



4-7 June 2025

STEPHEN HOUGH

PERFORMS MENDELSSOHN

«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

FIRST VIOLINS

Andrew Haveron
Concertmaster
Harry Bennetts
Associate Concertmaster
Alexandra Osborne
Associate Concertmaster
Lerida Delbridge
Assistant Concertmaster
Sun Yi
Associate Concertmaster
Emeritus
Jennifer Booth
Sophie Cole
Sercan Danis
Claire Herrick
Georges Lentz
Emily Long
Alexandra Mitchell
Alexander Norton
Léone Ziegler

SECOND VIOLINS

Marina Marsden
Principal
Emma Jezek
Acting Associate Principal
Victoria Bihun
Acting Assistant Principal
Rebecca Gill
Emma Hayes
Shuti Huang
Nicole Masters
Robert Smith
Maja Verunica
Riikka Sintonen°
Liam Pilgrim†

VIOLAS

Dor Sperber*
Guest Principal
Tobias Breider
Principal
Richard Waters°
Principal
Justin Williams
Assistant Principal
Anne-Louise Comerford
Associate Principal
Emeritus
Sandro Costantino
Rosemary Curtin
Stuart Johnson
Felicity Tsai
Amanda Verner

CELLOS

Catherine Hewgill
Principal
Leah Lynn
Assistant Principal
Kristy Conrau
Fenella Gill
Timothy Nankervis
Elizabeth Neville
Adrian Wallis
Minah Choe*

DOUBLE BASSES

Kees Boersma
Principal
Alex Henery
Principal
David Campbell
Steven Larson
Jaan Pallandi
Benjamin Ward

FLUTES

Emma Sholl
Acting Principal
Carolyn Harris

OBOES

Shefali Pryor
Principal
Alexandre Oguey
Principal
Cor Anglais

CLARINETS

Olli Leppäniemi
Principal
Christopher Tingay

BASSOONS

Todd Gibson-Cornish
Principal
Matthew Wilkie
Principal
Emeritus
Laura Brown*
Guest Principal
Contrabassoon

HORNS

Ruben Buils Garcia*
Guest Principal
Euan Harvey
Acting Principal
Marnie Sebire
Rachel Silver
Bryn Arnold†

TRUMPETS

David Elton
Principal
Cécile Glémot

TROMBONES

Scott Kinmont
Acting Principal
Nick Byrne
Christopher Harris
Principal
Bass Trombone

TIMPANI

Mark Robinson
Acting Principal
Section Percussion

Bold *Principal*
* Guest Musician
° Contract Musician
† Sydney Symphony Fellow

2025 CONCERT SEASON

EMIRATES MASTERS SERIES

Wednesday 4 June, 8pm

Friday 6 June, 8pm

Saturday 7 June, 8pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

EMIRATES THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

Thursday 5 June, 1.30pm

STEPHEN HOUGH PERFORMS MENDELSSOHN

CAPTIVATING MASTERPIECES

DONALD RUNNICLES conductor

STEPHEN HOUGH piano

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

The Hebrides, Op.26 ('Fingal's Cave') (1830)

MENDELSSOHN

Piano Concerto No.1 in G minor, Op.25 (1831)

i. Molto allegro con fuoco

ii. Andante

iii. Presto – Molto allegro e vivace

INTERVAL

DETLEV GLANERT (born 1960)

Vexierbild: Kontrafaktur mit Brahms

(Hidden Image: Contrafactum with Brahms) (2023)

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

Symphony No.3 in F major, Op.90 (1883)

i. Allegro con brio

ii. Andante

iii. Poco allegretto

iv. Allegro

Pre-concert talk

By Yvonne Frindle in the
Northern Foyer at 7.15pm
(12.45 pm Thursday)

Estimated durations

Overture – 12 minutes

Concerto – 23 minutes

Interval – 20 minutes

Glanert – 12 minutes

Brahms – 35 minutes

The concert will run for
approximately 1 hour and
50 minutes

Cover image

Stephen Hough performing
with the Sydney Symphony
Orchestra in 2022

Photo by Craig Abercrombie

Principal Partner



WELCOME

Welcome to **Stephen Hough performs Mendelssohn**, a concert which celebrates deep musical and personal connections.

This is a milestone year for our Australian operations as we've just celebrated 25 years of service to Sydney. Together with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, we have created one of the most significant and enduring relationships in Australia's performing arts, one we all continue to be immensely proud of.

The incomparable pianist Stephen Hough has been a regular guest of the Orchestra since his early career. In this concert he is joined by his long-time friend and collaborator Sir Donald Runnicles, Principal Guest Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Together they will immerse you in the beauty of Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1.

As the Presenter of this Masters Series, Emirates proudly champions exceptional local and international talent such as Sir Stephen Hough, with a special focus on the Sydney Symphony's celebrated Chief Conductor, Simone Young AM.

Partly inspired by the wild Scottish coastline, this concert is a journey into dramatic and romantic worlds. It is a wonderful illustration of our mutual commitment to excellence at the very highest level.

For over 22 years, our partnership with the Orchestra has been underpinned by a shared vision: to create unforgettable journeys and remarkable experiences, like this concert.

