

25 July
Sydney Opera House

PLAY WITH RAY



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

Fiona Ziegler

Assistant Concertmaster

Jennifer Booth

Sophie Cole

Georges Lentz

Emily Long

Alexander Norton

Sercan Danis°

Benjamin Tjoa°

SECOND VIOLINS

Emma Jezek

Assistant Principal

Victoria Bihun

Rebecca Gill

Shuti Huang

Wendy Kong

Benjamin Li

Nicole Masters

Riikka Sintonen°

VIOLAS

Tobias Breider

Principal

Anne-Louise

Comerford

Associate Principal

Rosemary Curtin

Jane Hazelwood

Graham Hennings

Stuart Johnson

CELLOS

Timothy Nankervis

Christopher Pidcock

Adrian Wallis

Eliza Sdraulig°

DOUBLE BASS

Richard Lynn

Benjamin Ward

KEYBOARD

Erin Helyard*

Guest Principal

Harpsichord

Erin Helyard appears

courtesy of Pinchgut Opera

Italian Harpsichord after

Grimaldi by Carey Beebe,

Sydney 1990 supplied &

prepared by Carey Beebe

Harpsichords

* = Guest Musician

° = Contract Musician

† = Sydney Symphony

Fellow

Tuesday 25 July, 7pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

PLAY WITH RAY

BACH'S DOUBLE VIOLIN CONCERTO

TIANYI LU conductor
RAY CHEN violin

SAMUEL BARBER (1910–1981)
Adagio for Strings (1936)

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)
Concerto for Two Violins in D minor, BWV1043 (1730)
i. Vivace – with Przemysław (Przemek) Pruchnal
ii. Largo, ma non tanto – with Anna Sing
iii. Allegro – with Yongren Yuto Lim

INTERVAL

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921–1992)
ARR. LEONID DESYATNIKOV (BORN 1955)
Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas (The Four Seasons of the Porteñas) (1970)
i. *Primavera Porteña* (Spring)
ii. *Verano Porteño* (Summer)
iii. *Otoño Porteño* (Autumn)
iv. *Invierno Porteño* (Winter)

attrib MARIE COWAN
ARR. STEPHAN KONCZ (born 1984)
Waltzing Matilda (1895)

STEPHAN KONCZ
AFTER ERIK SATIE (1866–1925)
A New Satiesfaction

ESTIMATED DURATION

Barber – 9 minutes
Bach – 17 minutes
Interval – 20 minutes
Piazzolla – 28 minutes
Cowan – 3 minutes
Koncz – 4 minutes

This concert will run for
approximately 90 minutes

COVER IMAGE

Ray Chen
Photo by John Mac

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



CONCERT DIARY

JULY 2023



JAVIER PERIANES IN RECITAL SCENES FROM SPAIN

Spanish virtuoso Javier Perianes brings to life impressions of his homeland in the evocative music of Falla, Debussy and Goyescas by Granados.

FALLA Homenaje from le Tombeau de Claude Debussy
Serenata Andaluza

DEBUSSY

Préludes: Book II: La Puerta del Vino

Préludes: Book I: La sérénade interrompue

ALBÉNIZ Iberia: El Albaicín

FALLA Fantasía Bética

GRANADOS Goyescas

JAVIER PERIANES piano

International Pianists in Recital

Monday 31 July, 7pm

City Recital Hall

AUGUST 2023



SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS BEETHOVEN'S PASTORAL SYMPHONY RADIANT BEAUTY

Lose yourself in the idyllic, radiant landscapes of Beethoven's enchanting *Pastoral* Symphony, with Chief Conductor Simone Young.

MARY FINSTERER

Stabat Mater – Symphony (First Movement)

50 Fanfares Commission

BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No.4

BEETHOVEN Symphony No.6, Pastoral

SIMONE YOUNG conductor

JAVIER PERIANES piano

Emirates Masters Series

Emirates Thursday Afternoon Symphony

Wednesday 2 August, 8pm

Thursday 3 August, 1:30pm

Friday 4 August, 8pm

Saturday 5 August, 8pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House



DIANA DOHERTY PERFORMS ROSS EDWARDS CELEBRATING ROSS EDWARDS

Celebrate the music of Ross Edwards, one of our most prominent composers, and his unique soundworld that draws on Australia's natural life and landscape.

