

27-28 June 2025

# BERNSTEIN & KORNGOLD



Presenting Partner



Royal Caribbean Symphonic Saturdays

“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 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.

## PERFORMING IN THIS CONCERT

### FIRST VIOLINS

**Andrew Haveron**  
*Concertmaster*  
**Harry Bennetts**  
*Associate Concertmaster*  
**Alexandra Osborne**  
*Associate Concertmaster*  
**Fiona Ziegler**  
*Assistant Concertmaster*  
**Sun Yi**  
*Associate Concertmaster*  
*Emeritus*  
Jennifer Booth  
Sophie Cole  
Sercan Danis  
Claire Herrick  
Georges Lentz  
Alex Mitchell  
Marcus Michelsen°  
Liam Pilgrim†  
Benjamin Tjoa°  
Brian Hong\*

### SECOND VIOLINS

**Lerida Delbridge**  
*Principal*  
**Kirsty Hilton**  
*Principal*  
**Marina Marsden**  
*Principal Emeritus*  
**Emma Jezek**  
*Assistant Principal*  
Rebecca Gill  
Emma Hayes  
Caroline Hopson  
Shuti Huang  
Wendy Kong  
Benjamin Li  
Nicole Masters  
Robert Smith  
Natalie Mavridis†  
Riikka Sintonen°

### VIOLAS

**Richard Waters°**  
*Acting Principal*  
**Tobias Breider**  
*Principal*  
**Justin Williams**  
*Acting Associate Principal*  
**Anne-Louise Comerford**  
*Associate Principal Emeritus*  
Sandro Costantino  
Stuart Johnson  
Justine Marsden  
Felicity Tsai  
Leonid Volovelsky  
Ariel Postmus†  
Andrew Jezek°  
Stephen Wright°

### CELLOS

**Catherine Hewgill**  
*Principal*  
**Simon Cobcroft**  
*Associate Principal*  
**Leah Lynn**  
*Assistant Principal*  
Kristy Conrau  
Fenella Gill  
Timothy Nankervis  
Elizabeth Neville  
Christopher Pidcock  
Adrian Wallis  
Noah Lawrence†

### DOUBLE BASSES

**Kees Boersma**  
*Principal*  
**Alexander Henery**  
*Principal*  
Dylan Holly  
Steven Larson  
Richard Lynn  
Jaana Pallandi  
Benjamin Ward  
Harry Young†

### FLUTES

**Emma Sholl**  
*Acting Principal*  
Carolyn Harris  
Dana Alison†

### OBOES

**Stephane Rancourt\***  
*Guest Principal*  
Amy Clough†  
**Alexandre Oguey**  
*Principal Cor Anglais*

### CLARINETS

**Francesco Celata**  
*Associate Principal*  
Christopher Tingay  
Oliver Crofts\*  
**Alexander Morris**  
*Principal Bass Clarinet*

### BASSOONS

**Todd Gibson-Cornish**  
*Principal*  
Bailey Ireland†  
**Noriko Shimada**  
*Principal Contrabassoon*

### HORNS

**Samuel Jacobs**  
*Principal*  
**Euan Harvey**  
*Acting Principal*  
Marnie Sebire  
Emily Newham°  
Bryn Arnold†

### TRUMPETS

**David Elton**  
*Principal*  
**Brent Grapes**  
*Associate Principal*  
Cécile Glémot  
Anthony Heinrichs

### TROMBONES

**Scott Kinmont**  
*Acting Principal*  
Jeremy Mazurek†  
**Christopher Harris**  
*Principal Bass Trombone*

### TUBA

**Scott Frankcombe\***  
*Guest Principal*

### TIMPANI

**Mark Robinson**  
*Acting Principal*

### PERCUSSION

**Rebecca Lagos**  
*Principal*  
**Joshua Hill°**  
*Associate Principal /*  
*Section Percussion*  
Timothy Constable  
Tim Brigden\*  
Jess Ciampa\*  
Alison Pratt\*  
Blake Roden\*

### HARP

**Louisic Dulbecco**  
*Principal*

### KEYBOARDS

**Catherine Davis\***  
*Guest Principal Piano &*  
*Guest Principal Celeste*

### EXTRAS

**Alice Morgan\***  
*Guest Principal Saxophone*

### Bold Principal

\* Guest Musician  
° Contract Musician  
† Sydney Symphony  
Fellow

# 2025 CONCERT SEASON

## TEA AND SYMPHONY

Friday 27 June, 11am

Concert Hall,  
Sydney Opera House

## ROYAL CARIBBEAN SYMPHONIC SATURDAYS

Saturday 28 June, 7pm

# BERNSTEIN & KORNGOLD

## FEATURING VIOLINIST CHRISTIAN LI

**EDUARDO STRAUSSER** conductor

**CHRISTIAN LI** violin

**BREE VAN REYK** (born 1978)

*Fanfare for Solidarity* (2021)

