

MOSMAN
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Batons
& Bows

Andrew Del Riccio
musical director



Berlioz: Le Corsaire Overture
Mussorgsky: Night On Bald Mountain
Beethoven: Violin Concerto

Ronald Thomas
violin

Friday April 4th at 8pm
Sunday April 6th at 2.30pm
Mosman Art Gallery

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Message from the Musical Director



Thank you for coming today to Mosman Symphony Orchestra's first concert program for 2014. For our regular audience members, it is great to see you again, and we also welcome first time patrons. We ended last year on a high note musically, and think this year has a wonderful set of concerts for you all to enjoy!

Our music for this year came about through the fantastic soloists who have agreed to play with us. I feel incredibly lucky to work with such amazing soloists as Ronald Thomas, Georgia Lowe, Gregory Kinda and Nicola Lee. The works they are playing lent themselves to other complementary pieces and before we knew it, a concert program was born! Already it has been not only a joy but a wonderful privilege to be making music with Ronald in the Beethoven violin concerto, so I am looking

forward to the rest of this year as I hope all the audience and players do.

Our concert today, *Batons and Bows*, is in a sense pure indulgence. First off we have a rather uncommon work, Berlioz's *Le Corsair Overture*. One can hear the waves rolling in this fast paced piece that is full of the imagery of pirate battle. Coincidentally, it is also a fitting piece as shipwrecks have been found again off Sydney's coast for the first time in years. During the past month: the group I dive with has discovered what may be a 60m long WWII coal lighter, and another bunch found the remains of a scuttled WWI destroyer. The drive and energy of Berlioz's work seems to reflect the excitement we feel in making these discoveries: the only regret is the lack of booty for us more modern pirates!

We follow this with Mussorgsky's *A Night on Bald Mountain*. As the program to the piece describes, this is another free-for-all work, beginning in a sinister and menacing way, but has such a wild high point in the witch's rites before the calm ending with a musical depiction of dawn and church bells, it is in a classical sense, orgy of music: ecstatic and unrestrained.

The place of honour in this concert goes to Beethoven's *Violin Concerto*. As it is such a major work, it can only go in the place of a symphony. In fact, the first movement is as big as some entire concertos and Mozart symphonies! We are also delighted to welcome back Ronald to play with us. Over the years his performances with the MSO of the Bruch Concerto, *The Lark Ascending*, etc. have been musical high points for us. Preparing this Concerto is more than a great joy and a large amount of fun: it is an amazing privilege. Beethoven only wrote one violin concerto, but what a work! Add to this being able to perform with one of Australia's musical legends, and we have what can only be described as an EVENT.

So, sit back and let the orchestra's musical waves wash over you, make your hair stand on end, and cradle you as only Beethoven can.

Andrew Del Riccio, April 2014

Notes on the Program

Overture “Le Corsaire” - Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

Berlioz's exuberant seascape dates from the early autumn of 1844. In its original form it was composed in Nice, where Berlioz had gone for a holiday after an exhausting summer organising and conducting concerts in Paris. Berlioz initially named his overture *La tour de Nice* (The Tower of Nice), and it was performed under that name at a concert at the *Cirque Olympique* in Paris, on 19 January 1845.

One reviewer who witnessed the premiere commented: “*It is like a tale by Hoffmann. It plunges you into an indefinable malaise; it torments you like a bad dream, and fills your imagination with strange and terrible images.....You can imagine and believe everything when you hear these strident violins, croaking oboes, lamenting clarinets, groaning basses and moaning trombones.*”

Later the work was given the title *Le Corsaire Rouge* (the French translation of James Fenimore Cooper's novel *The Red Rover*) and finally, by the time of its publication in revised form in 1852, *Le Corsaire*.

Le Corsaire celebrates the dangers and excitements of the imagined life of the privateer. The pirate or brigand as free man, in contrast to the citizen of bourgeois society hemmed in by convention and the daily cares of profit and loss, was a favourite Romantic theme.

The work's three sections are introduced by lacerating strings and woodwinds. The first section has a slow, unfolding melody, and the second is a spiky, strident allegro that uses the same melodic material. The third section reiterates the allegro even more dynamically, expanding the use of woodwinds with more forceful percussive chords, leading to a huge climax of blaring brass. The music bounds brashly on to a massive conclusion.



***Night on Bald Mountain* - Modeste Mussorgsky (1839 - 1881)
(orch. Rimsky-Korsakov)**



Night on Bald Mountain is a tone poem by Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky, a Russian composer and member of *The Five* (also known as *The Mighty Handful*), a group dedicated to producing a distinctly Russian kind of music. *Night* was originally drafted in 1867 as *St. John's Night on Bare Mountain*, inspired by a short story by Gogol in which a peasant witnesses a witches' Sabbath on the Bald Mountain near Kiev on St John's Eve. It was apparently never performed in Mussorgsky's

lifetime, but he adapted the music for use in other forms.

When Mussorgsky died in 1881 he left much music either unfinished or in a format which seemed to contemporary ears to have a primitive starkness. Its sheer originality was little appreciated then, and his friend Rimsky-Korsakov took it upon himself to partially rework Mussorgsky's material, adding a more cultured veneer to what Mussorgsky had left.

