

Scenes from the New World

MOSMAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

ANDREW DEL RICCIO | MUSICAL DIRECTOR
GREGORY KINDA | PIANO

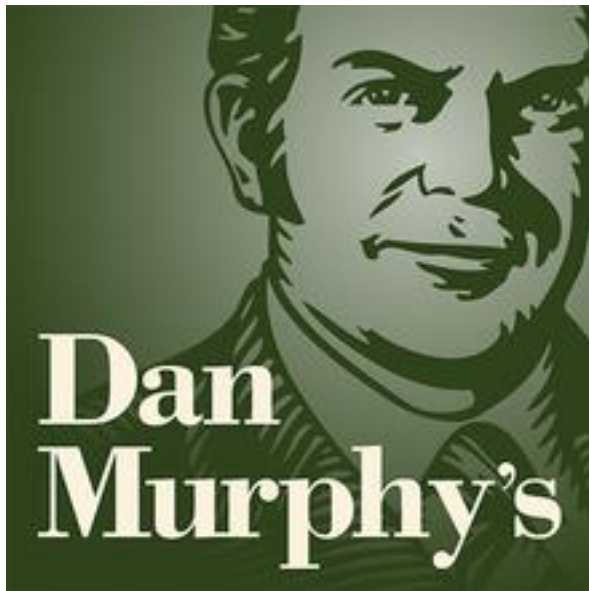
BERNSTEIN	Overture to Candide
GERSHWIN	Rhapsody in Blue
DVORAK	New World Symphony

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Message from the Musical Director



Today is a bit of a treat for me, and I hope for you as well. We all have a few pieces of music that are special to us and today, Mosman Symphony is presenting 3 that are quite special to me. It is our hope they become special to you as well!

It seems that we are well and truly back to a life where we can perform, make music and enjoy the special things in life (for now).

Today's program shares three things which are special for me. Bernstein's Candide

Overture is one of those uplifting, positive

works which can get one to reflect on the good things we can all enjoy. Having had the joy of performing it many times over the years, I have finally been able to get it into a program! Listen for the enthusiasm that permeates every bar: this is where we all need to be these days! It also seems to match the feeling we get when spring springs - so to speak. What better way to start the day, the concert, or a season where life rebounds, ready and raring to go!

Greg Kinda joining us again as soloist is a treat. He has uncovered layers of ever thickening 'traditions' to reveal more of Gershwin's original feel for his Rhapsody in Blue. He brings to life the energy, positivity and 'go get it' attitude of the roaring twenties, where anything was possible. Be prepared for a thrilling performance! This is one of those pieces that captures the middle ground, between jazz and 'classical' music. Right from the opening clarinet trill and glissando Gershwin has made this something that not only features our soloist but so many players in the orchestra. As does Dvorak! Inspired by the new world, but still a part of the old, his symphony is one of the most well known and loved in the repertoire. There's is nothing more to say but - Dvorak! Enjoy!

Andrew Del Riccio, September, 2022

Notes on the Program

Overture to *Candide*; Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

It is not often that an eighteenth-century novella becomes the basis for a twentieth-century American musical work. But Voltaire's scathing satire *Candide* seemed the perfect vehicle for Leonard Bernstein and his collaborators Lillian Hellman and Richard Wilbur to make an operatic statement sending up American feel-good optimism. The story – in both the original and the chamber opera – concerns the fortunes of a young man who has been taught by his tutor Pangloss that whatever disasters befall human beings must be accepted as part of a greater cosmic plan, and that everything happens for the best. *Candide* and his beloved fiancée Cunegonde then suffer an increasingly appalling series of personal and other disasters – including shipwreck, famine, capture, rape, and possible death. The music and libretto are witty, sometimes tender, and the sting of the satire is unmistakable. Voltaire's ironic assertion that 'All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds' becomes in Richard Wilbur's hands: 'Once one dismisses/ the rest of all possible worlds/One sees that this is /the best of all possible worlds.'

The overture, probably Bernstein's most frequently performed piece (as a stand-alone work and aside from his score for the musical *West Side Story*) perfectly captures the mockery of Voltaire's satire. In an artfully compact form Bernstein includes tunes from the show, including the instrumental *Battle Music*, the ironic love duet 'Oh Happy We' and most notably Cunegonde's virtuoso coloratura aria 'Glitter and Be Gay', Bernstein's parody of 'The Jewel Song' from Gounod's *Faust*. And though the original production of *Candide* in 1956 was not hugely popular due to its hybrid nature – audiences not being sure whether it was an opera, an operetta or a musical – its witty libretto and irresistibly inventive score have guaranteed *Candide*'s continuing success.

