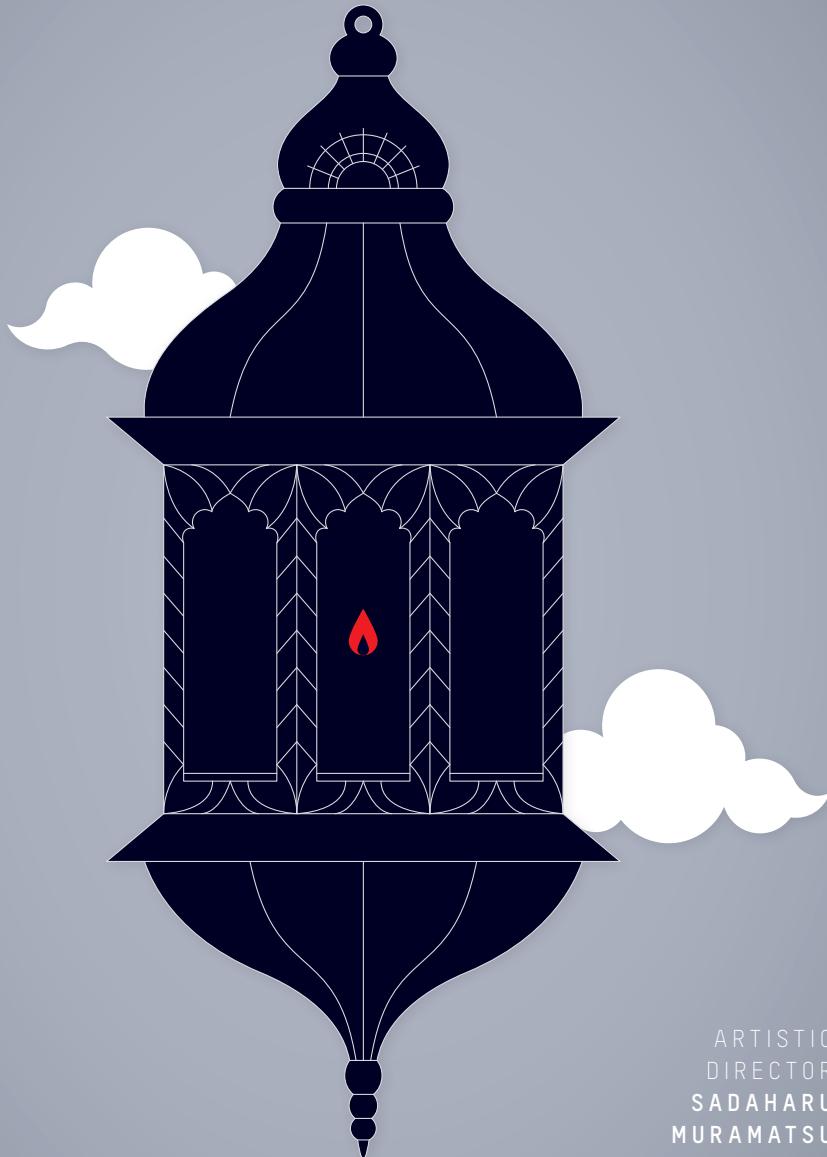


DREAMS & DISCOVERY



ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR
SADAHARU
MURAMATSU

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6 JULY, 2.30PM



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JOE HISAI SHI

SOLOIST ARIELLE MAGNO

CASTLE IN THE SKY
NAUSICÄÄ REQUIEM
HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE
KIKI'S DELIVERY SERVICE
PRINCESS MONONOKE
TOTORO
SPIRITED AWAY
PONYO

NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

SCHEHERAZADE

Approximate running times:
40 - interval - 45

JOE HISAISHI
(B. 1950)

A GHIBLI MEDLEY

Few composer-director collaborations have had the cultural resonance of Joe Hisaishi and Hayao Miyazaki. Over more than three decades of films, Hisaishi's music has become inseparable from the breath-taking animation and heartfelt storytelling of Studio Ghibli. Our program is a journey through this legendary collaboration, highlighting some of Hisaishi's most beloved works and telling the story through melody and orchestration.

Hisaishi's musical language blends the lyricism of classical Romanticism with minimalist textures, folk-like simplicity and occasional bursts of jazz, pop and traditional Japanese elements. The result is a style that is deeply cinematic, yet unmistakably personal, capturing both the wonder of fantasy and the quiet beauty of everyday life.

Together, these soundtracks form more than just the backdrop of Studio Ghibli's cinematic legacy. They are integral voices in its storytelling. Joe Hisaishi's music not only amplifies the emotional resonance of Miyazaki's films, but continues to enchant listeners and remind us of the profound connection between sound, story and spirit.

