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Symphonie Fantastique

THE SYDNEY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Sat 9 April, 7pm

Verbruggen Hall

Sydney Conservatorium of Music

THE
SYDNEY
YOUTH
ORCHESTRA



It is a powerful thing to see this formidable youth orchestra on stage once again.

For young people especially, the future is dynamic and uncertain. The world is grappling with an ongoing pandemic. The climate is changing and global tensions are rising. Celebrities are rewarded despite amoral behaviour. Even real estate prices in the Metaverse rose 700% in 2021.

It's tough to keep the faith that art can make a difference. But in a way it does; there is so, so much hope to be found here, on stage tonight, in the hearts and minds of these bright future leaders. They come here voluntarily, to test themselves, to find spirit and connection in music, to learn and to have fun with their peers. That in itself is a balm for the soul. The commitment, drive and passion the Sydney Youth Orchestra displays continues to humble and uplift me.

In this concert, we welcome back my dear friend and true musical genius Max McBride to the podium to conduct Berlioz's monumental *Symphonie Fantastique*. But before that, we welcome and celebrate new conductor Aija Draguns in her Sydney Youth Orchestras debut.

She will conduct the World Premiere of a newly commissioned work by the powerhouse composer Alice Chance, titled *COLOURBURST*.

The support that you have given these musicians and the Sydney Youth Orchestra this last little while has been incredible, impactful and hasn't gone unnoticed. Thank you. Please join us for their next performance on Sunday 26 June here in Verbrughen Hall at 2:00pm. The program includes: *The Space Between Stars* by Ella Macens; the dreamy *Puts' Marimba Concerto* featuring Claire Edwardes and *West Side Story: Symphonic Dances* by Leonard Bernstein. All conducted by our incredible 2021 Create NSW Conducting Fellow, (and another Leonard) Leonard Weiss.

To the Sydney Youth Orchestra musicians, thank you for reaffirming for me that the world is good; have a blast and enjoy this celebration of you.

Casey Green
Head of Artistic Planning

Symphonie Fantastique

THE SYDNEY YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Sat 9 APRIL, 7pm
Verbrughen Hall
Sydney Conservatorium of Music

Repertoire

Alice CHANCE
*COLOURBURST**

Hector BERLIOZ
Symphonie Fantastique, Op. 14

*World Premiere

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 Violins

Olivia Kowalik*
Suraj Nagaraj
Felicity Yau
Julia Lim
Klara Decker-Stewart
Erin Jee
Nurhan Solbudak
William Carraro
Hannah Kim
Alex Paterson

Second Violins

Jamie Krockenberger
Ethan Powell
Natalie Liu
Sophia Juarez
Newton Cheang
Jackson Boden
Joshua Kok
Lawrence Yuen
Kimberley Santos
Sam Silva

Violas

Julian Kwok
Liaam Rao
Billie Rose Clow
Alice Moon
Asher Tarbox

Cellos

Alisdair Guiney
Javier Mobellan
Karen Cortez
John Wu
Rory Marshall-McClelland
Charlotte He
Leo Apollonov
Cadence Ing
Elden Loomes
Belvina Bai
Lucy Blomfield
Bahar Hakimjavadi

Double Basses

Michael McNamara
Bryton Johnson
Gideon Dionysius

Flutes

Yiting Wang
Jennifer Ridgway (Piccolo)

Oboes

Miriam Cooney
Gahyun Lee (Cor Anglais)

Clarinets

Robert Mackay
Gordon Richter

Bassoons

Hayden Burge
Dylan Roberts
Jihyun (Bonna) Yoon
Mun Joon Teo

Horns

Bryn Arnold
Benjamin Hans-Rosenbaum
Bridget Darby
Gabriel Don
Laura Duque Cash

Trumpets

Elizabeth Dawson
Harry James
Toby Rands
Amy Fox

Trombones

Cooper Rands
James McNaughton

Bass Trombone

Harry Macpherson

Tubas

Michael Welch
Dominic Lukin

Percussion

Owen Bloomfield
Grace Lee
Alexandra (Rosie) Bennett
Buddy Lovett
Jack Peggie

Harps

Paul Nicolaou
Isabella Rahme

*Concertmaster
Principal

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

CONDUCTOR

Max McBride

Max McBride is a well respected musician having found success on the concert stage and as an educator. He began his professional career in 1969 gaining recognition as a double bassist when he became the youngest full time member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. In 1973 he gained the position of co-principal of the bass section.