PEGGY POLIAS Arachne

50 Fanfares Commission

ROSS EDWARDS

Oboe Concerto, Bird Spirit Dreaming

ROSS EDWARDS Bennelong Caprices

World Premiere

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Symphony No.8

SIMONE YOUNG conductor

DIANA DOHERTY oboe

Credit Suisse Special Event

Friday 11 August, 8pm

Saturday 12 August, 8pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

RAY CHEN violin

Ray Chen is a violinist who redefines what it is to be a classical musician in the 21st century. With a media presence that enhances and inspires the classical audience, reaching out to millions through his unprecedented online following, Ray Chen's remarkable musicianship transmits to a global audience that is reflected in his engagements with the foremost orchestras and concert halls around the world.

Initially coming to attention via the Yehudi Menuhin (2008) and Queen Elizabeth (2009) Competitions, of which he was First Prize winner, he has built a profile in Europe, Asia, and the USA as well as his native Australia both live and on disc. Signed in 2017 to Decca Classics, the summer of 2017 saw the recording of the first album of this partnership with the London Philharmonic as a succession to his previous three critically acclaimed albums on SONY, the first of which (*Virtuoso*) received an ECHO Klassik Award. Profiled as "one to watch" by *The Strad* and *Gramophone* magazines, his profile has grown to encompass his featuring in the *Forbes* list of 30 most influential Asians under 30, appearing in major online TV series *Mozart in the Jungle*, a multi-year partnership with Giorgio Armani (who designed the cover of his Mozart album with Christoph Eschenbach) and performing at major media events such as France's Bastille Day (live to 800,000 people), the Nobel Prize Concert in Stockholm (telecast across Europe), and the BBC Proms.

He has appeared with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhausorchester, Munich Philharmonic, Filarmonica della Scala, Orchestra Nazionale della Santa Cecilia and Los Angeles Philharmonic. He works with conductors such as Riccardo Chailly, Vladimir Jurowski, Sakari Oramo, Manfred Honeck, Daniele Gatti, Kirill Petrenko, Krystof Urbanski, Juraj Valcuha and many others. From 2012-2015 he was resident at the Dortmund Konzerthaus.

His presence on social media makes Ray Chen a pioneer in an artist's interaction with their audience, utilising the new opportunities of modern technology. His appearances and interactions with music and musicians are instantly disseminated to a new public in a contemporary and relatable way. He is the first musician to be invited to write a lifestyle blog for Italian publishing house, RCS Rizzoli (*Corriere della Sera*, *Gazzetta dello Sport*, *Max*). He has been featured in *Vogue* and is currently releasing his own design of violin case for the industry manufacturer GEWA. His commitment to music education is paramount, and inspires the younger generation of music students with his series of self-produced videos combining comedy and music.

Born in Taiwan and raised in Australia, Ray was accepted to the Curtis Institute of Music at age 15, where he studied with Aaron Rosand and was supported by Young Concert Artists. He plays the 1715 "Joachim" Stradivarius violin on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation. This instrument was once owned by the famed Hungarian violinist, Joseph Joachim (1831-1907).



Ray Chen
Photo by John Mac

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

PRZEMYSŁAW (PRZEMEK) PRUCNAL

Poland – 1st Movement

Prucnal began his violin studies at the age of seven and has since studied under Irena Wójtowicz and Małgorzata Szubakmiecik in Cracow. He is currently pursuing his bachelor's degree in music studies at Nowowiejski Music Academy in Bydgoszcz under the tutelage of Professor Mariusz Patyra. He has won numerous awards and scholarships, including First Prize at the Polish Arts Education Center Nationwide Violin Competition in Kielce, Grand Prix, First Prize and Special Prize at the XV Polish Nationwide Forum of Young Instrumentalists, Polish Minister's of Culture and National Heritage scholarship and the scholarship of the National Center of Culture - "Young Poland".

