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MASTER SERIES 6

Symphonic Dances

August

Fri 16, 8pm

Sat 17, 6.30pm

Adelaide Town Hall

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MASTER SERIES 6

Symphonic Dances

August

Fri 16, 8pm

Sat 17, 6.30pm

Adelaide Town Hall

Dalia Stasevska Conductor

Louis Lortie Piano

John Adams

The Chairman Dances: Foxtrot for Orchestra

Ravel

Piano Concerto in G

Allegramente

Adagio assai

Presto

Louis Lortie Piano

Interval

Rachmaninov

Symphonic Dances, Op.45

Non allegro

Andante con moto (Tempo di valse)

Lento assai - Allegro vivace

Duration

This concert runs for approximately 1 hour and 50 minutes, including 20 minute interval.

Listen Later

This concert will be recorded for delayed broadcast on ABC Classic. You can hear it again at 2pm, 25 Aug, and at 11am, 9 Nov.

Classical Conversation

One hour prior to Master Series concerts in the Meeting Hall. Join ASO Principal Cello Simon Cobcroft and ASO Double Bassist Belinda Kendall-Smith as they connect the musical worlds of John Adams, Ravel and Rachmaninov.

The ASO acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, learn and work. We pay our respects to the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, present and future.



Vincent Ciccarello
Managing Director

Good evening and welcome to tonight's concert which marks the ASO debut of Finnish-Ukrainian conductor, Dalia Stasevska.

Ms Stasevska is one of a growing number of young women conductors who are making a huge impression on the international orchestra scene. Last week, she gave her first concerts at the BBC Proms in her role as Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

I refer to Ms Stasevska's gender if only to highlight an example of the gender blindness that has afflicted our profession for decades (if not centuries).

Generally speaking, Australian orchestras fare reasonably well on gender parity. The gender balance resulting from orchestral auditions – conducted behind screens to best safeguard the anonymity of candidates – is often held up in management textbooks as a model of merit-based recruitment. Indeed, membership of the ASO is evenly split between women and men.

However, has the system equally prepared both men and women to best represent themselves in the blind auditions? Regardless of the screen, it is the inherent confidence, systemic support and role modelling that allows one to perform at their best. This is also an area where we have room for continuous growth and development throughout our music education.

Notwithstanding our concertmaster, women are significantly underrepresented in leadership positions in the orchestra. Things may be changing but there is still much work to do.

Girls and women are finally able to consider a career as a professional conductor as a genuine possibility. Institutions of higher education and training are changing. The number of role models and mentors is still very small but growing. And orchestras around the world are now more alert to not falling victim to age-old biases.

Last week, the ASO was very pleased to be able to collaborate once again with Simone Young, one of the world's leading conductors, a trailblazing Australian and the first woman ever to conduct the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.

Last year, we were thrilled to work with Karina Canellakis, who has since been appointed Chief Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin.

We will soon announce our 2020 Season, but I'm pleased to be able to share with you this evening that it will include the debuts of at least three exciting young female conductors.

Programming is another area of gender blindness that we'll be turning our attention to – and I look forward to updating you on our plans in the months ahead.

Enjoy the concert.



Dalia Stasevska
Conductor

Dalia Stasevska's charismatic and dynamic musicianship is establishing her as a conductor of exceptional versatility.

Recent engagements have included Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and, last Summer, she opened the 2016 Helsinki Festival where she conducted both the Helsinki Philharmonic and the Finnish Radio Symphony orchestras in a programme featuring two new commissions by Magnus Lindberg (*Two Episodes*) and Lauri Porra.

In 2017/18 Dalia will return to the Oslo Philharmonic, Gothenburg Symphony orchestra to celebrate the Finnish 100th Independence Anniversary, and will debut with Gürzenich-Orchester Köln, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Orchestra of Opera North and Aalborg Symphony Orchestra. She will also continue her relationship with the Trondheim Symfoniorkester.

A passionate opera conductor, Dalia will return to Finnish National Opera in autumn 2017 for a revival of *The Cunning Little Vixen* following her triumphant debut there. She will also make her debut with Norwegian Opera in spring 2018 conducting *Lucia di Lammermoor* directed by David Alden. In 2016/17 she conducted the Finnish National Ballet and their production of *Seven Brothers* by Eero Ojanen.

Away from the concert stage, Dalia is a keen supporter of young musicians. In her Finnish homeland she founded the Kamarikesä Festival in Helsinki, of which she is also the Artistic Director.

