

Mosman Symphony Orchestra

Andrew Del Riccio: musical director

Christopher Kinda: violin



Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto
Brahms: Symphony no. 1

November 2015
Mosman Art Gallery

Mosman Symphony Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the support of:



Audi
Centre Mosman

Message from the Musical Director



Hello and thank you for being here and reading our program, at this (almost) final concert season for the year. 2015 has been a stellar year for Mosman Symphony Orchestra and we hope to be ending the year with a bang!

We close the year at the Mosman Art Gallery with the Tchaikovsky violin concerto and Brahms's first symphony, two very special works that constitute a pinnacle of nineteenth-century music. They are so well known and popular that I need hardly say much more about them.

I have wanted to perform these works with the orchestra for a long time, and I am delighted to welcome to the stage Christopher Kinda as the soloist in the Tchaikovsky. His agreement to perform this work is great news for us all, and I hope we keep hearing much of him, in the future.

We are having a Christmas concert this year – a community concert on December 4 at Mosman High School. The orchestra will perform the sublime Faure Requiem with the Mosman Symphony Chorus and soloists including Jenny Liu and Tristan Entwistle. Of course Christmas is not Christmas without some carols, so we will be performing some spectacular settings of carols as well as a community sing along of some old favourites. Please join us for a seasonal celebration to mark the end of the year.

2016 is shaping up to be another exciting year. We will be bringing you symphonies by Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, concerti by Donizetti, Rachmaninov and Bach as well as works by Wagner, Mozart and Handel. It will be a cornucopia of dazzling music making. Please look out for our dates in this program.

Notes on the Program

Violin Concerto in D major by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)



I Allegro moderato

II Canzonetta: Andante

III Finale: Allegro vivacissimo

When he came to write his only violin concerto in 1878, Tchaikovsky was in a bad way. Indeed, he was suffering from depression, caused by his disastrous marriage to Antonini Ivanova Milioukov, a former student of his who was obsessed with him. He had married her because he felt he needed a wife for the sake of his career. Considering Tchaikovsky's

sexual orientation, the marriage was, not surprisingly, a total disaster. After only a few weeks, he arranged to send his wife to Moscow while he fled to other cities. However, he could not ignore her forever, and they met again in Moscow. As a result Tchaikovsky became so depressed that he plunged into an icy river, hoping to catch fatal pneumonia. When this failed, he consulted a doctor in St Petersburg, where a doctor recommended divorce and a change of scenery. And so Tchaikovsky travelled around Europe for a while, eventually settling in the Swiss resort town of Clarens. His unfortunate wife has disappeared from history: rightly or wrongly, she is now remembered simply as a melancholy footnote to Tchaikovsky's life.

In Clarens Tchaikovsky was joined by the violinist Josif Kotek, one of his composition students, who had been studying in Berlin with Joseph Joachim (later famous as a close collaborator with Brahms). They played piano and violin duets together, including an arrangement of Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole*. Some musicologists think this work could have inspired the composition of the concerto, and Tchaikovsky's comments about the Lalo work in a letter to his patroness Nadezhda von Meck also apply to the concerto he was about to write: 'It has a lot of freshness, lightness, of piquant rhythms, of beautiful and excellently harmonized melodies ... [Lalo] does not strive for profundity, but he carefully avoids routine, seems out new forms and thinks more about musical beauty than about observing established traditions.'

Tchaikovsky, fired with enthusiasm, wrote to von Meck that he could not resist the pleasure of sketching out the concerto. He completed it within a month, including a complete rewrite of the second movement.

The concerto follows a typical pattern, with a fast movement, then a slow movement and a fast finale. The first movement starts with a quiet string melody before building up to introduce the solo violin, which plays the main theme. We then hear the second theme, followed by a repeat of the main theme by the whole orchestra. The soloist then performs variations on that theme, followed by an extraordinary cadenza in which the soloist shows off his expertise in several different and imaginative ways, extending both themes. The second theme is repeated before a lively section that concludes the movement.

