



IN CONCERT

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2012

GRIEG CONCERTO

30 AUGUST-1 SEPTEMBER

STEPHEN HOUGH PLAYS TCHAIKOVSKY

14, 15 AND 17 SEPTEMBER

TCHAIKOVSKY'S PATHÉTIQUE

20-22 SEPTEMBER

ENIGMA VARIATIONS

28 SEPTEMBER

MEET YOUR MSO MUSICIANS:
SYLVIA HOSKING AND
MICHAEL PISANI

PIERS LANE VISITS
GRIEG'S BIRTHPLACE

STEPHEN HOUGH ON
TCHAIKOVSKY'S PIANO
CONCERTO NO.2

SIR ANDREW DAVIS HAILS
THE NEW HAMER HALL

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IMAGE: SIR ANDREW DAVIS CONDUCTING
THE MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



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It really is thrilling to be in the new Hamer Hall. The acoustic clarity and warmth (not to mention the beauty!) of the renovations are tremendously gratifying. Having been a regular visitor to Melbourne for some years and conducted in the 'old' Hall, I know how much everyone here who loves the Orchestra was hoping for a renovation that represented a real improvement. Well, we have it! And I can assure you that the success of the work by Marshall Day Acoustics, and architects

Ashton Raggatt McDougall, has been reported all over the world.

The program of music by Grieg and his friend and champion Percy Grainger that I have the privilege to conduct from August 29 to September 1 will be a wonderful opportunity for you to experience all the richness our "new" hall has to offer. Ranging from the simplicity of an *a capella* setting of the folk song *Brigg Fair* to the full-blown Romanticism of Grieg's Piano Concerto and the extraordinary originality of Grainger's *Tribute to Foster* for voices and orchestra, this homage to Australia's pioneering musical personality offers tremendous variety of mood and colour. And, parenthetically, the concert will be performed very close to Princes Bridge, which was designed by Percy's father, John Grainger.

There are many wonderful artists performing with our Orchestra during September: the MSO Chorus, pianists Piers Lane

(I urge you to read his reflections on Grieg's Concerto on page 16) and Stephen Hough, and conductors Andrew Litton and Christopher Seaman, the last of whom will be joined by two of the finest brass soloists in the world, Radovan Vlatkovic (horn) and Øystein Baadsvik (tuba), for our special Town Hall concert at the end of the month, presented in collaboration with the Melbourne International Festival of Brass.

When I next see you in early 2013, I shall be the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's Chief Conductor, and I could not be more delighted to be assuming that title!

My best wishes for a rewarding month of concert experiences with this great orchestra.

Sir Andrew Davis
Chief Conductor Designate

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With a reputation for excellence, versatility and innovation, the internationally acclaimed Melbourne Symphony Orchestra is Australia's oldest orchestra, established in 1906.

This fine Orchestra is renowned for its performances of the great symphonic masterworks with leading international and Australian artists including Maxim Vengerov, John Williams, Osmo Vänskä, Charles Dutoit, Yan Pascal Tortelier, Donald Runnicles, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Yvonne Kenny, Edo de Waart, Lang Lang, Nigel Kennedy, Jeffrey Tate, Midori, Christine Brewer, Richard Tognetti, Emma Matthews and Teddy Tahu Rhodes. It has also enjoyed hugely successful performances with such artists as Sir Elton John, John Farnham, Harry Connick, Jr., Ben Folds, KISS, Burt Bacharach, The Whitlams, Human Nature, Sting and Tim Minchin.

The MSO performs extensively with its own choir, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Chorus, directed by chorus master Jonathan Grieves-Smith. Recent performances together include Britten's *War Requiem* under Tadaaki Otaka, Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe* under Sir Andrew Davis and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony under Douglas Boyd, as part of the 2011 Beethoven Festival.

Key musical figures in the Orchestra's history include Hiroyuki Iwaki – who was Chief Conductor and then Conductor Laureate, between 1974 and his death in 2006 – and Markus Stenz, who was Chief Conductor and Artistic Director from 1998 until 2004. Oleg Caetani was the MSO's Chief Conductor and Artistic Director from 2005 to 2009.

The MSO, the first Australian symphony orchestra to tour abroad, has received widespread international recognition in tours to the USA, Canada, Japan, Korea, Europe, China and St Petersburg, Russia. In addition, the Orchestra tours annually throughout regional Victoria, including a concert season in Geelong.

Each year the Orchestra performs to more than 200,000 people, at events ranging from the **Sidney Myer Free Concerts** in the Sidney Myer Music Bowl to the series of **Classic Kids** concerts for young children. The MSO reaches

an even larger audience across Australia through its regular concert broadcasts on ABC Classic FM. The Orchestra's considerable ceremonial role in Victoria has included participation in the opening ceremony of the 2006 Commonwealth Games, in the 2009 bushfire memorial service **Together for Victoria**, the Prime Minister's Olympic Dinner and the 2010 and 2011 **AFL Grand Final**.

The MSO's extensive education and community outreach activities include the **Meet the Orchestra**, **Meet the Music** and **Up Close and Musical** programs, designed specifically for schools. In 2011 the MSO launched an educational iPhone and iPad app designed to teach children about the inner workings of an orchestra.

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra is funded principally by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and is generously supported by the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet. The MSO is also funded by the City of Melbourne, its Principal Partner, Emirates, and individual and corporate sponsors and donors.

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PROGRAM INFORMATION

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra programs can be read on-line or downloaded up to a week before each concert, from mso.com.au

If you do not need this printed program after the concert, we encourage you to return it to a member of staff.



EMIRATES – HELLO TOMORROW

MSO musicians Christopher Carlidge, Michelle Wood and Roger Young recently played a role in Emirates’ Harmony Campaign, part of Emirates’ **Hello Tomorrow** global brand launch.

Designed to capture Emirates’ passion for connecting people’s hopes, dreams and aspirations, the Emirates’ **Hello Tomorrow** campaign encapsulates life’s potential to embrace the future and all the possibilities it holds.

Emirates and the MSO share this vision, continuing to connect people and cultures to create relevant and meaningful experiences. The **Hello Tomorrow** campaign is designed to connect people and their communities, and encourage them to join together to make a positive impact on society. In the same way, the MSO continues to connect with our community in new and exciting ways.

In 2013 Emirates will celebrate ten years as Principal Partner of the MSO. To find out more about Emirates and the MSO, visit the Principal Partner page at mso.com.au



Thursday 30 and
Friday 31 August at 8pm
Saturday 1 September at 8pm
Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall
.....

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
Sir Andrew Davis piano
Piers Lane piano
Melbourne Symphony Chorus
Jonathan Grieves-Smith
chorus master
.....

Grainger
Marching Song of Democracy

Grieg
Piano Concerto

INTERVAL 20 MINUTES

arr. Grainger
Brigg Fair

Delius
Brigg Fair

Grainger
Danny Deever

Grainger
The Bride's Tragedy
AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

Grainger
Tribute to Foster

This concert has a duration of approximately two hours, including one interval of 20 minutes.

Friday evening's performance will be broadcast live around Australia on ABC Classic FM (on analogue and digital radio), and streamed on its website.

Please turn off your mobile phone and all other electronic devices before the performance commences.

GRIEG CONCERTO



BEYOND THE STAGE

Learn more about the music in these free events taking place in the Hamer Hall Stalls Foyer.

CELEBRATING GRAINGER

Thursday 30 and Friday 31 August at 7pm
Saturday 1 September 1 at 7pm
Stalls Foyer, Hamer Hall

Designed and funded with the assistance of Percy Grainger himself, the autobiographical Grainger Museum (built upon the grounds of the University of Melbourne) houses thousands of the composer's original manuscripts, letters, instruments, artworks and intimately personal items.

In this 20-minute presentation, the Grainger Museum's manager Suzanne Bravery (Thursday and Friday) and curator Brian Allison (Saturday) will discuss the life and works of Australia's most celebrated composer, as well as his friendship with Grieg - whose piano concerto is included in this evening's program.



SIR ANDREW DAVIS conductor

Sir Andrew Davis is Chief Conductor Designate of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

He has served as Music Director and Principal Conductor of Lyric Opera of Chicago since 2000. He is also Conductor Laureate of both the Toronto Symphony and BBC Symphony orchestras, and was previously Music Director of Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

A former organ scholar at King's College, Cambridge, he has conducted all of the world's major orchestras as well as at leading opera houses and festivals. His tenure as chief conductor of the BBC Symphony, which he led at the Proms and on tour to Europe, the USA and Asia, was the longest since that of the Orchestra's founder Sir Adrian Boult. His repertoire is diverse, however he is a keen proponent of works by Elgar, Tippett, Britten, Boulez, Messiaen and Janáček.

In addition to performances in Toronto and Chicago, this season's operatic engagements have included the Metropolitan Opera (*Don Giovanni*), Santa Fe Opera (*Arabella*), and the Canadian Opera Company (*Gianni Schicchi*, *A Florentine Tragedy*). Symphonic engagements have included the Philharmonia Orchestra, BBC Symphony, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic and the opening of the Edinburgh Festival.

The most recent additions to his award-winning discography include Holst's *The Planets*, *Beni Mora* and *Japanese Suite*; York Bowen's Symphonies Nos 1 and 2 (BBC Philharmonic); and Delius' *Appalachia*, *The Song of the High Hills* and Violin and Cello Concertos with Tasmin Little and Paul Watkins (BBCSO). His first recordings with the MSO will be issued on the Chandos label in 2013.

He was made a Commander of the British Empire in 1992, and a Knight Bachelor in 1999. He is also a recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society/Charles Heidsieck Music Award.



PIERS LANE piano

London-based Australian pianist Piers Lane has a flourishing international career that has taken him to more than 40 countries. Five-times soloist at the BBC Proms, he boasts a wide-ranging concerto repertoire that exceeds 80 works and has led to engagements with the world's great orchestras and conductors.

Performances this season have included the Busoni Piano Concerto at Carnegie Hall, debuts with the Czech Philharmonic and the Giuseppe Verdi Orchestra of Milan, the London Philharmonic's Prokofiev Festival, and the world premiere of Carl Vine's Piano Concerto No.2 with the Sydney Symphony.

In addition to his longstanding collaborations with violinist Tasmin Little and clarinetist Michael Collins, tours in recent years have included performances with Brett Dean, Marc-André Hamelin, Cheryl Barker, Yvonne Kenny, Markus Schäfer, Peter Coleman-Wright, Anne Sofie von Otter, and the Australian, Doric, Goldner, Medici, New Zealand, Prazak and RTÉ Vanbrugh String quartets.

Piers Lane has been the Artistic Director of the Australian Festival of Chamber Music since 2007. He is also Artistic Director of the annual Dame Myra Hess Day at the National Gallery in London, which resulted in his collaboration with actress Patricia Routledge on the theatre piece *Admission: One Shilling*.

He has written and presented over 100 programs for BBC Radio 3, including the 54-part series, *The Piano*. His discography includes rare Romantic piano concertos, piano transcriptions by Grainger, and recordings with the Goldner String Quartet of works by Elgar, Bridge, Bloch, Dvořák and Hamilton Harty.

Piers Lane holds an Honorary Doctorate from Griffith University and was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in June 2012.

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PERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER

(1882–1961)

Marching Song of Democracy

Brigg Fair

FREDERICK DELIUS

(1862–1934)

Brigg Fair –

An English Rhapsody

Introduction (Slow. Pastoral)

I *Theme & Variations 1–6* –

II *Interlude*

(Slow and very quietly)

III *Variations 7–12*

IV *Variations 13–17* –

Coda *(Very quietly)*

GRAINGER

Danny Deever

The Bride's Tragedy

AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

Tribute to Foster



PERCY GRAINGER WITH HIS MOTHER
ROSE IN 1903

Given its historical connections to continental Europe, it is easy for us to think that Western classical music is largely something that happens elsewhere – that Australia is little more than an observer on a tradition that, for reasons of geography and history, is predominantly the property of others. Notwithstanding the quality and quantity of Australian composition today, Australian music history too easily has assumed a thinly-veiled melancholic character, perhaps reflecting a country still anxious about its place in the world.

With Percy Grainger, however, we can unambiguously claim for Australia a composer of truly world significance. Why then, is his music not performed, or indeed celebrated, here with anything like the frequency and verve as can be found in Britain and the United States? Almost from the outset, it seems, Australia has been diffident about Grainger's significance, doubting even if he could reasonably be called an *Australian* composer. He may have been born in Brighton in suburban Melbourne, built his museum here, and have Adelaide as his final resting place, but Grainger left Australia at the age of 13 to attend the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, and subsequently settled in London (1901–1914) and then the United States (1914 to his death), where he also took up citizenship. Yes, he might have toured extensively around Australia throughout his life, but he was known here principally – *Country Gardens* notwithstanding – as a touring pianist, not as a composer. Then there is what Peter Sculthorpe has called the 'Grainger trap,' whereby interest in his undeniably eccentric lifestyle and political views has served further to deflect critical and academic attention away from his music.

Unfortunately for him, the first half of the 20th century saw the nigh complete rejection by the classical music establishment of the kinds of aesthetic qualities his music exalted, in favour of the hard-edged music of the prophets of high modernism. Times, however, have changed, and certainly as far as Grainger's reputation is concerned, much for the better – his music is now regularly programmed by leading ensembles in Europe and North America and scholars and critics, too, are coming to a new understanding of, and respect for, Grainger's considerable creative achievements.

How much, though, does his music reflect, and speak to, his Australian roots? As far as Grainger himself was concerned, very. If we listen out for onomatopoeic references to Australian fauna, or hope for engagement with indigenous musical culture, we will do so in vain. Grainger instead considered the 'Australianness' in his music to lie in something much more subtle, and perhaps more profound; its freshness of spirit, its openness to new ideas, its dismissal of faux claims to 'artiness' but also – and perhaps most awkwardly for his Australian critics – a predilection for taking the expressions of sentimentality to be found in ordinary people's lives very seriously indeed; Grainger's music is, if we like, in many ways the compositional counterpoint to C.J. Dennis' *The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke* (1915).

