

27 March
Sydney Town Hall

HAYDN & GABRIELI



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Sydney Symphony Orchestra

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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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Saturday 27 March, 2pm
Sydney Town Hall

HAYDN AND GABRIELI

ANDREW HAVERON director and violin
RONALD PRUSSING speaker and brass
ensemble conductor

GIOVANNI GABRIELI (c.1556–1612)

Sacrae symphoniae (1597):

Canzon per sonar primi toni

SAMUEL BARBER (1910–1981)

Mutations from Bach

MORTEN LAURIDSEN (born 1943)

O magnum mysterium

GABRIELI

Canzon per sonar in eco duodecimi toni

JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)

Seven Last Words of our Redeemer from the Cross Hob.XX/1

Introduzione: Adagio

Sonata 1: Largo

Sonata 2: Grave e cantabile

Sonata 3: Grave

Sonata 4: Largo

Sonata 5: Adagio

Sonata 6: Lento

Sonata 7: Largo –

Il Terremoto: Presto e con tutta la forza

ESTIMATED DURATIONS

6 minutes, 3 minutes,

6 minutes, 4 minutes,

interval 20 minutes,

67 minutes.

COVER IMAGE

Andrew Haveron, Sydney

Symphony Concertmaster

Photo: Nick Bowers

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ANDREW HAVERON director and violin
Sydney Symphony Concertmaster,
Vicki Olsson Chair

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. With his unrivalled versatility, he is a highly respected soloist, chamber musician and concertmaster.

As a soloist, Andrew has collaborated with conductors such as Sir Colin Davis, Sir Roger Norrington, Jiří Bělohlávek, Stanislaw Skrowachewski, David Robertson and John Wilson, performing a broad range of the well-known and less familiar 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, including Disney's 'Fantasia' game, which includes his performance of Vivaldi's Four Seasons with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields.

In 1999 Andrew was appointed first violinist of the internationally acclaimed Brodsky Quartet. A busy schedule saw the quartet perform and broadcast in their unique style all over the world. Amassing a repertoire of almost 300 works, they collaborated with outstanding artists and commissioned many new works from today's composers. Also famed for their iconic 'cross-genre' projects, 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.

Andrew is also in great demand as a concertmaster and director and has worked with all the major symphony orchestras in the UK and many further afield. In 2007 he became concertmaster of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, broadcasting frequently on BBC Radio and enjoying many appearances at the BBC Proms including the famous "Last Night". 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. In 2019 Andrew appeared with the London Symphony Orchestra under Sir Simon Rattle, and in recitals around Australia with pianists Anna Goldsworthy, Piers Lane and Simon Tedeschi.

Andrew Haveron plays a 1757 Guadagnini violin, generously loaned to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra by Vicki Olsson.



Andrew Haveron
Photo: Nick Bowers

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Baroque music was frequently tailored to the physical environment in which it was to be performed. In Venice, for instance, composers like Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, and Monteverdi at one time, were employed at the basilica of San Marco. They were inspired by the building's space and shape to develop a distinctive polychoral style, where groups of voices and or instruments placed in different parts of the church, such as the choir lofts that face each other, to create antiphonal, or stereophonic effects. Often, as in the works we hear today, the composer creates the effect of echoes in a vast space. Giovanni Gabrieli was made principal organist at San Marco in 1584, and on the death of his uncle Andrea became principal composer there, a post he held for the next two decades.

Gabrieli's *canzone* don't always specify instrumentation so much as the number of players (these versions are by US composer Tim Higgins), and are usually based on 'recitation tones' – melodic fragments to which certain parts of the Mass were routinely chanted.

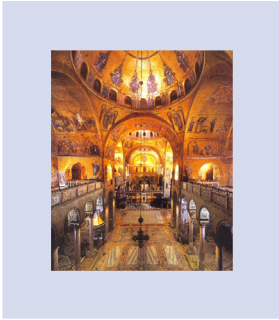
The *Canzon per sonar primi toni* juxtaposes two musical ideas – one in common time based on a contrapuntal elaboration of the theme with its distinctive long-short-short 'canzone' rhythm, and a more dance-like section in triple time.