After two study leaves in Austria where he studied double bass with world-renowned Ludwig Streicher and conducting with Otmar Suitner, he returned to Australia in 1979 to take up the position of Principal Double Bass with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. He toured extensively with them in Australia as well as in Europe, the United States and South East Asia. He also became the regular bass player of the Australia Ensemble and the Brandenburg Orchestra, performing most of the standard repertoire which includes bass as well as less familiar works.

Other significant appearances were with Kathy Selby and Friends; Pinkas Zuckerman for Melbourne Summer Music; several solo performances with

cellist David Pereira and viola player Irena Morozov; a concert for Sydney's Mostly Mozart Festival in 1997 with the Korean cellist Young Chang Cho and regular appearances at the Townsville International Chamber Music Festival between 1993 and 2012.

In 1992 Max took up a full-time teaching position at the Canberra School of Music. In 1994 he was appointed Lecturer in conducting. In 2001 he was promoted to Senior Lecturer in Double Bass. In 2009 Max left his full time position but has continued to teach double bass on a part time basis.

Max's students have held positions in the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Orchestra, Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, Ensemble Modern, at Penn State University, as well as other teaching institutions.

Max has held the positions of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of The Sydney Youth Orchestra



CONDUCTOR

Aija Draguns



Aija Draguns is a Sydney-based emerging conductor, composer, and arranger. She has a special passion for composing and directing choral music. She aims to captivate audiences with her emotive music, which is largely influenced by her Latvian heritage.

Born in 1999, Aija studied piano and saxophone, and sung in various choirs and ensembles in the Latvian community. Aija attended the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, completing a Bachelor of Music (Composition) in 2020, and a Bachelor of Music Studies (Composition Honours) in 2021, studying under composers Paul Stanhope and Daniel Rojas. It was at university where Aija found her love for choral music, singing in the Conservatorium's chamber choir. She workshopped, premiered, and conducted various compositions and arrangements with the university choir, later co-founding her own student composer choir, Ad Lib. From choral directing, Aija began studying orchestral conducting under Elizabeth Scott, John Lynch and George Ellis, working as Ellis' conducting assistant between 2020-21. Aija now works under director Sam Weller as part of Ensemble Apex's orchestral conducting fellowship for 2021-22. Aija also freelance conducts school bands and community choirs, including the Sydney Latvian choir, recently

directing the combined choir for the Australian Latvian Arts Festival concert: The Music of Ēriks Ešēnavds. She also directs the choir and band program at the yearly Latvian Summer camp (Annas Ziedares Vasaras Vidusskolu) in Adelaide.

Aija's compositions have been programmed by Sydney Philharmonia choir (Vox) and orchestra, Sydney Conservatorium chamber and big choirs, Konzertprojekt, Trinity Grammar School choir, Sydney Children's choirs (Gondwana), Coro Innominata, the Australian Latvian Cultural Festival, The House that Dan Built, and Melbourne Latvian choir (Daina). She also works as an orchestral arranger, writing for "Queen Orchestrated" and "David Bowie Orchestrated" shows, performed around Australia.

Aija has most recently been commissioned for a new children's opera ("Max and Moritz") to be performed by Musgrove Opera at the Sydney Opera House in August 2022.

Musical Notes



Hector BERLIOZ

Symphonie Fantastique, Op. 14

Hector Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique is still just as wild, magnificent and bizarre to audiences today as it was on the night of its premiere in 1830. The first of four symphonies by Hector Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique set the precedent for the composer's programmatic approach to symphonic composition. Based on the composer's turbulent relationship and infatuation with Shakespearean actress Harriet Smithson, Berlioz published detailed program notes to guide the audience through a series of surreal dreamscapes.

Rêveries- Passions (Reveries- Passions)

A series of musical ideas, each falling into fragmentation, open the scene. This is a musical representation of the 'vague des passions' (vagueness of passions) which plague the mind of the protagonist, an artist. It is within this swirling milieu of unfinished themes that that the *idée fixe* is first introduced- a theme representing the object of the protagonist's affection. This motif is to recur many times throughout the work.

"The author imagines that a young musician, troubled by that moral disease that a well-known author has called the 'vague des passions' (vagueness of passions), sees for the first time a woman who embodies all the charms of the ideal person he has been dreaming of, and falls hopelessly in love with her. Strangely, this beloved image always appears in the artist's mind in association with a musical idea, which embodies the character of his beloved- passionate, yet noble and shy." (Hector Berlioz)."

