

1-4 November 2023
Sydney Opera House

ALEXANDER GAVRYLYUK PERFORMS TCHAIKOVSKY



SYDNEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Principal Partner



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PATRON **Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley** AC KC

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 Fremaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdenek Macal, 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. Australian-born Simone Young commenced her role as Chief Conductor in 2022, a year in which the Orchestra made 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

Vladimir Ashkenazy

Conductor Laureate

Andrew Haveron

Concertmaster

Chair supported by Vicki Olsson

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Concertmaster

Harry Bennetts

Associate

Concertmaster

Lerida Delbridge

Assistant

Concertmaster

Fiona Ziegler

Assistant

Concertmaster

Sun Yi

Associate

Concertmaster

Emeritus

Jennifer Booth

Sophie Cole

Claire Herrick

Georges Lentz

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Alexandra Mitchell

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° = Contract Musician

† = Sydney Symphony

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Grey = Permanent

member of the Sydney Symphony not appearing in this concert

2023 CONCERT SEASON
EMIRATES MASTERS SERIES

Wednesday 1 November, 8pm

Friday 3 November, 8pm

Saturday 4 November, 8pm

EMIRATES THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

Thursday 2 November, 1.30pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

ALEXANDER GAVRYLYUK PERFORMS TCHAIKOVSKY

PASSIONS OF THE SOUL

DONALD RUNNICLES conductor
ALEXANDER GAVRYLYUK piano

HENRI DUTILLEUX (1916–2013)
Métaboles (1964)

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)
Images for Orchestra (1912)

i. *Gigues*

ii. *Ibéria*

i. *Par les rues et par les chemins* (Along the streets
and along the paths)

ii. *Les parfums de la nuit* (The scents of the night)

iii. *Le matin d'un jour de fête* (The morning of a
festive day)

INTERVAL

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)
Piano Concerto No.1 in B flat minor, Op.23
(1875/1888)

i. Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso – Allegro con spirito

ii. Andantino semplice – Prestissimo – Andantino semplice

iii. Allegro con fuoco

PRE-CONCERT TALK

By Francis Merson in the
Northern Foyer at 7.15pm
(12.45pm Thursday)

ESTIMATED DURATION

Dutilleux – 19 minutes

Debussy – 35 minutes

Interval – 20 minutes

Tchaikovsky – 35 minutes

The concert will run for
approximately two hours

COVER IMAGE

Alexander Gavrylyuk
Photo by Marco Borggreve

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



WELCOME

Welcome to *Alexander Gavrylyuk performs Tchaikovsky.*

Emirates and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra have enjoyed one of the longest-standing and most significant relationships in Australia's performing arts, and 2023 marks over 20 years of partnership.

As the Presenter of this Masters Series, Emirates is passionate about supporting incredible local and international talent, in particular the Sydney Symphony's Chief Conductor Simone Young AM.

Together, we share a common goal of creating journeys of excitement and discovery for people around the globe.

In this concert, the Sydney Symphony and virtuoso soloist Alexander Gavrylyuk bring new energy, finesse and brilliance to Tchaikovsky's instantly recognisable Piano Concerto No 1. Its powerful emotional soundscape is perfectly balanced by Debussy's impressions of England, France and Spain in his iconic work *Images for Orchestra*.

The works in this performance embody a deep sense of wonder and exploration that is at the heart of both the Sydney Symphony and Emirates experience.

We are delighted by our continuing partnership, and we do hope you enjoy this remarkable concert.



Barry Brown

Divisional Vice President for Australasia
Emirates



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DONALD RUNNICLES conductor

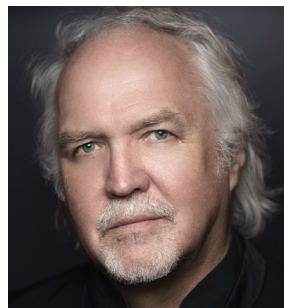
Sir Donald Runnicles is the General Music Director of the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Music Director of the Grand Teton Music Festival, as well as Principal Guest Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. In 2019 Runnicles also took up post as the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's first ever Principal Guest 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 2021-22 season, maestro Runnicles will lead performances of the complete *Ring Cycle*, *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser*, *Der Zwerg*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and Britten's *War Requiem* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin; *Elektra* at the Metropolitan Opera; and concerts with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, including a concert version of *Hansel and Gretel*.