The *Canzon per sonar in echo duodecimi toni* is formally simpler, beginning with both groups in rhythmic unison but diverging to create the piece's distinctive echo effects.

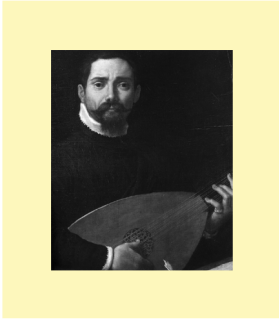
Samuel Barber's short work for brass and timpani was composed in 1967. It is based on a chorale melody published in 1525 set to the words 'O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us ... grant us your peace', the last 'fixed' section of the traditional text of the Mass. Barber includes the words in the printed score where the melody appears.

Joachim Decker was one of the early Lutheran composers to arrange liturgical melodies as 'chorales' for congregational singing, supporting the tune with simple harmony and regular metre. Barber begins with Decker's 1604 version, given here to the horns and tuba. The addition of the brighter trumpets signals the beginning of Bach's harmonisation of the melody from over a century later. His Cantata BWV 23, 'You true God and son of David' was composed in 1723 and formed a part of Bach's job application to the city of Leipzig where he would spend much of his professional life. It concludes with a harmonically more elaborate version of the chorale.

Barber then derives an accompanying texture of overlapping descending scales from Bach's chorale prelude, BWV 619, based on this tune, from the *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book) composed some years earlier. The music returns to the mood of the Cantata, specifically its second-movement recitative where the



The Basilica of San Marco,
Venice



Giovanni Gabrieli



Samuel Barber, 1951

ABOUT THE MUSIC

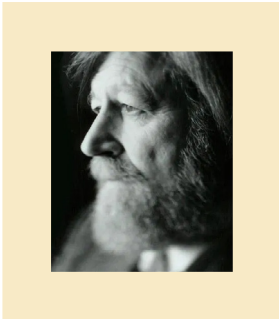
tenor imagines himself one of the blind people healed by Jesus, singing against a slow-movement version of the chorale. Barber has the chorale played by trumpet with the horn having the more expressive melody, before quietly restating Decker’s harmony at the close.

Christ as Lamb of God is associated with his sacrifice at Easter, where *O magnum mysterium* is, of course, associated with Christmas, with the charming (if non-Biblical) image of the animals in the stable gazing at the new-born Saviour. US composer Morten Lauridsen’s setting is characteristically serene and slow moving but builds to a beautiful ecstatic response to the mystery of the Incarnation. Lauridsen, much of whose work is highly mystical if not explicitly religious, composed it in 1993 for the Los Angeles Master Chorale. It was inspired, in part by Francisco de Zurbarán’s painting *Still Life With Lemons, Oranges and a Rose*, a work which, like much 17th century painting is freighted with iconographical symbolism that, as the composer puts it ‘projects an aura of mystery, powerful in its unadorned simplicity, its mystical quality creating an atmosphere of deep contemplation...’ In response, Lauridsen composed a piece that, in his words ‘seems to float, to hover in the air, due to a predominant use of inverted chords, recalling the Renaissance practice of fauxbourdon. Inclusion of the Alleluia descant over sustained pedal tones references yet another characteristic of the era.’

This version for brass was commissioned by the Bay Brass of San Francisco.

Haydn’s *Stabat mater*, a 13-movement work for soloists, choir and orchestra describes the anguish of the Virgin Mary at seeing her son dying on the cross, and asks, on behalf of Christian souls, to share in the agony of Christ and subsequent bliss in heaven. First performed in Vienna in 1768 it became immensely popular, nowhere more so than in Spain. Haydn’s celebrity there eventually led to a commission from ‘a canon of Cádiz Cathedral’ for an orchestral work to accompany the liturgical presentation of the seven last utterances of Christ, as recorded in the Gospels. In the season of Lent in 1787, the ceremony took place in the Oratory of the Holy Cave, an underground church in the city. Presumably on the basis of an eye-witness account, Haydn’s friend and biographer Georg August Griesinger described the occasion:

