

21–24 September
Sydney Opera House

AUGUSTIN HADELICH PERFORMS BRAHMS

Presenting Partner



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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 commences her role as Chief Conductor in 2022, a year in which the Orchestra makes its return to a renewed Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

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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Donald Runnicles

Principal Guest
Conductor

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MASTERS SERIES

AUGUSTIN HADELICH PERFORMS BRAHMS

RIISING ROMANCE

DONALD RUNNICLES conductor
AUGUSTIN HADELICH violin

MELODY EÖTVÖS (born 1984)

*Pyramidion**

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

Violin Concerto in D, Op.77

i. *Allegro non troppo*

ii. *Adagio*

iii. *Allegro giocoso*

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872–1958)

Symphony No.5 in D

i. *Preludio (Moderato)*

ii. *Scherzo (Presto)*

iii. *Romanza (Lento)*

iv. *Passacaglia (Moderato)*

* Melody Eötvös' commission for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's 50 Fanfares Project was made possible through a co-commission by the Grand Teton Music Festival and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Wednesday 21 September,
8pm

Friday 23 September,
8pm

Saturday 24 September,
8pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

Pre-concert talk by
Zoltán Szabó in the
Northern Foyer at 7.15pm.

ESTIMATED DURATIONS

8 minutes, 38 minutes,
interval 20 minutes,
39 minutes

The concert will conclude
at approximately 9.45pm.

COVER IMAGE

Augustin Hadelich
Photo by Luca Valentina

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Abercrombie & Kent Masters Series

Abercrombie & Kent would like to welcome you to the third concert in the Masters Series, Augustin Hadelich performs Brahms' Violin Concerto.

Tonight's musical journey demonstrates Brahms' legacy as one of history's greatest composers.

In the quiet pauses between the stormy opening, the dreamy melodies, the gorgeous orchestral passages, curvaceous ballads, beautiful, adagio oboe, and of course, Brahms final signature gypsy spirit, you'll find a gentle sense of contemplation — where quiet winds give way to a serene and peaceful ambience.

Brahms was a traveller at heart. When he wasn't touring in Europe, he found joy in the rustic hills of Italy, the alpine meadows of Switzerland and the mountain-edged lakes of Austria.

It is no surprise then that Brahms was moved to compose his lyrical concerto while travelling through the Austrian village of Pörschach, his favourite retreat in the Carinthian mountains. According to legend, Brahms believed the lakeside setting was so overrun with melodies that one had to take care not to step on them!

At A&K, we believe that travel has the ability to inspire joy, reflection, creativity and memories of a lifetime. Truly great travel can be lifechanging. That's why we get to know each guest as an individual, one traveller to another, finding the right tempo and perfect pitch for every individual with just the right crescendo and diminuendo to bring each extraordinary day to life.

Whether journeying to the vineyard valleys of Portugal, the scenic Swiss alps or the dazzling coastlines of the Mediterranean, let us guide you into a world of tranquillity, Brahms-style, with all the inspiration of his masterful concerto; we promise the show will be unforgettable.

I hope you enjoy tonight's masterful performance and leave enthused to go on an inspirational journey of your own.



Debra Fox

Managing Director
Abercrombie & Kent

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DONALD RUNNICLES conductor

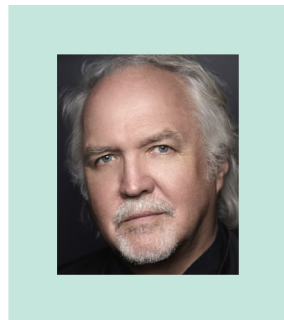
Sir Donald Runnicles is the General Music Director of the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Music Director of the Grand Teton Music Festival, as well as Principal Guest Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. In 2019 Runnicles also took up post as the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's first ever Principal Guest Conductor. He additionally holds the title of Conductor Emeritus of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, having served as Chief Conductor from 2009-2016.

In the 2022-23 season, Maestro Runnicles will lead performances of *Arabella*, *Elektra*, *Fidelio*, *Tosca* and *Tristan und Isolde* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the San Francisco Opera; and concerts with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, including Mahler's Fifth Symphony.

Sir Donald enjoys close and enduring relationships with many of the most significant opera companies and symphony orchestras. His previous posts include Music Director of the San Francisco Opera (1992-2008), during which he led world premieres of John Adams's *Doctor Atomic*, Conrad Susa's *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, and the U.S. premiere of Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise*; Principal Conductor of the Orchestra of St. Luke's (2001-2007); and General Music Director of the Theater Freiburg and Orchestra (1989-1993).

Mr. Runnicles' extensive discography includes complete recordings of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Britten's *Billy Budd*, Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, and Aribert Reimann's *L'invisible*. His recording of Wagner arias with Jonas Kaufmann and the Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper Berlin won the 2013 *Gramophone* prize for Best Vocal Recording, and his recording of Janáček's *Jenůfa* with the Orchestra and Chorus of the Deutsche Oper Berlin was nominated for a 2016 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording.