The second movement, which Tchaikovsky rewrote from scratch after realizing that it did not really fit the rest of the concerto, is short and very lyrical, filled with nostalgia and warmth. It forms a beautiful bridge between the second and third movements.

In the finale, Tchaikovsky uses folk music themes in a fiery and imaginative way, including dazzling pyrotechnics from the soloist, and the movement comes to a triumphant conclusion.

Since Tchaikovsky was not a violinist, he sought his friend Kotek's advice on completing the solo part. Tchaikovsky was very grateful to Kotek, but avoided dedicating the concerto to him because of almost certain gossip about their relationship.

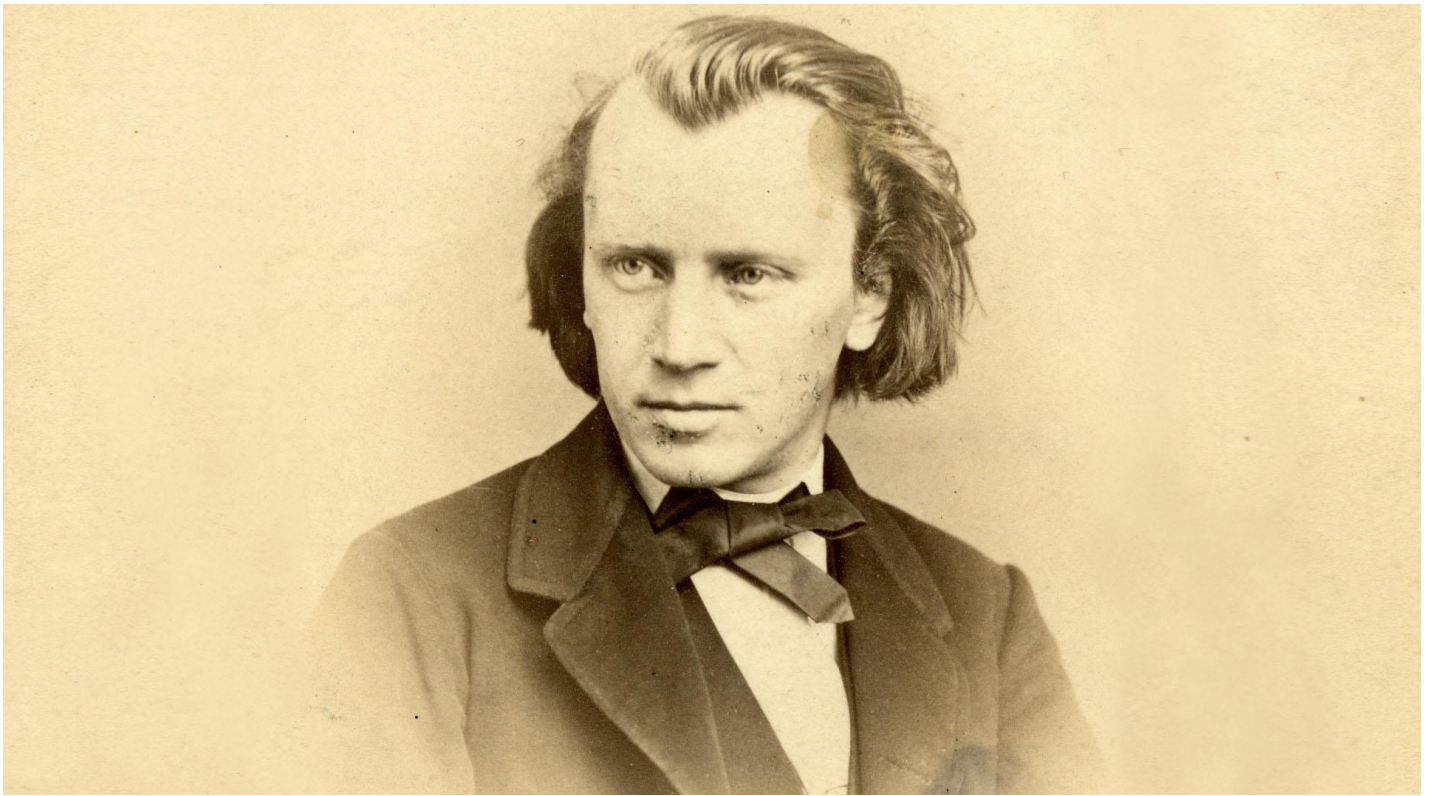
As it happened, their friendship cooled dramatically, partly because Kotek couldn't play the concerto; he told Tchaikovsky that he thought it would be poorly received and would damage his own budding career. Tchaikovsky dedicated the work to the violinist Leopold Auer, who ungraciously refused to perform it too, thinking that some parts of the work were, in his words, 'not suited to the character of the instrument and that, however perfectly rendered, they would not sound as well as the composer had imagined'. The premiere, planned for March 1879, had to be cancelled and a new soloist found.

