

# V

A MORNING IN FRANCE

# Vignettes



QUEENSLAND SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA

6 OCT 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 Peter Wallis, Sarah Marshall & Darren Thomas

# WELCOME

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Bonjour cher amies,

Welcome to a magnifique Music on Sundays, as we journey to France and explore various vignettes of French and French-inspired music.

As the name “Vignettes” suggests, today's concert will share small suites and selections that paint single symphonic frames of the rich cultural tapestry that is this vibrant country.

Hear how France inspired the stage with Rameau’s Baroque opera-ballet, *Les Indes galantes*; then how France inspired the U.S., with Gershwin’s *An American in Paris*, and Debussy’s Alto Saxophone and Orchestra - commissioned by American saxophonist Elise Hall (and performed today by special guest Nick Russoniello). We will traverse Ravel’s popular arrangement of Modest Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition* and debate which work of art inspired Satie’s *Gymnopédies* - was it a novel or a symbolist painting? We will also honour Louise Farrenc, a remarkable performer and the composer of Overture No.2, who became the only woman appointed as a Professor at the Paris Conservatory during the 19th century.

Immerse yourself in the essence of what has made France a cultural capital of the world and revel in la joie de vivre.

## IN THIS CONCERT

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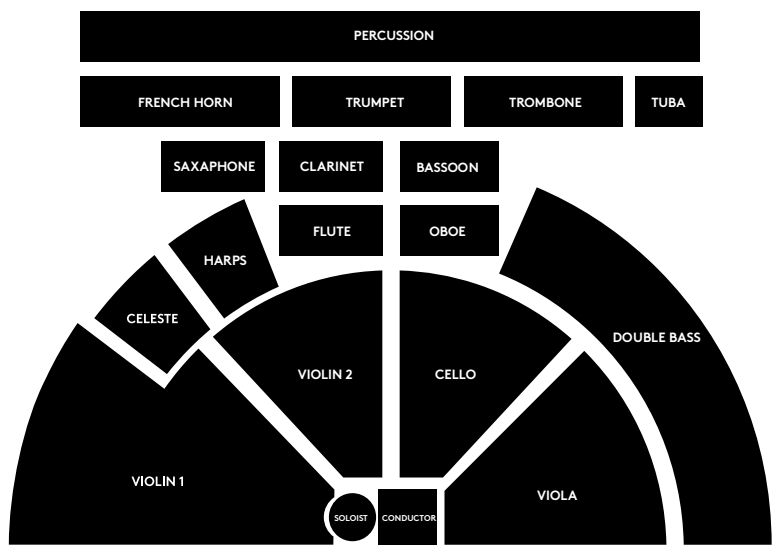
**Conductor** Umberto Clerici  
**Soloist** Nick Russoniello, saxophone

## PROGRAM

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RAMEAU	Suite from <i>Les Indes galantes</i>	13'
SATIE	<i>Gymnopédie</i> No. 3	4'
FARRENC	Overture No.2 in E flat, Op.24	7'
GERSHWIN	<i>An American in Paris</i>	16'
DEBUSSY	Rhapsody for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra	10'
MUSSORGSKY (ARR. RAVEL)	Selections from <i>Pictures at an Exhibition</i>	19'

# 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

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Find out who's on stage today,  
scan the QR code below.



# BEFORE WE BEGIN

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

## **Overture**

An introductory orchestral piece at the beginning of a major production, like an opera or ballet.

## **Tone poem**

A piece of orchestral music that tells a story, either evoking the content of a poem, story, painting, or landscape.

## **Suite**

A set of instrumental or orchestral works.

## **Coda**

A passage that brings a piece (or a movement) to an end.



# LISTENING GUIDE

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## JEAN-PHILIPPE RAMEAU (1683-1764)

Suite from *Les Indes galantes* (*The Amorous Indies*)

Prelude

Entrance of the Four Nations

Musette and Rondo

Rigaudon 1 and 2

Tambourin 1 and 2

If a time machine could transport you (appropriately dressed) back to the Paris of 1735 – the year *Les Indes galantes* first appeared – this music would have been considered the latest thing. A few years later, Louis XV honoured Rameau by making him a court composer, and when he died the *Mercure de France* wrote: 'Here lies the God of Harmony.' His operas became so popular that in 1749, the Paris Opéra ruled that they would only present two of them each year 'for fear of discouraging other composers.'

Dance was a hugely important part of any theatrical spectacle of the time in Paris and *Les Indes galantes* was considered an opéra-ballet. According to one of Rameau's contemporaries, this was 'a spectacle of singing and dancing made up of several different actions, each one complete and with no link, one without the other, except a vague and indeterminate relation.'

*Les Indes galantes* also speaks to the French fascination for faraway places, known generically at that time as 'The Indies'. It's an extravaganza which explores aspects of love in exotic locales: a Turkish island, the Peruvian desert, a Persian flower festival and finally among the Native Americans in a forest near the French and Spanish colonies.

