

WASO

West Australian
Symphony Orchestra
CELEBRATING 90 YEARS

Asher Fisch Conducts Debussy & Ravel

MASTERS SERIES

Fri 23 & Sat 24 March 2018, 7.30pm

Perth Concert Hall



Wesfarmers Arts
Principal Partner



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Frankie Lo Surdo, French Horn



The West Australian Symphony Orchestra respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners, Custodians and Elders of the Indigenous Nations across Western Australia and on whose Lands we work.

Welcome

Two weeks ago we opened the 2018 Masters Series with two large-scale masterpieces – Beethoven’s Violin Concerto and Strauss’s *Alpine Symphony*. For this week’s concerts we present a completely different style of program – four shorter works by four different composers, each work a wonderful example of their composer’s style and craft.

Although there are four works on the program, the concert musically falls into two distinct halves. Before interval the music is by two of the most acclaimed Nordic composers; after interval by two of the best-known and loved French.

It is a fascinating juxtaposition of composition styles and sound worlds: the colouristic, flexible, sensual music of Debussy (especially) and Ravel against the less overtly colourful, architectural, even slightly astringent music of Nielsen (especially) and Sibelius.

I hope you enjoy these wonderful musical contrasts and I am sure you will enjoy the exceptional artistry of the soloist in Nielsen’s Flute Concerto, WASO’s very own Principal Flute, Andrew Nicholson.

Evan Kennea
Executive Manager, Artistic Planning

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

1862 – 1918



Born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France
Died in Paris, France

CARL NIELSEN

1865 – 1931



Born in Funen, Denmark
Died in Copenhagen, Denmark

JEAN SIBELIUS

1865 – 1957



Born in Hämeenlinna, Finland
Died in Järvenpää, Finland

MAURICE RAVEL

1875 – 1937



Born in Ciboure, France
Died in Paris, France

Ravel's *La valse* – poème chorégraphique
1920

Nielsen's Concerto for Flute and Orchestra, FS 119
1926

Debussy's Nocturnes
1901

Sibelius' *Tapiola* - tone poem for orchestra, Op.112
1926

1875

1900

1925

1950

2018 Upcoming Concerts



SPECIAL EVENT

A Symphonic Tribute to Comic-Con

Fri 13 Apr 8pm
Perth Concert Hall

The Comic-Con phenomenon meets orchestra in this symphonic tribute. Featuring your favourite scores from Game of Thrones, Star Wars, Dr Who, Final Fantasy and more!

Christopher Dragon conductor

This is a concert performance and does not include projections on a screen.

**TICKETS
FROM \$39***



Photo: Nikolaj Lund

MASTERS SERIES

Ravel's Bolero & Two Pianos

Fri 11 & Sat 12 May 7.30pm
Perth Concert Hall

Carl Vine's *Implacable Gifts* - Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra, given its world premiere in Perth by luminaries Piers Lane and Kathryn Stott.

STRAVINSKY *Dumbarton Oaks*

CARL VINE *Implacable Gifts* - Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra WORLD PREMIERE

PROKOFIEV *Lieutenant Kijé*: Suite

RAVEL *Boléro*

Rory Macdonald conductor

Piers Lane piano

Kathryn Stott piano (pictured)

**TICKETS
FROM \$33***



FAMILY

Carnival of the Animals

Sun 10 Jun 1pm & 3pm
Perth Concert Hall

Let your imagination run wild with Saint-Saëns' delightful classic that introduces the instruments of the orchestra. Featuring the celebrated puppetry of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre and poetry by Nick Enright, this performance will delight children and families with a blend of music, puppets and stop motion animation.

SAINT-SAENS *Carnival of the Animals*

Words by Nick Enright

Benjamin Northey conductor

Suitable for 5-12 year olds. All live action is projected onto a big screen above the stage.

**TICKETS
\$29***

BOOK NOW – 9326 0000 – waso.com.au

Carl Vine's *Implacable Gifts* - Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra was commissioned by Geoff Stearn for the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and co-commissioned by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.
Carnival of the Animals is presented by WASO in conjunction with Spare Parts Puppet Theatre. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding advisory body.

*A one-off handling fee of \$5.50 per transaction applies to all purchases on our website. A fee of \$6.60 applies to phone and mail bookings. An additional fee of \$4.40 per transaction applies for delivery via Registered Post.

Asher Fisch Conducts Debussy & Ravel

SIBELIUS *Tapiola* (19 mins)

NIELSEN Flute Concerto (19 mins)

Allegro moderato

Allegretto un poco – Adagio ma non troppo – Allegretto – Poco adagio –

Tempo di marcia

Interval (25 mins)

DEBUSSY *Nocturnes* (25 mins)

Nuages

Fêtes

Sirènes

RAVEL *La valse* (13 mins)

Asher Fisch conductor

Andrew Nicholson flute

WASO Chorus

Asher Fisch appears courtesy of Wesfarmers Arts

Wesfarmers Arts Pre-concert Talk

Find out more about the music in the concert with this week's speaker, Yvonne Frindle (see page 7 for her biography). The Pre-concert Talk will take place at 6.45pm in the Terrace Level Foyer.

