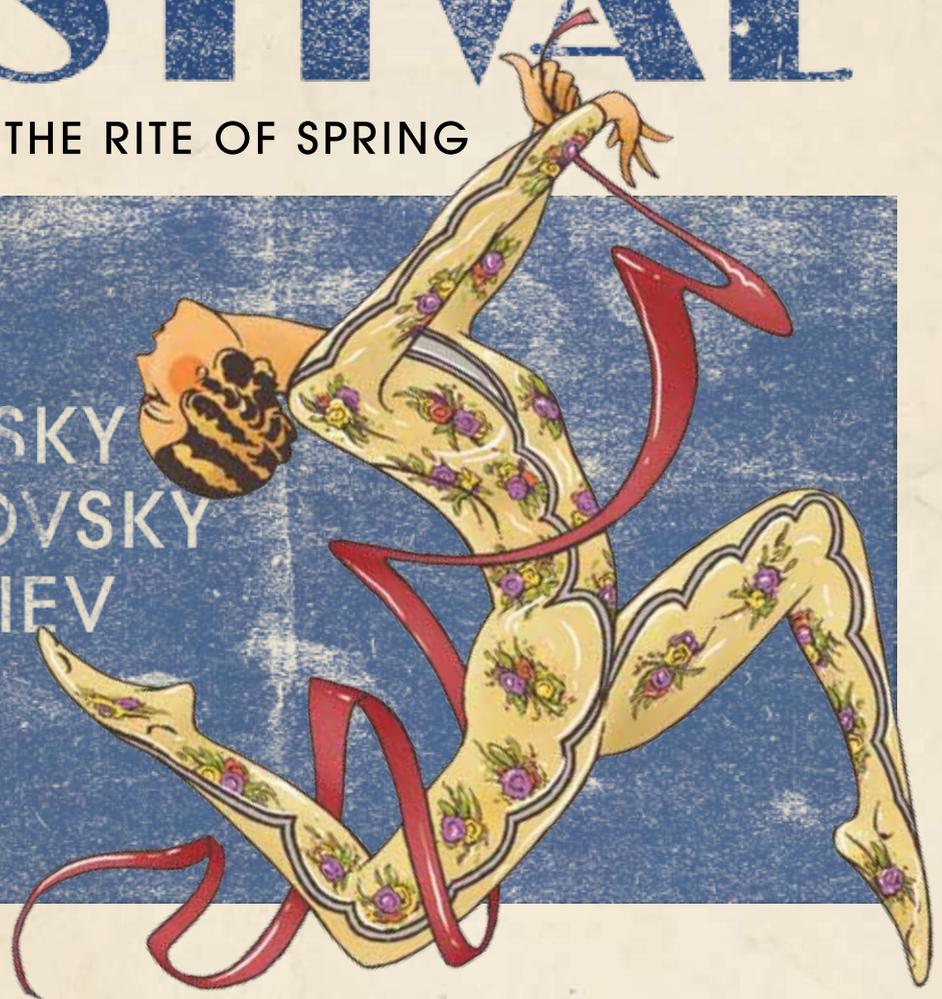


THE RUSSIAN FESTIVAL

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Jamie Barton mezzo-soprano
René Barbera tenor
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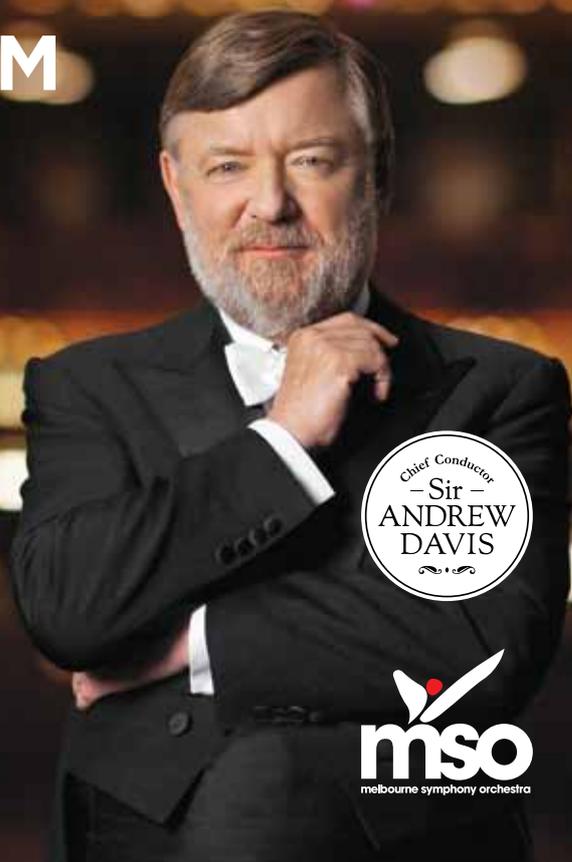
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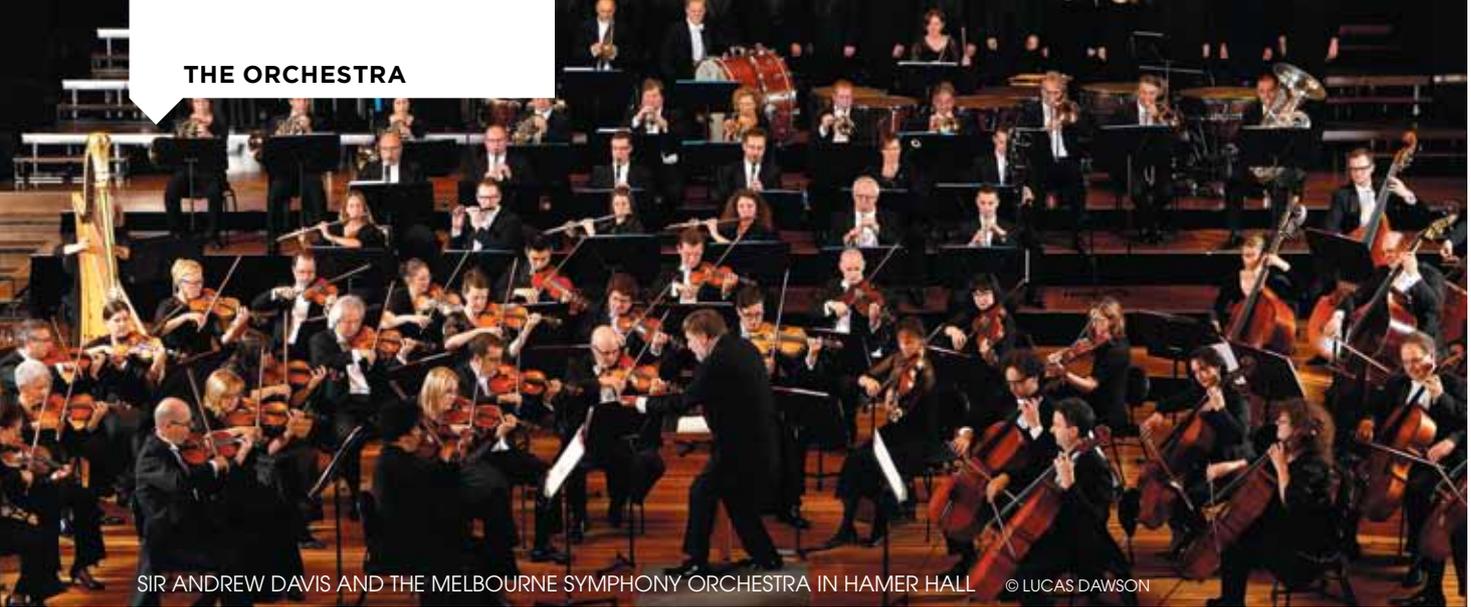
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SIR ANDREW DAVIS AND THE MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA IN HAMER HALL © LUCAS DAWSON

THE MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Harold Mitchell AC
Chairman

André Gremillet
Managing Director

Sir Andrew Davis
Chief Conductor

Diego Matheuz
Principal Guest Conductor

Benjamin Northey
Patricia Riordan Associate
Conductor Chair

With a reputation for excellence, versatility and innovation, the internationally acclaimed Melbourne Symphony Orchestra is Australia's oldest orchestra, established in 1906.

This fine orchestra is renowned for its performances of the great symphonic masterworks with leading international and Australian artists including Maxim Vengerov, John Williams, Osmo Vänskä, Charles Dutoit, Yan Pascal Tortelier, Olli Mustonen, Douglas Boyd, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Yvonne Kenny, Edo de Waart, Lang Lang, Nigel Kennedy, Jeffrey Tate, Midori, Christine Brewer, Richard Tognetti, Emma Matthews and Teddy Tahu Rhodes. It has also enjoyed hugely successful performances with such artists as Sir Elton John, John Farnham, Harry Connick Jr., Ben Folds, KISS, Burt Bacharach, The Whitlams, Human Nature, Sting and Tim Minchin.

The MSO performs extensively with its own choir, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Chorus, directed by chorus master Jonathan Grieves-Smith. Recent performances together include Walton's *Belsazzar's Feast* under Bramwell Tovey, Mahler's Symphony No.3 under Markus Stenz and, under Sir Andrew Davis, music of Percy Grainger and Beethoven's Symphony No.9.

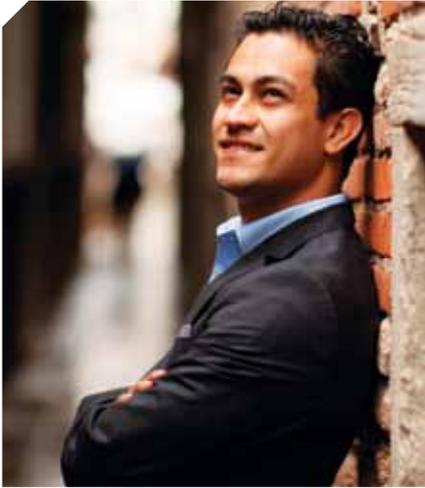
Key musical figures in the Orchestra's history include Hiroyuki Iwaki – who was Chief Conductor and then Conductor Laureate, between 1974 and his death in 2006 – and Markus Stenz, who was Chief Conductor and Artistic Director from 1998 until 2004. Oleg Caetani was the MSO's Chief Conductor and Artistic Director from 2005 to 2009. In June 2012 the MSO announced the appointment of Sir Andrew Davis as Chief Conductor, from the 2013 season. He gave his first concerts in this capacity in May.

The MSO, the first Australian symphony orchestra to tour abroad, has received widespread international recognition in tours to the USA, Canada, Japan, Korea, Europe, China and St Petersburg, Russia. In addition, the Orchestra tours annually throughout regional Victoria including a concert season in Geelong.