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' *Doctor Atomic*, Conrad Susa's *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, and the US 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

“SYDNEY” “SYMPHONY” “ORCHESTRA”

Discover the Sydney Symphony's 2024 Season.

There's a huge variety of experiences to choose from, including Mahler's Symphonies, an Opera in Concert and an MGM musical.

Join Simone Young and a dazzling roster of guest artists in performances that unleash the power of music that is totally alive.

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2024 SEASON

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ALEXANDER GAVRYLYUK piano

A stunningly virtuosic pianist, Alexander is internationally recognised for his electrifying and poetic performances. His performance of Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No.3 at the BBC Proms was described as 'revelatory' by *The Times* and 'electrifying' by *Limelight*. For the 2023/24 season, Alexander will be Artist in Residence at Wigmore Hall, performing three recitals across the season.

Highlights of the 2023/24 season include debuts with NDR Hannover, Bochum Symphoniker and Amsterdam Sinfonietta, as well as return visits to Sydney Symphony, Adelaide Symphony, Bournemouth Symphony, Aarhus Symphony & Rheinische Philharmonie. Recent highlights also include Detroit Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Polish Baltic Philharmonic, Sao Paolo Symphony & Rhode Island Philharmonic.

Born in Ukraine in 1984 and holding Australian citizenship, Alexander began his piano studies at the age of seven and gave his first concerto performance when he was nine years old. At the age of 13, Alexander moved to Sydney where he lived until 2006. He won First Prize and Gold Medal at the Horowitz International Piano Competition (1999), First Prize at the Hamamatsu International Piano Competition (2000), and Gold Medal at the Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Masters Competition (2005).

He has since gone on to perform with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the New York, Los Angeles, Czech, Warsaw, Moscow, Seoul, Israel and Rotterdam Philharmonics; the NHK, Chicago, Cincinnati and City of Birmingham Symphony orchestras; Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Philharmonia, Wiener Symphoniker, Orchestre National de Lille and the Stuttgarter Philharmoniker; collaborating with conductors such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Alexandre Bloch, Herbert Blomstedt, Andrey Boreyko, Thomas Dausgaard, Valery Gergiev, Neeme Järvi, Vladimir Jurowski, Sebastian Lang-Lessing, Kirill Karabits, Louis Langrée, Cornelius Meister, Vassily Petrenko, Rafael Payare, Alexander Shelley, Yuri Simonov, Vladimir Spivakov, Markus Stenz, Sir Mark Elder, Thomas Søndergård, Gergely Madaras, Mario Venzago, Enrique Mazzola and Osmo Vänska.

Gavrylyuk has appeared at many of the world's foremost festivals, including the Hollywood Bowl, Bravo! Vail Colorado, Mostly Mozart, the Ruhr Festival, the Kissinger Sommer International Music Festival, the Gergiev Festival in Rotterdam.

As a recitalist Alexander has performed at the Musikverein in Vienna, Tonhalle Zurich, Victoria Hall Geneva, Southbank Centre's International Piano Series, Wigmore Hall, Concertgebouw Master Pianists Series, Suntory Hall, Tokyo Opera City Hall, Great Hall of Moscow Conservatory, Cologne Philharmonie, Tokyo City Concert Hall, San Francisco, Sydney Recital Hall and Melbourne Recital Centre. Alexander also performs regularly with his recital partner Janine Jansens throughout Europe.

Alexander is Artist in Residence at Chautauqua Institution where he leads the piano program as an artistic advisor.



