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2011 SEASON

PROKOFIEV'S Romeo & Juliet

THU 14 JUL 1.30PM
FRI 15 JUL 8PM
SAT 16 JUL 2PM

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY

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2011 SEASON
THURSDAY AFTERNOON SYMPHONY
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Saturday 16 July | 2pm
Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

PROKOFIEV'S ROMEO AND JULIET

James Gaffigan conductor
Sergey Khachatryan violin

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1927)
Leonore Overture No.2, Op.72a

JEAN SIBELIUS (1865–1957)
Violin Concerto in D minor, Op.47

Allegro moderato – Allegro molto
Adagio di molto
Allegro ma non tanto

INTERVAL

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891–1953)
***Romeo and Juliet*: Highlights from the suites**

Montagues and the Capulets
Young Juliet
Masks
Romeo and Juliet
Death of Tybalt
Romeo and Juliet Before Parting
Romeo at Juliet's Grave –
Juliet's Death

ABC Classic FM

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Approximate durations: 13 minutes, 34 minutes, 20-minute interval, 42 minutes

The concert will conclude at approximately 3.40pm (Thu), 10.10pm (Fri), 4.10pm (Sat)

Galina Ulanova danced the role of Juliet in the Soviet premiere of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* in 1940.

INTRODUCTION

Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet

It's no surprise that a conductor coming before an orchestra and its audience for the first time wants to make a big impression. And last year, when James Gaffigan and the Sydney Symphony's Peter Czornyj were planning the program for his Australian debut, the prevailing theme was colour.

'I like to do colour repertoire,' says Gaffigan, 'whether it's French repertoire like Debussy or Ravel, or Russian, like Rachmaninoff or Prokofiev. These composers were matchless in exploiting the colour world of a large orchestra.' In the end, the program was built around Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* ballet music. It's music that James Gaffigan has performed many times before. It's also music in which you can get to know an orchestra very well. Above all, Gaffigan loves the emotional journey of the music. Because the narrative is so important to him, he's chosen to build his own suite, selecting numbers from Prokofiev's three concert suites and performing then in a sequence that makes dramatic sense.

Balancing the tragedy of the *Romeo and Juliet* story is a Beethoven overture, one that ends in joy and triumph: *Leonore* No.2, an early overture for his opera *Fidelio*. Normally, says Gaffigan, it's *Leonore* No.3 that orchestras play, but he has a special fondness for No.2. 'It has the same musical ideas as No.3, but it's put together a little differently and it's exciting to hear this particular version.' What's interesting about the *Leonore* No.2 overture is that – just as the *Romeo and Juliet* suite will trace a narrative – Beethoven captures the drama of the opera's conflict and resolution in those first 15 minutes. This is not a smart idea in the theatre, but has given us powerful and moving music in the concert hall.

At the centre of the program is Sibelius's Violin Concerto with another young artist making his Sydney Symphony debut, Sergey Khachatryan. Sibelius doesn't tell the listener a story in the way Prokofiev and Beethoven do, but the concerto genre itself ensures one of the most compelling dramas of all: the lone soloist matching his strength to the forces of a symphony orchestra.

Ludwig van Beethoven
Leonore – Overture No.2, Op.72a

Beethoven wrote only one opera, but he wrote it three times over a period of a decade. Finally, in 1814, *Fidelio* took its present, triumphant, form. Beethoven's revisions left a legacy of four overtures: the three *Leonore* overtures and the final overture to *Fidelio* that stands with the opera today.

Of the *Leonore* overtures, named for the heroine, No.3 (from 1806) is the most popular in the concert hall, while the more concise No.2 is the one that was used for the premiere of the opera in its first version in 1805. In many ways these two overtures are quite similar, adopting a classical symphonic structure as the framework for musical material that conveys the atmosphere and the people as well as the conflict and resolution of the drama.

Fidelio, or The Triumph of Conjugal Love is an 'escape opera' – a French genre fashionable at the time – and its hero is Florestan, a political prisoner, who sings: 'In the springtime of life, happiness has deserted me. I dared to speak the truth boldly, and these chains are my reward.' This aria, from the beginning of Act II, establishes the mood for the long, portentous introduction of *Leonore* Overture No.2. Beethoven gives the sombre theme to the woodwinds, with a prominent line for first clarinet. Once the overture arrives at the *Allegro* main section, the cellos steal in with the arching motif from which Beethoven builds powerful effects.

The overture follows an abridged sonata form while encapsulating the scenario of the opera, including its

Fidelio

The story of Beethoven's opera was based on an actual incident that took place in France during the post-revolutionary Reign of Terror: an aristocratic woman, portrayed in the opera as Leonore, disguises herself as a boy (Fidelio) in order to save her husband from wrongful execution at the hand of a tyrant. The lawyer Jean-Nicolas Bouilly found himself in the position of Don Fernando (the government minister whose arrival signals the release of the prisoners), and later wrote the story, changing names and places, as a libretto, which was set by two French composers as *Léonore*. Beethoven's theatre insisted that he change the name of his opera to avoid confusion.