WORLD PREMIERE

*Bree van Reyk's commission for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's  
50 Fanfares Project is generously supported by Christine Bishop.*

**ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD** (1897–1957)

**Violin Concerto in D, Op.35** (1945)

i. Moderato nobile

ii. Romance: Andante

iii. Finale: Allegro assai vivace

INTERVAL\*

**GEORGE GERSHWIN** (1898–1937)

***Cuban Overture***\* (1932)

\*Saturday only

**LEONARD BERNSTEIN** (1918–1990)

***Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*** (1960)

i. Prelude

ii. *Somewhere*

iii. Scherzo

iv. Mambo

v. Cha-Cha

vi. *Meeting Scene*

vii. *Cool, Fugue*

viii. *Rumble*

ix. Finale

### Pre-concert talk

By Joanna Drimatis in  
the Northern Foyer at  
6.15pm on Saturday.

### Estimated durations

#### - Friday

Van Reyk – 3 minutes

Korngold – 25 minutes

Bernstein – 25 minutes

This concert will run for  
approximately 1 hour

### Estimated durations

#### - Saturday

Van Reyk – 3 minutes

Korngold – 25 minutes

Interval – 20 minutes

Gershwin – 12 minutes

Bernstein – 25 minutes

The concert will run  
for approximately 1 hour  
and 45 minutes

### Cover image

Christian Li

Photo by Albert Comper

Presenting Partner



Royal Caribbean Symphonic Saturdays

Principal Partner



# WELCOME

Welcome to **Bernstein & Korngold**, featuring violinist Christian Li, a performance in the *Royal Caribbean Symphonic Saturdays* series.

As the Presenting Partner of *Royal Caribbean Symphonic Saturdays*, we are delighted to bring you the opportunity to hear classical music's most exciting works, performed by internationally renowned artists in one of the world's great concert halls.

It is even more thrilling to be presenting Australian violinist Christian Li, who is rapidly taking his place among the top international soloists. Still only 17 years old, he is the youngest-ever winner of the Yehudi Menuhin International Competition for Young Violinists.

In this concert, Christian electrifies audiences with his outstanding virtuosity in Korngold's Violin Concerto. Dynamic, impressive and uplifting, this work echoes the best-loved music of the golden age of cinema.

When in port, our innovative ships become a central feature of the breathtaking panorama of Sydney Harbour, a world-famous scene shared by the equally iconic Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Royal Caribbean is immensely proud of our partnership with the Orchestra. With an unswerving focus on creating world-class experiences, Royal Caribbean and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra share a deep commitment to excellence in all that we do.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Christian Li's performance of **Bernstein & Korngold** invites us all to experience the exhilaration of the young at heart – something we at Royal Caribbean also aspire to create.

I trust you enjoy this delightful and brilliant performance of **Bernstein & Korngold**, featuring Christian Li.



Gavin Smith,  
Vice President & Managing Director  
Royal Caribbean



# YOUR CONCERT AT A GLANCE

**BREE VAN REYK** (born 1978)  
***Fanfare for Solidarity*** (2021)  
WORLD PREMIERE

Van Reyk's fanfare is a joyful gesture of gratitude to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's players, who supported the Yes case in the voluntary, non-binding postal survey on marriage equality in 2017.



Bree van Reyk. Photo by Xanthe Roxburgh.

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**ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD** (1897–1957)  
***Violin Concerto in D, Op.35*** (1945)

A product of pre-World War II Vienna, Korngold was hailed as a genius (at the age of 10!) by Gustav Mahler. His three-movement concerto is a work in the Romantic tradition, informed too by Korngold's pioneering work in scoring films in Hollywood.

Composed in 1945, it premiered in 1947, the year that saw the partition of India and Pakistan, the beginning of the Cold War, and Heard and Macdonald Islands become Australian territories.

Contemporary music included Elliott Carter's Piano Sonata, Pierre Boulez's Flute Sonatina and Benjamin Britten's *Albert Herring*.



Korngold in 1927. Photo by Georg Fayer (1892–1950)

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**GEORGE GERSHWIN** (1898–1937)  
***Cuban Overture*\*** (1932)

\*Saturday only

Composed after a holiday on the Caribbean island, Gershwin's ten minute overture consists of two dance-impelled outer sections with a languid central movement.