Rhapsody in Blue; George Gershwin (1898-1937)

This composition by the twenty-six-year-old George Gershwin is probably the most famous jazz/classical synthesis in the history of American music. It was

written for solo piano and jazz band and combines elements of classical music with the rhythms and harmonies of jazz. It was commissioned by bandleader Paul Whiteman and the original performance took place in New York City with the composer playing the piano.

Whiteman's arranger Ferde Grofe – composer of the Grand Canyon Suite and an accomplished arranger as well orchestrated the piece several times, including the symphonic scoring in 1942, which you will hear today. Rhapsody in Blue is now one of the most popular of all concert works. The magazine American Heritage has observed that the famous opening glissando for clarinet is as instantly recognizable as the first bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

That famous glissando came about by accident during rehearsals. As a joke on Gershwin Ross Gorman, Paul Whiteman's virtuoso clarinetist, stretched the opening bars as far as he could, just to underline the jazzy form of the piece. Gershwin loved this and told him to perform the opening in exactly the same way. Gorman did, striking terror into the hearts of all clarinetists who have since performed the piece.

Gershwin later claimed that he started thinking about Rhapsody in Blue on his way from New York to Boston. As he told his biographer Isaac Goldberg, 'It was on the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattle-ly bang, that I suddenly heard – and even saw on paper – the complete construction of the rhapsody, from beginning to end. I heard it as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America, of our vast melting pot, our unduplicated national pep, of our metropolitan madness. By the time I reached Boston I had a definite plot of the piece.'

The first performance took place on a snowy afternoon in February 1924, in a packed-out concert held by Paul Whiteman and his Palais Royal Orchestra and entitled 'Experiments in Modern Music'. According to one newspaper of the time, the audience consisted of 'vaudevillians, concert managers come to have a look at the novelty, Tin Pan Alleyites, composers, symphony and opera

stars, flappers, cake-eaters, all mixed up higgledy-piggledy.’ Those present included Victor Herbert, Igor Stravinsky, Fritz Kreisler, Leopold Stokowski, John Philip Sousa and Willie ‘the Lion’ Smith. As was his habit, Gershwin improvised part of his piano solo, which left the anxious orchestra waiting for his nod so they could resume playing. Because of this improvisation, the solo piano sections of the work were not written out until afterwards, so nobody is certain what the original rhapsody sounded like. But it was greeted with tumultuous applause and many, many performances have followed.



Gershwin at the piano

Critical reception, however, has been somewhat mixed, mainly due to Rhapsody’s combination of different elements, which some thought did not hold together properly. But Leonard Bernstein, who loved the piece, pointed out how flexible it is: *‘Rhapsody in Blue is not a real composition in the sense that whatever happens in it must seem inevitable, or even pretty inevitable. You can cut out parts of it without affecting the whole in any way except to make it shorter. You can remove any of these stuck-together sections and the piece still goes on as bravely as before. You can even interchange these sections with one another and no harm done. You can make cuts within a section, or add new cadenzas, or play it with any combination of instruments or on the piano alone; it can be a five-minute piece or a six-minute piece or a twelve-minute piece. And in fact all these things are being done to it every day. It’s still the Rhapsody in Blue.’ J.K.*

Gregory Kinda – piano



Gregory Andrew Kinda was born in Katowice, Poland. In 1983, his family immigrated to Australia. In 1984, at the age of 6, he became the youngest scholar to enter the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in the preparatory department. In 1999, at the Academy of Music in Katowice, Gregory completed his Master of Arts degree in an accelerated three years instead of the usual five. He also studied post-graduate courses in Oslo, Norway and Gdansk, Poland. He returned to Sydney in 2000 and has lectured at the Australian International Conservatorium of Music and the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Conservatorium of Music. He currently works as an Associate Artist at Trinity Grammar School in Summer Hill, NSW.

Gregory has performed in Australia, Poland, Norway, Germany, Russia, France, Czech Republic and Japan. He was the star performer in March 2010 at the City Recital Hall, Angel Place in Sydney, during the official NSW state celebrations for the 200th anniversary of Frédéric Chopin, where he played in the presence of the Polish Ambassador and the Governor of NSW Professor Marie Bashir AC. He has won many prizes in international competitions, including the F. Chopin Competition in Poland and the M. Magin Competition in Paris.

