

CHILDHOOD TALES



3:00PM SUNDAY 17 MARCH

CONCERT PROGRAM

MAURICE RAVEL

Ma mère l'Oye (Mother Goose) (suite)

MAURICE RAVEL

Piano Concerto in D Major (Left Hand)

INTERVAL

SERGEI PROKOFIEV

Symphony No.7 in C sharp minor Op.131

I. Moderato

II. Allegretto

III. Andante Espressivo

IV. Vivace



VIOLIN 1

Karen Blair[^]
(Concertmaster)
Emma Eriksson
Peter Nicholls
Min Tan
Rebeca Stephenson
Shaileigh Thompson
Hwee Sin Chong

VIOLIN 2

Yvette McKinnon*
Ryan Smith
Ailsa Hankinson
Camilla Harvey
Sam Markovic
Cara Odenthal
Lauren Jones

VIOLA

Shannon Luk*
Bronwyn Gibbs
John McGrath
Daniel Tipping
Teagan Alford
Clarissa Wilson
Christine Cheng
Jenny Waanders
Katrina Greenwood

CELLO

Oliver Scott*
Mathilde Vlieg
Edward Brackin
Gabriel Dumitru
Oliver Holmes
Toby Saltwell
Anitah Kumar
Nicole Kancachian
David Silman
Sara Waak
Charmaine Lee
Elenore Combwell
Amy Naumann

BASS

Samuel Dickenson*
Georgia Lloyd
Angela Jaeschke
Dean Tierny

FLUTE

Jo Lagerlow*
Jessica Sullivan

PICCOLO

Lucia Gonz ales*

OBOE

Gabrielle Knight*
Hui-Yu Whitney Chung

COR ANGLAIS

Catherine Clarke[^]

CLARINET

Daniel Sullivan*
Kendal Alderman
Carmen Anaya-Partida[^]

E FLAT CLARINET

Daniel Sullivan*

BASS CLARINET

Daniel Byrne*

BASSOON

Lisa Squires*
Patricia Brennan
Carl Bryant

CONTRABASSOON

Carl Bryant*

HORN

Melanie Taylor*
Joyce Shek
Simon Miller
Michelle Hynes

TRUMPET

Blake Humphrey*
Sophie Kukilies
Ben Oldham

TROMBONE

Angela Prescott*
Nicholas Whatling

BASS TROMBONE

Clayton Fiander*

TUBA

Michael Sterzinger*

PERCUSSION

Kerry Vann*
Jenny Gribbin
Davis Dingle
Thomasina Lawrence

HARP

Loni Fitzpatrick[^]

PIANO/CELESTA

Cara Tran[^]



Conductor Peter Luff

We are delighted to once again be working with one of Brisbane's most in-demand conductors, Peter Luff.

Peter Luff is an Associate Professor and Deputy Director (Performance and Engagement) and lecturer in Horn and Brass Studies at Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University (QCGU). Until recently, Peter held the position of Associate Principal Horn with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra where he still performs regularly.

Peter has spent most of his career as a professional horn player, performing with most of Australia's leading professional orchestras and arts organisations. As a member of the advisory council of the International Horn Society, Peter is highly active in the promotion of the French horn, and in 2010 received the prestigious Punto Award for his distinguished contribution and service to the art of horn playing.

In 1987, after completing his Bachelor of Music in Performance at Adelaide University's Elder Conservatorium, Peter moved to Brisbane to join the Horn section of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. He has since completed a Master of Music degree in conducting at QCGU and continues to pursue a busy career performing, teaching and conducting.

Peter has conducted many ensembles and orchestras nationally and internationally, including the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra's Brass Ensemble, Bangalow Festival Orchestra, Macgregor Summer School Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Conservatorium Symphony Orchestra, Wind Orchestra and Brass Ensemble.

Peter is in great demand as a horn teacher. Many of his horn graduates have secured permanent playing positions in national and international professional symphony orchestras. He has tutored for the Australian Youth Orchestra, Queensland Youth Orchestra, Australian National Academy of Music, University of Arkansas (USA), Korean National University and Shandong University (China).



Piano ALEX RAINERI

Alex Raineri is “a soloist of superb virtuosic skill and musicality” - Limelight Magazine

Australian pianist Alex Raineri is an active recitalist, concerto soloist and chamber musician.

After completing undergraduate studies with First Class Honours and a University Medal, he is currently undertaking a Doctor of Musical Arts program at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music (Griffith University) and is an alumni and fellow of the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM). Alex also holds a Licentiate Diploma from the Australian Music Examinations Board and a Licentiate Diploma with distinction from Trinity College London.