Each year the Orchestra performs to more than 200,000 people, at events ranging from the **Sidney Myer Free Concerts** in the Sidney Myer Music Bowl to the series of **Classic Kids** concerts for young children. The MSO reaches an even larger audience through its regular concert broadcasts on ABC Classic FM, and CD recordings on Chandos and ABC Classics. The Orchestra's considerable ceremonial role in Victoria has included participation in the opening ceremony of the 2006 Commonwealth Games, in the 2009 Bushfire memorial service **Together for Victoria**, the Prime Minister's Olympic Dinner and the 2010 and 2011 **AFL Grand Final**.

The MSO's extensive education and community outreach activities include the **Meet the Orchestra, Meet the Music** and **Up Close and Musical** programs, designed specifically for schools. In 2011, the MSO launched an educational iPhone and iPad app designed to teach children about the inner workings of an orchestra.

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra is funded principally by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and is generously supported by the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet. The MSO is also funded by the City of Melbourne, its Principal Partner, Emirates, and individual and corporate sponsors and donors.



Imagine a work of the stage so powerful, so confronting, that an audience would begin to yell and curse (at the stage and even at each other), threatening to bring the performance to a standstill.

The Rite of Spring may be the most famous, and widely written about, example of a work to cause this kind of fury. By celebrating its centenary in this wonderful festival, we have a chance to reflect on a time (1913) and a place (Paris) where art was so crucial to a society's vision of itself that it could be the cause of a riot. After all, nobody riots over something unimportant. Somehow the combination of Vaslav Nijinsky's choreography, Nicholas Roerich's stage designs and Igor Stravinsky's music caused an unprecedented eruption of feeling in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on that May night in 1913.

This is a very important week of music-making, and of thinking about music, because it celebrates how Stravinsky's work for the Ballets Russes, and *The Rite of Spring* in particular, changed the language of music. To put it another way: when he was given the opportunity to write the music for *The Firebird* in 1909, Stravinsky was a promising young composer. In the years after *The Rite of Spring*, he became one of the most important composers in the world.

Stravinsky was influenced profoundly by his Russian musical heritage; his father Fyodor was an opera singer who knew Tchaikovsky personally. Stravinsky's love for Tchaikovsky's music was life-long and we honour it in this Festival with performances of some of Tchaikovsky's major works for solo instrument and orchestra.

The Russian Festival is structured so that you can see how *The Rite of Spring* emerged from a period of intense creative ferment. In music, the years before World War I gave us many works that still have enormous power, including Mahler's *Song of the Earth*, Ives' *The Unanswered Question*, Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit* and *Daphnis and Chloe* (the latter also written for Diaghilev), Elgar's Violin Concerto, Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*, Debussy's two books of Preludes for piano, Vaughan Williams' *A London Symphony*, Schoenberg's *Erwartung* and *Pierrot Lunaire*, Falla's *Nights in*

the Gardens of Spain, Sibelius' Symphony No.4 and Bartók's opera *Bluebeard's Castle*. This was some of the most important music 'in the air' at the time.

The influence of all this on the young Stravinsky – he was 28 when he wrote *The Firebird* – and the nature of this incredibly intense period of musical achievement are among the many fascinating questions explored in the **Beyond the Stage** series of talks, panel discussions and extra performances available for you to enjoy throughout the Festival. See, particularly, page 6 for the program of activities taking place during the **Russian Festival Open Day** on Saturday 10 August.

With these ancillary events to intensify the wonderfully immersive atmosphere, and the outstanding soloists joining us for these concerts, **The Russian Festival** promises to be an unforgettable week of engagement with Stravinsky's extraordinary genius. I'm thrilled that my first project with the MSO as the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor is dedicated to some of the most colourful, most virtuosic and also most influential orchestral music of all time. Enjoy!

Diego Matheuz
Principal Guest Conductor

Emirates
Principal Partner

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melbourne symphony orchestra

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THE RUSSIAN FESTIVAL

Wednesday 7 August

7PM RITE OR WRONG: THE GREATEST COMPOSITIONS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Stalls Foyer, Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

The MSO's Director of Artistic Planning Huw Humphreys and musicians of the MSO kick-start the Festival with an interactive panel discussion about their favourite works of the 20th century and Stravinsky's radical and enduring influence. **FREE**

8PM: THE FIREBIRD

Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

Debussy *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*
Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto
Stravinsky *The Firebird: Suite* (1945)

MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

DIEGO MATHEUZ CONDUCTOR

BAIBA SKRIDE VIOLIN

11AM - 11.30AM JAMS FOR JUNIORS SESSION 2

Stage Door Suite **FULL***

12PM - 12.30PM JAMS FOR JUNIORS SESSION 3

Stage Door Suite *All sessions led by Karen Kyriakou* **FULL***

Led by musician, composer and educator Karen Kyriakou. The MSO invites children aged 0 - 5 to participate in a fun and interactive jam with MSO musicians, based on Stravinsky's colourful and vivid music.

12.15PM - 1.15PM STRAVINSKY AND THE ARTS

FREE

Stalls Foyer, Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

A panel of Melbourne arts personalities, including musician and administrator Marshall McGuire, the Australian Ballet's Music Director and Chief Conductor Nicolette Fraillon, and Victorian Opera's Artistic Director Richard Mills, discuss Stravinsky's influence on the arts beyond the orchestral stage - from Picasso to pointe shoes.

2.30PM - 3.30PM THE RITE UNRAVELLED FOR TWO PIANOS

FREE

Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

Conductor and ABC Classic FM presenter Graham Abbott will dissect and explore the inner workings of *The Rite of Spring*, arranged for two pianos and performed by Amir Farid and Leigh Harrold.

4PM - 5PM IMPROVISATORY RITES FOR JAZZ TRIO

FREE

Stalls Foyer, Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

The Marc Hannaford Trio present Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* as a point of departure for original improvisations and compositions. This set will show how *The Rite*, in conjunction with analytical and sociological writings concerning Stravinsky's most well-known work, may spawn unexpected connections between seemingly disparate musical worlds.

MARC HANNAFORD PIANO

SAMUEL PANKHURST BASS

JAMES McLEAN DRUMS

Saturday 10 August

THE RUSSIAN FESTIVAL OPEN DAY

Immerse yourself in a day of free talks, performances and lectures exploring the influence of Stravinsky's music in Hamer Hall and its foyer spaces.

10AM - 10.30AM

JAMS FOR JUNIORS SESSION 1

FULL*

Stage Door Suite

Led by musician, composer and educator Karen Kyriakou. The MSO invites children aged 0 - 5 to participate in a fun and interactive jam with MSO musicians, based on Stravinsky's colourful and vivid music.

10.45AM - 11.45AM MR RITE: INTRODUCTION TO STRAVINSKY

FREE

Stalls Foyer, Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

Dean of the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and VCA, and prominent Australian composer Professor Barry Conyngham will give a beginner's guide to the life and works of Stravinsky.

**5.30PM – 6.15PM STRAVINSKY IN MUSIC,
WORDS AND DANCE** **FREE**

Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

This special performance will feature a selection of the composer's own words and witticisms, expressed through music, theatre and dance.

- The Firebird: Berceuse**
- Duo concertant: Cantilene**
- Duo concertant: Dithyrambe**
- Tango**
- Duo concertant: Eglogue I**
- Duo concertant: Eglogue II**
- Ragtime**
- Pastorale**
- Elegy**
- Petrushka: Danse Russe**

JI WON KIM VIOLIN
HOANG PHAM PIANO
NATALIE ABBOTT AND MATTHEW DAY DANCERS
FEATURING JOHN STANTON
DEvised AND DIRECTED BY ANNA MELVILLE

7PM – 7.20PM ARTPLAY PERFORMANCE **FREE**

Stalls Foyer, Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

Young musicians of the MSO ArtPlay Ensemble perform their own composition, based on the music and story of *Petrushka*, led by musician, composer and educator Gillian Howell.

8PM: PETRUSHKA

Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

- Prokofiev** Symphony No.1 *Classical*
- Tchaikovsky** *Variations on a Rococo Theme*
- Stravinsky** *Petrushka*

MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
DIEGO MATHEUZ CONDUCTOR
LI-WEI QIN CELLO

Tuesday 13 August

7PM – 7.20PM A RITE RIOT **FREE**

Stalls Foyer, Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

University of Melbourne Senior Lecturer Dr Michael Christoforidis talks about the infamous *Rite of Spring* riot of 1903 and its 100-year anniversary.

8PM: THE RITE OF SPRING

Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

- Revueltas** *Sensemaya*
- Tchaikovsky** Piano Concerto No.1
- Stravinsky** *The Rite of Spring*

MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
DIEGO MATHEUZ CONDUCTOR
NIKOLAI DEMIDENKO PIANO

ABC Classic FM will broadcast all three concerts in the Russian Festival on the weekend of 21 and 22 September (see individual concerts for details). You can also hear Graham Abbott's *The Rite Unravalled*, with pianists Amir Farid and Leigh Harrold, in Graham's **Keys To Music** program on ABC Classic FM at 9am on Saturday 21 September. Hear ABC Classic FM in Melbourne on 105.9 FM, on digital radio, and streaming at abc.net.au/classic



GRAHAM ABBOTT
THE RITE UNRAVELLED



PROFESSOR BARRY CONYNNGHAM
MR. RITE: INTRODUCTION TO STRAVINSKY



MARC HANNAFORD
IMPROVISATORY RITES



GILLIAN HOWELL
ARTPLAY PERFORMANCE



DIEGO MATHEUZ conductor

Diego Matheuz is Principal Guest Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

The 29 year-old conductor and violinist is a graduate of the Venezuelan Sistema program, and is already widely acknowledged as one of today's most promising talents. He is currently Principal Conductor of Teatro La Fenice and Principal Guest Conductor of Orchestra Mozart in Bologna. He made his debut with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra at the Sidney Myer Free Concerts in 2012; these concerts are his first as the MSO's Principal Guest Conductor.

He made his debut with Orchestra Mozart in 2008 and was appointed Principal Guest Conductor there a year later. In 2010 he made his professional opera debut with *Rigoletto* at La Fenice and, since his appointment as Principal Conductor in 2011, he has conducted a

Tchaikovsky symphony cycle and productions of *La traviata* and *La bohème*. This season he will conduct *Carmen*, *The Barber of Seville* and *The Rake's Progress*, in addition to his second New Year concert.

Now well established in Italy, he has also toured with the Santa Cecilia Academy Orchestra and appeared with the RAI National Symphony Orchestra, La Scala Philharmonic Orchestra, and at the Spoleto Festival and Maggio Musicale Fiorentino.

