

30 November – 2 December 2023
Sydney Opera House

PROFESSOR BRIAN COX

SYMPHONIC
HORIZONS



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

Harry Bennetts

Associate
Concertmaster

Alexandra Osborne

Associate
Concertmaster

Lerida Delbridge

Assistant
Concertmaster

Fiona Ziegler

Assistant
Concertmaster

Jennifer Booth
Sophie Cole
Claire Herrick
Georges Lentz
Emily Long
Alexandra Mitchell
Alexander Norton
Léone Ziegler
Sercan Danis[°]
Thibaud Pavlovic-Hobba^{*}
Robert Smith^{*}
Jasmine Tan^{*}

SECOND VIOLINS

Marina Marsden

Principal

Emma Jezek

Assistant Principal

Alice Bartsch
Victoria Bihun
Rebecca Gill
Emma Hayes
Shuti Huang
Monique Irik
Wendy Kong
Benjamin Li
Nicole Masters
Maja Verunica
Caroline Hopson[°]
Riikka Sintonen[°]
Brian Hong^{*}

VIOLAS

Tobias Breider

Principal

Anne-Louise

Comerford

Associate Principal

Justin Williams

Assistant Principal

Sandro Costantino
Rosemary Curtin
Jane Hazelwood
Graham Hennings
Stuart Johnson
Justine Marsden
Felicity Tsai
Leonid Volovelsky
Stephen Wright[°]
Rachel Dyker^{*}

CELLOS

Catherine Hewgill

Principal

Kristy Conrau
Fenella Gill
Timothy Nankervis
Adrian Wallis
Miles Mullin-Chivers[°]
Eliza Sdraulig[°]
Ariel Volovelsky^{*}
Paul Ghica^{*}
Jack Ward^{*}

DOUBLE BASSES

Kees Boersma

Principal

Alex Henery

Principal

Dylan Holly
Steven Larson
Richard Lynn
Jaan Pallandi
Benjamin Ward
Alanna Jones^{*}

FLUTES

Joshua Batty

Principal

Emma Sholl

Associate Principal

Lily Bryant^{*}

Katie Zagorski[°]

Acting Principal Piccolo

OBOES

Shefali Pryor

Associate Principal

Callum Hogan
Noah Rudd^{*}

Alexandre Oguey

Principal Cor Anglais

CLARINETS

Francesco Celata

Acting Principal

Alexander Morris

Acting Associate

Principal

Christopher Tingay

Romola Smith[°]

Acting Principal

Bass Clarinet

BASSOONS

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Principal Emeritus

Fiona McNamara
Jamie Dodd^{*}

Noriko Shimada

Principal

Contrabassoon

HORNS

Euan Harvey

Acting Principal

Sarah Barrett^{*}

Guest Principal

Lee Wadenpfohl[°]

Acting Principal 3rd

Marnie Sebire

Rachel Silver

Jenny McLeod-Sneyd^{*}

Ian Wildsmith^{*}

TRUMPETS

David Elton

Principal

Brent Grapes

Associate Principal

Cécile Glémet

Anthony Heinrichs

TROMBONES

Scott Kinmont

Associate Principal

Nick Byrne

Brett Page^{*}

Guest Principal

Bass Trombone

TUBA

Steve Rossé

Principal

Karina Filipi^{*}

TIMPANI

Mark Robinson

Acting Principal

PERCUSSION

Rebecca Lagos

Principal

Joshua Hill[°]

Acting Associate

Principal Timpani/

Section Percussion

Timothy Constable

HARP

Natalie Wong^{*}

Acting Principal

Kate Moloney^{*}

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Catherine Davis^{*}

Guest Principal Piano

Bold Principal

* = Guest Musician

° = Contract Musician

† = Sydney Symphony

Fellow

SYDNEY SYMPHONY PRESENTS

Thursday 30 November, 7pm

Friday 1 December, 7pm

Saturday 2 December, 2pm

Sunday 3 December, 7pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

PROFESSOR BRIAN COX: SYMPHONIC HORIZONS

LIVE WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

BENJAMIN NORTHEY conductor

PROFESSOR BRIAN COX

JESS HITCHCOCK soprano

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957)

