



| SUMMER NIGHTS

14 MARCH 2026

ODEION

FREE STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

love good music.



SUMMER NIGHTS

CONDUCTOR:

YASUO SHINOZAKI

MEZZO-SOPRANO:

VIOLINA ANGUELOV

PROGRAMME:

MAURICE RAVEL:	LE TOMBEAU DE COUPERIN
HECTOR BERLIOZ:	LES NUITS D'ÉTÉ ('SUMMER NIGHTS')

- INTERVAL -

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN:	SYMPHONY NO.3 'EROICA'
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14 MARCH 2026

ODEION

FREE STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

MAURICE RAVEL

1875-1937

Le Tombeau de Couperin, (1917, orch. 1919)

- I. Prélude
- II. Forlane
- III. Menuet
- IV. Rigaudon

In 1917, Maurice Ravel completed a piano suite entitled *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, a monument to the French baroque style (the English translation of 'tomb' is misleading). The opening Prélude is an abstract movement, followed by a Fugue, three dances (Forlane, Menuet and Rigaudon) and a Toccata. Stylistically, *Le Tombeau* is interesting in that it displays Ravel's particular brand of neo-classicism – the composer had by this time developed some independence from Debussyian impressionism. The patriotic flavour of the work is not only suggested by ancient French dance forms, but in the work's very sound and texture, in which Ravel invokes the spirit of the *clavecin*, the light-toned French harpsichord. Inspired by comrades who had fallen in the First World War, the suite remains one of the composer's most well-loved works.

Understandably, music written in the wake of conflict is frequently mournful. Alternatively, it can also be triumphalist, or defiantly patriotic. But *Le Tombeau* is different. There is a certain sadness to it, of course, and given the era this would have been inescapable to its first audiences. Ravel had experienced the horrors of the battlefield himself. However, the composer wished to celebrate the human spirit and life itself, which is after all what the soldiers had died for. *Le Tombeau* purposely avoided excessive pathos or morbidity – 'the dead are sad enough', Ravel explained. The archaic dances that he had selected for resurrection had long fallen out of fashion – dead, really, in the minds of the public, but ultimately irrepressible and eternal. In this sense the general tone is immensely dignified and timeless.

In 1919 Ravel orchestrated the Prélude & the three dances of *Le Tombeau*. The orchestra required is relatively modest, by comparison with the composer's usual demands. The principal oboe is prominent throughout all four movements.

The rapid filigree material of the Prélude is first stated by the oboe, and then shared by other instruments, notably the clarinet, bassoons and violins.

In 1914, a story made the rounds that Pope Pius X had condemned the lascivious tango, and suggested that Catholics dance the respectable forlane instead, thus giving the 18th century groove a brief upsurge in vogue. Ravel was one composer that took advantage of the rumour; the spiky melody of his Forlane never fails to raise a smile.

The Menuet is graceful, but tinged with melancholy and nostalgia nonetheless. Ravel invokes a rustic scene with bagpipes in the contrasting trio, using magical harmonies that seem to come from another world.

The Rigaudon was a lively dance in duple time, performed at ceremonial occasions in the baroque era. Ravel's quicksilver example is a delight – *scherzando* in character, dizzying, rapid and joyous. The myriad instrumental effects are astonishing and miraculous.

HECTOR BERLIOZ

1803-69

Les nuits d'été ('Summer Nights'), Opus 7 (1841, orch. 1856)

- I. Villanelle
- II. Le Spectre de la rose
- III. Sur les lagunes: Lamento
- IV. Absence
- V. Au cimetière: Clair de lune
- VI. L'île inconnue

Hector Berlioz was profoundly inspired by literature, especially when that literature reflected aspects of his own personal life. He idolised Virgil and Goethe, and above all Shakespeare, whose plays (*Romeo & Juliet*, *King Lear* and *Hamlet*) inspired some of the Frenchman's most memorable works. But Berlioz also sought more contemporary (and local) sources, one of whom was his friend Théophile Gautier. The composer selected six poems from Gautier's 1838 collection *La comédie de la mort*, setting them for voice (mezzo soprano or tenor) and piano in 1841.

