

Mosman Symphony Orchestra

Andrew Del Riccio | musical director

EDWARD WALTON | VIOLIN

HANDEL Water Music
BRITTEN 4 Sea Interludes
TCHAIKOVSKY Violin Concerto



SATURDAY JUNE 1ST AT 8 PM
SUNDAY JUNE 2ND AT 2.30 PM
MOSMAN ART GALLERY

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June 1st & 2nd 2019

Mosman Art Gallery

Program

BRITTEN 4 Sea Interludes

HANDEL Water Music

Interval (approx. 20 minutes)

TCHAIKOVSKY Violin Concerto

Please consider our players & audience and ensure that mobile phones are switched off.

Notes on the Program

Four Sea Interludes from *Peter Grimes* Op.33a by Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

1. *Dawn*
2. *Sunday morning*
3. *Moonlight*
4. *Storm*



Britten (left) inspecting a model of the set for *Peter Grimes*

These four orchestral interludes form a series of entr'actes in *Peter Grimes*, possibly Britten's best-known opera, written in 1941 and recognised as one of the most dramatic and searing musical works of the twentieth century. At the time, Britten had returned from a sojourn in New York and had settled in Aldeburgh on the Suffolk coast. The fact that Britain was at war understandably shifted the general tone of his music towards the threatening and unpredictable, possibly exacerbated by the fact that he was living not far from the forbidding North Sea.

Based on 'The Borough', a narrative poem by the eighteenth-century poet George Crabbe, *Peter Grimes* tells the tragic story of the eponymous Aldeburgh fisherman, his difficult life and his downfall, exacerbated by the treatment he receives at the hands of

his fellow villagers. Britten wrote that when he read 'The Borough' he 'realised two things: that I must write an opera, and where I belonged'. He added that the opera's subject was 'very close to my heart – the struggle of the individual against the masses. The more vicious the society; the more vicious the individual.' The opera is set in a Suffolk coastal village during the mid-nineteenth century: a foghorn in Act III places it later than the date of Crabbe's poem.

Britten made the *Sea Interludes*, which were originally intended to set the scene for various parts of the opera into an orchestral suite in 1944. It is anything but pastoral in form or tone: indeed, the grim undercurrents of the opera itself are very much present in the themes and harmonies. 'Dawn', for instance, is anything but a peaceful prelude to the day: the high-pitched orchestration evokes a desolate, cold landscape, with a threatening sea swell coming up from the depths. 'Sunday morning', with a title that calls to mind churchgoing and other day-of-rest activities, features a spiky melody with piccolo and pizzicato violins, with a contrasting theme on violas and cellos. 'Moonlight' features tricky rhythms, with sharp surges of woodwind, pizzicato strings and percussion, representing the moon striking silver flashes from the night-swelling sea. And 'Storm', a simple rondo, is spectacular, with thunderous timpani and raging brass; threatening phrases rise chromatically until the menace is challenged by a distant ray of hope.

Water Music by Georg Frederic Handel (1685-1759)

Overture Suite 2

Overture Suite 1

Adagio e staccato Suite 1

Alla Hornpipe Suite 2

Minuet Suite 2

Andante Suite 1

Lentement Suite 2

Bourrée Suite 2

The water in Handel's celebrated *Water Music* could hardly be more different from the menacing sea of *Peter Grimes*. Recalling the River Thames and originally composed for George I who had requested music for a concert on the river, the *Water Music* is a collection of orchestral movements, often published in three suites. Today we shall hear three movements from Suite 1 and the whole of Suite 2; most orchestras play excerpts from the *Water Music* in no set order.



Handel with King George I. Painting by Edouard Hamman

The first performance of the suites is recorded in the *Daily Courant*, an early London newspaper. At about eight in the evening on Wednesday 17 July 1717 King George, accompanied by several aristocrats, boarded a royal barge at Whitehall Palace for a summer excursion up the Thames towards Chelsea. It was followed by another barge, containing about fifty musicians who performed Handel's music. Accompanying these vessels was a large number of river boats, so many that according to the *Courant* 'the whole River in a manner was covered'.

The king left the barge at Chelsea, then came back at eleven for the return trip. He was apparently so pleased with the *Water Music* that he ordered it to be repeated at least three times, both on the trip upstream to Chelsea and on his return, until he landed at Whitehall again. The story goes that King George wanted to remind his subjects that – despite his son's lavish parties and dinners – he was actually the king, and one who knew how to create a spectacle. The musicians' reaction to playing the suites at least eight times in three hours is not recorded.

