

EDWARD GARDNER CONDUCTS BRAHMS

MACA SYMPHONIC SERIES

Friday 11 & Saturday 12 July 2025, 7.30pm
Winthrop Hall, The University of Western Australia



West Australian Symphony Orchestra respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and Elders of Country throughout Western Australia, and the Whadjuk Noongar people on whose lands we work and share music.

MACA SYMPHONIC SERIES

Edward Gardner Conducts Brahms

Franz SCHUBERT Symphony No.8

Unfinished (24 mins)

Allegro moderato

Andante con moto

Benjamin BRITTEN *Les Illuminations*

(23 mins)

I. *Fanfare*

II. *Villes*

IIIa. *Phrase*

IIIb. *Antique*

IV. *Royauté*

V. *Marine*

VI. *Interlude*

VII. *Being Beauteous*

VIII. *Parade*

IX. *Départ*

Interval (25 mins)

Johannes BRAHMS Symphony No.1 (45 mins)

Un poco sostenuto – Allegro

Andante sostenuto

Un poco allegretto e grazioso

Adagio – Più andante – Allegro non troppo, ma con brio

Edward Gardner conductor

Samantha Clarke soprano

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This performance is recorded for broadcast on Thursday 14 August, 1pm (AWST) on ABC Classic. Date subject to change. For further details visit abc.net.au/classic.

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Assoc Concertmaster

Semra Lee

Assistant Concertmaster

Alexandra Isted

Principal 1st Violin

Zak Rowntree*

Principal 2nd Violin

Kylie Liang

Assoc Principal 2nd Violin

Kate Sullivan

Assistant Principal 2nd Violin

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OBOE

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CLARINET

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Alexander Millier

BASSOON

Adam Mikulicz

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Chloe Turner

Acting Assoc Principal

Bassoon

CONTRABASSOON

Kina Lin-Wilmoth°

HORN

David Evans

Eve McEwen

Robert Gladstones

Principal 3rd Horn

Julia Brooke

Francesco Lo Surdo

TRUMPET

Jenna Smith

Peter Miller

TROMBONE

Liam O'Malley

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Percussion & Timpani

KEY

Principal

Associate Principal

Assistant Principal

Contract Musician°

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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 18.

About the Artists

Edward Gardner Conductor

Edward Gardner is Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) and Music Director of The Norwegian Opera and Ballet. He additionally serves as Honorary Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, following his tenure as Chief Conductor from 2015 to 2024.

Edward opens his inaugural season as Music Director of The Norwegian Opera and Ballet with concert performances of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* and Mahler's Symphony No.2 *Resurrection*. He will then conduct two fully staged operas; Verdi's *La Traviata* and Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, following earlier productions of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, Zemlinsky's *A Florentine Tragedy* and Verdi's *Un ballo in Maschera*.

During his fourth season with the LPO, Edward will conduct nine concerts at the Royal Festival Hall, as well as a US tour culminating at Carnegie Hall, and in major European cities including Vienna, Frankfurt and Hamburg. Highlights of their London season include Strauss' *Alpine Symphony*, Ravel and Rachmaninov double bills and several world premieres, closing with Mahler's Symphony No.8 *Symphony of a Thousand*.

In demand as a guest conductor, this season Edward appears with Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Frankfurt Radio, Dallas Symphony, New World Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic, Sydney Symphony Orchestra and West Australian Symphony Orchestra. Debuts in recent seasons include New York Philharmonic, The Philadelphia and Cleveland Orchestras, San Francisco Symphony, Staatskapelle Berlin Orchestra, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, and Wiener Symphoniker; with re-invitations to Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Montreal Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, and Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala di Milano. In the UK, he has had longstanding collaborations with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, where he was Principal Guest Conductor from 2010-16, and the BBC



Symphony Orchestra, whom he has conducted at both the First and Last Night of the BBC Proms.

In Spring 2025, Edward returns to the Royal Opera House to conduct the world premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Festen*, having made his debut with a new production of *Káťa Kabanová*, and he returns to Bayerische Staatsoper in June for *Rusalka*, following his debut with Peter Grimes in 2022 and Verdi's *Otello* in 2023. Music Director of English National Opera for eight years (2007-15), Edward also built a strong relationship with The Metropolitan Opera with productions of *Damnation of Faust*, *Carmen*, *Don Giovanni*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Werther*. Elsewhere, he has conducted at La Scala, Chicago Lyric Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Opéra National de Paris.

