

12 September 2025

DONALD RUNNICLES CONDUCTS

SHOSTAKOVICH'S FIFTH SYMPHONY

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
Fiona Ziegler
Assistant Concertmaster
Jennifer Booth
Sophie Cole
Sercan Danis
Claire Herrick
Georges Lentz
Emily Long
Alex Mitchell
Leone Ziegler
Natalie Mavridis*
Brian Hong°
Katherine Lukey*
Liam Pilgrim†
Emily Qin°

SECOND VIOLINS

Lerida Delbridge
Principal
Kirsty Hilton
Principal
Marina Marsden
Principal Emeritus
Emma Jezek
Assistant Principal
Alice Bartsch
Victoria Bihun
Rebecca Gill
Shuti Huang
Wendy Kong
Benjamin Li
Nicole Masters
Robert Smith
Maja Verunica
Riikka Sintonen°
VIOLAS
Tobias Breider
Principal
Justin Williams
Assistant Principal
Anne-Louise Comerford
Associate Principal Emeritus
Sandro Costantino
Rosemary Curtin
Stuart Johnson
Justine Marsden
Felicity Tsai
Amanda Verner
Leonid Volovelsky
Andrew Jezek°
David Wicks*
Ariel Postmus*

CELLOS

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Associate Principal
Leah Lynn
Assistant Principal
Kristy Konrau
Fenella Gill
Timothy Nankervis
Elizabeth Neville
Christopher Pidcock
Adrian Wallis
Noah Lawrence*
Joseph Kelly*
DOUBLE BASSES
Alexander Henery
Principal
David Campbell
Dylan Holly
Steven Larson
Richard Lynn
Benjamin Ward
Harry Young†
Matthew Cave*

FLUTES

Emma Sholl
Acting Principal
Carolyn Harris
Katlijn Sergeant
Principal Piccolo

OBOES

Shefali Pryor
Principal
Callum Hogan

CLARINETS

Olli Leppäniemi
Principal
Francesco Celata
Associate Principal
Christopher Tingay
Oliver Crofts†

BASSOONS

Todd Gibson-Cornish
Principal
Fiona McNamara
Noriko Shimada
Principal Contrabassoon

HORNS

Samuel Jacobs
Principal
Euan Harvey
Acting Principal 3rd Horn
Marnie Sebire
Rachel Silver
Emily Newham°

TRUMPETS

David Elton
Principal
Cécile Glémot
Anthony Heinrichs

TROMBONES

Isobel Daws*
Guest Principal
Nick Byrne
Christopher Harris
Principal Bass Trombone

TUBAS

Steven Rossé
Principal

TIMPANI

Mark Robinson
Acting Principal

PERCUSSION

Rebecca Lagos
Principal
Joshua Hill°
Acting Associate Principal
Timpani / Section Percussion
Ian Cleworth*
Brian Nixon*

HARPS

Louisic Dulbecco
Principal
Julie Kim*

KEYBOARD

Susanne Powell*
Guest Principal

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

2025 CONCERT SEASON

TEA AND SYMPHONY

Friday 12 September, 11am

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

DONALD RUNNICLES CONDUCTS SHOSTAKOVICH'S FIFTH SYMPHONY

DRAMATIC AND HEROIC

DONALD RUNNICLES conductor

ANNA CLYNE (born 1980)

This Midnight Hour (2015)

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975)

Symphony No.5, Op.47 (1937)

- i. Moderato – Allegro non troppo
- ii. Allegretto
- iii. Largo
- iv. Allegro non troppo

Estimated durations

Clyne – 12 minutes

Shostakovich – 44 minutes

The concert will run
for approximately 1 hour,
with no interval

Cover image

By Jay Patel

*These performances have
been generously supported
by Paolo Hooke*

Principal Partner





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YOUR CONCERT AT A GLANCE

ANNA CLYNE (born 1980)
This Midnight Hour (2015)

This 13-minute single movement is inspired by imagery from two poets – Juan Ramón Jiménez and Charles Baudelaire – neither of whom evokes nocturnal calm. Clyne's music is often forceful, building and demolishing powerful blocks of sound and using driving rhythms, against which she contrasts lyrical solo woodwind writing and a quiet chorale just before the work concludes.

