

22–23 April
Sydney Town Hall

DIANA DOHERTY PERFORMS
**STRAUSS' OBOE
CONCERTO**



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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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2022 CONCERT SEASON

Friday 22 April, 11am
Saturday 23 April, 2pm
Sydney Town Hall

DIANA DOHERTY PERFORMS STRAUSS' OBOE CONCERTO

UMBERTO CLERICI conductor
DIANA DOHERTY oboe

CARL MARIA VON WEBER (1786–1826)

Der Freischütz: Overture

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)

Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra

Allegro moderato –

Andante –

Vivace

ESTIMATED DURATIONS

10 minutes, 28 minutes,
interval 20 minutes,
4 minutes, 22 minutes

The concert will conclude
at approximately 12.30pm
(Friday) and 3.30pm
(Saturday)

COVER IMAGE

Diana Doherty,
photo by Ben Morris

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

The Marriage of Figaro, K.492: Overture

RICHARD STRAUSS

Der Rosenkavalier, Op.59: Suite

Prelude (Act I)

Presentation of the Silver Rose (Act II)

Baron Ochs's Waltz (Act II)

'Ist ein Traum' (Act III)

Waltz (reprise)

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

UMBERTO CLERICI conductor

With a career spanning more than 20 years as a gifted cello soloist, orchestral musician, and now conductor, Umberto Clerici has gained a reputation as an artist of diverse and multifaceted talents.

Umberto began his career as a virtuoso cellist making his solo debut at the age of 17 performing Haydn's D Major cello concerto in Japan. After years of performing on the stages of the world's most prestigious concert halls, Umberto took up the position as Principal Cellist of the Royal Opera House in Turin, which he held for four years. In 2014, he was then appointed as the Principal Cello of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, a position he held until last season.

It was in Sydney in 2018 that Umberto made his conducting debut with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House. Following a rapid trajectory of conducting engagements, Umberto is now in high demand with the major symphony orchestras throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Future conducting highlights in Australia include returns to the podiums of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In 2022 Umberto also looks forward to his debuts with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

As a cellist, Umberto is beloved by Australian audiences and has performed internationally as a soloist at New York's Carnegie Hall, Vienna's Musikverein, the great Shostakovich Hall of St Petersburg, Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome, the Salzburg Festival and in 2012 he performed Tchaikovsky's "Rococo variations" under the baton of Valery Gergiev.



Umberto Clerici

Photo: Jay Patel

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DIANA DOHERTY oboe

*Sydney Symphony Principal Oboe,
John C Conde AO Chair*

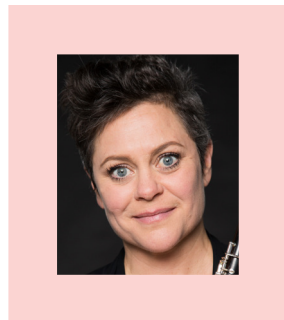
Principal Oboe of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra since 1997, internationally recognised Diana Doherty has performed as soloist with the New York, Liverpool and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestras, Ensemble Kanazawa, Japan, all the major Australian and New Zealand Symphony Orchestras, the Australian and Melbourne Chamber Orchestras, St. Lawrence String Quartet, Musica Viva, the Seymour Group, Queensland Music Festival, Four Winds Festival, Australian Chamber Music Festival, Prague Spring Festival, MusicaRiva Festival, Italy, Bratislava Music Festival and the 'Young Artist in Concert' Festival in Davos, Switzerland.

Concertos by Ross Edwards, Graeme Koehne, Allan Zavod, Joe Chindamo and Nigel Westlake's *Spirit of the Wild* were all written specifically for Diana.

Major engagements for Diana in 2022 include the Strauss Oboe Concerto with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, a recital at the Melbourne Recital Centre and a residency at the Australian National Academy of Music.

Diana's performances are featured on ten recordings: Westlake's *Spirit of the Wild* (Sydney Symphony); Concertos by Haydn, Mozart, Martinu and Zimmerman (Symphony Orchestra, Lucerne, released in Europe on Pan Classics); *Romantic Oboe Concertos* (Queensland Symphony); *Blues for DD* (folk and jazz influenced works with pianist David Korevaar); *Souvenirs*; Ross Edwards' *Oboe Concerto* (Melbourne Symphony); Carl Vine's *Oboe Concerto* (Tasmanian Symphony); Bach's *Concerto for violin and oboe* (Richard Tognetti and the Australian Chamber Orchestra); Works for oboe and oboe d'amore by JS Bach (Ironwood and Linda Kent), all for ABC Classics; and Koehne's *Inflight Entertainment* for Naxos.

