

3–6 September 2025

SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS

RICHARD STRAUSS



«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
Yi Sun
Associate Concertmaster
Emeritus
Jennifer Booth
Sophie Cole
Sercan Danis
Claire Herrick
Emily Long
Alex Mitchell
Alexander Norton
Leone Ziegler
Natalie Mavridis†
Brian Hong°
Benjamin Tjoo°

SECOND VIOLINS

Lerida Delbridge
Principal
Kirsty Hilton
Principal
Marina Marsden
Principal Emeritus
Emma Jezek
Assistant Principal
Alice Bartsch
Victoria Bihun
Rebecca Gill
Emma Hayes
Shuti Huang
Wendy Kong
Benjamin Li
Nicole Masters
Robert Smith
Maja Verunica

VIOLAS

Born Lau*
Guest Principal
Tobias Breider
Principal
Justin Williams
Associate Principal
Anne-Louise Comerford
Associate Principal Emeritus
Sandro Costantino
Rosemary Curtin
Stuart Johnson
Felicity Tsai
Amanda Verner
Leonid Volovelsky
James Wannan°
Ariel Postmus†
Dana Lee*

CELLOS

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

DOUBLE BASSES

Alexander Henery
Principal
David Campbell
Steven Larson
Richard Lynn
Benjamin Ward
Harry Young†
Alexandra Elvin*
Jacques Emery*

FLUTES

Emma Sholl
Acting Principal
Carolyn Harris
Emilia Antcliff*
Katlijn Sergeant
Principal Piccolo

OBOES

Shefali Pryor
Principal
Callum Hogan
Amy Clough†
Alexandre Oguey
Principal Cor Anglais

CLARINETS

Olli Leppäniemi
Principal
Francesco Celata
Associate Principal
Christopher Tingay
Alexander Morris
Principal Bass Clarinet

BASSOONS

Todd Gibson-Cornish
Principal
Matthew Wilkie
Principal Emeritus
Fiona McNamara
Melissa Woodroffe*
Guest Principal Contrabassoon

HORNS

Samuel Jacobs
Principal
Euan Harvey
Acting Principal 3rd Horn
Marnie Sebire
Rachel Silver
Emily Newham°
Bryn Arnold†
Joshua Davies*

TRUMPETS

David Elton
Principal
Brent Grapes
Associate Principal
Cécile Glémot
Anthony Heinrichs

TROMBONES

Isobel Daws*
Guest Principal
Scott Kinmont
Acting Principal
Christopher Harris
Principal Bass Trombone

TUBAS

Steven Rossé
Principal
Scott Frankcombe*

TIMPANI

Mark Robinson
Acting Principal

PERCUSSION

Rebecca Lagos
Principal
Timothy Constable
Joshua Hill°
Acting Associate Principal
Timpani / Section Percussion

HARPS

Louisic Dulbecco
Principal
Julie Kim*

ORGAN

David Drury*
Guest Principal

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

2025 CONCERT SEASON

EMIRATES MASTERS SERIES

Wednesday 3 September, 8pm

Friday 5 September, 8pm

Saturday 6 September, 8pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

EMIRATES THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

Thursday 4 September, 1.30pm

SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS RICHARD STRAUSS

A MUSICAL ODYSSEY

SIMONE YOUNG conductor

ANDREA LAM piano

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)

Metamorphosen – Study for 23 solo strings (1945)

Burleske (1885–86)

INTERVAL

Also sprach Zarathustra, Op.30 (1896)

- i. Introduction: *Sunrise*
- ii. *Of the backworldsmen*
- iii. *Of the great longing*
- iv. *Of joys and passions*
- v. *Dirge*
- vi. *Of science*
- vii. *The convalescent*
- viii. *Dance song*
- ix. *Nightwanderer's song*

Preconcert talk

By Genevieve Lang in the
Northern Foyer at 7.15pm
(12.45pm Thursday)

Estimated durations

Metamorphosen – 26 minutes
Burleske – 17 minutes
Interval – 20 minutes
Zarathustra – 33 minutes

The concert will run for
approximately 1 hour and
45 minutes

Cover image

Simone Young
Photo by Craig Abercrombie

Principal Partner



WELCOME

Welcome to **Simone Young conducts Richard Strauss**, a program that promises beauty, excitement and power.

