

# MOSMAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Andrew Del Riccio - musical director

Rachel Tolmie - cor anglais



SPOHR: Overture to Faust

DONIZETTI: Concertino for Cor Anglais

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 5

Friday May 20 at 8pm

Sunday May 22 at 2.30pm

Mosman Art Gallery

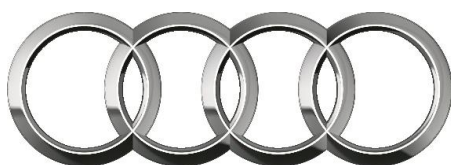
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## Message from the Musical Director

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Welcome to our May concerts for 2016! We have something for (almost) everyone: a bit of opera, a rousing overture, and the symphonic majesty of Tchaikovsky. In fact, the genesis of the program you will hear today is a group effort, and this is the small tale I wish to pass on to you.

Today's program is based on our soloist, Rachel Tolmie. Last year she suggested that we perform the Donizetti Concertino for Cor Anglais; when I heard it I was keen to put this operatic and virtuosic piece into our year's program. What an immediately tuneful work it is – I was amazed that it is not better known. But then we had to work out what to put with it – how to start the concert, what styles and instrumentations would work, how to

end the concert, bearing in mind, of course that we want what we play to attract our audience! My initial inspiration of 'Greatest Hits of the *Bel Canto* Era' didn't quite see the light of day. Nor did 'Pieces you have never heard of, but will like to'.

We needed a larger symphonic style piece to end the concert, something with the sort of drama one finds in opera. It didn't take long to come to Tchaikovsky's fifth symphony, which is not only extremely tuneful but has a theme that is found in many operas: the inevitability of fate. It also helps that this is an immensely popular piece! We trust you will enjoy our first performances of this powerhouse work.

That left our concert opener. This can be an overture, a short piece, a contrast, parent, or related piece to the rest of the program, or even a movement from another larger work. We are extremely grateful to our orchestra member David Trainer, who donated a set of parts to the orchestra: the overture to the opera *Faust* by Louis Spohr. Like the Donizetti, this is a wonderful piece of music. Louis Spohr is very under-represented in concert programs, and deserves far more recognition than his music currently gets.

And there we have it. A great program of music that is well known and loved, plus pieces that are new to our ears, but need to be heard and I am certain will be appreciated! Enjoy!

## Notes on the Program

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### Overture to the Opera 'Faust' Louis Spohr (1784-1859)

Louis Spohr was a prolific and popular composer, violinist and conductor. Born in northwestern Germany to musical parents, he composed symphonies, concerti for violin and clarinet, oratorios, chamber music and art songs. According to music historians, his work occupies a pivotal position between classicism and romanticism – though he is not well known today. However, he was famous in his time, well known enough to be mentioned in the Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera *The Mikado*. One of the punishments demanded by the title character in *The Mikado* is for a victim to suffer music 'by Bach interwoven/With Spohr and Beethoven'.



Spohr wrote ten operatic works, and his opera *Faust* is now widely regarded as an important work in the history of German romantic opera. Unlike the famous story by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, which is widely considered the most popular form of the Faust story, Spohr's libretto does not include any comic characters. And Spohr's Faust, unlike Goethe's is not redeemed.

There are other departures from the Faust story. In Spohr's opera Faust is torn between his love for the young girl Roschen and his desire for Kunigunde, the fiancée of Count Hugo. He makes a pact with the devil Mephistopheles which allows him to rescue Kunigunde from the clutches of an evil knight, and obtains a love potion from a witch which he gives to Kunigunde during her wedding celebrations. She becomes besotted with Faust and her new husband, Count Hugo, challenges him to a duel. Faust kills Hugo and flees. His first love, Roschen, drowns herself in despair and Mephistopheles seizes Faust and drags him down to Hell.

The opera, written in 1813, was premiered in Prague three years later under the direction of Spohr's friend, the composer Carl Maria von Weber. In its original form, the opera was a

music drama in two acts; in 1851 Spohr turned it into a three-act opera, replacing spoken dialogue with recitative.

In his overture Spohr uses various themes he develops during the course of the opera to describe the inner conflict of Faust and the tensions that pervade the story. The overture is tuneful and vigorous, with interpolations in minor keys and especially chromatic passages hinting at the darker aspects of the opera.

