

SEASON OPENING GALA  
28 February – 2 March 2024

SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS

# MAHLER'S FIFTH SYMPHONY

«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.

## PERFORMING IN THIS CONCERT

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### FIRST VIOLINS

**Andrew Haveron**

*Concertmaster*

**Harry Bennetts**

*Associate*

*Concertmaster*

**Alexandra Osborne**

*Associate*

*Concertmaster*

**Lerida Delbridge**

*Assistant*

*Concertmaster*

**Fiona Ziegler**

*Assistant*

*Concertmaster*

**Sun Yi**

*Associate*

*Concertmaster*

*Emeritus*

Jennifer Booth

Sophie Cole

Claire Herrick

Georges Lentz

Emily Long

Alexandra Mitchell

Alexander Norton

Anna Skálová

Léone Ziegler

Benjamin Tjøa<sup>o</sup>

### SECOND VIOLINS

**Kirsty Hilton**

*Principal*

**Marina Marsden**

*Principal*

**Emma Jezek**

*Acting Associate*

*Principal*

Alice Bartsch

Victoria Bihun

Shuti Huang

Wendy Kong

Benjamin Li

Nicole Masters

Maja Verunica

Marcus

Michelsen<sup>o</sup>

Emily Qin<sup>o</sup>

Riikka Sintonen<sup>o</sup>

Dominic Azzi<sup>†</sup>

### VIOLAS

**Tobias Breider**

*Principal*

**Carrie Dennis**

*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

### CELLOS

**Catherine Hewgill**

*Principal*

**Kaori Yamagami**

*Principal*

**Simon Cobcroft**

*Associate Principal*

**Leah Lynn**

*Assistant Principal*

Kristy Conrau

Fenella Gill

Timothy Nankervis

Elizabeth Neville

Christopher

Pidcock

Adrian Wallis

### DOUBLE BASSES

**Kees Boersma**

*Principal*

**Alex Henery**

*Principal*

David Campbell

Dylan Holly

Steven Larson

Richard Lynn

Jaan Pallandi

Benjamin Ward

Alexandra Elvin<sup>†</sup>

### FLUTES

**Joshua Batty**

*Principal*

**Emma Sholl**

*Associate Principal*

**Carolyn Harris**

**Johanna Gruskin\***

*Guest Principal*

*Piccolo*

### OBOES

**Shefali Pryor**

*Associate Principal*

Callum Hogan

**Alexandre Oguey**

*Principal Cor Anglais*

### CLARINETS

**Oliver**

**Shermayer\***

*Guest Principal*

Christopher Tingay

**Alexander Morris**

*Principal*

*Bass Clarinet*

### BASSOONS

**Matthew Wilkie**

*Principal Emeritus*

Fiona McNamara

**Noriko Shimada**

*Principal*

*Contrabassoon*

### HORNS

**Samuel Jacobs**

*Principal*

**Euan Harvey**

*Acting Principal*

**Emily Newham\***

*Acting Principal*

*3rd Horn*

Marnie Sebire

Rachel Silver

Abbey Edlin\*

Stefan Grant<sup>†</sup>

### TRUMPETS

**David Elton**

*Principal*

**Brent Grapes**

*Associate Principal*

Cécile Glémot

Anthony Heinrichs

Joel Walmsley<sup>†</sup>

### TROMBONES

**Ronald Prussing**

*Principal*

**Scott Kinmont**

*Associate Principal*

Nick Byrne

**Christopher Harris**

*Principal*

*Bass Trombone*

### TUBA

**Steve Rossé**

*Principal*

### TIMPANI

**Antoine Siguré**

*Principal*

### PERCUSSION

**Rebecca Lagos**

*Principal*

**Mark Robinson**

*Associate Principal*

*Timpani/Section*

*Percussion*

Timothy Constable

Ian Cleworth\*

### HARP

**Louise Dulbecco\***

*Guest Principal*

### KEYBOARDS

**Catherine Davis\***

*Guest Principal Piano*

\* = Guest Musician

<sup>o</sup> = Contract Musician

<sup>†</sup> = Sydney Symphony

Fellow

# 2024 SEASON

## EMIRATES MASTERS SERIES

Wednesday 28 February, 8pm

Friday 1 March, 8pm

Saturday 2 March, 8pm

## EMIRATES THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

Thursday 29 February, 1.30pm

Concert Hall,  
Sydney Opera House

# SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS MAHLER'S FIFTH SYMPHONY

**SIMONE YOUNG** conductor

**RENAUD CAPUÇON** violin

### Rhythmic Acknowledgment of Country

**CAMILLE PÉPIN** (born 1990)

**Violin Concerto: *Le Sommeil a pris ton empreinte* (2022)**

Australian Premiere

i. *Le sommeil a pris ton empreinte – Et la colore de tes yeux I.*

(Sleep retains your imprint, and the colour of your eyes)

ii. *Le Temps déborde* (Time overflows)

iii. *Le sommeil a pris ton empreinte – Et la colore de tes yeux II.*

iv. *Le Phénix* (The Phoenix)

v. *Le sommeil a pris ton empreinte – Et la colore de tes yeux III.*

### INTERVAL

**GUSTAV MAHLER** (1860–1911)

**Symphony No.5 (1901–1902)**

Part I

i. *Trauermarsch (In gemessenem Schritt. Streng.*

*Wie ein Kondukt)* [Funeral march

(With measured pace, stern, like a funeral procession)]

ii. *Stürmisch bewegt. Mit grösster Vehemenz*

[Stormy, with utmost vehemence]

Part II

iii. *Scherzo (Kräftig, nicht zu schnell)* [Strong, not too fast]

Part III

iv. *Adagietto (Sehr langsam)* [Very slow]

v. *Rondo-Finale (Allegro)*

### Pre-Concert Talk

By Francis Merson, including a conversation with composer Camille Pépin, in the Northern Foyer at 7.15pm (12.45pm Thursday)

### Estimated durations

Acknowledgement – 5 minutes

Pépin – 25 minutes

Interval – 20 minutes

Mahler – 78 minutes

The concert will run for approximately two hours and fifteen minutes.

### Cover image

Simone Young

Photo by Jaimi Joy

### Principal Partner



# WELCOME

Welcome to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's 2024 Season Opening Gala.

