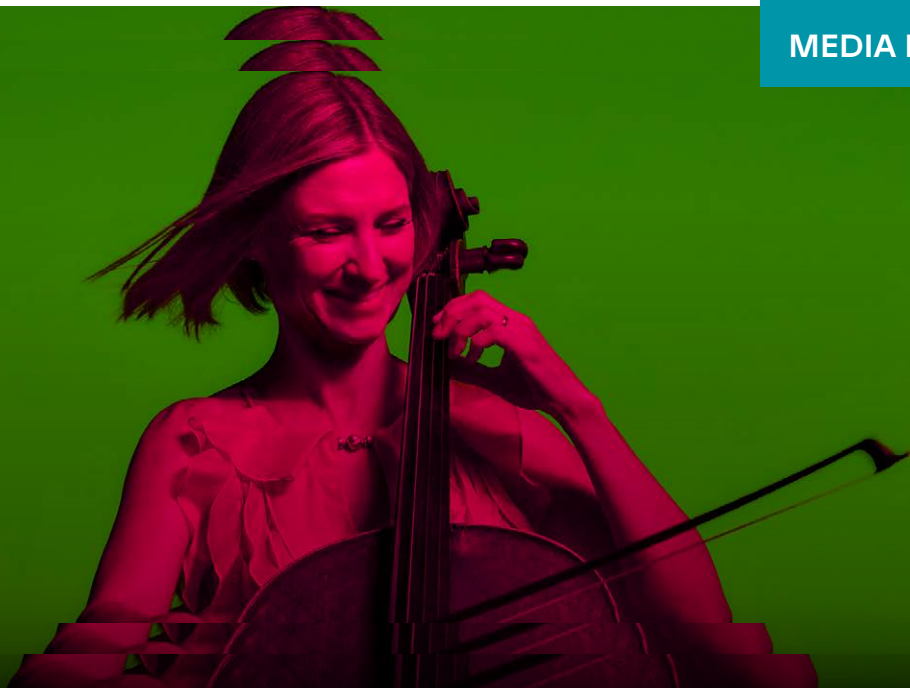




SOUNDS LIKE... SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 2027 SEASON



Chief Conductor
Simone Young AM

SYDNEY, 19 AUGUST 2026

In its 95th anniversary year, the **Sydney Symphony Orchestra** presents a 2027 Season of extraordinary ambition. Spanning centuries of music from the enduring power of the Classical masters to the majestic symphonies of the Romantic era, and on to trailblazing new works from some of the greatest living composers, it is a season that honours the past while fearlessly reimagining what an orchestra can be and do. With one of the world's leading orchestras performing in venues ranging from the iconic Sydney Opera House Concert Hall to suburban stages, regional towns and communities right across New South Wales, the experience is immediate, electric and impossible to replicate.

Reflecting on the season ahead, Chief Conductor **Simone Young** says:

‘What does the Sydney Symphony Orchestra sound like? It’s a question I’m often asked as I travel the world. To me, it sounds like fearless music-making, thrilling discovery, time-honoured traditions and inspired masterpieces. It sounds like home.

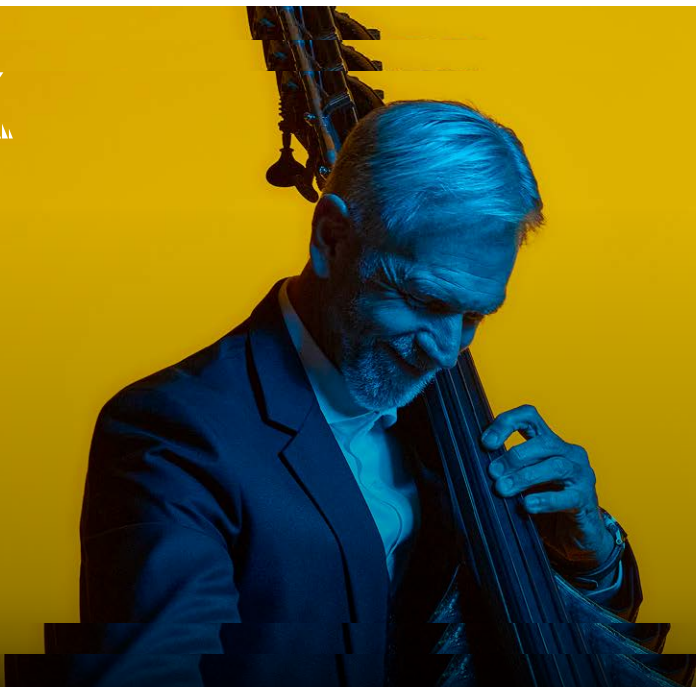
Mahler once said the symphony must be like the world and contain everything. In that spirit, I welcome you to our 2027 Season.

