ARTISTS

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Conductor Sir Andrew Davis

Piano Piers Lane

Contralto Liane Keegan

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Chorus

Chorus Master Warren Trevelyan-Jones

REPERTOIRE

Berlioz Le Corsaire Overture

Delius A Song of Summer

Ireland Piano Concerto

INTERVAL

Walton Façade: excerpts from Suites 1 & 2

Grainger Irish Tune from County Derry

Grainger Country Gardens

Elgar Pomp and Circumstance March No.1

Wood Fantasia on British Sea Songs

Arne Rule, Britannia!

Parry Jerusalem

Running time 2 hours 10 minutes
SIR ANDREW DAVIS

Established in 1906, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO) is an arts leader and Australia’s oldest professional orchestra. Chief Conductor Sir Andrew Davis has been at the helm of MSO since 2013. Engaging more than 2.5 million people each year, the MSO reaches a variety of audiences through live performances, recordings, TV and radio broadcasts and live streaming. As a truly global orchestra, the MSO collaborates with guest artists and arts organisations from across the world. Its international audiences include China, where the MSO performed in 2016 and Europe where the MSO toured in 2014.

The MSO performs a variety of concerts ranging from core classical performances at its home, Hamer Hall at Arts Centre Melbourne, to its annual free concerts at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl. The MSO also delivers innovative and engaging programs to audiences of all ages through its Education and Outreach initiatives.

The MSO also works with Associate Conductor, Benjamin Northey, and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Chorus, as well as with such eminent recent guest conductors as John Adams, Tan Dun, Charles Dutoit, Jakub Hrůša, Mark Wigglesworth, Markus Stenz and Simone Young. It has also collaborated with non-classical musicians including Nick Cave, Sting, Tim Minchin, Ben Folds, DJ Jeff Mills and Flight Facilities.

Sir Andrew Davis is Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Chief Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In a career spanning over 40 years, he has been the musical and artistic leader at several of the world’s most distinguished opera and symphonic institutions, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra (1991-2004), Glyndebourne Festival Opera (1988-2000), and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (1975-1988). He recently received the honorary title of Conductor Emeritus from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

One of today’s most recognised and acclaimed conductors, Sir Andrew has conducted virtually all the world’s major orchestras, opera companies, and festivals. Born in 1944 in Hertfordshire, England, Sir Andrew studied at King’s College, Cambridge, where he was an organ scholar before taking up conducting. His wide-ranging repertoire encompasses the Baroque to contemporary, and his vast conducting credits span the symphonic, operatic and choral worlds.

In 1992 Maestro Davis was made a Commander of the British Empire, and in 1999 he was made a Knight Bachelor in the New Year Honours List. He has been awarded an honorary doctorate by Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois.

Image courtesy Dario Acosta Photography.
PIERS LANE
PIANO

London-based Australian pianist Piers Lane stands out as an engaging and highly versatile performer, at home equally in solo, chamber and concerto repertoire. In great demand as soloist and collaborative artist, Piers Lane’s concerto repertoire exceeds ninety works. Five times soloist at the BBC Proms in London’s Royal Albert Hall, recent highlights include a performance of Busoni’s mighty piano concerto at Carnegie Hall, premieres of Carl Vine’s second Piano Concerto, written for him, with the Sydney Symphony and the London Philharmonic, and several sold-out solo recitals at Wigmore Hall.

Piers has a discography of more than 50 CDs, including a solo recording, ‘Piers Lane goes to Town’, concertos with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and sonatas with violinist Tasmin Little.

Piers is Artistic Director of the Sydney International Piano Competition of Australia. In the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Honours, he was made an Officer in the Order of Australia for his services to music.

LIANE KEEGAN
CONTRALTO

Liane Keegan has received scholarships from the Opera Foundation Australia, Shell Royal Covent Garden Scholarship which enabled her to study at the National Opera Studio London. She attended the AIMS summer School in Graz Austria on the Opera Australia Foundation Scholarship and in 1997, she won a Bayreuth Bursary from the Wagner Society of Great Britain.

Throughout her career, Liane’s roles have included Azucena (Il trovatore) for the Opera of South Australia, Ulrica (Un ballo in maschera) for Opera Australia, Rosa Mamai (L’Arlesiana) and Marcellina (Le nozze di Figaro) with Opera Holland Park London, Filippyevna (Eugene Onegin) with Staatstheater Stuttgart, and Klytaemnestra (Elektra) and Brigitta (Die tote Stadt) with Theater Hagen.