A permanent symphony orchestra is said to be a measure of a city's vibrancy and musical maturity. It was some 92 years ago, in 1932, that the first iteration of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra began.

From that first step, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has moved hand in hand with our cultural evolution as a city.

Tonight's concert marks the beginning of Simone Young's third season as Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony. In the last two years we have seen the Orchestra's triumphant return to the renewed Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, groundbreaking collaborations with major Australian artists and ensembles, and always performances of great passion, intensity and skill.

As is now tradition, the season begins with one of the symphonies by Gustav Mahler, who believed that symphonies must be like the world, and contain everything. His Fifth Symphony is perhaps his best-known due to the Adagietto, used recently to great dramatic effect in the Cate Blanchett film *Tár*. It is a stunning piece of music, and under the guidance of Simone Young – celebrated worldwide for her interpretation of Mahler's music – promises to be a memorable experience.

We will also hear the Australian premiere of a new violin concerto by French composer Camille Pépin, performed by the great violinist Renaud Capuçon. The concerto was co-commissioned by the Sydney Symphony and the Orchestre National de France and received its world premiere in Paris in April 2023, and now it is our turn to hear this compelling new work.

Enjoy the concert.

**The Hon. John Graham**  
**NSW Minister for the Arts**

# WELCOME

Welcome to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's 2024 Season.

We begin with what has rapidly become a celebrated Sydney tradition, as Chief Conductor Simone Young conducts Mahler's epic Fifth Symphony to open a thrilling year ahead.

Emirates and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra have enjoyed one of the longest-standing and most significant relationships in Australia's performing arts, one of which we remain extremely proud.

Our partnership with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra is a cornerstone of our ongoing support to music and arts around the world and reflects our long-standing commitment to Australia.

We're passionate about growing music, arts, and culture to enrich the lives of the communities we serve and connecting the finest talents with audiences globally.

Rightly regarded as one of Mahler's most important works, the Fifth Symphony marks a turning point in his life and work. The music is untethered from storytelling and becomes a passionate journey of expression, including the radiantly beautiful Adagietto.

As the Presenter of the Masters Series and the Orchestra's Principal Partner, Emirates is an ardent supporter of superlative local and international talent, in particular the Sydney Symphony's Chief Conductor, Simone Young AM.

Over the course of 21 years of partnership between Emirates and the Orchestra, our common goal has been to bring wonderful journeys to life – both around the world and around the imagination.

And tonight takes us on such a journey, embodying originality and excellence at the highest level, both qualities the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Emirates aspire to in equal measure.

We are delighted by our continuing partnership, and we hope you enjoy this spellbinding concert.

**Barry Brown**

**Divisional Vice President for Australasia  
Emirates**

# WELCOME

Visit [sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com](https://sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com) for more information,  
or call our Box Office on (02) 8215 4600

## MARCH 2024

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Tea & Symphony

**Friday 8 March, 11am**

Great Classics

**Saturday 9 March, 2pm**

Concert Hall,

Sydney Opera House

### SCHUMANN'S SECOND SYMPHONY WITH SIMONE YOUNG

CLASSICAL CHARM

Chief Conductor Simone Young presents warm, gleaming works by Robert Schumann, Beethoven and Peggy Glanville-Hicks.

**Peggy GLANVILLE-HICKS** Three Gymnopédies  
**BEETHOVEN** Symphony No.2\*  
**SCHUMANN** Symphony No.2

*\*Great Classics performance only (Sat 9 March)*

**SIMONE YOUNG** conductor



Special Event

**Friday 15 March, 7pm**

**Saturday 16 March, 7pm**

Concert Hall,

Sydney Opera House

### SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS GURRELIEDER

A SPECTACULAR ROMANCE

Arnold Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* is a musical tapestry of monumental scale, requiring an orchestra of 140 musicians and a chorus of 285. With musical forces of this size a live performance is likely to be a once in a lifetime experience.

**SIMONE YOUNG** conductor

**SIMON O'NEILL** Waldemar

**RICARDA MERBETH** Tove

**DEBORAH HUMBLE** Waldtaube

**SAVA VEMIĆ** Peasant

**ANDREW GOODWIN** Klaus-Narr

**WARWICK FYFE** Speaker

**MUSICIANS OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL  
ACADEMY OF MUSIC (ANAM)**

**SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS**

**MSO CHORUS**

**TSO CHORUS**



International Pianists in Recital

**Monday 18 March, 7pm**

Concert Hall,

Sydney Opera House

### VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON PERFORMS BACH'S GOLDBERG VARIATIONS

A STUNNING MUSICAL JOURNEY

**VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON** piano



Emirates Masters Series

**Wednesday 20 March, 8pm**

**Friday 22 March, 8pm**

**Saturday 23 March, 8pm**

Emirates Thursday Afternoon

**Thursday 21 March, 1.30pm**

Concert Hall,

Sydney Opera House

### BEETHOVEN'S THIRD SYMPHONY

VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON PERFORMS RAVEL

**DEBUSSY** arr. Colin Matthews

Four Preludes:

Book I, No.12: Minstrels

Book II, No.3: La puerta del Vino

Book I, No.4: Les sons et les parfums  
tournent dans l'air du soir

Book II, No.6: Général Lavine

**RAVEL** Piano Concerto in G

**BEETHOVEN** Symphony No.3, Eroica

**DONALD RUNNICLES** conductor

**VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON** piano



# YOUR CONCERT AT A GLANCE

## COMPOSERS

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### GUSTAV MAHLER (1860-1911)

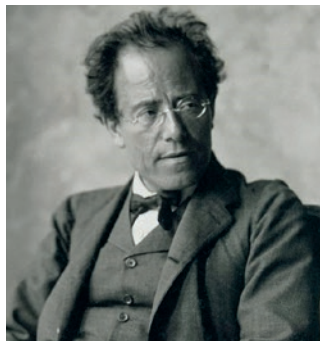
Symphony No.5

Premiered 1904 – also the year of JM Barrie’s *Peter Pan*, Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard*, Henry James’ *The Golden Bowl*, and Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*.

Mahler divides this 70-odd-minute work into three parts, the first and last containing pairs of contrasting movements. The first begins with a funeral march replete with trumpet fanfares that leads into a section of heightened emotion and ‘stormy vehemence’.