Wesfarmers Arts Meet the Artist

Enjoy a conversation with Andrew Nicholson post-concert Saturday night in the Terrace Level Foyer.

About The Artist

Asher Fisch Principal Conductor & Artistic Adviser

A renowned conductor in both the operatic and symphonic worlds, Asher Fisch is especially celebrated for his interpretative command of core German and Italian repertoire of the Romantic and post-Romantic era. He conducts a wide variety of repertoire from Gluck to contemporary works by living composers. Asher Fisch took up the position of Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra in 2014, and in 2017 extended his contract until the end of 2023. His former posts include Principal Guest Conductor of the Seattle Opera (2007-2013), Music Director of the New Israeli Opera (1998-2008), and Music Director of the Wiener Volksoper (1995-2000).

Highlights of the 2017-18 season include guest engagements with the Milwaukee Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic, Würth Philharmonic, a jubilee concert celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Chorus of the Semperoper Dresden, and a tour to Japan with the Bayerische Staatsoper conducting Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Guest opera engagements include *The Flying Dutchman* at both Semperoper Dresden and at Bayerische Staatsoper, where he also conducts *La traviata* and *Un ballo in maschera* this season. In addition, Asher Fisch and WASO celebrate the orchestra's 90th anniversary, and will present a concert version of *Tristan und Isolde* with Stuart Skelton and Eva-Maria Westbroek in the title roles. Fisch recently made debuts with the Sydney Symphony and the New Japan Philharmonic.



Photo: Chris Gonz

Born in Israel, Fisch began his conducting career as Daniel Barenboim's assistant and kappellmeister at the Berlin Staatsoper. He has built his versatile repertoire at the major opera houses such as the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, and Semperoper Dresden. Fisch is also a regular guest conductor at leading American symphony orchestras including those of Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, and Philadelphia. In Europe he has appeared at the Berlin Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, and the Orchestre National de France, among others.

Asher Fisch recently recorded the complete Brahms symphonies with WASO, released in September 2016 on ABC Classics to great acclaim. His recording of Wagner's *Ring Cycle* with the Seattle Opera was released on the Avie label in 2014. His first *Ring Cycle* recording, with the State Opera of South Australia, won ten Helpmann Awards, including best opera and best music direction. Fisch is also an accomplished pianist and has recorded a solo disc of Wagner piano transcriptions for the Melba label.

Asher Fisch appears courtesy of Wesfarmers Arts

About The Artist



Andrew Nicholson Flute

Andrew studied at Chetham's School of Music and the RNCM in Manchester.

He has held principal flute positions with the HKPO, Hallé, RPO, BBCNOW and WASO. He has also regularly appeared as guest principal flautist with the LSO, LPO, Opera North, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Philharmonia, BBC Philharmonic, Bournemouth, City of Birmingham, Malaysia, China Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, London Chamber, Guangzhou, Auckland, Royal Scottish, Scottish Chamber, English Chamber, Hebrides, John Wilson, QSO, SSO, and the Australian Chamber Orchestras.

Andrew has given masterclasses at the Guildhall School of Music, Royal Academy, Royal College, UWA, WAAPA, ANAM, and in Hong Kong, Athens, Belgium, Poland, Manchester, Cardiff, New York, Brisbane, Adelaide and Sydney.

Andrew is a Haynes Artist and plays on a solid 14K gold flute, with 14K gold keys. Find out more about Andrew on his website www.andrewnicholsonflute.com

Wesfarmers Arts Pre-Concert Talk Speaker

Yvonne Frindle

Yvonne Frindle was Artistic Administrator of WASO from 1999 to 2001, and since 2003 has returned each year to give pre-concert talks. She holds qualifications in flute performance, musicology, education and communication, and in 1995 was awarded the ABC/Youth Music Australia Music Presentation Fellowship, launching a career in working for orchestras.

She has worked for Symphony Australia and as Artistic Administrator for Apollo's Fire (Cleveland Baroque Orchestra), and is on the Artistic Advisory Committee for CityMusic Cleveland. She is the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Publications Editor and Music Presentation Manager.

Her writing is published in the programs of major Australian concert presenters and visiting orchestras and ballet companies. She has been presenting talks since 1997 – for Apollo's Fire and the Cleveland Orchestra as well as in Australia – and has created audio features for the ACO, SSO and ABC Classic FM.

WASO Chorus

Formed in 1988, the WASO Chorus brings together auditioned singers who volunteer their time and talents to perform under the WASO banner. The Chorus is led by Chorus Director Christopher van Tuinen and Vocal Coach Andrew Foote.

