



West Australian
Symphony Orchestra

LI-WEI QIN PLAYS TCHAIKOVSKY

MATINEE SYMPHONY SERIES

Thursday 20 November 2025, 10.30am
Winthrop Hall, The University of Western Australia

MACA SYMPHONIC SERIES

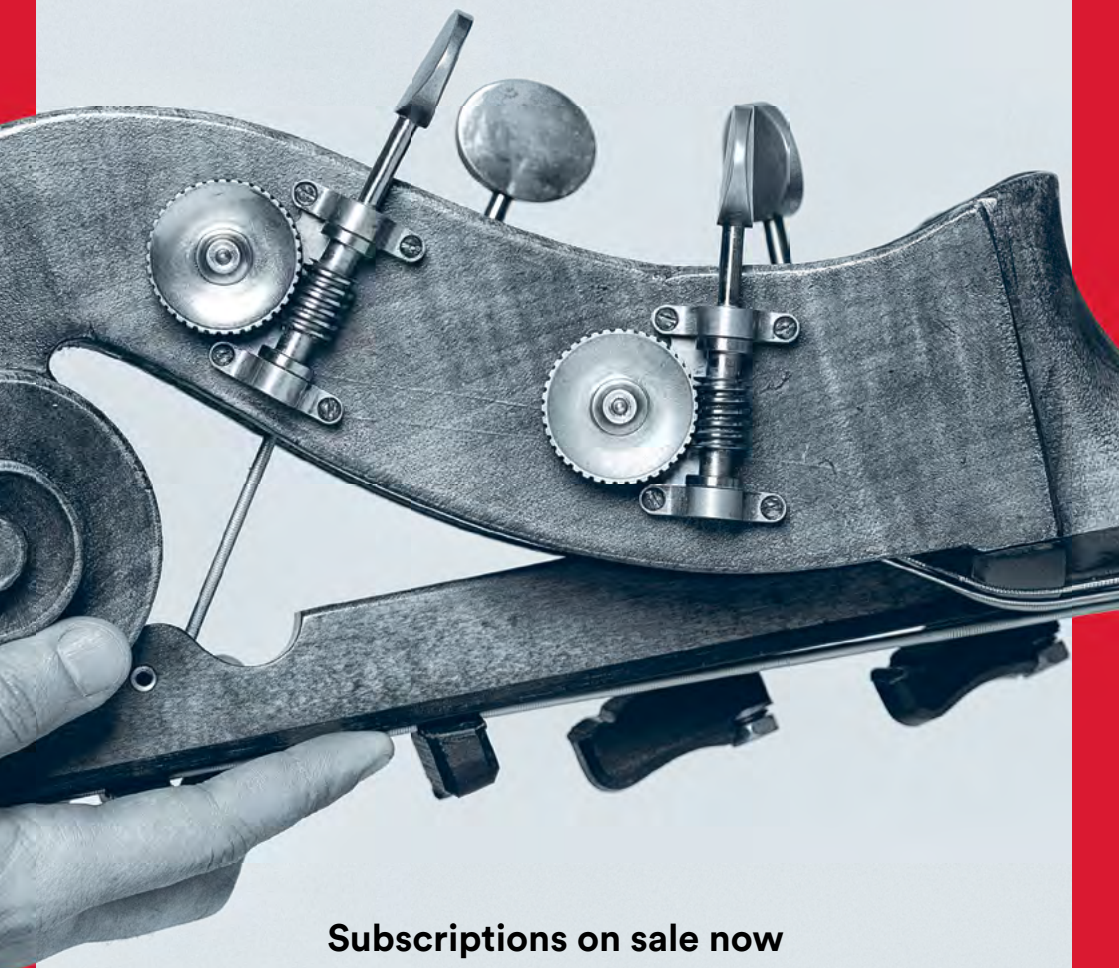
Friday 21 & Saturday 22 November 2025, 7.30pm
Winthrop Hall, The University of Western Australia





West Australian
Symphony Orchestra

2026



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MATINEE SYMPHONY SERIES

Li-Wei Qin Plays Tchaikovsky

Pyotr Ilyich TCHAIKOVSKY *Variations on a Rococo Theme* (18 mins)

Introduction (*Moderato quasi andante*)

Theme (*Moderato semplice*)

Variation I (*Tempo della thema*)

Variation II (*Tempo della thema*)

Variation III (*Andante sostenuto*)

Variation IV (*Andante grazioso*)

Variation V (*Allegro moderato*)

Variation VI (*Andante*)

Variation VII and Coda (*Allegro vivo*)

Richard WAGNER *Parsifal*, Act III: Prelude and 'Good Friday Music' (17 mins)

Richard WAGNER *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* – Suite (18 mins)

Act III, Prelude

Dance of the Apprentices

Act I, Prelude

Asher Fisch conductor

Li-Wei Qin cello

This concert does not contain an interval.