How else could we begin but with Mahler? His Seventh is a work I have long wanted to bring to Sydney – nocturnal and endlessly surprising. With our Ring Cycle now concluded, I turn to my other great love: Richard Strauss, and his Salome, an opera I have conducted countless times around the world and am thrilled to finally present here.

We mark 200 years since Beethoven’s death with a festival of all nine symphonies, returning to his music with fresh ears and renewed wonder. I am also proud to showcase extraordinary artists from around the world alongside the remarkable musicians of our own Orchestra.

As I begin my sixth season as Chief Conductor, and the Orchestra celebrates its 95th anniversary, I look forward to deepening this most fulfilling artistic partnership.

In all its complexity, beauty, mystery and wonder, I hope you will join us in 2027.’



‘When it comes to Mahler, Sydney Symphony Orchestra continues to show that it is up there with the best.’

Limelight on
Mahler’s Sixth Symphony



Simone Young has ‘waved the magic Mahler wand’ (*Limelight*) to open each of her seasons as Chief Conductor, and in 2027 she continues that tradition, shaping the vast journey of Mahler’s Seventh Symphony with fierce conviction. From its darkest atmospheres to its blazing conclusion, she reveals the work’s technicolour brilliance and the tremendous skill of the Orchestra.

Having concluded the landmark multi-year *Ring* Cycle, a centrepiece of **Simone Young**’s tenure that coincided with her historic appearances as the first woman and first Australian to conduct the full cycle at the Bayreuth Festival, where does an orchestra go next? The answer is *Salome*. Richard Strauss was among Wagner’s musical successors, and *Salome* is one of his most searing creations: a single, unrelenting act that spirals towards an unforgettable close, exposing its characters’ inner worlds in ways that words alone never could. Beguiling, uncanny, psychologically raw, there are few operatic experiences to match it, and **Young**, one of the world’s foremost interpreters of Strauss’s music, leads a world-class cast of vocalists to do it full justice.

2027 marks 200 years since the death of Beethoven, yet his music feels as vital as ever. The Sydney Symphony celebrates his enduring legacy with a two-week Beethoven Festival led by **Simone Young**, presenting all nine symphonies in an intense, concentrated burst: a once-in-a-generation opportunity to trace the full arc of a body of work that reshaped the symphonic form. Across the season, lesser-performed masterpieces including the exquisite Romances and the towering *Missa Solemnis* reveal other sides of the composer and the man.

Throughout the year, the Sydney Symphony is proud to welcome a stellar lineup of artists making their debuts with the Orchestra. French cellist **Jean-Guihen Queyras**, praised for his ‘perfect control over his instrument’ (*Bachtrack*), brings the bite and emotional force that Shostakovich’s First Cello Concerto demands. **Lauri Porra** arrives as one of the most distinctive figures of his generation: electric bassist, composer and great-grandson of Sibelius, his concerto *Entropia* sees the bass sing and growl in ways the instrument has rarely been asked to. South Korean violinist **Inmo Yang**, possessed of ‘ardent and intense violin mastery’ (*Auditorium*), takes on Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto. We also welcome conductors **Ryan Bancroft**, **Eva Ollikainen**, **Joshua Weilerstein** and **Bernard Labadie** to the podium for the first time.



***‘As Chief Conductor...
Young radiates an assured
omniscience – a galvanising
“I’ve got this” – that gives
the orchestra an unfettered
confidence to play fearlessly.’***

Sydney Morning Herald on
Simone Young conducts Britten
and Vaughan Williams

This season also sees the Sydney Symphony reunite with some of its most compelling artistic collaborators. **Gautier Capuçon**, one of the finest cellists of his generation, returns to Sydney for the first time in a decade to perform Dvořák’s Cello Concerto, widely revered as the greatest concerto in the cello repertoire. **Víkingur Ólafsson**, **Kirill Gerstein**, **Pierre-Laurent Aimard** and **Andrea Lam** each appear as soloists with the Orchestra and in the International Pianists in Recital series at the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall. **James Ehnes**, ‘a flawless technician and a serious, ever perceptive musician’ (*The Guardian*), is back for Sibelius’s Violin Concerto: elemental, stormy and utterly compelling. Two-time Grammy Award-winning mezzo-soprano **Sasha Cooke** joins us once more, as do **Gerhard Siegel** and **Wolfgang Koch**, who dazzled audiences in our 2025 performance of *Siegfried*.

