

13 & 14 September 2025

DONALD RUNNICKES CONDUCTS

SHOSTAKOVICH'S FIFTH SYMPHONY

Presenting Partner



Royal Caribbean Symphonic Saturdays

SYDNEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Principal Partner



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PATRON Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world’s finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world’s great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra’s concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres, reflecting the Orchestra’s versatility and diverse appeal. Its award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, and the Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

The Orchestra’s first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013, followed by David Robertson as Chief Conductor from 2014 to 2019. Australian-born Simone Young commenced her role as Chief Conductor in 2022, a year in which the Orchestra made its return to a renewed Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

PERFORMING IN THIS CONCERT

FIRST VIOLINS

Andrew Haveron
Concertmaster
Harry Bennetts
Associate Concertmaster
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

Simon Cobcroft
Associate Principal
Leah Lynn
Assistant Principal
Kristy Conrau
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

ROYAL CARIBBEAN SYMPHONIC SATURDAYS

Saturday 13 September, 7pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

Sunday 14 September, 2pm

DONALD RUNNICLES CONDUCTS SHOSTAKOVICH'S FIFTH SYMPHONY

DRAMATIC AND HEROIC

DONALD RUNNICLES conductor

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN piano

ANNA CLYNE (born 1980)

This Midnight Hour (2015)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Piano Concerto No.4 in G, Op.58 (1805–1806)

- i. Allegro moderato
- ii. Andante con moto –
- iii. Rondo (Vivace)

INTERVAL

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906–1975)

Symphony No.5, Op.47 (1937)

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

Preconcert talk

By Sam Weller in the
Northern Foyer at 6.15pm
(Saturday), 1.15pm (Sunday)

Estimated durations

Clyne – 12 minutes
Beethoven – 35 minutes
Interval – 20 minutes
Shostakovich – 44 minutes

The concert will run for
approximately 2 hours

Cover image

By Jay Patel

*These performances have
been generously supported
by Paolo Hooke*

Presenting Partner



Royal Caribbean Symphonic Saturdays

Principal Partner



WELCOME

Welcome to **Donald Runnicles conducts Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony**, part of the *Royal Caribbean Symphonic Saturdays* series.

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

Principal Guest Conductor Sir Donald Runnicles believes that in music, some turning points change everything that comes after. Beethoven is one such point, Shostakovich another. In this concert, we hear them both.

Tonight, the full force of the Orchestra is on display as Donald Runnicles leads Shostakovich's mighty Fifth Symphony, a defiant and unforgettable expression of personal rebellion.

The extraordinary Canadian pianist Marc-André Hamelin makes his Sydney Symphony debut with Beethoven's heroic Fourth Piano Concerto, while the ambitious and dramatic music of acclaimed British composer Anna Clyne fits perfectly within this bold program.

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

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

In **Donald Runnicles conducts Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony**, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Royal Caribbean invite you to be inspired and amazed by this powerful concert.

As Presenting Partner of this series, I hope you enjoy an unforgettable evening of spectacular performance.



Gavin Smith,
Vice President & Managing Director
Royal Caribbean



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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 ARTISTS

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN piano

Pianist Marc-André Hamelin, a ‘performer of near-superhuman technical prowess’ (*The New York Times*), is acclaimed worldwide for his rare combination of profound musicianship and dazzling technique. He is celebrated both for his interpretations of the core repertoire and for his fearless exploration of lesser-known works from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. He regularly performs around the globe with the leading orchestras and conductors of our time and gives recitals at major concert venues and festivals worldwide.

Hamelin’s 2025–26 season spans North America, Europe, Asia and Australia, with a dynamic mix of orchestral, recital and chamber music engagements. He opens the season with a tour of Australia and Asia, featuring concerto and recital appearances with the Sydney Symphony under Sir Donald Runnicles, concerto engagements with the Wuxi, Ningbo and Shenzhen symphonies and solo recitals in Adelaide, Xiamen, and Shenzhen.

