AUSTRALIAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA
IN CONCERT

FRIDAY 18 JULY 2014, 8PM
CONCERT HALL, QPAC
Upcoming concerts

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Nicholas Carter conductor
Genevieve Lacey recorder
William Barton didgeridoo

WEDNESDAY 30 JULY 2014, 7:00PM
City Hall, Newcastle
civictheatrenewcastle.com.au or call 02 4929 1977

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City Recital Hall, Angel Place, Sydney
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Tickets
$25 - $49

Under the baton of the dynamic Nicholas Carter experience the best of the Australian Youth Orchestra as they bring to life Beethoven’s heart-pounding Eroica and Stravinsky’s neo-classical masterpiece Pulcinella: Suite. Genevieve Lacey joins on recorder for Tüür’s lyrical Whistles and Whispers from Uluru which combines the rich birdsong of the Baltic Sea with the starkly different sounds of the Australian desert. William Barton on didgeridoo continues the exploration into our native landscape with his evocative composition Birdsong at Dusk with string quartet. Don’t miss your chance to hear Australia’s best young classical musicians come together with three internationally acclaimed guest artists.

Repertoire:
STRAVINSKY Pulcinella: Suite
TÜÜR Whistles and Whispers from Uluru
BARTON Birdsong at Dusk
BEETHOVEN Symphony No.3 Eroica
AUSTRALIAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA
IN CONCERT

FRIDAY 18 JULY, 2014
CONCERT HALL, QPAC

Australian Youth Orchestra
Simone Young CONDUCTOR
Ray Chen VIOLIN

Repertoire:

STRAVINSKY Symphony in Three Movements
SIBELIUS Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 47

INTERVAL

TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74 Pathétique

This concert is being webcast live as part of AYO’s Digital Connection Initiative and recorded for delayed broadcast thanks to ABC Classic FM. No filming or photography permitted during the concert.
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Yuhki Mayne  *Concertmaster*
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Jonathan Mui
Alexander Chiu
Liam Oborne
Imogen Giffedder-Cooney
Emma Williams
Mia Stanton
Kate Worley
Jimmy Park
William Huxtable
Rita Fernandes
Sophie Longmuir
Esther Wong
Annie Silva
Molly Collier-O’Boyle

VIOLA
Hannah Donohoe  *Principal*
Justin Julian
Julia Doukakis
Henry Justo
Beth Condon
Elliot O’Brien
Anthony De Battista
Gregory Daniel
Sariah Xu
Angela Huang
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Madeleine Coco

CELLO
Jack Bailey  *Principal*
Daniel Smith
Timothy Oborne
Sophie Parkinson-Stewart
James Morley
Samuel Payne
Julia Janiszewski
Nils Hobiger
Jovan Pantelich
Mason Stanton

DOUBLE BASS
Daniel Dean  *Principal*
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Christopher Bainbridge
Kinga Janiszewski
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George Hronakis Principal
Tom Collins
Sophie Spencer

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Vili Toalo

BASS TROMBONE
Simon Baldwin

TUBA
Chloe Higgins

TIMPANI
Gabriel Fischer Principal

PERCUSSION
Joel Bass Principal
Hugh Tidy

HARP
Melina van Leeuwen Principal

PIANO
Cara Tran Principal
Since its first performance in 1957, the Australian Youth Orchestra has performed in some of the world’s most prestigious concert halls and festivals, fulfilling the role of cultural ambassador for Australia on no fewer than 21 international tours across Europe, Asia and America.

Aged up to 25 years, orchestra members are selected through a highly competitive annual audition process and represent the best young musical talent in the nation. The orchestra regularly attracts superlatives from the ranks of the international music press, confirming its high standing throughout the world. Geoff Brown of The Times, said of the AYO’s performance at the Proms in 2010: “A succulent refinement of tone and touch, an adult grasp of emotions and cultural worlds usually thought beyond any teenager; in any hemisphere.”

The orchestra also performs across Australia, as well as internationally. Landmark concerts include performances in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Konzerthaus in Berlin, and the Schloss Grafenegg Wolkenturm in Austria as part of AYO’s 21st International Tour under the baton of Christoph Eschenbach, featuring violinist Joshua Bell and didgeridoo player William Barton. In 2012, the AYO performed Strauss’ monumental An Alpine Symphony under the baton of Simone Young at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre. In 2011, the orchestra performed the world premiere of Carl Vine’s Violin Concerto at the Sydney Opera House with soloist Dene Olding and conductor Thomas Dausgaard. Other critically acclaimed appearances include performances of Britten’s opera Peter Grimes with the West Australian Opera at the Perth International Arts Festival, the award-winning Beethoven cycle conducted by John Nelson at the Adelaide Festival Centre, and a concert performance of Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde at the Queensland Music Festival.

