

6–9 September
Sydney Opera House

NICOLA BENEDETTI PERFORMS MARSALIS

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.

Simone Young

Chief Conductor

Donald Runnicles

Principal Guest
Conductor

Vladimir Ashkenazy

Conductor Laureate

Andrew Haveron

Concertmaster
*Chair supported by
Vicki Olsson*

FIRST VIOLINS

Andrew Haveron

Concertmaster

Harry Bennetts

Associate
Concertmaster

Lerida Delbridge

Assistant
Concertmaster

Sun Yi

Associate
Concertmaster
Emeritus

Sophie Cole
Claire Herrick
Emily Long
Alexandra Mitchell
Anna Skálová
Sercan Danis^o
Alexandra Osborne^o
Dominic Azzi[†]
Marcus Michelsen[†]
Thibaud Pavlovic-Hobba[†]
Tim Yu[†]
Robert Smith[^]
Fiona Ziegler
Assistant
Concertmaster
Jennifer Booth
Brielle Clapson
Georges Lentz
Alexander Norton
Léone Ziegler

SECOND VIOLINS

Marina Marsden

Principal

Emma Jezek

Assistant Principal

Alice Bartsch
Rebecca Gill
Emma Hayes
Shuti Huang
Monique Irik
Wendy Kong
Benjamin Li
Nicole Masters
Caroline Hopson^o
Riika Sintonen^o
Cristina Vaszilcsin^o

Kirsty Hilton

Principal

Marianne Edwards

Associate Principal

Victoria Bihun
Maja Verunica

VIOLAS

Tobias Breider

Principal

Carrie Dennis

Principal

Anne-Louise

Comerford

Associate Principal

Justin Williams

Assistant Principal

Sandro Costantino
Rosemary Curtin
Jane Hazelwood
Stuart Johnson
Felicity Tsai
Amanda Verner
Leonid Volovelsky
Sarah Zhu[^]
Graham Hennings
Justine Marsden

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Kaori Yamagami^{*}

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Catherine Hewgill

Principal

Simon Cobcroft

Associate Principal

Leah Lynn

Assistant Principal

Kristy Conrau
Fenella Gill
Timothy Nankervis
Christopher Pidcock
Adrian Wallis
Miles Mullin-Chivers^o
Eliza Sdraulig^o
Paul Stender^o
Elizabeth Neville

DOUBLE BASSES

Kees Boersma

Principal

Alex Henery

Principal

Dylan Holly
Steven Larson
Richard Lynn
Jan Pallandi
Benjamin Ward
David Campbell

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Joshua Batty

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Emma Sholl

Associate Principal

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Katie Zagorski^o

Acting Principal Piccolo

OBOES

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Principal

Callum Hogan
Noah Rudd[†]

Alexandre Oguey

Principal Cor Anglais

Shefall Pryor

Associate Principal

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Francesco Celata

Acting Principal

Alexander Morris

Acting Associate Principal

Christopher Tingay

Alexei Dupressoir^o

Acting Principal

Bass Clarinet

BASSOONS

Matthew Wilkie

Principal Emeritus

Fiona McNamara
Melissa Woodroffe^{*}

Noriko Shimada

Principal Contrabassoon

Todd Gibson-Cornish

Principal

HORNS

Samuel Jacobs^{*}

Guest Principal

Euan Harvey

Acting Principal

Lee Wadenpfuhl^o

Acting Principal 3rd

Marnie Sebire
Rachel Silver

Madeline Aarons^{*}
Jenny McLeod-Sneyd^{*}

Emily Newham^{*}
Ian Wildsmith^{*}

Geoffrey O'Reilly

Principal 3rd

TRUMPETS

Brent Grapes

Associate Principal

Owen Morris^{*}

Cécile Glénot
Sophie Spencer^{*}

Fletcher Cox[^]
Colin Grisdale^{*}

David Elton

Principal

Anthony Heinrichs

TROMBONES

Ronald Prussing

Principal

Nick Byrne

Christopher Harris

Principal Bass Trombone

Scott Kinmont

Associate Principal

TUBA

Steve Rossé

Principal

TIMPANI

Mark Robinson

Acting Principal

PERCUSSION

Rebecca Lagos

Principal

Timothy Constable
Brian Nixon^o
Ian Cleworth[†]