Elsewhere he has conducted the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Hamburg Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic, Radio France Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Vienna and Mahler Chamber orchestras, Israel Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, National Arts Centre Orchestra Ottawa, Saito Kinen Orchestra and the NHK Symphony Orchestra. This season's engagements include debuts with the Spanish National Orchestra and Choir, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne, and his opera debut in Spain conducting *Don Pasquale* at the Liceu, Barcelona.

Born in 1984, Diego Matheuz began his violin studies in his hometown of Barquisimeto before moving to Caracas. His international debut as a conductor took place with the Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela in March 2008 at the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico. He maintains a strong association with his native orchestras, returning regularly to Caracas. Recent engagements with the Simón Bolívar Orchestra include an Italian tour, and a performance of Beethoven's Symphony No.9 in Bogota. In 2013 he also takes part in the Sistema residency at the Salzburg Festival, appearing with the Teresa Carreño Youth Orchestra of Venezuela.

Diego Matheuz conducts all three **Russian Festival** programs.



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THE FIREBIRD

Wednesday 7 August at 8pm

Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

Debussy *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*

Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto

INTERVAL 20 MINUTES

Stravinsky *The Firebird: Suite* (1945)

MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

DIEGO MATHEUZ CONDUCTOR

BAIBA SKRIDE VIOLIN

.....
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If you do not need this printed program after the concert, we encourage you to return it to a member of staff.

This concert has a duration of approximately two hours, including one interval of 20 minutes.

This performance will be broadcast and streamed by ABC Classic FM on Saturday 21 September at 1pm.

Please turn off your mobile phone and all other electronic devices before the performance commences.

.....



BEYOND THE STAGE

Learn more about the music in these free events.

PRE-CONCERT TALK

Wednesday 7 August at 7pm

Stalls Foyer,
Arts Centre Melbourne,
Hamer Hall

Rite or Wrong:

The Greatest Compositions of the 20th Century

The MSO's Director of Artistic Planning Huw Humphreys and musicians of the MSO kick-start the Festival with an interactive panel discussion about their favourite works of the 20th Century and Stravinsky's radical and enduring influence.



BAIBA SKRIDE violin

Baiba Skride was born into a musical family in Riga, Latvia, where she began her studies. She later attended the Rostock University of Music and Theatre and in 2001 won first prize in the Queen Elisabeth Competition.

She has appeared with such orchestras as the Berlin Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio Symphony, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, Orchestre de Paris, London Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Philadelphia and Cleveland orchestras and, most recently, the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

In 2013 she makes her Proms debut with the Oslo Philharmonic and Petrenko, playing Szymanowski's Violin Concerto No.1. She also performs with the Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra, Vienna Symphony, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Swedish Radio Symphony and Helsinki Philharmonic, and tours with the Luxembourg Philharmonic to St Petersburg and Moscow. In October, she concludes her Mozart residency with the RTÉ National Symphony in Dublin with play/direct performances of the first three violin concertos.

Chamber music highlights include performances at the Schubertiade Schwarzenberg, Vienna Konzerthaus and Amsterdam Concertgebouw. She is joined by her sisters Lauma Skride (piano) and Linda Skride (viola), Julian Steckel and Alban Gerhardt for piano quartet performances at the Rheingau and Schleswig-Holstein festivals.

Her recordings include the Stravinsky and Frank Martin concertos with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Thierry Fischer, a Brahms double CD with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and Sakari Oramo, a Tchaikovsky album with the City of Birmingham Symphony and Andris Nelsons, and a duo disc with Lauma Skride. Due for release is a Schumann CD with John Storgårds and the Danish National Symphony.

Baiba Skride plays the 'Ex Baron Feilitzsch' Stradivarius, on loan from Gidon Kremer.

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CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

Prélude à 'L'après-midi d'un faune'

(Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun)



CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Published in 1876, Stéphane Mallarmé's eclogue *L'après-midi d'un faune* is a monument of symbolist poetry, reflecting in its sumptuous but fragmentary language the erotic fantasies of a drowsy faun – a mythical half-man, half-goat – on a hot, languid, Sicilian afternoon. Running like a thread through the imagery of fruit and flowers and naked nymphs are references to music, specifically to the syrinx, or flute fashioned from reeds by the god Pan. One such reference, to the syrinx's 'sonorous, airy, monotonous line', would become the kernel of Debussy's musical rendering of the poem. Inviting Mallarmé to hear the work in 1894, he described 'the arabesque which ... I believe to have been dictated by the flute of your faun'.

The first, repeated phrase of the solo flute arabesque with which the piece begins has rightly been described as a founding moment in modern music. Its chromatic line traces and retraces

the ambiguous interval of the tritone: it is in no clearly discernible key, as is shown by the varied ways in which it is harmonised on its subsequent reappearances. The second half of the melody provides more 'conventional' motifs that are taken up from time to time by the rest of the orchestra.

Mallarmé's poem rhymes, but otherwise avoids traditional forms or a narrative line; similarly, Debussy's piece avoids the goal-directed development and tonal architecture that informs 19th-century symphonism. Musical events, like the vivid splashes of colour that first answer the flute, are there for the immediate pleasure they give; climaxes are approached by simple repetition of motifs; the most extended melody is a richly scored, Massenet-like tune at the work's midpoint, accompanied by rocking ostinatos.

The faun's dream is overcome by sleep and the 'proud silence of noon', and the piece ends with the flute fading to nothingness.

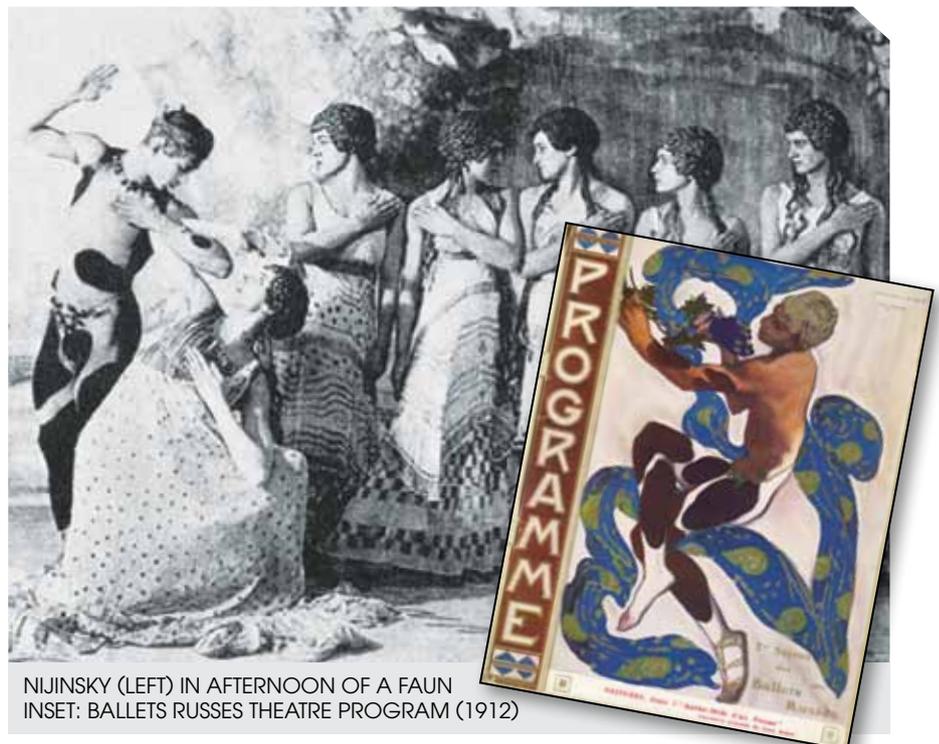
Gordon Kerry © 2013

The MSO was the first of the former ABC orchestras to perform this work, on 12 September 1940 under conductor Bernard Heinze. The Orchestra most recently performed it in March 2013 with conductor Benjamin Northey.

GUEST MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA MUSICIANS FOR THE RUSSIAN FESTIVAL

Natsuko Yoshimoto *concertmaster**
Rebecca Adler *violin*
Jo Beaumont *violin*
Zoe Black *violin*
Alyssa Conrau *violin*
Jacqueline Edwards *violin*
Michael Loftus-Hills *violin*
Elizabeth Gormley *violin*
Jenny Khafagi *violin*
Lynette Rayner *violin*
Okasana Thompson *violin*
Danielle Arcaro *viola*
Merewyn Bramble *viola*
William Clark *viola*
Ceridwen Davies *viola*
Simon Oswell *viola*
Rosia Pasteur *viola*
Molly Kadarau *cello*
Stuart Riley *double bass*
Agatha Yim *flute*
Ann Blackburn *oboe*
Geoffrey Dodd *cor anglais*
Rachel Cashmore *oboe*
Alex Morris *clarinet*
Chloe Turner *bassoon*
Colin Forbes-Abrams *bassoon*
Sam Jacobs *principal horn***
Jenna Breen *horn*
Julie Brooke *horn*
Claire Lindquist *horn*
Anton Schroeder *horn*
Callum G'Froerer *trumpet*
Robert Collins *trombone*
Paul Luxenberg *tuba‡*
Daniel Richardson *percussion*
Alannah Guthrie-Jones *harp*
Delyth Stafford *harp*
Louisa Breen *piano*
Leigh Harrold *piano/celeste*
Donald Nicolson *piano/celeste*

*Courtesy of Adelaide Symphony Orchestra
**Courtesy of New Zealand Symphony Orchestra
‡Courtesy of Hong Kong Philharmonic



NIJINSKY (LEFT) IN AFTERNOON OF A FAUN
INSET: BALLETS RUSSES THEATRE PROGRAM (1912)

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

(1840-1893)

Violin Concerto in D, Op.35

I Allegro moderato

II Canzonetta (Andante) –

III Finale (Allegro vivacissimo)

Baiba Skride violin



TCHAIKOVSKY (RIGHT) WITH VIOLINIST
JOSEF KOTEK

The first bad review of a masterpiece has a curious allure. There is something forlorn and fascinating about the French critic of the 1850s who proclaimed that *Rigoletto* 'lacks melody', or George Bernard Shaw's declaration that Goetz was a greater symphonist than Brahms. Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto is a distinguished member of that company of musical masterpieces that survived a traumatic debut to become one of the most beloved works of its kind.

It could almost be described as a love letter. In 1878 the composer was still feeling the repercussions from his short-lived marriage and had begun the lengthy and difficult process of obtaining a divorce. He and his brother Modest took a holiday in Clarens, on Lake Geneva. Here, in March, they were joined by the violinist Josef Kotek, one of Tchaikovsky's pupils at the Moscow Conservatory, who had introduced the composer's music to his future patron, Nadezhda von Meck.

