

28–30 July
Sydney Opera House

SIMONE YOUNG & HILARY HAHN



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 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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Member of the Sydney
Symphony Orchestra
not appearing in
this concert

2022 CONCERT SEASON

Thursday 28 July, 1.30pm
Friday 29 July, 8pm
Saturday 30 July, 8pm
Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

Pre-concert talk by
Simon Bruckard in the
Northern Foyer 45 minutes
before each performance

SIMONE YOUNG & HILARY HAHN

SIMONE YOUNG conductor
HILARY HAHN violin

CATHY MILLIKEN
*Catalogue of Sky**

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)
Violin Concerto No.1 in D, Op.19
i) Andantino
ii) Scherzo - Vivacissimo
iii) Moderato - Allegro moderato

ESTIMATED DURATIONS
8 minutes, 22 minutes,
interval 20 minutes,
46 minutes

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

COVER IMAGE
Hilary Hahn, photo by
O J Slaughter

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

Symphony No.6 in B minor, Op.74 (Pathétique)
i) Adagio – Allegro non troppo
ii) Allegro con grazia
iii) Allegro molto vivace
iv) Finale (Adagio lamentoso)

*Cathy Milliken's commission for the Sydney Symphony
Orchestra's 50 Fanfares Project is generously supported by
Gary Holmes & Anne Reeckmann.

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A WORD FROM EMIRATES

Welcome to tonight's performance.

Emirates and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra have enjoyed one of the longest standing partnerships in Australia's performing arts. This year marks our 20th year of partnership, and we can think of no better time to celebrate this landmark than with the Orchestra's return to its home at the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

20 years ago, Emirates and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra met and created a wonderful partnership that celebrated our common goal of creating journeys of excitement and discovery for people around the globe. Covid has recently required both of our organisations to navigate uncharted skies, but we are proud to have done this side by side.

Emirates has led the way in our care for our customers, with safety initiatives to boost travel confidence. We continue to seek ways to support our community during these challenging times, and we hope today's music points the way to an increasingly brighter future. We are delighted by this continuing partnership, and we wish the Sydney Symphony all the best in this exciting new chapter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Brown', followed by a small comma.

Barry Brown

Divisional Vice President for Australasia
Emirates

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

1932 – 2022



Chief Conductor Stuart Challender (1987–1991) leading the Orchestra. Photo by T. Schramm.



Conductor Otto Klemperer taking a break at the Sydney Botanic Gardens ahead of a performance in the 1950s.



Chief Conductor Dean Dixon (1964–1967) after a performance at the Sydney Town Hall.



Cliff Goodchild, Principal Tuba (1951–1987), performing in the 1960s.

Vladimir Ashkenazy
Principal Conductor
2009–2013





Simone Young AM
Photo by Sandra Steh

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SIMONE YOUNG AM conductor

Internationally recognised as one of the leading conductors of her generation, Simone Young has this year taken up her position as Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, having been Chief Conductor Designate since 2020. From 2005-2015 she was General Manager and Music Director of the Hamburg State Opera and Music Director of the Philharmonic State Orchestra Hamburg. An acknowledged interpreter of the operas of Wagner and Strauss, she has conducted complete cycles of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Vienna Staatsoper, the Staatsoper Berlin and in Hamburg. Her Hamburg recordings include the *Ring Cycle*, *Mathis der Maler* (Hindemith), and symphonies of Bruckner, Brahms and Mahler. Her tour to Brisbane with the Hamburg Opera and Ballet, (*Das Rheingold* in concert, and Mahler's Symphony No.2 *Resurrection*), won her the 2013 Helpmann Award for Best Individual Classical Music Performance.

Simone Young is regularly invited by the world's great orchestras and has led the New York, Los Angeles, Berlin, Vienna, Munich, Stockholm, New Japan, Helsinki, and Dresden Philharmonic Orchestras; the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo; Orchestre de Paris; Staatskapelle Dresden; the BBC, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Detroit, Chicago, Dallas, and National Symphony Orchestra; and the Orquesta Nacional de España, Madrid. In Australia she has conducted the West Australian, Adelaide, Melbourne and Queensland Symphony Orchestras and the Australian World Orchestra.