Edward has an extensive discography with Chandos. His many recordings with the Bergen Philharmonic feature Brahms, Sibelius, Nielsen, Grieg, Bartók, Schoenberg and Britten, and their recording of Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* received a Grammy nomination. His recording of Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* for LPO Live received the Gramophone Opera Award 2023 and their most recent release is Berlioz' *The Damnation of Faust*.

A passionate supporter of young talent, Edward founded the Hallé Youth Orchestra in 2002 and regularly conducts the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. He has a close relationship with the Juilliard School of Music, and with the Royal Academy of Music who appointed him their inaugural Sir Charles Mackerras Conducting Chair in 2014.

Born in Gloucester in 1974, Edward was educated at Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music and gained early recognition as Assistant Conductor of The Hallé and Music Director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera. His many accolades include the Royal Philharmonic Society Conductor of the Year Award (2008), an Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera (2009) and an OBE for Services to Music in the Queen's Birthday Honours (2012).

About the Artists

Samantha Clarke

Soprano

Australian/British soprano Samantha Clarke is the winner of the 2019 Guildhall Gold Medal and prize winner in the 2019 Grange International Festival Singing Competition. Samantha studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, as a Sir John Fisher Foundation and Independent Opera Scholar, under the tutelage of Mary Plazas. She is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama Opera School as a Baroness de Turckheim Scholar, Help Musicians, Tait Memorial and Countess of Munster Trust Scholar and studied with Yvonne Kenny.

In addition to the 2019 Guildhall Gold Medal, Samantha is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Leverhulme Royal Northern College of Music Award, the Dame Eva Turner Award and the Michael and Joyce Kennedy Award for the singing of Strauss.

Her operatic roles include: Violetta (*La Traviata*), Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*), Helena (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Countess (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*), The Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*) and Theodora.

Recent and future engagements include Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at Garsington, Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*) with the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy in Japan, Grange Festival and Opera Queensland, Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) and Theodora for Pinchgut Opera, Woglinde (*Das Rheingold*), Marzelline (*Fidelio*) and Mendelssohn's (*Midsummer Night's Dream*) with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Simone Young, Violetta (*La Traviata*) with Opera Australia and West Australian Opera, a US tour with the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, *Messiah* and *War Requiem* with the Melbourne



Symphony Orchestra, Beethoven Symphony No.9 in Tasmania, and *Les Illuminations* with Western Australia Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Edward Gardner.

Samantha features on the Resonus' *Samuel Barber: The Complete Songs* recording with accompanist Dylan Perez.

About the Music

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Symphony No.8 in B minor, D759
Unfinished

Allegro moderato
Andante con moto

Why is Schubert's *Unfinished* Symphony so much admired by musicians and their public alike? Because of its lyrical outpouring of one melody after another? Because romantically-minded people are attracted to the idea of the incomplete masterpiece? Or because of the sentimental legend that Schubert was unable to finish his symphony through illness and lack of public appreciation?

The latter idea can be banished by noting that Schubert composed the music in 1822. Still to come, in 1825, was the grandly affirmative *Great C major* Symphony, and in the remaining six years of his life Schubert could have returned to the *Unfinished* and completed it. Instead, two movements survive, and an incomplete sketch of a third. There have been attempts to finish the symphony, however musicologists these days agree that it should be left as it stands.

The two movements which constitute the *Unfinished* Symphony seem, on first hearing, almost like two slow movements, one after another. Schubert's musical thinking is extraordinarily broad, its essential feature being a new kind of long-range harmonic movement: amazing **modulations**, but all making sense in the whole.



Schubert presented his work to the Styrian Musical Society of Graz, in gratitude for an honorary diploma. He entrusted it to Anselm Hüttenbrenner, a member of the Society, who never delivered it. In 1860, 32 years after Schubert's death, the score was rescued from Hüttenbrenner, who had kept it in a drawer stuffed full of papers. The first performance was given by the orchestra of the Society of the Friends of Music in Vienna in 1865.

Adapted from a note by David Garrett © 1998

FIRST PERFORMANCE:

17 December 1865, Vienna. Johann von Herbeck conducting.

MOST RECENT PERFORMANCE:

11-12 March 2022. Asher Fisch, conductor.