It premiered in 1932, the year that saw the Lindbergh kidnapping, the Nazis become the largest party in the German Reichstag, the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the creation of the Australian Broadcasting Commission – and with it, the ensemble that would become the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Contemporary music included Grainger's *Handel in the Strand*, Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* and Schoenberg's *Moses and Aaron*.



George Gershwin

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**LEONARD BERNSTEIN** (1918–1990)  
***Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*** (1960)

Bernstein's Broadway masterpiece is a retelling of the Romeo and Juliet story set in New York City, and is replete with music derived from the popular music of the time.

The show appeared in 1957, the year that saw the Treaty of Rome (establishing the European Economic Community), the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik, and Jørn Utzon win the competition to design the Sydney Opera House.

Contemporary music included Iannis Xenakis' *Pithoprakta*, Stravinsky's *Agon* and Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*.



Leonard Bernstein in the 1950s

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **EDUARDO STRAUSSER** conductor

In the 2024/25 season, Brazilian conductor Eduardo Strausser begins his first year as Principal Conductor and Music Director of Norrlandsoperan. The season features an extensive Nordic tour in November 2024 and the world premiere of Jenny Wilson's debut opera, *The Lovers*, in March 2025.

Deepening his strong relationships with Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, summer 2024 sees Strausser's first appearance at the Royal Concertgebouw Hall with the orchestra and soloist Yeol Eum Son.

Strausser continues his relationships with Ulster Orchestra, the Hallé, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Orchestre de Montpellier as well as debuts with Bilbao Orkestra Sinfonikoa, San Diego Symphony and Pacific Symphony. Other US engagements have included the symphony orchestras of Kansas City, Utah, North Carolina, Detroit and Indianapolis.

Working extensively across Australia, Strausser appears twice this season with Sydney and Queensland symphony orchestras, as well as debuts with Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

Previously Resident Conductor of Teatro Sao Paolo from 2014–2016, Eduardo has become an experienced opera conductor and productions in Sao Paolo have included *Elektra* and Carlos Gomes' *Fosca*, as well as performances of *The Nutcracker* with Balé da Cidade de São Paulo and a Stefano Poda production of Mahler's Symphony No.1. He is now based in Berlin but still returns home to Latin America for guest conducting.

Most recently he led Leonard Ever's *Die Odyssee* for Zurich Opera and other highlights include *Tosca* for Northern Ireland Opera and Theater Magdeburg which he also conducted for Staatstheater Hannover alongside productions including *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Die Zauberflöte*. Elsewhere he has also conducted *La bohème* for Teatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro and Teatro Verdi di Padova. From a young age,

Eduardo developed an interest in works by contemporary composers. Through his studies at the Zurich University of Arts, he worked with the visionary Karlheinz Stockhausen. Also as a student he took part in the International Forum for Conductors at the Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt, where he had the chance to work closely with composers György Kurtág and Brian Ferneyhough.

Eduardo works with top soloists, including Javier Perianes, Nobuyuki Tsujii, Alexandra Lowe, Isata Kanneh-Mason, Marie-Ange Nguci, Paul Lewis, Augustin Hadelich, Richard Galliano, Cédric Tiberghien and Steven Osborne among others. A multi-linguist, Eduardo speaks eight languages fluently including German, Italian, French, Spanish and Hebrew.



Photo by Rodrigo Levy

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## CHRISTIAN LI violin

Born in Melbourne in 2007, Christian Li first picked up a violin aged five. He captured international attention in 2018 when he became the youngest-ever winner of the Menuhin Competition, winning the joint Junior 1st Prize in Geneva where he play-conducted a movement of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. Performing with the Geneva Chamber Orchestra, he also received the Audience Prize and the Composer Award.

Soon after, in 2020, Christian became the youngest artist to sign with Decca Classics. His debut album featuring Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* accompanied by works for violin and piano by Bazzini, Kreisler, Massenet and Li Zilli was released in August 2021 gathering five-star reviews. *BBC Music Magazine* wrote: 'He brings thrilling virtuosity and myriad colours to Vivaldi's fast movements and an exquisitely silky cantabile sound to the aria-like slow movements.' Following this success, Christian's second album *Discovering Mendelssohn* released in 2023 received a glowing review from *Gramophone* magazine.

In concerts, Christian made a series of acclaimed debuts including with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic, Gavle Symphony, Aalborg Symphony, RTV Slovenian Radio Symphony and Macao Orchestra, as well as gave recitals in Taiwan, Canada, Israel, Norway and the UK.

