

10 July 2025

# RAVEL & FALLA

«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*  
Sophie Cole  
Sercan Danis  
Georges Lentz  
Emily Long  
Alex Mitchell  
Alexander Norton  
Marcus Michelsen°  
Brian Hong°  
Benjamin Tjoa°  
Ilya Isakovich\*

### SECOND VIOLINS

**Lerida Delbridge**  
*Principal*  
**Kirsty Hilton**  
*Principal*  
**Marina Marsden**  
*Principal Emeritus*  
**Emma Jezek**  
*Assistant Principal*  
Victoria Bihun  
Rebecca Gill  
Emma Hayes  
Shuti Huang  
Wendy Kong  
Benjamin Li  
Nicole Masters  
Riikka Sintonen°

### VIOLAS

**Tobias Breider**  
*Principal*  
**Erina Goldwasser\***  
*Guest Principal*  
**Justin Williams**  
*Acting Associate Principal*  
Sandro Costantino  
Rosemary Curtin  
Stuart Johnson  
Justine Marsden  
Felicity Tsai  
Amanda Verner  
Leonid Volovelsky  
Stephen Wright°  
Andrew Jezek°  
Elizabeth Woolnough\*

### CELLOS

**Catherine Hewgill**  
*Principal*  
**Leah Lynn**  
*Assistant Principal*  
Fenella Gill  
Timothy Nankervis  
Elizabeth Neville  
Christopher Pidcock  
Adrian Wallis  
Rebecca Herman\*

### DOUBLE BASSES

**Kees Boersma**  
*Principal*  
**Alexander Henery**  
*Principal*  
Dylan Holly  
Steven Larson  
Richard Lynn  
Benjamin Ward

### FLUTES

**Lily Bryant\***  
*Guest Principal*  
Adrienne Hanslow\*  
**Emilia Antcliff\***  
*Guest Principal Piccolo*

### OBOES

**Shefali Pryor**  
*Principal*  
Amy Clough†  
**Alexandre Oguey**  
*Principal Cor Anglais*

### CLARINETS

**Francesco Celata**  
*Associate Principal*  
Christopher Tingay  
**Alexander Morris**  
*Principal Bass Clarinet*

### BASSOONS

**Todd Gibson-Cornish**  
*Principal*  
Fiona McNamara  
**Noriko Shimada**  
*Principal Contrabassoon*

### HORNS

**Alberto Menéndez Escribano\***  
*Guest Principal*  
**Euan Harvey**  
*Acting Principal 3rd Horn*  
Marnie Sebire  
Rachel Silver  
Emily Newham°

### TRUMPETS

**David Elton**  
*Principal*  
**Brent Grapes**  
*Associate Principal*  
Cécile Glémot  
Anthony Heinrichs  
**TROMBONES**  
**Scott Kinmont**  
*Acting Principal*  
Brett Page\*  
Jeremy Mazurek†

### TUBA

**Steve Rossé**  
*Principal*

### TIMPANI

**Mark Robinson**  
*Acting Principal*

### PERCUSSION

**Rebecca Lagos**  
*Principal*  
**Joshua Hill°**  
*Acting Associate Principal*  
*Timpani/Section Percussion*  
Timothy Constable  
Brian Nixon\*  
Alison Pratt\*  
Blake Roden\*

### HARP

**Louisic Dulbecco**  
*Principal*  
Julie Kim\*

### KEYBOARD

**Susanne Powell\***  
*Guest Principal Piano*

### SAXOPHONES

**Christina Leonard\***  
*Guest Principal Saxophone*  
**Nicholas Russoniello\***  
*Guest Associate*  
*Principal Saxophone*

### Bold Principal

\* Guest Musician  
° Contract Musician  
† Sydney Symphony Fellow

# 2025 CONCERT SEASON

## SYMPHONY HOUR

Thursday 10 July, 7pm

Concert Hall,  
Sydney Opera House

# RAVEL & FALLA

## POSTCARDS FROM SPAIN

**JAIME MARTÍN** conductor

**MAURICE RAVEL** (1875–1937)

*Alborada del gracioso* (1905, orch. 1919)

**MANUEL DE FALLA** (1876–1946)

*The Three-Cornered Hat* (1917)