INSTRUMENTATION:

two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons; two horns, two trumpets, three trombones; timpani and strings.

Glossary

Modulation – a change of key.

About the Music

Benjamin Britten

(1913–1976)

Les Illuminations for high voice and string orchestra, Op.18

- I. *Fanfare*
- II. *Villes*
- IIIa. *Phrase*
- IIIb. *Antique*
- IV. *Royauté*
- V. *Marine*
- VI. *Interlude*
- VII. *Being Beauteous*
- VIII. *Parade*
- IX. *Départ*

One night in 1938 Britten and Swiss soprano Sophie Wyss were returning to London by train after giving a recital. Wyss remembers how excited Britten was: ‘he had just read the most wonderful poetry by Rimbaud and was so eager to set it to music.’ By March 1939 Britten had set two of the poems, *Being Beauteous* and *Marine*, which Wyss premiered in Birmingham to great acclaim a month later. The remainder of the cycle was composed between then and October 1939, during which time Britten and singer Peter Pears were living in North America.

The two musicians’ trip to Canada and the USA has been retrospectively explained as the response of two pacifists to the inevitable outbreak of war in Europe, but the truth would appear rather more complex than that. Britten and Pears had for some time intended to give a series of recitals in Canada, and Britten’s friend and mentor, the poet W.H. Auden, was by this time residing in the USA. Moreover, Humphrey Carpenter’s biography of the composer suggests that their extended stay was influenced as much by complications in Britten’s love-life at home as by global politics. The British Government’s declaration of



war in September 1939, however, made the decision to stay in North America an almost foregone conclusion.

That a composer as fastidious as Britten should be so excited by a poet who cultivated the ‘derangement of all the senses’ seems odd at first. Arthur Rimbaud (1854–1891) wrote all of his influential poetry as a teenager, while scandalising French society by having a tumultuous, drug-fuelled love affair with the poet Paul Verlaine, ten years his senior and, until Rimbaud’s arrival, happily married. Having survived addiction, homelessness and a gunshot wound inflicted by Verlaine, Rimbaud gave up literature at the age of 21 and spent many of his remaining sixteen years as a trader and gun-runner in East Africa. Britten had set Verlaine’s poetry in the extraordinary *Four French Songs* composed when he was 15, but it was through Auden that he discovered the work of the younger Rimbaud in 1938.

Britten’s obsession with the corruption of innocence – a much-discussed aspect of many of his works – and his powerfully ambivalent attitude to sexuality found resonance in Rimbaud’s poetry, with what Michael Kennedy describes as its ‘dark and tormented sexual images’. (As commentator Christopher Palmer has noted, French composers, ‘deeply conscious of the “difficulty” of [Rimbaud’s] work, have for the most part studiously avoided him’.) Paradoxically, though, Britten’s music is far from dark and tormented. Much of the melodic material is derived from the common major

chord, as heard in the fanfares of the first section, and the main melody of *Antique*. His writing for the voice – and despite Britten's later stated preference for Peter Pears' interpretation, it is a work which suits the soprano better – has a crystalline clarity, and the scoring for string orchestra has numerous touches of brilliance. In his introduction to the vocal score, writer Edward Sackville-West noted that 'it is always a picture, not an idea, that is evoked, and Britten's settings have rightly the sharp outlines and vivid colours of a missal.'

FIRST COMPLETE PERFORMANCE:

30 January 1940, London. Boyd Neel, conductor. Sophie Wyss, soloist.

FIRST WASO PERFORMANCE:

21 August 1973. Tibor Paul, conductor. Gerald English, soloist.

MOST RECENT PERFORMANCE:

21-22 July 1995. Paul Daniel, conductor. Joan Rodgers, soloist.

INSTRUMENTATION:

strings only.

Text & Translation

I. Fanfare

J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage.

Britten takes this single line from *Parade*, the last poem in the cycle, using it as a point of reference several times during the piece. In its first appearance, Britten evokes the sound of brass instruments by having the strings play fanfares 'towards the bridge' of their instruments to produce a distinctly nasal sound.

I. Fanfare

I alone hold the key to this savage parade.