In North America, Hamelin appears with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, San Diego Symphony with Thomas Guggeis, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra on tour. Recital highlights include Chicago Symphony Presents, San Francisco Symphony, Chamber Music Pittsburgh, Keyboard Concerts in Fresno and Soka Performing Arts Center. In duo with Maria João Pires, he is presented by The Cleveland Orchestra, the Gilmore Piano Festival and the Fortas Chamber Music Series at the Kennedy Center.

An exclusive recording artist for Hyperion Records, Hamelin has released more than 90 albums to date with a broad range of solo, orchestral and chamber repertoire. In October 2025, Hyperion release *Found Objects / Sound Objects*, a recording of contemporary works. Recent acclaimed recordings include Beethoven’s *Hammerklavier* Sonata, Op.106 and Sonata in C major, Op.2 No.3, as well as the Dvořák and Florence Price quintets with the Takács Quartet.

A noted composer, Hamelin has written more than 30 works. Many, including his *Études* and *Toccata on “L’homme armé”* – commissioned by the Van Cliburn International Piano

Competition – are published by Edition Peters. He performed the Toccata in 2023 on NPR’s *Tiny Desk* alongside works by CPE Bach and William Bolcom. His most recent composition, *Mazurka*, was commissioned by the Library of Congress to celebrate 100 years of concerts and premiered in April 2024. Hamelin’s 2024 album *New Piano Works* is a survey of some of his own recent works, exhibiting his formidable skill as a composer-pianist whose music imaginatively and virtuosically taps into his musical forebears. ‘His previous offerings of his own music were rich, but his latest self-portrait album is on another level,’ wrote *The New York Times*. It was Hamelin’s first album of all original compositions since *Études* (2010)

Hamelin is the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the German Record Critics’ Association and over 20 of its quarterly awards. Other honours include eight Juno Awards, twelve Grammy nominations, the 2018 Jean Gimbel Lane Prize from Northwestern University and the Paul de Hueck and Norman Walford Career Achievement Award from the Ontario Arts Foundation. Hamelin is an Officer of the Order of Canada, a Chevalier de l’Ordre national du Québec and a member of the Royal Society of Canada. Born in Montreal, Hamelin lives in the Boston area with his wife, Cathy Fuller, a producer and host at Classical WCRB.



Photo by Sim Canetty-Clarke

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! -

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):

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!

Music

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

*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.

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 LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

In the late eighteenth century Germany was a loose grouping of small principalities. The city of Bonn was the seat of the Archbishop Elector of Cologne and Beethoven was born here in 1770. His grandfather was a chief musician in the Elector's household; his father Johann was also a musician employed there. Johann was a violent alcoholic, and family life was far from happy, but young Ludwig nonetheless showed early promise as a musician and soon joined the Archbishop's retinue.

Beethoven almost certainly met Mozart briefly in Vienna in 1787, but in 1792 returned to that city to study with Joseph Haydn. They didn't get on. Late in life, Haydn was suddenly enjoying superstar status throughout Europe. Beethoven could be extremely rude and arrogant and felt that Haydn wasn't paying him enough attention.

Beethoven's status in Vienna was helped by | the relative ease with which he was accepted into aristocratic circles. This is partly because he allowed people to think that the 'van' in his name meant he himself was noble (in German, 'von' indicates nobility), and he allowed a rumour to circulate that he was the illegitimate son of the King of Prussia! But it was mostly about the music, and a group of Viennese nobles supported him for the rest of his life (despite appallingly bad behaviour on occasions).

From the later 1790s he had been aware of the deterioration of his hearing, and by the early years of the new century his deafness caused him gradually to retreat from society. His was also chronically unlucky in love. This, along with his deafness, led him to the point of suicide and the heroic resolution to carry on which is documented in a kind of will he wrote at Heiligenstadt, his favourite holiday village, in the summer of 1802. The crisis launched his middle or 'heroic' period.



Detail of a portrait of Beethoven by Joseph Willibrord Mähler (1778–1860), painted between 1804–05.