Asher Fisch appears courtesy of Wesfarmers Arts.

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Li-Wei Qin Plays Tchaikovsky

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART Symphony No.29
(23 mins)

Allegro moderato
Andante
Menuetto and Trio
Allegro con spirit

Pyotr Ilyich TCHAIKOVSKY *Variations on a Roccoco Theme* (18 mins)

Introduction (*Moderato quasi andante*)
Theme (*Moderato semplice*)
Variation I (*Tempo della thema*)
Variation II (*Tempo della thema*)
Variation III (*Andante sostenuto*)
Variation IV (*Andante grazioso*)
Variation V (*Allegro moderato*)
Variation VI (*Andante*)
Variation VII and Coda (*Allegro vivo*)

Interval (25 mins)

Richard WAGNER *Parsifal*, Act III: Prelude and 'Good Friday Music' (17 mins)

Richard WAGNER *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* – Suite (18 mins)

Act III, Prelude
Dance of the Apprentices
Act I, Prelude

Asher Fisch conductor
Li-Wei Qin cello

Asher Fisch appears courtesy of Wesfarmers Arts.

Listen to WASO

This performance is recorded for broadcast on Wednesday 10 December, 1pm (AWST) on ABC Classic. Date subject to change. For further details visit abc.net.au/classic.

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WASO On Stage

VIOLIN

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Riley Skevington
Associate Concertmaster
Semra Lee
Assistant Concertmaster
Alexandra Isted
Principal 1st Violin
Zak Rowntree*
Principal 2nd Violin
Kylie Liang
Associate Principal
2nd Violin
Kate Sullivan
Assistant Principal
2nd Violin
Sarah Blackman
Stephanie Dean
Amy Furfaro
Rebecca Glorie
Beth Hebert
Emma Hunt
William Huxtable
Sunmi Jung
Christina Katsimbardis
Kathryn Lee
Andrea Mendham
Akiko Miyazawa
Lucas O'Brien
Melanie Pearn
Jane Serrangeli
Luisa Theis^
Cerys Tooby
Samantha
Wickramasinghe

VIOLA

Daniel Schmitt
Alex Brogan
Kierstan Arkleysmith
Nik Babic
Benjamin Caddy
Alison Hall
Rachael Kirk
James Munro
Elliot O'Brien
Helen Tuckey

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Melinda Forsythe^
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Shigeru Komatsu
Oliver McAslan
Nicholas Metcalfe
Anna Sarcich^
Fotis Skordas

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Robin Brawley
Christine Reitzenstein
Mark Tooby
Giovanni Vinci

FLUTE

Andrew Nicholson
Mary-Anne Blades

PICCOLO

Sonia Croucher

OBOE

Liz Chee
Acting Principal Oboe
Stephanie Nicholls°
Niamh Dell^

COR ANGLAIS

Jonathan Ryan

CLARINET

Allan Meyer
Som Howie
Ashley Smith^

BASS CLARINET

Alexander Millier

BASSOON

Adam Mikulicz
Acting Principal Bassoon
Chloe Turner
Acting Assoc Principal
Bassoon
Natalya Czernicziv^

CONTRABASSOON

Kina Lin-Wilmoth°

HORN

David Evans
Eve McEwen
Robert Gladstones
Principal 3rd Horn
Julia Brooke
Francesco Lo Surdo

TRUMPET

Jenna Smith
Darcy O'Malley°
Peter Miller

TROMBONE

Joshua Davis
Liam O'Malley
Jeremy Alderson°

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Chloe Higgins

TIMPANI

Alex Timcke

PERCUSSION

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François Combémoré!
Assoc Principal
Percussion & Timpani

HARP

Tijana Kozarcic^

KEY

Principal
Associate Principal
Assistant Principal
Contract Musician°
Guest Musician^

Correct at time of printing. * Instruments used by these musicians are on loan from Janet Holmes à Court AC. We greatly appreciate the support of our musicians' Duet partners, acknowledged on page 22.