HARP

Louise Johnson^{*}

Guest Principal

Genevieve Lang^{*}
Julie Kim^{*}

KEYBOARDS / EXTRAS

Catherine Davis^{*}

Guest Principal Piano

Susanne Powell^{*}

Guest Principal Celeste

Bold = Principal

Italics = Associate

Principal

^{*} = Guest Musician

^o = Contract Musician

[†] = Sydney Symphony

Fellow

[^] = Australian Youth

Orchestra Fellow

appearing in this

program

Grey = Permanent

member of the

Sydney Symphony not

appearing in this concert

EMIRATES MASTERS SERIES

Wednesday 6 September, 8pm

Friday 8 September, 8pm

Saturday 9 September, 8pm

EMIRATES THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

Thursday 7 September, 1.30pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

NICOLA BENEDETTI PERFORMS MARSALIS

KAREN KAMENSEK conductor**NICOLA BENEDETTI** violin**JOHN ADAMS (born 1947)*****Short Ride in a Fast Machine (1986)*****WYNTON MARSALIS (born 1961)*****Violin Concerto in D (2016)***i. *Rhapsody*ii. *Rondo Burlesque*iii. *Blues*iv. *Hootenanny*

INTERVAL

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)***The Firebird (1910)***

i. Introduction

Tableau I

ii. *Kashchei's Enchanted Garden*iii. *The Firebird appears, pursued by the Tsarevich Prince Ivan*iv. *Dance of the Firebird*v. *Prince Ivan captures the Firebird*vi. *Supplication of the Firebird*vii. *The appearance of thirteen enchanted Princesses*viii. *The Princesses play with the golden apples*ix. *Sudden appearance of Prince Ivan*x. *Round Dance of the Princesses*xi. *Daybreak. Prince Ivan enters the Palace of Kashchei*xii. *Fairy Carillon – Appearance of Kashchei's Guardian Monsters – The Capture of Prince Ivan*xiii. *The Arrival of the Demon King Kashchei – Dialogue of Kashchei and Prince Ivan – Intercession of the Princesses*xiv. *Appearance of the Firebird*xv. *Dance of Kashchei's Retinue under the magic spell of the Firebird*xvi. *Infernal Dance of the Subjects of Kashchei*xvii. *Lullaby of the Firebird*xviii. *Kashchei awakens – Death of Kashchei – Profound Darkness*

Tableau II

xix. *Disappearance of Kashchei's Palace and Sorcery – Reanimation of the Knights who had been turned to stone – General Rejoicing***PRE-CONCERT TALK**

By Yvonne Frindle in the Northern Foyer at 7.15pm (Wednesday, Friday, Saturday) and 12.45pm (Thursday).

ESTIMATED DURATION

Adams – 5 minutes

Marsalis – 45 minutes

Interval – 20 minutes

Stravinsky – 50 minutes

The concert will run for approximately two hours and ten minutes

COVER IMAGE

Nicola Benedetti

Photo by Simon Fowler

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



CONCERT DIARY

SEPTEMBER 2023



**BEETHOVEN 7 &
BRUCH'S VIOLIN CONCERTO**
EXHILARATING & POWERFUL

Experience Bruch's most famous work and one of the greatest symphonies ever written with Beethoven's Seventh.

WAGNER

Tannhäuser Overture and Venusberg Music
Great Classics performance only

BRUCH Violin Concerto No.1

BEETHOVEN Symphony No.7

MARK WIGGLESWORTH conductor

EMILY SUN violin

Tea & Symphony
Great Classics

Friday 15 September, 11am
Saturday 16 September, 2pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House



SCHUBERT'S OCTET
WARM & RADIANT

Concertmaster Andrew Haveron leads this mighty work that showcases an impressive range of Sydney Symphony musicians across six glowing movements.

SCHUBERT Octet

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
MUSICIANS

Cocktail Hour

Friday 15 September, 6pm
Saturday 16 September, 6pm

Utzon Room,
Sydney Opera House

OCTOBER 2023



LILYA ZILBERSTEIN IN RECITAL
GRAND EXPRESSIONS

Hear the absolute mastery of Lilya Zilberstein in an intimate piano recital as she expertly captures the essence of Rachmaninov and Schubert.

International Pianists in Recital

Monday 16 October, 7pm

City Recital Hall



DANIEL DE BORAH
PERFORMS MOZART
HERE'S TO MOZART

Conductor Umberto Clerici and pianist Daniel de Borah pay homage to Mozart in these joyous performances.