The concerto is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets in A and B flat, two bassoons, four horns in F, two trumpets in D, timpani and strings. The first performance was eventually given by Adolph Brodsky in December 1881 in Vienna, to mixed reviews. The most hostile called it 'long and pretentious' saying that it 'brought us face to face with the revolting thought that music can exist which stinks to the ear', and that 'the violin was not played but beaten black and blue'. Like most artists who have received bad notices, Tchaikovsky brooded over this to the point that he eventually memorised it.

Very fortunately, the critic was quickly proved wrong and Tchaikovsky was vindicated. Violinists continued to play the concerto, audiences acclaimed it, and now it is one of the most loved violin concertos ever written.

INTERVAL

Symphony No 1 in C minor by Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)



I Un poco sostenuto – Allegro – Meno allegro

II Andante sostenuto

III Un poco allegretto e grazioso

IV Adagio – Piu andante – Allegro non troppo ma con brio

Johannes Brahms is one of the giants of nineteenth-century music. Born in Hamburg into a Lutheran family, he spent most of his professional life in Vienna. His popularity and influence were considerable during his lifetime, and he is sometimes grouped with Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven as one of the 'three Bs', a comment originally made by the conductor Hans von Bulow and adopted by musicologists and teachers.

He composed for piano, chamber ensembles, symphony orchestra, and for voice and chorus and, as a virtuoso pianist he premiered many of his own works. Brahms is often considered both a traditionalist and an innovator. His music takes its structures and techniques from the baroque and classical masters. As a composer, Brahms was always

very conscious of the German tradition, especially the work of Haydn, Mozart, Bach and Beethoven. All his life he wanted to honour their 'purity', while at the same time creating new approaches to musical forms. It is the tension between classical form and his romantic sensibility, expressed in innovative techniques in harmony and melody, which have earned Brahms his place in Western music; his diligent, highly constructed works inspired a generation of composers.

When Brahms was only twenty Robert Schumann, amazed by the young man's talent, published a famous article hailing him as a genius and declaring that he was 'destined to give ideal expression to the times'. At the time Brahms had composed and published a number of piano works, but little more. After the praise from Schumann, people expected Brahms to write a symphony. Brahms, in a panic, replied to Schumann that his praise 'will arouse such extraordinary expectations ... that I don't know how I can begin to fulfil them.'

Brahms must have felt that Schumann had done him no favours. He was an extremely self-critical, severely perfectionist composer at the best of times. During his career he destroyed many early works, including a violin sonata he had performed, and once claimed to have torn up twenty string quartets before publishing the work that became his official first quartet. He composed large sections of a symphony in D minor, but abandoned it before recasting it as his first piano concerto. But he was determined to try and live up to Schumann's imprimatur, and to his own sense of destiny as a composer, and to write a symphony that would be worthy of the times.

This imperative effectively paralysed him as a symphonic composer for years. As well as the expectations that Schumann had placed upon his shoulders, he had Beethoven's legacy to reckon with. He venerated Beethoven; a marble bust of the composer held pride of place above his desk as he worked. 'You have no idea how it is for the likes of us to feel the tread of a giant like him behind us!' he wrote to a friend in despair.