Sir Donald Runnicles was born and raised in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was appointed OBE in 2004, and was made a Knight Bachelor in 2020. He holds honorary degrees from the University of Edinburgh, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.



Donald Runnicles

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

AUGUSTIN HADELICH violin

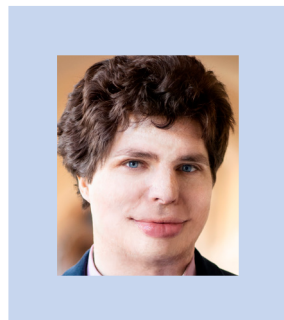
Augustin Hadelich, “the man with truly the finest violin sound” (*Fono Forum*) is one of the most compelling violinists on the international stage. His fame on the concert platform long-established, Hadelich became a YouTube star during the pandemic with his online tutorials, *Ask Augustin*, in which he gives tips on topics including intonation, vibrato, bowing and performance nerves.

Born to German parents in Italy and brought up on a wine estate, Augustin Hadelich studied at the Juilliard School in New York, winning the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis in 2006. In 2009 he was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant in New York. In 2011 he was granted a fellowship of the Borletti-Buitoni Trust, and won the inaugural Warner Music Prize in 2015, followed by a Grammy Award in 2016. The publication *Musical America* voted him Instrumentalist of the Year in 2018. His third album, *Bohemian Tales*, featuring Dvořák’s Violin Concerto and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, gained him an Opus Classic Award in 2021. His fourth album as an exclusive artist for Warner Classics, *Recuerdos*, with the Westdeutsche Rundfunk Symphony Orchestra, features Prokofiev’s Violin Concerto No.2, Sarasate’s *Carmen Fantasy* and Britten’s Violin Concerto, as well as Tarrega’s *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*, and has just been released in August 2022.

In recitals and concerts with the world’s top-ranking orchestras, Hadelich consistently and thrillingly reinvents the Classical and Romantic violin repertoire with his impeccable playing and deeply personal, expressive performances. He is equally passionate about the violin concertos of the 20th and 21st centuries, his interpretations testifying to an ardent pioneering spirit.

In 2021, Augustin Hadelich was appointed to the staff of Yale School of Music.

Augustin Hadelich plays on a violin by Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù from 1744 known as the ‘Leduc, ex Szeryng’, on loan from the Tarisio Trust.



Augustin Hadelich,
photo by Suxiao Yang

ABOUT THE MUSIC

MELODY EÖTVÖS (born 1984) *Pyramidion*

Melody Eötvös was born in the Southern Highlands, NSW, Australia. Her work draws on multi-media and traditional instrumental contexts, substantial extra-musical references to a broad range of philosophical, biological, and ancient topics as well as a sustained interest in late 19th-century life and literature.

The composer writes:

A Pyramidion is a very special and particular stone that tops a pyramid (or an obelisk, in Egypt), and is itself a miniature pyramid. Very few, if any Pyramidions have been found still sitting atop their pyramids and, if they still exist, are usually unearthed somewhere nearby their original resting place.

In comparison to the magnitude and size of a pyramid, its capstone is minute. Yet it is arguably the most important stone placed on the structure as it brings the entire pyramid to a point at the same angle and proportions as the main body.

While this piece for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's 50 Fanfares project is one of the shorter orchestral works that I have composed, the goal of the composition is to portray a punchy, angular entity that feels unified through the repetition and development of the opening motif.

Melody Eötvös © 2022

Melody Eötvös' commission for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's 50 Fanfares Project was made possible through a co-commission by the Grand Teton Music Festival and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.



Melody Eötvös

ABOUT THE MUSIC

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

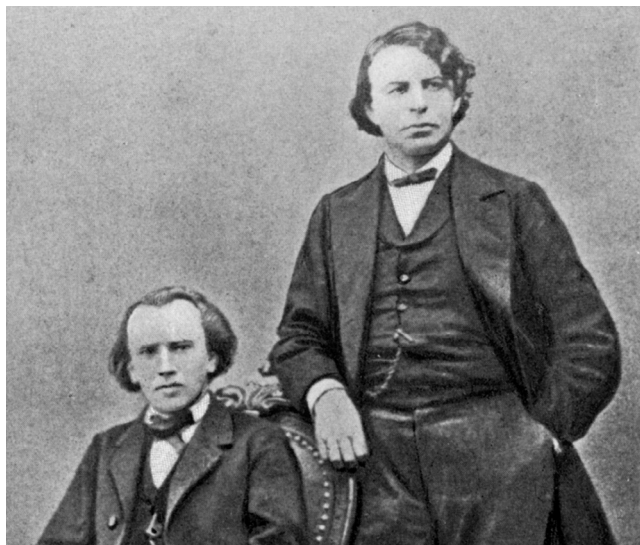
Violin Concerto

Brahms spent the summers of 1877-9 in the lakeside village of Pörtlach in Carinthia, producing his first Motet, Op.74, the Ballades for piano Op.75, the Symphony No.2 and his Violin Sonata in G Op.78 – all works which share an atmosphere of pastoral beauty shot through with nostalgia. But as Brahms scholar Karl Geiringer notes, the ‘crowning masterpiece’ of this time is the Violin Concerto.