IBERT Homage to Mozart
MOZART Piano Concerto No.17
SCHUBERT Symphony No.5

UMBERTO CLERICI conductor
DANIEL DE BORAH piano

Classics in the City

Thursday 19 October, 7pm

City Recital Hall

Friday 20 October, 7.30pm

Joan Sutherland
Performing Arts Centre,
Penrith

WELCOME

Welcome to tonight's concert, Nicola Benedetti Performs Marsalis.

Tonight the Sydney Symphony Orchestra presents the Sydney premiere of the Violin Concerto written by the incomparable American master Wynton Marsalis, performed by its dedicatee, Grammy Award-winning violinist Nicola Benedetti.

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

As the Presenter of this Master 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 performance, Sydney Symphony spotlights the grace and brilliance of violinist Nicola Benedetti as she performs a great American work from the pen of Wynton Marsalis, alongside Stravinsky's *Firebird* (an early influence on Marsalis) and *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* by another American great, John Adams.

All three works embody an energetic, modern approach 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

KAREN KAMENSEK conductor

Karen Kamensek, born in Chicago, is equally at home on the opera and concert stages. Her broad range of interests and her varied work extend from classical to modern, including many world premieres, film music and crossover projects.

A specialist in contemporary music, she regularly works with the American composer Philip Glass, whose *Orphée* she conducted in New York and Germany, as well as Glass' world premiere of *Les Enfants terribles* at the Spoleto Festival USA. A further Glass premiere to take place under Kamensek's baton was the first ever live performance of *Passages* in collaboration with Anoushka Shankar, which marked her BBC Proms debut, where she returns in summer 2022. In recent years, Kamensek has also made Glass' opera *Akhnaten* a core part of her repertoire, and she was honoured with a Grammy Award for her recorded performance of the work at the Metropolitan Opera in 2019.

As a sought-after opera conductor, Karen Kamensek is a guest at major opera houses around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Oper Frankfurt, Gothenburg Opera, Royal Swedish Opera, Bergen Opera, English National Opera, Israeli Opera, New York City Opera, Opera Australia, Royal Danish Opera, San Diego Opera, San Francisco Opera and the Vienna Volksoper.

She is also regularly on the concert podium and has conducted the Bergen, Dortmund, Duisburger, Freiburg, Hamburg, Malaysian, Oslo, Stockholm and Hungarian National philharmonics; Orchestres national de Bordeaux, Lille, Montpellier and Pays de la Loire; Monterey, Norrköping, Leipzig, Basel, San Antonio, Malmö, Helsingborg and MDR symphony orchestras; Orchestres de chambre de Lausanne and Paris; Royal Northern Sinfonia; Tonkünstler Niederösterreich; Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille; Bruckner Orchester Linz; Norwegian Radio Orchestra; Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra; Braunschweig Philharmonic State Orchestra; Halle Philharmonic State Orchestra; Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra Ljubljana and Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi.

Kamensek was First Kapellmeister at the Vienna Volksoper from 2000 to 2002 and Music Director at the Theater Freiburg from 2003 to 2006, after which she took on the position of interim Chief Conductor of the Slovenian National Theater in Maribor in the 2007/08 season. Beginning in 2008 Kamensek served as Deputy Music Director at the Hamburg State Opera before becoming Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Hanover State Opera in 2011. She led the opera in Hanover until 2016, and during her tenure she conducted numerous new productions including Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Puccini's *Il trittico*, Detlev Glanert's *Caligula*, and Janáček's *Jenůfa*.



Karen Kamensek
Photo by Todd Rosenberg

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

NICOLA BENEDETTI violin

Nicola Benedetti is one of the most sought-after violinists of her generation. Her ability to captivate audiences with her innate musicianship and spirited presence, coupled with her wide appeal as a high-profile advocate for classical music, has made her one of the most influential classical artists of today.

With concerto performances at the heart of her career, Nicola is in much demand with major orchestras across the globe. The 2022-23 season has seen Nicola perform the Marsalis Violin Concerto with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra at the BBC Proms and Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto with Kazuki Yamada and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Further engagements included the world premiere of James MacMillan's Violin Concerto with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, a tour to Japan with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and performances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Hallé, DSO Berlin, St Louis Symphony, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Gothenburg Symphony and Orchestre de Paris amongst others.

Winner of the Grammy Award for Best Classical Instrumental Solo in 2020 for her recording of the Marsalis Violin Concerto, as well as Best Female Artist at both 2012 and 2013 Classical BRIT Awards, Nicola records exclusively for Decca (Universal Music). In 2021, *BBC Music Magazine* named her Personality of the Year for her online support of many young musicians during the pandemic.

