

16 – 19 June 2021
Sydney Town Hall

BEETHOVEN & BRAHMS

Presenting Partner



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«SYMPHONY»
«ORCHESTRA»

Principal Partner



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PATRON Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC

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.

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, followed by David Robertson as Chief Conductor from 2014 to 2019. Australia-born Simone Young has been the Orchestra’s Chief Conductor Designate since 2020. She commences her role as Chief Conductor in 2022 as the Orchestra returns to the renewed Concert Hall of the Sydney Opera House.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra’s concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres, reflecting the Orchestra’s versatility and diverse appeal. Its award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, and the Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

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THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

Wednesday 16 June, 8pm
Thursday 17 June, 1.30pm
Friday 18 June, 8pm
Saturday 19 June, 8pm
Sydney Town Hall

BEETHOVEN & BRAHMS

NICHOLAS CARTER conductor
PIERS LANE piano
ANDREW HAVERON violin
UMBERTO CLERICI cello

HARRY SDRAULIG (born 1992)
*Torrent**

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)
Concerto for violin, cello and piano in C major, Op.56

Allegro
Largo
Rondo alla Polacca

INTERVAL

FRANZ SCHREKER (1878-1934)
Intermezzo, Op.8
Third movement from the *Romantic Suite*

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)
Symphony No.3 in F major, Op.90

Allegro con brio
Andante
Poco allegretto
Allegro

*Harry Sdraulig's *Torrent* was made possible through the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's 50 Fanfares Project and was commissioned by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, supported by the Sharon & Anthony Lee Foundation.

ESTIMATED DURATIONS
8 minutes, 33 minutes,
interval 20 minutes,
6 minutes, 33 minutes.

The concert will conclude
at approximately 10pm
(Wednesday, Friday,
Saturday), 3.30pm
(Thursday).

COVER IMAGE
Photo by Keith Saunders

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WELCOME

PRESENTING PARTNER



Abercrombie & Kent

Hello and welcome to this June performance for the 2021 Masters Series. Tonight's program offers a charming balance of thrillingly dramatic and classically romantic work, sure to delight all of us who hear this performance.

Beethoven's Triple Concerto is the perfect piece to showcase the illustrious talents of tonight's soloists, with celebrated concertmaster Andrew Haveron demonstrating his dazzling talent as violinist, combined with the talents of Piers Lane as pianist and cellist Umberto Clerici. Much like a perfectly planned escape, this spectacularly balanced concerto brings together the individual talents of these artists in an unforgettable experience that brings together many riches.

Contrasting Beethoven's music, Brahms' Third Symphony seems more of a romantic idyll, reminiscent of afternoons on the Rhine. The symphony's musical theme – captured in the recurring use of the notes F-A-F as musical reference of the motto *Frei aber froh* (free but happy) – lends itself to a dreamy nostalgia, much like a fond reminiscence of a favourite trip and its memorable moments in the regions of the world we have explored.

As the landscape of travel continues to change and evolve, we can start planning for future journeys both close to home and further afield. Whatever your perfect adventure, here at A&K we are in the business of crafting travel experiences that, like a remarkable symphony performance, stay with you long after you return home.

Enjoy tonight's performance.

Abercrombie & Kent Australia

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

NICHOLAS CARTER conductor

Now in his final season as Chief Conductor of the Stadttheater Klagenfurt and the Kärntner Sinfonieorchester, Nicholas Carter will take up the Chief Conductor position of the Konzert Theater Bern from the beginning of the 2021-2022 season. In addition to his conducting duties there, Nicholas will also assume the role of Opera Director.

His tenure in Klagenfurt has seen Nicholas lead three new productions per season and appearing regularly in the orchestra's concert series. His repertoire there has included widely celebrated productions of *Tannhäuser*, *Pelleas et Melisande*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Rusalka*, *Elektra*, and *La Clemenza di Tito* among others.