Such characteristics are to be found in abundance in the music by Grainger we will hear tonight. Grainger's own program note to his *Marching Song of Democracy*, for instance, quotes a passage from Walt Whitman's 'A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads' (from *Leaves of Grass*, 1855), in which the American poet asks whether, of the 'great poems received from abroad and from the ages, and today enveloping and penetrating America', is there one consistent



FREDERICK (SEATED) AND JELKA DELIUS
WITH PERCY GRAINGER IN 1923



DELIUS IN 1907

with the spirit of the United States, and in particular with the spirit of democracy? In response, Grainger recalled that, as a ‘boy of 16 or 17 I was greatly struck by the truth of this assertion, not merely as regards America and literature, but as applying no less to Australia and the other younger Democracies, and to all the arts; and I felt a keen longing to play my part in the creation of music that should reflect the easy-going, happy-go-lucky, yet robust hopefulness and the undisciplined individualistic energy’ of this country.

The *Marching Song of Democracy* was therefore composed with the express intention to reflect a form of ‘optimistic humanitarian democracy’ in which a community of ‘comradely affectionate athletic humanity... urges to be heroic but not martial, exultant but not provocative, passionate but not dramatic, energetic but not fierce, athletic but not competitive’. Typically for Grainger, this expressive aim determines the very manner of performance. He originally intended the work to be for voices and whistlers only (no instruments), and have it performed outdoors by a chorus of marching men, women and children who would accompany themselves with only the pulse of their tramping feet. While Grainger eventually conceded to the benefits of added instrumental colour, and to the formality of the concert hall, he nevertheless asked

that the performances continue to reflect the ‘athletic out-of-door spirit’ that lay behind the piece from start to finish.

The use of nonsense syllables, a common Grainger trait, not only evokes the free expression of a child’s vocal doodling, it also allows the choir (and the audience) to be immersed in the general mood of the piece without being limited by the specificity of particular words. As a ‘democratic Australian’, he wished for his music ‘to breathe tonal democracy’, so that each musical line could have an equal chance to stand out. In one final act of musical symbolism, four horns individually state a G flat triad in their own time to bring the work to a conclusion.

Given these interests in the spirit of democracy as well as in ‘vulgar’ (in the literal sense of ‘common’) sentimentality, it should come as no surprise that Grainger’s enthusiasm for Walt Whitman was matched by that for Rudyard Kipling, one of the few British authors of his day who wrote about the lives and experiences of the common people. The poem *Danny Deever* was penned early in 1890 as part of his set of ‘Barrack-Room Ballads’, and some believe that the execution it describes relates to an actual incident Kipling had observed in India some three years earlier. No less a figure than George Orwell considered ‘Danny Deever’ as an example of Kipling ‘at his worst’, but ‘also his most

vital’, a work that was essentially vulgar yet seductive, ‘a sign of the emotional overlap between the intellectual and the ordinary man.’ That, of course, is precisely why Grainger would have been drawn to it!

Grainger’s setting mirrors the poem’s structure as a dialogue between a young soldier (a member of the ‘Files-on-Parade’) and more experienced NCO (the ‘Colour-Sergeant’) as their regiment is paraded to witness the hanging of Danny Deever, sentenced to death for murdering a colleague. Kipling’s attempt to be faithful to the kind of English that might have actually been spoken would have been particularly appealing to the composer, who exhibited the same curatorial care with his folk-song transcriptions. Grainger also revelled in the repetitive nature of a narrative ballad such as this, which gave him the chance to invent different accompaniments of great variety and subtlety for each verse. In this instance the tune is his own, but it is composed in a style that mimics a genuine ‘barrack-room’ ballad.

Grainger admitted he had always had a ‘soft spot’ for folk songs – but his aim was not to preserve the sonic imprint of a dying rural tradition for the amusement of urban sophisticates, but rather to remind us of the value of a profound sense of community. His principle in arranging these tunes was to ‘strive to make the voice-leading of my tone-strands touching and the effect of my harmonies agonise’, to ‘wrench at the listener’s hearts with my chords’. Such expressive harmony, or, as he once described it, ‘heart-throb-some chord-music’, could, he believed, ‘voice the painfulness of human life’ no less.



GRAINGER DURING HIS 1934 AUSTRALIAN TOUR

Heart-wrenching chords is exactly what we hear in *Brigg Fair*, one of Grainger's most justly famous folk song arrangements, which he exquisitely scores for solo tenor and five-part chorus. Grainger had recorded the original tune onto wax cylinder in 1905 from the singing of one Joseph Taylor in Lincolnshire, then 71 years old. In 1907, Delius heard the setting and was so impressed by both the tune and Grainger's arrangement that he used the song as the basis of an orchestral work, first performed in 1908. Legend has it that at this first performance Taylor stood up and began to sing with the orchestra – if it is true, certainly Grainger could not have received a more apposite compliment.

Composed largely in 1908–9, *The Bride's Tragedy* is one of Grainger's most intensely personal works. A setting of Swinburne's *Border Ballad*, the work tells the tale of a girl who is about to be married to a man she does not love. At the church door she is abducted by her true lover, and together they ride away. The couple are pursued by the bridegroom and her own family until they reach a river in full flood, and they both drown in their attempt to cross it.

Grainger wrote in a letter to a friend that the work was his 'personal protest against the sex-negation that our capitalistic world (assisted by mother, by you, and by numberless other well-wishers) offered to young talents like me. A man cannot be a full artist unless he is manly, & a man cannot be manly unless his sex-life is selfish, brutal, wilful, unbridled.' Grainger accepted the need to temper these impulses with the demands of civilised society, but thought all the same that 'the situation called for a protest. *The Bride's Tragedy* was my protest, & the angry chords on the brass (at the first singing of 'they lie drowned & dead') is my personal bitterness'. The work was premiered in 1922, just after his mother's death, and Grainger regarded it as a kind of requiem for her, despite – or more correctly, because – Rose Grainger had been responsible, among other things, for his delay in marrying.

Autobiographical impulses also lie behind *Tribute to Foster*, one of Grainger's most original compositions – a veritable transcendental etude on a most unlikely theme, Foster's 'Camptown Races'. It has an even more unlikely instrumental accompaniment for its middle 'lullaby' section, a set of musical glasses. Grainger recalled that one of his earliest musical recollections had been of his mother 'singing me to sleep' with this tune, and in 1913 he decided 'to give musical expression to these Australian memories and to my ever-increasing love and reverence for this great American genius – one of the most tender, touching and subtle melodists and poets of all time; a mystic dreamer no less than a whimsical humorist.'

Grainger's setting incorporates one of his compositional trademarks, a phalanx of tuned percussion, which here includes a celeste and glockenspiel. The combined sonic effect can at first seem overdetermined – as if the means is far in excess of the ends. This is

music, however, which asks us to revise our suspicion of nostalgia and sentimentality as states of mind somehow less deserving of serious artistic reflection. The die-hard nostalgic need not, as this music suggests, be someone who is merely afraid of the future, just as the lover of Grainger's music need not necessarily be a reactionary conservative who wishes to ignore a century of overt musical modernism. Indeed, we do Grainger an injustice to presume that he was a naïve sentimentalist or reactionary. Rather, he asks us, and us Australians in particular, to take his music, and the premonitory modern ideas that lie behind it, very seriously indeed.

Peter Tregear © 2012

Marching Song of Democracy has been performed only once by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra; in July 1993 under conductor John Hopkins.

This is the first performance of Grainger's Brigg Fair by the MSO, however the Orchestra first performed Delius' arrangement in 1946 with Bernard Heinze, and most recently in August 2008 under Christopher Seaman.

This is the first performance of Danny Deever by any of the former ABC orchestras.

The first public performance in Australia of Tribute to Foster was by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, in March 1973 with John Hopkins. The MSO's most recent performance was at a Sidney Myer Free Concert in February 2011 under the direction of Benjamin Northey.

The Staff Bells used in these performances of Marching Song of Democracy and Tribute to Foster are on loan to the MSO from the Grainger Museum collection at the University of Melbourne, and belonged to Grainger himself. His original Musieum label for these bells reads: 'Resonated Staff Bells (Chime Bells, Swiss Hand Bells). Bought from Deagan (Chicago) in 1916 for about \$200–\$300. Used in first performance of The Warriors, Worcester festival (Mass.) of 1917 (May?) just before entering USA Army and used later also.'

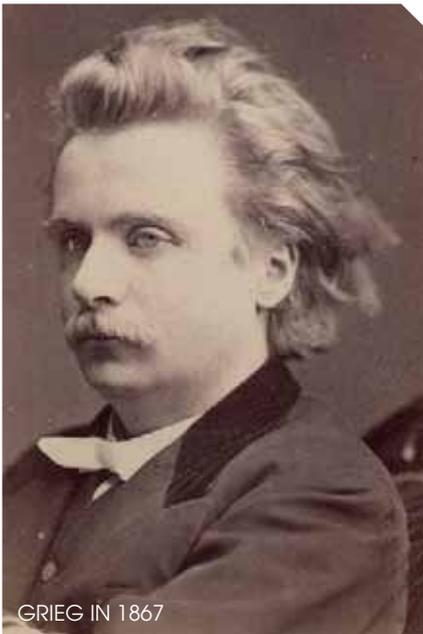
EDVARD GRIEG

(1843–1907)

Piano Concerto in A minor,
Op.16

- I *Allegro molto moderato*
- II *Adagio* –
- III *Allegro moderato molto e marcato*

Piers Lane piano



GRIEG IN 1867

After hearing a performance of Grieg's piano concerto, Arnold Schoenberg is supposed to have remarked: 'That's the kind of music I'd really like to write', and one can't help but feel that there was a wistful sincerity buried in the remark. Grieg's concerto is, with good reason, popular – a fate not enjoyed by Schoenberg's music.

Grieg composed the concerto at the age of 25, while relatively inexperienced in orchestral writing, and tinkered endlessly with the orchestration between the time of the work's (triumphant) premiere and his death in 1907. He had studied at the Leipzig Conservatory from the age of 15 with the initial intent of becoming a concert pianist. Dissatisfied with his first teacher, Grieg began lessons with E.F. Wenzel, a friend and supporter of Schumann's; under his tutelage Grieg began writing piano music for his own performances and wrote passionate articles in defence of Schumann's music.

The influence of Schumann's Piano Concerto, also in A minor, has been remarked on frequently, but apart from their similar three-movement design and opening gesture, the style of each is markedly different.

Grieg's Concerto is replete with exquisite tunes. Many of these echo the Norwegian folk music with which Grieg had become familiar in 1864. The piano's opening gesture, for instance, recalls folk music in its use of a 'gapped' scale, and the origins of the finale in folk dance are clear.

Grieg was unable to attend the premiere of his concerto in Copenhagen in 1869, but it was an outstanding success and was recognised as a youthful masterpiece. Anton Rubinstein, for instance, described it as a 'work of genius'. A year later, Grieg met Liszt for the second time. Liszt allegedly sight-read Grieg's concerto and said: 'You have the real stuff in you. And don't ever let them frighten you!'

Grieg didn't let them frighten him, and the Piano Concerto went on to establish his reputation throughout the musical world. Audiences responded, as they still do, to the charm of Grieg's melodies, the balance of, it must be said, Lisztian virtuosity and Grieg's own distinctive lyricism, and what Tchaikovsky, who adored the work, described as its 'fascinating melancholy which seems to reflect in itself all the beauty of Norwegian scenery'. One of Grieg's greatest admirers described the 'concentrated greatness and all-lovingness of the little great man. Out of the toughest Norwegianness, out of the most narrow localness, he spreads out a welcoming and greedy mind for all the world's wares.' This was, of course, the Australian-born pianist/composer Percy Grainger who became one of the Concerto's most celebrated exponents and one of the dearest friends of Grieg's last years. Not only that – Grainger spent time with Grieg working on the concerto before the composer's death, at which time Grieg was making the final adjustments to the orchestration; with such 'inside knowledge' Grainger was able to publish his own edition of the work in later years. Sadly, a proposed tour with Grieg conducting and Grainger playing the Concerto never transpired.

Gordon Kerry © 2006

The first performance of Grieg's Piano Concerto by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra took place on 14 May 1940 with conductor Antal Dorati and soloist Eunice Gardiner. The Orchestra's most recent performance was in November 2006 with Jaap van Zweden and soloist David Tong.

BRIGG FAIR

Trad. arr Grainger

Featuring **Ben Namdarian** tenor

It was on the fifth of August, er' the weather fine and fair,
Unto Brigg Fair I did repair, for love I was inclined.
I rose up with the lark in the morning, with my heart so full of glee,
Of thinking there to meet my dear, long time I'd wished to see.
I took hold of her lily-white hand, O and merrily was her heart:
'And now we're met together, I hope we ne'er shall part.'
For it's meeting is a pleasure, and parting is a grief,
But an unconstant lover is worse than any thief.
The green leaves they shall wither and the branches they shall die
If ever I prove false to her, to the girl that loves me.

DANNY DEEVER

Text by Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) from *Barrack-Room Ballads*

Featuring **José Carbó** baritone

'What are the bugles blowin' for?' said Files-on-Parade.
'To turn you out, to turn you out,' the Colour-Sergeant said.
'What makes you look so white, so white?' said Files-on-Parade.
'I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch,' the Colour-Sergeant said.
For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can hear the Dead March play,
The regiment's in 'ollow square, they're hangin' him today;
They've taken all his buttons off and cut his stripes away,
An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

'What makes the rear ranks breathe so 'ard?' said Files-on-Parade.
'It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold,' the Colour-Sergeant said.
'What makes that front-rank man fall down?' said Files-on-Parade.
'A touch o' sun, a touch o' sun,' the Colour-Sergeant said.
They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of 'im round,
They 'ave 'alted Danny Deever by 'is coffin on the ground;
An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin' shootin' hound
O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!

'Is cot was right-'and cot to mine,' said Files-on-Parade.
'E's sleepin' out an' far tonight,' the Colour-Sergeant said.
'I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times,' said Files-on-Parade.
'E's drinkin' bitter beer alone,' the Colour-Sergeant said.
They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im to 'is place,
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin', you must look 'im in the face;
Nine 'undred of 'is county an' the regiment's disgrace,
While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

'What's that so black agin the sun?' said Files-on-Parade.
'It's Danny fightin' 'ard for life,' the Colour-Sergeant said.
'What's that that whimpers over'ead?' said Files-on-Parade.
'It's Danny's soul that's passin' now,' the Colour-Sergeant said.
For they're done with Danny Deever, you can 'ear the quickstep play,
The regiment's in column, an' they're marchin' us away;
Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll want their beer today,
After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!

