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3 DECEMBER 2017

CONCERT PROGRAM
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Handel's
Messiah

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Andrew Macleod flute
Ann Blackburn oboe
Michael Pisani oboe
Philip Arkinstall clarinet
Robin Henry clarinet
Brock Imison bassoon
Natasha Thomas bassoon
Saul Lewis french horn
Abbey Edlin french horn
Ben Hanlon double bass
Leigh Harrold piano
Mairi Nicolson presenter

Gounod
Petite symphonie

Hough
Was mit den Tränen geschieht

INTERVAL

Lotti
Crucifixus a 8

Krommer
Octet-Partita

Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes, including a 20-minute interval

In consideration of your fellow patrons, the MSO thanks you for dimming the lighting on your mobile phone.

The MSO acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are performing. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be in attendance.
ANDREW MACLEOD
FLUTE

Andrew Macleod has been Principal Piccolo of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra since 2003. Originally from Brisbane, he holds a Bachelor of Music degree with First Class Honours from The University of Queensland where he studied flute and piccolo with Jeanette Manricks.

Andrew has appeared as a soloist with the MSO on numerous occasions, and in June 2013 gave the world premiere of Paul Stanhope’s Concerto for Piccolo Flute with the MSO, a work co-commissioned by the Melbourne, Adelaide and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras. The recording of the performance was released on the MSO LIVE label by the ABC, and in 2014 the album was nominated for an ARIA in the Best Classical Album category.

Image courtesy James Penlidis

ANN BLACKBURN
OBOE

Ann holds a Bachelor of Music from the Australian National University, and a Diploma from the Freiburg Hochschule für Musik, where she studied with Heinz Holliger.

Ann was previously Associate Principal with Orchestra Victoria from 2004 to 2006, and has worked with the Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras, Opera Australia’s OzOpera, and Victorian Opera, before her appointment with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

She is also a regular guest artist with the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, and appears on Katie Noonan’s album Songbook. Ann has performed recitals in New Zealand and on various cruise liners with her chamber music group Trio Australasia.
MICHAEL PISANI
OBOE

Michael Pisani has been a member of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra since 2004, and holds the position of Principal Cor Anglais.

Michael grew up in Melbourne, first learning the piano before starting the oboe at age 12. After studying at the Victorian College of the Arts he was appointed to the position of Associate Principal Oboe in the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, and then to the same position at Orchestra Victoria the following year.

He has appeared as a soloist with various orchestras in Melbourne, performing the Strauss and Mozart oboe concertos, and has featured on the ABC’s Sunday Live and Young Australia programs. Michael also teaches oboe at the University of Melbourne.

PHILIP ARKINSTALL
CLARINET

Philip Arkinstall has been the Associate Principal Clarinet of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra since 2009. He previously held the position of Principal Clarinet with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra for 11 years, and has been a regular soloist with the MPO in a wide range of repertoire.

Philip was the winner of the Australian Woodwind Competition in Brisbane at the age of 18, the ABC Symphony Australia Young Performers Award in 1997, and the 2MBS Young Performers Award in 1996.

An active chamber musician, he is currently a member of the Melbourne Wind Quintet and the Plexus Trio, and has previously toured Australia for Musica Viva with the Auer Quartet.
ROBIN HENRY
CLARINET

Robin Henry studied music at the University of Melbourne, learning from MSO’s Craig Hill. Alongside his studies, Robin played with the Australian Youth Orchestra and the Sydney Sinfonia. He completed a Masters degree in 2009 studying with MSO’s David Thomas, and, later, a Graduate Diploma of Education.

Robin works with many orchestras and chamber groups including the Melbourne Symphony, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra Victoria. Robin was the Acting Associate Principal Clarinet in Orchestra Victoria in 2015. In the theatre, Robin played the 2014 Melbourne Season of Les Misérables and the 2017 season of My Fair Lady. Robin is also a member of the award-winning contemporary chamber music group Syzygy Ensemble.