The Concerto, like the G major Sonata, was composed for the great virtuoso Joseph Joachim, whom an ecstatic fifteen-year old Brahms had heard play the Beethoven Concerto. In 1853 their friendship began in earnest, with Joachim writing to Brahms’ parents of how ‘Johannes had stimulated my work as an artist to an extent beyond my hopes...my friendship is always at his disposal’. Brahms similarly admired Joachim – significantly as a composer rather than performer, saying that ‘there is more in Joachim than in all the other young composers put together.’



Brahms at 40



Brahms and Joachim

While Joachim was intimately involved with the creation of early works of Brahms’ chamber music, it was not, strangely enough, until those summers by the lake at Pörtlach in the 1870s that Brahms

ABOUT THE MUSIC

wrote solo music for his friend. Geiringer notes that, in the case of both Concerto and Sonata, Brahms 'conscientiously asked his friend's advice on all technical questions – and then hardly ever followed it', but in fact at crucial points Joachim's advice on technical matters was invaluable. This consists mainly of tinkering with certain figurations to make them more gratifying to play. But Joachim was also a profoundly serious artist – like Brahms – and out of their collaboration came works in which the element of virtuosity never overshadows the musical argument, despite the work's many technical challenges. Joachim also wrote a cadenza for the concerto which is still frequently heard today.

The Concerto has some of the expansive dimensions of Brahms' first Piano Concerto. This is especially true of the spacious first movement which, like that of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, takes up more than half the work's playing time, and which begins with a long, symphonic exposition of its main themes. Like its companion Second Symphony, the Concerto is in D, a key which composers like Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and Sibelius used for violin concertos as it makes use of the instrument's natural resonance; like the Symphony it has something of a visionary Romantic tone.

Brahms originally thought to write the piece in four movements, making the central pair a scherzo and contrasting slow movement. But he wrote to Joachim that the 'middle movements – naturally the best ones – have fallen through. So I have substituted a feeble adagio.' Feeble is of course hardly the word for this piece: derived from the simplest of musical figures – the falling broken chord with which the violin begins – it evolves into one of Brahms' most soulful but restrained movements. As such it provides a wonderful contrast to the gypsy style finale, with its pyrotechnic solo line and exciting use of displaced accents.

Joachim premiered the piece in Leipzig in 1879, but the response was tepid, and only through Joachim's persistence did it gradually gain its rightful place in the standard repertoire. Brahms and Joachim fell out over the violinist's divorce in 1884, the rift lasting until Brahms wrote the Concerto for Violin and Cello in 1887. But that's another story.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872–1958) **Symphony No.5 in D**

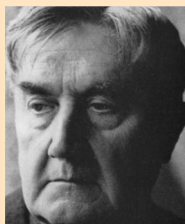
After Vaughan Williams directed the premiere of his Fifth Symphony in 1943, his champion and friend, conductor Adrian Boult, wrote to congratulate him: 'its serene loveliness is completely satisfying in these times and shows, as only music can, what we must work for when this madness is over.'

Boult was hardly alone in regarding the Fifth as an image of what serenity and peace might look like in the aftermath of war. And not without cause. The piece's demeanour stresses gradual change and accumulation of material, its harmonic idiom is predominantly modal, its scoring is transparent. But the serenity is earned, built on a substratum of more complex emotion, and it is really only in the final calm pages that the work's key of D is unambiguously sounded.

In part this exploration of long-range, subliminal tension and release reflects Vaughan Williams' admiration for the work of Jean Sibelius, and he famously dedicated the symphony to the Finnish composer 'without permission'.

The Preludio is the most overtly Sibelian movement. Over a low, immobile C in the basses, the horns sound a distant call in D major – there is thus, even in this simple atmospheric gesture, a dissonance (however mild) that is not resolved by the fragmentary string motifs that soon appear, and which contain the rhythmic seeds of the final passacaglia movement. Vaughan Williams maintains the tension through a gently inexorable series of key-changes, and, over a shimmer of strings (Sibelius again), introduces a falling three-note motif that becomes imperceptibly more urgent before the first climax of the movement and a return of the horn-calls. Momentum builds again until a second climax, in which Vaughan Williams refers to his much-loved hymn tune *Sine nomine* ('For all the Saints') – specifically the setting of the word 'Alleluia'. The music returns to the horn motif.