Brahms wanted to be absolutely certain that he could write something noble enough to honour Beethoven's memory and to live up to his own growing reputation. He spent time on other works and eventually, when he was in his forties, he had become a reasonably well known composer – largely because of his German Requiem and his chamber music. He kept worrying away at his first symphony, however, and eventually it was ready for

performance. He declared that from first sketches to finishing touches it had taken him twenty-one years to complete.

The symphony was first performed in Karlsruhe on 4 December 1875, when the composer was in his forties. It was acclaimed as a masterpiece, with audiences and critics recognising him as the successor to Beethoven. Some critics even started calling it 'Beethoven's Tenth': to Brahms this was high praise indeed.

The first symphony does express deliberate homage to Beethoven. It has a classical sense of form and order, which led his contemporaries to see him as the champion of traditional forms. Like Beethoven's Symphony No 5, it begins in the key of C minor and ends in C major. The strings and timpani at the end of the first movement sound out a rhythm which is like the 'fate' motif in Beethoven's Symphony No 5. Brahms followed Beethoven's example by making the fourth movement the most spectacular, with the main theme reminiscent of the last movement in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. (When critics smugly pointed this out, Brahms responded: 'Any ass can see that!')

However, in very important ways it differs dramatically from anything Beethoven wrote. This is a thoroughly revolutionary composition, for Brahms was trying to write a symphony that would have the multidimensional splendor of a Bach fugue with the energy of a large-scale orchestral work. His textures are defined not by Beethoven's use of clearly identifiable musical themes and their development, not single musical thoughts or melodies played consecutively, but by a network of interrelated musical ideas, all happening simultaneously.

Uniquely in Brahms's symphonies, the First has a formal introduction, a richly chromatic counterpoint that has been compared to the opening of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*. Syncopated rhythms are emphasized by timpani, woodwinds and pizzicato strings, playing with thematic phrases. The movement features rising and descending melodic lines, often in counterpoint, simultaneously pitted against each other. The overall mood of the movement is highly energetic.

In the second and third movements, Brahms sidesteps polyphony in favour of flowing and lyrical themes. The second movement is gentle and peaceful, with a beautiful violin solo towards the end. In the third movement, the shortest of the four and written in ternary form (ABA), Brahms rejects the traditional energetic scherzo in favour of music that is both sweet and light. Both these movements are reflective and thoughtful, with Brahms focusing on working out his musical material rather than using his resources of harmony and counterpoint to be dramatically expressive.

The finale is the longest movement and the most strikingly dramatic. It begins with a slow, dark and impressionistic Adagio in a minor key which one commentator has described as 'akin to the process of thought itself'. But the sun breaks through the melodic clouds with a beautiful horn call in C major – transcribed by Brahms from the alphorns of Switzerland – which heralds the trajectory of the rest of the movement. This is followed by a dynamic theme, the one that has been compared to Beethoven. There is a moment of tension and release when the horn call returns, now harmonized by a dissonant chord, then the music moves for a major key. The very end features what is probably the most triumphantly music Brahms ever composed for an orchestra. Heroic without a hint of bombast, it underlines Brahms's achievement in re-forging the symphony for the late nineteenth century.

Please join us after the concert for refreshments

Christopher Kinda in conversation with Jacqueline Kent



You were born in Katowice, Poland and your parents and your elder brother Greg are all pianists. You took up the violin at the age of six. Why the violin?

Well, my parents thought that three pianists in the family were enough, and the violin was the next option. It also has the advantage that, whereas two pianists might compete against each other, a violin and piano complement each other perfectly.

Your family emigrated to Australia in 1983, and then you spent four years in Papua New Guinea. Were you able to continue your studies?

My father was transferred to PNG for his company. Living there was a very interesting experience, and I gained a lot from it – but no, I wasn't able to continue playing the violin because we couldn't find a teacher for me. When we came back to Poland a few years later, I pretty much had to start again from open strings, and almost literally from scratch! But fortunately because I was quite young I picked it up again quickly.

You went back to Poland for your secondary music studies, and then in 1999 and 2000 studied violin at the Norwegian Academy in Oslo. Who were your teachers?