BROCK IMISON
BASSOON

Brock Imison has held the position of Principal Contrabassoon with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra since 2004. Born in Brisbane, Brock began playing the Bassoon at age 13 and completed his studies at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music. Brock is also the Principal Contrabassoonist with the Australian World Orchestra.

Brock strives to improve the profile of the Contrabassoon, premiering new music in solo recitals, arranging chamber music and hosting workshops for composers to learn more about the instrument. In 2008, he toured as soloist with the MSO performing his own transcription of Weber’s Bassoon Concerto for the contrabassoon, and in 2007 he performed the Australian premiere of the Gunther Schuller’s Concerto for Contrabassoon with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

*Image courtesy Tony Skinner*
Natasha Thomas has been a member of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra’s Bassoon section since 2006. Natasha was born in Perth and took up the Bassoon at Perth Modern School prior to studying music performance at the University of Western Australia.

While in Perth, Natasha also performed extensively on the Baroque (early 18th Century) and Classical (late-18th Century) forms of the Bassoon, working with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, and Florilegium.

Natasha relocated to Melbourne in 2000 and enjoyed a busy freelance schedule performing with the MSO, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria and in the Melbourne season of *Man of La Mancha*.

*Image courtesy James Penlidis*

Saul Lewis has been a member of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Horn section since 2009 and holds the position of Principal Third Horn. After completing his A.S.C.M. at the Sydney Conservatorium, Saul was awarded a Big Brother Scholarship and studied with many pre-eminent horn players in London and Germany.

Saul has performed with the Sydney, Queensland, Adelaide and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras, Australian Chamber Orchestra, and also performs as a freelance musician for film music and recording projects.

Saul was a founding member of the Sydney wind quintet Enigma Five. He currently teaches at Monash University and at the University of Melbourne, and when not performing or teaching, Saul enjoys playing golf.
ABBEY EDLIN
FRENCH HORN

Abbey grew up in Invercargill, New Zealand. She started out as a cornet player in the local brass band and later went on to play horn in the National Band of New Zealand.

Abbey started playing french horn fairly late in life. After completing her Bachelor degree, she was at a loss with what to do next. A close friend encouraged her to pick up the french horn, something she had wanted to do since a young age, but never had the opportunity, or the courage, to do so!

The french horn proved to be a fairly treacherous instrument to try to navigate, but with an enormous amount of hard work Abbey completed a post graduate diploma at the New Zealand School of Music in 2007 and hasn’t looked back since.

BEN HANLON
DOUBLE BASS

Ben Hanlon has been a member of the MSO’s Double Bass section since 2011. As a student Ben was a member of the Melbourne Youth Orchestra, Australian Youth Orchestra and attended the Australian String Seminar.

Ben was a finalist in the 2005 ‘Generations in Jazz’ scholarship whilst completing the Applied Performance Program at the Australian National Academy of Music. While studying at the Colburn Conservatory of Music in Los Angeles, Ben attended the Sarasota Music Festival in Florida, USA and the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan and gained orchestral experience with groups including Miami’s New World Symphony. As a professional Ben has performed in a great variety of concerts including as soloist in two performances of Bottesini’s Concerto No.2 with the Nicholas Chamber orchestra.
LEIGH HARROLD
PIANO

Leigh Harrold enjoys a reputation as a “musician of rare talent and intelligence”, and is one of Australia’s busiest and most sought-after pianists since being named The Advertiser ‘2008 Musician of the Year’.

Born in Whyalla, South Australia, Leigh completed undergraduate and post-graduate studies at The University of Adelaide with concert pianist Gil Sullivan. During this time he had many successes, including being a National Finalist in the Young Performer Awards and a recipient of the prestigious Beta Sigma Phi Classical Music Award – the conservatorium’s highest honour.

