

ORCHESTRAL DANCES WITH HÅKAN HARDENBERGER

12–15 AUGUST 2026

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House



“SYDNEY”
“SYMPHONY”
“ORCHESTRA”

Emirates

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 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.

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.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS CONCERT

Expect to enjoy yourself! Maybe your heart will beat a little faster. Maybe your hair will stand on end. It's hard to predict or describe how the vast sound of a symphony orchestra will affect each of us. Just bring an open mind and engage with the music – close your eyes, watch the conductor and the musicians, or just sit back and let the music take you away.



When do I clap?

Good question. Most pieces of music are broken up into different movements – usually, people only clap at the end of a piece, so there will be silent pauses between movements. On the next page you will see how many movements the pieces in this concert have, and the duration of each piece. But the simplest thing is to wait until the conductor turns around – or when everyone else starts applauding.

The conductor may leave the stage and come back on a few times, and acknowledge the different sections of the orchestra. You can keep clapping as long as you want to – and feel free to cheer and stomp your feet if you really enjoyed the concert!



Can I take photos or videos?

You can take photos and videos on your phone during the applause at the end of a piece of music. **Please switch your phone to silent, make sure the flash is off and dim the brightness of your screen so you don't distract other audience members.** And if you share it to your socials, tag us in your posts! We love seeing what people have captured.

Please leave professional and semi-professional camera gear at home and limit yourself to a phone camera inside the venue.



What happens at interval?

The interval will begin when the conductor leaves the stage and the lights go to their full brightness. You can choose to stay in your seat and wait, go to the bathroom, walk around or purchase food or drink from one of the foyer bars.

An announcement will play through the speaker system 10 minutes, 5 minutes and 1 minute before the concert resumes.

2026 CONCERT SEASON

ORCHESTRAL DANCES WITH HÅKAN HARDENBERGER

VISIONS OF VIENNA

FABIEN GABEL conductor

HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803–1869)

Beatrice and Benedict (1862)

Overture

HK GRUBER (born 1943)

Aerial (1998–99)

SYDNEY SYMPHONY PREMIERE

i. Done with the Compass – Done with the Chart!

ii. Gone Dancing

HÅKAN HARDENBERGER trumpet

INTERVAL

RICHARD STRAUSS (1846–1949)

Der Rosenkavalier: Suite (1910)

MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

La Valse (1919–1920)

Wednesday 12 August, 8pm

Friday 14 August, 8pm

Saturday 15 August, 8pm

Emirates Masters Series

Thursday 13 August, 1.30pm

Emirates Thursday

Afternoons

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

Pre-concert talk

By Megan Steller in the
Northern Foyer at 7.15pm,
and at 12.45 on the
Lounge Level (Thurs).

Estimated durations

Berlioz – 9 minutes

Gruber – 28 minutes

Interval – 20 minutes

Strauss – 25 minutes

Ravel – 13 minutes

This concert will run for
approx. 2 hours

ABC Classic

Friday's concert will
be recorded for broadcast
on 25 September at 1pm,
and streaming online.

Cover image

Håkan Hardenberger
Photo by Marco Borggreve

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of the land and water on which we work and perform. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Emirates

Principal Partner

MAHLER SYMPHONY NO. 3

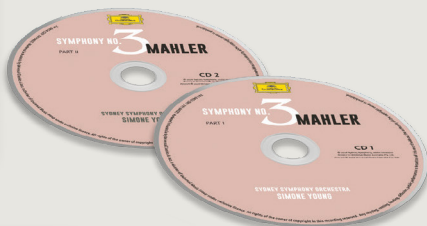


**SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
SIMONE YOUNG**



**“This was a
gala performance
to savour” *Limelight***

This recording of Mahler's Third Symphony signals a new partnership between the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Universal Music Australia on the Deutsche Grammophon label. An epic, six-movement work, the symphony traverses nature, humanity, spirituality and redemption across nearly 100 minutes. It features mezzo-soprano Noa Beinart, the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and The Sydney Children's Choir.



**ALSO AVAILABLE
on CD, VINYL and DIGITAL**

**MAHLER: SYMPHONY NO. 2
“RESURRECTION”**

BARTON: OF THE EARTH

WELCOME

Welcome to **Orchestral Dances with Håkan Hardenberger**, the seventh concert in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Emirates Masters Series for 2026.

You really need a good partner for dancing, and in this concert we get to watch the interplay between long-time collaborators Fabien Gabel and Håkan Hardenberger.

Together they will steer us through a program inspired by dance, featuring a suite from Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* infused with the sweeping elegance of the Viennese waltz, while Ravel's *La Valse* evokes a similar scene through some of that composer's most romantic music. But the centrepiece is *Aerial*, a trumpet concerto written for Hardenberger by Austrian composer HK Gruber and described by the *Chicago Tribune* as 'a weird, wondrous, exhilarating tour de force'.