In this **suite** of dances, you'll hear how colourful Rameau's orchestra could sound, from the bagpipe-like drone which tints the Musette and Rondo, to the sprightly – even at times foot-stomping – Rigaudon and Tambourin, in the latter of which the bassoon has a starring role. The Prelude to the whole spectacle manages – like so much of Rameau's music – to be simultaneously grand and elegant.



# LISTENING GUIDE

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## ERIK SATIE (1866-1925) ORCH. CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918) *Gymnopédie No.3*

The magic of Satie's three *Gymnopédies* lies in their timeless simplicity. The ethereal, floating melody, the simple, restrained accompaniment, suggest a beauty from long ago, but one which – somehow – could just as well have been created last week.

Satie wrote these delicate morsels for piano in the 1880s, and meant to orchestrate them, but that was left to his friend and admirer Debussy (who in the end orchestrated only the first and third of them). While the mature Satie became a revered figure for young French modernists, and is equally famous for his deadpan wit, the *Gymnopédies* are loved for their fragile grace. The meaning of the title is ambiguous; it may refer to the *Gymnopaedia*, an ancient Spartan festival where young men danced naked, or perhaps simply unarmed, primarily in honour of the god Apollo.





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## LOUISE FARRENC (1804-1875)

### Overture No.2 in E flat, Op.24

Thirty years ago, had you asked a music lover to name some prominent French composers of the 19th century, you might have been told about Berlioz (*Symphonie fantastique*); Saint-Saëns (*Organ Symphony*, *Carnival of the Animals*); Bizet (*Carmen*, *The Pearl Fishers*) and Delibes (*Coppélia*). Louise Farrenc's name would not have been mentioned – because at that point her music was barely known. Fast-forward to 2024 and her chamber and orchestral works are fast becoming a regular part of international musical life.

What happened? In recent decades scholars and performers have discovered a wealth of music by previously unknown composing women, including the German Emilie Mayer (1812-1883), Croatian Dora Pejačević (1885-1923), France's Mel Bonis (1858-1937), England's Ruth Gipps (1921-1999) and the Welsh Grace Williams (1906-1977). The spotlight has also now been shone anew on major works by Australia's own Margaret Sutherland (1897-1984).

Many of these pioneering women struggled to create a life in music, often fighting gender norms. However, Farrenc was born into an artistic family (her father and brother were successful sculptors), studied piano from age six and studied composition from the age of 15. She later gave many recitals with her flautist husband, and together they formed a music publishing house, Éditions Farrenc, which became a major force in the revival of historical French music. An author of a book on the performance of early music, Farrenc also toured as a concert pianist and, in 1842, was appointed Professor of Piano at the Paris Conservatoire, a position she held for more than 30 years.

Her first compositions were for her own instrument, the piano, but she soon created chamber and orchestral works, some of which were significant public successes. Her 'break-out' orchestral pieces were her two **overtures**, both of which she composed before she was 30. Although her Overture No.2 is sufficiently powerful to act as the curtain-raiser to an opera, it's actually a concert overture (like Mendelssohn's *The Hebrides*) and might best be thought of as a prelude to an imaginary drama. It's punchy and pithy, brimming with confidence, and with moments of delicacy amid the tumult.

# LISTENING GUIDE

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## GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898-1937)

### *An American in Paris*

Writer Ernest Hemingway, poet Gertrude Stein, and singer-dancer Josephine Baker were all Americans in Paris during the vibrant 1920s. And just as vividly 'present' in the City of Lights during this dazzling era is the hypothetical hero of Gershwin's sassy **tone poem**.

Already a successful composer, with many hits and *Rhapsody in Blue* behind him, his thoughts were turning increasingly toward the creation of bigger, more ambitious pieces. *An American in Paris* is where Gershwin turned his travel experiences into a concert work, which became hugely popular right from the day of its premiere, continuing to inspire award-winning movie and stage musicals.

Listen out for the taxi horns near the beginning, as our American visitor encounters Parisian traffic for the first time, and for the big tune in the 'blues' section, which sashays silkily towards you on solo trumpet.