2027 also marks the debut of *Spotlight*, a reimagining of our Classics in the City series. Held at the City Recital Hall, *Spotlight* offers shorter, curated programs shaped by fascinating musicians from home and abroad, the smaller ensemble allowing a delicacy and intimacy that opens the music in new ways. The series ranges from Bach and Mozart with pianist **Alexander Gavrylyuk** to the harpsichord with **Chad Kelly**, and the ravishing sound of the harp with **Xavier de Maistre**, ‘a virtuoso of the highest order, profoundly musical and capable of realising a remarkable range of nuance’ (*Gramophone*). We also shine a light on the extraordinary talent within the Sydney Symphony’s own Percussion section.

Be among the first in the world to hear major new works by defining composers of our time, performed by the soloists for whom they were written. **Ross Edwards**’s Seventh Symphony, commissioned by the Sydney Symphony and shaped in close collaboration with **Simone Young**, is unveiled in its world premiere: rhythmically alive, coloured by the natural landscape and inhabiting a corner of classical music entirely its own. **John Adams**, in his 80th year, sees his piano concerto *After the Fall* arrive in Australia in the hands of **Víkingur Ólafsson**, its long incandescent phrases carrying echoes of Bach glittering on the surface. **Alex Turley**’s song-cycle *the ocean’s dream of itself*, a work that moves like the tide and pulls with it an undercurrent of profound mystery, receives its Australian debut with the luminous **Sasha Cooke**, conducted by Principal Guest Conductor **Sir Donald Runnicles**. And **Lauri Porra**’s *Entropia*, in which the electric bass shifts between raw power and aching tenderness, receives its Australian premiere conducted by his wife **Dalia Stasevska**, principal guest conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, whom we are thrilled to welcome back in 2027.



‘As a veteran of concerts at the Sydney Opera House, I have never experienced the great rapture and volume of clapping and whooping given to the musicians and artists.’

Sydney Arts Guide on 2026
Season Opening Gala

Some of this country’s extraordinary musical talent takes centre stage in 2027. Beloved soloists **Alexander Gavrylyuk**, **Andrea Lam** and **Emily Sun** return alongside conductors **Benjamin Northey** and **Umberto Clerici**. And this year, the Orchestra’s own musicians step forward: **Andrew Haveron**, **Harry Bennetts**, **Emma Sholl**, **Richard Waters**, **Shefali Pryor**, **Olli Leppäniemi**, **Todd Gibson-Cornish** and **Samuel Jacobs** all feature as soloists, a vivid reminder that some of the world’s most remarkable artistry is found right here, in this orchestra.

In our 95th year, our connection to this city, this state and this nation is stronger than ever. We launch a new subscription series in Wollongong, part of an expanded touring program reaffirming the Sydney Symphony’s commitment to being an orchestra for all of New South Wales. Our commitment to First Nations communities deepens through a new series of On-Country activations led by composer, musician, Sydney Symphony Orchestra Board member and proud Kalkadunga man **William Barton**: a multi-year program connecting the Orchestra with diverse and culturally rich communities across New South Wales through listening, shared experience and creative exchange.

The Sydney Symphony’s Learning & Engagement program, developed with Conductor in Residence **Benjamin Northey**, continues to flourish in 2027. More than 15,000 students across New South Wales will experience live music through concerts, school workshops and regional touring, for many the beginning of a lifelong love of live orchestral music. *Listen to This* returns, weaving performance and guided listening into something that builds real connection and understanding, while *Ready, Set, Listen!* introduces little ears to gems of the orchestral canon. The season also embraces the full breadth of what live music can be: from cinematic spectacles featuring the music of **John Williams** performed live to film, to evenings with songwriters **Rufus Wainwright** and **Ben Folds**, and collaborations with the much-loved **Art of the Score** team.

2027 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS



SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS MAHLER'S SEVENTH SYMPHONY (17–20 February)

Season Opening Gala

Mahler has been central to Simone Young's tenure as Chief Conductor, with each of her Sydney Symphony seasons opening with one of his symphonies to critical acclaim. In 2027, she turns to the Seventh: a work that wanders through a nocturnal world of shadow, strange reflection and blurred illusion. Often called the 'Song of the Night', it moves between serenity and unease, its flickering textures alive with wit, mystery and surprise.



SIMONE YOUNG & GAUTIER CAPUÇON (25–28 February)

Dvořák & Vaughan Williams

'Even among today's stellar vintage of cellists, Gautier Capuçon is an amazing talent,' declares Classic FM. Returning to Sydney for the first time in a decade, he performs Dvořák's Cello Concerto, widely revered as the king of all cello concertos. Chief Conductor Simone Young continues her exploration of the music of Vaughan Williams with his London Symphony – a work as expressive and observant as the city it portrays.



