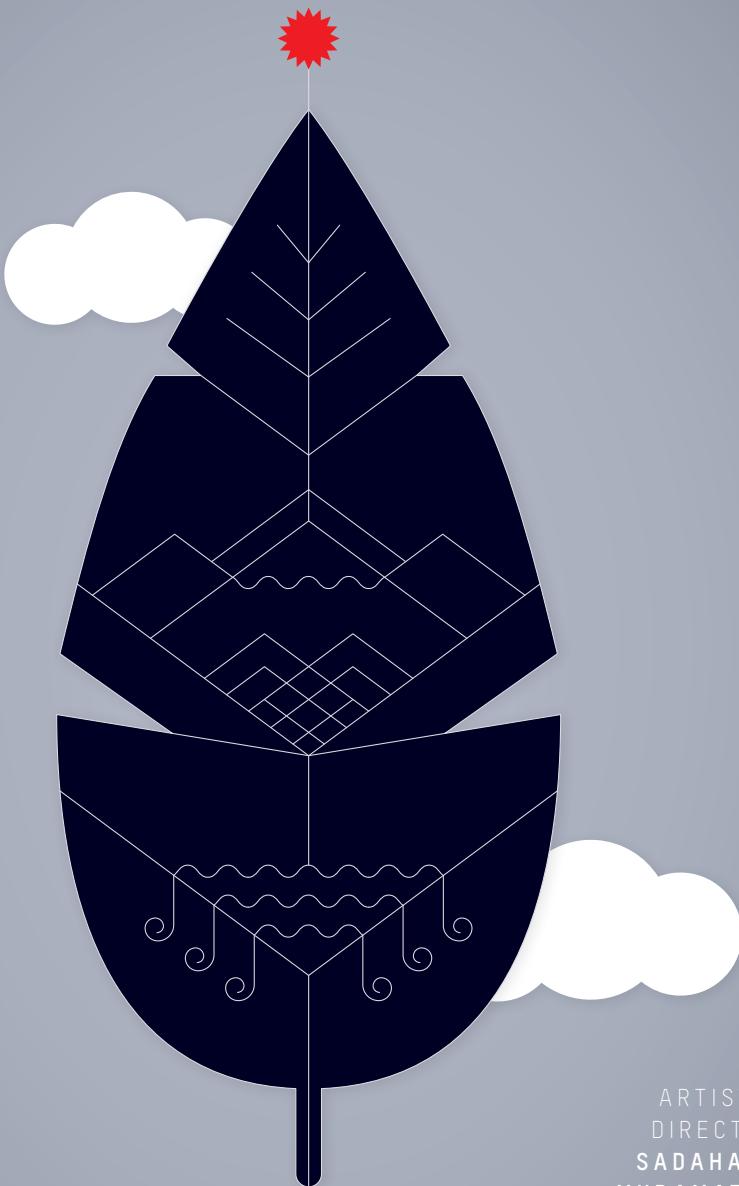




E A R T H S K Y



ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR
SADAHARU
MURAMATSU

SSO

20 SEPTEMBER 2025, 7PM &
21 SEPTEMBER 2025, 2:30PM





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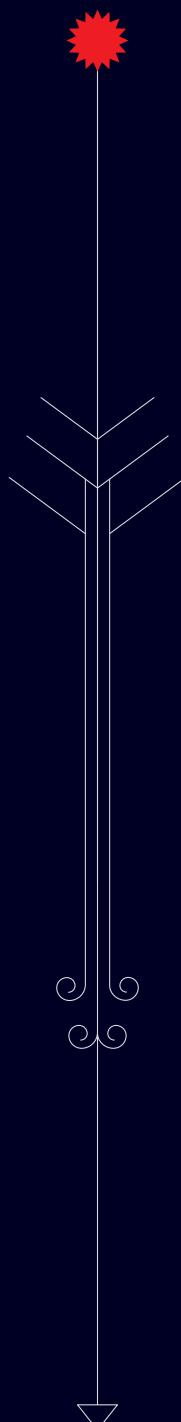
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MARIA GRENFELL

RIVER MOUNTAIN SKY

MODEST MUSSORGSKY

NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN

ROBERT SCHUMANN

SYMPHONY NO. 3 (RHENISH)

CHIN CHENG LIN

CONCERTO NO. 1

Approximate running times:
10 - 20 - 13 - interval - 32



MARIA GRENFELL

(B. 1969)

RIVER MOUNTAIN SKY

Born in Malaysia, raised in New Zealand and educated in New York and Los Angeles, Maria Grenfell (1969-) now makes her home in Hobart, where she is a senior lecturer at the Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

Her music has been performed by all the major Australian and New Zealand symphony orchestras, and numerous leading chamber ensembles. Many of her compositions are based on ideas from Chinese literature and culture: examples are *Ten Suns Ablaze*, inspired by a Chinese legend, and *Poems of a Bright Moon*, from verses of the T'ang dynasty poet Li Po.