After such a spacious opening, Vaughan Williams places the fast Scherzo movement second. Full of open intervals, diaphanous scoring, and metre



Ralph Vaughan Williams
in 1938

ABOUT THE MUSIC

that tugs between three and two beats in a bar, the piece recalls 'Mercury' from *The Planets* by Vaughan Williams' close friend Gustav Holst. Its dance rhythms and Phrygian-mode melodies lead to a sudden snarl that introduces the trio section, a section in 2/4 that features staccato woodwind. The opening section returns, now stripped down to a static final chord.

The heart of the piece is the Romanza. Vaughan Williams had an ongoing engagement with *The Pilgrim's Progress*, a Christian allegory of the soul's journey towards salvation, written by John Bunyan who was jailed in 1675 for dissenting from Anglican orthodoxy. The composer produced music for several iterations of the story – including a radio play and an opera (or 'Morality') that reached its final form in the last years of his life. The Romanza is dominated by a theme, heard first on cor anglais, where in the opera the Pilgrim sings 'He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death' at the foot of the Cross. The tune reappears in full string unison. An anguished central section (derived from the Pilgrim's 'Save me, Lord. The burden is more than I can bear!') is resolved by solo horn playing the cor anglais theme.

Like Brahms' Fourth, the symphony ends with a Passacaglia, where a repeated pattern or 'ground' supports a series of contrasting variations. (The long-short-short- long rhythm that dominates is drawn from the first movement.) The variations range from genial to dancelike, heraldic to pointillistic. There is a dramatic turn to the minor key issuing in a baleful passage where major and minor chords contend before the opening horn-calls ring through the whole orchestra. An ever-more rarefied epilogue concludes the work in peace.

Gordon Kerry © 2022

AUGUSTIN HADELICH ON BRAHMS' VIOLIN CONCERTO

Ahead of his debut with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the brilliant violinist discusses the greatness of Brahms' work, Joseph Joachim's influence on it, and working with Donald Runnicles again.

Written by Hugh Robertson

The violinist Joseph Joachim called Brahms Violin Concerto one of the four great German violin concerti. Where does it sit in your estimation?

We have Joachim to thank for working very closely with Brahms on the violin part. Brahms was a great pianist but writing for the violin did not come as easily to him. Thanks to Joachim, it suits the instrument well, yet the difficulties are never flashy, meant to impress virtuosically, but rather are there only in service of the musical ideas.

When everything goes well in a performance of the Brahms concerto, it won't sound as difficult as it actually is — that's the goal!

Has your relationship with the concerto changed over the years? Do you find new things in it each time you play it?

Even after many years I feel like I'm still delving deeper into the piece, and there are more layers to uncover. Growing up, I was mostly focused on the violin part, which is beautiful, lyrical, dramatic — it was as an adult that I studied the score more and more closely and understood more the musical dialogue between the solo violin and the orchestral lines. The more time I put into this piece, the more inspiration I get back from it!

You have performed with Sir Donald Runnicles before, and in fact very recently. How do your personalities and artistic approaches to the music fit together?

Whenever we have worked together, I found that Donald and I had a similar musical instinct and share a love for the pieces we played together. We haven't done the Brahms together before, but have been talking about it for years, ever since we first played together. In a way, it's the ultimate collaborative piece between a conductor and a

AUGUSTIN HADELICH ON BRAHMS' VIOLIN CONCERTO

violinist— I only want to play it with conductors with whom I am on the same wavelength musically. It never feels the same to me with two different conductors, or with two different orchestras.

Your current instrument is the 1744 "Leduc/Szeryng" Guarneri del Gesu, and you have performed on Stradivarius instruments previously. What is the personality and character of your Guarneri? And do you find it takes time to get acquainted with a new instrument?

The sound of the Leduc violin has a warmth and complexity that I have rarely heard in any instrument. When I first tried it, I was immediately drawn to it.

It always takes time to switch instruments, even between two instruments of the same maker – it is as if a singer suddenly has a different voice. In this case, the difference was huge, when I switched in late 2019.

Every violin has its own quirks, strengths and weaknesses. The sound production on a Del Gesu is quite different than on Stradivari. However, I think the longer I play on an instrument, the more I sound like me again, because I can get closer and closer to the sound I want!



Augustin Hadelich, photo by Suxiao Yang

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In the future, more airlines will have soft luxurious leather seats, raised footrests and more room to stretch out. They might even have delicious gourmet meals and thousands of entertainment channels. Meanwhile at Emirates, you can fly today. Introducing the new Premium Economy cabin on selected routes.


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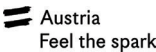
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