Nicola has continued her role as a dedicated, passionate ambassador and leader in music education. Her commitment to supporting the UK's music practitioners was underlined in July 2018, when Nicola took over as President of the European String Teachers' Association. In 2019, Nicola formalised her commitment to music in education when she established The Benedetti Foundation. Since its launch, the Foundation has worked with over 29,000 participants, age 2-92, from 103 countries through its transformative in-person workshops and online sessions for young people, students, teachers and adults. The Foundation unites those who believe that music is integral to a great education and demonstrates ground-breaking teaching by producing and delivering innovative and creative musical experiences accessible to all.

In March 2022, Nicola became the Director Designate of the Edinburgh International Festival, becoming Festival Director on 1 October 2022. In taking the role she will be both the first Scottish and the first female Festival Director since the Festival began in 1947.

Nicola was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2019 New Year Honours list, awarded the Queen's Medal for Music in 2017, the youngest ever recipient, and was appointed as a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 2013 in recognition of her international music career and work with musical charities throughout the United Kingdom. In addition, Nicola has received nine honorary degrees to date.

Nicola plays the Gariel Stradivarius (1717), courtesy of Jonathan Moulds.



Nicola Benedetti
Photo by Andy Gotts

ABOUT THE MUSIC

JOHN ADAMS (born 1947) ***Short Ride in a Fast Machine* (1986)**

John Adams' music often grows out of his engagement with particular works from the past including vernacular music – march, hymn and jazz ballad. Early pieces like *Shaker Loops* and *Christian Zeal and Activity*, elaborate patterns out of fragments of Nonconformist hymnody; *Grand Pianola Music* reaches its fulfilment in a rolling, big-hearted popular tune.

In 1979 Adams began the series of large-scale orchestral works such as *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* and *Harmonielehre* (whose title references the teaching method of composer Arnold Schoenberg) that spring from a confident, optimistic energy embodied in the use of large-scale fields of stable diatonic harmony; by the early 1990s, in his Chamber Symphony, Adams explores more introspective, and occasionally darker, worlds in a piece that encompasses references to Schoenberg and the scores of Warner Brothers cartoons.

Adams' distinguished career in the opera theatre began in earnest with *Nixon in China* in 1982. This was followed by the still-controversial *The Death of Klinghoffer* and several other works including *El Niño: A Nativity Oratorio*; *Doctor Atomic* and *A Flowering Tree*.

The operas all have a direct concern with contemporary life; the essential humanism of Adams' works is also manifest in his setting of Walt Whitman's Civil War elegy, *The Wound Dresser*, and *On the Transmigration of Souls* of 2002, his response to the appalling events of September 11, 2001.



John Adams
Photo by Christine Alicino

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Writing of *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, Michael Steinberg has observed that:

The most famous American fanfare is *Hail to the Chief*. Next comes Aaron Copland's thumping huff and puff in honour of 'the Common Man'. Most fanfares are brilliant, some even aggressive (etymologists disagree whether the word 'fanfare' is onomatopoeic or actually connected with the verbal family that gives us 'fanfaronade', meaning blustering and bragging behaviour), though John Adams has also explored the possibilities of the restrained and pianissimo fanfare (in his *Tromba lontana*).

Short Ride in a Fast Machine is a joyfully exuberant piece, brilliantly scored for a large orchestra. The steady marking of a beat is typical of Adams' music. *Short Ride* begins with a marking of crotchets (woodblock, soon joined by the four trumpets) and quavers (clarinets and synthesizers); the woodblock is fortissimo and the other instruments play forte. Adams sees the rest of the orchestra as running the gauntlet through that rhythmic tunnel. About the title: 'You know how it is when someone asks you to ride in a terrific sports car, and then you wish you hadn't?'

Short Ride in a Fast Machine features the usual minimalist earmarks: repetition, steady beat, and, perhaps most crucially, a harmonic language with an emphasis on consonance unlike anything in Western art music in the last five hundred years. Adams is not a simple – or simple-minded – artist. His concern has been to invent music at once familiar and subtle. For all of their minimalist features, works such as *Harmonium*, *Harmonielehre* and *El Dorado* are full of surprises, always enchanting in the glow and gleam of their sonority, and bursting with the energy generated by their harmonic movement.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

WYNTON MARSALIS (born 1961) **Violin Concerto in D (2016)**

Wynton Marsalis' Violin Concerto was composed for Nicola Benedetti. The composer writes:

It takes inspiration from her life as a traveling performer and educator who enlightens and delights communities all over the world with the magic of virtuosity. Scored for symphony orchestra, with tremendous respect for the demands of that instrument, it is nonetheless written from the perspective of a jazz musician and New Orleans bluesman. We believe that all human beings are connected in the essential fundamentals of life: birth, death, love, and laughter; that our most profound individual experiences are also universal (especially pain); and acknowledging the depth of that pain in the context of a groove is a powerful first step towards healing.