### Suite No.1

1. Introduction
2. *The Afternoon*
3. *Dance of the Miller's Wife*
4. *The Magistrate*
5. *The Grapes*

### Suite No.2

1. *The Neighbours' Dance*
2. *The Miller's Dance*
3. *Final Dance*

**MAURICE RAVEL** (1875–1937)

*Bolero* (1928)

### Pre-concert talk

By Genevieve Lang in the  
Northern Foyer at 6:15pm

### Estimated durations

Ravel – 8 minute

Falla – 23 minutes

Ravel – 13 minutes

The concert will run for  
approximately one hour

### Cover image

Illustration by Rebecca Shaw

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Principal Partner



# YOUR CONCERT AT A GLANCE

## MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)

### ***Alborada del gracioso*** (1905, orch. 1919)

In 1918 Ravel revisited his piano suite *Miroirs* (from 1904–5) and orchestrated this ‘morning song of the jester’. It joyfully appropriates many of the gestures and sounds of Spanish music, especially those of the guitar.

The year 1918 saw the end of World War I, the beginning of the ‘Spanish’ flu epidemic and the opening of Australia House in London.

Contemporary music included Stravinsky’s *A Soldier’s Tale*, Holst’s *The Planets*, and Bartók’s *Bluebeard’s Castle*.



Ravel as a student in 1905

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## MANUEL DE FALLA (1876–1946)

### ***The Three-Cornered Hat*** (1917)

Based on Alarcón’s novel of the same name, *The Three-cornered Hat*, tells in strongly ‘Spanish’ song and dance of a loving couple (a miller and his wife) who outwit a predatory magistrate.

The work premiered in 1919, the year that saw Ignacy Jan Paderewski become prime minister of Poland, the creation of the Save the Children fund, and mutiny aboard HMAS Australia.

Contemporary music included Elgar’s Cello Concerto, Milhaud’s *Le boeuf sur le toit* and Prokofiev’s *The Love of Three Oranges*.



Manuel de Falla

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## MAURICE RAVEL

### ***Bolero*** (1928)

Ravel’s best-known work is a ballet score based on a simple Spanish dance-rhythm and a repeated ornate melody, building inexorably to a shattering climactic end.

It was composed in 1928, the year that saw the founding of Opus Dei, the first colour television transmission, and the Royal Flying Doctor Service’s first flight.

Contemporary music included Gershwin’s *An American in Paris*, Bartók’s String Quartet No.4 and Shostakovich’s *Tahiti Trot*.



Ravel in 1925. Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France/Wikimedia Commons.



## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### **JAIME MARTÍN** conductor

Chief Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra since 2022, and Music Director of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra since 2019, with those roles currently extended until 2028 and 2027 respectively, Spanish conductor Jaime Martín has also held the positions of Chief Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland (2019-2024), Principal Guest Conductor of the Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España (Spanish National Orchestra) (2022-2024) and Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of Gävle Symphony Orchestra (2013-2022).

Having spent many years as a highly regarded flautist, working with the most inspiring conductors of our time, Jaime turned to conducting full-time in 2013 and has become very quickly sought after at the highest level. Recent and future engagements include his debuts with the Dresden, Netherlands Philharmonic and Dallas Symphony Orchestras, and return visits to the London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Colorado Symphony, Antwerp Symphony, Orquesta Sinfónica y Coro de RTVE (ORTVE) and Galicia Symphony orchestras, as well as a nine-city European tour with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

In recent years Martín has conducted an impressive list of orchestras that includes the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National, Swedish Radio Symphony, Barcelona Symphony, New Zealand Symphony, Queensland Symphony, Sydney Symphony, Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saabruecken, Essen Philharmonic and Philharmonia Orchestras, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. He has forged strong relationships with renowned soloists such as Anne Sophie von Otter, Joshua Bell, Pinchas Zukerman, Christian Tetzlaff and Viktoria Mullova, among many others. Martín has also commissioned multiple world and regional premieres of works by composers Ellen Reid, Andrew Norman, Missy Mazzoli, Derrick Spiva, Albert Schnelzer and Juan Pablo Contreras.