The music includes dances of the period, with minuets, Bourrée and hornpipes. It is scored for a relatively large orchestra, which made it suitable for outdoor performance, though today's orchestral forces will be much smaller. According to conductor Sir Thomas Beecham in 1920, 'The original Handelian orchestra was composed of a handful of strings and about a dozen reed wind instruments, maybe oboes and bassoons, with an occasional reinforcement of horns, trumpets and drums, restricted by necessity to the somewhat monotonous repetition of tonic and dominant. This makes hard going for any audience asked to listen to it with the opulent sound of a latter-day orchestra well in its ears.'

Most orchestras playing the *Water Music* these days tend to be on the small side, no doubt influenced by scholarship regarding historically informed performance.

INTERVAL

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35 by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

I Allegro moderato

II Canzonetta; Andante

III Finale; Allegro vivacissimo

It has been said that Tchaikovsky, who excelled in writing lyrical and dramatic works for the concert hall, was much less at home within the medium of the concerto; after all, he wrote only two that were successful, one for piano and one for violin. Some writers with a psychoanalytical bent have even suggested that his avoidance of close relationships made it difficult for him to come to terms with the personal struggle that is often the basis of a good Romantic concerto. Tchaikovsky himself seems to have been aware of this, at least on one level, writing gloomily in a letter that he could compose only 'weak and rotten little themelets'.

At the time the composer wrote that letter, in 1877, he was at a very low ebb. He was in debt, working far too hard, and anxious about the repercussions of rumours about his sexuality. In order to stop gossip he married Antonina Milyukova in July, a marriage that was doomed to failure from the start, lasting no longer than a few weeks. Within two months he was hospitalised with depression, which dogged him for a long time.

Early in 1878 he escaped to the Swiss resort of Clarens to recover, and he was joined there by his pupil, the violinist Iosif Kotek, who had studied in Berlin with the famous violinist Joseph Joachim. The two played works for violin and piano together including an arrangement of Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole*. Tchaikovsky wrote to his patron Nadezhda von Meck that he really liked the Lalo work: 'In the same way as Delibes and Bizet, [it] does not strive after profundity, but carefully avoids routine, seeks out new forms, and thinks more about musical beauty than about observing established traditions, as do the Germans.' One authority on Tchaikovsky's work has observed that the composer might almost have been writing the prescription for the violin concerto he was about to compose.

In mid-March Tchaikovsky wrote to his patron: 'This evening I was seized ... quite unexpectedly with a burning inspiration.' He set aside a sonata on which he had been working and began composing the violin concerto; it was the first time in his life he had started work on a new composition before completing the previous one. Once he started work, Tchaikovsky made swift progress, finishing the first movement in five days. He asked Kotek for advice about the solo part, and was delighted with the result, writing to his brother Anatoly that 'I would have been able to do nothing without him. He plays it marvellously.' Still, after playing through the concerto with Kotek he decided to write a new second movement. The whole score was completed by the first week in April.

Tchaikovsky wanted to dedicate the concerto to Kotek, but decided not to, in view of the gossip that would certainly spring up about the nature of his relationship with the younger man. In any case, three years later Kotek refused to play the concerto, because he believed it would be poorly received and damage his budding career. Tchaikovsky then approached Leopold Auer, who also refused to play the concerto. Some of the passages, he said, were unsuited to the character of the instrument. He was probably referring to the double stops, glissandi, trills, leaps and dissonances that characterize the work. Deeply hurt, Tchaikovsky then approached Adolph Brodsky, who agreed to play it, and the first performance was given on 4 December 1881 in Vienna, conducted by Hans Richter.

Critical reception was mixed. One critic observed that 'the violin was not played, but beaten black and blue'. Though Leopold Auer later urged his students to study the work, it did not immediately gain popularity. However, it was performed in London in 1882, in European cities during the 1880s and in New York in 1888. Tchaikovsky himself conducted the work in Warsaw the year before he died.

The concerto is scored for solo violin and an orchestra consisting of two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets in A, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings. It is characterised by lyrical melody, often suggesting the Slavic and Russian folk songs that Tchaikovsky so often used. Even though the solo part is very difficult, the violin decorates the theme rather than showing off purely technical passages.