Nicky asked me to 'invite a diverse world of people into the experience of this piece'. Because finding and nurturing common musical ground between differing arts and musical styles has been a lifetime fascination of mine, I was already trying to welcome them. It may seem simple enough, but bringing different perspectives together is never easy. The shared vocabulary between the jazz orchestra and the modern orchestra sits largely in the areas of texture and instrumental technique. Form, improvisation, harmony, and methods of thematic development are very different. The biggest challenges are: how to orchestrate the nuance and virtuosity in jazz and blues for an ensemble not versed in those styles (a technical issue); and how to create a consistent groove without a rhythm section (a musical/philosophical issue).



Wynton Marsalis
Photo by Piper Ferguson

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Because modern living is an integrated experience, it is never difficult to discover organic connections. Turning those insights into something meaningful and playable, however, is another story. It has to be lived and digested. That's why I looked for real-life examples in the history of jazz-symphonic collaborations and to the environment and experience that connect Nicky and me. I considered aspects of her Scottish ancestry, the great Afro- American abolitionist Frederick Douglass' love of legendary Scottish poet Robert Burns, my love and inextinguishable respect for Scottish baritone saxophonist Joe Temperley (and his gleeful recitation of pungent limericks), and the luminous but obscure achievements of Afro- American keyed bugler Francis Johnson, father of the American cornet tradition and one of the first published American composers... who was also a fine fiddler. These sources led me to reconnect with the Anglo-Celtic roots of Afro-American music.

The piece opens with Nicky whispering a solo note before the orchestra enters, as if to say 'And so it came to pass' or 'Once upon a time'. Then we are into a form constructed in fours – as in the four corners of the earth, where her travels take her.

Each of the four movements, Rhapsody, Rondo Burlesque, Blues and Hootenanny, reveals a different aspect of her dream, which becomes reality through the public storytelling that is virtuosic performance.

Movement 1, *Rhapsody*, is a complex dream that becomes a nightmare, progresses into peacefulness and dissolves into ancestral memory.

Movement 2, *Rondo Burlesque*, is a syncopated, New Orleans jazz, calliope, circus clown, African gumbo, Mardi Gras party in odd meters.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Movement 3, *Blues*, is the progression of flirtation, courtship, intimacy, sermonizing, final loss and abject loneliness that is out there to claim us all.

Movement 4, *Hootenanny*, is a raucous, stomping and whimsical barnyard throw-down. She excites us with all types of virtuosic chicanery and gets us intoxicated with revelry and then... goes on down the Good King's highway to other places yet to be seen or even foretold.

As in the blues and jazz tradition, our journey ends with the jubilation and uplift of an optimistic conclusion.

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)

***The Firebird* (1910)**

Glinka's 1842 opera *Ruslan and Ludmilla* – with its heroic knight, abducted princess, evil magicians, malevolent gnomes, gigantic singing head and final wedding – influenced Russian works from Tchaikovsky's ballets to Prokofiev's *The Love of Three Oranges*, and was particularly important to the group known in English as 'The Five' or 'Mighty Handful': Balakirev, Cui, Mussorgsky, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov. The Russian fairy-tale world was also irresistibly exotic to audiences abroad, so for the 1910 Paris season of the Ballets Russes, artistic director Sergei Diaghilev commissioned Anatoly Liadov to compose a score to be choreographed by Mikhail Fokine. Diaghilev had already whetted the Parisian audience's appetite for Russian music in concerts presented as early as 1907; this new work would be 'the first Russian ballet' – Tchaikovsky's ballets, while exploiting the Russian love of fairy-tales, are largely based on non-Russian stories, but Fokine's scenario for *The Firebird* is drawn exclusively from Russian folklore.



Igor Stravinsky

ABOUT THE MUSIC



The Firebird, by Ivan Bilibin.