International performances include tours in California, South-East Asia, United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, Germany and Austria. Within Australia he frequently appears at many major music festivals, prominent concert series and throughout regional areas.

Alex has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3, Radio NZ, California Capital Public Radio, and regularly appears on ABC Classic FM and the Australian MBS Networks. As a concerto soloist he has featured with the Queensland, Tasmanian, Darwin and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, Southern Cross Soloists, Orchestra Victoria, Four Winds Festival Orchestra, Bangalow Festival Orchestra and the Queensland Pops Orchestra.

Alex is the pianist with the Southern Cross Soloists, company in residence at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC). He plays in ongoing duo-partnerships with Tabatha McFadyen (soprano) and Angus Wilson (percussion) and was the pianist and co-artistic director of contemporary music ensemble Kupka's Piano (2012-2018).

Having had several successes in the competition field, Alex has been the recipient of a number of major awards including the Kerikeri International Piano Competition, Australian National Piano Award, ANAM Concerto Competition, Michael Kieran Harvey Scholarship, Joyce Campbell Lloyd Scholarship, Theme and Variations Foundation Scholarship, and Allison/Henderson Sydney Eisteddfod Piano Scholarship. In 2014 he was awarded a 'Kranichstein Musikpries' at the International Summer Courses for New Music in Darmstadt, Germany.

Significant performances and festival appearances include; Utzon Music Series, Bangalow Music Festival, Bendigo Festival of Exploratory Music, Port Fairy Spring Music Festival, Four Winds Festival, Canberra International Music Festival, Queensland Music Festival, Music by the Sea Festival, Castlemaine Festival, 3MBS Brahms & Mendelssohn Marathons, Australian Piano Duo Festival, Brisbane Baroque Festival, QSOCcurrent, 4MBS Festival of Classics, Crossbows Festival, IMPULS Academy (Austria) and the Darmstadt International Summer Courses for New Music (Germany).

Alex's mentors have included Leah Horwitz OAM, Timothy Young, Stephen Emmerson and Genevieve Lacey. He holds sessional accompanist positions at the University of Queensland and Queensland Conservatorium of Music (Griffith University).

ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA

The Brisbane Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO) is Brisbane's leading community orchestra. The orchestra brings together up to 200 musicians a year to play a variety of classical orchestral music. Over 100 members of the incorporated association form the core of the orchestra. Other players perform as casual musicians, but often join as full-time members after their first concert with BPO. The orchestra was founded on principles of musical excellence and development, communal participation, and organisational professionalism.

Since its creation in 2000, the BPO has become the community orchestra of choice for over 500 musicians. It is eagerly sought as a performance partner for touring choirs, festivals, and internationally acclaimed instrumentalists and vocalists. The BPO performs its own series of symphony concerts and participates in multiple community and festival events throughout the year, attracting an audience of over 2,500 people. The orchestra's main metropolitan concert series includes four to five symphony concerts at Brisbane City Hall and the Old Museum Concert Hall. Programs vary between concerts featuring the great classical, romantic, and 20th

century composers, light concerts including film music, as well as concerts with programs targeted at a younger audience. Additionally, BPO occasionally performs chamber music concerts, featuring smaller groups in a more intimate setting.

The BPO maintains many community partnerships including with the Queensland Music Festival, 4MBS Festival of Classics, Brisbane City Council, and The Brisbane Airport Corporation. These partnerships provide essential connections in artistic, educational, professional, and social programs and cater to the association's increased responsibility to culturally enhance localities and bring a diversity of people together in a fast-paced, ever-impersonal global village. Unusually for a community orchestra, entry to the BPO is by audition and the ensemble is the only community orchestra within the city that rotates guest conductors by invitation rather than establishing a permanent Music Director. Uniquely, this allows a variety of the finest local professional conductors to deliver diverse and innovative programming to artistically stimulate members of the orchestra.



PROGRAM NOTES

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Ma mère l'Oye (Mother Goose)
(1910)

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Mother Goose was originally written as a piano four hands work dedicated to the children of his friends the Godebski family: 6-year old Mimi and 7-year old Jean. The suite, subtitled "Five children's pieces" was later orchestrated by the composer for a small orchestra with strings winds, horns, harp and percussion and subsequently was used as the nucleus of a ballet score. Ravel loved children but was sadly childless himself, and frequently made up stories to entertain his friends children, *culminating* in Mother Goose where he created a vivid fairy-tale world of sound. "The idea of evoking the poetry of childhood in these pieces," Ravel explained, "naturally led me to simplify my style and to refine my means of expression."