FROM A NOTE BY GORDON KERRY ©2004

Keynotes

BEETHOVEN

Born Bonn, 1770
Died Vienna, 1827

Beethoven was a trailblazer – he broke new musical ground at every turn, composing in nearly every major genre: 7 concertos, 9 completed symphonies, 16 string quartets plus other chamber music, 32 piano sonatas, and several choral works. But he wrote only one opera, *Fidelio*, which took shape between 1805 and 1814, during the period when he was at his busiest – as both pianist and composer.

LEONORE NO.2

***Fidelio* is the only opera that comes with three bonus overtures. These are called 'Leonore' after the heroine of the opera and were composed at different stages of the opera's development as Beethoven sought to balance dramatic narrative and the theatrical requirements of a curtain-raiser. Before he composed his final effort – the *Fidelio* overture heard in the opera houses today – he was imagining his overtures in symphonic terms. As a result, *Leonore* No.2 and the even better-known No.3, both adopt a symphonic structure (sonata form) as the framework for dramatic music that prefigures the conflict and resolution of the opera itself, including the crucial trumpet calls of the climax. This is the musical equivalent of a spoiler, and both overtures were discarded. But the opera theatre's loss is the concert hall's gain.**

last-minute reprieve announced by dramatic trumpet calls. This is the moment that anybody who knows the overture or the opera will be waiting for – the rescue. In the opera this is signalled by a faint and distant trumpet fanfare, announcing the arrival of the government minister who has the power to save Florestan. Leonore, Florestan's wife, sings: 'You are saved, thank God!' Florestan's enemy, Rocco, is dismissive. Then the trumpet sounds again, a little closer.

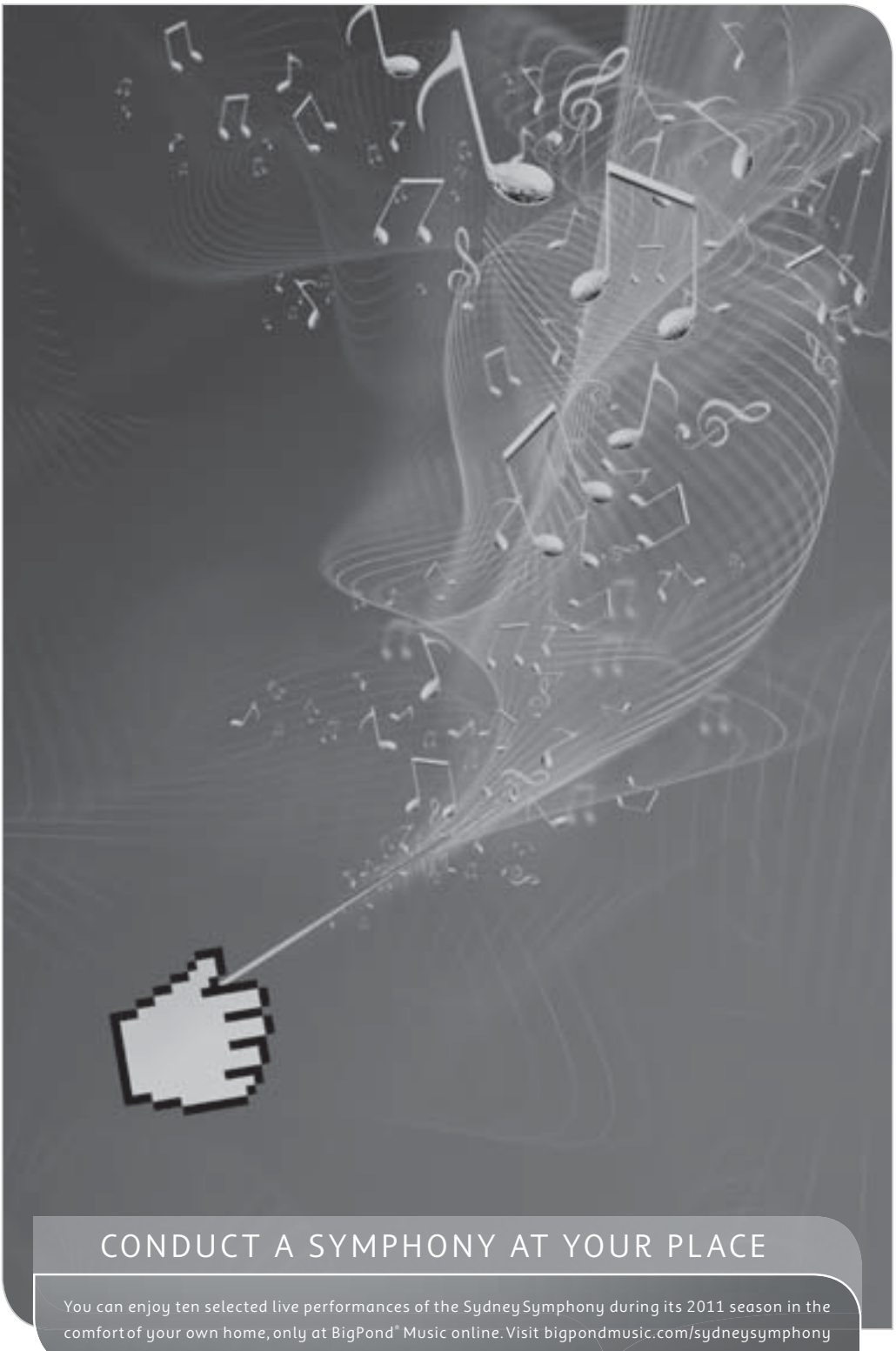
In this overture Beethoven captures the moment with the two trumpet calls separated by a reference to the main theme of the *Allegro*. The second trumpet call is followed by brief reminiscence of Florestan's aria motif in the woodwinds before plunging into a triumphant coda.

