

Northern Lights



Mosman Symphony Orchestra

Andrew Del Riccio - musical director

Anny Bing Xia & Armine Gargrtsyan - violins

BACH Double Violin Concerto

WAGNER Siegfried Idyll

SIBELIUS Symphony No. 2

Mosman Art Gallery

Friday Nov 11 at 8pm

Sunday Nov 13 at 2.30pm

\$25 | \$20 Student/Pensioner | U16 free admission
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Message from the Musical Director Andrew Del Riccio



Spring is well and truly sprung, so as I write this welcome to our fifth concert program for 2016, I am wondering whether we will have blistering heat or a torrential downpour to accompany this exciting program. Whatever the weather is doing, I hope you find this concert as captivating and varied as I do.

Mosman Symphony Orchestra is blessed to have many outstanding musicians in its ranks and it is only natural that we proudly feature such talented players in our concerts. Anny and Armine, our soloists today, have delighted audiences as concertmasters, and our audience has frequently seen Anny as a soloist, whether in the *Butterfly*

Lovers violin concerto, recreating Itzhak Perlman's solos from the movie *Schindler's List* or playing solo sections within the orchestra. While this is the first time Armine has appeared as a soloist with us, she has provided wonderful leadership in our concerts and is a well known and highly respected musician. Their performance of *Bach's Double Violin Concerto* will not only show their talents but give us all 'music for the soul', as one of the orchestra's more poetic members has said.

We follow this with a total contrast – including quite a bit of furniture rearranging – in the music of Richard Wagner. This is not the over-the-top, larger-than-life operatic music we usually associate with this composer, but the rather tender, introverted and reflective *Siegfried Idyll*, written for his wife as a birthday present after the birth of their son. Who would have thought Wagner was so romantic? To end the concert, we present yet another means of conveying musical thought: the second symphony of Sibelius. The challenges of this work, the deep emotions and sometimes arctic winds that seem to blow through his melodies round out a program that is full of unpredictable contrast: rather like Sydney spring itself.

With such varied music, we trust you will be on the edge of your seats for the whole concert, whatever the weather may be. And I conclude by saying that elsewhere in the program we have the concert dates for 2017. Make a note for the diary, and we look forward to seeing you next year!

Andrew Del Riccio – musical director

Notes on the Program

Double Concerto for 2 Violins in D Minor BWV 1043 by J.S. Bach (1685-1750)



I Vivace

II Largo ma non tanto

III Allegro

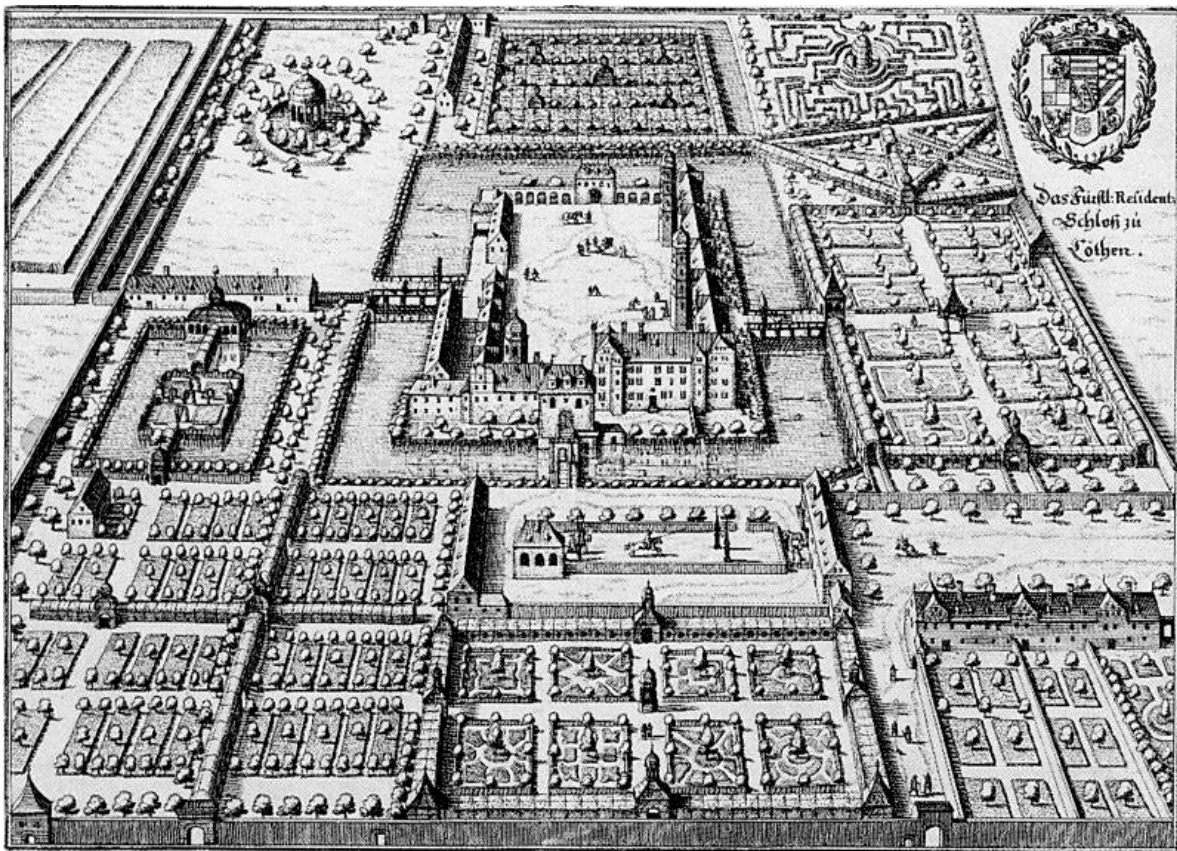
This concerto for two violins, strings and basso continuo is one of Bach's most beloved and famous works. It is considered among the best musical examples of the Baroque period and has been recorded by all the great violinists. Characteristic of the work is the subtle and expressive relationship between the violins throughout, as well as the use of intricate fugal imitation and counterpoint.