The first piece, **Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant** (Pavane of Sleeping Beauty) This presents a graceful, ancient dance by attendants surrounding the Sleeping Princess Florine. Both flute and harp are featured prominently in this baroque dance.

The second movement, **Petit poucet** (Hop-o'-My-Thumb) Tom's frustrated wanderings in the woods are depicted by continual meter changes by string passages, while the woodwinds play a quiet "walking" melody. Twittering birds (flute, piccolo) swoop down to steal the crumbs left to mark his return path.

The third movement, **Laideronnette, impératrice des pagodes** (Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodas) Empress of the Pagodas – Exotic Javanese music paints a picture of the little empress taking her bath while her pagodes (tiny munchkin-like people) sing and play on their miniature percussive instruments. The musical flavour is turn-of-the-century orientalism styled by pentatonic scales.

The fourth movement, **Les entretiens de la belle et de la bête** (Conversations of Beauty and the Beast) The clarinet represents Beauty in the tempo of a waltz, while the role of the Beast is assumed by a contrabassoon. A dialogue between the two alternates between brusque growls and lilting melodies. After a loud climax and a measure of silence, an expressive solo violin announces with a delicate glissando the change of the Beast into a handsome prince. A moment before this, Beauty had decided that she would marry the beast because of his inner beauty and kindness.

The final movement, **Le jardin féérique** (The Fairy Garden) Everyone lives happily and in peace in this musically delicate watercolour depicting the splendour of an enchanting fairyland. The music builds to a grand fanfare celebrating that all is good and beautiful.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Piano Concerto for the Left Hand (1930)

In 1929 Ravel was approached by pianist Paul Wittgenstein (elder brother of philosopher Ludwig), who had lost his right arm in World War 1, to write a piano concerto for Wittgenstein to play. At the time Ravel had been considering writing a piano concerto anyway, and took on the commission to write the Concerto for the Left Hand - but for good measure also started work on a traditional two-handed concerto (the Concerto in G) as well.

Ravel commented on the challenges of writing a musically fulfilling work when the solo part must be artificially limited to what is possible with a single hand: "A severe limitation of this sort poses a rather arduous problem for the composer... The fear of difficulty, however, is never as keen as the pleasure of contending with it, and, if possible, of overcoming it. That is why I acceded to Wittgenstein's request to compose a concerto for him. I carried out my task with enthusiasm"

In preparation Ravel studied some previous compositions for piano one hand and created a work in which the use of only one hand is not a musical limitation at all- indeed, the supremely difficult piano part is such that when first listening to the work one may be forgiven for thinking it is a standard part for piano two hand!

The prominent use of bass instruments in the orchestration (as well as the natural tendency for the solo part to tend towards the bass register) gives the music a dark grandeur, with the musical climaxes feeling that they are rising out of a turbulent sea of notes.

The concerto is in one movement but in three connected sections and begins slowly with an unusual opening where the double basses murmur away playing a repeated rhythm based on the notes E-A-D-G, which is both harmonically ambiguous and also the open strings of the bass, giving a feeling like the orchestra is still tuning up! The contrabassoon enters with a prominent solo with the main theme of the concerto, which layers and builds in intensity as the remainder of the orchestra enters slowly - firstly the horns playing a sinuous jazzy countermelody, then the music builds into an anticipatory passage and brass and percussion provide a sense of expectation.

After an orchestral climax the soloist enters with a cadenza descending down to the lowest register of the instrument and then presenting the main theme of the movement as an unaccompanied piano solo. Ravel's writing has the piano part frequently leap between octaves to give the illusion of there being two hands playing. The solo finishes with another cadenza-like passage leading up to a glissando.

The orchestra re-enters with another tutti that develops the main theme, growing again in intensity until there is some new, distinctly Spanish-sounding music with percussion that leads down into an extended piano solo. The piano part becomes more harmonically-complex, starting to sound slightly jazzy or ragtime, and then as the strings join in the momentum and energy builds until there is a sudden rollicking 6/8 fast session with brass and percussion fanfares and a driving repeated rhythmic accompaniment.

Concerto Continued..

This central fast section has a marching, scherzo-like feeling and features strong contrasts between forceful descending scale runs and syncopated, jazzy phrases. Descending flute passages introduce a contrasting, more laid back section and the solo part plays a quicksilver torrent of notes, and then there is a return to the driving rhythms, but now softly with an extended bassoon solo above and contrast between duple and triple melodies - with a series of duple orchestral solos based on the sinuous horn motif from the opening, contrasted by triple time passages on the piano. The harmonic language becomes more adventurous with the strings entering with a "dissonant" version of the duple melody and trumpets playing a triple time passage in a "wrong key" until there is a forceful orchestral tutti. A brief section with clarinet and then an ascending solo for the soloist leads into the final section of the piece.