Martín is recording a series for Ondine Records with the Gävle Symphony Orchestra; this includes the Brahms Serenades, Songs of Destiny, Brahms choral works with the Eric Ericson Chamber Choir, and a recording of the Brahms Piano Quartet arranged by Schoenberg, which was

released in February 2019. He has also recorded Schubert Symphony No.9 and Beethoven Symphony No.3, *Eroica*, with Orquestra de Cadaqués and various discs with the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra for Tritó Records. In 2015 he recorded James Horner's last symphonic work Collages for four horns and orchestra with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

As a flautist, Martín was principal flute of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, English National Opera, Academy of St Martin the Fields and London Philharmonic Orchestra. Also sought-after as a soloist, he made a recording of Mozart flute concertos with Sir Neville Marriner, the premiere recording of Sinfonietta Concerto for Flute and Orchestra written for him by Xavier Montsalvatge and conducted by Gianandrea Noseda, and Bach works for flute, violin, and piano with Murray Perahia and Academy of St. Martin in the Fields for Sony.

Martín is the Artistic Advisor and previous Artistic Director of the Santander Festival. Over the last five years he has brought financial stability and created a platform for some of the most exciting artists in their fields, ranging from symphony orchestras and baroque ensembles to education workshops and ballet companies. He was also a founding member of the Orquestra de Cadaqués, with whom he was associated for thirty years, and where he was Chief Conductor from 2012 to 2019.

Jaime Martín is a Fellow of the Royal College of Music, London, where he was a flute professor. He now enjoys working with many of his former students in orchestras around the world.



Photo by Paul Marc Mitchell

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## ABOUT SPANISH MUSIC

Traditional Spanish music is astonishingly varied. Connected to the European continent by a mountainous isthmus, Spain has a number of natural barriers which has resulted in the individuation of regional cultures. The Celts who invaded the peninsula around 1000 BCE were in turn driven into the north west of the country; 2000 years later that area proved the last toehold of Christendom during the time that the rest of Spain was a paragon of Islamic society. The Basque country in the north is home to a people with a language and culture seemingly unrelated to any others, and the Catalans speaking a language closer to Provencal than Spanish had closer links with the south of France than with Madrid.

Muslims from North Africa first occupied parts of Spain in the 8th century. At its height, Islamic Spain occupied about four-fifths of the peninsula. While Christian Europe was still emptying chamber pots in the street and burning heretics, the court at Cordova hosted the finest scientific minds – Jewish, Christian and Muslim – who were encouraged to translate and comment on the works of the ancient Greeks, thereby laying one foundation of the later European Renaissance. According to some scholars, toward the end of the Muslim reign in Spain (which came in 1492), Islamic tolerance extended to what later would be known as *Gitanos*, or the Roma people. Many of these were fleeing persecution in Flemish parts of Europe, so their music came to be known as flamenco. (Other scholars say flamenco suggests the erect posture of the flamingo; other that it is a corruption of the German word ‘to flame’ or ‘burn’).

The heartland of flamenco, with its eroticism and Moorish-sounding cantillation, is the southern province of Andalucía. The Celts of Galicia and Asturias in the north-west play their gig-like tunes on a bagpipe called the gaita, on the harp and, in Cantabria to the east, a kind of clarinet. The Basques are fond of choral singing, and use instruments found nowhere else like the Txalaparta – a specialised wooden plank beaten with sticks. Catalonia is said to show influences ranging from the French through Moorish to the Visigothic.

Some kinds of music were found more or less everywhere in Spain, however. The jota seemingly originated in the north-eastern province of but has become important in many areas. This rapid dance-song in triple time is simplicity itself: four bar phrases are repeated in a strict order, and only two chords are used. (This is one more than Ravel managed in most of *Bolero* – a word which may derive from the Latin for ‘to fly’.) The better known fandango which is likewise fast, in triple time, but with a slightly more complicated set of rules governing the lines of text, phrase lengths and harmony. And then there’s the *seguedillas*, as sung by Bizet’s *Carmen*, even more complicated in form, but characterized by phrases beginning on up-beats, and the use of florid decoration on the weak beats of the bar.

