

Schubert in Spring

Mosman Orchestra conducted by Andrew Del Riccio

Friday Sept 10th @8pm
Sunday Sept 12th @2.30pm

Weber: Overture to Oberon

Tchaikovsky: Rococo Variations

Schubert: Symphony in C "The Great"

Mosman Art Gallery

Tickets at the door: \$20, \$15 conc. U16's free

Daniel Morris – Cello

Message from the Musical Director



Welcome to Mosman Orchestra's fourth concert program for 2010. Even though it is only September, the members of the orchestra have been hard at work preparing a very light and 'springy' spring program.

With this feeling in mind, we are also delighted to welcome Daniel Morris back, this time as a soloist. Daniel is a well known musical identity in Sydney, and possesses an enthusiasm for making music which is hard to beat. You may remember him adding numbers to our cello section; if not, this time you can't miss him out the front.

Tchaikovsky wrote a bright collection of traditionally inspired variations that lend themselves brilliantly to Daniel's virtuosic and spontaneous interpretation. It makes a wonderful partner with Weber's Overture to *Oberon*, which is another lighter work.

Schubert wrote his last and most expansive symphony in a light and breezy style. Even though Symphony number nine (AKA '*The Great*') is a rather long work, it floats along with fast-moving rhythms and a strong pulse that also reflects the vitality and vigour of spring. We hope it takes you home with a smile and humming the melodies, as it has our members.

Our final performances for 2010 see the orchestra continue our annual Kiddies Concert with a presentation of the ever popular '*Peter and the Wolf*'. I am very happy that Danika Allars, our principal clarinet, has agreed to once again take to the podium to direct the orchestra. Please put October 30 at 11am into your diaries and bring along all the youngsters in your extended families! Lastly, we are bringing back an old favourite, Handel's '*Messiah*' on December 3 and 5. In conjunction with Willoughby Choir and some excellent soloists we are presenting a full concert version, using both Handel's original score and for some pieces Mozart's orchestration, that adds the colour of woodwind and extra brass to these well loved classics. Please make sure you arrive early to grab a seat, as there is already much interest from audience members enquiring for early tickets!

Please sit back and enjoy today's performance, and remember to stay to enjoy a drink and nibble while chatting the players!

Notes on the Program

Overture to Oberon - Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)

Many in today's audience will remember Weber's *Bassoon Concerto* from our last concert. Today we present Weber in the genre which first secured his reputation as a composer.

His place in musical history as the founding figure of German Romantic opera is undisputed, for it was *Der Freischutz*, in 1821, that established the form and laid the foundations for the operatic works of Richard Wagner.

It was the success of *Der Freischutz* in London that led to the creation of *Oberon*, when Charles Kemble of the Royal Opera House offered Weber a lucrative commission for a new opera in English. Already seriously ill with tuberculosis, and against his doctor's strong advice, Weber accepted, and started learning English in order to be better able to understand the libretto when it arrived from England.

Weber completed two of the three acts of *Oberon* before he departed for London in 1826 to finish the score and supervise the rehearsals. He apparently left with a strong premonition of impending death, a feeling clearly shared by his wife, who, expecting their second child and remaining in Dresden, remarked "I have just heard his coffin lid shut!" He completed the third act and the *Overture* in London, where he died two months after conducting the opera's premiere.

Although acclaimed at its first performance, *Oberon* has never been able to hold the stage. Some critics have blamed the unwieldy libretto, a confusing tangle of characters, narratives, and events; others have objected to the excessive use of non-singing parts. *Grove* notes that despite the "unmitigated awfulness" of the libretto, Weber was able to provide musical characterisation for the main characters, at the same time colourfully evoking the mood of the different scenes.

Oberon, or *The Elf King's Oath* was composed to an English libretto by James Robinson Planche, based on the epic romance *Huon de Bordeaux*, a French medieval tale. Oberon, the Elfin King, having quarrelled with his fairy partner, can never be reconciled until he finds two lovers constant to each other under all circumstances. Puck searches the world in quest of them. The two lovers are Sir Huon, a young knight of Bordeaux, and Reiza, daughter of the Caliph of Bagdad. The story relates their trials and temptations, through all of which they remain constant, thereby securing the forgiveness of Oberon.