Symphony No.5 in E-flat, Op.82 (1915)

Third Movement – Allegro molto

NIGEL WESTLAKE (born 1958)

Missa Solis – Requiem for Eli (2010)

Seventh Movement – *Siderius Nuncius (The Starry Messenger)*

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860–1911)

Symphony No.5 in C-sharp minor (1902)

Fourth Movement – Adagietto

INTERVAL

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)

Also sprach Zarathustra, Op.30 (1896)

i. Sunrise

ii. Of the Backworldsmen

iii. Of the Great Longing

iv. Of Joys and Passions

v. The Song of the Grave

vi. Of Science and Learning

vii. The Convalescent

viii. The Dance Song

ix. Song of the Night Wanderer

ESTIMATED DURATION

The concert will run for approximately two and a half hours, including a 20-minute interval

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Artwork by Amy Zhou
Photo by Dustin Rabin

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*With thanks to
Lateral Events*

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

BENJAMIN NORTHEY conductor

Australian conductor Benjamin Northey is the Chief Conductor of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and the Principal Conductor in Residence of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. He has previously held the posts of Associate Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (2010-2019), Resident Guest Conductor of the Australia Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra (2002-2006) and Principal Guest Conductor of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra (2007-2010).

Northey studied conducting at Finland's Sibelius Academy with Professors Leif Segerstam and Atso Almila after being accepted as the highest placed applicant in 2002. He completed his studies at the Stockholm Royal College of Music with Jorma Panula in 2006.

Northey appears regularly as a guest conductor with all major Australian symphony orchestras, Opera Australia (*La bohème*, *Turandot*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, *Carmen*), New Zealand Opera (*Sweeney Todd*) and the State Opera South Australia (*La sonnambula*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Les contes d'Hoffmann*).

His international appearances include concerts with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, the Malaysian Philharmonic and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Northey has collaborated with a broad range of leading artists including Pinchas Zukerman, Maxim Vengerov, Anne-Sofie von Otter, Julian Rachlin, Karen Gomyo, Piers Lane, Alban Gerhardt, Johannes Moser, William Barton, Lu Siquing, Amy Dickson, Slava Grigoryan and many others.

Northey is highly active in the performance and recording of new Australian orchestral music having premiered dozens of major new works by Australian composers. He has previously been a board member of the Australian Music Centre.

An ARIA, AIR and Art Music Awards winner, he was voted *Limelight* magazine's Australian Artist of the Year in 2018. Northey's many recordings can be found on ABC Classic.

In 2023, he conducts the Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Tasmanian and Christchurch Symphony Orchestras and the Hong Kong Philharmonic.



Benjamin Northey
Photo by Laura Manariti

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

JESS HITCHCOCK soprano

Jess Hitchcock is a Melbourne-based Indigenous singer-songwriter who has stirred the Australian music and performing arts scene as a genre-defying force. Her powerful voice and knack for storytelling has seen her shine across pop, country, folk, opera and music theatre, sharing the stage and studio with some of Australia's favourites.

One of Jess's most notable collaborations is with legendary Australian singer-songwriter Paul Kelly. Together they performed and recorded Paul's song 'Everyday My Mother's Voice', earning standing ovations across the nation. You can occasionally find Jess in Paul's band on vocals and percussion. Jess has also collaborated with Archie Roach, Tina Arena and Kate Miller-Heidke.

Jess's much anticipated album, *Unbreakable*, was released mid-2023 and reached No.4 in the AIR charts. Her original material is equal parts dramatic as it is playful, always showcasing her vocal prowess. *Unbreakable's* first single, 'I Don't Have The Heart', was described by *The Music* as 'an arena sized pop ballad.'

When Jess is not on stage with her own band, or joining forces with Australian music legends, Jess lends her mezzo-soprano vocals to select performing arts companies, including the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Victorian Opera and Opera Queensland.

