

Mosman Symphony Orchestra

Slide Into Spring

Andrew Del Riccio - conductor
Jacob Shaw - trombone

Offenbach: Overture to Orpheus in the Underworld

Grondahl: Trombone Concerto

Beethoven: Symphony no 2

Mosman Art Gallery

Friday August 31st at 8pm

Sunday September 2nd at 2.30pm



Tickets: \$20 | \$15 student/pensioner | U16 free

Book online: www.mosmanorchestra.org.au

Comment [L1]:

Message from the Musical Director



Spring is almost here, and I can certainly feel the difference in the air already. I hope you are ready for a concert to lift the spirits, invigorate the senses and get us in the mood for warmer weather!

It was only a few weeks ago that I was in full summer mode, while in the Czech Republic at a summer conducting workshop. With some 24 conductors attending, and a net collection of some 40 or so ensembles represented, I got my batteries recharged and am looking forward to our performance with great enthusiasm.

It is a mixed program for you, a light bubbly overture, a Beethoven Symphony, and a 20th

century concerto for trombone! I am delighted to welcome Jacob Shaw to play the Trombone Concerto by Launy Grondahl. Jacob is one of leading lights of Australia's next generation of musicians, and studied both here and in Germany at the Karlsruhe Hochschule, which is considered one of the finest institutions for brass study in the world. Grondahl's concerto, while written in the 20th century is both lyrical and dramatic. That it has remained a constantly performed part of the repertoire is testament to it being a work well worth hearing again and again.

Of course, Beethoven and his symphonies need no introduction. I was at Beethoven's grave (along with those of Brahms and Schubert) in Vienna on my way back to Australia and so feel rather inspired by all the immersion in music. While I was there, I saw a constant procession of people, all coming to visit the final resting places of some of classical music's greatest composers.

We will open our concert with a bit of a bang, a-la the can-can in Offenbach's *Overture to Orpheus and the Underworld*. It's a rollicking, happy work that also has a few tender moments.

I hope you enjoy our performance! And please come back to our next concert.

Andrew Del Riccio

Notes on the Program

Overture to *Orpheus in the Underworld* (1858) – Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880)

Jacques Offenbach was a German born French composer of the Romantic period. In his early days he earned a living as a professional cellist and achieved considerable fame as both a cellist and a conductor. He gravitated more and more towards composition of incidental music for plays and opera *bouffés* (operetta), a comic form of opera usually containing satire, parody and farce.

In 1855 he opened a little theatre in the Champs-Elysées for the presentation of one-act musical farces. It was here in 1858 that Offenbach and his librettists Ludovic Halévy and Hector-Jonathan Crémieux created a riotous musical satire based on the exploits of the ancient gods, notably those told in the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice: *Orpheus in the Underworld*.

The legend of Orpheus and Eurydice has a venerable history in opera. Offenbach took a risk when he adapted the mythical topic as a satire. Virtually everyone knew mythology in 19th-century France, and opera buffs certainly knew Gluck's venerable tragedy, *Orphée et Euridice* (1774).

The work, the first in which his famous *Can-Can* melody appears, did not have much success until the review of critic Jules Janin appeared. When Janin described Orpheus as "a profanation of holy and glorious antiquity in a spirit of irreverence that bordered on blasphemy," the Parisians rushed to see for themselves what outrages Offenbach had committed.

(The can-can was developed in working class halls in Montparnasse in Paris during the mid 1800's and is now considered part of world dance culture. At that time however it was considered inappropriate in respectable society.)

The operetta's Overture is a pastiche of themes from the opera in five sections, culminating in the vivacious *Can-Can* from Act II. Clarinet, oboe and the cello section each claim important lyrical melodies after the opening flourish. Next is a luscious violin solo, borrowed from the opera. To conclude, Offenbach substituted the decidedly risqué can-can (called galop infernal in the opera) for the dignified minuet.

Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra (1924) – Launy Gröndahl (1886-1960)

1. *Moderato assai ma molto maestoso*
2. *Quasi una leggenda* (*In the manner of a tall tale*): *Andante grave*
3. *Finale: Maestoso - Rondo*

Around the turn of the century, Scandinavia was enjoying a significant period of cultural expansion, celebrating authors such as Kierkegaard and Strindberg, artists such as Munch and Hill, and composers like Grieg and Nielsen. This also affected musical life on a smaller scale and trombonists too experienced an expansion of educative and working possibilities. In Denmark, Anton Hansen started a school which even today retains its importance for trombonists' training. Composers like Anton Hansen, Axel Jörgensen and Georg Wilkenschmidt took a special interest in music for brass instruments and wrote many pieces dedicated to special performers. Possibly the most successful example of this is the trombone concerto by Launy Gröndahl, dedicated to the trombonist Wilhelm Aarkrogh, who was the soloist at its premiere in Copenhagen.