THE BRIDE'S TRAGEDY

Text by Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909)

'The wind wears roun', the day wears doun,
The moon is grisly grey;
There's nae man rides by the mirk muirsides,
Nor down the dark Tyne's way.'
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

'And winna ye watch the night wi' me,
And winna ye wake the morn?
Foul shame it were that your ae mither
Should brook her ae son's scorn.'
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

'O mither, I may not sleep nor stay,
My weird is ill to dree;
For a fause faint lord of the south seaboard
Wad win my bride of me.'
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

'The winds are strang, and the nights are lang,
And the ways are sair to ride:
And I maun gang to wreak my wrang,
And ye maun bide and bide.'
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

'Gin I maun bide and bide, Willie,
I wot my weird is sair:
Weel may ye get ye a light love yet,
But never a mither mair.'
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

'O gin the morrow be great wi' sorrow,
The wyte be yours of a':
But though ye slay me that haud and stay me,
The weird ye will maun fa'.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

When cocks were crawling and day was dawing,
He's boun' him forth to ride:
And the ae first may he's met that day
Was fause Earl Robert's bride.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

O blithe and braw were the bride-folk a',
But sad and saft rade she;
And sad as doom was her fause bridegroom,
But fair and fain was he.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

'And winna ye bide, sae saft ye ride,
And winna ye speak wi' me?
For mony's the word and the kindly word
I have spoken aft wi' thee.'
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

'My lamp was lit yestreen, Willie,
My window-gate was wide:
But ye camena nigh me till day came by me
And made me not your bride.'
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

He's set his hand to her bridle-rein,
He's turned her horse away:
And the cry was sair, and the wrath was mair,
And fast and fain rode they.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

But when they came by Chollerford,
I wot the ways were fell;
For broad and brown the spate swang down,
And the lift was mirk as hell.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

'And will ye ride yon fell water,
Or will ye bide for fear?
Nae scathe ye'll win o' your father's kin,
Though they should slay me here.'
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

'I had liefer ride yon fell water,
Though strange it be to ride,
Than I wad stand on the fair green strand
And thou be slain beside.'
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

'I had liefer swim yon wild water,
Though sair it be to bide,
Than I wad stand at a strange man's hand,
To be a strange man's bride.'
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

'I had liefer drink yon dark water,
Wi' the stanes to make my bed,
And the faem to hide me, and thou beside me,
Than I wad see thee dead.'
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

He's kissed her twice, he's kissed her thrice,
On cheek and lip and chin:
He's wound her rein to his hand again,
And lightly they leapt in.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

Their hearts were high to live or die,
Their steeds were stark of limb:
But the stream was starker, the spate was darker,
Than man might live and swim.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

The first ae step they strode therein,
It smote them foot and knee:
But ere they wan to the mid water
The spate was as the sea.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

But when they wan to the mid water,
It smote them hand and head:
And nae man knows but the wave that flows
Where they lie drowned and dead.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

TRIBUTE TO FOSTER

Text by Stephen Foster (1826–1864) and
Percy Grainger

FEATURING

Jessica Aszodi soprano
Victoria Lambourn mezzo-soprano
Ben Namdarian tenor
Timothy Reynolds tenor
Nicholas Dinopoulos bass-baritone

De Camptown ladies sing dis song, Doodah!
Doodah!
De Camptown race track five miles long, Oh!
Doodah day!
I came down dah wid my hat caved in, Doodah!
Doodah!
I go back home wid a pocket full ob tin, Oh!
Doodah day!

Gwine to ride all night!
Gwine to ride all day!
I'll bet my money on de bob-tail nag,
Somebody bet on de bay.

De long-tail filly and de big black hoss, Doodah!
Doodah!
Dey fly de track and dey both cut across, Oh!
Doodah day!
De blind hoss stickin' in a big bog hole, Doodah!
Doodah!
Can't touch de bottom wid a ten-foot pole, Oh!
Doodah day!

Gwine to ride all night!
Gwine to ride all day!
I'll bet my money on de bob-tail nag,
Somebody bet on de bay.

Old Muley cow came on to de track, Doodah!
Doodah!
De bob-tail fling her ober him back, Oh! Doodah
day!
Den fly along like a railroad car, Doodah! Doodah!
Runnin' a race wid a shootin' star, Oh! Doodah day!

Gwine to ride all night!
Gwine to ride all day!
I'll bet my money on de bob-tail nag,
Somebody bet on de bay.

In Pittsburgh town a man did dwell, Doodah!
Doodah!
His name was Foster as I've heard tell, Oh! Doodah
day!
Foster's dead and gone away, Doodah! Doodah!
His songs dey lib fo' eber an aye, Oh! Doodah day!

Gwine to still be sung
's long as de worl's heart's young.

Foster's songs warn't 'darkie' quite, Doodah!
Doodah!
Yet neider war dey jes' plain 'white', Oh! Doodah
day!
But Foster's songs dey make you cry, Doodah!
Doodah!
Bring de tear-drop to yo' eye, Oh! Doodah day!

Gwine to still be sung
's long as de worl's heart's young.

Dese songs dey trabbel de worl' around, Doodah!
Doodah!
At las' dey come to Adelaide town, Oh! Doodah day!
When I was a tot on ma mammy's knee, Doodah!
Doodah!
She sung dat race-track song to me, Oh! Doodah
day!

Gwine to still be sung
's long as de worl's heart's young.

Sung it to me sweet as a lullaby, Doodah! Doodah!
Hear dat song till de day I die, Oh! Doodah day!

Gwine to sing all night!
Gwine to sing all day!
I'll bet my money on de Pittsburgh man,
Pittsburgh, Pa., USA.

*The text by Stephen Foster and Percy Grainger from Tribute to
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MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CHORUS

Under the artistic leadership of Jonathan Grieves-Smith, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Chorus is establishing an international reputation for its outstanding performances and recordings. Known as the Melbourne Chorale until 2008, it has since then been integrated with the MSO.

The Chorus sings with the finest conductors, including Sir Andrew Davis, Mark Wigglesworth, Bernard Labadie and Manfred Honeck.

Recent commissions include Paul Stanhope's *Exile Lamentations* (commissioned with Sydney Chamber Choir and London's Elysian Singers), and Gabriel Jackson's *To the Field of Stars* (commissioned with the Netherlands Chamber Choir and Stockholm's St Jacob's Chamber Choir). The Chorus has also premiered works by MacMillan, Pärt, Henze, Schnittke, Bryars and Vasks.

The Chorus has performed with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, with The Australian Ballet, at the Melbourne International Arts Festival, at the 2011 AFL Grand Final and at the Sydney Olympic Arts Festival. The Chorus continues its relationship with ABC Classics with the recent CD release of Westlake's *Missa Solis – Requiem for Eli* with the MSO.



JONATHAN GRIEVES-SMITH chorus master

English conductor and chorus master, Jonathan Grieves-Smith has established an international reputation for his compelling performances and breadth of artistic vision. He has been Chorus Master of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Chorus (formerly Melbourne Chorale) since 1998, and prior to that was Chorus Master of the Huddersfield Choral Society, the Hallé Choir, and Music Director of Brighton Festival Chorus.

Jonathan is a passionate advocate for new music, commissioning and conducting premieres by composers Brett Dean, Paul Stanhope, Gabriel Jackson, Giya Kancheli, Gavin Bryars, Richard Mills, Alfred Schnittke, Ross Edwards, Krzysztof Penderecki, Arvo Pärt and Peteris Vasks.

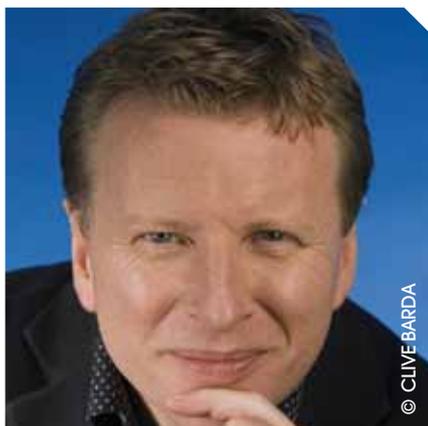
Jonathan has trained choirs for performances and recordings with the world's leading conductors including Sir Simon Rattle, Valery Gergiev, Sir Mark Elder, Sir Andrew Davis and Sir Roger Norrington.

As guest conductor he has worked with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields Chorus, Sydney Chamber Choir, the BBC Singers, Cantillation, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Dartington International Summer School, the Flemish Federation of Young Choirs, and Europa Cantat.

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GRIEG'S CONCERTO – A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

– PIERS LANE

I was comparing notes with the great Australian pianist Ronald Farren-Price on his birthday a few weeks ago and wasn't unduly surprised when it emerged that it was Grieg's Piano Concerto that fired his ambitions to become a concert pianist. It was much the same for me! When I was nine, I started to dig for treasure in my parents' music cupboards, unearthed my mother's well-worn copy and proceeded to read it through at the piano. I'm sure it sounded nothing like the real thing, but nonetheless, it worked its magic and made me feel like a prince, attempting its thrilling octave plunges and its yearning melodies garlanded with passionate arpeggios. The cadenza was a fairytale in itself, roaming over the entire keyboard and the whole dynamic range.

'The Grieg' has everything a piano concerto should have: it's big and bold and beautiful, packed with juicy tunes and catchy rhythms, it's showy but tasteful, the structure immediately clear to the listener and the balance between piano and orchestra ideally proportioned. Last week, I premiered Carl Vine's new Piano Concerto in Sydney and next week shall do it again in Hobart. He confessed to me a few months ago that 'the Grieg' was one of its prime inspirations. It seems eminently wise for a composer to set out to write a piece emulating the qualities of a concerto which has more-or-less eclipsed all others in popularity with both pianists

and the public.

My first performance of 'the Grieg' took place at short notice. I was asked to replace an indisposed pianist at the Royal Festival Hall in London in the early 80s. When you are young and ambitious, and perhaps a tad foolish, you agree to every opportunity that presents itself. I had just over a week to really learn the score. I had a long weekend's holiday booked with friends at a delightful place in Devon – the Nobody Inn in Doddiscombsleigh, a quaint old hotel that specialised in roast duck and good whiskey – and the odd medieval low doorway that brought one up short, if one were tall and distracted! I didn't want to let down my friends, but needed desperately to work on the concerto – so contacted the tiny local village school and the headmistress kindly agreed that I could practise as much as I wished on their little upright piano. The isolation was perfect for concentration. A much older, more experienced Aussie pianist friend, Bernice Lehmann, gave me some sound advice a couple of days before the performance: to set myself up right, at the beginning of the piece, by pausing to listen to the first chord singing out into the hall. I duly did my first Grieg and adored it!

Since then, I've played it on and off throughout my career and my initial love of it has been enriched by a variety of experiences. One of the most important was the chance to visit Grieg's home –

Troldhaugen – just 20 minutes' drive from the centre of Bergen in his native Norway. I was there to perform in the Bergen Festival.

It was an intriguing assignment. I was to give three performances with Martha Clarke's Dance Company from New York. She had choreographed five short stories by Chekhov to piano music by Scriabin. I was dressed in 19th-century tails, playing a grand on the left of the stage. I was also part of the action – at one point, a prostitute had to sidle onto my piano stool and slyly remove money from my pockets; at the end of the show, I slowly strolled offstage as snow fell from a bleak sky. I had never previously played for dancers and was worried I'd have to play strictly in time at prescribed tempi, but no, it was actually like chamber music, with a wonderful awareness and interaction between dancers and pianist. The whole thing was a great joy, spice added by the attendance of Norway's Queen Sonja at the final performance. She attended the post-concert party and proved disarmingly amenable and charming. We chatted about Percy Grainger and she also asked if I had met the curator of Grieg's house and museum. When she realised I hadn't, she excused herself and went off to locate him for an introduction. I couldn't believe her generosity.

That led to my being invited to attend a piano recital in Grieg's living room, on his own 1892 Steinway, which is maintained in extraordinary condition. The walls of the room are lined with Grieg's own collection of paintings and photographs, particularly of his opera singer wife, Nina. The home and grounds are gracious and beautiful, all in cream and green and high up on a promontory. Grieg's studio in the back garden overlooks Lake Nordaas and is kept in authentic order, with his composing upright on one wall, his writing desk by the window with its breathtaking views, and his writing implements and chairs dotted about. His presence is almost palpable. Bergen is a bustling port. It's a treat to wander down to the harbour at lunchtime and sample freshly caught fish and breathe the salt air. I remember too, on that first visit, sitting in on a Bergen Philharmonic rehearsal with Australia's Simone Young

conducting her first *Turangalila-symphonie* by Messiaen. Since then, I've returned on several occasions, performing in the Festival and recording Norwegian romantic piano concertos with the Philharmonic and Andrew Litton.

Spending time in Grieg's own country, and in his own home, inevitably fuels one's love of the concerto. You feel you know a little more of his world. And the fact that Percy Grainger was Grieg's favourite exponent of the piece, that he entrusted Percy with an edition for publication, undoubtedly encourages 'down-under' pianists to explore their affinities with polar opposites in Scandinavian parts. There's a surprising synergy – a similar feeling of freshness and expansiveness and room to breathe – a sense of mystery and potential in the air...

