

27 May 2021  
Sydney Town Hall

# ADAMS & SHOSTAKOVICH



Presenting Partner

CREDIT SUISSE



SYDNEY  
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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# ADAMS & SHOSTAKOVICH

**FABIAN RUSSELL** conductor

**MICHAEL BAKRŇČEV** (born 1989)  
*Hustle*

**JOHN ADAMS** (born 1947)  
*Shaker Loops*  
*Shaking and Trembling –*  
*Hymning Slews –*  
*Loops and Verses –*  
*A Final Shaking*

**DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH** (1906-1975)  
*Symphony No.1 in F minor, Op.10*  
*Allegretto – Allegro non troppo*  
*Allegro*  
*Lento –*  
*Allegro molto*

**ESTIMATED DURATIONS**

4 minutes, 25 minutes,  
28 minutes

The concert will conclude  
at approximately 8.00pm.

**COVER IMAGE**

Photo by Denis Zalevskiy

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Michael BakrŇčev's *Hustle* was made possible through the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's 50 Fanfares Project and was commissioned by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, supported by Geoff Stearn.

# WELCOME

## PRESENTING PARTNER



**Credit Suisse, Premier Partner of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra welcomes you to Adams & Shostakovich.**

Tonight's program features John Adams' Shaker Loops, Dimitri Shostakovich's Symphony No.1, and the world premiere of Michael Bakrnčev's Hustle, a work from the Sydney Symphony's 50 Fanfares commissioning project. Michael Bakrnčev is a young multi-award-winning composer in his first ten years of practice and a graduate of The Melbourne Conservatorium.

Credit Suisse is proud to support young talent through our partnership with the Sydney Symphony. This year, we celebrate 20 years of the Sydney Symphony Fellowship program, alongside astounding young Australian musicians as they develop the skills to build their music careers. Over 80% of the Fellowship alumni are now employed in orchestras around the world with many also securing permanent positions in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. For Credit Suisse, it has been truly amazing to see the impact of this partnership and we are looking forward to being part of the 20th anniversary celebrations in July 2021.

Thank you for joining the Sydney Symphony tonight, and we hope you enjoy this performance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Gibb".

**Richard Gibb**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Credit Suisse Australia

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **FABIAN RUSSELL** conductor

Fabian Russell is a multi-award-winning conductor, artistic director, pedagogue, orchestral musician and solo performer.

Orchestras he has conducted include the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Victorian Opera, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra and Orchestra Victoria. He has also served as Associate Conductor of the Australian Youth Orchestra for twenty six seasons and is currently Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of The Orchestra Project that he founded in 2002.

Fabian has a particular interest in commissioning new music and has conducted the Australian premieres of more than thirty works by composers such as Gordon Kerry, Brett Dean, James Ledger, Mary Finsterer, Harry Sdraulig and Kate Moore.

Born in Sydney, Fabian had a twenty-year career as an orchestral musician including Guest Principal Tuba of the Sydney Symphony for three years from the age of nineteen. In 1993 he was appointed to the MSO where he remained until the end of its 2006 season, as well as performing as a soloist across Australia. He was awarded the Elton John Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Scholarship in 1999.

In 2012 Fabian was the recipient of a Sir Winston Churchill Fellowship to research international orchestral training programs. In 2014 he received a Helpmann Award nomination and a Green Room Award for Outstanding Conductor for his critically acclaimed performances of *Nixon in China* for Victorian Opera. Later this year Fabian will conduct Franz Schubert's Singspiel *Friends of Salamanca* also for Victorian Opera, as well as engagements with the ASO, AYO and The Orchestra Project.



Fabian Russell  
Photo: Pete Walker

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

Michael Bakrnčev's family migrated to Australia in the 1960s and brought with them a rich tapestry of Macedonian folklore, religion, traditional cuisine, dance and, of course, music. As a student of Gerard Brophy, and later Elliott Gyger and Brenton Broadstock, Michael's passion and understanding of Macedonian folk music began to intertwine with modern 20th-century classical music practice. This inherited musical landscape has become part of his musical DNA.