II. Villes

Ce sont des villes! C'est un peuple pour qui se sont montés ces Alleghanys et ces Libans de rêve! Des chalets de cristal et de bois se meuvent sur des rails et des poulies invisibles. Les vieux cratères ceints de colosses et de palmiers de cuivre rugissent mélodieusement dans les feux...Des cortèges de Mabs en robes rousses, opalines, montent des ravines. Là-haut, les pieds dans la cascade et les ronces, les cerfs têtent Diane. Les Bacchantes des banlieues sanglotent et la lune brûle et hurle. Vénus entre dans les cavernes des forgerons et des ermites. Des groupes de beffrois chantent les idées des peuples. Des châteaux bâtis en os sort la musique inconnue...Le paradis des orages s'effondre. Les sauvages dansent sans cesse la Fête de la Nuit.

Quels bons bras, quelle belle heure me rendront cette région d'où viennent mes sommeils et mes moindres mouvements?

II. Towns

These are towns! It is for the inhabitants of towns that these dream Alleghanies and Lebanons have been raised. Castles of crystal and wood move on rails and invisible pulleys. Old craters, encircled with colossal statues and palms of copper, roar melodiously in their fires...Corteges of Queen Mabs in robes red and opaline, climb the ravine. Up there, their hoofs in the cascades and the briars, the stags give Diana suck. Bacchantes of the suburbs weep, and the moon burns and howls. Venus enters the caves of the blacksmiths and hermits. Groups of bell-towers sing aloud the ideas of the people. From castles built of bones proceeds unknown music...The paradise of the thunders bursts and falls. Savages dance unceasingly the Festival of the Night.

What kindly arms, what good hour will restore to me those regions from which come my slumbers and the least of my movements?

Britten, who by the time he set this poem had experienced New York, thought this poem a 'very good impression of chaotic modern city life'; it was probably inspired by Rimbaud's visit to London in the 1870s. The savage parade is depicted in a kaleidoscope of images and the roar of the city dancing its Festival of the Night. At the end of this section, the music becomes calmer as the poet yearns for what Britten called 'a little peace'.

IIIa. Phrase

J'ai tendu des cordes de clocher à clocher; des guirlandes de fenêtre à fenêtre; des chaînes d'or d'étoile à étoile, et je danse.

IIIb. Antique

Gracieux fils de Pan! Autour de ton front couronné de fleurettes et de baies, tes yeux, des boules précieuses, remuent. Tachées de lie brune, tes joues se creusent. Tes crocs luisent. Ta poitrine ressemble à une cithare, des tintements circulent dans tes bras blonds. Ton cœur bat dans ce ventre où dort le double sexe. Promène-toi, la nuit, en mouvant doucement cette cuisse, cette seconde cuisse et cette jambe de gauche.

One of the complications in Britten's love-life in England was a young man called Wulff Scherchen whom the composer had met as a teenager – Britten, as Dorothy Parker said of Verlaine, was always chasing Rimbauds. *Antique* is dedicated to Scherchen. Britten conceived of the piece as a dance, and this is clear in performance. Over the low strings' pizzicato – which evoke the 'cithare' or ancient lyre – the first violins enter in stages. Britten seems, at this point in the piece, to want to present sexuality in a relatively positive light.

IV. Royauté

Un beau matin, chez un peuple fort doux, un homme et une femme superbes criaient sur la place publique: 'Mes amis, je veux qu'elle soit reine!' 'Je veux être reine!' Elle riait et tremblait. Il parlait aux amis de révélation, d'épreuve terminée. Ils se pâmaient l'un contre l'autre.

En effet, ils furent rois toute une matinée, où les tentures carminées se relevèrent sur les maisons, et tout l'après-midi, où ils s'avancèrent du côté des jardins de palmes.

In this poem we are back on the city streets, where a possibly mad, but happy couple announce that they wish to be king and queen. As Rimbaud tells us, and Britten's affectionate parody of ceremonial music makes clear, their wish, or delusion, becomes reality – for a whole day.

V. Marine

*Les chars d'argent et de cuivre,
Les proues d'acier et d'argent,
Battent l'écume,
Soulèvent les souches des ronces.
Les courants de la lande,
Et les ornières immenses du reflux,
Filent circulairement vers l'est,
Vers les piliers de la forêt,
Vers les fûts de la jetée,
Dont l'angle est heurté par des tourbillons de lumière.*

Marine is a tour-de-force of energy and evocative scoring, where Britten uses numerous inventive touches to bring to life Rimbaud's imagery of the constant motion of the sea and its 'whirlpools of light'.