Przemek has performed in many solo and chamber concerts, including appearances at the Cracow Philharmonic and Polish television as well as performances with the Zabrze Philharmonic Orchestra and with the Bydgoszcz Music Academy Orchestra in the Pomeranian Philharmonic.



Photo credit Pawel Zechenter

ANNA SING Melbourne, Australia – 2nd Movement

Medical student by day and musician by night, Anna is a violinist who loves making music with friends. As a child, she insisted on learning the piano, the flute and the harp, but it was the violin that captured her heart.

A student of Julian Qurit and Mark Mogilevski, she received her Licentiate in violin from the AMEB aged 13. She was a finalist in the Musical Society of Victoria Hephzibah Menuhin Memorial Awards and the recipient of the Australian Strings Association Paul McDermott Violin Scholarship in 2016.

She is especially keen on orchestral and chamber music, frequently performing in chamber groups and several orchestras including The University of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Corpus Medicorum, and the University of Melbourne Medical Students' Society Orchestra.

Anna has also completed a Diploma in classical voice at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music.



Photo credit Sam Chiu,
Chloe Teo

YONGREN YUTO LIM Singapore – 3rd Movement

Yuto, currently studying under Albert Shagimardanov at Libitum Music School in Singapore, started playing the violin just before his fifth birthday. He achieved his ABRSM Grade 8 and Trinity's ATCL performance Diploma at ages 9 and 11, respectively.

He has received several awards, including the Honorable Mention in the Junior Category of the 2021 National Piano and Violin Competition, and first prizes in the 4th László Spezzaferri International Music Competition and Music Singapore 2022.

Yuto posts his playing on YouTube and Instagram and is the concertmaster for his school string orchestra. He loves performing and has recently played at the Victoria Concert Hall Atrium in conjunction with the 2023 Light to Night Festival.



Yongren Yuto Lim's appearance with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra is supported by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and the National Arts Council in Singapore.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

TIANYI LU conductor

Internationally known for her thrilling energy on the podium, her deeply creative approach to the repertoire and her open-hearted style of leadership, Chinese-born New Zealander Tianyi Lu collaborates with major orchestras and opera houses worldwide. Her work is driven by an ethos of empowerment, creating connection and compassion across diverse communities through music.

After winning First Prize in 2020 at both the Sir Georg Solti International Conductors' Competition and the International Conducting Competition "Guido Cantelli" in Italy, Tianyi Lu was appointed Conductor-in-Residence with the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra in Norway, following a sensational debut with them in 2020/21. She is also the Female-Conductor-in-Residence with the Welsh National Opera and Principal Conductor of the St Woolos Sinfonia in the UK.

Recent highlights include concerts and recordings with the Het Residentie Orkest Den Haag, Västerås Sinfonietta, Orquestra Gulbenkian, Philharmonia Orchestra London, Hallé Orchestra Manchester, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Malmö Symphony Orchestra, Dresden Philharmonie and Sydney Symphony Orchestra. A former Dudamel Fellow, in July 2021 Lu made her Hollywood Bowl debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and in Autumn 2021 conducted performances of Verdi's *Rigoletto* at the Aalto-Musiktheater Essen. Lu conducted various concerts with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra as their Assistant Conductor throughout 2017-2019.

The 2022/2023 season sees Tianyi Lu making her debut with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, MDR Sinfonieorchester Leipzig, Philharmonisches Orchester Freiburg, Orchestra della Toscana, and Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid, plus return engagements with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Turku Philharmonic Orchestra and Seattle Symphony.

