

# MOSMAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Andrew Del Riccio | musical director

Jacqueline Kent | narrator



**MOZART** Overture to Idomeneo

**WALTON** Façade Suite

**TCHAIKOVSKY** Pathétique Symphony



SATURDAY June 2nd at 8 pm

SUNDAY June 3rd at 2.30 pm

Mosman Art Gallery

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## Message from the Musical Director

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Welcome to a very special concert from Mosman Symphony Orchestra. Today we are delighted to perform one of the landmark works of the orchestral repertoire, Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony. Often referred to as Symphony Pathétique, many commentators speak of the composer's state of mind, impending death and melancholy. In many ways, the work is just so. There are places where the throbbing heartbeat-like pulsing conveys a feeling of doom. Yet, the work is not at all like this in other places. The second and third movements, a delicate, if somewhat lopsided waltz and celebratory, triumphant march tend to scotch the notion of the symphony being only a statement of

anguish. In fact, there is so much in the work which is reminiscent of light, a joy and of happiness.

What Tchaikovsky has achieved in this symphony is the daring he shows in orchestration, in changes of colour, of mood and tempo. He is meticulous in his musical instructions and has crafted the symphony like no one before him. It is indeed full of emotion: at times joyful, exuberant at other times reflective, and also a portent of his remaining time.

It is to this collection of different moods we add Mozart's Overture to Idomeneo with the political intrigue of Rome and the light and ebullient poems of Edith Sitwell in Walton's Façade Suite. Façade is at times hilarious and a fitting foil to the drama of Mozart.

***Andrew Del Riccio 2018***

## Notes on the Program

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Written in 3 different centuries, the works in the program have each in their own way elements of revolution – overturning expectations, subverting traditional forms. They also have highly dramatic, theatrical elements. There's a story behind each one.

### **Overture to Idomeneo; Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 -1791)**

In November 1770 24 year old Mozart arrived in Munich full of high spirits. He was away from Salzburg, on leave from his irksome duties as court musician to the philistine archbishop, and he had a commission to write a new opera. What's more it would be performed by the Mannheim Orchestra, considered by many to be the finest orchestra in Europe and one that contained some of Mozart's dear friends. The poet Schubart wrote that:

*'No orchestra in the world has ever played like the Mannheim orchestra. Its forte is like thunder, its crescendo a cataract, its diminuendo a crystal brook burbling in the distance, its piano a breath of spring air.'*

With so much to inspire him, it is little wonder that *Idomeneo* is considered by many to be his first dramatic masterpiece. It was commissioned by the Elector of Bavaria to be performed in a festival in Munich in 1771. The subject of the opera was probably suggested by the Elector, but Mozart clearly relished the dramatic possibilities of the story. While Mozart was composing the music in Munich, the librettist, Abbate Gianbattista Varesco, was in Salzburg. Varesco had written an old fashioned baroque style libretto, with long recitatives and static arias, and Mozart was constantly asking for the text to be tightened and shortened so as to make a dynamic musical drama. He used his father, Leopold, as an intermediary, writing his suggestions to Leopold, who discussed them with Varesco then wrote back. We are lucky to have quite a lot of letters from Mozart to his father that document the compositional process and show how keenly engaged Mozart was – not just with the music, but also with the text, performers, and staging. His letters are detailed, spontaneous and enthusiastic, yet at one point he writes to his father, *'please forgive me not writing more – every minute here is valuable.'*

The story concerns Idomeneo, the King of Crete, who returning in triumph from the Trojan War is threatened by a storm at sea. To appease the god Neptune, he pledges to offer in sacrifice the first living thing he meets on shore, which turns out to be his own son, Idamante. Idamante is ready to die for his father, but when his beloved Ilia, a captive Trojan princess, whom he had previously saved from shipwreck, offers herself to be sacrificed in Idamante's place, Neptune relents and spares the couple. He ordains that Idomeneo abdicate and proclaims Idamante and Ilia as the new rulers of Crete.

As befits an opera featuring gods and princes, the overture opens with grand, majestic gestures by the whole orchestra in an uplifting D major. Rising arpeggios are contrasted with a falling motif, perhaps representing respectively the victor and the vanquished. The second theme is a dramatic contrast to the first, played softly in A minor.