GUEST MUSICIANS FOR THIS PROGRAM

- Rebecca Adler *violin*
- Jo Beaumont *violin*
- Glenn Christensen *violin*
- Stephanie Dean *violin*
- Ingrid Homburg *violin*
- Jenny Khafagi *violin*
- Susannah Ng *violin*
- William Clark *viola*
- Ceridwen Davies *viola*
- Sophie Kesoglidis *viola*
- Catherine Turnbull *viola*
- Josephine Vains *cello*
- Zoe Wallace *cello*
- Esther Wright *double bass*
- Ann Blackburn *oboe*
- Chloe Turner *contrabassoon*
- Jenna Breen *horn*
- Julia Brooke *horn*
- Matthew Van Emmerik *tenor tuba*
- Neil Curry *percussion*
- Laura Holian *percussion*
- Rebecca Lloyd-Jones *percussion*
- Evan Pritchard *percussion*
- Matthias Schack-Arnott *percussion*
- Greg Sully *percussion*
- Louisa Breen *piano*
- Leigh Harrold *celste*
- Calvin Bowman *organ*
- Stuart Byrne *tenor saxophone*
- Lachlan Davidson *alto saxophone*
- Tom Martin *soprano saxophone*
- Jason Xanthoudakis *baritone saxophone*

MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CHORUS

Sopranos

- Philippa Allen
- Sheila Baker
- Andrea Christie
- Thea Christie
- Veryan Croggon
- Samantha Davies
- Catherine Folley
- Rashika Gomez
- Camilla Gorman
- Alexandra Hadji
- Madelaine Howard
- Penny Huggett
- Jasmine Hulme
- Teresa Ingrassi
- Gwen Kennelly
- Melika Mehdizadeh Tehrani
- Lynne Muir
- Caitlin Noble
- Elizabeth O'Shea
- Alexandra Patrikios
- Jodie Paxton
- Anne Payne
- Marita Petherbridge
- Susannah Polya
- Tanja Redl

Helena Ring

- Jo Robin
- Sue Robinson
- Ruth Shand
- Katherine Tomkins
- Justine Underwood

Altos

- Cecilia Björkegren
- Kate Bramley
- Jane Brodie
- Alexandra Chubaty
- Elin-Maria Evangelista
- Jill Giese
- Ros Harbison
- Sue Hawley
- Kristine Hensel
- Andrea Higgins
- Katherine Kibbey
- Helen MacLean
- Christina McCowan
- Siobhan Ormandy
- Leah Phillips
- Alison Ralph
- Lauren Simpkins
- Helen Staindl
- Jenny Stengards

Libby Timcke

- Norma Tovey
- Jenny Vallins
- Emma Warburton

Tenors

- James Allen
- Steve Burnett
- John Cleghorn
- Geoffrey Collins
- James Dipnall
- Marcel Favilla
- Peter Finnigan
- Trevor Finlayson
- Lyndon Horsburgh
- Dominic Mckenna
- Colin MacDonald
- James Macnae
- Michael Mobach
- Andrew Pogson
- Adam Purton
- Malcolm Sinclair
- Marcus Travaglia
- James Walcott

Basses

- Maurice Amor
- Richard Barber
- David Brown
- Barry Clarke
- Richard Corboy
- Phil Elphinstone
- Gerard Evans
- Matthew Gulino
- Andrew Ham
- Andrew Hibbard
- John Lester
- Edward Ounapu
- Douglas Proctor
- Jonathan Sanders
- Matthew Toulmin
- Ian Vitcheff
- Foon Wong
- Allan Yap

Repetiteur

- Tom Griffiths

Sylvia Hosking has been a member of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra since 1999 and currently holds the position of Assistant Principal Double Bass. Growing up in Melbourne, Sylvia studied at the Victorian College of the Arts under Steve Reeves, later moving to the Royal Conservatory of the Hague under Quirijn van Regteren-Altena, and finally gained her Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the Juilliard School in New York. Since her return to Melbourne she has been involved in much chamber music-making around the city. She has performed on a number of occasions as Guest Principal Double Bass with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Australian Chamber Soloists and Australia Pro Arte. She regularly appears in the MSO Chamber Series and has given solo recitals around Melbourne. She now teaches privately, at the VCA, and at Melbourne and Monash universities.

My earliest musical memory is

My mother singing harmonies to The Beatles, and really wanting to be able to do that.

What is your favourite place in the world to "just be"?

Bushranger's Bay

What is your favourite Melbourne Symphony Orchestra memory?

Beethoven Symphony No.9 with Douglas Boyd and community choirs, during the 2011 Beethoven Festival.

What's your "top pick" for city dining, or for a post concert drink or dessert?

Cabinet in Rainbow Alley

The music that changed my life is....

Michael Jackson's album *Thriller*



MEET YOUR MSO MUSICIAN

SYLVIA HOSKING

Friday 14 September at 8pm
Saturday 15 September at 2pm
Monday 17 September at 6.30pm

Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall
.....

Andrew Litton conductor
Stephen Hough piano
.....

Glinka
Ruslan and Ludmilla: Overture

Tchaikovsky
Piano Concerto No.2

INTERVAL

Prokofiev
Symphony No.7
.....

This concert has a duration of approximately two hours, including one interval of 20 minutes.

Saturday afternoon's performance will be recorded for later broadcast around Australia on ABC Classic FM (on analogue and digital radio), and for streaming on its website.

Please turn off your mobile phone and all other electronic devices before the performance commences.

STEPHEN HOUGH PLAYS TCHAIKOVSKY



BEYOND THE STAGE

Learn more about the music in these free events taking place in the Hamer Hall Stalls Foyer.

RENAISSANCE MAN

Saturday 15 September at 1pm
Stalls Foyer, Hamer Hall

Stephen Hough is not only one of the world's most accomplished concert pianists – he is soloist in this afternoon's performance – but is also a prolific composer, writer and tweeter with extensive interests encompassing theology, art, food, and hats! This 20-minute conversation with Huw Humphreys will reveal more about this engaging musician, along with his thoughts on Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No.2.

MEET THE MAESTRO

Friday 14 September at 7pm
Monday 17 September, after 8.30pm (post-concert event)
Stalls Foyer, Hamer Hall

Andrew Litton combines a wealth of international experience with an infectious enthusiasm, on and off the podium. In this 20-minute talk you'll hear this dynamic American conductor explore the works of Glinka, Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev that make up this evening's program.



ANDREW LITTON conductor

Andrew Litton is Music Director of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Artistic Director of the Minnesota Orchestra's Sommerfest, Conductor Laureate of the Bournemouth Symphony, and Music Director Emeritus of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. This month he assumes the position of Artistic Advisor of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra.

He maintains a busy guest conducting schedule, regularly directing and recording with the world's greatest orchestras. He has also conducted at the Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, English National Opera and Deutsche Oper Berlin, among others, and in 2010 he made his Opera Australia debut with *Der Rosenkavalier*.

Highlights in recent seasons include appearances with the Royal Philharmonic at the 2010 and 2011 BBC Proms, and a Kennedy Center Gala Concert with Lang Lang and the National Symphony Orchestra.

His catalogue of more than 100 recordings includes a Grammy-winning *Belshazzar's Feast* with the Bournemouth Symphony and Bryn Terfel, a Grammy-nominated *Sweeney Todd* with the New York Philharmonic and Patti LuPone, and many Gershwin recordings as conductor and pianist. His complete Rachmaninov concerto cycle, recorded live with Stephen Hough and the Dallas Symphony, received widespread critical acclaim.

Andrew Litton began piano lessons aged five and resolved to become a conductor a few years later after attending a Leonard Bernstein New York Philharmonic Young People's Concert. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in piano and conducting from Juilliard. The youngest-ever winner of the BBC International Conductors Competition, he served as Assistant Conductor at La Scala, Milan and the National Symphony Orchestra (Washington DC) under Mstislav Rostropovich.

His many honours include Norway's Order of Merit and the Elgar Medal.



STEPHEN HOUGH piano

Widely regarded as one of the most important pianists of his generation, Stephen Hough has appeared with most of the leading European and American orchestras and plays recitals regularly in the major concert series and halls around the world. He has made over 20 concerto appearances at the BBC Proms, and recent highlights include a worldwide televised performance under Simon Rattle and the Berlin Philharmonic, and a season as Artist-in-Residence at Wigmore Hall.

Hough's own cello concerto was premiered by Steven Isserlis and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and he gave the premiere of his Sonata for Piano (*broken branches*) at Wigmore Hall in 2011. The symphonic version of his *Missa Mirabilis*, previously performed at Westminster Cathedral, was premiered by the Indianapolis Symphony in April 2012.

His discography, comprising over 50 CDs, has earned numerous awards including the *Gramophone* Gold Disc Award in 2008, which named his complete Saint-Saëns Piano Concertos as the best recording of the past 30 years. Recent releases include the complete Waltzes of Chopin and the Liszt and Grieg Concertos.

Named by *The Economist* in 2009 as one of 20 living polymaths, Stephen Hough is also an avid writer who has contributed to *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*, where he has a popular cultural blog.

He is a visiting professor at London's Royal Academy of Music and holds the International Chair of Piano Studies at his alma mater, the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. He is a recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society Instrumentalist Award and was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2001.

MIKHAIL GLINKA (1804–1857)

Ruslan and Ludmila: Overture



Glinka's music was, to borrow a phrase from Tchaikovsky, the 'acorn from which the oak of Russian music grew'. Born into a minor noble family, Glinka was able to cultivate his musical interests from a young age, at school in St Petersburg and conducting a 'serf orchestra' on an estate neighbouring his parents'. By 1820 he was back in St Petersburg, ostensibly working in the civil service but in fact devoting himself to composition,

and attending opera. The visit of an Italian company in 1828 confirmed his love of Rossini, and he travelled to Italy two years later where he got to know Donizetti and Bellini and their works. Before returning to Russia in 1834, he spent time in Berlin, studying the principles of counterpoint. Having absorbed Italian lyricism and German rigour, Glinka returned to his homeland and set about writing music based on Russian themes.

Ruslan and Ludmila is his second completed opera, and is based on a fairy tale given literary currency by Alexander Pushkin. (Glinka and Pushkin had discussed a collaboration on the work, but the poet was fatally wounded in a duel before work began.)

Ludmila is the daughter of Svetozar, the Grand Prince of Kiev. She is betrothed to Ruslan, but abducted from her father's palace by the evil sorcerer Chernomor. Ignoring the betrothal, Svetozar offers his daughter and half his kingdom to whoever brings Ludmila back. Ruslan and his two rivals, Farlaf and Ratmir, set off on the quest, encountering wizards, giants and other magical

beings. Ruslan, having won Chernomor's own sword from the sorcerer's giant brother, cuts off Chernomor's beard (rendering him powerless) only to discover that Ludmila, who has been cast into a magic sleep, has been abducted again, this time by Farlaf, who takes her to the hall of her father in Kiev. The good sorcerer Finn gives Ruslan a ring which will awaken Ludmila. He returns to Svetozar's palace, removes the spell and marries Ludmila, to the joy of the people of Kiev.

Like many an opera composer, Glinka left writing the overture to *Ruslan and Ludmila* until last, but drew on themes from the body of the work. The overture begins with music derived from the general rejoicing at the end of the opera, which is contrasted with a melody associated with Ruslan's love for Ludmila.

Gordon Kerry
Symphony Australia © 2004

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra first performed the Overture from Ruslan and Ludmila in August 1945 under the baton of Bernard Heinze, and most recently at the launch of the 2012 season, at Flinders Street Station, with Benjamin Northey.

ARTPLAY PART OF THE CITY'S CULTURE

ArtPlay is a civic studio where families and children can be creative and express themselves in an open and supportive environment.

At ArtPlay, children up to the age of 13 and their families are encouraged to learn the language of art together. From here, they can move on to galleries, performances and Melbourne's other art offerings with confidence and curiosity. Through workshops with professional artists, ArtPlay aims to improve educational and arts opportunities for children.

The MSO Education and Community Outreach program has been associated with ArtPlay since its inception in 2003. The MSO ArtPlay Ensemble involves creating music as well as performing, with each project leading to the composition and performance of new music, inspired by repertoire from the MSO's current concert season.

ArtPlay is an initiative of the City of Melbourne, located at Birrarung Marr behind Federation Square. For more information on MSO Artplay Ensemble please contact MSO Education on 9626 1198 or visit mso.com.au



PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

(1840–1893)

Piano Concerto No.2 in G,
Op.44

- I *Allegro brillante*
- II *Andante non troppo*
- III *Allegro con fuoco*

Stephen Hough piano



TOP: SERGEI TANEYEV, SOLOIST IN THE
WORK'S FIRST RUSSIAN PERFORMANCE

BOTTOM: NIKOLAI RUBINSTEIN, TO WHOM
THIS CONCERTO IS DEDICATED

After spending the summer travelling between Moscow, St Petersburg and the rural estates of friends and relatives, Tchaikovsky arrived back at his sister's place at Kamenka in the Ukraine on 11 October 1879. Here he had few obligatory musical occupations, and to relieve the boredom he began work on the Second Piano Concerto.

Tchaikovsky decided to dedicate the new work to Nikolai Rubinstein, despite the latter's initial criticism of the First Piano Concerto in 1874. For insurance however, Tchaikovsky sent the new score to Rubinstein for his comment, suggesting that he could change anything in the piano part, but to please not touch the essence of the piece. Sergei Taneyev, studying with Rubinstein, reported back: 'Absolutely nothing to be changed.'

Rubinstein did not give the first performance, which took place in New York on 12 November 1881. The English pianist Madeline Schiller appeared under the baton of Theodore Thomas. Taneyev gave the first Russian performance in 1882. By then Rubinstein had died.

The work begins with a robust, though four-square, theme. Biographer David Brown regards the melodic material as second-rate, a symptom of the work arising from forced activity rather than any deeper impulse; but he also sees the movement's real strengths in the very stark delineation of sections, the forthright harmony, and the segregation of the solo instrument from the main body of sound. 'Drama,' he says, 'springs less from direct and sometimes complex interaction of soloist and orchestra... than from a grandly spaced alternation of robust orchestral ritornello, grandiloquent cadenza, and even some contrasting passages of almost chamber-like intimacy.' Indeed this stark juxtaposition of ideas accounts for much of the movement's structural novelty.

However, this first movement accounts for some of the early criticisms of the piece. Tchaikovsky was not amused when Taneyev, after performing the work, said the first and second movements were too long. 'Those people to whom critical examination was entrusted,' said Tchaikovsky, rather tartly, 'did not point to this deficiency at the time.'

In the end it was the length of the work which prompted varying versions, though in this concert you hear the original. The most extensive revisions were those later proposed by Tchaikovsky's pupil, Siloti, to whom Tchaikovsky wrote in January 1889:

I'm extremely grateful to you for your concern and interest...but emphatically I can't agree with your cuts and especially with your re-ordering of the first movement. The version of the Second Concerto I want is the one I made Sapelnikov play [under Tchaikovsky's own direction, November 1888]...My hair stood on end at your idea of transferring the cadenza to the end.

