

Mahler & Tchaikovsky



Visual Story

Friday 17 April at 7.30pm
Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

mso

Getting there

Hamer Hall is a concert hall in Southbank and is home to the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. It is a round, concrete building right next to the Yarra River.

Hamer Hall is one of the spaces at Arts Centre Melbourne, which sits on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People.

The address is 100 St Kilda Road, Southbank, Melbourne 3004.



The closest train station is Flinders Street Station.



The closest tram stop is Stop 14: Arts Precinct/St Kilda Rd.



There is 24 hour parking available at the Arts Centre Melbourne car park. You have to pay for parking. You can find the prices on the Arts Centre Melbourne website. It is usually easy to find an empty car space.

www.artscentremelbourne.com.au/visit/parking

Around Hamer Hall

Hamer Hall is in a very busy area of Melbourne. When you arrive, there will be lots of people on the streets, and cars, buses, trams, and taxis on the road. It might be quite noisy. If you are near the river, there might be some bright glare reflecting off the water.

Arriving at Hamer Hall

It is good to arrive about 30-60 minutes ahead of the performance to familiarise yourself with the space.

You can wear formal clothes or casual clothes – whatever makes you feel most comfortable. Remember you will be sitting down for a long period of time.

Entering the venue

The entrance is through the big glass doors on St Kilda Road at ground level. This entrance is wheelchair accessible.



Foyer

When you enter the doors you will arrive at the Foyer on street level. **Street level is Level 6** in the Hamer Hall building. It might be very busy. Once you're inside, there is lots of carpet, so it's usually not too loud.



Box Office

Directly in front of you will be the Box Office. This is where you will pick up your tickets if you don't have a digital copy. There will be staff members there to help you. The Box Office will open 90 minutes before the performance.



The MSO is proud to be a member of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program. If you have a hidden disability you may pick up a lanyard from the Box Office.

Finding your way around

There are signs on the pylons either side of the Box Office. They will show you where toilets and other important places are within the building.



Staff to Help

In the foyer, there will also be someone from the Front of House team to assist you. They are wearing black uniforms. There will also be other Front of House staff around the venue. You can ask them if you need any help during your visit. Front of House staff are also sometimes called Ushers.



Cloak Room

If you have any items that you won't need during the performance like a backpack, coat, or umbrella, you can leave them at the Cloak Room. This is where a staff member will keep your belongings safe during the performance.

They will give you a ticket when you drop off your items. After the performance, you return the ticket and your belongings are handed back to you. The Cloak Room will close 30 minutes after the performance finishes. Using the Cloak Room service does not cost any money.

You do not have to leave your things at the Cloak Room unless they are larger than an A4 size piece of paper.

Note: Ear defenders and Hidden Disability Sunflower lanyards will be available for collection from the cloak room. This does not cost any money.



Level 6 Toilets

There are male toilets, female toilets, and an accessible toilet located on this level. The toilets have touch-free sensor taps and hand dryers for washing and drying your hands.



There is also a Changing Places toilet on Level 3. It has a full-sized changing table, hoist system, toilet and basin. A Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK) is required to use the Changing Places facility.



Heading to Level 2 Stalls

Heading to Level 2

For this performance, everyone will be sitting in the Stalls section. The Stalls is the name for the section of the auditorium on the same level as the stage. In Hamer Hall, the **Stalls are located on Level 2**. You will need to take the lift, escalators, or stairs down to Level 2.





There are lots of lights overhead. Feel free to wear a hat, visor, or sunglasses if you find they are a bit too bright.



There are lots of mirrors in the Hamer Hall foyers, especially in the stairways. These are for decoration. Sometimes they can be a bit disorienting, so it's good to know they are there.



Level 2 - Stalls Level

When you arrive on Level 2 there are more signs to help you find your way.

You may notice approximately 40 chairs facing the direction of a microphone. This is for the pre-concert talk, which you are welcome to attend. There is no cost to attend.



Pre Concert Talk

A pre-concert talk is a way for audiences to learn about the music being performed. This is free to attend. This begins at 6.45pm.

There will be one speaker who will use a microphone. Some lighting will be used on the speaker. The length is approximately 20 minutes.

Level 2 Toilets

There are male toilets, female toilets, and an accessible toilet located on this level.

Level 2 Bar

There is also a bar on Level 2. You can buy a small selection of snacks, drinks, and light refreshments here. They do not serve meals, and they may not cater for dietary requirements. You are also welcome to bring your own snacks and drinks to enjoy in the foyer area.

The bar is open before the performance, and at interval. It is closed after the performance.



Entering the Auditorium

You can enter the Auditorium into the Stalls through Door 1 or Door 2 from 7pm.

At each door there will be a Front of House staff member scanning tickets with a handheld scanner. They will ask to see your ticket and scan its barcode or QR code, so it's a good idea to have it ready before you head towards the doors. Staff will also have ear defenders available for use.

If you have a digital copy of your ticket, you can open the ticket email on your phone or tablet and show the staff member at the door.

