

YING FANG SINGS SONGS OF THE AUVERGNE

8–10 OCTOBER 2026

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House



“SYDNEY”
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“ORCHESTRA”

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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 enjoy 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

YING FANG SINGS
SONGS OF THE AUVERGNE

DONALD RUNNICLES CONDUCTS BRAHMS

DONALD RUNNICLES conductor

DARIUS MILHAUD (1892–1974)
*Le Bœuf sur le Toit** (1919–20)

JOSEPH CANTELOUBE (1879–1957)
Songs of the Auvergne (selections) (1923–1930)
L'Antouèno (Antoine)
Pastourelle (Pastoral dialogue)
L'aïo de rotso (Water from the spring)
Baillèro
Passo pel prat (Come through the meadow)
Malurous qu'o uno fenno (Unhappy is he who has a wife)
YING FANG soprano

INTERVAL*

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)
Symphony No.4 in E minor, Op.98 (1885)
i. Allegro non troppo
ii. Andante moderato
iii. Allegro giocoso
iv. Allegro energico e passionato

**Friday & Saturday only*

Thursday 8 October, 7pm
Symphony Hour
Friday 9 October, 7pm
Symphonic Fridays
Saturday 10 October, 2pm
Great Classics
Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

Pre-concert talk
By Natalie Shea, at 6.15pm
in the Northern Foyer
(Thurs & Fri) and 1.15pm
on the Lounge Level (Sat).

**Estimated durations
(Thursday)**
Canteloube – 20 minutes
Brahms – 40 minutes
The concert will run for approx. 1 hour

**Estimated durations
(Friday & Saturday)**
Milhaud – 15 minutes
Canteloube – 20 minutes
Interval – 20 minutes
Brahms – 40 minutes
The concert will run for approx.
1 hour and 45 minutes

ABC Classic
Saturday's concert will be recorded
for broadcast on 29 October, and
streaming online.

Cover image
Ying Fang. Photo by Johannes Ifkovits.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the
many lands on which we work and perform.
We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

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YOUR CONCERT AT A GLANCE

DARIUS MILHAUD (1892–1974)

Le Bœuf sur le Toit* (1919–20)

*Friday & Saturday only

Milhaud's piece is 15-minute response to his first-hand experience of Brazilian popular music, which he thought of as a soundtrack to an imaginary silent film.

It appeared in 1919, the year that saw the Spartacist uprising in Berlin, proclamation of the Grand Canyon National Park and mutiny on the HMAS Australia in Fremantle.

Contemporary music included Elgar's Cello Concerto, Sibelius's Fifth Symphony and Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges*.



Darius Milhaud in 1923.
Photo by Agence de presse Meurisse.

JOSEPH CANTELOUBE (1879–1957)

Songs of the Auvergne (selections) (1923–1930)

Marie-Joseph Canteloube de Malaret's *Songs of the Auvergne* are colourful arrangements of folk songs from the mountainous region of central France that deal mostly in love – well, sexual desire – and loss.

He composed five sets of such songs between 1923 and 1930, a time that saw the rise of fascism, the Wall Street Crash and extension of women's suffrage in many places.

Contemporary music included Schoenberg's Wind Quintet, Ravel's *Bolero* and Stravinsky's *Œdipus Rex*.



Joseph Canteloube in 1942. ©
Palazzetto Bru Zane / fonds Leduc

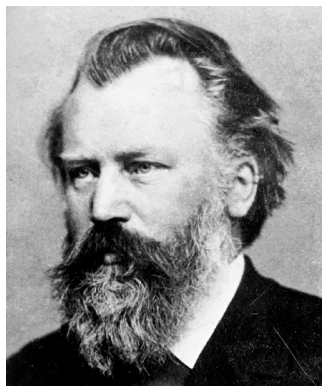
JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

Symphony No.4 in E minor, Op.98 (1885)

Brahms largely avoided the Romantic lyricism of the Third Symphony in his final work in the genre, opting for a rigorously organised work, especially in the outer movements where, like Beethoven, he spins arcs of music out of seemingly little material. The inner movements include a haunting *Andante moderato* and a rambunctious scherzo.

