lîla* means sport or play, on a divine, cosmic scale (it can also mean love). Messiaen's suggested translation is 'a hymn to love', but other connotations could include 'rhythmic games' or 'playing with the passage of time'.

More specifically, the word reflects the composer's absorption at the time in study of the rhythmic patterns and processes of Indian music, together with simpler processes of Messiaen's own devising. These 'rhythmic games', mostly given to the untuned percussion, often constitute an autonomous layer in the texture. At a much deeper level, 'playing with the passage of time' is an apt description of the interaction throughout the work of a progressive,



Olivier Messiaen in 1952

IN BRIEF

Messiaen's life's work was to express 'the truths of the Catholic faith. This is the main aspect of my work, the most noble, without doubt the most useful, the most valid.' The *Turangalîla-symphonie*, a massive multi-movement work written for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, uses a large orchestra (including the weird 'voice' of electronic ondes Martenot). It avoids any overt Christian symbolism, but rather fuses certain elements of Asian music such as Indian rhythms and the bright sounds of the Javanese gamelan with Messiaen's own idiosyncratic style to create a celebration of erotic love. For him, that is a foretaste of divine love.

experiential view of time – implicit in the work’s ‘symphonic procedures’ – and a typically Eastern, static or cyclic view of time.

One other particular cultural influence is to be heard in the highly prominent tuned percussion contingent, led by the solo piano, which Messiaen himself referred to as the ‘gamelan’. The writing for these instruments is almost entirely decorative; elaborate ornamentation of much slower lines elsewhere in the orchestra. By contrast, the other instrument defining *Turangalila*’s sound-world, the ondes Martenot, is allocated the most important melodic statements. As Griffiths has commented, it is ironic, but consistent with the surreal qualities of the music, that the Symphony’s most expressive, ‘human’ voice is in fact electronic.

I. Introduction

This movement serves to introduce, one after the other, a variety of characteristic ideas. Prominent are two motifs which recur in several movements: the powerful ‘Statue’ theme, played by the lower brass in striding thirds; and the ‘Flower’ theme (marked *caressant*) on the clarinets and other woodwind. These two ideas represent opposing poles of strength and lyricism (the labels ‘Statue’ and ‘Flower’, with their psychosexual connotations, are Messiaen’s own).

There follows a piano cadenza. This leads into the most extended section, an elaborate mechanism of interlocking ostinatos containing at least five independent layers. In passages such as this, the rate at which the music changes through time is not great, but the harmonic complexity is formidable. The listener is challenged not merely to take things as they happen, but actively to explore the layers within the musical object. The movement concludes with a brief return to the Statue theme.



Messiaen and Yvonne Loriod, 1950s

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II. *Chant d'amour 1*

The two *Chant d'amour* movements, and the closely related *Développement de l'amour*, are elaborate rondo-like structures incorporating a wide variety of colours and textures. Although predominantly in fast tempi, in each of them a much slower, luminously tonal melodic idea acts as a focal point, an image of the fulfilment and serenity which the music is striving to attain. These 'love song' movements are not songs of love achieved, but expressions of passionate yearning.

The second movement's main idea is an ecstatic melody with two alternating segments: a fast, leaping tutti line, and a long drawn-out phrase for the strings with the ondes Martenot at its most unbearably sweet. The key, F sharp major, is shared with movements VI and X, and may be regarded as the tonality of the Symphony. This melody engages in dialogue with new material, after which the final part of the movement strives towards a brief but intense climax on the second (slow) part of the rondo theme.

III. *Turangalila 1*

In contrast to the *Chant d'amour* movements, those bearing the work's title are much darker and more abstract, as well as more concise. The opulent harmonies of Messiaen's characteristic 'modes of limited transposition' are absent, and the 'bones' of the music are left exposed.

Turangalila 1 opens with a mysterious melody for clarinet and ondes Martenot in dialogue. A second theme is introduced *fortissimo* in the bass register, with 'gamelan' decoration, after which the opening is restated in a much fuller texture. This is followed by a third idea, a heterophonic concurrence of solo lines including an expressive solo oboe. Finally, elements from all three are superimposed.

IV. *Chant d'amour 2*

This is the work's most elaborate movement, in which the processes of juxtaposition and superimposition reach their apex. Four ideas are presented in turn:

- 1) a scherzando theme for piccolo and bassoon, repeated with piano figuration;
- 2) a fast, lightly-scored tutti, with a legato woodwind melody and piano scales and arpeggios;
- 3) a powerful lyrical statement in A major marked *avec amour (passionné, généreux)*, alternating between tutti with ondes, *fortissimo*, and wind alone, piano; and
- 4) a hesitant chorale for solo strings over a long celesta trill.

Then the superimpositions begin, including eventually the Statue theme from movement I, until the texture reaches saturation point. The impasse is broken with a piano cadenza, followed by appearances of the Flower theme and Statue theme, before a brief but serene coda on the first phrase of [3].

V. *Joié du sang des étoiles*

The title – *Joy of the blood of the stars* – is best explained through Messiaen's own comment on the movement:

'In order to understand the extravagance of this piece, it must be understood that the union of true lovers is for them a transformation, and a transformation on a cosmic scale.'