At some point in their long friendship, according to Tchaikovsky biographer Alexander Poznansky, the two men became lovers. Indeed, the composer had already declared, 'I love [him] to distraction...what a lovely, naïve, sincere, tender and kind creature.'

In Clarens, composer and former student spent some time playing over various unfamiliar pieces, including Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*, a new work which Tchaikovsky admired for its piquancy and melodiousness. The combination of Lalo's concerto and Kotek's presence inspired in Tchaikovsky a desire to write a violin concerto himself. He immersed himself in work and had the concerto fully sketched in a few weeks. By the end of April he had orchestrated the whole work.

Kotek's advice and encouragement were crucial in the work's composition. He would play over sections as they were finished, and gave a complete performance from the short score for Tchaikovsky's and Modest's private pleasure. Kotek was originally to have been the concerto's dedicatee, but Tchaikovsky, concerned at the gossip this would cause in Moscow, dedicated the work to Leopold Auer, a renowned performer and teacher, whose pupils were to include Mischa Elman and Jascha Heifetz.

Tchaikovsky's hope that Auer's fame would help promote the concerto was dashed when Auer claimed, as Nikolai Rubinstein had about the First Piano Concerto, that the work was technically impossible and structurally weak; in short, that he would not learn it. Then Kotek decided not to play it either, which caused Tchaikovsky to break with him altogether.

Three years later Jurgenson, who had since published the score, informed Tchaikovsky that Adolph Brodsky was planning to play the piece at a Vienna Philharmonic concert under Hans Richter in December 1881. There was a furious mixture of applause, boos and hissing afterwards, with Brodsky acclaimed and the work derided. The Viennese critics were almost universal in their condemnation of the concerto. Hanslick, champion of Brahms and enemy of Wagner, whose tastes were not inclined toward new Russian music, wrote a review of infamous vituperation.

For a while the concerto has proportion, is musical, and is not without genius, but soon savagery gains the upper hand...The violin is no longer played: it is yanked about, it is torn asunder, it is beaten black and blue.

Tchaikovsky read Hanslick's review by chance in a Rome café, and was shocked at its vehemence, but Brodsky was not

dissuaded and remained the work's most fervent champion. 'You have indeed crammed too many difficulties into it,' he told the composer, '[but] one can play it again and again and never be bored; and this is a most important circumstance for the conquering of its difficulties.' Auer eventually overcame his opposition to the concerto and played it to great acclaim, introducing it to many of his pupils.

The work opens with a kind of scene-setting introduction, after which the soloist enters with a brief flourish, then announces the main theme of the first movement. Soon the second subject appears, a melody of great tenderness that is presented in a setting not dissimilar to those of Tchaikovsky's famous violin solos in *Swan Lake*. From this point the temperature of the first movement rises considerably, with the solo part becoming much more virtuosic and the orchestral writing increasingly colourful. There is a magnificently varied cadenza for the soloist.

Kotek felt Tchaikovsky's original slow movement was too insubstantial and sentimental, and the composer agreed, replacing it with the *Canzonetta*. After a simple chordal introduction for the woodwinds, the soloist takes up a hushed, appropriately song-like theme. The accompaniment to the violin's later decorations of this melody is scored with the utmost delicacy.

The *Finale* follows on without a break, and immediately the soloist has a dazzling, short cadenza, which leads straight into the movement's vigorous main theme, a short, folk-like dance tune. The second theme, introduced over a bagpipe-like drone on the strings, is a temporary lyrical resting-place in the movement's wild infectiousness.

Phillip Sametz © 1996

The MSO was the first of the Australian state symphony orchestras to perform this concerto, on 21 May 1938 with conductor George Szell and soloist Lionel Lawson. The Orchestra's most recent performance took place in May 2011 on a tour of regional Victoria, with Nicholas Carter and Ji Won Kim.

INTERVAL 20 MINUTES

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

The Firebird: Suite (1945)

Introduction – Prelude, Dance of the Firebird and Variation – Pantomime I – Pas de deux (The Firebird and Ivan Tsarevitch)

Pantomime II – Scherzo (Dance of the Princesses) –

Pantomime III – Round Dance of the Princesses (Khorovod) –

Infernal Dance – Berceuse (The Firebird) – Final hymn



COSTUME SKETCH FOR THE FIREBIRD BY LEON BAKST

The Russian fairy-tale world was irresistibly exotic to European audiences in the early 20th century, so for the 1910 Paris season of the Ballets Russes, artistic director Sergei Diaghilev commissioned Anatoly Liadov to compose a score to Mikhail Fokine's scenario and choreography.

When Liadov failed to deliver, Diaghilev turned to the 28-year-old Stravinsky. The ballet would be the largest single piece composed by Stravinsky to date,

and would require what the composer in retrospect derided as 'descriptive' music, composed to a scenario not of his choosing, and with a deadline that was frighteningly close. But such things concentrate the mind wonderfully, and in *The Firebird*, Stravinsky emerges as a major composer of the 20th century, while bringing to a radiant close the Russian Romantic tradition.

In 1919, Stravinsky created a suite from the ballet music which would be attractive to concert promoters in its brevity and smaller orchestration. So it proved, but US copyright law meant that he had no legal rights over his work in the country to which he emigrated at the start of World War II. In 1945 he revisited the 1919 Suite, extending it so that he could re-copyright the work. This is the version we hear tonight.

Fokine's original scenario for the ballet brings together characters from three strands of Russian folklore: the Firebird – a phoenix; Kashchei the Deathless, a demon attended by monsters, who abducts maidens and turns knights to stone; and Ivan Tsarevich, who personifies a nationalist, indeed imperial, heroism. Stravinsky, in later life, made no secret of his dislike for Fokine and his scenario, in the latter case because of what Stravinsky regarded as dramatic 'padding' that obliged him to write the dance equivalent of recitatives – 'pantomimes'. The 1945 revision allowed the composer to reintroduce enough of this narrative material as to make the work viable on stage.

The story begins in the enchanted forest that surrounds Kashchei's castle. The *Introduction* begins in the sepulchral depths of the orchestra, rising to fluttering wind figurations and a fragmentary, plaintive oboe solo. The Firebird's dance, as she enters pursued by Ivan Tsarevich, is a spritely waltz clothed in brilliant orchestral colour that dissolves into scurrying flute textures as Ivan captures her (*Pantomime I*). The Firebird begs for her freedom in a slow dance (*Pas de deux*) whose main melody is first heard in the violas and bassoon, and promises to come to his aid should he ever require it; as a token of her promise she gives him a plume from her tail. Moving deeper into the forest, Ivan

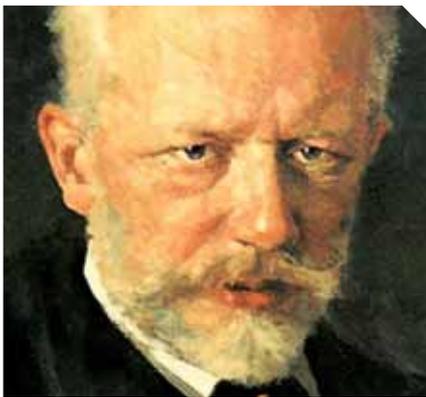
finds himself in the garden of Kashchei's castle. Thirteen princesses appear (*Pantomime II*) and play a game with golden apples (*Scherzo*); Ivan, enchanted by the 13th princess' beauty, reveals his presence (*Pantomime III*) and they all perform a stately round-dance (*Khorovod*) to a Russian folk-tune.

Kashchei's monsters appear, capturing Ivan as Kashchei arrives. The monsters attempt to turn Ivan to stone in the face of the princesses' pleas for mercy. Ivan summons the Firebird, who casts a spell on the monsters. An exhilarating *Infernal Dance* to acrobatic trumpet calls, woodwind trills and clattering xylophones, follows. The Firebird dances a *Berceuse*, or lullaby, putting Kashchei and the monsters into a magic sleep and telling Ivan that he must destroy the egg in which Kashchei keeps his soul. As Kashchei awakes, Ivan does so, thus destroying the evil demon and plunging his world into profound darkness. In the single-movement finale, a long-breathed melody passed from solo horn through the full orchestra announces the destruction of evil and the reawakening of the knights whom Kashchei had turned to stone. Ivan, naturally, marries the 13th princess in music of great ecstasy.

Gordon Kerry © 2009/13

The Firebird was premiered by the Ballets Russes in Paris on 25 June 1910 in a performance conducted by Gabriel Pierné. Mikhail Fokine was the choreographer and danced the role of Ivan Tsarevich; Tamara Karsavina was the Firebird.

The first Australian performance of music from The Firebird was given by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in September 1938 under Malcolm Sargent. The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra first performed the Suite in July 1944 at a War Funds Concert conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Stravinsky himself conducted the Berceuse and Finale in Sydney during his visit to Australia in November 1961. The MSO's most recent performance of music from The Firebird (1919 Suite) took place in September 2010 under conductor Mark Wigglesworth.



PORTRAIT OF TCHAIKOVSKY
BY KUZNETSOV (1893)

AS THE SHOEMAKER MAKES SHOES

Gordon Kerry discusses Stravinsky's admiration for the music of Tchaikovsky.

In 1893 the 11-year-old Stravinsky was taken to see a gala performance of Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmila* at the Mariinsky (later known as the Kirov) Opera in St Petersburg. Stravinsky remembered the occasion for two reasons: his father Feodor was on stage singing the role of Farlaf, and Russia's pre-eminent composer, Tchaikovsky, was in the audience.

Feodor, as it happened, was one of Russia's leading basses, and had created numerous roles in Tchaikovsky's operas. Neither Stravinsky nor Tchaikovsky was born in St Petersburg, but both lived and were educated there as children and both were expected by their families to study for the law. Moreover, the music of both composers reflects an internationalist

outlook, while remaining always aware of its Russian origin.

Tchaikovsky was dead within months of that performance, and when Stravinsky resolved to make composition his vocation it was to Rimsky-Korsakov that he went to study. The latter was a member of the so-called 'Five' or 'Mighty Handful', a group of composers who sought to write a 'Russian' music untainted by that of the West. Stravinsky once noted that Rimsky-Korsakov (the least chauvinistic of the five) 'was only unkind to admirers of Tchaikovsky'; Tchaikovsky, for his part once complained of the Five's 'horrible presumptuousness and purely amateur conviction of their superiority to all other musicians in the universe'. In fact, though, Rimsky-Korsakov proved a great teacher, especially of technical skills like orchestration which bore fruit in the glittering scoring of works as early as *The Firebird*. But while Rimsky-Korsakov was Stravinsky's mentor, Tchaikovsky was his idol, whose cause he advocated passionately. Throughout Stravinsky's career, Tchaikovsky's was the only music which he conducted regularly (apart from his own) and which he arranged without substantially modifying. As Paul Griffiths has noted, Stravinsky's exploration of neo-classicism, with its use of diatonic harmony and regular rhythmic phrases, brought his musical language closer to that of Tchaikovsky. In the ballet *The Fairy's Kiss* the two converge completely: Stravinsky appropriates Tchaikovsky's material in such a way as to make it impossible to tell who is arranging whom.