Dalia Stasevska was born into a Finnish-Ukrainian family of painters. Originally educated as a violinist, violist and composer at the Tampere Conservatoire and the Sibelius Academy. As a conductor her teachers include Jorma Panula, Leif Segerstam, Hannu Lintu, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Susanna Mälkki, Mikko Franck and Sakari Oramo.



Louis Lortie
Piano

For over three decades, French-Canadian pianist Louis Lortie has performed world-wide, building a reputation as one of the world's great pianists. He extends his interpretative voice across a broad spectrum of repertoire rather than choosing to specialise in one particular style, and his performance and award-winning recordings attest to his remarkable musical range.

Mr. Lortie is in demand internationally. As Artist in Residence of the Shanghai Symphony, he performed four different programs with them throughout the 2017-2018 season. He also performed with the symphony orchestras of Sao Paulo, Perth, BBC, Dallas, Taipei, Philadelphia, Budapest, Detroit, Ottawa and Toronto, and many recitals including two at the Wigmore Hall in London and one presented by the Chicago Symphony.

Upcoming concerts include returns to the New York Philharmonic, and to the orchestras of Atlanta, Milwaukee, Dallas, BBC, Hamburg NDR, Sao Paulo, Vancouver Toronto, Sydney, Adelaide and New Zealand. His complete *Liszt Annees de Pelerinage* will be heard at Cal Performances, Berkeley; and to celebrate Beethoven's 250th birthday year in 2020, he performs complete Beethoven sonata cycles and all of the Beethoven concertos in North America and in Europe.

He has made over 45 recordings for the Chandos label, covering repertoire from Mozart to Stravinsky, including a set of the complete Beethoven sonatas, the

complete Liszt *Annees de Pelerinage* which was named one of the ten best recordings of 2012 by the New Yorker magazine, and all of Chopin's solo works. His recording of the Lutoslawski Piano Concerto with Edward Gardner and the BBC Symphony received high praise, as did a recent Chopin recording which was named one of the best recordings of the year by the New York Times. Recently released albums are Chopin Waltzes ("This is Chopin playing of sublime genius" – Fanfare Magazine), Saint-Saens' *Africa, Wedding Cake*, and *Carnival of the Animals* with Neeme Jarvi and the Bergen Philharmonic, and with Helene Mercier, Rachmaninov's complete works for two pianos and the Vaughn-Williams Concerto for Two Pianos. For the Onyx label, he has recorded two acclaimed albums with violinist Augustin Dumay.

Louis Lortie is the Master in Residence at The Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel of Brussels. His long-awaited LacMus International Festival (www.lacmusfestival.com) on Lake Como, Italy, made its debut in 2017. He studied in Montreal with Yvonne Hubert (a pupil of the legendary Alfred Cortot), in Vienna with Beethoven specialist Dieter Weber, and subsequently with Schnabel disciple Leon Fleischer. In 1984, Mr. Lortie won First Prize in the Busoni Competition and was also prizewinner at the Leeds Competition. Mr. Lortie has lived mostly in Europe in the last decades with homes in Berlin, Canada and Italy.



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In tonight's program, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra Concertmaster Natsuko Yoshimoto will be playing 'The Adelaide' violin. Crafted in Milan in 1753-7 by Giovanni Batista Guadagnini. Natsuko is the current custodian of 'The Adelaide' which is held in trust by UKARIA.

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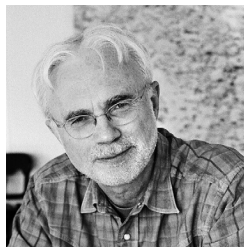
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John Adams
(born 1947)

The Chairman Dances: Foxtrot for Orchestra

John Adams describes *The Chairman Dances* as an ‘out-take’ of Act III of his opera *Nixon in China*, based on Richard Nixon’s historic visit to China in 1972. In 1985, with a commission overdue to the Milwaukee Symphony, Adams received the scenario of the final act of the opera, in which the main characters privately reminisce about their younger years. This fired Adams’ imagination, and his response was *The Chairman Dances*, which ‘began as a “foxtrot” for Chairman Mao and his bride, Chiang Ch’ing, the fabled “Madame Mao”, firebrand, revolutionary executioner, architect of China’s calamitous Cultural Revolution, and (a fact not universally realised) a former Shanghai movie actress’. Powered along by a relentless chugging rhythm, the music ‘takes full cognisance of her past as a movie actress. Themes, sometimes slinky and sentimental, at other times bravura and bounding, ride above a bustling fabric of energised motives.’

