

Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre  
30 May 2025



# ORCHESTRAL MAGIC

WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Presenting Partners



Principal Partner



# 2025 REGIONAL TOUR

BATHURST MEMORIAL ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

Friday 30 May, 11am

# ORCHESTRAL MAGIC WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

A SYDNEY SYMPHONY SCHOOLS CONCERT

**BENJAMIN NORTHEY** conductor

**TIMOTHY CONSTABLE** presenter

**Rhythmic Acknowledgment of Country** (2023)

**FELIX MENDELSSOHN** (1809–1847)

***A Midsummer Night's Dream Overture, Op.21*** (1826)

**MANUEL DE FALLA** (1876–1946)

***The Three-Cornered Hat: Suite No.1*** (1919)

i. Introduction & Fandango

**MAURICE RAVEL** (1875–1937)

***Mother Goose: Suite*** (1910)

ii. *Tom Thumb*

iii. *Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodas*

**EDVARD GRIEG** (1843–1907)

***Peer Gynt, Suite No.1, Op.46*** (1888)

iv. *In the Hall of the Mountain King*

## Estimated durations

Acknowledgment – 4 minutes

Mendelssohn – 11 minutes

Falla – 4 minutes

Ravel – 6 minutes

Grieg – 3 minutes

The concert will run for  
approximately 50 minutes

Presenting Partners



ELECTRICAL  
& DATA  
SUPPLIERS



ROYAL  
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# YOUR CONCERT AT A GLANCE

## **Rhythmic Acknowledgment of Country** (2023)

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.

It was developed as a collaboration between the musicians of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Adam Manning, a Kamilaroi man and musician, artist, producer/researcher and educator at the University of Newcastle, NSW.



Adam Manning

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## **FELIX MENDELSSOHN** (1809–1847)

### ***A Midsummer Night's Dream Overture, Op.21*** (1826)

The teenaged Mendelssohn responded to Shakespeare's madcap comedy of enchanted fairies and mortals in a dark wood with music of extremes – delicate shimmering gives way to the pomposity of the Athenian nobility, and you can even hear the braying of an ass.



Mendelssohn, painted by James Warren Childe in 1839.

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## **MANUEL DE FALLA** (1876–1946)

### ***The Three-Cornered Hat: Suite No.1*** (1919)

Falla's 'ballet with songs', in which a miller and his wife outwit a lecherous magistrate, is unmistakably Spanish in sound, though premiered in London with choreography by the Russian Léonide Massine.



Manuel de Falla

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## **MAURICE RAVEL** (1875-1937)

### ***Mother Goose: Suite*** (1910)

Ravel's Suite was originally a piano duo for two gifted children, and depicts some well-known fairy tales in music.



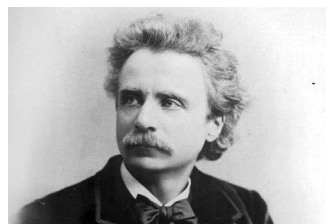
Maurice Ravel in 1905

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## **EDVARD GRIEG** (1843–1907)

### ***Peer Gynt, Suite No.1, Op.46*** (1888)

Grieg is a hero in his native Norway for incorporating their own folk tales into music. Originally written as the soundtrack for a play by the famous Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, *Peer Gynt* – and in particular *In the Hall of the Mountain King* – has become Grieg's most famous piece.



Edvard Grieg in 1888

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## RHYTHMIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

The Rhythmic Acknowledgment of Country is a powerful and creative tribute to the Traditional Custodians of the land. Performed immediately after the Orchestra's tuning, this unique acknowledgment connects performers and audiences to the First Nations rhythms of the Sydney Basin, first documented in the 1800s.

Led by First Nations percussionist and University of Newcastle lecturer Adam Manning, this rhythmic journey reimagines, revives, and improvises upon these ancient patterns to foster a deep connection to Country. Manning has been performing the Rhythmic Acknowledgment of Country for many years and has developed the concept in collaboration with numerous Elders, including Uncle Ray Kelly Snr.

As a unifying conclusion, all onstage members will perform clapsticks together at the end of the Acknowledgment, symbolising shared respect, unity, and a collective recognition of the enduring cultural heritage of the Traditional Custodians.

By integrating this Acknowledgment into an orchestral setting, the performance amplifies its cultural and artistic significance, weaving rhythm into a powerful narrative that bridges the past and present and celebrates the enduring connection between people and Country.



