

CITY RECITAL HALL

City Recital Hall produces and presents a rich and diverse program of concerts and events at our world class performance space in the heart of Sydney. Our program embraces all genres and art forms from chamber orchestras to opera, contemporary ensembles to bands, talks and debates, to festival events. We welcome you to City Recital Hall to discover, connect and socialise, and hope you leave stimulated and energised.

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2 Angel Place
Sydney NSW 2000

Administration: 02 9231 9000
Box Office: 02 8256 2222
Website: www.cityrecitalhall.com

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The City of Sydney is a Principal Sponsor of City Recital Hall

COMING UP

THE SYDNEY CABARET ALL-STAR GALA City Recital Hall and Sydney Cabaret Friday 5 July 7pm

Sydney Cabaret is the newest international festival to hit the streets of Sydney and City Recital Hall is hosting the star-studded opening night event.

MIMI'S SYMPHONY

City Recital Hall
Children's Concert

Saturday 20 July 11am and 1pm

Join Mimi the magpie on a musical journey in this new orchestral story for Australian children featuring writer and narrator Justine Clarke (Play School) and composer and conductor George Ellis.

BECOME A MEMBER

Come here often? Make the most of your experience by becoming a City Recital Hall Member. Our Members receive discounts to a large selection of shows, invitations to exclusive Member events and discounts at our bars, never pay booking fees and enjoy pre-show dining deals at a variety of restaurants close to the Hall, and more. For more information, or to become a Member, visit cityrecitalhall.com/membership

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Concertos on Fire is supported by the Bravo Circle. The artists would also like to acknowledge Elaine Chia and the team at City Recital Hall, Vivid Festival, Ross & Helen Edwards, Kate Reid, Marin Chorbazdhiyski, Nicole & Chris Cox, John Schebeck, Kris Charody, Duncan Townsend, Pollard Productions, Andrej Grilc, David Vagg, Georgina Oakes, Ezmi Pepper, Olivier Grascœur, Robyn Wood, Mark Harris and Enzo Andreano. Chloé & Sonja would like to dedicate this performance to the memory of Peter Charody and Luba Schebeck.

The creation of *Tale of the Firebird* has been made possible by the support from all the artists & crew involved and funding from The Australia Council for The Arts.

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CONCERTOS ON FIRE

Friday 7 June 7.30pm

PROGRAM

Edwards *Maninyas*

- I. First Maninya*
- Intermezzo Quasi Cadenza*
- II. Chorale*
- III. Second Maninya*

Charody *Tale of the Firebird*

- I. The Golden Nest*
- II. Firebird Caprice*
- III. Dance of the Firebird*
- IV. Fire Beneath Her Wings* (solo double bass improvisations by Edoardo Blandamura)
- V. Premonition*
- VI. The Raven*
- VII. The Firebird's Dream*
- VIII. Lament*
- IX. The Burning*

ARTISTS

The Freestyle Orchestra

Sonja Schebeck Violin/fire/aerial (The Firebird in *Tale of the Firebird*)
Claudia Cox Violin/acrobatics
Sarkhan Akhundov Violin/dance/acrobatics/fire
Bridget Rieger Viola/aerial/fire
Antonio Chorbazdhiyski Cello/aerial/fire/acrobatics
Edoardo Blandamura Double bass/aerial/fire/acrobatics
Dr Chanda VanderHart Piano/aerial

Kate Reid Circus Consultant, Rigger

Peter Rubie Lighting Designer

Piers Burbrook de Vere Live Sound Designer, *Maninyas*

Adrian Leung (Fivestripe Studios) Music Production, *Maninyas*

Remi Wörtmeyer Movement Director, *Tale of the Firebird*

Gemma McDonald Aerialist (Mother Bird in *Tale of the Firebird*)

#freestylesymphony

Luke Spicer Conductor/violist
Veronique Serret Violin
Kelly Tang Violin
Victoria Jacono Violin
Julia Vagg Violin
Charlotte Fetherston Viola (The Raven in *Tale of the Firebird*)
Ezmi Pepper Cello

Katie Zagorski Flute
Jonathan Ryan Oboe
Georgina Oakes Clarinet
Greg Taylor Bassoon
Seb Dunn Horn/fire
Owen Morris Trumpet
Ashley Carter Trombone
Niki Johnson Percussion

Duration: Approximately two hours, including a 20-minute interval



PROGRAM NOTES FROM THE ARTISTS

MANINYAS Ross Edwards

“Ross Edwards’ iconic violin concerto *Maninyas* marked a clear break with the austere style of some of his earlier music, it burst exuberantly upon the 1980s music scene, delighting audiences and performers with its sheer freshness and quirky rhythms. Edwards commented that he had an ‘up-feeling’ while composing the piece which drew him from introspection into the ecstasy of nature: ‘The sky was blue, the warm air was full of shrieking parrots and an irresistible impulse to dance suddenly took over the music.’