A highly sought-after guest conductor at the world's leading opera houses, most recently Simone Young has appeared at the Vienna State Opera: *Peter Grimes*; Opera Nationale de Paris: *Parsifal*; Bavarian State Opera, Munich: *Tannhäuser*; Berlin State Opera: *Der Rosenkavalier*; and Zurich Opera: *Salome*.

Simone Young has been Music Director of Opera Australia, Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor of the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Lisbon and is currently Principal Guest Conductor of the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra. Her many accolades include the 2019 European Cultural Prize Vienna, a Professorship at the Musikhochschule in Hamburg, honorary Doctorates from the University of Western Australia, Griffith University, Monash University and the University of New South Wales, the Sir Bernard Heinze Award, the Goethe Institute Medal, and the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, France.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

HILARY HAHN violin

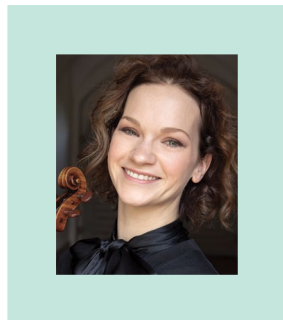
Three-time Grammy Award-winning violinist Hilary Hahn melds expressive musicality and technical expertise with a diverse repertoire guided by artistic curiosity. Her barrier-breaking attitude towards classical music and her commitment to sharing her experiences with a global community have made her a fan favourite. Hahn is a prolific recording artist and commissioner of new works, and her 21 feature recordings have received every critical prize in the international press and have all opened in the top ten of the Billboard charts.

In September Hahn began her two year appointment as Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Artist in Residence. Throughout her tenure she complements her public performances with educational and audience engagement initiatives. She participates in projects which provide coaching and support to young musicians from diverse backgrounds hoping to pursue professional music careers. She is also involved with Notes for Peace, which empowers Chicago families affected by gun violence to create songs that memorialize their loved ones.

A strong advocate for new music, Hahn champions and has commissioned works by a diverse array of contemporary composers. Most recently, Lera Auerbach wrote Violin Sonata No. 4: Fractured Dreams for her and Michael Abels was commissioned to write a solo piece which was kindly supported by the Philharmonic Society of Orange County. Hahn premiered Rautavaara's Deux Sérénades, another piece written for her, with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and released it on her latest disc Paris.

Hahn has related to her fans naturally from the very beginning of her career. Her Instagram-based practice initiative, #100daysofpractice, has helped to demystify the typically grueling and isolating practice process, transforming it into a community-oriented, social celebration of artistic development. Since creating the hashtag in 2017, Hahn has completed the project four times under her handle, @violincase; fellow performers and students have contributed more than 600,000 posts under the hashtag.

Hahn is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions. In 2001, she was named "America's Best Young Classical Musician" by Time magazine, and in 2010, she appeared on The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien. She also holds honorary doctorates from Middlebury College—where she spent four summers in the total-immersion German, French, and Japanese language programs—and Ball State University, where there are three scholarships in her name.



Hilary Hahn,
photo Dana van Leeuwen

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Australian composer Cathy Milliken writes of her new fanfare:

‘Sky’ is a beautiful word. It suggests endlessness. One can sound it on a long breath too.

Iceland has beautiful high skies, their grey-in-greyness can be beautiful, particularly when a lone bird, scarcely discernible at first, wings its way above silent fields. Australia has high skies too, infinite and intense, as also our winter sky, often ablaze with gold and pink. However Giacomo Leopardi, Italian poet and philosopher, was interested in a sky that showed variety and uncertainty. ‘A sky dotted with small clouds is perhaps more pleasurable than a totally clear sky,’ we read in his notebook, the *Zibaldone*. Rainer Maria Rilke turns to the sky in his poem *Ach, nicht getrennt sein...* (‘Ah, not to be cut off...’) when he reflects “The inner-what is it? If not intensified sky, hurled through with birds’.

Locked away as we were during the last two years, it feels wonderful to look ahead, look up, look further, as in the beautiful and comforting Psalm 121: ‘I to the hills will lift mine eyes...’ *Catalogue of Sky* is a hopeful work, hopeful that the skies will again become peaceful for all.

© Cathy Milliken

Cathy Milliken's Catalogue of Sky was made possible through the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's 50 Fanfares Project and was commissioned by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, supported by Gary Holmes & Anne Reeckmann.