Stravinsky's love of Tchaikovsky stems at least in part from the latter's ability to imaginatively recreate lost worlds, as Stravinsky himself did in works as different as *The Rite of Spring*, *Apollo*, *Oedipus Rex*. He once remarked of Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* ballet:

This cultured man, with his knowledge of folksong and of old French music, had no need to engage in archaeological research in order to present the age of Louis XIV; he recreated the character of the period by his musical language, preferring involuntary but living anachronisms to conscious and laboured pasticcio: a virtue that appertains only to great creative minds.

According to Tchaikovsky's friend Herman Laroche, *it was Peter Ilyich's good fortune that his development coincided with a time...when the word 'Russian' was no longer synonymous with 'peasantlike', and when the 'peasantlike' itself was put in its place, as only a part of Russianness.*

For both composers, then, being Russian was as much about the 18th century splendour of St Petersburg as about the pagan rites of the steppes. And both were above all craftsmen: in his letters Tchaikovsky makes it clear that the emotional trajectory of any work can only be expressed by the use of solid technique; Stravinsky, that most professional of composers, loved to quote Tchaikovsky when he said that a composer composes 'exactly as a shoemaker makes shoes'.

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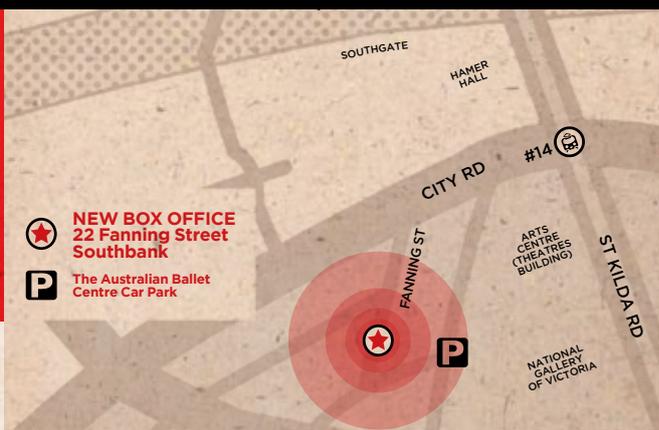
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- Janet Hirst, Chief Executive Officer, The Ian Potter Foundation.

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Stravinsky *Petrushka (1947)*

MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Since his successes at the 11th International Tchaikovsky Competition and the 2001 Naumburg Competition in New York, Li-Wei Qin has performed throughout the world as a soloist and chamber musician and can be heard on numerous recordings. He is an exclusive Universal Music China Artist.

Li-Wei has enjoyed successful artistic collaborations with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, Prague Symphony, BBC Philharmonic,

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In recital and chamber music, Li-Wei is a regular guest at Wigmore Hall, the BBC Proms and the City of London, Jerusalem, Rheingau, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Music festivals, with musicians such as Daniel Hope, Nobuko Imai, Mischa Maisky, David Finckel, Wu Han, Vladimir Mendelssohn and Peter Frankl, among many others.

Recent appearances include with the NDR Symphony Orchestra Hamburg, Konzerthaus Orchestra Berlin, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Deutsch Staatsphilharmonie, Philharmonie der Nationen, Shanghai Symphony, Korean Symphony, Singapore Symphony, Auckland Philharmonia and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

Engagements in 2013 have included the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican; appearances as guest artist for the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society and for the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Townsville; at the Melbourne Recital Centre in a concert with Wilma and Friends and a Musica Viva Coffee Concert; and at Government House in Sydney. His recordings include the Elgar Cello Concerto with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

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SERGEI PROKOFIEV

(1891-1953)

Classical Symphony

(Symphony No.1 in D), Op.25

I *Allegro*

II *Larghetto*

III *Gavotte (Non troppo allegro)*

IV *Finale (Molto vivace)*

A 20th century composer writes in a style much simpler, and less obviously modern, than his other music, and calls his piece *Classical Symphony*, harking back to the music of Mozart and Haydn. What is going on? After Prokofiev wrote this symphony in 1917, audiences everywhere thought they knew. This time, at least, Prokofiev had written music which was easy to understand and enjoy. It quickly became one of Prokofiev's best-loved works, second in popularity only to *Peter and the Wolf*. But the composer was really up to some harmless mischief when he gave this piece its title. He admitted later he wanted to 'tease the geese', and he laughed at the critics' complicated discussions about his 'neo-classical' style, of which the *Classical Symphony* was supposed to be so striking an example.

Prokofiev chose the style of the Classical composers, but not as a tribute to their music. He later told his friends he had set himself an exercise, in the summer of 1917, between the February and October revolutions. He had gone to stay in a country house where there wasn't a piano. Having noticed that 'thematic material composed without the piano was often better', he wanted to see whether he could compose a whole work in his head, without using the piano as he usually did. He thought this 'difficult journey' would be easier if he deliberately adopted a simpler style and form.

Prokofiev loved playing musical games (he was also a champion chess player), and the *Classical* is a cheerful, humorous symphony. Haydn's music is often like this too, and Prokofiev mentioned that 18th-century symphonist as his model. He had



SERGEI PROKOFIEV

heard and studied Haydn's symphonies in Tcherepnin's conducting classes, and it was for a 'Haydn' or Classical orchestra that he wrote – pairs of wind instruments, horns, trumpets, timpani and strings. Prokofiev knew the 'rules' of musical language which had been codified from the procedures of 'Classical' symphonists such as Haydn. But he didn't imitate Haydn slavishly: 'It seemed to me,' he wrote, 'that if Haydn had lived to our day he would have retained his own style while at the same time absorbing something of the new. This was the kind of symphony I wanted to write.'

With hindsight we can see that the *Classical Symphony* has much the same characteristics as all Prokofiev's best music. He plays similar games, such as taking a conventional melody and shifting it into a harmonic frame which seems disconnected. This produces the feeling, as Prokofiev's friend Nicholas Nabokov said, that the melody has been refreshed by being harmonically mishandled.

Prokofiev did not feel bound by 18th century harmonic conventions: for instance, at the very beginning he states his subject in the key of D, then without any pretence at modulation, in C. The writing for the strings tends to be high up in the compass of the instruments, which gives the *Classical Symphony* its elegant, witty-sounding texture: as

though themes by Haydn were being played an octave higher than he would have written them.

This cheerful style was one way Prokofiev rebelled against the late-Romantic atmosphere, steamy with philosophy, literature and mysticism. This symphony, composed in 1917, was part of a musical revolution. But it was also very Russian and traditional, in its somewhat mechanical concept of form as an external structure, since Russian 19th-century composers had tended to pour their music into existing formal moulds. The *Gavotte*, composed in 1916 before the rest of the music, is an old French dance form. Its inclusion in the symphony, in the place of the Classical minuet, shows that Prokofiev was drawn, whether consciously or not, to an older, even more formal style than is found in the symphonies of Mozart and Haydn. His departure from their formal example comes, significantly, in music based on the dance; which, as Prokofiev's own ballets show, suited his gifts so well.

David Garrett © 1987

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra gave the first performance in Australia of Prokofiev's Classical Symphony in May 1940, under conductor Antal Dorati. The MSO's most recent performance, conducted by Marcello Viotti, took place in April 2000.

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

(1840-1893)

Variations on a Rococo Theme,
Op.33 (Fitzenhagen version)

Introduction (*Moderato quasi
andante*)

Theme (*Moderato semplice*)

Variation I (*Tempo della thema*)

Variation II (*Tempo della thema*)

Variation III (*Andante sostenuto*)

Variation IV (*Andante grazioso*)

Variation V (*Allegro moderato*)

Variation VI (*Andante*)

Variation VII and Coda
(*Allegro vivo*)

Li-Wei Qin cello



WILHELM FITZENHAGEN, FOR WHOM
TCHAIKOVSKY WROTE THESE VARIATIONS

A nostalgia for the world of the 18th century, thought of as refined, elegant and gently civilised, is never far from the surface in the highly Romantic art of Tchaikovsky. It shows in his choice of works by Pushkin – who shared and fed this nostalgia – for the books of his two best operas, *Eugene Onegin* and *The Queen of Spades*, where Tchaikovsky's music sometimes resorts to out-and-out 18th-century pastiche. Mozart was the composer who symbolised the best of the former century for Tchaikovsky, and he revered him above all other musicians. 'No one,' he said, 'has so made me weep and tremble with rapture at nearness to what we call the ideal.' Whatever the term 'rococo' may mean, to Tchaikovsky it meant Mozart. This set of variations is his finest tribute to his idol's art, far preferable to his orchestration and overlaying of Mozart pieces with a rather sticky sweetness in the orchestral suite *Mozartiana*.

In no way does it detract from the success of Tchaikovsky's *Variations* that the Mozart he emulates contains no turbulent emotions. In short, the *Variations* are far from the real Mozart. Charming, elegant, deftly written, they are equally gratifying to virtuoso cellists and to audiences. The light and airy accompaniment, which enables the cello to stand out beautifully, is for 18th-century forces: double winds, two horns and strings. Tchaikovsky composed the work in 1876 (shortly before beginning his Fourth Symphony) for a cellist and fellow-professor at the Moscow Conservatorium, Wilhelm Fitzenhagen.

Fitzenhagen had requested a concerto-like piece for his recital tours, so it was natural that Tchaikovsky first completed the *Variations* in a version for cello and piano. Before orchestrating it he gave the music to Fitzenhagen, who made changes in the solo part, in places pasting his own versions over Tchaikovsky's. The first performance was of the orchestral version, in November 1877. Tchaikovsky couldn't attend since he had left Russia to recover from his disastrous marriage. Fitzenhagen retained the score, and it was he who passed it on to the publisher, Jurgenson. The cello and piano version was the first to appear in print, in autumn 1878, with substantial alterations which Fitzenhagen claimed were authorised but about which Tchaikovsky complained somewhat bitterly.

But by the time Jurgenson came to publish the *Rococo Variations* in orchestral form, ten years had elapsed, during which Fitzenhagen had performed the work successfully both inside and outside Russia, and it had entered the repertoire. When Fitzenhagen's pupil, Anatoly Brandukov, asked Tchaikovsky what he was going to do about Jurgenson's publication of the Fitzenhagen version, the composer replied, 'The devil take it! Let it stand as it is!'