Concert appearances have included Mozart’s Requiem with Sir Neville Mariner and the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Barbara in Korngold’s Violanta at the 1997 BBC Proms conducted by Paul Daniels and Waltraute in Die Walküre with Antonio Pappano at the Edinburgh Festival.
MSO CHORUS

For more than 50 years the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Chorus has been the unstinting voice of the Orchestra’s choral repertoire. In 2017 the Chorus joins forces with the Orchestra on more than 20 different occasions to perform some of the most moving and inspiring repertoire from the canon, as well as once again presenting its own a cappella performances.

The MSO Chorus sings with the finest conductors, including Sir Andrew Davis, Edward Gardner, Mark Wigglesworth, Bernard Labadie, Stephen Layton, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Masaaki Suzuki and Manfred Honeck, and is committed to developing and performing new Australian and international choral repertoire. Commissions include Brett Dean’s Katz und Spatz, Ross Edwards’ Mountain Chant, and Paul Stanhope’s Exile Lamentations, and the Chorus has also premiered works by such composers as James MacMillan, Arvo Pärt, Hans Werner Henze, Alfred Schnittke, Gavin Bryars, and Pēteris Vasks.

Recordings by the MSO Chorus have received critical acclaim. It has performed across Brazil and at the Cultura Inglese Festival in Sao Paolo, in Kuala Lumpur with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, with The Australian Ballet, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, at the AFL Grand Final and at Anzac Day commemorative ceremonies.

The MSO Chorus is always welcoming new members. If you would like to audition please visit mso.com.au/chorus for more information.

WARREN TREVELYAN-JONES
MSO GUEST CHORUS MASTER

Warren Trevelyan-Jones is the Head of Music at St James’, King Street in Sydney and is regarded as one of the leading choral conductors and choir trainers in Australia. Warren has had an extensive singing career as a soloist and ensemble singer in Europe, including nine years in the Choir of Westminster Abbey, and regular work with the Gabrieli Consort, Collegium Vocale (Ghent), the Taverner Consort, The Kings Consort, Dunedin Consort, The Sixteen and the Tallis Scholars.

He has appeared on more than 60 CD recordings, numerous television and radio broadcasts, and in many of the worlds’ leading music festivals and concert halls.

Warren is also Director of the Parsons Affayre, Founder and Co-Director of The Consort of Melbourne and, in 2001 with Dr Michael Noone, founded the Gramophone award-winning group Ensemble Plus Ultra. Since 2015, he has been regular Guest Chorus Master with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Chorus. Warren is also a qualified music therapist.
PROGRAM NOTES

HECTOR BERLIOZ
(1803–1869)

Le Corsaire – Overture, Op.21

Berlioz’s concert overture Le Corsaire, possibly inspired by a tempest he had encountered during a sea voyage, began life in 1844 as La Tour de Nice (The Tower of Nice – after a spectacular coastline ruin which Berlioz admired as he composed the piece). The work’s initial failure led Berlioz to revise it between 1846 and 1851. It became Le Corsaire rouge (The Red Corsair) in response to Byron’s Corsair and also from James Fenimore Cooper, whose tale of the Red Rover features the prominent landmark of a tower on a rocky coast. Berlioz later removed ‘Red’ from the title.

The opening of the overture features two cracking chords leading into various flourishes from the strings and chordal figures in the wind. As if to parallel the violent mood changes in Byron’s poem, a quiet Adagio soon appears, after which the music moves onward with all the restless energy of Berlioz’s familiar Romantic impulses.

© Symphony Australia
The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra first performed this overture on 9 April 1940 under conductor Georg Schnéevoigt, and most recently in June 2008 with Mario Venzago.

FREDERICK DELIUS
(1862–1934)

A Song of Summer

A Song of Summer was completed in 1931, its opulent scoring and harmony belying the fact that the composer was blind and mortally ill. One day, in the French village where he lived, the composer conceived of a new opening for his discarded A Poem of Life and Love. He called on his amanuensis Eric Fenby and dictated the new material, saying:

I want you to imagine we are sitting on the cliffs of heather and looking out over the sea. The sustained chords in the high strings suggest the clear sky and stillness and calm of the scene … that figure that comes in the violins when the music becomes more animated…suggests the gentle rise and fall of the waves. The flutes suggest a seagull gliding by.