Just as Fabien and Håkan are a terrific team, so too are Emirates and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Together we aspire to create unforgettable journeys and remarkable experiences, with a commitment to excellence at the very highest level.

We are immensely proud of our partnership, one of the most significant and enduring relationships in Australia's performing arts and Emirates' longest-running collaboration with a non-sporting organisation. This partnership reflects our shared belief in the power of connection: bringing world-class artistry to the global stage and enabling music to transcend borders, cultures, and audiences. We're proud to support artists who inspire, unite, and connect with fans around the world.

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

We are delighted by the continuing success of our long-term partnership and trust you will enjoy this marvellous concert.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a unique monogram.

Barry Brown
Emirates DVP – Australasia

YOUR CONCERT AT A GLANCE

HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803–1869)

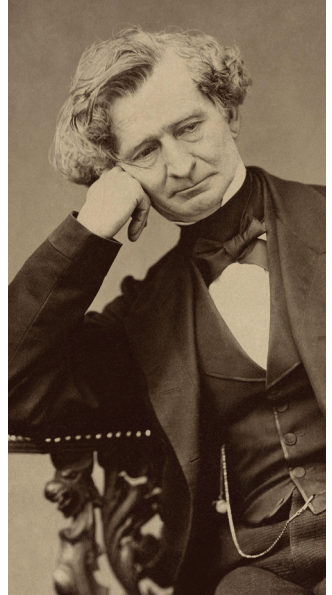
Beatrice and Benedict (1862)

Overture

Beatrice and Benedict was Berlioz's last opera, a comedy based on Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing* in which the titular couple appear at first to loathe each other but are married by the end. In the overture, Berlioz introduces about seven themes from the opera, encapsulating its comic drama.

It appeared in 1862, the year that saw Bismarck's 'Blood and Iron' speech, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and Archer win the Melbourne Cup.

Contemporary music included Henri Vieuxtemps's Violin Concerto No.5, Op.37, Ferenc Liszt's *Berceuse* and Giuseppe Verdi's *La forza del destino*.



1863 portrait of Berlioz by French photographer Pierre Petit. Via Wikimedia Commons.

HK GRUBER (born 1943)

Aerial (1998–99)

Composed for Håkan Hardenberger, *Aerial* is a two movement concerto playing for about 28 minutes. The first movement is inspired by Emily Dickinson's celebration of abandon, *Wild Nights*; the second refers to dance music from Broadway and points much farther east.

Aerial premiered in 1999, the year that saw Vladimir Putin become acting President of Russia, Leonardo da Vinci's restored *The Last Supper* go on display and the failure of Australia's referendum on becoming a republic.

Contemporary music included Karl Jenkins's *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*, Liza Lim's *Veil* and Daron Hagen's *Bandanna*.



HK Gruber. Photo by Jon Super.

YOUR CONCERT AT A GLANCE

RICHARD STRAUSS (1846–1949)

Der Rosenkavalier: Suite (1910)

After shocking the operatic world with works of decadence in the ancient world, Strauss and his librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal created a bittersweet Romantic comedy set in the Vienna of Mozart's era. The music is all late-Romantic Strauss, with a further anachronism in the prevalence of his wonderful waltz tunes.

It appeared in 1911, the year that saw the first International Women's Day celebrated across Europe, the theft of the Mona Lisa and the Australasian Antarctic Expedition's departure from Hobart.

Contemporary music included Jean Sibelius's Fourth Symphony, Igor Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha*.



1910 postcard of Richard Strauss.
Source unknown/Wikimedia Commons.

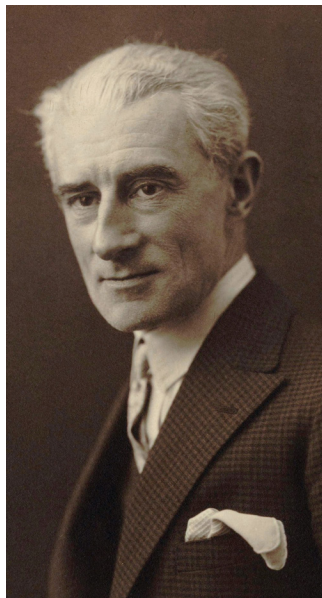
MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

La Valse (1919–1920)

If Strauss created a fairy-tale Vienna, Ravel depicted its dissolution in *La Valse*, which appears out of darkness and after episodes of manic energy, descends into it again.

La Valse was first performed in 1920, the year that saw Anna Andersen claim to be the Archduchess Anastasia of Russia, the canonisation of Joan of Arc and the foundation of the Communist Party of Australia.

Contemporary music included Ralph Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending*, Darius Milhaud's *Le Boeuf sur le toit* and Leoš Janáček's *The Excursions of Mr. Broucek to the Moon and to the 15th Century*.



