

STRATHFIELD

Symphony Orchestra

Serious Fun!

Conductor
Piano

Sarah-Grace Williams
Ben van Tienen



A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Carnival Overture

by Antonin Dvorák

Rhapsody in Blue

by George Gershwin

Interval

Symphony 'From the New World'

by Antonin Dvorák

Adagio - Allegro molto

Largo

Scherzo: Molto vivace

Allegro con fuoco

8.00pm, Saturday, 1 April & 2.30pm, Sunday, 2 April

**

* Strathfield Town Hall *

SSO Survey

Strathfield Symphony Orchestra is proud to have a loyal following and supportive audience.

To help us improve and select our music program we need your feedback.

We would appreciate you taking a few minutes to fill in the form below and placing it in the box on the ticket table before you leave.

Thank you for your support!

How did you hear about this concert?

- Media
- Word of Mouth
- Saw a poster/flyer
- Friend/Family
- Other, please specify _____

Have you been to previous concerts by the SSO?

- Yes if so, how often do you come to concerts _____
- No, this is my first time

How would you rate the concert?

- Too Long
- Too Short
- Other, please specify _____

Would you like to be kept informed of upcoming concerts and special

- Yes
- No

If yes please fill in your details below.

Did you like the program presented?

- Yes
- No

We would appreciate your feedback

Do you have any comments or suggestions on particular music you would like us to perform or suggestions on how we may improve to make your listening experience more enjoyable?

Yes, please keep me informed of upcoming events and special offers from Strathfield Symphony Orchestra.

Name (Mr, Ms, Mrs) _____

Address _____

State _____

Postcode _____

Phone _____

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Please place this survey in the box at the ticket table before you leave.

Thank you for your comments. We appreciate your support.

STRATHFIELD
Symphony Orchestra

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The Orchestra

1st Violin

Paul Hoskinson**
Isabel Boesenberg
Volf Frishling
Gwynneth Grant
Carol Henson
Belisario Hernandez
Beatrice Ip
Lisa Lebedev
Martin Lee
Vincent Leonard
Maryana Sywak
Francesca Teng
Samuel Tov-Lev

2nd Violin

Solomon Bard*
Joseph Singles*
Karina Barnard
Diana Barraga
Simonil Bhavnagri
Elizabeth da Silva
Bonnie Leung
Stephen Matthey
Natalie Meaney
Rohini Mulford
Behram Taleyarkhan
Francesca Teng

Viola

Chris Elenor*
Judith Baker
Ted Davis
Antony Harvey
Marjorie Hystek
Julia Pokorny

Cello

Laura Hitchcock*
Nada Aubrey
Deborah Coogan
Rowena Cseh
Geoff Widmer

Double Bass

Manfred Schoen*
Michael Atkins
Aurora Henrich
Carole Jeon
Nick Lebedev

Flute & Piccolo

Bruce Lane*
Rebecca McCabe
Vanessa Ropa

Oboe

Merryn Horrocks*
Kitty Blythe

Cor anglais

Clement Loy

Clarinet

Mami Iwashita*
Michelle Reynolds

Bass clarinet

Peter Scaysbrook

Bassoon

Mark Pinner*
Alex Thorburn

Alto saxophone

Katia Beaugeais
Joe Wolfe

French Horn

Dennis Williams*
Elizabeth Dalton
Peter Hogg
Marian Lesslie
Elana Traurig

Trumpet

David Young*
Bruce Hardie
John Tweed

Trombone

Lindsay Smartt*
Brendon Downey
Rod Walker

Tuba

Gary Levin

Piano

Kris Spike

Timpani & Percussion

Merrilee McNaught*
Andrew Blake
Kayley Dunstan
Lyndle Hardstaff
Greg McCunn
Sandy Sin
Jane Makeham

** Denotes concertmaster

* Denotes Principal

Special Thanks to the Friends of the Orchestra

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Mr J B Linley	Mrs J E Dunlop
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*denotes life member

Don't miss our next concert!

A Russian Spectacular!

Tchaikovsky

Swan Lake

Borodin

Polovtsian Dances

Rimsky-Korsakov

Scheherazade

Saturday 1 July at 8pm

Sunday 2 July at 2.30 pm (to be confirmed)

Special thanks also to **Garvey & Graham**, specialists in piano removing.
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visit us at www.strathfieldsymphony.org.au

Program Notes

George Gershwin 1898 - 1937

George Gershwin was born Jacob Gersowitz in Brooklyn, New York. George was enthralled with music leaving high school for Tin Pan Alley (the collection of New York City music publishers and songwriters who dominated US popular music in the late 19th and early 20th centuries).