In May 1809 Napoleon's armies attacked Vienna and bombarded it with considerable violence. Beethoven took shelter with his brother Caspar Carl and his wife Johanna and to protect what was left of his hearing hid with pillows over his ears in the cellar. He wrote to his publisher: 'What a destructive, disorderly life I see and hear around me: nothing but drums, cannons and human misery in every form'. Despite his misery, Beethoven managed to work.

Beethoven's deafness was only part of the chronic ill-health which dogged him for most of his life, but it certainly made things worse. He retreated from society, became grumpy and paranoid (occasionally to the point of violence) and despite relative financial security often lived in squalor. His music, though, tells a completely different story. Beethoven's late works encompass a bewildering array of moods and styles.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT THE FOURTH PIANO CONCERTO

David Garrett writes:

Beethoven first played his Fourth Piano Concerto at a semi-private concert in the Palace of Prince Lobkowitz in March 1807; he was also the soloist at a public performance in Vienna near the end of the following year which included the premieres of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies. This was his last public appearance as a pianist. Beethoven was by now troubled by his increasing deafness; he is said to have played the solo part impulsively and at a tremendous pace – a description which does not match our idea of the work in general, though it may have suited some parts of the first movement. Did Beethoven, under the often atrocious conditions of music making in early 19th century Vienna, do his new concerto justice? It requires an exceptionally close understanding between soloist and orchestra.

There had never been a piano concerto like this before. It is not always the most assertive Beethoven which is the most revolutionary. Some of the composer's originality here is immediately obvious, such as the quiet piano opening, unaccompanied, with the main theme. Still more surprising, however, even when we know that the soloist will begin alone, is the quiet answer of the strings in a remote key – a poetic beginning to a poetic movement. The climax of this wide and free-ranging exploration by soloist and orchestra in gracious collaboration comes with the piano's pounding out of the theme it had introduced so gently, revealing its implicit power. After the cadenza, for which Beethoven left a number of alternatives, there is a dreamy coda based on one of the many rich thematic elements of this movement.

As in many of his 'middle period' works, Beethoven, rather than writing a fully developed slow movement, links his *Andante* to the last movement – but what an arresting *Andante* it is! The contrast of the stern string unisons with the piano's serene, almost hymn-like song unruffled by the strings' anger, the 'soft answer that turneth away wrath', is something new in music. Liszt had to resort to a mythical metaphor, comparing it to Orpheus taming the wild beasts. There does indeed seem to be an idea behind the music: that of dialogue and resolution of emotional conflict.

From the dark minor key music which concludes this movement the strings slip into C major, to introduce a rondo which is to be in the tonic key (G) of the concerto – this is another surprise, which reinforces the feeling that the slow movement is a prelude to the *Rondo*. At the first tutti, trumpets and drums, used for the first time in the work, cut through the texture with startling effect. The finale is on a large scale, and combines elements of rondo and sonata form: as the first episode, the piano presents a second subject over a sustained cello note; a central episode develops the main theme; and there are some further very inventive touches in the 'recapitulation': a 'singing' variation for divided violas, and a canon between the left hand of the piano and the clarinets. Apart from one almost martial outburst from the orchestra, the movement is good-humoured, even saucy in places.

Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto is scored for flute and 2 each of oboe, clarinet and bassoon; 2 horns and 2 trumpets, timpani, strings and a piano soloist.

It was premiered on 22 December 1808 at Vienna's Theater an der Wien, with Beethoven himself as soloist – the same famous concert that also saw the public premieres of his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies and the Choral Fantasy.

A popular work with audiences and musicians alike, it has a long performance history in Sydney. The Orchestra first performed the work in July 1941, with soloist Ignaz Friedman and conductor Edgar Bainton.