For more information visit waso.com.au

Christopher van Tuinen
Chorus Director

Andrew Foote
Chorus Vocal Coach

Lea Hayward
Accompanist

SOPRANO

Valerie Bannan
Alinta Carroll
Cate Creedon
Chamaïne de Witt
Nike Tiilola Etim

Kath Goodman
Diane Hawkins
Michelle John
Elysia Murphy

ALTO

Patsy Brown
Julie Durant
Catherine Dunn
Jenny Fay
Susanna Fleck

Gaylene Kelso
Kate Lewis
Tina McDonald
Deborah Piesse



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WASO On Stage

VIOLIN

Laurence Jackson

Concertmaster

Semra Lee-Smith

A/Assoc Concertmaster

Graeme Norris

A/Assistant Concertmaster

Rebecca Glorie

A/Principal 1st Violin

Zak Rowntree*

Principal 2nd Violin

Kylie Liang

Assoc Principal 2nd Violin

Kate Sullivan

Assistant Principal

2nd Violin

Sarah Blackman

Hannah Brockway^

Fleur Challen

Stephanie Dean

Beth Hebert

Alexandra Isted

Jane Johnston°

Sunmi Jung

Christina

Katsimbardis

Andrea Mendham^

Lucas O'Brien

Melanie Pearn

Ken Peeler

Louise Sandercock

Jolanta Schenk

Jane Serrangeli

Kathryn Shinnick

Bao Di Tang

Cerys Tooby

Teresa Vinci^

David Yeh

VIOLA

Basil Vendryes^

Guest Principal Viola

Alex Brogan

A/Principal Viola

Benjamin Caddy

A/Assoc Principal Viola

Kierstan Arkleysmith

Nik Babic

Alison Hall

Rachael Kirk

Allan McLean

Elliot O'Brien

Katherine Potter^

Helen Tuckey

CELLO

Rod McGrath

Chair partnered by

Tokyo Gas

Louise McKay

Chair partnered by

Penrhos College

Shigeru Komatsu

Oliver McAslan

Nicholas Metcalfe

Eve Silver*

Fotis Skordas

Tim South

Xiao Le Wu

DOUBLE BASS

Andrew Sinclair*

Mark Tooby

A/Assoc Principal

Double Bass

Caitlin Bass^

Elizabeth Browning^

Louise Elaerts

Christine

Reitzenstein

Andrew Tait

FLUTE

Mary-Anne Blades

Diane Riddell^

PICCOLO

Michael Waye

OBOE

Liz Chee

A/Principal Oboe

Zhiyu Xu°

COR ANGLAIS

Leanne Glover

CLARINET

Allan Meyer

Lorna Cook

BASS CLARINET

Alexander Millier

BASSOON

Jane Kircher-Lindner

Chair partnered by

Sue & Ron Wooller

Adam Mikulicz

CONTRABASSOON

Chloe Turner

HORN

David Evans

Robert Gladstones

Principal 3rd Horn

Julia Brooke

Francesco Lo Surdo

TRUMPET

Brent Grapes

Chair partnered by NAB

Matthew Dempsey°

Peter Miller

TROMBONE

Joshua Davis

Chair partnered by

Dr Ken Evans and

Dr Glenda Campbell-Evans

Liam O'Malley

BASS TROMBONE

Philip Holdsworth

TUBA

Cameron Brook

TIMPANI

Alex Timcke

PERCUSSION

Brian Maloney

Chair partnered by

Stott Hoare

Mathew Levy^

Joel Bass^

Amanda Dean^

Robyn Gray^

HARP

Yi Yun Loei^

Bronwyn Wallis^

*Instruments used by these musicians are on loan from Janet Holmes à Court AC.

Principal
Associate Principal
Assistant Principal
Contract Musician°
Guest Musician^

West Australian Symphony Orchestra Celebrating 90 Years in 2018



The West Australian Symphony Orchestra (WASO) is Western Australia's largest and busiest performing arts organisation. With a reputation for excellence, engagement and innovation, WASO's resident company of full-time, professional musicians plays a central role in creating a culturally vibrant Western Australia. WASO is a not for profit company, funded through government, ticket revenue and the generous support of the community through corporate and philanthropic partnerships.

WASO's mission is to touch souls and enrich lives through music. Each year the Orchestra entertains and inspires the people of Western Australia through its concert performances, regional tours, innovative education and community programs, and its artistic partnerships with West Australian Opera and West Australian Ballet.

The Orchestra is led by Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser Asher Fisch. The Israeli-born conductor is widely acclaimed for his command of the Romantic German repertoire and is a frequent guest at the world's great opera houses.

Each year the Orchestra performs over 175 concerts with some of the world's most talented conductors and soloists to an audience in excess of 190,000. An integral part of the Orchestra is the WASO Chorus, a highly skilled ensemble of auditioned singers who volunteer their time and talent.

waso.com.au

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Your Concert Experience

FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF ALL

When to applaud? Musicians love applause. Audience members normally applaud:

- When the concertmaster (violin) walks onto the stage
- When the conductor walks onto the stage
- After the completion of each piece and at the end of the performance

When you need to cough, try to muffle or bury your cough in a handkerchief or during a louder section of the music. Cough lozenges are available from the WASO Ticket Collection Desk before each performance and at the interval.

