



Come Dancing!

With MOSMAN ORCHESTRA

Directed by Andrew Del Riccio

Patron: The Hon. Joe Hockey, MP

Guest conductor MARK BROWN

Friday 25 June 2004, 8.00pm

Sunday 27 June 2004, 2.30pm

Mosman Art Gallery and Community Centre

Franz Schubert: Ballet Music 1 and 2 from *Rosamunde*

Maurice Ravel: *Pavane pour une infante defunte*

Nick Sifniotis: *Uberpolka #1 in G*

Ludwig van Beethoven: *Twelve Contredances*

Edvard Grieg: "Peer Gynt" - Suite No.1, Op. 46

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

***Ballet Music 1 and 2 from Rosamunde* - Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)**

In the autumn of 1823, Schubert was asked to provide incidental music for the play *Rosamunde, Fürstin von Zypern* ("Rosamunde, Princess of Cyprus") by Wilhelmine von Chezny. Madame von Chezny had been the librettist for Weber's opera *Euryanthe*, an opera Schubert did not like, but he was anxious for a stage success and quickly accepted the assignment. Schubert was pressed for time, however, and—working at break-neck speed—he wrote three entr'actes, two ballets, a *Shepherd's Melody* and several choruses, but he did not have time to write an overture. He solved this problem by resorting to a trick Rossini also used: he substituted the overture he had written three years earlier for a performance of Hofmann's melodrama *Die Zauberharfe* ("The Magic Harp").

The Viennese public did not have much time to enjoy Schubert's music. Madame von Chezny's play was apparently dreadful beyond imagination. It opened on December 20 and folded after two performances. Like many other artists associated with a failure, Schubert was left begging to be paid for his efforts. To von Chezny he wrote: "As regards the price of the music, I do not think I can put it at less than 100 florins without depreciating the music itself. In case that price should be too high, I beg your honour to fix the price yourself, but not at much below the above named figure."

After the failure of the play Schubert put his music for *Rosamunde* on the shelf and forgot about it for over 40 years. In 1867, two very distinguished names in music history—Sir George Groves (of dictionary fame) and Arthur Sullivan (the musical half of Gilbert and Sullivan)—journeyed to Vienna to look for lost Schubert manuscripts, and on this trip they found his music to *Rosamunde*. The ballet music and entr'actes have since found enduring life in the concert hall.

There is no way of knowing what *Rosamunde, Fürstin von Zypern* was like. Von Chezny's text has disappeared, and only a synopsis has survived. The play may have been dreadful, but the fresh spirit of Schubert's music will ensure its continuing vitality, long after the play which was the occasion for its life has vanished into history.

***Pavane pour une infante defunte* (Pavane for a dead princess) - Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)**

Completed in 1899, Ravel's *Pavane for a Dead Princess* achieved immediate popularity, both in France and abroad. The unpretentious little piece, written originally for solo piano, was so well accepted that in 1910 the composer decided to orchestrate it. Thus, it exists in two distinct versions, each by Ravel himself.

Imaginative people have supposed that the piece must be in remembrance of a young and beautiful noblewoman. So the wistfulness of the music might suggest, yet despite the allure of such a romantic image, the composer's own testimony thwarts the image. Ravel always insisted that his inspiration lay not in death, but in alliteration, in the rhythmic echo between words in the original French title: "Pavane pour une Infante defunte." Such wordplay proved irresistible to a man noted for his dry wit. Once, Ravel carried the verbal humor one step further in his advice to prospective performers, who might choose too slow a tempo: "Remember that I wrote a Pavane for a deceased princess... not a deceased Pavane for a princess."

Poeticism aside, musical connections can be drawn between pavanes and princesses. A pavane was a Renaissance court dance, specifically a processional in duple meter. Noted for their grave and stately mood, pavanes were

occasionally used as wedding marches, even for princesses. Curiously, though musicologists know exactly what pavanes are, they are less certain about the word's origins. Some suggest that the word "pavane" derives from the Italian city of Padua. Others advocate a connection to the Spanish word "pavon" (peacock). Either is possible. By Ravel's time, however, pavanes were less concerned with dancing than with a generalized solemn atmosphere, such as that aptly conveyed by this lovely and lyrical composition.

Uberpolka #1 in G - Nick Sifniotis

Nick Sifniotis plays violin with the Mosman Orchestra, and his first composition 'Uberpolka' is receiving its world premiere performance at the Orchestra's June concert series.

In year 10 Nick started to play the electronic keyboard, and quickly discovered the world of the MIDI. Soon Nick realized he could produce music for orchestra on his keyboard, and started experimenting.

Nick remembers his first version of the Uberpolka; he was writing it instead of studying for his HSC. He wasn't satisfied with it at that stage, but he liked the main melody inspired by a computer game. He put it aside for a few years.

In the meantime he started listening to a lot of music; Bach, Mozart, Beethoven Liszt, Philip Glass ... he became very influenced by Liszt. For a long period Nick concentrated on listening and experimenting.

Returning to his Uberpolka after a few years, his modifications included adding a duet between flute and oboe over a string base, extending the climax and refining the finale. The final product is a mutation of the first product. Structurally similar, haunting, the peculiar rhythm repeated and main melody ever present.

Nick is thrilled at the opportunity of listening to his music executed by real instruments, being directed by a real conductor, after spending five years hearing it through a synthesizer!

Interval

Twelve Contredances, WoO 14* - Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

*WoO are works without opus number.

In his biography of Beethoven, his friend and disciple Anton Schindler (1795-1864) commented on the particular interest that Austrian dance music aroused in Beethoven. Until his arrival in Vienna in 1792, he claimed to know nothing of folk music except for the songs of Berg (the duchy of Berg and Cleves in the Lower Rhine) with their strange rhythms. However he subsequently wrote many waltzes, landler, minuets, ecossaise, deutsche and contredances which were evidently popular in his own day. Indeed, Beethoven showed more natural flair for this kind of music than did the Austrian-born Haydn.

