

27 June 2024

HANDEL'S WATER MUSIC



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 Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, 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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Fiona Ziegler

Assistant Concertmaster

Jennifer Booth

Brielle Clapson

Sercan Danis

Claire Herrick

Alexander Norton

SECOND VIOLINS

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Emma Jezek

Acting Associate Principal

Alice Bartsch

Emma Hayes

Shuti Huang

Riikka Sintonen^o

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Tobias Breider

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Rachel Silver

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Acting Principal

SERPENT

Scott Kinmont

Principal

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Section Percussion

Timothy Constable

EXTRAS

Mikaela Oberg*

Guest Principal Recorder

Simon Martyn-Ellis*

Guest Principal Theorbo

Bold Principal

* Guest Musician

^o Contract Musician

[†] Sydney Symphony Fellow

2024 CONCERT SEASON

CLASSICS IN THE CITY
Thursday 27 June, 7pm

City Recital Hall,
Angel Place

HANDEL’S WATER MUSIC SPARKLING BAROQUE

ERIN HELYARD harpsichord/director

JOHANN GEORG PISENDEL (1687–1755)
Fantasie: Imitation des caractères de la danse

- | | |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| i. Loure | v. Musette: Langsam |
| ii. Rigaudon | vi. Passepied: Fröhlich |
| iii. Canarie | vii. Polonaise: Majestätisch |
| iv. Bourrée | viii. Concertino: Presto |

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)
Water Music (HWV 348–350)

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| i. Overture | xiii. [Andante] |
| ii. Adagio e staccato | xiv. [Rigaudon I] |
| iii. [Allegro] | xv. [Rigaudon II] |
| iv. Andante | [da capo Rigaudon I] |
| v. Allegro | xvi. Lentement |
| vi. Air | xvii. [Bourrée] |
| vii. Minuet | xviii. Minuet I |
| viii. Bourrée | xix. [Minuet II] |
| ix. Hornpipe | xx. [Allegro] |
| x. [Andante] | xxi. [Alternativement] |
| xi. [Allegro – ‘Overture’] | xxii. ‘Trumpet’ Minuet |
| xii. [Alla hornpipe] | (coro) |

Pre-concert talk

By Andrew Bukenya in the
Function Room on Level 1
at 6.15pm

Estimated durations

Pisendel – 7 minutes
Handel – 55 minutes
The concert will run for
approximately 65 minutes

Cover image

By Craig Abercrombie

Harpsichord

Erin Helyard is playing a
Ruckers Double Harpsichord
by Carey Beebe, Sydney 2003.
Supplied & prepared by
Carey Beebe Harpsichords

Principal Partner



CONCERT DIARY

Visit sydneyssymphony.com for more information,
or call our Box Office on (02) 8215 4600

JULY 2024

Royal Caribbean
Classics Under the Sails

Friday 5 July, 7pm

Saturday 6 July, 7pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

DALIA STASEVSKA CONDUCTS SIBELIUS' FIFTH SYMPHONY

MUSIC OF THE NORTH

Finnish conductor Dalia Stasevska conducts this program of works by her homeland's greatest composers – Sibelius' extraordinary Fifth Symphony, Einojuhani Rautavaara's Cantus Arcticus and Kaija Saariaho's Harp Concerto featuring soloist Xavier de Maistre.

RAUTAVAARA Cantus Arcticus
SAARIAHO Trans for Harp and Orchestra
SIBELIUS Symphony No.5

DALIA STASEVSKA conductor
XAVIER DE MAISTRE harp



Emirates Masters Series
Emirates Thursday Afternoon
Symphony

Wednesday 10 July, 8pm

Thursday 11 July, 1.30pm

Friday 12 July, 8pm

Saturday 13 July, 8pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

SAINT-SAËNS' ORGAN SYMPHONY THUNDEROUS AND TENDER

Virtuoso French organist Olivier Latry is one of the world's top organists. A professor at the Paris Conservatoire, he was appointed organist at Notre Dame Cathedral at just 23 – and in this program with conductor Stephane Deneve, he brings his fabulous technique to two great works by two French masters.