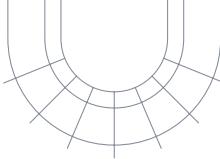
SET 1

CASTLE IN THE SKY,
NAUSICÄA REQUIEM,
HOWL'S MOVING
CASTLE, KIKI'S
DELIVERY SERVICE

The 1986 film **Castle in the Sky** was one of Hisaishi's first collaborations with Miyazaki. The music combines a sense of wonder and a sense of danger, capturing the tension between human ambition and the power of nature. From gentle lullabies to dramatic action sequences, the score demonstrates Hisaishi's ability to blend classical Western influences with Japanese musical sensibilities.

Though pre-dating the official founding of Studio Ghibli, **Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind** laid the foundation for the studio's formation and marked the beginning of Hisaishi's relationship with Miyazaki. The Requiem symbolises the film's post-apocalyptic themes. Sparse and solemn, the piece evokes the fragility of life and the resilience of the natural world, core themes that would become central to Ghibli's ethos.

The opening waltz of **Howl's Moving Castle** encapsulates the film's tone: sweeping, whimsical and touched with melancholy. Set in the chaotic world of Howl, the music juxtaposes innocence with grandeur. The recurring waltz theme, carried by rich strings and bells, serves as an emotional anchor, shifting from playful to pensive as the story unfolds.



In **Kiki's Delivery Service**, Hisaishi brings to life the warmth and charm of a young witch navigating independence in a bustling seaside town. The music is light-hearted and melodic, with elements of jazz and European folk traditions. It captures the exuberance of youth and the bittersweet journey of growing up, while maintaining cosy familiarity.

SET 2

PRINCESS MONONOKE (THEME & ASHITAKA SEKKI), TOTORO

Perhaps Hisaishi's most epic and dramatic score, **Princess Mononoke** explores themes of nature, conflict and humanity. The music matches the film's dark, sweeping narrative about the clash between industrialism and the spirit world. Thunderous percussion, rich strings and solemn brass lines underscore the tension between destruction and redemption. The soundtrack emphasises the scale and gravity of the story, while still leaving space for moments of lyrical beauty.

A late addition to the program, **My Neighbour Totoro** is one of the most recognised of the Studio Ghibli/Hisaishi collaborations and we decided that the program would not be complete without it!

SET 3

SPIRITED AWAY, PONYO

Widely regarded as one of Hisaishi's masterpieces, the score for **Spirited Away** perfectly captures the surreal, dreamlike quality of the film's spirit realm. Tracks like 'One Summer's Day' blend delicate piano melodies with sweeping orchestral flourishes. The music is both mysterious and familiar, evoking a world that is as emotionally rich as it is visually imaginative. Through his score, Hisaishi conveys themes of identity, memory and transformation with unmatched sensitivity.

Unlike the darker Mononoke, **Ponyo** is a bubbly film that taps into the inner child. Ponyo features bright, playful orchestrations, full of life and energy. Hisaishi incorporates elements of classical music, including Wagnerian motifs and French Impressionist colours and textures to build a soundscape that reflects the majesty of the sea and the innocence of its characters. The result is a score that feels both whimsical and operatic, capturing the childlike wonder at the heart of the film.

NIKOLAI RIMSKY-
KORSAKOV
(1844-1908)

SCHEHERAZADE

Few works in the orchestral repertoire capture the imagination with such storytelling and exotic colour as *Scheherazade*, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's symphonic suite inspired by the tales of One Thousand and One Nights. Composed in 1888, this richly evocative work blends Eastern-inspired melodies with Western orchestral tradition, a hallmark of Rimsky-Korsakov's mature style and a testament to his mastery of orchestration.

At the heart of *Scheherazade* lies the legend of the eponymous heroine, a clever and courageous storyteller who staves off her execution by spinning tale after tale for the Sultan Shahryar. Rimsky-Korsakov, a member of the Russian nationalist 'The Five', was fascinated by the exoticism and mystery of the East, a fascination shared widely in 19th-century Europe. While the composer insisted that *Scheherazade* should not be heard as a literal programmatic depiction of specific stories, he nonetheless provided evocative movement titles in early editions, later withdrawing them to encourage more abstract listening.

Despite this, the structure and recurring musical themes make it difficult not to imagine vivid narrative scenes. The work unfolds in four movements, unified by the recurring solo violin theme that represents *Scheherazade* herself: a sensuous melody that opens the suite and reappears in various guises throughout.

I. THE SEA AND SINBAD'S SHIP

The suite begins with a dramatic motif from the low brass, symbolizing the stern Sultan. This imposing theme is interrupted by the entrance of *Scheherazade*, voiced by the solo violin, whose lyrical, improvisatory line introduces the storyteller herself. The music then sets sail into the tale of Sinbad, with undulating strings and swaying rhythms conjuring the vast, rolling sea. Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestral flair is on full display as he uses instrumental colour to depict wind, waves and the grandeur of a fantastical voyage.