Born with heritage from the Torres Strait Islands and Papua New Guinea, Jess's artistic diversity and adroitness are seldom seen in someone as young as her. The way she navigates her creative path is a rare find and nothing short of inspirational.



Jess Hitchcock
Photo by Tessa Thames

PROFESSOR BRIAN COX WRITES...

I think there is only one interesting existential question: what does it mean to live a small, finite life in an infinite, eternal Universe?

Our small world orbits around one star amongst four hundred billion inside one galaxy amongst two thousand billion in the small patch of the Universe we can see. Light takes over a hundred thousand years to cross our galaxy, and two billion years to make its way from our nearest galactic neighbour, Andromeda. We are a fragile spec in a limitless ocean of stars.

The questions raised by our observations of the Universe are profound; to put it bluntly, when confronted by the size and scale of the Universe, what's the point?

Symphonic Horizons is part of my personal search for answers. I don't claim to have THE answer of course. As one of my heroes Carl Sagan wrote, astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience; anyone who claims to have THE answer is not humble and is also wrong. Having said that, the search for answers is in itself an important part of what it means to be human. Astronomy doesn't render the quest for meaning futile; it amplifies the challenge.

Nature is undoubtedly both beautiful and terrifying, but then so are our lives. Insight into the meaning of both can only be gained by exploration, and there are many ways to explore. The central idea behind *Symphonic Horizons* is that music and science are two of the ways we explore; both are necessary, neither alone is sufficient. We won't find meaning through the lens of a telescope, but neither will we find meaning if we avert our eyes from Nature and, through fear or lack of curiosity, refuse to contemplate the Universe beyond.



Professor Brian Cox
Photo by Dustin Rabin

PROFESSOR BRIAN COX WRITES...

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957)

Symphony No.5 in E-flat, Op.82 (1915)

Third Movement – Allegro molto

Sibelius's Fifth Symphony is a love letter to Nature, depicting the majesty of swans in flight. For me, it is also a love letter to humanity; we are, after all, a part of Nature – in fact we are the most complex part of Nature we know of anywhere in the Universe. A human being is a collection of atoms that contemplates atoms; matter, processed in generations of stars and clumped together by gravity, capable of writing symphonies.

Why should our future matter? My answer is it's possible that Earth is the only planet in The Milky Way Galaxy that has ever hosted an intelligent civilisation. I will explain why I think this is possible, perhaps even likely. If it is true that we are alone, we are the only island of meaning in a sea of 400 billion stars. If we do not survive there will be no love, no science, no art, no music. There will be nobody to explore the Universe for millions of light years in every direction because nowhere else will life have made the journey from prehistory to thought. The galaxy of the future will be meaningless again, as it may have been for almost all of time.

Our fragility and isolation surely confer value. Whatever meaning is, it emerges from the human mind. Without minds, there are no thoughts, and without thoughts there is no meaning. Imagine the possibility that Earth is the only place in our galaxy where a single thought exists or has ever existed. That would make it hard to argue that we are insignificant.

There are questions beyond our value that arise when we begin to explore Nature, however; perennial questions of existence.

"Why do we exist?" is a question we can answer in broad sweep and quite remarkable detail. It is a story that begins 13.8 billion years ago at the Big Bang, continues through the births and deaths of countless stars and the formation of the Earth, and culminates in our rare world populated today by Darwin's Endless Forms Most Beautiful, each and every one related to a common ancestor that emerged almost four billion years ago in the deep oceans of the primordial Earth. Ours is a majestic story.



Jean Sibelius in 1918

PROFESSOR BRIAN COX WRITES...

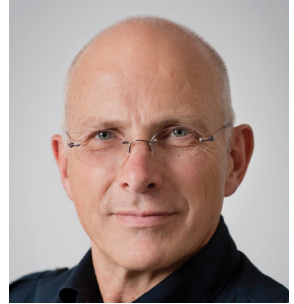
"Why does anything exist at all?" is a different and far more difficult question, however, but perhaps we are beginning to glimpse answers.