Mozart had done something similar with his *Don Giovanni* Overture: foreshadowing the climax of the opera with the dreadful chords of the opening. But that was just a hint, a setting of the mood. *Leonore* No.2 – functioning as a kind of 'tone poem' – is almost too effective at tracing the action of the opera and its victorious conclusion.

Which is why, after making much the same error in *Leonore* No.3, Beethoven wrote one last overture – a much simpler prelude – in 1814. The dramatic qualities that make *Leonore* No.2 and No.3 so satisfying in the concert hall were less well-suited to the requirements of the theatre. Beethoven realised that the symphony was his 'real element' – that his instincts were primarily orchestral – and that a symphonically conceived overture could never function as a mere curtain raiser.

Beethoven's *Leonore* Overture No.2 calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets and three trombones; timpani and strings.

The earliest Sydney Symphony performance of the overture on record was given in the 1953 Beethoven Festival, conducted by Harold Beck. Most recently Markus Stenz conducted the overture in 1996.



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Jean Sibelius
Violin Concerto in D minor, Op.47

Allegro moderato – Allegro molto
Adagio di molto
Allegro ma non tanto

Sergey Khachatryan violin

By his very nature, Sibelius was not the sort of composer one would expect to compose a concerto. The conception of a concerto as a show-off work for the soloist was anathema to Sibelius, who increasingly throughout his compositional career sought to employ the purest, most unselfconscious forms of musical expression, eventually resulting in the astonishing economy of utterance and organic structure of his last two symphonies (Nos 6 and 7).

And yet for all that reluctance to indulge in merely 'gestural' instrumental effects, throughout his musical career Sibelius maintained a love of the violin. As a young man he had harboured ambitions of becoming a virtuoso violinist himself, but a comparatively late start to his training, together with a slightly dodgy technique, meant that this career option was not viable in the longer term.

Instead, Sibelius had to content himself with his famous improvisation sessions as he sat high on a rock overlooking a lake, and occasional appearances as a second violinist in a string quartet at the Helsinki Conservatory. But his frustrated ambitions must have been compensated at least in part by his composition in 1903 of his only concerto of any kind, the Violin Concerto, which is now acknowledged alongside the Beethoven, Brahms, Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky as indisputably one of the greatest works ever written in the form.

Written between the second and third symphonies, the Violin Concerto demonstrates just how successfully Sibelius managed to adapt the virtuoso vehicle to his own expressive needs. For the listener, the concerto is not so much a demonstration of fiendish virtuosity, but rather an organic musical whole in which every note – even the most fleeting – contributes to the overall expressive intent. In other words, its technical demands emerge from its artistic purpose.

Undoubtedly the concerto had been inspired by Willy Burmester, former leader of the Helsinki Orchestra, a disciple of the great Joachim and a long-time admirer of Sibelius' music. As early as 1902 Burmester had been

Keynotes

SIBELIUS

Born Hämeenlinna, 1865
Died Järvenpää, 1957

Sibelius was a force in the creation of a distinctive Finnish voice at the turn of the 20th century, and much of his music was based on themes from the Finnish folk epic, the *Kalevala*. He made his name with the stirringly patriotic *Finlandia*. His symphonies and his only concerto (for violin, his own instrument) represent more 'abstract' works. Stylistically, Sibelius takes the language of Tchaikovsky and the Romantic nationalists and puts his distinctive stamp on it.

VIOLIN CONCERTO

Sibelius composed his Violin Concerto in 1804 when he was 39. The concerto received mixed reactions at first, but eventually, in the 1930s, Jascha Heifetz became an advocate and it has since found an undisputed place in the concert repertoire.