The final section features a majestic return of the main melody interspersed with ascending runs from the soloist, until the music subsides down into a subdued mood again and the soloist plays the "duple theme" from the central section and then an extended arpeggiated solo that finally brings back the main theme and the orchestra enters with a crescendo to a series of chords while the soloist plays a virtuosic arpeggiated run and then the concerto ends with a brief reprise of the 6/8 descending scales leading to a final chord in what the composer described as a "brutal conclusion".

Although not the only piece commissioned by Wittgenstein, Ravel's work has outshone all the others to become an important part of the solo piano repertoire, even if due to its tremendous difficulty it is not played as often as its sibling, his Piano Concerto in G.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

Symphony No.7 in C sharp minor, Op 131 (1952)

Prokofiev's final symphony dates from the penultimate year of his life, a time where the musical world of the Soviet Union was under the oppressive scrutiny of the Communist Party after 1948's Zhdanov Decree, which persecuted artists whose works did not conform to the shallow optimism that was the only acceptable artistic style of "Socialist Realism". Prokofiev had already suffered from the decree: his Sixth Symphony was denounced and his state-sponsored pension was cut off. He started work on the Seventh Symphony in express hope of winning the Stalin Prize, whose prize money of 100,000 rubles would definitely have been appreciated by the broke composer.

The symphony is relatively short by Prokofiev's standards and is sometimes viewed as a children's symphony due to its seeming simplicity and because it was written for the Soviet Children's Radio Division. And while the composer of Peter and the Wolf can definitely be heard at times, the Seventh Symphony is a much more complex and ambiguous beast. Nostalgic throughout, as if the sick and broke composer was looking back at the end of his life and indulging in pleasant memories of childhood, this gives some of its simplicity and on-the-surface playfulness a dark shadow.

Symphony Continued..

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The first movement is broadly in sonata form, but with very little development or conflict between the musical material. Prokofiev plays fast and loose with his modulations with the musical material travelling through a dizzy range of keys over the course of the symphony. This harmonic adventurousness gives the symphony a slightly unsettled feeling at times.

The melancholy first subject has a slightly austere quality with the main melody by the violins offset by a countersubject played by the lower strings. When the winds finally enter, they usher in a mood change as the music becomes more unsettled and turbulent with rushing torrents of semiquavers, over which the strings and winds trade brief quotations from the main melody and its countermelody, until finally an ascending scale ushers in the rhapsodic second subject, played by horns, cor anglais, bassoon and lower strings over a murmuring string accompaniment. When the upper strings and upper winds take over the melody, piano and harp provide a brilliant accompaniment of repeated passages.

An ascending passage leads directly into an eerie passage where the horns and then clarinets play a "ticking clock" repeated rhythm and oboe, flute and glockenspiel play a spiky little motif based on the interval of a descending fourth. The rhythm oscillates between bars of two and bars of three, creating an unsettled feeling. An ornamented clarinet phrase then leads into some warm cadence chords and the end of the exposition section.

The development section has the lower strings play a slightly-ponderous rhythmic melody, soon joined by the oboe, cor anglais and first violins. A transformed version of the movement's main theme follows, with flute and first violins playing virtuosic flourishes above, and then the transformed main theme grows to a climax, out of which the music slowly transforms into a version of the second subject, which in turns leads to an ascending passage and a return of the "ticking clock" rhythm and melody, which seems to run out of energy.

The recapitulation features a return of the main theme with similar orchestration to the beginning, and indeed the recapitulation is very similar to the exposition with similar orchestration, only differing in the keys into which it ventures. After the second subject, the music returns back to the "ticking clock" theme and the warm cadence, until there is a sudden shift in colour as the main theme is quoted again as the movement comes to a subdued ending.

The second movement begins as an elegant waltz for strings and clarinet, which suddenly accelerates into an ebullient faster section giving it a circus music feel. The intensity fades a bit and the waltz transforms into an elegant country dance and then the second half of the melody is an ascending passage for oboe, coming to a slightly dissonant close. Prokofiev then sends the music through a dizzying sequence of keys - sometimes just for a few bars - and passes the musical material around as the music gets faster and faster, culminating in violins, oboe and clarinet playing sparkling runs of triplets.

The music gets even faster with timpani and bass drum and the winds playing in opposition until the music leads to a loud climax with the lower brass being unleashed in one of the first times that Prokofiev has called them to play loud in the entire symphony thus far. A burbling bassoon solo then leads into a slower trio section, which starts with a lush waltz for muted violins. The dynamic stays soft and subdued throughout, but always with a relentless sense of energy. A final statement of the trio melody by flute oboe and harp in unison leads to the strings bringing back the opening waltz.