The second theme of the first movement is widely cited as a prime example of Tchaikovsky's song-like melody, and both the themes of the first movement are displayed in the extended cadenza at the end of the movement, which Tchaikovsky wrote out (cadenzas are sometimes improvised by the soloist). The extremely expressive canzonetta in the somewhat unexpected key of G minor forms the second movement and leads directly to the finale without a break. The lively finale displays the strong influence of folk music, both in the harmonies and in melodies built upon descending fourths. It is common for soloists to play the last movement extremely rapidly: as violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter explained in an interview with ABC Classic FM, she loves playing it as fast as she can, to see orchestral colleagues 'sweat and be in fear'. Fear, or exhilaration, or perhaps both. **J.K.**

Please join us for refreshments after the concert

Edward Walton - violin



Is the Tchaikovsky a particular favourite of yours?

For as long as I can remember the Tchaikovsky violin concerto has been one of my favourite pieces. It is such a great masterpiece and has such beautiful melodies, which then contrast with the last movement which has such energy and is thrilling to play!

Are there any particular challenges you enjoy about it?

For me, I just love the piece so much and was so eager to play it that I never really thought about it as being challenging. I do enjoy playing the fast runs – even though they are pretty challenging and keeping the fun and energy in the stroke in the last movement.

What do you enjoy most about playing with an orchestra?

It is such an amazing opportunity for me to play this piece with orchestra as the orchestra makes it sound so much more exciting. It is how Tchaikovsky envisaged it would be played and it is great how in the 3rd movement for example the orchestra and soloist can

bounce off each other's energy when they pass the melody back and forth. It is also wonderful to play with other people who love and appreciate music as much as I do. So, I am so grateful to Mosman Symphony for this opportunity!

Tell us about your violin.

I am so excited about the violin I will be playing on for the concert. It is a Gagliano, kindly on short term loan from Beares London for a competition I am in which takes place in July. It has such a lovely sound – I just wish it was mine forever!

What does the future hold for you, Ted?

I have lots of exciting things coming up. I have the *Il Piccolo Violino Magico* "competition in Italy in July and later on in that month I am performing Mendelssohn concerto E minor with orchestra in Imola, Italy and in the next orchestral season I will be travelling to Atlanta, USA to perform with Orchestra Noir. In Australia I will be performing at Music in the Round in Abbotsford Convent in September and the Waxman Carmen Fantasie with the Australian Medical Students Orchestra in Melbourne on 22nd September. I really hope that I can continue to learn and improve my playing and gain more solo experiences with Orchestra. In the future I can only dream that one day I can become a professional violinist, own a great instrument and share my music with the world, but I also really hope that I will be in a position to give back something to those who have helped me along the way, like the wonderful orchestras who have given me an opportunity to perform in such a supportive environment.

Edward Walton spoke with Linda Entwistle

Mosman Symphony Orchestra

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*), Laura Case, Julian Dresser, Nicole Gillespie, Joyce Hang, John Phelp, Denisa Smeu-Kirileanu, Justin White,

Second violin: Emily Jones (leader Saturday), Mariangela Martinez (leader Sunday), Paul Bartels, Joy Lixiaotan, Daniel McNamara, Monica Meng, Kate Robertson, Alexander Tzannes, Bridget Wilcken, Haydn White, Darrell Woods

Viola: Eda Talu (leader), Mark Berriman, Zhiliang Chen, Bob Clampett, Jane Hazelwood, Daniel Morris, Sascha Tzannes

Cello: Michal Wieczorek (leader+), Ying Huang, Jennifer Mast, Karly Melas, Scott Rowe, Lewis Wand

Double bass: Clare Cory, Nicole McVicar, Jason Smith, James Zhang

Flute: Linda Entwistle, Jacqueline Kent, Jan Squire

Clarinet: Judy Hart, Allan Kirk, Sally Lucas

Oboe: Kim d'Espiney, Cate Trebeck

Bassoon: Bob Chen, Sofia Obando

French horn: Madeleine Aarons, Bill Cotis, Sandra Miletic, Derek Shangdian Wang

Trumpet: Anthony Aarons, William Sandwell

Trombone: Jai Cory, Peter Purches, Lauren Smith

Tuba: Greg Moloney

Percussion: Lisa Beins, William Hemsworth, Laurence Lau

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

+ Chair of Principal Cello is sponsored by Smiling Smiles Orthodontics, Mosman

Mosman Symphony Orchestra Concert Dates

Concert 3. Aug 24 & 25 Showcasing Leon Liang's *Adagio* (new Australian work), Chopin's *Piano Concerto in E*, and Bizet's *L'Arlésienne*

Concert 4. Nov 9 & 10 Featuring Brahms' *Symphony No. 4*

Choral Concert. Aug 11

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