I do hope you enjoy it.



Barry Brown
Divisional Vice President for Australasia
Emirates



YOUR CONCERT AT A GLANCE

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)
The Hebrides, Op.26 ('Fingal's Cave') (1830)

On a visit to Scotland in 1829, Mendelssohn saw Fingal's Cave on the Isle of Staffa. He noted down the theme of the piece, a hypnotically repeated figure like gentle waves, later crafting a short tone poem that reflects sky and sea and the grandeur of the rock formation.

It was composed in 1830 and revised in 1832, the year that saw Charles Darwin arrive in South America, independence granted to Greece, and the foundation of the Saving Bank of NSW.

Contemporary music included Berlioz's *Lélio*, Chopin's Op.7 Mazurkas and Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'amore*.

Piano Concerto No.1 in G minor, Op.25 (1831)

Mendelssohn's first piano concerto dates from around the same time, its three classically-shaped movements written down in three days. It premiered in 1831, the year that saw the brief appearance of Graham Island in the Mediterranean, the Bosnian Uprising, and the first edition of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Contemporary music included Schumann's *Papillons*, Czerny's Tenth Piano Sonata and Bellini's *Norma*.



Mendelssohn, painted by James Warren Childe in 1839.

DETLEV GLANERT (born 1960)
Vexierbild: Kontrafaktur mit Brahms
(Hidden Image: Contrafactum with Brahms) (2023)
AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

This short work, whose title means 'hidden picture' or 'image,' is one of several in which German composer Detlev Glanert pays homage to Brahms, in this case, using reminiscences and suggestions of the latter's Third Symphony to create a unique but familiar atmosphere.

It was composed in 2023.



Photo by Bettina Stoess

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)
Symphony No.3 in F major, Op.90 (1883)

Brahms' Third Symphony is in the classical four-movement layout and was written with uncharacteristic ease and speed. It is thought to have been partly a gesture of reconciliation with Brahms' estranged friend and duo partner, the violinist Joseph Joachim.

It was composed in 1883, the year that saw the eruption of Krakatoa, the liquification of oxygen and the meeting of NSW and Victoria rail lines at Albury.

Contemporary music included Chabrier's *España*, Dvořák's Piano Trio No.3 and Johann Strauss II's *A Night in Venice*.



Brahms in the 1880s.
Photo by Hanfstaengl of Frankfurt.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DONALD RUNNICLES conductor

Over the course of a career spanning 45 years, Sir Donald Runnicles has built his reputation on enduring relationships with several of the most significant opera companies and orchestras, and is especially celebrated for his interpretations of Romantic and post-Romantic symphonic and opera repertoire which are core to his musical identity. He is the music director of the Deutsche Oper Berlin (since 2009) and the Grand Teton Music Festival (since 2005) and has held chief artistic leadership roles at the San Francisco Opera (1992–2008), BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (2009–2016), and the Orchestra of St. Luke's (2001–2007). Sir Donald was also Principal Guest Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for more than two decades (2001–2023), and he is the Principal Guest Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (since 2019). In February 2024, Runnicles was appointed as Chief Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic, beginning in the 25/26 season.

Maestro Runnicles kicks off his 24/25 season with a 70th birthday celebration concert at the Edinburgh International Festival conducting the BBC Scottish Symphony in a program of Mahler and Bruckner, after which he opens the Dresden Philharmonic's season in his first concerts as Chief Conductor Designate, returning two more times over the course of the season. At the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Runnicles concludes his Strauss cycle in collaboration with director Tobias Kratzer with a new production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, alongside *Arabella* and *Intermezzo*, as well as revival performances of Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg*, Puccini's *La bohème*, Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, Verdi's *Don Carlo*, and a symphony concert with the DOB as part of Musikfest Berlin. In North America, he makes guest appearances with the Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, Houston and Pittsburgh symphony orchestras. He also returns twice to the Sydney Symphony.

Runnicles spends his summers at the Grand Teton Music Festival in Jackson, Wyoming. This eight-week festival of symphonic and chamber music, five of which are conducted by Runnicles as music director, takes place amid the breathtaking beauty of Grand Teton National Park. Summer 2024 GTMF highlights

included a semi-staged *The Magic Flute*, concerts with Augustin Hadelich and Yo-Yo Ma, and fifth symphonies by Mahler and Vaughan Williams.

His extensive discography includes recordings of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Britten's *Billy Budd*, Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* and Aribert Reimann's *L'invisible*. His recording of Wagner arias with Jonas Kaufmann and the Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper Berlin won the 2013 *Gramophone* prize for Best Vocal Recording, and his recording of Janáček's *Jenůfa* with the Orchestra and Chorus of the Deutsche Oper Berlin was nominated for a 2016 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording.

Sir Donald Runnicles was born and raised in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was appointed OBE in 2004 and was made a Knight Bachelor in 2020. He holds honorary degrees from the University of Edinburgh, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.



Photo by Simon Pauly

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

STEPHEN HOUGH piano

Named by *The Economist* as one of Twenty Living Polymaths, Sir Stephen Hough combines a distinguished career of a concert pianist with those of a composer and writer. In recognition of his contribution to cultural life, he became the first classical performer to be given a MacArthur Fellowship, and was awarded a Knighthood for Services to Music in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2022.