The movement takes the form of a wild dance-like scherzo. Its layout is straightforward, even to the extent of falling into the standard ternary scherzo design.

ABOUT THE ONDES MARTENOT



Ginette Martenot playing the instrument her brother invented

Percy Grainger once complained that for 'too long has music been subject to the limitations of the human hand...Machines (if properly constructed and properly written for) are capable of niceties of emotional expression impossible to a human performer.'

Such sentiments led to the invention of instruments like the theremin (named after its Russian inventor Lev Sergeyevich Termen) which appeared in the 1920s and rapidly became a staple of science fiction movie scores. The human hand certainly didn't touch the instrument, in fact the gliding sounds were modified by moving the hand in relation to an antenna, which activated two oscillators. The beat frequency oscillator forms the basic technology for the ondes Martenot, also, but here the control of pitch and timbre is a more literally hands-on affair.

Maurice Martenot (1898–1980) invented the ondes in the 1920s, soon attracting the attention of composers like Honegger, Milhaud and Varèse; Martenot's sister Ginette became an early virtuoso.

Messiaen began writing for it in the late 1930s, and it is of course a major soloist in the *Turangalîla-symphonie*. As David Garrett has noted, visiting Australia in 1988, Messiaen explained that he liked the ondes Martenot because the player controls the notes with a finger wound in a ribbon, so it has direct contact with a human being. Referring to Jeanne Loriod he added 'Besides,' he said, 'the human being is often my own sister-in-law!'

The music's most remarkable quality is its unrelieved excess. For example, the 'trio' section, rather than serving as lyrical contrast, increases the tension by undermining the stability of the 3/16 metre with abstract rhythmic processes. The final overpowering crescendo on a D flat major added sixth chord is augmented with the white noise of cymbal and gong rolls; it is as if the crescendo were protracted into infinity, and is merely cut short in the score because human ears can take no more.

VI. Jardin du sommeil d'amour

If V brings *Turangalila* to the heights of energy and abandon *Garden of the sleep of love* represents the work's true centre of gravity. Here at last fulfilment is realised. Ondes Martenot and strings unfold a tranquil F sharp major melody, merely hinted at earlier on. Over and around the unbelievably slow phrases of this Love theme a few other instruments weave lines of decoration: birdsong on piano, sinuous melodic dialogue between flute and clarinet, and more measured contributions from vibraphone. To these are later added glittering celesta and glockenspiel chords, and rhythmic processes on untuned percussion. None of these layers interact with the Love theme in any way; they serve to create the garden of the piece's title, within which the lovers are completely self-absorbed.

VII. Turangalila 2

The serene mood is instantly broken with the return of darker elements. After a prefatory piano solo, two eerie musical mechanisms unfold, calling to mind the macabre contrivances of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Pit and the Pendulum* (an inspiration for this movement). The mechanisms alternate and are layered with other material, including a brief reference to the Statue theme, before the movement comes to an abrupt halt.

VIII. Développement de l'amour

Messiaen's description of this movement as 'constituting the main development of the thematic elements in the work' is not entirely helpful. While it could be thought of as a *Chant d'amour 3*, II and IV strive forward to the consummation of VI, whereas *Développement de l'amour* looks back upon it. In fact, the love music has reached its ultimate state in the 'garden of the sleep of love', and the later music can only try to recapture something of that movement's rapture.

The opening section of VIII juxtaposes several elements. The main body of the movement is built around an urgent toccata which continually builds tension through changes of key and insistent repetition. The energy of this toccata material is periodically discharged in cadential gestures from the Love theme in VI, sometimes with the Flower theme as a pendant. As the movement progresses, however, these cadential points are delayed much longer. Finally a vastly extended statement of the Love theme, now in its home key of F sharp, effects a long winding-down of the accumulated tension. However, the serenity of the sixth movement is not to be regained. The events of the movement's introduction return in telescoped form, before the music is extinguished with a stroke of the gong.

IX. Turangalila 3

This penultimate movement is the most detached in the work, and also one of the simplest in design. It consists of a theme and four variations, where each variation is superimposed upon the one before.

X. Final

The last movement is a counterpart to *Joie du sang des étoiles*. The 3/16 metre and dance-like character are the same, as is the lucid texture. It falls into what Paul Griffiths has described as 'a hugely powerful but compact sonata form, if one where the soundings of themes in different keys is more important than real development'. The energetic first subject goes through an almost complete rising chromatic succession of keys from F sharp to C sharp. The second subject is a much accelerated version of the Love theme, which appears at its original tempo and key (albeit in blazing tutti) just before the end of the work. However, there is a palpable sense that this apotheosis appears in quotation marks. Indeed, despite its triumphant fusion of elements from movements V and VI, this Finale has more of the air of a celebration and recollection of something past, than of resolution and fulfilment in its own right.

It is perhaps this trait more than any other which distinguishes *Turangalila* from Olivier Messiaen's religious works. Whereas in the religious pieces the music projects beyond the final bar line into eternity, the *Turangalila-symphonie* is fundamentally inward-looking. Although the ecstasy of human love is for Messiaen a glimpse of the infinite, it is only a passing moment, and not to be compared with the fulfilment of divine love.