Maurice Ravel c.1925. Via Bibliothèque nationale de France/Wikimedia Commons.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

FABIEN GABEL conductor

The 2025/2026 season marks Fabien Gabel's first as Chief Conductor of the Tonkünstler-Orchester, Niederösterreich. He has established an international career of the highest calibre, appearing with orchestras such as Orchestre de Paris, London Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, The Cleveland Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, Seoul Philharmonic and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Praised for his dynamic style and sensitive approach to the score, he is best known for his eclectic choice of repertoire, ranging from core symphonic works to championing lesser-known composers of the 19th and the 20th century. He also highlights contemporary works and has conducted the premiere performances of pieces by Dieter Amman, Andres Hillborg and Samy Moussa.

During the 2025/2026 season Gabel will make his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in *Carmen* and with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra on a five-day tour of Spain with Yuja Wang. In Europe he returns to the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, Orquesta Sinfonia de Galicia and the BBC and City of Birmingham symphony orchestras. In the US he returns to the Minnesota Orchestra, Detroit Symphony and Toronto Symphony orchestras and will make his South American debut with the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra (OSESP).

In France, Gabel works regularly with all major Paris orchestras and had a highly acclaimed debut at the Opéra national de Paris in 2022/2023. Gabel recently led the recording of a new score for Abel Gance's 1927 epic film *Napoléon* with the Orchestre National de France and Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. The first part of the film was presented at the 2024 Festival de Cannes and will be shown in theatres, on French television and Netflix.

Fabien Gabel performs with soloists such as Daniil Trifonov, Yefim Bronfman, Emanuel Ax, Bertrand Chamayou, Seong-Jin Cho, Francesco Piemontesi, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Gidon Kremer, Augustin Hadelich, Vilde Frang,

Daniel Lozakovich, Christian Tetzlaff, Gautier Capuçon, Daniel Mueller-Schott, Johannes Moser, Håkan Hardenberger and Emmanuel Pahud and with singers such as Measha Bruegggosman, Natalie Dessay, Petra Lang, Jennifer Larmore, Marie-Nicole Lemieux, Nikola Hillebrand, Asmik Grigorian and Michael Schade.

Having attracted international attention in 2004 as the winner of the Donatella Flick conducting competition, Fabien Gabel was Assistant Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra 2004-2006. He was music director of Orchestre symphonique de Québec 2012-2021 and Orchestre Français des Jeunes 2017-2021.

Born in Paris to a family of accomplished musicians, Fabien Gabel began playing the trumpet at the age of six and honed his skills at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris and at the Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe. He played with various Parisian orchestras under prominent conductors such as Pierre Boulez, Sir Colin Davis, Riccardo Muti, Seiji Ozawa, Simon Rattle and Bernard Haitink before embarking on his conducting career.

Fabien Gabel was named Chevaliers des Arts et des Lettres by the French government in January 2020.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

HÅKAN HARDENBERGER trumpet

During his extraordinary 40-year career as the world's most prominent trumpet soloist, Håkan Hardenberger has not only pushed the boundaries of what can be achieved with the instrument, he has inspired countless composers and musicians to expand their horizons and explore unknown musical territories with him. His quest for excellence and innovation continues to this day and he champions the finest works written for the trumpet by performing them with stunning virtuosity and sheer dedication to music.

Hardenberger performs regularly with the world's leading orchestras such as the Berliner Philharmoniker, Concertgebouworkest, Wiener Philharmoniker, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks and the London, Boston and NHK Symphony Orchestras. Notable engagements of the 2025/26 season include the Norwegian Premiere of Jörg Widmann's *Towards Paradise* with the Oslo Philharmonic and Alain Altinoglu as well as the Dutch premiere with the Concertgebouworkest and Andris Nelsons, with whom he will also perform Bernd Zimmermann's *Nobody knows de trouble I see* with the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks. He brings HK Gruber's *Aerial* to the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, Tonkünstler Orchestra and Sydney Symphony Orchestra with Fabien Gabel.

Many works written for Håkan Hardenberger stand as cornerstones of what has become a vast repertoire thanks to his tireless commitment. These have included pieces by Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Brett Dean, Helen Grime, HK Gruber, Hans Werner Henze, Betsy Jolas, György Ligeti, Olga Neuwirth, Tōru Takemitsu, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Rolf Wallin and Jörg Widmann. Håkan Hardenberger's 60th birthday season featured two extraordinary trumpet concertos: Jörg Widmann's *Towards Paradise*, co-commissioned by the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig and the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Helen Grime's *night-sky-blue*, co-commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation, Library of Congress, London Symphony Orchestra and Boston Symphony Orchestra.

He appeared as Artist Portrait with the London Symphony Orchestra, performing with Sir Simon Rattle in London and Paris and giving country premieres of the Grime concerto in Germany and Denmark. Hardenberger performs frequently with pianist Roland Pöntinen, guitarist Mats Bergström and percussionist Colin Currie. With the latter Hardenberger released a recording of works by Brett Dean, André Jolivet and others.

The latest addition to his discography on BIS features French trumpet concertos by Jolivet, Schmitt and Tomasi, and Jolas's *Onze Lieder*. He has also recorded for Philips, Deutsche Grammophon, Decca and EMI.