The set of twelve Contredances probably dates from 1800-1, but it is not known for what occasion they were composed. The contredances are lively in style, in 2/4 metre, and are lightly scored – without violas, trumpets or drums. Beethoven incorporated Nos. 7 and 11 into his Creatures of Prometheus ballet (produced in 1801) and No. 7 was destined to become the basis of the Variations and Fugue Op. 35 for piano (1802) and of the finale of the Eroica Symphony (1803-4).

Note on Contredanse: a dance derived from the English country dance which enjoyed much popularity in France (contredanse) and Germany (contretanz) during the 18th century.

"Peer Gynt" - Suite No.1, Op. 46 - Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

1. Morning Mood
2. The Death of Åse
3. Anitra's Dance
4. In the Hall of the Mountain King

"The most remarkable thing he did" writes The Bluffer's Guide to Music of Edvard Grieg "was to write incidental music to Ibsen's weird play Peer Gynt." While play and music have long since parted company, the music has remained the better-known, and has shown itself to have a life outside its initial dramatic context.

The incidental music to Peer Gynt was written in 1875, and first performed, with the play, in February 1876. It comprised 23 movements, written for a small theatre orchestra and chorus. Grieg extracted eight of these in 1888 and 1891, after it had become evident that the play in its original form would not be frequently revived, and re-orchestrated them for full orchestra in two Suites, the first of which we will hear today. Peer Gynt, a sort of Nordic Everyman-figure with a mischievous streak, travels through his life encountering a range of allegorical adventures until, after years of wandering, he realises the sterile selfishness of his existence and finds peace in the arms of his beloved Solveig. The four movements depict characters and scenes in the play:

Morning Mood - Robbed and deserted by the seductress Anitra, Peer wakes in the Arabian desert. Grieg gives us a radiant portrayal of a crisp, sunlit morning, more redolent of a fresh northern landscape than a desert, and more rapturous than disillusioned - but no less beautiful for it.

The Death of Åse - A tender lament for strings, based on an old Norwegian melody, accompanies the death of Peer Gynt's aged mother. Ibsen makes this scene portray Peer's frivolous insensitivity; Grieg cannot but let real feeling show.

Anitra's Dance - Grieg captures the seductive Anitra in a deliciously sinuous oriental dance, very much in the spirit of Tchaikovsky and Saint-Saens. The wonderfully pale orchestral colours match the mirage-like nature of this scene in the play to perfection.

In the Hall of the Mountain King - Peer witnesses a dance of pig-faced trolls in a mountain cavern. Ibsen was tongue-in-cheek about Norwegian folklore, and so is Grieg, building this vigorous dance on a grotesque, angular ostinato, scored to sound intentionally ridiculous and bizarre.

Mark Brown, Guest Conductor

Music has always been part of Mark Brown's life, having grown up in a musical family. He took piano lessons at an early age but confesses to preferring cricket to the piano at that stage.

In High School, his enthusiasm for music was rekindled when he took up the euphonium and became part of a band. From euphonium he moved on to trombone where he enjoyed access to a larger jazz repertoire. He performed in his first gig on trombone at 16.

Being a young musician in a band is fun but not enough to make a living, Mark enrolled in the conservatorium to study piano tuning. For 10 years music performance remained a hobby - until he got involved with the Australian Wind Orchestra and went on tour to Europe, America etc. He then gave up piano tuning and decided to go back to the conservatorium to do a bachelor of music in trombone performance. He then settled into a busy life of teaching, conducting and doing gigs.

According to Mark, there are two schools of conductors, one the interpreter, the dictator, the egotist who want to reinvent Beethoven; and the other which is the servant, the conductor who is faithful to the score and subservient to the composer.. As Mark said. who is he to improve on Beethoven?

Mark has had a long association with Andrew Del Riccio, Mosman Orchestra's Musical Director, during their schooldays and musical careers. Mark and the Orchestra have enjoyed each others' company before - when he was guest conductor in June 2003.

Mark and his partner Dominique will be departing next year for the US where they have each been offered a 2-year scholarship at Syracuse University. They are both very excited at the opportunity and experience such a project will bring them. Mark will do a master degree in conducting whilst Dominique will concentrate on a string master.

Mosman Orchestra

First Violins: Kathryn Crossing* (concertmaster), Julian Dresser, Paul Hoskinson, Beres Lindsay, Sarah Lovie, Clare Ryan, Nick Sifniotis.,

Second Violins: Denis Brown, Chris Bladwell, Bob Clampett, Libby Colyer, Penny Myerscough, Robert Timmins.

Violas: Holly Doyle, Linh Ly

Cellos: Lindsay Wood, Mary Bramston, Elena Clark, Mark Haughton, Katherine Hipwell, Maxine Moorehead-Stephan

Bass: Clare Cory

Flutes: Carolyn Thornely, Cathy Fraser

Oboes: Margaret Shirley, Jan Cosse

Clarinets: Randell Hayman, Liz Hogan

Bassoons: Graham Cormack, Dan Adelman

French Horns: Rana Wood

Trumpet: Jono Apps

Trombone: Vicki Sifniotis

*Kathryn Crossing's chair proudly sponsored by The Learning Group Mosman Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the support of The Mosman Council, The Learning Group Pty Ltd and the indefatigable Peter Stephan, who maintains the Mosman Orchestra website: <http://muzie.customer.netspace.net.au/tmo/> Visit this site to find out more about Mosman Orchestra and its 2004 program.

Don't miss our next concerts on Fri 17 and Sun 19 September