Awards and prizes include joint winner of the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York, first prize at Prague Spring Festival Competition, a MO award for Classical/Opera performer of the year and an ARIA for her performance of the Ross Edwards' Oboe Concerto.



Diana Doherty

Photo: Christie Brewster

ABOUT THE MUSIC

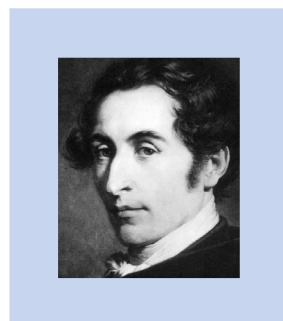


Design for the 'Wolf's Glen Scene'
from Weber's *Der Freischütz*,
Weimar 1822.

DER FREISCHÜTZ

Mozart's two final operas were, in the decades after his death, his most popular: *La clemenza di Tito* a self-consciously old fashioned opera seria ('serious opera'), sung in Italian and written for a coronation and therefore depicting an autocrat as the paragon of reason and morality. Then there was *The Magic Flute*, sung in German and full of supernatural beings, and loved by the great unwashed, which was in a sense a proto-Romantic opera. Romanticism, as it emerged in German and English literature at the turn of the 19th century stressed simplicity over ornament, subjectivity over objectivity, nature over culture, and cultivated the mystical. It was intimately bound up, too, in the quest for self-determination and, indeed, liberation, that was gaining ground among the smaller nations that made up imperial Europe.

Der Freischütz (the marksman) is generally regarded as the foundation text of German Romantic opera and Weber – incidentally a cousin of Mozart's wife, Constanze – composed it for the opening of the Berlin Schauspielhaus in 1821. It is thus roughly contemporary with the work of the



Carl Maria von Weber,
painted by Carl Jäger

ABOUT THE MUSIC

brothers Grimm, who had begun publishing their collections of fairy tales in 1812. It tells of a young marksman and gamekeeper, Max, who is to succeed Kuno as head ranger on the estate of Duke Ottokar and marry Kuno's daughter Agathe. When a young stranger appears and displays greater skill as a marksman, Max is persuaded by Kaspar to enter into a pact with the devilish Black Rider, Samiel, to cast seven magic bullets in a terrifying scene in the depths of the Wolf's Glen.

In the climactic scene of the opera Max shoots at the target, and the devil guides the last bullet towards Agathe, who is miraculously protected by her bridal veil; a holy hermit explains that Max will be forgiven his sins after a year's penance.

The Overture introduces a number of moods and themes that will be elaborated in the opera. It begins with mysterious music, perhaps depicting the dark German forest. We hear hunting horns and an ominous drumbeat suggesting Samiel, and a foreshadowing of Max's aria of trepidation. By contrast we hear some of Agathe's loving melody before an energetic central section, and the opera's happy ending is signalled by a final section in C major.

German opera in the 19th century was dominated by Richard Wagner, who revered *Der Freischütz*, and much of whose work explores the mythic and supernatural, and examines passion rather than reason. The musical language that Wagner developed for his dramatic ideas had in turn a profound effect on subsequent generations of composers, among them Richard Strauss. Strauss' earliest operas have their roots in this tradition: the unperformed *Battle with the Dragon and Guntram*, a mediaeval love-triangle on whose score Strauss wrote 'Deo gratias: Und dem heiligen Wagner' (Thanks be to God – and the sainted Wagner). Strauss would then expand Wagner's expressiveness in works of great violence and passion like *Salome* and *Elektra*.

