

July, 2.30pm

AMERICAN Saturday 6 July, 7pm & Sunday 7



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JOHN ADAMS

Short Ride in a Fast Machine

AARON COPLAND $Appalachian\ Spring\ Suite$

FLORENCE PRICE Symphony No. 3

Today's concert will open with a quintet arrangement of Deborah Cheetham Fraillon's 'Tarimi Nulay'. Through this performance, we pay our respects to Indigenous People's traditions and custodianship of the lands.

Spoken text:

This song is our connection to a land of ancient wisdom
And the stories (history) of a people who have been here all along
If you listen I will tell you what I've learned about this country
And I'll help you sing so we can all belong.

For the longest time you have lived your culture In your dance and in your song
And the same is true for today and tomorrow
It's your (our) way to know. It's your (our) way to belong!

The beauty of this country surrounds every moment And the path to understanding is a path that we can share If you listen to the knowledge that was here from the beginning You will find a strength you never knew was there.

Tarimi nulay ngalawa yuru garrabarra baraya yagu barrabugu ngyiningi ngara ngyiningi berong Long time here live the people dancing and singing today and tomorrow Your way of knowing

your way of belonging

(B. 1947)

Short Ride in a Fast Machine

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes-Benz?

Written in 1986, approximately midway into the evolution of Joplin's final song – from a critique of consumerism to the soundtrack of a car ad – *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* premiered as the opening work for a Pittsburgh Symphony summer festival, dubbed a "bright, happy piece of music".

The piece is not, as might be hoped, about a ride in a Mercedes-Benz. Rather like Joplin's song, it perhaps escapes the composer's intentions. The 'gating' – sudden, modal changes in harmonies that are characteristic of Adam's music – is transformed by the *Ride* into the unexpected shifts of weight and slides of tyres as each bend and blind corner in a road are traversed. The structured repeating, pulsating nature of the minimalist form becomes a driving beat that accelerates, like a vehicle, ever faster.

It's this idea of pulsation that Adam's identifies most closely with the idea of American music. Disappointing then that the ride that inspired Adam's was not that most American of sports cars, a muscle car. It was instead a "terrifying" drive in a Ferrari that inspired the relentless, frenetic reflections of energy and adrenaline of the fast machine in the work's title.

Is a late night drive in a sports car an antidote to Guy Debord's famous critique of modern society — a decline of being into having and having into merely appearing — that so directly recalls Joplin? Perhaps it is, if accompanied by the pulsations of *A Short Ride in a Fast Machine*.

First performance

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra premiered Short Ride in a Fast Machine in 1986

Orchestration

Piccolo, flute, oboe, cor angleis, clarinet, bassoon, contrabassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion, keyboard and strings

Performance time

5 minutes



(1900 - 1990)

Appalachian Spring Suite

Running more than 2,000 kilometres down the east of northern USA, the Appalachian Mountains separate the interior from the coast. Their presence – as an imposing geographical feature, as a landscape in which history unfolds, and as an idea – has been a backdrop to the evolution of the American identity. The Appalachians were first a barrier to expansion for early settlers. Before long, they became America's first great western frontier. Expeditions opened routes through the mountains into the interior, leading to conflict and war between settlers and Native Americans, and contributing to some of the great American pioneer myths of the 18th century.

In the 19th century, the Appalachians were a backdrop to the critical events of the American Civil War. Harper's Ferry, the location of John Brown's attempt to start an armed insurrection against slavery, is ringed by the Appalachians and sits within the Shenandoah Valley, part of the Great Appalachian Valley that runs the length of the range. The valley was a major advance route for Confederate and Union armies and the setting of many brutal battles. After the resulting desolation, the Appalachians became a centre for coal mining and logging. And in the late 20th century, as mining declined, they were increasingly associated with poverty and educational disadvantage. From the heroic 'Overmountain men' that helped save the American Revolution to clan-feuding Hillbillies and Moonshiners, stereotypes about Appalachian America reflect metropolitan American perceptions about the frontier.

Written during the cataclysm of World War II, the opening notes of *Appalachian Spring* are often read as sunrise in these mountains. This pastorale opens a work that parallels an idealised, arcadian story of Appalachian settlement with the turmoil and ultimate military and moral triumph of America's involvement in WW2.