Chief Conductor Simone Young is one of the world's foremost interpreters of Strauss' music. In this concert, she has chosen three contrasting works that span his early, middle and late career.

In Simone Young's view, Andrea Lam is among Australia's finest rising soloists, a pianist eager to embrace the richness of Strauss' early piano work, *Burleske*.

In *Metamorphosen*, Strauss evokes a contemplative and poignant mood. Meanwhile, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, with its iconic opening (made globally famous by *2001: A Space Odyssey*), audiences will experience the full power and brilliance of the Orchestra.

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

Uniting Simone Young's vision, a stellar Australian soloist and the virtuosity of the entire Orchestra, **Simone Young conducts Richard Strauss** stands as a vivid testament to all that Emirates and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra have achieved together.

This is a milestone year for our Australian operations as we celebrate 25 years of service to Sydney. Together with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, we have created one of the most significant and enduring relationships in Australia's performing arts, that continues to make us extremely proud.

We are delighted by the continued success of this long-term partnership, and I trust you will enjoy this electrifying concert.



Barry Brown
Divisional Vice President for Australasia
Emirates



YOUR CONCERT AT A GLANCE

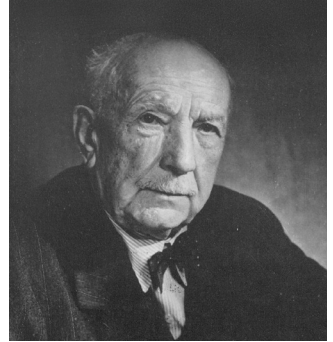
RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)

Metamorphosen – Study for 23 solo strings (1945)

Strauss' *Metamorphosen* began life as a waltz celebrating Munich and ended up as an old man's deep lament for the culture destroyed by Nazism and war. This is expressed by his own highly charged harmonic language and references to Beethoven.

It premiered in 1946, the year that saw the first meeting of the United Nations, the election of Ho Chi Minh as president of Vietnam and the designation of 26 January as Australia Day.

Contemporary music included Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto*, Brittens' *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* and Prokofiev's Violin Sonata in F minor.



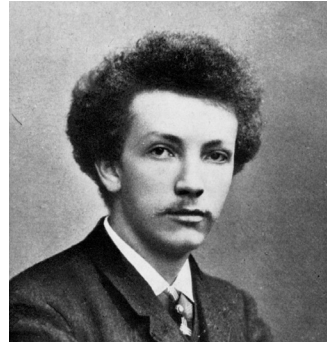
The last photograph of Strauss, from 1945

Burleske (1885–86)

This is the work of much younger Richard Strauss, a single movement for piano and orchestra that is a mostly loving parody of two musical giants, Wagner and Brahms.

It was composed in 1886 but was revised and premiered in 1890, the year that saw Bismarck forced out as Chancellor of Germany, the Wounded Knee Massacre in the US and the opening of the University of Tasmania.

Contemporary music included Dvořák's Eighth Symphony, Chausson's *Chansons de Shakespeare* and Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*.



Strauss in 1888

Also sprach Zarathustra, Op.30 (1896)

Also sprach Zarathustra is the third of Strauss' symphonic poems – works of considerable scale and ambition that seek to depict extra-musical ideas while retaining the formal coherence of the more abstract symphony. It begins with the *Sunrise* fanfare which on its own has found a place in popular culture, and then follows the story of Friedrich Nietzsche's Superman in a series of linked movements.

It appeared in 1896, the year that saw Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius predict the carbon-induced greenhouse effect, the first modern Olympic Games and the first films of horse racing made in Australia.

Contemporary music included Mahler's Third Symphony, Brahms' *Vier ernste Gesänge* (Four Serious Songs) and Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*.



A younger Strauss. Source: Tucker Collection, New York Public Library.