*"My purpose here is to portray the impressions of an American visitor in Paris as he strolls about the city, listens to various street noises, and absorbs the French atmosphere.*

*The opening gay section is followed by a rich 'blues' with a strong rhythmic undercurrent. Our American friend, perhaps after strolling into a café and having a couple of drinks, has succumbed to a spasm of homesickness. The harmony here is both more intense and simple than in the preceding pages.*

*This 'blues' rises to a climax followed by a **coda** in which the spirit of the music returns to the vivacity and bubbling exuberance of the opening part with its impressions of Paris. Apparently the homesick American, having left the café and reached the open air, has downed his spell of blues and once again is an alert spectator of Parisian life.*

*At the conclusion, the street noises and French atmosphere are triumphant."*

- George Gershwin



## CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

### Rhapsody for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra

You often hear the phrase ‘small but exquisite’ used as a compliment – when it concerns fine jewellery or a beautifully prepared entrée, that is. Classical saxophonists would not be so sure; while they sure were exquisite, they didn’t appreciate having such a small (almost non-existent) presence in orchestral works at the time. The major composers who’ve written enduring works for sax and orchestra are few and far between – Glazunov, Ibert, Villa-Lobos, Richard Rodney Bennett and John Adams come to mind. Before them however, the ground was broken by Debussy, for what you hear today is the first major orchestral piece for the saxophone.

It has a strange back story. Elise Hall, wife of a Boston surgeon, was advised to take up a musical instrument to help with her asthma. Having chosen the alto saxophone, and being a woman of means, she asked Debussy to write her a piece. He took payment, then took eight years to deliver this Rhapsody to her – and even then, it was not quite complete. After Debussy died, Roger-Ducasse filled in some missing bars and completed the orchestration but by then, some 16 years after she’d commissioned it, Elise Hall’s increasing deafness was bringing an end to her music-making, and the soloist in the 1919 premiere performance, was Pierre Mayeur.

At one point Debussy called the piece *Rhapsody Mauresque* (Moorish Rhapsody), and you can hear an evocation of a languid Spanish night in the hushed stillness of the opening phrases. The pace then gradually quickens until the soloist seems to be leading the orchestra in a pulsating dance. The ending is sudden and spectacular.

# LISTENING GUIDE

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## MODEST MUSSORGSKY (1839-1881)

ORCH. MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

Selections from *Pictures at an Exhibition*

Promenade I

I. Gnomes (Gnomus)

II. The Old Castle (Il vecchio castello)

III. Tuileries (Children's Quarrel after Games)

V. Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells

X. The Great Gate of Kiev

As the old saying goes, 'a picture paints a thousand words', but for centuries, composers have often been inspired by great works of art to create their own masterpieces in music. Respighi's *Botticelli Triptych* and Stravinsky's opera *The Rake's Progress*, were both based on paintings by Hogarth. Today you'll hear excerpts from the most celebrated of all musical art galleries, the one Mussorgsky created after his visit to a memorial exhibition honouring the work of his close friend, the painter and architect Viktor Hartmann (1834-1873).

Mussorgsky wrote *Pictures at an Exhibition* for solo piano, casting it as a suite in which he gave musical voice to his impressions of Hartmann's paintings and drawings. It's a fearsomely demanding work, and a legendary showpiece for a great pianist. Yet the breadth and ambition of the keyboard writing have suggested something incipiently orchestral to many musicians over the last 150 years. There are more than 22 orchestrations of *Pictures at an Exhibition*, by figures as diverse as conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy and Chinese-Australian composer Julian Yu, not to mention arrangements for organ, brass band, jazz trio and more – not to forget the landmark progressive rock version by Emerson, Lake and Palmer.

However, the most enduring re-imagining of Mussorgsky's original is the one by Ravel, who treated his task not simply as one of expansion, but as a way of engaging creatively with the aesthetic of another composer, and one he greatly admired.

Today you'll hear six excerpts: the opening *Promenade*, its alternating time signature suggesting the stop-start gait of someone looking at pictures in a gallery. The sinister *Gnomes*, inspired by Hartmann's design for a nutcracker. *The Old Castle*, in which Hartmann's depiction of a troubadour singing by a medieval castle becomes a wistful saxophone solo. *Tuileries*, in which bustling woodwinds suggest the scurry of children's games. *Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells*, another woodwind showcase, one in which Ravel brilliantly evokes the sound of the barnyard. Then finally, *The Great Gate of Kiev*, a suitably epic finale to Ravel's spectacular orchestral showpiece.

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# ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

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## Umberto Clerici Conductor

After a career spanning more than 20 years as a gifted cello soloist and orchestral musician, Umberto Clerici is widely regarded for his seamless transition to the podium now as an acclaimed conductor. The 2024 season will mark Clerici's second as Chief Conductor of Queensland Symphony Orchestra in addition to being a frequent guest with several leading orchestras.

Umberto began his career as a virtuoso cellist making his solo debut at the age of 17 performing Haydn's D Major cello concerto in Japan. After years of performing on the stages of the world's most prestigious concert halls, Umberto took up the position as Principal cello of the Teatro Regio di Torino following which he was Principal Cello of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra from 2014 to 2021.

It was in Sydney in 2018 that Umberto made his conducting debut with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House. Following a swift trajectory of prestigious conducting engagements, Umberto is now in high demand with the major symphony orchestras throughout Australia and New Zealand.