A Night on Bald Mountain is a famous example of this posthumous collaboration. Rimsky-Korsakov partially re-scored and polished the work without losing its elemental diabolism, turning it into a vividly exciting orchestral evocation; the brass venomous, the strings wailing like banshees, but with the demons dispelled at daybreak and the radiance of the sunrise glowingly conveyed.

Millions of twentieth-century listeners owe their initial acquaintance with *A Night on Bald Mountain* to Walt Disney's 1940 film *Fantasia*, which featured a specially produced version based on the Rimsky-Korsakov recomposition in form and content, but Mussorgsky's original in orchestration, as edited and revised by Leopold Stokowski. Stokowski was familiar to some extent with Mussorgsky's style, having conducted the U.S. premiere of the original version of *Boris Godunov* in 1929 and subsequently produced a symphonic synthesis of *Boris* for concert purposes.

Interval

Violin Concerto in D, Op.61 - Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827)

1. *Allegro ma non troppo*
2. *Larghetto*
3. *Rondo*

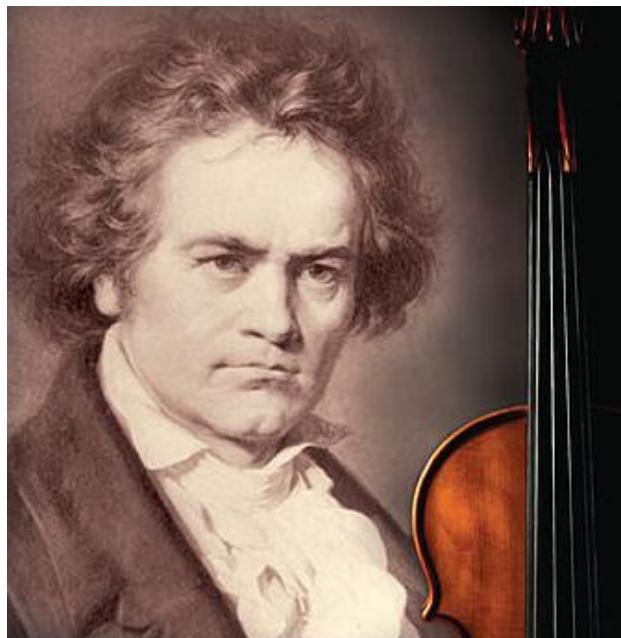
Beethoven's *Violin Concerto in D major* was composed in 1806, during Beethoven's middle, or "heroic" period. For the previous three years his energies had been consumed by two huge works: the *Eroica* Symphony and *Fidelio*. Over the rest of 1806 Beethoven turned out a rush of works including the Fourth Piano Concerto and the Fourth Symphony.

Beethoven wrote his Violin Concerto for his colleague Franz Clément (1784-1842), a leading violinist of the day, who had earlier given him helpful advice on his opera *Fidelio*.

Clément performed the work at its premier at the *Theater an der Wien* in Vienna in December 1806. It is believed that Beethoven finished the solo part so late that Clément had to sight-read part of his performance. Clément is said to have interrupted the Concerto between the first and second movements with a solo composition of his own, played on one string of the violin held upside down.

The Concerto was a success with the audience, but the press was more reserved. As one of them wrote: "*The many beauties of the piece must be conceded, but it must also be admitted that the continuity is often completely broken and that the endless repetitions of certain commonplace passages might easily become tedious to the listener.*"

The longest and probably the most difficult violin concerto written up to that time, it largely disappeared from the repertoire until 1844 (seventeen years after Beethoven's death), when Felix Mendelssohn conducted a concert featuring the Concerto with the soloist Joseph Joachim, who was just 12 years old at the time. Joachim became a world-renowned violinist, inspiring concertos by Brahms (with whom he was good friends), Schumann and Dvořák.



The *Violin Concerto* is one of Beethoven's most regal works; full of easy majesty and spacious in conception. The first movement alone lasts 24 minutes—his longest symphonic movement. The music begins with five quiet timpani strokes. By itself, this is an extraordinary opening, but those five pulses also perform a variety of roles through the first movement—sometimes they function as accompaniment,

sometimes as harsh contrast with the soloist, sometimes as a way of modulating to new keys. The movement is built on two ideas: the dignified chordal melody announced by the woodwinds immediately after the opening timpani strokes, and a rising-and-falling second idea, also first stated by the woodwinds. (This theme is quietly accompanied by the five-note pulse in the strings.) Beethoven delays the appearance of the soloist, and this long movement is based exclusively on the two main themes.

The slow movement is the Concerto's still point. The orchestral strings are muted and the motion of the harmonies is minimal. The movement is a set of variations on a theme that has the simplicity of a chorale. The fourth of these variations introduces a lyrical episode, touchingly ornamented and beautifully accompanied in utmost simplicity by clarinets and bassoons. The last improvisation sinks almost out of hearing and a brief cadenza leads directly into the amiable finale.