The original scenario for the piece (altered from the final one in the opera), as devised by the opera’s director Peter Sellars and librettist Alice Goodman, is as follows:

Chiang Ch’ing, a.k.a. Madame Mao, has gatecrashed the Presidential Banquet. She is first seen standing where she is most in the way of the waiters. After a few minutes, she brings out a box of paper lanterns and hangs them around the

hall, then strips down to a cheongsam, skin-tight from neck to ankle and slit up the hip. She signals the orchestra to play and begins dancing by herself. Mao is becoming excited. He steps down from his portrait on the wall, and they begin to foxtrot together. They are back in Yenan, dancing to the gramophone...

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Adelaide Symphony Orchestra first performed this work in April 1988 under conductor Nicholas Braithwaite, and most recently in September 2010 with Kristjan Järvi.



Duration: 12 minutes

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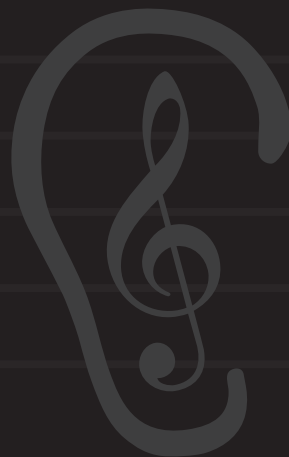
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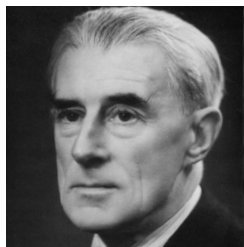
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Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

Piano Concerto in G

Allegro moderato

Adagio assai

Presto

It is scarcely surprising that Ravel wrote two of the greatest piano concertos of the 20th century. He was, after all, a concert pianist himself, as well as a composer of the highest calibre for solo piano, and arguably the greatest orchestrator of his generation. What was unexpected, however, was that he took so long to get around to the task, only writing the Piano Concerto for the Left Hand and the Piano Concerto in G simultaneously at the end of his career.

During the 1920s Ravel began frequenting Paris' jazz clubs, and in 1928, while on a concert tour in America, he encountered Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and met the composer. This influence is most clearly observable in the G major Piano Concerto. His admiration for *Rhapsody* is obvious in the first movement of his concerto, where the themes have a distinctly Gershwin-esque feel. Ravel originally intended to perform the solo part of the concerto himself (which may explain why it is written with much more of a jazz feel than the Left Hand Concerto written for Paul Wittgenstein), but in the end his ailing health prevented him from doing so. Instead, the concerto was premiered by Marguerite Long at the Salle Pleyel in 1932, with Ravel conducting.

For all its hipness, there is no mistaking that this is a 'classical' concerto in the strict, Mozartian sense of the term. Ravel believed that 'the music of a concerto should...be lighthearted and brilliant, and not aim at profundity or dramatic effects'. Indeed, so keen was Ravel to keep the concerto from self-indulgent solemnity that he considered calling it a 'Divertissement'. In any case, it became a true concerto in which fun, self-parody and exquisite beauty all play their part; but there is a 'brittleness' in the concerto's high spirits, not to mention a pervasive and 'in-spite-of-itself' sadness to the slow movement.

It begins, appropriately enough, with a crack-of-the-whip and it barely stops racing during the entire first movement. Scored with virtuosic dexterity and lightness, the jazzy rhythm drives on through spiky arpeggios in the piano, a piccolo solo, tremolos and pizzicati in the strings, and a trumpet solo. Even the harp takes the spotlight, while a mixture of broad, lurching, Gershwin-esque themes dominates the middle section. The sense of purpose never falters, and before breath can be drawn, the movement hurtles to its abrupt conclusion.

The sublime *Adagio* was modelled on the equivalent movement in Mozart's Clarinet Quintet. Writing painstakingly, Ravel agonised over this movement for months, confessing later that it 'almost killed him'. Its prevailing mood is that of a nocturne, and the piano's achingly beautiful main theme seems almost hesitant, yet somehow inexorable and assured.

The finale is supposedly a rondo (although at this frenetic pace it's not easy to tell), and is filled with jazz sounds and dazzling piano effects. It presents percussive flourishes, trombone glissandi and brief snatches of big band imitations from brass and woodwind, before racing on to its sudden but emphatic end.

Abridged from a note by Martin Buzacott

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Adelaide Symphony Orchestra first performed this concerto in May 1965 with conductor Ladislav Slovák and pianist Lance Dossor, and most recently in March 2016 with Nicholas Carter and pianist Dejan Lazić.