VÍKINGUR ÓLAFSSON RETURNS (17–20 March)

John Adams & Bruckner

The applause for Víkingur Ólafsson's 2024 Sydney Symphony debut was still echoing around the Concert Hall when we started work to bring him back. Now he returns with a new work written for him by one of today's most celebrated composers. In his 80th year, John Adams remains one of the most influential figures in contemporary classical music, and his piano concerto *After the Fall* receives its Australian premiere, a captivating work shaped for Ólafsson's artistry. The piano unfolds in long, incandescent phrases with echoes of Bach glittering on the surface, familiar yet refracted and quietly exhilarating. Conducted by Lawrence Renes, the program also features Bruckner's Sixth Symphony – vast, radiant and among his most distinctive achievements.



RUFUS WAINWRIGHT & THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY (7–11 April)

Praised by Elton John as 'the greatest songwriter on the planet,' Rufus Wainwright joins us for two very special programs. *Dream Requiem* (7 & 8 April), his grandest project yet, fuses text by the poet Byron to the Requiem Mass to create an unforgettable work for narrator, soprano, choir and orchestra. 'There's a real sense of a special occasion about it all,' wrote *The Guardian*. Then *Want Symphonic* (10 & 11 April) brings the 'breathtaking and eccentric opulence' (*Rolling Stone*) of his acclaimed albums *Want One* and *Want Two* to stunning new symphonic arrangements. Both programs receive their Australian premieres.



DALIA STASEVSKA CONDUCTS DVOŘÁK (21–24 April)

Lauri Porra's *Entropia*

Dalia Stasevska 'ignites orchestras with sheer force of personality' (*The Arts Desk*). She returns with three compelling works: Anna Thorvaldsdottir's shimmering *Archora*, Lauri Porra's extraordinary concerto *Entropia*, in which the electric bass sings, growls and resists in ways the instrument has rarely been asked to, and Dvořák's Seventh Symphony, a work of dark, urgent power and buoyant lyricism.



BEETHOVEN FESTIVAL (16–26 June)

Led by Simone Young

200 years since Beethoven's death, his music still sets the terms. Chief Conductor Simone Young presents all nine symphonies across two spectacular weeks, tracing a body of work that reshaped the possibilities of the symphonic form.



TCHAIKOVSKY'S VIOLIN CONCERTO (30 July – 1 August)

With Inmo Yang & Eva Ollikainen

Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto is one of the most technically demanding works in the repertoire, making for a spectacular introduction to the 'ardent and intense violin mastery' (*Auditorium*) of violinist Inmo Yang. From gorgeous melodies to deep melancholy, it draws you into the sublime magic of Tchaikovsky's sound world, its finale erupting in spirited folk music. Led by Finnish conductor Eva Ollikainen, the program also features Elena Kats-Chernin's beloved *Wild Swans* and Sibelius's Fifth Symphony – expansive, weightless and gloriously his own. A horn theme in the final movement, said to be inspired by a flock of swans, brings the evening full circle.



SHOSTAKOVICH & PROKOFIEV (19 August)

25 Years of the Sydney Symphony Fellows

Celebrating 25 years of the Sydney Symphony Fellows, this concert revels in wit, clarity and rich orchestral colour. Prokofiev's Classical Symphony opens with poise and sparkling invention; Shostakovich's Ninth turns the mood deliciously on its head, playful, sardonic and edged with mischief. A new work by Elena Kats-Chernin and the energy of the Fellowship Alumni complete a program of remarkable musical vitality, led by conductor Roger Benedict, the driving force behind the Fellows program for so many years.



INFERNAL DANCES (17–19 September)

Schubert & Liszt

From the heavenly to the hellish in the space of one concert. Schubert's Fifth Symphony opens in a burst of pure Classical delight – bright, fresh and alive with a lighter spirit. Then Liszt's *Totentanz* seizes the ancient Dies Irae and wrings from it something thrillingly macabre, demanding the artistry of Kirill Gerstein, who 'has the ability to make even the most terrifyingly difficult compositions look like a piece of cake' (*Australian Arts Review*). The final descent is Thomas Adès's vision of Dante's underworld: wasps sting the damned, Charon's boat creaks across the Acheron, and Satan lies frozen in the ice. Conductor Finnegan Downie Dear, winner of the 2020 Mahler Competition, leads the Orchestra through it all with wicked vividness. It may take a moment to come back to earth.