First performance

The New York
Philharmonic premiered
the orchestral suite on 4
October 1945, conducted
by Artur Rodzinski

Orchestration

Piccolo, flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, trombones, timpani, percussion, harp, piano and strings

Performance time

25 minutes



The ballet, first performed in 1944, centres around a settler couple who move to the foot of the Appalachians in early 19th-century Pennsylvania. The plot takes audiences through the couple's engagement with the landscape in 'Eden Valley' and their subsequent marriage in 'Wedding Day'. The bride's joy is expressed in swing-like passages and the country-fair mood of the wedding is found in musical hints of square dancing and fiddling.

An interlude follows based on the Shaker song *Simple Gifts*. The four variations presented are the melodic heart of the work and the sentiments of the song are a reminder of the charm of a uniquely American, earnest innocence:

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained,
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.

The ballet continues with sections representing the Civil War itself: 'Fear in the Night', 'Day of Wrath' and 'Moment of Crisis'. These are not however featured in the suite. Instead, the suite closes with 'The Lord's Day', featuring hymn-like music that evokes a Shaker meeting or African American church music.

The work was originally titled *Ballet for Martha* and famously performed by the Martha Graham Dance Company. As she herself put it, the story of *Appalachian Spring* is simple:

Part and parcel of our lives is that moment of Pennsylvania spring when there was 'a garden eastward of Eden.' Spring was celebrated by a man and woman building a house with joy and love and prayer; by a Revivalist and his followers in their shouts of exaltation; by a pioneering woman with her dreams of the Promised Land.

But it's Copland's music that evokes and expresses the feeling of American nationalism and nostalgia associated with this story. It's the idealised yet idyllic sense of landscape, the naïve yet charming sense of faith and community, the simplistic yet earnest sense of history that characterises one sense of American identity.

Symphony No. 3

I have two handicaps – those of sex and race...
I should like to be judged on merit alone – the great trouble having been to get conductors... to even consent to examine a score.

This appeal to conductor Serge Koussevitzky was written in 1943. It highlights how painfully aware Price was that the prejudices of the music world and the bigotry of society were truly difficult to overcome.

Despite being an academically gifted and musically talented child, African American Price faced prejudice throughout her early life. The best musical teachers refused her instruction as a child and she initially passed as Mexican to avoid racial discrimination at the New England Conservatory. As an adult in the late 1920s, she moved from the deep south to escape segregation, settling in Chicago with her family.

Her First Symphony won first prize in a competition in 1932, marking the first performance of a work composed by an African American woman by a major orchestra. While achieving national recognition and a lifelong audience particularly in Chicago, she continued to struggle for recognition as a composer during her lifetime.

Price's Second Symphony, completed in 1935, is presumed lost and her *Third*, completed in 1940, would be the last she would hear performed. It opened to a warm reception in 1940, but was not performed again in her lifetime.

The music of Price's remaining symphonies all contrast the classical-Romantic with the African American. She described her *Third Symphony* as "Negroid in character and expression, a cross-section of present-day Negro life and thought with its heritage of that which is past, paralleled or influenced by concepts of the present day."

First performance

Valter Poole and the Michigan WPA Symphony Orchestra on 6 and 8 November 1940

Orchestration

Piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, timpani, harp, celeste and strings

Movements

- 1. Andante
- 2. Andante ma non troppo
- 3. Juba: Allegro
- 4. Scherzo: Finale

Performance time

30 minutes

Sadaharu Muramatsu

Born in Japan and based in Sydney,
Australia, Dr. Sadaharu Muramatsu
(Sada) is the artistic director of Strathfield
Symphony Orchestra, artistic director
of Symphonia Jubilate, conductor of
Sydney Youth Orchestra / Western Sydney
Youth Orchestra, lecturer and conductor
of Excelsia College (formerly Wesley
Institute) and music director of Excelsia
Chamber Orchestra

Sada completed a Masters of Music in Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, UK. Subsequently, he was granted a fellowship to study conducting at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney under the Japanese Government Overseas Study Program for Artists. Sada resides in Australia under a Distinguished Talent visa granted by the Australian Government for his achievements as a conductor