Gershwin worked three years as a pianist demonstrating sheet music for Remick's music publishers, and quickly absorbed both the songwriting and performance styles of the time. He composed on his own and with his brother Ira as lyricist. In 1918 he scored his big first national hit with *Swanee*, going on to compose popular songs, and music for both Broadway and the classical concert hall.

Rhapsody in Blue was commissioned by Paul Whiteman for a 1924 concert he and his band were playing entitled 'An Experiment in Modern Music'. Gershwin took the commission then promptly forgot about it. Two years later his brother Ira jogged his memory after reading in the *New York Tribune* that 'George Gershwin is at work on a jazz concerto'! In three weeks, *Rhapsody in Blue* was born. On a journey to Boston, the steely rhythms and the rattle-ty bang of the train planted the ideas for *Rhapsody in Blue* in Gershwin's mind. 'And there I suddenly heard, and even saw on paper – the complete construction of the Rhapsody, from beginning to end. By the time I reached Boston I had a definite plot of the piece, as distinguished from its actual substance'.

Pressed for time, Gershwin did not write out the piano part until after the performance, only the band parts. We will never know how *Rhapsody* originally sounded as on the night of the first performance as he improvised some of what he was playing. Gershwin's understanding with Whiteman was that he would nod to him when his solos were over and the next orchestral portion was to begin. The event has since become historic specifically because of its première of the *Rhapsody*.

Is *Rhapsody in Blue* classical music with pop elements, or jazz with serious pretensions? Even with the benefit of retrospect, this piece eludes convenient classification. Gershwin approached all music as a songwriter and his strength was as one of the great instinctive melodists of all time. All Gershwin's works discount traditional development and proceed linearly from one event to the next. What we can say about the *Rhapsody* is that it is a true melting pot of pop and serious music, with sources as diverse as America itself. His work, as one critic observed, is a natural, sincere expression of the confidence and nervous energy of the 'Roaring Twenties'.

Rhapsody in Blue has been a great hit through the years and in its first decade (which included the Depression years) earned the composer over \$250,000. A fortune in those days. George Gershwin died of a brain tumour at the age of 38.



Antonin Dvorák 1841 - 1904

Antonin Dvorák was born in a Bohemian village where his father was a butcher and innkeeper. As a child he learned the violin and enjoyed playing with his father in the village band. His father had hopes for him to follow the family trade but when he was sent to stay with his uncle, a friend taught him to play the viola, piano and the organ. At 16 he travelled to Prague to study the organ and also played violin and viola for the Prague National Opera Orchestra. His real desire, though, was to compose.

Dvorák came to the attention of Johannes Brahms who convinced publishers in Berlin to publish Dvorák's *Slavonic Dances* which was an overnight success. Dvorák adored the folk music of his homeland and other places, often composing original works using these melodies, which became popular with the public. Throughout his works you can hear the folk music effortlessly entwined.

In 1891, aged 50, Dvorák wrote three overtures which he originally titled *Nature*, *Life* and *Love* and it has been suggested that these overtures mark the birth of modern Czech music. The *Carnival Overture* (originally 'Life') is rollicking and boisterous, evoking the exultant joy of living. It features an cor anglais solo, an instrument Dvorák particularly loved. At a climax in the music's tremendous exuberance, there is a brief lyrical Intermezzo in G major as the clarinets play a version of the 'Nature Motive' in 3/8 time. Here, contemplation of nature as the underlying basis of life brings with it a sense of tranquility.

In 1893 while teaching in America, a homesick Dvorák wrote his famous ninth symphony, entitling it *From the New World* (later shortened to *New World*). After Dvorák's death, research uncovered four unpublished symphonies, of which the manuscript of the first had even been lost to the composer himself. This led to an unclear situation in which the *New World* has alternately been called the fifth, eighth and ninth.

The ninth symphony is a mixture of nationalist folk influences and the symphonic tradition owing its character to short, extremely potent themes and linking of its movements by means of a recurring chordal theme which emerges from the brief adagio introduction. The themes tend to return to their fundamental note, which helps to create a sense of wistful sadness, while the entry of themes and the vehement outbursts recall simple folk musicians. The symphony is a melodious blend of the 'Indian' (Native American) and 'Czech' folk music, a sound typical of Dvorák. The first movement features a solo flute passage reminiscent of *Swing Low Sweet Chariot* while the second movement was so reminiscent of a Negro spiritual that lyrics were written for it and it became *Goin' Home*. Dvorák said that the third movement (scherzo) was 'suggested by the scene at the feast in Longfellow's 'Hiawatha' where the Indians dance'.