Siloti also made substantial changes to the second movement, and these went even deeper to the heart of this music. His truncated version downplays the importance of the violin and cello soloists which is the distinguishing, indeed original, feature of the movement. Siloti's reassignment of violin and cello solos at the beginning of the movement altered the complexion of the music. There is melodic inspiration of a high order in Tchaikovsky's original, underlined when the cello soloist joins solo violin in repeating the opening melody. As Brown says, 'Tchaikovsky's employment here of violin and cello soli...was patently determined by their ability to handle such a long-spun thread of lyrical melody superlatively well.' Arguably the middle section of the movement, with its mounting symphonic-sounding sequences, is formulaic, possessing a false excitement, but the eventual

return of the main melody in duet between violin and cello against the piano's faster accompaniment restores the authentic Tchaikovsky, the master of balletic suggestion.

The final movement sounds relatively uncomplicated. Certainly this movement underwent none of the revision undergone by the other two movements, proof of the expertise with which Tchaikovsky could structure a movement made of discrete sections.

At first the movement appears to be shaping up as a rondo. There is the first theme in the tonic and then the second in the relative minor. But then, as the tonic is regained, there is a new, *third* theme, and the emphasis on the tonic at this early point reverses our expectation of tonal progress. It also tends to rule out thematic development. But Tchaikovsky makes a short quasi-developmental extension of his third theme, 'enhancing a little the expressive world of the movement, before

passing to the recapitulation,' says Brown. The recapitulation follows the thematic course of the exposition, but now with a series of changing keys, reserving the greatest tonal flux until the end of the movement.

The finale is by no means as mechanical as it may appear at first hearing. It is typical of the beauties hidden in this, one of Tchaikovsky's less-frequently played pieces. The work may have its flaws, but Tchaikovsky, often derided as a popular melodist, was attempting new structural feats.

Tchaikovsky believed in the integrity of this piece, and his faith in it can be seen in the fact that, even three months before his death, he was still resisting Siloti's pressure to cut.

Gordon Kalton Williams
Symphony Australia © 1998

The Melbourne Symphony was the first of the former ABC orchestras to perform this work, on 18 January 1941, with conductor Joseph Post and soloist Henri Penn. The Orchestra most recently performed it on 29 June 1991, with conductor Hiroyuki Iwaki and pianist Ian Munro.

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THREE WAYS INTO TCHAIKOVSKY'S SECOND

On his CD set of the Tchaikovsky concertos with Osmo Vänskä and the Minnesota Orchestra (Hyperion CDA67711/2), Stephen Hough recorded Tchaikovsky's original version of the Piano Concerto No.2. (It is this version he will play this evening.) In supplementary tracks, he offers two alternative versions of the second movement – the cut version by Alexander Siloti, and Hough's own arrangement. Here he explains his reasons:

At early performances of this concerto, criticisms were raised about two issues: its length, and the lack of prominence of the solo piano part in the second movement. It seems from Tchaikovsky's letters that he acknowledged these problems in the piece, and he suggested some cuts himself as well as handing over the score to his friend and pupil Alexander Siloti for further amendments.

Tchaikovsky appears to have implemented three cuts when conducting later performances: one in the first movement and two in the second movement. Siloti incorporated the first and third of these cuts in his version, but further slashed the second



TCHAIKOVSKY (RIGHT) WITH ALEXANDER SILOTI IN 1888

movement to bits, changing a serious, deeply expressive movement into a mere lightweight intermezzo. Tchaikovsky was horrified when he saw what Siloti had done, and absolutely refused to accept his changes. There are at least three letters in which he makes this clear in the strongest terms, yet this version was not only published after the composer's death, but became the only version heard for 50 years or more. Although I would never dream of playing it in the context of a performance of the piece, I thought it would be interesting to include it on a recording as a historical document.

When I first played this piece in concert – in the original version – I was struck by a problem in the second movement: the music is so glorious, and I couldn't understand why it just didn't seem to 'work' as a structure. I didn't think that it needed cutting like early critics suggested, but I did feel that the solo instruments were out of balance. It was wonderful to hear the solo violin and cello declaim the theme at the start of the movement, especially after the first movement's extraordinary, super-virtuosic, turbo-charged pianism; it was a perfectly judged change of character – first solo violin, then solo cello with violin accompaniment, and finally the

piano. Then follows the dramatic 'B' section which Siloti cut – full of turbulence, with brilliant cadenzas for solo violin and cello. Finally, when things have calmed down, the three solo instruments play the opening thematic material, united as an equal trio for the first time in the piece.

So far, so good. But then Tchaikovsky suggests a cut – at the point when the piano stops and the solo violin and cello continue and develop up to a passionate climax. It is one of the most glorious moments in the whole work (even Siloti kept this passage), but there is a problem with it, as Tchaikovsky obviously realised if he suggested removing it. The problem is not its length, but that it begins as an exact repeat of the opening section, a jarring reprise coming after the three instruments have already been playing together with equal prominence. It's as if the pianist is suddenly asked to leave the room whilst the party goes on for everyone else. I realised that if the music here is played by the piano instead, leading naturally into the original piano cadenza, it would give a symmetry to the whole movement, lending a psychological cohesion, and eliminating any need to remove any music.

© Stephen Hough

SERGEI PROKOFIEV

(1891–1953)

Symphony No.7 in C sharp minor, Op.131

- I *Moderato*
- II *Allegretto*
- III *Andante espressivo*
- III *Vivace*



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 Rebecca Lloyd-Jones *percussion*
 Louisa Breen *piano*

Sergei Prokofiev's Seventh Symphony was one of his last works. A number of compositions from his final years have had an uneasy history. Some scholars have asserted that these late works are weak, that they portray a composer – by then frail from illness and increasingly impoverished – who possessed little of his former skills. Dorothea Redepenning writes in *New Grove*: 'The late instrumental works are curiously colourless, and conspicuous for an almost excessive tendency to simplicity; there is nothing here of the lively nonconformity of the young Prokofiev.' About his final symphony, the composer similarly indicated reservations when, during a rehearsal, he asked his companions 'but isn't the music rather too simple?'

Yet those with a negative opinion of the Seventh Symphony often miss many of its nuances, and almost certainly assess the work separately from the circumstances of its composition. Chief among the factors that contributed to the composer's difficult final years was a famous resolution on Soviet music in 1948 which attacked Russia's most gifted composers, of whom Prokofiev was a leading member. Accused of 'formalism' – an ill-defined notion that, in its most simplistic reading, related to the use of dissonance, but which could be also levelled as an attack on socialist ideology – his powerful Sixth Symphony was denounced, and his entire output effectively banned from performance. Furthermore, the arrest and incarceration of his foreign-born wife, the deaths of fellow composer and friend, Nikolay Myaskovsky, and film director, Sergei Eisenstein, the subsequent loss of income from performances and prizes, and the rapid erosion of his health, combined to bring about his own death within five years.

In the case of the Seventh Symphony, some of the simplicity for which he has been criticised may stem from its origins as a work intended for the Children's Radio Division. While some have suggested that writing for a youthful audience may have been an attempt at skirting official censorship, the exact circumstances of its composition are not known.

The initial mood of the symphony reveals a stark, and mature, reality, with the plaintive writing at times pared back to just two lines. The wintry tone is soon broken by a theme of extraordinary warmth. A curiously tinkling motif follows in flute and glockenspiel, recalling the magical soundscapes so common to Russian music since the time of Glinka. The instrumentation also draws to mind a ticking clock, an effect that Shostakovich was to use in his final symphony. Perhaps advisedly, Prokofiev proceeds with a typically 'classical' development of the material, marking one of the few instances where he adheres to the archaic 'sonata form'. The themes are again presented, before the movement ends quietly with an unexpected return to the colder tonality of the opening.

The bright and capricious *Allegretto* movement immediately brings to mind the composer's earlier forays into ironical waltzes. As the movement progresses, however, focus is drawn increasingly to the recurrence of fateful pounding rhythms and seemingly portentous moments of subdued orchestration, such as in the theme of the repeated trio section, scored for muted strings.

The slow movement revisits a melody that Prokofiev had composed for an intended – but never produced – theatrical adaptation of Pushkin's *Yevgeny Onegin* in 1936.

The final movement seems most easily identifiable with the audience originally designated for the work, as it noisily bursts forth in a sprightly gallop. A yearning subsidiary theme leads to a playful march, recalling the humour of *Peter and the Wolf*. The momentum is ultimately broken by a series of heaving chords, leading to the unexpected re-emergence of the broad-winged theme from the first movement. The tinkling bell motif follows, but the alternation between major and minor tonalities creates an impression of bittersweet resignation.

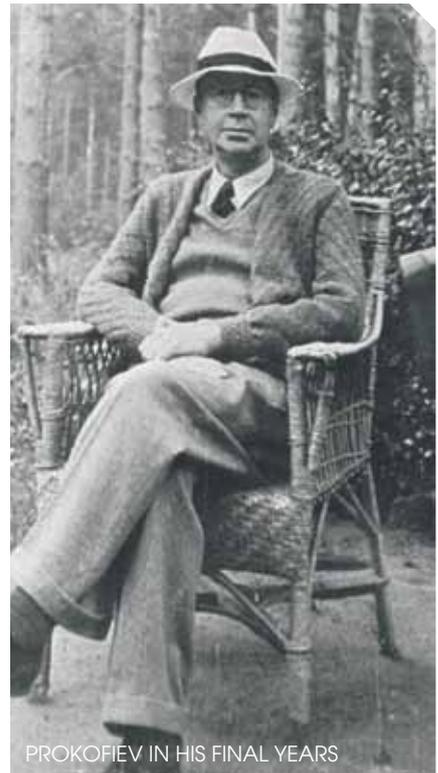
On this irresolute point, the symphony was originally intended to close (and that is the ending you will hear tonight). However, Prokofiev was persuaded to change it by writing a few further bars, returning with great optimism to the gallop. For some, a sadly forlorn conclusion might potentially trouble an audience, as the symphony's first conductor, Samuil Samosud, may have pointed out.

At the same time, it is difficult to ignore the composer's dire financial situation, and the knowledge that such a change would gain his eligibility for a Stalin Prize First Class, worth some 100,000 rubles. Ultimately, the composer decided not to step entirely away from his earlier plan, and the published score states that performance of either ending is valid.

Given the many unanswered questions that still surround Prokofiev – such as how much he truly understood of the events of 1917 when he decided to leave Russia, and why he chose to return in the 1930s, when so many liberties were being curtailed – it is perhaps fitting that the close of his final symphony is similarly enigmatic.

Abridged from an annotation by Scott Davie © 2009

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra first performed Prokofiev's Seventh Symphony in May 1957, conducted by Enrique Jordá; Markus Stenz conducted the most recent performance by the Orchestra, in June 2002.



PROKOFIEV IN HIS FINAL YEARS



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Michael Pisani has been a member of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra since 2004, and is now 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 in Orchestra Victoria the following year. On occasion, Michael also plays Principal Oboe with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and has been guest principal with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia and Hong Kong Philharmonic. He has appeared as 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.

If you weren't a musician what would you be?
I'd like to be a professional yachtsman.

What is your first performance memory?
Playing the recorder at my school assembly

Vanilla or chocolate?
Definitely chocolate.

What is your favourite sporting team?
Essendon Bombers, but only half heartedly, like when they are doing well, so it's been a while, but looking a little better lately.

What's your favourite place in the world to "just be"?
Anywhere with my family

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artists, and the works by Tchaikovsky and Dvořák featured in the program.



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LOUIS LANGRÉE conductor

French conductor Louis Langrée is Music Director of New York's Mostly Mozart Festival – a role he has held since 2002 – and Chief Conductor of the Camerata Salzburg. From the 2013/14 season he will also assume the position of Music Director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

He has conducted such orchestras as the Vienna and London Philharmonic orchestras, Orchestra of the Saint Cecilia Academy Rome, Suisse Romande Orchestra, and period ensembles including the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

His festival appearances have included the BBC Proms, Wiener Festwochen, Salzburg Mozart Week and Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

On the opera stage he has conducted at La Scala, Covent Garden, Bastille Opera, Dresden Staatsoper, Netherlands Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago, and was previously Music Director of Lyon National Opera (1998–2000) and Glyndebourne Touring Opera (1998–2003).

Highlights of the 2012/13 season include debuts with the Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus and NHK Symphony in Tokyo, as well as return visits to the Orchestre de Paris, Budapest Festival Orchestra and Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra. He will also continue his long-term relationships with the Metropolitan Opera (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*) and the Vienna State Opera (*Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro*).

The most recent addition to his award-winning discography is a DVD of *La traviata* recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra at the 2011 Aix-en-Provence Festival, which received a *Diapason d'Or*.

In 2006 he was appointed Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture.



JIAN WANG cello

Jian Wang began playing the cello at the age of four. While a student at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, he featured in the documentary film *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China*. With Stern's support he moved to the United States and in 1985 entered the Yale School of Music, where he studied under Aldo Parisot.

His first professional engagement was in 1986 at Carnegie Hall, and since then he has embarked on a successful career during which he has performed with many of the world's leading orchestras and conductors. He made his BBC Proms debut in 2008 performing three of Bach's solo Cello Suites, and has also appeared at Aldeburgh, Tanglewood, Verbier and Mostly Mozart. He has performed for the President of the People's Republic of China, and at the opening seasons of the China Philharmonic, Shanghai Symphony and the Macau Symphony Orchestra.

During the 2012/13 season he will appear as concerto soloist with, among others, the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Thomas Dausgaard, Radio France Philharmonic Orchestra with Myung-Whun Chung, MDR Symphony Orchestra Leipzig with Kristjan Järvi, and the Sydney Symphony with Vladimir Ashkenazy.

Jian Wang's recordings include the Brahms Double Concerto with Gil Shaham, Claudio Abbado and the Berlin Philharmonic; Haydn Concertos with the Gulbenkian Orchestra under Muhai Tang; Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* with Gil Shaham, Paul Meyer and Myung-Whun Chung; Bach's Cello Suites; the CD *Reverie* with guitarist Göran Söllscher; a Baroque album with the Camerata Salzburg and, most recently, the Elgar Concerto with the Sydney Symphony and Ashkenazy.