His accomplishments include receiving recognition in the NSW State Parliament for his significant contributions to music in the local Strathfield Area (2022), Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendations (2019), Consul-General of Japan's Commendation Award in Sydney (2018), an Honorary

Doctorate in Music from his alumnus Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, UK (2011), second prize in the Vienna Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival with the Wesley Institute Choir in the Golden Hall, Musikverein, Austria (2011), finalist and awarded Special Prize of the Jury at the Emmerich Kalman International Conductor's Competition at the Budapest Operetta Theatre, Hungary (2007), semi-finalist in the 2nd Bartok Bela International Opera-Conducting Competition in Romania (2007). Mortimer Furber Prize for Conducting in Manchester, UK (2005), and first prize at the ISIS Conducting Competition in Cambridge, UK (2001).

Sada studied conducting under Imre Pallo, Kurt Masur, Sir Mark Elder CH CBE, Hirofumi Misawa and Kazuki Sawa.

sadaharu.net



Our Players

Violin 1

Paul Pokorny**

Dorothy Sercombe

Suzanne Cattell

Jake Coppinger

Volf Frishling

Clinton Lau

Julia Pokorny

Violin 2

Louise May**

Meredith Burton Jessica Chen Rosslyn Irvine Laura Jarimba Clinton Lau Judy Whitlock Andrew Wong

Viola

Danielle Norton*
David Angell
Chris Elenor^
Laura Jamieson^
Haruki Muramatsu

Cello

Alicea Gedz*^
Anna Bray
Serena Devonshire
Rory Dungan
Craig Giles
Katherine Voukidis
Jessica Yeo
Andrew Zheng

Double Bass

Jordan Bartlett*^
Paignthor
Acevedo-Martin

Flute

Andrew Haselgrove James Hillier Katie Proudian

Oboe

Adele Haythornthwaite*
Julie Stafford

Clarinet

Gigie Tam* Martin Brown

Bassoon

John Fletcher* Justin Crouch

French Horn

Shayne Bray Denbeigh Morris Annalisa Solinas Amanda Whitfield

Trumpet

Toby Rand
Janette Vardy
David Young

Trombone

Conor Bratty Andrew Mayes Andrew Smith

Tuba

Gary Levin

Timpani/Percussion

Poppy Burnett
Lawrence Lau
Ming Lee
Andrea Leong
Laurence McFarlane

Piano/Keyboard

Kungoak Kim

Harp

Leigha Dark

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Paul Pokorny

AND

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Craig Giles

Art Direction

Zoë Barber

Program Notes

Jeremias Zylberberg

Strathfield Symphony Orchestra appreciates the support of



ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA

Strathfield Symphony first performed under the baton of Richard Gill in 1969 and celebrated our golden jubilee in 2019 led by our Artistic Director, Sadaharu Muramatsu.

Strathfield Symphony is a not-for-profit community orchestra run by its members. We benefit from the ongoing support of Strathfield Council, which has provided rehearsal and concert venues throughout our long history.

Strathfield Symphony is dedicated to giving local audiences access to exciting and challenging classical programs, and providing opportunities for local players to perform under the direction of our inspiring Artistic Director, Sada.

PAUL POKORNY, CONCERTMASTER

Concertmaster Paul Pokorny has also appeared as soloist for the Strathfield Symphony.

He has played in many of the orchestras in Sydney including the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra (as Concertmaster) and Balmain Sinfonia (as Concertmaster) and often plays with The Metropolitan Orchestra and the Rourbaki Ensemble

Paul also leads the Strathfield String Quartet, performing at many Strathfield Council functions, as well as weddings and other events. Paul often plays for musical and opera societies, and enjoys singing and playing piano.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Strathfield Symphony Orchestra creates and performs on the land of the Wongal people of the Darug tribe. We recognise their continued connection to this beautiful place and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. Our hope is to pay respect to their rich and varied cultural traditions by adding our shared music making to this Country.

COMING UP...

Let us sweep you away with Mahler's monumental *Symphony No. 1*, an opus that will take you on a titanic journey (but with a more harmonious ending)

Saturday 28 September, 7pm Sunday 29 September, 2.30pm

Book now at **strathfieldsymphony.org.au**