The concerto fulfils nearly all expectations: it is a virtuosic showcase for a brilliant soloist, its rhythms energise and its melodies soar to powerful effect. The music is also organised in the usual three movements, following the pattern of fast – slow – fast. The first movement is by far the longest and the most muscular in character. It is followed by the tenderness of the poignant, almost regretful, slow movement and a dazzling finale.

enquiring by letter as to the concerto's progress, and he made various offers of technical assistance and advice. In September 1903 Sibelius sent Burmester a short score, to which Burmester replied: 'I can only say one thing: wonderful! Masterly! Only once before have I spoken in such terms to a composer, and that was when Tchaikovsky showed me his concerto.'

But when Sibelius finished the work, his anxiety to arrange a first performance as soon as possible, and Burmester's unavailability in the short term, meant that Sibelius actually offered the first performance to Viktor Novacek, an unexceptional Helsinki musician who was so slow to learn it that the concert had to be delayed. When on 8 February 1904 the flushed and perspiring Novacek premiered the work with Sibelius conducting, it was not a success, despite some favourable reviews. 'The public here is shallow and full of bile,' wrote Sibelius soon afterwards, and he threatened to withdraw the work.

With Burmester still offering to perform the concerto, Sibelius set about revising it, completely rewriting the first movement and also making significant alterations to the slow movement. The new version was completed in June 1905, and again Burmester was passed over as soloist, despite his availability and desire to perform it. Instead, the new version was premiered in Berlin by Karl Halir, with the Berlin Orchestra conducted by none other than Richard Strauss.

Amidst the general wrangling and bitterness, Burmester vowed never to perform the concerto, while Joachim, on hearing the Berlin premiere, damned it. 'Joachim seems no longer in tune with the spirit of our time,' wrote Sibelius in response. Fortunately the Berlin press was rather more enthusiastic, but even so, the work didn't really establish itself in the repertoire until the 1930s, when Jascha Heifetz began to perform it. Since that time it has been regarded as a yardstick by which violinists are measured.

The opening of the **first movement** is one of the most unmistakable in all music. Over the murmur of muted violins, the soloist enters immediately with an unforgettable, intense and brooding first subject, soon echoed and developed in the woodwind. This *Allegro moderato* theme is set against a series of fragmentary figures which form a kind of second subject emerging out of the depths of the cellos and bassoons. The movement itself doesn't sit well with standard sonata principles, however.

The traditional development and recapitulation sections are actually combined, and the cadenza precedes them both. And yet there is a clear organic structure within the movement, with the soloist dominating and the rhythm driving on through a series of orchestral climaxes.

The mood of the **Adagio** is more restrained, but the characteristic intensity remains, as does the poignancy and sense of regret. The soloist's entry is prefaced by the woodwinds weaving a series of instrumental lines in thirds, and the strongly accented second subject also derives from this opening idea. After a more agitated middle section, the movement ends with a return of the main thematic material, intensified now and with an apparent reluctance to conclude the proceedings.

…a yardstick by which violinists are measured.

The **finale** is a polonaise in all but name, and a bravura showpiece for the soloist. Sibelius noted: 'It must be played with absolute mastery. Fast, of course, but no faster than it can be played perfectly.' It begins with a stamping figure low down in the timpani and strings and the solo part then shoots up heavenwards, with amazingly difficult passages of thirds, harmonics, arpeggios, double-stops – indeed all the pyrotechnics available to the soloist, but at the same time without any sense of self-indulgence or self-conscious display. The wild dance gathers momentum until a series of majestic flourishes from the violin leads to the final, sharp decisive chords from the full orchestra.

MARTIN BUZACOTT
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA ©1998

The orchestra for Sibelius's Violin Concerto calls for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, two trumpets and three trombones; timpani and strings. The same formation, in fact, as the orchestra required for Beethoven's *Leonore* No.2.

The Sydney Symphony first performed the concerto in 1938, with soloist Guila Bustabo, conducted by Joseph Post, and most recently in 2004 with soloist Boris Belkin, conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy.

INTERLUDE

'That Shakespeherian Rag'

The Globe was a low-tech theatre. Its tiny open-air could be transformed into fair Verona or Birnam Wood only by a poet's language. The one special effect at Shakespeare's disposal was music, and when he wants us to understand that a miraculous transformation has taken place – a statue restored to life as a woman, four noble lovers waking from what they think was a crazy dream, a prince cast ashore on a desert island – he does so by calling for music.

Shakespeare was as magical for music as music was for Shakespeare, at least when the temper of the times allowed it. The mere handful of Shakespeare-derived musical entertainments from the later 17th century includes John Blow's *Venus and Adonis* and the unconscionably bowdlerised version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which became Henry Purcell's *Fairy Queen*. The Enlightenment had little use for a poet of verbal ambiguity, supernatural visitations and unhappy endings, though Beethoven acknowledged the influence of *Romeo and Juliet* on the slow movement of his String Quartet in F, Op.18 No.1, and his plan for an opera on *Macbeth* seems to have left its mark on the so-called *Ghost* Trio, Op.70 No.1.