As a concert piece, the overture ends somewhat disconcertingly, with the falling motif passed down from solo flute to solo oboe, and the music fading quietly away. In the opera, this leads directly to the opening scene for Ilia, who is found alone, a captive in the Cretan court, lamenting the loss of her family & her home, and grieving that Idamente is perhaps now '*a meal for hungry fish.*'

### **Façade Suite No. 2; William Walton (1902 - 1983) & Edith Sitwell (1887 – 1964)**

The poems and music for *Façade* exist in a number of different versions. Many of the poems were first published in 1918. William Walton wrote chamber music to accompany the poems in 1922, when it was first performed as *Façade: An Entertainment*. Walton went on to arrange the music as 2 suites for full orchestra, and he continued making revisions, arranging the music for different instrumental combinations, and with various permutations of the poems until 1979. The music was also made into a ballet by Frederick Ashton. The origins of the title are unclear. Edith's brother Osbert claimed that it came from a comment on Edith made by an unnamed painter: '*Very clever, no doubt – but what is she but a façade!*', which apparently delighted Edith so much that she used it as the title of the poems. There is also an anecdote that Edith's charlady had said, '*all this carry on is just one big façade.*'

William Walton was the son of a Lancashire choir master. As a boy he took violin and piano lessons, without any great success, and sang in his father's church choir. Although he didn't have a strong interest in music, he was a natural singer, and his father, wanting to ensure that he get a better general education than the local school provided, decided that he should compete for a place at the choir school at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford. It was here, aged about 12, that he began to develop an interest in composing - mainly unaccompanied choral music and solo songs, as well as some organ music. The Dean of Christ Church was impressed with his efforts and persuaded his father to let the boy become an Oxford undergraduate at the early age of 16. The Dean himself paid the fees. Although he passed the B Mus exams, he repeatedly failed Responsions – a set of oral exams in Greek, Latin and Mathematics and when he left Oxford in 1920, it was without a degree. Oxford had, however, brought him into contact with the aristocratic, wealthy and decidedly eccentric Sitwell siblings.



Edith, Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell were living in London, and had already become the centre of a circle of artists and writers that rivalled the Bloomsbury Group. Edith, the eldest of the three, was the editor of an avante garde poetry magazine, *Wheels*, in which she and her brothers led a revolt against Georgian poetry, as exemplified by the works of Rupert Brooke and D H Lawrence. Sacheverell, having met Walton at Oxford, invited him to stay with them in London. Willie, as they called him, became their lodger and stayed on and off for about 15 years. Many of the *Façade* poems had already been published in *Wheels*, but having a composer on tap prompted the Sitwells to have them set to music for what Osbert called '*an entertainment for artists and people of imagination*'.

The first public performance of *Façade: an Entertainment* was in London in 1923. Osbert directed, William, described by the *Daily Mail* as 'a young Lancashire man' conducted, and Edith performed the poems from behind a colorful screen (perhaps you might say a façade) painted with a Grecian face with a hole for its mouth, behind which was a papier mache 'sengerphone'. This idea was Osbert's, who said that his aim was to '*eliminate the reciter's personality*' which '*usually interferes between the art and the audience*'.



**Edith Sitwell with the sengerphone**

Edith's poems are playful experiments in sound and color – full of interesting assonances and clever rhythms and rhymes, rather like a precursor of contemporary rap music. Meanings are not always clear, and words morph as they serve multiple purposes. For example in *Noche Espagnole*, *The hard and braying light Is zebra'd black and white* and in *Scotch Rhapsody*, the huntsman's 'boring' bagpipe playing becomes a '9 bore gun'. There are some biographical references, as in *Old Sir Faulk*, whom Edith identified in her autobiography as Colonel Hume, the father of some childhood friends - '*a tall, stork like personage who resembled a character in Struwpeter... or like a character in Mr. Stravinsky's Chansons Plaisantes... Both these works have influenced very greatly, my early poetry.*'

Edith wrote that her poems were a response to the *'flaccidity, the verbal deadness...of some of the poetry immediately preceding us...The audience is meant to laugh.'*

Walton's music is the perfect foil to Sitwell's poems and no less innovative. Like the poems, there are elements of parody and allusion. The Scotch Rhapsody, for example, has a kind of inverted Scotch snap rhythm, and conjures up the bagpipes mentioned in the poem. Walton employs a variety of popular and jazz idioms that would have been quite novel to the concert-going public at the time, not to mention the inclusion of the alto saxophone whose raunchy sounds would have been more startling then than now.