On the appointed day, the walls, windows, and pillars of the church were hung with black cloth, and only one large lamp hanging from the centre of the roof broke the solemn darkness. At an appointed hour the doors were all locked, and the music began. After a short prelude the bishop ascended the pulpit, pronounced the first of the seven words (or sentences) and delivered a meditation upon it. As soon as this was ended, he left the pulpit, and prostrated himself before the altar. The interval was filled by music. The bishop



Morten Lauridsen



Joseph Haydn

ABOUT THE MUSIC

then in the same way pronounced the second word, then the third, and so on, the orchestra following on the conclusion of each discourse.

Haydn duly composed a set of orchestral ‘sonatas’, his publisher released a string quartet version soon after, most likely with Haydn’s approval if not in his actual arrangement. That formed the basis of a keyboard reduction and some years later Haydn reworked the piece as an oratorio.

From the mid-1770s Haydn’s duties as music director to Prince Nikolaus Eszterházy at his palace, Eszterháza, in rural Hungary involved overseeing a full-time opera company (the Empress Maria Theresa once quipped that she had to go the country to see a decent production). Haydn conducted numerous works and contributed some six operas to the repertoire. The Seven Last Words, unsurprisingly, shows his finely-honed ability to depict emotion and a dramatic scenario.

Haydn prefaces the set with an introduction (*maestoso ed adagio*), which establishes the solemnity of the occasion through a stately pace and the distinctive dotted rhythms that feature frequently in ceremonial music of the period. This nevertheless gains impetus from a pervasive pattern of three repeated quavers and off-beat accents.

The seven sentences that follow presented Haydn with the challenge of sustaining the sombre mood, largely though slow tempos, while not boring the audience. He met the challenge in several ways – by transforming material from movement to movement, sometimes unusual orchestration, and contrasting key and metre. Each of the sentences begins with a motto, or theme that ‘fits’ the Latin text from the Gospel.

The first, ‘Father forgive them for they know not what they do’, presents the theme on oboe and violin, taking up the dotted rhythms and repeated quavers of the introduction. The harmony is often chromatic, with expressive semitonal dissonances, like sighs, on strong beats. At the end, the repeated notes, as if exhausted are quietly stated and separated by rests.

‘Today you will be with me in Paradise’, the second sonata, likewise states the theme in the first violin, with the repeated note pattern, now half speed, forming the accompaniment. Here Christ is addressing one of the thieves crucified with him, assuring him of the comfort of salvation, which Haydn represents in lyrical music that transforms from minor- to major-key harmony.

Addressing his mother and his favourite disciple (St John) in the third piece, Jesus says ‘Woman, behold your son’. Delicately scored, the music is much more fragmented – the repeated-note figure appears at various speeds in isolation, and the theme comes in short motifs in the violins, and is passed to solo flute.



The interior of the Oratory of the Holy Cave, photo Jim Walton

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Jesus’ impassioned cry ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ forms the fourth sonata, a dark minor-key piece redolent of similar moments in opera, punctuated by solo sobbing motifs. Suffused by dotted rhythms and the three-note pattern, it too ends in a gesture of exhaustion.

‘I thirst’, the fifth sonata, begins with a unison cry followed by the dry texture of pizzicato strings over which the two note ‘theme’ migrates from one instrumental group to another. Jesus’ increasing distress is depicted in more and more insistent music, bringing in the sobbing motif from earlier in the work.

The theme of ‘It is finished’, the sixth sonata, is given a fully-scored chorale treatment before breaking into canon, and then offering a contrasting – and an oddly cheerful seeming second theme. Jesus has, after all conquered the world.

The final sentence ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit’ is again operatic at first, and in E flat, a key which composers of the time associated with heroism. Now-familiar motifs return – the repeated-note idea, the etiolated sobbing figure, the dramatic use of sudden dynamic changes. And as Jesus gives up his spirit the music dissolves into fragmentary pizzicato, leading straight into a fast, forceful (and operatic) evocation of the earthquake that, according to Matthew 27:51, signalled Jesus’ death.

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