Traditional Spanish music was frequently linked to dance, and dance to ritual. There are sword dances, dances which act out religious events like the Passion of Christ, wedding dances. Seville Cathedral uses one of the last examples of medieval liturgical dance for the feast of Corpus Christi. There are war dances, courtship dances and ritual fire dances. The composer of the best known ‘Ritual Fire Dance’, Manuel de Falla was the culmination of Spain’s rediscovery of its art music heritage – which goes back beyond the exquisite Renaissance music of Tomás Luis de Victoria – at the beginning of the 20th century. Granados and Albeniz proved that great Spanish music didn’t have to be written by defrosting Russians or arch Frenchmen; they also reminded the world that great music had been written in Spain by adopted composers. Domenico Scarlatti wrote many of his 555 keyboard sonatas in Portugal and Spain and scholars have found influences of the vernacular music in his work; his fellow Italian Luigi Boccherini explicitly celebrated the music of the night watch in Madrid, where he lived, in several pieces.

Falla believed that *cante jondo*, the ‘deep songs’ of Andalucía had a natural excellence which is why they were ‘continuously and abundantly used by foreign composers’. But he prophetically saw the demise of traditional music in its context. ‘Andalusian singing is no more than a sad and lamentable shadow of what it was and what it should be. The grave hieratical song of yesterday has degenerated into the flamencoism of today’.

# 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. 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 in 1905

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'.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## ABOUT ALBORADO DEL GRACIOSO

The tired and inaccurate cliché that the ‘best Spanish music was written by non-Spaniards’, does contain a grain of truth. Musicians from all over Europe were drawn to Spain – or to an idea of Spain – because of its relative exoticism and its musical. French composers in particular, such as Bizet, Chabrier and Debussy, all wrote ‘Spanish’ works. Unlike them, though, Ravel was actually of Spanish – or, to be more specific, Basque – heritage: his mother was Basque and his father Swiss, and though himself born in the Basque regions of south-western France, Ravel spent his entire life in Paris. But Iberian music was of great importance to him, and Ravel explores Spanish sounds and manners especially in works like the opera *L’heure espagnole* (‘The Spanish Hour’, which, with its ticking-clock music might also have satisfied his Swiss side!), several pieces ‘en forme de habanera’, the *Rapsodie espagnole* and the late ‘Don Quixote’ songs. The earliest work in which Ravel explicitly evokes Spain is the *Pavane for a Dead Infanta* in the piano version of 1899; the Renaissance dance to which it alludes was widespread across Europe but certain figurations seem to suggest the guitar.

In 1904-5 he composed his *Miroirs*, which he described as ‘a collection of piano pieces which in my harmonic evolution mark a change considerable enough to have disconcerted musicians who, up to now, have been most accustomed to my style.’ Most agree that the standout work of the collection is the fourth piece, ‘Alborada del gracioso’ (which very roughly translates, from the Spanish, as ‘Morning Song of the Jester’).

Here Ravel’s idiom is much more closely aligned with Spanish vernacular music – its ‘arabesque’ melodies and subtly accented rhythms. It also pays homage, acknowledged by Ravel, to the music of Domenico Scarlatti who spent much of his professional life in Spain, and whose keyboard music often, as here, is composed in such a way as to evoke guitar music. Scarlatti and Ravel achieve this by the use of wide leaps, frequent arpeggiations, and the tremolo effect of rapidly repeated notes.

Ravel orchestrated another of the set, ‘Une barque sur l’océan’, soon after composing it, but tried to suppress the score; in 1918, however, he returned to the ‘Alborada’, magically transforming such idiomatic piano music into a gorgeous orchestral showpiece. In some respects the presence of a large orchestra made it easy. Ravel makes full use of his percussion section, including the mandatory castanets, and his writing for the strings (aided by the harp) is full of pizzicato figurations and glinting harmonics, while the whirling melodic material is often given to woodwinds. A notable detail is a notorious passage of tremolo single notes before the end of the work’s first section. Ravel surprises us by giving that material to a muted trumpet, then muted horns, harp and flute.

The work makes dramatic use of wildly different moods and textures, but this is not evidence of anything fatuous like ‘Latin temperament’. It is, after all, a work by Ravel, who according to James Burnett, ‘once demonstrated to Maurice Delage that the structure of the ‘Alborada’ was as strict as that of a Bach fugue.’

*Alborada del gracioso* is scored for 3 flutes (the third doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, cor anglais, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon; 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones and tuba; timpani, extensive percussion, 2 harps and strings.

The premiere of the orchestral version was given in Paris on May 17, 1919, Rhené-Baton conducting.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the work on 28 & 29 May 1952, led by Chief Conductor Eugene Goossens.

