

15 June
City Recital Hall

SYDNEY SYMPHONY BRASS MUSICIANS



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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SYDNEY SYMPHONY BRASS MUSICIANS

EXHILARATING & INSPIRING

ALEXANDER BORODIN (1833–1887)

ARR. GEORGES MOREAU

Prince Igor, Act II: Polovtsian Dances

MOGENS ANDRESEN (born 1945)

Three Norwegian Dances

- i. *Prelude and Reinlendere*
- ii. *Trønderpols*
- iii. *Per Spellman*

JUAN DEL ENCINA (1468–1529/30)

ARR. SCOTT KINMONT

Three Villancicos

- i. *Más vale trocar*
- ii. *Hermitaño*
- iii. *Amor con fortuna*

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921–1992)

ARR. STEPHEN VERHELST

María de Buenos Aires: Suite

- i. *Yo soy María* –
- ii. *Balada renga para un organizo loco* –
- iii. *Habanera* – *valse lento* –
- iv. *Fuga y misterio*

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)

ARR. ELGAR HOWARTH

Music for the Royal Fireworks HWV 351

- i. Overture
- ii. Bourrée
- iii. *La Paix*
- iv. *La Réjouissance*
- v. Menuet I & II

Pre-concert talk by
Jim Coyle in the Function
Room on Level 1 at 6.15.

ESTIMATED DURATION

Borodin – 14 minutes
Andresen – 11 minutes
Encina – 9 minutes
Piazzolla – 11 minutes
Handel – 19 minutes

The concert will run for
approximately 65 minutes

COVER IMAGE

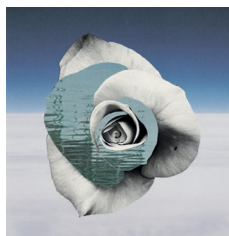
Marnie Sebire and
Euan Harvey
Photo by Pierre Toussaint

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



CONCERT DIARY

JUNE 2023



SIMONE YOUNG & STEVEN ISSERLIS
POWERFUL & ROMANTIC

BEETHOVEN
The Creatures of Prometheus: Overture*
WALTON Cello Concerto
SCHUMANN Symphony No.4

**Great Classics performance only*

SIMONE YOUNG conductor
STEVEN ISSERLIS cello

Tea & Symphony
Great Classics

Friday 30 June, 11am
Saturday 1 July, 2pm
Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House



BRITTEN & PROKOFIEV
RHYTHMIC MOVEMENTS

BRITTEN Phantasy Quartet
BRIDGE Lament
PROKOFIEV Quintet in G Minor

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
MUSICIANS

Cocktail Hour

Friday 30 June, 6pm
Saturday 1 July, 6pm
Utzon Room,
Sydney Opera House

JULY 2023



SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS
TCHAIKOVSKY'S BALLET MUSIC
AN ENCHANTED EVENING

TCHAIKOVSKY
Selections from The Nutcracker,
Sleeping Beauty and Swan Lake

SIMONE YOUNG conductor

Royal Caribbean Classics Under the Sails
Sunday Afternoon Symphony

Friday 7 July, 7pm
Saturday 8 July, 7pm
Sunday 9 July, 2pm
Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House



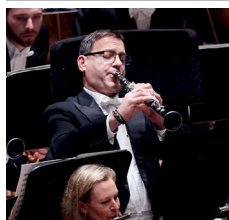
RAY CHEN PERFORMS TCHAIKOVSKY
BEAUTY & ROMANCE

ALICE CHANCE
Through Changing Landscape
50 Fanfares Commission
TCHAIKOVSKY Violin Concerto
NIELSEN Symphony No.5

DAVID ROBERTSON conductor
RAY CHEN violin

Emirates Masters Series Emirates
Thursday Afternoon Symphony

Wednesday 12 July, 8pm
Thursday 13 July, 1.30pm
Friday 14 July, 8pm
Saturday 15 July, 8pm
Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House



BEETHOVEN & MOZART
HEARTWARMING CLASSICS

BEETHOVEN
Sextet for Clarinets, Bassoons and Horns
SEIBER Serenade
MOZART Serenade No.11