Photo by Peter Brew-Bevan

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SIMONE YOUNG AM conductor

Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Chief Conductor, Simone Young has previously held the posts of General Manager and Music Director of the Hamburg State Opera and Music Director of the Philharmonic State Orchestra Hamburg, Music Director of Opera Australia, Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of both the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Lisbon and the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra. An acknowledged interpreter of the operas of Wagner and Strauss, she has conducted numerous complete cycles of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Bayreuth Festival, Vienna Staatsoper, the Staatsoper in Berlin and again, to great acclaim, in Hamburg as part of the 'Wagner-Wahn' Festival, during which she conducted the ten major Wagner operas. Her Hamburg recordings include the *Ring Cycle*, *Mathis der Maler* (Hindemith), *Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln* (Schmidt) and symphonies of Bruckner, Brahms and Mahler. She has also recorded Benjamin Britten folksongs and songs of Richard Strauss with Steve Davislim, and songs by Wagner and Strauss with Lisa Gasteen. Her 2012 tour to Brisbane with the Hamburg Opera and Ballet, (*Das Rheingold* in concert, and Mahler's Symphony No.2, *Resurrection*), won her the 2013 Helpmann Award for the Best Individual Classical Music Performance.

Firmly established as one of the world's leading conductors, 2025 will see Simone Young return to Milan to continue La Scala's new *Ring Cycle*, with the premieres of both *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*, to the Bayreuth Festival to again conduct the complete *Ring Cycle*, to the Berlin State Opera for *Elektra*, to the Opera nationale de Paris for *Don Carlos*, to Zürich Opera for *Salome* and to the Vienna State Opera for further performances of *Fin de Partie*.

Equally impressive is the list of her return invitations to the great orchestras of the world which this year will include the Orquesta nacionales de Madrid, the Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, the New York Philharmonic, the Bavarian Radio Orchestra, the North German Elbphilharmonie Orchestra Hamburg, Staatskapelle Berlin, the Orchestre nationale de Lyon and the Orchestre de Paris. Closer to home, Simone Young returns to conduct the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and will conclude her year in Sydney, performing Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and Dvořák's Cello Concerto with Kian Soltani, the next opera in the Sydney Symphony's *Ring Cycle*, *Siegfried*, and Beethoven's Symphony No.9 with an all-star local cast of soloists.

The presentation of the first two operas in Sydney Symphony Orchestra's *Ring Cycle* played to sold out audiences, standing ovations and five-star reviews. A second, feature-length documentary film, *Knowing the Score*, showcasing Simone Young and her career was internationally released in 2023.

Simone Young's many accolades include the 2024 Conductor of the Year (British *Opera* magazine), Honorary Member (Ehrenmitglied) of the Vienna State Opera, the 2019 European Cultural Prize Vienna, a Professorship at the Musikhochschule in Hamburg, honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Western Australia and New South Wales, Griffith University and Monash University, the Sir Bernard Heinze Award, the Goethe Institute Medal, Helpmann Award and the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, France.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ANDREA LAM piano

Pronounced a ‘real talent’ by the *Wall Street Journal* and finalist for *Limelight’s* 2024 Artist of the Year, ARIA Award-nominated Australian pianist Andrea Lam has thrilled audiences from Carnegie Hall to the Sydney Opera House with works from Bach, Chopin, Mozart and Schumann to Aaron Jay Kernis, Liliya Ugay and Nigel Westlake.

Making her orchestral debut at age 13 with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Andrea has performed with leading conductors including Sir Donald Runnicles, Alan Gilbert, Eivind Aadland, Michael Christie, Wing-sie Yip and Simone Young, and frequently collaborates with artists including cellist Matt Haimovitz, the Takács Quartet, Ani Kavafian and the Australian String Quartet.