Currently, Christian is the Young Artist in Association with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, a title he has held since 2021. He will return to perform Korngold's Violin Concerto with the orchestra in 24/25 season. Other upcoming engagements include European tour with Australian Youth Orchestra and David Robertson, highly anticipated return to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, debut with the Sofia Philharmonic in Bulgaria, and recitals in China.

Christian Li plays the Youssupov – Hoffman Guarneri del Gesu from 1737, on generous loan from a European benefactor, and uses a bow by François Peccatte. He currently studies with Dr. Robin Wilson at the Yehudi Menuhin School and receives mentorship from David Takeno in London. In his free time, he enjoys reading, swimming and bike riding.



Photo by Albert Comper

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## ABOUT BREE VAN REYK

Bree van Reyk is a drummer, percussionist, composer and sound artist whose music resides in the intersection between contemporary classical, indie-rock and performance art and is equally warm-hearted, celebratory, and focussed on issues of equality.

Bree has been commissioned by Sydney Festival, Sydney Chamber Opera, Ensemble Offspring, Canberra International Music Festival, Marrugeku, Urban Theatre Projects, Performance Space, Sydney Dance Company, The Letter String Quartet, Shaun Parker Company, fashion designer Bianca Spender, AGNSW, GOMA and the MCA.

Her performance career includes tours and recordings with artists such as Gurrumul, Paul Kelly, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Synergy Percussion, Ensemble Offspring, Holly Throsby, Sarah Blasko, Marcus Whale, Laura Jean, Sally Seltmann, Toby Martin, Darren Hanlon, Grand Salvo, Katie Noonan, Oren Ambarchi + Martin Ng, and Anthony Pateras.



Bree van Reyk. Photo by Xanthe Roxburgh.

## ABOUT FANFARE FOR SOLIDARITY

*The composer writes:*

*Fanfare for Solidarity* is dedicated to the players of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra with extreme gratitude for their collective public statement in support of the federal Australian government's marriage equality bill in October 2017. The statement from the players followed on from the SSO board publicly stating that the company would remain 'neutral' in the face of what was an extremely disturbing, fracturing, heart-breaking and damaging time for the LGBTQI+ community (of which I am a member), and our nation collectively. The statement from the SSO players was later met with a U-turn in the SSO board's stance. This piece, using my voice in the gayest and most joyful way I could imagine, is written to celebrate the love and solidarity shown by the orchestra members who used their collective voice to contribute to positive change at a crucial moment in time.

### Bree van Reyk © 2025

Bree van Reyk's *Fanfare for Solidarity* is scored for three percussionists.

This is the work's world premiere.

## ABOUT KORNGOLD

When Erich Wolfgang Korngold died in 1957 he was all but forgotten despite having been one of the most important composers of film music ever. He travelled to the USA with legendary producer Max Reinhard in 1934 to collaborate on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Warner Brothers, making creative use of Mendelssohn's score. In Hollywood, he and colleagues such as Max Steiner rewrote the manual for film scoring. Rather than providing mere 'atmosphere' in reaction to a film's events, Korngold created large-scale scores linked by motifs representing particular characters, much as Wagner did in his operas, and contributed immensely to the *mise-en-scène* with a masterful knowledge of instrumental colour. Korngold, indeed, thought of film scores as 'opera without singing'.



## ABOUT THE MUSIC



Korngold in 1927. Photo by Georg Fayer (1892–1950)

He was born what is now the Czech city of Brno, but by the age of ten was active in Vienna. Mahler, then director of the Vienna Court Opera, heard some of the ten year-old Korngold's music and pronounced him a genius, recommending the boy study with Alexander von Zemlinsky. Before he had turned 20, Korngold had composed orchestral works, including the still celebrated *Sinfonietta*, his first two operas, *Violanta* and *Der Ring des Polykrates*, and his celebrated incidental music to Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*. His music was championed by leading performers of the time: Richard Strauss conducted his orchestral works; pianists like Artur Schnabel performed his solo works widely.

Korngold's heyday as a film composer was the decade or so from 1934 until the end of the Second World War, after which he concentrated on concert music such as the violin concerto, a symphony and his cello concerto. He was shrewd enough to maintain control of the copyright on his film music – knowing that there might well be material that could do service in the concert hall as well.

## ABOUT KORNGOLD'S VIOLIN CONCERTO

*Phillip Sametz writes:*

Leaving most of his family behind, Korngold left Vienna for Hollywood in January 1938 to compose music for *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, expecting to return in a few months' for the premiere of his opera, *Die Kathrin*. But Germany's annexation of Austria in March made a return home impossible, and his family escaped Austria on the last unrestricted train.