It dates from 2015, the year that saw the first detection of gravitational waves, the eradication of rubella in the Americas and the elevation of Malcolm Turnbull as Australian Prime Minister.

Contemporary music included Jennifer Higdon's *Viola Concerto*, Errollyn Wallen's *Rebuttal Blues No.1* and Sally Beamish's *Be Still*.



Photo by Victoria Stevens

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975)
Symphony No.5, Op.47 (1937)

Whether or not he thought of it as a Soviet artist's answer to just criticism, Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony is a determinedly neoclassical work in its four-movement design, and its Beethovenian trajectory through struggle to triumph. It was thus just what the party ordered, and a huge hit with the audiences then, as it has remained.

It was composed and premiered in 1937, the year that saw the Moscow Trials, the Hindenburg disaster and regular airmail services between Australia and the US.

Contemporary music included Bartók's *Music for strings, percussion and celesta*, Messiaen's *Poèmes pour Mi* and Berg's *Lulu*.



Shostakovich in 1943

FROM THE ARCHIVES



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA			
THURSDAY, MARCH 12, at 8 p.m.			
Regent Theatre			
Conductor: ALCEO GALLIERA		Soloist: INGRID HAEBLER	
Concert Master: ERNEST LLEWELLYN			
"Das Jenseits", Symphonic Poem, Op. 20	.	.	Richard Strauss
Piano Concerto No. 4, Op. 15	.	.	Beethoven
Symphony No. 5, Op. 67	.	.	Dmitri Shostakovich
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA			
SATURDAY, MARCH 14, at 8 p.m.			
Regent Theatre			
Conductor: ALCEO GALLIERA		Soloists: BERYL KIMBER, MAURICE CLARE	
Concert Master: ERNEST LLEWELLYN			
"Tid and Vokklung" ("Death and Transfiguration"), Symphonic Poem, Op. 24	.	.	Richard Strauss
Concerto for two Violins and Orchestra (1924) (First Australian Performance)	.	.	Frank Bridge
Symphony in D ("Hoffmann"), K. 302	.	.	Mozart
"The Place of Rome", Symphonic Poem	.	.	Benjamin
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA			
MONDAY, MARCH 16, at 8 p.m.			
Regent Theatre			
Conductor: ALCEO GALLIERA		Soloist: HEATHER HARPER	
Concert Master: ERNEST LLEWELLYN			
Overture to "The Italian Vespers"	.	.	Vivaldi
Ernesta	.	.	Alfredo Cappelletti
Les Four Sings	.	.	Richard Strauss
Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68	.	.	Beethoven
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA			
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, at 8 p.m.			
Regent Theatre			
Conductor: SIR WILLIAM WALTON		Soloist: JAMES WHITEHEAD	
Variations on a Theme by Hindemith (First Australian Performance)			
Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (First Australian Performance)			
Symphony No. 1			
WAR REQUIEM			
Benjamin Britten			
(First Australian performance)			
FRIDAY, MARCH 20, and SATURDAY, MARCH 21 at 8.15 p.m.			
Centennial Hall			
THE FESTIVAL CHOIR			
The Adelaide Philharmonic Choir			
The Adelaide Harmony Choir			
A Choir of Boys from St. Peter's College			
SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA*			
Conductor: SIR BERNARD HEINZE			
Soloists: HEATHER HARPER, DAVID GALLIVER, JOHN SHAW			
Organist: DAVID FOWLE Concert Master: ERNEST LLEWELLYN			
* By arrangement with the Australian Broadcasting Commission			

1964 – SHOSTAKOVICH & BEETHOVEN AT THE ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

In March 1964 the Sydney Symphony Orchestra was a cornerstone of the third Adelaide Festival, performing five different programs over nine days.