About the Artists

Asher Fisch

Principal Conductor & Artistic Adviser

Asher Fisch is a renowned conductor celebrated for his interpretative mastery of the core German and Italian repertoire of the Romantic and post-Romantic eras. Equally accomplished in both the operatic and symphonic realms, his repertoire spans from Haydn to contemporary works by living composers. Since 2014, he has been the Principal Conductor & Artistic Adviser of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra (WASO), making him the Orchestra's longest-serving Principal Conductor. His previous positions include Principal Guest Conductor of the Seattle Opera (2007–2013), Music Director of the New Israeli Opera (1998–2008), and Music Director of the Wiener Volksoper (1995–2000).

Born in Israel, Fisch began his career as Daniel Barenboim's assistant and Kapellmeister at the Berlin Staatsoper. He has since conducted at major opera houses worldwide, including the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Vienna Staatsoper, Teatro alla Scala, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, and Semperoper Dresden. His symphonic engagements have included leading prestigious orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, and Orchestre National de France, as well as top American orchestras in Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, and Philadelphia.

In 2023, Asher Fisch was appointed Music Director of the Tiroler Festspiele in Erl, Austria, where he collaborates with the festival's General Manager, celebrated tenor Jonas Kaufmann. Their inaugural season premiered in December 2024. The festival, held three times annually, features a diverse program of orchestral and



operatic performances, chamber music, and Lied. Known for its dedication to the works of Richard Wagner, the Tiroler Festspiele will present *Parsifal* during Easter 2025, with Fisch conducting and Kaufmann in the title role. Each year will see the addition of a new Wagner opera production.

In 2025, Fisch's engagements include *La Bohème*, Wagner's *Parsifal*, and three Verdi operas at the Tiroler Festspiele, Verdi's *Il Trovatore* with the West Australian Opera, Britten's *War Requiem* in Düsseldorf, among other performances. Recent highlights include Reimann's *Lear* at Teatro Real de Madrid, *Carmen* at the Vienna Staatsoper, and *Dialogues des Carmélites* at the Israeli Opera.

Fisch's award-winning discography includes Bruckner's Symphony No. 8, Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, and tenor Stuart Skelton's debut solo album *Shining Knight*, all recorded with WASO. His critically acclaimed releases also feature Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole* with the Munich Radio Orchestra and the complete Brahms symphonies with WASO, released on ABC Classic. His two recordings of Wagner's *Ring Cycle* (with the Seattle Opera and the State Opera of South Australia) garnered widespread acclaim, with the latter winning ten Helpmann Awards, including Best Opera and Best Music Direction.

In addition to his conducting achievements, Fisch is an accomplished pianist. His solo recording of Wagner piano transcriptions for the Melba label showcases his versatility and artistry.

Asher Fisch appears courtesy of Wesfarmers Arts.

About the Artists

Li-Wei Qin

Cello

The winner of multiple awards and competitions, leading Chinese Australian cellist, Li-Wei Qin appears all over the world as a soloist and chamber musician.

This year in Australia, Li-Wei also performs the Barber Cello Concerto with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Haydn's Cello Concerto in C major with the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, and appears in recital at Ukaria with pianist Konstantin Shamray.

Highlights in recent seasons include debuts with the London Symphony, Russian Philharmonic, and Brussels Chamber Orchestras, and return visits to the Finnish Radio Orchestra, Melbourne and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras, China Philharmonic, and extensive national tours throughout China as concerto soloist with all the leading Symphony Orchestras. Li-Wei was also heard in Adelaide Festival's Chamber Landscapes series, and in recital at the Tasmanian Chamber Music Festival and at Ukaria.

Twice a soloist at the BBC Proms in London's Royal Albert Hall, Li-Wei enjoys successful artistic collaborations with many of the world's great orchestras, including all the BBC Symphony Orchestras, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, NDR Philharmonic Hamburg, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, La Verdi Orchestra Milan, ORF Vienna Radio Orchestra, Prague Symphony, Osaka Philharmonic, and Hong Kong Philharmonic. Leading conductors with whom he has worked include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Marek Janowski, Jaap Van Zweden, Gianandrea Noseda, Jan Pascal Tortelier, Hans Graf, Yu Long, Tan Dun, and the late Sir Andrew Davis, Marcello Viotti, Jiri Belohlavek, and Lord Menuhin. Li-Wei



has appeared with chamber orchestras such as the Kremerata Baltika, Sinfonia Vasovia, and the Munich, Manchester, Zurich, and Australian Chamber Orchestras.