It premiered in 1886, the year that saw Benz's gasoline-driven car, the drafting of the Berne convention, and the first meeting of the Federal Council of Australasia.

Contemporary music included Saint-Saëns's 'Organ' Symphony, Richard Strauss's *Aus Italien* and Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina*.



Brahms in the 1880s.
Photo by Erwin Hanfstaengl.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DONALD RUNNICLES conductor

Over a career spanning 45 years, Sir Donald Runnicles has built his reputation on enduring relationships with several of the world's most significant opera companies and orchestras. He is especially celebrated for his interpretations of the Romantic and post-Romantic repertoire which are core to his musical identity.

The 2025-2026 season is one of transition: it marks both his final season as Music Director of the Deutsche Oper Berlin as well as his first season as Chief Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic. He also continues to serve as Music Director of the Grand Teton Music Festival and as Principal Guest Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Sir Donald concludes his tenure with the Deutsche Oper Berlin with Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer*, new productions of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* by Michael Thalheimer and Korngold's *Violanta* by David Hermann, all culminating in two cycles of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in a Stefan Herheim production that he premiered with the company. Over the course of his sixteen-year tenure, Sir Donald cemented himself as one of the central figures in the German cultural scene.

In Sir Donald's inaugural season as Chief Conductor with the Dresden Philharmonic in 25/26, he leads ten weeks of programs including a concertante version of Strauss' *Elektra*, highlights his British heritage with performances of William Walton's Viola Concerto with British violist Timothy Ridout, and Scottish composer Sir James MacMillan's Symphony No.4 (originally composed to celebrate Sir Donald's 60th birthday), and concludes the season with a ten-city Asia tour of Japan and Korea.

He returns to conduct four weeks as Principal Guest Conductor of the Sydney Symphony with performances of Shostakovich's Symphony No.5 and Violin Concerto No.1 with violinist Leonidas Kavakos, as well as Tchaikovsky's Symphony No.5. Guest engagements for the 25/26 season include performances with San Francisco Symphony, the BBC Scottish Symphony and his debut with the Philharmonia Orchestra in London.

Sir Donald spends his summers as Music Director of the Grand Teton Music Festival. This eight-week festival of symphonic and

chamber music, five of which are conducted by Runnicles, takes place amid the breathtaking beauty of Grand Teton National Park.

Past chief artistic leadership roles include 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).

A regular guest conductor with the Chicago Symphony, Runnicles' performance history with the orchestra dates back to 1997. Over a decade-long relationship with the Vienna State Opera, he led new productions of *Parsifal*, Britten's *Billy Budd* and *Peter Grimes*, as well as pieces from the core repertoire. He's conducted the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, and the Orchestre de Paris, among many of the world's leading orchestras.

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.