Musical Notes

Un bal (A Ball)

Swirling colours and festivities set the scene of a Ball. Despite cheerful settings, unrest lies in the mind of the protagonist as the *idée fixe* is heard again in the winds.

“The artist finds himself in a serious of diverse situations- amidst the tumult of a festive party, in peaceful contemplation of the beauties of nature - but everywhere, in town, in the countryside, the beloved vision keeps haunting him, bringing trouble to his soul.”

Scène aux champs (Scene in the Fields)

In a scene of momentary peace, an oboe duet evokes the reedy sounds of shepherds' instruments, before the *idée fixe* returns and the melody takes on a life of its own. The shepherd's song reappears, now threatened by distant, foreboding thunder in the timpani.

“One evening in the countryside, he hears in the distance two shepherds playing a *ranz des vanches* [a Swiss herdsmen's song]. This pastoral duet, his surroundings, the quiet rustle of trees in the wind, certain hopes that he has recently entertained in his mind- all come together to create an unfamiliar calm in his heart, and give a more cheerful colour to his thoughts. He reflects upon his loneliness, and hopes he will soon be alone no longer... But what if she deceived him!... This mix of hope and fear, these ideas of happiness disturbed by darker thoughts, form the subject of the Adagio. At the end, one of the shepherds once again plays the *ranz des vaches*; the other no longer replies. The distant sound of thunder...solitude...silence.”

March au supplice (March to the Scaffold)

A slightly adapted version of the *Marche des Gardes* from Berlioz's unfinished opera *Les francs juges* (1826), the only notable difference between the fourth movement and the original march is the reappearance of the *idée fixe*.

“He dreams... that he is condemned to death, led to the scaffold, and is witnessing his own execution. The procession advances to the sound of a march that is sometimes sombre and fierce, and sometimes brilliant and solemn, in which the muffled sound of heavy steps gives way without transition to the sound of loud outbursts. At the end of the march, the first four measures of the *idée fixe* recur like a last thought of love interrupted by the fatal blow [a series of chords in G Major].”

Songe d'une nuit du sabbat (Dream of a Witches' Sabbath)

“Strange noises, groans, bursts of laughter, far-off cries which other cries seems to answer. The beloved melody once again appears, but has now lost its character of nobility and shyness; it has become nothing more than a common dance tune, trivial and grotesque.”

By far the most chaotic and memorable of the five, in the final movement we are plunged straight into the depths of the *Witches' Sabbath*, where all manner of devilish creatures gather for the funeral of the protagonist. The Dance begins, piercing and shrill, in the winds, taken up by the Eb clarinet and piccolo. Excessive ornaments and extremes of pitch paint a picture of decadent, wild frivolity. A chilling *Dies Irae* is heard in the lower brass, and funerary bells ring, before the dance resumes, and a brilliant coda propels us to the very end.

Hector Berlioz

Hector Berlioz was born on December 11, 1803, into the family of Dr. Louis Berlioz and Marie-Antoinette-Josephine. Hector was the first of six children, three of whom died. He took music lessons at home from a visiting teacher and played flute and guitar. By age 16 he wrote a song for voice and guitar that was later reused for his "*Symphonie Fantastique*."

In 1821 Berlioz went to Paris to study medicine. His impressions of the Paris Opera performance of "*Iphigenie en Tauride*" by Christoph Willibald Gluck turned him on music forever. He spent more days at the Paris Conservatory than at the medical school. In 1823 he started writing articles on music for "*Le Corsaire*". He abandoned medicine for music and successfully performed his "*Messe Solennelle*" in 1825. After being "cursed" by his mother for abandoning medicine, his allowance from his father was reduced, and was forced to take such jobs as a choir singer to support

himself. In 1828 he heard the 3rd and 5th Symphonies by Ludwig van Beethoven and with that impression he read "Faust" by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. With such inspiration he started composing "*La Damnation de Faust*."