Andrea featured in the Sydney Opera House’s International Piano Day 2020 and 2022 livestreams, New York City’s Chelsea Music Festival (including the world premiere of *The Clarke Variations* by Ninfia Cruttwell-Reade) and the Smithsonian Museum (Washington, DC). Andrea also performed at private birthday celebrations for actor Natalie Portman. Recent highlights include engagements with the Sydney, Melbourne, Tasmanian and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras, a critically acclaimed national tour of Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* for Musica Viva Australia and recitals for Sydney Opera House’s Utzon Music Series, the 2023 ABC *Classic 100* concert and Adelaide Festival including the world premiere performances of *Ngapa William Cooper* with music by Nigel Westlake and Lior.

In 2025, Andrea headlined the ABC’s new television series *The Piano*, watched by over one million viewers each week, alongside Harry Connick Jr. and doyenne of Australian media, Amanda Keller. Andrea also enjoys soloist engagements with the Sydney, Melbourne and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras with renowned conductors including Simone Young, Jaime Martín and Benjamin Northey, and as soloist at the Grand Teton Music Festival (USA) at the invitation of Sir Donald Runnicles. Andrea performed in the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra’s Myer Music Bowl series before an audience of 8,000

and returned for *Classic 100* concerts at Arts Centre Melbourne with the MSO, broadcast on ABC iView. She performs in chamber concerts with the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, Australia Ensemble at UNSW and the Goldner Quartet, and plays in regional festivals such as the Four Winds Easter Festival, where Andrea takes on the dual role of Artistic Curator and performer.

In May 2025, ABC Classics released Andrea’s new solo album, *Piano Diary*, remaining for weeks at #1 on the ARIA Classical and Classical/Crossover charts, and selected as featured album on both ABC Classic and Fine Music FM.

Lecturer in Piano at Melbourne Conservatorium of Music (University of Melbourne) and board director of the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM), Andrea was a semi-finalist in the 2009 Van Cliburn Competition, Silver Medalist in the 2009 San Antonio Piano Competition, winner of the ABC’s Young Performer of the Year Award in the Keyboard section and the Yale Woolsey Hall Competition. Andrea holds a Bachelor of Music from the Manhattan School of Music and Artist Diploma and Master of Music from Yale University.



Photo by Lisa-Marie Mazzucco



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Principal Partner





Portrait of Richard Strauss (1918) by German painter Max Liebermann (1847–1935). Source Wikimedia Commons/
Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT RICHARD STRAUSS

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

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

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

Salome was a turning point. Oscar Wilde's play is a self-consciously 'artificial' piece of work. Strauss, however brings all he had learned from Wagner to make it a gripping document of psycho-pathology. Its companion piece, *Elektra* likewise essays madness in an ancient mythic setting are the extreme points of Strauss at his most post-Wagnerian. As time went on, Strauss turned, or returned, to the example of Mozart, who had been the inspiration for some of his earliest compositions. *Der Rosenkavalier*, the greatest result of Strauss' collaboration with playwright Hugo von Hofmannsthal is set in a highly Romanticised, late 18th-century Vienna. In works like *Ariadne auf Naxos* or *Capriccio* he moved even closer to a neo-classical manner; at the end of his life, in instrumental works like the Oboe Concerto, Strauss took great solace from the example of Mozart in the face of the horror of World War II.

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

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT *METAMORPHOSEN*

Strauss had, it is true, initially welcomed the rise of the Third Reich: Hitler cared for good music, and Strauss believed that the Führer regarded him as a valuable ornament to German culture. Strauss' prestige initially saw him rewarded with official posts, but what he didn't know was that the view of Josef Goebbels, at least, was that 'one day we shall have no further need of this decadent neurotic'. Strauss aroused the regime's suspicions as early as 1935 when he naively wrote to Jewish playwright Stefan Zweig – who had prudently escaped to Switzerland – suggesting a secret collaboration; Goebbels was monitoring his correspondence, and it was only Strauss' international reputation saved him from a fate worse than humiliation. His reputation also saved his Jewish daughter-in-law, Alice, though in 1944 the old man drove to the gates of Theresienstadt concentration camp to demand the release of Alice's grandmother, only to be jeered at by the guards.