Adam Manning

## ABOUT MENDELSSOHN'S *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* OVERTURE

'I have grown accustomed to composing in our garden...' wrote the 16-year-old Mendelssohn to his sister Fanny in 1826. 'Today or tomorrow I am going to dream there *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This is, however, an enormous audacity...'

From Mendelssohn's own dream emerged a concert overture that captured all the magic of the siblings' 'favourite among old Will's beloved plays'. Shakespeare's plays formed a regular part of the Mendelssohns' family life; they read them in English as well as in German, frequently dividing the parts between themselves for impromptu presentations. Yet for all the overture's dreamlike deftness, elfin humour and fluent orchestration - the work of a 'finished master', albeit a young and audacious one - its composition followed Mendelssohn's habit of scrupulous self-criticism and painstaking revision.

Adolf Bernhard Marx (assuming the role of musical mentor) had complained of the first draft that, beyond the dance of the elves with its introductory chords he 'could perceive no *Midsummer Night's Dream* in it'. Mendelssohn retained the famous opening - four sustained and 'gleaming' chords in the woodwind - and the feathery, whispering fairy music of the violins, and was persuaded, too, not to dispense with the comical braying of the transformed Bottom. Later, he declared roguishly of this passage that, while there was nothing in his overture 'that Beethoven did not have and practise', perhaps he had broken new ground in using the ophicleide (the coarse-toned 'chromatic bullock', its part covered nowadays by the more refined tuba).

## ABOUT THE MUSIC



Mendelssohn, painted by James Warren Childe in 1839.

To these were added the lyrical wanderings of the mortal lovers, the ‘rumbustious representation of the rustics’, and the horns of Theseus’ hunting party. Yet, while evoking the whimsy and confusion of the drama, the musical ideas neatly obey the requirements of sonata form. The central section is a fanciful development of the fairy music, and the fairies have the last word (as in the play) with the return of the four woodwind chords of the opening.

**Adapted from a note by Yvonne Frindle © 1998**

### ABOUT FALLA’S *THREE-CORNERED HAT*

In 1907 Falla had left his native Spain in some frustration. Two years before, he had won a prize for his opera *La vida breve* (‘Life is short’), a work in which he established the principles of working with distinctly Spanish sounds and forms; but when the promised production failed to eventuate, the composer left for Paris.

Sergei Diaghilev, impresario of the Ballets Russes, was keen to add Falla to a stable of composers that included Stravinsky and Ravel and suggested a ballet of *El corregidor y la molinera* (‘The Magistrate and the Miller’s Wife’), a novel by Pedro de Alarcón. The war (and the Russian revolution, which meant that Diaghilev was forbidden to enter Spain) intervened, but by way of a ‘dry run’ Falla produced a pantomime of the story for performance in Madrid. When Diaghilev finally saw the pantomime he suggested several major revisions out of which the ‘ballet with songs’ *El sombrero de tres picos* (‘The Three-Cornered Hat’) was born. The new work, which was premiered in London in 1919, had sets by Pablo Picasso and choreography by Léonide Massine.

Alarcón’s story tells of an ugly miller and his beautiful wife who are devoted to each other. In Act 1, which more or less corresponds to the first of the suites, a distant song warns that all women should lock their door. The suite itself begins with an evocation of afternoon with its shrill bird calls. The local magistrate passes in a procession past the mill, and returns shortly thereafter to try and seduce the miller’s wife. She dances a provocative *fandango*, colluding with her husband to lead the magistrate on and humiliate him, and then teases him with a bunch of grapes. The magistrate realises that he is being set up and leaves angrily. (The Magistrate’s Dance in Suite No.1 actually occurs in Act 2.)

**Gordon Kerry © 2005**



# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## ABOUT RAVEL'S *MOTHER GOOSE* SUITE

In some exasperation, Ravel once asked a friend, 'Doesn't it ever occur to those people that I can be "artificial" by nature?' He was responding to the criticism that his music was more interested in technique than expression. There is some truth in the charge: Stravinsky described him – affectionately – as the 'Swiss watchmaker of music', and Ravel's stated aim was indeed 'technical perfection'. In fact, his love of mechanical intricacy led Ravel to collect various automata and other small machines, and he dreamed, as he put it in a 1933 article, of 'Finding Tunes in Factories'. Many of his pieces are exquisite simulacra of earlier or other forms and styles – Renaissance dances, Spanish music, jazz, or the music of the French Baroque.