Louis Spohr was an innovator in other ways. Two of his inventions – the violin chinrest and the orchestral rehearsal mark – have earned him the gratitude of musicians ever since.

### **Concertino for Cor Anglais Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)**



With Rossini and Bellini, Donizetti is the most celebrated *bel canto* opera composer of the nineteenth century. However, he composed many other works – more than six hundred, according to one source. They include pieces for woodwind ensemble, flute and chamber orchestra, oboe and piano, violin, cello and orchestra. Many of these were composed for special occasions, and they all show his skilful use of instruments, especially those closest to the range of the human voice, as well as orchestral colour.

Born in Bergamo, Lombardi, Donizetti did not come from a musical background. However, he received his early training from composer Simon Mayr, who had set up a school for young students who showed musical talent. Here Donizetti received training in fugue and counterpoint. Mayr later found him a place at the Bologna Academy, where he wrote his first opera at the age of nineteen, and went on to compose almost seventy others.

His Concertino for English Horn and Orchestra was written for a fellow student at the Bologna Academy at about the same time as he wrote his first operas. It consists of a theme and set of variations, introduced by the cor anglais, with the orchestra following. Again, this structure is operatic – solo followed by chorus – and the virtuoso passages given to the cor are a source of rich enjoyment.

Nobody quite knows why the solo instrument is called the ‘English horn’. It first appeared in Vienna in about 1760; the curved form, which survived locally to 1900, was almost identical to the eighteenth-century *oboe da caccia*, and is now sometimes used in works by J. S. Bach. The modern straight form of the instrument was first exhibited in Paris in 1839, and it appears in many Romantic works, especially by Hector Berlioz, Cesar Franck and Richard Wagner.

## INTERVAL

## **Symphony No 5 in E minor Op 64 Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)**

I Andante – Allegro con anima – Molto piu tranquillo

II Andante cantabile con alcuna licenza – Non allegro – Andante maestoso con piano

III Valse – Allegro moderato

IV Finale – Andante maestoso con fiamma – Non allegro – Presto molto furioso – Molto assai e molto maestoso – Allegro vivace



Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony was composed between May and August 1888 and first performed at St Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre in November of that year, with Tchaikovsky conducting. The work is dedicated to the German musician Theodor Ave-Lallemant, who played a leading role in the musical life of Hamburg and was therefore influential in the development of nineteenth-century German music. Godfathers to two of his sons were



Schumann and Brahms and he was also on friendly terms with other notable musicians including Clara Schumann and the violinist and conductor Josef Joachim.

He and Tchaikovsky met in January 1888, when Tchaikovsky came to Hamburg to conduct a concert of his own music, including his Serenade for String Orchestra and Piano Concerto No 1. Then over eighty, Ave-Lallemant was extremely interested in Tchaikovsky's work and according to the composer treated him 'with paternal affection ... I visited this kindly old gentleman who passionately loves music and who ... is quite free from that aversion which many old people have against everything that has been written in recent times.'

Nevertheless, Ave-Lallemant could be critical of Tchaikovsky's work, saying that he could not stand the Russian's 'noisy instrumentation' and thought he used too much percussion. Still, 'he saw in me the makings of a good, truly German composer'. Ave-Lallemant urged Tchaikovsky to settle permanently in Germany, whose culture he felt would correct Tchaikovsky's faults and rid him of the deficiencies of having been born in a backward place such as Russia. Tchaikovsky did not take his advice and forgave this hostility towards Russia when he dedicated the Fifth Symphony to Ave-Lallemant.

It was an artistically fruitful time in Tchaikovsky's life: from 1877 to 1890 he was financially secure, and able to devote himself entirely to composition. This was solely because of his patron, the wealthy widow Nadezhda von Meck, a condition of whose patronage was that they should never meet. However, despite this assurance Tchaikovsky – as ever – was fatalistic, intense and consumed with self-doubt. He naturally held to the Romantic view that music should express the artist's inner turmoil and believed that the symphony was the ultimate vehicle for a composer's loftiest statements. But he was unable to reconcile conventional symphonic structure with his expressive intent; large-scale structure did not really accord with his musical sensibility.

Tchaikovsky addressed the problem to some extent in the Fifth Symphony by using a recurring main theme in all four movements (a technique he had first used in the *Manfred Symphony* completed two years earlier). This theme unifies all four movements of the symphony. In the first movement it is somewhat funereal, but over the course of the symphony it becomes a triumphant march that dominates the final movement. He also added more themes in the symphony as a whole, which gave further potential for musical development.