Films were now Korngold's only source of income. When his father berated him for not writing absolute music, Korngold replied that if anyone in America wanted to perform his music they knew where to find him. His wife said later: 'It was almost as if he had made a vow not to write any more until Hitler was defeated.'

The Violin Concerto was to be Korngold's return to the concert hall. Ideas for this work seem first to have surfaced in 1937. A theme from the film *Another Dawn*, scored that year, is the principal melody of the concerto's first movement; and a transformation of the opening title theme for that year's *The Prince and the Pauper* forms the basis for the concerto's finale.

But Korngold did no serious work on the piece until the war in Europe was over. The violinist Bronislaw Huberman revived a joke that dated back to Korngold's teenage years: 'Erich, where's my violin concerto?' At dinner one night in 1945, Huberman asked the usual question, whereupon Korngold went to the piano and played the opening theme.

When the concerto was ready for performance, Huberman was somewhat vague about when he might perform it. When Jascha Heifetz expressed interest, Korngold didn't hesitate: 'Huberman, I haven't been unfaithful yet, I'm not engaged...but I have flirted.' Huberman's death a short time later brought this chapter in the concerto's life to an end.

In the weeks before the premiere, Korngold wrote of the work: '...is there still a place...for music with expression and feeling, with long melodic themes, formed and developed on the principles of the classic masters...?'



# ABOUT THE MUSIC

The premiere, in St Louis with Heifetz, was a success. But in New York, Irving Kolodin's jibe: 'More corn than gold,' hurt the composer deeply. Posterity's answer to Korngold's question has been mixed: the work languished on the fringes of the repertoire until the 1980s. It is now the most performed of all Korngold's concert works.

By 1945, Korngold's enjoyment of film-scoring had abated, and he was concerned that some of his best musical ideas were disappearing as each film was taken out of circulation. He had no hesitation in re-casting film themes in his concert music.

The first movement is primarily lyrical. The violin joins the orchestra with the theme adapted from *Another Dawn*. The gentle second subject was first used in *Juarez* (1938). The coda offers opportunities for overtly virtuosic display.

The *Romance* is almost a love scene between soloist and orchestra. Korngold drew on his *Anthony Adverse* score, but created anew the haunting *misterioso* episode at the movement's core, which recurs at the end. In a similar manner to the last movement of Samuel Barber's violin concerto, Korngold establishes a decisive change of mood in the finale, a set of variations on the *Prince and the Pauper* theme.

## Phillip Sametz © 2000

Korngold's Violin Concerto is scored for 2 flutes (the second doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (the second doubling anglais), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet and 2 bassoons (the second doubling contrabassoon); 4 horns, 2 trumpets and trombone; timpani, percussion, harp, celeste and strings, and a violin soloist.

It received its premiere on 15 February 1947, with the St. Louis Symphony under conductor Vladimir Golschmann, with Jascha Heifetz as soloist.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the work in September 2005, with Marin Alsop conducting and our then-Concertmaster Michael Dauth as soloist. Our only other performances were those conducted by Tomáš Netopil with Arabella Steinbacher as soloist (2008) and by our then-Chief Conductor David Robertson with Renaud Capuçon as soloist, performances which took place in Sydney and also in Hamburg and Luxembourg on our 2018 European Tour.

## ABOUT GERSHWIN

Gershwin seems to have made a habit of dazzling established composers and then asking for lessons; possibly, the inevitable polite refusal became a badge of honour. If the stories are true, Stravinsky asked how much he earned, then suggested Gershwin should give him lessons; Ravel supposedly told him he should be 'a first-rate Gershwin rather than a second-rate Ravel'. Schoenberg is said to have made a similar response. Gershwin, while he never studied with Stravinsky, Ravel or Schoenberg, was 'classically' schooled – while working as a successful song-writer, between 1915 and 1921 he had taken lessons in 'classical' harmony and counterpoint.

Born to Russian Jewish parents in Brooklyn, New York, in 1898, Gershwin dropped out of school at 15. He made his living as a pianist, making piano rolls or 'song plugging' – demonstrating newly published songs in music shops, and playing in nightclubs. Inspired by the sophisticated work of composers such as Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern he began writing songs and published his first in 1916. When Al Jolson sang Swanee Gershwin's future was assured. Gershwin's heyday was the 1920s and 30s when he, often collaborating with his brother Ira, produced songs for shows that are still widely sung. and one of the most important American operas – *Porgy and Bess*.