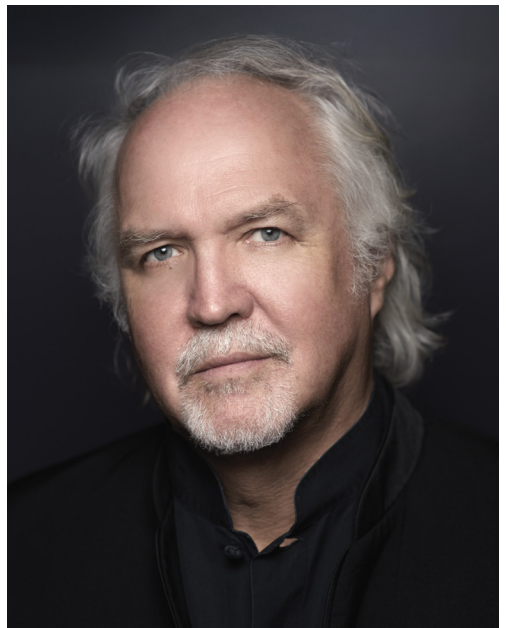


Photo by Simon Pauly

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

YING FANG soprano

Chinese soprano Ying Fang has been praised as ‘indispensable at the Met in Mozart’ (*The New York Times*) and for ‘a voice that can stop time, pure and rich and open and consummately expressive’ (*Financial Times*). This season, Ms. Fang makes her role debut as the title role in a new production of Handel’s *Theodora* at Grand Théâtre de Genève and returns to The Metropolitan Opera as Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* as well as Lyric Opera of Chicago as Norina in *Don Pasquale*. She continues her illustrious concert career in performances with NHK Symphony conducted by Fabio Luisi, Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by Donald Runnicles and the Vienna Philharmonic.

Last season, Ms. Fang made her house debut at Houston Grand Opera in the US premiere of Robert Wilson’s staged version of Mozart’s arrangement of Handel’s celebrated *Messiah*, conducted by Patrick Summers, and sang Ilia in *Idomeneo* with Wiener Staatsoper. In the US, she joined the San Francisco Symphony and Manfred Honeck for Mozart’s Requiem alongside mezzo soprano Sasha Cooke and appeared with The Philadelphia Orchestra and Nézet-Séguin for Mahler’s Symphony No.2 in both Philadelphia and at Carnegie Hall. She also recorded Mahler’s Symphony No.2 with the Pittsburgh Symphony with Honeck, and joined the Manchester Camerata and Gábor Takács-Nagy for an all-Mozart concert, which was released by Chandos Records. Further highlights include Mahler’s Symphony No.8 with the Vienna Philharmonic and Andris Nelsons, Festival d’Aix-en-Provence as Pamina in Simon McBurney’s production of *Die Zauberflöte* under conductor Raphaël Pichon, and Baden-Baden Festival with Yannick Nézet-Séguin for performances of Mozart’s Mass in C minor and Requiem and a lieder recital. She also appeared at the Verbier Festival in Bach’s Mass in B minor and made her role debut as Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* alongside Sir Bryn Terfel. At the Salzburg Festival, she joined Riccardo Muti in Bruckner’s Mass No.3 in F minor.

Ms. Fang has performed with conductors James Levine, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Andrew Davis, Andris Nelsons, Gustavo Dudamel, Raphaël Pichon, Carlo Rizzi, Alan Gilbert, James Gaffigan, Gianandrea Noseda, Emmanuelle Haïm,

Nathalie Stutzmann, Manfred Honeck, Philippe Jordan, Robin Ticciati and Sir Donald Runnicles. She has sung at the Wiener Staatsoper, the Metropolitan Opera, Opera national de Paris and Lyric Opera of Chicago. Concert engagements have included appearances with the San Francisco, Atlanta and Pittsburgh symphony orchestras, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and National Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Fang has given performances at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center as well as Verbier Festival and Festival d’Aix-en-Provence.

A native of Ningbo, China, Ms. Fang is the recipient of the Martin E Segal Award, the Hildegard Behrens Foundation Award, the Rose Bampton Award of The Sullivan Foundation, The Opera Index Award and First Prize of the Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition. In 2009, she became one of the youngest singers to win one of China’s most prestigious awards – the China Golden Bell Award for Music. She has been hailed as ‘the most gifted Chinese soprano of her generation’ by *Ningbo Daily*. Ms. Fang holds a Master’s degree and an Artist Diploma in Opera Study from The Juilliard School and a Bachelor’s degree from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. She is a former member of the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



Photo by Eduardus Lee

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT DARIUS MILHAUD

Born in Marseilles, Milhaud grew up in a long-established Jewish family in Aix-en-Provence, and never lost his love for that beautiful part of southern France, its culture and language.

He studied at the Paris Conservatoire, where his composition teacher was composer and organist Charles-Marie Widor, and where he met at least some of the five other composers with whom he was bracketed in 1920 as ‘Les Six’.