The resulting song cycle, *Les nuits d'été*, did not make much of an impression. Berlioz was not a competent pianist, and the music's failure to capture the audience's imagination was probably due to his unidiomatic keyboard writing. For a cycle named 'Summer Nights' (the composer's title, not Gautier's), the poems chosen by Berlioz are decidedly sad and resigned, if not downright morbid. By the late 1830s his marriage to Harriet Smithson had long passed its blissful phase – her alcoholism, jealousy and bitterness having driven him into the arms of a mistress, the mezzo soprano Marie Recio. We can only speculate as to whether the poems of *Les nuits d'été* were chosen as a commemoration of his marriage as something of the past, although such an act would not have been out of character for Berlioz.

Berlioz orchestrated the first song, Villanelle, for performance by Marie. It was well received at the premiere, and at the behest of his friends he recast the other songs too. The orchestral version of *Les nuits d'été* brings the accompaniment to life, and makes it worthy of the beautiful vocal melodies. Although it is a very different work to earlier masterpieces such as the celebrated *Symphonie fantastique*, its instrumentation is every bit as accomplished and effective. Most of Berlioz' works require a vast orchestra, but the ensemble in this song cycle is decidedly modest, allowing for the (often quiet) singer's line to project through the texture.

The chosen texts deal with different aspects (or different stages) of love. The opening song, *Villanelle*, immediately invokes the restless heartbeat of an infatuated youth in the season of spring. The second, *Le Spectre de la rose*, is the most beautiful and charming of the set, its poetry describing the sacrifice of the self for the sake of love. With *Sur la lagunes*, we are in the territory of death – the poet lamenting the loss of his love; in *Absence* he implores her return, but is obliged to accept his fate in *Au cimetière*. The final song, *L'île inconnue*, is a vision of an exotic, imagined paradise, in which the soul of the departed seeks solace and the bliss of eternal love.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

1770-1827

Symphony no.3 in E-flat major, Opus 55 'Eroica' (1804)

- I. *Allegro con brio*
- II. *Marcia funebre: Adagio assai*
- III. *Scherzo: Allegro vivace*
- IV. *Finale: – Allegro molto*

Even after two centuries, the explosive power of Beethoven's *Eroica* symphony remains undiminished. Written in honour of the Enlightenment ideals of Napoleon Bonaparte, Beethoven's pupil Ferdinand Ries relates that when the Frenchman declared himself Emperor, the composer tore the dedication from the title page in fury, and scribbled 'Heroic Symphony to celebrate the Memory of a Great Man' in its place. It is a wonderful story, and it would be equally wonderful if it were true – Ries' accounts of the great man are colourful but prone to sensationalist exaggeration. A more plausible explanation is that Beethoven intended his 'Bonaparte Symphony' for Paris, but when his Viennese patron Prince Lobkowitz offered him a handsome sum for a premiere, the composer's pragmatism trumped his idealism.

Never mind. The *Eroica* remains a stunning and revolutionary work no matter what 'meaning' is ascribed to it. Composition began not long after Beethoven had written a poignant letter to his brothers during a visit to the town of Heiligenstadt in 1801. This 'Heiligenstadt Testament' provides us with some idea of the composer's near-suicidal despair after realising his hearing was deteriorating. In the end, Beethoven chose to seize his own destiny rather than accept his fate. Here are the beginnings of musical romanticism – the composer is no longer content merely to entertain and reflect the beauty of the world, but to tell his audience of his own strivings. The language of the old classicism would no longer suffice.

The *Eroica* marks the first orchestral piece in Beethoven's new, highly personal style. In striving for expressive extremes, the composer produced a score that comfortably exceeded the elegant works of Mozart and Haydn in length, scope, dissonance, and sheer volume – it demanded a huge orchestra, obliging Lobkowitz to cough up payment for 22 extra musicians (!) in that first performance.

So, to that famous first movement. The music really begins in bar 3, after Beethoven's two *tutti* chords serve to silence the crowd. Modern audiences need no such admonishment, and instead reverently prepare to receive the first theme, played *piano* by the cellos. But would it really be the same work without those ferocious hammer blows? No, it certainly would not. Beethoven gives us three themes in the exposition, instead of the usual two.