The central scherzo is a kind of cosmic vision of a ‘foaming raging, roaring sea of sound... dancing stars... breath-taking iridescent and flashing breakers?’ dominated by a virtuoso part for solo horn. The last part brings together the melancholy delicacy of the famous *Adagietto* for strings and harp, before its melody is transformed into a powerful eruption of energy in the finale.

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Gustav Mahler in 1907.  
Photo by Moritz Nähr.

### CAMILLE PÉPIN (BORN 1990)

Violin concerto: *Le Sommeil a pris ton empreinte*  
(Sleep retains your imprint)

Premiered 2023 in Paris.

This is the work’s Australian premiere.

Significant contemporary events: death of Queen Elizabeth II; election of Albanese Government; opening of Sydney Modern; release of *Tár* starring Cate Blanchett.

Pépin’s concerto for violinist Renaud Capuçon plays for about 20 minutes and falls into five movements. Inspired by the poetry of Paul Éluard the work traces a story of erotic love, the brute reality of bereavement, and, finally, newly-found happiness. It explores shifting emotions through passages of quiet reflection and emphatic bravura display, blending orchestral colour in constantly changing iridescent combinations, like the action of light on water.



Camille Pépin. Photographed  
by Natacha Colmez-Collard

## ARTISTS

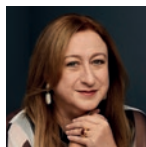
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### SIMONE YOUNG

conductor

### RENAUD CAPUÇON

violin





Simone Young. Photo by Peter Bevan-Brew



# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**SIMONE YOUNG** AM conductor

Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Chief Conductor, Simone Young, has previously held the posts of General Manager and Music Director of the Hamburg State Opera and Music Director of the Philharmonic State Orchestra Hamburg, Music Director of Opera Australia, Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Lisbon and the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra. Her Hamburg recordings include the *Ring Cycle*, *Mathis der Maler* (Hindemith), and symphonies of Bruckner, Brahms and Mahler. She has conducted complete cycles of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Vienna, Berlin and Hamburg State Opera companies.

This year Simone Young will make her much-anticipated Bayreuth Festival debut conducting Wagner's *Ring Cycle*. She also returns to both the Berlin and Vienna State Opera companies, the Berlin, Los Angeles, Stockholm, Oslo and Goeteborg Philharmonic Orchestras, the Bavarian Radio Orchestra and the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra.

2023 saw the commencement of her Sydney Symphony Orchestra *Ring Cycle* with the presentation of *Das Rheingold* which played to sold out audiences, standing ovations and five-star reviews. A second, feature-length documentary film, *Knowing the Score*, about Simone Young and her career was also internationally released in 2023.

Simone Young is regularly invited by the world's great orchestras and has led the New York, Los Angeles, Berlin, Vienna, Munich, Stockholm, New Japan, Helsinki and Dresden Philharmonic Orchestras; the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo; Orchestre de Paris; Staatskapelle Dresden; the BBC, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Detroit, Chicago, Dallas, and National Symphony Orchestra. In Australia she has conducted

the West Australian, Adelaide, Melbourne and Queensland Symphony Orchestras and the Australian World Orchestra.

Highly sought-after by the world's leading opera houses, most recently Simone Young has appeared at the Vienna State Opera (*Die Fledermaus* and *Peter Grimes*), The Metropolitan Opera New York (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Opera Nationale de Paris (*Parsifal* and *Salome*), Bavarian State Opera (*Tannhäuser*), Berlin State Opera (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Zurich Opera (*Salome*).

Simone Young's many accolades include Honorary Member (Ehrenmitglied) of the Vienna State Opera, the 2019 European Cultural Prize Vienna, a Professorship at the Musikhochschule in Hamburg, honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Western Australia and New South Wales, Griffith University and Monash University, the Sir Bernard Heinze Award, the Goethe Institute Medal, Helpmann Award and the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, France.

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **RENAUD CAPUÇON** violin

French violinist Renaud Capuçon is firmly established internationally as a major soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. He is known and loved for his poise, depth of tone and virtuosity, and he works with the world's most prestigious orchestras, artists, venues, and festivals.

Born in Chambéry in 1976, Renaud Capuçon began his studies at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris at the age of fourteen, winning numerous awards during his five years there. Following this, Capuçon moved to Berlin to study with Thomas Brandis and Isaac Stern and was awarded the Prize of the Berlin Academy of Arts. In 1997, Claudio Abbado invited him to become concertmaster of the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester, which he led for three summers, working with conductors including Boulez, Ozawa, Welsch-Möst and Abbado.

Since then, Capuçon has established himself as a soloist at the very highest level. He performs with leading orchestras such as the Berliner Philharmoniker, Boston Symphony, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Filarmonica della Scala, London Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre National de France, and Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

His many conductor relationships include Barenboim, Bychkov, Dénève, Dohnanyi, Dudamel, Eschenbach, Gergiev, Haitink, Harding, Long Yu, Paavo Järvi, Nelsons, Nézet-Seguin, Roth, Shani, Ticciati, van Zweden. In the 22/23 season, Capuçon made his Carnegie Hall debut to fervent ovation in a play-direct performance with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra.

Capuçon has built an extensive discography and, up until recently, recorded exclusively with Erato/Warner Classics. In September 2022, Capuçon announced his new partnership with Deutsche Grammophon, and two months later released his first album with the yellow label – a collection of violin sonatas performed with Martha Argerich and recorded at his Easter Festival in Aix-en-Provence. Recent releases with Erato include a recording of Elgar's Violin Concerto and Violin Sonata with the LSO conducted by Simon Rattle, an album with Guillaume Bellom featuring an extensive range of shorter works arranged for violin and piano, and, most recently, recordings of violin concerti

by Vivaldi and Saint-George with the Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne. His album *Au Cinema*, featuring much loved selections from film music, was released to critical acclaim in October 2018.

Capuçon plays the Guarneri del Gesù 'Panette' (1737), which belonged to Isaac Stern.

In June 2011, he was appointed Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite and in March 2016 Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur by the French Government.



Renaud Capuçon. Photo courtesy Universal Music.

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## ADAM MANNING

Adam Manning is a musician, artist, producer/researcher, and educator, and has Kamilaroi kinship. Currently serving as the Conservatorium Coordinator at the University of Newcastle, NSW, Adam's multifaceted pursuits reflect his deep connection to his ancestral land, Kamilaroi Barray, as an original Custodial Descendant. As a composer, percussionist, and artist, he finds solace in the rhythmic expressions that intertwine with the essence of Land, People, Culture, and Story, resonating with the natural frequency, the heartbeat, of Ngaya Barray, Mother Earth.