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

(1841–1904)

Overture: *Carnival*, Op.92



DVOŘÁK WITH HIS PIGEONS

Dvořák's career is an inspiring reminder that greatness can grow from unlikely beginnings. An inn-keeper's son from the provinces of Bohemia, Dvořák first followed his father's wish that he should train for the butcher's trade. But music won out, and he went to Prague, to become an orchestral string player and composer. His first great international success introduced the national flavour he would contribute to the world's music. *The Moravian Duets* for voices attracted the attention of Brahms, who recommended Dvořák to his own publisher. This was good business: the *Slavonic Dances*, in their versions first for piano duet, then for orchestra, took Europe by storm.

Writing now for an international audience, Dvořák had major successes which have kept their place in the repertoire ever since. His Seventh and Eighth Symphonies and *Symphonic Variations* were especially associated with England, where he achieved immense popularity, even with his *Stabat Mater* and *Requiem*, works of a devout Catholic which conquered Protestant-dominated England. Invited to teach in the USA, he composed there his *New World Symphony*, full of a glowing nostalgia for his homeland, and on his return the *Cello Concerto* which is, by common consent, the greatest of all. Dvořák confirmed his standing, along with Smetana, as the major Czech composer of the 19th century.

Dvořák's love of the music of his great predecessors Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms led him to recreate classical forms with a fresh content. Vigorous liveliness, fresh colours, and folk inspiration never let us forget that he called himself a 'humble Czech musician'.

David Garrett © 2002

Written in 1892, the *Carnival Overture* is one of three in a series originally known as *Nature*, *Life* and *Love* – the more customary titles *In Nature's Realm*, *Carnival* and *Othello* came later. This triptych shows Dvořák's essential Romanticism in his adherence to the cult of Nature and his delight in celebrating his ethnic musical roots. Where the first piece celebrates the emotions of the individual contemplating nature, the landscape of the *Carnival* overture is quite definitely populated. The opening suggests a rural carnival in full swing and the piece as a whole is dominated by boisterous dance rhythms. There are, however, reflective moments. Significantly, after the first statement of the dance music, Dvořák inserts one such passage in which the clarinet recalls the theme associated with nature from *In Nature's Realm*. It is as if the quiet contemplation of nature makes possible the energy and joy of the carnival spirit.

Adapted from a note by
Gordon Kerry

Symphony Australia © 2001

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra first performed the Carnival Overture on 8 September 1941 with conductor Bernard Heinze, and most recently on 1 February 2006 under Pietari Inkinen at a Sidney Myer Free Concert.

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DVOŘÁK

Cello Concerto in B minor,
B.191 Op.104

- I *Allegro*
- II *Adagio ma non troppo*
- III *Allegro moderato*

Jian Wang cello

Brahms was impressed. 'If only I'd known,' he said, 'that one could write a cello concerto like that, I'd have written one long ago!' And he wasn't just being polite. Brahms had recognised Dvořák's talents early on, ensuring that the young composer received the Austrian State Stipendium for five years, and persuading his own publisher, Simrock of Berlin, to publish Dvořák's music.

But Brahms' admiration aside, the composition of what Dvořák scholar John Clapham has called simply 'the greatest of all cello concertos' was no easy matter. In fact, it was his second attempt at the medium – the first, in A major, was composed in 1865 (and rediscovered in 1929), but appears only to have been written out in a cello and piano score. That Dvořák left the work unorchestrated suggests that he was dissatisfied with this first effort. Despite the urgings of his friend, the cellist Hanuš Wihan, Dvořák thought no more about writing such a piece until many years later.

In 1894 Dvořák was living in New York, having accepted the invitation of Jeannette Meyer Thurber to head the National Conservatory of Music that she had founded there in 1885. In March 1894, Dvořák attended a performance by Victor Herbert of his Second Cello Concerto. The Irish-born American composer and cellist is now best remembered for the operettas *Naughty Marietta*, *Babes in Toyland* and *Sweethearts*, but his concerto, modelled on Saint-Saëns' First, made a huge impact on Dvořák, who re-examined the

idea of such a work for Wihan. The concerto was sketched between 8 November 1894 and New Year's Day, and Dvořák completed the full score early in February.

Much to Dvořák's annoyance, the first performance of the concerto was not given by its dedicatee, Wihan. The London Philharmonic Society, who premiered it at the Queen's Hall in March 1896, mistakenly believed Wihan to be unavailable, and engaged Leo Stern. Despite Dvořák's embarrassment, Stern must have delivered the goods, as Dvořák engaged him for the subsequent New York, Prague and Vienna premieres of the work. Wihan did, however, perform the work often, and insisted on making some 'improvements' to Dvořák's score so that the cello part would be more virtuosic. Wihan also insisted on interpolating a cadenza in the third movement, which the composer vehemently opposed. Simrock was on the point of publishing the work with Wihan's amendments, and only a stiff letter from Dvořák persuaded the publisher to leave out the cadenza.

Despite being an 'American' work, the concerto is much more a reflection of Dvořák's nostalgia for his native Bohemia, and perhaps for the composer's father, who died in 1894. As scholar Robert Battey has noted, 'two characteristic Bohemian traits can be found throughout the work, namely pentatonic ['black note'] scales and an aaB phrase pattern, where a melody begins with a repeated phrase followed by a two bar "answer".' The work is full of some of Dvořák's most inspired moments, such as the heroic first theme in the first movement, and the complementary melody for horn which adds immeasurably to its Romantic ambience.

The Bohemian connection became even stronger and more personal when Dvořák, working on the piece in December 1894,

heard that his sister-in-law Josefina (with whom he had been in love during their youth) was seriously, perhaps mortally ill. Dvořák was sketching the slow movement at the time. The outer sections of this movement are calm and serene, but Dvořák expresses his distress in an impassioned gesture that ushers in an emotionally unstable central section in G minor, based on his song *Kěž duch můj sám* (Leave me alone), which was one of Josefina's favourites.

Josefina died in the spring of 1895, and Dvořák, by this time back in Bohemia, made significant alterations to the concluding coda of the third movement, adding some 60 bars of music. The movement begins almost ominously, with contrasting lyrical writing for the soloist. Dvořák's additions to the movement, and his determination not to diffuse its emotional power with a cadenza, allowed him, as Battey notes, to revisit 'not only the first movement's main theme, but also a hidden reference to Josefina's song in the slow movement. Thus, the concerto becomes something of a shrine, or memorial.'

Gordon Kerry
Symphony Australia © 2004

The first performance of this work by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra took place on 3 June 1950. Edmund Kurtz was the soloist with Alceo Galliera, conducting. The Orchestra's most recent performance was on a Powercor Regional Tour in October 2011, with soloist Nicholas Bochner and Paul Fitzsimon conducting.

INTERVAL 20 MINUTES

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

(1840–1893)

Symphony No. 6 in B minor,
Op. 74, *Pathétique*

- I *Adagio – Allegro non troppo*
- II *Allegro con grazia*
- III *Allegro molto vivace*
- IV *Finale (Adagio lamentoso – Andante)*



GUEST MUSICIANS FOR THIS PROGRAM

Rebecca Adler *violin*
 Jo Beaumont *violin*
 Jacqueline Edwards *violin*
 Francesca Hiew *violin*
 Ingrid Homburg *violin*
 Robert John *violin*
 Jenny Khafagi *violin*
 Katherine Lukey *violin*
 Matthew Rigby *violin*
 Kate Sullivan *violin*
 Oksana Thompson *violin*
 Danielle Arcaro *viola*
 Simon Oswell *viola*
 Rachel Atkinson *cello*
 Oliver Scott *cello*
 Rohan Dasika *double bass*
 Ann Blackburn *oboe*
 Jack Schiller
guest associate principal bassoon
 Chloe Turner *contrabassoon*
 Jenna Breen *horn*
 Leah Scholes *percussion*

The original audience for the Sixth Symphony was uncomprehending and ambivalent. Tchaikovsky had expected this, writing to his nephew and the dedicatee, 'Bob' Davidov, that he wouldn't be surprised if the symphony were 'torn to pieces', even though he considered it his best and most sincere work. The critic Hermann Laroche suggested that audiences who 'did not get to the core' of the symphony would 'in the end, come to love it'. As it turned out, it took them only 12 days. In the intervening period its composer had died, and for the second performance, in a memorial concert, it was promoted with the composer's subtitle: *Pathétique* (or *Pateticheskaiia Simfoniia* – 'impassioned symphony' – as he had conceived it in Russian). The symphony was declared a masterpiece.

The myth of the-Pathétique-as-suicide-note (not to mention Tchaikovsky's 'suicide' itself) has been more or less debunked in the past two decades. There are no grounds for doubting that Tchaikovsky died from post-choleric complications; the theory that his old classmates decided in a 'court of honour' that he should commit suicide to avoid disgrace has been undermined; and his social, financial and artistic situation all speak against any other motivation for suicide, even if he continued to be troubled by his homosexuality.

The Sixth Symphony, specifically, seems to have been a source of immense pride, satisfaction and joy to him. And shortly after its premiere he's reported to have said 'I feel I shall live a long time.'

He was wrong. His audience, now in mourning and seeking 'portents', immediately heard the Sixth Symphony in a new way. New significance was given to the appearance in the first movement of an Orthodox burial chant, 'Repose the Soul' – a hymn sung only when someone has died –

and to the otherworldly, dying character of the *adagio* finale.

Even if the symphony is not a suicide note, there is a programmatic and semi-autobiographical underpinning to the symphony that is the source of its unusual form and turbulent emotions. Tchaikovsky admitted the existence of a program but was cagey about the details, perhaps because it reflected his romantic feelings for Davidov. The closest we have is a sketched scenario, devised originally for an abandoned symphony in E flat but appearing to correspond with much of the Sixth Symphony:

Following is essence of plan for a symphony *Life!* First movement – all impulse, confidence, thirst for activity. Must be short (Finale *death* – result of collapse). Second movement love; third disappointment; fourth ends with a dying away (also short).

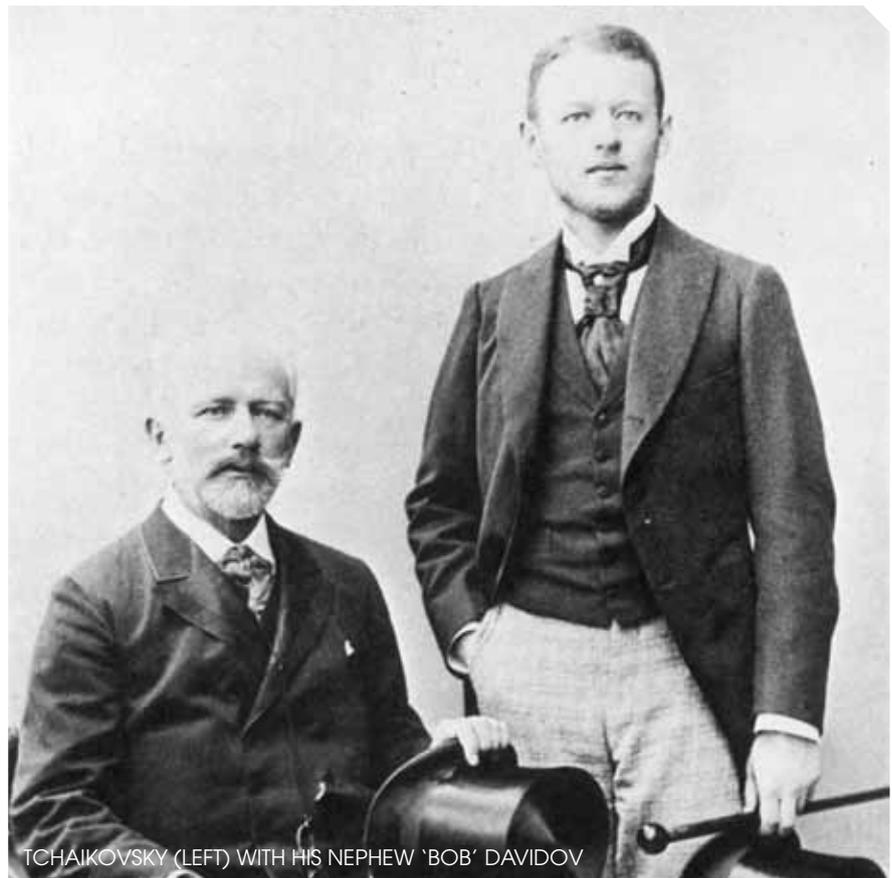
There are aspects of this program and the Sixth Symphony that suggest suffering, but for Tchaikovsky the composition of the symphony was a cathartic experience rather than an expression of current sufferings. He himself wrote: 'Anyone who believes that the creative person is capable of expressing what he feels out of a momentary effect aided by the means of art is mistaken. Melancholy as well as joyous feelings can always be expressive only out of the Retrospective.'

In its art this is Tchaikovsky's most innovative symphony. He dares to conclude with a brooding slow movement and uses boldly dramatic gestures to give the music its emotional impulse. The 'limping' elegance of the second-movement waltz would have been less surprising, to Russians at least – its five-beat metre was a part of a tradition that was embraced by Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky (in his *Pictures at an Exhibition*), and later Rachmaninov (in *The Isle of the Dead*).

In the Sixth Symphony, Tchaikovsky comes to terms with his professed inadequacies in structural matters. His solution in the first movement was to extend the exposition section, so well suited to his melodic gifts, and to compress the development section in which he felt his skills inadequate. The music begins in the depths with the dark colour of the bassoon and yet somehow Tchaikovsky sustains a downward trajectory, or the impression of one, for the whole work.

In the third movement the idea of 'disappointment' is replaced by something more malevolent. In purely musical terms it conflates two musical figures – feverish tarantella triplets and a spiky march – but the juxtapositions and incursions into each other's thematic territory create a disturbing sense of antagonism. The movement's applause-provoking conclusion *could* be triumphant, or it could be the crash of self-delusion.

The finale may not fit the formula established by Tchaikovsky's classical predecessors, but within the emotional journey of the symphony its stark sense of tragedy provides an inevitable conclusion – all the more powerful for the grace and jauntiness of the preceding movements.