ABRIDGED FROM ELLIOTT GYGER © 1996

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the *Turangalila-symphonie* in October 1986 under Hiroyuki Iwaki, with Kaori Kimura, piano and Takashi Harada, ondes Martenot, and most recently in August 2007 under Simone Young with Cédric Tiberghien, piano and Cynthia Millar, ondes Martenot.

Turangalila-symphonie calls for an orchestra of 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, cor anglais, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, cornet, 3 trombones, tuba, 11 percussion, celesta, solo piano, ondes Martenot and strings.

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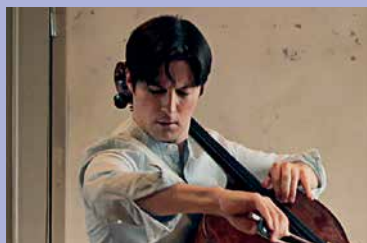
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DAVID ROBERTSON

CHIEF
CONDUCTOR
AND
ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR

2014
– 2019

Asked to name favourite memories of his time with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, David Robertson's answer is unexpected.

"It's those places where, in a strange way, I can step back. I'm participating, but I'm not having to bring any direction to the musicians, because their focus is perfectly calibrated. It happens constantly in concerts and rehearsals with this group." He likens the experience to looking through a lens in which the images are absolutely clear. "You don't need to fiddle with anything – you just have to admire the beauty that's coming through that lens."

Even from his first encounter with the Orchestra as guest conductor in 2003, the New York-based Robertson felt it had something special. On that occasion, he was in Sydney with his wife, pianist Orli Shaham, a soloist in one of the programs. "We had been married a total of six months at that point," he says. "Everyone we met was so incredibly sweet and low-key in their way of behaving, but so tremendously professional and incredibly passionate about making the music. That's a pretty incredible combination – it's hard not to fall in love with it."

That initial impression hasn't wavered, says Robertson, who has been Chief Conductor and Artistic Director since 2014. He is convinced there are "certain projects and adventures" he wouldn't have been able to do with other orchestras – the 120-musician Varèse *Amériques*, for instance, ("That was colossal") or, on last year's European tour, playing 12 concerts in 14 days. "I wouldn't feel confident doing that with many orchestras, but the comfort zone of Sydney Symphony musicians seems to be extraordinarily high – there isn't anything they can't do."

On the sound of the Orchestra, Robertson says it's easy to generalise about something that's immensely complex.

"It's the combination of everyone involved – they have a very warm sound, so even when they need to be harsh and abrasive, there's a beauty of tone I love. Along with that warmth is an incredible muscular energy like the very best gymnast."

He heard that particularly clearly on the 2014 China tour, where the Orchestra played in seven halls. "It was like someone you know very well picking up seven different instruments. Hearing their personality being able to express itself in those different circumstances was revelatory." It provided an impetus, he says, to work with others behind the scenes to "make sure the concert hall acoustics would be brought up to the standard of the orchestra".

As a champion of new music, Robertson says one of the "really nice legacies" of his time in Sydney has been to introduce the work of Australian composers to overseas audiences. "I was at the Met Orchestra recently, and one of the players had heard *Spirit of the Wild*, the Nigel Westlake piece that Diana Doherty played – I was able to give him the CD. You have that aspect of proselytising, and the other side

is that in Pittsburgh this season, I'll be performing Georges Lentz's *Jerusalem*. It's very nice to be able to take those works around."

He's also taking more subtle things away with him. "When you work with musicians, you're learning all the time. There are ways of turning a phrase or thinking about a sound that I have learnt from Umberto Clerici or someone like Andrew Haveron, ideas about percussion from Timothy Constable or Rebecca Lagos, or ideas about woodwind phrases from Todd Gibson-Cornish or Matthew Wilkie, just to name a couple of people. You never come back to those pieces without having that experience as part of their living tradition."

Apart from the orchestra, there are other aspects of Sydney he'll miss having regular access to, like the "very good food and coffee", trips to the Blue Mountains, and walks around the city – "With its hills and various different vistas and the way it changes, for me it's like an ever-evolving sculpture."

Robertson is currently dividing his time between his role as director of conducting studies at Juilliard and guest conducting, with more opera in his calendar than he's been able to schedule in decades. He's looking forward to coming back to Sydney as guest conductor in July, and into the future, and "happily seeing everyone again. I'm very grateful for the depth of conversation we have had."

On the future of the Sydney Symphony more generally, Robertson says, “I hope they keep their tremendous sense of curiosity and adventure – that’s a really prized commodity. In a place that has as much remarkable landscape as Australia does, to have a group that personifies that adventurous spirit is just wonderful.”



