

Music On Sundays Series proudly presented by



Gypsy Life!

Music on Sundays Series

11:30AM, SUNDAY MAY 30, 2010

QPAC Concert Hall

Conductor	Johannes Fritzsch
Violin	Niki Vasilakis
Presenter	Guy Noble
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)	<i>Hungarian Dance</i> No.5 in G minor
Béla Bartók (1881-1945)	<i>Romanian Folk Dances</i>
Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908)	<i>Zigeunerweisen</i> , Op.20 (Gypsy Airs)
Franz Liszt (1811-1886)	<i>Hungarian Rhapsody</i> No.2
arr. Albert Franz Doppler (1821-1883)	
Johann Strauss II (1825-1899)	<i>Eljen a Magyar</i> – Polka, Op.332
Vittorio Monti (1868-1922)	<i>Czárdás</i>
Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967)	<i>Dances of Galánta</i> (Galántai táncok)
Jenő Hubay (1858-1937)	<i>Hejre Kati</i> (<i>Scènes de la csárda</i> No.4), Op.32
Brahms	Piano Quartet No.1 in G minor, Op.25:
arr. Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)	<i>Rondo alla Zingarese</i> (<i>Presto</i>)

Concert Hall Etiquette

To ensure an enjoyable concert experience for all, please remember to turn off your mobile phone (and other electronic devices) before entering the concert hall. If you need to cough or sneeze, please muffle the sound with a handkerchief or scarf, or excuse yourself from the auditorium to recover. Thank you, and enjoy the performance.

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Program Notes

The mainstream culture of Central Europe has a long history of fascination with the music of the gypsy or Roma people. It was a complicated relationship of simultaneous disapproval of the moral naughtiness of the gypsies and enthusiasm for the earthy vitality of their music and dance. Franz Liszt wrote that he identified the gypsy character as threatening 'four chasms of perdition: love, song, dance and drink' – whilst at the same time describing these as 'four glittering stars' which invest their music with an inspirational power. It was primarily through Liszt's expressed admiration for gypsy music that it came also to be integrally identified as Hungarian, and the two terms were often used interchangeably.

This double-edged attitude is reflected throughout classical music's engagement with the music of the Roma: at once drawing inspiration from its passionate energy and seeking to subdue and 'civilise' it. The music of the Roma had a very diverse character, constantly changing and absorbing new influences as it engaged with other cultures, but its main essence is well known: passionate and emotional, virtuosic, rhythmically driven and highly energised.

Our understanding of gypsy culture has deepened only in the last 30 years or so. While for most of us the term 'gypsy' is one we use without any serious sense of negative connotations, it was actually a derogatory reference to the Egyptian origins of the Roma. Similarly, while we associate this music primarily with Eastern European – specifically Balkan – folk music, the influence of the music and the reciprocating influences which informed its own evolution encompass the whole of Europe, from Turkey to Spain, assuming different qualities wherever its influence emerged.

Johannes Brahms encountered gypsy music when he was a young man; one of his first paying jobs was as accompanist to the Hungarian violinist Eduard Reményi, with whom he performed recital tours to Hungary

and from whom he learned the gypsy style. The music of the gypsies made an impression on Brahms that stayed with him throughout his life. Renowned for his devotion to the great Classical tradition, Brahms adopted characteristics of gypsy music and integrated it into his refined and sophisticated style. His love for Hungarian music found a direct expression in the 21 *Hungarian Dances*, originally composed for piano four hands. Their great popularity led him to arrange some of them for orchestra himself; other composers subsequently set the remainder of them, and they have become a popular staple of the orchestral repertoire. The fifth dance, originally in F sharp minor but transferred to G minor in the orchestral version, is probably the most celebrated, and in it Brahms established the characteristics that were to become features of his mature style.

The Hungarian composer **Béla Bartók** is renowned as one of the first to intensively study the folk music of his native country, and his insights into gypsy music took western appreciation of the nature of this music to a deeper level. Bartók admired this music for its innovative qualities and it inspired him to develop a radical new approach to rhythm, tonality and melody. He originally composed *Romanian Folk Dances* for piano in 1915, before arranging an orchestral version in 1917. The pieces can be viewed as Bartók's take on what Brahms had set out to do in his *Hungarian Dances*, however in this case Bartók has made use of original Romanian melodies that he collected in his research.

