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Symphonic Dances

THE SYDNEY YOUTH ORCHESTRA
Sun 26 June, 2pm
Verbruggen Hall,
Sydney Conservatorium of Music

THE
SYDNEY
YOUTH
ORCHESTRA



Welcome to Symphonic Dances

The music from West Side Story is one my favourite pieces of orchestral music. It is magnificent, dynamic, surprising, and timeless.

How appropriate that it is among the music we will hear today, as we celebrate and behold the final conducting performance of Leonard Weiss, our inaugural Create NSW Conducting Fellow.

I thank Leonard for his immense contributions to SYO. From being unphased by pandemic restrictions at the commencement of his fellowship in July 2021, to leading The.SYO at SYO Activate, to conducting our Xbox 20th Anniversary recording, and throughout so much more, Leonard has been a true professional and a rare talent. It is a privilege for SYO – an organisation devoted to the artistic development of young people – to be able to add value to Leonard's career and prepare him for the next stage of his journey.

I thank Create NSW and the Arts Minister for supporting the need to build mid-career conductors and establishing this Fellowship. The future of orchestral music in this country hinges on such opportunities and we are lucky that Create NSW trusts SYO with providing formative artistic experiences on the ground.

With Leonard, we also celebrate Australian music and musicians. Back in 2015, Ella Macens was the composer in residence for SYO. Today, we hear her work 'The Space Between Stars.' Despite being relatively new it has already been widely lauded, putting this young Australian composer firmly on the map as an emerging talent to watch.

We are very privileged to have Claire Edwardes OAM as our guest soloist, an SYO Alumna who has made unique and significant contributions to Australian music, and indeed will give an unforgettable performance in Kevin Puts' 'Marimba Concerto.'

And of course, I welcome our young musicians from The.SYO, the driving force of this performance and the reason why SYO exists. I thank each of you in the audience today for the support you have shown to them. Together we set out to create an abundant future of orchestral music in this country through our young people. How exciting it is to be in a privileged position to hear the future revealed, right now through every passing note.

Mia Patoulios

Chief Executive Officer
Sydney Youth Orchestras

Symphonic Dances

THE. SYDNEY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Sun 26 June, 2pm
Verbruggen Hall
Sydney Conservatorium of Music

Leonard Weiss, Conductor
Claire Edwardes OAM, Marimba

REPERTOIRE

Ella Macens
The Space Between Stars

Kevin Puts
Marimba Concerto

Leonard Bernstein
West Side Story: Symphonic Dances

Sydney Youth Orchestras acknowledges the traditional owners of the land which we work, rehearse, gather and perform; the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. We would like to pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and thank them for their rich musical traditions that continue to echo to this day.



The Musicians

First Violin

Olivia Kowalik*

Suraj Nagaraj

Felicity Yau

Julia Lim

Klara Decker-Stewart

Erin Jee

Nurhan Solbudak

William Carraro

Alex Paterson

Hannah Kim

Second Violin

Jamie Krockenberger**

Ethan Powell

Natalie Liu

Sophia Juarez

Newton Cheang

Jackson Boden

Joshua Kok

Lawrence Yuen

Kimberley Santos

Sam Silva

Viola

Julian Kwok**

Liaam Rao

Billie Rose Clow

Aleksei Prakhiy

Alice Moon

Asher Tarbox

Cello

Javier Mobellan

Karen Cortez

John Wu

Rory Marshall-McClelland

Charlotte He

Leo Apollonov

Cadence Ing

Elden Loomes

Belvina Bai

Lucy Blomfield

Bahar Hakimjavadi

Bass

Michael McNamara**

Gideon Dionysius

Flute

Yiting Wang**

Jennifer Ridgway

Matthew Bottaro

Oboe

Miriam Cooney**

Gahyun Lee

Alex Tsang

Clarinet

Robert Mackay**

Gordon Richter

Zachary Donoghoe

Aiden Love

Saxophone

Paige Gullifer

Bassoon

Hayden Burge**

Dylan Roberts

Jihyun (Bonna) Yoon

Horn

Benjamin Hans-Rosenbaum

Bridget Darby

Gabriel Don

Laura Duque Cash

Sarah Bernard

Trumpet

Elizabeth Dawson**

Toby Rands

Harry James

Trombone

Cooper Rands**

James McNaughton

Bass Trombone

Harry Macpherson**

Tuba

Michael Welch

Percussion

Owen Bloomfield**

Grace Lee

Alexandra (Rosie) Bennett

Alice Zhang

Ruhani Dillon

Harp

Paul Nicolaou**

Piano/Celeste

Dominic Hart

*** Concertmaster**

**** Principal**

For more information on The Sydney Youth Orchestra musicians and principal biographies, visit www.thesyo.com.au/the-orchestra/



CONDUCTOR

Leonard Weiss

Leonard Weiss is an Australian conductor and educator. As the inaugural recipient of the 2021 NSW Orchestral Conducting Fellowship, he has had the opportunity to work closely with Sydney Youth Orchestras over the past year, culminating in the exhilarating program that you will experience this afternoon.