Hearing aids that are incorrectly adjusted may disturb other patrons, please be mindful of those around you.

Mobile phones and other electronic devices need to be switched off throughout the performance.

Photography, sound and video recordings are permitted prior to the start of the performance.

Latecomers and patrons who leave the auditorium will be seated only after the completion of a work.

Moving to empty seats. Please do not move to empty seats prior to the performance as this may affect seating for latecomers when they are admitted during a suitable break.

LISTEN TO WASO

This performance is being recorded for broadcast on ABC Classic FM. Please visit abc.net.au/classic to view broadcast times and to listen.

ABC RADIO PERTH

Tune in to ABC Radio Perth on Friday mornings at 6.15am when WASO's Executive Manager, Community Engagement, Cassandra Lake joins Peter Bell and Paula Kruger to provide the latest on classical music and WASO's upcoming concerts.

FOOD & BEVERAGES

Visit perthconcerthall.com.au for information on food and beverage offerings at the venue. Foyer bars are open for drinks and coffee two hours before, during interval and after the concert. To save time we recommend you pre-order your interval drinks.

FREE WATER STATIONS

- Level 1 Ground Floor across from box office
- Wardle Room – western side of bar
- Terrace Level Corner Bar – one water station on either side of the bar
- Lower & Upper Gallery level

FIRST AID

There are St John Ambulance officers present at every concert so please speak to them if you require any first aid assistance.

ACCESSIBILITY

- A universal accessible toilet is available on the ground floor (Level 1).
- The Sennheiser MobileConnect Personal Hearing Assistance system is available for every seat in the auditorium. Visit perthconcerthall.com.au/your-visit/accessibility/ for further information.

WASO BOX OFFICE

Buy your WASO tickets and subscriptions, exchange tickets, or make a donation at the Box Office on the ground floor (Level 1) prior to each performance and at interval. Tickets for other performances at Perth Concert Hall will be available for purchase only at interval.

The Box Office is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, and contactable on 9326 0000.

DONATE YOUR TICKET

Can't attend a concert? Contact the WASO Box Office on 9326 0000 to donate your ticket for re-sale and you will receive a tax deductible receipt.

About The Music

Jean Sibelius

(1865 -1957)

Tapiola – tone poem for orchestra, Op.112

Between 1926 and his death in 1957, Sibelius produced no significant new music. *Tapiola* was his last major musical statement. It was commissioned by the New York Symphony Society and its conductor Walter Damrosch and, unusually for Sibelius, took only a few months to complete.

‘Tapi’ is the forest god – *Tapiola* translates as ‘where Tapio dwells’, or, as Sibelius notes at the head of the score:

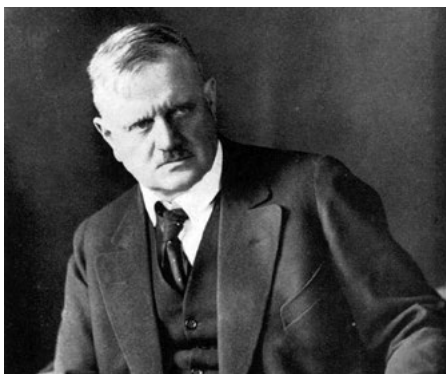
Wide-spread they stand, the Northland’s dusky forests,

Ancient, mysterious, brooding savage dreams;

With them dwell the Forest’s mighty god,

And wood-sprites in the gloom weave magic secrets.

After initial drum taps, all the melodic material there is comes in the opening bars: the rest of the work flows from it. The orchestra is not large: there is no harp, no tuba and no percussion other than timpani. Yet the colours and textures are remarkable. Sibelius’ subtle use of divided strings and the way in which he can ‘pull focus’ between orchestral sections, within a matter of bars, are salient features. *Tapiola*’s uncanny identification with the natural world reaches a dramatic intensity rare even for Sibelius; in the basic rhythmic pulse



on the strings which is transformed into the climactic, ferociously elemental ‘storm’ we have one of the most terrifying passages in all **programmatic music**. The score’s sense of weight, scale and timelessness comes from **pedal points** that underpin whole musical paragraphs and bind together many of the ideas.

Tapiola’s shining final bars cannot be foreseen from the shadow and storm that has gone before them; they are an ‘Amen’, perhaps, an affirmation of the eternal beauty in the ancient darkness.

Adapted from a note by Phillip Sametz © 2004

First performance: 26 December 1926, New York. Walter Damrosch conducting.

This is the first performance of *Tapiola* by the West Australian Symphony Orchestra.

Instrumentation: three flutes (third doubling piccolo), two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings.

Glossary

Pedal point – a note (usually in the bass) which is sustained for a long time while the harmonies change above it.