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
MUSICIANS

Cocktail Hour

Friday 21 July, 6pm
Saturday 22 July, 6pm
Utzon Room,
Sydney Opera House



PLAY WITH RAY
BACH'S DOUBLE VIOLIN CONCERTO

Program to include:
BACH Concerto for Two Violins in D minor

TIANYI LU conductor
RAY CHEN violin

Credit Suisse Special Event

Tuesday 25 July, 7pm
Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

ABOUT THE MUSIC

In two of his *Ten Golden Rules for Young Conductors*, Richard Strauss mentions the brass section, writing:

Never look encouragingly at the brass, except with a quick glance to give an important cue

and

If you think the brass is not blowing hard enough, tone them down another shade or two.

Strauss – master orchestrator and conductor (and son of a horn player) was of course being facetious. The brass section's constituent instruments *are* the descendants of devices designed to convey information by making a lot of noise in the great outdoors – fanfares announce the arrival of someone important, sennets and alarums warn soldiers of the movement of troops, horn-calls pinpoint the location of hunters and hunted. So they are naturally capable of producing massive waves of sound. But, as Strauss' biographer Norman Del Mar, himself a great conductor, points out, 'it is surprising how softly the brass can play and with what refined beauty', noting instances in the orchestral music of Tchaikovsky and Dvořák. To which we might add that the brass ensemble – think of any decent Big Band – can provide thrilling and decisive rhythmic momentum. This is very much in evidence in all the music we hear today, which all derives, ultimately, from the dance.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ALEXANDER BORODIN (1833–1887)

ARR. GEORGES MOREAU

Prince Igor, Act II: Polovtsian Dances

Occasionally we need to remind ourselves of how ‘new’ classical music was in 19th century Russia. Aristocrats there, as in Western Europe, had maintained their own musical establishments but usually with foreign performers, and in the later 18th century societies of largely amateur music-lovers began presenting public concerts. But a home-grown musical culture only reached critical mass with the foundation of the great conservatories in St Petersburg, by Anton Rubinstein in 1862, and Moscow, by his brother Nikolai in 1866. In 1865, Tchaikovsky was in the first graduating class from the Moscow Conservatory, and in 1871, Rimsky-Korsakov would become the third director of the St Petersburg school.

The two composers trod very different paths, at first. Tchaikovsky benefitted from the formal discipline, based in Western techniques, of the Conservatory, while Rimsky-Korsakov was a member of the *kuchka*, which we know in English as ‘The Five’, or ‘Mighty Handful’. These composers were not opposed to Western music as such – one member, César Cui, reminisced about evenings playing through and discussing works of Liszt, Schumann and Berlioz – but they were implacably opposed to ‘conservatory’ notions of good technique.

One of the Five, Alexander Borodin was the illegitimate son of a Georgian prince, was educated in St Petersburg. Gifted in both music and science, he chose the latter, ultimately becoming Professor of Chemistry at the St Petersburg Medico-Surgical Academy. His research in chemistry was of some consequence, and he is celebrated as co-discoverer of the aldol reaction.



Alexander Borodin

ABOUT THE MUSIC

But the Five, as we have seen were at first less rigorous about musical technique than they might have been. Tchaikovsky once sneered that Borodin possessed 'a very great talent, which, however, had come to nothing for want of instruction'. Nevertheless, Borodin persisted, and worked on his opera *Prince Igor* between 1869 and his death in 1887; the work was completed by Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Glazunov, and first performed in 1890 in St Petersburg.

Russian opera has its roots in the works of Mikhail Glinka: his first opera *A Life for the Tsar* about a self-sacrificing 17th century peasant, and *Ruslan and Ludmila* with its cast of sorcerers, dwarves, knights and bards. Based on the (possibly spurious) 12th century epic 'The Tale of Igor's Campaign', Borodin's opera fits in, with its overt Russian nationalism and medieval setting. Despite the best efforts of Rimsky-Korsakov, though, it remains, as Richard Taruskin put it so colourfully, 'a sprawling torso, its simple but nevertheless incoherent story line traditionally excused on account of its "epic" genre, and its inept dramaturgy redeemed by music so alluring as to keep the opera, despite its gargantuan handicaps, perpetually alive on the fringes of the repertory.'