The theme, which determines the character of the *Variations*, is Tchaikovsky's own. The soloist plays it after a brief introduction in which the orchestra anticipates the later breaking of the theme into fragments by attempting little phrases from it. The theme itself has an orchestral postlude, with a final question from the cello.

This postlude, increasingly varied, rounds off most of the *Variations*. The first two of these are fairly closely based on the theme, which the cello decorates with a dance in triplets, then discusses with the orchestra. The soloist emerges in full limelight in the virtuosic second variation. This is followed by a leisurely slow waltz, largely in the hands of the soloist. This variation, number three, is the expressive heart of the *Variations*.

In Variation IV, Tchaikovsky gives the theme a different rhythm, and incorporates some bravura flourishes. In the fifth variation the flute has the theme, and the cello accompanies with a long chain of trills. The cello solo has its most substantial cadenza at the end of this variation which leads into the soulful slow variation, number six. This minor key version of the theme is heard over plucked strings. It was this variation that, without fail, drew stormy applause on Fitzenhagen's recital tours.

The final variation begins with the solo part establishing its own particular rhythmic interpretation of the theme, a delightful way of upping the activity, which continues into the coda.

David Garrett © 2002

The first performance of Tchaikovsky's Rococo Variations by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra took place in February 1961 with conductor Sir Bernard Heinze and soloist John Kennedy. The MSO most recently performed it in November 2011 with Tadaaki Otaka and Alisa Weilerstein.

INTERVAL 20 MINUTES



TCHAIKOVSKY

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

Petrushka: Burlesque in four tableaux (1947 version)

First Part: *The Shrovetide Fair – Russian Dance –*

Second Part: *Petrushka –*

Third Part: *The Blackamoor – Waltz –*

Fourth Part: *The Shrove-Tide Fair and the death of Petrushka – Wet-Nurses' Dance –*

Peasant with Bear – Gypsies and a Rake Vendor – Dance of the Coachmen – Masqueraders –

The Scuffle (Blackamoor and Petrushka) – Death of Petrushka – Police and the Juggler –

Apparition of Petrushka's Double

Petrushka, the second of Stravinsky's ballets for Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, began life as a 'burlesque' for piano and orchestra called *Petrushka's Cry*. Stravinsky later wrote:

I had wanted to refresh myself by composing an orchestral piece in which the piano would play the most important part... In composing the music, I had in mind the distinct picture of a puppet, suddenly endowed with life, exasperating the patience of the orchestra with diabolical cascades of arpeggios.

Stravinsky, writing in later life, no doubt used the term 'diabolical', with its suggestion of 'doubleness', advisedly: much of *Petrushka's* harmony, notably in the inner tableaux, makes use of parallel black-and white-note figures to create a spiky bitonality.

'As a piece of musical architecture, *Petrushka's Cry* is unremarkable' according to Stravinsky biographer Stephen Walsh, but Diaghilev saw its balletic potential and asked artist Alexandre Benois to draft a scenario based on the Russian version of the puppet known in English as Mr Punch. There is no Judy, however, as the story is in fact derived from the *commedia dell'arte* tradition with its masked, stock characters: Petrushka, a puppet with human emotions, is in love with the Ballerina, who is more attracted

to the Moor. What transpired was a work in four tableaux (articulated by circus-ring drum rolls) of which the second is the original *Petrushka's Cry*.

The first presents the Shrovetide Fair in music that immediately announces how much its composer has matured in the short time since *The Firebird*. In a gesture that looks forward to works as different as *The Rite of Spring* and *Dumbarton Oaks*, Stravinsky creates scintillating, active textures that are nonetheless harmonically static, and cuts seemingly randomly between them to depict the bustle of the fair. Some of the music is derived from street cries and songs of St Petersburg: two organ-grinders in the first tableau 'duel' with songs sent to Stravinsky by his friend, Andrey Rimsky-Korsakov. After establishing this busy scene, Stravinsky focuses on the figure of the Charlatan, or Showman, who brings his puppets to life with the sound of the flute. Their 'Russian Dance' was taken from sketches for the work that would become *The Rite of Spring*.

The second tableau is set in Petrushka's darkly furnished cell, into which the puppet falls as if kicked. After his characteristic black and white motif for clarinets, swarming figurations featuring the piano indicate Petrushka's helplessness and fury at the Ballerina's preference for the dashing Moor. She enters the room; frightened by his manic attempts to win her over, she leaves.

Things comes to a head in the third tableau, where the Moor seduces the Ballerina, who has come to his lavish room, in an agile waltz featuring flute and trumpet. Petrushka appears and attacks the Moor but is overpowered and flees.

The final tableau returns us to the Shrovetide Fair, and another charming mosaic of character dances, including that of the Wet-Nurses, based on a further St Petersburg street-song, and an appearance by a peasant with a bear. This is suddenly interrupted as Petrushka, still fleeing the Moor, appears and runs across the stage with Moor chasing him, and the Ballerina following. The Moor kills Petrushka with his blade. In the appalled silence the Charlatan shakes the body to show the crowd that it is a puppet, but Petrushka's ghost appears above the stage.

In moving to the USA, Stravinsky found that copyright law gave no protection to his European works, so in 1947 he revised several scores to republish and copyright them, and took the opportunity in *Petrushka* to produce a work for slightly smaller forces than the 1911 original.

Gordon Kerry © 2013

Choreographed by Mikhail Fokine, Petrushka was first performed by the Ballets Russes at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris on 13 June 1911 in a performance conducted by Pierre Monteux. The title roles were taken by Vaslav Nijinsky (Petrushka), Tamara Karsavina (the Ballerina) and Alexander Orlov (the Moor).

The work was first heard in concert on 1 March 1914, again conducted by Monteux, and with Alfredo Casella at the piano.

The first Australian performance of Petrushka (1911) was given in March 1944 by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Sir Bernard Heinze, who conducted the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's first performance, in August 1945. The MSO's most recent performance (1947 version), conducted by Markus Stenz, took place in November 2004.



SET DESIGN FOR PETRUSHKA BY ALEXANDRE BENOIS

STRAVINSKY'S CHOREOGRAPHIC COLLABORATORS

Lee Christofis introduces Stravinsky's 'dance partners'.

When Sergei Diaghilev first invited the 27-year-old Igor Stravinsky to join the writers, painters, designers and composers creating for the Ballets Russes in 1909, he could not have predicted the impact his choice would make on the future of ballet around the world. With 18 specifically commissioned scores alone, Stravinsky would have been a phenomenon in the ballet world, but with another 80 scores, from symphonies to wind solos, he helped spawn some 1250 dance works by 700 choreographers between 1910 and 2012, making him the most influential ballet and dance composer of the 20th century. And if this trajectory, carefully detailed in 'Stravinsky the Global Dancer', a website of Roehampton University, is any indication, the list will continue to grow.

Commissioned by Diaghilev to write *The Firebird* (1910) and *Petrushka* (1911), Stravinsky proved to be a complex thinker, exploring every aspect of a new production. He was naturally predisposed towards the theatre; his father Fyodor was a successful bass at the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg, a predecessor of the great Chaliapin. And he displayed and shared an instinctive balletic sensibility which, like his infinitely varied music, could enhance ballets or infuriate their choreographers, whom he could criticise most harshly. Relations were never straightforward; they often erupted into power struggles and recriminations, and Stravinsky, more than most, rewrote his view of their shared history, even denigrating the company's early works as 'Russian salads'.

His first choreographer was an early reformer of Russian ballet, Michel Fokine, creator of *Les Sylphides* and *The Dying Swan*. Influenced by the American dancer Isadora Duncan to free the dance from every conceivable constraint, Fokine made more natural as much of the movement for *The Firebird* as he could, limiting virtuosity and giving the eccentric characters in the court of the evil magician Kashchei very simple, folkloric movements instead of set dances. Fokine and Stravinsky worked closely together on the music, but it was Stravinsky who determined *The Firebird's* coda, with its processions of Boyars, courtiers and priests to the stirring Russian anthem which brings the ballet to its imperious close.

The scenario for *Petrushka* was conceived by Stravinsky with Alexandre Benois, a painter, who designed *Petrushka's* decors and costumes. With the scenario and score a *fait accompli*, Fokine initially resisted the endless rhythmic problems Stravinsky's music presented. But Fokine adapted his own ideas and later admitted that *Petrushka* was possibly his greatest achievement, not only in the awkward movements for the tragic puppet Petrushka, but in the busy



APOLLON MUSAGÈTE
CHOREOGRAPHED BY BALANCHINE

Shrovetide fair with its plethora of leitmotifs, lively folk dances and comic character studies.

Diaghilev's first true protégé, and his lover, the legendary Vaslav Nijinsky, danced the puppet Petrushka. He wrought an emotionally compelling tragi-comic figure which was a far cry from his unbelievable ability to hover at the apex of his jumps in Fokine's *Le Spectre de la Rose* or the classic *Giselle*. It was Nijinsky who would match the driving forces of Stravinsky's next work, *The Rite of Spring*, which he and Diaghilev had heard the composer playing on the piano many months before.

Just as Stravinsky's iconoclastic *Rite* changed the potential for orchestral writing, Nijinsky had already taken dance in a new direction on making his first ballet, *Afternoon of a Faun* (1912), to Claude Debussy's atmospheric music and Léon Bakst's painterly evocation of a classical Greek landscape. It was barely dance, more a series of stylised Greek friezes come to life. *Faun* took over a hundred rehearsals for the dancers to get it right. More radical was *Jeux* (with Debussy and Bakst again), a bisexual *ménage à trois* on a moonlit tennis court, in sports clothes, with barely a ballet step in it. It opened two weeks before *The Rite of Spring* and provided the Ballets Russes with another welcome flurry of controversy.

None of his earlier ballets prepared Nijinsky for *The Rite of Spring*, which proved a brutal challenge to everyone



LÉONID MASSINE (1949)

concerned. Nijinsky needed help to deconstruct the rhythms; the dancers, often distraught, had to forget their ballet technique to learn Nijinsky's hundreds of jumps with turned-in feet, pounding out what were regarded as 'primitive' dances. The orchestra was offended by Stravinsky's barbaric inventions and the composer was convinced it would be a disaster.