Adam's rhythmic expressions take on diverse forms, blending the old and the new, transcending disciplinary boundaries. Renowned percussion instrument maker, Latin Percussion, proudly endorses him, while his music can be frequently heard on the airwaves of ABC Classic. His artworks can be observed in locations such as Murrook Cultural Centre, the University of Newcastle, NSW Department of Education, and Government Social Service buildings. Furthermore, Adam has been commissioned for infrastructure design works by Port Stephens Council, and Lake Macquarie City Council.



Adam Manning. Photo supplied

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## **Rhythmic Acknowledgment of Country**

*Featuring First Nations percussionist  
Adam Manning and the Sydney Symphony  
Orchestra*

This distinctive tribute unfolds immediately after orchestral tuning, crafting a compelling rhythmic expression to honour the traditional custodians of the land and their deep connection to the First Nations Sydney Basin rhythms, first documented in the 1800s.

Under the guidance of Adam Manning, this rhythmic journey becomes a dynamic exploration, inviting our talented percussionists to not only reference and improvise but also to revive these ancient rhythms within a contemporary context. Manning's extensive experience and dedicated commitment to this art form have positioned him as a valuable custodian of these traditions, actively engaging in the exploration and sharing of these rhythms for many years.

Throughout the Acknowledgment orchestral members will play single notes on their instruments, weaving a tapestry of sound that echoes the essence of the land's ancient rhythms. As the Acknowledgment reaches its crescendo, the entire Sydney Symphony Orchestra, in a synchronised harmony, will play clapsticks together.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

**Though very different in style, Camille Pépin's Violin Concerto and Mahler's Fifth Symphony are both inspired by the experience of grief and the process of recovery.**

Born in 1990, Camille Pépin is one of the most successful rising young composers of her generation. Combining traditions of French music (notably Debussyan 'impressionism') and American minimalism, her distinctive sound-world finds its inspiration in nature or painting. Her individual palette of instrumental colour is expressed in formally rigorous orchestration that reveals her poetic imagination.

Pépin's music is regularly played by orchestras in Europe, the UK, USA and Australia under conductors such as Alain Altinoglu, Mikko Franck, Fabien Gabel, Ben Glassberg, Kent Nagano, Leonard Slatkin, Arie Van Beek and Simone Young.

Pépin has won numerous prizes such as the Île de Créations competition and the SACEM Prize in 2015, as well as a prize from the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 2017. The following year, she was one of the 30 Éclaireurs Vanity Fair. In 2020, she was composer of the year at the Victoires de la Musique Classique and was made Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters in 2022.

In 2023, Renaud Capuçon premiered her Violin Concerto, *Le Sommeil a pris ton empreinte*, with the Orchestre national de France and Simone Young. The Hr-Sinfonieorchester Frankfurt also premiered one of her new works with Alain Altinoglu, and Renaud Capuçon and Guillaume Bellom premiered a new work for violin and piano. Her latest album *Les Eaux célestes*, with the Orchestre national de Lyon and Ben Glassberg and released by NoMadMusic, was unanimously praised by critics.

After studies at the Amiens Conservatoire, Pépin obtained five first prizes in Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris (orchestration, analysis, harmony, counterpoint and fugue, and musical forms). She studied with notable French composers Guillaume Connesson, Marc-André Dalbavie and Thierry Escaich.

Connection to nature is essential for Camille. She also likes cooking, Harry Potter, and her favourite colour is blue.

She writes of her concerto:

*Le Sommeil a pris ton empreinte* is a violin concerto dedicated to Renaud Capuçon. I make a point of tailoring my compositions to their dedicatees, so it was quite natural for me to ask Renaud about a particular source of inspiration. When he suggested the poet Paul Éluard, (the nom-de-plume of Eugène Émile Paul Grindel) I was absolutely delighted and selected three poems that would structure the concerto and define its five 'moments'.



Paul Éluard photographed by Studio Harcourt, 1945

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## 1. *Le sommeil a pris ton empreinte Et la colore de tes yeux I.*

(Sleep retains your imprint, and the colour of your eyes.)

This short poem will occur three times over the course of the concerto, like a delicate, diaphanous ritornello punctuating and emphasizing longer episodes – a moment suspended in time. The sober musical material is developed in the other movements: a rather modal melodic motif ('sleep' motif), an ascending fifth ('love' motif) and a throbbing arpeggio. The poem characterizes the atmosphere of the eponymous concerto. A different sound colour highlights each occurrence of the poem as its meaning evolves throughout the piece in relation to the preceding or following episode. The first time, harmonic tremolos add a misty, dreamy touch to the passionate song of the violin. The answer of the winds is much darker. A throbbing, alarmingly unstable arpeggio finds its way into the solo line, like an omen of the impending disaster.

## 2. *Le Temps déborde* (Time overflows)

The second movement introduces a dramatic change of mood. In November 1946, the poet's wife Nusch (the nickname of stage performer and model Maria Benz) died unexpectedly and Éluard's life was shattered. The profound upheaval translates as a sudden influx of restlessness that inevitably leads us into the meanders of a tormented mind. The violin and the orchestra engage in a confrontational dialogue echoing the poet's inner conflict as he faces the loss of his loved one. Only once (and briefly) do tensions ease, when the poet evokes Nusch. The following cadenza – a confrontation of the poet with himself – leaves him shaken.

## 3. *Le sommeil a pris ton empreinte Et la colore de tes yeux II.*

The third movement opens on a desolate soundscape, created by the sonic 'gap' between the highest and the lowest orchestral instruments. The harp, celesta, distant gongs and the misty atmosphere of the violin arpeggios fill and illuminate that void with a few magic touches of light. The soloist then picks up the 'sleep' motif, which the horns echo on the ascending fifth ('love' motif), as if in search of a new horizon.

## 4. *Le Phénix* (The Phoenix)

After a mourning period, Éluard rises from the ashes of his bereavement. He makes the acquaintance of Dominique Lemort whom he marries, publishing *The Phoenix* collection in 1951 in celebration.