Gershwin was a little nervous when band leader Paul Whiteman commissioned him to write a piano concerto for a projected concert called *An Experiment in Modern Music* in 1924, but Whiteman convinced Gershwin that he truly had the talent to write the piece in less than a month and assured him that he could delegate the orchestration to Ferde Grofé, the band's arranger, later composer of the *Grand Canyon Suite*. The concert took place at New York's Aeolian Hall on 12 February 1924, with people like Jascha Heifetz, Rachmaninov, numerous critics and Tin Pan Alley composers in the audience. *Rhapsody in Blue* was so successful that Gershwin was soon fulfilling commissions for Walter Damrosch of the New York Symphony-Philharmonic (*Concerto in F* and *An American in Paris*). From now on, though, he was determined to do his own orchestration.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

His collaboration with brother Ira also produced one of the most important American operas – *Porgy and Bess*. Gershwin's works grew out of a loving understanding of the musical idioms of African-Americans – not just in the jazz that brought forth the *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1924 but the music of the coastal communities in the deep south which are immortalised in the opera a decade later.



George Gershwin

## ABOUT THE CUBAN OVERTURE

*Phillip Sametz writes:*

Cuba was American café society's playground for many decades before Fidel Castro's revolution. In the 1920s and early 1930s, its many natural attractions were enhanced by the American holiday maker's ability to drink alcohol in public at a time of Prohibition at home.

Gershwin's Cuban holiday of 1932 was as much about wine and women (and of course, cigars) as it was about song. He frequented the nightspots, lay in the sun, gambled at the casinos, caroused with his cronies and was seen in the company of many attractive women. He also found the inspiration for his next orchestral piece.

On his numerous spins on Havana's dance floors he became intrigued by the many special Latin percussion instruments featured by the native dance bands. He brought some of these back with him to New York in July and began work on the *Cuban Overture* immediately. The 1932 edition of his concert at New York's Lewisohn stadium was imminent, and he wanted to have the work premiered there. Writing at speed, he finished the whole piece in three weeks, completing the orchestration just a few days before the first performance.

Gershwin called the work 'a symphonic overture which embodies the essence of Cuban dance.' It is constructed in three parts, the two outer, dance-inspired sections framing a central idyll that might be regarded as the Cuban equivalent of the 'Blues' section in Gershwin's other musical travelogue, *An American in Paris*.

The work's novelty lies in the changes Gershwin's musical language had undergone as a result of his recent studies with the teacher and theorist Joseph Schillinger. His work with his new teacher brought to the *Cuban Overture* a greater textural diversity and harmonic complexity than in many of Gershwin's previous works. Of course the other major innovation for Gershwin was his use of Cuban percussion instruments, including gourds, bongos and maracas. These are the work's driving force, and dominate many of its most memorable passages.

### Phillip Sametz © 2000

Gershwin's *Cuban Overture* is scored for 3 flutes (third doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, cor anglais, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon; 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones and tuba; timpani, percussion and strings.

It was premiered at New York's now-demolished Lewisohn Stadium on 16 August 1932, as part of an all-Gershwin concert by the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Albert Coates.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the work in May 1950, as part of the Musicians' Benevolent Fund concert led by Chief Conductor Eugene Goossens. Goossens led another performance the following year (1951).

Other notable performances include those conducted by William Southgate (1995 & 96), Tommy Tycho (1999) and Chief Conductor Edo de Waart (2000).

Our most recent performances were in May 2012, conducted by Bramwell Tovey.



# UNWIND ON ISLAND TIME

ON A 7 NIGHT

SOUTH PACIFIC HOLIDAY



We Will Rock You



Paddleboarding



Jamie's by Jamie Oliver\*



Water Dance Welcome, Vanuatu  
Photo: @Tourism Vanuatu



FlowRider® Surf Simulator



# YOUR ITINERARY

DAY

## 1 Sydney

Begin your South Pacific escape on *Anthem of the Seas*® sailing from Sydney. Once onboard, start your holiday on the Pool Deck for the Sail Away party and watch as the sun sets over the water.

## 2 Cruising

Get ready to check off your bucket list now you're onboard. From 360-degree views in the North Star® observation capsule to simulated skydiving on RipCord® by iFLY® and the only bumper cars at sea, there is so much to explore. After working up an appetite from all the adventure, be taken on a culinary journey from the rustic flavour of Tuscany to the fresh ingredients of Japan. Make sure to finish your day with your drink of choice as you are spoilt with a full-scale Broadway production of *We Will Rock You*.