Passionately committed to diversity, equity and inclusion and to building a more empathetic world through the arts, Tianyi Lu is an Artist Ambassador for Opera for Peace. She is regularly invited to work with and speak to communities and institutions about her experiences in empowering leadership, transforming cultures, resilience and wellbeing. She has appeared in and hosted Welsh National Opera's Podcast *The O Word*, has spoken as a guest for London Marathon Events and the *Do More Good* Podcast, and conducted and hosted Ears Wide Open concerts with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Tianyi Lu completed her Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting with Distinction at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in 2015, where she studied with David Jones. She has assisted or attended masterclasses with Sir Andrew Davis and Xian Zhang with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Daniele Gatti with the Concertgebouworkest, Bernard Haitink with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, and is an alumni of the Hart Institute for Women Conductors at The Dallas Opera. Other teachers and mentors have included Sian Edwards, Carlo Rizzi, Neemi Järvi, Alexander Polianichko, Kenneth Kiesler, Carlo Montanaro and Alice Farnham.



Tianyi Lu
Photo by Marco Borggreve



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RAY CHEN INVITES YOU TO PLAY ALONG

*Not content with being one of the world's most in-demand soloists, Ray Chen decided to design a whole new concert format – part competition, part practice exercise, part performance. As *Play with Ray* arrives at the Sydney Opera House, Chen explains what inspired the idea, and introduces us to this year's winners!*

The life of a concert soloist can be a lonesome one. Endless hours of rehearsal, moving from concert hall to concert hall, three shows here, one night only there – if it's Tuesday, this must be Belgium. Of course it is exciting, too, and the opportunity to travel the world playing music is one that most of us would jump at. But as with so many elite performers, from musicians to athletes, the dedication required can be exhausting.

As one of the world's most in-demand violinists for more than 15 years now, Ray Chen knows a thing or two about the itinerant life of the soloist. Since announcing himself to the world with wins in major violin competitions while still a teenager, the Australian has been a regular fixture at all the world's great concert halls. But not satisfied with the traditional model of the soloist, Chen has also worked hard to build a profile based on accessibility and community, in particular through his social media channels, through which hundreds of thousands of followers who hang on his every note.

"People often ask me why I do all these other things," says Chen. "Why can't I just focus on the stage – walk on, play, walk off? And I worked out the perfect analogy: music is the juice, composers are the juice makers, and I am the straw. I'm not a juice maker, but I can be the best straw that I can possibly be.

"When I realised that, this light went on in my mind and I realised it doesn't really matter what the straw is made of. Performances are one type of straw, but so are videos on YouTube or on social media. So are creating communities online, so something like *Play with Ray* or working with the Sydney Symphony. These are all different ways of getting the juice to the people.

RAY CHEN INVITES YOU TO PLAY ALONG

“I remember feeling immense relief after I figured that out. And it made things so simple: my measurement for success is how much I can positively impact. That’s all it is. And it all makes sense now.”

One of the things Chen is most passionate about is dispelling the mystique of the genius soloist. Classical music is an artform that loves to keep its inner workings hidden; the final product demands such precision, such high-level artistry, that presenting anything less than that to the public risks the mask slipping forever. But that too comes with an extraordinary amount of pressure, and young musicians have been known to crack under the weight of expectation.

Then a few years ago, the thought occurred to Chen – what if he could make a virtue of the process, rather than the result? What if he could make practice and rehearsal a communal activity, rather than a solo pursuit? And what if he could bring that sense of community, and that joy of playing music with friends, to the great concert halls of the world?

“I just wanted to connect the world a little bit more, to make something that was fun,” says Chen, his enthusiasm bursting through even on Zoom. “That’s what the core of *Play With Ray* is, it’s to find ways to really enhance your own motivation through connecting with people, through fun and this community.”

“I was really thinking about how you don’t see something until it’s at the end, right? The performance, the recording, the whatever it is. And then the process in the middle is obscured. So *Play with Ray*, I thought this would be fun if we had more people involved and started practicing towards something, to give people a goal, and something they could dream towards.”