Although lyrical over layers of strings, the violin sounds wistful at first. The orchestra ascends progressively to the high register and introduces a rhythmically intense, more optimistic note. The uninterrupted flow of the following cadenza gradually brightens the horizon. The rhythmic episode returns, almost euphoric. Covering all the elements already heard throughout the piece, it culminates in a dazzling orchestral tutti celebrating the poet's rebirth and the power of love. The violin progressively leads the listener back to the initial diaphanous atmosphere.

## 5. *Le sommeil a pris ton empreinte Et la colore de tes yeux III.*

The reassuring whirl of the lower string section creates a soft, comforting musical texture over which the bright tone of the violin, echoing the oboes, exposes the sleep motif one last time in the high register. One last flutter... Then silence. And serenity.

In this piece, the various combinations of winds (horns, clarinets, flutes) create morphing resonances amplified by the bells (tubular, gongs, lower celesta pitches) and metals (tams, cymbals).



Vibrant keyboard layers (celesta, harp, vibraphone) – sometimes out of phase – introduce a dreamy, magical atmosphere. The strings add the pure tones of their bowed harmonics. This type of orchestration contributes to the development of drowsy sound mixtures. Whether emerging from this atmosphere, blending into it or soaring over it, the melodious voice of the solo violin never ceases to sing of love.

© **Camille Pépin**  
(translation by **Geneviève Bégou**)

Camille Pépin's Violin Concerto *Le Sommeil a pris ton empreinte* is scored for two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and two percussion, harp, celeste, strings and solo violin.

The work received its world premiere on 27 April 2023, with Simone Young conducting violin soloist Renaud Capuçon and the Orchestre National de France. Co-commissioned by the Orchestre National de France, Orchestre National de Lyon and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, this is its Australian premiere.



Nusch Eluard photographed for Vogue Italia



Camille Pépin. Photographed by Natacha Colmez-Collard

## INTERVIEW

# “IT’S A LOVE STORY.” SIMONE YOUNG AND CAMILLE PÉPIN ON HER NEW VIOLIN CONCERTO

**French composer Camille Pépin and Chief Conductor Simone Young unpack Pépin’s new violin concerto, which receives its Australian premiere as part of our Season Opening Gala in February.**

By Hugh Robertson

Camille Pépin is one of the classical world’s rising stars. Not yet 35, the French composer’s sweeping, dramatic music has been commissioned and performed all over the world, winning numerous awards and legions of fans – including Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Simone Young.

In April 2023, Young led violinist Renaud Capuçon and the Orchestre National de France in the world premiere of Pépin’s new violin concerto, *Le Sommeil a pris ton empreinte* (Sleep retains your imprint). Co-commissioned by that orchestra, Orchestre National de Lyon and the Sydney Symphony, in February the work will receive its Australian premiere as part of Sydney’s 2024 Season Opening Gala, once again with Capuçon as soloist and Young at the podium.

‘Camille is an extraordinary voice in new music,’ says Young excitedly. ‘And this concerto is a beautiful work. It’s very expressive. It has at times tremendous rhythmic vitality, and at other times quite ethereal elegance. The orchestral writing

is very atmospheric and the violin part is hugely virtuosic, and so that makes for a great start for the season with an artist of the calibre of Renaud Capuçon.’

Pépin describes her own music as being at the crossroads of French Impressionism and American repetitive music, and this concerto bears all those hallmarks: the rich, evocative sound paintings of Debussy and Ravel as well as the driving, maximalist energy of the orchestral works of Adams, Steve Reich and Philip Glass.

However Pépin reveals that her chief inspiration is nature, but not in the sense that she attempts to depict landscapes, like Beethoven in his Pastoral Symphony. Rather Pépin says that nature provides her with a blank canvas on which to work.

‘When I’m composing, I always need to go on a walk in nature, in the forest,’ she says. ‘I live in the countryside and I really need this environment. I need a quiet place and I need trees and mountains.’

# INTERVIEW

‘Nature gives me a clean mind. And all the colours and textures I can see outside inspire me. Sometimes I have this feeling when I see a landscape, I translate the colours I see in my mind and I hear instruments or mixture of instruments in my head.’

That inspiration can be clearly seen in the titles of her works, with such evocative names as *The Sound of Trees*, *At the Edge of the Storm*, *Before the light of dawn* and *Early Summer Rain*. This new concerto, however, is not so directly inspired by the natural world, but by another awe-inspiring phenomenon: love.

‘The piece is a love story, actually,’ says Pépin. ‘I was inspired by love and especially by Paul Éluard, a French writer. Renaud Capuçon and I are very big fans of him.’

Éluard was a French poet in the first half of the twentieth century, and is closely associated with the Surrealist movement. Through writing, painting, theatre, filmmaking and photography, Surrealism’s aim was to express the unconscious mind, ungoverned by logic or reality: think of René Magritte’s famous illustration of a pipe featuring the declaration “this is not a pipe”, or Salvador Dalí’s *The Persistence of Memory* and its unnerving melting clocks.

‘I first read Éluard’s writings when I was a teenager,’ says Pépin. ‘At that time I liked him, but as I grew up, I experienced things in life and I had the feeling I understood his poetry much better. I don’t think he is a poet we can really understand when we are too young – we have to experience life.’



Simone Young, Renaud Capuçon, Camille Pépin and the Orchestre National de France after the world premiere of Pépin's Violin Concerto, April 2023. Source: Instagram.

‘I selected three poems by Éluard, and these poems structure the concerto and define its five movements,’ explains P  pin. ‘The idea of the concerto was to talk about love, but through the life of the poet. In 1946, his first wife died unexpectedly, and that’s the story of the second movement. After a mourning period, he meets his second wife and that’s the fourth movement.’

‘And the first, the third and the last movements are really short and slow, and they are inspired by the same poem – *Le Sommeil a pris ton empreinte* – which is about sleep, and how sleep has taken the colour of his lover’s eyes. It’s like a suspended moment in time. And I tried to find a different sound for each occurrence as its meaning evolves through the piece.’

Putting a new work out into the world is always slightly harrowing. Composing a new work for orchestra is especially nerve-racking, says P  pin, given that you never get to hear the full work until the first rehearsal.

‘We don’t have a whole orchestra at home to try things,’ says P  pin. ‘So the first rehearsal is actually the first time we hear it.’