STRAUSS AND MOZART

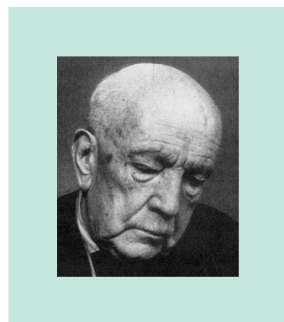
Strauss' father, Franz, was one of the finest horn players of his day. He was also a force with which to be reckoned in musical circles in Munich and beyond for over four decades. His son later remembered that 'his music trinity was Mozart (above all), Haydn and Beethoven. To these were added Schubert, as a song-writer, Weber and, at some distance, Mendelssohn and Spohr.' Strauss senior loathed most of Wagner's music and said so often and in no uncertain terms, yet regularly went to Bayreuth to play in Wagner's festival orchestra. But he tried very hard to ensure that his gifted son would never be seduced by Wagner's work. Richard's earliest pieces duly included a very Mozartean wind Serenade and he would return to pay homage to Mozart at several crucial points in his career, not least as it drew to a close in the aftermath of World War II.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

STRAUSS' OBOE CONCERTO

As the Allied forces gained control of Germany in 1945, a group of American GIs entered the Bavarian town of Garmisch and began requisitioning villas to accommodate the troops. A US officer, Milton Weiss knocked on one door and was greeted with the famous line 'I am the composer of *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Salome*. Leave me alone.' Weiss responded by placing Strauss' house off limits to the troops, and even went so far as to provide the household with a number of staples that had been in short supply. Other visitors at this time were less respectful. A German speaking journalist, Mr Brown (who turned out to be Klaus Mann, son of the novelist Thomas Mann), wrote an article for the American press which accused Strauss of on-going complicity with the Nazis. In fact, Strauss had fallen from favour years before, when his covert attempts to work with the exiled Jewish playwright Stefan Zweig were discovered; it has been suggested that only Strauss' international eminence saved him and his family (which included his Jewish daughter-in-law) from a fate worse than disgrace.

Among Milton Weiss' GIs, however, there was one man with whom Strauss became friendly. In peacetime John de Lancie was principal oboist with the Pittsburgh Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestras, and later became Director of the Curtis Institute. De Lancie asked whether Strauss might compose a concerto for him, to be met with a curt refusal. But, as Strauss' biographer Michael Kennedy puts it 'a seed had been sown.' Strauss began sketching his oboe concerto not long after. He completed the first draft shortly before he left Garmisch to spend the winter in the relative comfort in Switzerland, and in January 1946 the piece was premiered in Zurich with Marcel Saillet as soloist. John de Lancie, as Norman Del Mar reports 'had to be content with a nice letter giving him permission to perform the work in America whenever he liked...before it was published'.



The last photo of
Richard Strauss, 1949

Strauss and oboist and
GI John de Lancie
(Richard-Strauss-Archive
/ Richard-Strauss-Institute
Garmisch-Partenkirchen)

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The concerto was written in the same period as Strauss' *Metamorphosen* in which a fragment from Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony becomes the protagonist in a heart-rending drama of dissolution. The concerto, by contrast, revisits the mythical Mozartean world. The work is worlds away from the real or imagined bombast of Strauss' tone-poems. Laid out in the three conventional movements it has a classical poise and economically uses the resources of the small orchestra. But it's not easy: the oboe is required to play for 56 bars straight in the first movement, and is often included in the fuller scored tutti passages. The slow movement reminds us of Strauss the song writer – though interestingly a supremely lyrical passage then becomes the basis for the first cadenza, which in turn takes the music immediately into the rondo-style finale, dominated by a terse two-note figure and running semiquavers.

Behind the apparent serenity of this work its composer was old, ill and depressed. Kennedy quotes from a letter Strauss wrote to his grandsons a few months after the premiere of the Oboe Concerto. 'Art' he says 'is the finest gift of God that exalts over all earthly suffering and our beloved music is the most delightful'.

MOZART AND FIGARO

In the screenplay of Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*, the decrepit and insane composer Antonio Salieri remembers hearing *Le nozze di Figaro* for the first time:

I saw a woman, disguised in her maid's clothes, hear her husband speak the first tender words he has offered her in years, simply because he thinks she is someone else. I heard the music of true forgiveness filling the theatre, conferring, on all who sat there, perfect absolution. God was singing through this little man to all the world – unstoppable.

Le nozze di Figaro, which premiered in 1786, is a politically toned-down version of Beaumarchais' revolutionary comedy *The Marriage of Figaro*. It is cast in the form of an *opera buffa* or comic opera – that is, the language is Italian, as in *opera seria*, but the music is less formal and more immediately memorable, and the stories are contemporary and not always flattering to the ruling classes. Figaro is the valet to Count Almaviva, and the Count is hoping to seduce Figaro's bride Susanna before her wedding night. But the servants outsmart him, and all the characters have to face some home truths. In 'Figaro', as David Cairns puts it, 'for the first time music has found the means of embodying the interplay of living people'.