Pablo de Sarasate was a Spanish violin virtuoso who was inspired by the virtuosic techniques of Roma players who had settled in Spain. The *Zigeunerweisen* (Gypsy Airs) are based on themes he'd heard these fiddlers play, particularly the characteristic and much-emulated gypsy dance known as the *czardas*, which begins slowly (the *lassu* or *lassan*) but ends in a very fast tempo (the *friss* or *friska*). The piece is characterised by virtuosic exploitation of bowing techniques like *spiccato*, *ricochet* bowing and *pizzicato*.

Franz Liszt wrote 19 *Hungarian Rhapsodies* to show off his prodigious pianistic technique whilst celebrating his love of Hungarian folk music. The famous Second Rhapsody is in the form of a czardas. In its orchestral version, our familiarity with the piece owes a great deal to its use in some of the classic *Bugs Bunny* cartoons.

Johann Strauss was attracted to gypsy music as a source for his dance music, and the polka *Eljen a Magyar* is full of the energy and sparkle that the gypsy inspiration provided to Viennese society.

The Italian composer, violinist and conductor **Vittorio Monti** is remembered almost solely for his composition *Czárdás*, and it is a great compliment to the composer that the piece has been adopted as a staple of the gypsy repertoire.

Jenő Hubay was another violinist, especially renowned as a teacher, with several distinguished students to his credit. Born in Hungary of German parents, he greatly loved the gypsy violin tradition, and put it to effective use in the numerous encore pieces he wrote, like this well-known version of the ubiquitous czardas.

Zoltán Kodály, like his younger colleague Bartók, was a patriotic student of the Hungarian folk tradition, and it inspired his original compositions, including *Dances of Galánta*. Its inspiration is deeply personal as the composer's own note attests: 'The author spent the most beautiful seven years of his childhood in Galánta. The town band, led by the fiddler Mihók, was famous. May this modest composition serve to continue the old tradition.'

Johannes Brahms' Piano Quartet in G minor is one of his most famous creations, and it is so rich in musical ideas that years later Schoenberg had the brilliant idea of making an orchestral version of the piece, sometimes described as Brahms' 'fifth symphony'. The last movement, subtitled 'Alla Zingarese' (in the gypsy style), inspired Schoenberg to create a dazzling orchestral showpiece that thrillingly celebrates the gypsy spirit.

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UPCOMING CONCERTS

GREAT CLASSICS 3

Finland Awakes – a Magical Journey to Karelia

7PM SATURDAY JUNE 5

QPAC Concert Hall

Conductor & Piano Olli Mustonen

Sibelius	<i>The Bard</i>
Beethoven	Piano Concerto No.1
Mustonen	<i>Jehkin livana</i>
Sibelius	<i>Tapiola</i>
Sibelius	<i>Finlandia</i>

MAESTRO 5

Restless Spirit

8PM FRIDAY JUNE 25

QPAC Concert Hall

Conductor Edvard Tchivzhel
Piano Cyprien Katsaris

Chopin	<i>Krakowiak</i>
Chopin	Piano Concerto No.2
Tchaikovsky	<i>Manfred</i> Symphony

20/21 2

A Winter Journey

7PM FRIDAY JULY 16

Brisbane Powerhouse

Conductor	Hamish McKeich
Tenor	David Hobson
Zender	Schubert's <i>Winterreise</i> – A composed interpretation

FOR INFO AND BOOKINGS
VISIT WWW.QSO.COM.AU

Biographies



Johannes Fritzsich



Niki Vasilakis



Guy Noble

Johannes Fritzsich, Chief Conductor

Johannes Fritzsich is currently the Chief Conductor of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and the Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Grazer Philharmonisches Orchester and Grazer Oper, Austria. He recently held the position of Chief Conductor of Staatsoper Nürnberg.

Maestro Fritzsich was born in Meissen, Germany; his higher education was received at the Carl Maria von Weber Music Academy in Dresden, majoring in conducting and piano.

After a period in Rostock, Mo. Fritzsich accepted the position of Kapellmeister with the Staatsoper Dresden, Semperoper, where he conducted more than 350 opera and ballet performances within five years.

The German reunification enabled Mo. Fritzsich to accept engagements outside of Eastern Europe; he has led many orchestras in Germany and internationally including: Hamburger Sinfoniker, Düsseldorfer Sinfoniker, Philharmonie Essen, Nationaltheater-Orchester Mannheim, Staatskapelle Schwerin, Berliner Sinfonie Orchester, Staatskapelle Dresden, Norddeutsche Philharmonie Rostock, Staatsorchester Halle, the Swedish Radio Orchestra, the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre Philharmonique Strassbourg, the Orchestra National de Montpellier, the Orchestra National du Capitole de Toulouse, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra

Victoria, the Tasmanian, Adelaide and West Australian Symphony Orchestras.