In recital and chamber music, Li-Wei is a regular guest at Wigmore Hall, the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, New York, and the Rheingau, City of London, Schleswig-Holstein, and Mecklenburg Festivals.

Li-Wei's recordings include the complete Beethoven Sonatas, Works of Rachmaninov with pianist Albert Tiu, Dvořák Concerto with Singapore Symphony Orchestra, and Elgar/Walton Concerti with the London Philharmonic ("A superbly stylish, raptly intuitive performer": Gramophone Magazine, January 2015). Most recently, courtesy of Universal Music, Li-Wei's 2013 live concert with the Shanghai Symphony and Maestro Yu Long was released on Sony Classical.

He teaches at the YST Conservatory, Singapore, and is guest professor at Shanghai and Central Conservatory of Music, China and visiting professor, Chamber music, at the Royal Northern College of Music. Li-Wei plays a 1780 Joseph Guaragnini cello, generously loaned by Dr and Mrs Wilson Goh.

About the Music

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

(1756–1791)

Symphony No.29 in A, K201

Allegro moderato

Andante

Menuetto and Trio

Allegro con spirito

Eighteenth-century composers used simple musical materials, sometimes little more than tags, and it could be said of some of Mozart's early symphonies that they are conventional in just this way. The symphony then was not the dominant genre that Haydn and Beethoven were to make it – many symphonies of the 1770s may not have been listened to very carefully, but they made a good festive noise. Mozart's Symphony in A of 1774 is his first which is by common consent not only worth listening to closely, but a masterpiece from start to finish.

Right from the start something arresting is happening; while the violins have a strongly rhythmic theme proceeding in upward sequences and marked at each step with a falling octave, the lower parts are proceeding gently, glidingly, in long notes – a rising bass. Instead of a loud attention-getter, Mozart begins with what Jens-Peter Larsen calls a fusion of symphonic and chamber-musical styles, the fusion explored by Haydn in his symphonies of the same period.



Many of Haydn's slow movements show the same telling though economical use of wind instruments against muted strings as Mozart does in his stately but intimate slow movement, where the pace increases with the **triple** figures which dominate the **development**. Staying in the mind from the Minuet are the humour of the loud restarts on unexpected notes, and of the comic tailpiece for the winds. The **Trio**, mostly in sustained notes, contrasts with the angular rhythms of the Minuet.

The finale is made up entirely of formulaic ‘scraps’, but brilliantly organised to combine noise, excitement and musical interest. No trumpets, but the horns reach dizzying heights by the end.

Adapted from a note by David Garrett © 2003

FIRST PERFORMANCE:

This symphony was completed in Salzburg on 6 April 1774, but no record exists of its first performance.

FIRST WASO PERFORMANCE:

7 January 1956, Festival of Perth. John Farnsworth Hall, conductor.

MOST RECENT WASO PERFORMANCE:

21 and 22 April 2017; Asher Fisch, conductor.

INSTRUMENTATION:

two oboes, two horns, strings.

Glossary

Development – in sonata form, in which the first movements of most symphonies of the Classical period are structured, the main themes are introduced in the exposition; in the development section these themes are explored according to key relationships; finally, the themes are restated and resolved in the recapitulation.

Triplet – group of three notes played in the time of two.

Trio – in a minuet or scherzo, the trio is the middle section of the movement; the minuet or scherzo is performed on either side of the trio.

About the Music

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

(1840–1893)

Variations on a Rococo Theme, Op.33
[Fitzenhagen version]

Introduction (*Moderato quasi andante*)

Theme (*Moderato semplice*)

Variation I (*Tempo della thema*)

Variation II (*Tempo della thema*)

Variation III (*Andante sostenuto*)

Variation IV (*Andante grazioso*)

Variation V (*Allegro moderato*)

Variation VI (*Andante*)

Variation VII and Coda (*Allegro vivo*)

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

In no way does it detract from the success of Tchaikovsky's *Variations* that the Mozart he emulates contains no turbulent emotions. In short, the *Variations* are far from the real Mozart. Charming, elegant,



deftly written, they are equally gratifying to virtuoso cellists and to audiences. The light and airy accompaniment, which enables the cello to stand out beautifully, is for 18th-century forces: double winds, two horns and strings.