Like most of Bach's concertos, including the six Brandenburgs, it was composed between 1717

and 1723, when Bach was court organist and director of the orchestra for Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cothen. This was a happy, productive period for Bach, and one of the terms of his employment was to concentrate on music for various instrumental ensembles. He quickly endorsed his employer's enthusiasm for the latest musical fad, the Italian-style concerto as typified by Vivaldi. The older German version of this had four movements, but Bach quickly adopted the Italian three-movement fast-slow-fast structure, as he has done here. The 'Bach Double' is unique among the many compositions he wrote for the eighteen-piece Court band because it explored the possibilities of using two solo instruments.

As well as being a highly accomplished organist and conductor, Bach was a talented violinist who had, according to the critic Albert Schweitzer, 'learned from Vivaldi the perfect violin technique, the art of writing "singably".' Indeed, it is Vivaldi who is probably the moving spirit behind all Bach's violin concertos. Bach had already paid the Venetian master the compliment of transcribing a number of his published concertos for solo keyboard. However, Bach's violin concertos, including this one, are not Vivaldi-like showpieces of brilliant virtuosity. Rather, like the others, this is an intricate dialogue between orchestra and soloists. In this case the solo violins are very much first among equals, not always taking the limelight but adding to the overall texture of the music.

The concerto opens with a fugue, each violin answering the other, rapidly alternating the melody line; each carries a different tune, yet their melodies are so closely intertwined that they are inseparable, their combined voices much greater than the sum of their parts. The slow movement is particularly subtle in intention; the dialogue of the two violins – almost an operatic aria for separate voices -- reduces the orchestra to the background providing harmony and rhythm. This slow movement is in effect the still point of gravity of the entire work, for the two fast movements are much more conventional. However, the final movement is architectural in scope; the writing is so complex that following the individual violins is not an easy task.



The schloss in Anhalt-Cöthen

Siegfried Idyll by Richard Wagner (1813-1883)



Richard and Cosima photographed in 1872

On Christmas morning 1870, the day on which her birthday was to be celebrated Cosima Wagner, the second wife of Richard Wagner and daughter of Franz Liszt, awoke to the sound of music: 'As I awoke, my ear caught a sound, which swelled fuller and fuller, no longer could I imagine myself to be dreaming: music was sounding, and such music! When it died away, Richard came into my room with the children and offered me the score of this symphonic birthday poem. I was in tears, but so were the rest of the household. Richard had arranged his orchestra on the staircase, and thus was our Tribschen consecrated forever.'

This grand gesture and musical love letter was Wagner's orchestral poem known as the *Siegfried Idyll*. The original ensemble included two violins, one viola, one cello, a double bass, a flute, an oboe, two clarinets,

two horns, a trumpet and a bassoon. Despite the limited number of instruments, Wagner managed to create beautiful shades of tone by artfully combining various sounds.

The piece was originally called 'Tribschen-Idyll with Fidi-Birdsong and Orange Sunrise, as symphonic birthday greeting. Presented to his Cosima by her Richard.' Tribschen is the name of the villa near Lucerne, Switzerland, where Wagner and Cosima were living, and Fidi was the pet name of Siegfried, their small son. The 'orange sunrise' referred to the way the sunrise lit up the orange wallpaper on the morning of Siegfried's birth. The piece is generally considered to have confirmed the domestic bliss enjoyed by Wagner and Cosima, since they had not been able to marry before 25 August that year after two years of living with each other.