Alexander Gavrylyuk
Photo by Marco Borggreve

ABOUT THE MUSIC

HENRI DUTILLEUX (1916 –2013)

Métaboles (1964)

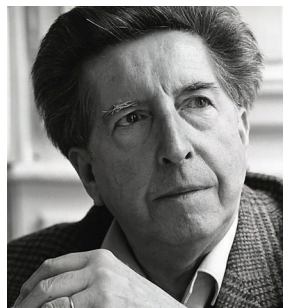
With the death of Olivier Messiaen in 1992, and the growing absorption of Pierre Boulez in conducting, Henri Dutilleux had the role of ‘greatest living French composer’ thrust upon him. This well-deserved reputation nonetheless rested on a relatively small output: Dutilleux was self-critical almost to a fault, and destroyed much of what he composed.

Born during World War I, Dutilleux studied first at the Conservatoire in Douai before moving to the Paris Conservatoire in 1933. He won the much-coveted Prix de Rome in 1938 but was forced to return to France by the outbreak of war in 1939. He served as a medical orderly during the war and then held several teaching and conducting positions before becoming Head of Music Production for Radio France in 1945.

He established himself as an important symphonist in the 1950s, thereafter producing major concertos for the likes of Mstislav Rostropovich, Isaac Stern and Anne-Sophie Mutter, song cycles for Renee Fleming and a body of distinguished chamber music including the 1976 string quartet *Ainsi la nuit*, of which he was most proud.

Métaboles, which Dutilleux once described as a ‘concerto for orchestra’, was commissioned to celebrate the 40th anniversary (1957–8) of the Cleveland Orchestra, but work commitments prevented the composer from completing it on time. It was finally given in the 1964–5 season under the direction of its dedicatee, George Szell.

‘Métabole’ is used here as the rhetorical term meaning transition, passing from one thing to another. The work was originally called *Cinq Métaboles* but Dutilleux later deleted the ‘five’ in order to stress that the work should be played as one continuous piece without a break.



Henri Dutilleux
Photo by Guy Vivien

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The composer himself said, in a program note written for the Cleveland Orchestra's first performance, that the term disclosed the intention of the author 'to present one or many musical ideas in different order and aspects, until – by successive stages – they *underwent* an actual change of nature.'

In each piece the main motif – melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, or simply instrumental – undergoes successive transformations, as in the processes adopted in the domain of Variation. At a given stage of evolution – toward the end of each piece – the distortion is so charged as to engender a new motif which appears as a filigree under the symphonic texture. It is this figure which sets the bait for the next piece, and so forth until the last piece where the initial motif from the beginning of the work is profiled above the coda, in a long rising movement.

The choice of instrumentation gives each of the five pieces a distinct sound. In the first piece – predominance of the woodwinds, treated with increasing sonority; in the second – sovereignty of the strings, with more and more numerous divisions of the string quartet; in the third – supremacy of the brasses; in the fourth – almost exclusive employment of the percussion, with added touches of brass, harp, celesta, clarinet and bass clarinet, and the double-basses treated in harmonics; in the last – dialogues, opposition or blending of these different groups. Throughout the entire work, solo instruments take an important role.

As Dutilleux's music was not dictated by a literary program or other extra-musical idea, he gave no more descriptive titles for the pieces than the following:

- i. (Largamente) *Incantator*
- ii. (Lento moderato) *Linear*
- iii. (Scherzando) *Obsessive*
- iv. (Andantino) *Torpid*
- v. (Presto) *Flamboyant*

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Finally, Dutilleux wrote, 'as the general title clearly suggests, in conceiving this work the composer did not cease to muse upon the mysterious and fascinating world of eternal metamorphosis.'