IIIa. Phrase

I have hung ropes from bell-tower to bell-tower;
garlands from window to window; golden chains from
star to star – and I dance.

IIIb. Antique

Oh, gracious son of Pan! Thine eyes – those precious globes – glance slowly; thy brow is crowned with little flowers and berries. Thy hollow cheeks are spotted with brown lees; thy tusks shine. Thy breast resembles a cithara; tinkling sounds run through thy blond arms. Thy heart beats in that womb where sleeps Hermaphrodite. Walk at night, softly moving this thigh, this other thigh, this left leg.

IV. Royalty

On a beautiful morning, in a country inhabited by a mild and gentle people, a man and woman of proud presence stood in the public square and cried aloud: 'My friends, it is my wish that she should be queen.' She laughed and trembled. To his friends he spoke of a revelation, of a test concluded. Swooningly they leaned one against the other.

And during one whole morning, whilst the crimson hangings were displayed on the houses, and during the whole afternoon, while they advanced towards the palm gardens, they were indeed kings.

V. Marine

Chariots of silver and of copper
Prows of steel and of silver
Beat the foam,
Lift the stems of the brambles.
The streams of the barren parts
And the immense tracks of the ebb
Flow circularly towards the east,
Towards the pillars of the forest,
Towards the piles of the jetty,
Against whose angles are hurled whirlpools of light.

Text & Translation

VI. Interlude

J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage.

For this appearance of the 'motto' Britten writes a sober interlude, which, as he told Sophie Wyss, was 'a reproof for the exaggeratedly ecstatic mood of *Marine*'.

VI. Interlude

I alone hold the key to this savage parade.

VII. Being Beateous

Devant une neige, un Etre de beauté de haute taille. Des sifflements de mort et des cercles de musique sourde font monter, s'élargir et trembler comme un spectre ce corps adoré; des blessures écarlates et noires éclatent dans les chairs superbes. – Les couleurs propres de la vie se foncent, dansent, et se dégagent autour de la vision, sur le chantier. – Et les frissons s'élèvent et grondent, et la saveur forcenée de ces effets se chargeant avec les sifflements mortels et les rauques musiques que le monde, loin derrière nous, lance sur notre mère de beauté, – elle recule, elle se dresse. Oh! nos os sont revêtus d'un nouveau corps amoureux.

O la face cendrée, l'écusson de crin, les bras de cristal! le canon sur lequel je dois m'abattre à travers la mêlée des arbres et de l'air léger!

VII. Being Beateous

Against a background of snow is a beautiful Being of majestic stature. Death is all round her, and whistling, dying breaths, and circles of hollow music, cause this adored body to rise, to swell, and to tremble like a spectre. Scarlet and black wounds break out on the superb flesh. Colours which belong to life deepen, dance, and separate themselves around the vision, upon the path. Shudders rise and mutter; and the mad savour all of these things, heavy with dying groans and raucous music, is hurled at our Mother of Beauty by the world far behind us. She recoils, she stands erect. Oh rapture! Our bones are covered anew with a body of love.

Ah! The pale ashen face, the mane-like hair, the arms of crystal. And there is the cannon upon which I must cast myself through the noise of trees and light winds.

This, one of the first songs written in the set, is the most explicitly sexual in its imagery of tumescence and shuddering, of wounds appearing on swelling flesh, and the mention of the 'raucous music of the world' reminds us of the second song, *Villes*. The use of pizzicato recalls the dance of *Antique*, a song dedicated to a love that was passing; this song, with what Donald Mitchell has described as 'its feeling of spaciousness and long farewell' was dedicated to Peter Pears with whom Britten would spend the rest of his life.

VIII. Parade

Des drôles très solides. Plusieurs ont exploité vos mondes. Sans besoins, et peu pressés de mettre en oeuvre leurs brillantes facultés et leur expérience de vos consciences. Quels hommes mûrs! Des yeux hébétés à la façon de la nuit d'été, rouges et noirs, tricolores, d'acier piqué d'étoiles d'or; des facies déformés, plombés, blémis, incendiés; des enrouements folâtres! La démarche cruelle des oripeaux! – Il y a quelques jeunes –

O le plus violent Paradis de la grimace enragée!... Chinois, Hottentots, Bohémiens, niais, hyènes, Molochs, vieilles démences, démons sinistres, ils mêlent les tours populaires, maternels, avec les poses et les tendresses bestiales. Ils interpréteraient des pièces nouvelles et des chansons 'bonnes filles'. Maîtres jongleurs, ils transforment le lieu et les personnes et usent de la comédie magnétique.