## 4 Noumea, New Caledonia

Get ready for an epic day of culture, French cuisine, sun and crystal-blue water in the capital city of New Caledonia. For the ultimate tropical adventure, hop on a ferry out to Amedee Island to visit the lighthouse and swim with turtles, relax on the picturesque beaches at Baie des Citrons or go snorkelling in Anse Vata Bay. Immerse yourself in Noumea's culture by visiting one of the many museums, theatres or art galleries on the island. Don't miss out on trying the abundance of French-influenced food! Once back onboard, freshen up in your room before deciding where the night will take you – Live musical performances, a game of pool, bar hopping or a silent disco.

## 5 Mystery Island, Vanuatu

Head ashore and explore Mystery Island's pristine beaches or underwater marvels. Take yourself on the short walk around the island, peruse the local markets and tuck into a traditional lunch of freshly caught lobster. Spend your afternoon soaking up the sunshine on the beach or take to the water on a stand-up paddleboard or kayak. For the ultimate way to unwind back onboard, overlook the crystal waters on your balcony with a glass of bubbles and Room Service delivered to your room.

## 6 Cruising

Pull back your curtains to the sun shining onto your balcony and let the fresh air in as you plan your day. Fuel-up for your day with coffee and a hearty breakfast at the Main Dining Room, before claiming your spot by the pool for a morning relaxing, splashing and soaking up the sun. Book in for some 'me' time with a facial from Vitality Spa<sup>SM</sup> or get ready for 'we' time and challenge your crew at the Rock Climbing Wall. For your final hurrah, celebrate with dinner at Jamie's Italian by Jamie Oliver\* before settling in for wow-worthy shows as cinema, pop culture and tech combine in *Spectra's Cabaret*, or you embark on a musical journey of fantasy and illusion in *The Gift*.

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\*T&Cs apply. \*Speciality dining and select beverages and some activities incur an additional cost. Height, age and weight restrictions apply for some activities. This itinerary is based on the 3 November 2025 sailing from Sydney.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## ABOUT LEONARD BERNSTEIN

In Peter Bogdanovich's 1972 film *What's Up, Doc?*, Barbra Streisand gets a big laugh when she says that she and the hapless paleo-musicologist she's pursuing have been talking to Leonard Bernstein about 'conducting an avalanche. In E flat.'

It's funny for various reasons, not least in that it reminds us that Bernstein did everything on a grand scale, and it's a reminder of the days when conductors – at least this one – could be household names.

Despite his later claims of having grown up in poverty, Bernstein was born into a comfortably-off family in Massachusetts, and was educated at the selective Boston Latin school, then at Harvard and at the Curtis Institute. In all three institutions he demonstrated his flair for language (as a critic) and theatre (leading and directing a production of Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle will Rock* – a proudly left-wing show that President Roosevelt had tried to ban) and his brilliance as a performer, improviser and composer of music.

Bernstein's career as a conductor began in 1940 when he became conductor's assistant to Serge Koussevitsky, chief of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and its summer festival at Tanglewood. At 25 he was assistant conductor to the New York Philharmonic; when the great Bruno Walter had to cancel a 1943 appearance at the last minute Bernstein famously stepped in, giving a performance that made his name overnight.

It was at this time that his first mature compositions appeared: his First Symphony, *Jeremiah*, appeared that year and in 1944 a ballet, *Fancy Free*, would become the basis for the hit musical *On the Town*, that he wrote with Betty Comden and Adolph Green. That collaboration, which would include jazz appearances in nightclubs as well as writing shows, would last a long time.

Bernstein toured internationally as a conductor from the mid-1940s on. The 1950s saw him emerge as an author, and, more momentously, saw him bring classical music to a huge public through television when the Philharmonic's 'Young Peoples Concerts' were telecast with Bernstein conducting and commenting.



Leonard Bernstein in the 1950s

Bernstein claimed that everything he did – talking, writing conducting, playing and composing was all part of the same thing, of working in the service of music. But one sense that deep down he'd have liked to be a 'classical' composer of the status of the greats, such as Mahler or Sibelius whom he championed. He wrote three symphonies, various choral works like his *Chichester Psalms*, several orchestral works, and the hybrid *Mass: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players and Dancers*. He also wrote important film scores such as *On the Waterfront*.

But it is arguably in shows such as *On the Town* and *West Side Story* that show his mercurial genius at its best. And there's *Candide*, his take on Voltaire's satirical tale, which went through many unsuccessful iterations before, late in his career, a final version showed it to be a work of great substance, wit and beauty.