In recent seasons, Nicholas's guest engagements have included the Wiener Staatsoper (*Die Fledermaus*), return visits to the Radio Symphonieorchester Berlin, Hong Kong Philharmonic, the Dallas Symphony, Orchestre Metropolitain (Montreal) plus invitations to Glyndebourne Opera (*Entführung aus dem Serail*), the Seoul Philharmonic and Atlanta Symphony, which were all postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Born in Melbourne, Nicholas enjoys an ongoing relationship with all the major Australian orchestras, particularly with the Adelaide Symphony, where he served as Principal Conductor from 2016-2019.

The 2021-22 season will see his New York Metropolitan Opera debut with Brett Dean's *Hamlet*.



Nicholas Carter
Photo: Annette Koroll

PIERS LANE piano

London-based Australian pianist Piers Lane has a worldwide reputation as an engaging, searching and highly versatile performer. Five times soloist at the BBC Proms, his wide-ranging concerto repertoire exceeds one hundred works, leading to engagements with conductors like Sir Andrew Davis, Andrew Litton, Vassily Sinaisky, Yan Pascal Tortelier and Brett Dean. He has given recitals across the globe, performed three concerti at Carnegie Hall, and world premieres of Carl Vine's second Piano Concerto and Double Piano Concerto *Implacable Gifts*, both written for him.

His extensive discography for Hyperion includes much admired recordings of rare romantic piano concertos, eleven volumes of piano quintets with the Goldner String Quartet, many CDs with Tasmin Little and Michael Collins for Chandos and further solo and chamber CDs for EMI, Phillips, Dutton, Unicorn Kanchana and ABC Classics.

Piers Lane is Artistic Director of the Sydney International Piano Competition and was Artistic Director of the Australian Festival of Chamber Music from 2007 to 2017. He has written and presented over 100 programmes for BBC Radio 3.

Piers is an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for distinguished services to the arts, an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music and holds Honorary Doctorates from Griffith and James Cook Universities.



Piers Lane
Photo: Keith Saunders

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ANDREW HAVERON violin

Andrew Haveron has established himself as one of the most sought-after violinists of his generation. A laureate of some of the most prestigious international violin competitions, Andrew studied in London at the Purcell School and the Royal College of Music.

As a soloist, Andrew has collaborated with conductors such as Sir Colin Davis, Sir Roger Norrington, Jiří Bělohlávek, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, David Robertson and John Wilson, performing a broad range of concertos with many of the UK's finest orchestras. His performance of Walton's Violin Concerto with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 2015 was nominated for a Helpmann Award. Andrew's playing has also been featured on many film and video-game soundtracks.

In 1999 Andrew was appointed first violinist of the internationally acclaimed Brodsky Quartet. The quartet enjoyed barrier-breaking work with Elvis Costello, Björk, Paul McCartney and Sting. Andrew has also appeared with numerous other chamber groups such as the Nash and Hebrides ensembles, the Logos Chamber Group, Kathy Selby and Ensemble Q.

In 2007 Andrew became concertmaster of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, broadcasting frequently on BBC Radio and enjoying many appearances at the BBC Proms. Joining the Philharmonia Orchestra in 2012 Andrew also led the 'World Orchestra for Peace' at the request of its conductor Valery Gergiev, and again in 2018 at the request of Donald Runnicles. He has also been the leader of 'The John Wilson Orchestra' since its inception. In 2013, Andrew started in his current position of concertmaster of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

UMBERTO CLERICI cello

With a career spanning more than 20 years as a cello soloist, orchestral musician, and now emerging conductor, Umberto Clerici is swiftly gaining a reputation as an artist with a diverse and multifaceted career.

As a cello soloist, Umberto made his debut at the age of 17 performing Haydn's D Major cello concerto in Japan, and has since appeared with an array of renowned orchestras internationally including the Vienna Philharmonic, St. Petersburg Philharmonic and Russian State Orchestra of Moscow. In 2003 he made his debut at the Salzburg Festival and in 2012 he performed Tchaikovsky's "Rococo variations" conducted by Valery Gergiev. Umberto has performed on the stages of the world's most prestigious concert halls including New York's Carnegie Hall, Vienna's Musikverein, and the great Shostakovich Hall of St Petersburg.

Umberto was Principal Cello of the Sydney Symphony from 2014-2021 following time as Principal Cellist of the Royal Opera House in Turin.