Leonard was recently appointed as the 2022 New Zealand Assistant Conductor in Residence. The only such full-time position in the southern hemisphere, this unique opportunity sees him work regularly as conductor with all major orchestras in NZ. He is also a participant by invitation in the 2022 Australian Conducting Academy.

Leonard was the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's 2020-21 BSO-Peabody Fellow and studied conducting with Marin Alsop at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. As an educator Leonard has taught at the Australian National University Open School of Music and at Canberra Grammar School.

Leonard's accolades include the 2020 Mr and Mrs Gerald Frank New Churchill Fellowship and an Ars Musica Australis Arts Fellowship. He was named the 2016 Young Canberra Citizen of the Year for Youth Arts and Multimedia, and an ACT

Finalist for 2016 Young Australian of the Year. For more information, visit www.LeonardWeiss.com.



“What you hear on stage today is the culmination of many hours of work in rehearsals, behind the scenes, and in the years of skilled practice by every individual on stage. I would like to acknowledge and thank everyone at SYO; in particular for their tireless support, Mia Patoullos, James Pensini and Nick Munro; as well as Casey Green and Christopher Lawrence for their artistic vision. This conducting fellowship stands alone in the Australian landscape, so equal appreciation is offered to Create NSW for their initiative and ongoing support of this position. I'm lucky to share this program with two great artists and would like to thank Claire Edwardes and Ella Macens for their boundless and joyful energy, and for sharing my vision to champion new music.

Lastly, my greatest appreciation goes to every musician who makes music at SYO, and in particular The SYO musicians who have shared their enthusiasm, talent and dedication with me over the past year. I'm excited to see you all flourish in your professional careers and can't wait to see what is in store for SYO's 50th birthday in 2023!



SOLOIST

Claire Edwardes OAM

From the set of Play School to the mainstage at the Sydney Opera House, Claire Edwardes OAM is 'the sorceress of percussion' (City News, Canberra).

The only Australian to win the 'APRA Art Music Award for Excellence by an Individual' three times, Claire leaps between her role as Artistic Director of Ensemble Offspring (2019 Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award winners) and concerto performances with all of the Australian and New Zealand orchestras plus numerous European orchestras.

Add her genre - spanning solo concerts, teaching at the Sydney Conservatorium, a broad spectrum of collaborations, premiering hundreds of new works by composers, to passionately advocating for equity in classical music through projects such as 'Rhythms of Change' and Ngarra - Burria: First Peoples Composers and you begin to appreciate her astonishing energy.

Perhaps her most significant contribution, beyond her endless quest for excellence in performance, is in breaking down the barriers between art music and audiences, through her enthusiasm for bringing new music to unexpected places - including bowling clubs and old power stations.

Recently described in The Age as

“prodigiously talented Australian... Edwardes' is an invigorating musical life force,”

Claire is a national treasure in the Australian art music scene.



Ellen Macens

THE SPACE BETWEEN STARS (2008)

The Space Between Stars started its compositional journey at the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra's inaugural National Women Composer's Development Program. During this two-year program, the piece was workshopped with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra under the guidance of Australian composers Maria Grenfell and Matthew Hindson. The premiere of The Space Between Stars took place in 2018 at the Sydney Conservatorium Music (SCM), performed by the SCM Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Eduardo Diazmunoz.

“When I began composing this work, I imagined the listener lying in an open field- the earth in total stillness. I imagined them gazing up at the night sky, watching as it glowed with millions of bright shining stars. I pondered the question, 'What is the space between stars? Is this space empty? Is this space silent? Could this space be charged with the energy of those who are no longer with us?' Through this piece I wanted to convey the energy and magic of our night sky, and explore the power I believe it holds. I would like to dedicate this piece to my grandfather Arturs who passed away whilst the work was being composed. May you rest peacefully among the stars.”

The Space Between Stars invites us in with a pure, transparent texture in the strings. A series of melodies, introduced by the oboe, trumpet and trombone, appear and sparkle for a moment before falling back into the texture. A string melody emerges, supported by woven clarinet lines before it is taken up by the brass in a singing chorale. After melodic statements from the oboe and bassoon, the music pauses- a lone cor anglais melody sings out from the silence.

From here the music once again builds momentum, with rich and full melodies in the strings, increasing in bright intensity. As the atmosphere beings to cool, the music drops in range until it swells and rumbles away- leaving in its wake a space for silence and contemplation.