Other notable performances include those led by Chief Conductors Willem van Otterloo (1962), Louis Frémaux (1983) and Gianluigi Gelmetti (2002, 2008); and by guest conductors Bernard Heinze (1955), Andre Cluytens (1964), Hans Vonk (1994), Lawrence Foster (1995) and Tuomas Ollila (2000).

Our most recent performances were in 2012, conducted by Miguel Harth-Bedoya.



# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## ABOUT MANUEL DE FALLA

In 1907 Manuel de Falla was preparing to perform Debussy's *Danse sacrée et danse profane* (Debussy sanctioned a transcription of the harp solo for piano) in Madrid; he wrote to the composer for advice and received a generous response. Later that year Falla left his native Spain in some frustration. Two years before he had won a prize for his opera *La vida breve* ('Life is short'), a work in which he established the principles of working with distinctly Spanish sounds and forms, but when the promised production failed to eventuate, the composer went to Paris for a short break that lasted seven years. There he got to know Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Paul Dukas and Igor Stravinsky and absorbed some of their stylistic idioms, to the extent that when he returned to Spain with the outbreak of World War I his 'ballet with songs' *El amor brujo* (Love, the magician') was criticised as sounding too French.

Falla was born in Cádiz, in Spain's southernmost region, Andalusia, a province known to the Romans as Bætica and much later to the Umayyads as Al-Andalus. Much of Andalusia's distinctive culture has roots in its Islamic history, including what Debussy called the 'stark beauty of the old Moorish cantilenas' and, of course, the whole tradition of flamenco. Despite his parents both being from other parts of Spain (his mother was from Catalonia and his father from Valencia), Falla's first works are steeped in Andalusian traditions.

Returning from France on the outbreak of World War I, Falla settled at first in Madrid where he wrote some of his most enduring music – including *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* and the final version of *The Three-Cornered Hat*. In 1921 he moved to Granada, and began cultivating a more neoclassical style in chamber works and concertos.

With the victory of Francisco Franco's Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War, Falla left Spain in 1939 to live in Argentina (despite that country's own flirtation with militarism and fascism in the 1930s) where he lived, despite inducements from Franco to return, until his death in 1946.



Manuel de Falla

## ABOUT THE THREE-CORNERED HAT

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

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

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

Act 2, from which the second suite is drawn, begins with the miller, his wife and their neighbours dancing the *seguidillas*, in celebration of St John's Night. The miller then dances a vibrant *farruca* before being arrested by the magistrate's bodyguard (who has a rather Beethovenian way of knocking on the door...). The magistrate returns and chases the miller's wife; she takes advantage of his falling into the millstream to disappear into the night. The magistrate gets out of those wet things, and leaves them to dry while he takes shelter in the miller's empty hut. The miller escapes from the bodyguards and returns, puts on the magistrate's clothes (including his three-cornered hat, a symbol of authority) and goes off vowing to seduce the magistrate's wife; the magistrate puts on the miller's clothes. The miller's wife returns, as do the townsfolk (with an effigy of the magistrate they propose to burn).

Predictably enough, confusion and remonstrances ensue, but once who's who is sorted out, the magistrate is tossed in a blanket and the townsfolk launch into an energetic and triumphant final *jota* – complete with castanets.



Falla and Léonide Massine at the Alhambra, 1916

*The Three-Cornered Hat* is scored for 3 flutes (the second and third doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, cor anglais, 2 clarinets and 2 bassoons; 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones and tuba; timpani, percussion, harp, piano doubling celeste, and strings.

The ballet was premiered in London at the Alhambra Theatre on 22 July 1919, conducted by Ernest Ansermet, who stepped in at the last minute when De Falla was called home to Spain to see his dying mother.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra has performed this music in various iterations, from the complete music to suites and individual movements, dating back to September 1938 and concerts conducted by Joseph Post.

Other notable performances include those led by Chief Conductors Eugene Goossens (1947, 1952, 1953 Regional Tour, 1955), Dean Dixon (1962, 1965 Regional Tour) and Stuart Challender (1987); and guest conductors including Edgar Bainton (1940), Sixten Ehrling (1972), Hiroyuki Iwaki (1976), Jesús López Cobos (2002), Miguel Harth-Bedoya (2010), Benjamin Northey (2013) and Charles Dutoit (2017).