After a months-long process that saw close to 500 entries coming from 55 countries, that dream will become a reality for three young violinists: Przemysław (Przemek) Prucnal, a 21 year-old from Poland, Anna Sing, a 21 year-old from Melbourne, and Yongren Yuto Lim from Singapore, who is just 11 years old!



Ray Chen performs with the Sydney
Symphony Orchestra, August 2022.
Photo by Daniel Boud.

RAY CHEN INVITES YOU TO PLAY ALONG

They will perform Bach's Concerto in D minor for Two Violins with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, with each violinist featuring in one movement alongside Chen. Then Chen will treat the audience to a display of the breadth of his artistry, performing pieces by composers as diverse as Samuel Barber and Astor Piazzolla, as well as a couple of his favourite showpieces.

But not only will these young musicians get to perform at the Sydney Opera House with Ray Chen and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, but they will spend a whole week soaking up everything Sydney has to offer – all part of Chen's desire to build a community, not just run a competition, and to replicate some of the unforgettable experiences that he had as a young musician.

"There will be masterclasses, there will be workshops, but we'll also go to the zoo," he says with a laugh. "We'll invite you to all these cool places in Sydney. And there's this community-like feeling that happens, and we make something of a special event."

"When I was eight years old, I got invited to go to Nagano in Japan for the Winter Olympics – and it was the coolest experience. It was the first time that I was traveling *for* the violin. It was through Suzuki Method, they invited like 500 kids from all over the world. But to me, it was special.

"I loved it, and through that I met all these people, and I'm still in touch with the host family that I stayed with with my mom. It changed my life."

And Chen isn't stopping at just one competition, either – he's out to change the world.

"It's a bit further off and perhaps more a nebulous dream, but I want to make the world a better place, to have a positive impact. It's a wheel, isn't it? You have to push, and then hope that other people will also push. I just want to continue giving, to keep pushing that wheel. It's my turn now – I've got to do it! I can't just sit here and do nothing!"

ABOUT THE MUSIC

SAMUEL BARBER (1910–1981)

***Adagio for Strings* (1936)**

The late Stephen Sondheim once quipped that it was time for a medley of ‘my greatest hit’; for all of the many and varied works he wrote for the Broadway stage, it seemed that ‘Send in the Clowns’ was the only song that many people recognised as his. He wasn’t alone in being associated in the public mind with a single, ubiquitous piece.

Samuel Barber felt the same about the wide currency of his *Adagio for Strings* (which, to be fair, he wasn’t above feeding by turning into a choral setting of the *Agnus dei*) and was reportedly perplexed that his *Adagio for Strings* was commonly used to add an air of solemnity to important occasions; ‘it’s just music’, he insisted.

In 1938 Arturo Toscanini had heard Barber’s Symphony and asked for a new work. Barber provided two: the *Adagio* and the first Essay for orchestra, and both were performed and broadcast by the NBC Symphony Orchestra. The *Adagio* instantly became part of the USA’s sound-track to the encroaching crisis of the war and was played during the broadcast announcement of President Franklin D Roosevelt’s death. It brought its composer high standing with audiences and sneering dismissal by the more learned. Reviewing another work of Barber’s, Virgil Thomson offered the backhanded compliment that ‘the only reason Barber gets away with elementary musical methods is that his heart is pure’.

In its original version, however, the *Adagio* is the second movement (originally marked *Molto adagio*) from Barber’s String Quartet Op.11, and he himself knew that he had written a ‘knockout’ of a slow movement. It’s derived from those ‘elementary’ musical methods that Thomson mentioned, and which have been shamelessly purloined by any number of present-day choral composers: the melody unfolds quite slowly, often by stepwise



Samuel Barber

ABOUT THE MUSIC

progression, gently folding back in on itself, which makes the use of upward leaps all the more affecting. In a manner that suggests certain Baroque pieces in super-slow motion, Barber uses a lot of suspended dissonance, which gives the music its eternal note of sadness, and its sense of constant yearning. It dwells on this limited thematic material, using the process known as sequence to imperceptibly move the music higher while making gradual changes as it gathers intensity before the sudden silence at the work's climax.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750) **Concerto for Two Violins in D minor,** **BWV1043 (1730)**

Bach, of course, didn't and doesn't struggle with identification with a single piece, though over the course of music history since the Baroque we can see quite clear patterns of fashion which meant that – amazing as it might seem to us – the early 19th century revered him as a composer of instrumental music, particularly for keyboard, but had little time for his Cantatas and Passions.