Kevin Puts

MARIMBA CONCERTO (1997)

I. "...terrific sun on the brink"
(Flowing)

II. "...into the quick of losses"
(Broad and Deliberate)

III. "...logarithms, exponents, the damnedest of metaphors"
(Presto non troppo).

Between the years of 1767 and 1791, Mozart wrote 27 piano concertos, each crafted with distinct individuality, yet linked through stylistic and formal similarities. 206 years later, in October 1997, American composer Kevin Puts premiered his Marimba Concerto with the Vermont Symphony orchestra, performed by Makoto Nakura under the baton of Kate Tamarkin. Co-commissioned by the Vermont Symphony Orchestra and the Kobe Ensemble of Japan, this piece is one of eight concertos written by Puts for solo wind, string and percussion instruments.

With a distance spanning over two centuries between their works, Kevin Puts credits the inspiration behind his Marimba Concerto to the piano concertos of W.A. Mozart. We hear this similarity at a macro level through the fast-slow-fast structure of the three movements, typical of Mozart's own classical concertos. Amidst form, the Marimba weaves in and out of the spotlight, with melodies that soar over the orchestral layers- interspersed with blended lines that dissolve into the orchestral texture. This balanced role



between
the
soloist and
ensemble

is not dissimilar to Mozart's own instrumentation, whereby the soloist blends into the orchestral texture almost as frequently as taking a solo musical role.

Each movement of the Marimba Concerto is subtitled with extracts from poetry written by Kevin Puts' Aunt, Fleda Brown. Movement one opens with a forward-flowing melody, joyful exclamations from the woodwind section decorating sustained melodic lines. The marimba soloist soon enters, joining the orchestra in conversation. A brilliant crescendo makes way for a cadenza from the Marimba soloist, before the conversation resumes with a final statement from the orchestra. A slow and serene string melody commences Movement 2, with a gentle and ruminating character that flows between orchestra and soloist. The third and final Movement opens with a pulsating rhythm that remains constant as woodwind lines bubble to the surface. The marimba soloist weaves in and out of this texture, building in speed and intensity until a series of bright, ecstatic chords propel us to the end.

Leonard Bernstein

WEST SIDE STORY: SYMPHONIC DANCES (1961)

Following his earlier successes on the Broadway stage with *On the Town*, *Wonderful Town*, and *Candide*, *West Side Story* soon became one of the best known works of Bernstein's oeuvre. Whilst the musical was premiered in 1957, the original idea behind *West Side Story* was conceived by Jerome Robbins- a musical retelling of Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet*, set within the context of a love affair between a Catholic boy and a Jewish girl. Alongside composer Leonard Bernstein and librettist Arthur Laurents, Robbins later adapted this idea to tell the story of a rivalry between two gangs in New York City.

One year following the premiere of *West Side Story*, in 1958, Bernstein's *Young People's Concert "What is American Music?"* detailed a distinct, individual style which was beginning to take form within American classical music. With a nod to older traditions of the Western classical canon, and a penchant for keeping abreast of musical innovation, Bernstein in *West Side Story* fuses elements the old and new.

In addition to the more modern influence of Jazz and Latin music heard in *West Side Story*, one element of the old style that Bernstein employs is his use of leitmotifs- short, recurring musical themes that herald the appearance of a certain character, or foreshadow events to come. One example heard in *West Side Story* is the leitmotif for violence, which consists simply of a tritone- a specific intervallic distance- that occurs in almost every musical theme of *West Side Story*.

The orchestral adaption of *West Side Story* was premiered in 1961. The title, *Symphonic Dances*, reveals Bernstein's ability to create music that can exist independently from the onstage action. The key to this adaptability lies in the word *Symphonic*. An orchestral symphony is typically built on a very simple set of musical material (motifs).

Bernstein's leitmotifs thus serve a dual function- on the one hand, they allude to the action happening onstage; on the other hand, they provide musical building blocks for a symphonic masterpiece.

The events of the storyline can be followed through the titles and subtext of each movement:

1. **Prologue**
'The growing rivalry between two teenage gangs – the Jets and the Sharks'
2. **'Somewhere'**
'In a visionary dance sequence, the two gangs are united in friendship'
3. **Scherzo**
'In the same dream, they break through the city walls and suddenly find themselves in a world of space, air and sun'
4. **Mambo**
'Reality again; competitive dance between the gangs'
5. **Cha-Cha**
'The star-crossed lovers (Tony and Maria) see each other for the first time, and dance together'
6. **Meeting Scene**
'Music accompanies their first spoken words'
7. **'Cool', Fugue**
An elaborate dance sequence in which the Jets practice controlling their hostility'
8. **Rumble**
'Climactic gang battle during which the two gang leaders are killed'
9. **Finale**
'Love music developing into a procession, which recalls, in tragic reality, the vision of 'Somewhere'

Leonard Bernstein

1918

Leonard Bernstein is born Louis Bernstein in Lawrence, Massachusetts

1935-41

Bernstein studies piano, conducting and orchestration at Harvard University, Tanglewood and the Curtis Institute of Music over a period of seven years.