Dutilleux did make some observations about the movements' forms to aid listening:

The first piece obeys in general the design of an enlarged Rondo with a refrain or A section that is varied each time, and what Dutilleux call a couplet, or contrasting episode between statements of the refrain. The second piece evokes a song, while the third despite its rapid motion, follows strictly the pattern of a passacaglia: its ostinato, the repeated pattern that supports its structure is based on a twelve-tone motive, creating endlessly complex textures. The fourth piece is built upon a single chord of six notes that are given in different order and instrumental registers as corresponding musical synonyms. The last piece resembles a scherzo whose central trio section utilises the principal motif, rhythmically distorted.

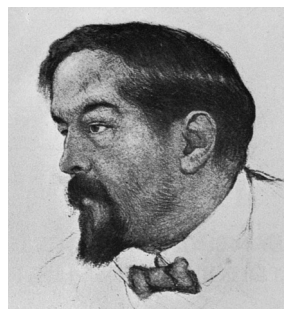
CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)

***Images for Orchestra* (1912)**

Three of Debussy's four orchestral works are triptychs. The amount of connection between the movements within each work varies: *La Mer* has been described as almost symphonic; *Nocturnes* abruptly contrasts meditations on the basic idea of the title.

Images is less unified. The three parts were written over eight years and first performed as separate pieces. Indeed, they are published as separate scores, 'Images pour orchestre' appearing as a subtitle. The extra-musical intention of *Images*, to evoke three different European countries, suggests diversity and even eclecticism.

However, *Images* is more than a set of musical postcards. The orchestration outdoes any of Debussy's earlier scoring in sophistication and brilliance, but mostly the



Debussy in 1913, drawn by Ivan Thiele (1877-1948)

ABOUT THE MUSIC

resources are deployed with subtlety and understatement. Even the rousing climaxes fail to raise the roof; Debussy prefers to remain objective. Almost incredibly, the music was originally conceived for two pianos.

Gigues, published first, was actually the last *Image* to be composed, reaching completion in 1913. It is Debussy's portrait of England, a country he visited several times, and lays claim to being one of his strangest, yet most utterly characteristic, achievements. Its paradox is indicated by its original title – 'Gigues tristes' (sad jigs). The basic material is the well-known English tune 'The Keel Row', but presented in distorted and truncated form. The other main element is a melancholy, folk-like tune for the sweet but rare oboe d'amore. At first the music moves in fits and starts, until the introduction of the second half of the 'Keel Row' seems to signal an escape from gloom. But this is abruptly halted by an icy blast which descends from the piccolos through the entire woodwind section, leaving the stage to the oboe d'amore and reminiscences of the opening.

Ibéria comes from a long tradition of French composers' evocations of Spain. Debussy only ever visited Spain for one afternoon. However, even Manuel de Falla, Spain's most eminent composer of the time, regarded *Ibéria* as the best example of a French work on an Hispanic subject. It is the longest of the *Images*, and is itself subdivided into three movements. 'Par les rues et par les chemins' (Along the streets and pathways) is in a spirited dance tempo. 'Les parfums de la nuit' (The perfumes of the night), longer than either *Gigues* or *Rondes de printemps*, is a sensual Spanish nocturne, enriched by harps and much-divided strings. The finale, 'Le matin d'un jour de fête' (The morning of a festival day), follows without a break; Debussy was particularly proud of the transition from night to morning, effected with the sound of distant bells. This is Debussy at his most 'realistic', giving us a festive jumble of sounds and images.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893) **Piano Concerto No.1 Op.23 (1875/1888)**

After completing the opera *Vakula the Smith* in September 1874, Tchaikovsky had good reason to bask in encouraging circumstances. His First Symphony was soon to be printed; there was interest in the forthcoming performance of his symphonic fantasia *The Tempest*, and at the end of the year, his two quartets were to be performed at Russian Musical Society concerts in St. Petersburg. It is not clear why he decided that his next major work would be a piano concerto. He had previously confessed to disliking the combination of piano and orchestra. But after telling his brother Modest in November that he had turned his attention to a piano concerto, he finished the work in seven weeks, fired by the dramatic possibilities of the confrontation between heroic soloist and eloquent orchestra.

