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# MISO

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## BEETHOVEN'S *EROICA*

10–12 MAY 2018

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### CONCERT PROGRAM

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### Melbourne Symphony Orchestra



Principal Partner

**Melbourne Symphony Orchestra**

**Sir Andrew Davis** conductor

**Moye Chen** piano

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**Vine Concerto for Orchestra** – Composer in Residence

**Liszt Piano Concerto No.1**

**INTERVAL**

**Beethoven Symphony No.3 *Eroica***

***Running time:*** 2 hours, including a 20-minute interval

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

**Melbourne  
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**mso.com.au  
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## MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Established in 1906, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO) is an arts leader and Australia's longest-running professional orchestra. Chief Conductor Sir Andrew Davis has been at the helm of MSO since 2013. Engaging more than 4 million people each year, the MSO reaches a variety of audiences through live performances, recordings, TV and radio broadcasts and live streaming.

The MSO also works with Associate Conductor Benjamin Northey and Cybec Assistant Conductor Tianyi Lu, as well as with such eminent recent guest conductors as Tan Dun, John Adams, Jakub Hrůša and Jukka-Pekka Saraste. It also collaborates with non-classical musicians such as Elton John, Nick Cave and Flight Facilities.

## SIR ANDREW DAVIS CONDUCTOR



Chief Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Sir Andrew Davis is also Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Lyric Opera of Chicago. He is Conductor Laureate of both the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Symphony, where he has also been named interim Artistic Director until 2020.

In a career spanning more than 40 years he has conducted virtually all the world's major orchestras and opera companies, and at the major festivals. Recent highlights have included *Die Walküre* in a new production at Chicago Lyric.

Sir Andrew's many CDs include *Messiah* nominated for a 2018 Grammy, Bliss' *The Beatitudes*, and a recording with the Bergen Philharmonic of Vaughan Williams' *Job/Symphony No.9* nominated for a 2018 BBC Music Magazine Award. With the MSO he has just released a third recording in the ongoing Richard Strauss series, featuring the *Alpine Symphony* and *Till Eulenspiegel*.

**MOYE CHEN**  
PIANO



Highlights of Moyer Chen's recent seasons have included concerts at Carnegie Hall, Benaroya Hall (Seattle), and the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire. He has appeared with ensembles such as the Mariinsky and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestras.

Moyer Chen has won prizes at festivals including the 2016 Sydney International Piano Festival and gold medal at the 2014 Cincinnati World Piano Competition. He recently signed a recording contract with Universal Music Australia/Decca which sees the release of a recording of music by Grainger and Rachmaninov.

Moyer Chen studied at Shanghai Conservatory of Music and Oberlin. He is currently studying at the University of Illinois.

The MSO is thrilled to be touring China with Moyer Chen and Sir Andrew Davis next week.

**CARL VINE**  
COMPOSER



Carl Vine is one of Australia's best known and most often performed composers, with a catalogue now including seven symphonies, eleven concertos, music for film, television, dance and theatre, electronic music and numerous chamber works. Although primarily a composer of modern 'classical' music he has undertaken tasks as diverse as arranging the Australian National Anthem and writing music for the Closing Ceremony of the Olympic Games (Atlanta, 1996).

Born in Perth, Carl studied piano with Stephen Dornan and composition with John Exton at the University of Western Australia. Moving to Sydney in 1975, he worked as a freelance pianist and composer with a wide range of ensembles, theatre and dance companies over the following decades.

Since 2000 Carl has been the Artistic Director of Musica Viva Australia, the largest chamber music entrepreneur in the world. His recent compositions include *Five Hallucinations* commissioned by the Chicago and Sydney Symphony Orchestras, *Wonders* for Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, *Our Sons* for the Australian Chamber Orchestra and *Concerto for Orchestra* for the West Australian Symphony Orchestra.

## PROGRAM NOTES

### CARL VINE

(born 1954)

#### *Concerto for Orchestra*

Concertos for orchestra are a uniquely 20th-century phenomenon, evolving from the Baroque model of the *concerto grosso* and the ensuing *sinfonia concertante*. They generally feature multiple solo instruments and alternating focus on contrasting instrumental families. More than 70 have been composed since Hindemith's landmark work of 1925, including eight each by composers Alan Hovhaness and Robin Holloway. None have been as successful as Bartók's remarkable work of 1943.