The highlight of the Festival was the first visit to Australia by the English composer Sir William Walton and the Australian premiere of his opera *Troilus and Cressida*, given by the South Australian (now Adelaide) Symphony Orchestra conducted by Joseph Post. In addition Walton himself conducted the Sydney Symphony in a concert of his own works, including his First Symphony and the Australian premieres of his *Variations on a Theme of Hindemith* and his First Cello Concerto, with British cellist James Whitehead as soloist.

The Sydney Symphony also gave the Australian premiere of Benjmain Britten’s *War Requiem* (less than two years after its first-ever performance), with Sir Bernard Heinze conducting and Heather Harper, David Galliver and John Shaw the vocal soloists.

Curiously, the Orchestra also gave a concert with a very similar program to today’s performance: Beethoven’s Fourth Piano Concerto paired with Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony (with Austrian pianist Ingrid Haebler the soloist and the Italian Alceo Galliera conducting).

By Hugh Robertson

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DONALD RUNNICLES conductor

Over the course of a career spanning 45 years, Sir Donald Runnicles has built his reputation on enduring relationships with several of the most significant opera companies and orchestras, and is especially celebrated for his interpretations of Romantic and post-Romantic symphonic and opera repertoire which are core to his musical identity. He is the music director of the Deutsche Oper Berlin (since 2009) and the Grand Teton Music Festival (since 2005) and has held chief artistic leadership roles at the San Francisco Opera (1992–2008), BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (2009–2016), and the Orchestra of St. Luke's (2001–2007). Sir Donald was also Principal Guest Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra for more than two decades (2001–2023), and he is the Principal Guest Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (since 2019). In February 2024, Runnicles was appointed as Chief Conductor of the Dresden Philharmonic, beginning in the 25/26 season.

Maestro Runnicles kicks off his 24/25 season with a 70th birthday celebration concert at the Edinburgh International Festival conducting the BBC Scottish Symphony in a program of Mahler and Bruckner, after which he opens the Dresden Philharmonic's season in his first concerts as Chief Conductor Designate, returning two more times over the course of the season. At the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Runnicles concludes his Strauss cycle in collaboration with director Tobias Kratzer with a new production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, alongside *Arabella* and *Intermezzo*, as well as revival performances of Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg*, Puccini's *La bohème*, Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, Verdi's *Don Carlo*, and a symphony concert with the DOB as part of Musikfest Berlin. In North America, he makes guest appearances with the Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, Houston and Pittsburgh symphony orchestras. He also returns twice to the Sydney Symphony.

Runnicles spends his summers at the Grand Teton Music Festival in Jackson, Wyoming. This eight-week festival of symphonic and chamber music, five of which are conducted by Runnicles as music director, takes place amid the breathtaking beauty of Grand Teton

National Park. Summer 2024 GTMF highlights included a semi-staged *The Magic Flute*, concerts with Augustin Hadelich and Yo-Yo Ma, and fifth symphonies by Mahler and Vaughan Williams.

His extensive discography includes recordings of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Britten's *Billy Budd*, Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* and Aribert Reimann's *L'invisible*. His recording of Wagner arias with Jonas Kaufmann and the Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper Berlin won the 2013 *Gramophone* prize for Best Vocal Recording, and his recording of Janáček's *Jenůfa* with the Orchestra and Chorus of the Deutsche Oper Berlin was nominated for a 2016 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording.