Amongst the first night audience were Sitwell's friends, Virginia Woolf and Evelyn Waugh, and her *bête noire*, Noel Coward. The response of the audience and of critics was mixed. One reviewer claimed that the sengerphone produced an effect *'somewhere between a Greek chorus and the reading of a tenancy agreement, which might have become monotonous without the extraordinarily stimulative running comment of Mr. Walton's music. His musical invention is as original and witty as Miss Sitwell's poetry'*. Noel Coward walked out during the performance. Years later Dame Edith recalled: *'I had to hide behind the curtain. An old lady was waiting to beat me with an umbrella.'* But the renowned musicologist, E J Dent called it *'a novel and most exhilarating affair'*. He said that the audience was *'at first inclined to treat the whole thing as an absurd joke'*, but that the *'serious element in Miss Sitwell's poetry, and Mr. Walton's music, which was cleverly adapted to the glittering style of the poems, ... soon induced the audience to listen with breathless attention.'*

#### I. FANFARE

#### II. SCOTCH RHAPSODY

*'Do not take a bath in Jordan,  
Gordon  
On the Holy Sabbath, on the peaceful day!'  
Said the huntsman, playing on his old bagpipe,  
Boring to death the pheasant and the snipe –  
Boring the ptarmigan and grouse for fun –  
Boring them worse than a nine-bore gun.*

#### III. COUNTRY DANCE

*That hobnailed goblin, the bob-tailed Hob,  
Said, 'It is time I began to rob.'  
For strawberries bob, hob-nob with the pearls  
Of cream (like the curls of the dairy girls),*

*And flushed with the heat and fruitish ripe  
Are the gowns of the maids who dance to the pipe.*

#### IV. NOCHE ESPAGNOLA

*Long steel grass -  
The white soldiers pass -  
The light is braying like an ass.  
See the tall Spanish jade  
With hair black as night-shade  
Worn as a cockade!*

#### V. POPULAR SONG

*Lily O'Grady,  
Silly and shady.  
Longing to be  
A lazy lady,  
Walked by the cupolas, gables in the  
Lake's Georgian stables,  
In a fairy tale like the heat intense,  
And the mist in the woods when across the fence....  
.....But Lily O'Grady,  
Silly and shady,  
In the deep shade is a lazy lady;  
Now Pompey's dead, Homer's read,  
Heliogabalus lost his head,  
And shade is on the brightest wing,  
And dust forbids the bird to sing.*

#### VI. OLD SIR FAULK

*Old Sir Faulk  
Tall as a stork  
Before the honeyed fruits of dawn were ripe, would walk,  
And stalk with a gun  
The reynard-coloured sun*

**INTERVAL**



## Symphony No. 6 in B Minor (Pathétique); (1840 – 1893)

- I. Adagio – Allegro non troppo
- II. Allegro con grazia
- III. Allegro molto vivace
- IV. Finale: Adagio lamentoso

This incredibly moving music, regarded by many as the quintessential romantic symphony, was the last piece that Tchaikovsky wrote. He died just 9 days after its premiere in 1893. The title comes from the Russian, Патетическая (Pateticheskaya), meaning 'passionate' or 'emotional'. It was suggested by Tchaikovsky's brother Modest after the composer realised that his original choice of title, Программная (Programmnaya) - Program Symphony - would only encourage speculation about the story behind the symphony, which he did not wish to reveal.

He wrote to his beloved nephew, Bob Davidoff, to whom the symphony is dedicated, that behind it was *'a program that should remain an enigma for everyone but myself; let them try and guess it! ... The theme is full of subjective feeling, so much that as I was mentally composing it, I frequently shed tears.'*

Aside from its deeply emotional qualities, the symphony is also fascinating in the way it continually overturns expectations. It begins in a key which is not the tonic, the waltz is in 5/4 time; the march in 12/8, and what you would think is the Finale is followed by an Adagio.