GUILLAUME CONNESSON Flammenschrift
POULENC Organ Concerto
SAINT-SAËNS Symphony No.3, Organ

STEPHANE DENÈVE conductor
OLIVIER LATRY organ



Symphony Hour
Tea & Symphony

Thursday 18 July, 7pm

Friday 19 July, 11am

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA WITH JESS GILLAM

INTOXICATING RHYTHMS

Jess Gillam may only be 25, but the British saxophonist is already a star. Her natural effervescence makes her the perfect choice for Michael Nyman's *Where the Bee Dances*. Gillam brings her vivid and bright playing to the piece, losing herself in its swirling drive. Don't miss this exuberant and entirely original performer.

RAVEL La Valse*
MICHAEL NYMAN Where the Bee Dances
RACHMANINOV Symphonic Dances

**Symphony Hour performance only*

UMBERTO CLERICI conductor & presenter
JESS GILLAM saxophone



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ERIN HELYARD harpsichord/director

Erin Helyard has been acclaimed as an inspiring conductor, a virtuosic and expressive performer of the harpsichord and fortepiano, and a lucid scholar who is passionate about promoting discourse between musicology and performance.

Erin graduated in harpsichord performance from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with first-class honours and the University Medal. He completed his Masters in fortepiano performance and a PhD in musicology with Tom Beghin at the Schulich School of Music, McGill University, Montreal. His monograph *Clementi and the woman at the piano: virtuosity and the market for music in eighteenth-century London* was published by Oxford University Studies in Enlightenment in 2022.

As Artistic Director and co-founder of the celebrated Pinchgut Opera and the Orchestra of the Antipodes (Sydney) he has forged new standards of excellence in historically-informed performance in Australia. The company won Best Rediscovered Opera (2019) for Hasse's *Artaserse* at the International Opera Awards in London. Pinchgut's opera film, *A Delicate Fire*, won Best Australian Feature Film at the Sydney Women's International Film Festival in 2021. Operas under his direction have been awarded Best Opera at the Helpmann Awards for three consecutive years (2015-2017) and he has received two Helpmann Awards for Best Musical Direction: one for a fêted revival of *Saul* (Adelaide Festival) in 2017 and the other for Hasse's *Artaserse* (Pinchgut Opera) in 2019. Together with Richard Tognetti, Erin won an ARIA and an AIR award for Best Classical Album in 2020.

He regularly appears as a collaborator with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and Erin has distinguished himself as a conductor in dynamic performances with the Adelaide, Tasmanian, Queensland and Sydney Symphony Orchestras, ACO Collective, the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM), the Australian Haydn Ensemble, and as a duo partner on historical pianos with David Greco (baritone) and Stephanie McCallum (piano). In 2018 he was recognised with a Music and Opera Singers Trust Achievement Award (MAA) for contribution to the arts in Australia. In 2022 Erin was an Artist in Residence at the Melbourne Recital Centre.

Erin is a Senior Lecturer at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and appears courtesy of Pinchgut Opera.



Erin Helyard. Photo by Richard Tognetti.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

WHAT'S BAROQUE?

The Portuguese word *barocco* describes a misshapen pearl, but what we now call Baroque music was born in Florence in the late 16th century, when the Florentine Camerata, a group of artists led by Vincenzo Galilei (father of the astronomer), sought to recreate the sung dramas of ancient Greece and accidentally invented opera. The music of the late Renaissance was dominated by the vocal polyphony of church music, the stylised fanfares and dances of aristocratic or royal court, and the more domestic forms of the solo song or the ensemble form of the madrigal. The liturgical music represents the triumph of polyphony, where each of the individual lines in a piece have more or less equal roles to play, weaving elaborate textures as thematic material is passed from one voice to another. But this democratic texture didn't suit the requirements of the Florentine Camerata; out of the need to differentiate character came *monody*, where a single melodic line carries the musical argument, supported by a strong bass part and coloured by emotionally affecting harmony. Baroque music was, therefore, flexible and capable of sudden contrasts; it was, in a word, dramatic. The visual arts of the Baroque created breathtaking effects from the manipulation of light and colour, perspective and proportion and the use of a welter of ornamental detail, such as we see in the architecture of Bernini or Wren, or the paintings of Caravaggio or Velazquez. In literature something similar happens in the powerful rhythm and sometimes tortuous syntax of Milton's poetry. In the period between Galilei and Monteverdi and the generation of Bach, Vivaldi and Rameau, music dramatically embodied the religious mysteries of ascendant Protestantism and the equally assertive Catholicism of the Counter-reformation, as well as the ritualised life in the courts of Versailles and Westminster, and it developed regional accents and manners, as is reflected,

for instance, in the titles of Bach's Italian Concerto, and French and English Suites. Towards the end of the period, there was an explosion of instrumental music for court of city-based orchestras down to intimate chamber groupings; a growing middle class provided a market, which was serviced by advances in printing technology.