Sir Donald Runnicles was born and raised in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was appointed OBE in 2004 and was made a Knight Bachelor in 2020. He holds honorary degrees from the University of Edinburgh, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

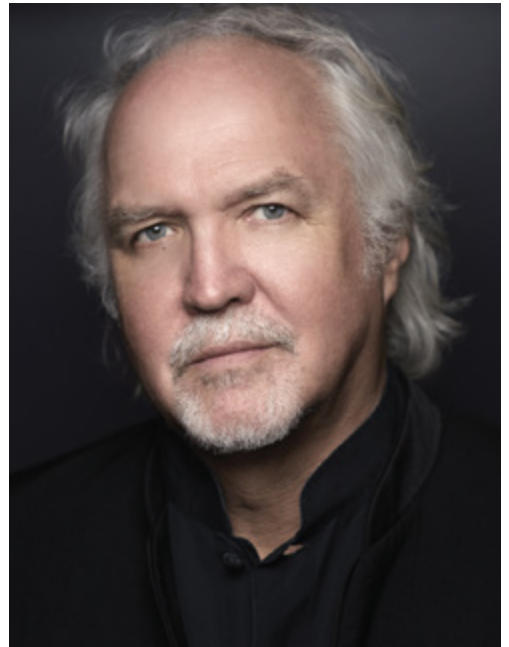


Photo by Simon Pauly

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT ANNA CLYNE

One of the most in-demand composers today, working with orchestras, choreographers, filmmakers, and visual artists around the world, Anna Clyne has been commissioned and presented by the world's most dynamic and revered arts institutions. Her music has opened such events as the Edinburgh International Festival, The Last Night of the Proms, the New York Philharmonic's season and the World Economic Forum, which commissioned *Restless Oceans*.

Clyne often collaborates on creative projects such as *Between the Rooms*, a film with choreographer Kim Brandstrup and LA Opera, as well as the *Nico Project* at the Manchester International Festival, a stage work about pop icon Nico's life that featured Clyne's reimagining of *The Marble Index* for orchestra and voices. Clyne has also reimagined tracks from Thievery Corporation's *The Cosmic Game* for the electronica duo with orchestra and her music has been programmed by such artists as Björk.

Clyne's works are frequently choreographed, with recent projects including the world premiere of choreographer Pam Tanowitz's dance set to *Breathing Statues* for the Royal Ballet in London and performances of *Dance* by the San Francisco Ballet with choreography by Nicolas Blanc. Her fascination with visual art has inspired several projects including *Atlas*, inspired by a portfolio of work by Gerhard Richter; *Color Field*, inspired by the artwork of Mark Rothko; and *Abstractions*, inspired by five contemporary paintings.

Clyne seeks innovation through technology, developing the Augmented Orchestra with sound designer Jody Elff; the technology expands the sound-world of the orchestra through computer-controlled processes. The Augmented Orchestra was premiered in *Wild Geese* at the 2023 Cabrillo Festival, featured in *The Gorgeous Nothings* at the BBC Proms 2024 and will be used in her new work *PALETTE* to premiere in February 2025 with the St Louis Symphony Orchestra.



Photo by Simon Pauly

Clyne has held residencies with nine major orchestras in Europe and the US, and in 2024-2025 continues her role as Composer in Residence with the BBC Philharmonic. Clyne is deeply committed to music education and to supporting and mentoring the next generation of composers. She has taught master classes and workshops throughout the US and internationally and was the founding mentor for the Orchestra of St Luke's Degaetano Composition Institute, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's New Stories program, and the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra's Emerging Composers Program.

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ABOUT THIS MIDNIGHT HOUR

The composer writes:

The opening to *This Midnight Hour* is inspired by the character and power of the lower strings of L'Orchestre national d'Île de France. From here, it draws inspiration from two poems – one by Charles Baudelaire and another by Juan Ramón Jiménez. While it is not intended to depict a specific narrative, my intention is that it will evoke a visual journey for the listener.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Jiménez's poem is very short and concise
(translated by Robert Bly):

JUAN RAMÓN JIMÉNEZ (1881–1958)

La musica

La musica;
-mujer desnuda,
corriendo loca por la noche pura! -

Music

*Music –
a naked woman
running mad through the pure night!*

This immediately struck me as a strong image and one that I chose to interpret with outbursts of frenetic energy – for example, dividing the strings into sub-groups that play fortissimo staggered descending cascade figures from left to right in stereo effect. This stems from my early explorations of electroacoustic music.