Cosima treasured the piece and so she was somewhat miffed when in 1878 her husband revised the score for a larger orchestra, retitled it and sold it to the publisher B. Schott; Wagner was, as usual, struggling under the burden of debt. Cosima acidly noted in her diary that 'the secret treasure is to become public property'. Wagner had already used some of the material in his opera *Siegfried* a couple of years before, especially the horn motif and the melody of the forest bird as well as the major love theme.

The piece can be viewed as a modified sonata form, though Wagner plays around with the rules more than once. The principal theme was the one Wagner used for the opera *Siegfried*, but the second theme is a lullaby. Wagner originally noted it down on New Year's Eve 1868, written for his son-to-be, Siegfried, who was born six months later. The third theme was also used in the opera.

INTERVAL

Symphony No 2 in D major, Op 43 by Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)



Jean Sibelius 1903 – sketch by Albert Engström

I Allegretto

II Tempo andante, ma rubato

III Vivacissimo

IV Finale

Early in 1901 Baron Axel Carpelan, who had given Sibelius's most famous tone poem its name of *Finlandia*, wrote to the composer. 'You have been sitting at home for quite a while, Mr Sibelius, it is high time for you to travel. You will spend the late autumn and the winter in Italy, a country where one learns cantabile, balance and harmony, plasticity and symmetry of lines, a country where everything is beautiful, even the ugly. You remember what Italy meant for Tchaikovsky's development and for Richard Strauss.'

Carpelan was right about Italy's influence on northern artists: Goethe frequently travelled there, Mendelssohn entitled his most cheerful symphonic work the *Italian Symphony*, Berlioz toured Italy and ended up staying fifteen months, with his symphonic poem *Harold In Italy* as a souvenir. Wagner claimed the idea for the opening of his opera *Das Rheingold* came to him in La Spezia on the western sea coast. And of course Tchaikovsky fled to Italy with a broken heart and came back with *Capriccio Italien*, some of the most serene music he ever wrote.

Possibly with these predecessors in mind, Sibelius went to Italy in 1901. Carpelan managed to raise enough money for him to stay in a mountain villa near the sunny town of Rapallo in northern Italy. Whether inspired by his friend's solicitude or by the beauties of the countryside, Sibelius started writing his second symphony. Unlike so much of his previous music he did not think of his Finnish homeland, and instead contemplated a work based on Dante's *Divine Comedy*. He also toyed with the idea of a four-movement tone poem based on a theme of Mozart's from *Don Giovanni*. Little came of these ideas. However, Sibelius fell in love with Italy – he later his love for the country was second only to Finland – and his extended stay did have a profound effect on him. According to his notebooks, some ideas conceived in Rapallo feature throughout his Second Symphony.

For Sibelius, the symphony was the most important vehicle for his musical thoughts. He was writing at a time when the form was not popular among most of his contemporaries. Though Strauss, Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Bartok all wrote symphonies of various kinds, their best known and most original work embraced other forms. When Sibelius met Gustav Mahler – the only contemporary of Sibelius whose symphonies are played today – he said that he admired the symphony's severity and style and 'the profound logic that created an inner connection between all the motifs'.

His Second Symphony is a bold, unconventional work. Like much of Sibelius's later symphonic writing, it makes something whole and musically compelling out of themes that seem scrappy at first. As he wrote, 'It is as if the Almighty had thrown down the pieces of a mosaic for heaven's floor and asked me to put them together.'

The symphony is scored for conventional orchestral forces: two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani and strings. The first movement begins with a gentle song for the strings in D major, which,

with their rising three-note progression, form a kind of motif for the whole symphony. The movement continues with alternation between the winds and the French horns; the theme then returns in various forms, with some drama, and finally the musical motifs are presented in a grand synthesis. The movement ends with the pastoral mood of the beginning.

The second movement begins with a long pizzicato sequence from cellos and double basses – something that astonished Sibelius's contemporaries. The first main theme of the movement is heard on the bassoon, and one critic has compared it with the threatening figure of Death, come for Don Giovanni. However, this changes to a peaceful motif, and the movement culminates with a towering, brassy theme, followed by an ethereal motif from the strings.

An energetic minor-key scherzo in the third movement is followed by a slow trio section, featuring a lyrical oboe solo accompanied by the clarinets and horns. After a trumpet blast, the scherzo returns. About five minutes later it segues into the final movement without pause, beginning with loud and regal themes, sometimes drawn from the first movement. In a way that recalls Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the material from the first two movements is brought back a second time. The movement unfurls slowly, continuously, and with increasing power and majesty. One critic wrote that the last movement 'develops towards a triumphant conclusion intended to rouse in the listener a picture of lighter and confident prospects for the future'.