A standing ovation for David Robertson and the Sydney Symphony at Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, December 2018. Photo: Peter Hundert



With Renaud Capuçon in Linz,
November 2018
Photo: Reinhard Winkler



In rehearsal during the 2014 China Tour. Photo: Julian Kingma



Photo: Peter Hundert



On stage with Artist-in-Residence Brett Dean in Hamburg,
December 2018. Photo: Peter Hundert



In rehearsal with Principal Oboe Diana Doherty, February 2017. Photo: Keith Saunders



Backstage at the Sydney Opera House. Photo: Keith Saunders



Photo: Ken Butti

Sydney Symphony Orchestra Concertmaster Andrew Haveron reflects on the legacy of David Robertson



David Robertson with Concertmaster Andrew Haveron, 2017.
Photo: Daniela Testa

There's a tradition among orchestral players, says Sydney Symphony Orchestra Concertmaster Andrew Haveron, that after someone has played a significant solo in a symphony, the musicians around that person will, in the middle of a performance, shuffle their feet inaudibly as a way of applause. "David does something from the podium that no other conductor does," he says. "Because he started his career as a horn player in an orchestra, he's perfectly aware of the tradition, and will surreptitiously – or not so surreptitiously sometimes – slide his feet backwards and forwards in the middle of conducting to say, 'Well done, I loved that.'"

"He may well be the
conductor, at the front
and taking responsibility,
but he knows what
it's like to be in a team.
It's a very collegial
way of working, and one
that we enjoy."

Haveron, who first worked with David Robertson in London more than 10 years ago, has always appreciated his approach to musicmaking. "He doesn't come with preconceptions or try to micromanage – he's aware of the talent in the room and the importance of allowing it its own space. He can direct it in certain ways if necessary, or allow it to blossom, and he really embraces anything that happens spontaneously. That's a skill that takes conductors quite a long time to learn."

Robertson's expertise with contemporary music, in particular, has been invaluable to the Orchestra, says Haveron. Part of that is to do with the efficiency of his rehearsal process. "He knows what's challenging, explains difficult passages or, for instance, when the metre changes from five beats in this bar to 13 in the next, he puts you at ease immediately – "This is going to be easy, you just do this here, and that there...'" The result is that the Orchestra "is now very confident to play more complex pieces. It's second nature to us."

That becomes noticeable, says Haveron, when visiting conductors come with music of that ilk, and are slightly concerned at how experienced the Orchestra might be. "When we play it through the first time, it's, 'Wow, you guys know what you're doing.'"

There's clarity to Robertson's conducting, says Haveron, and an eloquence when he speaks to the audience about new music. Sometimes, he creates a synthesis from unusual and, on the surface, seemingly unrelated ideas. "David has a reputation, and he's very well aware of it, of talking quite a lot during rehearsals. His brain works so fast that he makes connections that not everyone would make, between something quite esoteric and cerebral and, for example, a cartoon he was familiar with in his childhood or one that his children watch. We can be somewhat perplexed by what he's just said, and how it's relevant to the music, but it always has some sort of significance."

The Orchestra has witnessed more of "the extraordinary stuff that goes on in David's head" when,

on international tours, he would announce any encore in the local language. "And I'm talking about Chinese, Korean, Japanese and some of the European languages. We ended up in Denmark, and he announced the encore we'd be playing in Danish, with very good pronunciation, apparently."

Robertson's broad interests and idiosyncratic mind led to interesting programming. It has given the Orchestra the chance to play pieces they might not have done otherwise, and for the audience to experience them, says Haveron, whether that be an opera-in-concert such as this year's *Peter Grimes* or an immersive event like Messiaen's *From the Canyon to the Stars*, programmed in 2016. "He pushes the boat out a bit, and that's to be applauded and celebrated. When Wynton Marsalis came here recently with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, David had the audacity to program Varèse's *Amérique* in the first half. It's not very long, but it's one of the most controversial and loudest pieces of music. Everyone knew they were coming for an interesting jazz program, but also got this really interesting starter course they weren't expecting."

With plans for David Robertson to return to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra as guest conductor, Haveron says, "Luckily, we won't have to miss him too much. We've been on a journey with him, and look forward to continuing to do whatever he wants to do. We trust him and he trusts us, so there's a certain element of calm there. We know each other extremely well, and that counts for an awful lot in a relationship."

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Todd Gibson-Cornish *bassoon*

AARON COPLAND (1900–1990)

Appalachian Spring: Suite

Very slowly

Fast

Moderate

Fast

Still faster

Very slowly (as at first)

Calm and flowing

Moderate

CHRISTOPHER ROUSE (1949–2019)

Bassoon Concerto

Allegro –

Adagio tenebroso –

Allegro

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

INTERVAL

JOHN ADAMS (born 1947)

Harmonielehre

Part One

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

Pre-concert talk by Sally Whitwell in the Northern Foyer 45 minutes before the performance.

Estimated durations: 23 minutes; 20 minutes; 20 minute interval; 40 minutes.

The concert will conclude at approximately 3.30pm Thursday, 10pm Friday and 7pm Saturday.

Christopher Rouse's Bassoon Concerto has been commissioned with the generous support of Geoff Stearn.



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WELCOME



Principal Partner

A farewell to David Robertson as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director

Welcome to tonight's Emirates Metro Series concert, where we celebrate the wonderful contribution David Robertson has made as the Sydney Symphony's Chief Conductor and Artistic Director over the last five years.