‘I’m always afraid of it,’ she continues with a slightly traumatised laugh. ‘Each time I’m always afraid that the piece doesn’t sound the way I imagine. That is the worst fear of composers!’

With this concerto, though, P  pin was greatly comforted by working with Young and Capu  on, benefitting not only from their individual mastery but also their strong working relationship.

‘I composed this concerto especially for Renaud,’ she says. ‘What I appreciate the most in his violin playing is his sound. I think Renaud can be as soft as a leaf, but still very intense. I tried to explore all of this in the concerto.’

Simone Young is similarly enthusiastic about working with P  pin and Capu  on, though she reveals that her relationship with Renaud isn’t as long as people always think.

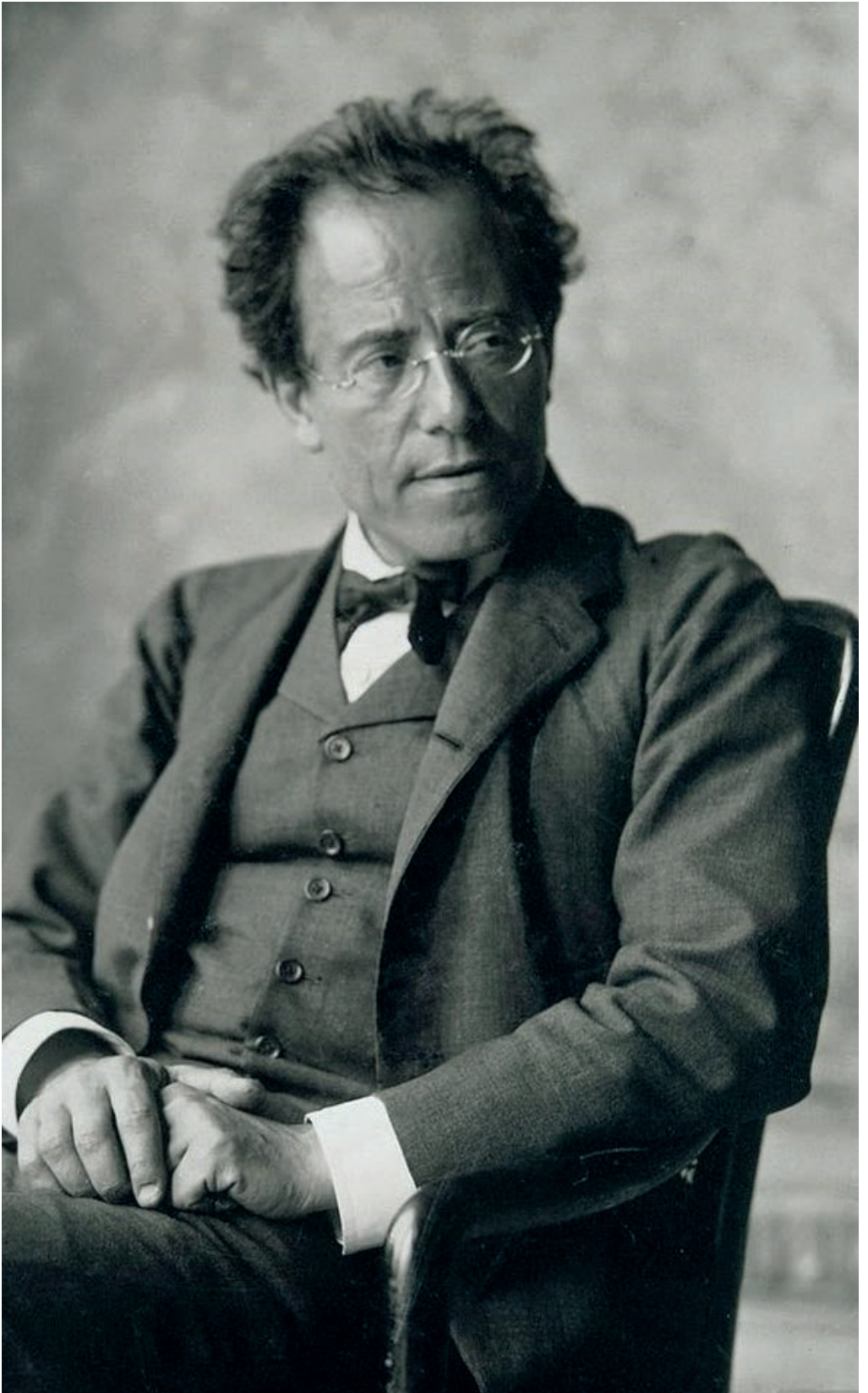
‘It feels like we have known each other for years,’ says Young. ‘Actually we haven’t – but we found a mutual musical language very, very quickly.’

‘Renaud is one of these musical polymaths. He plays, he works with composers on new works, he programs festivals. He’s one of these people with a brain that’s about this big,’ she says, raising her arms in a big circle around her head.

‘But the first time we worked together was for an insane program in Paris in July 2021. It was the Bastille Day concert which took place on the Champ de Mars, which is that beautiful field right in front of the Eiffel Tower.’

‘So having opened the summer with a bang in Paris, we’ve got Renaud here to open the season with a bang with Camille’s concerto, followed by Mahler’s Fifth Symphony. There’s a nice serendipity to the whole thing.’

‘It’s going to be a very special concert.’



Gustav Mahler in 1907. Photo by Moritz Nähr.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## GUSTAV MAHLER (1860-1911)

Gustav Mahler was born into a Jewish family in Bohemia. He was one of 12 children, five of whom died in infancy. Perhaps not surprisingly, an obsession with death seemed to mark both his life and his music, although it must be said such a rate of infant mortality was common enough in the 19th century. His parents quarrelled, and conflict may have become associated in his unconscious mind with the sounds of a brass band in a military camp near his childhood home. He was also indelibly affected by the Austrian folksongs which were sung to him. All these influences are reflected in the music Mahler composed: in the tragic character of much of it, in the funeral marches of the symphonies, the Songs on the Death of Children, in the brassy, military outbursts which often interrupt his most tense music. His first four symphonies and many of his songs are suffused with the world and often even the words of the German folk-poetry of the Youth's Magic Horn collection.

