

“Cannon Beneath Flowers”: The Passion of the Romantics



Mosman Orchestra
Andrew Del Riccio – Conductor
Tony Lee – Piano

“Chopin’s works are cannon buried under flowers”
– Robert Schumann 1836

Bellini: Overture to Norma
Chopin: Piano Concerto no 1
Dvorak: Symphony no 5

Friday 30th April at 8.00pm
Sunday 2nd May at 2.30pm
Mosman Art Gallery
cnr Art Gallery Way & Myahgah Road

Message from the Musical Director



Welcome to Mosman Orchestra's second concert program for 2010.

Big works, but with a hint of gentleness to them. Or is it gentle works with a hint of steel?

It's these dramas that start the concert, with the overture to Norma, drama that carries on through Chopin's Piano Concerto and still more drama that finishes us off with Dvorak's 5th Symphony. Bellini's overture sets the stage for the excitement and passion of his dramatic opera Norma, and does the

same service for us today – albeit setting the scene for Chopin's piano concerto. Tony Lee is a wonderfully expressive pianist, with a fluid lyrical touch who brings this work to life. Each time I hear the piece I hear something new, something that grabs my attention, taking me in a new direction. I hope you experience the same freshness.

After the interval, we present Dvorak's 5th symphony. Also known as the third and eighth (to be somewhat confusing) this is where we see yet more steel beneath a veil of beautifully melodic music. From the opening fanfare, played by clarinets, there is an air of expectation: *something* is going to happen. The beauty of the symphony is that this something does happen – again and again, be it an unexpected melody from trombone, a timpanistic viola line, to a gentle accompaniment figure from trumpets, there is an aspect of anticipation that is quite charming, but at the same time full of a drive that hints at the same hidden steel.

For our second concert series this year, we have again placed the orchestra at the 'rear' of the hall, which is in fact the 'front' originally. This does mean that lighting is somewhat problematic, and we are attempting to reflect light so the players of the orchestra can see their music. We do apologise if you too are getting some additional lighting directed at you. We hope that by our next concert, there will be additional lights in place.

As usual, we invite everyone to stay after the concert and mingle with the orchestra. Please enjoy a glass of champagne and nibbles. As you chat, you'll find out what we are intending for the rest of the year and into the future. I hope you'll join us for our next concerts and enjoy today's performance.

Notes on the Program

Overture to *Norma* - Vincenzo Bellini (1801-1835)

Vincenzo Bellini is most widely known for his contribution to the development of the Italian Romantic Musical language and for bringing *bel canto* ("beautiful singing") opera into popularity.

Bellini's operas *La sonnambula* and *Norma*, both completed in 1831 at the peak of his career, placed Bellini in the forefront of popularity in his homeland and in 1833 his popularity had spread throughout Europe and into America.

Norma marked the climax of the *bel canto* era. The operas of Giuseppe Verdi would lead the art form to a new level of 'music drama'. Yet the beauty of Bellini's arias and ensembles would leave a lasting mark on operatic history.

The first performance of *Norma* was given in Milan on December 26, 1831. The libretto was written by Felice Romani, who collaborated with Bellini on all his most successful operas.

The action takes place in Ancient Gaul after its invasion by the Romans. Norma, chief of the Druid priestesses, has broken her sacred vows and entered into a marriage with a Roman officer, Pollione. Pollione's passion for her has cooled and has taken a lover, a young priestess named Adalgisa. The story weaves betrayal and forgiveness around the triangle, but the greatness of Norma's character finally wins back Pollione's love, although their reunion ends with both their deaths.

The drama of Bellini's overture to *Norma* reminds us that this is a war opera, sounding a call to arms to the ancient Gauls who are hoping to throw off the Roman yoke. However, the contrast between those stern opening chords and the scurrying strings is just as much a musical image of the battle that's raging in Norma's heart as of her people preparing to liberate Gaul. The penultimate slow passage, with a sweetly ascending theme on the strings, adds a pathos to this overture.

Concerto No.1 in E minor, Op.11 - Frédéric Chopin

- I. *Allegro maestoso*
- II. *Romance - Larghetto*
- III. *Rondo – Vivace*

The Piano Concerto No. 1 in E minor by the Polish composer Frédéric Chopin was the first of his two piano concertos to be published, and was therefore given the designation of *Piano Concerto No. 1* at the time

of publication, even though it was actually written immediately after what was later published as *Piano Concerto No. 2*, in F minor, Opus 21.

Chopin was aged between nineteen and twenty at the time of writing these concertos, in which he achieved a remarkable maturity. Along with a handful of other somewhat less ambitious works from his youth, they comprise the whole of the composer's *concertante* output for soloist with orchestra.