River Mountain Sky was commissioned by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra in 2004. The composer writes:

"[The work] suggests an impression of the beautiful island that has been my home since 1998. It celebrates a landscape of rivers and mountains, painted by orange and pink skies at dawn and dusk... Quiet nights when stars sparkle across a clear clean southern sky... Mist over the estuary, sunshine dancing off a bright blue river."

After a brief opening outburst, woodwinds announce an evocation of gently rippling waters. Similar textures will be heard through much of the work, accompanying a series of majestic and opulent sonorities. Notable among these are an eloquent theme for cor anglais and a brass chorale combined with rugged timpani rhythms, perhaps suggesting the mountains of the title.

After a brief silence, strings and trumpets introduce a faster tempo with more complex textures, while the final bars of *River Mountain Sky* consist of quiet string harmonies, joined by the luminous scintillations of harp and vibraphone.

FIRST PERFORMANCE

27 November 2004
as a commission
for the Tasmanian
Symphony Orchestra

ORCHESTRATION

Piccolo, flute, oboe,
cor angleais, clarinet,
bassoon, french horn,
trumpet, trombone, tuba,
timpani, percussion
and strings

PERFORMANCE TIME

10 minutes





MODEST MUSSORGSKY
(1839-1881)

NIGHT ON BALD MOUNTAIN

[ORCH. NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV, 1886]

Few orchestral works conjure terror as vividly as Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*. With swirling strings, blaring brass and relentless drive, it has become the musical embodiment of the supernatural: a witches' sabbath in symphonic technicolor. Yet its path to fame was far from straightforward.

In the early 1860s, Mussorgsky – then in his twenties – was fascinated by Slavic folklore and pagan myth. Legends spoke of Bald Mountain, a barren summit where witches and demons gathered on St. John's Eve before dispersing at dawn. Mussorgsky sought to capture this in music: a night of wild celebration ending with daybreak.

His first version, *St. John's Eve on Bald Mountain* (1867), was startlingly modern – raw in harmony, rhythm and orchestration – so much so that his mentor, Mily Balakirev, rejected it. He later reworked the score for other projects, but none were staged. After Mussorgsky's death in 1881, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov revised the work, refining its harmonies and orchestration into the version that premièred in 1886.

The music unfolds in a single movement. A fierce proclamation of snarling brass and frantic strings announces the storm-like arrival of dark forces. Jagged rhythms and shifting harmonies create instability, while bold, repetitive themes drive the frenzy. Orchestral colours shift constantly: slashing strings, piercing woodwinds and booming percussion conjure supernatural chaos.

At its peak comes a demonic "black mass", a grotesque parody of sacred music. Suddenly, a tolling bell pierces the darkness. The revels dissolve, giving way to dawn: muted strings and soft woodwinds banishing the spirits. This stark contrast of darkness and light defines the work's power.

FIRST PERFORMANCE

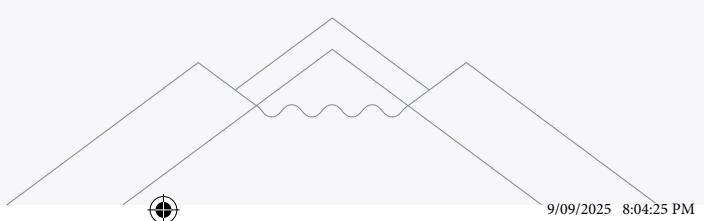
October 15 1886

ORCHESTRATION

Woodwinds: piccolo
2 flutes, 2 oboes,
2 clarinets, 2 bassoons
Brass: 4 horns, 2 trumpets,
3 trombones, tuba
Percussion: timpani, bass
drum, cymbals, gong, bell
Strings: harp,
violins, violas,
cellos, double basses

PERFORMANCE TIME

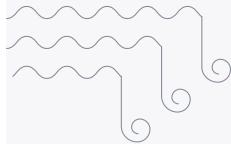
12 minutes





ROBERT SCHUMANN
(1810-1856)

SYMPHONY NO. 3 (RHENISH)



In 1854, Robert Schumann – beset by difficulties in his professional relations with the city of Düsseldorf and his increasing mental instability – threw himself into the river Rhine. It was a sad contrast to the composer's delight at his appointment as the city's Director of Music just four years earlier and the warm welcome afforded him by the local musical community. Schumann had been enchanted by the prosperous sociability of the Rhinelanders, though perhaps even here there were warning signs. In his previous post in the more conservative Dresden, music was taken very seriously, as it was by Schumann himself. It was not long before he began to find himself out of sympathy with Düsseldorf's easygoing musical culture.

In 1850, however, this was all ahead of him. Within three months of his appointment, inspired by the Rhine and a journey upriver to view the great Cologne cathedral, Schumann began and finished a symphony evoking the scenery and spirit of the region.

The first movement of *Symphony No. 3 (Rhenish)* plunges without preamble into sustained, vigorous forward motion. Contrasting double and triple rhythms can be heard, particularly in a striking rendition by four forte horns in unison against quietly shimmering woodwind and strings.