Much of his professional life was as a court musician, which in most cases involved writing liturgical works for the local duke's chapel, and in his final period in Leipzig he was employed by the St Thomas School to provide music for the choir to sing in the city's churches.

From 1717 until 1723, though, he was Kapellmeister at the court of Anhalt-Cöthen, where Bach found in Prince Leopold a patron who truly appreciated his genius, and who was himself a skilled amateur musician. Leopold's family was, moreover, Calvinist, so of a sect that frowned on liturgical music. But the Prince lavishly supported secular music, so it was to that that Bach devoted himself.

The Double Concerto may well have been written at Cöthen, but only exists in a set of orchestral parts dating from 1730. By his time, Bach was well established in Leipzig,



Portrait of JS Bach
by EG Haussmann, 1746.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

where he had settled after leaving Leopold's service. In 1729 he had taken over the directorship of the Collegium Musicum, an orchestra made up of professional players and students from Leipzig University which Bach's colleague Georg Philipp Telemann had founded in 1702. In Bach's time the orchestra gave weekly concerts in one of Leipzig's coffee houses, and frequently played host to visiting star musicians keen to work with Bach. We have little detail about who played what at the Collegium concerts, but we do know that Bach presented several works from the Cöthen period as well as composing a number of new pieces.

Up until the time of Antonio Vivaldi the solo concerto had been the exception rather than the rule, and Bach himself had cultivated the older *concerto grosso* genre, where groups of instruments (rather than a soloist) contend in such works as the 'Brandenburg Concertos'. Bach immediately saw the potential of Vivaldi's virtuoso works, and, as well as assimilating them by reworking some of Vivaldi's material, produced original works that surpassed Vivaldi's imagination.

The D minor concerto is 'Italian' in its use of three movements (fast-slow-fast), and each offers an object lesson in some aspect of Bach's compositional mastery.

The first movement begins with the typical *ritornello*, or recurring tutti that acts as the pillars of the movement. But Bach casts this as a fugal exposition, with one soloist and part of the ensemble giving out the subject, and the other soloist and remaining lines sounding the answer. The solo writing thereafter is closely woven like a two-part keyboard work. This gives the sublime slow movement something of the quality of a love-duet. The *Largo's* sensual languor is dispelled by the finale, in which the counterpoint is frequently in close canon.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921–1992)

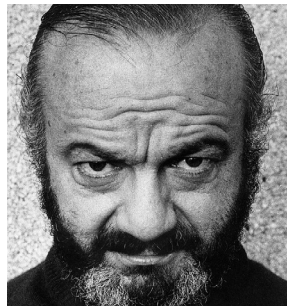
ARR. LEONID DESYATNIKOV (born 1955)

***Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* (The Four Seasons of the Porteñas) (1970)**

In 1954 Astor Piazzolla won a scholarship to study with the legendary Nadia Boulanger in Paris. He was by this stage acknowledged as a great composer of tangos and performer on the *bandoneón* in his native Buenos Aires (though, incidentally, he spent many of his earliest years in New York) and had already studied with Alberto Ginastera. But Piazzolla, like Gershwin, yearned to be a serious composer and played down the importance of tango at first. Boulanger, however, showed her usual perspicacity. Hearing Piazzolla play tango on the *bandoneón* she famously said ‘Astor, your classical pieces are well written, but the true Piazzolla is here, never leave it behind’.