Despite the now legendary debacle of the premiere on 29 May 1913, the ballet had more than 30 performances before the choreography was 'lost' or forgotten. Its success had many side-effects: it dislodged Fokine, whom Diaghilev already regarded as *passé*. Then in 1914, when Nijinsky married a young Hungarian, Romola de Pulszky, Diaghilev was both bereft and incensed, and severed all ties with him. Within a few years, and with only one more success to his credit, *Till Eulenspiegel* to Richard Strauss' music, Nijinsky began a tragic decline into chronic and life-shattering schizophrenia and died in 1950.

While Nijinsky's ballet has been lost (and various attempts to reconstruct it have been inconclusive), the score continues to thrive on concert and theatre stages, where it has spawned over 200 productions, including a remarkably fine one danced to a piano roll recording with choreography by Argentinean Javier de Frutos. The first *Rite of Spring* after 1913 was by another Russian dancer and Diaghilev's new protégé, Léonide Massine, who in 1920 would create *The Song of the Nightingale* (February) and *Pulcinella* (May), and new choreography for *The Rite of Spring* (December).

Although Massine's works were very theatrical, Stravinsky thought the choreographies trite, unsubtle and unimaginative, a view supported by the next two in Diaghilev's growing cluster of choreographers, Bronislava Nijinska, Vaslav's sister, and a young Armenian-Russian émigré, George Balanchine. These two would match Stravinsky's musical inventiveness

and understand his intentions more closely than most others he would come across.

When preparing *Les Noces* (The Wedding, 1923), Nijinska battled Diaghilev to get rid of Natalia Goncharova's brilliantly coloured and heavy folk costumes. She insisted on, and got, a design appropriate for Stravinsky's peasant wedding cantata – pungent, ritualistic and ostensibly cruel in its treatment of the young bride and groom. Throwing out her kaleidoscopic palette, Goncharova designed plain brown and white peasant costumes for Nijinska's percussive, stabbing pointe work for the bride and young women, and bodies piled up like pyramids or arranged in geometric formations inspired by Russia's early Constructivist painters. The entire combination of dance and decors was then and remains today a near-perfect visualisation of Stravinsky's work for solo voices, chorus, four pianos and percussion. Nijinska also choreographed *Renard* (1922) and *The Fairy's Kiss* (1928).

Fortuitously, it was George Balanchine who would fully enter the new musical phase Stravinsky was creating for himself, what is called his neo-classical period, when Balanchine created his first entirely new work, *Apollon musagète* (1928), later simply called *Apollo*. Here, just as Stravinsky had eschewed earlier, highly coloured 'Russian salad' orchestrations, Balanchine found a sleek, uncluttered way of moving, athletic at times and always fluid, with finely wrought pointe work for the women and a controlled power for the men. Their close friendship and collaboration, which lasted till Stravinsky's death in 1971, outstripped all the others, partly because they both went to live in the United States in the 1930s, but more importantly because they constantly fed into each other's life and work.

Stravinsky felt perfectly free to tell Balanchine how to arrange a dance grouping, as he did in both *Jeu de cartes* (1937) and *Agon* (1957), because, as he said at different times, Balanchine found things in the music that the composer himself would not have noticed or drawn attention to. Furthermore, Balanchine looked to Stravinsky for inspiration for a total of 36 dances.

The most comical of these, the use of the *Circus Polka* for 50 elephants and 50 women and featuring Balanchine's wife Vera Zorina in *Ballet of the Elephants*, provides a fascinating link to the choreographer's not insignificant contribution to Broadway and Hollywood musicals, and Stravinsky's great delight in receiving such a pleasurable commission before startling the musical world with his journey into serial music. This culminated in one of 20th-century ballet's most cerebral and tantalising works, *Agon*, regarded by many as epitomising this extraordinary partnership of musical and choreographic minds, one which has yet to be replicated in the Western world.

Lee Christofis © 2004/2013

Stravinsky the Global Dancer *was compiled by Stephanie Jordan and Lorraine Nicholas, and can be accessed at <http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/stravinsky/index.asp>.*

RITE OF SPRING

Tuesday 13 August at 8pm

Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

Revueltas *Sensemaya*

Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1

INTERVAL 20 MINUTES

Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*

MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

DIEGO MATHEUZ CONDUCTOR

NIKOLAI DEMIDENKO PIANO

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If you do not need this printed program after the concert, we encourage you to return it to a member of staff.

This concert has a duration of approximately two hours, including one interval of 20 minutes.

This performance will be broadcast and streamed by ABC Classic FM on Sunday 22 September at 1pm.

Please turn off your mobile phone and all other electronic devices before the performance commences.



BEYOND THE STAGE

Learn more about the music in these free events.

PRE-CONCERT TALK

Tuesday 13 August at 7pm

Stalls Foyer,
Arts Centre Melbourne,
Hamer Hall

A Rite Riot

University of Melbourne Senior Lecturer Dr Michael Christoforidis talks about the infamous *Rite of Spring* riot of 1913 and its 100-year anniversary.



PHOTO BY MERCEDES SEGOVIA

NIKOLAI DEMIDENKO piano

Nikolai Demidenko is renowned for his authoritative performances of the Russian concerto repertoire of Prokofiev, Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky. He has worked with many of the world's major orchestras, and has a flourishing relationship with the St Petersburg Philharmonic and Yuri Temirkanov, with whom he performs regularly.

His frequent London recitals have included the Great Performers series at the Barbican, International Piano Series at the Southbank Centre and the London

Pianoforte Series at Wigmore Hall. His regular chamber activities include a cello and piano duo with Leonid Gorokhov, piano quartets with the Hermitage String Trio, and a two-piano partnership with his fellow Moscow Conservatory alumnus Dmitri Alexeev.

Although he has a broad repertoire that includes Bach, Clementi, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Mussorgsky and Scarlatti, he has a special affinity with the music of Chopin and makes frequent visits to Poland. This season he will perform Chopin's Piano Concerto No.1 with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment conducted by Sir Roger Norrington in Brussels and Helsinki, and at the *Chopin and His Europe* festival in Warsaw.

His extensive award-winning discography includes several Chopin CDs, the complete Prokofiev concertos with the London Philharmonic conducted by Alexander Lazarev, Medtner Piano Concertos Nos 2 and 3 with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Jerzy Maksymiuk, and two albums of Busoni's transcriptions of Bach.

Russian born and trained, Nikolai Demidenko made his British debut in 1985 and has been resident in the UK since 1990. He first toured Australia in 1996 and has since appeared with all the Australian state symphony orchestras.

Nikolai Demidenko's appearance with the MSO is supported in part through The Stephenson Gift, in tribute to the great Romanian pianist Dinu Lipatti.

THE STEPHENSON GIFT – HONOURING THE PAST, SECURING THE FUTURE

Sharing great live music and celebrating great musicians go hand in hand, and are a cherished part of the experience for MSO concertgoers. We are delighted that two longstanding subscribers to the Emirates Master Series have stepped forward to now play a direct part in supporting our guest artist program – and in so doing to recognise the impact of a great musician, and this orchestra, in their lives in a uniquely personal way.

The Stephenson Gift will provide an ongoing benefit to the MSO by contributing toward fees and production costs for a pianist as guest soloist within the MSO's annual season. The inaugural gift will contribute to this visit of Nikolai Demidenko, performing as part of the MSO's Russian Festival.

As the donors Drs Gabriela and George Stephenson, express it, "behind our initiative to contribute financially to the MSO's 'guest soloist' program during our life time and beyond, is our wish to give something back to classical music, our country of birth (Romania) and our adopted hometown (Melbourne). We appreciate that MSO administration has found a very satisfying way for us to do this by recognising this support as being in tribute to the great Romanian pianist Dinu Lipatti."

MSO Managing Director André Gremillet – himself a conservatoire-trained pianist – acknowledged that the Stephenson's initiative assists the MSO greatly in bringing the finest international artists to Melbourne to perform. "Every season we bring numerous pianists to the stage, from exciting newcomers to artists with established careers, so this type of specific support is incredibly helpful to our planning," he said. "This is philanthropic support at its best, investing in artists and in the central role of orchestral music in our culture."



ROMANIAN PIANIST DINU LIPATTI (1917-1950)

SILVESTRE REVUELTAS

(1899-1940)

Sensemayá – Canto para matar una culebra
(Chant to kill a snake)



SILVESTRE REVUELTAS

In 1936, Silvestre Revueltas was elected president of Mexico's League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists (Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios, LEAR). Short-lived but influential both in the arts and in mustering support for the anti-fascist cause at home and abroad, the League held a congress in Mexico City in January 1937 at which Revueltas met the Afro-Cuban poet and political activist Nicolás Guillén (1902-1989) and became fascinated with his work. In the ensuing year, Revueltas and Guillén both travelled to Spain to international congresses in support of the Republican movement there, and wrote works for each other. Guillén's poem *Fusilamiento* ('Firing-squad execution') is dedicated to Revueltas. And during 1937 and into 1938, Revueltas composed musical works around the first two poems of Guillén's 1934 collection *West Indies Ltd.*

The second of these is this short but seismic work for full orchestra. It borrows not only the original title of Guillén's poem, *Sensemayá*, but, despite lacking voices to sing them, also closely follows its actual words. Essentially, Revueltas' work is an orchestral setting of the poem Guillén wrote in the early morning of 6 January 1932 (see panel at right).

Ill in bed in a Havana hotel room, Guillén had been reading a book by the Cuban ethnographer Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969), *Los Negros Brujos* (The Black Sorcerers). In it, Ortiz described a ritual enacted annually on the very same date, the eve of Christian feast of the Twelfth Night, or *Día de Reyes*, since the era of the slave trade. A troupe of black dancers and musicians would reinterpret a traditional African ritual, carrying a huge puppet snake, several metres long, in procession round the streets of the city, accompanied by the hypnotic singing and drumming of the 'chant to kill a snake'. Without directly quoting any of the original ritual text, Guillén conceived a new poem that recreated the sounds and rhythms of the procession. Since Cuba, unlike Africa (where the ritual originated), has no

dangerous snakes, the text was naturally read as an impassioned anti-imperialist outburst against slavery and oppression, historical and recent.

Revueltas' first version of *Sensemayá*, as begun in May 1937, just before he left for Spain, was scored for a large mixed chamber ensemble of 15 players. The following year, 1938, he reworked it for large orchestra, perhaps persuaded of the worth of the extra labour entailed by the warm reception his earlier full orchestral works (including the newly composed *Homage to Garcia Lorca*) had received from the symphony orchestras in Madrid and Barcelona the previous September and October. Revueltas' close setting of Guillén's *Sensemayá* first invokes the *mayombero*, an Afro-Cuban magus and ritual leader of the procession, whose name gives the chant its refrain '*mayombe, bombe mayombé*'. Revueltas fits this eight-syllable tag into a seven-beat ostinato figure with a percussive accent (marked initially by clapstick) on the last syllable-beat. With constant repetition, variation, and addition of further ostinato lines, progressively spelling out in melody and rhythm the lines of Guillén's poem, the short work builds to the climactic 'killing of the snake'.