GLIÈRE'S HARP CONCERTO (3 & 4 September)

With Xavier de Maistre & Umberto Clerici

Rarely given the spotlight, the harp becomes the star in Glière's resplendent concerto. Written in 1938 yet steeped in the late Romantic warmth of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov, it unfolds in long, glowing lines of irresistible beauty. In the hands of Xavier de Maistre, who 'plays the harp with infinite finesse and much delicacy of colour' (*Gramophone*), it is an unmissable event. At the podium is Umberto Clerici, our former Principal Cello and now Chief Conductor of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, whose deep connection to this Orchestra brings something special to every return. Then Berlioz loses his mind, magnificently, in *Symphonie fantastique*: five movements of fever dream and hallucination that remain a sensation all these years later.



ANDREA LAM PERFORMS MOZART (8 & 9 October)

With Donald Runnicles & Sasha Cooke

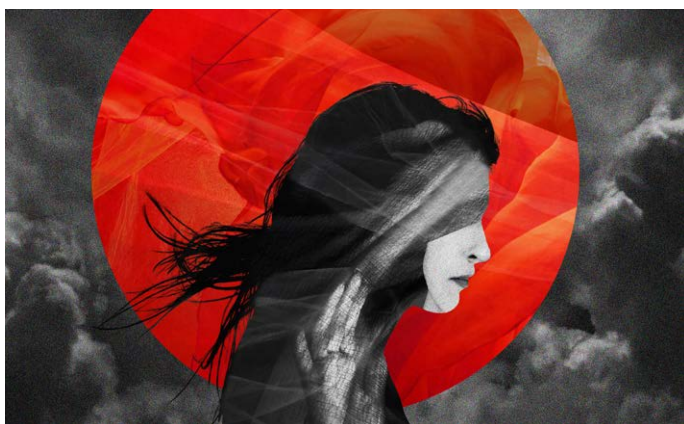
ARIA award-winning Australian pianist Andrea Lam brings poise and sensitivity to Mozart's sublime Piano Concerto No.23, the slow movement unfolding like an operatic aria without words. Conducted by Principal Guest Conductor Sir Donald Runnicles, the program also features the Australian premiere of Alex Turley's song-cycle *the ocean's dream of itself*. One of the most distinctive compositional voices of his generation, Turley writes music that 'ranges from pulsating energy to contemplative stasis' (*Limelight*), and his remarkable song-cycle intertwines voice and orchestra in a hypnotic, immersive soundscape that shifts between intimacy and vastness, performed by the 'luminous' (*New York Times*) Sasha Cooke.



SIMONE YOUNG & PIERRE-LAURENT AIMARD (5–7 November)

Brahms & Ross Edwards

Few piano concertos demand as much as Brahms's Second. Pierre-Laurent Aimard, praised for his 'astonishing clarity and control' (*The Guardian*), is the perfect artist for a work that requires a musical architect to carry its weight. It opens with an unexpected exchange between horn and piano, moves from stormy intensity to aching beauty, and closes with a finale of surprising lightness. Simone Young then leads the world premiere of Ross Edwards's Seventh Symphony: rhythmically alive, coloured by the natural landscape and inhabiting a corner of classical music entirely its own.



SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS SALOME (12 & 13 November)

An Opera in Concert

Salome is Strauss at his most visceral. A princess, a prophet, a severed head – and an orchestra that knows exactly how to make your skin crawl. Young, one of the world's foremost interpreters of his music, leads a world-class cast of vocalists through an opera that has transfixed and disturbed audiences for over a century. The Dance of the Seven Veils alone is worth the ticket.



A CLASSICAL CHRISTMAS (2, 3 & 12 December)

A Sydney Symphony Family Event

Celebrate the festive season with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in a sparkling concert of Christmas favourites, designed for kids aged 5–12 and their families. At its heart are highlights from Tchaikovsky's beloved *The Nutcracker*, including the enchanting March and the *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*, surrounded by carols and holiday classics. It's the perfect way to kick off Christmas together, with music that glows with warmth and cheer. Performances will be held at the Coliseum Theatre; Newcastle Civic Centre; and the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.



PRESS IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE HERE

2027 SEASON BROCHURE AVAILABLE HERE

Tickets available from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra Box Office on **(02) 8215 4600** or choose your own seat at **sydneysymphony.com**

ABOUT SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras.

Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House and led by Chief Conductor Simone Young, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra is Australia's flagship orchestra and performs over 180 concerts each year to more than 350,000 people. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Sydney Symphony Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra concerts encompass celebrated masterpieces from the classical repertoire, alongside works by some of the finest living composers and collaborations with major guest artists, connecting audiences with the profound experience of live music. For more information, visit **sydneysymphony.com**

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