TCHAIKOVSKY (LEFT) WITH HIS NEPHEW 'BOB' DAVIDOV

Yvonne Frindle ©2008

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra was the first of the former ABC orchestras to perform this symphony, on 19 September 1939. Bernard Heinze was the conductor. Paul Daniel conducted the Orchestra's most recent performance in October 2009.

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Øystein Baadsvik tuba
Radovan Vlatković horn
.....

Kodály
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Vaughan Williams
Tuba Concerto

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Mozart
Horn Concerto No.2

Elgar
Enigma Variations

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ENIGMA VARIATIONS





CHRISTOPHER SEAMAN conductor

In 2011 Christopher Seaman relinquished his 13-year tenure as Music Director of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the longest in that orchestra's history. He has assumed the post of Conductor Laureate. He previously also held the positions of Music Director of the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra (Florida), Conductor-in-Residence with the Baltimore Symphony, and Artistic Advisor of the San Antonio Symphony.

In addition to his many guest appearances in North America and Europe, he has worked regularly with the leading UK orchestras and served as Principal Conductor of both the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the Northern Sinfonia.

He frequently conducts the major orchestras in Australia and Asia, and as long-standing Course Director of the Symphony Australia Conductor Development program, he devotes several weeks each year to teaching and directing training programs for young conductors.

Committed to encouraging young talent, he has also enjoyed a long association with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

His diverse musical interests are reflected in his range of repertoire and he is particularly noted for his interpretations of early 20th-century English music, Bruckner, Brahms and Sibelius. He has recorded with the Royal Philharmonic and the Philharmonia Orchestra, and his 2012 release with the Rochester Philharmonic, Vaughan Williams' *A London Symphony* and *Serenade to Music*, received critical acclaim.

Christopher Seaman's awards include an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Rochester and an ASCAP (American Association of Composers, Authors and Publishers) programming award in recognition of his artistic contribution to the Rochester Philharmonic.



ØYSTEIN BAADSVIK tuba

Tuba virtuoso Øystein Baadsvik has established an international career as a soloist performing with such orchestras as the Oslo Philharmonic, Suisse Romande Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan and Orchestra Victoria, among others.

He studied under Michael Lind, Harvey Phillips and Arnold Jacobs (former long-standing Principal Tuba, Chicago Symphony Orchestra) and his international career began in 1991 when he was awarded two prizes at the Geneva International Music Competition. He made his Carnegie Hall recital debut in 2006 and performs in some of the world's most prestigious venues. This season's engagements include the Melbourne International Festival of Brass, to which he has returned on a regular basis.

His teaching skills are highly sought after by universities worldwide, and he has been a guest lecturer at more than 40 educational establishments in the United States including The Juilliard School, Indiana University and the Cleveland Institute of Music. He is also in demand as a conductor and has conducted several major Scandinavian orchestras.

He has recorded ten solo albums and works constantly to expand the musical aspects of the tuba, collaborating with jazz and rock musicians in addition to performing solo repertoire for tuba and orchestra. His development of new tuba-playing techniques, which have been used in several recent works for the instrument, earned him a two-year scholarship awarded by the Norwegian state. His discography includes concertos by Vaughan Williams, John Williams and Kalevi Aho (*Gramophone Critics' Choice* 2007).



RADOVAN VLATKOVIĆ horn

Croatian-born Radovan Vlatković studied at the Zagreb Academy of Music and at the Hochschule für Musik Detmold, Germany. He won the Premio Ancona in 1979 and the ARD Competition in Munich in 1983.

From 1982 to 1990 he served as Principal Horn with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, and since establishing a career as a soloist he has appeared with many distinguished orchestras, including the Bavarian and Stuttgart Radio Symphony orchestras, BBC Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony,

Rotterdam Philharmonic, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra, and the Munich, Vienna, English and Scottish Chamber orchestras. He made his Australian debut in 1999 with the Melbourne and Adelaide Symphony orchestras.

He has given first performances of works by Elliott Carter, Sofia Gubaidulina and Heinz Holliger, among others, and in 2008 he performed the premiere of Penderecki's Horn Concerto *Winter Journey* with the Bremen Philharmonic under the direction of the composer.

He has held teaching posts at the Stuttgart Musikhochschule, Salzburg Mozarteum, Queen Sofia School of Music in Madrid and the Zurich Hochschule der Kuenste. He also gives regular masterclasses at the Royal Academy of Music, Juilliard and the Tokyo University of the Arts.

From 2000 to 2003 he was Artistic Director of the September Chamber Music Festival in Maribor, Slovenia, and since 2007 he has been Artist-in-Residence with the Giuseppe Verdi Orchestra, Milan.

Radovan Vlatković has received the German Music Critics' Prize for several of his discs, the most recent of which is the Penderecki Concerto recorded with Sinfonietta Cracovia and the composer conducting.

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ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

(1882–1967)

Variations on a Hungarian
Folksong *The Peacock*

Moderato

Var.1: *Con brio*

Var.2

Var.3: *Più mosso*

Var.4: *Poco calmato*

Var.5: *Appassionato*

Var.6: *Tempo (calmato)*

Var.7: *Vivo*

Var.8: *Più vivo*

Var.9

Var.10: *Molto vivo*

Var.11: *Andante espressivo*

Var.12: *Adagio*

Var.13: *Tempo de Marcia
funèbre*

Var.14: *Andante, poco rubato*

Var.15: *Allegro giocoso*

Var.16: *Maestoso*

Finale: *Vivace*



BARTÓK AND KODÁLY

GUEST MUSICIANS FOR THIS PROGRAM

Rebecca Adler *violin*

Zoe Friesberg *violin*

Edwina George *violin*

Francesca Hiew *violin*

Jenny Khafagi *violin*

Katherine Lukey *violin*

Lachlan O'Donnell *violin*

Oksana Thompson *violin*

Oliver Scott *cello*

Ann Blackburn *oboe*

Jodie Upton *clarinet*

Jack Schiller

guest associate principal bassoon

Chloe Turner *contrabassoon*

Jenna Breen *horn*

Calvin Bowman *organ*

Kodály, along with his friend and colleague Béla Bartók, was a pioneer in collecting, recording and notating the folk music of eastern Europe and beyond. In fact the two first met on a collecting expedition as they both sought new sources of melodic inspiration; in the course of collecting they became more acutely aware of the imminent demise of folk music and resolved to preserve as much as they could. In 1906 Kodály was awarded a PhD for his research in that area. Kodály also brought his considerable intellect to bear on the theory of music education, believing that it was the duty of all schools to expose young children to the 'life-giving stream of good music' and devising a method of teaching in use world-wide. Kodály was no less committed as a composer, using the resources of folk music and Gregorian chant to produce work that is beautiful, well-crafted and integrated. Though he was inevitably eclipsed by Bartók, there was no rancour on either side, and the two remained close friends and colleagues.

In 1927, Kodály had established the publication *Hungarian Musical Essays* to document research in folk music, and a decade later produced his monograph *Hungarian Folk Music*. The same period saw his emergence as a major composer, beginning with the 'Singspiel' *Háry János* in 1926 and continuing through a series of substantial orchestral works inspired by the Hungarian music he so loved. But, like Bartók, Kodály was appalled by the rise of fascism in Europe generally and Hungary in particular, and in 1938 joined his friend in protesting against the state's growing obsession with racial 'purity'. Unlike Bartók, however, Kodály remained in Hungary during the war and after.

The song 'Felszállott a páva' ('Fly, peacock, fly') was traditionally sung to a tune that Kodály believed to be of great antiquity but whose text was bound to be contentious in Europe on the brink of war. Kodály made a choral arrangement of the song, in which the sight of a peacock in flight gives heart to a group of prisoners, and then used the tune as the basis for this work, composed to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam in 1939. The 'Peacock Variations' were, predictably, banned in Hungary for the duration of World War II.

The 25-minute work, consisting of an introduction and finale that bookend 16 short variations, is a tour de force of orchestration, an almost cinematic celebration of the Hungarian people and landscapes; Kodály had studied the music of Debussy and Richard Strauss, among others, and had developed a brilliant orchestral technique. The largely pentatonic tune leads to musical treatments that at times recall the music of Vaughan Williams in Britain, and the orchestral palette encompasses stirring dance rhythms, fanfares, elaborate bird-song for woodwind soloists and passages of pensive introspection, especially in the funeral march of variation 13. Despite the simplicity of the musical material, Kodály's harmony is sometimes uncompromisingly astringent, a reminder that those observing the peacock's flight were not themselves free.

Gordon Kerry © 2012

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra first performed this work on 5 May 1959 under conductor Kurt Woess, and most recently at a Sidney Myer Free Concert on 17 February 1996, with conductor Michael Halász.

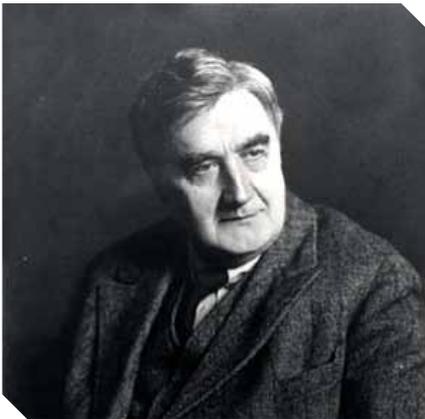
RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

(1872–1958)

Tuba Concerto in F minor

- I *Allegro moderato*
- II *Romanza: Andante sostenuto*
- III *Finale: Rondo alla tedesca*

Øystein Baadsvik tuba



Like Verdi before him, the more Vaughan Williams aged, the more ‘experimental’ he became in his music. The works which the great English composer completed in his 70s and 80s began to explore new horizons of sound, both in terms of their aesthetics – witness the bleak final movement of the Sixth Symphony for instance, and the strange and eerie sound-world of the *Sinfonia Antarctica* – and in terms of their orchestration.

Perhaps with a similar intention, this Tuba Concerto, like the Romance for Harmonica, Strings and Piano which preceded it, was written for an instrument which rarely enjoys the opportunity to shine within an orchestral setting. It was composed in 1954 and first performed in that year by Philip Catelinet and the London Symphony Orchestra as part of that Orchestra’s 50th birthday celebrations. In it, the octogenarian Vaughan Williams was able to explore the surprisingly diverse expressive range of the solo instrument.

While the outer movements of the concerto provide ample opportunity to display comic elements, the characteristically labelled *Romanza* central movement demonstrates the extraordinary lyrical capability of this most underrated of brass

instruments. Vaughan Williams likened the Concerto more to those of his revered Bach than to Mozart’s or Beethoven’s conceptions of the concerto form, and noted: ‘The music is fairly simple and can probably be listened to without much previous explanation.’

Certainly it is a brief concerto in Baroque style, beginning and ending with cadenzas for the soloist and never overstaying its welcome. The opening movement is a spirited *Allegro moderato* in which the soloist displays the deceptive agility of the bass tuba. The *Romanza* is an example of Vaughan Williams at his lyrical best. If the heading is reminiscent of the slow movement of the Fifth Symphony, the main theme itself is typical of those sublime, lilting melodies which had been part of so many of the composer’s works for five decades before. The final movement then begins with an ‘alarm-call’, as if to wake the music from its peaceful slumbers.

© Martin Buzacott

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra has performed this concerto in its entirety on only one previous occasion: on 16 December 1962, with conductor Clive Douglas and soloist Ian King.

INTERVAL 20 MINUTES

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“I am passionate about live performance and identify strongly with my home orchestra – the MSO. I am interested in how they go about their business. I know from listening to orchestras around the world that the MSO is good and I come home from many concerts feeling uplifted. I want the MSO to achieve even greater heights, and by supporting the MSO Leadership Program I am confident that I can make a sound social investment in my passion.”

The **Joy Selby Smith Orchestral Leadership Chair** recognises Joy's inspirational pledge of support for this landmark artist development program, which is being implemented progressively from 2012. This first stage has seen percussion, string, woodwind and brass Section Principals taking part in a structured training program facilitated by Dr Tim Baker, Director of Winners At Work.

“An orchestra's Section Principals are crucial on-stage leaders – they not only need to deliver an amazing performance themselves; they inspire and provide artistic direction, motivating every member of their section to deliver their best. We are delighted that Joy's gift, and her commitment, is enhancing the MSO's abilities in this specialised direction”, said Cameron Mowat, the MSO's Director of Development.



PARTICIPANTS IN THE MSO'S ORCHESTRAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM TAKING A BREAK WITH JOY SELBY SMITH DURING REHEARSAL: L-R STEVE REEVES, PRINCIPAL DOUBLE BASS; JOY SELBY SMITH; BRETT KELLY, PRINCIPAL TROMBONE; MATTHEW TOMKINS, PRINCIPAL SECOND VIOLIN

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

(1756–1791)

Horn Concerto No.2 in E flat
major, K.417

- I *Allegro maestoso*
- II *Andante*
- III *Rondo*

Radovan Vlatković horn



The early months of 1783 were particularly happy ones for Mozart. He had established his credentials as an opera composer with *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (The Abduction from the Seraglio), he had a number of piano students and he very astutely carved a niche for himself as a composer and performer of brilliant piano concertos. These were the mainstay of his career and income from late 1782 to 1786. He had been married the previous year, and as he wrote:

My whole company consists of my little wife who is pregnant, and hers consists of her little husband, who is not pregnant, but fat and flourishing.

The Mozarts' first child, Raimund Leopold, was born in June.

Composers' states of mind don't necessarily have a direct connection with the music they produce. With the Horn Concerto, K.417, however, it is tempting to see Mozart's general contentment reflected in his work. As Maynard Solomon notes, this work, among others, displays 'beauties that are celebrations of sheer joy, expressions of mirth that revel in the pleasures of creation, that deliberately eschew conflict, that are embodiments of grace, decorum and other 'classical' virtues'.

With friends like Mozart, maybe you can't blame Joseph Leutgeb for giving up a full-time career as a horn player and opening a cheese shop. Leutgeb and Mozart knew each other from Salzburg days, when Leutgeb played in the Archbishop's orchestra, and he moved to Vienna around the time that Mozart established himself there.

