

28–29 October  
Sydney Opera House

# TAKEMITSU & SHOSTAKOVICH



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# WELCOME

As the Orchestra's Premier Partner, we welcome you to tonight's performance of Takemitsu & Shostakovich.

Tonight's Cocktail Hour performance contains two works by two of the greatest composers of the 20th century, Tōru Takemitsu and Dmitri Shostakovich.

Takemitsu is a remarkable figure, applying the idioms and instruments of traditional Japanese music to the Western Classical. In the process, he establishes a new way of thinking about how music could and should sound.

Shostakovich's struggles against censorship and tyranny are well-known. As is often heard in his music, this String Quartet references Russian folk music and the chaos and devastation of war.

Chamber music is the ultimate in collaboration and partnership, requiring musicians to be completely in sync with each other. In the same way, Credit Suisse continues to work in partnership with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, striving to bring music to more than 2,000 young students in deserving schools by supporting emerging young professional musicians.

We are proud to support this world-class Orchestra and wish you a very enjoyable evening.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Gibb', with a stylized, flowing script.

**Richard Gibb**

Chief Executive Officer  
Credit Suisse Australia

COCKTAIL HOUR

Friday 28 October, 6pm  
Saturday 29 October, 6pm  
Utzon Room,  
Sydney Opera House

# TAKEMITSU & SHOSTAKOVICH

POWERFUL MOVEMENTS

**GENEVIEVE LANG** presenter

**LERIDA DELBRIDGE** violin

**ANNA SKÁLOVÁ** violin

**JUSTIN WILLIAMS** viola

**KRISTY CONRAU** cello

**DAVID CAMPBELL** double bass

**JAAN PALLANDI** double bass

**MARK ROBINSON** percussion

**REBECCA LAGOS** percussion

**TIMOTHY CONSTABLE** percussion

**ESTIMATED DURATIONS**

12 minutes, 8 minutes,  
34 minutes

The concert will conclude  
at approximately 7pm

**COVER IMAGE**

Timothy Constable.  
Photo credit Nick Bowers.

**TÖRU TAKEMITSU (1930–1996)**

*Rain Tree* for two marimbas and vibraphone

**HENRY ECCLES (c.1670–c.1742)**

**arr. DAVID CAMPBELL**

Sonata in G minor

i. *Grave*

ii. *Courante*

iii. *Adagio*

iv. *Vivace*

**DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975)**

String Quartet No.3, Op.73

i. *Allegretto*

ii. *Moderato con moto*

iii. *Allegro non troppo*

iv. *Adagio*

v. *Moderato*

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# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## TÔRU TAKEMITSU (1930–1996)

### *Rain Tree*

Tôru Takemitsu graduated from Keika High School in 1948 where he studied composition. However, most of his musical knowledge was self-acquired during a slow recovery from tuberculosis in his late teens. The work that first gained him a lot of exposure was the *Requiem for Strings*, 1957, which was commissioned and performed by the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra. In 1967 he produced *November Steps*, a work which successfully blended traditional Japanese instruments like the *shakuhachi* (an end-blown flute) and *biwa* (a four stringed lute) with the Western symphony orchestra.

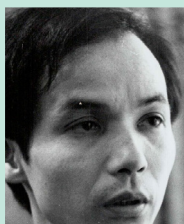
In 1971 he was selected as a main composer of the International Contemporary Music Week (SMIP) in Paris with Stravinsky, Stockhausen and Eloy. *The Music of Tôru Takemitsu*, an event exclusively featuring his music, was held in Buffalo by the University of New York at the Center of the Creative and Performing Arts, directed by Morton Feldman in 1977.

Takemitsu was awarded Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government, and was chosen honorary member of the French Académie des Beaux-Arts in the mid-80s.

In recognition of his services to contemporary music he was invited to Hong Kong as a member of the International Society of Contemporary Music Jury. His association with Australia – as teacher of Barry Conyngham and friend of Peter Sculthorpe – led to works influenced by this country, such as *Dreamtime* (1982).

The composer noted that *Rain Tree* (1981) ‘belongs to a series of works inspired by the common theme of rain.’ The complete collection, entitled *Waterscape*, also includes *Rain Coming* (1982), *Garden Rain* (1974), *Rain Tree* (1981) and *Rain Spell* (1982). It was the composer’s intention to create a series of works ‘that pass through various metamorphoses aiming at the sea of tonality, just like water which circulates in the universe.’

*Rain Tree* is often linked to an image from author Kenzaburo Oe – ‘it was named the “rain tree”,



Tôru Takemitsu

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

for its abundant foliage continued to let fall rain drops from the previous night's shower until the following midday' – though it has been suggested that the music came before the image. In any case, the texture provided by the three 'keyboards' and crotales creates a texture of gradually varying density and movement, from almost silence to brief downpours of sound.