The *Rondo* finale is based on one of the happiest tunes that Beethoven ever wrote, announced at the outset by the soloist, first low down on the G string, then in the highest compass, before the orchestra is allowed to take ownership. This is a Rondo with three episodes; the second sharing a lyrical G minor melody between the soloist and the bassoon in its expressive tenor register; the last leading, by way of a cadenza, not to a final reprise of the main theme but straight to a prolonged coda. The violin gets one last, *pianissimo* solo just before the two *fortissimo* final chords, and the work is suddenly over.

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Please join us after the concert for refreshments

Mosman Symphony Orchestra 2014 Concert Dates

Thank you for your company today. We hope to see you again at some of our concerts scheduled over the rest of the year:*

June 13 and 15 – Beethoven *Symphony #4*, with guest conductor Joanna Drimatis

August 22 and 24 – soloist *Gregory Kinda* performing Chopin, plus Dvorak *Symphony #8*,

October 31 and November 2 – Elgar's *Enigma Variations*

December 12 and 14 – *Messiah*

*Dates and programs may change; please check our website www.mosmanorchestra.org.au

Ronald Thomas



Born in Australia, Ronald Thomas began the violin at the age of four with lessons from his father. At sixteen he made his national debut performing the Beethoven Violin Concerto with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. The following year after winning a scholarship to Europe, he continued his studies with Max Rostal in London and Switzerland. At the age of 21 he won the Carl Flesch International Violin competition. Following a critically acclaimed recital at the Wigmore Hall in London he was offered concerto engagements with major orchestras in England, including the Royal Philharmonic, Birmingham and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestras. He also began broadcasting recitals for BBC radio and was a concerto soloist at the first

night of the BBC Promenade concerts. While continuing to give recitals and perform concertos throughout the country, he was a member of the English Chamber Orchestra. He also performed as concertmaster and soloist with Sir Neville Marriner and the Academy of Saint Martin-in-the-Fields for a number of years in concerts, recordings and world tours. He formed his own ensemble, the New London Soloists Ensemble, which toured the USA. At this time he returned to Australia to play with and conduct the ABC orchestras.

In 1976 he became concertmaster, then Musical Director of the Bournemouth Sinfonietta where he remained for ten years, giving some 950 concerts (250 of which he conducted), solo concerts broadcasts and recordings. In the 1980s he was invited by Sir George Solti to be guest concertmaster for a Special Anniversary Series of Concerts by the London Philharmonic Orchestra appearing at the Edinburgh Festival and the Royal Festival Hall in London. At this time he was also the guest concermaster of the London Symphony Orchestra.

He moved back to Australia in 1987 to become Artistic Director of the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra. Whilst in Australia he formed the Soloists of Australia which made a number of recordings for Chandos Records as well as appearing at the Perth Festival. He was also Lecturer of Violin at the Sydney Conservatorium. At present he is leader of the Sydney String Quartet and Master of Chamber Music at Trinity Grammar School in Sydney.

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), Bernadette Coffey, Julian Dresser, Talitha Fishburn, Stuart Hill, Johnny Lim, Beres Lindsay, Sarah Sellars

Second Violin: Emily Jones (leader), Anish Carmyn, Mark Casiglia, Margaret Duncan, Sarah Hatton, Annika Herbert, Meryl Rahme, Kate Robertson, Bridget Wilcken

Viola: Vicki Sifniotis (leader), David Angell, Mark Berriman, Bob Clampett, Gemma Grayson, Brett Richards

Cello: Megan Corlette (leader), Claire Hogan, Yvette Leonard, Ian Macourt, Karly Melas, Michael Wieczorek

Double Bass: Claire Cory, Jonathan Gamra, Warwick Ross, Mark Szeto

Flute: Jacqueline Kent, Carolyn Thornely

Piccolo: Linda Entwistle

Oboe: Kim d'Espinay, Cate Trebeck

Clarinet: Alan Kirk, Jason Kok

Bassoon: Bob Chen, Graham Cormack

French Horn: Chika Migitaka, Hiroaki Migitaka, Billy Nicolson, Cindy Sims

Trumpet: Will Sandwell, Simon Hilberding

Trombone: Greg Hanna, Vicki Sifniotis, Lauren Smith

Tuba: Greg Moloney

Percussion: Lisa Beins (leader), Austin Beins, Rufina Ismail, Nicola Lee

Harp: Verna Lee

Patron: Dr. John Yu

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**Mosman Symphony Orchestra gratefully acknowledges
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Our website www.mosmanorchestra.org.au 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.

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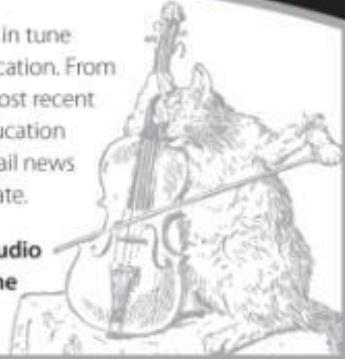
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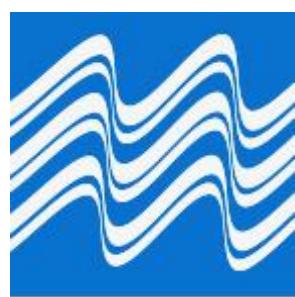
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