There is also a lot of evocative sensory imagery in Baudelaire's *Harmonie du Soir*, the first stanza of which reads as follows (translated by William Aggeler):

*The season is at hand when swaying on its stem
Every flower exhales perfume like a censer;
Sounds and perfumes turn in the evening air;
Melancholy waltz and languid vertigo!*

I riffed on the idea of the melancholic waltz about halfway into *This Midnight Hour* – I split the viola section in two and have one half playing at written pitch and the other half playing $\frac{1}{4}$ -tone sharp to emulate the sonority of an accordion playing a Parisian-esque waltz.

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE (1821–1867)

Harmonie du soir (1857)

Voici venir les temps où vibrant sur sa tige
Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir;
Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir;
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige!

Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir;
Le violon frémit comme un cœur qu'on afflige;
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige!
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir.

Le violon frémit comme un cœur qu'on afflige,
Un cœur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir!
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir;
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige.

Un cœur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir,
Du passé lumineux recueille tout vestige!
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige...
Ton souvenir en moi luit comme un ostensor!

Evening Harmony

The season is at hand when swaying on its stem
Every flower exhales perfume like a censer;
Sounds and perfumes turn in the evening air;
Melancholy waltz and languid vertigo!

Every flower exhales perfume like a censer;
The violin quivers like a tormented heart;
Melancholy waltz and languid vertigo!
The sky is sad and beautiful like an immense altar.

The violin quivers like a tormented heart,
A tender heart, that hates the vast, black void!
The sky is sad and beautiful like an immense altar
The sun has drowned in his blood which congeals...

A tender heart that hates the vast, black void
Gathers up every shred of the luminous past!
The sun has drowned in his blood which congeals...
Your memory in me glitters like a monstrosity!

translated by William Aggeler

This Midnight Hour is scored for piccolo and 2 each of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones and tuba; timpani, percussion and strings.

It was first performed on 13 November 2015 in Plaisir, France by Orchestre national d'Île de France conducted by Enrique Mazzola.

This is its Sydney Symphony premiere.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Shostakovich was an adolescent at the time of the 1917 revolution. Unlike his near contemporary Prokofiev, or the slightly older Stravinsky, Shostakovich saw no need to travel abroad, let alone emigrate. The twenty-one year old composer's First Symphony premiered in his home town of Leningrad (St Petersburg) in 1928; its introduction to the West by Bruno Walter assured Shostakovich of world celebrity, but was also an announcement of the optimistic, outward looking Russia of the immediate post-Revolutionary period. That Shostakovich was broadly in sympathy with the ideals of early revolutionary Russia is suggested by his Second and Third Symphonies, subtitled 'To October' and 'The First of May' respectively. It should be noted, however, that these works pre-date the official promulgation of the concept of 'socialist realism'; in them, Shostakovich displays an exuberant interest in the techniques of Western art music, such as dissonance and irony.

By the early thirties the ascendancy of Stalin was complete and in 1934 the purges, or Great Terror, began. Within that period (1934-38) were two particularly bloody years where the NKVD (later the KGB) oversaw the imprisonment and murder of Stalin's principal Party rivals as well as leading scientists, writers and musicians. The effect of the purges was to rob the USSR of millions of its citizens, especially leading figures in most fields, so that by the end of the 1930s the country's intellectual infrastructure was almost fatally weakened.