Currently Leigh holds positions on the Faculties of ANAM and the University of Melbourne, and is pianist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

MAIRI NICOLSON
HOST

Mairi Nicolson can be heard six days a week on ABC Classic FM – Weekday Afternoons from midday to 4pm and The Opera Show, Saturdays at 4pm.

Mairi’s love-affair with radio began after she graduated from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, majoring in piano and singing. She spent the first decade of her ABC career reading radio news in Sydney, presenting Behind the News with John Hall, broadcasting the Sydney Symphony Orchestra concerts, hosting In Tempo (also known as The Music Show) on Radio National and the Sydney International Piano Competitions.

Now, Mairi regularly presents pre-concert artist talks, and hosts live broadcasts from Melbourne for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Opera Australia, Musica Viva and the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition. She has toured to Europe twice as broadcaster with the MSO.
CHARLES-FRANÇOIS GOUNOD  
(1818–1893)  

Petite Symphonie  

Adagio et Allegretto  

Andante cantabile  

Scherzo: Allegro moderato  

Finale: Allegretto

Debussy once wrote that ‘for all his weakness, Gounod was a necessity.’ In Debussy’s view, the composer of Faust and Roméo et Juliette was to be praised for never succumbing to the temptation to imitate ‘the imperious spirit of Wagner’. Moreover, said Debussy, Gounod was ‘cultivated. He understood Palestrina and collaborated with Bach, [but] was not blinded by a respect for tradition.’ The ‘weakness’ identified by Debussy and others was, perhaps, his lack of a defined musical personality, and tendency to sound like, among others, Mozart, Mendelssohn or Schumann at various times. But as Debussy noted, Gounod ‘stirred’ many of his contemporaries and his music represented ‘a moment in French sensibility’.

At first glance, the Petite Symphonie looks and sounds like an incurable retro piece. It is scored for the classical harmonie ensemble of paired oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns, with an extra flute, and is laid out in the standard classical four movements. In tone it is of an almost entirely unruffled geniality.

The B flat major first movement begins with a slightly Beethovenian unison and a slow introduction in hymnal chords that occasionally sidestep harmonically, suggesting remoter possibilities. These, however, prove to be an Allegretto movement dominated by chugging bassoon rhythms and perky themes from the upper winds that can only be described as Gallic in character, which are developed in a Mozartean fashion before the recapitulation according to the principles of classical sonata form.

Much of the Andante, in E flat, involves the lower instruments in simple ostinato patterns that support a long and often ornate line from the solo flute, which it occasionally shares with oboe or clarinet.

The Scherzo, again in B flat, has a kind of ‘hunting music’ energy, though in its minor moments with lighter scoring sounds positively Mendelssohnian. The trio, with its drone and vaguely ‘Scottish’ tune, is far more rustic and earth-bound. The Finale is effectively a rondo whose simple melodies are occasionally put through some contrapuntal paces, and whose harmony is not without its unexpected moments.

The piece was written in 1885 for the Société de Musique de Chambre pour Instruments à Vent (Society for Chamber Music for Winds), founded by the flautist Paul Taffanel in 1879. Taffanel was a prime mover in the revival of interest in music for wind instruments, but was aided by then-recent advances in technology. Chief among these were the improvements made in instrument-
building by Theobald Boehm. Thanks largely to Boehm, late 19th-century wind instruments became more reliable: Boehm had invented a key-mechanism for flute, oboe and clarinet whereby chromatic notes could be played in tune without the often cumbersome finger-gymnastics (half-closing sound holes, cross fingering) required on older instruments. Now, not only were chromatic notes in tune, they could be played with exactly the same tone-colour as ‘natural’ notes. These innovations, along with the use of metal for making flutes and valves on horns, meant a smoother, more even ‘surface’ to music for such an ensemble was possible. The flute, for instance, can blend with the clarinets into new colours, or help to etch out a melodic line without drawing attention to itself. The textures that Gounod brings forth would hardly have been possible for Mozart or even Mendelssohn; this is an ideal classical sound that had never, in fact, existed.