In the *Overture*, the solo horn-call is answered by muted strings, iridescent flutes, and clarinets—all sounds associated with Oberon's elfin world. A scarcely audible fanfare, as of mysterious, distant trumpets, is marked to be played "as softly as possible." A *tutti* crash introduces the fiery *Allegro* on themes of Huon's adventures. Rushing violin figures forecast the triumphant escape of the lovers, Huon and his

Princess Reiza. The horn-call and elf music return briefly, suggesting Oberon's intervention. A clarinet sings a love melody from Huon's first act aria. More quotations from the opera, including a lusty, stamping rhythm associated with the two elves, Puck and Droll, enrich the development. The exciting conclusion is based on the melody from the famous aria in which Reiza exults, "*My husband, my husband, we are saved!*"

Variations on a Rococo Theme, op. 33 - Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

The Variations on a Rococo Theme for cello and orchestra was the closest Tchaikovsky came to writing a full concerto for cello and orchestra. The term "rococo" belongs to the vocabulary of French art history, where it refers to a specific style of architectural decoration.

The *Theme*, however, is not rococo in origin. It is an original theme by Tchaikovsky in imitation of the classical, 18th Century ideal. Classical also is the size of the orchestra, with only several 19th Century additions in the woodwind section.

Tchaikovsky wrote the work for and with the help of Wilhelm Fitzenhagen, a German cellist and fellow-professor at the Moscow Conservatory. Fitzenhagen gave the premiere in Moscow on November 30, 1877, with Nikolai Rubinstein conducting. Fitzenhagen later rearranged the order of the variations, removing one entirely, and rewrote most of the solo part. Tchaikovsky accepted the changes, and the hybridized version entered the popular canon, thanks to Fitzenhagen's numerous concert appearances and an 1889 publication.

20th-century scholarship (aided by x-rays) revealed Tchaikovsky's original music under Fitzenhagen's changes, and a reconstructed version debuted in Moscow in 1941. However, *Rococo Variations* are still almost always played in the adaptation of its dedicatee, including in today's performance.

The genius of Tchaikovsky is unmistakable in the work as a whole; and in the lyric, refined grace and beauty of the melodies and the inventive use of the theme and variation form.

While the theme upon which the composition is based is Tchaikovsky's own, the graceful contours and well-mannered cadence that make up the first half of this theme show clearly from which period Tchaikovsky had taken his model.

Following a stately orchestral introduction, the cello introduces the light-stepping theme, balanced into two repeated sections. The theme ends with a harmonically adventurous *codetta*, first in the winds alone and then shifting to the strings. That material returns various times to link the connected variations, and it brings Tchaikovsky's Romantic voice into dialogue with the Classical ideals in this piece.

The first two variations maintain the theme's flavour and pulse, adding increasing decoration and commentary; then the third variation breaks away to a singing melody, one of those heartbreaking tunes that Tchaikovsky seems to unfurl with such ease. The fourth and fifth variations return to an outgoing, virtuosic character, culminating in an extended *cadenza*. The sixth variation, a minor-key *andante*, bookends the earlier slow section, and trails off in an ascent of ethereal harmonics. The final variation follows the work's only pause, and enters with a rustic, pulsing intensity. It builds through quick call-and-response phrases and breathless configurations, linking directly to the energetic coda and a rousing conclusion.

I n t e r v a l

Symphony No. 9 in C major, D. 944, "The Great" – Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

1. *Andante - Allegro ma non troppo*
2. *Andante con moto*
3. *Scherzo. Allegro vivace*
4. *Finale. Allegro vivace*

The *Symphony No. 9 in C major, D. 944*, known as *The Great*, is the final symphony completed by Franz Schubert. It was originally nicknamed *The Great C major* to distinguish it from his other C major symphony, his sixth, the *Little C major*, but the nickname is now often taken to refer to the symphony's length and majesty.



For a long time it was believed to be a work of Schubert's last year, 1828. In fact, we now know that the '*Great*' was largely composed in sketch in the summer of 1825: that, indeed, it was the work to which Schubert was referring in a letter of March 1824 when he said he was preparing himself to write 'a grand symphony'. By the spring or summer of 1826 it was completely scored, and in October Schubert, who was unable to pay for a performance, sent it to the Vienna Philharmonic Society with a dedication. In response they made him a small payment, and at some point in the latter half of 1827 actually gave the work a play-through (the exact date and the conductor are unknown) – though it was decided to be too long and difficult for a public performance.

In 1838, 10 years after Schubert's death, Robert Schumann visited Vienna and found the dusty manuscript of the symphony. He took it back to Leipzig, where it was performed publicly for the first time by Felix Mendelssohn at the Leipzig *Gewandhaus* on 21 March 1839. Schumann celebrated the event in the *Neue*

Zeitschrift with an ecstatic article in which, in a phrase destined to become famous, he hailed the symphony for its '*heavenly length*'.