In a career spanning over 40 years, Stephen Hough has played regularly with most of the world's leading orchestras, including televised and filmed appearances with the Berlin, London, China, Seoul and New York Philharmonic Orchestras, and the Concertgebouw, Budapest Festival and the NHK Symphony Orchestras. He has been a regular guest of recital series and festivals including Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium, London's Royal Festival Hall, Salzburg, Verbier, La Roque-d'Anthéron, Aspen, Tanglewood, Aldeburgh and Edinburgh.

He begins his 2024/25 concert season with his 30th appearance at the BBC Proms, performing at Last Night of the Proms to a live audience of 6,000 and televised audience of 3.5 million. Over the course of the following 12 months Hough performs over 80 concerts on four continents, opening Philharmonia Orchestra's season at the Royal Festival Hall, performances with the Cleveland Orchestra, performing a solo recital at Barbican Centre and giving the world premiere of his Willa Cather-inspired Piano Quintet at Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall. Following the 2024 world premiere of his own Piano Concerto (*The World of Yesterday*), named after Stefan Zweig's memoir, Hough brings the work to Adelaide, Bournemouth, Oregon, Singapore and Vermont Symphony Orchestras.

Hough's discography of 70 recordings has garnered awards including the Diapason d'Or de l'Année, several Grammy nominations, and eight *Gramophone* Awards including Record of the Year and the Gold Disc. For Hyperion he has recorded the complete piano concertos of Beethoven, Brahms, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Rachmaninov, Saint-Saëns and Tchaikovsky as well as celebrated solo recordings of the Final Piano Pieces of Brahms, Chopin's complete nocturnes, waltzes, ballades and scherzi, as well as recitals of Schumann, Schubert, Franck, Debussy and Mompou. Upcoming releases

include a Liszt album, a recital of encores, including arrangements made for Lang Lang's Disney project, and Hough's own Piano Concerto.

As a composer, Hough's *Fanfare Toccata* was commissioned for the 2022 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition and performed by all 30 competitors. His 2021 String Quartet No.1, *Les Six Rencontres*, was written for and recorded by the Takács Quartet for Hyperion Records. Hough's body of songs, choral and instrumental works have been commissioned by Musée du Louvre, National Gallery of London, Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral, Wigmore Hall, the Genesis Foundation, Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation, BBC Sounds and the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Quintet. His music is published by Josef Weinberger Ltd.

As an author, Hough's memoir *Enough: Scenes from Childhood*, was published by Faber & Faber in Spring 2023. It follows his 2019 collection of essays *Rough Ideas: Reflections on Music and More* which received a Royal Philharmonic Society Award and was named one of the *Financial Times*' Books of the Year. His novel *The Final Retreat* was published in 2018 (Sylph Editions). He has also written for *The New York Times*, *The Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Guardian* and the *Evening Standard*. Hough is an Honorary Bencher of the Middle Temple, an Honorary Member of the Royal Philharmonic Society, an Honorary Fellow of Cambridge University's Girton College, the International Chair of Piano Studies and a Companion of the Royal Northern College of Music, and is on the faculty of The Juilliard School in New York.



Photo by Sim Canetty-Clarke

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Felix Mendelssohn has been described by Charles Rosen as ‘the greatest child prodigy the history of Western music has ever known’. He had the great good fortune to be born into a milieu of enormous cultural and material privilege. He was a grandson of celebrated philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, and the friends of his family in Mendelssohn’s childhood and early adult life reads like a who’s who of German philosophy and literature, including Goethe, Heine and Hegel; he would later enjoy friendships with everyone from Queen Victoria through Berlioz to the brothers Grimm.

When Mendelssohn was two years old the family left Hamburg, and the threat of Napoleon, for Berlin where his father Abraham quickly became indispensable in financing the Prussian war-effort. Despite the Jewish family’s social status, however, the four Mendelssohn children were all secretly baptised in the Lutheran church in 1816, and in 1822 Abraham and his wife Lea converted, adopting the less Jewish-sounding Bartholdy as a surname.

The two eldest children, Felix and Fanny, showed early talent for music and their parents put considerable resources at their disposal. Both had the finest available teachers and Abraham Mendelssohn initiated a series of Sunday concerts at the family home where Felix and Fanny would perform with paid members of the Court Orchestra (forerunner of the Berlin Philharmonic). Among the works that Felix wrote for these concerts between 1822 and 1824 were his celebrated 13 string sinfonias, five early concertos and five *Singspiele* (that is operas in German with spoken dialogue).



Mendelssohn, by James Warren Childe

In 1821 Weber’s *Der Freischütz* blew Mendelssohn’s mind; its supernatural element, a staple of the new Romantic aesthetic, was also to be found in German writers’ discovery of Shakespeare, especially plays like *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, a decade after the brothers Grimm had reignited interest in fairy tales.

Mendelssohn spent 1833-5 as music director in Düsseldorf, but more congenial was the appointment to the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig from 1835, where, with occasional official forays back to Berlin, he would be based until his death and where he helped found the Conservatorium.