Above the first solo entry in the score of Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No.1 stands the word *sognando* – dreamily. The theme to which it refers is the most enduringly attractive feature of the concerto. As expansive as it is reflective, this exquisite melody reveals an easily neglected lyrical aspect of Prokofiev's style.

But when the concerto was premiered in Paris on 18 October 1923, the musical avant-garde found the work too lyrical – shot through, in the words of White Russian émigré critic Boris de Schloezer, with ‘Mendelssohnism’. The accusation – despite the intended malice – was not unfounded. The concerto's melancholy lyricism and pensive romanticism, as well as its modest lack of ostentatious display, is indeed reminiscent of Mendelssohn's music.

There's another striking parallel: Mendelssohn had been plagued by the opening theme of his own violin concerto, writing to Ferdinand David six years before its composition, ‘I want to do you a violin concerto. I have one in E minor in my head, and the opening won't leave me in peace.’ Similarly, Prokofiev's first theme had been in his head since he'd developed it for a concertino in 1915. ‘I had often regretted,’ he wrote, ‘that other work had prevented me from returning to its “meditative opening”’.



Cathy Milliken
photo Jacintha Nolte



Sergei Prokofiev in 1917

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Two years later, during a summer retreat to the country outside St Petersburg (by then Petrograd) the concertino ‘grew’ into a concerto. Meanwhile, Prokofiev recalled, ‘exciting’ but ‘contradictory’ news of the October Revolution filtered out from the city, along with trainloads of ‘panic-stricken bourgeois crowds’. Yet the serenity and spirit of the First Violin Concerto holds no trace of the violence of the revolution that delayed its premiere by six years.

With the premiere finally in sight, potential soloists could only see that the concerto lacked a cadenza, and the celebrated Bronislaw Huberman and other violinists ‘flatly refused to learn “that music”’. It was not until 1924 – when Joseph Szigeti performed it at the Prague International Festival of Contemporary Music – that the concerto began to attract the recognition it deserved. Even then acceptance was not complete. The composer Glazunov ostentatiously walked out of one performance even as the audience was encoring the Scherzo movement.

In Szigeti’s view, the *sognando* opening was ‘a clue to the day-dreaming expression of the “the little boy listening to a story” feeling’ of the exposition. So it’s no surprise to find, soon after, a second word above the solo part: *narrante* – ‘in the manner of a narration’. Here the music takes on a rhythmic character, all sparkle and bite. No longer is Prokofiev setting the scene for daydreams – we’re thrown headlong into a tale. And it’s a tale told in symphonic dialogue between the violin and orchestra, with little sense of the traditional opposition between soloist and full ensemble.

But in many ways Prokofiev was as much a traditionalist as an innovator. The First Violin Concerto has the clear-cut, neoclassical construction of the *Classical Symphony* (also composed in 1917) even as it inverts the usual sequence of tempos so that two slow lyrical movements surround a fast, rhythmic scherzo.

The *Scherzo* is a catalogue of violin trickery: extreme leaps, double-stopping, slides, harmonics, and rapid figuration alternating with accented rhythms. Yet Prokofiev avoids giving the impression of empty display. Instead, the capricious exposition of technical effects draws attention to their expressive possibilities. The five sections of the movement transport the listener from the buoyant ascent of the opening theme above a clockwork accompaniment to the sinuous passage work of the solo violin in its low register.

This mercurial *Scherzo* with its abrupt ending has been cited as an example of the ‘grotesque’ or ‘sarcastic’ aspect of Prokofiev’s style, but he objected to this use of the word ‘grotesque’, describing it as hackneyed and distorted. ‘I would prefer my music,’ he wrote, ‘to be described as “scherzo-ish” in quality, or else by three words describing various degrees of the scherzo – whimsicality, laughter, mockery.’

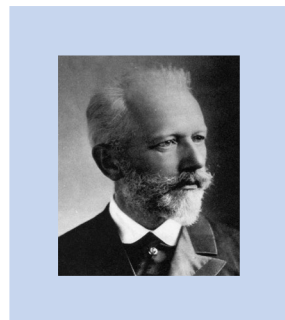
ABOUT THE MUSIC

The third movement begins with a brief theme on the bassoon (no hint of mockery here) that is developed with increasing lyricism by each of the woodwind instruments in turn. This sets the scene for the solo part's combination of staccato and sustained ideas suspended above scoring of the utmost economy. Nowhere is the translucency of the orchestration more apparent than in the coda where the opening theme from the first movement returns in the orchestral violins above a shimmer of tremolos and harp arpeggios. The solo violin traces the melody with 'altitudinous trills' before coming to rest – exactly as it had at the end of the first movement – on a top D in unison with the piccolo.