He writes:

*Hustle was composed during a period of transition working in private corporate development finance and property development - with my family's third-generation company Ruuhm. Musically, it draws direct and indirect inspiration from traditional Macedonian folk music. The intention is to listen to this piece when extra motivation is required.*

*Michael Bakrnčev's Hustle was made possible through the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's 50 Fanfares Project and was commissioned by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, supported by Geoff Stearn*

*Shaker Loops*, John Adams' breakthrough work, is still one of his most popular and performed pieces. It began as a string quartet called *Wavemaker*, an early experiment in what has come to be called minimalism – that is, music that grows out of a web of constantly-repeated motifs. But as Adams candidly admits, 'my technique lagged behind my inspiration' and some months after an unsuccessful premiere, he salvaged material from the work, and recast it for string septet. That, as he says, adds 'sonic mass and the potential for more acoustical power', he expanded it to become the four-movement work we know as *Shaker Loops*.

The word 'loops' in the title refers to the now-obsolete technique of making short loops of magnetic recording tape to create endlessly repeating patterns; Adams, like Steve Reich and Philip Glass, creates analogous musical fragments repeated here by the instruments. The word 'Shaker' refers to a millenarian Christian sect known formally as the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing that was founded in the UK but established itself in the US in the 1780s; 'shaker' was a derogatory term that grew out of the believers' ecstatic movements during worship. While Adams' piece does admit a certain meditative calm in the second of the four linked movements, he was struck overall by a 'vision of these otherwise pious and industrious souls caught up in the ecstatic frenzy of a dance that culminated in an epiphany of physical and spiritual transcendence. This dynamic, almost electrically charged element, so out of place in the orderly mechanistic universe of Minimalism, gave the music its *raison d'être* and ultimately led to the full realisation of the piece.' *Shaker Loops* can now be played either by a septet or full string orchestra.



Michael Bakrnčev  
Photo: Matthew Rigby



John Adams  
Photo: Christine Acilino

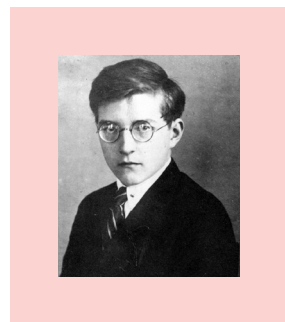
# ABOUT THE MUSIC

Shostakovich's breakthrough piece, the First Symphony, began life as a Conservatoire graduation piece; it can fairly be said that few university composition portfolios take on a life of their own as decisively as this work. Within a few years it had found itself an international publisher, and had been conducted not only by Nikolai Malko (who gave its premiere in Leningrad in 1926) but by Bruno Walter. (It certainly does not diminish the achievement of the work to note a few features which proved a little over-ambitious for the teenage composer to control: notably, its strikingly eclectic style, and its slightly overloaded harmony, with virtually every main melody so sinuously chromatic it can be hard to tell them apart.)

Compared with Mahler, Brahms or Beethoven, the opening perky little duet for trumpet and bassoon certainly qualifies as a most unpretentious beginning to a symphonic career. Several disjointed fragments finally give way to an appropriately symphonic theme in the clarinet, over a muffled tramping in the lower strings; even that soon yields to a self-consciously jolly cabaret waltz in the flute. The introductory fragments receive as much attention in the development section as the supposed main themes; indeed the movement ends with the introductory trumpet and bassoon music, in the more sombre colours of clarinet and cellos.

The *Scherzo* is more orthodox. (Shostakovich had indeed had a few 'dry runs' at the form: his Op.1 and Op.7 are scherzos for orchestra.) The main theme still has plenty of chromatic notes, but this time they ornament an essentially diatonic outline. Shostakovich's own instrument, the piano, makes a few sparkling appearances, and unforgettably dominates the movement's close. One of the *Scherzo*'s most curious features is in fact barely audible. The central *Trio* section is notated in triple time, but sounds as if, like the rest of the movement, it is in quadruple time – the listener may just be able to make out that the accompanying triangle and snare drum mark out every third note of the theme. This might seem scant reason for a change of time signature. However, it does enable Shostakovich to get maximum academic value from combining the main and trio themes towards the end of the movement, by adding a purely illusory degree of difficulty – and in a graduation piece that is perhaps justification enough.