It is fitting that this performance features music written by David's fellow countrymen: Aaron Copland; John Adams and Christopher Rouse. It is also appropriate because the program brings together three very different musical voices in a single grand vision – a true reflection of the expansive and colourful vision David has brought to the Orchestra. That vision now brings us a newly commissioned work from the late Christopher Rouse – a bassoon concerto which will feature the Orchestra's brilliant Principal Bassoon, Todd Gibson-Cornish.

We're proud to have supported David Robertson's vision and equally proud to have supported the Orchestra as it has grown and excelled over the last two decades.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Brown".

Barry Brown

Emirates' Divisional Vice President
for Australasia



© CHRISTIE BREWSTER

Todd Gibson-Cornish

bassoon

New Zealander Todd Gibson-Cornish was appointed principal bassoon of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 2016 at the age of 21. He began lessons on the mini-bassoon, progressing to the tenoroon and then full-size bassoon, with Selena Orwin at the Pettman National Junior Academy of Music. He was an NZSO Fellowship student and freelanced with the New Zealand and Christchurch Symphony Orchestras.

In 2016 Todd graduated from the Royal College of Music (RCM) in London with a first-class honours degree, as a Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Scholar supported by a Douglas and Hilda Simmonds Award. His teachers were Joost Bosdijk, Andrea de Flammeneis and Julie Price. Todd was awarded the Tagore Gold Medal for outstanding musical contribution to the RCM, which was presented to

him by HRH The Prince of Wales. Since graduating, he has returned to the RCM to give masterclasses and mentoring sessions.

Todd has played as guest principal with the Philharmonia Orchestra in London (including at the BBC Proms), Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. He has also taken part in the Aldeburgh Winds, Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme UK.

In 2019 Todd spent two months touring Europe and Asia as guest Principal Bassoon with the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Simon Rattle.

Todd performed Mozart's Bassoon Concerto with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 2018.

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David Robertson
THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF
CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR



Donald Runnicles
PRINCIPAL GUEST
CONDUCTOR



Vladimir Ashkenazy
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Andrew Haveron
CONCERTMASTER
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CONCERTMASTER
Harry Bennetts
ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER
Sun Yi
ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER
Lerida Delbridge
ASSISTANT CONCERTMASTER
Fiona Ziegler
ASSISTANT CONCERTMASTER
Brielle Clapson
Sophie Cole
Claire Herrick
Georges Lentz
Emily Long
Alexandra Mitchell
Alexander Norton
Anna Skálová
Elizabeth Jones*
Tobias Aarj
Kirsten Williams
ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER
EMERITUS
Jenny Booth
Nicola Lewis
Léone Ziegler

SECOND VIOLINS

Kirsty Hilton
PRINCIPAL
Marina Marsden
PRINCIPAL
Marianne Edwards
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Emma Jezek
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
Alice Bartsch
Victoria Bihun
Rebecca Gill
Emma Hayes
Shuti Huang
Monique Irik
Wendy Kong
Stan W Kornel
Nicole Masters
Maja Verunica
Benjamin Li

VIOLAS

Tobias Breider
PRINCIPAL
Anne-Louise Comerford
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Justin Williams
ACTING ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Sandro Costantino
Rosemary Curtin
Graham Hennings
Justine Marsden
Felicity Tsai
Amanda Verner
Leonid Volovelsky
Stephen Wright*
Andrew Jezek*
Roger Benedict
PRINCIPAL
Jane Hazelwood
Stuart Johnson

CELLOS

Umberto Clerici
PRINCIPAL
Catherine Hewgill
PRINCIPAL
Leah Lynn
ACTING ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Kristy Conrau
Timothy Nankervis
Elizabeth Neville
Christopher Pidcock
Adrian Wallis
Eliza Sdraulig
Paul Stender*
Fenella Gill
David Wickham

DOUBLE BASSES

Kees Boersma
PRINCIPAL
David Campbell
Steven Larson
Richard Lynn
Benjamin Ward
Aurora Henrich*
Oliver Simpson*
Alex Henery
PRINCIPAL
Jaan Pallandi

FLUTES

Joshua Batty
PRINCIPAL
Emma Sholl
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Carolyn Harris
Linda Stuckey*

OBOES

Shefali Pryor
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Alexandre Oguey
PRINCIPAL CÔR ANGLAIS
Eve Osborn†
Diana Doherty
PRINCIPAL
David Papp

CLARINETS

Francesco Celata
ACTING PRINCIPAL
Christopher Tingay
Alexander Morris
PRINCIPAL BASS CLARINET
Renaud Guy-Rousseau*

BASSOONS

Matthew Wilkie
PRINCIPAL EMERITUS
Fiona McNamara
Noriko Shimada
PRINCIPAL CONTRABASSOON
Long Nguyen*
Jordy Meulenbroekst†
Todd Gibson-Cornish
PRINCIPAL

HORNS

Ben Jacks
PRINCIPAL
Geoffrey O'Reilly
PRINCIPAL 3RD
Marnie Sebire
Rachel Silver
Aidan Gabrielst
Euan Harvey

TRUMPETS

David Elton
PRINCIPAL
Anthony Heinrichs
David Johnson†
Paul Goodchild
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL

TROMBONES

Nick Byrne
Christopher Harris
PRINCIPAL BASS TROMBONE
Andrew Nissen*
Ronald Prussing
PRINCIPAL
Scott Kinmont
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL

TUBA

Steve Rossé
PRINCIPAL
Scott Frankcombe*

TIMPANI

Mark Robinson
ACTING PRINCIPAL

PERCUSSION

Rebecca Lagos
PRINCIPAL
Timothy Constable
Ian Cleworth*
Alison Pratt*
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HARP

Genevieve Lang*
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Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

Appalachian Spring: Suite

Very slowly

Fast

Moderate

Fast

Still faster

Very slowly (as at first)

Calm and flowing

Moderate

Aaron Copland met the choreographer Martha Graham in 1931. She wanted to do a ballet on his Piano Variations. Copland threw back his head and laughed – until he saw her interpretation, the ballet *Dithyramb*. A collaboration was born.