Most major key classical symphonic developments are brief and polite affairs, but this one is a gargantuan thing, reaching remote key regions with ferocious dissonance. And the rest of the movement is very naughty indeed – not only does the recapitulation wander off into the wrong key, but there is further development in the coda. Beethoven was end-weighting sonata form to make it more dramatic, something Mahler would build upon a century later.

The second movement is a funeral march – severe, archaic and ceremonial in character. After that supercharged first movement, the slow tempo and spare textures are profoundly moving. The scherzo (technically a minuet, but named 'joke' because of the unexpectedly fast tempo indication) is a rollercoaster, Beethoven courting danger with high-speed cross rhythms that prefigure the syncopations of the *Ninth symphony*. The finale is a set of variations, based upon a theme the composer pinched from his own 1801 *Creatures of Prometheus* ballet, written a few years earlier. This delightful ending makes the perfect counterbalance to the stormy opening movement.

Notes by Lance J. Phillip 2026

CONDUCTOR

**YASUO
SHINOZAKI**

**Yasuo Shinozaki was born in Kyoto in 1968.
At the Toho Gakuen College he studied conducting
with Nanao Yamamoto and Taijiro Imori.**

In 1993 he won the highest prize in the Antonio Pedrotti International Conducting Competition and went on to study with Ilya Musin and Myung-Whun Chung at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana; Leopold Hager and Yuji Yuasa at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna; and Seiji Ozawa and Bernard Haitink in the Tanglewood Music Festival Seminar. In 2000 he won 2nd Prize in the International Sibelius Competition.

Shinozaki began his tenure as assistant conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in 2001. In this capacity he was involved in performances of diverse repertoire spanning classical works to world premieres of contemporary compositions, in over 40 concerts.

In 2004 Shinozaki relocated to London and focused his activity on concerts in Europe, conducting major orchestras in numerous countries including the BBC Philharmonic, Bournemouth Symphony, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Finnish Radio Symphony, Nuremberg Symphony, Swedish Radio Symphony, Belgrade Philharmonic, and Latvian National Symphony. In South Africa he has conducted the Johannesburg Philharmonic, KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic and Cape Town Philharmonic.

In January 2007, he became chief conductor and artistic director of the Kymi Sinfonietta in Finland, and earned attention for ambitious projects including the launch of the series "Beethoven and 20th-Century Viennese Composers." He held the position for 7 years. In 2015 Yasuo Shinozaki became Principal Conductor of the Shizuoka Symphony Orchestra.

He has appeared with many other Japanese orchestras including the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic, Japan Philharmonic, New Japan Philharmonic, Osaka Philharmonic, Kansai Philharmonic, Sendai Philharmonic, Kanagawa Philharmonic, Nagoya Philharmonic, Kyoto Symphony Orchestra, Japan Century Symphony Orchestra, Osaka Symphony Orchestra, Sapporo Symphony Orchestra and Gunma Symphony Orchestra.

SOLOIST

A black and white portrait of a woman with dark, wavy hair styled in an updo. She is wearing a dark, draped garment, a necklace with a small pendant, and large, ornate earrings. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. Her arms are crossed.

VIOLINA ANGUELOV-HOBBS

Violina Anguelov-Hobbs was born in Bulgaria and is a celebrated mezzo-soprano with an international performance career spanning over two decades.

She obtained her Performer's Diploma in Opera with distinction and a First-Class Honours Degree in Singing from the University of Cape Town, where she studied under voice teacher Sarita Stern and the direction of Professor Angelo Gobbato. Her artistry has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Adcock Ingram Music Prize, the Leonard Hall Memorial Prize, the Erik Chisholm Prize, and Cape Town Opera's Best Principal Singer Award.

With a repertoire of over 35 leading roles, Violina has appeared in acclaimed operatic productions across South Africa, Germany, Bulgaria, Australia, Switzerland, and Sweden. She made her South African operatic debut in 1999 as Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Mozart) with Cape Town Opera, and her European debut as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* (Mozart) in Hanover, Germany, in 2000. Her notable roles include Rosina (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Marguerite (*La Damnation de Faust*), Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Carmen (*Carmen*), Nerone (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*), and Mrs. Patrick De Rocher (*Dead Man Walking*), among many others. Her performance as Carmen in 2011 and 2016 was met with both critical and public acclaim.