They are written in the style of the *concert brillant*, a genre that was fashionable during Chopin's youth, and characterised by great bravura, brilliance and technical display, as well as having tuneful, sentimental themes. Concertos of this type for piano and orchestra were written by the leading pianists of those times, including Hummel, Weber, Moscheles, Field and Kalkbrenner (to whom the E minor Concerto was dedicated).

The two concertos are without doubt the most beautiful examples of the *concert brillant* convention. The personal, individual style of the young composer was fully manifest for the first time in the concertos, which - without ceasing to be *brillant* - are above all Romantic, poetic, youthfully ardent and fresh, written during the period of Chopin's first love for Konstancja Gładkowska.

The *E minor Concerto* – written later than the *F minor* by around half a year, is written with great pianistic sparkle and panache. In its general conception it is similar to its predecessor.

It adheres in general formal outline to the classical concerto model: the first movement is a sonata form, the second is a section in a slower tempo, and the third takes the form of a quick-moving rondo. It is the virtuosic and richly ornamented piano part that dominates, against the limited role of the orchestra.

The concerto's opening *allegro* begins with a stately, *polonaise*-like first theme and a gentle *cantilena* of a second theme in the parallel major.

Chopin wrote of the second movement: "*The Adagio of the new concerto is in E major. It is not meant to be powerful, but rather romantic, quiet, melancholic, should give the impression of a look back at a thousand loveable memories. It is like meditating in beautiful springtime, at moonlight.*"

The rousing *rondo* finale is characteristic of the *krakowiak*, a Polish folk dance - here treated with exceptional virtuosic bravura.

Chopin performed both his concertos in public shortly after their completion, at the *Teatr Narodowy* in Warsaw, in 1830.

I N T E R V A L

Symphony No. 5 in F major, Op. 76, B. 54 – Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

1. *Allegro ma non troppo*
2. *Andante con moto, attacca:*
3. *Andante con moto, quasi l'istesso tempo - Allegro scherzando*
4. *Finale: Allegro molto*

During Dvořák's life only five of his symphonies were widely known. The first to be published, in 1880, was his Sixth. This was the symphony that made Dvořák internationally known in his lifetime as a symphonic composer. After his death, research uncovered four unpublished symphonies, of which the manuscript of the first had even been lost to the composer himself.

The first two of these owe much in form and style to Schubert and Beethoven, while the Third and Fourth clearly show the sudden and profound impact of his recent acquaintance with the music of Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt

Dvorák's Fifth Symphony can be considered a milestone work. The 33-year-old Czech composer, making slow progress in his native Bohemia, gained wider recognition within the Austro-Hungarian empire and beyond in February 1875 when he received the Austrian State Music Prize. The award spurred Dvorák into action. In swift succession, he wrote his *Serenade* and *Nocturne*, majestic works for string ensemble, and *the Fifth Symphony in F major*.

Brahms, one of the judges of the Austrian State Music Prize, clearly admired Dvorák's developing musical style, which owed a good deal to the German composer's example. Largely thanks to Brahms, Dvorák gained a publisher and a new audience.

The Symphony No. 5 received its debut in Prague on March 25, 1879, with Adolf Cech conducting. It was subsequently dedicated to Hans von Bülow, who was a tireless advocate of the composer's symphonic works.

It had to wait almost nine years from the time of its Prague premiere in 1879 to appear in print. The work, as revised for publication, almost certainly made its concert debut at London's Crystal Palace on 7 April 1888. During the 1920s, Donald Francis Tovey noted the pastoral mood of much of the symphony in an influential programme that helped preserve interest in a work that might easily have disappeared beneath

the shadow of Dvorák's famous final symphonies. Above all, Tovey and others have heaped praise on the Fifth Symphony's tempestuous finale. "It causes the symphony to go out like a lion after coming in like a lamb to the slaughter," observed one critic.

The Symphony opens in a leisurely manner with an arpeggiated theme for two clarinets; this opening idea returns to dominate the development section, and the movement closes with a peaceful coda.

The *Andante con moto* is dominated by a plaintive, melancholy cello theme that is reminiscent of the opening of Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto. Dvorák continuously varies this tune, toying with the opening figure and deriving new accompaniment figures from it. Without pause, the music moves into a transition to the *Scherzo*, a vivacious, colourfully scored movement full of delightfully unexpected contrasts.

The *Finale* begins in the "wrong" key of A minor; when the music finally moves to the tonic key of F major, the effect is striking and dramatic. Reminiscences of the opening theme of the first movement conclude the *Finale*.

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Please join us after the concert for refreshments

Don't miss Mosman Orchestra's next concerts!