Strauss believed that art 'is the finest gift of God that exalts over all earthly suffering'. He took refuge in music, and in the great works of German culture unpolluted by the 'criminal soldiery'. In 1944 he re-read the poetry of Goethe. He was particularly taken with two poems from the *Zahme Xenien* ('Tame invectives'), written between 1820 and 1827, which suggest that 'no-one can know himself... yet must daily put to the test who he is and what he was, what he can and what he may be'; and 'No-one understands what goes on the world ...conduct yourself with discernment.'

In August 1944, Paul Sacher asked Strauss for a work for strings, and the composer began reworking a little waltz theme from a discarded 1939 film-score about Munich that had become, in the intervening time, a memorial piece. The Allied bombings intensified through autumn and winter, and in the wake of bombings in March 1945 Strauss wrote to a friend 'I am inconsolable. The Goethehaus, the most sacred place on earth, destroyed! My lovely Dresden, Weimar, Munich, all gone!' Ten days later Vienna's Staatsoper (Opera House) was destroyed and the following morning Strauss began the full the score of what would become the *Metamorphosen* – *Study for 23 solo strings*.

Deep in the orchestra's compass, the work's first four common chords exploit all the possible twelve notes of tonal music, suggesting how complete the metamorphosis will be; that harmonic fluidity underpins the sometimes vertiginous key-changes of the piece. The second theme, introduced, like many in the piece, on viola, is the remnant of the 'Munich' piece, with its three repeated notes, its downward scale and the characteristic short-long 'snap' of the 'Lombard' rhythm. It is this rhythm that, after a formidable display of compositional ingenuity in the central section of the work, reveals its affinity with the theme of the slow movement of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony. In the final bars of the piece Beethoven's theme is quoted in the bass under Strauss' melody: the score includes the words *IN MEMORIAM* at this point. Strauss, significantly, conducted the dress rehearsal of the premiere, but refused to attend the work's first performance.

There is no metamorphosis of themes (in a Wagnerian sense) in this work, except for that final convergence of Strauss' theme with that of the 'Funeral March for a Hero' from Beethoven's symphony, and Strauss maintained this was an accident – 'it escaped from my pen'. Fortunately, it was not his last word; the Oboe Concerto and Four Last Songs would follow. Clearly, though, *Metamorphosen* is, as Michael Kennedy notes, 'an emotional catharsis, a confession and an atonement'. It enacts and mourns the utter destruction wrought on all that Strauss held dear.

Metamorphosen is scored for 23 strings: 10 violins, 5 violas, 5 cellos and 3 double bass.

It was premiered on 25 January 1946 by the Collegium Musicum Zürich and conducted by their founder and director Paul Sacher, who had commissioned the work and to whom it is dedicated.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the work in May 1952, conducted by our inaugural Chief Conductor Eugene Goossens.

Other notable performances include those led by Fritz Rieger (1971), Willem van Otterloo (1976), Franz-Paul Decker (1982), Edo de Waart (1999, 2001, 2003), Vladimir Ashkenazy (2012) and play-directed by James Ehnes (2016).

We also recorded the work at Sydney Town Hall on 10 December 2020, conducted by Simone Young.



Scan the QR code below to visit Sydney Symphony On Demand and watch this performance for free.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT *BURLESKE*

Hans von Bülow didn't spare the young composer's feelings. Strauss' new work, a 'scherzo' for piano and orchestra was, according to Bülow, 'unpianistic...A different position for the hands in every bar? Do you think I'm going to sit down for four weeks to learn a cross grained piece like this?' Strauss, barely 21, decided that Bülow was right: the orchestration was 'overloaded' and the piano part 'too detailed'.

It wasn't the first time he had incurred the wrath of the formidable conductor and pianist. As a teenager, Strauss' work had come to the attention of Bülow who judged Strauss 'not a genius, at best a talent, 60% calculated to shock'. When, however, Strauss produced his Serenade for winds, Op.7, the conductor was much impressed. He programmed it with the Court Orchestra at Meiningen – a band which under his direction had become one of the most prestigious in Germany. And in 1885 he invited Strauss to become his assistant conductor.