He was committed to new music, but paradoxically his enthusiasm for reviving novelties of Baroque and Classical music led indirectly to the ‘masterpiece culture’ that drives out the new. Above all he understood the power of music, noting that words ‘seem to me so ambiguous, so vague, so easily misunderstood in comparison to genuine music that fills the soul with a thousand things better than words.’

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT THE HEBRIDES

The beginning of 1829 saw Mendelssohn's performance of his version of the *St Matthew Passion*, at the time a work still occasionally done in Bach's last home town, Leipzig, but elsewhere unknown. Then he was off on tours, this time including Scotland, whose dramatic landscapes, Gothic ruins and men 'with long red beards, tartan plaids, bonnets and feathers, naked knees, and their bagpipes in their hands' would inspire the 'Hebrides' Overture, composed in 1830, and his 'Scottish' Symphony.

Travelling to the islands of the Inner Hebrides, he visited Fingal's Cave on the isle of Staffa. Known to the locals as the Cave of Melody until the 18th century, this amazing coastal formation was publicised by Sir Joseph Banks in 1782, who renamed it after Fionn mac Cumhaill (aka Finn MacCool, or Fingal), the legendary Irish hero who built the Giant's Causeway between Ulster and Scotland.

Thanks to Banks, it had since become a great tourist attraction. Sir Robert Peel described it as 'a temple not made with hands'.

Where there is nothing immediately Scottish about Mendelssohn's 'Scottish' Symphony,

for this work he jotted down the opening, undulating theme of the piece and sent it in a letter to his family '...to make you understand how extraordinarily the Hebrides have affected me'. From that theme he spun a work of intensely evocative beauty, which paved the way for depictions of nature in Romantic composers like Wagner.

Gordon Kerry © 2015

Mendelssohn's overture is scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets and 2 bassoons; 2 horns and 2 trumpets; timpani and strings.

It was premiered on 14 May 1832 in London, conducted by Thomas Attwood, in a concert that also featured Mendelssohn's Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the work in January 1943, in a studio broadcast conducted by Percy Code; our first public performance was in November 1946, conducted by Henry Krips.

Other notable performances include those led by guest conductors Alceo Galliera (1951), Georges Tzipine (1960), Sir Donald Runnicles (2000) and Andrew Haveron (2019), and by Chief Conductors Eugene Goossens (1953), Moshe Atzmon (1971), Willem van Otterloo (1977), Stuart Challender (1984, 1991) and David Robertson (2017).

Our most recent performances were in February 2020, conducted by Jun Märkl.



A photograph of Fingal's Cave, taken between 1890-1905. Source: United States Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Photochrom Prints Collection. Reproduction number: LC-DIG-ppmsc-07617.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT THE PIANO CONCERTO IN G MINOR

Gordon Williams writes:

Some time in the summer of 1828, Mendelssohn's parents had decided that their young man needed travel to broaden his mind. It could be asked how much broadening could be needed by someone whose family home had been frequented by the likes of scientist Alexander von Humboldt, the philosopher Hegel, Eduard Devrient (the actor), and music critic and theorist Adolph Bernhard Marx, among others, but in any case Felix left Berlin on 10 April 1829 bound for England, Scotland and Wales. There in the British Isles he was enthusiastically received as a concert and salon pianist, and, as we've noted, visited the famous Fingal's Cave. Scotland also inspired him to begin the *Reformation Symphony*.

Mendelssohn returned briefly to Berlin before setting off on another journey. In Weimar he paid what was to be the last of his visits to Goethe, who gave him a manuscript sheet from *Faust* inscribed 'in friendly remembrance of happy May days in 1830', and whetted his appetite for Italy.

It was in Munich that Mendelssohn met Delphine von Schauroth who was to be the inspiration for his first piano concerto.

Mendelssohn, who was in demand at soirées, records that he followed Delphine around 'like a pet lamb'. He persuaded her to play Hummel's Sonata for four hands with him and gallantly held an A flat for her because her tiny hands could not reach it. 'We flirted dreadfully,' he wrote to his sister Fanny, 'but there is no danger because I am already in love with a young Scottish girl whose name I don't know.'

Mendelssohn then went on to Italy, where he finished the first version of the *Hebrides Overture*, and began work on the *Italian Symphony*. The Concerto in G minor was actually committed to paper in the space of three days during Mendelssohn's return journey to Munich the following year.

The Piano Concerto No.1 was first performed in Munich on 17 October 1831, with Mendelssohn as soloist before the King and Queen of Bavaria. The concert program also included his Symphony No.1 (with the newly-orchestrated scherzo from the Octet replacing the Symphony's original scherzo) and the Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is astonishing to think that a letter from Eduard Devrient, received by Mendelssohn in Milan in July, could have provoked a period of reflection and self-assessment for Felix. Devrient quoted Schiller's *Don Carlos*: 'Two-and-twenty, and nothing done for immortality'. We are more likely to be amazed that a 22 year-old could fill a program with works of such maturity; that so many of the works by which his name is remembered were already well and truly conceived, if not completed, by then!