Tchaikovsky composed the work in 1876 (shortly before beginning his Fourth Symphony) for a cellist and fellow-professor at the Moscow Conservatorium, Wilhelm Fitzenhagen. Fitzenhagen had requested a **concerto**-like piece for his recital tours, so it was natural that Tchaikovsky first completed the *Variations* in a scoring for cello and piano. Before orchestrating it he gave the music to Fitzenhagen, who made changes in the solo part, in places pasting his own versions over Tchaikovsky's. The first performance was of the orchestral version, in November 1877.

Tchaikovsky couldn't attend since he had left Russia to recover from his disastrous marriage. Fitzenhagen retained the score, and it was he who passed it on to the publisher, Jurgenson. The cello and piano version was the first to appear in print, in autumn 1878, with substantial alterations which Fitzenhagen claimed were authorised but about which Tchaikovsky complained somewhat bitterly.

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

The theme, which determines the character of the *Variations*, is Tchaikovsky's own. The soloist plays it after a brief introduction in which the orchestra anticipates the later breaking of the theme into fragments by attempting little phrases from it. The theme itself has an orchestral postlude, with a final question from the cello. This postlude, increasingly varied, rounds off most of the *Variations*. The first two of these are fairly closely based on the theme, which the cello decorates with a dance in triplets, then discusses with the orchestra. The soloist emerges in full limelight in the virtuosic second variation. This is followed by a leisurely slow waltz, largely in the hands of the soloist. This variation, number three, is the expressive heart of the work.

In Variation IV, Tchaikovsky gives the theme a different rhythm, and incorporates some bravura flourishes.

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

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

David Garrett © 2002

FIRST PERFORMANCE:

30 November 1877. Nikolai Rubinstein, conductor; Wilhelm Fitzenhagen, soloist.

FIRST WASO PERFORMANCE:

1 August 1961. Karel Ančerl, conductor; John Kennedy, soloist.

MOST RECENT WASO PERFORMANCE:

5 and 6 October 2018. Ludovic Morlot, conductor; Gautier Capuçon, soloist.

INSTRUMENTATION:

solo cello, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, strings.

Glossary

Cadenza – a showy passage by a solo instrument, usually towards the end of a concerto movement.

Coda – a concluding section added to the basic structure of a piece or movement to emphasise the sense of finality.

Concerto – a work for solo instrument and orchestra.

Rococo – 18th-century style featuring light, ornate decorations.

Trill – ornament consisting of a very rapid alternation of two (usually adjacent) notes.

About the Music

Richard Wagner

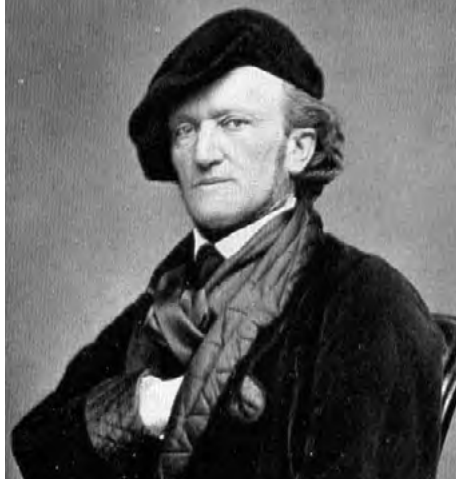
(1813–1883)

Parsifal, Act III: Prelude and 'Good Friday Music'

There is evidence that Wagner knew *Parsifal* would be his last statement on themes that had intrigued him throughout his career – the evil that comes from the eschewal of love; the conflicts of maddening desire; and redemption through understanding and renunciation. *Parsifal* was his 'last card', as Wagner apparently told his wife, Cosima. The term *Bühnenweihfestspiel* ('festival play for the consecration of a stage'), used to describe the work, indicated that Wagner considered this work perfectly suited to the unique theatre he had built for his **music dramas**. But *Parsifal* also contains some of Wagner's most ravishing *pure* music.

Wagner first became interested in the Parsifal legend in 1845 after reading Wolfram von Eschenbach's medieval epic *Parzival*. Nearly 40 years elapsed between Wagner's first thoughts on the subject and the premiere of this, his last opera, at Bayreuth in 1882, a gestation period surpassing that of Wagner's four-opera cycle *The Ring of the Nibelung*.