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This is the first performance of this work by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

STEPHEN HOUGH
(born 1961)

Was mit den Tränen geschieht
for piccolo, piano and contrabassoon

Lento giusto –
Allegro brilliante –
Andante

Stephen Hough began playing piano and composing at around the age of six in his native England, but while his star was rising as a pianist – he famously gives some 100 concerts each year – he took leave of composition until 2005. The considerable body of work produced since then reflects not only his artistry as an interpreter of the great tradition of piano music, but his ‘extra-musical’ interests. He paints (and exhibits); his Twitter followers will be aware of his interest in ‘poetry, perfume, puddings’, and, more seriously, the subjects of art and Catholic theology on which he is an insightful and elegant thinker and writer. His piano sonatas, for instance, include the poetically subtitled Broken Branches (No.1) and notturno luminoso (No.2), and the third, Trinitas, commissioned by the Catholic magazine The Tablet. His instrumental music includes other solo piano pieces, instrumental sonatas, and works such as The Loneliest Wilderness, an elegy for cello and orchestra. Hough’s vocal work encompasses choral music for the liturgy and art songs in various languages. His musical language is inclusive and expressive and focused on clarity of sound: in Trinitas, for
example, Hough uses twelve-note serial procedures to gradually uncover the hymn tune *Nicaea* (Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty).

*Was mit den Tränen geschieht* (what happens to tears) was composed for himself and members of the Berlin Philharmonic, including the flautist Michael Hasel and bassoonist Marion Reinhard, in 2008. Hough has explained that despite the odd juxtaposition of instruments the piece is not intended to be a joke: in fact, there is considerable pathos in the inability of the winds’ ranges to ever meet or overlap. And indeed, Hough is sanguine that the piece will still work if either of the wind instruments is absent, or if one or either is substituted for by flute or bassoon.

The 13-minute piece consists of three movements, where two slowish ones flank a more active second. The *Lento giusto* is dominated by a motif that begins with a lilting downwards-moving scale – when sounded on the piccolo it inevitably recalls a similar motif in Richard Strauss’ *Tod und Verklärung* and might be associated with tearful grief. Hough weaves this material into a gently flowing texture that briefly gives way to a bleaker sound world in the final moments, before regaining speed through an assertive short-long chordal motif in the piano. This, without a break, launches the second movement, an *Allegro brilliante* characterised by cascading piano writing, which is interrupted by the two-chord motif, and frantic chirping motifs from the piccolo. The movement’s central section is a lurching scherzo that is itself interrupted by terse piano chords and virtuoso passage-work from the winds, sometimes in imitation and sometimes in rhythmic unison. The plangent descending scale motif is heard at various points including in the final bars of the movement.

The final *Andante* is introduced by a spare, slow-moving piccolo melody over a quietly insistent contrabassoon rhythm. This is answered by brooding music for piano – still dominated by the falling scale pattern. Rich chords release a more active piccolo line that in turn is answered by the two-chord motif from the first movement, which leads to a plangent bassoon solo. The work returns to the atmosphere of the opening, and closes with a gesture from the piano.

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This is the first performance of this work by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.
ANTONIO LOTTI
(1666–1740)
arr. Brock Imison

_Crucifixus_ a 8

At the heart of the collective profession of Christian faith known as the Creed are three statements on the nature of Jesus: that He ‘became incarnate…and was made man’; that ‘for our sake, He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered death and was buried’; and that ‘on the third day He rose again from the dead’.

The _Crucifixus_ is a vocal setting of the second of these, and in the later Baroque period especially, became a vehicle for composers to create an atmosphere of pain and desolation that contrasts with the joyful celebration of the Resurrection.

Antonio Lotti was born in the German city of Hanover, but returned to his father’s native Venice to study and work in the 1680s. He composed a great deal of liturgical music including numerous settings, for choruses of between five and ten voices, of the _Crucifixus_.