The Concerto's first movement immediately dispenses with the extended orchestral opening of classical tradition. Its turbulent G minor calls to mind Carl Zelter's question when the 12 year-old Mendelssohn had improvised for Goethe: 'What goblins and dragons have you been dreaming about to drive you along so wildly?' The movement's biggest surprise comes at the end where, after a compressed development and recapitulation, a trumpet motto interrupts, and the piano's musing reply leads directly into the second movement - a warm, tenderly scored *Andante*.

Mendelssohn as pianist liked to play the final movement (*Presto*) 'as fast as possible, providing that the notes can be heard.' The movement contains passing references to the first movement in order to clinch the concerto's unity.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Some writers have claimed that this work is more virtuosic than profound. Yet it overflows with youthful elan as well as providing an early example of Mendelssohn's life-long quest for structural unity and continuity. Many of Mendelssohn's works during the period bore the sign of literary or pictorial inspiration, yet here is a piece which works in the realm of structural as well as pianistic interest. Perhaps Mendelssohn was balancing his concerns in consideration of the philosophy of his family's friend, Hegel, who was to say in *Vorlesung über die Ästhetik* (Berlin, 1836) that a composer 'should devote equal attention to two aspects - musical structure, and the expression of an admittedly indeterminate content'.

This concerto subsequently became one of Mendelssohn's most popular pieces. Berlioz tells the story of an Erard piano at the Paris Conservatoire which began to play the piece of its own accord after 29 contestants in a row had played it in a competition. Erard, the maker, was hastily summoned and sprinkled holy water on the piano to no avail. Nor did dismantling the piano or chopping it up have any effect. The only thing that worked was burning it.

In December 1831 Mendelssohn went on to Paris where Liszt sight-read the concerto from the manuscript. On 19 April 1832 he left again for London. Members of the London Philharmonic cheered him when he visited a rehearsal (though they were not even preparing a Mendelssohn program!).

In London Mendelssohn performed what by then he was calling his 'Munich concerto' and heard his *Hebrides Overture* performed, though he admitted that the latter sounded 'very strange in the middle of lots of Rossini'.

GK Williams © Symphony Australia 1997

This concerto is scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets and 2 bassoons; 2 horns and 2 trumpets; timpani and strings.

It was premiered in Munich on 17 October 1831, with Mendelssohn as the soloist.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra's first performance of this piece was in May 1948, with Laurence Davis as soloist conducted by Eugene Goossens.

Since then it has rarely been heard in Sydney, receiving just three performances: Ernest Llewellyn conducting Igor Hmelnitsky in 1962, Patrick Thomas conducting Rudolf Serkin in 1975, and most recently Lamberto Gardelli conducting Victor Sangiorgio in 1979.



Mendelssohn plays to Goethe, 1830 (1864) by German artist Moritz Oppenheim (1800–1882).
Source: Wikimedia/Jewish Museum Frankfurt.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT DETLEV GLANERT

Detlev Glanert's orchestral music includes four symphonies, and concertos for piano, piano duet, violin, harp, trumpet, and tuba, works that are regularly performed in Germany by orchestras including the Berlin and Munich Philharmonic Orchestras, as well as further afield in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Toronto, Tokyo, Paris and Vienna.

His work as a teacher has seen him at the head of Cantiere internazionale d'arte in Montepulciano, and he has given composition classes and workshops in Italy, the USA, Australia, Indonesia and Germany.

Glanert was born in 1960 in Hamburg – also the home town of Brahms, with whose work his own music so constantly engages – and studied there with Diether de la Motte. He later moved to Cologne to study with Hans Werner Henze and undertook further work with Oliver Knussen at Tanglewood.

He has composed some fourteen works for the stage. His opera *Oceane* received three major awards. Earlier works such as *Jest*, *Satire*, *Irony and Deeper Meaning* and his first opera, *The Mirror of the Great Emperor*, have likewise been recognised.

Much of his work engages with the art, music and literature of the past, ranging from arrangements of Mahler for Matthias Goerne through a violin concerto 'To the Immortal Beloved' (which, of course relates to Beethoven), his *Prague Symphony: Lyric Fragments after Franz Kafka* and his *Requiem for Hieronymus Bosch*.

Glanert has been especially celebrated for his creative engagement with the Romantic tradition in Western music.



Photo by Bettina Stoess

ABOUT VEXIERBILD

In addition to orchestrations of certain choral works of Brahms, Glanert has composed four works that reflect in Brahms' Symphonies.

Brahms-Fantasie, based on Brahms' First, was followed by *Weites Land* in 2013, based on the Fourth, and *Idyllium*, based on the Second, in 2019. *Vexierbild*, or *Hidden Image* completed the set in 2023 and is Glanert's response to Brahms' Third Symphony.

The 'hidden picture' refers to what Glanert has called the mystery surrounding the symphony. He writes that 'It came out of nowhere; nobody has any information about when he started it or was even thinking about it.'

