

MSO

EARS WIDE OPEN: *DANCES OF GALÁNTA*

25 JUNE 2018

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Brett Kelly conductor

Nicholas Bochner presenter

Kodály *Dances of Galánta*

BRETT KELLY CONDUCTOR

Brett Kelly has been the Principal Trombone of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra since 1981. Brett played in Newcastle Brass Band and was Principal Trombonist in the Australian Youth Orchestra before joining the orchestra of Opera Australia and later taking up his position at the MSO. Committed to new Australian music, Brett has been a core member of three influential Australian contemporary music ensembles – Flederman, The Seymour Group and Elision and has played or conducted the premieres of over 300 new works. From 1989 to 2004 Brett was Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of The Academy of Melbourne, a chamber orchestra comprising his colleagues in the MSO. He has also conducted the Melbourne, Tasmanian, Adelaide, Queensland and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, along with Orchestra Victoria, Sydney Symphony, Auckland Philharmonia and Southern Sinfonia. Since 2003 he has been Resident Conductor of Chamber Made Opera. Brett has conducted the orchestral scores of more than 20 major films, seven of which have been by David Hirschfelder.

NICHOLAS BOCHNER PRESENTER

Nicholas began his music studies on piano aged 7 and took up the cello two years later. Throughout his school years he pursued a widely varied range of musical styles. After leaving school Nicholas concentrated on cello, studying with Janis Laurs at the University of Adelaide where he completed a Bachelor of Music with honours. Nicholas then spent two years with Stefan Popov at the Guildhall School of Music, London.

In 1998, Nicholas joined the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra as Assistant Principal cellist. In addition to his work with the orchestra, Nicholas has been in demand as both a chamber musician and a teacher. He was a principal instrumental teacher at the Australian National Academy of Music from 2004–2009.

In 2011 Nicholas appeared as a soloist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in performances of Dvořák's cello concerto, and in 2012 appeared at the Adelaide Festival in a concert for solo cello and electronics. In 2016 Nicholas was awarded a Fellowship at ANAM to develop and present educational concerts and since then has presented educational concerts for ANAM, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra.

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ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

(1770–1827)

Dances of Galánta (Galántai táncok)

Lento – Andante maestoso –

Allegretto moderato – Andante maestoso

–

Allegro con moto, grazioso – Andante maestoso –

Allegro –

Poco meno mosso –

Allegro vivace – Andante maestoso –

Allegro molto vivace

Zoltán Kodály is revered as Hungary's father of modern composition. His breadth of creativity and commitment to teaching helped to maintain a vigorous musical culture through periods of artistic and political oppression. Along with his close contemporary and friend Béla Bartók (1881-1945), he collected over 3,500 folk tunes from throughout Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. These songs influenced both composers' subsequent works, as well as those of many other middle-European composers. Kodály said of his collaboration with Bartók: 'The vision of an educated Hungary, reborn from the people, rose before us. We decided to devote our lives to its realisation.' Thus the importance of folk tunes to the national identity of countries such as Hungary cannot be overstated.

The *Dances of Galánta* were written for the 80th anniversary of the Budapest Philharmonic in 1933. Kodály took as his source a compendium of dances from the early 1800s, 'the gypsy dances from

Galánta', and selected, orchestrated and linked some of them. Kodály grew up in the town of Galánta on the border between Hungary and Austria, where the passing traffic, including gypsies and wandering musicians, may well have left an aural impression. This is a mature work from Kodály (he was in his early fifties), both highly accessible and gently conservative, possibly due in part to the influence of the commissioning orchestra.

Based on the *verbunkos* style (similar to the *csárdás* or the 'tavern' tunes of Hungary and its surrounding regions), these dances have two moods: pensively slow and fiercely fast. Chiefly linking these two emotional opposites with broad and impassioned string writing, Kodály also allows solo passages to play a significant role. As in his suite from the opera *Háry János* (1927), there are meltingly lyrical sections of poignant beauty and virtuosity for the clarinet.

Kodály maintains tension by clever use of rubato and rhythmic variation, as with the syncopated rhythms of the fiery *csárdás* heard in the late-night revels of a tavern. The 'gypsy scale', found in so much of the folk music diligently collected by Kodály, is a prominent melodic feature. There is also a Jewish 'feel' in much that is here – the clarinet in particular conjures the sound of klezmer music in its sense of abandonment and melancholy.

Abridged from a note by David Vivian Russell © 2000