ABOUT THE MUSIC



Costume design by Konstantin Alexeyevich Korovin for a Polovtsian girl in a 1909 production

The tale, and the opera, relates the struggle between the 'Rus' and the Polovtsi (also known as the Cumans), a Turkic tribe that originated in the steppes of central Asia. In 1185 Igor, Prince of Novgorod-Seversk, led a raiding expedition against the Polovtsi, then living in what is now southern Russia. Igor was taken captive by Khan Kontchak, who treated him and his son magnanimously, singing about how magnanimous he was, and arranging a festival for them that features the *Polovtsian Dances*. Taruskin admits that every musical number in the opera is masterpieces, and the dances contain some of Borodin's most powerful and hauntingly original music – including a famous melody borrowed for the song in the musical, *Kismet*: 'Hold my hand, I'm a stranger in Paradise...'. This arrangement is by Belgian composer and tuba-player Georges Moreau.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

MOGENS ANDRESEN (born 1945) **Three Norwegian Dances**

Like Elgar Howarth, Scott Kinmont and Georges Moreau, Mogens Andresen brings considerable experience as a brass player to his creative work. The Danish-born composer is a bass trombonist, who began his professional life with the Falster Infantry Regimental Band in Vordingborg and then, across the Øresund Bridge with Sweden's Malmö Symphony Orchestra. In 1974 he joined the Royal Danish Opera. *María is conjured up by El Duende*, the spirit who watches over her and is the principal voice in the opera, grows up in a poor area on the edge of town, moves to the city centre, is corrupted and dies. In act two she wanders about as a shadow through various circles of her own hell – one of which is the circle of psychoanalysts. El Duende, through the cooperation of some mysterious “drunk marionettes” in the bar where he is drinking, sends the germ of a child to her so that she gives birth to a new *María*, who is the same *María*, but at the same time not the same...The miraculous birth brings about hallucinations and trembling in the people, construction workers and spaghetti kneaders, who witness the event.

Academy of Music. He has founded a number of ensembles, and worked with others including ‘mixed’ ensembles specialising in Baroque music.

Andresen's *Three Norwegian Dances* was commissioned in 1990 for Oslo Concert Brass, who asked for a piece using traditional Norwegian melodies that showed the formal variety and unique sounds of Norwegian folk music, while also showing off the possibilities of the modern brass ensemble.



Mogens Andresen

ABOUT THE MUSIC

After a maestoso fanfare (Prelude) the music launches, via percussive rhythms into the *Reinlendere* (Rhinelander) based on a lively traditional couples dance that, in its steps and its characteristic rhythm, at first resembles a polka. Andresen takes it through a huge range of sounds, from spare counterpoint to velvety hush to emphatically loud, and in the manner of folk dance, plays rhythmic games to keep everyone on their toes. *Trønderpols* (Thunder Pole) by contrast begins slowly, with a sinuous duet for horns, that is taken over and extended by trombones before an arresting full chord. This introduces a free duet for cornets, that in turn gives way to a faster, fully scored dance section, after which the music gradually dissolves – though not without humour.

The finale, *Per Spellman* (Per the musician) is based on a modern folk song about Per, who has pawned his fiddle and has to sell his only cow to redeem it. But when he does, he couldn't be happier.

JUAN DEL ENCINA (1468–1529/30) ARR. SCOTT KINMONT Three Villancicos

It is not for nothing that we use the term brass choir, and the three works by Juan del Encina that Scott Kinmont has arranged were originally vocal works derived from dance-songs. (These arrangements maintain that sense of the dance in their use of added percussion.)

Encina is a fascinating and important figure in the Iberian culture of the high Renaissance. He was a composer, as a dramatist he is considered one of the founders of Spanish-language theatre, he wrote prose, and held a number of important ecclesiastical-administrative positions such as the Archdiaconate of Malaga Cathedral even before being ordained. And he found the time to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. As Howard Mayer Brown notes, in working for the Dukes of Alba, 'Encina wrote the plays, composed the music, supervised the productions at carnival and other times, and sometime even acted in them.'