The work's subtitle – 'contrafactum with Brahms' – refers in the first instance to the medieval and Renaissance practice of substituting the text of a vocal work without making much change to the music. In this case, Glanert is deliberately not quoting Brahms' material literally, rather 'focusing on Brahmsian gestures, figures, motifs, and structural qualities.' As Glanert put it, he draws inspiration from the older composer's 'ideas and his inner material, but it's my own Brahms.'

ABOUT THE MUSIC

That said, we can trace some of the correspondences. The piece, written for a Brahms-sized orchestra, begins with the same tempo marking (*allegro con brio*) and metre (6/4, which allows for ambiguous switches from two groups of three to three groups of two beats in each bar), and the opening gesture is underpinned by the F – A flat – F motto of Brahms' Symphony.

There are decidedly un-Brahmsian sounds like long glissandos (slides) in the strings, the first of which introduces a theme in the clarinets (a beloved instrument of Brahms') derived from a theme in Brahms' fourth movement whose long-short-short rhythm is found elsewhere in the work. Glanert also freely uses Brahms' texture of repeated woodwind-and-horn chords gently throbbing in syncopation (one of several Brahmsian rhythmic displacements that Glanert cultivates), before stating a motif clearly derived from the opening motto of the symphony.

Glanert puts this motto through several transformations: we hear a modified 'upside-down' version in the adagio section

(note, there is no adagio in the symphony) before a 'straighter' version, and after a brief Andantino, whose solo woodwind material refers to the second movement of Brahms, we get the motto again in version and then as the basis for march rhythms. Here we also hear a rising three-note motif that echoes the opening of the celebrated Allegretto in the symphony.

The piece then moves through increasingly sections of varying tempo and metre, before a coda that sounds nothing like Brahms, but which hums with the quiet mystery with which he so often concluded his works.

Gordon Kerry © 2025

Detlev Glanert's *Vexierbild* is a companion piece to Brahms' Third Symphony and scored for the same forces: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon; 4 horns, 2 trumpets and 3 trombones; timpani and strings.

It was premiered at the Grand Tetons Music Festival in Wyoming on 28 June 2024, performed by the Grand Teton Music Festival Orchestra conducted by Sir Donald Runnicles.

Scoring and history by Hugh Robertson



Sir Donald Runnicles and Detlev Glanert leave the stage together following the world premiere of *Vexierbild* at the Grand Tetons Music Festival on 28 June, 2024. Photo by Cody Downard.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT JOHANNES BRAHMS

Brahms died neither young, nor insane; he was never a liveried servant, nor dependent on aristocratic or royal patronage; he held several music directorships, but never for long, and, while a performer of distinction, became increasingly able to support himself on composition. He grew relatively wealthy on the sale and performances of his music, but in Vienna he lived with his piano and collection of music manuscripts and books in a three-room flat for 25 years.

He was born, in 1833, in Hamburg, in modest circumstances to a mismatched couple: Christiane and Johann Jakob Brahms a local session-musician. His early promise as a pianist was used to augment the family finances; the 15-year old played dance music in the dockside taverns (read: brothels) of his home town at night while studying by day.

Violinist Joseph Joachim encouraged Brahms, in September 1853, to meet two of the most important influences on his life: Robert and Clara Schumann. Robert hailed the appearance of a major talent, and as Schumann slipped into madness, Brahms grew closer to Clara. He never married.

Brahms settled in Vienna around 1869, where the conservative critic Eduard Hanslick felt he had found in Brahms the embodiment of the classical tradition of abstract music. He never taught, but was instrumental in the state stipend given to Antonín Dvořák in the latter's early maturity. He never married.

His earliest works are for piano, some for public performance (though with an eye firmly on his posterity, Brahms destroyed a great many pieces in all genres) and some as studies. The period around the end of the 1850s and into the new decade see Brahms' first 'official' attempts at orchestral music, notably the First Concerto and the First Serenade.



Brahms in the 1880s. Photo by Hanfstaengl of Frankfurt.

In the 1860s, Brahms focused on chamber music, though his mother's death catalysed a major choral orchestral piece: *A German Requiem*.

He suffered stage fright when it came to the symphony, and it is only in 1876 that the First, a work that had been gestating for many, many years, appeared. His symphonies, Second Piano Concerto and the two string concertos all date from the period 1876-1887 as do his three Violin Sonatas.

The String Quintet, Op.111, dating from 1890 was to have been his last chamber work, but fortunately he made the acquaintance of clarinettist Richard Mühlfeld soon after, inspiring the Clarinet Trio and Quintet. His final works were Bachian chorale preludes, including two based on the chorale, 'O world, I must leave thee'. He died of liver cancer on 3 April 1897.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT BRAHMS' THIRD SYMPHONY

Brahms spent the summer of 1883 in the German spa-town of Wiesbaden. There he produced his Third Symphony in a mere four months. It is the shortest of Brahms' symphonies, but for this obsessively self-critical composer that was almost miraculous. Hans Richter, who conducted the first performance in Vienna, was perhaps a little over the top in calling it 'Brahms' Eroica', and yet it is a work that essays many emotional states in a highly dramatic fashion, and leads to a conclusion of great peace.