THE BAROQUE IN GERMANY

Baroque-era 'Germany' was a collection of principalities, kingdoms, electorates and city states run by Lutherans, Calvinists or Catholics. The Thirty Years' War, which dominated the first half of the 17th century, was in part (but only in part) the result of friction between these differing interests. Needless to say, this fragmentation of culture had serious effects on the development of music, and on the careers of particular composers: when employed by Lutherans, composers routinely wrote music for the church, sometimes including Latin Masses; when employed by Calvinists, who forbade elaborate instrumental music in worship, composers worked exclusively in secular forms. Composers who were active at princely courts naturally wrote courtly music; composers working in large cities began to look to a broader public for their music.

JOHANN GEORG PISENDEL (1687–1755)

Born near Nuremberg, Johann Georg Pisendel was almost certainly a student of the violinist composer Torelli, and spent much of his professional life in Dresden (apart from a brief period studying law in Leipzig) where he rose to become concert master of the Dresden Court Orchestra. In that capacity he introduced a range of new music to the city including numerous works of Vivaldi, with whom he undertook further study in Venice. There he coped with being followed by the police (mistaken identity) and triumphantly played a Vivaldi concerto despite the best efforts of the orchestra to derail him by playing the accompaniment too fast.

ABOUT THE MUSIC



Johann Georg Pisendel

Clearly he was a major talent, and had various works by Vivaldi, Albinoni and Telemann composed for or dedicated to him. It seems possible that Bach wrote his A minor Concerto and possibly the fifth Brandenburg Concerto with Pisendel in mind.

Pisendel himself was a composer of great talent, if nowhere near as prolific as his friends Bach and Telemann, leaving us several concertos for his own instrument, a pair of sonatas and a small number of other instrumental pieces. Among his works is this gem of a *Fantasie*, probably written between 1725 and 1735 in Dresden, in which various dances are sketched in miniature and then abandoned.

The *Loure* (originally an evocation of the medieval bagpipe) is a gracious piece in 6/4 characterised by elegant dotted rhythms and the timbre of the oboe. A fragmentary rigaudon – a fast dance in 4/4, here featuring strings – takes us briefly towards C minor (unusually for Baroque music, which typically remains in one key throughout.) Oboes return for the gigue-like *Canarie* (a dance from the Canary Islands), and the sound of the piccolo gives the *Bourrée* a military flavour. In a rare excursion into G major, and also suggestive of the bagpipe with its drone harmony, the *musette* features the oboe, while the piccolo again provides a bright tracery in the *Passepied*. The stately *Polonaise*, strikingly, uses groups of three bars to give it a slightly lopsided feel, though this is dispelled by the simple energy of the final *Concertino*.

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759) *Water Music* (HWV 348–350)

Handel's *Water Music* inhabits a grey area between ceremonial and popular music. Handel had taken up a post in 1710 at the court of Georg Ludwig, the Elector of Hanover (the Electors were several European princes who nominally elected the Holy Roman Emperor) and twice took advantage of a generous travel allowance to go to London. Enjoying some success there on his second trip in 1712, Handel stayed on, but in 1714 the Elector, as the closest Protestant relation to British royalty, was proclaimed King George on the death of Queen Anne and crowned at Westminster. It might have been awkward, and an early biographer, John Mainwaring, did indeed put about the story that king and composer were estranged over the latter's long absence from Hanover. The story goes that the King's Master of Horse, Baron Johann von Kielmannsegg (or Kilmanseck), wanted to effect a reconciliation so arranged, without the King's knowledge, for an entertainment involving a barge cruise on the Thames. This supposedly took place in August 1715, and brought about a cessation of hostilities between the two Georges, but there is no direct evidence linking Handel to this occasion.