AYO is committed to access and innovation. Its pioneering AYO Digital Connection Initiative developed in partnership with Accenture, connects musicians in remote and regional Australia with masterclasses, live-streaming of concerts and online auditions.

Today, more than 65% of musicians working in Australian orchestras are AYO alumni and countless AYO alumni are members of the finest professional orchestras worldwide. Each year, the Australian Youth Orchestra presents training programs across metropolitan and regional Australia, ranging from orchestral fellowships with the Tasmanian and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras, to tailored regional residencies for quartets, to seasons by the Australian Youth Orchestra, or the intense environment of over 220 young musicians and budding music journalists, administrators, and composers in residence at AYO National Music Camp.

Australian Youth Orchestra is supported by the Australian Government and its Principal Sponsor Accenture.
AYO rehearses under the baton of Maestro Eschenbach at the Young Euro Classic in Berlin.
Simone Young AM, is internationally recognised as one of the leading conductors of her generation and has been General Manager and Music Director of the Hamburgische Staatsoper and Music Director of the Philharmonic State Orchestra Hamburg since 2005. She is an acknowledged interpreter of the operas of Wagner and Strauss, and has conducted several complete cycles of Der Ring des Nibelungen at the Vienna Staatsoper, the Staatsoper in Berlin and in Hamburg. Her Hamburg recordings include the Ring cycle, Mathis der Maler (Hindemith), and symphonies of Bruckner, Brahms and Mahler.

Simone Young has been Music Director of Opera Australia, Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Lisbon. She has conducted at all the leading opera houses including the Vienna Staatsoper, Opéra National de Paris, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Bayerische Staatsoper; Metropolitan Opera New York, and Los Angeles Opera and regularly collaborates with some of the world’s leading orchestras including the Berlin, Vienna, Munich, London and New York Philharmonic Orchestras, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Bruckner Orchestra, Linz, City of Birmingham Symphony, and the Wiener Symphoniker; this year for a tour of China.

She has been elected to the Akademie der Kuenste in Hamburg, awarded a Professorship at the Musikhochschule in Hamburg and Honorary Doctorates from Griffith University, Monash University and the University of New South Wales. Other awards include Green Room and Helpmann Awards, the 2014 International Opera Awards for
best anniversary production for Verdi trilogy - *La battaglia di Legnano, I due Foscari, I Lombardi* with the Hamburg Staatsoper, Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from France, the Goethe Institute Medal and the Sir Bernard Heinze Award.

Simone Young regularly returns to Australia, this year to work with the Queensland, West Australian and Sydney Symphony Orchestras and the Australian National Academy of Music, Melbourne.
Winner of the Queen Elisabeth (2009) and Yehudi Menuhin Competitions (2008), Ray Chen is among the most compelling young violinists today. “Ray has proven himself to be a very pure musician with great qualities such as a beautiful youthful tone, vitality and lightness. He has all the skills of a truly musical interpreter,” said the great Maxim Vengerov.

Ray has released three critically acclaimed albums on Sony: a recital program Virtuoso of works by Bach, Tartini, Franck, and Wieniawski, and the Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky concertos with Swedish Radio Orchestra and Daniel Harding. Following the success of these recordings, Ray was profiled by The Strad and Gramophone magazines as “the one to watch”. Virtuoso was distinguished with the prestigious ECHO Klassik award. His third recording, an all-Mozart album with Christoph Eschenbach and the Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra, was released in January 2014.

Ray continues to win the admiration of fans and fellow musicians worldwide. In 2012, he became the youngest soloist ever to perform in the televised Nobel Prize Concert for the Nobel Laureates and the Swedish Royal Family. His Carnegie Hall debut with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and Sakari Oramo, as well as his sold-out Musikverein concert with the Gewandhaus Orchestra and Riccardo Chailly were met with standing ovations. Since the 2012-13 season, Ray has been invited to join Konzerthaus Dortmund’s series Junge Wilde, which presents young and groundbreaking artists in Germany. Later this season, Ray will make his San Francisco recital debut at the SF Jazz Center. He also looks forward to his upcoming recital tour of
Australia and his debuts with the Orchestre National de France and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Followed by over 1 million people on SoundCloud, Ray Chen looks to expand the classical music audience by increasing its appeal to the young generation via all available social media platforms. He is the first ever classical musician to be invited to write a regular blog about his life as a touring soloist for the largest Italian publishing house, RCS Rizzoli (*Corriere della Sera, Gazzetta dello Sport, Max*)

In his unstinting efforts to break down barriers between classical music, fashion and pop culture, he is supported by Giorgio Armani and was recently featured in *Vogue* magazine.