Future conducting highlights include returns to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Canberra Symphony as Artist in Residence and debuts with the Melbourne and Queensland Symphony Orchestras, as well as performances with the Izmir and Istanbul State Orchestras, Hong Kong Sinfonietta and Orchestra della Valle d'Aosta.



Andrew Haveron
Photo: Nick Bowers



Umberto Clerici
Photo: Jay Patel

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Harry Sdraulig writes about *Torrent*

Torrent begins with immediate, unrelenting forward motion. Flurries disperse among the winds and strings, supported by bold, fanfare-like interjections from the brass and percussion. But before long a second theme emerges—one of complete rhythmic simplicity and contrast, first heard in the *pizzicato* strings and then passed to the woodwinds. After a brief return of the opening flourish, a languid oboe solo heralds the beginning of a gentle, slow intermezzo. Muted brass and vibraphone accompany an extended violin solo, eventually entwined with lyrical responses from the piccolo. However, the relative peace of this passage proves short-lived – trumpets and snare drum drive towards an extended recapitulation in which the second theme is entirely transformed to make for a martial, tumultuous conclusion.

This work was made possible through the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's 50 Fanfares Project and was commissioned by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, supported by the Sharon & Anthony Lee Foundation.

Beethoven's major works from the first years of the 19th century include the *Eroica* Symphony, the 'Razumovsky' Quartets and the *Kreutzer Sonata* – all pieces in which the composer has radically expanded the scale of a conventional genre, and developed a powerful rhetoric with which to fill it. The Triple Concerto has something of the same scale: its opening movement is the longest in any of Beethoven's concertos, but the rhetoric is something else again. The work is the cause of perplexity or even embarrassment for some commentators precisely because of its geniality and tunefulness, its lack of conflict, and because, with its team of soloists, it formally seems to hark back to the *sinfonia concertante* of the Classical period (Mozart and Haydn each produced one example) or the Baroque *concerto grosso*. In reaction, this in turn has led to performances that have tried to make the piece into the weighty Beethovenian masterpiece it is felt that it should be. One of the most perceptive recent appraisals was made by critic, Tom Service, who points out that it is not really a concerto, in that there is little or no dramatic dialogue between soloists and orchestra, but rather 'an amplified piano trio, with the orchestra beefing up the textures but often reduced to no more than generic accompaniment'. This is merely to describe, rather than dismiss the piece, and certainly not to say that those beefed-up textures are not glorious in themselves.

It begins with one of those Beethovenian gambits where soft active motifs suddenly 'inflate' to create big sound before the solo trio takes up the major thematic material – notably first one strings and then using the piano as a melody instrument, before unleashing the orchestra once again. This establishes the pattern of the movement, where more and more of the material, especially in the extensive central development section, is entrusted to the trio; there Beethoven creates intricate contrapuntal sections, and moves to chromatic and minor-key passages that make the return of the sunny C major opening material more than satisfying.



Harry Sdraulig



Beethoven in 1802

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Last year, thanks to the generosity of our Sydney Symphony family, we were able to find new ways to keep the healing power of music alive for our community in need.

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**“A huge and heartfelt
thank you for standing
by us! Your help will allow
us to continue as an
Orchestra that can serve
and inspire everyone.”**

– Andrew Haveron, Concertmaster



ABOUT THE MUSIC

The slow movement in A flat major (a relatively distant key from C) is a short and sublimely lyrical piece, spun out of a melody given to the cello at the top of its range. The strings then play a soulful duet while the piano weaves delicate bell tones around them. Beethoven varies, rather than develops, his material, whose trajectory is downward, leading to quiet, dark repeated chords from the orchestra. As so often in Beethoven (compare, for instance, the transition from third to final movement in the Fifth Symphony) the music seems to retreat into silence as it transforms into something new: in this case a Polish dance tune (*polacca*) in 3/4 announced by the cello. This forms the basis for a brilliant rondo, where the theme returns after a series of contrasting episodes, including an Allegro in 2/4, which is swept away as the music returns to the joyous *polacca* material.