Despite having enjoyed a spectacularly successful two year run, Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* was attacked in the pages of *Pravda* in 1936 as 'chaos instead of music' and its composer warned that 'this could all end very badly'. Shostakovich, or the orchestral management in Leningrad, immediately withdrew his demanding Fourth Symphony, a powerfully disturbing behemoth of dissonance and irony. The composer is said to have slept for a time in the hallway of his apartment so that the seemingly inevitable arrest wouldn't traumatise his young family. (Shostakovich suffered several reversals of fortune: he was denounced in 1936, rehabilitated with the premiere of the Fifth Symphony, denounced again in 1948, despite having been awarded the Stalin Prize in 1940 and the Order of Lenin in 1946.)



A 1942 caricature of Shostakovich by his friend Nikolai Sokolov.

ABOUT THE FIFTH SYMPHONY

Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony is one of the most crucial works of the 20th century, coherently expressed and brilliantly orchestrated in a large-scale architecture whose pacing is always expertly judged. But its status derives in part from extra-musical considerations: the work was conceived in extraordinary circumstances, and has become a powerful symbol in the battle for the composer's ideological soul.

When *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* received its anonymous review in *Pravda* the opera was immediately pulled from the stage (and later revised as the toned-down *Katerina Ismailova*), and Shostakovich withdrew, or allowed to be withdrawn, his Fourth Symphony. He had good reason for alarm. Shostakovich's Fourth – which had to wait decades for a performance – is an epic, blisteringly ironic work where triumphal fanfares turn sour in the space of a single bar and glacial spaces unfold menacingly.

Composed in 1937, the Fifth, by contrast, is essentially a neoclassical piece, the angular contour and dotted rhythms of its opening gesture immediately recalling the baroque overture. The work has four movements in conventional forms (sonata-allegro, scherzo and so on); its musical language affirms traditional diatonic harmony in a Beethovenian journey from a striving D minor opening to the blazing major-key optimism of the finale. Following the common practice of Russian composers like Borodin, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov, Shostakovich places the dance-like scherzo second, before an emotionally powerful largo which alludes briefly to his own setting of Pushkin's poem *Rebirth*. At the

ABOUT THE MUSIC

time Shostakovich claimed that ‘man with all his experiences [is] in the centre of the composition, which is lyrical in form from beginning to end. In the finale, the tragically tense impulses of the earlier movements are resolved in optimism and joy of living’. Composers’ program notes are often unreliable, but years later Shostakovich’s conductor son Maxim claimed that his father had described it as an ‘heroic symphony’ – not unlike Beethoven’s Third in intent.

The work was a huge success at its premiere, with audience members weeping during the slow movement and on their feet, cheering, as the finale drew to a close. (And they stayed on their feet for 40 minutes after the piece finished!) As a work which reflected the ideals of socialist realism, and which was clearly such a hit with the masses, the Symphony was Shostakovich’s passport to a return – for now at least – to official favour. When a journalist described it as ‘an artist’s response to just criticism’ Shostakovich didn’t demur, and that phrase has come to be seen as the work’s subtitle, though there is no evidence that it was indeed Shostakovich’s expressed view.

During the early stages of the Cold War, Shostakovich was derided in the West as a composer of what Virgil Thomson called ‘national advertising’ and a work like the Fifth seen as a piece of mandatory optimism and Soviet propaganda. In the late twentieth century, however, that attitude changed radically as the view emerged that Shostakovich was a secret dissident, encoding anti-Soviet ‘messages’ in his music, including the Fifth Symphony.

This view gathered strength with the publication in 1979 (four years after Shostakovich’s death) of a volume entitled *Testimony: Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich as related to and edited by Solomon Volkov*. In it Volkov quotes Shostakovich contradicting what he told his son, by saying:

I think it is clear to everyone what happens in the Fifth. The rejoicing is forced, created under threat, as in *Boris Godunov*. It’s as if someone were beating you with a stick and saying, ‘Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing,’ and you rise, shaky, and go marching off, muttering, ‘our business is rejoicing, our business is rejoicing.’ What kind of apotheosis is that? You have to be a complete oaf not to hear that.