In addition to his role as Chief Conductor of Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Umberto's 2024 conducting engagements include returns to the podiums of the Melbourne and West Australian Symphony Orchestras together with a three-week series with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra for 'Symphony Hour' that Umberto himself has expertly curated. Other recent highlights include his debut with the Tasmania Symphony Orchestra and a hugely successful debut in opera conducting *Verdi's Macbeth* with Opera Queensland.

In Europe, 2024 season highlights include *Elgar's cello* concerto with Steven Isserlis for the Volksoper Vienna, Orchestra del Teatro Massimo in Palermo and Orchestra Regionale Toscana.



## Nick Russoniello

### Soloist

Nick Russoniello is a highly accomplished and dynamic saxophonist, composer, ensemble leader and educator. A graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and the Conservatorio di Musica “Giuseppe Verdi” di Milano, Nick has appeared as a soloist or guest musician with many of Australia’s premier arts organisations including the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Australian World Orchestra, the Australian Opera & Ballet Orchestra, Ensemble Offspring, Metropolitan Orchestra and the Acacia Quartet. He has been the recipient of major awards including the ABC Symphony Australian Young Performer of the Year Award, Fine Music Kruger Scholarship and a finalist for the Australian Freedman Fellowship.

Nick’s own projects and ensembles (Duo Histoire, Golden Age Project and his One Man Band live looping show) are highly acclaimed, with appearances for the Sydney Festival, Musica Viva Australia, the Royal College of Music (London), ABC Classic FM, Conservatorio di Milano (Italy), Strasbourg Cité De La Musique (France),

City Recital Hall, The Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestras and Australian Digital Concert Hall. In addition to his performances, Nick’s original compositions for saxophone are regularly performed by international artists and are featured with the Australian Music Centre. In 2023, with the support of an Australia Council award, Nick composed and premiered three original saxophone concerti that were presented by the Orange Chamber Music Festival, Queensland Chamber Orchestra, The Metropolitan Orchestra and Steel City Strings.

Nick holds a doctorate from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and is a Yamaha Australia Artist & D’Addario Woodwind Artist.



# Join the Music Chair Program

The Music Chair Program is a unique opportunity to strengthen your relationship with QSO and connect with our musicians. Support received through this program helps develop QSO as a world-class orchestra.

“ It helps establish a special rapport and relationship with our audiences, it makes it personal, we hear their views and learn about their life rather than it being all about us on stage. I enjoy looking over at the end of a performance to my supporters to gauge their reaction and hopefully to receive a thumbs up! The program is really important to us as musicians. ”

- KATHRYN CLOSE, CELLO

“ It makes us so proud when our supported musician gives us a friendly wave from the stage. If you want to engage with QSO in an exciting and meaningful way, certainly consider joining the Program. ”

- LORNA AND WILL HEASLOP



# QSO Harmony



If you enjoy the Morning Masterworks concerts and would like to enrich your relationship with Queensland Symphony Orchestra (QSO), we warmly invite you to join QSO Harmony.

QSO Harmony is a new giving circle that will support QSO's Health and Wellbeing Program, while allowing you to connect with those sitting alongside you in the Concert Hall.

This circle will give the gift of connection to our supporters and those who need it most through the Health and Wellbeing Program.

As a member of QSO Harmony you will enjoy opportunities to meet behind the scenes before the Morning Masterworks concerts, an invitation to QSO Health and Wellbeing concerts, and updates on the impact of your support.

Please contact the Development office on (07) 3833 5027 or [development@qso.com.au](mailto:development@qso.com.au) for more information.

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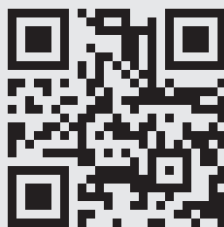
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## Reel Classics

FRI 11 OCT 7.30PM

SAT 12 OCT 1.30PM

Concert Hall, QPAC

**Conductor** Vanessa Scammell

**Featuring music from:**

*The Pink Panther* | *The Wizard of Oz*  
*Psycho* | *Goldfinger* | *Carousel* | *Born Free*  
and many more



## QSO Favourites

SAT 26 OCT 7.30PM

SUN 27 OCT 11.30AM

HOTA | Concert Hall, QPAC

**Conductor** Eduardo Strausser

**Soloist** Ein Na, violin

**Bernstein** *Overture to Candide*

**Beethoven** *Symphony No.7 in A major, Op.92*

**Sibelius** *Finlandia, Op.26*

and much more!



## Umberto & Natsuko

FRI 15 NOV 7.30PM

SAT 16 NOV 1.30PM

Concert Hall, QPAC

**Conductor/Soloist** Umberto Clerici, cello

**Soloist** Natsuko Yoshimoto, violin

**Vocalist** Eleanor Lyons, soprano

**Schubert** *Rosamunde Overture*

**R. Strauss** *Four Last Songs*

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*in A minor (Double Concerto)*

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