Tchaikovsky showed the completed work to Nikolai Rubinstein on 5 January 1875, hoping to get advice from the virtuoso on the effectiveness of the piano writing. As he was to describe the circumstances three years later in a letter to his patron Nadezhda von Meck, Rubinstein's response was devastating:

...There began to flow from [Rubinstein]'s mouth a stream of words...my concerto was worthless, it was unplayable, passages were trite, awkward, and so clumsy that it was impossible to put them right...I left the room silently and went upstairs...Rubinstein soon appeared and...told me...that if his suggested changes were made by such-and-such a date he would honour me by playing the piece in a concert of his. 'I won't change a single note,' I replied, 'and I'll publish it just as it is now!'



Tchaikovsky in 1875

ABOUT THE MUSIC

It is difficult to be certain, however, that Rubinstein's criticism was quite as severe as Tchaikovsky made out. Rubinstein conducted the Moscow premiere with Sergei Taneyev at the piano in December that year, and Tchaikovsky said on that occasion, 'The present writer could not wish to hear a better performance of the piece than this one.' By 1878, Rubinstein had become one of the work's most persuasive advocates. But perhaps Rubinstein was puzzled not by the relationship between orchestra and soloist, which is mostly well-handled, but by the work's unusual structure.

The second and third movements are both fairly straightforward. The second really requires little more than a simple flow of melody such as Tchaikovsky was uniquely able to supply. The form is a simple ternary. In the third movement Tchaikovsky alternates two blocks of thematic material. They are supplemented, as David Brown notes in *Tchaikovsky: The Early Years*, 'by brief self-contained chunks of transition containing only the slightest hint of quasi-developmental intent'. (Tchaikovsky disdained thematic development, which he derided as 'working out'.)

But it is the first movement which is most interesting from a structural point of view. The sinuous weaving theme introduced by the strings has become one of the best-loved melodies in the classical music repertoire. Anyone hearing this concerto for the first time expects to hear this impressive melody again at some stage – but it never reappears. Why? Because Tchaikovsky the melodist doesn't have enough structural sense? Or because Tchaikovsky the great melodist knows that the high charge of this melody will keep it memorable for the duration of the work? Or...something else?

ABOUT THE MUSIC

That Tchaikovsky originally intended this introduction to be a slow introduction in the manner of a Haydn symphony is indicated by the original tempo indication *Andante non troppo e molto maestoso*. But Brown points out that the apparently self-contained nature of this introduction is deceptive: this melody has implications for the rest of the movement. Its underlying harmony, for example, is invested in the chromatic sighing second subject introduced later by the winds.

The main body of the movement is introduced by the piano in fast two-note groups. Tchaikovsky avoids his detested thematic development by dovetailing the sighing second subject directly into the end of this principal material. Muted strings then introduce the second part of the second subject, and it is the muted string theme which begins the development section, the winds adding the two-note skipping material of the first subject, until the muted string theme is pumped out forcefully by brass. Tchaikovsky thus fulfils the demands of sonata form by character transformation, not thematic transformation.

In the recapitulation, quick doubled notes in the piano signal the return of the main material. The sighing second subject appears in turn as the doubled notes of the first subject fragment and grumble away in the bass of the piano. But then, instead of the muted string theme, Tchaikovsky interpolates the high drama of a cadenza. Only after this does the muted string theme reappear and bring the movement to its conclusion.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Brown believes that ‘the frankness and force with which Tchaikovsky declared himself in this work’ have embarrassed many critics, and ‘deafened many to its finer qualities’, not least of which is the composer’s bold answer to the questions of organic growth in the first movement. Too many have assumed that Tchaikovsky’s emotional candour and melodic strengths obscured structural weaknesses.

Perhaps the question for an audience member, however, is simply this: do you miss not hearing the bold opening theme again? Or, at work’s end, particularly with Tchaikovsky providing you with yet another wonderful melody (the second subject of the finale), are you satisfied with the surfeit of riches? Would you criticise the work as scathingly as Rubinstein is alleged to have done?