If you can't find your ticket, don't worry! You can always ask the box office (on level 6) for help finding it.



- Please put your phone on silent when you enter the auditorium.
- You can bring helpful items such as ear plugs, headphones, ear defenders, sunglasses, hats or fidget toys into the auditorium.
- Booster seats are also available. Ask a member of staff if you would like one.
- Sometimes it can get cold in the auditorium, so you might like to bring a jumper, hat, or scarf to keep you warm.



Finding Your Seats

Hamer Hall can seat up to 2,500 people. The inside of the Auditorium looks like this. The seats are arranged in layers called the Stalls (bottom), Circle (middle), and Balcony (top). For this performance, everyone will be sitting in the Stalls section. Not all of the seats will be filled.



Where do I sit?

At some performances you might be allocated a specific seat, which is printed on your ticket. For this performance everyone is sitting in the Stalls. You will see the words 'General Admission' on your ticket. This means you can sit anywhere you like within the Stalls section of the Auditorium.



The Stalls section is the name for the seats on the bottom level – the same level as the stage.

The floor of the main aisle is carpet, and the floor in each seating row is wood.

The floor slopes gently down towards the stage. There are no stairs.

The lights will be about as bright as you can see in the pictures when you first walk in.



There will be other people sitting around you but there will be lots of empty seats, so it won't be too crowded. You can sit in any seat that is empty.

You might need to squeeze past other people to get to where you want to sit. People will move their legs out of the way or stand up to let you pass them. They might not notice you waiting right away, so you might need to ask them politely to let you past.

You might also need to stand or move your legs to let other people past where you are sitting.



The seats in Hamer Hall are pretty comfortable. The seats have thick foam covered in soft velvet fabric. There are arm rests on both sides. You cannot move the arm rests.

You will have to fold the seat down to sit on it. You can always ask one of the Front of House staff to help you with this.



Once you have found a seat, you can stay there until the performance begins.

You can take a break at any point during the performance. You are free to get up and move around within the Auditorium or Stalls foyer.

If you leave your seat you can leave some belongings on your seat – for example a bag or jumper – to signal to others that you will return back to your seat soon.

If you want to take all your belongings with you, that's fine too. If someone else sits in that seat while you are gone, you can always sit in a different empty seat when you come back.

Eating and Drinking

You usually cannot eat or drink in the auditorium. At a relaxed performance you can bring your own drinks and snacks into the auditorium to have during the performance.

Because everyone will be trying to listen to the music, it is best not to bring crunchy snacks or food in loud packaging (like chips or cans of drink) as it might be distracting for people sitting nearby.

You will find water and paper cups in the foyer if you would like a drink. You do not have to pay for a drink of water.



Quiet Space

You can also take a break in the sensory-friendly quiet space that will be set up on Level 3. There will be LED and paper signs pointing to this area, and staff to help guide you up the stairs, escalators or lift. There will be comfy beanbags, weighted animals, and fidget toys for you to borrow in this space if you would like. You are also welcome to stay in the Level 2 foyer space if you prefer.



Other places to relax

In addition to the dedicated Quiet Space there are lots of other informal seating spaces around Hamer Hall. You are welcome to retreat to one of these spaces before or during the performance.



Going back inside the Auditorium

If you would like to go back into the Auditorium after a bit of a break, you can go back in and take your seat again. You can also sit somewhere new if you would prefer.

During the Show

Before the show begins

About five minutes before the show begins, you will hear some chimes played over the loudspeaker. This is a signal to the audience to find their seats and get settled in.

You can't take pictures or videos during the performance, but you can take pictures and videos before the performance begins, during interval, and during applause.

Before the performance begins, members of the Orchestra will slowly set up on stage. Once they have arranged their chair and music so they are comfortable, they might begin playing their instruments to warm up and practice a little bit, getting ready for the performance ahead.



The beginning of the show

Once the musicians are ready, they will tune their instruments all together. This can sound like a lot of noise all at once, but it only lasts for a few seconds and signals that the performance is about to begin!

When it is time for the performance to begin, the lights in the auditorium will get a bit dimmer so that the audience can see the performers more easily. During a relaxed performance, it will never go completely dark and you will still be able to see.

The musicians of the orchestra will be lit up with bright stage lights so that the audience can see them. These lights will never shine at the audience and will not get in your eyes.

Four musicians will then play a musical Acknowledgement of Country on their instruments. Another musician will stand up and speak into a microphone while they play. This Acknowledgement was written by James Henry, Cybec First Nations Composer in Residence.

Then the conductor will come out on stage. His name is Kahchun Wong. When he comes out on stage, you can welcome him by clapping your hands in applause.



Kahchun will speak into a microphone to introduce himself, the orchestra, and the music to be played in today's performance. He will then turn the microphone off and the music will start.



The Music!