Born in Taiwan and raised in Australia, Ray was accepted to the Curtis Institute of Music at age 15, where he studied with Aaron Rosand and was supported by Young Concert Artists. He plays the 1702 *Lord Newlands* Stradivarius violin on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation.

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NICHOLAS CARTER, CONDUCTOR
GENEVIEVE LACEY, RECORDER
WILLIAM BARTON, DIDGERIDOO

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Andante
Interlude: L’istesso tempo
Con moto

Stravinsky’s life seems to divide into neat chunks – Russia, Paris (or at least western Europe), the USA. Which roughly match with discrete musical styles – the folkloric works that are still his most popular; the neo-classical works beginning in Switzerland and Paris and ending in the USA; and the final serial phase. Symphony in Three Movements was his first new work to be performed after naturalisation as a US citizen in December 1945. It was premiered by the New York Philharmonic under his direction on 24 January 1946. The dvoryanin (member of the Russian gentry) was by now living in Hollywood, a far cry from the stimulus of Paris or the formative influences of St Petersburg.

Symphony in Three Movements maintains a neo-classical attitude to music of the past: the first movement is said to follow the shape of a Beethoven first movement, and the scampering woodwind duetting in the second movement suggests 19th-century opera. The title cutely acknowledges deviation from the usual four movements of a Classical symphony. (Stravinsky’s assistant Robert Craft once pointed out that Stravinsky’s ‘classicism’ is rhomboids and trapezoids compared to Mozart’s squares and rectangles.) But Symphony in Three Movements is like a neo-classical harking-back to the energy of 1913’s The Rite of Spring, it begins with a muscular flourish and clangorous chords before segueing into an intense secondary section where sharp bursts on winds and piano appear, syncopated, over an ominous ostinato in lower strings; it harnesses the eruptive force of The Rite in an elegant formal structure.

There are also extra-musical associations going on, something that one does not expect from a composer who despised programs and argued the abstract nature of music at Harvard (‘music is powerless to express anything other than itself’).

The second movement, with harp rather than piano obbligato, was originally to have accompanied the Apparition scene in the 1943 film The Song of Bernadette. The wonky march which begins the third movement was inspired by World War II newsreel footage of goose-stepping German soldiers, and Stravinsky even conceded that the fugal-style passage that begins on piano and harp in the last movement (punctuated in typical Stravinskian fashion by single notes on trombone) represented the ‘turning-point’ of the Second World War; when the Allies finally began to prevail against the Nazis. Stravinsky’s love of sound is always obvious, nowhere more so than in a neo-classical work which is bound to make the abstract nature of sound its business. But the combining of harp and piano in the third movement might actually have denoted a nostalgia for mother Russia. Mikhail Glinka too had used the combination of piano and harp in Ruslan and Ludmila in 1842 to suggest the gusli, a zither-like instrument Stravinsky loved.

Stravinsky may have passed through many different phases, but there were elements, standards, a cast of mind that he maintained. His attention to sound, his ‘motor habits’, his concertante use of instruments, always gave his work their particular stamp, their ‘physiognomy’, as he liked to say. And there may be an extra-musical association of a more personal nature. Critic Paul Griffiths thinks the piano, present as an obbligato in so many of his works, always represents Stravinsky himself.

About the same time as Symphony in Three Movements, Stravinsky had thought of revising The Rite of Spring, but in the end he revised only one movement. Why no further? Perhaps because there was no need. Symphony in Three Movements fulfilled the purpose of the revision perfectly: the need for a reprise of that sort of volcanic expression.

G.K. Williams
Symphony Australia © 2002
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 the 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 concertos 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.

Undoubtedly the concerto was inspired by Willy Burmester, former leader of the Helsinki Orchestra, a disciple of Joachim and a long-time admirer of Sibelius’ music. As early as 1902 Burmester had been 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 Nováček, 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 Nováček premiered the work with Sibelius conducting, it was not a success, despite some favourable reviews.

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 Karel Halíř, with the Berlin Tondorchester conducted by Richard Strauss.

Amidst the general wrangling and bitterness, Burmester vowed never to perform the concerto, while Joachim, on hearing the Berlin premiere, damned it. Fortunately the Berlin press was rather more enthusiastic than Joachim, 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.

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

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

Program notes
The opening of the concerto 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. This theme is set against a series of fragmentary figures which emerge out of the depths of the cellos and bassoons. Although the movement doesn’t sit well with standard sonata principles (the development and recapitulation are combined, and the cadenza precedes them both), there is a clear organic structure, 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 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 as it proceeds until a series of majestic flourishes from the violin leads to the final, sharp decisive chords from the full orchestra.