II. THE STORY OF THE KALENDAR PRINCE

This movement features more angular and mysterious themes, portraying the tale of a wandering prince. A notable aspect here is the prominent role of solo instruments, particularly the woodwinds and the violin, which interact like characters in a story. The music alternates between introspection and flamboyance, perhaps reflecting the prince's hardships and adventures. Rimsky-Korsakov employs modal harmonies and exotic scales to give the music an Eastern flavour.

III. THE YOUNG PRINCE AND THE YOUNG PRINCESS

In contrast to the dramatic, restless energy of the second movement, the third offers a lyrical and romantic interlude. A graceful, flowing melody in the strings and woodwinds suggests gentle courtship or love. Lush orchestration and rich harmonies highlight Rimsky-Korsakov's Romantic sensibility, and Scheherazade's theme once again weaves subtly through the narrative, a reminder of her guiding voice.

IV. FESTIVAL AT BAGHDAD – THE SEA – THE SHIP

BREAKS UPON A CLIFF SURMOUNTED BY A BRONZE HORSEMAN

The final movement is a whirlwind of activity. It begins with the excitement of a bustling marketplace or festival and soon builds in intensity. Previous themes return in a kaleidoscopic collage, culminating in a dramatic seafaring scene. The stormy climax brings the shipwreck vividly to life, and the brass reiterates the Sultan's theme. However, the story ends not in violence but in peace: Scheherazade's solo violin reappears, quiet and tender, as the Sultan's heart is finally softened. The suite concludes with a sense of closure and serenity.

Scheherazade remains one of Rimsky-Korsakov's most beloved and frequently performed works. Its compelling blend of narrative suggestion, orchestral brilliance, and emotional depth continues to enchant audiences and inspire composers, performers, and storytellers alike. As much a triumph of imagination as of musical craftsmanship, it is a vivid reminder of the enduring power of music to transport us to distant times and places.

FIRST PERFORMANCE

October 28, 1888

ORCHESTRATION

2 flutes and piccolo,
2 oboes, 2 clarinets,
2 bassoons, 4 horns,
2 trumpets, 3 trombones,
tuba, percussion,
strings and harp

PERFORMANCE TIME

50 minutes

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SADAHARU MURAMATSU

sadaharu.net



Born in Aichi, Japan and based in Sydney, Australia, Dr. Sadaharu Muramatsu (Sada) is the artistic director of Strathfield Symphony Orchestra, 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.

In Sydney, Sada has conducted the Penrith Symphony Orchestra, Rockdale Opera Company, Sydney Camerata and many other ensembles. He also conducted the Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra and Central Aichi Symphony Orchestra in Japan.

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.

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.

OUR PLAYERS

VIOLIN 1

Paul Pokorny**
Dorothy Sercombe^
Suzanne Cattell
Stephen Davies
Amy Diaz
Manu Fosny
Wolf Frishling
Clinton Lau
Hannah Mercer
Julia Pokorny

VIOLIN 2

Clifton Chan*
Meredith Burton
Rosslyn Irvine
Laura Jarimba
Rohini Mulford
Judy Whitlock
Andrew Wong

VIOLA

Laura Jamieson**
Chris Elenor
Matthew Jamieson
James Le Maitre
Danielle Norton
Kathryn Ramsay
Evonne Voukidis

CELLO

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

FRENCH HORN

Annalisa Solinas*
Shayne Bray
Denbigh Morris
Amanda Whitfield

TRUMPET

Andrew Del Riccio*
Janette Vardy
David Young

TROMBONE

Conor Bratty
Vicki Sifniotis

TUBA

Gary Levin

TIMPANI/PERCUSSION

Laurence McFarlane*
Jun Cho
Lawrence Lau
Ming Lee
Sebastian Tam

FLUTE

Deborah Cunneen*
Andrew Haselgrove
James Hillier

OBOE

Adele Haythornthwaite*
Julie Stafford

CLARINET

Gigie Tam*
Lucy Tokuoka

PIANO/KEYBOARD

Kyungook Kim

HARP

Kaela Phillips

BASSOON

John Fletcher*
Maurice Leung



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Laura Jamieson

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Sadaharu Muramatsu

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Shirrley
Mahableshwarwalla
Chris Elenor
Laura Jamieson

Bruce Lane
Alicea Gedz
Paul Pokorny
Zoë Barber

AND...

STAGE MANAGER

Craig Giles

PROGRAM NOTES

Jesse Nguyen

ART DIRECTION

Zoë Barber

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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 lead 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 Bourbaki 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: EARTH & SKY

Embark on a breath-taking musical voyage as our orchestra brings to life the awe-inspiring elements of nature – river, mountain and sky – through vivid soundscapes and powerful compositions. This concert explores the majestic beauty of landscapes, from serene rivers to towering peaks, and the boundless expanse of the heavens above.

Saturday 20 September, 7pm and
Sunday 21 September, 2.30pm

Book now at strathfieldsymphony.org.au



Strathfield Symphony
Orchestra of the Inner West