Despite Piazzolla’s distinguished career, tango was originally far from high art, and while its origins are complex it was the music of the *porteños* and *porteñas* – inhabitants of the slum port areas of Buenos Aires – in the early twentieth century which is the root of Piazzolla’s art. (And, we might note, plenty of people believed that Piazzolla had ruined tango by developing it into a ‘classical’ genre as he did.) These four pieces, composed between 1964 and 1970, are often referred to as the *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*, but are really tango portraits of this particular aspect of the city’s life through the year.

They were originally composed for Piazzolla’s own ensemble of violin, piano, electric guitar, bass, and *bandoneón* (accordion). Violinist Gidon Kremer had the idea of using the pieces to complement Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons*, so commissioned Ukrainian composer Leonid Desyatnikov to make this version for violin and string orchestra. They are, strictly speaking, versions rather than arrangements: Desyatnikov underlines the relationship to Vivaldi by incorporating thematic material, often to genuinely humorous effect, from the Baroque



Astor Piazzolla



Leonid Desyatnikov

ABOUT THE MUSIC

composer's work into Piazzolla's without disrespect to either. Desyatnikov also exploits the virtuosity of both Kremer and his orchestra.

Each movement has a strong musical and meteorological character. 'Spring', as in other parts of the southern hemisphere is busy but not always comfortable; 'Summer', the first composed of the set, was written for a play and is well-known in its own right. 'Autumn', composed second, begins with an implacable rhythm that gives way to an introspective solo, originally for *bandoneón* but here played on cello. 'Winter' begins with a slow introduction that leads, eventually, into the main tango, but ends in a mood of quiet nostalgia with music that recalls Pachelbel's famous canon.

attrib MARIE COWAN
ARR. STEPHAN KONCZ (BORN 1984)
***Waltzing Matilda* (1895)**

The story – well, one story – goes that in 1895 the poet AB 'Banjo' Paterson visited Dagworth Station in outback Queensland where Christina Macpherson played him a tune (on, it seems, a zither) that much intrigued him. Macpherson had heard it at the Warrnambool Steeplechase the previous year, where it was played by a band in honour of the Vice-Regal couple. The tune was known as 'The Bonnie Woods of Craigielea' and was attributed to a Scottish composer, James Barr, though it is been claimed it in turn was derived from a march called 'The Gay Fusilier'. Paterson wrote a ballad to the tune, based, apparently, on an incident that had happened in the wake of the recent Great Shearer's Strike, where an unemployed homeless person, having stolen a sheep, commits suicide in a billabong rather than face the rough justice of the local police and landowners. 'Waltzing' was, it seems, then-current slang for walking, and a 'matilda' was the swag in which the itinerants kept their belongings, and, at night, slept.



Stephan Koncz

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The plot thickened some years later when a politician and tea-merchant, James Inglis, reputedly paid Paterson for his copyright, and – so someone said in 1943 – Inglis’ manager’s wife, Marie Cowan composed the tune. Or maybe she arranged Macpherson’s tune. Such ambiguous patrimony makes it an ideal *de facto* folk song. This arrangement for Ray Chen and his Made in Berlin Quartet was made by the brilliant Viennese-born cellist (in which capacity he is a member of the Berlin Philharmonic and of Ray Chen’s Made in Berlin Quartet) and arranger Stephan Koncz. The well-known tune is given, at first, an archaic character through folk-fiddling techniques over a static drone, before thrilling, fast dance rhythms take it over.

STEPHAN KONCZ AFTER ERIK SATIE (1866–1925) *A New Satiesfaction*

Also for the Made in Berlin quartet, Koncz uses Erik Satie’s *Gymnopédie No.1* (arguably his ‘greatest hit’) as source material for his *A New Satiesfaction* where he takes Satie’s tune and threads it through a texture of pulsing cross-rhythms, with one, fleeting reference to another great classic.

Gordon Kerry © 2023



A B ‘Banjo’ Paterson



Erik Satie

ORCHESTRA CHAIR PATRONS

Andrew Haveron

Concertmaster
Vicki Olsson Chair

Harry Bennetts

Associate Concertmaster
Judy & Sam Weiss Chair

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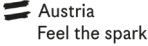
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