Born in Malmö, Sweden, he began studying the trumpet at the age of eight with Bo Nilsson and continued his studies at the Paris Conservatoire with Pierre Thibaud and in Los Angeles with Thomas Stevens. From 2016 to 2018, Hardenberger was Artistic Director of the Malmö Chamber Music Festival and he is a professor at the Malmö Conservatoire.



Photo by Marco Borggreve

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT BERLIOZ

Katherine Kemp writes:

The early life of Berlioz was dominated by the political turmoil of France in the early nineteenth century. Educated mostly at home in a small village, it's little wonder young Hector yearned for travel and Romance.

In Paris, ostensibly studying medicine, he was more often found at the Conservatoire, copying out Gluck or sitting in on classes. Unusually for a composer of his era, he was no virtuoso (he could never play more than a few chords on the piano, for example). He had composed since his early teens, mostly small-scale vocal works, but July 1825 saw his first public success: a mass. His family were less than impressed with this career change by their only son. Arguments over financial support and lifestyle choices continued for years, until he was vindicated by success in the prestigious Prix de Rome.

In 1827, Berlioz first encountered the intoxicating combination of Shakespeare and the Irish actress Harriet Smithson. Shakespeare provided the inspiration for many of the young composer's subsequent works; unrequited passion for Miss Smithson inspired the phenomenal *Symphonie Fantastique*. Later, recovering from the emotional storms of another unsuccessful relationship, he wrote *The Return to Life* as a continuation of the *Symphonie*; eventually it received the alternative title *Lélio*. (He did marry Harriet in the end, but everyday life and a language barrier quickly led to disillusionment).

Swept up by the influences of great literature, Beethoven and the immense philosophical changes occurring in society at that time, Berlioz worked hard writing for papers and journals, composing, organising concerts (including a notorious one for 1,000 performers) and touring abroad. The death of his only son (a sailor), closely followed by a tiring tour to Russia and some bad falls on the beach, led to a last year spent in Paris, weak and unwell. He died having completed several volumes of impressive memoirs; a true Romantic to the end.



1863 portrait of Berlioz by Portrait by French photographer Pierre Petit. Via Wikimedia Commons.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT *BEATRICE AND BENEDICT*

David Garrett writes:

Berlioz ended his composing career in 1860–2 with a comedy, *Beatrice and Benedict* – an Indian summer, following his epic opera *The Trojans*. The Overture fits Berlioz’s description of the opera: ‘a caprice written with the point of a needle, and demanding excessive delicacy of execution’. Berlioz commented wryly on the critics’ response: ‘They have discovered that I have melody, that I can be gay and even comic.’

Berlioz was obsessed with Shakespeare. Well-known is his infatuation with the actress Harriet Smithson, who came to Paris in a touring Shakespeare company and whom he married. Berlioz’s Shakespeare-inspired music includes *Roméo et Juliette* and the *King Lear* Overture. He had been contemplating a *Romeo and Juliet* opera, or an *Antony and Cleopatra* when the commission for a new opera came from Edouard Bénazet, to inaugurate the new theatre he was building at the fashionable spa in Baden-Baden.

Berlioz chose to base the opera on his adaptation of a Shakespeare comedy – light relief after his struggles getting *The Trojans* finished and performed. He had been toying with the idea of setting Shakespeare’s *Much Ado about Nothing* since as early as 1833, when he made a few preliminary sketches. His life since then had made Shakespeare’s play even more meaningful. A tragi-comedy, originally called *Benedick and Beatrice*, the play celebrates a marriage between two high-spirited young people. Beatrice and Benedict achieve a true partnership in spite of themselves, love triumphing in the end over independent-mindedness, cynicism and raillery. Berlioz saw the irony of his choice of subject – his own marriages, with Harriet Smithson and Marie Récio, brought him much unhappiness.

The opera, premiered in 1862, was a success, but the overture remains its best-known music. Composed last, it is a brilliant *précis*, a weaving-together, or patchwork, of melodies from the opera (at least seven of them); a quicksilver scherzo, with episodes of soft emotion. ‘Racing, headlong, yet ironically poised, brilliant but touched with warmth of heart and a delicate spirit of fantasy’ is Berlioz biographer David Cairns’s summary of the overture, and he comments with wonder that it was the creation of a man in pain and longing for death. Though Berlioz lived seven more years, *Beatrice and Benedict* was his last major composition. The overture quotes at the beginning the duet Beatrice and Benedict sing about the love that has broken down their defences: ‘a flame, a will o’ the wisp, coming from no one knows where, gleaming and vanishing to distract our souls’.

David Garrett © 2011

Berlioz’s Overture is scored for piccolo, flute, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets and 2 bassoons; 4 horns, 2 trumpets, cornet and 3 trombones; timpani and strings.

The opera was first performed on 9 August 1862 at Theater Baden-Baden, conducted by Berlioz himself.