The next section is largely similar to the first section of the movement, but with some small changes - like the strongly accented offbeat chords that occur just before the return of the "country dance" melody. The music continues onwards through even more modulations until after another brilliant triplet passage and a brief slow-down, the extended final section of the movement brings back some of the melodies from the country dance, but now in an unsettled mix of two bar and three bar phrases. The music continues to alternate between musical material from the waltz and the trio, but with growing intensity. A final return of the opening theme then leads into the manic coda in which frantic string passages are taken over by the winds and a brilliant close to the movement.

Symphony continued..

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The warm third movement is an effective foil to the manic intensity of the scherzo. It is both the simplest and shortest movement of the symphony, and begins with a gentle melody initially on cello which is then taken over and shared amongst the winds, with each instrument playing a brief phrase before passing it over to another to finish. The harmonies are traditionally tonal, and each major phrase ends with a characteristic descending scale motif; indeed it sounds almost anachronistically simple for a "modern" composer such as Prokofiev and gives a nostalgic warmth, as if recalling a favourite song from childhood.

Over a repeated rhythmic pedal, bassoon, clarinet and cor anglais play the second section, which consists of legato melodies which use the same repeated quaver rhythm as the accompaniment but with ever-increasing intervals. The repeated rhythms become more complicated and decorated and then there is a sudden return to the opening theme, on clarinet, horns and tuba, and then shortly the second theme returns with the legato melody now played by muted trumpet and then by a flute and bassoon duet. The first theme returns again, now played by flute over an accompaniment of rippling triplets by the piano and harp, before there is a sudden loud cadence and the movement ends ambiguously without a harmonic resolution.

The fourth movement follows immediately onwards with a jaunty lilting string gallop that leads into some astringent brass chords and then a wind phrase that leads into the main theme of the finale: a pattering string melody that is pure circus music. The finale is structured as a sonata-rondo with this "circus theme" recurring several times albeit with some development of the musical material. The ending passage of the "circus theme" leads into a dotted rhythm that is taken over and passed around by the winds and the strings.

A wind phrase then leads into a gruff lower-string version of the main melody and then a robust, burlesque-like passage with a marcato sequence of quavers over a repeated bass. Another instance of the rondo theme then leads into a ritardando into a section marked poco meno mosso, with a folksy theme that leads into solos for flute, oboe and then bassoon that wind down into a held pedal note.

A march-like section interrupts the circus antics with a rising march melody for oboe and cor anglais offset by a jaunty countermelody on strings. The whole orchestra takes over the march and countermelody, with the rhythms becoming swung, emphasising the "circussy" feel - until the reprise of the opening gallop with the winds and brass finally getting to play the circus theme. The enjoyable orchestral romp continues until finally a deliberately over-the-top series of chords heralds the coda, in which the second subject from the first movement returns with a triumphant triplet accompaniment - feeling like we have finally arrived at a rhapsodic, joyous conclusion, but then it is interrupted by a sudden drop in mood as the trumpets, piano and strings tap out a repeated "tick tock" accompaniment. Undeterred, the second subject returns, with a bold modulation halfway through a phrase that brings the symphony "home" to the opening key of C sharp minor and then the foreshadowing of the "ticking" rhythm is made clear: the ominous "ticking clock" motif from the first movement recurs - but now with a dissonant "wrong note" feeling. The symphony ends with ghostly muted trombone fanfares and a bleak succession of brass chords as the glockenspiel, piano and xylophone play uneasy repeated rhythms above, until finally the symphony finishes with one abrupt pizzicato string chord.

Unfortunately, the bleak grandeur of the original version of the symphony was unlikely to win favour with the authorities and so conductor Samuil Samosud convinced Prokofiev to re-compose the ending.

THE TEAM

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Treasurer: Daniel Sullivan

Committee Member: Melanie Taylor

Committee Member: Michael Sterzinger

Committee Member: Amanda Lugton

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Catering: Thomasina Lawrence

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BPO holds deductible gift recipient status (DGR) for tax purposes. All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible and receipts are provided.

For further information email
info@bpo.org.au

AUDITIONS

Being a member of the BPO is a rewarding community experience and a lot of fun. Our members are just like you – ordinary people who enjoy coming together to make extraordinary music! Auditions are held to fill vacant positions or to appoint suitable reserve players capable of filling temporary vacancies from time-to-time.

Visit our website to download audition excerpts and fill out the online form to sign up! www.bpo.org.au

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SUNSET SONGS



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