## ABOUT WEST SIDE STORY

The idea, conceived as early as 1949, to use *Romeo and Juliet* as the basis for a story set in contemporary Manhattan was that of choreographer Jerome Robbins. Robbins discussed the idea with Arthur Laurents, who would go on to write the book, and Bernstein. The trio debated the various ways of representing the social chasm between their modern-day Montagues and Capulets: at once point it was to have been an *East Side Story*, with the star-cross'd lovers drawn from the Jewish and Catholic



## ABOUT THE MUSIC

communities. Eventually the creators, who now included Stephen Sondheim as lyricist, agreed on a story that pits two street gangs – the ‘American’ Jets and the Puerto Rican Sharks – against each other, with tragic consequences for the lovers Tony and Maria. *West Side Story* was not, by any means, the first Broadway show based on Shakespeare: Rogers and Hart had produced *The Boys from Syracuse* (after *A Comedy of Errors*) in 1938, and ten years later, Cole Porter’s *Kiss me, Kate* – based on *The Taming of the Shrew* – appeared. But *West Side Story*, which hit the stage in 1957, was certainly the first work based on a Shakespearean tragedy to play on Broadway.

The action takes place in 1950s Manhattan. A fight between the gangs is disrupted by the police, so Riff, the Jets’ leader proposed to attend a dance at the local gym where he will challenge Bernardo, leader of the Sharks, to a ‘rumble’ which will establish the primacy one of the gangs. Tony, Riff’s best friend, has left the gang, but is persuaded to come to the dance; there he sees Maria, sister of Bernardo, who has recently arrived from Puerto Rico; they fall in love. After the dance, Tony serenades Maria outside her apartment, then joins the gangs in their discussion of the rules for the coming fight. The next day Tony and Maria meet and dream about marrying, and Tony agrees when Maria ask him to stop the rumble. Tony, however, trying to break it, inadvertently makes Riff vulnerable, and Bernardo kills him. In fury, Tony kills Bernardo.

In Act II, Maria is at first horrified that Tony has killed her brother, but agrees to escape the city for a better life together in the countryside. Bernardo’s girlfriend Anita, understanding that Maria loves Tony, tries to find Tony and warn him that one of the Sharks, Chino, is coming after him with a gun; but she is brutally treated by the Jets, and angrily claims that Maria has been killed by Chino. Tony seeks out Chino, and is mortally wounded just as he sees Maria alive. Her grief persuades the gangs to bring the war of attrition to an end.

*West Side Story* is unusual in that the dance element is integrated into the drama, rather than interrupting it with a series of set-pieces. Moreover, its musical language, despite the contrasts of Latin dance music

and Romantic duets, is a very tightly constructed score, featuring motifs based on certain intervals. Most prominent is the tritone, or augmented fourth (heard in the first gesture of the prologue, for instance, or the first two syllables of ‘Maria’) – an interval which is inherently unstable, and which therefore contributes a pervasive unease to the music. Bernstein could rightly describe this selection as ‘symphonic dances’: their contrast of mood and style is unified by just such techniques.

The *Prelude* has a growing sense of macho swagger and latent violence. An instrumental version of *Somewhere*, follows – the duet that Tony and Maria sing at the opening of Act II when they dream of leaving the violence of Manhattan behind them, and which Maria reprises in the final scene of the work. The *Scherzo*, too, is an idyllic vision of a peaceful world, whose spell is broken by the more muscular rhythms of the *Mambo* as the gangs compete in the dance at the gym. The *Cha-Cha* is another glimpse of happiness, a reminiscence of Tony’s ‘I’ve just met a girl called Maria’. *Cool, Fugue* comes from Act I, as the Jets, increasingly impatient, wait for the Sharks to arrive for their council of war at Doc’s Candy Store. The *Rumble* takes place at the end of Act I, with the deaths of Bernardo and Riff. The slow *Finale* is based Maria’s ‘I have a love’, from earlier in Act II, in which she explains to Anita how much she loves Tony, despite his having killed Bernardo. Its melody’s similarity to the so-called ‘redemption through love’ motif that ends Wagner’s *Ring Cycle* is probably not coincidental; the work concludes with a fading memory of *Somewhere*.

The *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story* are scored for 3 flutes (third doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, cor anglais, 2 clarinets, 2 bass clarinets, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon; 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones and tuba; timpani, percussion, harp, piano, alto saxophone and strings.

*West Side Story* opened at the Winter Garden Theatre on Broadway on September 26, 1957. The *Symphonic Dances* premiered at New York’s Carnegie Hall on 13 February 1961, with the New York Philharmonic conducted by Lukas Foss.

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**Scoring and history by Hugh Robertson**

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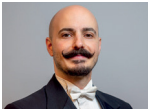
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Pim den Dekker  
*Head of Customer Relations*  
Georgia Mulligan  
Jennifer Calacoci  
Meg Chaseling  
*Customer Relations Team Leads*

**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*  
Brighdaie 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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