In 1942 Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge commissioned Graham to stage three ballets and Copland was one of three composers asked for a score (the others being Paul Hindemith and Darius Milhaud). *Appalachian Spring* was the result. It premiered in Washington in October 1944. The score eventually won a Pulitzer Prize and a Music Critics' Circle Award.

Springtime was not in the creators' heads at the time of writing. A poem by Hart Crane actually contains the words:

I took the portage climb, then chose
A further valley-shed; I could not stop.
Feet nozzled wat'ry webs of upper flows;
One white veil gusted from the very top.
O Appalachian Spring!...

The reference is to a spring of *water* on a trail through the Appalachian Mountains.

Appalachian Spring is one of those works which defines the American spirit in music. Graham's original scenario included Bible quotations, a central character who resembled Pocahontas (the Powhatan woman who saved the life of Virginia explorer John Smith), and several references to the Civil War. Eventually the story revolved around a pioneer farmhouse in the Pennsylvania hill country in the early 1800s – a stark symbol of American values.

Graham's unique choreographic style – spare and restrained – determined much of the expressive content of the ballet. Set designer Isamu Noguchi noted that Graham was 'in a sense influenced by Shaker furniture, but it is also the culmination of Martha's interest in American themes and in the Puritan American tradition'. The values of simplicity and directness led to the use of the Shaker hymn *Simple Gifts*, a song 'previously...unknown to the general public', recalled Copland.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can tell that much of Graham's aesthetic was in accord with Copland's own compositional inclinations, and which we associate now with the typical American sound. 'Plain, plain, plain!...' said Leonard Bernstein in admiration, 'one of those Puritan values like being fair – you're thrifty.'



Aaron Copland, 1940s

IN BRIEF

Written for choreographer Martha Graham in 1931, *Appalachian Spring* became a ballet depicting simple rural life in Pennsylvania in the early 19th century, and centring on a country wedding. It made Copland's name and has come to symbolise American landscapes. As well as square-dance music and folk-fiddling, the score famously includes a tune known as *Simple Gifts*, sung by the sect known as Shakers.

'The storyline of the original ballet implies good Yankee values – solidity, sobriety, industriousness, family and community spirit.'

In the spring of 1945, Copland arranged the ballet as an orchestral suite. He trimmed 15 minutes of primarily choreographic material, and expanded the original 13-member ensemble to full orchestra. Even in the suite it is possible to discern the broader features of the ballet. Slow music: the characters are introduced one by one. After a fast section introduced by unison strings, the Bride and her intended dance to a moderate tempo, a scene of tenderness. Next a folksy feeling – hints of square dancers and country fiddlers suggesting the Revivalist and his flock. The music speeds up as the Bride experiences presentiments of motherhood, joy, fear and wonder. A slow transition leads to scenes of activity for the Bride and her farmer-husband, and the appearance of *The Gift to be Simple*. In a coda the Bride takes her place among her neighbours, the couple left ‘quiet and strong in their new house’.

‘*Appalachian Spring* had a great deal to do with bringing my name before a larger public,’ recalled Copland in later years, and Copland’s orchestration of *Simple Gifts* has become a secondary American anthem. The storyline of the original ballet implies good Yankee values – solidity, sobriety, industriousness, family and community spirit. Though few people these days know the ballet, there is something in Copland’s music – the wide-open folksy breeziness, the stoic heroism of melodies constructed starkly from fourths, the simple colours of the orchestration – which has also come to represent these qualities.

GORDON KALTON WILLIAMS
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA © 2006

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed Copland’s *Appalachian Spring* Suite in July 1980 under Uri Mayer and most recently in July 1999 under Edo de Waart.

The *Appalachian Spring* Suite calls for an orchestra of 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), pairs of oboes, clarinets and bassoons, pairs of horns, trumpets and trombones, timpani, 2 percussion, harp, piano and strings.



***Appalachian Spring* 1944 - Martha Graham as the Bride, Merce Cunningham as the Preacher**

Christopher Rouse (1949–2019)

Bassoon Concerto

Allegro –

Adagio tenebroso –

Allegro

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

The late Christopher Rouse was one of America's most prominent composers of orchestral music and winner of the 1993 Pulitzer Prize in Music for his Trombone Concerto. Born in Baltimore in 1949, Rouse developed an early interest in both classical and popular music. He graduated from Oberlin Conservatory and Cornell University, numbering among his principal teachers George Crumb and Karel Husa. Rouse maintained a steady interest in popular music: at the Eastman School of Music, where he was Professor of Composition, he taught a course in the history of rock for many years. Rouse was also a member of the composition faculty at The Juilliard School. He has composed a number of concertos for violinist Cho-Liang Lin, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, flautist Carol Wincenc, percussionist Evelyn Glennie, pianist Emanuel Ax, guitarist Sharon Isbin and clarinetist Larry Coombes.

