

SYDNEY
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The Rite of Spring

19 & 20 Feb

Sydney Town Hall



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Symphony Hour

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One musical piece.
One unforgettable
sonic experience.*

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SYMPHONY HOUR

WEDNESDAY 19 FEBRUARY, 7PM

THURSDAY 20 FEBRUARY, 7PM

SYDNEY TOWN HALL

The Rite of Spring

Pietari Inkinen *conductor*

RICHARD WAGNER (1813–1883)

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Act I: Prelude

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)

Le Sacre du printemps (The Rite of Spring)

Part 1 *L'Adoration de la terre* (Adoration of the Earth)

Introduction

Danse des adolescentes (Dance of the Young Girls)

Jeu du rapt (Ritual of Abduction)

Rondes printanières (Spring Rounds)

Jeux des cités rivales (Games of the Rival Tribes)

Cortège du sage (Procession of the Sage)

L'Adoration de la terre (Adoration of the Earth)

Danse de la terre (Dance of the Earth)

Part 2 *Le Sacrifice*

Introduction

Cercles mystérieux des adolescentes (Mystic Circles of Young Girls)

Glorification de l'élue (Glorification of the Chosen Virgin)

Evocation des ancêtres (Evocation of the Ancestors)

Action rituelle des ancêtres (Ritual of the Ancestors)

Danse sacrée – L'élue (Sacrificial dance – The Chosen Virgin)

Estimated durations: 9 minutes;
33 minutes.

The concert will conclude at
approximately 8pm.



Cover image: Pietari Inkinen
Image credit: Atsushi Yamaguchi

PRESENTING PARTNER

**YOUNG
HENRYS**



Emirates
Principal Partner

THE ARTISTS



Pietari Inkinen *conductor*

In September 2017, Pietari Inkinen became Chief Conductor of the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbruecken. Inkinen is also Chief Conductor of the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, a post he has held since the beginning of the 2016-17 season. He has also been Chief Conductor of the Prague Symphony Orchestra since 2015.

The music of Wagner has been a distinct focus of Inkinen's career and in 2020 he will conduct a new production of the Ring Cycle in Bayreuth, directed by Valentin Schwarz. In 2018 Inkinen returned to Melbourne to conduct *Die Meistersinger*, following his acclaimed performances in 2013 and 2016 of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, directed by Neil Armfield. He will conduct his first *Tristan und Isolde* in 2020 for Opera Queensland. The title role will be taken by Simon O'Neill, a long-time collaborator of Inkinen, with whom he recorded a highly acclaimed Wagner disc for EMI with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra in 2010.

Recent and future highlights as a guest conductor include engagements with the Concertgebouw Orchestra, Gurzenich Orchestra, NDR Hamburg, SWR Stuttgart, BBC Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony, and Budapest Festival Orchestra. In previous seasons Inkinen has also conducted RSB Berlin, Staatskapelle Berlin, Munich Philharmonic, La Scala Philharmonic, Orchestra of Santa Cecilia, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra as well as the Staatskapelle Dresden and the Leipzig Gewandhaus. He has conducted opera productions at the Finnish National Opera, Dresden Semperoper, La Monnaie in Brussels, Staatsoper in Berlin and the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich.

From 2008 to 2016, Pietari was Music Director of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra where he now holds the title of Honorary Conductor. Inkinen also held the title of Chief Conductor of the Ludwigsburg Schlossfestspiele from 2014 to 2019.

Also an accomplished violin soloist, Inkinen studied at the Cologne Music Academy with Zakhar Bron, winning various awards and prizes for his solo work, before taking further studies in conducting at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki.

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1932 by the ABC, 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.

In 2020, as the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall undergoes renovations as part of the Sydney Opera House Renewal program, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra returns to their original home, the Sydney Town Hall - one of the best acoustic venues in the heart of the city.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs regularly at other venues around Sydney and tours NSW and internationally, and it is well on its way to becoming the premier orchestra of the Asia Pacific region.

Their concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres. These collaborations reflect the Orchestra's versatility and diverse appeal. They also celebrate the role of the symphony orchestra in movies, television and video games with concerts such as *The Godfather*, the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, the Harry Potter film franchise, *Star Wars*, and James Bond films *Casino Royale* and *Skyfall*.