Programme music – music which is inspired by and purports to express a non-musical idea, such as a story, idea or a particular scene.

Carl Nielsen

(1865 -1931)

Concerto for Flute and Orchestra, FS 119

Allegro moderato

Allegretto un poco –Adagio ma non troppo

– Allegretto – Poco adagio –Tempo di

marcia

In his notes for the Flute Concerto, Carl Nielsen famously wrote:

The flute cannot deny its own nature, its home is Arcadia and it prefers pastoral moods. Hence, the composer has to obey its gentle nature unless he wants to be branded a barbarian.

Arcadia was the mythical Greek land of nymphs and shepherds, but as scholar Ryan Ross argues, here it symbolises the state of childhood innocence, ‘an idyllic past [that is contrasted] with a troubled present.’

In 1925, Nielsen had been honoured as a Danish national treasure on his 60th birthday and the following year, ill with chronic heart disease, embarked on both the Flute Concerto and his memoir *My Childhood on Funen*, which he described as ‘straightforward impressions of my life as a boy and a young man’. The family had been poor, but his mother introduced him to folk-song, which she sang ‘as if she were longing for something far away beyond the farthest trees of the land’. His father played violin and cornet in a local amateur band, which Carl soon joined as a violinist. Soon after, he joined a military band in Odense, playing signal horn and trombone, where generous local authorities arranged for him to study at the Copenhagen Conservatorium.



There is certainly little that is pastoral about the Flute Concerto’s opening, a brusque **bitonal** fanfare of falling **semiquavers** for the orchestra that is taken over and modified by the soloist. Interestingly, though, this passage is based on a piece from Nielsen’s young adulthood, a **Humoresque** for oboe and piano dating from the 1880s. After a passage of elaboration and dialogue, a second, contrasting theme appears. In place of the strenuousness of the first, this begins with four even statements of a single note followed by sweetly harmonised triplets – a symbol, perhaps, for Arcadia. Nielsen doesn’t develop his material in a classic symphonic sense, but elaborates it through a series of contrasting paragraphs that include, for instance, a delicate texture of flute, clarinet and solo violin, sections where the repeated-note idea is restated assertively, and a new theme sounded by **tutti** winds over driving string semiquavers. The flute’s **cadenza** is extensive, and occasionally ‘interrupted’, but the movement concludes with a provisional tranquillity.

The second of the two movements is considerably shorter, but ‘telescopes’ aspects of traditional forms. It is a ‘sort of **rondo**’ in Nielsen’s words, beginning with ‘slightly malicious’ semiquaver **motifs**. The flute’s melody in the lovely *Adagio* section is lightly accompanied at first by a version of the second, repeated-note theme from the first movement, but builds to more emphatic rhetoric. There follows a new version of the *Allegretto* ‘rondo’ music that reaches its climax in a shimmer of strings, flute and timpani. The final, comic march section (much expanded after the work’s premiere in Paris) is, again, derived from the original second theme, though completely altered in character.

The work concludes quietly and enigmatically, featuring dazzling flute writing and broadly humorous gestures from one of Nielsen’s own instruments, the trombone.

© Gordon Kerry 2018

First performance: 21 October 1926, Paris. Emil Telmányi, conductor; Holger Gilbert-Jespersen, soloist.

First WASO performance: 21 August 1979. Peter Erös, conductor; James Kortum, soloist.

Most recent WASO performance: 8-9 April 1994. Vernon Handley, conductor; Andras Adorian, soloist.

Instrumentation: solo flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, trombone, timpani, strings.

Glossary

Bitonal – in two different keys simultaneously.

Cadenza – a showy passage by a solo instrument, usually towards the end of a concerto movement.

Humoresque – short (usually instrumental) piece of music of a genial, entertaining nature, popular during the Romantic era.

Motif – a short, distinctive melodic or rhythmic figure, often part of or derived from a theme.

Rondo – a musical form where a main idea (refrain) alternates with a series of musical episodes. Classical composers often wrote the final movement of their symphonic works in rondo form.

Semiquaver – a very rapid note, half the length of a quaver.

Tutti – all instruments.

About The Music

Claude Debussy

(1862 – 1918)

Nocturnes

Nuages

Fêtes

Sirènes

Debussy completed *Nocturnes* on 15 December 1899 at three in the morning, and it was first performed in 1900. In more than a symbolic sense, however, it can be considered the first major work of the 20th century. It contains many of the features which mark a break with the 19th century: a subtler sense of form, non-directional harmony, less assertive melody, and the elevation of the importance of orchestral colour. As foreshadowed in Debussy's earlier works, there is an acceptance of sound as something to luxuriate in, rather than a Classical-Romantic notion of sound as something to be mobilised in the pursuit of a statement or climax.