Of the Bassoon Concerto dedicated to David Robertson, the composer has written:

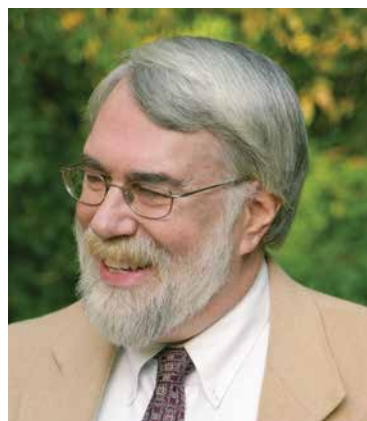
With my Bassoon Concerto I was able to complete my cycle of concerti for each of the principal four woodwinds. While my Flute and Oboe concerti are of a more serious nature, those for clarinet and bassoon are lighter in mood. As the bassoon's voice is a comparatively modest one, I pared down the orchestra to a group of two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons (in order to provide the occasional potential for building a sort of 'mega-bassoon'), two horns, harp, timpani, percussion (one player), and strings.

The concerto is cast in the traditional three movement (fast-slow-fast) form and is meant in large part simply to provide pleasure. I realize that such an intent is now looked upon with suspicion in some quarters, but I have never felt that every work of art is required to plumb the depths and secrets of human existence. Sometimes twenty minutes spent in the company of, I hope, a genial companion can be the most meaningful way of passing time. I did, however, try to resist making too much of the bassoon's oft-heralded role as the 'clown' of the orchestra. While there are occasional forays into the more 'comical' lower range of the instrument, more time is spent in the middle and upper tessitura of the bassoon, and melodic lines often tend toward the lyrical. Overall there is a collegial relationship between soloist and orchestra, unlike the common 'soloist against the orchestra' paradigm of many romantic era concertos.

Completed on February 2, 2017, the concerto was a joint commission of the Saint Louis Symphony, Sydney Symphony, New Jersey Symphony, and Lausanne Chamber Orchestras. It received its premiere performance on November 16, 2018 with Andrew Cuneo as soloist and Cristian Macelaru leading the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra.

CHRISTOPHER ROUSE © 2019

Christopher Rouse's Bassoon Concerto requires solo bassoon and an orchestra of double winds, two horns, timpani, percussion, harp and strings.



Christopher Rouse

IN BRIEF

Christopher Rouse, who passed away earlier this year, was an eminent American composer of orchestral music, especially of concertos. This work consists of three linked movements, and, to fully exploit the bassoon's tone-quality, uses a small orchestra with which the soloist engages in a collegiate fashion.

John Adams (born 1947)

Harmonielehre (1985)

Part One

The Anfortas Wound

Meister Eckhardt and Quackie

The composer writes:

Harmonielehre is roughly translated as 'the book of harmony' or 'treatise on harmony'. It is the title of a huge study of tonal harmony, part textbook, part philosophical rumination, that Arnold Schoenberg published in 1911 just as he was embarking on a voyage into unknown waters, one in which he would more or less permanently renounce the laws of tonality.

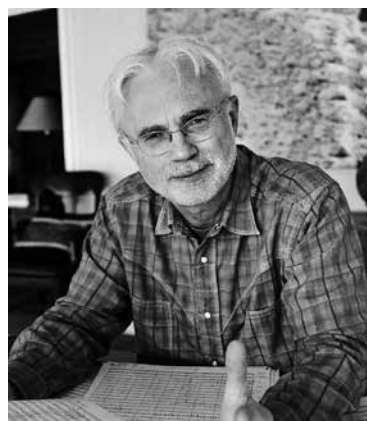
My own relationship to Schoenberg needs some explanation. Leon Kirchner, with whom I studied at Harvard, had himself been a student of Schoenberg in Los Angeles during the 1940s. Kirchner had no interest in the serial system that Schoenberg had invented, but he shared a sense of high seriousness and an intensely critical view of the legacy of the past. Through Kirchner I became highly sensitised to what Schoenberg and his art represented. He was a 'master' in the same sense that Bach, Beethoven and Brahms were masters. That notion in itself appealed to me then and continues to do so.

But Schoenberg also represented to me something twisted and contorted. He was the first composer to assume the role of high-priest, a creative mind whose entire life ran unflinchingly against the grain of society, almost as if he had chosen the role of irritant. Despite my respect for and even intimidation by the persona of Schoenberg, I felt it only honest to acknowledge that I profoundly disliked the *sound* of twelve-tone music. His aesthetic was to me an over-ripening of 19th-century Individualism, one in which the composer was a god of sorts, to whom the listener would come as if to a sacramental altar. It was with Schoenberg that the 'agony of modern music' had been born, and it was no secret that the audience for classical music during the 20th century was rapidly shrinking, in no small part because of the aural ugliness of so much of the new work being written.