Philippe Mercier's portrait of Handel

ABOUT THE MUSIC

From 1717, however, we have the famous account of Friedrich Bonet, a diplomat from Brandenburg, of another Royal excursion:

About eight in the evening the King repaired to his barge... Next to the King's barge was that of the musicians, about 50 in number, who played on all kinds of instruments, to wit trumpets, horns, oboes, bassoons, German flutes, French flutes [recorders], violins and basses; but there were no singers. The music had been composed specially by the famous Handel, a native of Halle, and His Majesty's principal Court Composer. His Majesty's approval of it was so great that he caused it to be played three times in all, twice before and once after supper, even though each performance lasted an hour. The evening was as fine as could be desired for this occasion and the number of barges and boats full of people wanting to listen was beyond counting. In order to make this entertainment the more exquisite, Madam de Kilmanseck had arranged a choice supper at the late Lord Ranelagh's villa on the river at Chelsea, where the King went at one in the morning. He left at three o'clock and returned to St. James' about half past four. The concert cost Baron Kilmanseck £150 for the musicians alone.



Jan Griffier, view of Lambeth Palace across the Thames, c 1718

In fact, as Handel biographer Jonathan Keates points out, while Kielmannsegg paid for the entertainment, it was the King's idea – as Elector he had enjoyed similar

events on the lake at his summer palace Herrenhausen, and the family, moreover, had on several occasions witnessed aquatic pageants in Venice.

Handel was demonstrably in good favour with the King in 1717, having travelled in the royal retinue back to Hanover the previous year. While not much enjoying formal court ceremonial, the King was keen to raise his own public profile in London, especially given the bitter rivalry that had broken out between him and his son, the Prince of Wales, and Handel would have been wise to display his loyalty. The pageant, held on 17 July 1717, was essentially a party on a series of barges that 'drove with the Tide without Rowing' from Whitehall up-river to Chelsea – where, as noted, the King dined – and then back.

'Handel's Celebrated Water Musick' was only published in full score after the composer's death, with the now-customary division into three separate suites in F, D and G. Sadly, no autograph manuscript has survived, so it is not possible to say definitively which movements were played and in what order. It may be, as Keates notes, that certain movements were intended for specific points of the journey. The posthumous ordering by key reflects the traditional disposition of the 'French suite' and the suites' different orchestrations, which reflect that some early instruments were restricted in the choice of keys that they could use. In fact the score is the first English piece to use 'crooked' horns, which allows them to play in more than one key. The movements in F feature oboes, bassoon, horns, strings and basso continuo while those in D add trumpets. The movements in G offer the gentle contrast of a palette of flutes and strings.

In 2004, the late scholar Terence Best discovered a manuscript copy in the archives of the Royal Society of Musicians in London, which he confidently dated to 1718 or 1719, making it the earliest extant manuscript copy of the work. (Best notes that it must have been based on an earlier

ABOUT THE MUSIC

manuscript, but that certain errors make it unlikely that the 1718 copyists were working from Handel's own autograph.) Nevertheless, it may reflect how the music was first performed, especially – fascinatingly – in the order of movements. It conflates the suites in D and G, providing dramatic contrasts of key, timbre and mood, and juxtaposing examples of the same dance form in different keys.

Much of the music, using the carrying power of reed and brass instruments, is clearly designed to be heard from a distance, though without, of course, today's ambient sounds of cars, trains and motor-boats. The Suite in F begins with the expected French *ouverture* – that is, with a slow opening section full of 'ceremonial' dotted rhythms and trills that is succeeded by a faster section in formal fugal counterpoint. (Best argues that this movement was almost certainly written earlier, and for indoor performance.) The movements that follow offer a study in Handel's brilliant orchestration, with, on this occasion, a little help from Erin Helyard. Not all have identifying dance titles or tempo markings, but many of them conform, as any contemporary would have known, to then current dance-forms. Among these are the minuet in 3/4, rather better behaved than its

descendant, the waltz; the bourrée, in quick duple time with an upbeat, and its close relative the rigaudon – which we have met in Pisendel's piece; the triple-time hornpipe; and the third- and second-last movements here, which are sometimes referred to as country dances but are really jigs.



A man playing the serpent, one of the more unusual instruments of the Baroque orchestra

As Beethoven noted approvingly of Handel's music generally, it makes great effects with the simplest of means. Here, this includes contrasts of solo and tutti writing, and antiphonal effects (as in the D major 'Overture' [No.11] and the celebrated hornpipe) that remind us of the Venetian heritage of Baroque instrumental music. This performance brings the *Water Music* to a close with the bright strains of the 'trumpet' minuet from the Suite in D.

Gordon Kerry © 2020/2024



Philippe Mercier's portrait of Handel

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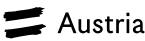


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