The *Nocturnes* were originally conceived as a triptych, *Scènes au crépuscule* (Scenes at twilight), inspired by poems by Henri de Régnier. Then in 1894 Debussy wrote to the Belgian violinist Ysaÿe:

I am working at three nocturnes for violin and orchestra that are intended for you; the first is scored for strings, the second for three flutes, four horns, three trumpets and two harps; the third combines both these groups. This is, in fact, an experiment in the various arrangements that can be made with a single colour – what a study in grey would be in painting.

The reference to painting is notable. In few other works is the epithet 'impressionist', borrowed from painting, more appropriate. Debussy did not intend the work's title to be understood in the sense of a Chopin nocturne; it has more to do with a series of Whistler paintings of the same name.



The programmatic intent of these works is illustrative, without the emotional involvement of the late-Romantic **tone-poets**. '*Nuages* [Clouds] renders the immutable aspect of the sky and the slow, solemn motion of the clouds, fading away in grey tones lightly tinged with white' – the composer's words find musical expression in the slowly changing background of rootless, floating chords which underlie the recurring tone of the cor anglais. Classical-Romantic distinctions between theme and texture are irrelevant in the smooth accompaniment; the cor anglais call never evolves into a melody. There is a whole new range of string colours here – delicate combinations of bowed and **pizzicato** effects, **harmonics**, non-standard divisions of the string forces. A complete change of colour and a new **pentatonic** theme on flute and harp mark an obvious new section in the music, and the movement closes with merely a *résumé* of the opening material. There is no progression to a clearly marked **cadence** at the end, but rather a gradual disintegration of elements, as the cor anglais **motif** breaks down into smaller and smaller particles.

In complete contrast with *Nuages* and its 'study in grey', *Fêtes* (Festivals) gives us an almost kaleidoscopic display of momentarily bright colours. Once more the composer supplies a description:

Fêtes gives us the vibrating, dancing rhythm of the atmosphere with sudden flashes of light. There is also the episode of the procession (a dazzling, fantastic vision) which passes through the festive scene and becomes merged in it. But the background remains persistently the same: the festival with its blending of music and luminous dust participating in the cosmic rhythm.

Sirènes (Sirens) evolves almost as a continuum; it swells and ebbs, rather than marking out a path; the melody grows and decays by the addition or alteration of small details. It is understandable how turn-of-the-century listeners, accustomed to more definition in form, could have regarded this music as impressionistic. It is possible that the use of wordless female voices in this last *Nocturne* was suggested to Debussy not only by Régnier's *L'Homme et la sirène*, but also by Swinburne's poem *Nocturne*, in which love is symbolised by a mermaid rising from the sea. Debussy wrote that this last movement 'depicts the sea and its countless rhythms and presently, amongst the waves silvered by moonlight...the mysterious song of the sirens as they laugh and pass on'.

Within the value system of the Classical-Romantic period, Debussy's music was at first seen by some as negative, even morbid. Fluent rather than dramatic, plastic rather than constructed, it is the very antithesis of the positive striving of, say, a Beethoven or a Bruckner. Yet Debussy's innovations laid the foundations for a new ethos in Western music and for new techniques of musical language, opening up for the 20th century many new vistas for exploration.

G.K. Williams
Symphony Australia © 1998

First performance: *Nuages* and *Fêtes* first performed 9 December 1900, Concerts Lamoureux, Paris; Camille Chevillard, conductor. Complete work premiered 27 October 1901.

First WASO performance: 19-20 October 1956. John Farnsworth Hall, conductor and Moongana Singers (*Sirènes*).

Most recent WASO performance: 21-22 November 2008. Thierry Fischer, conductor and Women of the WASO Chorus.

Instrumentation: three flutes (third doubling piccolo), two oboes, cor anglais, two clarinets, three bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, two harps, percussion, strings.

Glossary

Cadence – series of chords which gives a sense of the end of a phrase or section of music.

Harmonics – high, flute-like sounds produced by lightly touching the string.

Motif – a short, distinctive melodic or rhythmic figure, often part of or derived from a theme.

Pentatonic – five-note scale, here referring to that which is made up of the black notes on a piano keyboard. The pentatonic scale is common in the folk music traditions of many countries.

Pizzicato – plucking, rather than bowing, the strings.

Tone-poem/poets – a programmatic work (that is, one based on a literary, pictorial or other extra-musical idea) for orchestra, usually in a single movement. The term is often used interchangeably with 'symphonic poem'. Richard Strauss (1864-1949) is celebrated for his series of tone-poems.

About The Music

Maurice Ravel

(1875 – 1937)

La valse – poème chorégraphique

In the space of 120 years the waltz evolved from sturdy rusticity through elegant whirling to intoxicating sumptuousness – everyone from Mozart to Richard Strauss had taken a turn on the dance floor. Then World War I crushed the society that danced in three-quarter time, and the waltz became a thing of the past. For Ravel, himself traumatised by the war, this could only have made the waltz more irresistible; the composer of the *Menuet antique* and the *Pavane pour une infante défunte* was drawn, as always, to the past and to the dance.