The Sydney Symphony first performed the work for a national radio broadcast in 1940, conducted by Percy Code. Our first public performance of the work was not until 1969, in a Proms concert conducted by John Hopkins.

Rarely performed in Sydney, other notable performances include those led by Hopkins again (1983) and Edo de Waart (1995).

Our most recent performance was in February 2011, conducted by Peter Oundjian.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT HK GRUBER

HK Gruber, born in Vienna in 1943, was a member of the Vienna Boys' Choir and studied composition at the Vienna Hochschule für Musik.

In 1968, along with fellow composers Kurt Schwertsik and Otto Zykan, Gruber founded the 'MOB art and tone ART' ensemble, taking on the role of singer and actor for the first time. Gruber's international career became established when in 1978 Simon Rattle and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra gave the premiere of *Frankenstein!!* The work has since been performed throughout the musical world – in the orchestral version, the ensemble version and as a ballet.

Gruber is particularly noted for his concertos, including *Aerial* for trumpeter Håkan Hardenberger, two concertos for violinist Ernst Kovacic, the Cello Concerto written for Yo-Yo Ma and premiered at Tanglewood in 1989, the percussion concerto *Rough Music* in the repertoire of Evelyn Glennie and *Busking* for trumpet, accordion, banjo and string orchestra, premiered by Hardenberger in 2008. Orchestral scores include *Dancing in the Dark*, premiered by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under Simon Rattle in 2003, the orchestral suite *Northwind Pictures* premiered in 2011 and *into the open...* for percussion and orchestra, premiered with Colin Currie as soloist at the 2015 BBC Proms. His most recent work is a Piano Concerto for Emanuel Ax, premiered by the New York Philharmonic in 2017 with subsequent performances scheduled in Berlin, Zürich, Stockholm, Vienna and Paris.

Gruber's dramatic works include the apocalyptic opera *Gomorra, Gloria*, a musical version of Rudolf Herfurtner's classic pigtales, *Der Herr Nordwind* to a libretto by HC Artmann, and more recently, his opera based on Horváth's *Tales from the Vienna Woods*.

As a featured composer, conductor and cabaret artist, Gruber has travelled widely. He regularly performs the chansonnier role in *Frankenstein!!* internationally and his music theatre repertoire also includes Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, Maxwell Davies's *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, and works by Maurizio Kagel. He appeared in performances at the Almeida Festival in 1987, took a leading role in the Alternative Vienna series, presented by the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the South Bank Centre in 1993, and was featured at the Grafenegg Festival in 2011 and the Stockholm Konserthus's International Composer Festival in 2017. His association with the Frankfurt-based Ensemble Modern has included a series of widely acclaimed concerts, opera performances and recordings and he has worked closely with the BBC Philharmonic in Manchester, holding the post of Composer/Conductor from 2010 until 2015. He continues to be much in-demand as conductor with the world's leading orchestras, ensembles and music festivals.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT AERIAL

Emily Dickinson - *Wild Nights* (1861)

Wild Nights! Wild Nights!

Were I with thee,

Wild Nights should be

Our luxury!

Futile the winds

To a heart in port –

Done with the compass,

Done with the chart!

Rowing in Eden!

Ah! the sea!

Might I but moor

To-night in Thee!

As Keith Potter has said,

It would probably be a mistake to suggest that the two movements of this concerto represent the schizophrenic divide in late 20th century musical culture between what has been called the ‘cultivated’ (or classical) and the ‘vernacular’ (or popular). HK Gruber is far too wily a subverter of categories and bounder of boundaries for that. Yet the two ‘aerial views’ are inspired by contrasting sources which do belong, respectively, to the higher realms of literary imagination and the earthier impulse to dance the night away.

The composer writes:

Aerial was written for the virtuoso trumpeter Håkan Hardenberger, with whom I collaborated closely on preparing the solo part. The concerto stretches the soloist’s skills not only in terms of virtuosity, stamina and the use of multiple mutes, but also through the requirement to play cow horn as well as trumpet and piccolo trumpet, the employment of playing with slides removed, and the ability to sing and play simultaneously.

The concerto offers two aerial views, firstly an imaginary landscape beneath the Northern Lights bearing an inscription from the Emily Dickinson poem *Wild Nights*: ‘Done with the Compass – done with the chart!’ In part this refers to the pure invention that can be conjured up through the skills of a great trumpeter, with the solo part here tailored especially for Hardenberger as the magician, casting an incantatory spell perhaps with a



HK Gruber. Photo by Jon Super.

little help from his native troll art? The work opens with trumpeter playing and singing the work into being, conjuring up the mythological image of the creation of music as Pan blows into the reed into which the nymph Syrinx had been transformed. As the orchestra enters, the soloist explores the notes available with slideless playing, providing a sonic bridge to the entry of the cow horn which functions as an ur-brass instrument from a lost age. The title of this movement also refers to the challenge of hiding compositional procedures in the background, so that the musical surface flows spontaneously.