## **HENRY ECCLES (c.1670–c.1742)**

**arr. DAVID CAMPBELL**

### **Sonata in G minor**

The past, as L.P. Hartley reminds us, is a different country, and they do things very differently there when it comes to intellectual property and the notion of copyright. It was, for instance, only in 1777 that Johann Christian Bach won a court case against the publisher Longman that ruled that musical scores were subject to copyright — in Britain at least. It is for this reason that while composers such as Vivaldi published a good deal of their music, they knew the value of holding a good deal of it back so it didn't end up pirated and bowdlerised.

British composer Henry Eccles was part of musical family; his father was a composer and his brother John was Master of the King's Musick to a succession of monarchs, two of whom (Mary II and Anne) were queens. Having been employed as a violinist by the French ambassador to Britain, Henry – or Henri – moved to Paris in 1713 where he continued to perform and compose, publishing his *Premier livre de sonates à violon seul et la basse* (First book of sonatas for solo violin and bass) in 1720 dedicating it to a prominent British businessman based in Paris.

'His' perhaps overstates things, as some 18 of the movements therein were lifted from 12 *Allettamenti da Camera*, Op.8 ('12 alluring chamber pieces') by Giuseppe Valentini, and one of the movements of the G-minor Sonata — the Courante — was taken from *10 Inventiones*, Op.10, by Francesco Antonio Bonporti, published in 1712. Other than that, it seems though, that the G-minor sonata is largely Eccles' own work, and he would no doubt have approved of its relative popularity in



Henry Eccles

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

the bewildering number of arrangements in which it has subsequently appeared, including this one for two basses and percussion.

The piece is a sonata da chiesa in design, that is, alternating slow and fast movements in pairs. The opening movement (*Grave* or *Adagio* depending on which score one consults) has the steady tread and melancholy dying fall of the Albinoni *Adagio* (another work that isn't all it seems). It is followed by Bonporti's Courante (a 'running dance') that shows idiomatic string writing. The *Sarabande* is also melancholy with a gracious slow triple metre, and leads straight into the *Vivace* (or, indeed *Presto*) finale that recalls moments in other Albinoni or Vivaldi works.

## **DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975)** **String Quartet No.3, Op.73**

Having been denounced by the official newspaper, *Pravda*, in 1936, Shostakovich regained precarious favour with the Soviet regime when his Fifth Symphony appeared the following year. By 1946, however, his stocks were falling again, despite the composer's efforts to ingratiate himself with Stalin (who knew that Shostakovich was a cultural asset, but one that needed to be managed). In the poisonous atmosphere created by Andrei Zhdanov — memorably described as the 'propagandist-in-chief' of the Soviet Union — hostile critics noted that while the Seventh Symphony offered a vision of triumph during Russia's darkest hours, the Eighth was relatively pessimistic even though victory seemed assured. And again, somewhat bafflingly, despite Stalin's 'suggestion' that the Ninth Symphony should be a choral paean to Soviet power, Shostakovich felt compelled to write a short, apparently light work full of barely concealed irony. In 1948, he was again denounced, and forced to publicly acknowledge his 'errors'. Much of Shostakovich's work from the mid-1940s was written, as he put it, 'for the drawer', where works like the Violin Concerto No.1 stayed until Stalin's death in 1953.

The Third Quartet was Shostakovich's major preoccupation during 1946 and, as Norman



Dmitri Shostakovich in 1943

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

Lebrecht puts it, 'opens a triptych of private torture chamber works'. Where the Second displayed the resilience of a Russian folk song in the face of a series of variations, the Third is a much more symphonic work. The first movement is a complex structure of sonata and learned elements, the second presaging doom in its particular use of the viola. The third movement creates drama out of the alternation of bars with three and two beats respectively. The fourth is a passacaglia — where the relentless repetition of a theme is countered by a gradual loss of energy. That theme occurs at a climactic moment in the finale, which eventually reaches a kind of peace.

Author Wendy Lesser describes a 'dubious but nonetheless persistent story' that the quartet's five movements had the following subtitles:

- I. *Calm unawareness of the future cataclysm*
- II. *Rumblings of unrest and anticipation*
- III. *The forces of war unleashed*
- IV. *Homage to the dead*
- V. *The eternal question: Why? And for what?*

referring, of course, to the recent war. There is no evidence that Shostakovich sanctioned them — they are never included in published scores of the music — but allowing them to circulate did perhaps forestall the charge of 'formalism': Soviet code for decadent, Western-influenced music which is more concerned with itself than with proletarian values.

Clearly the work had great significance for Shostakovich. At a rehearsal with the Borodin Quartet 20 years later, the quartet's violist Feodor Druzhinin remembered,

he'd promised to stop us when he had any remarks to make. Dmitri Dmitriyevich sat in an arm-chair with the score opened out. But after each movement ended he just waved us on saying 'Keep playing!' So we performed the whole quartet. When we finished he sat quite still in silence like a wounded bird, tears streaming down his face...



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