In his mid-twenties Milhaud took a job as secretary to Paul Claudel, the famous French poet who was also a diplomat and was ambassador to Brazil from 1917 to 1919. Milhaud’s life-long love of vernacular (and non-European) music was fuelled by the experience, and one of his first masterpieces *Saudades do Brasil* dates from this time, as does *Le Bœuf sur le toit*.

He first heard jazz in London, of all places, but a trip to the United States a few years later saw Milhaud fully embrace the music that he heard in Harlem nightclubs: his ballet *La création du monde* is one of the first attempts to fuse jazz and western styles as it purportedly evokes ‘African’ creation myths. Such experiments weren’t universally welcomed: Saint-Saëns thought that such music would ‘open the gates of the lunatic asylum.’ Milhaud himself explored such idioms knowing the dangers of composing music of ‘perfumed billows, rocketing pyrotechnics, shimmering finery, vapours and wistfulness.’

Complementing his love of popular music, Milhaud also steeped himself in that of the European avant-garde; he conducted both the French and British premieres of Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire*, and in his own music cultivated bitonality – the simultaneous use of two different keys to create a pervasive sense of dissonance. David Garrett has noted that:

The atmosphere this creates can be compared to the blend of shapes and colours in the painting of another artist who worked in Provence, Cézanne. Cézanne liked to paint the same object from many different angles and in many different lights. Milhaud related his inclination to bitonal writing to a recurrent experience he had at night in the country, where he felt rays and tremors converging on him from the sky, and below ground ‘a thousand simultaneous musics rushing towards me in all directions.’

Milhaud’s posthumous reputation rests on a relatively small number of works but he was one of the most prolific composers, writing in almost all genres including incidental music for film and stage. His democratic spirit extended to instrumentation; like Paul Hindemith, he provided any number of works, chamber and orchestral, that feature instruments commonly overlooked by other composers.

As Jews, Milhaud and his wife had to flee France in 1940 when the Nazis occupied the country. Emigrating to America, Milhaud found a welcoming home in California, teaching at Mills College. His students over the years included post-war avant-garde lions such as Karlheinz Stockhausen and Iannis Xenakis, minimalists Phillip Glass and Steve Reich, jazz great Dave Brubeck, and the doyen of late 20th-century popular song, Burt Bacharach.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT *LE BŒUF SUR LE TOIT*

Milhaud composed *Le Bœuf sur le toit* in 1919 in response to Carnival celebrations in Rio de Janeiro, where bands played and people danced in the street. That year he wrote, pseudonymously:

there was a great deal to be learnt from those animated rhythms, those tunes played again and again throughout the night and whose greatness lies in their sameness. I may write a ballet about the carnival in Rio which will be called *Le Bœuf sur le toit*, from the name of the samba that the band was playing this evening

Some have seen this explanation as, in part a joke, and several other explanations have been advanced for the origin of the title in folk-tales, Parisian slang and so on.

Milhaud also left further interpretation open when he said that he conceived of the piece, not as a ballet, but as a sound-track to any imaginary Charlie Chaplin film. But the music's provenance is largely Ibero-American, with, as Anna Goldsworthy has noted, 'folk tunes, tangos, *maxixes*, sambas and a Portuguese *fado*' and short quotations of works by a number of identifiable Brazilian composers like Ernesto Nazareth.

In 1920 *Le Bœuf sur le toit* did indeed become a ballet, with a scenario by Jean Cocteau and design by Raoul Dufy, and cast including the Fratellini clowns and Circus Medrano performers. The plot, such as it was, is set in a seedy bar patronised by a boxer, a crossdresser, various stock character 'ladies' and others, including a policeman who gets his head cut off – temporarily – by a ceiling fan.

The show gave its name to a famous bar in Paris, and several like it elsewhere.



Darius Milhaud in 1923. Photo by Agence de presse Meurisse.

Milhaud's score calls for 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), oboe, 2 clarinets and bassoon; 2 horns, 2 trumpets and trombone; percussion and strings.