The main theme of the *Andante* introduction is announced by unison horns at the outset. This theme is ingeniously reworked in the exposition and returns to make the climax at the end of the *Allegro*. The *Andante* not only serves as an introduction to the main *Allegro* of the sonata form, but permeates the entire movement. Indeed, it provides the basis for many of the key relationships and juxtapositions of unequal phrase lengths in the whole work. The manuscript shows that Schubert apparently made certain large-scale structural revisions in the first movement as "afterthoughts." Addition and subtraction of bars in the *coda*, for example, resulted in a net gain of approximately 40 bars, augmenting the dramatic strength of the movement's conclusion.

The *Andante con moto*, one of Schubert's most memorable slow movements, projects a fatalistic atmosphere with its steady march rhythm that eventually works up to a shattering climax, a dramatic pause, and tragic reflection. Schumann refrained from describing the *Symphony* in detail but could not help from commenting on the passage leading to the recapitulation in which "*a horn, as though calling from afar, seems to come from another world. The instruments stop to listen, a heavenly spirit is passing through the orchestra.*"

The *Scherzo* shows inexhaustible rhythmic inventiveness. Its quintessentially Viennese trio seems to have cost Schubert more trouble than its relaxed lilt lets on: the manuscript shows that after the entire *Symphony* was drafted Schubert apparently recomposed almost the entire second section of the *trio*.

The *Finale* is particularly remarkable for its thematic development and its driving momentum. The pervasive triplet figure is already present in the main theme. Not only does it provide propulsion as the accompaniment to the second theme, but it also accompanies the famous four repeated "warning" notes that come to dominate the movement. The *Finale* also possesses one of the great codas of all time.

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Please join us after the concert for refreshments

Don't miss Mosman Orchestra's next concerts!

OCTOBER – Saturday 30th at 11am – Kiddies' Concert featuring "*Peter and the Wolf*"

DECEMBER - Friday 3rd at 8.00pm and Sunday 5th at 2.30pm – Handel's "*Messiah*"
presented in conjunction with Willoughby Choir and featuring:

Cheryl Oxley – soprano

Timothy Chung – countertenor

Ben Oxley – tenor

Philip Pratt - bass

Daniel Morris – Cello

Daniel started out musically on the violin at around 8 with his two brothers, all taught by their father who instilled a love of playing music first, and its technical aspects second. However, there were few pieces available for three violins, so Daniel took up the cello at age 11.

Playing with Sydney Youth Orchestra throughout his teenage years, Daniel learned to enjoy the rehearsal process and to make music whenever possible, and not to place too great a burden on the final outcome.



Throughout his Bachelor of Music at the Sydney Conservatorium Daniel came to appreciate the wide variety of characters that music can portray. Hearing these possibilities and attempting to emulate them was somewhat akin to surrounding oneself with many different languages. Extending what one can listen to, making the ears work harder, was the motivation - symphonic sounds down to intricate duo performances were the dimensions that inspired him.

Given an opportunity to explore the String Quartet repertoire Daniel joined the *Stringendo String Quartet* with Heather Cottrel, Matthew Larkum and Yvette Breen. They performed in the first Melbourne International Chamber Music competition in 1991 after many years together. At around this time he was invited to join the *Camerata of the Australian Youth Orchestra* for their tour to North and South America. A highlight of this tour was performing in Carnegie Hall.

Daniel studied the cello further with Alexander Ivashkin and Natasha Pavlutskaya in Christchurch, New Zealand from 1997 until 2000. Since then he has been playing with the *Aoraki Duo*, the *Kosciusko Quartet*, the *Arco Chamber Orchestra*, the *Sydney Philharmonia Orchestra*, and the *North Sydney Symphony Orchestra*, as a soloist, tutor and leader of the cellos.

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.

Mosman Orchestra

First Violin: Cameron Hough (concertmaster), Geoff Allars, Kathryn Crossing, Julian Dresser, Beres Lindsay, Calvin Ng, Sarah Sellars

Second Violin: Denis Brown, Kate Howse, Julia Jenkins, Alison Meades, Brett Richards, Hijee Song

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

Cello: Megan Corlette, Rufina Ismail, Yvette Leonard

Double Bass: Trevor Dalziell, Moya Molloy, Mark Szeto

Flute: Jacqueline Kent, Carolyn Thornely

Oboe: Cate Trebeck, Val Densmore

Clarinet: Danika Allars, Kate Sweeny

Bassoon: Elizabeth Shek-Noble, Graham Cormack

French Horn: Radu Boros, Cindy Sims, Catharine McBride, Rana Wood

Trumpet: Jarrah Coleman-Hughes, Kate Wilson

Trombone: Greg Hanna, Hanno Klein, Lauren Smith, Jayson McBride

Timpani: Graham Ball

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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