

Heroic Tales



QUEENSLAND SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

2 + 3 AUG 2024

CONCERT HALL, QPAC



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Queensland Symphony Orchestra provides a spoken Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of each concert to encourage awareness and to demonstrate our respect for First Nations cultures and traditions, as well as signalling our commitment to a more inclusive and equitable society. We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of Meanjin where we work, rehearse and perform; specifically the Turrbal and Yuggera peoples, whose deep connection to this land reminds us to always protect and care for it.

Queensland Symphony Orchestra acknowledges the traditional custodians of Australia.

We acknowledge the cultural diversity of Elders, both past and present, and the significant contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to Queensland and Australia.

Photos by Sarah Marshall & Sam Muller

WELCOME

Welcome noble concertgoers!

For all who have travelled from both near and far, we thank you for joining us for today's symphonic adventure of Heroic Tales.

Storytelling has always been one of humankind's most cherished forms of entertainment and community. A group of travellers sharing their adventures by campfire, an old legend told from parent to child at bedtime; creating and sharing stories is rooted in our minds and imaginations. However, before the days of printing presses and the Marvel Cinematic Universe, stories were told through different methods, including the magic of music!

Today, guest conductor Nicholas Carter and our orchestra will share the storytelling power of music through two exquisite works. For those attending Saturday's concert, a third piece will set the scene for your concert with Helen Grime's *Near Midnight*, inspired by D.H. Lawrence's poem *Week-night Service*. *Shéhérazade* for Voice and Orchestra by Maurice Ravel will then kick off our heroic quests with guest soprano Siobhan Stagg singing three fantastical tales from this piece, inspired by the Middle Eastern folktale *The Arabian Nights* (aka. *A Thousand and One Nights*) – of which *Shéhérazade* is a primary protagonist.

Our quest concludes with Richard Strauss' beloved tone poem, *Ein Heldenleben* (*A Hero's Life*). While Strauss denied the suggestion, *Ein Heldenleben* is widely considered a self-referential work with Strauss representing the Hero and his villainous critics represented in the movement, *The Hero's Adversaries*, much to their displeasure.

Find your companions, gather your supplies, and embark with us on this exciting adventure of Heroic Tales!

IN THIS CONCERT

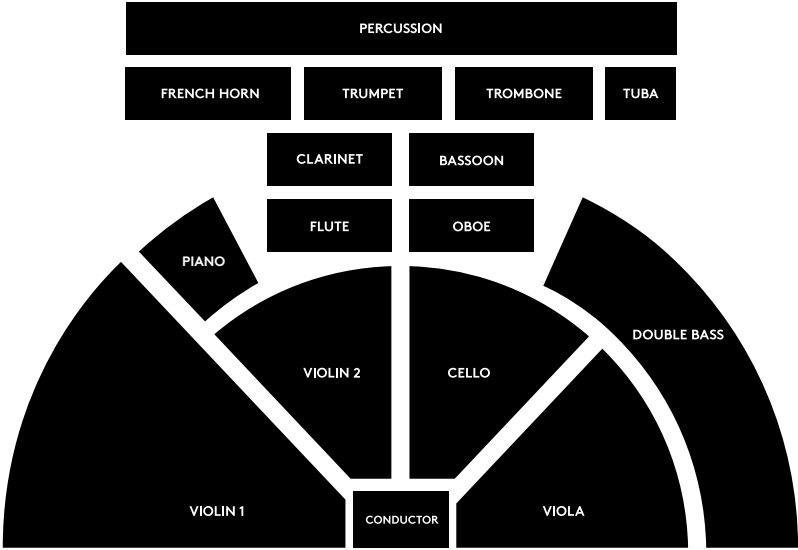
Conductor	Nicholas Carter
Soloist	Siobhan Stagg soprano

PROGRAM

GRIME	<i>Near Midnight</i> (Sat only)	12'
RAVEL	<i>Shéhérazade</i>	17'
INTERVAL	Saturday Only	20'
R.STRAUSS	<i>Ein Heldenleben</i>	40'

Relive this concert on ABC Classic 12 August at 1pm AEST.

IF YOU'RE NEW TO THE ORCHESTRA



WHO SITS WHERE

Orchestras sit in sections based on types of instruments. There are four main sections in the symphony orchestra (strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion) and sometimes a keyboard section.

STRINGS

These instruments produce sound by bowing or plucking stretched strings.

- First and Second Violin
- Viola
- Cello
- Double Bass
- Harp

WOODWIND

Wind instruments produce sound by being blown into.

- Flute/Piccolo
- Clarinet/E-flat Clarinet/Bass Clarinet
- Oboe/Cor Anglais
- Bassoon/Contrabassoon

KEYBOARD

Keyboard instruments are played by pressing keys.

- Piano
- Celeste
- Organ

BRASS

Brass players create sound by vibrating their lips. When this vibration is pushed through large brass tubes, it can create significant noise.

- French Horn
- Trumpet
- Trombone/Bass Trombone
- Tuba

PERCUSSION

These instruments create sound by being struck or, for the harp, plucked or strummed. Some instruments just make a sound; others play particular notes.