Scandalously, between 1900 and 1905 Ravel failed several times to secure the prestigious award for composers, the Prix de Rome, ostensibly because of musical 'errors' and despite his already having established himself as a major new voice. In 1909, partly in response to his outsider status, he helped to found the Société Musicale Indépendante – independent, that is, of the Parisian musical and academic establishment – and its inaugural concert saw the premiere of the first version, for piano duo, of the *Ma Mère l'oye* (Mother Goose) Suite.

Ravel was born in south-western France to a Basque mother and Swiss father but spent his entire life in Paris. Like Tchaikovsky, he saw a strong connection between childhood and enchantment. In his opera *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, for instance, a destructive child learns the value of compassion when furniture, trees and animals in the garden all come magically to life. The evocation of 'the poetry of childhood' in the original piano duo version of *Mother Goose* led Ravel to 'simplify my style and refine my means of expression' – or so he said. Certainly we can hear echoes of the deceptively simple piano music of Erik Satie, whose music Ravel championed.



Maurice Ravel in 1905

*Mother Goose* began life as the 'Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty' for piano, four hands. Ravel composed it for Mimie and Jean Godebski (aged six and seven respectively), to whose parents he had dedicated his Sonatine for piano. Ravel then composed four more *pièces enfantines*, depicting characters from the fairy-tales anthologised by three 17th century authors: Charles Perrault ('Sleeping Beauty' and 'Tom Thumb'), the Baroness d'Aulnoy ('Laidronette') and the Prince of Beaumont ('Beauty and the Beast'). 'Tom Thumb' is shown at the moment where he realises that he is lost; the breadcrumb trail he left has been eaten by the birds. 'Laidronette' ('little ugly girl') is represented in music where glinting pentatonic ('black-note') figures give the piece its 'oriental' flavour.

Having completed his major ballet *Daphnis et Chloé* in 1912, Ravel revisited *Mother Goose* to make it the basis for a ballet score in which the movements, in rearranged order and with new prelude and interludes, represent the Sleeping Beauty's enchantment, dreams, and her awakening by Prince Charming.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

**EDVARD GRIEG (1843–1907)**

***Peer Gynt, Suite No.1, Op.46 (1888)***

*iv. In the Hall of the Mountain King*

In Henrik Ibsen's play, written in 1867 in Norway, Peer Gynt is a young man whose father has abandoned him and his mother to a life of poverty. Peer himself is no saint – he elopes with a bride, Ingrid, on her wedding night and then abandons her. He spurns the one woman who loves him, and runs away from his home to have a series of adventures, in which he usually comes off second best.

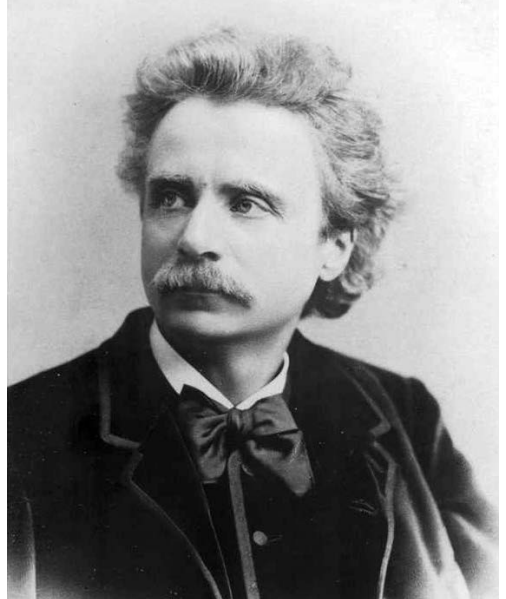
When he first leaves Ingrid, Peer heads for the mountains when he meets a woman dressed in green. She is the daughter of the Mountain King who rules over a kingdom of trolls, and she takes Peer there, hoping to marry him.

Trolls come in many shapes and sizes – some look human, and some are grotesquely ugly – but they are usually nasty, as Peer finds out.

Grieg's music for 'The Hall of the Mountain King' consists of the simplest of melodies, alternating between two keys, and thrown off balance by sharply-accented notes. The piece begins very, very softly, as if tiptoeing in the dark, but as the tune repeats itself it gets louder and louder and faster and faster. You can imagine the trolls advancing on Peer, shouting 'kill him, kill him' and then making graphic suggestions of how to go about it.

In the play he saved by the sound of church bells and escapes to continue his travels and adventures.

**Gordon Kerry © 2025**



Edvard Grieg in 1888

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **BENJAMIN NORTHEY** conductor

Australian conductor Benjamin Northey is the Chief Conductor of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, Conductor in Residence of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Principal Conductor, Artistic Advisor – Learning and Engagement of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. From 2019-2023 he was the Principal Conductor in Residence of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, having previously held the posts of Associate Conductor (2010-2019), Resident Guest Conductor of the Australia Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra (2002-2006) and Principal Guest Conductor of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra (2007-2010).