Thirty years earlier, Brahms had contributed the 'F-A-E Sonata', a work jointly composed with Albert Dietrich and Robert Schumann in honour of violinist Joseph Joachim. The letters stand for Joachim's personal motto 'frei aber einsam' (free but lonely) and provide a musical motif that unites the work. Brahms responded that his own motto was 'frei aber froh' (free but happy). The musical version of this, F-A-F, dominates the Third Symphony, which was written partly as a 'proffered hand' or gesture of reconciliation by Brahms, who had fallen out with Joachim over the latter's divorce some years earlier.

The motif provides the assertive opening gesture, where it is 'spelled' F-A flat-F: in F major, the A flat is chromatic, thus providing a dramatic dissonance at the work's outset. This pattern - the first, third and eighth degrees of the scale - can be found throughout the whole work, as melodic feature, accompanying figure, or seemingly inconsequential detail. But the major-minor tension pervades the work, giving it its moments of 'heroic' drama. The work's dramatic unity is also effected by its overall tonal plan: the outer movements are, naturally, centred on the home key of F, while the inner movements focus on its polar opposite C. This simple architecture is decorated at the more local level by much more surprising key relations. The F major/A flat opening is a case in point; the first subject, or thematic group is a surging music in F major, but the second, a serene tune sounded by clarinet and bassoon, is in the distant key of A major. A short development leads to the expected recapitulation of the opening material; more important, though is

Brahms gradual lowering of the temperature to conclude the movement - as he does with all four in this work - softly and calmly.

The *Andante* takes up the pastoral sounds of clarinet and bassoon, alternating wind textures with quiet lower-string passages at first, and such textures moderate any impassioned outbursts. The third movement is effectively a minuet. Its main theme, characterised by gently dissonance on the downbeats, is sung first by the cellos. After a contrasting central section, the opening material is recapitulated but in completely different instrumentation. The dramatic focus of the symphony, however, is the finale, where assertive, often terse rhythmic ideas contend with athletic, long-breathed melodies. After boisterous heroics, the music reaches a state of repose where, against rippling strings, the winds restate the opening F-A flat-F moment, now purged of any *Angst*.

Gordon Kerry © 2014

Brahms' Third Symphony is scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons and contrabassoons; 4 horns, 2 trumpets and 3 trombones; timpani and strings.

It was premiered on 2 December 1883 by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Hans Richter.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the symphony in September 1939, led by Malcolm Sargent.

Other notable performances include those led by Georg Schneevoigt (1940), Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt (1953), Tibor Paul (1961), Jascha Horenstein (1962), Bruno Weil (1995) and Thomas Zehetmair (2009), and by Chief Conductors Eugene Goossens (1948, 1951, 1954), Moshe Atzmon (1969), Willem van Otterloo (1972, 1978), Louis Frémaux (1981), Charles Mackerras (1984), Stuart Challender (1989), Edo de Waart (2001), Gianluigi Gelmetti (2007) and David Robertson (2014).

Our most recent performances were under Nicholas Carter in June 2021.

Scoring and history by Hugh Robertson



Photo by Craig Abercrombie

HANDING BACK THE KEYS: FAREWELL TO TERRY HARPER

Terry Harper has been tuning the pianos at the Sydney Opera House almost as long as it has existed – first with his father, then by himself. When he hangs up his tuning fork in June, it will bring to an end an incredible story of one family's service to music-making in Sydney.

By Hugh Robertson

In the middle of the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall stage, Terry Harper stands alone at the piano, putting the instrument through its final tuning and checks. The cavernous auditorium is empty; his only audience the production staff scurrying around setting up for this morning's concert. You have never heard this man play one single note, but he is one of the most important people in the modern history of music in Sydney.

Terry is the Sydney Opera House's piano tuner, and has quite literally had his hand in almost every concert involving a keyboard to ever take place underneath these famous sails.

And not just the gleaming concert grands that you see the likes of Sir Stephen Hough playing in this concert – Terry has been responsible for every piano in the building, in rehearsal rooms for the ballet, for the opera repetiteurs, in the Utzon Room and more besides.

So much goes into preparing a piano for a concert, though it is rarely a matter of pulling the whole thing apart and starting from scratch. Terry sees his job as maintenance more than construction, doing touch-ups and tweaks rather than knock-down rebuilds.

'If it's a good piano, and you've done your job well, you don't have to do much. The less you pull it around the better. These concert grand pianos are like F1 racing cars – they are driving them to the brink when they play them. They are going to their limits.'

Terry is hanging up his tools in June, bringing to an end a decades-long association between the Sydney Opera House and the Harper family which began when Terry's father Ron started tuning the pianos here not long after the building opened in 1973.

BACKSTAGE NEWS

The story goes that the Sydney Symphony Orchestra was rehearsing one morning, and the pianist refused to play on the piano because it hadn't been tuned properly. Someone at the Opera House knew my dad from a recording studio he used to work at, called the studio and he just happened to be there. Dad got down to the Opera House as soon as he could, sent the Orchestra off for a walk around the Botanic Gardens for an hour or two, and when they came back – with the pianist – the piano was tuned and all was well.

‘And of course, after that, Dad was offered the position to come in and look after the pianos here.’