Bust of Juan del Encina at Leon Cathedral

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Encina's secular vocal works or *cancioneros* are often in the form known as the *villancico*: like the contemporary Italian *frottole*, these are unaccompanied ensemble pieces that began as dance songs, and derive their musical structure from the verse forms of the poetry (which usually involve a refrain and several stanzas) and often match lines of music to lines of poetry, repeating both if necessary. They frequently give much of the melodic weight of the piece to the top line.

The three we hear today were collected in a manuscript known as the *Cancionero de Palacio*, compiled from 1460 on; Encina's probably date from the mid-1490s. The texts deal (like many a madrigal, romance, frottola or virelai) with love, usually unrequited or otherwise difficult.

Más vale trocar assures us that 'it is better to exchange pleasure for pain than to live without love.' Encina's melody consists of regular phrases, which as we have noted, are subject to repetition. The original text is in several verses; this arrangement reflects that, showing the material in a variety of instrumental combinations.

The poet of *Hermitaño quiero ser* describes in some detail how he wishes to be a hermit – complete with hairshirt, beard and so on – but hints that this is not entirely from pure religious motives. Kinmont gives the material an almost cheerful treatment, though with a brief and introspective central section. Finally in *Amor con fortuna* the poet's ambivalent relationship to love is expressed in a lively but precarious 5/8 metre. Here again Kinmont draws smaller combinations out of the ensemble, only bringing all five parts together in the final verse.

The *villancico* would gradually be appropriated by the church, but Encina's represent a high point in the sophisticated secular music of the Spanish Renaissance.



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ABOUT THE MUSIC

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921–1992)

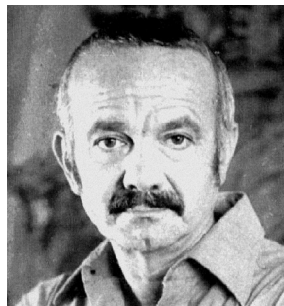
ARR. STEPHEN VERHELST

María de Buenos Aires: Suite

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 (concertina) 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’.

Piazzolla took Boulanger’s advice, as one would, but at the same time his interest in ‘classical’ music allowed him to enrich his tango composition and move freely between popular and ‘serious’ musical worlds. Tango itself was originally far from high art, and while its origins are complex it was the music of the slum areas of Buenos Aires in the early twentieth century which is the root of Piazzolla’s work. In 1968, with librettist Horacio Ferrer, Piazzolla merged tango and opera (or, more modestly, ‘operita’) in *María de Buenos Aires*. The story, in Robert McFall’s helpful summation is as follows:

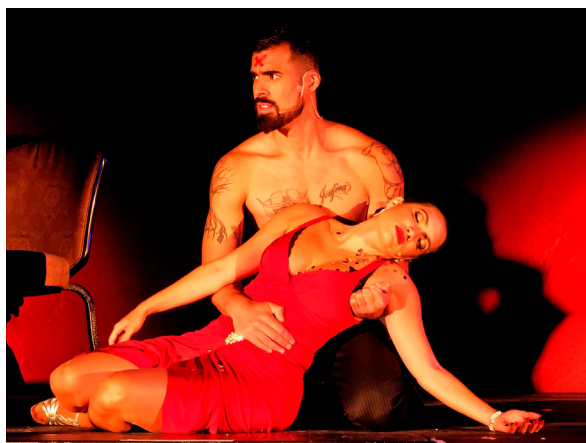
María is conjured up by El Duende, the spirit who watches over her and is the principal voice in the opera, grows up in a poor area on the edge of town, moves to the city centre, is corrupted and dies. In act two she wanders about as a shadow through various circles of her own hell – one of which is the circle of psychoanalysts. El Duende, through the cooperation of some mysterious ‘drunk marionettes’ in the bar where he is drinking, sends the germ of a child to her so that she gives birth to a new María, who



Astor Piazzolla

ABOUT THE MUSIC

is the same María, but at the same time not the same...The miraculous birth brings about hallucinations and trembling in the people, construction workers and spaghetti kneaders, who witness the event...