Berlioz fell in love with Irish actress Harriet Smithson and became so inspired that he finished the "*Symphonie Fantastique*." He premiered the work and met Franz Liszt at the premiere. They became good friends and Liszt transcribed the "*Symphonie Fantastique*" for piano. In 1830, after being rejected by Harriett Smithson, Berlioz became engaged to pianist Camille Moke. He went to Rome as the Prix de Rome Laureate and met Felix Mendelssohn and the Russian Mikhail Glinka. All three became friends for many years. At that time Berlioz received a letter from his fiancée that she had decided to marry M. Camille Pleyel, a wealthy piano maker in Paris. He decided to return to Paris and kill his fiancée, Mr. Playel and himself, but the long trip cooled him down. He stopped in Nice and composed "*Le Roi Lear*," inspired by William Shakespeare's play "*King Lear*".

Back in Paris he became friends with Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, Niccolò Paganini, Frédéric Chopin and George Sand. He met writer Ernest Legouve and

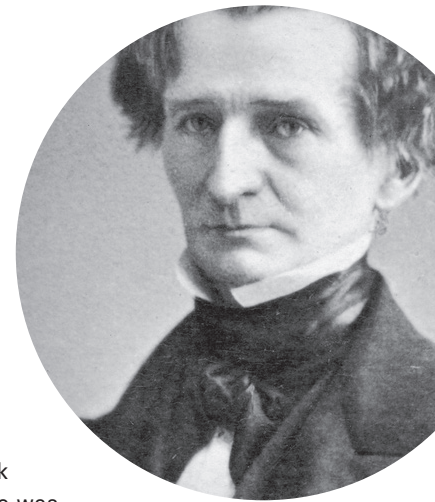
they became lifelong friends. In 1833 he finally married Harriet Smithson, with Liszt himself as one of his witnesses. Their son was born in 1834. Later he had a mistress, singer Marie Recio, whom he married after the death of Harriet Smithson in 1852.

Berlioz was an influential music critic. He wrote about Giacomo Meyerbeer, Mikhail Glinka, Paganini, Liszt and other musicians. From 1834-38 he completed the opera "*Benvenuto Cellini*". In 1838 his "*Harold en Italie*" was performed at the Paris Conservatoire. His friend Paganini was so impressed by that performance that he gave Berlioz 20,000 francs.

In the 1840s Berlioz toured in Europe and strengthened his friendship with Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Richard Wagner, Giacomo Meyerbeer and Robert Schumann. After extensive concertizing in Belgium and Germany, Berlioz returned to Paris. There his friend Mikhail Glinka, who lived in Paris for over a year, came up with the idea of concerts in Russia. Berlioz's joke "If the Emperor of Russia wants me, then I am up for sale" was taken seriously. Having Mikhail Glinka as a convert, Berlioz was invited to Russia twice, and each tour brought him financial gain beyond his expectation. His deep debts in Paris were all covered many times over after his first

concert tour of Russia in 1847. Back in Paris he was having difficulties in funding performances of his massive works and lived on his witty critical publications. His second tour of Russia in 1867 was so much more attractive that Berlioz turned down an offer of \$100,000 from American Steinway to perform in New York. In St. Petersburg Berlioz took special pleasure in performing with the first-rate orchestra of the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

His second Russian concert tour was a successful finale to his career and life. Berlioz never performed again. He died on March 8, 1869, and was laid to rest at the Cimetiere de Montmartre with his two wives.



Alice Chance

Q&A with Composer Alice Chance, interviewed by Jessica Scott, former Principal Flute, The Sydney Youth Orchestra

Jess: It's great to join you for a Zoom interview today- you're of course based in Paris at the moment! How has that been, moving to France from Australia?

Alice: Paris is such a melting pot of culture and beauty... there are so many people from all over the world. The food's amazing, and there are so many orchestras, concerts and concert halls. I'm excited to be here!

Jess: Do you have a favourite French food? (Or top three French dishes?)

Alice: In no particular order... number one would be a baguette de tradition, which is your average baguette. It's the best bread I've ever had! The second would be a dessert called a perle noire, which means black pearl. It's like an enlarged Ferrero Rocher; a ball of chocolate with meringue inside, chocolatey-coffee cream, and biscuity dark chocolate pieces on the outside. Number three would be soupe à l'oignon. Onion soup. It has croutons and cheese on top, and they put the whole dish in the oven before serving.

Jess: In just over a week from now, the Sydney Youth Orchestra will be premiering your new piece, COLOURBURST. Before we go into detail- how would you describe COLOURBURST in three words?

Alice: Pulsating. And...I want to say a word that's cheeky but in a really serious way. Cherious! For the third, I would choose a French word- ludique, which means playful.

Jess: What is the story behind the title of COLOURBURST?