The eight-voice setting begins with a low, foreboding bass for the line _Crucifixus etiam pro nobis_ that supports a texture built through the clashing of semitones on strong beats. At _sub Pontio Pilato_, Lotti uses imitative counterpoint to build tension that issues in the stark homophony of _passus et sepultus est_.

With very simple means, Lotti creates a miniature drama of some power. The 18th-century British writer and traveller Charles Burney wrote of Lotti’s music at St Mark’s Basilica in Venice: ‘It affected me even to tears.’ Lotti’s musical structure means that the _Crucifixus_ works well as an instrumental piece, evoking the instrumental tradition of St Mark’s.

FRANZ KROMMER
(1759–1831)

Octet-Partita (Harmonie) in F, Op.57

Allegro vivace

Minueto: Presto

Adagio – Andante cantabile

Alla polacca

Just before Don Giovanni is dragged off to hell at the end of Mozart’s opera, the Don enjoys a meal with entertainment provided by a wind band. The tunes they play are familiar to him and to Mozart’s audience, and are drawn from contemporary operas: when an aria from ‘Figaro’ starts up, Don Giovanni’s servant Leporello quips that he ‘knows that one all too well’.

The wind ensemble – known often as a Harmonie, as was the music written for it – was an extremely popular element of late 18th-century music-making in Europe. Such bands usually contained pairs of oboes, clarinets, horns and bassoons (though with various other wind instruments appearing from time to time, and occasionally an extra bass instrument for extra heft), and
were retained in aristocratic houses to provide background music for large public events. Mash-ups of current operatic tunes were favoured, as in *Don Giovanni*, and, for outdoor use especially, so was the multi-movement serenade, cassation or divertimento.

Originally from Moravia, Franz Krommer moved permanently to Vienna in 1795. Where Mozart established a freelance career, Krommer – perhaps more sensibly – went into the service of the music-loving Prince Grassalkovich. The Prince maintained a *Harmonie*, and Krommer obliged by writing a staggering amount of music for it, including, it is generally believed, the Partitas. He later held a number of appointments with aristocratic patrons, was *Ballettkapellmeister* at the Court Opera, and became a *Kammertürhüter* (Chamber-door Guardian) to the Emperor Franz I before being promoted to court composer in 1818. He was immensely prolific, writing in most of the then-favoured genres, though opera and song and solo keyboard music seem not to have interested him; in his lifetime his string quartets were revered as highly as Haydn’s.

Krommer’s Partitas are scored for wind octet with a supporting double bass (or double bassoon), and tend to use the four-movement design that had, by that time, become the established layout for classical chamber music and symphonies.

Krommer begins with an arresting blast in rhythmic unison that establishes the key of F immediately, and soon draws out various smaller ensembles from within the band – comically busy bassoons against syncopations from the clarinets, or counterpoint between the two oboes – that create a series of contrasting textures. Interestingly, this works shows a tendency to use minor keys unexpectedly: the Mozartean second subject is in C minor, not the expected C major, and the movement’s recapitulation is thus in the tonic F minor, providing the change of emotional register often cultivated by Schubert.

The minuet that follows is actually a scherzo in speed and manner, characterised by deceptively simple rhythmic motifs and highly chromatic melodies. The trio, which features slow-moving contrapuntal lines embedded in the faster texture, is harmonically adventurous.

This carries over into the harmonically ambiguous ‘chorale’ that opens the beautiful D minor slow movement. The main material here is, like the minuet’s, divided between chromatic melodies and repeated rhythmic figures in the accompaniment. The harmonic ambiguity resurfaces, after a passage of purely rhythmic rhetoric, in a major-key version of the movement’s main themes.

The final *alla polacca* is a good-humoured dance where Krommer creates ever more elaborate textures that suddenly dissolve to make way for solo passages for each of the instrument types, including a rustic horn solo.

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*This is the first performance of this work by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.*
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