J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage.

VIII. Parade

These are very sturdy rogues. Many of them have made use of you and your like. Without wants, they are in no hurry to put into action their brilliant faculties and their experience of your consciences. What mature men! Here are sottish eyes out of a midsummer night's dream – red, black, tricoloured; eyes of steel spotted with golden stars; deformed faces, leaden-hued, livid, enflamed; wanton hoarseness. They have the ungainly bearing of rag dolls. There are youths among them –

It is a violent Paradise of mad grimaces...Chinese, Hottentots, gypsies, simpletons, hyænas, Molochs, old insanities, sinister demons, they alternate popular or maternal tricks with bestial poses and caresses. They can interpret modern plays or songs of a simple naivety at will. Master jugglers, they transform places and people, and make use of magnetic comedy.

I alone hold the key to this savage parade.

Parade, however, is distinctly sinister in its evocation of 'rogues, who have exploited your world', their eyes the same red and black as the sexual wounds of *Being Beateous* indulging in 'bestial poses and caresses' in this 'violent paradise'. While Britten excised a line about 'catamites...rigged out in revolting luxury', the identification of sexuality with corruption and violence is clear.

IX. Départ

*Assez vu. La vision s'est rencontrée à tous les airs.
Assez eu. Rumeurs de villes, le soir, et au soleil, et
toujours.*

*Assez connu. Les arrêts de la vie. – O Rumeurs et
Visions!*

Départ dans l'affection et le bruit neufs!

IX. Departure

Sufficiently seen. – The vision has been met in all
guises.

Sufficiently heard. – Rumours of the town at night, in
the sunlight, at all times.

Sufficiently known. – Life's decrees. Oh Rumours!
Oh Vision!

Departure in the midst of love and new rumours.

The poet, and composer, have 'seen enough' and experienced enough of the world's noise, and resolve to depart in 'new affection'. Despite what Peter Pears described as 'jaded nostalgia' in the final section, *Les Illuminations* is a watershed work for Britten. As musicologist Arnold Whittall puts it, this is one of the 'first works in which maturity as well as mastery are unmistakably present.'

Gordon Kerry © 2002

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About the Music

Johannes Brahms

(1833-1897)

Symphony No.1 in C minor, Op.68

Un poco sostenuto – Allegro

Andante sostenuto

Un poco allegretto e grazioso

Adagio – Più andante – Allegro non troppo, ma con brio

The first symphony was a long time coming, largely as a result of Brahms' paralysing stage-fright when contemplating genres in which the 'giants' – especially Beethoven – had produced their masterpieces. That is not to say that Brahms had not wanted to compose symphonies, and in the early 1850s was persuaded by Robert and Clara Schumann to turn a D minor sonata for two pianos into such a work; the results have not survived. It was at this time, though, that he began making sketches for what would, eventually, become the first movement of the First Symphony. In 1862, Clara Schumann was surprised to receive a package from Brahms containing 'the first movement of a symphony'. She wrote to Joseph Joachim that it was 'rather strong ... but full of wonderful beauties' and noted that 'the themes are treated with a mastery that is becoming more and more characteristic of him'. Despite the enthusiasm of such colleagues, however, the movement (at this stage it was only the *Allegro* section) remained an unfinished torso for well over a decade. The Symphony was only completed and first performed in 1876 – the same year as the first production of the completed *Ring* cycle.

Its impact was such that conductor Hans von Bülow only half-jokingly referred to it as Beethoven's Tenth. It is certainly



Beethovenian in scale, and follows the blueprint of such works as Beethoven's Third, Fifth and Ninth Symphonies in tracing an epic journey from a state of turbulent conflict to one of triumphant resolution.

Clara Schumann may have found the ideas in the 1862 sketch 'strong', but they were immeasurably strengthened when Brahms added the overwhelming slow introduction where, over the implacable pounding of the timpani, the full orchestra sounds a harmony that threatens to come apart under the force of its internal tension. That tension is not resolved by a contrasting chirpy *Allegro*: the remainder of the movement continues to depict a compelling, but abstract, drama of musical processes in Brahms' now fully-formed orchestral sound.