The second and larger of the two aerial views, entitled ‘Gone Dancing’, is glimpsed as if from another planet – our world is empty of human life, but a lone sign hangs in view on which are written the words ‘Gone Dancing’. It opens in the West in the 1940s with Fred and Ginger creating a toe-tapping dance dialogue, and this is contrasted with outdoor folk music of a distinctly Eastern hue with soloist progressively assuming the role of leader of the village band.

HK Gruber © 1999

Aerial is scored for 3 flutes (2nd and 3rd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 4 clarinets (4th doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons and contrabassoon; 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones and tuba; timpani, percussion, piano, 2 saxophones and strings, with the trumpet soloist required to also play piccolo trumpet and cowhorn.

It was premiered in London by Hakan Hardenberger and the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Neeme Järvi on 29 July 1999.

This is the work’s Sydney Symphony premiere.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT RICHARD STRAUSS

In 1945, as the Nazi regime fell, American soldiers began commandeering villas in the Bavarian town of Garmisch. At one door, an elderly man greeted them with now famous words: 'I am Richard Strauss, composer of *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Salome*'. Fortunately for Strauss, the commanding officer knew him and his work, and the Strauss family was not evicted from its home.

Strauss was born in 1864 – Clara Schumann was still performing, Brahms and Wagner were contemporary composers. His father, Franz, was one of the finest horn players of his day. Richard Wagner regarded the elder Strauss as an 'intolerable blighter, but when he plays his horn one cannot stay cross with him'. Strauss senior loathed most of Wagner's music and said so often, yet regularly went to Bayreuth to play in Wagner's festival orchestra. Nevertheless, the older Strauss tried to ensure that his gifted son would never be seduced by Wagner's work, and Richard's earliest pieces include a very Mozartean wind Serenade.

At 17, however, young Strauss heard, or as he put it, 'wolfed the score of *Tristan*, as if in a trance'. Wagner's highly expressive chromatic harmony was a decisive influence on Strauss, and one which he put to good use in the series of massive tone-poems such as *A Hero's Life* or *Death and Transfiguration*. These in turn equipped him with the ability to write opera on something like a Wagnerian scale.

Salome was a turning point. Oscar Wilde's play is a self-consciously 'artificial' piece of work. Strauss, however brings all he had learned from Wagner to make it a gripping document of psycho-pathology. Its companion piece, *Elektra* likewise essays madness in an ancient mythic setting; these are the extreme points of Strauss at his most post-Wagnerian. As time went on, Strauss turned, or returned, to the example of Mozart, who had been the inspiration for some of his earliest compositions. *Der Rosenkavalier*, the greatest result of Strauss's collaboration with playwright Hugo von Hofmannsthal, is set in a highly Romanticised, late eighteenth century



1910 postcard of Richard Strauss.
Source unknown/Wikimedia Commons.

Vienna. In works like *Ariadne auf Naxos* or *Capriccio* he moved even closer to a neo-classical manner; at the end of his life, in the face of the horrors of World War II, Strauss took great solace from the example of Mozart in instrumental works like the Oboe Concerto.

Strauss, like Mozart, loved the human voice. Strauss and Mozart were married to singers, and some of their greatest works celebrate just that. Strauss was an inveterate composer of song, and even the opulence of the *Four Last Songs* never obscures his intense sensitivity to the beauty of the voice. The apparent differences between *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Salome* are largely superficial.

ABOUT DER ROSENKAVALIER SUITE

Gordon Kalton Williams writes:

Der Rosenkavalier (1911) was the second of Richard Strauss's operas written in collaboration with librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal. The title (*The Knight of the Rose*) derives from a scene in the second act whereby a knighted emissary presents a silver rose to a woman on behalf of her suitor. Such a custom never existed, but that is one of the charms of Hofmannsthal's libretto: its delightful mixture of fact and fantasy.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

When it first appeared, *Der Rosenkavalier* was seen by many critics as a retreat from the daring atonal modernism of Strauss's two immediately previous stage works *Salome* and *Elektra*. Strauss had next wanted to write a 'Mozartian opera', but *Der Rosenkavalier* has a sumptuousness which exceeds classicism. Its plot derives from a comedy written by a contemporary of Beaumarchais, who wrote *Le Mariage de Figaro*, but this 'comedy for music' is elevated by character portraiture that has rarely been surpassed in opera. It remains Strauss's best-loved work.

Der Rosenkavalier, set in Vienna in 1740, tells how the 17-year-old Octavian outwits the bullish Baron Ochs auf Lerchenau in his quest for the hand of the young convent girl, Sophie, daughter of the nouveau-riche Herr von Faninal. But that is not all: it is a story of the magic of love at first sight; of nostalgia, self-sacrifice and the passing of time. Octavian, the 'Knight', first lays eyes on Sophie during the presentation of the Rose. Strauss's orchestra wonderfully expresses the slow-motion intoxication of the moment. Octavian must first be given up by his older lover, the Feldmarschallin, Marie-Thérèse, who has known all along, somewhere inside, that one day he would fall for someone his own age, and whose proud surrender is the background for the Trio which climaxes the opera.