The resulting new piece is a French ‘impressionist’ scene, though might also recall the sounds and sense of the Florida of Delius’ youth.

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The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra first performed A Song of Summer on 4 March 1962 under Thomas Matthews, and most recently in November 1983 with Wilfred Lehmann.
JOHN IRELAND
(1879–1962)
Piano Concerto in E flat
In tempo moderato
Lento espressivo –
Allegro

Piers Lane Piano

John Ireland’s career and reputation were, sadly, overshadowed by his contemporaries Vaughan Williams and Holst, and eclipsed by the generation headed by Benjamin Britten, whom Ireland taught briefly at the Royal College of Music in London. His most enduring and largest-scale concert work is the Piano Concerto, inspired and premiered in 1930 by one of his pupils, Helen Perkin, with whom he was unrequitedly in love. The piece was taken up by many of the leading pianists of the day, including Australian-born Eileen Joyce who recorded it.

Referring to its former popularity, Norman Lebrecht has described the piece as ‘England’s answer to Rachmaninov’s Second’, though in character it has much more in common with the cool neo-classicism of contemporary French music. The first movement opens with a brooding Bartókian unison passage for strings, though the mood progressively lightens at the piano’s successive entries. The movement’s sonata design unfolds through slightly bluesy material and increasingly ornate paragraphs.

The second movement features intense dialogue between the orchestra – which presents the lengthy and bittersweet introduction – and soloist, and, according to Jane Jones, includes a quotation from a string quartet composed by Perkin herself. After a reminiscence of material from the first movement, the music moves without a break into the fast movement. This is signalled by the side drum, the first use in the work of percussion. Any military flavour is quickly dispelled, though, in favour of a swooning melody and joyous dance metres. Despite some introspective moments the overall mood is energetic. Scholar Fiona Richards has noted the quotation in this movement, from one of Ireland’s piano pieces, Spring will not wait. Sadly, it didn’t, and the much younger Perkin married architect George Adie and came to live in Australia. Ireland never forgave her and removed her name from the dedication.

© Gordon Kerry 2017
The only previous performance of this concerto by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra took place on 24 April 1949 with conductor Bernard Heinze and soloist Eileen Ralf.
Façade: excerpts from Suites 1 and 2
Polka (Suite 1, No.1)
Valse (Suite 1, No.2)
Swiss Jodelling Song (Suite 1, No.3)
Tango-Pasodoble (Suite 1, No.4)
Popular Song (Suite 2, No.5)
Tarantella-Sevillana (Suite 1, No.5)

‘Sir William Walton,’ says biographer Michael Kennedy, ‘had the misfortune to compose an inimitable, unique masterpiece – Façade – at the start of his career, and although he wrote superb examples in the traditional forms of symphony, concerto, and cantata, he carried that early and deserved success (and notoriety) like an incubus for the rest of his life.’

Façade dates from the years of Walton’s association with the Sitwells. This aristocratic and eccentric family, contemporaneous with and as significant as the Bloomsbury Group, provided Walton with heady artistic stimulation. Façade started out in 1921 as a collection of accompaniments to Edith Sitwell’s poems. The poems were intended to be recited for the Sitwells’ own entertainment – a highbrow extension of country house charades – but from that grew the idea of having an independent musical score against which the words were recited.

Façade was first performed in 1922 at Osbert Sitwell’s London house. Edith Sitwell was the reciter and the instruments consisted solely of clarinet, cello, trumpet and percussion. The first public performance took place at the Aeolian Hall on 12 June 1923. Alto saxophone, piccolo and flute, as well as ten more songs were added for this premiere. Edith Sitwell delivered the verse from behind a curtain through which she poked a megaphone. The contents of the collection changed over a number of years, but there are also two orchestral suites (from which tonight’s excerpts are drawn), a ballet, and a collection of left-over Sitwell poems set to music in a collection called Façade 2.

Façade, in whatever form, has remained Walton’s most popular piece. Though Walton was to go on to write some of the 20th century’s most significant British music (the Symphony No.1, Henry V, Belshazzar’s Feast), Façade, writes Hugh Ottaway, ‘with its sharply contrasting moods of spirited parody and languorous melancholy, is a clear pointer to the mature composer’.