Tchaikovsky, often prone to self-doubt, was extremely happy with the symphony:

*'I certainly regard it as quite the best – and especially the most sincere – of all my works. I love it as I never loved any one of my musical offspring before!'*

And to his publisher Pyotr Jurgenson: *On my word of honor, I have never felt such self satisfaction, such pride, such happiness, as in the consciousness that I am really the creator of this beautiful work'.*

**I Adagio – Allegro non troppo:** The main theme of the movement emerges lugubriously from the depths of the orchestra with solo bassoon accompanied by low strings. Unusually, it begins in E minor rather than the tonic key of B minor. There is a sense of lamentation in the 4 note motif – 2 rising quavers leading to a falling 2<sup>nd</sup> – which is continued throughout the movement, even when the tempo and dynamics change. The main theme, one of Tchaikovsky's loveliest melodies, unfolds tenderly from muted strings. Tchaikovsky asks for a huge range of dynamics from his players from *ffff* right down to the merest whisper of *pppp* in the clarinet and bassoon. Then the music explodes into a whirlwind of sound, with the entire orchestra playing ferocious rushing semiquavers that gradually subside into the darkness of the lower strings. The trombones

& trumpet play a sombre quotation from the Russian Orthodox Mass for the Dead. The opening 4 note motif returns, growing in intensity, then fading away as the lovely main theme returns. The movement ends softly with a sweet, gentle B major chord in the trombones.

**II Allegro con grazia:** This graceful, lilting dance comes as contrast to the high drama and emotion of the previous movement, but the unusual choice of a 5/4 time signature gives it a vaguely uneasy feeling – a kind of limping waltz. The darker middle section increases the feeling of unease.

**III Allegro molto vivace:** Fluttering triplets, reminiscent of a Mendelssohn scherzo, begin the movement and a jaunty march theme gradually emerges. Seemingly straightforward, yet it contains an undercurrent of unease. Is it in 4/4 or 12/8? The triplets become frenetic, verging on hysteria as the music moves relentlessly to its climax. The only movement of the symphony to end with a big finale, it has often prompted audiences to applaud, thinking they have come to a triumphant ending, only to have their expectations subverted.

**IV Finale: Adagio lamentoso:** Most symphonies end triumphantly with a rollicking fast movement, but here the symphony ends as it begins – in deep darkness with a heart rending lament that dies sorrowfully away with a *pppp* in the low strings. LE

*Please join us for refreshments after the concert*

## **Mosman Symphony Orchestra Concert Dates**

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**Choral concert July 1: Mosman Symphony Chorus with the Australian Brass Collective**

**Concert 3 Sept 7 and 9: *España Viva!***

**Concert 4 Nov 16 and 18: *Happy Endings: Weber, Honegger and Beethoven***

**Christmas Concert: Dec 9**

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## Jacqueline Kent – narrator



As well as playing flute for Mosman Symphony Orchestra – and presenting her own version of the plot of *Carmen* at several concerts – Jacqueline Kent is an author and book editor. She has written fourteen books including fiction for young adults, social history and biography.

Jacqueline's first book, published in 1983, was **Out of the Bakelite Box: The Heyday of Australian Radio**, a social and oral history of Australian radio, drawing heavily on original interviews. **In the Half Light: Life as a Child in Australia 1900-1970** (1988) consists of reminiscences of people from all walks of life, with emphasis on

events and personalities in Australian life seen through a child's eyes. **A Certain Style: Beatrice Davis, A Literary Life** (2001) the biography of a pioneering Australian book editor, won the 2002 National Biography Award, as well as the Nita B. Kibble Award for Women Writers; it was shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Award. **An Exacting Heart: The Story of Hephzibah Menuhin** (2008), the story of the brilliant pianist and social reformer who lived all her life in the shadow of her violinist brother Yehudi, was the 2009 winner of the Nita B. Kibble Award and was shortlisted for the New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria Premiers' Awards, the Adelaide Festival Literature Award, the Magarey Medal for Biography and a Walkley Award. Her biography of Australia's first woman prime minister, **The Making of Julia Gillard** (2009), was a best-seller updated three times; its sequel, **Take Your Best Shot** (2012) analysed Gillard's prime ministership.