It received its premiere as the music for a ballet staged by Jean Cocteau and conducted by Vladimir Golschmann at the Comédie des Champs-Élysées, Paris, on 21 February 1920.

The Sydney Symphony first performed work in April 1972, in a Youth concert conducted by Antonio de Almeida. We also performed excerpts from it for *A Night at the Speakeasy* in June 2018, conducted by Guy Noble.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT CANTELOUBE AND FOLK SONG

Industrialisation and rapid advances in communication during the nineteenth century threatened the existence of rural cultures throughout Europe. Composers as different as Bartók, Grainger, Vaughan Williams, Holst and Canteloube responded by collecting and notating folk song. In all cases some aspects of the folk idioms to which they were exposed influenced their own work, and each composer made versions of these songs for an urban concert-going audience.

The Auvergne, a region in central France had by virtue of geography maintained its cultural and linguistic independence from Paris until the seventeenth century. Surrounded by the mountains of the Massif Central, the valleys of the Auvergne were very difficult to invade and easy to defend; each hilltop seems to have a Romanesque castle watching over a small stone village. As a result, the local language, Auvergnat (a dialect of Occitans, related more closely to Provençal than to standard French), folk song and customs survived until relatively recently.

Joseph Canteloube was born in the region, and his earliest musical education was as a pianist, studying with an elderly Polish woman who had been a pupil of Chopin. He went to Paris to study at the Schola Cantorum in 1906 to study with Vincent D'Indy, whom he had met in 1901 and who encouraged Canteloube's interest in folk song.

Canteloube's original works, which date from early in his career, include a number of operas on regional and national themes: *Le mas* (The Farmhouse) tells of two Auvergnat brothers, while *Vercingétorix* celebrates the eponymous hero of the Gauls.

As his career went on, however, Canteloube spent more time on the collection and setting of folk songs from various French provinces, but particularly his native Auvergne. As he wrote:

The songs of the Auvergne no doubt form the largest, greatest and most varied collection of folk music that exists in France. Like those from other provinces, they fall into just a small number of types: songs based on history or legend; anecdotes; songs about love, marriage, children; work songs; songs of celebration, songs for the open air; dancing songs.



Joseph Canteloube in 1942. © Palazzetto Bru Zane / fonds Leduc

Where some composers, notably among the English, tended to smooth the rough edges of the songs they realised, Canteloube, like Grainger, seems to have sought to capture the vital and earthy aspects of the raw material. In the five series of *Songs of the Auvergne*, composed between 1923 and 1930, Canteloube's orchestration is always colourful (and, interestingly, uses the piano where we might expect a harp) with particularly exuberant wind writing. Richard Langham Smith quotes Canteloube's justification for such elaborate settings:

Just because the peasant sings without accompaniment, that is not sufficient reason to imitate him. When the peasant sings at his work, or during the harvest, there is an accompaniment which surrounds his song which would not be felt by those whose interest is purely academic. Only poets and artists will feel it... It is nature herself, the earth which makes this, and the peasant and his song cannot be separated from this... If you suppress this atmosphere, you lose a large part of the poetry. Only the immaterial art of music can evoke the necessary atmosphere, with its timbres, its rhythms and its impalpable, moving harmonies.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

L'Antoueno (Antoine) (2nd Series, No.2)

The ebullient 'L'Antouèno' sees a young girl preparing to go to market with her lover, pausing only for a short bout of double entendre.

Quond onorèn o lo fièïro, ié!
Quond onorèn o lo fièïro, ô!
Li onorèn tuoï dous, l'Antouèno!
Li onorèn tuoï dous!

Croumporèn uno baquetto, ié!
Croumporèn uno baquetto, ô!
La croumporèn touï dous, l'Antouèno!
La croumporèn touï dous!

La baquetto séro méouno, ié!
La baquetto séro méouno, ô!
Lèi cornoï sèroun pèr bous, l'Antouèno!
Lèi cornoï sèroun pèr bous!