Violina has shared the stage with esteemed artists including Bryn Terfel in a Gala Concert with Cape Town Opera and the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, and in 2013 she worked under the baton of Sir Richard Bonyngne in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (concert version).

Beyond the operatic stage, she is a sought-after concert soloist as well as performing as a soloist in oratorio, having performed major works by Mozart, Handel, Haydn, Elgar, Verdi, and more. Her lieder repertoire is equally extensive, spanning composers such as Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Britten, Debussy, Fauré, Tchaikovsky, and Rachmaninov.

In addition to her performance career, Violina is a dedicated educator and currently serves as a full-time Senior Voice Lecturer at the University of Cape Town's College of Music.

VIOLIN I

Samantha Durrant
(Concertmaster)
Sharon de Kock
(Co-Concertmaster)
Richard Reid
(Assistant Concertmaster)
Francois Henkins
(Assistant Concertmaster)
Elinoir Speirs
Lizette Gous-Holloway
Elzanne van Schalkwyk
Abri van Nieuwenhuizen
Jani Liebenberg
Joanie Prinsloo

VIOLIN II

Regomoditswe Molosioa
(Principal)
Elspeth Neary
Ezelle Lategan
Stefné Raubenheimer
Sue-Phill Petersen
Diandra Steenekamp
Maria Yazbek
Isaac Molelekoa

VIOLA

Jeanne-Louise Moolman
(Principal)
Chair sponsor: André Venter
Kate White
Ashleigh Scobbie
Sehle Mosole
Dora Ackerman

CELLO

Anmari van der Westhuizen
(Principal)
Chair sponsor: Frederick Fourie
Arend Brink
Tilla Henkins
Frederick Fourie

BASS

Ruan Baartman
(Principal)
Siyolise Nyondo-Holliman
Christi-Louise Swanepoel

FLUTE

Handri Loots
(Guest Principal)
Renée Neuhoff

OBOE

Peter Jaspan
(Guest Principal)
Elize Loeb van Zuilenburg

CLARINET

Danré Strydom
(Principal)
Chair sponsor: Katinka Botha
Jenny Brand

BASSOON

Brahm Henkins
(Guest Principal)
Jan-Willem Hoorweg

FRENCH HORN

Adriaan Erwee
(Guest Principal)
Emil Bruwer
Louise Loeb van Zuilenburg

TRUMPET

Paul Loeb van Zuilenburg
(Principal)
Dingaen Chabalala

TIMPANI

Maritsa Barlow
(Principal)

HARP

Gaylen Sales
(Guest Principal)

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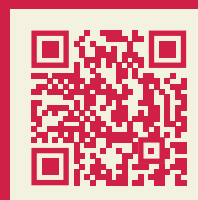
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Dingaen Chabalala

2026 SEASON

10 APRIL 19:30
SAND DU PLESSIS

CONDUCTOR:
DANIEL BOICO
PIANO:
LEO DE MARIA

Khachaturian: Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia from Spartacus
Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No. 2
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5

16 MAY 19:30
ODEION

CONDUCTOR:
ALEXANDER WALKER
DOUBLE BASS:
RUAN BAARTMAN

Britten: Suite on English Folk Tunes, Op. 90
Viwe Mkizwana: Concerto for double bass (world premiere)
Mozart: Symphony No. 35, "Haffner"
Stravinsky: Pulcinella Suite

19 SEPT 19:30
SAND DU PLESSIS

CONDUCTOR:
DANIEL BOICO
DIRECTOR:
SASHA GERRITSON
SOLOISTS:
TO BE ANNOUNCED

Act I Glinka: Overture to Ruslan and Ludmilla
Verdi: Overture to La Forza del Destino
Rossini: Overture to William Tell
Lehar: Overture to Land of Smiles
Wagner: Prelude to Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg
Act II Puccini: Gianni Schicchi, one-act comic opera

3 OCT 19:30
ODEION

CONDUCTOR:
GUIDO MANCUSI
SOLOIST:
FINALISTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOODWIND COMPETITION

31 OCT 19:30
ODEION

CONDUCTOR:
GERRY CORNELIUS
CELLO:
PETER MARTENS

Shostakovich: Cello Concerto No. 1

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