I have used this opportunity to feature every instrument in the orchestra in one way or another. Although classical concertos follow the symphonic fashion of incorporating sonata form, I have deliberately chosen to mutate the form beyond recognition, eliminating the precepts of primary and secondary themes, and the very notion of exposition-development-recapitulation.

In place of these traditional formulae, I have used a process developed in my piano trio (*The Village*, 2014); a broad family of musical 'elements' evolve organically through a chain of episodes to create a complex web of melodies and harmonies that are related but not identical. This network of ideas is tied together by strong lateral bonds but remains fluid and flexible, creating a series of fleeting glimpses – what Prokofiev called 'visions fugitives' – or abstract patterns glimpsed in the half-light or imagined behind clouds.

*Concerto for Orchestra* is dedicated to Geoff Stearn.

Carl Vine © 2014

This is the first performance of Carl Vine's *Concerto for Orchestra* by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

## FRANZ LISZT

(1811-1886)

Piano Concerto No.1 in E flat

*Allegro maestoso* –

*Quasi adagio* –

*Allegro vivace* – *Allegro animato* –

*Allegro marziale animato*

### Moye Chen piano

Liszt was a larger-than-life character, both biographically and musically. A gifted child prodigy, he was publicly kissed on the brow by Beethoven, and later gained a formidable reputation as a womaniser, toured extensively as the greatest pianist of his era, lived with a princess and even took a form of Holy Orders. Yet behind this colourful and romantic image lay an immensely gifted musician, deeply committed to the future of music and the creative endeavours of his contemporaries.

Liszt's two piano concertos rank among his most important works and, while quite different in character, have a similar history. Early sketches for both works date from 1838-1840, but Liszt's constant touring prevented the completion of the first until 1849, the year after his appointment as court conductor in Weimar. But even then there was a delay and the Concerto No.1 was not to be premiered in Weimar until 17 February 1855, with Liszt himself as soloist and Berlioz conducting.

Dedicated to Henri Litolff, the concerto is a work of extraordinary unity in four movements played without a

break. The main theme dominates both the first and the last movements and all other important themes recur several times during the course of the work. Variations of these themes occur through metamorphosis and transformation rather than through formal development.

The forceful principal theme is stated immediately in the strings over wind chords. It is said that Liszt sang the words '*Das versteht ihr alle nicht*' ('None of you understands this') to this melody. After four bars the piano enters and we hear a cadenza and some elaboration of the opening theme. The movement ends with intricate arpeggios and runs in the piano while the orchestra restates the main theme. A subject on muted cellos and double basses amplified by the solo piano heralds the beginning of the *Adagio*. The dreamlike melody for the piano gives way to a magical moment where the flute and then clarinet enter while the pianist's trills die away to nothing.

In the *Scherzo* there is an unusually prominent part for that most humble of orchestral instruments – the triangle! It is employed at the beginning as a sparkling companion to the descending cascades of the piano. Eduard Hanslick bitterly attacked the prominence given to the triangle in this movement, but Liszt retorted that it offered 'the effect of contrast'. Such extraordinary aesthetic debates hindered the general acceptance of the concerto early in its life (it was not performed again until 1869), although they could not distract

popular attention from it forever. A third important theme is introduced in this scherzo and the end of the movement is signalled by a cadenza in which the opening theme of the movement is again suggested.

A development section then leads to the final movement in which we find all the themes of the concerto transformed and unified: first the delicate *Adagio* melody is treated in a march-like fashion, then the theme of the scherzo ushers in a brilliant stretto (overlapping entries in close succession), and finally the main theme returns in triumph.

The strength – and the paradox – of this concerto lie in its tight structure that nevertheless appears to be almost ‘improvisatory’. As the legendary pianist Alfred Cortot remarked, ‘The listener... must not be given the impression that he is subjected to a kind of nonsensical chitchat. The steadiness of the work’s foundations must be felt.’

Martin Buzacott © Symphony Australia

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra first performed this concerto on 9 April 1940 with conductor Georg Schnéevoigt and pianist Eric Landerer, and most recently on 11 September 2015 with Benjamin Northey and Hoang Pham.

## LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

(1770-1827)

Symphony No.3 in E flat, Op.55 *Eroica*

*Allegro con brio*

*Marcia funebre (Adagio assai)*

*Scherzo (Allegro vivace) – Trio – Scherzo*

*Finale (Allegro molto)*

As is the case with the First and Second, Beethoven’s composing score for the Third Symphony has disappeared. However, circumstantial evidence suggests he finished it during the Vienna winter of 1803–04, at around the same time he was working on his massive *Waldstein* Piano Sonata, Op.53, whose opening *Allegro* shares with the Third’s the added direction ‘*con brio*’ (‘with vigour’). In size and scale, the Third epitomised the major advances he had made since even his recent Second Symphony, audibly obvious in the enhanced listening span he sets his audience, in his deployment of such attention-commanding themes, and in his pursuit of a more distinctive and sonorous orchestral mix. And in the summer of 1804, one of his patrons, Prince Joseph Lobkowitz, allowed him the almost unheard-of luxury of being able to trial the score while he was still revising it, in a series of private rehearsals, with an orchestra of some 27 or 28 players, in Lobkowitz’s Vienna palace. Later the Prince also paid Beethoven a hefty gratuity for the honour of having the name Lobkowitz appear as dedicatee on the title-page of the printed edition. In this respect at

least, Joseph Lobkowitz was ultimately the Third's hero.

In early 1804, however, Beethoven was still intending to dedicate it to Napoleon Bonaparte, the great political reformer and egalitarian. But when, late that year, Napoleon renounced democracy and proclaimed himself emperor of France, Beethoven reportedly flew into a rage, and correctly predicted his former idol would 'trample on human rights, and become a tyrant'. Even in disappointment, Beethoven still wanted to call it the 'Bonaparte Symphony', though by the time he corrected a new fair copy to send to his publisher in 1806 he had settled on *Sinfonia Eroica* ('Heroic'), with the regretful subtitle: 'to the memory of a great man'.

In November 1805 Napoleon's army had marched into Vienna largely uncontested, but unwelcome enough to make locals stay away from the premiere season of the first version of Beethoven's opera *Fidelio*, leaving mainly French officers to make up his small audience. During Napoleon's second occupation of the city in 1809 the noise of bombardment so affected the hearing-impaired Beethoven that he retreated to a basement to protect his ears. Before the Battle of Waterloo brought the warlord's reign of terror to an end in 1815, Beethoven celebrated the Napoleonic armies' defeat in Spain in 1813 with his short 'battle symphony', *Wellington's Victory*, and organised the patriotic concert at which it and his

Seventh Symphony were premiered to raise funds for Austrian soldiers wounded expelling the French from Germany. But time again altered his perceptions; Beethoven later told Carl Czerny, 'I used to detest Napoleon, now I think quite differently.' And on hearing of Napoleon's death in 1821, Beethoven remarked he had already composed the music for the 'sad event' in this Symphony's Funeral March.

According to his self-appointed secretary Anton Schindler, Beethoven intended the Symphony No.3 'to portray the workings of Napoleon's extraordinary mind'. In the opening *Allegro*, the titanic main theme has been interpreted as representing 'Napoleon's determined, questing character'. In the funeral march, though the shadow of Death temporarily encompasses him, in the midst of mourning, a new major-key theme signifies a rising star of hope, before the music returns to the graveside, muffled drumrolls, and a farewell volley faintly echoed. In stark contrast, the motoric *Scherzo* overflows with an abundance of energy. The finale consists of a simple country dance tune with variations that build strategically in intensity and complexity toward a blazing orchestral rout that – forget Napoleon – no one but Beethoven could have imagined!

Graeme Skinner © 2014

The first performance of Beethoven's Symphony No.3 by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra was given on 2 April 1940 under conductor Georg Schnéevoigt. The Orchestra most recently performed it in December 2014 under the baton of Osmo Vänskä.



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Elaine Walters OAM and Gregory Walters  
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Marian and Terry Willis Cooke  
Lorraine Woolley  
Richard Ye  
Panch Das and Laurel Young-Das  
Anonymous (21)

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## THE MAHLER SYNDICATE

David and Kaye Birks  
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The Hon Michael Watt QC and Cecilie Hall

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Ken Bullen  
Peter A Caldwell  
Luci and Ron Chambers  
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Gunta Eglite  
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Anne Roussac-Hoyne  
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Prof. Gabriela and George Stephenson  
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Mr Tam Vu  
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The **MSO Conductor's Circle** is our bequest program for members who have notified of a planned gift in their Will.

#### **Enquiries**

**P (03) 8646 1551**

**E [philanthropy@mso.com.au](mailto:philanthropy@mso.com.au)**



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music makers,  
and we are the  
dreamers of  
dreams.’**

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