Alice: The piece has had quite a few lives before this one. To take you through a journey of the piece- it started in lockdown with a conversation with Christopher Lawrence, when the orchestra couldn't rehearse any more due to Covid. We were discussing the idea of what it means to be an orchestra that can't play together. We also talked about colour- colour that spreads outwards, and the idea of finding comfort in colour.

Jess: So I imagine there were particular challenges in composing for an orchestra in the midst of Covid19?

Alice: It's true that this is a real piece of its era- something that was conceived of during some really weird times. The original idea was to give instructions to

Alice Chance

SYO players through a series of online workshops, gather sounds and visual material, and then bring it all together to create a multimedia work. Which then evolved; things were calming down, and we could hold some in person workshops. I'm one of the lucky four percent of the population who has synaesthesia, where you have associations between different senses... and so keeping with this idea of colour, I held some workshops at the SYO Summer Camp in 2021, and asked SYO players to play a note that they thought was red, for example. Once live concerts started to come back, we decided to make this a live work, celebrating the fact that orchestras can play together again.

Jess: Talk us through the musical events in COLOURBURST. How does the music evolve over the course of the work?

Alice: I like thinking of music scores and musicians onstage in a spatial way, and thinking of messages and energy being passed from musician to musician. There's an integral marimba and xylophone motif that is a thread throughout the whole piece- a colourful motif that gradually spreads out over the orchestra. It's a little bit like when you put food dye in water, and at first it's this really concentrated vein, and then gradually little branches

bleed out of it until it's colouring the whole water.

I've also been inspired by the sound worlds of composers Steve Reich and John Adams, in particular a piece by John Adams called Harmonielehre. The opening is this kind of crystallised texture that's sparkly and wonderful, and then there's this shimmer of strings voiced two octaves apart, and below that, a melody that flows through the piece. There's also a piece by my composition teacher Régis Campo, which has this beautiful alternation of chords in the piano. He just sits in it for bars and bars... I kept this approach as an idea and took it somewhere else. This idea of - That texture is delicious, I want to just swim in that for five minutes!

Jess: COLOURBURST has been written specifically for SYO - was there something unique about collaborating with a youth orchestra?

Alice: The young musicians in the Summer workshops took it really seriously and I appreciated that. Even though, in the end, I couldn't quite use the recordings how I imagined, the initial workshops were really valuable. To see a composer come in and say things like - "alright, play me what spiderwebs sound like!" - would have, I

Alice Chance

hope, transmitted the message to a few of those young musicians that being a composer can be playful and fun... and anyone can do it!

I would also like to add that it's been wonderful to work with Aija Draguns, who will be conducting the premiere of COLOURBURST. She really wants to do justice to the work and I'm so glad to have her leading COLOURBURST through its premiere.

Jess: What other concerts, events or premieres of your work can we look forward to hearing in 2022?

Alice: I'm currently working on my fanfare for the SSO, for their 50 Fanfares project. That has been a really fun experience! And I'm working on a piece that's really dear to me called 'Heirloom,' with Rubiks Collective - it's following on from work I've done about women in the same family line, the ties between mothers, daughters and grandmothers. Another project is a clarinet concerto that I have written for Oliver Schermacher. The premiere is going to be in October, with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sam Weller.

Jess: Thank you Alice – we can't wait to hear the World Premiere of your piece COLOURBURST. Congratulations.

Program notes and interview by Jessica Scott, former Principal Flute, The Sydney Youth Orchestra (2017 – 2019), currently studying at Royal Academy of Music, London.

Alice Chance

Alice Chance is a sought-after composer, conductor, arranger, and lyricist. Her works are performed in concert halls and cathedrals, as well as auditoriums, paddocks and showers all around Australia.

A three-time finalist in the APRA Art Music Awards for Vocal/Choral Work of the Year, Alice has worked with ensembles including Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Willoughby Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Children's Choir, Gondwana National Indigenous Children's Choir, Ensemble Offspring, The Song Company, and Moorambilla Voices. She is the vocal arranger and original music director of the award-winning musical FANGIRLS and was a member of Australia's national jury for Eurovision 2019. Alice is currently based in Paris doing a masters in Composition, researching humour in instrumental music, and studying with French composer Régis Campo. (École Normale de Musique de Paris, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin). Alice also enjoys writing, running, and making YouTube videos about learning French.



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Sydney Youth Orchestra 2022 concert series



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