With the rise of Romanticism in the 19th century, however, the Bard was back – the 'gothic' world of *King Lear*, *Macbeth* or *Hamlet*; the passion of *Romeo and Juliet*; the magical realms of the *Dream* or *The Tempest*. One of the first to succumb was the young Hector Berlioz – partly no doubt as a side effect of his passion for the Irish actress Harriet Smithson whom he saw act the role of Juliet. Shakespeare remained a potent and profound force in Berlioz's music throughout his life, in the 'dramatic symphony' *Romeo and Juliet*, the fantasy on *The Tempest*, the *King Lear* overture and the gentle comedy of his last opera *Béatrice et Bénédict*, but also in what he called the 'Shakespeareanised Virgil' of his operatic masterpiece, *The Trojans*.

In the first part of the 19th century Schlegel and Tieck – themselves in the vanguard of the Romantic movement – were translating Shakespeare into German, inspiring the young Felix Mendelssohn to write his celebrated *Midsummer Night's Dream* overture in 1826 and, many years later, his incidental music to the play. Shakespeare's blend of broad-brush dramaturgy and exploration of individual characters' inmost thoughts was attractive to composers like Berlioz and Franz Liszt, whose (wordless) symphonic poem *Hamlet* likewise balances a sense of dramatic action with that of profound soliloquy. Liszt's model proved

invaluable to Richard Strauss in his symphonic poem *Macbeth* of 1892 and an influence on Tchaikovsky in his concert overture (a symphonic poem by any other name…) *Romeo and Juliet*.

Romeo and Juliet was irresistible to a number of composers: Charles Gounod made an opera of it, as did Leonard Bernstein in *West Side Story* (1957). One of the more spectacular 'translations' of *Romeo and Juliet* is into Sergei Prokofiev's ballet score of 1938. Russian interest in Shakespeare grew hugely during the Soviet period, with the music that Dmitri Shostakovich contributed to the burgeoning film industry including an astonishing score for *Hamlet*. Like Shostakovich, William Walton had a gift for capturing Shakespeare as filmed – in *Henry V*, *Hamlet* and *Richard III* – by Laurence Olivier.

Russian interest in Shakespeare grew hugely during the Soviet period…

Giuseppe Verdi looked to Shakespeare for his blood and thunder *Macbeth* and for the late masterpieces *Otello* and *Falstaff* (based on *The Merry Wives of Windsor*). Ralph Vaughan Williams had a go at the latter in his *Sir John in Love*, a work which tests the orthodox view that Shakespeare's actual words should not be set to music, as they contain sufficient inherent music of their own. Benjamin Britten likewise felt that this was an empty taboo, noting drily (as he began cutting *A Midsummer Night's Dream* down to a manageable length in 1960) that 'the original Shakespeare will survive'. Tan Dun, using fragments of *The Tempest* alongside Chinese folksong in his *Ghost Opera* for Chinese lute and string quartet (1994) might have said the same thing.

Shakespeare does of course survive. What Keats called Shakespeare's 'negative capability' – the ability to seem completely removed from his poetry – makes his work endlessly interpretable, and particularly suited to the fluid responses of music.

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Sergei Prokofiev
Romeo and Juliet: Highlights from the suites

Montagues and Capulets
Young Juliet
Masks
Romeo and Juliet
Death of Tybalt
Romeo and Juliet Before Parting
Romeo at Juliet's Grave –
Juliet's Death

Between 1932 and 1936 Prokofiev spent increasingly long periods back in the USSR, having left for further study abroad in 1918. Aware that the Soviet system had created a vast new, but largely inexperienced, audience for classical music, he said in an interview with *Isvestia* in 1934 that what the USSR needed was:

> *'light serious' or 'serious light' music; it is by no means easy to find the term which suits it. Above all, it must be tuneful, simply and comprehensively tuneful, and must not be repetitious or stamped with triviality.*

Prokofiev may often have regretted the decision to return. Many of his first attempts to write for the new Soviet man and woman were derided as 'simplistic' or, at the same time, 'formalist' (Soviet-speak for 'nasty and modern'). Certain works, however, achieved the ideal of 'light serious' music and ensured a precarious period of grace for the composer at the end of the 1930s.

The greatest among them was the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, yet it had a difficult birth. Leningrad's Kirov Theatre rejected the proposal because of the tragic ending ('the dead cannot dance'), leading Prokofiev to consider a happy ending. Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre commissioned the work, but found it too complicated, so the premiere was given in Brno, Czechoslovakia in 1938. After much revision it finally made it to the Moscow stage in 1940.

Musicologist Stephen Walsh calls the ballet a 'brilliant fusion of post-Imperial romanticism and scuttling, unpredictable Prokofievism'. The score is notable for its clarity of orchestration – not that this precludes moments of great opulence, such as the pile-up of sonority which opens Act III and presages the tragic events about to unfold, or the divided string groups which give the young lovers a halo of rich sound. Prokofiev's chararacterisation is masterful, whether in the arrogance of the march which depicts the Capulets at their ball, or the tenderness of the lovers.