In 1911 Ravel completed his *Valses nobles et sentimentales* – a string of lapidary waltzes in the spirit but not the style of Schubert – and he had begun to toy with the idea of a grander work for two pianos capturing the essence of Vienna through various aspects of the waltz. But Ravel didn't write *Wien*, as it was to be called. When war broke out he headed to the front, driving lorries because he was too slight to be admitted to the fighting forces. After the armistice he completed something quite different: *La valse* – a choreographic poem for orchestra.

Where the *Valses nobles...* had been inspired by Schubert and the embryonic waltz of the early 19th century, *La valse* is a tribute to 'An Imperial Court, around 1855', a court in which the Strausses are the kings. Ravel imagined the music as 'a sort of apotheosis of the Viennese waltz', associated in his mind with 'the impression of a fantastic, fatal whirling'.



The effect is achieved through the simplest of structures, based not so much on themes or harmony but on something very simple: the crescendo, or building of sound from soft to loud. In this respect it is not unlike *Boléro*, but instead of one long overwhelming crescendo, *La valse* offers two.

The music begins with a grumble – a muted double bass section divided into three separate groups that share eerie **tremolos** and ominous plucked notes. Ravel's scenario describes eddying clouds that part from time to time, offering fleeting glimpses of waltzing couples. Bassoons, horns and clarinets join in... Ravel's beloved harps and more trembling strings...all is low and all is muted. This is the waltz viewed from a distance, each intimate couple in its own private world.

But we cannot stay voyeurs for long – the mists gradually disperse to reveal a huge ballroom in red and gold, brilliantly lit with chandeliers, and the waltzing couples have become a whirling crowd. The music embarks on a chain of waltzes that capture the verve of Johann Strauss, the opulence of Richard, and the frenzy of the ballroom. ‘I’m waltzing frantically,’ wrote Ravel when working on the piece.

The themes are sophisticated and volatile by turn – one moment the crowd of dancers is all glittering elegance, the next it is caught up in the fatal whirling that Ravel imagined. The fantastic melodic invention is matched by scintillating orchestral effects such as sweeping glissandi from the harps and divisions of the strings into as many as 16 separate parts. But the potential of Ravel’s huge orchestra of more than 90 players is kept in reserve – we are overwhelmed by its exquisite colours before we are overwhelmed by its power. By the time Ravel brings on his second crescendo, shorter and more turbulent, we are completely intoxicated.

Not all were intoxicated, however. Sergei Diaghilev of the Ballets Russes was offered this spectacular music for a ballet but rejected it as too symphonic and lacking in choreographic variety. In doing so he lost the friendship of the composer who had created *Daphnis et Chloé* for his company in 1912.

Ironically *La valse* was one of the few Ravel ballet scores that had been conceived for dancing and for orchestra: *Ma Mère l’Oye* (Mother Goose), *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and *Valses nobles et sentimentales* all became ballets, but only after they had first appeared as music for piano. In the end it was Ida Rubinstein who produced *La valse*, some nine years later, with choreography by Bronislava Nijinska. But the music was first performed in the concert hall and it is there that its exhilarating momentum and surging climaxes continue to sweep us away. Pre-war Vienna may have waltzed itself into fatal oblivion but *La valse* whirls on.

Yvonne Frindle © 2005

First performance: 12 December 1920 (orchestral version), Camille Chevillard conducting Lamoureux Orchestra, Paris.

First WASO performance: 14 February 1987, Diego Masson conducting.

Most recent WASO performance: 26-27 September 2014, Baldur Brönnimann conducting.

Instrumentation: three flutes (third doubling piccolo), three oboes (third doubling cor anglais), two clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, two harps, strings.

Glossary

Glossary

Tremolo – repeating the same note many times very quickly, producing a ‘shaking’ sound.

Meet The Musician

Philip Holdsworth Principal Bass Trombone

What's your earliest memory of playing music?

Apart from the usual “pot-lid-percussionist” as a child; my first introduction to music playing was piano lessons. These started around the age of 10. I first started on brass instruments at 12, with the euphonium, followed soon after by the trombone.

When did you realise that you wanted to become a professional musician?

I always remember the first day that I went to the Melbourne Youth Orchestra, back in 1972 (so long ago!). The effect on me was huge! I loved every minute and realised that that was where I wanted to be; as much as possible. I don't think I immediately thought “I want to be a professional musician”, but I caught the bug right then, and becoming a full time classical musician was an inevitable process.

When did you join WASO?

I began with the WASO at the start of the 1985 season. That's 33+ years ago!! (and still loving it!)

What are you most looking forward to this WASO season?

There are two pieces that come to mind. The first was in Master Series 1 – with Strauss' *An Alpine Symphony*. The second might surprise some – in these Masters 2 concerts there is the Nielsen Flute Concerto. This has only the one trombone part, for the bass trombone, which is quite demanding and prominent. At one stage the solo flute and the bass trombone battle out a “good versus evil” duet, which is great fun to play. I'll leave you to figure which is which! Then there are plenty of other pieces; Beethoven 9 is always special.