Duration: 23 minutes



Sergei Rachmaninov
(1873-1943)

Symphonic Dances, Op.45

Non allegro

Andante con moto (Tempo di valse)

Lento assai - Allegro vivace

After Rachmaninov left Russia in 1917, the seizure of his Russian income by the Soviet government meant he had to earn a living as a performing musician, and so he set about establishing his career as a concert pianist. Although famous for interpreting his own music, he had never been called upon to perform music by other composers in public, and now, at the age of 44, he began building up a soloist's repertoire. This left little time for composition, and he wrote no original work for another nine years. Then the urge to compose began to reassert itself. A fitful procession of 'Indian summer' pieces emerged between 1926 and 1940, many of which are now regarded as among his finest compositions. But at the time most of these works met with indifference from audiences and hostility from critics. His success as a pianist far outstripped that of his music.

Among the first fruits of his period in the West were the Fourth Piano Concerto (1926) and the *Variations on a Theme of Corelli* (1931). Neither was successful. The public and critical acclaim for his *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* (1934) gave him the confidence to write his Third Symphony (1936), to which, in the composer's words, 'audiences and critics responded sourly'. This indifference to his music sapped his confidence once again.

The orchestral style Rachmaninov cultivated in his later years was marked by great clarity of texture, a freer and more independent approach to brass and woodwind writing, and a tendency to express ideas more concisely than in his earlier large-scale pieces. Harmonically and rhythmically, his music of the 1930s bears the influence of Prokofiev and Stravinsky, but very much on Rachmaninov's own terms. His melodies still move, on the whole, in stepwise fashion, in the manner of Russian Orthodox chant, and although he clothes his melodies in lighter textures, he is not ashamed to write tunes that could be called 'vintage Rachmaninov'.

The result was too 'modern' and lean-sounding for audiences who wanted him to keep rewriting the Second Piano Concerto, and too conservative for critics, whose twin gods were Stravinsky and Schoenberg. Collectively, the *Symphonic Dances* represent perhaps the richest results of Rachmaninov's new approach to the orchestra. They were also his last original composition.

The idea of a score for a programmatic ballet had been at the back of Rachmaninov's mind since 1915, and when Michel Fokine successfully choreographed the *Paganini Rhapsody* in 1939 the opportunity presented itself again. He wrote the *Dances* the following year, giving the three movements the titles *Midday*, *Twilight* and *Midnight* respectively. At this point the work was called *Fantastic Dances*. Fokine was enthusiastic about the music but non-

committal about its balletic possibilities. His death a short time later cooled Rachmaninov's interest in the ballet idea. He deleted his descriptive titles, substituted the word 'Symphonic' for 'Fantastic', and dedicated the triptych to his favourite orchestra, the Philadelphia, and its chief conductor Eugene Ormandy.

It is a work full of enigmas which Rachmaninov, surely one of the most secretive of composers, does nothing to clarify. In the coda of the first movement, for example, there is a transformation from minor to major of a prominent theme from his first symphony, which at that time Rachmaninov thought he had destroyed (it was reconstructed from orchestral parts after his death). The premiere of that work in 1897 had been such a fiasco that Rachmaninov could not compose at all for another three years. The reference in this new piece had a meaning that was entirely private.

There is also the curious paradox that the word 'dance', with its suggestion of life-enhancing, joyous activity, is here put at the service of a work that is essentially concerned – for all its vigour and sinew – with endings, with a chromaticism that darkens the colour of every musical step. The sense of foreboding and finality is particularly strong in the second movement, with its evocations of a spectral ballroom, and in the bell-tolling and chant-intoning that pervade the finale. Here the extensive use of the *Dies irae* (Day of Wrath) theme from the Mass for the Dead (a regular source for Rachmaninov) and the curious inscription 'Alliluya', written in the score above the last motif in the work to be derived from Orthodox chant, suggest the most final of endings mingled with a sense of thanksgiving.

Abridged from a note by Phillip Sametz
© 1999



Adelaide Symphony Orchestra first performed this work in April 1982 under conductor Elyakum Shapirra, and most recently in August 2009 with Arvo Volmer.



Duration: 35 minutes

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Vincent Ciccarello
Managing Director

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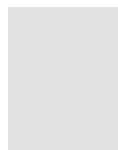
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Lisa Gill
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Principal Contra
Bassoon
Jackie Newcomb
 Norman Etherington
 AM & Peggy Brock



Principal Timpani
Vacant
 Drs Kristine Gebbie
 & Lester Wight



Principal Piccolo
Julia Grenfell
 Chris &
 Julie Michelmore



Principal Horn
Adrian Uren
 Roderick Shire &
 Judy Hargrave



Principal Percussion
Steven Peterka
 The Friends of
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 of Bev McMahon



Associate
Principal Oboe
Renae Stavely
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Associate
Principal Horn
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Principal
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Horn
Emma Gregan
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