1943

Bernstein is appointed Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic, making his debut in November that year

1944

Bernstein makes his debut as a composer for Broadway musicals, with the opening night of "On The Town" taking place at the Adelphi Theater, New York City.

1945-47

Appointed Music Director of the New York City Symphony Orchestra

1947

Bernstein's lifelong relationship with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra begins, conducting his first concert in Tel Aviv

1951

Appointed Head of the Orchestral Conducting program at Tanglewood

1954-73

Bernstein commences a concert and lecture series called the Omnibus program shortly followed by a second series, Young People's Concerts with the New York Philharmonic, both televised on the CBS Television Network.

1957

West Side Story is premiered on Broadway- a collaboration between Bernstein, Jerome Robbins, Arthur Laurents and Stephen Sondheim

1961

The orchestral music from West Side Story is adapted into "West Side Story: Symphonic Dances"

1958-69

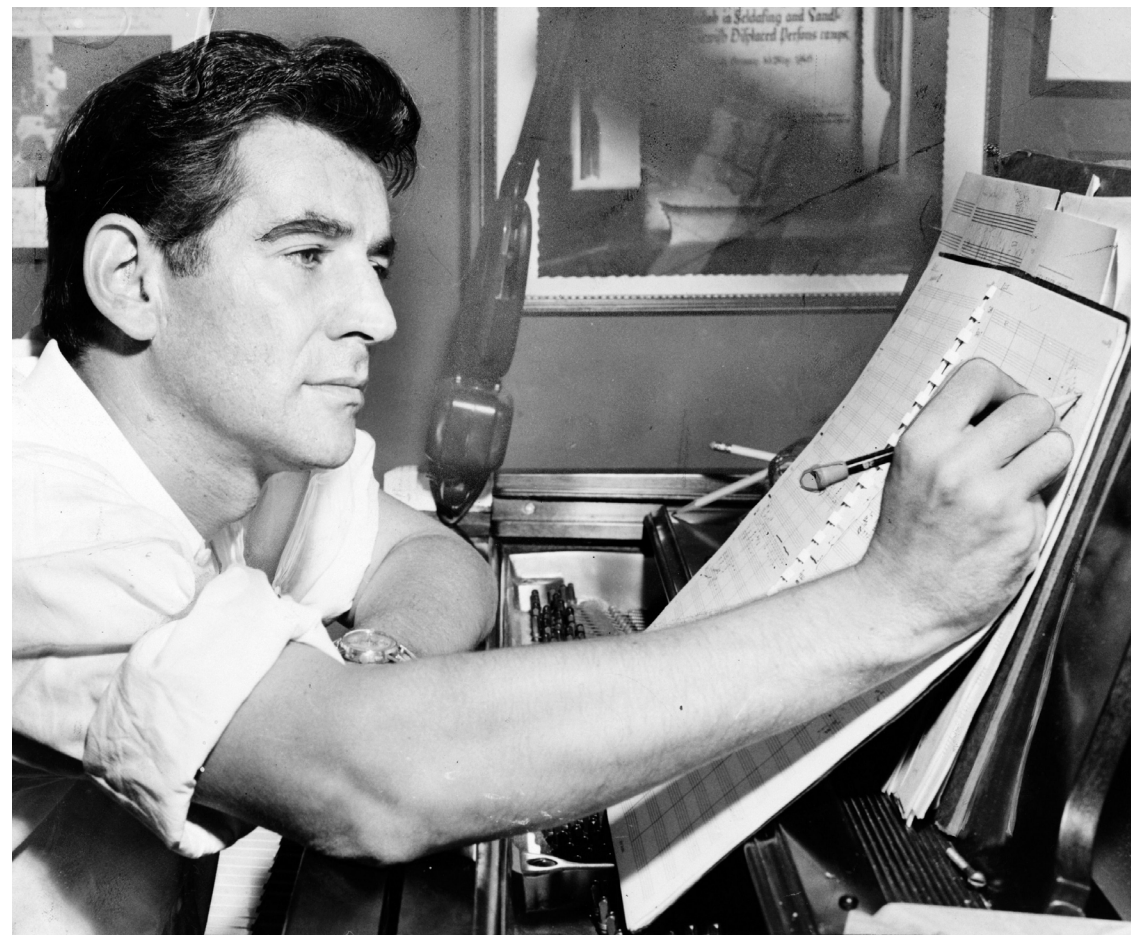
Becomes the Music Director of the New York Philharmonic

1973

Bernstein delivers his famed Harvard lecture series- these are later compiled digitally and published as The Unanswered Question

1990

Leonard Bernstein passes away in New York, at the age of 72



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