Today, *Maninyas* remains one of Edwards’ best loved compositions. It has had as much success as a ballet as a concert piece and has been choreographed and performed by leading dance companies around the world.” **Abridged from a note by Nina Apollonov**

STORY OF TALE OF THE FIREBIRD Chloé Charody

At the break of dawn, before the beginning of Time, in a beautiful land far, far away...a Firebird is born. Its mother knows that one day her Baby Firebird must leave their nest and learn to fly — for only through the power of flight will she find the magical powers she needs to keep their precious land safe. When that day comes, Baby Firebird is at first reluctant, but soon she is soaring high into the sky. She can feel her magical powers igniting inside her and that night she transforms into a magnificent adolescent. As Firebird’s powers continue to grow, the nature that surrounds her flourishes...until one night, when she is captured by an evil Raven consumed by its desire for power. Trapped in a cage and unable to fly, Firebird’s powers grow weak. The once beautiful land and the nature that embraces it are poisoned by Raven’s lust for supremacy. Then when Firebird is at her weakest, Raven rips her from the cage and forces her to a duel. The now frail Firebird tries in vain to fight back, but is finally killed by Raven. With Firebird’s death, the magic and beauty of the land seems lost forever...then a mysterious atmosphere fills the air; there is a sudden flash, and in a ring of fire, Firebird arises, reborn! Her fire cleanses the land, so that it flourishes once again, revealing that there is no force stronger than the force of Nature.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE The Freestyle Orchestra

The staging of *Maninyas* is directed by The Freestyle Orchestra, exploring the ideas of human connection, physically and musically, in its many forms (performer to performer, performer to audience) as well as the inextricable connection between music and movement that dates back to ancient times. For this show, seven core members of The Freestyle Orchestra engage in an artistic exchange with Australian musicians and creatives, forming the #freestylesymphony. Movement is dictated by the music as we visualise it, exploring the emotions it conveys and seeing if we can amplify those physically - a natural extension of what we hear in particular sections of the music. Very dance-like in places (for example Ross Edwards’ signature dance-chant), and very still and meditative in others (i.e. “inner” vs. “outer” dance), the work was written in and heavily influenced by the Australian natural environment and bush, evoking for example bird calls and insect sounds. In our staging, fire is used as a cleansing element, a function it has in both nature and ritual.

For *Tale of the Firebird*, we have had the opportunity to work with movement director Remi Wörtmeyer, who helped physically translate a narrative story by Chloé Charody following the Firebird, a mythical creature with the ability to be reborn through flame. Fire interludes utilising various props and disciplines including fire eating, fire spinning and flow arts were choreographed by The Freestyle Orchestra to specific sections of music.



CHLOÉ CHARODY Composer

Chloé Charody (b. 1984) is an Australian classical composer, show creator and arts entrepreneur. Through the dynamic fusion of classical music, opera and circus, several critics have stated that Charody’s work is quickly forming a new path for classical music and opera in the 21st century. In 2011 Charody’s circus opera *The Carnival* (composed by Charody and created with Sonja Schebeck) debuted on London’s West End. *The Carnival* then went on to run sell-out shows across Europe, Australia and the United Kingdom including a second season on London’s West End. 2011 was also the year that Charody was commissioned by The Dutch National Ballet to compose her ballet-opera *Magdalene* which was followed in 2014 with the The Dutch National Ballet’s presentation of Charody’s violin caprice *The Phoenix* (featuring Sonja Schebeck and choreographed by Remi Wortmeyer). 2012 saw Charody launch her Circus Opera Lab in Sydney and in Berlin to train up a generation of opera singers in the niche medium of “Circus Opera” which Charody has pioneered. In 2014 Charody was commissioned to write her second operatic musical *Morning Blossoms* that toured the Netherlands in 2016 featuring The Netherlands Symphony Orchestra. The production was met with critical acclaim when it toured to some of the most prestigious theatres in Holland including the Haarlem Philharmonie and Theater de Spiegel. Charody is currently represented by Budde Music Publishing and lives between Berlin and Sydney. She is Director of UK-based production company Chloé Charody Creations LTD, which is funded by Arts Council England.



ROSS EDWARDS Composer

One of Australia’s best known and most performed composers, Ross Edwards has created a distinctive sound world based on his interest in deep ecology and his awareness of the need to reconnect music with elemental forces and restore its traditional association with ritual. His music, universal in that it is concerned with age-old mysteries surrounding humanity, is at the same time connected to its roots in Australia, whose cultural diversity it celebrates, and from whose natural environment it draws inspiration, especially birdsong and the mysterious patterns and drones of insects.



THE FREESTYLE ORCHESTRA

The Freestyle Orchestra functions as an artist collective, bringing together musicians with a movement background and movement practitioners with a music background in order to explore hybrid forms of merging the disciplines and developing multidisciplinary performers. Rarely are both expressive movement and instrumental music performance embodied in the same individuals. The skills required are specific and rare in combination — as is finding people willing to take risks and undertake rigorous physical training — which is why the members of the Orchestra are scattered throughout the world.