THE ORCHESTRA



Simone Young
CHIEF CONDUCTOR DESIGNATE



Donald Runnicles
PRINCIPAL GUEST
CONDUCTOR



Vladimir Ashkenazy
CONDUCTOR LAUREATE



Andrew Haveron
CONCERTMASTER
SUPPORTED BY VICKI OLSSON

FIRST VIOLINS

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

SECOND VIOLINS

Kirsty Hilton
PRINCIPAL
Marina Marsden
PRINCIPAL
Emma Jezek
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
Victoria Bihun
Rebecca Gill
Emma Hayes
Shuti Huang
Wendy Kong
Benjamin Li
Nicole Masters
Maja Verunica
Brian Hong†
Marianne Edwards
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Alice Bartsch

VIOLAS

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

CELLOS

Umberto Clerici
PRINCIPAL
Julian Smiles*
GUEST PRINCIPAL
Leah Lynn
ACTING ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Timothy Nankervis
Christopher Pidcock
Adrian Wallis
Miles Mullin-Chiverst
Paul Stender*
Catherine Hewgill
PRINCIPAL
Kristy Conrau
Fenella Gill
David Wickham

DOUBLE BASSES

Kees Boersma
PRINCIPAL
David Campbell
Steven Larson
Richard Lynn
Jaan Pallandi
Benjamin Ward
Alex Henery
PRINCIPAL

FLUTES

Joshua Batty
PRINCIPAL
Emma Sholl
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Carolyne Harris
Anais Benoit*
GUEST PRINCIPAL PICCOLO
Kim Falconer*
ACTING PRINCIPAL PICCOLO

OBOES

Diana Doherty
PRINCIPAL
Shefali Pryor
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Alexandre Oguey
PRINCIPAL COR ANGLAIS
Eve Osborn*
Callum Hogant
David Papp

CLARINETS

James Burke
PRINCIPAL
Francesco Celata
ACTING PRINCIPAL
Christopher Tingay
Alexander Morris
PRINCIPAL BASS CLARINET
Richard Shaw†
Jon Craven*

BASSOONS

Todd Gibson-Cornish
PRINCIPAL
Matthew Wilkie
PRINCIPAL EMERITUS
Fiona McNamara
Noriko Shimada
PRINCIPAL CONTRABASSOON
Jordy Meulenbroekst
Melissa Woodroffe*

HORNS

Ben Jacks
PRINCIPAL
Geoffrey O'Reilly
PRINCIPAL 3RD
Euan Harvey
Marnie Sebire
Rachel Silver
Emily Newham†
Ysolt Clark*
Katy Grisdale*
Jenny McLeod-Sneyd*

TRUMPETS

Brent Grapes*
GUEST PRINCIPAL
Owen Morris*
GUEST PRINCIPAL
Anthony Heinrichs
David Johnson*
Fletcher Cox†
David Elton
PRINCIPAL
Paul Goodchild
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL

BASS TRUMPET

Scott Kinmont
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
TROMBONE

TROMBONES

Ronald Prussing
PRINCIPAL
Christopher Harris
PRINCIPAL BASS TROMBONE
Dale Vail†
Nick Byrne

TUBA

Steve Rossé
PRINCIPAL
Marcel Kocbek-Malepa*

TIMPANI

Mark Robinson
ACTING PRINCIPAL
Tim Brigden*

PERCUSSION

Rebecca Lagos
PRINCIPAL
Timothy Constable
Philip South*

HARP

Natalie Wong*

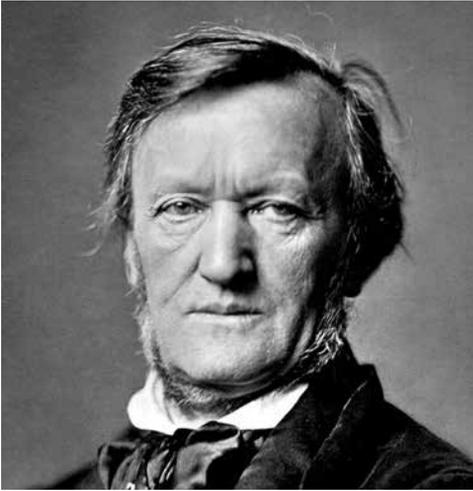
* = GUEST MUSICIAN

° = CONTRACT MUSICIAN

† = SYDNEY SYMPHONY FELLOW

Grey = PERMANENT MEMBER OF
THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA NOT APPEARING IN
THIS CONCERT

ABOUT THE MUSIC



Richard Wagner

It's an old story, and one which Richard Wagner no doubt thought applied to himself: a creative young person turns up out of nowhere with some great ideas but runs into the brick wall of convention and conservatism, until after much heartache the old guard reluctantly acknowledges the new ideas and welcomes the newcomer as a genius. It could be the story of Stravinsky's writing *The Rite of Spring*, but it's pretty much the nub of Wagner's only comedy *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg* – though clocking in at four and a half hours it's a bit more complicated than that. But not much.