Keynotes

PROKOFIEV

Born Sontsovka, Ukraine, 1891
Died Moscow, Russia, 1953

Sergei Prokofiev left the Soviet Union soon after the October Revolution in 1917. He returned nearly 20 years later to discover new audiences flocking to concert halls. 'The time is past when music was composed for a circle of aesthetes. Now, the great mass of people in touch with serious music is expectant and enquiring…' He played a significant role in Soviet culture, combining his innate traditionalism with the astringent neo-classical style he helped invent.

ROMEO AND JULIET

Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* ballet music first reached the public ear in 1936, through concert suites that Prokofiev devised, carefully selecting and re-working the music, often fusing several episodes from the ballet to create a single movement. The Soviet premiere of the ballet itself took place later, in 1940, overcoming protests from the dances – including Galina Ulanova as Juliet – that the music was 'undanceable'. James Gaffigan has assembled his own selections from the three suites Prokofiev prepared from the ballet and his choices follow the dramatic trajectory of the original play.

The complete ballet contains more than 50 numbers and lasts well over two hours. Prokofiev created from it three concert suites, two in 1936 and a third ten years later, and the music was first heard in concert rather than in the theatre. (In this the ballet shares a point in common with Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*.)

For this concert James Gaffigan has assembled his own selection using numbers from Prokofiev's three concert suites.

Montagues and Capulets (known in the ballet as the Dance of the Knights) comes from the second of Prokofiev's three concert suites. The scene is Capulet's ball in Act I and the solemnity of the dance is overlaid by a stormy atmosphere suggestive of the aggressive and uncompromising rivalry between the two families. The music also includes the Duke's warning to the brawlers from the beginning of the ballet.

Young Juliet is wonderfully characterised by Prokofiev as she playfully teases her nurse. At the entrance of Juliet's mother and a discussion of the arranged marriage to Paris, the music turns subdued and stately, with a hint of the trouble to come.

Later in Act I, Romeo and his friends arrive at the Capulets' ball wearing masks. The music, **Masks**, may remind some listeners of the music for *Peter and the Wolf*, with its stealthy percussion introduction, furtive clarinet, and delicately plucked strings. But this is not Peter's cat

stalking birds, rather three young Montagues swaggering onto 'enemy territory' – as cautious as they are intrepid. The good-humoured clockwork character yields at the end to Romeo's thoughtful mood.

The first act ends with the soaring love music of **Romeo and Juliet** – the balcony scene pas de deux.

In Act II of the ballet, the plot takes a tragic turn and reaches a crux when Romeo, against his will, kills Tybalt in a duel. Prokofiev's own scenario makes a key distinction between the duel between Tybalt and Mercutio and the one that follows, when Romeo avenges Mercutio's death. 'Unlike the duel between Tybalt and Mercutio, in which the opponents did not take account of the seriousness of the situation and fought because of their high spirits, here Tybalt and Romeo fight furiously, to the death.' In **Death of Tybalt** the volatile music builds to a peak of intensity with Prokofiev boldly repeating the same chord, 15 times, stark silence between each – musical death throes. The ominous thudding timpani beats then continue, underpinning the distraught funeral march that concludes Act II of the ballet.

After Romeo has slain Tybalt he is doomed to exile and the music portrays the secret visit of **Romeo and Juliet Before Parting**. Later, Juliet fakes her death with the help of Friar Lawrence's potion, and is entombed by her mourning family. Prokofiev uses the music from this scene again for **Romeo at Juliet's Grave**, which conveys Romeo's epic grief when he discovers Juliet, apparently dead, and takes his own life. The music recalls the themes used in the earlier love scenes. The ballet ends with the sublimely poignant **Death of Juliet**. She awakes in the tomb where she has been laid, to find Romeo's body beside her. In despair she takes his dagger and the act of stabbing herself is clearly portrayed in the music.

ADAPTED FROM NOTES BY GORDON KERRY ©2005
AND BRUCE BROWN

Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* music calls for piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon; four horns, two trumpets, cornet, three trombones and tuba; tenor saxophone; timpani and percussion (glockenspiel, tambourine, cymbals, snare drum, bass drum, maracas and triangle); harp and piano (doubling celesta); and strings (with the addition of an optional viola d'amore in some performances).

The Sydney Symphony first performed selections from *Romeo and Juliet* in 1953 with Eugene Goossens conducting, and most recently in 2009 under Vladimir Ashkenazy. The orchestra's most recent performance of the complete ballet music was in 2004 as a live accompaniment to the 1966 film starring Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn, with Carl Davis conducting.

GLOSSARY

ARPEGGIO – a musical gesture in which the notes of a chord are 'spread', or played one after the other instead of simultaneously. It nearly always starts at the bottom of the chord.

DOUBLE-STOPS – in string playing double-stopping involves bowing across two strings simultaneously to create chord effects; the left hand fingers, or 'stops', notes on both strings.