A scene from a recent Atlanta production,
photo by Jeff Roffman

The show hasn't exactly held the stage, but is full of some of Piazzolla's most attractive music, selections of which have been gathered into this suite, which plays without a break, by another Belgian composer, Stephen Verhelst, for the Brass of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam.

It opens with a setting of María's aria 'Yo soy María', whose original words began with:

*I am María of Buenos Aires
María of Buenos Aires, don't you see who I am?
María tango, slum María
María night, María fatal passion
María of love, of Buenos Aires, that's me*

The 'Balada renga para un organizo loco' (Lame ballad for a crazy organ) is a halting waltz, illustrating the words:

*Luckless little barrel organ
Which grinds out stories...let's see
If the lame man shows
The true colours of his waltz to the girl,
She who no-one wants to see*

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The remainder of the suite is given over to a 'Habanera', with its distinctive rhythm, and a slow waltz, before Piazzolla shows off his 'classical' credentials in a fast 'Fuga y misterio' (Fugue and mystery).

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)

ARR. ELGAR HOWARTH

***Music for the Royal Fireworks* HWV 351**

But the heraldic is something the brass will always do well, and in a work like Handel's *Musick for the Royal Fireworks* we see the nexus between the ceremony and popular entertainment. The year 1749 saw the eventual conclusion of the largely pointless War of Austrian Succession – a conflict that had gone on for some time without any resolution until the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed in October 1748. King George II had engaged in the war largely to benefit his German territories and now decided on a public display for his English subjects that would cast him as peacemaker.

The festivities took place in London's Green Park. The architect of St Sulpice in Paris, Giovanni Nicola Servadoni, had designed a 'Machine' that represented 'a magnificent Doric Temple, from which extended two Wings terminated by Pavilions...adorned with Frets, Gilding, Lustres, Artificial Flowers, Inscriptions, Statues, Allegorical Pictures &c.' This would serve as backdrop for a fireworks display, overseen by the 'Comptroller of His Majesty's Fireworks as well for War as for Triumph.' Comptrolling involved the commissioning of music (but only after persuading a reluctant king that there should be some) for the event, so Handel was asked for 'a grand Overture of Warlike Instruments', which in this case was a large band of trumpets, horns, oboes, bassoons, timpani and side drums. (The King was persuaded only when he was assured that there would be 'no fiddles'; Handel created the more commonly heard version with string parts for a subsequent performance in May.)



Handel in 1748,
by Philippe Mercier

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The event, famously, was not entirely successful. Londoners had brought traffic to a halt thronging to see the rehearsals at Vauxhall days before, but found the pace of events too slow on the night itself, though there was some excitement when one of Servadoni's pavilions caught fire thanks to an errant cracker.



A view of Servadoni's Machine

We don't know for sure whether Handel's piece opened the proceedings as intended, or indeed if it were finally performed at all, but it soon became a staple of orchestral concerts. It consists of a French-style Overture, which begins with slow, processional music featuring long-short 'dotted rhythms that introduce a lively martial section in 3/4 time. There follows a standard set of dance-based movements that suggest a simple narrative: a short but spirited Bourrée is succeeded by a siciliana (a gentle dance in 12/8 time with a distinct rhythmic pattern on the first beat of the bar) called *La Paix* – peace. After peace comes *La Réjouissance* – rejoicing – a movement that Handel indicated should be played three times by different groups of instruments each time. The set closes with two Menuets in graceful 3/4.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The version we hear today is by Elgar Howarth, a storied conductor who was part of the flowering of music in the north of England led by him, Peter Maxwell Davies and Harrison Birtwistle (whose works he championed); a former trumpeter, Howarth is also a distinguished composer and arranger for brass ensembles. His version of the 'Fireworks Music' is based on the original for wind band. He notes that he 'retains the original trumpet and horn parts in the Overture, *La Rejouissance* and final Menuet, cornets replacing oboes and trombones and tuba the bassoons and bass, whilst in the Bourrée, *La Paix* and first Menuet, what I hope is a judicious mix of light brass scoring, sometimes using mutes, seeks to capture the woodwind flavour'.

Gordon Kerry © 2023

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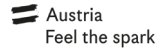
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