This was a turning point in Strauss' life. Not only was it his first professional engagement, it drew him out of the immediate environment of his father Franz – the greatest horn player of his time and a holder of strong views on music, particularly that of Wagner, which he hated. Franz also regarded Bülow as an 'implacable enemy', but Meiningen allowed Richard some space to explore and develop his own tastes.

Bülow in some ways bridged the gap between the rival camps of Wagner and Brahms (he had, of course, laid down his wife, Cosima, for his friend Wagner some time before) and one of Strauss' duties in Meiningen was to prepare the orchestra for the premiere of Brahms' Fourth Symphony which the composer conducted. Brahms offered his frank views on Strauss' own First Symphony, saying it 'contains too much playing about with themes. This piling up of many themes based on a triad, which differ from one another only in rhythm, has no value'. With the benefit of hindsight we can only assume that Strauss took no notice of that advice at all, but he certainly revered Brahms.

After the bucketing of his scherzo, Strauss set it aside for some four years until the pianist Eugene d'Albert persuaded him to dust it off. Strauss revised the score and gave it the name *Burleske* and d'Albert premiered it in the 1889-1890 season. 'Burlesque', of course, implies parody (if not an actual kick-line) and in the last work of Strauss' early period, we hear the beginnings of an important aspect of his mature style: the use of pastiche and parody. In Strauss this should never be mistaken for sarcasm: whether it be the Viennese waltzes of *Der Rosenkavalier* or the Mozartian manner of *Capriccio*, Strauss' parodies tend to be loving. So it is here. The 'subjects' of the *Burleske* are two of his heroes – Brahms and Wagner. The Brahms piano concertos, particularly the Scherzo of the B flat major work, are evoked, as is the D minor Ballade, and some passages are redolent of *Die Walküre* and *Tristan*.

The work is in one sonata-designed movement with cadenzas (one of which, as Norman del Mar has noted, improvises on a single chord of the dominant minor ninth – so much for Brahms' advice!) The work shows the wicked humour of some of Strauss' subsequent work; its triple metre on occasion turns into an outright waltz – a parody of Brahms and a glimpse of Strauss' future.

Strauss remained ambivalent about the piece until late in life. In 1947 he presented it in London, giving a war-shattered audience a glimpse of a cultured world long gone.

Burleske is scored for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets and 2 bassoons; 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, strings and piano soloist.

It was premiered by pianist Eugen d'Albert at a convention of the General German Music Association at Eisenach on 21 June 1890, in the same concert as the premiere of Strauss' *Death and Transfiguration*.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the work in May 1941, with Jascha Spivakovsky as soloist conducted by Bernard Heinze. Other notable performances include Muriel Cohen/Percy Code (1944), Claudio Arrau/Heinze (1962), Muriel Cohen/Gerald Krug (1968), Lorin Hollander/Moshe Atzmon (1972), Arrau/Willem van Otterloo (1974) and Arnaldo Cohen/Edo de Waart (1996).

Our most recent performances were in 2010, with Clemens Leske as soloist and Vladimir Ashkenazy conducting.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA

In 1891-2 the usually robust Strauss suffered a period of serious illness, including bouts of pneumonia, bronchitis and pleurisy. In the summer of 1892 he took leave of his duties at the Weimar Opera and travelled extensively through Italy, Greece and Egypt, soaking up the sun, but more importantly enjoying the awesome physical remains of the ancient pagan civilisations in those countries. It was at this time that he began to think about a musical response to some of the ideas of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, particularly those expressed in his poem *Also sprach Zarathustra* (Thus spake Zoroaster), though the work's composition had to wait until 1896.