Liadov failed to deliver and Diaghilev turned to the 28 year-old Stravinsky, with whose orchestral showpiece, *Fireworks*, Diaghilev had become acquainted in Russia in 1909, and whom he rightly regarded as 'on the eve of celebrity'. The ballet would be the largest single piece composed by Stravinsky to date, would require what the composer in retrospect derided as merely 'descriptive' music, composed to a scenario not of his choosing, and with a deadline that was frighteningly close. But such things concentrate the mind wonderfully, and in *The Firebird*, Stravinsky emerges as a major composer of the twentieth century, not least in his bold and inventive use of orchestral sound. After the triumphant first performance in June 1910 Stravinsky was praised in the press for the 'exquisite marvel of equilibrium...between sounds, movement and forms' and was suddenly immersed in

ABOUT THE MUSIC

the glamorous world of pre-war Paris. The Firebird also lays the foundations for the much greater radicalism of *The Rite of Spring*, while bringing to a radiant close the Russian Romantic tradition of 'The Five'.

Fokine's scenario brings together three strands of Russian folklore. The Firebird herself is a kind of phoenix and, as Richard Taruskin notes, 'a thing of preternatural, elemental freedom, she personified the indifference of beauty to the desires and cares of mankind.' Kashchei, the evil ogre attended by monsters, who abducts maidens and turns knights to stone, has cognates and avatars in many mythologies. Finally, there is Ivan Tsarevich, who, of course, personifies a nationalist, indeed imperial, heroism.

In two tableaux, the ballet score proceeds through a series of short linked sections. An introductory section begins in the sepulchral depths of the orchestra, rising to fluttering wind figurations and a fragmentary, plaintive oboe solo. The Enchanted Garden is characterised by glints of metal percussion, sinuous bassoon motives and shuddering strings. Harps and trilling woodwinds announce the apparition of the Firebird who is being pursued by Ivan Tsarevich. The Firebird's dance is a spritely waltz clothed in brilliant orchestral colour, which dissolves into scurrying flute textures as Ivan captures her.

The Firebird begs for her freedom in a slow dance whose main melody is first heard in the violas and bassoon. Ivan releases her, and in gratitude the Firebird gives him a plume from her tail, with the promise that she will return and come to his aid if called.

Now closer to the castle of Kashchei, high string chords and ornate wind solos announce the appearance of twelve enchanted princesses. At the end of this section a thirteenth princess appears; they then, to a glittering scherzo, play a game with golden apples as Ivan, unseen, watches them.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

He suddenly appears, and the princesses dance their stately *khorovod*, or 'round dance' (to a Russian folk-tune), where, again, solo woodwinds dominate.

Day breaks to a chorus of muted trumpet fanfares, and Kashchei's monsters appear accompanied by the vertiginous whirl of the 'fairy carillon'. To baleful low brass chords, Ivan is captured as Kashchei appears. Their dialogue depicts two strongly contrasting characters, before the monsters attempt to turn Ivan to stone in the face of the princesses' pleas for mercy.

Ivan remembers the Firebird's promise and summons her; she appears and casts a spell on the monsters. Other subjects of Kashchei perform an exhilarating 'infernal dance' to acrobatic trumpet calls, woodwind trills and clattering xylophones.

The Firebird dances a *berceuse*, or lullaby, putting Kashchei into a magic sleep and telling Ivan that he must destroy the egg in which Kashchei keeps his soul. As Kashchei awakes, Ivan does so, thus destroying the evil ogre and plunging his world into profound darkness lit only by quietly shimmering strings.

In the short, single-movement second tableau, a long-breathed melody passed from solo horn through the full orchestra announces the destruction of evil and the reawakening of the knights who Kashchei had turned to stone. Ivan, naturally, marries the thirteenth princess in music of great ecstasy.

Notes © Michael Steinberg (Adams) reprinted with kind permission of www.earbox.com; Wynton Marsalis; Gordon Kerry (Stravinsky).

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Simone Young AM

Chief Conductor



Donald Runnicles

Principal Guest Conductor



Vladimir Ashkenazy

Conductor Laureate



Andrew Haveron

Concertmaster
Vicki Olsson Chair

FIRST VIOLINS



Harry Bennetts

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

SECOND VIOLINS



Kirsty Hilton

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**

Assistant Principal
L Alison Carr Chair

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

John & Jane Morschel Chair

**Jane Hazelwood**

Bob & Julie Clampett Chair,
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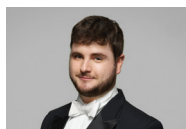
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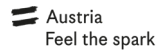
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