Opera Companies with which he has worked include: Sächsische Staatsoper Dresden, Opernhaus Köln, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Komische Oper Berlin, Opera Bastille Paris, Grazer Oper, the Royal Opera Stockholm, Malmö Operan and Opera Australia in Sydney and Melbourne (including *Wozzeck*, *Don Giovanni*, *Carmen*, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, *Salome*, *Der Rosenkavalier*).

Johannes Fritzsich is married to the Australian violinist, Susan Collins – with their three daughters, they divide their time between Europe and Australia.

Patrick Toghger Artists' Management © 2010

Niki Vasilakis, violin

Niki Vasilakis is regarded as one of the most exciting violinists to have emerged from Australia. Niki has performed with the Melbourne, Tasmanian, Adelaide Symphony Orchestras, Orchestra Victoria, as well as the Queensland Orchestra. In January 2004 she appeared with the Sydney Symphony in the *Symphony in the Domain*, to an audience of more than 100,000 people. This followed her successful debut with that orchestra for the Sydney Opera House's 30th Anniversary celebrations.

International orchestras with whom she has performed include the Wellington Symphony

Orchestra, Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra and the Prague Symphony Orchestra.

Niki released her debut self-titled album with ABC Classics with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra featuring the Mendelssohn and Bruch violin concertos and was nominated for an 'ARIA' award for her performance.

Niki featured as a presenter and performer in the popular international television show 'Classical Destinations' and features in the film "4" based on Vivaldi's Four Seasons with violinists Pekka Kuusisto, Cho-Liang 'Jimmy' Lin and Sayaka Shoji.

Niki was Young South Australian of the Year 2008 in recognition of her outstanding achievements in music and her extensive commitment to community work, including volunteer programs and teaching community groups. Niki has graced the pages of 'Vogue' magazine, appeared on 'Spicks and Specks' and many other regular television appearances.

Niki joins Kathryn Selby and Emma-Jane Murphy in Australia's premier piano trio TrioZ, and has collaborated in chamber music with musicians including, Steven Isserlis, Claus Christian Schuster, Leslie Howard, Sam Haywood, Henri Sigfridsson, Alexander Baillie, Rita Reichman, Julian Smiles, Irina Morozova and Asmira Woodward-Page.

Recent engagements for Niki Vasilakis include a guest performance for the Australian Prime Minister at a State Dinner, performances at the Rockefeller Centre New York for the Anzac Day memorial, UN Headquarters New York, Washington Cathedral, Athens Olympic Torch Celebrations, Sydney Opera House and 'Symphony in the park' as soloist with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra with a live audience of 30,000 people. Niki regularly collaborates with some of the world's leading performers at the International Musicians Seminar, Prussia Cove, United Kingdom.

Today Niki continues her commitment to the wider community with visits to central Australia to run holiday music programs with indigenous children.

Niki donates her time to be the ambassador of both 'Suzuki' South Australia and The Australian String Teachers Association where she works to encourage and inspire young individuals. Niki is the newly appointed patron for the Adelaide Festival Centre Foundation. Niki plays an Antonio Guadagnini Violin 1872.

Guy Noble, Presenter

Guy Noble is one of Australia's most versatile conductors and musical entertainers, conducting and presenting concerts with all the major Australian orchestras and performers such as Harry Connick Jr, Yvonne Kenny, David Hobson, Ben Folds, Dennis O'Neill, Dianne Reeves, Clive James and Olivia Newton John.

Guy has conducted and hosted many musical performances, including *Star Trek* and *The Music of John Williams* (Sydney Symphony) *Symphony under the Stars* (Tasmanian Symphony) and *Symphony in the City* (West Australian Symphony) and has created and conducted many performances of the music of Broadway with Sydney and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras. He has cooked on stage with Stefano de Pieri and the Tasmanian Symphony and this year he will perform with Maggie Beer and Simon Bryant in an orchestral version of ABC TV's *The Cook and The Chef* (Adelaide Symphony)

He has recorded nine CDs for ABC Classics, and was the host of the Breakfast program on ABC Classic FM from 1999-2001. He has presented on BBC Radio 3, hosted the *Dimensions in Time* series on ABC TV, written *The Music Explorer* (ABC Books) and *Word of the Day* (Penguin) and is a columnist with *Limelight* magazine.

Guy has presented Music on Sundays concerts for the Queensland Symphony Orchestra for five years, and has appeared as conductor and host in many different guises including Lawrence of Arabia, and a slow-motion runner in Chariots of Fire. Guy is delighted to return once more for another year of fine music and fun in this unique and popular series.