The composer constantly abused his friend: one day when Leutgeb called in to see how a piece was going, Mozart scattered sheets of the manuscript all over the floor and insisted that the poor horn player put them in order again. Often Leutgeb would find 'messages' scrawled on his music by the composer: 'Go it, Signor Asino' [little ass] – 'Take a little breath' – 'Wretched pig' – 'Thank God, here's the end.' And Mozart's dedication of the Horn Concerto, K.417, notes that he 'has taken pity on Leutgeb, ox, ass and fool, at Vienna, 27 March 1783...'

The work as we know it is generally performed from a published edition made by Johann André in 1802 (perhaps owing to Mozart's habit of throwing manuscripts around, parts of the autograph score are lost). It seems in fact that André himself had an incomplete score to work with; the published edition, for instance, leaves no opportunity for the soloist to improvise a cadenza. Recently, scholars such as John Humphries have attempted to reconstruct more faithfully the original score. The concerto is in the standard three movements: a spacious first movement, an aria-like *Andante* and a hunt-inspired Rondo finale.

Gordon Kerry © 2005

This is the first performance of Mozart's Horn Concerto No.2 by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

EDWARD ELGAR

(1857–1934)

Variations on an Original Theme, Op.36 *Enigma*

- I (C.A.E.) – Caroline Alice Elgar, the composer's wife
- II (H.D.S.-P) – Hew David Steuart-Powell, pianist in Elgar's trio
- III (R.B.T.) – Richard Baxter Townshend, author
- IV (W.M.B.) – William Meath Baker, nicknamed 'the Squire'
- V (C.A.E.) – Caroline Alice Elgar, the composer's wife
- VI (Ysobel) – Isabel Fitton, viola player
- VII (Troyte) – Arthur Troyte Griffith, architect
- VIII (W.N.) – Winifred Norbury
- IX (Nimrod) – August Johannes Jaeger, reader for the publisher Novello & Co
- X (Dorabella) *Intermezzo* – Dora Penny, later Mrs Richard Powell
- XI (G.R.S.) – Dr G.R. Sinclair, organist of Hereford Cathedral
- XII (B.G.N.) – Basil G. Nevinson, cellist in Elgar's trio
- XIII (***) *Romanza* – Lady Mary Lygon, later Trefusis
- XIV (E.D.U.) *Finale* – Elgar himself ('Edu' being his nickname)



In middle-age, Edward Elgar found himself in his native Malvern region, eking out a living as a humble rural music teacher. He took in students, made instrumental arrangements, gave an occasional performance and continually threatened to give away music altogether.

But one evening in October 1898 Elgar began to doodle away at the piano. Chancing upon a brief theme that pleased him, he started imagining his friends confronting the same theme, commenting to his wife, 'This is how so-and-so would have done it.' Or he would try to catch another friend's character in a variation. This harmless bit of fun grew into one of England's greatest orchestral masterpieces, Elgar's *Variations on an Original Theme*.

Where the word 'Theme' should have appeared in the score, however, Elgar wrote 'Enigma'. He stated that the theme was a variation on a well-known tune, which he refused to identify. It's a conundrum which has occupied concertgoers and scholars alike ever since. Elgar himself rejected suggestions of *God Save the King* and *Auld Lang Syne*.

Other suggestions have included *Rule, Britannia!*, an extract from Wagner's *Parsifal*, and even *Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay*. Another suggestion is that it's a simple scale, while Michael Kennedy has proposed that the unheard theme could be Elgar himself, with the famous two-quaver two-crotchet motif on which the entire work is based capturing the natural speech rhythm of the name 'Edward Elgar'. Elgar went to his grave without revealing the truth and no one has come up with the definitive answer.

The second enigma was the identity of the characters depicted within each variation, who were identified at first only by their initials in the score. This enigma has proved much easier to solve.

Variation 1, which simply elaborates the main violin theme with prominent wind playing, depicts Elgar's wife, Caroline Alice. The second variation brings the first hint of actual imitation. Pianist H.D. Steuart-Powell was one of Elgar's chamber music collaborators, who characteristically played a diatonic run over the keyboard as a warm-up. Variation 3 depicts the ham actor R.B. Townshend, whose drastic variation in vocal pitch is mocked here.

The Cotswold squire W. Meath Baker is the subject of Variation 4 while the mixture of seriousness and wit displayed by the poet Matthew Arnold's son Richard is captured in the fifth variation. The next two variations parody the technical inadequacies of Elgar's chamber music acquaintances. Violist Isabel Fitton (Variation 6) had trouble performing music where the strings had to be crossed while Arthur Troyte Griffith (Variation 7) was a pianist whose vigorous style sounded more like drumming! Poor Winifred Norbury is actually represented in Variation 8 by a musical depiction of her country house, 'Sherridge.'

The most famous variation of course is *Nimrod* (No.9). *Nimrod* (the 'mighty hunter before the Lord' of Genesis chapter 10) was Elgar's publisher A.J. Jaeger (German for 'hunter'). Apparently the idea for this particular variation came when Elgar was going through one of his regular slumps. Jaeger took Elgar on a long walk during which he said that whenever Beethoven was troubled by the turbulent life of a creative artist, he simply poured his frustrations into still more beautiful compositions. In memory of that conversation, Elgar made those opening bars of *Nimrod* quote the slow movement from Beethoven's *Pathétique* Sonata.

Variation 10 depicts a young woman called Dora Penny, whose soubriquet 'Dorabella' comes from Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. And then Variation 11 goes beyond the human species, depicting the organist G.R Sinclair's bulldog Dan, falling down the steep bank of the River Wye, paddling upstream, coming to land and then barking.

The cello features prominently in Variation 12 – a tribute to cellist Basil Nevinson. Mendelssohn's *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* is quoted in Variation 13, said to depict Lady Mary Lygon's departure by ship to Australia. Finally we hear 'E.D.U.' where the composer depicts himself (his wife's nickname for him was Edo) cocking a snook at all those who said he'd never make it as a composer.

Abridged from an annotation by Martin Buzacott © 2000



The MSO was the first of the former ABC orchestras to perform Elgar's Enigma Variations, on 29 September 1938, under conductor Malcolm Sargent. The Orchestra most recently performed the work in November 2007, as part of the final concert given in Australia by Sir Charles Mackerras.

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ELGARIAN/EDWARDIAN

Phillip Sametz examines the age in which Elgar composed his masterpieces.

He gazes serenely across the photograph, nattily attired, his white moustache beautifully groomed, eyes warm and kindly. He might be a landed country gentleman or a retired colonel. If we let our minds wander for a moment, we might hear in our heads the trio tune from the first *Pomp and Circumstance* march, the tune that became famous around the world as *Land of Hope and Glory*, or the 'Nimrod' episode from the *Enigma Variations*.

We might think also that in demeanour and musical stature we have, in Elgar, the perfect picture of the Edwardian age – resplendent, patrician, untroubled, too proudly triumphant, self-satisfied in a way that makes us, early in the next century, uncomfortable and a little embarrassed.

It is a fact that Elgar was most active as a composer in the years we now call Edwardian. He had his first outstanding public success with the *Enigma Variations* in 1899, and produced an almost continuous flow of music until, with *Falstaff* (1913), he seemed to slow down for good. There are some wartime pieces, and that late, small group of masterworks, which includes his chamber music and the palpably valedictory Cello Concerto (1919), and then, in large part, silence. Most of his best-known works – the two symphonies, the Violin Concerto, *The Dream of Gerontius*, the Introduction and Allegro for strings, *Cockaigne* and *In the South* were created either shortly before the death of Queen Victoria or in the reign of her son, Edward VII.

It is not so surprising, then, that the Elgar of popular imagination is a celebrator of imperial ways and manners, a writer of great symphonic marches or hymns to the glory of England. Yet is this really the sum of his achievement? Indeed, was the Edwardian era

really so serene, so self-assured for those who lived through it?

'A phenomenon of such extended malignance as The Great War does not come out of a Golden Age,' wrote historian Barbara Tuchman of the years between 1890 and 1914. It is an age near to us in time yet so distant in customs and morality as to seem impossibly remote.

Great Britain was a land of great social inequality. In 1895, out of a population of more than 44 million, 115 people in Great Britain owned more than 50,000 acres each; many of the tenant farmers who worked for wealthy landowners could end their days in the workhouse if their employers chose not to provide for them. At London's Savoy Hotel (and later at the Carlton), the rich and privileged ate Escoffier's grand culinary creations. At the same time, the huge population growth in the cities was creating a new class of urban poor. In the confusion and disappointment which followed the Boer War, the government was shocked by the Army's announcement that 60 per

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**ELGAR Enigma Variations
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MAHLER Symphony No. 6

Mahler's Sixth Symphony wrestles with the idea of greatness: what does it mean to be a hero, when the hammer-blows of Fate are waiting to strike the champion down? Boldly dramatic, but with an ever-present sense of regret and even nostalgia, this is one of the great symphonic experiences, in an electrifying performance conducted by Mark Wigglesworth.



cent of Englishmen were physically unfit for service. Slum conditions were not much better than they had been a generation before; infant mortality rates among the poor were worse in 1900 than they had been in 1850.

The British race was held by leading politicians and clergymen to be in a state of decline. This was not simply a question of living conditions and physical health. In the first years of the last century other inequalities created many of the social tensions which began to unseat the British establishment from the position of supreme moral comfort it had enjoyed in the last quarter of the 19th century.

The cry of 'votes for women' was heard, with increasing militancy as the decade progressed; the women's suffrage movement seemed to catch in its path a whole range of issues that threatened to change the fabric of society: divorce law reform, contraception and even socialism. 'Socialism' had been a term whispered with dread by the aristocracy in the 1890s, and now the utopian socialists, H.G. Wells among them, were arguing that the family was a form of capitalistic ownership. Of more immediate effect was the socialists' arrival in parliament, in force, in the 1906 elections. After

this, for the first time, Labour sat as an independent party in the House of Commons.

The increasing economic and military strength of Germany led to fears of an invasion. A war with Germany on British soil was the subject of pamphlets, novels and plays throughout the period. The Scouting movement was formed partly out of the fear engendered by the prospect of a strong, disciplined German attack on a weak, decadent race of Britons. The tabloid press fanned the fears further. Popular newspapers were, in any case, changing the political process irrevocably with their shrillness. The population was more literate and could be mobilised more swiftly than in earlier generations. The ha'penny *Daily Mail* sold in numbers ten times greater than *The Times*.

Only a few years after the opulent confidence of Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1897, the mood of the country turned to one of doubt and insecurity. Kipling had sounded one kind of warning bell in his fierce poem *The Islanders* (1902), and a slower one tolled as the triumphant Darwinism which had governed establishment thinking came to seem inadequate for the problems of the new age. In his book *The Condition of England* (1909) the prominent Liberal

politician and author C.F.G. Masterman wrote:

The large hopes and dreams of the Early Victorian time have vanished: never, at least in the immediate future, to return. The science which was to allay all diseases, the commerce which was to abolish war, and weave all nations into one human family, the research which was to establish ethics and religion on a secure and positive foundation, the invention which was to enable all humanity, with a few hours of not disagreeable work every day, to live for the remainder of their time in ease and sunshine – all these have become recognised as remote and fairy visions.

Masterman's position is doubly unsettling – he was not writing from a purely theoretical position, but, virtually, as an elected pessimist: he was a government MP. In fact the election of the Liberals in 1906 seemed confirmation that a new era had begun. Confused by the speed and diversity of societal change, they found it just as difficult to grapple with the complexities of the day as the Tories did before them.

If Elgar is no serene patrician in his music, neither does he purposefully mirror the troubled tenor of this times. Politically, he was conservative and a believer in the philosophy of the Empire. He was on cordial terms with the King,

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who greatly admired his music. But Elgar was not, as yet, a grand public figure, would never hold a major academic post and never took pupils. He was largely self-taught as a composer, and always regarded the academic musical establishment with distrust.

As an artist he was essentially a Romantic outsider, an insecure, inward-looking man who relied on the comfort of others – specifically his beloved wife Alice and a small circle of friends – to reassure him of his worth. He constantly worried over the usefulness of his music, and, despite his political leanings, resented the time he spent on many of his patriotic commissions. Of his music for the masque *The Crown of India* (1911–12) he wrote to a friend: ‘When I write a big serious work, e.g. *Gerontius*, we have had to starve and go without fires for 12 months as a reward: this small effort allows me to buy scientific works I have longed for.’ Yet he also carried a sense of duty for the generations who were yet to hear his music. ‘Even the highest ecstasy of “making” is mixed with the consciousness of the sombre dignity of the eternity of the artist’s responsibility,’ he wrote. One of his favourite quotations concerning the artist’s role in society was from Tasso: ‘I long for much, I hope for

little, I ask for nothing.’ Elgar was not a simple man.

For all his self-obsession, Elgar’s personal dilemmas do somehow spread their wings over the period in which he wrote his music, and capture for us now some of the contradictions of his age in a way that the more complacent music of his respected contemporary Stanford cannot.

For example, it is hard to imagine any of his fellow British composers writing so original, compact, grand-gestured, shapely and emotionally panoramic a work as the Introduction and Allegro for strings. The Symphony No.2, which opens in a mood of almost feverish joy, constantly sets off depth charges of the most destabilising kind. Is there a passage in any Western art music of the time at once so beautiful and sinister as the one which arrives stealthily, high on the cellos, in the middle of the first movement, a section Elgar described as depicting ‘a sort of malign influence wandering thro’ the summer night in the garden.’ When *The Dream of Gerontius* was new (1900), it shocked many people by its essential intimacy, by its vivid depiction of pain and spiritual doubt. Yet its linear narrative, its sense of urgency and human sympathy, have made it one of Elgar’s most enduring works.

The startling quality of Elgar’s music to his contemporaries, and the one that made it seem so original in Continental Europe, was its frank emotionalism. In 1957, on the centenary of the composer’s birth, musicologist J.A. Westrup wrote that Elgar offered English listeners ‘an opportunity to escape from our inherited inhibitions’. But then, the era in which Elgar was most productive was one of unusual public drama. The combined effects of Elgar’s own inner tensions with those of the age he lived through have given us music that can still carry enormous emotional power.

It does so, however, with an obvious love of opulent orchestration and memorable tunes, so that a first hearing can confirm the suspicion that his ideas are presented in too glamorous a fashion for our taste. But if anything, Elgar is a doubter in a new century and, therefore, one of our number.

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