If there is any single theme to be isolated from the knot of sacred and secular concerns in this opera, it is probably the idea of the maturing of an individual and the way a broader community benefits from this process, but the ambivalent symbolism and intimations of an underlying ideology shrouded in beautiful, even gorgeous music makes this a disturbing, if beguiling, Wagner opera. Robert Gutman saw in it a proto-Nazi 'religion of racism'; yet the anti-



Wagner critic Eduard Hanslick described it as 'a superior magic opera'. Some have criticised Wagner's use of Christian symbolism, the simulation of a Mass on stage for example. Yet this was Wagner's own view of Christianity.

The music at times seems about to elucidate the meaning of the text, but the **chromatic** style which had served Wagner in *Tristan and Isolde* to express unquenchable desire, here expresses Parsifal's annihilation of will. At any rate, the music throws-up a challenge to critics. If the opera contains such noxious ideas as Gutman describes, they're clothed in what Barry Millington describes as 'a diaphanous score of unearthly beauty and refinement'.

In Act III, Parsifal has returned to the Grail citadel, Montsalvat. Having failed in the first Act to understand the meaning of the Grail ceremony or of the suffering of the Grail knights' leader, Amfortas, and his unhealing wound, Parsifal has since resisted the temptations of the sorcerer Klingsor's garden of earthly delights, and become possessed, at the moment of temptress Kundry's kiss, not with Tristanesque lust, but a sense of Amfortas's suffering. He has now returned to the Grail realm with Christ's spear,

rescued from Klingsor's clutches, and a new-found maturity which will enable him to heal Amfortas and succeed to leadership of the Grail knights.

The Act III prelude expresses the travails which precede this moment of victory. Doleful chromaticism aptly expresses Parsifal's 'pathless wanderings' (in Wagner's words); there is a glimpse of the Grail in fleeting ascent to the 'Dresden Amen' (not yet radiantly proclaimed), one of the opera's musical **motifs**. There is also a striving to fulfil Act I's 'prophecy' motif which accompanied words promising the arrival of one who would learn wisdom through suffering.

This concert selection segues into the 'Good Friday Spell' which occurs later in the Act. As veteran knight Gurnemanz christens Parsifal and crowns him king, Parsifal notices the earth bursting again into flower on this spring day, Good Friday, the last day of his quest.

After a fanfare based on Parsifal's theme, and a restatement of the sure tread of the faith motif, the oboe introduces an entrancing melody which will recur like the verses of a **strophic song**. A **diatonic** theme declines into chromatic tailings

a number of times before the final radiant statement.

In the opera, this section accompanies monologues by Parsifal and Gurnemanz. Perhaps something is lost by excluding the voices. But this late in Wagner's career, the dramatic as well as musical interest has shifted to the orchestra. Thus is it possible to perform sections like this with orchestra alone. And why quibble over a slight change in meaning in an opera which deals with ambiguity to such a large extent and when the unalloyed beauty of the music wonderfully symbolises new seasonal beginning?

G.K. Williams

Symphony Australia © 1999/2025

YEAR / DATE OF COMPOSITION:

1857–82.

FIRST PERFORMANCE OF OPERA:

26 July 1882, Bayreuth. Hermann Levi conducting.

INSTRUMENTATION:

three flutes, three oboes, cor anglais, three clarinets, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba; timpani, percussion, and strings.

Glossary

Chromatic – music which conforms to the chromatic scale, consisting entirely of semitones, thereby giving rise to increasingly-inflected melody and harmony able to express a more widely-nuanced range of emotion .

Diatonic – music which conforms to a key, defined by its pattern of tones and semitones, and less productive of dissonant harmony.

Motif – in Wagner: musical themes that represent characters, objects or concepts and recur and morph in accordance with the changing fortunes of those concepts; thus unifying a musical structure that follows the flow of drama rather than a prescribed musical form.

Music drama – a term Wagner preferred for many of his operas, amplifying the importance of the dramatic aspect of this musical art.

Strophic song – a song in which each verse is sung to the same or similar musical material thus creating a very simple, easily-recognised structure.

About the Music

Richard Wagner

(1813–1883)

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg – Suite

Act III, Prelude

Dance of the Apprentices

Act I, Prelude

Richard Wagner was never one to do things by halves. So it is not altogether surprising that his comic opera *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (The Mastersingers of Nuremberg) should turn out to be well over four hours long and include no less than 17 named roles, one of which, Hans Sachs, is one of the largest and most challenging in all opera.