Mahler was trained in piano and composition in Vienna, where he attended classes by Bruckner, among others. His major career, however, was to be as a conductor – eventually perhaps the most celebrated and admired of his day. His early posts, which included Kassel, Prague, and Budapest, were mainly in opera theatres. A meteoric career led him to the musical directorship of the major house in Hamburg at age 31, and from there he was called to the directorship of the Vienna Court Opera in 1897. He became a convert to Catholicism to remove a barrier to this appointment.

Mahler held this position for a decade. The 'Mahler years' in Vienna are among the most famous in operatic history. An outstanding organiser and inspiring conductor, Mahler established and maintained the highest standards of artistic excellence, with superb ensemble and fidelity to the composers' intentions,

as well as imaginative staging. His work was not limited to the opera house: his experience as assistant to Arthur Nikisch in Leipzig bore fruit in his outstanding symphonic conducting, first with the Vienna Philharmonic, then, after his resignation from the Vienna Opera amidst controversy, as conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra as well as of the Metropolitan Opera, New York. His death in 1911 followed further conflict, this time with the conservative New York Philharmonic Trustees. He returned to Europe a broken and sick man, and died shortly thereafter of pneumonia.

Mahler was almost fanatically single-minded and determined in everything he did. The wonder is that his activity left any time for composing, yet by devoting his summers to writing music in his favourite retreats in the mountains, he managed to complete nine symphonies and a massive symphonic song-cycle, *The Song of the Earth*, and to sketch another symphony. In addition, he virtually invented the genre of the song accompanied by large orchestra, and left in it some of his most memorable creations, both inside and outside his symphonies. This music is on the most ambitious scale, staking a claim to be part of the great Austro-German musical succession from Haydn and Mozart through Schubert, Wagner and Bruckner.

Yet it is only in recent years that it has been universally accepted as such. The controversy which surrounded Mahler's person in his lifetime attached itself to his works after his death. His proclamation that his symphonies, like the world, contained everything, seemed at first to reflect only the self-indulgence of a spiritually confused man without a proper sense of artistic proportion. The idea of Mahler as combining tyrannous egocentricity with diffidence and artistic uncertainty was probably nurtured by the often misleading memoirs of his widow, born Alma Schindler.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

Her associations had put Mahler in contact with Vienna's artistic avant-garde, and after his death she was to be the companion of the architect Walter Gropius, of painter Oskar Kokoschka, and of novelist Franz Werfel.

Mahler's music, so demanding to perform and to listen to, because of its scale, duration and the resources required, was only kept alive by the dedication of his disciples, who included in Bruno Walter, Otto Klemperer and others some of the great conductors. Their dedication has been richly rewarded – a whole new post-World War II public has discovered Mahler as the most eloquent and challenging voice of the rich if decaying last years of Romanticism. They found in him, too, as did prescient admirers like Arnold Schoenberg and Alban Berg, much of the emerging voice of the music of the 20th century.

© David Garrett

## Symphony No.5 (1901-1902)

When the Fifth Symphony had its first public performance in Cologne in 1904, Mahler wrote, 'The Fifth is an accursed work. No one understands it'.

That judgment was not borne out by history, of course. The Fifth is one of the most-played of Mahler's works – certainly the most popular of his purely instrumental symphonies. Musicologist Michael Kennedy has called it 'Mahler's *Eroica*', meaning that, like Beethoven's Third Symphony, the work charts a simple but compelling trajectory from tragedy, through confused alarms of struggle and flight, to joy.

Mahler, then the Director of the Vienna Court Opera, only had time to compose during his summer holidays, The Fifth was written during the summer of 1902 at a lakeside holiday retreat. He worked in a hut in the woods, while his new bride Alma, herself a talented composer, made fair copies of the material that Gustav produced, and offered various bits of advice on the scoring and the use of a Brucknerian brass 'chorale' as the climax of the final movement.

The Fifth appeared at a critical time in Mahler's life; it is also a transitional piece within his output. His first four symphonies, for instance, (three of which include a vocal component) are all in some way programmatic – meaning that they have an overarching narrative or plot that determines the structure – and all re-use music from Mahler's song-settings of poetry from the famous collection of German folk stories *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. The Fifth also makes some use of self-quotation, but the overall form of the piece derives from its own internal architecture, which has a dual aspect. The piece falls into five movements, but these are grouped so as to form three larger parts.



Part I is the opening funeral march and the stormy, fast movement that follows. The March, in the relatively unusual key of C# minor, begins with the almost-Beethovenian trumpet-fanfare (derived from the Fourth Symphony), whose rhythm pervades these first two movements. The theme of the March itself is derived from a *Wunderhorn* song, 'Der Tambour'sell' (The Drummer Boy) where an imprisoned drummer boy is being taken from his cell to be executed. The march contains two contrasting sections, or trios. The great Marxist philosopher Theodor W Adorno noted that where we might expect a lyrical response to the formal grief of the march, the first trio 'gesticulates [and] raises a shriek of horror at something worse than death.' He goes on to say it evokes historical atrocities where 'the gestures of the hetman [a high-ranking Cossack], inciting to murder, are confused with the wails of the victims'. After this 'pogrom music', as Adorno calls it, the March returns in its restrained formality, leading to a quotation from Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* from flute, clarinet and violins. The line it references is 'I bless the light that gladdens all the world' and with this intimation of hope, the second trio begins. This is scored for strings only, and while its theme was first given in the brass in the first trio, here the mood is of understated nostalgia. Mahler gradually brings in other instruments, starting with the horn, and builds a shattering climax before a final dissipation of the trumpet-call, echoed by flute.

The 'stormy' second movement follows straight away, and, threaded through with trumpet calls and demonic laughter, develops the feeling of the anguished first trio. There is what Kennedy describes as a 'consoling' theme passed from clarinets and cellos to horns, and a D major climax that looks forward to the more satisfying resolution of the final movement.