Zoroaster (as he was known to the ancient Greeks) was a Persian prophet living in the sixth century BCE who taught that the universe, and humankind in particular, are subject to the eternal struggle of two gods, represented by light and darkness; his religion survives among the Parsees of modern India. Nietzsche's relationship to Zoroastrian ideas is fairly loose, and as Norman Del Mar puts it, he used these 'as a prop on which to clothe his own ideas on the purpose and destiny of mankind'. The most famous – indeed, notorious – of these is the idea of the *Übermensch* or Superman. 'Man', in Nietzsche's words, 'is a thing to be surmounted...what is the ape to man? A jest or a thing of shame. So shall man be to the Superman'. While Nietzsche (and, it must be admitted, the younger Strauss) were disdainful of Christianity's compassion for weakness, it is drawing a long bow to make Nietzsche responsible for the atrocities of Nazism. Indeed, Nietzsche scholar Joachim Köhler argues that *Also sprach Zarathustra*, with its celebration of the individual will, partly grew out of the poet's freeing himself from the dominating personality of the composer Richard Wagner. And Wagner's widow Cosima, writing to her son-in-law Houston Stewart Chamberlain (whose racist ideas definitely did influence Hitler), condemned Nietzsche's book for its 'Jewishness'.

Strauss' work is, as he said, 'freely after Fr. Nietzsche' which afforded him 'much aesthetic enjoyment' rather than any profound philosophical conversion. Strauss takes some of the chapter headings of the poem as the defining images for each section of his tone-poem. It begins with the famous invocation to the sun with low rumbling accompanying the trumpets simple C-G-C theme (which in much of Strauss represents primeval nature) the increasing blaze of full chords establishes C major as one pole of the work (and as Del Mar notes, the sounds of the organ at the end of the section adds a liturgical note). *Of the backworldsmen* depicts humanity in its primitive, or rather naïve state (in B minor, significantly – B being the other tonal pole of the piece). Strauss includes those who profess Christianity in this category, quoting a fragment of the plainchant for the Credo to underline his point, but the movement still reaches a gorgeous climax for multiple divided strings.

Of the great longing which follows is a depiction of humanity's search for something beyond mere superstition, but Strauss' music dramatises the conflict between nature (the trumpet theme) and humanity's tendency to create dogma with more hints of plainchant and the unresolved conflict between the keys of C and B. A new chromatic motif leads into the *Of Joys and Passions* section with a theme that Strauss described as 'A flat (brass: dark blue)'. Actually the section tends to be in C minor, linking it to the idea of nature, whereas the following *Dirge* is in B minor, and therefore linked to the idea of man.

Of science is based on a deeply-voiced fugue that Strauss described as 'spine-chilling' and Del Mar regards it as having a 'strangely mysterious quality' despite its dour timbre. In *The convalescent*, part of which Mahler sets in his Third Symphony, Nietzsche describes a Zoroaster's spiritual and physical collapse, after which he emerges as the Superman. *The Dance* song of the Superman is, like the 'Dance of Seven Veils' in *Salome*, a Viennese waltz – a Straussian joke, perhaps. Here poet and composer part company: Strauss'

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Zoroaster displays none of the triumphalism that Nietzsche's does, and the work closes with a mysterious and tranquil *Nightwanderer's song* in which the keys of nature and man still quietly contend.

After the final rehearsal for the premiere, Strauss, with characteristic modesty wrote to his wife: '*Zarathustra* is glorious...of all my pieces, the most perfect in form, the richest in content and the most individual in character...I'm a fine fellow after all, and feel just a little pleased with myself'.

Thus Spake Zarathustra is scored for a large orchestra consisting of piccolo, 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes, cor anglais, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bassoons and contrabassoon; 6 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones and 2 tubas; timpani, percussion, 2 harps, organ and strings.