As of 2025 he is the Artistic Director of the Australian Conducting Academy, a national training program for Australian and New Zealand conductors.

Northey studied conducting at Finland's Sibelius Academy with Professors Leif Segerstam and Atso Almila after being accepted as the highest placed applicant in 2002. He completed his studies at the Stockholm Royal College of Music with Jorma Panula in 2006 before returning home to Australia, where he has become one of the most sought-after conductors in the Asia-Pacific region.

He previously studied conducting with John Hopkins OBE at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, graduating with a Master's degree in 2002. In 2009/10 he was invited as one of three conductors worldwide to participate in the Allianz International Conductor's Academy with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Philharmonia Orchestra, where he was mentored by Vladimir Jurowsky and Christof von Dohnányi.

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

His international appearances include concerts with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, the Hong Kong

Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, the Malaysian Philharmonic and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Northey has collaborated with a broad range of leading artists including Pinchas Zukerman, Maxim Vengerov, Anne-Sofie von Otter, Julian Rachlin, Karen Gomyo, Piers Lane, Alban Gerhardt, Johannes Moser, William Barton, Lu Siquing, Amy Dickson, Slava Grigoryan, Marc-André Hamelin, James Morrison, Kurt Elling, Archie Roach, Ben Folds, Nick Cave & Warren Ellis, Paul Grabowsky, Tim Minchin, kd Lang, Patti Austin, Kate Miller-Heidke, Megan Washington, Barry Humphries, Meow Meow and Tori Amos.

Northey is highly active in the performance and recording of new Australian orchestral music, having premiered dozens of major new works by Australian composers. He has also been active in music education and training through concerts and workshops for the Melbourne, West Australian and Sydney Youth Orchestras, the Australian National Academy of Music, the Australian Youth Orchestra, the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and Monash University.

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

In 2025, he conducts the Melbourne, Sydney, Queensland, Tasmanian and Christchurch Symphony Orchestras and the Hong Kong Philharmonic.



Photo by Laura Manariti



# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **TIMOTHY CONSTABLE** presenter

Timothy Constable is an award-winning percussionist and composer, and has been a member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra since 2014. A compelling, creative and sensitive performer, he has performed as concerto and chamber music soloist at most of the Australian classical music festivals, as well as in New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, Poland, UK, Ireland, Senegal, USA, China, Korea, Nepal and South-East Asia.

He was the artistic director of Synergy Percussion between 2009 and 2017, during which time the group undertook some of its most ambitious work, including the 40th anniversary season in 2014, and extensive collaboration with renowned ensemble Noreum Machi (South Korea), commissions of music by Steve Reich and Anthony Pateras, several recordings and the video project 40under40.

His commissions include compositions for Omer Backley-Astrachan (Maholohet Festival, Israel) and Orava String Quartet (Australian Festival of Chamber Music), as well as Cinemusica (Australian Chamber Orchestra), Ordinary Time and Spirals (Southern Cross Soloists), and numerous works for Noreum Machi, Synergy Percussion and Taikoz. Contemporary dance score credits include Meryl Tankard, Shaun Parker, Legs on the Wall and Dance Makers Collective.

He is committed to both new and ancient music, with a large body of world and Australasian premieres to his name, including Steve Reich's Mallet Quartet, György Ligeti's *Síppal, Dobbal, Nádihegedűvel* (With Pipes, Drums and Fiddles), Anthony Pateras' *Beauty Will Be Amnesiac Or Will Not Be At All* and *Flesh and Ghost*, and music by Simon Holt, Lisa Lim, Arvo Pärt and Gerard Brophy among others. In the realm of ancient music, he has studied with Senegalese master drummer Aly N'Dyaye Rose and Korean Jangoo with Kim Yeong-Taek and Kim Chong-Hee.

Timothy Constable is a Freedman music fellow, an Elizabethan Theatre Trust scholar, a university medallist of Newcastle University, and a graduate of the Royal College of Music in Stockholm.



Photo by Jez Smith

# 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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Sophie Cole  
Sercan Danis  
Georges Lentz  
Emily Long  
Léone Ziegler  
Natalie Mavridis<sup>†</sup>

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**Victoria Bihun**  
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Benjamin Li  
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Emily Qin<sup>°</sup>

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Timothy Constable

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