Franz Schreker died a broken man at the age of 55. The son of an aristocratic Catholic mother and a Jewish father, his last years were beset by Nazi persecution. Two of his operas were disrupted or cancelled by right-wing agitators, and in 1932 he was dismissed by the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin where he had been an inspiring teacher of composition since 1920. He was then dismissed by the Prussian Academy of the Arts. He began to learn English with a view to emigrating to the United States but suffered a fatal stroke in December 1934. His works were banned as 'entartete Musik' (degenerate music) during the Nazi period, and were only revived as recently as the 1970s.

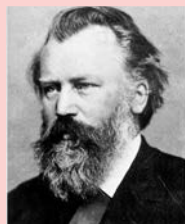
His early Romantic Suite for strings dates from 1900 and includes this ravishing intermezzo, where shining high-lying lyrical music unfolds gently, is briefly supplanted by faster folkdance-inspired material before coming back to rest in the serenity of the opening.

Brahms spent the summer of 1883 in the German spa-town of Wiesbaden. There he produced his Third Symphony in a mere four months. It is the shortest of Brahms' symphonies, but for this obsessively self-critical composer that was almost miraculous. Hans Richter, who conducted the first performance in Vienna, was perhaps a little over the top in calling it 'Brahms' *Eroica*', and yet it is a work that essays many emotional states in a highly dramatic fashion, and leads to a conclusion of great peace.

Thirty years earlier, Brahms had contributed the 'F-A-E Sonata', a work jointly composed with Albert Dietrich and Robert Schumann in honour of violinist Joseph Joachim. The letters stand for Joachim's personal motto 'frei aber einsam' (free but lonely) and provide a musical motif that unites the work. Brahms responded that his own motto was 'frei aber froh' (free but happy). The musical version of this, F-A-F, dominates the Third Symphony, which was written partly as a 'proffered hand' or gesture of reconciliation by Brahms, who had fallen out with Joachim over the latter's divorce some years earlier.



Franz Schreker in 1912



Brahms in the 1880s

The motif provides the assertive opening gesture, where it is 'spelled' F-A flat-F: in F major, the A flat is chromatic, thus providing a dramatic dissonance at the work's outset. This pattern - the first, third and eighth degrees of the scale - can be found throughout the whole work, as melodic feature, accompanying figure, or seemingly inconsequential detail. But the major-minor tension pervades the work, giving it its moments of 'heroic' drama. The work's dramatic unity is also affected by its overall tonal plan: the outer movements are, naturally, centered on the home key of F, while the inner movements focus on its polar opposite C. This simple architecture is decorated at the more local level by much more surprising key relations. The F major/A flat opening is a case in point; the first subject, or thematic group is a surging music in F major, but the second, a serene tune sounded by clarinet and bassoon, is in the distant key of A major. A short development leads to the expected recapitulation of the opening material; more important, though is Brahms gradual lowering of the temperature to conclude the movement - as he does with all four in this work - softly and calmly.

The *Andante* takes up the pastoral sounds of clarinet and bassoon, alternating wind textures with quiet lower-string passages at first, and such textures moderate any impassioned outbursts. The third movement is effectively a *minuet*. Its main theme, characterised by gentle dissonance on the downbeats, is sung first by the cellos. After a contrasting central section, the opening material is recapitulated but in completely different instrumentation. The dramatic focus of the symphony, however, is the finale, where assertive, often terse rhythmic ideas contend with athletic, long-breathed melodies. After boisterous heroics, the music reaches a state of repose where, against rippling strings, the winds restate the opening F-A flat-F moment, now purged of any angst.

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Elizabeth Neville
Cello
Bob Magid OAM & Ruth Magid Chair
Alexandre Oguey
Principal Cor Anglais
Mackenzie's Friend Chair
Mark Robinson
Acting Principal Timpani
Sylvia Rosenblum Chair in memory of Rodney Rosenblum
Rachel Silver
Horn
Sue Milliken AO Chair
Emma Sholl
Associate Principal Flute
Robert & Janet Constable Chair
Matthew Wilkie
Principal Emeritus Bassoon
Nelson Meers Foundation Chair
Justin Williams
Assistant Principal Viola
Robert & L Alison Carr Chair

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