Other notable performances include those by Lili Kraus conducted by Percy Code (1946), Eileen Joyce/Bernard Heinze (1948), Gyorgy Sandor/Charles Groves (1950), Paul Badura-Skoda/Eugene Goossens (1952), Isador Goodman/Tibor Paul (1953 Beethoven Festival), Claudio Arrau/Nicolai Malko (1957), Daniel Barenboim/Malko (1958), Andor Foldes/Heinze (1959), Philippe Entremont/Malko (1960), Gina Bachauer/Heinze (1962), Tamás Vásáry/Moshe Atzmon (1968 Benevolent Fund Gala), Barenboim/Atzmon (1970), Rudolf Buchbinder/Georg Tintner (1976), Vladimir Ashkenazy/John Hopkins (1977), Roger Woodward/Myer Fredman (1982), Jorge Bolet/Patrick Thomas (1985), Ivan Moravec/Jiří Bělohlávek (1992), Yefim Bronfman/Edo de Waart (1995), Christian Zacharias/de Waart (1998), Stephen Kovacevich/Alexander Lazarev (2000), Emanuel Ax/Andrey Boreyko (2002), Kovacevich/Ashkenazy (2012), Ax/David Robertson (2014) and Jayson Gillham/Ashkenazy (2016).

Also noteworthy is a performance from the 1949 Concerto & Vocal Competition (now known as the ABC Young Performers Competition), when a young Richard Bonyng performed the first movement, conducted by Eugene Goossens.

Our most recent performances were in 2023, with Javier Perianes as soloist conducted by Benjamin Northey.



EXPLORE MORE FROM SINGAPORE

ON A 4 NIGHT PENANG

AND PHUKET CRUISE



YOUR ITINERARY

DAY

1 Singapore

The vibrant island-state is big on excitement with something for everyone to enjoy. Before you board, indulge in the local cuisine from street vendors and experience the magic of the Singapore Botanic Garden rainforest. Once onboard the amped *Navigator of the Seas*®, celebrate the start of your holiday by heading to The Lime and Coconut®* for the ultimate tropical cocktails and holiday vibes, before joining the Sail Away Party.

2 Penang, Malaysia

Just off the coast of northwest Malaysia, Penang is rich in culture and activities. Before heading onshore, fuel up with a warm breakfast and a sweet treat from Café Promenade. Start your journey in Penang at George Town, where bicycles and trishaws dart along narrow streets lined with mural-adorned buildings before visiting Kapitan Keling Mosque. Take the tram up to Penang Hill and walk through the bird sanctuary or take in the greenery on one of the nature trails. Before jumping back onboard, don't miss out on trying Penang's signature dessert, *cendol* — a delicacy made from shaved ice and coconut milk.

3 Phuket, Thailand

Wake up in Phuket, where pristine beaches and crystal blue waters await. Start your day soaking up everything this vibrant island has to offer. In town, visit the Big Buddha of Phuket, a 45-metre white marble statue of a revered holy figure. Browse silk stalls for colourful scarves or textiles. Then, unwind at Kata Noi Beach, where lush green mountains hang over turquoise waves. Take a boat to James Bond Island where you'll be able to see the distinctive pointy rock from 1974's "The Man with the Golden Gun". After your time on land, come onboard and unwind by the pool with a cocktail in hand. For dinner indulge in melt-in-your-mouth Maine Lobster rolls Hooked SeafoodSM* before heading to Studio B for *iSKATE*, and be wowed by an incredible ice-skating show where skaters show-off freestyle jumps, stunts and thrills.

4 Cruising

At sea, it's time to max out on memories. Ride the waves of the FlowRider® surf simulator, peruse the shops for the biggest designer names, lounge, swim, and make sun-drenched memories by the pool, and chart a thrill-filled course on the longest waterslide at sea — The Blaster®. After all the excitement, take a moment for yourself and relax at VitalitySM Spa* with a hot stone massage or sip on cocktails in the adults-only Solarium before being spoilt with endless ways to please your palate for dinner. For your evening entertainment, join in the fun at a live game show, go bar hopping, or sit back and watch a movie under the stars.

5 Singapore

The sun rising over the Singapore coastline is the ultimate end to a memory-maxing holiday. If you are eager for more, Singapore offers endless opportunities to extend your Southeast Asian holiday.

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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.

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