The length of this concert will be 1 hour and 55 minutes, including a 20 minute interval. The concert will conclude at 9.25pm

Piece 1: The Erl-King

The first piece is **The Erl-King** by MSO's 2026 Cybec Young Composer in Residence, Andrew Aronowicz. Andrew lives in Melbourne and wrote this piece for the MSO. You are among the very first people in the world to hear this new work! The music is about a fairy tale in a dark forest and you may hear the orchestra perform music that sounds like rustling leaves or birds singing.

The Erl-King goes for about 16 minutes.



After **The Erl-King** is finished, there will be applause. Andrew will come onstage to take a bow. After the applause, some stage crew will come out onto the stage to set the stage for the next piece and some members of the Orchestra will leave the stage.



Piece 2: Variations on a Rococo Theme

The next piece is **Variations on a Rococo Theme** by Tchaikovsky. This piece was originally written for Orchestra and a cello soloist, but tonight the solo part will be played by Sergei Nakariakov on flugelhorn. The flugelhorn is like a trumpet but has a warmer, more mellow sound.

The conductor and Sergei will come on stage and you can give them another big round of applause.





When Sergei is all set up, the piece will begin.

Tchaikovsky's **Variations on a Rococo Theme** has several sections. The piece begins with an introduction by the Orchestra and then the main theme performed by Sergei.

After this, the Orchestra and Sergei will perform seven different 'variations' of the theme. Each variation is different than the last one. Sometimes the music is fast and sometimes slow. Different instruments of the Orchestra will be featured in the variations.

With all these variations combined, **Tchaikovsky's Variations on a Rococo Theme goes for about 18 minutes.**

Interval

After **Variations on a Rococo Theme**, there will be an interval. This is when the music stops and everyone takes a break for 20 minutes. This is a good time to go to the toilet and have a drink or snack.

The Bar will be open at interval if you would like to buy something.



At the end of the interval, the chimes will sound again, and everyone will find their seats. The musicians will come on stage again and get ready to play the second half of the concert.



Piece 3: Symphony No.1

The second half of the concert is all one piece – **Symphony No.1** by Gustav Mahler.

A Symphony is a long piece written for full orchestra. Symphonies are usually referred to by a number – in this case, this was the first Symphony that Mahler wrote.

Symphony No.1. has four main sections. We call each section a 'movement'. The four movements have German names that describe how to play the music. They are:

1. *Langsam. Schleppend. 'Wie ein Naturlaut'* – *Im Anfang sehr gemächlich* [Slow. Dragging. 'Like a sound of Nature' – Very comfortably]
2. *Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell – Trio. Recht gemächlich* [Forcefully, yet not too fast – Trio. Quite slowly]
3. *Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen* [Solemn and measured, without dragging]
4. *Stürmisch bewegt* [Stormily]

This Symphony has some sad and slow music, as well as fast and stormy music. It can go from a passage of very soft strings to very loud brass quite quickly – this is what makes it so thrilling and exciting!

If the music feels too loud, remember it's okay to cover your ears with your hands or with ear muffs.

This piece goes for approximately 53 minutes in total.

When the music stops and all the musicians shuffle in their seats, this usually means one movement has finished and the next is about to start. Normally at classical music concerts, the audience does not clap between movements. In a relaxed performance, however, you are welcome to clap any time you like.



At the end of Mahler's Symphony No.1, the orchestra will pause dramatically and then put their instruments down. When they put their instruments down, this is the sign that the piece is finished. Now you can go wild with applause!



The conductor will then turn around and gesture to the orchestra, who will stand. You can keep clapping all through this.

If you really loved this concert, you can also stand up while applauding to emphasise how much you appreciated the performance. This is called a standing ovation.

If you get tired of clapping, you can stop whenever you like. You also don't have to clap if you don't want to.

After the Show

When the applause has finished, the lights will get a bit brighter, and it is time to leave the auditorium.

Look around and make sure you have got all your belongings with you as you leave your seats.

It can be busy with everyone leaving the auditorium at the same time. You might need to let other people move past you, or wait for others to move. You can leave through either Door 1 or Door 2, and go back into the Stalls foyer.

You can stay in the auditorium until you are ready to leave, and if you want to wait until it is less busy that's okay.



From here, you can take the lift, escalator, or stairs back up to Level 6 (Ground Level).

If you need to use the toilet before beginning your journey home, now is a good time.

If you left any of your belongings at the Cloak Room on Level 6, you can collect them now. If you borrowed ear defenders or a Hidden Disabilities lanyard, you can return them now too. The Cloak Room is open for 30 minutes after the performance has finished.

Further Access Questions

If you require any further information about accessibility during your visit, please visit Arts Centre Melbourne's Frequently Asked Questions.

www.artscentremelbourne.com.au/about-us/faqs/accessibility

For any specialised access questions, Arts Centre Melbourne's Disability Access Manager is available to chat with you during office hours on **(03) 9281 8226**.

Acknowledgement

Arts Centre Melbourne helped the MSO write this Visual Story.

We are always looking for ways to make seeing an MSO performance more accessible. If you have feedback on how we could make this visual story better, please send your ideas to: lei@mso.com.au



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