Ron's story is typical of his generation: born in Liverpool, England, he first came to Australia as an aircraft mechanic with the Fleet Air Arm of the British Pacific Fleet in the final months of the Second World War. Retraining as a piano tuner upon his return to England, Ron's memories of Australia were so fond that he emigrated in early 1949 with his wife and young daughter and built a house (with his own two hands) in the leafy southern suburb of Mortdale. Terry's older brother was born two months later – ‘smuggled into the country’, as Terry puts it – before Terry and his twin sister showed up in 1956.

Tuning a piano is a unique task, equal parts mechanical and artistic, and Ron lived that particular dichotomy day-in, night-out. Terry describes how Ron, ‘a very good piano player’, would travel all over the city tuning pianos by day, then do the same in the evenings playing gigs with his own band. Terry's reminiscences are like a whistle-stop tour of Sydney nightlife in years past: Chequers nightclub on Goulburn Street, the Silver Spade Room at the Chevron Hotel in Kings Cross, the Trocadero Ballroom on George Street. Terry recalls nights when he would sing as a boy treble at St. Andrew's Cathedral School, then Ron would pick him up and go hear the likes of Shirley Bassey, Robert Goulet and Howard Keel. One especially vivid memory of Terry's is sitting in the back of his father's car while they drove Cilla Black to her accommodation, the singer and Ron sharing stories of Liverpool in thick Scouse accents.



Ron Harper in 1986, shortly before his retirement from the Sydney Opera House.

With this sort of scene typical of his childhood, it was inevitable that Terry would end up in music. Though it might surprise you to learn that he isn't a very good piano player at all.

‘I tried to learn the piano – It wasn't my instrument,’ he says with a laugh. ‘I cannot play a note on the piano. I can play you some major chords. That's it.’

‘I learned to play the drums. And I did get to the point when I was in my late teens where I could go out and play with Dad's band. So I did a bit of that until I was 21 or 22.’

Meanwhile, the Sydney Conservatorium had established a piano tuning course the year before he left school, and Terry – unsurprisingly – thought he might give it a go. ‘It was a one-year course and 50 years later, and here I am still doing it.’

When he graduated in 1976, Ron was tuning all of the pianos at the Opera House and brought Terry on to do the fifteen or so rehearsal room pianos around the building. They worked together for two years, not just at the Opera House but also at the ABC's old studios in Darlinghurst (where Harry Siedler's famous Horizon building now stands), before Terry moved to London. After ‘sponging off relatives’ for a few months, Terry walked into the Steinway & Sons branch where the wonderfully-named manager Lionel C. Squibb put him through his paces and ultimately offered Terry a job as one of six full-time tuners servicing

BACKSTAGE NEWS

the Steinways all over London, at the Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall, BBC Radio & Television Studios, Abbey Road Studios and many more.

Terry came back to Sydney in the early 1980s, and then in 1986 Ron retired, and Terry has been flying solo ever since.

Perhaps the ultimate compliment to Terry's diligence and ability is that he can't recall a single major complaint from any of the hundreds of pianists who have visited over the years – and indeed there are many that Terry has never met. 'I think that is a good thing, because if they don't need to see me then everything's fine. I'm just in the shadows, in the background, and that's where I like to be.'

Of course, Terry has some great stories after close to 50 years in the business. Vladimir Ashkenazy didn't like his pianos to be 'too

tight' and 'too perfect', leading to some performances that Terry felt were perhaps slightly out of tune. And he recalls visiting the London home of the great Alfred Brendel to tune the two pianos in his living room – a Bösendorfer concert grand and a Model C Steinway – and as he left Brendel proceeded to pull the piano apart so that he could work on the felt hammers to voice and adjust the tone himself.

But more than anything Terry is a music lover, and one of the great perks of this job has been sneaking into the hall just before the lights go down, listening to his handiwork ringing out into a room packed with 2,500 people hanging on every note.

Terry, from all of us at the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, thank you for the music.



Photo by Craig Abercrombie

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Douglas Emery
Senior Marketing Manager & Insights Analyst

Customer Relations

Pim den Dekker
Head of Customer Relations
Georgia Mulligan
Jennifer Calacoci
Meg Chaseling
Customer Relations Team Leads

OPERATIONS & PRODUCTION

Kerry-Anne Cook
Director of Operations & Production
Aeva O’Dea
Operations Manager
Tom Farmer
Production Manager
Elissa Seed
Production Manager
Jacinta Dockrill
Production Administrator
Shanell Bielawa
Production Coordinator
Jordan Blackwell, Jess Hughes, Rory Knott, Matthew Landi, Harvey Lynn, Ella Tomkins
Production Assistants
Georgia Holmes, Reede Palmer
Production Interns

ORCHESTRA MANAGEMENT

Aernout Kerbert
Director of Orchestra Management
Brighdie Chambers
Orchestra Manager
Emma Winestone
Deputy Orchestra Manager

PEOPLE & CULTURE

Daniel Bushe
Director of People & Culture
Rosie Marks-Smith
Head of Culture & Wellbeing
Yen Sharratt
People & Culture Manager
Keanna Mauch
People & Culture Coordinator
Sue Burnet
Work Health & Safety Specialist

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