The first movement begins with a long slow introduction on clarinet. The first subject proper, which comes in at the introduction, has the character of a Russian dance, building in intensity. The strings introduce the second subject, which has at least four distinct themes, culminating in a lyric passage for violins. The development section is quite short, and concentrated, with the recapitulation creeping in on bassoons. The coda recedes and leads the way to the tranquillity of the next movement.

In the second movement, a short string passage ushers in the famous horn theme, countered by a similarly structured theme in four-note phrases. These evolve before a third



subject, on solo clarinet, joins in. Soon afterwards the symphony's introductory theme rudely interrupts. There is a sudden hiatus, a tentative recapitulation, then the motto slams in again, with the rather lugubrious clarinet leading to a mood of wistfulness.

The waltz is almost a divertimento after the Andante, a simple three-part form with two flowing, lilting statements separated by a contrasting central figure on woodwinds. However, the main theme is not far away, and appears in the coda (in an echo suggesting the motto in the Ball movement of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*).

The main theme launches the finale with steely solemnity, and now becomes the dominant force. The first subject is full of activity, spilling over into the bustling march of the second subject, rushing headlong into a climax at which the main theme hurls the music into a tumultuous development. This is very brief. In the recapitulation, a new melody is superimposed over the musical texture, but it never returns, and the first movement's first subject returns for the last time.

Naturally Tchaikovsky considered that the symphony was a failure and critical reaction to the work was mixed. Since its first performances, however, it has earned a distinguished place in the orchestral repertoire. Themes have been extensively used for movie soundtracks and songs (and some audience members may even recall an arrangement of the second movement used in a prominent Australian 1970s TV ad for a brand of cigarettes).

*Please join us for refreshments after the concert*

## Rachel Tolmie – cor anglais



Rachel Tolmie holds a Master of Music degree from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and a post-graduate diploma from the Royal College of Music, London. She has extensive orchestral and chamber music performance experience, and is an experienced oboe teacher.

Rachel performs regularly with the brilliant pianist John Martin. Together they have released four CDs. Rachel also recorded a solo album with the Bourbaki Ensemble, conducted by David Angel. Her latest CD, *Bushfire*, with the Concertante Ensemble was released in 2011.

Rachel is also the author of *An Introduction to the Cor Anglais and Oboe*, which is published by Wirripang Publications.

*When and why did you take up the oboe and the cor anglais?*

**I took up the oboe at ten and the cor anglais at twelve.**

*Do you come from a musical family?*

**My mother and brother are musical. My great-uncle played the accordion and organized musical events with his fellow troops while serving in the army during World War I. One of his accordions is on display in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.**

*The cor anglais is often featured in tranquil orchestral passages but this Donizetti is sprightly and operatic ...*

**Yes, the cor anglais can play a range of styles and moods. It is frequently typecast as slow or sad or peaceful. But it's capable of fast and flashy passages and beautiful melodies too. The Donizetti is the best known cor anglais concerto in the world. It should certainly be played more often!**

*Rachel Tolmie was in conversation with Jacqueline Kent*

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# Mosman Symphony Orchestra

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## Andrew Del Riccio – Musical Director



Andrew Del Riccio holds degrees in performance from the NSW State Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, in conducting from the University of British Columbia and education from the University of Western Sydney. He has studied at the *Schola Canorum Basiliensis* in Switzerland and the Boston Conservatory, conducting master courses in the Czech Republic and in London. While completing a Masters in Opera Conducting in Canada, Andrew conducted many performances, including two seasons of *Hansel und Gretel*, and seasons of *La Finta Giardinera*, *Turandot* 127 (world premiere at Summerstock Festival), *L'histoire du Soldat*, *The Medium*, numerous premieres of student works, new music reading workshops, and student ensembles for recitals and juries.

In Australia, Andrew's conducting interests have led to the formation of ensembles including the St Peters Chamber Orchestra and The Unexpected Orchestra. He has been Musical Director of the Mosman Symphony Orchestra since 1999, conducting world premieres of works by Michiel Irik and Mathew Chilmaid with them. He has also worked with the Lane Cove Youth Symphony, North Sydney, Strathfield and Sydney University Symphony Orchestras and conducted concerts as an assistant conductor with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra.