The symphony received its first performance by the Helsinki Philharmonic Society in March 1902, with Sibelius conducting. After three sold-out performances Sibelius made some revisions; the new version premiered on 10 November 1903 in Stockholm. Some listeners connected the finale with Finland's struggle for independence from Russia – after *Finlandia* Sibelius was becoming known as 'the voice of Finland', a label about which he was ambivalent – and the work has frequently been considered nationalistic.

Because of its memorable melodies and heroic character, this remains his most popular and frequently performed symphony. The Russian conductor Valeri Gergiev wrote in 2001 that: 'In the finale there is a theme which could be in a work by Tchaikovsky. However, the form gives you a great deal to think about; when I first encountered it there were many surprises in the score.'

Please join us for refreshments after the concert

Mosman Symphony Orchestra

Anny Bing Xia – violin



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 degree of 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 has won numerous awards and has performed as a soloist internationally, as well as in a recent tour of China with Russian pianist Konstantin Shamray (Sydney International Piano Competition winner) 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 concerto *Butterfly Lovers*, described as ‘ [the] sweet, soft tones of her violin sound which brings out our inner-most poetic yearnings’.

Armine Gargrtysan – violin



Armine migrated to Australia seven years ago, and has been part of MSO since 2011. She began playing the violin when she was six years old. She was accepted into the violin faculty of the Tchaikovsky Specialized Music College for Gifted Students in Yerevan, Armenia. While studying at the specialised school, she travelled and performed with the violin ensemble of the school in various locations such as Moscow. Armine has a Bachelor of Music Degree in violin teaching and

performance from Yerevan's Komitas State Conservatorium (Armenia). While studying at the conservatorium she started playing professionally in the special opera orchestra dedicated to the vocal school of the conservatorium as first violinist. After graduating she worked for the Armenian National TV and Radio Symphony Orchestra, Yerevan's Symphony Orchestra and from 1998 until 2009 was employed by the Acapulco Symphony Orchestra in Mexico. She is currently working as a casual rank and file violinist with AOBO (Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra) and also plays on a freelance basis with other orchestras and groups in Australia. In addition to performing she also teaches violin and piano.

Armine says that having played with a variety of orchestras from around the world, she has been lucky to have travelled extensively to various major cities, such as Moscow, Marseilles, Chicago, Shanghai, Mexico City and other major cities in Mexico.

She looks forward to playing more with MSO and contributing to the community and the performing arts and music.

Orchestra Musicians

First violin: Anny Bing Xia (concertmaster), David Trainer (acting concertmaster for Bach) Stephen Carter, Julian Dresser, Talitha Fishburn, Armine Gargrtsyan, Nicole Gillespie, Annika Herbert, Kat Jurkiewicz, Calvin Ng, John Philp, Sarah Sellars

Second violin: Emily Jones (leader), Shari Amery, Sarah Hatton, Daniel McNamara, Nicole McVicar, Meryl Rahme, Marni Ramoni, Kate Robertson, Bridget Wilcken, Darrell Wood

Viola: Daniel Morris (leader), Mark Berriman, Zhiliang Chen, Gemma Grayson, Brett Richards, Hannah Shepherd, Carl St. Jacques

Cello: Michal Wieczorek (leader), Yvette Leonard, Ian McCourt, Karly Melas, Sally Wang, Micaela Williams

Double bass: Clare Cory, Cosimo Gunaratna, Moya Molloy

Flute: Linda Entwistle, Jan Squire

Clarinet: Allan Kirk, Judy Hart

Oboe: Rachel Tolmie, Cate Trebeck

Bassoon: Bob Chen, Graham Cormack

French horn: Stefan Grant, Lynette Gullick, Rafael Salgado, Shangdian Wang

Trumpet: William Sandwell, Anthony Aarons, Mark Hornibrook

Trombone: Lauren Smith, Greg Hannah

Tuba: Greg Moloney

Timpani: Lisa Beins

Harpsichord: Michelle MacDonald

Patron: Dr John Yu

Mosman Symphony Orchestra Concert Dates

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

Here are our concert dates for the remainder of the year. Please make a note for your diary ...

Christmas Concert with Mosman Symphony Chorus

December 11 at Scots Kirk

Handel's *Messiah*

And here are our dates for 2017 ...

17 and 19 March

26 and 28 May

1 and 3 September

10 and 12 November

Plus ...

23 and 25 June Family concert

10 December Christmas concert

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

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When the student is ready the teacher will appear. ZEN

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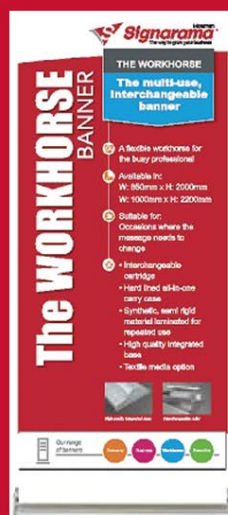
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