© Yvonne Frindle

Theories about Tchaikovsky's personal life are every bit as colourful and dramatic as his music. For years the prevailing narrative was that Tchaikovsky was a closeted gay man, struggling with shame and anguish, his marriage to former student an attempt to hide and, perhaps, even change his true self. This of course only made things worse, leading to the torment and unbridled emotion on display in his Sixth Symphony. In the 1980s another conspiracy theory originated in the Soviet Union: owing to a dangerous liaison with a young nobleman, Tchaikovsky had been called upon by his former schoolmates (themselves under pressure from the tsar) to go into the library with a loaded revolver and do the honourable thing – as soon, of course, as he'd finished his symphony.

These excitingly dramatic stories have long been debunked as myth, notably by Alexander Poznansky in 'Tchaikovsky: A Life Reconsidered', which opens Leslie Kearney's book of essays, *Tchaikovsky and his world*. Evidence for Tchaikovsky's suicide is thin, as it is for the stereotype of a sad and lonely gay man hiding from a repressive society. Urban 19th-century Russia was in practice more tolerant than Victorian England. Tchaikovsky's sexuality was an open secret; he enjoyed pre-eminent status within and outside Russia and his social and professional dance cards (including the Sixth's premiere on 16 October) were extremely full in October 1893. He did drink infected water but that was almost certainly a result of carelessness rather than deliberate, dying not from the disease but from post-choleric complications, and was given a State funeral at the tsar's immediate behest. Weeks later, Russia saw a memorial performance of the Sixth Symphony, and as Poznansky notes:



Tchaikovsky in 1891

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Stunned by the recent tragedy, the public was especially sensitive to the funereal moods of several of the symphony's passages. It is not surprising that many listeners (including some of the journalists writing about the concert for the press) gained the impression that Tchaikovsky had written a requiem for himself.

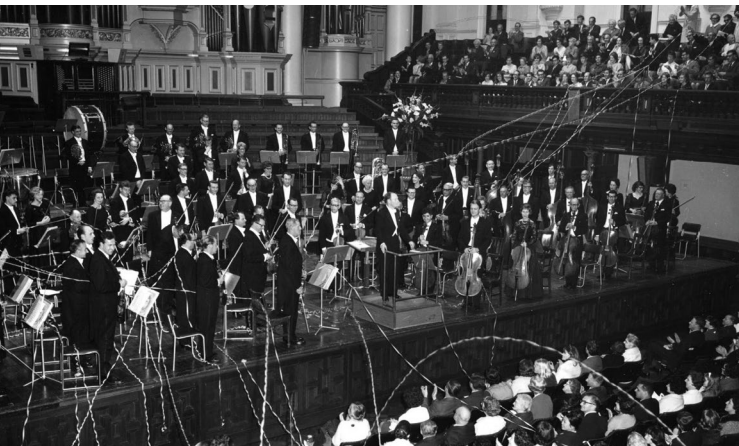
Tchaikovsky subtitled his symphony the *Pateticheskaja* ('impassioned' rather than 'pathetic'), believing in music's capacity to represent specific psychological states, but only, as he himself pointed out, in retrospect – that is, after the individual had passed through any given state. And, we might add, only with the degree of technical skill which this work so amply demonstrates. The introduction, which struggles to pull free of gravity and silence, is masterful, as is Tchaikovsky's blend of dark sound; the apparent volatility of the first movement's dynamics and tempo is achieved by a welter of extremely detailed directions in the score. The themes of the outer movements have a downward vector – even those with an upward scale embedded in them begin higher than they end; the almost Janáčekian texture of the first movement's *allegro vivo* section is dominated by a downward scale from the brass. The harmonic movement mirrors this trend, as does the way in which the second movement's 5/4 waltz peters out. The third movement appears at first to have an upwards-tending theme (but listen to its bass line) yet soon enough a downward scale emerges from the brass. The *Finale* gathers a number of strands from the previous movements: the ultimately fruitless gestures of rising scales and sequences, the inexorable fall towards deeper sounds and eventual silence.