Andrew currently teaches music at Trinity Grammar School and also has a busy private teaching practice.



## Anny Bing Xia – Concertmaster

Anny Bing Xia is a highly experienced professional violinist with an impressive record of achievements in China and Australia. After graduate studies in Shanghai Conservatorium of Music, Anny pursued the Master of Performance in Music and moved to Sydney from 1998. She was first taught by Peter Zhang, continued her studies with Alice Waten and completed her post graduate studies under Charmian Gadd at Australian Institute of Music.

Anny is actively involved as a performer with the Australia Opera and Ballet Orchestra, Australia Violin Ensemble and WIN Wollongong Symphony Orchestra (WWSO). She has recorded for ABC radio, TV shows and done solo performance recordings for the Australian Fox Studio.

As a student, Anny won numerous awards and has performed as a soloist internationally, as well as recent tour of China with Russian pianist Konstantin Shamray (a winner of the Sydney International Piano Competition) that was highly successful. She has received critical acclaim for her performance of works by Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Beethoven, Schubert and Debussy as well as special praise for her playing of the famous Chinese traditional piece *"Butterfly Lovers"*, described as '[the] sweet, soft tones of her violin sound which brings out our inner-most poetic yearnings'.



## Orchestra Musicians

*First violin:* Anny Bing Xia (concertmaster\*), Stephen Carter, Julian Dresser, Talitha Fishburn, Armine Gargrtsyan, Nicole Gillespie, Annika Herbert, Stuart Hill, Kat Jurkiewicz, Brian Lee, Johnny Lim, Shanelle McDonald, Calvin Ng, Sarah Sellars, David Trainer

*Second violin:* Emily Jones (leader), Paul Bartels, Mark Casiglia, Sarah Hatton, Melissa Lee, Daniel McNamara, Marni Ramoni, Harrison Steel, Bridget Wilcken

*Viola:* Daniel Morris (leader#), Mark Berriman, Bob Clampett, Gemma Grayson, Brett Richards, Hannah Shephard, Carl St. Jacques, Claire Whittle

*Cello:* Michal Wieczorek (leader+), Yvette Leonard, Nicole McVicar, Karly Melas

*Double bass:* Clare Cory, Sasha Cotis, Cosimo Gunaratna, Moya Molloy

*Flute:* Jacqueline Kent, Jan Squire, Linda Entwistle

*Piccolo:* Linda Entwistle

*Clarinet:* Allan Kirk, Judy Hart

*Oboe:* Adele Haythornthwaite, Cate Trebeck

*Bassoon:* Bob Chen, Graham Cormack

*French horn:* Bill Cotis, Stefan Grant, Shandian Wang

*Trumpet:* Mark Hornibrook, Will Sandwell

*Trombone:* Gregory Hanna, James Prior, Lauren Smith

*Tuba:* Gregory Moloney

*Percussion:* Lisa Beins (leader), Rufina Ismail

\*Chair of Concertmaster in memory of Carolyn Clampett

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## **Mosman Symphony Orchestra Concert Dates**

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*Thank you for your company today. We hope to see you again!*

Here are our concert dates in 2016. Please make a note for your diary ...

### **Concert 3**

**August 5 and 7**

***Brahms Violin Concerto, Polovtsian Dances & Capriccio Italian***

***Ronald Thomas – violin***

### **Concert 4**

**November 11 and 13**

***Bach Double Violin Concerto, Wagner Siegfried Idyll & Sibelius Symphony No.2***

### **Pops Concert**

**September 9 and 11**

### **Christmas Concert with Mosman Symphony Chorus**

**December 9 and 11**

***Handel's Messiah***

***Dates may change: please check our website [www.mosmanorchestra.org.au](http://www.mosmanorchestra.org.au)***

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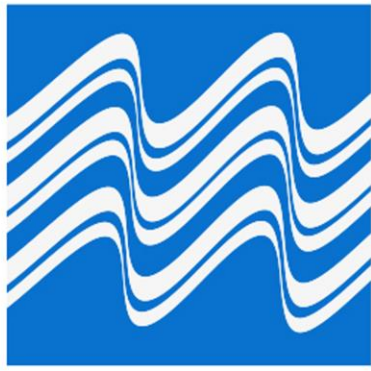
When the student is ready the teacher will appear. ZEN

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