When we go to the fair, hey!
When we go to the fair, ho!
We'll go together, Anthony!
We'll go as a couple.

We'll buy a cow, hey!
We'll buy a cow, ho!
We'll buy it together, Anthony!
We'll buy it as a couple.

The cow will be mine, hey!
The cow will be mine, ho!
The horns will be yours, Anthony!
The horns will be yours!

Pastourelle (Pastoral dialogue) (2nd Series, No.1)

This 'pastorale' uses the common dialogue form, in which the lovers who are parted by a river sing to each other. This one, though, has a nasty twist.

'È passo dè dessai!
È passo dellaï l'àiio!
Bendras olprès de ièu,
Què d'ofaïré parlorèn,
È lou restan del jjour
N'en parlorèn d'amour!'

'Né pouodi pas passa!
Couci bouos qué iéu passi?
N'ai pas de pount d'arcados
È n'ai pas dè batéu,
Ni máï dè pastourel
Qué mè siasco fidèl!'

'Aurias léu un batéu
Sè tu èros poulido!
Aurias un pount d'arcados,
Aurias un pastourel
Qué té serio fidèl
È máï d'jusqu'al toumbel!'

'Hey! come over here!
Come across of the river!
Come over to this bank
and we'll talk of serious things
And then for the rest of the time
We can talk about love!'

'But I can't possibly cross over
What should I do?
There's no bridge over the water
and I don't have a boat
Or a shepherd boy
Who'll love me truly!'

You'd soon have a boat
if only you were pretty
and an arched bridge to cross
and a shepherd-boy as well
A boy who would love you truly
for the rest of your life!'

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

L'äio de rotso (Water from the spring) (1st Series, No.3a)

Among the dancing songs is the bourrée, a lively dance usually in triple time, native to the region.

L'äio dè rotso té foro mourir, filhoto,
l'äio dè rotso té foro mourir!
Nè té cal pas bèir' oquèl äio,
mès cal prendr'un couot d'oquèl' äio dè bi!

S'uno filhoto sè bouol morida, pitchouno,
s'uno filhoto sè bouol morida,
li cal pas douna d'oquèl äio dè rotso,
äimaro miliour oquèl'äio dè bi!

Pure spring-water will kill you, young girl,
the spring-water will kill you!
Don't drink pure water,
a cup of good wine will do you good!

When a young girl wants to get married, little one,
when a young girl wants to get married,
you mustn't give her pure spring-water,
she'll love much better after a cup of good wine

Bailèro (1st Series, No.2)

in 'Bailèro', one of the most famous of the songs, a shepherd and his girlfriend are also separated by a river across which they sing their longing for each other, accompanied by some of Canteloube's most sensuous scoring.

Pastré, dé délaï l'äio
as gaïré dé boun tems,
dio lou bailèro, lèrô?
E n'ai pa gaïré, è dio, tu,
bailèro, lèrô?

Pastré, lou prat faï flour,
l'i cal garda toun troupel,
dio lou bailèro, lèrô.
L'herb' ès pu fin' ol' prat d'oïci,
bailèro, lèrô.

Pastré, couci forai,
en o bal io lou bel riou,
dio lou bailèro, lèrô.
Espéromé, té baô circa,
bailèro, lèrô!

Shepherd on the other side of the river,
you can't be having much of a good time,
sing bailero, lero?
No, I'm not. What about you,
bailero, lero?

Shepherd, the meadows are in flower,
come and watch your flock over here,
sing bailero, lero.
The grass is better in the fields on this side,
bailero, lero.

Shepherd, the river runs between us,
and I can't get across,
sing bailero, lero.
Then wait and I'll come to you,
bailero, lero!

Passo pel prat (Come through the meadow) (3rd Series, No.2)

'Passo del prat' is a languid invitation to the beloved to make love, or at least conversation, in the meadow, or maybe the woods.

Lo lo lo lo...
Passo pel prat, bèloto,
lèu possorai pel buous;
Quon li sèras, pouloto,
M'èspèroras sé vuous!
Nous porlorèn, filhoto,
Nous porlorèn toui dous;
Qu'os toun omour, drouloto,
Què mé foro hurous!