Friday 2nd July 8.00pm & Sunday 4th July 2.30pm

With guest conductor Mark Brown

Verdi – Overture to Nabucco

**Weber – Bassoon Concerto in F major featuring Bob Chen,
Bassoon**

Tchaikovsky – Symphony #1 "Winter Dreams"

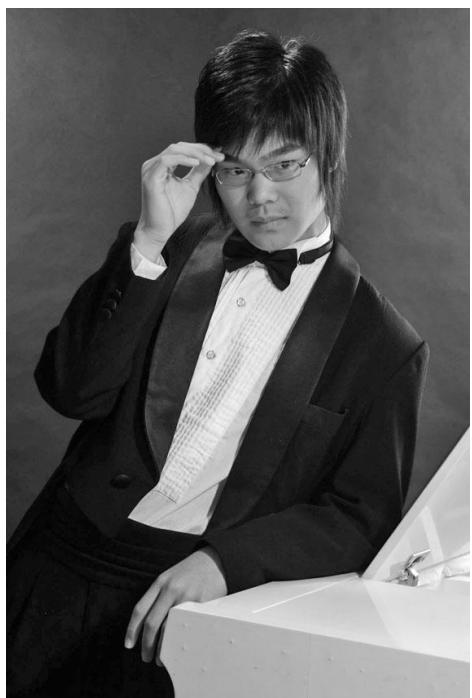
Andrew Del Riccio - Music Director, Mosman Orchestra

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 (Canada) and in Education from the University of Western Sydney. He has received scholarships that enabled him to study at the *Schola Cantorum Basiliensis* in Switzerland, The Boston Conservatory, and conducting master courses in the Czech Republic and in London.

Andrew has performed with many of Sydney's leading ensembles including the *Sydney Symphony* and *Opera Australia*, as well as founding the *Blues Point Brass Quintet* and a heraldic trumpet ensemble. His conducting interests have led to the formation of ensembles in Australia and Canada. With the *Mosman Orchestra* Andrew has conducted world premieres of works by Michiel Irik and Mathew Chilmaid. Recently, he has worked with the *UNSW orchestra & Concert Band*, *Lane Cove Youth*, *Strathfield* and *North Sydney SOs* and directed concerts as an assistant conductor with the *Willoughby Symphony Orchestra*.

Andrew currently teaches at Trinity Grammar School, has a busy private teaching practice. He performs with the WIN-Wollongong Symphony Orchestra as principal trumpet is also heavily involved in scuba diving, actively researching wrecks of the New South Wales coast as a part of *The Sydney Project*.

Tony Lee



Tony Lee was born in Sydney and began piano studies at the age of 5. He has performed in festivals and won competitions in various countries including Australia, China, England, Germany, Russia and the USA. Professional training began in 2004, with the 'Young Aims' Program, studying with V Makarov and A Koltakov. Tony also achieved his A Mus A diploma that year.

In 2005 Tony won the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra Concerto competition, performing Grieg's Piano Concerto at the Ravenswood Centenary Centre Auditorium. Later that year he was named Gold Medallist and Special Prize winner (classical composition) of the 2nd Louise Henriette

International Piano Competition - Oranienburg, Germany.

In 2006 he entered the Australian National Academy of Music studying with R Reichman and T Young and was invited to participate at the Oxford International Piano Festival in England. In 2007, Tony was accepted into the Central Music School of the Moscow Conservatoire in the class of Professor Anatol Ryabov. Performances followed at the Arbat Concert Hall, Rachmaninov Hall, Philharmonic Concert Hall of Samara and at the prestigious Kremlin Palace in Moscow.

Tony continued his studies with K Makarova at the Australian Institute of Music and currently studies at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with Paul Rickard Ford.

Mosman Orchestra

First Violin: Cameron Hough (concertmaster), Kathryn Crossing, Mana Gharun, Beres Lindsay, Calvin Ng, Sarah Sellars, Kirsten Siegmann

Second Violin: Chris Gleeson, Denis Brown, Julian Dresser, Brett Richards, Mark Berriman

Viola: Marjorie Hystek, Bob Clampett, Samuel Loukas, Vicki Sifniotis

Cello: Megan Corlette, Rufina Ismail, Yvette Leonard, Danny Morris

Double Bass: Trevor Dalziell, Mark Szeto

Flute: Linda Entwistle, Jacqueline Kent, Carolyn Thornely

Piccolo: Linda Entwistle

Oboe: Cate Trebeck, Val Densmore

Clarinet: Danika Allars, Patrick Musgrave

Bassoon: Bob Chen, Graham Cormack

French Horn: Claire Cameron, Louisa Long, Rana Wood

Trumpet: Jarrah Coleman-Hughes, Kate Wilson

Trombone: Greg Hanna, Hanno Klein, Lauren Smith

Tuba: Paul Touyz

Percussion: Graham Ball, Oswyn Brent

Visit Mosman Orchestra in Cyberspace!

Our website has lots of information about the orchestra and upcoming concerts, but did you know that you can also have fun with it too? Have a look at our Children's corner for activities such as colouring in and a quiz, a link to us on YouTube, and photos taken of us by members of the Mosman Camera Club.

www.mosmanorchestra.org.au

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