That said, Wagner did not set out to write a monumental work with a hugely demanding principal part. Like many of his projects, *Meistersinger* sat at the back of his mind for a good number of years, gradually making its way to the front when he felt that the time was right. It ended up being the second of two works that he wrote (the first was *Tristan und Isolde*) when he broke off work on the epic *Der Ring des Nibelungen* to devote his time to smaller projects that might have some chance of being staged in conventional opera houses (he was saving the four-part *Ring* for a specially built festival theatre). But whereas he dashed off *Tristan* in a couple of years, *Meistersinger* took no less than six. Completed in 1867, it was premiered to rapturous acclaim in Munich the following year.

Part of the reason why *Meistersinger* proved a challenge to Wagner is that it is set in a real place, Nuremberg, at a specific time, the mid-16th century, involving people who actually existed,

such as the aforementioned Hans Sachs, and a musical tradition that likewise existed, the poet-composer mastersinger tradition. The difficulty for Wagner was to come up with a musical idiom that referenced, to some degree, the conventions of 16th-century music while also adhering to the musico-dramatic requirements of a modern opera with full orchestral accompaniment. Also, being a comedy, Wagner had to ‘lighten up’ his normally intense musical language and attend to the crucial matter of comic timing.

One of the things that is noticeable in *Meistersinger* – and we hear it right from the start of the Prelude to Act I – is the reasonably ‘clean’ harmonic palette. The Prelude opens in a blaze of resplendent and unambiguous C major. It also opens with a big tune and, remarkably for Wagner, one that makes no attempt to subvert its time signature (it is in 4/4). In the course of the opera this grand and imposing theme will be associated with the mastersingers guild, an elite association of poet-composers. Another thing that is noticeable in *Meistersinger* is Wagner’s use of counterpoint – the art of combining different melodies at the same time – which is one of the ways in which he casts a nod in the direction of music of the 16th century. There are three main themes in the Prelude and at one point (about two thirds of the way through) Wagner executes a stunning coup when he superimposes them one on top of the other.

Another of Wagner’s self-consciously archaic touches appears in the Dance of the Apprentices, which is from Act III. Here he makes use of a drone bass, which is a very simple and unsophisticated accompaniment type. It is also a very

ancient technique. While lacking in regal splendour (these are apprentices after all, not masters), the Dance of the Apprentices is full of naive charm and winning simplicity.

Meistersinger reaches its climax in a song contest in which a young and charismatic upstart, Walther von Stolzing, wins the hearts of his listeners and the hand of the woman he loves, Eva. But the hero of the opera is the somewhat older and wiser mastersinger, Hans Sachs, one of the adjudicators of the song contest. Early in Act III Sachs delivers one of the key scenes in the opera, the 'Wahn monologue'. Here he ruminates on the extent to which 'Wahn' (which can mean both 'illusion' and 'madness') impacts upon our lives and on the workings of our communities. Sachs's monologue is a serious and reflective episode, and the dramatic function of the Prelude to Act III is to establish the solemn and thoughtful mood. Wagner at this point deepens the character of Sachs and deepens the opera as a whole. The happy ending will come, but not just yet.

Robert Gibson © 2014

YEAR / DATE OF COMPOSITION:
1862–67.

FIRST PERFORMANCE OF OPERA:
21 June 1868, Munich. Hans von Bülow conducting.

MOST RECENT WASO PERFORMANCE:
7–8 March 2014. Asher Fisch, conductor.

INSTRUMENTATION:
two flutes and piccolo, two each of oboes, clarinets and bassoons; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba; timpani, percussion, harp and strings. bassoons, contrabassoon; four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba; timpani, percussion, and strings.

West Australian Symphony Orchestra

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From the centre of Perth to the furthest corners of the state, we have provided the soundtrack to life in WA since 1928.

As the State Orchestra, Perth's first and finest, WASO is the largest employer of performing artists in Western Australia and reaches two million people with musical experiences each year on stage, in our community, and online.

From concert stages to classrooms, hospitals to aged care, we bring joy, inspire learning, and nurture participation in our community, because everybody deserves the opportunity to experience live music. Every year, through community and leading industry partnerships, we engage a new generation of young and emerging artists to help secure a bright future for music in Australia.

We celebrate our rich classical music heritage with great artists from all over the world and commission and perform new repertoire to renew and expand it.

The Orchestra collaborates widely with major arts companies and independent artists, performing opera to ballet, movies to musicals, jazz to rock.