Again the third movement's main theme (first presented by the solo oboe) is strikingly chromatic; it is eventually juxtaposed with an important rhythmic fragment dominated by four repeated notes. The movement's harmony only comes to rest on the final chord, for divided strings; a snare drum roll brings in the *Finale* without a break. There is a relatively slow introduction, leading to the urgent main theme divided between two clarinets; the movement's increasingly hectic progress is halted for a timpani solo, recalling the slow movement's rhythmic fragment, before regaining its momentum. The final pages feature a Mahlerian clash between major and minor modes – an appropriate ambiguity at the beginning of Shostakovich's career.



A young Dmitri  
Shostakovich

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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.

We went digital and performed online for audiences everywhere – for free! More importantly, you helped us support all 100 musicians of the Orchestra while concert halls were closed.

As our musicians joyfully take the stage and perform for you today, we are reminded that nothing will ever replace the thrill of experiencing a live orchestra.

Your support will help us rebuild the future of music.

**Please consider a tax-deductible donation by 30 June.**

**[sydneysymphony.com/appeal](https://sydneysymphony.com/appeal)**  
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by us! Your help will allow  
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and inspire everyone.”**

**– Andrew Haveron, Concertmaster**



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Every gift makes a difference. We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of our community, including those who wish to remain anonymous.

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Kees Boersma  
Emma Dunch CEO  
Catherine Hewgill

The Hon. Justice AJ Meagher  
Sam Meers AO  
Karen Moses *Deputy Chair*  
Dr John Vallance  
Geoff Wilson

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Concertmaster  
*Vicki Olsson Chair*  
**Joshua Batty**  
Principal Flute  
*Karen Moses Chair*  
**Harry Bennetts**  
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*Judy & Sam Weiss Chair*  
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*Sylvia & the late Sol Levi Chair*  
**Kees Boersma**  
Principal Double Bass  
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*Roslyn Packer AC & Gretel Packer AM Chair*  
**James Burke**  
Principal Clarinet  
*Oranges & Sardines Foundation Chair*  
**Nick Byrne**  
Trombone  
*Robertson Family Chair*  
**Anne-Louise Comerford**  
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*Christine Bishop Chair*  
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*John & Jane Morschel Chair*  
**Lerida Delbridge**  
Assistant Concertmaster  
*Simon Johnson Chair*  
**Diana Doherty**  
Principal Oboe  
*John C Conde AO Chair*  
**Todd Gibson-Cornish**  
Principal Bassoon  
*Nelson Meers Foundation Chair*  
**Rebecca Gill**  
Violin  
*In memory of Reg & Jeannette Lam-Po-Tang Chair*  
**Carolyn Harris**  
Flute  
*The late Dr Barry Landa Chair*  
**Jane Hazelwood**  
Viola  
*Bob & Julie Clampett Chair in memory of Carolyn Clampett*

**Claire Herrick**  
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**Catherine Hewgill**  
Principal Cello  
*The Hon. Justice AJ & Mrs Fran Meagher Chair*  
**Kirsty Hilton**  
Principal Second Violin  
*Drs Keith & Eileen Ong Chair*  
**Scott Kinmont**  
Associate Principal Trombone  
*Audrey Blunden Chair*  
**Emily Long**  
Violin  
*Dr Margot Harris Chair*  
**Leah Lynn**  
Assistant Principal Cello  
*Sydney Symphony Orchestra Vanguard Chair (lead support from Seamus R Quick)*  
**Nicole Masters**  
Violin  
*Nora Goodridge OAM Chair*  
**Fiona McNamara**  
Bassoon  
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**Timothy Nankervis**  
Cello  
*Dr Rebecca Chin & Family Chair*  
**Elizabeth Neville**  
Cello  
*Bob Magid OAM & Ruth Magid Chair*  
**Alexandre Oguey**  
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*Mackenzie's Friend Chair*  
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Acting Principal Timpani  
*Sylvia Rosenblum Chair in memory of Rodney Rosenblum*  
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Horn  
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**Emma Sholl**  
Associate Principal Flute  
*Robert & Janet Constable Chair*  
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*Nelson Meers Foundation Chair*  
**Justin Williams**  
Assistant Principal Viola  
*Robert & L Alison Carr Chair*

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