The *Andante* shows an equally Brahmsian, if completely different, sound world. After the confused alarms of the previous movement, the rhetoric is much more subdued, and the scoring lighter, allowing for brief, sylvan wind solos and passages of lush string writing. But the retreat from the Romantic *Sturm und Drang* of

the previous movement is by no means complete, and the music is occasionally taken over in an impassioned outburst. The closing section of the movement, though, is quietly gleaming, with a violin solo and the soft wind chords with which Brahms often concludes a piece. Brahms scholar Karl Geiringer writes that that the *Allegretto* (not a conventional **scherzo**) ‘seems to smile through its tears’, though it too has moments of frank emotionalism. Conductor Hermann Levi felt that the inner movements were serenade-like, but as such they provide respite between the two, titanic outer movements. Following the Beethovenian model meant that Brahms had to create a finale that balanced if not outweighed the opening movement. Brahms’ solution was essentially that of Beethoven in the finale of the Ninth Symphony – though not, of course, using voices: both begin with seemingly unrelated passages that return to a state of uncertainty and move through various musical fields before discovering the thematic centre of the piece. Brahms begins with a sombre *Adagio* introduction that, like the first movement’s, features harmony that moves almost painfully from chord to nearby chord. This gives rise to fragmentary, more troubled music, which in turn is interrupted by a long horn melody; this tune had personal significance for Brahms, in that he wrote

it out, with some home-made verse, on a card sent to Clara Schumann when they were estranged. It is joined by the trombones (making their first appearance in the work), that suggests a sudden view of a spacious landscape. Only now does Brahms bring in his theme, a piece of pure and simple **diatonicism**. Brahms, who never suffered fools, would snap at people who noted the similarity of the theme to Beethoven’s ‘Freude’ tune: ‘Any jackass can see that!’ And of course it may be a Beethovenian tune but its scoring, and the development to which it is subjected, are purely and masterfully Brahmsian.

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FIRST PERFORMANCE:

4 November 1876, Karlsruhe.
Otto Dessoff, conductor.

FIRST WASO PERFORMANCE:

11 August 1944. Ernest J. Roberts,
conductor.

MOST RECENT PERFORMANCE:

20-21 August 2021. Asher Fisch,
conductor.

INSTRUMENTATION:

two each of flutes, oboes, clarinets,
bassoons and contrabassoon; four
horns, two trumpets, three trombones;
timpani and strings.

Glossary

Diatonicism – music which conforms to a key, without discordant notes.

Scherzo – literally, a joke; the term generally refers to a movement in a fast, light triple time which may involve whimsical, startling or playful elements.

Sturm und Drang – A movement in German letters, reflected in the other arts, that reached its highpoint in the 1770s. It is most easily defined by its artistic aims: to frighten, to stun, to overcome with emotion.

West Australian Symphony Orchestra

Engage | Excite | Experience | Educate

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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About the Venue: Winthrop Hall

Nestled within the stunning grounds of UWA, Winthrop Hall's majestic architecture provides the perfect backdrop for your WASO experience.

Public Transport

Buses to UWA are frequent, covering routes from the City of Perth, Subiaco, Morley and more. Visit transperth.wa.gov.au for up-to-date information and to find the best bus route for you.

Accessibility

- **Lift access:** Patrons may access the auditorium via a lift from ground level, which is located on the south-west corner of the building. An accessible toilet is also located next to the lift. Please note, Winthrop Hall gallery seating is not accessible by lift.
- **Wheelchair seating:** These are available on booking, and are located on the outside ends of the rows.

If you have booked standard tickets and your accessibility needs have changed, please advise the WASO team by emailing boxoffice@waso.com.au or calling (08) 9326 0000.