The opera, which premiered in 1868, is set in 16th-century Nuremberg, where the 'mastersingers' are artisans of various kinds – shoemakers, goldsmiths, bakers – but all members of a guild which makes them eligible to enter the city's song contest and to vote on its winner. A young stranger, Walther von Stolzing arrives and is immediately smitten with love for Eva, who is to marry the winner of the contest to be held the next day. His efforts to join the guild fail at first, as his songs do not conform to its strict rules. Thanks to the efforts of the widowed shoemaker Hans Sachs (the likely winner of the competition, but decently realising Walther and Eva's love for each other) the forces of reaction are laughed off the stage, and Walther's new song wins.

The Prelude to Act I of Wagner's opera doesn't evoke 16th century music, but opens with brightly heraldic music in C major. More passionate music follows, suggesting the love-interest in the plot, while the Mastersingers themselves are evoked in a grand march, that is later played, faster and lighter, to depict their apprentices. Between marches comes another episode of music full of romantic yearning, and then – where Wagner shows a debt to Bach – a number of themes are combined in intensely sophisticated counterpoint, including a reference to the 'Prize Song' with which our hero, Walther, successfully challenges the Mastersingers' hidebound rules.

An even older story is the one where a society convinces itself that it needs to sacrifice a pure innocent to a supernatural power to ensure that the sun will come up next morning, or that the snow will finally melt. That is pretty much the nub of Stravinsky's third and most famous ballet, composed for the Ballets Russes season in Paris in 1913.

The sacrifice of the virgin isn't the only myth in this piece – there is the story of its first performance. The trouble started as soon as the solo bassoon began its plaintive version of a Lithuanian folksong. Heckling from the gallery of the new Théâtre des Champs-Élysées spread down into the stalls. The noise soon became so loud that when Stravinsky fled backstage, he found the choreographer Nijinsky standing on a chair in the wings shouting directions at the dancers who could no longer hear the orchestra. The theatre's electrician frantically flicked the house lights on and off to try to settle the audience; there was a brawl and the police had to be called. The orchestra – which had had 16 rehearsals under conductor Pierre Monteux – soldiered on and gave what those who could hear it describe as a fine performance.

In 1910, Stravinsky later claimed, he had a vision of 'wise elders, seated in a circle watching a young girl dancing herself to death...to propitiate the god of spring'. In due course he drafted a scenario (not much more than this simple idea) with the designer Nicholas Roerich. (They later fought over whose idea it was). The work is, as scholar Stephen Walsh puts it, 'hardly a "story" ballet with characters [but] a strict 'liturgical' sequence, a sequence which, we understand, will always happen this way, with different participants but the same meaning'. Incidentally, Stravinsky's Russian title for the work is better translated as *Holy Spring* rather *The Rite of Spring* and its subtitle is 'Scenes from Pagan Russia'.

The composer later said that he was 'the vessel through which *The Rite* passed', and the sketches do show that many of his ideas sprang fully formed onto the page. But Stravinsky's brilliant orchestration and harmony could not have existed without the music of Glinka and Rimsky-Korsakov; Debussy was right to call it 'primitive music with all modern conveniences'.



Igor Stravinsky during his 1961 visit to Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Moreover, Stravinsky long maintained that the opening bassoon melody, whose timbre suggests traditional dudki or reed pipes, was the only folk tune in the score but the publication of the composer's sketchbooks in 1969 showed that he had copied out a number of tunes which found their way, if often disguised, into the score. As Walsh



Martha Graham as the Chosen One in the 1930 New York production of *The Rite of Spring*.

says 'what nobody seems to have done before *The Rite of Spring* was to take dissonant, irregularly formed musical "objects" of very brief extent and release their latent energy by firing them off at one another like so many particles in an atomic accelerator'. The 'cells' that Stravinsky creates out of the simple rhythmic essences of folk tunes are repeated, distorted by the addition of extra beats, interrupted by contrasting cells, the ultimate abstraction of Stravinsky's early 'Russian' style.

The riot at its premiere made *The Rite of Spring* into the stuff of legend – Richard Taruskin says that Stravinsky 'spent the rest of his long life telling lies about it'. But while the event has been described as modern music's 'heroic moment' it was not a simple matter of the score's being so wonderfully radical, like Walther's song, that it caused a fracas among Philistines. Debussy's *Jeux* had been booed a couple of weeks before, and Nijinsky, still suspect for his erotic dancing of Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* was the choreographer, despite the task being clearly beyond him. Jean Cocteau described the choreography as 'automaton-like monotony' and it was this that caused offence. A year later Pierre Monteux conducted a concert performance of the music in Paris, and Stravinsky experienced the success 'such as composers rarely enjoy' as he was carried through the streets like a sporting hero on the shoulders of his audience.

Gordon Kerry © 2020

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