If the opening movement portrays the Rhine in full flow, the second exhibits a gentler aspect of the river or, perhaps, the somewhat rustic jollifications of those who lived along its banks. There follows a delicate and elegant movement in the style of an intermezzo.

The fourth movement was inspired by Schumann's visit to Cologne and the grandeur of the city's cathedral. It's based upon a majestic chorale, announced by trombones making their first appearance in the piece. As the first strain of the chorale concludes, strings and winds add a faster figure: an accelerated version of the chorale melody. The same continues into a lively finale, rapidly and mischievously inserted first by strings and ultimately as an enhanced setting of the original, bringing to a close Schumann's heartfelt celebration of the Rhine and its surrounds.

FIRST PERFORMANCE

February 6 1851 in
Düsseldorf, Germany,
conducted by the composer

ORCHESTRATION

Flute, oboe, clarinet,
bassoon, horn, trumpet,
trombone, timpani
and strings

PERFORMANCE TIME

32 minutes



CHIN CHENG LIN

(B. 1984)

CONCERTO NO. 1

Taiwanese-born marimbist and composer Chin-Cheng Lin introduces his *Concerto No. 1 for Marimba and Symphony Orchestra*, blending Asian and Western traditions. A leading figure in the marimba world, Lin has written over fifty works and performed internationally after studies at the Royal Conservatory, Antwerp.

Movement I – One World

Driving rhythms showcase the marimba's clarity against rich orchestral textures.

Movement II – One Dream

A lyrical, dreamlike dialogue explores subtle harmonies.

Movement III – One Love

The finale bursts with brilliance, accelerating rhythms and radiant harmonies celebrating unity.

The concerto highlights the marimba through both virtuosic soloist and orchestral colour. The titles of the movements evoke hope, connection and joy.

ORCHESTRATION

Solo marimba

Woodwind: piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet

Brass: 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba

Timpani and percussion

Strings: violins, violas, cellos, double basses

PERFORMANCE TIME

20 minutes

SOLOIST: ANNEKE BRAHE

Percussionist Anneke Brahe, a second-year student at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, specializes in marimba. She has performed as a soloist and ensemble player at major venues including the Sydney Opera House, won national and international competitions, and studied with renowned percussionists worldwide. In 2024, she attended the 17th International Keiko Abe Marimba Academy. In this concert, Anneke performs Chin-Cheng Lin's *Marimba Concerto No. 1*, showcasing its lyrical melodies, rhythmic energy and technical brilliance.





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, Hiroyumi Misawa and Kazuki Sawa.





OUR PLAYERS

VIOLIN 1

Paul Pokorny**
Dorothy Sercombe ^
Aurelia Bergin
Suzanne Cattell
Amy Diaz
Manu Fonsny
Martin Yu

VIOLIN 2

Stephen Davies**
Meredith Burton
Sandie Fardon
Laura Jarimba
Judy Whitlock
Andrew Wong

VIOLA

David Angell*
Laura Jamieson
Matthew Jamieson
Danielle Norton
James Le Maitre

CELLO

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

DOUBLE BASS

Jordan Bartlett*
Carol Jeon
Miwa Muramatsu

FLUTE

Drew Collins
James Hillier

OBOE

Adele Haythornthwaite*
Sophia Hillier

CLARINET

Gigie Tam*
Lucy Tokuoka

BASSOON

John Fletcher*
Maurice Leung

FRENCH HORN

Annalisa Solinas*
Shayne Bray
Dru Whitfield
Dennis Williams

TRUMPET

Andrew Del Riccio*
David Young

TROMBONE

Angus Iceton
Vicki Sifniotis

TUBA

Gary Levin

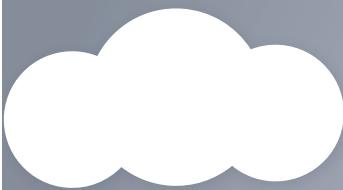
TIMPANI/PERCUSSION

Kien Le Board
Kungoak Kim
Derek Wu
Sebastian Tam

HARP

Kaela Phillips

* Principal ** Acting Principal # Concertmaster ^ Deputy Concertmaster



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Laura Jamieson

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Sadaharu Muramatsu

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Bruce Lane

Shirrley

Alicea Gedz

Mahableshwarwalla

Paul Pokorny

Chris Elenor

Zoë Barber

Laura Jamieson

AND...

STAGE MANAGER

Craig Giles

PROGRAM NOTES

Jesse Nguyen & David
Angell

ART DIRECTION

Zoë Barber

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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: HEROES & VILLAINS

Prepare to be swept away by the bold, dramatic and triumphant sounds of heroism in this exhilarating orchestral concert. From Beethoven's fierce battle between fate and destiny to Mozart's sublime vision of grandeur, each piece on this program embodies the spirit of the hero: undaunted, resilient, powerful.

Saturday 29 November, 7pm and
Sunday 30 November, 2.30pm

Book now at strathfieldsymphony.org.au



Strathfield Symphony
Orchestra of the Inner West