Our most recent performances occurred earlier this year in Bathurst and Orange, as part of our 2025 Regional Tour led by Conductor in Residence Benjamin Northey.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## ABOUT *BOLERO*

Poor Ravel. He was joking when he described *Bolero* as a ‘masterpiece without any music in it’, so was very annoyed when the piece became one of his most popular works. In fact it came about when he was asked by the Russian dancer Ida Rubinstein to orchestrate parts of Albéniz’s *Iberia* for a ballet with a ‘Spanish’ character in 1928. Rubinstein had founded her own company in Paris that year.

In the case of the ballet envisaged by Ida Rubinstein, though, it turned out that the rights to Albéniz’s music were not available, so Ravel composed his *Bolero*, based on an 18th-century Spanish dance-form that is characterised by a moderate tempo and three beats to a bar. It has ‘no music’ in that, having established a two-bar rhythmic ostinato, with its characteristic upbeat triplet and sextuplet figures tapped out by the snare-drum, Ravel introduces his simple theme, which he described as of the ‘usual Spanish-Arabian kind’. Where the rhythmic ostinato, however, is relatively terse, the C-major melody is in fact very expansive, unfurling over 16 bars and often pausing on a sustained ‘G’ between its ornate arabesque motifs. It is reiterated over and over again, embodied in different orchestral colours each time, including a marvellous moment where it appears simultaneously in three keys moving in sinuous parallel. The work’s shifting palette of colour and inexorable rhythmic tread builds massive tension, which is released explosively in its final bars as the music suddenly reaches the new key of E major.

The music’s erotic charge of constraint and release mirrors the scenario for Ida Rubinstein’s ballet, choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska (Nijinsky’s sister). Ravel had, by no means idly, suggested *Bolero* could accompany a story where passion is contrasted by the mechanised environment of a factory. Nijinska, however, had the dancer in an empty café, dancing alone on a table as the room gradually fills with men overcome, as Michael J. Puri notes, ‘by their lust for her’ which they express through ever more frenetic dance.

**Gordon Kerry © 2025 (*Alborado del Gracioso*) 2005 (*Three-Cornered Hat*), 2007/12 (*Bolero*)**

Ravel’s *Bolero* is scored for a large orchestra, consisting of 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes (the second doubling on oboe d’amore), cor anglais, 2 clarinets (one doubling on E flat clarinet), bass clarinet, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon; 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones and tuba; timpani, percussion, celeste, harp, 2 saxophones and strings.

It was originally written as music for dance, commissioned by Ida Rubinstein. It premiered at the Paris Opéra on 22 November 1928, with choreography by Bronislava Nijinska, designs and scenario by Alexandre Benois, and conducted by Walther Straram.

It has been hugely popular with audiences ever since that first performance, which is reflected in the Sydney Symphony’s long and varied performance history. We first performed the work in July 1946, in a Young People’s concert conducted by Bernard Heinze.

Since then it has been a staple of our programming, from mainstage concerts to youth performances and major outdoor public events.

Some of the most notable performances include those led by Chief Conductors Eugene Goossens (1947, 1949, 1952), Nikolai Malko (1959), Louis Frémaux (1979), Stuart Challender (1987, 1989, 1990), Gianluigi Gelmetti (2002, 2004, 2008) and David Robertson (2017), with both Challender’s and Gelmetti’s performances released on CD.

Other performance highlights include performances at the 1967 Proms (conducted by John Hopkins), a free concert in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall on 17 December 1972, nearly a year before it officially opened (Bernard Heinze), at the 1984 Sydney Festival (David Measham), Symphony Under the Stars (1990, Challender) and Symphony in the Domain (2003, Rumon Gamba).

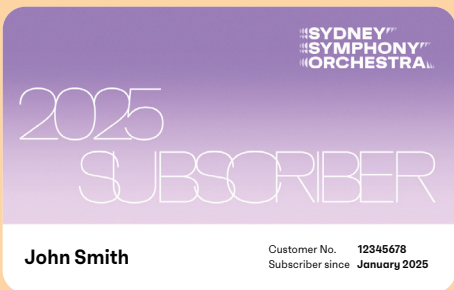
Our most recent performances were earlier this year as part our summer series at Sydney Town Hall, led by Conductor in Residence Benjamin Northey.

**Scoring and history by Hugh Robertson**

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Conductor in Residence



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