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Donald Runnicles
Principal Guest Conductor



Vladimir Ashkenazy
Conductor Laureate



Andrew Haveron
Concertmaster
Vicki Olsson Chair

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Associate Concertmaster
Judy & Sam Weiss Chair



Lerida Delbridge
Assistant Concertmaster
Simon Johnson Chair



Fiona Ziegler
Assistant Concertmaster
Webb Family Chair, in memory
of Dr Bill Webb & Helen Webb



Sun Yi
Associate Concertmaster
Emeritus



Jennifer Booth



Brielle Clapson



Sophie Cole



Claire Herrick
Russell & Mary McMurray Chair



Georges Lentz



Emily Long
In memory of Dr Margot Harris
Chair



Alexandra Mitchell



Alexander Norton



Anna Skálová



Léone Ziegler

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Principal
Drs Keith & Eileen Ong Chair



Marina Marsden
Principal



Marianne Edwards
Associate Principal
Dr Rebecca Chin & Family Chair



Emma Jezek
Assistant Principal



Alice Bartsch



Victoria Bihun



Rebecca Gill
Dr John Lam-Po-Tang Chair,
in memory of Reg & Jeannette
Lam-Po-Tang



Emma Hayes



Shuti Huang



Monique Irik



Wendy Kong



Benjamin Li



Nicole Masters
Nora Goodridge OAM Chair



Maja Verunica

VIOLAS**Tobias Breider**

Principal

Roslyn Packer AC
& Gretel Packer AM Chair**Anne-Louise
Comerford**Associate Principal
White Family Chair**Justin Williams**

L Alison Carr Chair

**Sandro Costantino****Rosemary Curtin**

John & Jane Morschel Chair

**Jane Hazelwood**Bob & Julie Clampett Chair,
in memory of Carolyn Clampett**Graham Hennings****Stuart Johnson****Justine Marsden****Felicity Tsai****Amanda Verner****Leonid Volovelsky**

CELLOS**Catherine Hewgill**

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The Hon. Justice AJ &
Mrs Fran Meagher Chair**Leah Lynn**

Assistant Principal

**Kristy Conrau****Fenella Gill****Timothy Nankervis****Elizabeth Neville**Bob Magid OAM & Ruth Magid
Chair**Christopher Pidcock****Adrian Wallis**

DOUBLE BASSES**Kees Boersma**

Principal

Council Chair, with lead
support from Brian Abel**Alex Henery**

Principal

**David Campbell****Dylan Holly****Steven Larson****Richard Lynn****Jaan Pallandi****Benjamin Ward**

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Principal



Emma Sholl
Associate Principal
Robert & Janet Constable Chair



Carolyn Harris
Landa Family Chair,
in memory of Dr Barry Landa



Diana Doherty
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Sue Milliken AO Chair



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Principal Cor Anglais
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How long have you been playing with the Sydney Symphony?

26 years.

What has been the highlight of your Sydney Symphony career so far?

Our USA tour in 1998, and playing at Boston Symphony Hall and Carnegie Hall. And Bruckner 8 with Yannick Nézet-Séguin in Sydney (August 2005), to name just two.

Who is your favourite composer?

My favourite composer to perform is probably Debussy, but my favourite composer to listen to is definitely Bach.

When did you realise that you could make a career out of music?

I had hoped I could from the age of 15, but I only knew for sure when I got my first job at 25.

Do you have any pre-concert rituals or superstitions?

No – just be calm and breathe.

What was the last book/podcast/TV series you really loved?

I didn't get around to them until years after everyone else, but the *Serial* podcast and the TV series *My Brilliant Friend*.

What is the best piece of advice you ever received – either musical or general?

If you're scared to talk to a famous person, imagine them sitting on the toilet...

If you weren't a musician, what would you most like to be?

Maybe an engineer, but my brain is overwhelmed by music already!



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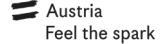
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