La la la la ...
Come through the meadow, pretty one,
I'll come through the woods;
when you get there, sweet one,
wait for me, if you like!

We'll talk, my lass,
we'll talk, the two of us;
for it's your love, little one,
which will make me happy!

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

Malurous qu'o uno fenno (Unhappy is he who has a wife) (3rd Series, No.5)

One of the dance-songs, and with a characteristic oboe solo between verses, 'Malurous qu'o uno fenno' is a lively variation on the 'can't live with them/can't live without them' theme, though the singer concludes that freedom is best of all.

Malurous qu'o uno fenno,
Malurous qué n'o cat!
Qué n'o cat n'en bou uno,
Qué n'o uno n'en bou pas!
Tradèra, ladèri dèra!

Urouzo lo fenno
Qu'o l'omé qué li cau!
Urouz' inquèro maito
Oquèlo qué n'o cat!
Tradèra, ladèri dèra!

Sorry the man who has a wife,
sorry the man who has none!
Whoever doesn't have one, wants one,
Whoever has one, doesn't want one!
Tra la la ...

Happy the woman
who has the man she needs!
But even happier
the woman who has none!
Tra la la ...



Panorama from the summit of the Puy de Dôme, an extinct volcano in the Auvergne region of central France.

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.

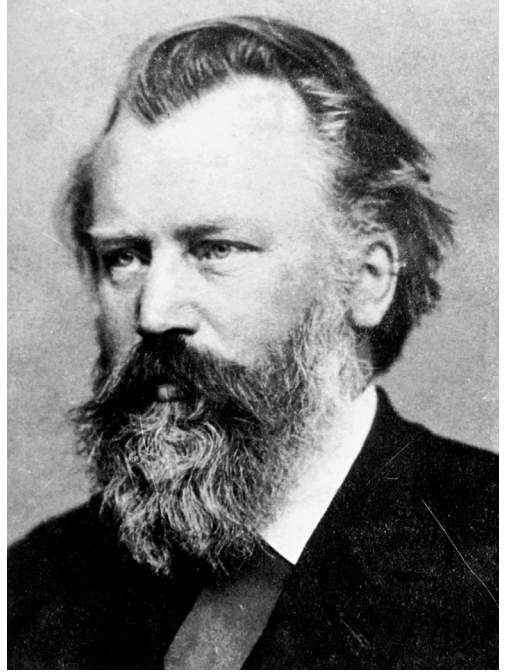
He was born, in 1833, in Hamburg, in modest circumstances to a mismatched couple: Christiane and Johann Jakob Brahms, a local session-musician. His early promise as a pianist was used to augment the family finances; the 15-year old played dance music in the dockside taverns (read: brothels) of his home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



Brahms in the 1880s. Photo by Erwin Hanfstaengl.

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 BRAHMS'S FOURTH SYMPHONY

As was his wont, in 1885 Brahms convened a group of trusted friends to listen to a play-through of the Fourth Symphony, with the composer and his friend Ignaz Brüll at the piano. Feedback from knowledgeable people had been invaluable throughout his career, and on this occasion the listeners included the conductor Hans Richter and the critic Eduard Hanslick. But this time the response was a baffled silence. Even Hanslick, Brahms' greatest supporter in print, tried to joke that he felt like he had been 'beaten up by two intelligent people' at the end of the first movement. Later, after the work's politely-received Viennese premiere, a less-well-disposed wit composed a verse to the theme of the first movement to the effect that Brahms had run out of ideas.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The Third Symphony had, of course enjoyed an unqualified success and it says much for Brahms' artistic integrity that he was prepared to take a quite different approach in the new work; that the Fourth was written over not one but two summers suggests that Brahms had to work hard at it.