Launy Grøndahl was born on the 30th June 1886 and studied the violin and composition from the age of 8. His teachers were Bloch, Gade and Nielsen and he became a violinist in the orchestra of the Casino Theatre in Copenhagen at the age of 13. He wrote an early symphony, two string quartets and a violin concerto but then went on to study further in Paris, Vienna and Italy. In 1924, the last year of his studies and the year before he began his three-decade tenure with the Danish Radio, he wrote his trombone concerto. It has been his most frequently played piece ever since.

Grøndahl's musical style is melodic, but does include some modernistic techniques and angular harmonies. The combination of traditional and modern styles creates a musical tapestry that is always interesting.

This concerto begins in the lowest reaches of the orchestra with a stormy chord, which is soon joined by a declamatory and dramatic statement by the solo trombone. The drama of the first theme soon gives way to the exotic lyricism of the second melody. Of particular interest here is the character of the solo part, virtuosic and impressive in its agility.

Grøndahl's second movement, entitled "*Quasi una Leggenda*" ("In the manner of a tall tale"), is an *andante* that abounds in beauty. The two contrasting themes are interrupted by a large climax in the centre of the movement that culminates with a high B-flat in the solo trombone. The gentle rippling of arpeggios and string chords end the movement quietly.

The *maestoso* introduction to the finale is based on music from the first movement, but soon gives way to a surprisingly light *rondo*. This playful music has a blitheness that is seldom heard from the trombone. Despite the light nature of this music, there is an overwhelming sense of authority that is echoed in the orchestra interludes. The final measures display the upper limits of the trombone's range. A *fortissimo* flourish concludes the concerto.

Interval

Symphony No.2 in D major Op.36 – Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

By the time he turned 30 Beethoven had solidly established himself in Vienna. With his First Symphony, his first two piano concertos and numerous chamber works behind him, he greeted the new century with an expressed determination to "take a new road." His Second Symphony was the turning point for this "new road", which firmly established itself with the truly revolutionary Third Symphony, the "*Eroica*".

Beethoven first mentioned his hearing loss in a letter to his friend Franz Wegeler in 1801. In 1802 Beethoven was living in the Viennese suburb of Heiligenstadt, and it was there that he wrote the so-called *Heiligenstadt Testament*, addressed but not sent to his two brothers, in which he lamented his growing deafness: "With joy I hasten to meet death." It was at this time that he composed most of the Second Symphony.

The D major symphony, like other music written at the time, shows no signs of Beethoven's despair. It is a prevailingly cheerful work with a feeling of robust vitality and well-being. Its premiere in April 1803 in Vienna was part of a huge program which also included the premieres of the Third Piano Concerto and the oratorio Christ on the Mount of Olives, as well as performances of the First Symphony and other earlier works.

Many of his contemporaries applauded his Second Symphony as a noteworthy piece full of power and depth, but they commonly described his music of that time as bizarre. A

Viennese critic writing for the *Zeitung für die Elegante Welt* (Newspaper for the Fashionable World) characterized it as “a gross enormity, an immense wounded snake, unwilling to die, but writhing in its last agonies and, though bleeding to death, furiously beats about with its tail in the finale.” Early 19th century listeners, of course, were hearing the piece in the context of the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart, and of Beethoven’s own first essay in the genre.

Hector Berlioz wrote extensively about Beethoven, especially about the symphonies. It is interesting to consider what Berlioz valued in Beethoven and how he heard his symphonies. Here is his discussion of the Second Symphony:

“In this Symphony everything is noble, energetic, proud.

The Introduction [Adagio molto] is a masterpiece. The most beautiful effects follow one another without confusion and always in an unexpected manner. The song is of a touching solemnity, and it at once commands respect and puts the hearer in an emotional mood. The rhythm is already bolder, the instrumentation is richer, more sonorous, more varied.

An Allegro con brio of enchanting dash is joined to this admirable introduction. The fast motive which begins the theme, given at first to the violas and cellos in unison, is taken up again in an isolated form, to establish either progressions in a crescendo or imitative passages between wind instruments and the strings. All these forms have a new and animated physiognomy. A melody enters, the first section of which is played by the clarinets, horns, and bassoons. It is completed by the full orchestra, and the manly energy is enhanced by the happy choice of accompanying chords.