HARMONICS – in string playing, a harmonic is achieved by touching the string lightly while bowing, thereby affecting its frequency of vibration. The resulting sound is ethereal and flute-like.

ORCHESTRATION – the way in which an orchestral work employs the different instruments and sections of the ensemble; it provides the musical equivalent of colour.

POLONAISE – a stately Polish dance in triple time, processional in character; as with many dances in the Baroque suite, it began life as a folk dance, becoming more sophisticated once it was adopted for court ballrooms and then concert performance.

SONATA FORM – this term was conceived in the 19th century to describe the harmonically based structure most Classical composers had adopted for the first movements of their sonatas and symphonies. It involves the **EXPOSITION**, or presentation of themes and subjects: the first in the tonic or home key, the second in a contrasting key. The tension between the two keys is intensified in the **DEVELOPMENT**, where the themes are manipulated and varied as the music moves further and further away from the ultimate goal of the home key. Tension is resolved in the **RECAPITULATION**, where both subjects are restated in the tonic. Sometimes a **CODA** ('tail') is added to enhance the sense of finality.

TONE POEM – a genre of orchestral music, also 'symphonic poem', which flourished in the 19th century. At its simplest, the orchestral tone poem is a symphonic work that departs from conventional forms and adopts a freer structure in service of an extra-musical or literary 'program' that provides the narrative or scene. Liszt was the pioneer in this genre and Strauss became a champion.

In much of the classical repertoire, names of movements and major sections of music are taken from the Italian words that indicate the tempo and mood. Examples of terms from this program are included here.

Adagio di molto – very slow
Allegro – fast
Allegro ma non tanto – fast, but not so much
Allegro moderato – moderately fast
Allegro molto – very fast

This glossary is intended only as a quick and easy guide, not as a set of comprehensive and absolute definitions. Most of these terms have many subtle shades of meaning which cannot be included for reasons of space.

MORE MUSIC

Selected Discography

BEETHOVEN OVERTURES

Although Beethoven wrote only one opera, he wrote a number of overtures for ballets and plays. Several recordings bring them all together, revealing the variety of expression and mood in these symphonic miniatures. One worth seeking out is David Zinman's 2-CD recording with the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra.

ARTE NOVA 578310

Or turn to Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic.

DG GALLERIA 427526

KHACHATRYAN PLAYS SIBELIUS

In 2000 Sergey Khachatryan won the Sibelius competition; three years later he recorded his first concerto disc, with the violin concerto by fellow-Armenian Aram Khachaturian (composed for David Oistrakh), and the Sibelius concerto. The orchestra is Sinfonia Varsovia, with conductor Emmanuel Krivine.

NAIVE 4959

...AND BACH

Khachatryan's most recent release offers the sonatas and partitas for solo violin by Johann Sebastian Bach.

NAÏVE 5181

ROMEO AND JULIET

If you're seeking a complete performance of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* ballet music, try the virtuoso performance from Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 423368

Or if you'd like to wait, Ashkenazy's recording of the complete ballet with the Sydney Symphony is due for release in 2012…

Even before the premiere of the ballet, Prokofiev began devising suites of highlights for the concert hall. Neeme Järvi has recorded all three suites with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

CHANDOS 10539

And the first two suites are available with other Prokofiev ballet music in performances with Ernest Ansermet and the Suisse Romande orchestra.

DECCA ELOQUENCE 4800830

Broadcast Diary

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Friday 15 July, 8pm

PROKOFIEV'S ROMEO & JULIET

See this program for details.
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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

James Gaffigan conductor


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James Gaffigan is considered by many to be one of the most outstanding young American conductors working today. He is currently Chief Conductor of the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra.

Born in New York City in 1979, he studied at the LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and the Juilliard School Preparatory Division, and he is a graduate of New England Conservatory of Music and the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, Houston. In 2000 he was one of eight conductors chosen by David Zinman to participate in the inaugural American Academy of Conducting in Aspen. He subsequently received the Academy's first Robert Harth Conducting Award and was selected as a conducting fellow to study at the Tanglewood Music Center.

His international career was launched when he won the 2004 Sir Georg Solti International Conducting Competition in Frankfurt. Since then his European engagements have included City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Camerata Salzburg. He recently returned to the Munich and Rotterdam Philharmonic orchestras, Deutsches Symphony Orchestra Berlin, Bournemouth Symphony, Leipzig and Stuttgart Radio orchestras and made his debut with the Dresden Staatskappelle. In Asia he has conducted the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra.

In North America, he has conducted the Philadelphia, Cleveland and Minnesota orchestras, as well as the Chicago, Toronto and Vancouver symphony orchestras, the St Paul Chamber Orchestra and other major ensembles. He recently completed a three-year tenure as Associate Conductor with the San Francisco Symphony and Artistic Director of the orchestra's Summer in the City festival, and previously he was Assistant Conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra (2003–2006)

James Gaffigan also conducts opera, making his professional debut with *La Bohème* at the Zurich Opera in 2005. More recently he has conducted opera for the Aspen Music Festival, Glyndebourne and Houston Grand Opera, and in December he will make his Vienna State Opera debut in *La Bohème.*

This is James Gaffigan's Australian debut.