Strauss's score retains a Mozartian intention in the level of musical beauty which is maintained no matter the situation. The 'Viennese waltzes' heard throughout, though anachronistic (such waltzes were not to be heard until the century after the action takes place!), are of such a quality that, by this opera alone, Richard Strauss could almost challenge his unrelated namesake for the title of 'Waltz King'.

Such was the popularity of *Der Rosenkavalier* in the years after its premiere that a silent film version of it was made in the 1920s, Strauss agreeing to a reworking of his score as accompaniment. Strauss made his own arrangements of two waltz sequences in 1934 and 1944. Finally, in 1945, he sanctioned the making of this suite.

It opens, as does the opera, with music played before the curtain depicting the bedroom antics of Octavian and the Marschallin. The suite then segues into the 'Presentation of the Rose' music, with its sugar ice harmonies played by flutes, harp, celeste and solo violins. A short transition brings us to Baron Ochs's all-too-creamy waltz, and then to the Trio music from the end of the opera.

What we miss in this orchestral version is perhaps not so much the immense bitter-sweet wisdom of the plot (of which the nostalgic use of trumpet solo at this point is a faint reminder), but Strauss's ravishing writing for women's voices. With Octavian sung by a woman, this final Trio provides one of the most ravishing intertwinings of female voices in the opera house. However, even without the singers, we are still entranced by Strauss's seamless, ever-enriching melody.

The suite is then rounded off with music from Ochs's humiliation in Act III and a recall of the vaunting leaps of the opening horn motive. It is called 'the knight of the rose' after all.

Gordon Kalton Williams/Symphony Australia © 2000

Strauss's suite from *Der Rosenkavalier* is scored for 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (3rd doubling cor anglais), 3 clarinets, bass clarinet and 3 bassoons (3rd doubling contrabassoon); 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones and tuba; timpani, percussion, 2 harps, piano and strings.

The opera was premiered on 26 January 1911 at Königliches Opernhaus, Dresden, conducted by Ernst von Schuch.

The Sydney Symphony first performed this suite in August 1947, led by Chief Conductor Eugene Goossens.

Other notable performances include those led by Alfred Wallenstein (1959), Ernest Llewellyn (1962), Franz-Paul Decker (1981), Gareth Southgate (1997 Symphony Under the Stars), Lorin Maazel (2002), Principal Conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy (2010) and Umberto Clerici (2022).

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT MAURICE RAVEL

In some exasperation, Ravel once asked a friend, ‘Doesn’t it ever occur to those people that I can be “artificial” by nature?’ 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’.

His passion for precision and order was also in evidence in his fastidious, even dandyish, appearance, but he was a man of great courage. In the First World War, despite being 39 years old, short and underweight, he cared for the wounded and after some months became a military truck driver. With his truck, ‘Adelaïde’, he faced a number of dangers, and for the rest of his life suffered terrible insomnia. (This experience may also have contributed to the debilitating aphasia of his last years when he could no longer write his own name, let alone the music which still rang in his head). His great Piano Trio, written during the War, puts paid to any idea that Ravel’s music lacks an emotional heart.

In 1909 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’s works are frequently, exquisite simulacra of existing styles and forms, or pieces ‘in the manner of’ various composers. In *Le tombeau de Couperin*, he pays homage to the style of the French Baroque master. In *Gaspard de la nuit* he set out to write his version of Lisztian piano music, wryly suggesting that he ‘might have overdone it’. His *Shéhérazade* songs evoke a typical early-20th century view of Asia where orchestration and subject matter relate directly to Russian music, especially that of Rimsky-Korsakov.

Ravel was born in south-western France 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* 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’.



Maurice Ravel c.1925. Via Bibliothèque nationale de France/ Wikimedia Commons.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT *LA VALSE*

Yvonne Frindle writes:

Over a period of 120 years the waltz evolved from sturdy rusticity through elegant whirling to intoxicating sumptuousness – everyone from Mozart to Richard Strauss took a turn on the dance floor. Then World War I crushed the society that danced in three-quarter time, and the waltz became a thing of the past. For Ravel – fascinated by the past and by dancing – this could only have made the waltz more irresistible.

In 1911 Ravel began to toy with the idea of a work for two pianos capturing the essence of Vienna through various aspects of the waltz. But Ravel didn't write *Wien*, as it was to be called. When war broke out he headed to the front, driving lorries because he was too short and slight for the regular army. After the armistice he completed something quite different: *La Valse* – a choreographic poem for orchestra.

La Valse is a tribute to 'An Imperial Court, around 1855', a court in which the Strausses are kings. Ravel imagined the music as 'a sort of apotheosis of the Viennese waltz', associated in his mind with 'the impression of a fantastic, fatal whirling'. The effect is achieved through a simple device: the crescendo. In this respect it is similar to *Bolero*, but instead of one long overwhelming crescendo, *La Valse* offers two.