It is difficult to understand why the Schoenbergian model became so profoundly influential for classical composers. Composers like Pierre Boulez and György Ligeti have borne both the ethic and the aesthetic into our own time, and its immanence in present day university life and European musical festivals is still potent. Rejecting Schoenberg was like siding with the Philistines, and freeing myself from the model he represented was an act of enormous willpower. Not surprisingly, my rejection took the form of parody... not a single parody, but several extremely different ones. In my *Chamber Symphony* the busy, hyperactive style of Schoenberg's own early work is placed in a salad spinner with Hollywood cartoon music. In *The Death of Klinghoffer* the priggish, disdainful Austrian Woman describes how she spent the entire hijacking hiding under her bed by singing in a *Sprechstimme* to the accompaniment of a *Pierrot [Lunaire]*-like ensemble in the pit.

My own *Harmonielehre* is parody of a different sort in that it bears a 'subsidiary relation' to a model (in this case a number of signal works from the turn of the century like *Gurrelieder* and the Sibelius Fourth Symphony), but it does so without the intent to ridicule. It is a large, three-movement work for orchestra that marries the developmental techniques of Minimalism with the harmonic and expressive world of *fin de siècle* late Romanticism. It was a conceit that could only be attempted once. The shades of Mahler, Sibelius, Debussy and the young Schoenberg are everywhere in this strange piece. This is a work that looks at the past in what I suspect is 'postmodernist' spirit, but, unlike *Grand Pianola Music* or *Nixon in China*, it does so entirely without irony.

The first part is a 17-minute inverted arch form: high energy at the



John Adams photographed by
Margaretta Mitchell

IN BRIEF

Adams is one of the most significant and frequently performed composers of today. He is a second-generation minimalist, building upon that simply repetitive style conceived in America in reaction against the ultra-complexity of much 20th-century music.

Harmonielehre is named after a textbook by Arnold Schoenberg and retrieves devices from the early 20th century to create a post-modern three-movement symphony. It was inspired by a number of significant dream experiences.

'Schoenberg ... was the first composer to assume the role of high-priest, a creative mind whose entire life ran unflinchingly against the grain of society.'

beginning and end, with a long, roaming 'Sehnsucht' ('yearning') section in between. The pounding E minor chords at the beginning and end of the movement are the musical counterparts of a dream image I had shortly before starting the piece. In the dream I'd watched a gigantic supertanker take off from the surface of San Francisco Bay and thrust itself into the sky like a Saturn rocket. At the time [1984-85] I was still deeply involved in the study of C.G. Jung's writings, particularly his examination of Medieval mythology. I was deeply affected by Jung's discussion of the character of Anfortas, the king whose wounds could never be healed. As a critical archetype, Anfortas symbolised a condition of sickness of the soul that curses it with a feeling of impotence and depression. In this slow, moody movement, entitled *The Anfortas Wound*, a long, elegiac trumpet solo floats over a delicately shifting screen of minor triads that pass like spectral shapes from one family of instruments to the other. Two enormous climaxes rise up out of the otherwise melancholy landscape, the second one being an obvious homage to Mahler's last, unfinished symphony.

The final part, *Meister Eckhardt and Quackie*, begins with a simple berceuse (cradlesong) that is as airy, serene and blissful as *The Anfortas Wound* is earthbound, shadowy and bleak. The Zappaesque title refers to a dream I'd had shortly after the birth of our daughter, Emily, who was briefly dubbed 'Quackie' during her infancy. In the dream, she rides perched on the shoulder of the Medieval mystic Meister Eckhardt as they hover among the heavenly bodies like figures painted on the high ceilings of old cathedrals. The tender berceuse gradually picks up speed and mass (not unlike the *Negative Love* movement of *Harmonium*) and culminates in a tidal wave of brass and percussion over a pedal point on E flat major.

JOHN ADAMS © 1999

Harmonielehre requires an orchestra of 4 flutes (2 doubling piccolo), piccolo, 3 oboes (1 doubling cor anglais), 4 clarinets (2 doubling bass clarinet), 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, 2 tubas, timpani, 4 percussion, celesta, piano and strings.

Jorge Mester conducted the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's first performance of *Harmonielehre* in September 1988; its most recent performance was in 2003 with David Robertson.

Mahler's Klagende Lied

One of Australia's finest musical exports, the charismatic Simone Young, returns to the Concert Hall stage to close the 2019 season in legendary style. Young's gift for shaping musical narratives and mustering huge forces are a perfect match for Gustav Mahler's dark and theatrical fairy tale, *Das klagende Lied*.

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The Chair of Assistant Concertmaster Lerida Delbridge has been generously supported by Simon Johnson since 2014. Lerida says, "having a Chair Patron is a wonderful thing – like gaining an extra member of the family. Thank you Simon for being part of our Sydney Symphony family for so many years!"

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PHOTO: ANTHONY GEERNAERT

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Stuart Challender, Sydney Symphony Orchestra Chief Conductor and Artistic Director 1987–1991

We gratefully acknowledge those who have left a bequest to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra

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