Mozart, 1785,
by Johann Bosio

ABOUT THE MUSIC



Autograph score of the
'Figaro' overture

Most would agree that there is something miraculous, even perfect, about this opera. The plot, with its numerous reversals and surprises, disguises and unmaskings, is complex but never confusing; the libretto is a model of simple clarity; the music articulates the drama with a magical sense of timing.

All of this is captured in what has been called the greatest comic Overture, with its parade of bustling, pompous and wolf-whistling musical characters.

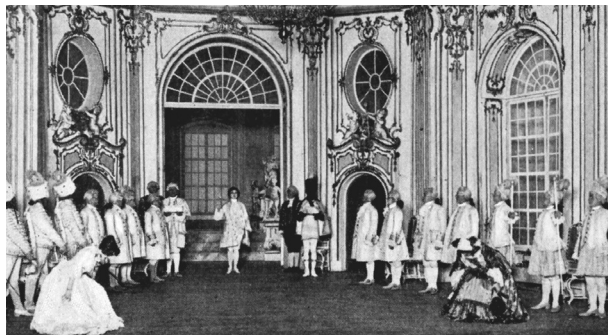
MOZART AND STRAUSS

For his opera *Elektra* based on one of the great myths of familial vengeance in ancient Greece, Strauss adapted the play of the same name by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. In 1909 Hofmannsthal happened to mention that he was thinking of an opera scenario that 'contains two big parts, one for baritone and another for a graceful girl dressed up as a man... Period: the old Vienna under the Empress Maria Theresa' – in other words, the years preceding Mozart's rise. On the face of it, this couldn't be farther from the mythical worlds of the earlier works, but in fact, Mozart's Vienna had something of the fairytale about it for Strauss and his generation.



At *Der Rosenkavalier's*
premiere in Dresden:
Strauss, front row centre,
with conductor Ernst von
Schuch, right. Director Max
Reinhardt and librettist Hugo
von Hofmannsthal third and
fourth from left, back row.

ABOUT THE MUSIC



The arrival of the
Rosenkavalier.

The score, like so much of Strauss' music, is far from 'classical', and is full of waltzes even though the form was not yet current then. And the whole central idea – that a prospective bridegroom would customarily send an envoy bearing a silver rose to his intended is merely a lovely invention of Hofmannsthal.

As it transpired, the baritone and graceful girl were joined by a major role, sung by soprano: the Marschallin, an unhappily married woman entering middle-age who comes to the painful realisation that she must give up her much younger lover, Octavian (sung by the mezzo). The oafish (and impoverished) Baron Ochs von Lerchenau arrives and mercilessly harasses the maid 'Mariandel' – who is Octavian, hurriedly disguised as a woman to avoid being found with, and therefore compromising, the Marschallin. Ochs has come to claim his bride, the beautiful and wealthy Sophie von Faninal, and the Marschallin realises that Sophie faces an awful fate. At the Marschallin's suggestion, Octavian (back in 'his' clothes) is sent to present Sophie with the silver rose, and the two, as expected, fall in love. Octavian, in his disguise as 'Mariandel' helps to entrap the Baron, enabling Sophie to free herself from any obligation to him. (As in 'Figaro', an aristocratic male is rendered at least temporarily powerless.) The Marschallin arrives and she, Sophie and Octavian sing the great and famous trio, before departing to leave the lovers in a dreamlike state.

The Suite was probably arranged by the conductor Artur Rodziński rather than Strauss himself, and was first performed in 1944. It begins with the opera's Prelude, with its celebrated alternation of assertive horn-calls and lush orchestral upholstery. Without a break, the music moves into the magical scene where Octavian, as the Rosenkavalier, first appears to Sophie. Baron Ochs is evoked in the following waltz. Hofmannsthal had suggested that Strauss 'try to think of some old-fashioned Viennese waltz, half sweet, half cheeky, which should pervade the whole Act'. In the event Strauss' waltzes have a wonderful energy, but their fruity late-Romantic harmony make everything seem a little at sea.

The fourth section of the Suite is based on the final love-music, the crowning glory of the piece, where, the Marschallin having sadly withdrawn, Sophie and Octavian ask 'is it a dream?' In order to bring the suite to rousing conclusion, though, we hear a slightly slower reprise of the waltz to end.

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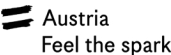
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