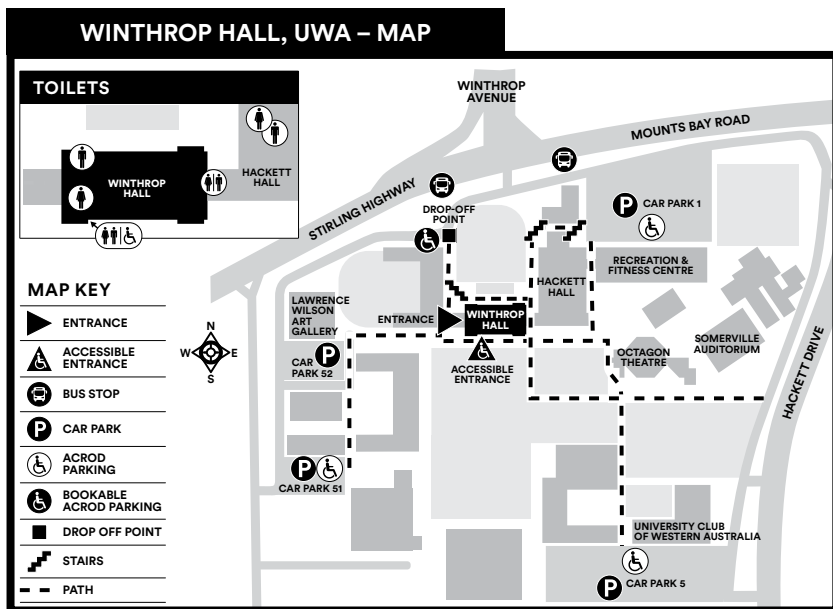
Parking

Parking at UWA is free every day after 5pm and all day on weekends. Please check parking signs on arrival. The closest car parks to Winthrop Hall are all within a 3 to 5 minute walk to the venue. ACROD parking bays are located at Car Parks 1, 5 and 51, and are subject to availability.

A limited number of **pre-arranged Accessible Parking Bays** are available to ACROD Parking Permit holders by request through the WASO Ticketing & Customer Service team. Simply call (08) 9326 0000 at least seven days prior to each performance to request a bay.

Having a meal before the show? Car Park 5 is the preferred parking location for patrons who have pre-concert dinner reservations at The University Club of WA.

Find your best parking option on the map below.



Schools & Education



NextGen: Explore ATAR & more

Earlier this year, WASO, in collaboration with the University of Western Australia (UWA) Conservatorium of Music, delivered an inspiring educational concert at the Heath Ledger Theatre at the State Theatre Centre of WA. Designed specifically for secondary school music students, this annual *NextGen: Explore ATAR & More* performance offered a unique side-by-side experience, pairing WASO musicians with emerging talent from the Conservatorium.

The event provided an in-depth exploration of key works from the ATAR Music syllabus, combining performance with guided analysis to deepen students' musical understanding. Under the baton of WASO Associate Conductor, Jen Winley, and with engaging insights from presenter Dr. Ashley Smith, the concert began with Rossini's vibrant Overture to *The Barber of Seville*.

The program then delved into three set works from the ATAR syllabus: the first movement of Amy Beach's *Gaelic Symphony*, a captivating performance of Haydn's Trumpet Concerto (third movement) with WASO Principal Trumpet Jenna Smith, and Smetana's evocative *Má Vlast: Vltava* (The Moldau).

Through live musical demonstrations and thoughtful commentary, students were guided through the structural, historical, and stylistic elements of each piece. This immersive experience not only enriched their theoretical understanding but also honed their aural and analytical skills — making it a valuable learning opportunity for all in attendance.

The concert reinforced WASO's ongoing commitment to music education in Western Australia and celebrated the vibrant connection between professional and emerging musicians.

2025 Annual Giving Appeal

Thank you for joining us on the journey



Samantha Wickramasinghe (far left) and Allan Meyer (far right) - Annual Giving Ambassadors with Janet Holmes à Court AC.

As we eclipse the end of the financial year, we wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the incredible generosity we have felt for our Annual Giving Appeal this year.

Our Annual Giving program, a cherished tradition of philanthropy, plays a central role to underpinning the Orchestra's everyday activities. This program remains one of the most impactful ways music lovers can demonstrate their support and it continues to be a bedrock of our financial foundation.

Giving annually is one of the most significant ways you can play a part in our present, paving the way to an even brighter future.

We remain truly thankful for the daily dedication shown by our extraordinary donors. Every gift, no matter its size, leaves a lasting impact and, as ticket prices continue to cover only half of our rising operational costs, the generosity of this community will only become more important in the years to come.

Thank you for your unwavering support. With you by our side, we can dream even bigger.

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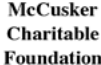
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