- Timpani, Bass drum, Snare drum, Cymbals,
- Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Vibraphone,
- Tam-tam, Triangle, Sleigh Bells.

WHO'S ON STAGE TODAY



BEFORE WE BEGIN

Before the performance begins, get to know a few musical terms in the Listening Guide.

Tone Poem

A piece of music based on a descriptive theme.

Fortissimo

Means to be played very loudly.

Movement

A symphonic work often divided up into different sections, called movements. Each section may be played at a different speed to the previous, but each carry an overall theme of the symphony throughout.





LISTENING GUIDE

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

Schééhérazade

Maurice Ravel and his friend Tristan Klingsor were members of Les Apaches – the hoodlums, loosely translated. Not to be confused with the French criminal gangs of the same name, these hoodlums were a turn-of-the-century group of artists who stayed up all night to talk about music and poetry. In 1903, Klingsor wrote a suite of poems called *Schééhérazade*, and Ravel composed a song cycle based on this text.

Schééhérazade named after the character from *The Arabian Nights* who tells the Sultan fantastical tales. She always leaves him on a cliffhanger – ensuring she'll live to share the stories again tomorrow. This Middle Eastern and Indian story collection appealed to the hoodlums who lived in an era of orientalism – the Western fascination with art that might evoke an impression of Asia. Klingsor's poetry is a product of this movement, and the first song is called 'Asie' ('Asia' in French). We hear a soprano (occasionally, a mezzo soprano) longing to sail to distant lands. Indeed it would have taken Ravel weeks to cross the continents, so this piece reveals how he might have imagined Asian music to sound – with a twist of French impressionism. About five minutes in, you'll hear an exotic harp over which the singer holds a striking note through the word 'China'. Ravel illustrates his landscape with smatterings of wind instruments punctuated by the crystal chime of the triangle.

The work sounds a bit like Debussy; both composers had attended the 1889 Paris Exposition celebrating international arts and innovation, which sparked their infatuations with music from around the world. But 'La flûte enchantée' continues to charm with a sound world that is distinctly Ravel's. Its singer represents a slave listening to her lover playing flute from afar; its melody brushes over her like a kiss. The romantic mood flows into 'L'indifférent', where the speaker's infatuation with an androgynous character has lead musicologists to further speculate on Ravel's mysterious romantic life.

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)

Ein Heldenleben

Lebhaft bewegt! Richard Strauss wrote this expressive marking on the first page of his score for *Ein Heldenleben* (A Hero's Life). It instructs the hefty brass and lower strings to play a lively opening theme – the musical embodiment of our protagonist who treks through a series of challenges in this 1898 **tone poem**.

The work follows a structure similar to the literary Hero's Journey. It also sounds like the type of dramatic score you'd hear in a mid-Century Hollywood epic. Feel free to fashion yourself as the hero of this symphonic adventure – Strauss left it open to interpretation (though some believe he wrote it about himself).

The second **movement** takes us on a strange and daring journey with mystical flute and double reeds scattered throughout the score: our hero meets their adversary. It leads triumphantly into The Hero's Companion in which the orchestra stops to listen to the charismatic violin solo – a depiction of Strauss' wife Pauline. Pauline warns our hero of impending battle, and the militaristic fourth movement pits brass against strings in a clashingly loud (**Fortissimo!**) mess of instruments. It's a gripping fight – and it also offers a window into the future of film music, with composers such as John Williams so greatly influenced by these heroic classics. The return of the optimistic opening theme reveals the winner.

The Hero's Works of Peace is a Strauss mixtape. If you're a connoisseur of his music, you'll hear the references to his previous hits including Don Juan, Death and Transfiguration, and Guntram among others. As *Ein Heldenleben* reaches its closing movement, our hero rides off into the sunset – immer ruhiger; quiet and calm. Strauss stacks his final notes in a not-so-subtle nod toward another of his tone poems. If you've seen 2001: A Space Odyssey, you'll know which one.

LISTENING GUIDE

HELEN GRIME (B.1981-PRESENT)

Near Midnight

D.H. Lawrence wrote a rather creepy poem called *Week-night Service*. He describes the church bells' incessant chime; the empty smile on the face of the moon. Trees discard their leaves with scorn, and the night sky cringes from the harsh light of human activity.

If you think it sounds unsettling, hold onto that: Helen Grime's 2012 *Near Midnight* aims to conjure a similar mood. The English-born Scottish composer started writing this music while reading Lawrence's poem. She uses brass instead of bells to break the silence of the night. Her score sounds sparse but for jagged interjections of each instrumental section. Percussion glistens like a starry sky, but offers little comfort.

Grime wrote her deliciously eerie work as associate composer with The Hallé. Her vision was to showcase the skill of the players, which means you'll have the opportunity to enjoy active listening when each section of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra ventures towards this ghostly hour.



ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

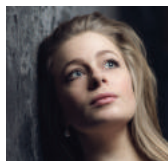


Nicholas Carter Conductor

Most recently celebrated for his conducting of Brett Dean *Hamlet* and Britten Peter *Grimes* at the Metropolitan Opera, Nicholas Carter is one of the leading opera conductors of the younger generation. Since 2021 he has been Chief Conductor and Co-Operndirektor of Bühnen Bern, following his positions as Kapellmeister at the Staatsoper Hamburg and the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and as Chefdirigent of the Stadttheater Klagenfurt and the Kärntner Sinfonieorchester from 2018 to 2021. Serving as Principal Conductor of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra from 2016 to 2019, Carter has since been in international demand in the symphonic field.

Alongside regular collaborations with Australia's leading symphony orchestras, Carter has appeared with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Métropolitain, Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, the Dallas and Oregon Symphony Orchestras, Orchestre National de Lille, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, MDR Sinfonieorchester Leipzig, Bochumer Symphoniker, Seoul Philharmonic and Hong Kong Philharmonic, among others.

At the heart of Nicholas Carter's tenure in Bern is the new production of Wagner *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, which he will also conduct at the Deutsche Oper Berlin in the 2023/2024 season. He conducts Bizet *Les pêcheurs de perles* at both the Oper Zürich and the Oper Köln and makes his debut at Stuttgart Opera with *Rheingold* in 2023/24. He has also worked with the Wiener Staatsoper, Santa Fe Opera and Deutsche Oper am Rhein as well as at the Glyndebourne Festival. His extensive operatic repertoire ranges from Mozart, Verdi, Wagner and Strauss to Russian and French works and contemporary composers such as Brett Dean, with whom he has a close artistic relationship.



Siobhan Stagg

Soprano

Australian soprano Siobhan Stagg was a member of the Deutsche Oper Berlin from 2013-19 where her roles included Pamina *Die Zauberflöte*, Sophie Der Rosenkavalier, Tytania *A Midsummer Nights' Dream*, Gilda Rigoletto, Micaëla Carmen, Adele Die Fledermaus, Musetta La bohème, Contessa di Folleville *Il viaggio a Reims* and Waldvogel and Woglinde in The Ring Cycle conducted by Sir Simon Rattle.

Elsewhere she has sung the title role in Cendrillon for the Lyric Opera of Chicago; Pamina for the Royal Opera House Covent Garden; Sophie Der Rosenkavalier for the Opernhaus Zurich and Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin; Mélisande for Opera de Dijon and Australia's Victorian Opera (for which she received the Green Room Award for Best Female Lead in an Opera); Gilda, Blonde and Cordelia in Aribert Reimann's *Lear* for the Hamburgische Staatsoper; Najade Ariadne auf Naxos for the Bayerische Staatsoper; Blonde for the Dutch National Opera; staged performances of *Mozart's Requiem* at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and Morgana Alcina and Marzelline Fidelio for the Grand Théâtre de Genève.

Siobhan began the 2022/23 season with prestigious concerts of *Shéhérazade* with the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks and Tugan Sokhiev; *Mahler's Symphony No.2* with London Symphony Orchestra and Simon Rattle; *Buch mit sieben Siegeln* with Wiener Symphoniker

and Ingo Metzmacher, and Berg's *Sieben frühe Lieder* with Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin and Vasily Petrenko. She made her debut solo recital at the Pierre Boulez Saal before appearing at Opernhaus Zürich as Eritea in a new production of *Eliogabalo*. Her other opera engagements this season include returns to the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin as Sophie Der Rosenkavalier; the Royal Opera House Covent Garden as Susanna *Le nozze di Figaro* and to the Deutsche Oper Berlin as Pamina *Die Zauberflöte* and as soprano soloist in their new staged production of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*.



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A black and white photograph of a woman with blonde hair, smiling and playing a cello. She is wearing a dark long-sleeved top. The background is dark and out of focus.

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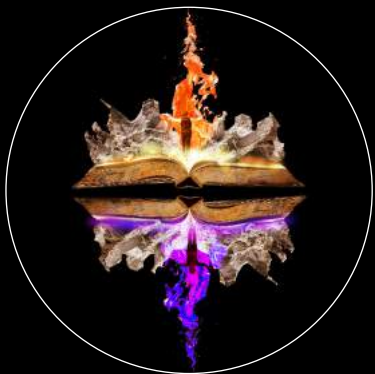
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COMING UP



Blaze Of Glory

FRI 23 AUG 7.30PM

SAT 24 AUG 1.30PM

Concert Hall, QPAC

Conductor	Johannes Fritzsich
Schubert	Symphony in B minor (Unfinished)
Bruckner	Symphony No.9 in D minor



Spirit of the Wild

FRI 13 SEP 11.30AM

SAT 14 SEP 7.30PM

Concert Hall, QPAC

Conductor	Umberto Clerici
Oboe	Diana Doherty
Westlake	<i>Spirit of the Wild</i>
Haydn	The Depiction of Chaos from <i>The Creation</i>
John Luther Adams	<i>Become Ocean</i>



Cinematic

FRI 22 NOV 7.30PM

SAT 23 NOV 1.30PM & 7.30PM

Concert Hall, QPAC

Conductor	Nicholas Buc
Soloist	Daniel Le
Features music from	<i>Batman</i> <i>Interstellar</i> <i>Superman</i> <i>How to Train Your Dragon</i> <i>The Lion King</i> and many more

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