At the Academy Isaac Schuldman really developed my deep sound. He himself had studied under David Oistrakh and Henryk Szeryng. My other teacher, Piotr Janowski, had studied under Jascha Heifetz. So I was very lucky to have the opportunity for such a rich education.

The Tchaikovsky violin concerto is regarded as one of the most difficult in the violin repertoire. Why is it so special? Do you have a particular love for it?

That's true, it is very difficult. According to Itzhak Perlman, it's the most difficult of all to play. But it is the essence of Russian music, the challenge is exciting, and I'm looking forward to performing it.

Mosman Symphony Orchestra

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, Nicole Gillespie, Annika Herbert, Johnny Lim, Beres Lindsay, Calvin Ng, Sarah Sellars, David Trainer

Second Violin: Emily Jones (leader), Paul Bartels, Lucy Braude, Mark Casiglia, Margaret Duncan, Sarah Hatton, Daniel McNamara, Nicole McVicar, Meryl Rahme, Kate Robertson, Bridget Wilcken

Viola: Daniel Morris (leader#), Mark Berriman, Bob Clampett, Gemma Grayson, Jane Hazelwood, Brett Richards, Hannah Shephard, Carl St Jacques, Clare Whittle

Cello: Michal Wieczorek (leader+), Christina Kim, Yvette Leonard, Ian Macourt, Nicole McVicar, Karly Melas

Double Bass: Clare Cory, Cosimo Gunaratna, Moya Molloy, Amanda Stead

Flute: Linda Entwistle, Jacqueline Kent

Oboe: Kim d'Espiney, Cate Trebeck

Clarinet: Judy Hart, Allan Kirk

Bassoon: Bob Chen, Graham Cormack

French Horn: Stefan Grant, Chika Migitaka, Hiroaki Migitaka, Rafael Salgado

Trumpet: Mark Hornibrook, William Sandwell

Trombone: Greg Hanna, Jayson McBride, Tim Robbins

Percussion: Lisa Beins, Rufina Ismail

*Chair of Concertmaster in memory of Carolyn Clampett

Chair of Principal Viola sponsored by Audi Centre, Mosman

+ Chair of Principal Cello sponsored by Smiling Smiles Orthodontics, Mosman

Patron: Dr John Yu

Mosman Symphony Orchestra Concert Dates

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

Our next concert ...

4 December 2015 – Christmas Concert: Fauré Requiem and Christmas carols at Mosman High School.

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

Concert 1

11 and 13 March

Concert 2

20 and 22 May

Concert 3

5 and 7 August

Concert 4

11 and 13 November

Pops Concert

9 and 11 September

Christmas Choral Concert

9 and 11 December

Dates may change: please check our website www.mosmanorchestra.org.au

If you would like to receive information about our concerts by email please contact us at publicity@mosmanorchestra.org.au and we will be happy to add you to our mailing list.

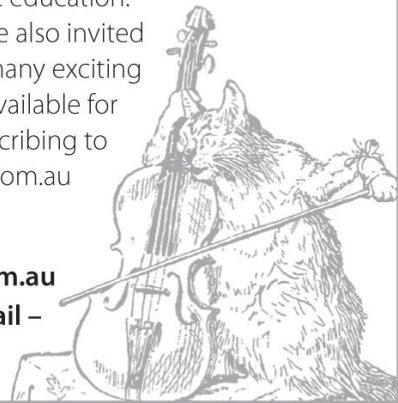
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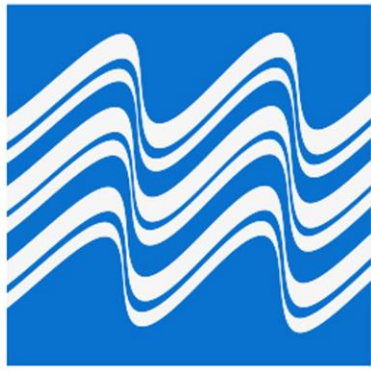
When the student is ready the teacher will appear. ZEN

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