So, what baffled the listeners in the first movement? In fact the 'run out of ideas' guy was wrong, but nevertheless onto something, in that a large chunk of Brahms' first theme consists of practically no material: two chains of thirds (and sixths, their inversion) are sounded in a rhythm that consists entirely of a repeated short-long pattern. Eventually a more elaborate motif is sounded, but then immediately repeated in sequence. The thirds provide the basis for a fanfare-like transition into the second theme, and here again Brahms goes against convention with a melody that is not, as expected, 'lyrical' but is much more assertive, sounded in the orchestra's tenor register, and again based on sequences of a repeated rhythmic cell (long, long, short, short, short). Fragmentary patterns of thirds provide the accompaniment. All of which is to say that Brahms was writing in, to the Viennese, a disturbingly abstract and 'modern' way. Haydn, of course, and Beethoven - especially in the Fifth Symphony - had worked in just this way, and it is no accident that such rigorous design attracted the approval of Schoenberg in his 1933 lecture, *Brahms the Progressive*. But it put Brahms out of step with current musical fashion in Vienna.

The piece is frequently intensely contrapuntal (and thus requires a 'classical' orchestra), reflecting Brahms' life-long love of the Baroque, but there are intensely poetic moments. The recapitulation of the first movement's main theme should, by convention, be a rhetorically powerful moment of arrival; Brahms instead dwells on a distant but radiant C major chord and then, radically, continues to develop his themes. The second movement is in what has sometimes been called Brahms' 'bardic' manner. The young Richard Strauss, who regarded the 'gigantic work' as 'new and original in its greatness of conception and invention, its genius in treatment of form', captured the slow movement's essence in his image of a 'funeral procession moving across moonlit heights'.

This movement, which relies heavily on mysterious wind scoring and the occasional archaic inflections of the Phrygian mode could not offer a greater contrast to the scherzo, with what Karl Geiringer calls its 'sturdy gaiety'. In two, rather than three, beats to a bar, it has a rustic air, but its most curious feature is the way in which Brahms, again creating music out of nothing, offers a serious of monolithic chords, octaves apart, that interrupt the rhythmic drive of the movement towards its end. These chords, however, also pave the way for the finale, in which Brahms abandons any vestige of classical precedent, instead using the Baroque form of the passacaglia, in which a repeated harmonic pattern, or ground, serves as a vehicle for variations. Brahms' ground is a series of rhythmical equal chords (adumbrated at the end of the scherzo) over which he elaborates a movement unlike anything heard in symphonic music before.

In 1886, Vienna's response was tepid, partly as Hans Richter's rehearsals were inadequate. But by then the work had enjoyed triumphant success in fourteen German and Dutch cities under Hans von Bülow. Vienna finally embraced it, and the mortally ill Brahms, at the last concert the composer was able attend before his death in 1897.

Notes by Gordon Kerry © 2026 (Milhaud), 2013 (Canteloube) 2015 (Brahms).

Brahms's Fourth Symphony is scored for 2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon; 4 horns, 2 trumpets and 3 trombones; timpani and strings.

Brahms himself conducted the premiere in the German town of Meiningen on 25 October 1885.

The Sydney Symphony first performed the work in July 1938, led by Malcolm Sargent on one of his frequent visits.

Since then it has been a mainstay of our concert seasons, with notable performances including those led by Georg Szell (1939), Sargent again (1945), Otto Klemperer (1950), Eugene Goossens (1951 & 1953), Nicolai Malko (1957 & 1960), Rafael Kubelik (1964), Dean Dixon (1965, 1973 & 1975), Moshe Atzmon (1969), Daniel Barenboim (1970), Willem van Otterloo (1973 & 1976), Leif Segerstam (1979), Louis Frémaux (1982), Stuart Challender (1991), Hans Vonk (1993), Claus Peter Flor (1997), Edo de Waart (2003), Simone Young (2005), Gianluigi Gelmetti (2007), Thomas Dausgaard (2011) and Jakub Hruška (2014).

Our most recent performances were with David Robertson in 2018.

Scoring and history by Hugh Robertson

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