The music begins with a grumble – a muted double bass section playing tremolos and ominous plucked notes. Ravel's scenario for his 'choreographic poem' describes eddying clouds that part from time to time, offering fleeting glimpses of waltzing couples. Bassoons, horns and clarinets join in...harps and trembling strings...all is low, all is muted. This is the waltz viewed from a distance, each intimate couple in its own private world.

But we cannot stay voyeurs for long – the mists disperse to reveal a brilliantly lit ballroom and a whirling crowd. The music embarks on a chain of waltzes that capture the verve of Johann Strauss, the opulence of Richard, and the frenzy of the ballroom. 'I'm waltzing frantically,' wrote Ravel.

The fantastic melodic invention – sophisticated and volatile – is matched by scintillating orchestral effects. But the potential of Ravel's huge orchestra is kept in reserve – we are overwhelmed by its exquisite colours before we are overwhelmed by its power. By the time Ravel brings on his second crescendo, shorter and more turbulent, we are completely intoxicated.

Not all were intoxicated, however. Sergei Diaghilev of the Ballets Russes, offered this music for a ballet, rejected it as too symphonic and lacking in choreographic variety. He said it wasn't a ballet but 'the portrait of a ballet'. In doing so he lost the friendship of the composer who had created *Daphnis et Chloé* for his company. *La Valse* reached the ballet stage in the end, but the music was first performed in the concert hall and it is there that its exhilarating momentum and surging climaxes continue to sweep us away. Pre-war Vienna may have waltzed itself into fatal oblivion but *La Valse* whirls on.

Yvonne Frindle © 2005 (abridged by permission)

La Valse is scored for 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes (3rd doubling cor anglais), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon; 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones and tuba; timpani, percussion, 2 harps and strings.

It was first performed on 12 December 1920 in Paris, with Camille Chevillard conducting the Lamoureux Orchestra of Paris.

The Sydney Symphony first performed this work in March 1939, under conductor Antal Dorati, who also conducted it in 1966. Other notable performances include those with guest conductors Walter Susskind (1952), André Cluytens (1964) Miguel Harth-Bedoya (2012), Charles Dutoit (2017) and Pietari Inkinen (2022); and those led by our Chief Conductors Eugene Goossens (1950, 1952), Dean Dixon (1967), Willem van Otterloo (1975), Louis Frémaux (1982), Stuart Challender (1988, including on our USA Tour) and Gianluigi Gelmetti (2005, 2006 and 2008, including on our European tour).

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Library

BUSINESS SERVICES

Sarah Falzarano
Director of Finance
Daniela Ramirez
Finance Manager
Laura Soutter
Payroll Manager
Jonathan Zaw
IT Manager
Alex Hong
Assistant Accountant
Anel Jansen van Vuuren
Accounts Payable Officer

DEVELOPMENT

Jennifer Drysdale
Director of Development
Rachel Shafran
Development Manager
Benjamin Moh
Head of Corporate Relations
Fleur Griffiths
Head of Philanthropy
Patricia Laksmono
Events Manager
Gabriela Postma
Philanthropy Officer
Alison Eom
Philanthropy Coordinator

LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT

John Nolan
Director of Learning & Engagement
Daniella Garnerio
Program Manager, Schools & Families
Giulian Favrin
*Program Manager, Artist Development
& Public Engagement*
Alice Jarman-Powis
Learning & Engagement Coordinator

MARKETING

Charles Buchanan
Director of Marketing

Alexandra Barlow
Head of Communications & Content
Craig Abercrombie
Content Producer
Elizabeth Arrigo
Communications Manager
Hugh Robertson
Editorial Manager
Brittany Wyper
Social Media Specialist
Tina Ma
Publicity Coordinator
Andrea Reitano
Head of Growth Marketing
Nicola Solomou
Senior Marketing Manager
Katelyn Del Rosario
Digital Marketing Specialist
Amy Zhou
Graphic Designer
Laura Dang
Marketing Coordinator
Lynn McLaughlin
Head of Lifecycle Marketing
Douglas Emery
Senior Marketing Manager & Insights Analyst
Elinor Hillock
Database Specialist
Olivia Georgas
Loyalty Marketing Coordinator

Customer Relations

Adriana Law
Interim Customer Relations Leader
Meg Chaseling
Customer Relations Coordinator
Jennifer Calacoci
Customer Relations Team Lead

OPERATIONS & PRODUCTION

Kerry-Anne Cook
Director of Operations & Production
Aeva O’Dea
Operations Manager
Shanell Bielawa, Elissa Seed
Production Managers
Jacinta Dockrill
Deputy Production Manager
Jordan Blackwell, Jess Hughes,
Rory Knott, Matthew Landi,
Harvey Lynn, Ella Tomkins
Production Assistants

ORCHESTRA MANAGEMENT

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

PEOPLE & CULTURE

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

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