After music, Dvorák's strongest interest was trains, and he was often seen at the railway stations observing, studying railway schedules, and visiting with railway engineers. He returned to his beloved homeland after only a couple of years in the USA, continuing to compose. At the end of his life, Dvorák was in serious financial straits, as he had sold his many compositions for so little he had hardly anything to live on.



Our Conductor

Sarah-Grace Williams is an accomplished musical director, conductor and performer, who has toured throughout Europe, Asia, Great Britain and New Zealand.

Graduating with distinction, Sarah-Grace Williams completed her Bachelor of Music degree in 1997 from the University of Western Sydney, majoring in performance (clarinet) and composition. Receiving a scholarship for academic excellence, she went on to achieve a First Class Honours in conducting. In 2002, Sarah-Grace Williams travelled overseas to complete postgraduate studies in conducting with Maestro Alexander Polishchuk (St Petersburg Conservatoire, Russia) and Maestro Jorma Panula (Amsterdam, Holland). Since returning to Australia, Sarah-Grace has made regular conducting appearances with many orchestras, choirs and musical theatre companies across Sydney.

Recent memorable highlight performances include Handel's *Messiah* with the Penrith Symphony Orchestra in 2003 and 2005, conducting the orchestra of the Sydney Anglicare Prom Praise concerts at the Sydney Town Hall in 2004 with soloist Simon Tedeschi, working as the Musical Director for the Australian Institute of Music's production of Bernstein's *Candide* and writing/presenting a Baby Proms *Pops for Tots* with PSO.

For the past three years Sarah-Grace Williams has been an active participant in Symphony Australia's Conducting Programme, conducting The Queensland Orchestra and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra on several occasions. In April this year she will conduct Melbourne Symphony in concert. Sarah-Grace was also selected as one of five conductors in 2005 to conduct the Auckland Philharmonia in conjunction with their Graduate Conductor's Programme.

Sarah-Grace Williams currently works at the Australian Institute of Music (tertiary), lecturing in Conducting and Musical Theatre, as well as working as a Vocal Coach and teacher of Keyboard and Performance Studies. She is Associate conductor with both the AIM Symphony Orchestra and The Occasional Performing Sinfonia (TOPS) and is Musical Director of Aurora Winds, a chamber ensemble in which she also plays clarinet.

Sarah-Grace Williams has composed, arranged and recorded music for films, theatre productions, symphonic ensembles and chamber groups both in Australia and overseas. She also continues to play regularly as a clarinetist, pianist, saxophonist, flautist and vocalist.

This is Sarah-Grace's first performance with the Strathfield Symphony Orchestra. She was appointed Chief Conductor of SSO in February 2006.



Our Soloist



Ben van Tienen has worked as a répétiteur and pianist for many organisations, including Sydney Symphony, Gondwana Voices, Sydney Philharmonia, IHOS Opera and Pacific Opera.

Ben devotes much of his time to new music, including working as répétiteur on the Australian Premieres of *Hydrogen Jukebox* by Philip Glass and *The Master Builder* by Manolis Kalomiris; and the World Premiere of *Tesla: Lightning in his Hand* by Con Koukias. He has also recorded two new works by Tasmanian Composer Matthew Dewey for ABC Classic FM.

As a conductor, Ben van Tienen worked on the premiere of Koukias' new concert piece *Pentekostarian* in Canberra, and with the New Music Ensemble at the Tasmanian Conservatorium. He was Musical Director for the Tasmanian Song Company for two years.

Ben van Tienen was recently accompanist in residence for the 12th Australian Flute Convention, and the inaugural Festival of Voices in Tasmania; and he participated in the 2005 Ronald Dowd Memorial Summer School for young opera singers and répétiteurs, under the direction of Victor Morris (formerly of the ENO.) Ben has also recorded a broadcast with

soprano Sarah Jones for ABC Classic FM, featuring rarely performed works by Menotti and Armstrong Gibbs.

Ben van Tienen is currently studying at Sydney Conservatorium of Music, with Stephanie McCallum and David Miller.

**The Strathfield Symphony Orchestra acknowledges with thanks
the assistance of the Strathfield Municipal Council.**

**Strathfield Symphony Orchestra is proudly sponsored by Strathfield MP Virginia Judge.
For interviews, information and enquiries please contact the Electorate Office .**



www.virginiajudge.net

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