Testimony created an ongoing furore, with musicologists and journalists confidently proclaiming the work either a complete fraud or a valuable document of the composer’s thought. In 2004 one of the sceptics, Laurel E Fay, subjected the text to detailed examination. Fay cast doubt on the authenticity of the book, having discovered that the eight pages which the composer signed as having read all contained material which was not only innocuous but all of which had been published before. There was no guarantee that he saw, let alone dictated, the rest.

The stylistic change that came about with the Fifth was certainly fuelled by Shostakovich’s brush with the regime, and it is no accident that he began his epochal cycle of intensely personal string quartets at this time. But certain facts are inconvenient to a simplistic reading of the man and his work, such as his decision to join the Communist Party in 1960, long after the immediate danger of Stalinism had passed. Moreover the Fifth Symphony was at one stage seen as pro-Soviet tub-thumping and then almost overnight regarded as a denunciation of the very same regime. Maybe it’s neither, or both, and different performances create very different effects: Mstislav Rostropovich, for instance, prefers an unusually slow tempo in the finale which gives the music a much more tragic, less triumphal feel. But as critic Alex Ross puts it ‘The notes, in any case, remain the same. The symphony still ends fortissimo, in D major, and it still brings audiences to their feet.’

Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony is scored for a large orchestra consisting of piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, E flat clarinet, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon; 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones and tuba; timpani, percussion, 2 harps, piano, celeste and strings.

Its premiere was on 21 November 1937, by the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra under Yevgeny Mravinsky.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra first performed the work in June 1944, conducted by Eugene Ormandy.

Other notable performances include those conducted by Bernard Heinze (1948, 65, 67), Nikolai Malko (1949), Alceo Galliera (1964, including at the Adelaide Festival), Mariss Jansons (1969, 95), Louis Frémaux (1981), Stuart Challender (1985, 87 and on our 1988 USA tour), Sergiu Comissiona (1991), Charles Dutoit (2005) and Vladimir Ashkenazy (2012).

Our most recent performances were in 2017 under Vladimir Ashkenazy.

Notes by Anna Clyne © 2015, David Garrett © 2002 (Beethoven) Gordon Kerry © 2007 (Shostakovich)

Scoring and history by Hugh Robertson

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Sharing the gift of music with future generations is one of the best gifts of all.

A bequest to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra ensures its enduring future and supports the development of tomorrow's musical leaders. Your legacy will bring the world's finest artists to our stages and share the transformative power of music.

The Orchestra is profoundly grateful to the following individuals and families for their recent legacy gifts.

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Estate of the late Betty Bennett
In memory of Rosemary Cahill
Estate of the late Jennifer Fulton
Estate of the late Stanley Harvey
Estate of the late Beryl Jamieson
In memory of Matthew Krel
Olive Lawson
Estate of the late Daniel Lemesle

Dr Lee MacCormick Edwards Charitable
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Estate of the late Helen MacDonnell
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Estate of the late Ross McNair
Estate of the late Gordon Mills
Estate of the late Colin Price
Patricia H Reid Endowment Fund
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For a confidential and sensitive discussion, please contact
Fleur Griffiths, Head of Philanthropy
fleur.griffiths@sydneyssymphony.com

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP



Simone Young AM
Chief Conductor



Donald Runnicles
Principal Guest Conductor



Benjamin Northey
Conductor in Residence



Vladimir Ashkenazy
Conductor Laureate



Andrew Haveron
Concertmaster
Vicki Olsson Chair

FIRST VIOLINS



Harry Bennetts
Associate
Concertmaster
*Judy & Sam Weiss
Chair*



**Alexandra
Osborne**
Associate
Concertmaster
*Helen Lynch AM &
Helen Bauer Chair*



Fiona Ziegler
Assistant
Concertmaster
*Webb Family Chair,
in memory of Dr Bill
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Sun Yi
Associate
Concertmaster
Emeritus



Jenny Booth



Brielle Clapson



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