The second-movement Larghetto is not treated after the manner of that of the First Symphony: it is not composed of a theme worked out in canonic imitations, but it is a pure and simple song, which is first stated sweetly by the strings, and then embroidered with a rare elegance by means of light and fluent figures whose character is never far removed from the sentiment of tenderness which forms the distinctive character of the principal idea. It is a ravishing picture of innocent pleasure which is scarcely shadowed by a few melancholy accents.

The Scherzo is as frankly gay in its fantastic capriciousness as the previous movement has been wholly and serenely happy; for this symphony is smiling throughout; the warlike bursts of the first Allegro are entirely free from violence; there is only the youthful ardour of the noble heart in which the most beautiful illusions of life are preserved untainted. The composer still believes in immortal glory, in love, in devotion. What abandon in his gaiety! What wit! What sallies! Hearing these various instruments disputing over fragments of a theme which no one of them plays in its entirety, hearing each fragment thus coloured with a thousand nuances as it passes from one to the other, it is as though you were watching the fairy sports of Oberon’s graceful spirits.

The finale [Allegro molto] is of like genius. It is a second scherzo in duple meter, and its playfulness has perhaps something still more delicate, more piquant.”

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Please join us after the concert for refreshments

Mosman Symphony Orchestra 2012 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:

November 23 and 25 –Tchaikovsky's *Symphony #2 "The Little Russian"*, plus Brahms' *Double Concerto*.

December 14 – Handel's *Messiah*

Jacob Shaw – Trombone



Jacob studied trombone at the Griffith University Conservatorium of Music where he completed a Bachelor of Music (Performance) in 2002. In 2004, he performed with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Symphonnia program, before relocating to Germany to study with Werner Schrietter at the Hochschule für Musik Karlsruhe. Whilst overseas, Jacob also performed as a casual musician with the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra.

Since returning to Sydney, Jacob has performed as a freelance musician with a number of professional and community orchestras, including the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. He also teaches brass at three prominent Sydney schools.

Jacob is a previous winner of the Australian Trombone Association Solo competition and has received third place in the Beta Sigma Phi Brass Prize. As a member of the brass quintet Brass on Tap, Jacob won the Gertrude Langer prize and toured with the group to regional Queensland for the Queensland Arts Council. He also undertook a cultural exchange program to Korea with the group.

Andrew Del Riccio - Music Director, Mosman Symphony 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 education from the University of Western Sydney. He has studied at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Switzerland, 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 Matthew Chilmaid with them. He has also worked with the North Sydney, Lane Cove Youth Symphony, Strathfield Symphony and Sydney University Symphony Orchestras and conducted concerts as an assistant conductor with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra.

Recently, he attended a summer workshop with the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic in Kromeriz in the Czech Republic, conducting Brahms' *First Symphony* and Mahler's *Fifth*. He is awaiting developments from the contacts made there.

Andrew currently teaches at Trinity Grammar School, has a busy private teaching practice as well as performing as a trumpeter when possible. He is also involved in scuba diving, actively researching wrecks of the New South Wales coast as a part of the Two Dogs dive team.

Mosman Symphony Orchestra

Patron: Jim Reid

First violin: Anny Xia (concertmaster), Bernadette Coffey, Julian Dresser, Beres Lindsay, Reg Larner, Elaine Neal, Tamara Lyell, Kathryn Krugell, Samuel Sun

Second Violin: Chris Hawkins, Denis Brown, Mark Casiglia, David Healey, Johnny Lim, Brett Richards, Bridget Wilcken,

Viola: Vicki Sifniotis, Mark Berriman, Bob Clampett, Gemma Grayson, Danny Morris

Cello: David Deng, Yvette Leonard, Nicole McVicar, Jacqueline Maybury, Sarah Vale

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Double Bass: Trevor Dalziell, MarkLipski

Flute: Linda Entwistle, Jacqueline Kent

Piccolo: Linda Entwistle

Oboe: Kate Trebeck, Kim d'Espiney

Clarinet: Danika Allars, Leah Crosby

Bassoon: Bob Chen, Graham Cormack

French Horn: Claire Cmaeron, Tom O'Sullivan, Rana Wood

Trumpet: Jarrah Hewes-Coleman, William Sandwell

Trombone: Lauren Smith, Greg Hanna, Vicki Sifniotis, Adam Stanton

Tuba: Glenn Pink

Percussion: Lisa Beins, Nicola Lee, Louise Pocock

Piano: Greg Kinda

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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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