NIGEL WESTLAKE (BORN 1958)

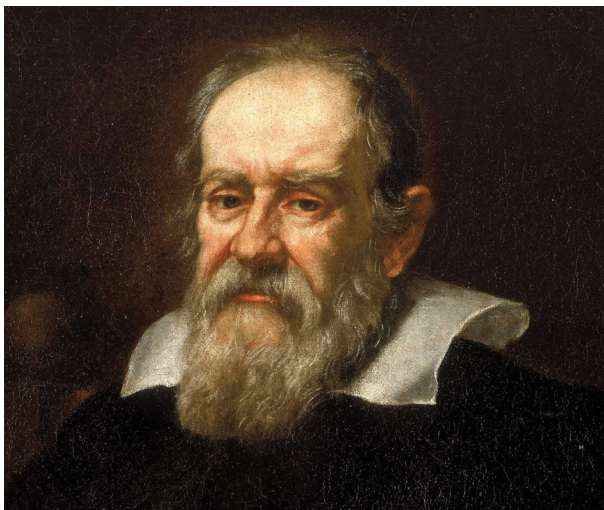
Missa Solis – Requiem for Eli (2010)
Seventh Movement – *Siderius Nuncius*
(*The Starry Messenger*)

Nigel Westlake's beautiful *Siderius Nuncius* (*The Starry Messenger*) plays as we journey through the planets. Nigel's piece is inspired by the great Italian physicist, mathematician, astronomer and philosopher Galileo Galilei, who built a telescope and saw the moons of Jupiter in 1610.

Looking at the moons of Jupiter is as powerful today as it was 400 years ago, because it only takes five seconds to see that they are obviously orbiting around Jupiter and not Earth, which proves that the Earth is not the centre of the universe. That one idea was so profound, so antithetical to the teachings of the Church, that Galileo was charged with heresy and sentenced to house arrest for the final decade of his life. But Galileo was right, and his observations remain fundamental to astronomy, physics, and indeed much of modern science.



Nigel Westlake
Photo by Steve Forrest



Portrait of Galileo Galilei (c. 1640) by Justus Sustermans (1597–1681). Courtesy National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London. Creative Commons license CC-BY-NC-SA-3.0.

PROFESSOR BRIAN COX WRITES...

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860–1911)

Symphony No.5 in C-sharp minor (1902)
Fourth Movement – Adagietto

Mahler is one of my favourite composers. Artists like Mahler have thought deeply about the meaning of our fragile lives. I believe the questions raised by Cosmology are universal in the sense that they touch on the deepest puzzles of existence. The intellectual challenges are made vivid and well-defined by science, but the answers will not ultimately be expressed in scientific language alone. In my view, some of the most eloquent answers to date in our civilisation's grand 'work in progress' are to be found in the great symphonic works.

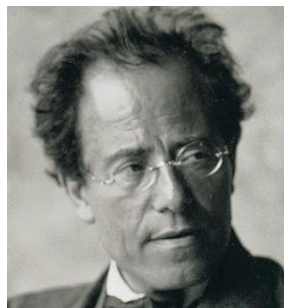
RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)

Also sprach Zarathustra, Op.30 (1896)

Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra* is based on the book of the same name by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, which you may know from the opening of Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. It is a beautiful piece of music that is essentially Strauss's interpretation of Nietzsche's book.

But we have an advantage over Nietzsche, because he didn't know anything, scientifically-speaking, when he wrote that book at the end of the 19th century. He didn't know there were any galaxies beyond our own. He didn't know the universe had a beginning, or at least something that looks like an origin in the Big Bang. He had no idea about the size and scale and strangeness of reality.

Now, over a hundred years later, we have an advantage. But the questions that he posed and attempted to answer are as relevant now as they were then – we just have a bit more information.



Gustav Mahler in 1913.
Photo by Moritz Nähr



Richard Strauss c. 1890.
Photo by Albert Meyer

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The Sydney Symphony Orchestra is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.



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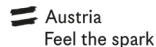
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