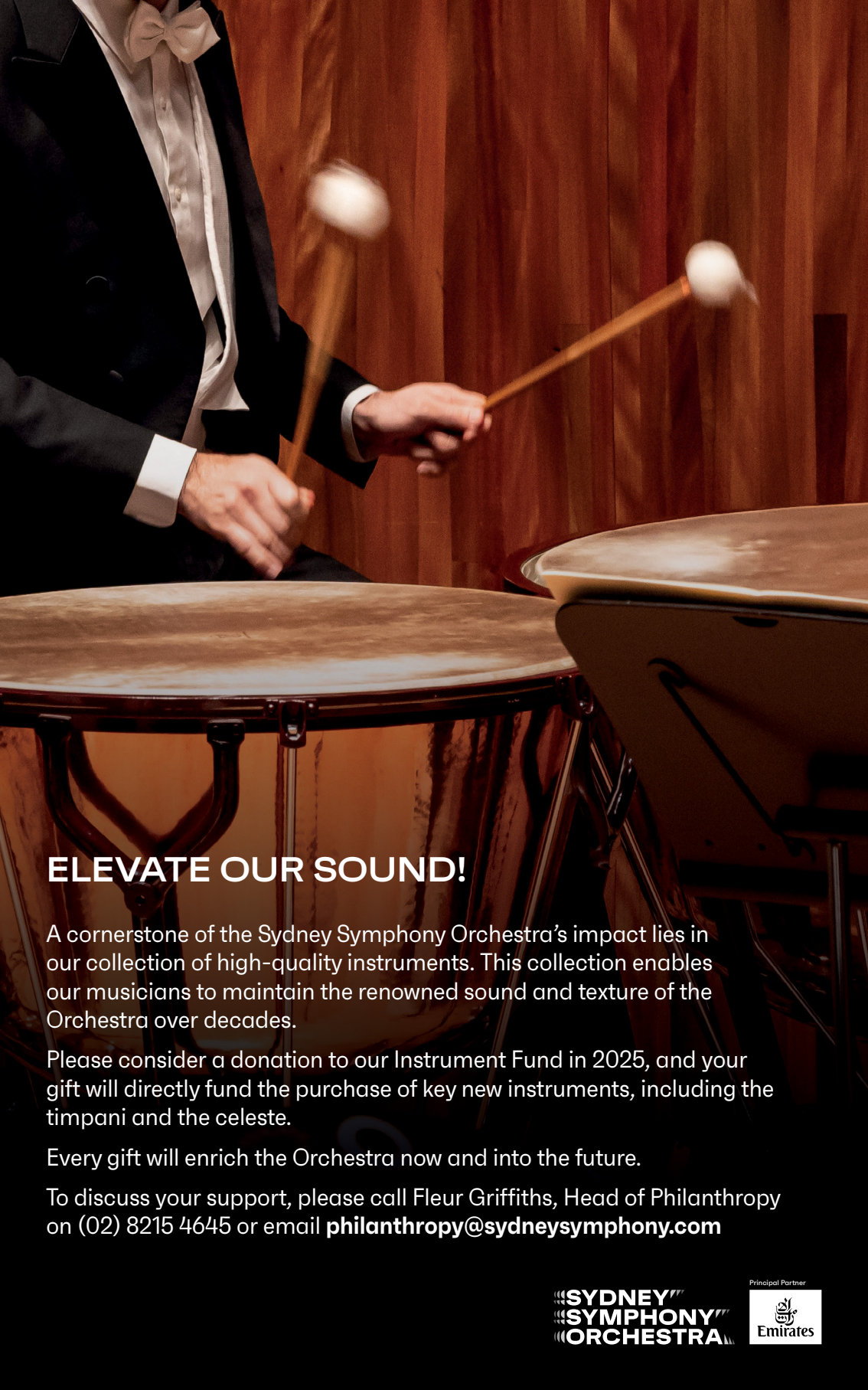
It was first performed on 27 November 1896 in Frankfurt, conducted by Strauss.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the work in April 1947, conducted by Bernard Heinze.

Other notable performances include those led by Eugene Goossens (1952, 1955), Charles Mackerras (1978, 2007), Patrick Thomas (1980, 1981), Zdeněk Mácal (1983), Hiroyuki Iwaki (1987), Stuart Challender (1988), Franz-Paul Decker (1993), Edo de Waart (1997), Marc Taddei (2011) and Vladimir Ashkenazy (2012).

Our most recent performances were in 2023 as part of *Symphonic Horizons*, a collaboration with Professor Brian Cox conducted by Benjamin Northey.

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