Adapted from a note by Gordon Kalton Williams
© Symphony Australia
The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra first performed Suite No.1 from Façade on 19 September 1939 under Bernard Heinze. In September 2011 the Orchestra performed the complete entertainment with Sir Andrew Davis.
PERCY GRAINGER
(1882–1961)

Irish Tune from County Derry
Country Gardens

Australian-born Percy Grainger’s reputation as one of classical music’s most approachable composers is probably largely attributable to his many folk-song settings. After moving to London in 1901, he became one of the leading contributors to the British folk music revival and was among the first to take a phonograph into the fields to record the traditional music of rural England. Many of the folksongs Grainger collected were arranged for orchestra (and other combinations, including brass and military band) in beautiful, imaginative scorings.

The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland (1855) is one of the most significant 19th-century compilations of traditional Irish music. It was from this collection that Grainger sourced Irish Tune from County Derry, the melody also known as Londonderry Air or, in the song version with lyrics, Danny Boy. Grainger made several arrangements, including tonight’s version for strings.

Although Grainger often re-scored his pieces in a number of ways, he was a wonderful writer for the modern orchestra. Grainger had performed his specialty, the Grieg Piano Concerto, under Stokowski, and the conductor had championed Grainger’s works over the years. Country Gardens is one of the songs he orchestrated for Stokowski in 1949/1950. Grainger had first sketched the tune in 1908, and his 1918 piano arrangement, made as a birthday gift for his mother, became hugely successful. Record-breaking publishing sales notwithstanding, Grainger’s enthusiasm for it later waned, and he wrote in 1937: ‘The typical English country garden is not often used to grow flowers in; it is more likely to be a vegetable plot. So you can think of turnips as I play it.’

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EDWARD ELGAR (1957–1934)
Pomp and Circumstance March No.1

CHARLES WOOD (1866–1926)
Fantasia on British Sea Songs

THOMAS ARNE (1710–1778)
Rule, Britannia!

HUBERT PARRY (1848–1918)
Jerusalem

The traditional end to a Last Night of the Proms features Elgar’s Pomp and Circumstance March No.1, Wood’s Fantasia on British Sea Songs, Arne’s Rule, Britannia! and a rousing rendition of Jerusalem by Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry. Well-known pieces in their own rights, they are worthy of the anthemic singalongs that they inspire from the concert hall to the sporting arena.

Rarely, though, can they be experienced in such a goosebump-inducing spectacle as at a Last Night of the Proms. This climax – which has appeared in various guises throughout the past 70 years – stretches back to 1954 during Sir Malcolm Sargent’s tenure as Proms Chief Conductor in 1947.
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Enquiries
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CARMINA BURANA
21–24 April
Hamer Hall,
Arts Centre Melbourne

Have you experienced Carl Orff's epic masterpiece yet? One of the highlights of the MSO’s 2017 season, the larger-than-life choral concert *Carmina Burana* has people from all over the world humming to its chorus line.

Bear witness to the work of Chinese superstar conductor Yu Long as the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra is joined by some of the brightest Australian singers including Eva Kong, John Longmuir, Warwick Fyfe, the National Boys Choir of Australia and the MSO Chorus.

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BENJAMIN NORTHEY CONDUCTS SIBELIUS 2

11–12 May
Melbourne Town Hall

When the MSO played Beethoven's *Emperor Piano Concerto No.5* last year, the concert sold out. If you missed out – or simply want to know what the fuss was all about – you’ve got another chance.

Under the masterful baton of MSO Associate Conductor, Benjamin Northey, Melbourne’s own Stefan Cassomenos will join the MSO to perform the piece, as well as Beethoven’s *Coriolan Overture*.

To round out the concert, experience Sibelius’ ‘confession of the soul’, his Symphony No.2.

A CELEBRATION OF ELLA & LOUIS

2 & 3 June
Hamer Hall,
Arts Centre Melbourne

Melbourne will become home to jazz royalty in June when legendary award-winning vocalist Patti Austin and Australia’s own James Morrison come together to perform the works of Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong, alongside the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in a very special Melbourne International Jazz Festival event.

Revel in the awesome sound of two jazz giants, backed by the brilliant sound of the MSO at its best.

*Presented in partnership with the Melbourne International Jazz Festival*
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Anytime is a good time to enjoy a relaxing drink or two in our spacious onboard bar*, serving cocktails, canapés, spirits and exclusive wines. You never know who you'll meet.

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