This work may well stem from the composer's psychological experience but the experience is mediated by Tchaikovsky's genius and his craft. His sexuality provided a neat tragic impetus for Romantic criticism and a specious reason for his music's difference from Austro-German models, but the myth has hampered serious evaluation of the work.

© Gordon Kerry

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

1932 – 2022



Celebrations following an Australian Proms performance at Sydney Town Hall under conductor John Hopkins, 1960s.

A performance during the Orchestra's first overseas tour to Manila, Tokyo and Hong Kong in 1965.



The Orchestra performing at the United Nations General Assembly under Chief Conductor Stuart Challender, 1988.

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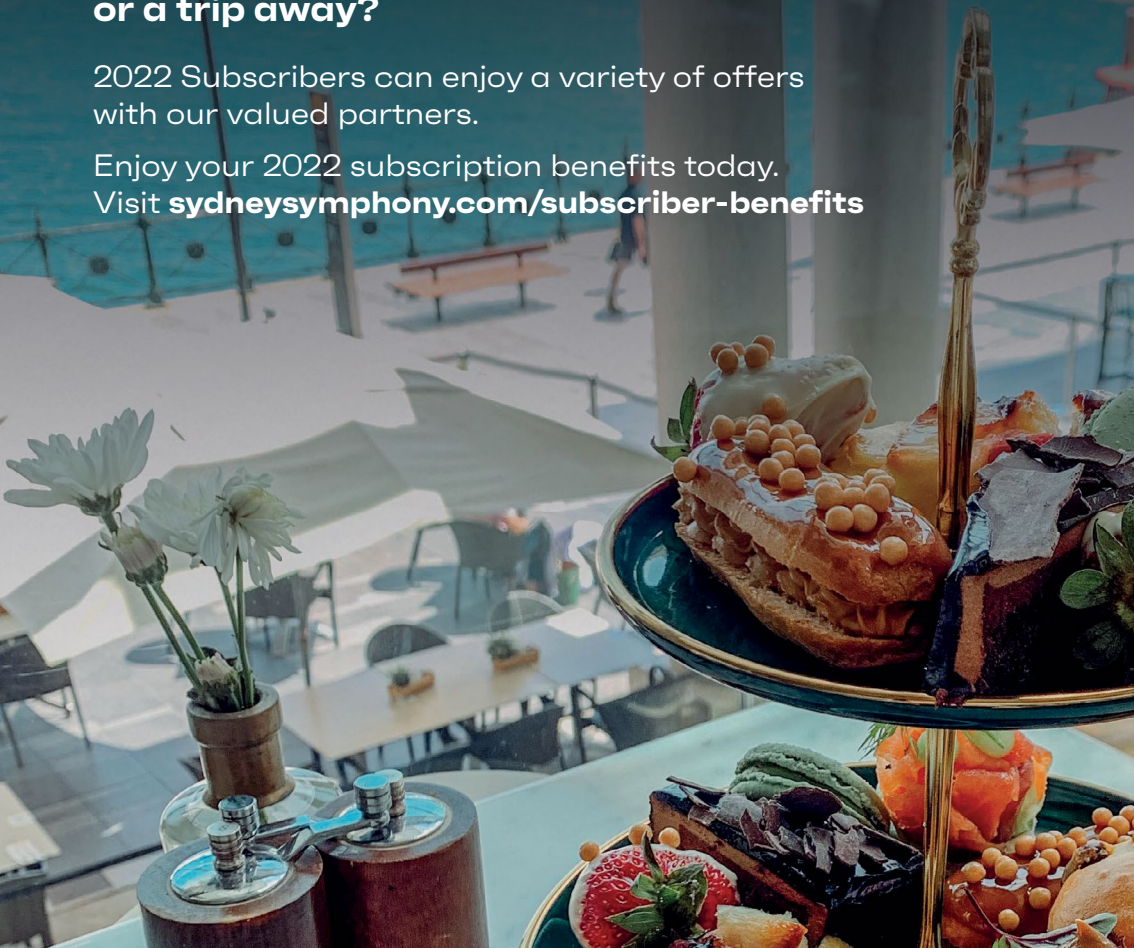
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