The Scherzo constitutes Part II of the symphony. It was this movement that gave the composer pause. He wrote that 'each note is endowed with supreme life and everything in it revolves as though in a whirlwind or the tail of a comet' but, in a letter to his wife Alma written after the first rehearsal in Cologne, he wondered what conductors would say to 'this primeval music, this foaming raging, roaring sea of sound, to these dancing stars, to these breath-taking iridescent and flashing breakers?' It is certainly one of the most colourful pieces of orchestration in all of Mahler's works, with its demanding solo part for the horn and a glittering array of sounds. The outer sections are a kind of hyper-Viennese dance music, with a contrastingly introspective central trio featuring horn and strings.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

Nothing could be further from the exuberance of the Scherzo than the celebrated *Adagietto* with which Part III begins. After the flashy, kaleidoscopic scoring of the former, Mahler now writes for harp and strings only, echoing the yearning second trio from the first movement. Once again, the thematic material refers to, while not literally quoting, an extant song: 'Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen' (I am lost to the world), a setting of a poem by Friedrich Rückert, author of the *Kindertotenlieder* poems. Mahler's genius here is to conjure a wealth of orchestral sonorities from strings alone, and to depict a state of unfulfillable longing – a staple of much late Romantic art. But this intense feeling is ameliorated by humour as soon as the Rondo-finale starts. After a single-note horn-call, the bassoon announces a motif drawn from Mahler's setting of the *Wunderhorn* song 'Lob des hohen Verstandes' (In praise of higher understanding), a folk-tale in which a cuckoo and a nightingale enter a singing contest; a donkey, because of his big ears, is the judge. As Kennedy puts it 'Mahler serves notice that he is about to give a display of academic prowess, fugue and all.' And so he does, with evident great enjoyment in his own facility, in a long but constantly engaging movement. Mahler's mastery of technique is always evident, and it is surely significant that he brings back the melody from the *Adagietto*, now by no means lost to the world but fully engaged with it, and concludes with a fully realised version of the climatic 'chorale' from the end of the second movement.

The grief and terror of Part I, and the searing anguish of the *Adagietto* are here well and truly banished by energy and joy. What's not to understand?

Mahler's Fifth Symphony is scored for four flutes (two doubling piccolo), three oboes (one doubling English horn), three clarinets (one doubling E flat clarinet and bass clarinet), three bassoons and contrabassoon; seven horns, four trumpets, three trombones and tuba; timpani and four percussion; harp and strings.

The work was premiered on 18 October 1904 at Gürzenich Hall in Köln, Germany, with the composer conducting the Gürzenich-Orchester Köln.

The Sydney Symphony was the first major Australian orchestra to perform this work, with conductor Georg Schnéevoigt on 5 August 1937. The Orchestra most recently performed the work under former Chief Conductor David Robertson in 2018; other notable performances include those led by Vladimir Ashkenazy (2013 & 2010); Gianluigi Gelmetti (2004), Stuart Challender (1998), Gunther Herbig (1997), Lorin Maazel (1997), Edo de Waart (1992), Charles Mackerras (1983), Willem van Otterloo (1976), Moshe Atzmon (1970) and Dean Dixon (1967).

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# FAREWELL RON PRUSSING



**Our long-serving Principal Trombone, Ron Prussing, is retiring after more than 50 years of playing with the Sydney Symphony. Here he talks to Editorial Manager Hugh Robertson about his lifetime of memories with the Orchestra.**

When the final note of Mahler's Fifth Symphony sounds on 2 March 2024, it will bring to an end the career of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Principal Trombone, Ron Prussing, who is retiring after 44 years as a permanent member of the Orchestra.

Ron officially joined the Orchestra as our first-ever Associate Principal Trombone in 1980, but had played with us casually for many years before that. His first appearance with the Orchestra came in 1970 while he was still a student at the Conservatorium High School – the Orchestra's second trombone had fallen ill, and Ron was called up to rehearse Tchaikovsky's *Romeo & Juliet* under the baton of our then-Chief Conductor Moshe Atzmon.

'I walked in and I was so nervous that I actually knocked over the music stand of the Bass Trombone,' Ron recalls with a laugh. 'We ultimately became very good friends, but he remembered that first meeting vividly.'

Ron also performed at perhaps the biggest night in Sydney's music history – the opening of the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall on 29 September 1973, when Charles Mackerras conducted an all-Wagner program featuring Swedish soprano Birgit Nilsson.

'I was very young, but I just had this incredible sense that something of an occasion was going to happen, something very significant. We were in this new spectacular building and it had caught the attention of everybody around the world.

There was an anticipation that this was going to lead us into a new, uncharted era. We weren't quite sure what was going to happen. But having a world class venue added to the expectations and the aspirations of the orchestra at that time.'

Unsurprisingly, after half a century spent playing with the Orchestra, Ron is a walking archive of names, performances and personality.

When asked which colleagues he most looked up to, Ron recalls some of the great names in the Orchestra's history.

“Don Hazelwood [First performance 1952, Concertmaster, 1965-1988] was a legendary leader of the orchestra,’ says Ron. ‘A magnificent man, a fine player, always consistent, a real leader, always a good, mature conduit between conductor and orchestra players.’

‘Guy Henderson [Oboe, 1967-1998] was a very fine oboe player and leader of the wind section. Donald Westlake [Clarinet, 1953-56 and again 1960-1978], the father of the great Australian composer Nigel, was a very, very fine clarinet player.

‘Clarry [Clarence] Mellor [Horn 1948-1995] was always consistent, and a very dedicated orchestral musician and member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. John Robertson [Trumpet, 1947-1973] became a real legend. He had a massive technique, a wonderful sound and was a real character too.’

‘There have been lots of wonderful musicians and characters. I've said to many people in recent times that I believe the Orchestra stands on the shoulders of giants.’

Ron has a similarly long memory of our Chief Conductors, too, having performed with all but three of the fourteen to hold that post.

‘The first Chief Conductor that I worked with was Moshe Atzmon, but he wasn't here very long,’ he recalls. ‘Then Willem van Otterloo came. The Orchestra really respected him very, very much. He had terrific knowledge of the repertoire and was a very mature musician. I remember him with a great deal of fondness, actually.

‘I was engaged permanently under the baton of Louis Fremaux, so I was always thankful that he said, ‘yes, I want that guy as our Principal Trombone’.

‘I think that Edo de Waart had an enormous influence on the orchestra. He demanded a standard and turned up the heat in the kitchen. He expected a lot, and brought the orchestra, I believe, right into the twentieth century.

‘And I'm very, very thrilled with our present Chief Conductor Simone Young. I think she's a world class conductor, and she's got a fine mind. She's an incredible musician and I think we're going to launch into even bigger and better things.’

Ron, from all of us at the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, congratulations on your extraordinary career.



The opening of the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall on 29 September 1973, conducted by Charles Mackerras.

# THANK YOU

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