Graeme Skinner © 2010

The first performance of the full orchestral version of Sensemayá was given in December 1938 by the Mexico Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of the composer. The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra has performed this work on two occasions: in a Family Concert conducted by Dobbs Franks in July 1983 and, most recently, in March 2010 with Alexander Shelley.

Sensemayá – Canto para matar una culebra (Chant to kill a snake)

Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!	Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!
La culebra tiene los ojos de vidrio;	The snake has eyes of glass;
la culebra viene y se enreda en un palo;	The snake coils on a rod;
con sus ojos de vidrio, en un palo;	With his eyes of glass, on a rod,
con sus ojos de vidrio [...]	With his eyes of glass [...]
Sensemayá, la culebra ...	Sensemayá, the snake ...
Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!	Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!
Sensemayá, no se mueve ...	Sensemayá, does not move ...
Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!	Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!
Sensemayá, la culebra ...	Sensemayá, the snake ...
Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!	Mayombe-bombe-mayombé!
Sensemayá, se murió!	Sensemayá, is dead!

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

(1840 - 1893)

Piano Concerto No.1 in B flat
minor, Op.23

I *Allegro non troppo e molto
maestoso – Allegro con spirito*
II *Andantino semplice –
Prestissimo – Andantino
semplice*
III *Allegro con fuoco*

Nikolai Demidenko piano



STUDY OF SCENE DECORATION FOR THE RITE
OF SPRING, BY NICHOLAS ROERICH



THE NEW YORK TIMES REPORT ON THE PARIS
PREMIERE OF THE RITE OF SPRING IN 1913

If it was fortuitous that Tchaikovsky succeeded at his first attempt, writing perhaps the 'greatest piano concerto of all time', then it is remarkable that he simultaneously created a new Russian genre. The striking mix of lyricism and virtuosity in his First Piano Concerto, Op.23, which was written over six weeks late in 1874, would later be emulated by many Russian composers. The concerto is not Tchaikovsky's only youthful work to find a permanent place in the repertoire – *Romeo and Juliet* (1869, but later revised) and *Swan Lake* (1876) are distinguished inclusions – but it was the first to receive an international premiere. The dedicatee of the concerto, Hans von Bülow, performed it in Boston, Massachusetts in 1875 to positive reviews, yet one wonders if the small band, consisting of only four first violins, were a match for the music's potential. (A critic noted that, after a missed entry of the trombones in the first movement, von Bülow cried out 'the brass may go to hell!') Rather, it is likely that the potential of the new concerto was first realised in a performance in Moscow by Sergei Taneyev later that year, following an apparently mediocre rendition by Gustav Kross in St Petersburg.

It had been to Anton Rubinstein's younger brother, Nikolai – equally as gifted by all accounts – that Tchaikovsky had turned within days of the score's completion, seeking advice about piano composition that only a professional could offer. Instead, and quite notoriously, he savaged the concerto, devastating its composer with comments suggesting that, in all, only a few pages could be salvaged and that the remainder should be discarded. There has been

speculation ever since over the reason for Rubinstein's reaction – ranging from jealousy to a tempestuous personality – but the defiant young Tchaikovsky remained true to his word, publishing the work exactly as it stood. Nikolai Rubinstein was soon to recant his position, however: as well as conducting the first Moscow performance with Taneyev, he performed it often as soloist in the years before his early death.

In hindsight, it may have been over the demanding solo part that Rubinstein had voiced concerns, or about sections where piano textures might be lost beneath the orchestration. Similarly, it could have been about structural matters that are still difficult to explain today, chief of which is the famous melody that begins the concerto but which, inexplicably, never returns. In this opening passage, Tchaikovsky eventually relented to advice, replacing lightweight arpeggios that had previously accompanied the soaring melody with the now-famous double-octave chords (revised version, 1889). In terms of structure, it is the brisk, dotted theme that quietly follows which is the real first subject in this sonata-form movement. And here, as if to indicate to the world the ethnic authenticity of his music, Tchaikovsky follows in the style of the newly formed nationalist group of composers (the so-called "mighty five") by using a Ukrainian folksong, 'Oy, kryatshe, kryatshe.'

The simple theme that opens the second movement typifies Tchaikovsky's innate gift for melody, the solo flute conjuring folk-like affinities. A central section – originally marked *Allegro vivace assai*

but later escalated to *Prestissimo*, no doubt capitalising on the concerto's virtuosic appeal – briefly quotes a café waltz, *Il faut s'amuser, danser et rire*, well-known to the composer's circle of friends. And it is to another Ukrainian folksong, 'Vidy, vidy, Ivan'ku', that Tchaikovsky turns for the principal theme of the finale, its dance-like cross-rhythms again evoking national character. The broadly lyrical melody that contrasts with this material twice succeeds in holding back the momentum, before the concerto arrives at a seemingly inevitable conclusion: a forceful octave cadenza traverses the entire keyboard, and moves headlong into an apotheosised statement of the movement's main lyrical theme. With the pianist indefatigably leading the entire orchestra with fortissimo treble chords, it is a famous and satisfying ending. (And for more than a few composers who followed, one that proved irresistible to copy!)

Scott Davie © 2011/2013

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra first performed this concerto in August 1939 with Malcolm Sargent and pianist Edward Goll. Olli Mustonen was the soloist in the MSO's most recent performance of the work, in May 2010, with conductor Andrew Litton.

INTERVAL 20 MINUTES

IGOR STRAVINSKY

(1882-1971)

Le Sacre du printemps
(*The Rite of Spring*)

Part 1 *L'Adoration de la terre*
(*Adoration of the Earth*)

Introduction

Danse des adolescentes
(*Dance of the Young Girls*)

Jeu du rapt (*Ritual of Abduction*)

Rondes printanières (*Spring Rounds*)

Jeux des cités rivales (*Games of the Rival Tribes*)

Cortège du sage
(*Procession of the Sage*)

L'Adoration de la terre
(*Adoration of the Earth*)

Danse de la terre
(*Dance of the Earth*)

Part 2 *Le Sacrifice*

Introduction

Cercles mystérieux des adolescentes
(*Mystic Circles of Young Girls*)

Glorification de l'élue
(*Glorification of the Chosen Virgin*)

Evocation des ancêtres
(*Evocation of the Ancestors*)

Action rituelle des ancêtres
(*Ritual of the Ancestors*)

Danse sacrée – L'élue (*Sacrificial dance – The Chosen Virgin*)



SCENE FROM THE BALLETS RUSSES PRESENTATION OF THE RITE OF SPRING (1913)

The trouble started as soon as the solo bassoon began its plaintive version of a Lithuanian folksong. Heckling, spreading from the gallery of the new Théâtre des Champs-Élysées into the stalls, became so loud that the choreographer Nijinsky stood on a chair in the wings shouting directions at the dancers who could no longer hear the orchestra. The theatre's electrician frantically flicked the house lights on and off to try and settle the audience; there was a brawl and the police had to be called. The orchestra soldiered on and gave what those who could hear it describe as a fine performance.

The riot at *The Rite of Spring's* premiere is legendary – scholar Richard Taruskin says that Stravinsky 'spent the rest of his long life telling lies about it'. But it was not the score that caused a fracas among the Philistines. (Debussy's *Jeux* – also premiered by the Ballets Russes – had been booed a fortnight before.) Nijinsky's choreography (described by Jean Cocteau as 'automaton-like monotony') caused the most offence. A year later Pierre Monteux conducted a concert performance, and Stravinsky experienced the success 'such as composers rarely enjoy' as he was carried through the streets like a sporting hero on the shoulders of his audience.

The Firebird was a story of princesses, ogres and a magic phoenix; *Petrushka's* protagonists are fairground puppets. But in 1910, Stravinsky had a vision of 'wise elders, seated in a circle, watching a young girl dancing herself to death... to propitiate the god of spring' and drafted a scenario with the designer Nicholas Roerich. The work is, as scholar Stephen Walsh puts it, 'a strict "liturgical" sequence, a sequence which, we understand, will always happen this way, with different participants but the same meaning.' Stravinsky's Russian title for the work is better translated as *Holy Spring*, and its subtitle is 'Scenes from Pagan Russia.'

Musicologist Paul Griffiths quotes Stravinsky's long-time assistant Robert Craft's assertion that the composer 'repeatedly said that he wrote *The Rite of Spring* in order "to send everyone" in his Russian past, Tsar, family, instructors, "to hell."

This suggests that *The Rite* attempts to be a 'clean slate' untouched by the corruptions of musical 'civilisation.' The composer later said that he was 'the vessel through which *The Rite* passed,' and the sketches suggest that many of his ideas sprang, fully formed, onto the page. At the same time, Stravinsky's sumptuous orchestration and harmony



STRAVINSKY AS DRAWN BY PABLO PICASSO (1920)

could not have existed without the music of Glinka and Rimsky-Korsakov; Debussy rightly called the score 'primitive music with all modern conveniences.' Moreover, Stravinsky long maintained that the opening bassoon melody, whose timbre suggests traditional *dudki* or reed pipes, was the only folk tune in the score, but the publication of his sketchbooks in 1969 showed that he had copied out several tunes that found their way into the work. These tunes are usually relevant in subject matter to the events of the ballet, but as Stephen Walsh puts it, Stravinsky reduces them 'to simple essences which could then be used as motives of rhythmic and ostinato treatment.'

Walsh goes on to say: 'What nobody seems to have done before *The Rite of Spring* was to take dissonant, irregularly formed musical "objects" of very brief extent and release their latent energy by firing them off at one another like so many particles in an atomic accelerator.' The 'cells' that Stravinsky creates out of the simple rhythmic essences of folk tunes are repeated, distorted by the addition of extra beats, and interrupted by contrasting cells. *The Rite*, then, is the ultimate abstraction of Stravinsky's early 'Russian' style, and the foundation for much of his subsequent music.

Gordon Kerry © 2005/13

The Ballets Russes gave the first performance of The Rite of Spring on

29 May 1913 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris. The conductor was Pierre Monteux and the choreographer, Vaslav Nijinsky. The principal dancers were Maria Plitz (Chosen Virgin), Ludmila Guliuk (Old Woman) and Alexander Vorontzov (Sage).

The first Australian performance of The Rite of Spring was given by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in August 1946 under conductor Eugene Goossens. The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's first performance, conducted by Juan José Castro, took place in July 1952. The MSO's most recent performance was in July 2009 under Ilan Volkov.

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