Forthcoming books include the reissue of **A Certain Style** (September 2018), a memoir **Beyond Words** (February 2019), and a biography of pioneer Australian suffragist Vida Goldstein (2020).

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# Mosman Symphony Orchestra

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## Andrew Del Riccio – Musical Director



Andrew Del Riccio is a Sydney-based trumpeter, teacher and conductor. He has performed extensively with many of Sydney's leading ensembles including the Sydney Symphony, Australian Opera and Ballet and Australian Chamber orchestras, and is the founder of the Blues Point Brass Quintet, St Peters Chamber Orchestra and the Unexpected Orchestra. He holds degrees in performance and education having studied at the Sydney Conservatorium and the universities of British Columbia, Western Sydney and New England. Andrew has also won scholarships to study trumpet and baroque performance practice at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Switzerland, and conducting in the Czech Republic. Since completing his Master of Music degree in opera conducting in Canada he has taught music at Trinity Grammar School, specialising in brass pedagogy, band and chamber music and taking a leading role in developing brass and ensembles at the primary school level. Since 2008 he has also been an adjudicator with the Fine Music 104.5 FM Young Virtuosi competition.

Andrew has been musical director of the Mosman Symphony Orchestra since 1999 and a guest conductor for several other Sydney-based orchestras and orchestral ensembles. He also runs a busy private teaching practice, and numerous students of his have progressed to careers in music performance, as well as education and management.

Outside of musical life, Andrew was until recently an avid scuba diver, exploring wrecks and habitats off the New South Wales coast and elsewhere. As health issues have stopped this activity, he is now considering how best to put up his feet and relax, spending his free time on the south coast with his wife Lucy and their effervescent hound Joey.

## **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 has won numerous awards and has performed as a soloist internationally, as well as 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 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\*), Julian Dresser, Nicole Gillespie, Annika Herbert, Talitha Fishburn, Calvin Ng, John Philp, Justin White

**Second violin:** Emily Jones (leader Saturday), Armine Gargrtsyan (leader Sunday), Shari Amery, Kirri Clarke, Melissa Lee, Sylvia Lim Tio, Daniel McNamara, Monica Meng, Kate Robertson, Bridget Wilcken, Haydn White

**Viola:** Eda Talu (leader#), Mark Berriman, Bob Clampett, Carmel Glanville, Jane Hazelwood, Daniel Morris, Brett Richards, Hannah Shephard, Zhiliang Chen

**Cello:** Michal Wieczorek (leader+), Danni Ding, Yvette Leonard, Ian Macourt, Jennifer Mast, Karly Melas, Scott Rowe, Lewis Wand, Micaela Williams

**Double bass:** Claire Cory, Cosimo Gunaratna, Amanda Stead

**Flute:** Linda Entwistle, Jacqueline Kent, Jan Squire

**Piccolo:** Jan Squire

**Clarinet:** Allan Kirk, Judy Hart

**Oboe:** Irene Lee, Cate Trebeck

**Saxophone:** Kim d'Espiney

**Bassoon:** Bob Chen, Graham Cormack

**French horn:** Bill Cotis, Stefan Grant, Rafael Salgado

**Trumpet:** Anthony Aarons, Mark Hornibrook, Will Sandwell

**Trombone:** John Dunn, Peter Purches

**Percussion:** Lisa Beins, Rufina Ismail

**\* Chair of Concertmaster in memory of Carolyn Clampett**

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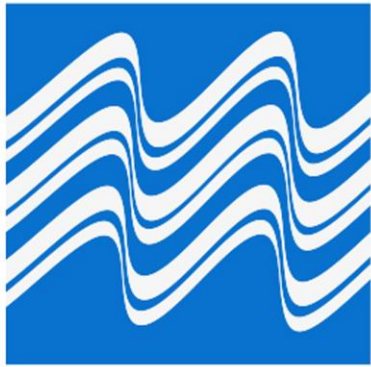
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