Do you have a shortlist of works or composers that you love to play the most?

Mahler is always at the top of the list. Brahms also comes to mind. One of my first professional jobs was a season of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* which has always remained a favourite, along with all his music.

What is your secret non-music related talent?

I've always been interested in computers, though these days I feel a little left behind with all the advancements. I dabble in photography (not as much as I'd like, though). I'm pretty good at Sudoku – something that has got me through many a slow-moving rehearsal or pit season!

The most important non-music job for me is being a dad and husband. I have two kids – Liz and James and my loving wife, Jan. My family are the most important to me. I *think* I do a reasonable job of it!?!)

WASO In The Community

As we look forward to another year of delivering diverse programs to audience across the State, we also celebrate some highlights from the year that has been. In 2017, our Community Engagement Department proudly



presented 514 Community Outreach & Education performances, workshops, classes and masterclasses



reached more than 27 000 participants and/or audience members of all ages



presented programs in 35 different locations across the State

We celebrated another very successful Education Week+ between 19-26 June, presenting 21 performances, workshops and classes across 11 different programs and 7 different performance sites, to more than 6500 people. It was a joy to have guest educationalist, composer and presenter Paul Rissmann with us. His visit was the first of many that will see young children engage with interactive education programs that combine music, visual art and the written word. WASO continued to deliver Crescendo, WA's only El-Sistema inspired free music education program, to two primary schools in Kwinana. WASO's Crescendo Program delivered 414 lessons to 272 students in Pre-primary to Year 3. And as an extension of our suite of Arts in Healthcare programs, we launched Connect Open Rehearsals to provide opportunities for adults with disabilities registered with a community organisation, to experience the Orchestra.



We are incredibly passionate about and proud of our Education & Community Programs, and sincerely thank all of our supporters who help make it possible.

For more information about WASO's Education & Community Programs, please visit waso.com.au/education-community

WASO's Community Outreach program is proudly presented by Healthway, promoting the Act Belong Commit message.

Paul Rissmann, Education Artist in Residence Program is supported by McCusker Charitable Foundation.

Crescendo is supported by Crown Resorts Foundation, Packer Family Foundation, The Stan Perron Charitable Foundation, Tianqi Lithium and Crescendo Giving Circle.

WASO Philanthropy

Join us in bringing *Tristan und Isolde* to the Stage!

After our wonderfully successful Wagner & Beyond mini festival last year, we are now very excited about our landmark production for WASO's 90th Anniversary Year:

Wagner's ground-breaking opera *Tristan und Isolde*. Asher Fisch and WASO will be joined by a truly world-class, international cast to deliver the seminal story of love and intrigue that has transformed the art form of classical music forever. We invite you to also be transformed!

Tristan und Isolde is an expensive undertaking as the scale of Wagner productions incurs significant costs, and ticket sales will not cover the full cost of the production. We continue to seek support to help fund this bold artistic project, and

invite you to be a part of getting these unique concerts to the stage. So if WASO, or Wagner, or our 90th anniversary year or all of the above are important to you, we'd love to hear from you!

Your donation will support our exquisite cast of singers and you will get to enjoy exclusive events and behind-the-scenes experiences, such as a *Tristan und Isolde* Cast Party and an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour and rehearsal at Perth Concert Hall. You will also be acknowledged as a Wagner Patron on the WASO website and in our concert programs.

To arrange your valued donation to WASO's 90th anniversary year landmark production, please contact Sarah Tompkin on 9326 0017 or tompkins@waso.com.au

Patrons & Friends Events

Save the Dates: 2018 Patrons & Friends Events

After an amazing first event for 2018 with Janet Holmes à Court and Principal Trumpet, Brent Grapes on 19 February, we are pleased to share with you our confirmed dates for the upcoming Patrons & Friends Events later this year.

- **Judy Sienkiewicz Lecture:**
Em. Prof. Alan Harvey
Hosted by Prue Ashurst
Thurs 7 June | 6.00pm
Perth Concert Hall
- **WASO Chorus at the Cathedral**
Tues 16 October | 6.00pm
St Mary's Cathedral
- **Patrons & Friends Christmas Party**
Thurs 13 December | 4.30pm
Perth Concert Hall

More information on these events will follow in the upcoming Patrons & Friends newsletter, *Encore*.



Pictured: Em. Prof. Alan Harvey

We look forward to seeing you there!

Our Supporters

Philanthropic partnerships come in all shapes and sizes

Whatever the shape or size, your donation helps WASO make a difference and we thank you for your support. WASO's philanthropy program continues to grow, supporting our vision now and into the future. It is an exciting time to be a part of this community, to meet our musicians and to know you have helped your Orchestra to *touch souls and enrich lives through music*. Together we can do amazing things.

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This fund includes major donations and bequests

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We are grateful to those who have supported new works commissioned for the Orchestra by WASO

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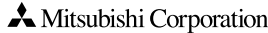
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