Martin Buzacott
Symphony Australia © 1997
Adagio – Allegro non troppo
Allegro con grazia
Allegro molto vivace
Finale (Adagio lamentoso – Andante)

The original audience for the Sixth Symphony was uncomprehending and ambivalent. Tchaikovsky had expected this, writing to his nephew and the dedicatee, ‘Bob’ Davidov, that he wouldn’t be surprised if the symphony were ‘torn to pieces’, even though he considered it his best and most sincere work. The critic Hermann Laroche suggested that audiences who ‘did not get to the core’ of the symphony would ‘in the end, come to love it’. As it turned out, it took them only 12 days. In the intervening period its composer had died, and for the second performance, in a memorial concert, it was promoted with the composer’s subtitle: Pathétique (or Pateticheskaia Simfoniia – ‘impassioned symphony’ – as he had conceived it in Russian). The symphony was declared a masterpiece.

The myth of the—Pathétique—as-suicide-note (not to mention Tchaikovsky’s ‘suicide’ itself) has been more or less debunked in the past two decades. There are no grounds for doubting that Tchaikovsky died from post-choleric complications; the theory that his old classmates decided in a ‘court of honour’ that he should commit suicide to avoid disgrace has been undermined; and his social, financial and artistic situation all speak against any other motivation for suicide, even if he continued to be troubled by his homosexuality.

The Sixth Symphony, specifically, seems to have been a source of immense pride, satisfaction and joy to him. And shortly after its premiere he’s reported to have said ‘I feel I shall live a long time.’ He was wrong. His audience, now in mourning, and seeking ‘portents’, immediately heard the Sixth Symphony (the Pathétique) in a new way. New significance was given to the appearance in the first movement of an Orthodox burial chant, ‘Repose the Soul’ – a hymn sung only when someone has died – and to the otherworldly, dying character of the adagio finale.

Even if the symphony is not a suicide note, there is a programmatic and semi-autobiographical underpinning to the symphony that is the source of its unusual form and turbulent emotions.

Tchaikovsky admitted the existence of a program but was cagey about the details, perhaps because it reflected his romantic feelings for Davidov. The closest we have is a sketched scenario, devised originally for an abandoned symphony in E flat but appearing to correspond with much of the Sixth Symphony:

Following is essence of plan for a symphony
Life! First movement – all impulse, confidence, thirst for activity. Must be short (Finale death – result of collapse). Second movement love; third disappointment; fourth ends with a dying away (also short).

There are aspects of this program and the Sixth Symphony that suggest suffering, but for Tchaikovsky the composition of the symphony was a cathartic experience rather than an expression of current sufferings. He himself wrote: ‘Anyone who believes that the creative person is capable of expressing what he feels out of a momentary effect aided by the means of art is mistaken. Melancholy as well as joyous feelings can always be expressive only out of the Retrospective.’

In its art this is Tchaikovsky’s most innovative symphony. He dares to conclude with a brooding slow movement and uses boldly dramatic gestures to give the music its emotional impulse. The
‘limping’ elegance of the second-movement waltz would have been less surprising, to Russians at least – its five-beat metre was a part of a tradition that was embraced by Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky (in his *Pictures at an Exhibition*), and later Rachmaninov (in *The Isle of the Dead*).

In the Sixth Symphony Tchaikovsky comes to terms with his professed inadequacies in structural matters. His solution in the first movement was to extend the exposition section, so well suited to his melodic gifts, and to compress the development section in which he felt his skills inadequate. The music begins in the depths with the dark colour of the bassoon and yet somehow Tchaikovsky sustains a downward trajectory, or the impression of one, for the whole work.

In the third movement the idea of ‘disappointment’ is replaced by something more malevolent. In purely musical terms it conflates two musical figures – feverish tarantella triplets and a spiky march – but the juxtapositions and incursions into each other’s thematic territory create a disturbing sense of antagonism. The movement’s applause-provoking conclusion could be triumphant, or it could be the crash of self-delusion.

The finale may not fit the formula established by Tchaikovsky’s classical predecessors, but within the emotional journey of the symphony its stark sense of tragedy provides an inevitable conclusion – all the more powerful for the grace and jauntness of the preceding movements.

Yvonne Frindle ©2008
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Kwong Lee Dow AO, AYO Alumnus and former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne
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Elizabeth Cooney, Development Coordinator
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Chair of the AYO, Mary Vallentine AO, Board of Directors, staff and participants would like to thank everyone who supports Australia’s national youth orchestra.

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Photography by Kris Washusen, Greg Barrett, Kai Bienert and Sanja Simic.
Accenture is proud to serve as the Principal Sponsor of the Australian Youth Orchestra. Here’s to high performance.

Since its first performance more than 60 years ago, the Australian Youth Orchestra has been a showcase of artistic excellence and high performance. Accenture celebrates the orchestra’s myriad achievements and we are pleased to contribute to the development of the arts and young musicians in Australia.

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