Asher Fisch is Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser of our Orchestra. We champion the diversity of music in all its forms, with a team of talented and passionate people who create unforgettable experiences for all West Australians to enjoy.

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Your Concert Experience at Winthrop Hall



Clap with enthusiasm

Whether you are welcoming your favourite artist to the stage, or showing appreciation at the end of a piece, we love thunderous applause. Not sure when to clap? Here's a tip; if the conductor's arm is raised, hold it. If it's relaxed, go for it!



Share with your friends

Snap a selfie from your seat, capture the artist bows and share the experience with friends. Don't forget to tag us! #WASymphonyOrchestra



Respect those around you

Ensure your mobile phone is on silent and does not disrupt the experience of those around you. If you need to cough or sneeze, please do this into your elbow.



Accessible services available

For information about our services such as lifts and accessible toilets, please ask one of our friendly ushers.



Latecomers admitted at a suitable time

If you arrive late or leave your seat during a performance, your auditorium entry will need to wait until a suitable break.



First Aid available

St John First Aid officers are present at every WASO concert. Please notify a team member if you require any first aid assistance.



Box Office is open

Get tickets to your next WASO experience at the WASO Mobile Box Office located inside the Winthrop Hall foyer. The WASO Mobile Box Office is open 90 minutes before each performance and during interval. Alternatively, you can visit waso.com.au to buy online or book an in-person ticketing appointment by calling (08) 9326 0000.



A black and white photograph of a large orchestra performing on a stage, with musicians seated in rows, holding instruments like violins and cellos.

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WASO Family Show



Witches & Wizards

Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble...

Witches, wizards and magical creatures of all kinds gathered at the Heath Ledger Theatre for WASO's latest family concert, *Classic Adventures: Witches & Wizards*. This family-friendly performance offered children a wonderful opportunity to engage with their State Orchestra – many experiencing orchestral music for the very first time.

Under the baton of WASO Associate Conductor Jen Winley, and joined by returning guest presenter Adam Mitchell, the concert featured a spellbinding selection of magic-themed music. Audiences were captivated by the shimmering celeste in *Hedwig's Theme* from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone Suite*, and the delicate charm of Tchaikovsky's *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*. Stravinsky's soaring *Firebird Finale* sparked imaginations, while Dukas' mischievous *Sorcerer's Apprentice* brought laughter and delight. The concert

concluded with a dazzling medley from *Wicked*, leaving the audience spellbound.

Emerging, young composer, Sahil Sidhu, premiered an original piece written for this family concert. The work, *Willy Wonka was a Wizard, Harry*, captured the whimsical and unpredictable nature of magic; full of colour, shape and vibrant musical texture. Sahil was the recipient of the Bendat Family Foundation Scholarship for his outstanding composition in the 2024 WASO Composition Project.

Adding to the enchantment, the orchestra donned costumes to embrace the magical theme, while the theatre was transformed with floating candles, two dragons, and a bubbling cauldron on stage. Families also enjoyed pre-concert activities throughout the State Theatre Centre of WA, as part of the 2025 AWESOME Festival.

Presented in association with the 2025 AWESOME Festival. Jen Winley is supported by the Simon Lee Foundation and JACE Foundation. Composition Project is supported by the Bendat Family Foundation.

Supporting WASO

Refined Virtuosity: A Legacy of Patronage and Passion

This concert showcases masterworks by classical music's greatest composers, whose timeless works were shaped and supported by visionary patrons who believed in the transformative power of music.

Mozart's Symphony No. 29 was created under the auspices of the Archbishop of Salzburg, whose patronage provided the young genius with the foundation to craft works that still resonate centuries later. Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme* blossomed through collaboration with cellist Wilhelm Fitzenhagen, whose dedication helped shape this elegant masterpiece. Wagner's epic operas, *Parsifal* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, were made possible by the unwavering support of King Ludwig II of Bavaria, whose faith and generosity gave Wagner the freedom to realise his grand artistic vision.

These stories are reminders that behind every note is a legacy of generosity and support; a tradition that continues today.

Philanthropic support enables your Orchestra to deliver performances such as today's. It supports the musicians, the rehearsal hours, and the programs that deepen your experience and connect us all through music.

By donating to WASO, you become part of this ongoing story of inspiration and excellence. Your philanthropy transforms lives, nurtures creativity, and ensures that extraordinary music continues to thrive for generations to come.

To learn more about supporting WASO, please contact our Philanthropy Team at (08) 9326 0014 or visit our website via the QR code.



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