Sergey Khachatryan violin

Born in Yerevan, Armenia, Sergey Khachatryan won First Prize in the VIII International Jean Sibelius competition in Helsinki in 2000, becoming the youngest-ever winner in the history of the competition. In 2005 he won the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels.

Sergey Khachatryan has performed with orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre de Paris, Philharmonia Orchestra, NHK Symphony in Tokyo, Munich Philharmonic and the Tonhalle Orchestra in Zurich. Since 2002 he has performed regularly with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, including a Proms debut in 2005. With the London Philharmonic Orchestra he has performed the Bach Double Concerto (with Anne-Sophie Mutter), the Sibelius concerto, and the Khachaturian concerto on tour in North America. Earlier this year he performed Shostakovich's Second Violin Concerto with the London Symphony Orchestra and Valery Gergiev.

Since his debut with the Cleveland Orchestra in 2004, he has appeared with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and San Francisco Symphony. In 2005 he performed at the Ravinia and Blossom festivals, and in 2006 he made his debut at the Mostly Mozart Festival performing Beethoven with Osmo Vänskä.

Sergey Khachatryan also works regularly with Gergiev and the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra in St Petersburg and at the Mikkeli Festival, Finland, and he has recently made debuts with the Dresden Staatskapelle, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra Washington and Rotterdam Philharmonic. Other highlights have included concerts with the Orchestre National de Belgique and James Gaffigan.

Forthcoming engagements will include his debut in China with the National Centre of Performing Arts Orchestra and the premiere of a concerto by Arthur Aharonian with the Amsterdam Sinfonietta. His discography includes the Sibelius and Shostakovich concertos, and the Shostakovich and Franck sonatas, recorded with his sister Lusine Khachatryan, with whom he performs regularly in recital. His most recent release is the complete Bach sonatas and partitas for solo violin.

On his Australian debut tour, Sergey Khachatryan appears with the Sydney and Melbourne symphony orchestras.

Sergey Khachatryan plays the 1740 'Ysaÿe' Guarneri violin on kind loan from the Nippon Music Foundation.

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THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC ADVISOR Vladimir Ashkenazy
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Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the Sydney Symphony has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities.

Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, where it gives more than 100 performances each year, the Sydney Symphony also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales. International tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence, most recently in a tour of European summer festivals, including the BBC Proms and the Edinburgh Festival.

The Sydney Symphony's first Chief Conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and, most recently, Gianluigi Gelmetti. The orchestra's history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

The Sydney Symphony's award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. The Sydney Symphony promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program. Recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards, Liza Lim, Lee Bracegirdle, Gordon Kerry and Georges Lentz, and a recording of works by Brett Dean was released on both the BIS and Sydney Symphony Live labels.

Other releases on the Sydney Symphony Live label, established in 2006, include performances with Alexander Lazarev, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Sir Charles Mackerras and Vladimir Ashkenazy. Currently the orchestra is recording the complete Mahler symphonies. The Sydney Symphony has also released recordings with Ashkenazy of Rachmaninoff and Elgar orchestral works on the Exton/Triton labels, and numerous recordings on the ABC Classics label.

This is the third year of Ashkenazy's tenure as Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor.

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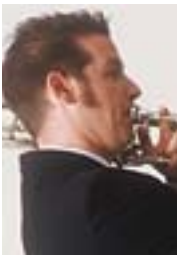

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sydney symphony
Vladimir Ashkenazy
Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor

Clocktower Square, Argyle Street,
The Rocks NSW 2000
GPO Box 4972,
Sydney NSW 2001
Telephone (02) 8215 4644
Box Office (02) 8215 4600
Facsimile (02) 8215 4646
www.sydneysymphony.com

Please address all correspondence to the Publications Editor:
Email program.editor@sydneysymphony.com

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SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

Bennelong Point GPO Box 4274, Sydney NSW 2001
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Facsimile (02) 9250 7666 Website sydneyoperahouse.com

SYMPHONY SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

SYMPHONY SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

Suite 2, Level 5,
1 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst NSW 2010
PO Box 1145, Darlinghurst NSW 1300
Telephone (02) 8622 9400 Facsimile (02) 8622 9422
www.symphonyinternational.net

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ACN 003 311 064 ABN 27 003 311 064
Head Office: Suite A, Level 1, Building 16,
Fox Studios Australia, Park Road North, Moore Park NSW 2021
PO Box 410, Paddington NSW 2021
Telephone: +61 2 9921 5353 Fax: +61 2 9449 6053
E-mail: admin@playbill.com.au Website: www.playbill.com.au

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