INTERVAL

Symphony No 9 'From the New World'; Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)

I Adagio, Allegro molto

II Largo

III Molto vivace

IV Allegro con fuoco

Dvořák's most celebrated and popular symphony would seem, on the face of it, to have little in common with Bernstein's overture to *Candide* and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. But all three have a very strong link: they draw heavily on different features and traditions of American music. In Dvořák's case, this consists of Afro-American and other American folk songs.

Already a well-known composer in Europe, admired for his unabashed nationalism expressed in his use of Czech melodies, Dvořák was employed from 1892 to 1895 to run the National Conservatory of Music in New York, to help American composers develop their own voices, shaking off the influence of the European masters. He saw that, as had happened in Europe, composers could very effectively use their own folk music in their work, and he saw American folk music as the foundation of works by local composers. In an interview with the *New York Herald* in 1893 he said, 'In the Negro melodies of America I discover all that is needed for a great and noble school of music.'

Dvořák was criticised by American and European newspapers for this statement, and several musicians also weighed in. They all seemed to assume that Dvořák thought it was enough simply to take existing melodies and forge them into new works, but he said that he was interested only in the spirit of African-American and 'Indian' melodies. It is true that the influence of African-American spirituals and other folk songs, with their pentatonic scales and syncopated rhythms, is strong in several works he composed in the United States. But saying, as he did, that he did not use any of those melodies in his work – especially in his ninth symphony – is perhaps a little disingenuous. It has been pointed out that the melodic outline and rhythmical structure of the

final theme in the symphony's first movement recalls very strongly the spiritual 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot'.

However Dvořák, the quintessential European, came across this kind of music – and there are several theories – the fact remains that his ninth symphony reflects his wonder and excitement about his new environment and the new cultural impulses surrounding him. He was, after all, in his fifties, with an established voice and range as a composer, and he very effectively synthesised the new music he heard into this, creating a remarkably harmonious and expressive musical palette.

Dvořák insisted that the symphony's slow introduction, marked 'Adagio' should be 'drawn out, where possible', and it anticipates the thematic material of the entire movement, which is structured around three supporting thematic ideas. The fanfare-like phrase that gets the 'Allegro molto' under way is a defining feature of the symphony as a whole, with something similar appearing at significant points in the following three movements.

The second subject, in a minor key with a limited melodic range, has been likened to Native American music, but its development transforms it into something much more like a Czech polka. The closing theme – often said to be like 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' – is also treated in the symphony's subsequent movements.

The second 'Largo' movement begins with a remarkable harmonic succession of chords in the wind instruments. The famous main theme was originally intended for the clarinet; Dvořák changed it to the cor anglais. It is said that he thought the cor's quality of sound reminded him of the voice of Harry T. Burleigh, the African-American singer whose performances introduced the composer to Negro spirituals. It is frequently associated with homesickness, nostalgia, lamentation, emphasised by the 1922 song version of the theme 'Goin' Home' written by one of the composer's American students. A scherzo-like segment follows, its dynamic climax incorporating several thematic ideas: the 'Largo' theme and the main and closing themes of the first movement.

The sequence of introductory chords makes its appearance at the very end of the movement.



Dvorak by James Hadley

In Dvořák's words, the third movement, written in A-B-A form, is associated with 'the feast where the Indians dance', his music influenced by his reading of Hiawatha by Longfellow. The entire character of the A section and its

increasing sense of urgency as the piece progresses indeed have their echo in the section of Hiawatha depicting Hiawatha's wedding feast:

*To the sound of flutes and singing,
To the sound of drums and voices,
Rose the handsome Pau-Puk-Keewis
And began his mystic dances.*

This stirring section is interrupted only in the contrasting middle section, whose idyllic atmosphere is sometimes likened to a Czech dance melody. After a repletion of part A is the coda, which – defying the overall tone of the movement – forms a transition to the final part of the symphony.

The fourth movement, marked 'con fuoco' – is to some extent a recapitulation of previous themes. But its main theme, characterised by great energy from the brass section of the orchestra, prefigures the mood of the whole movement. The second subject, however, is a broad, lyrical top line, supported by other parts of the orchestra. And in one passage Dvořák actually interweaves the main themes from the second, third and fourth movements. The recapitulation is short in comparison to the exposition, so the majestic coda stands out even more, taking in all the key ideas of the symphony in a rousing conclusion.

Given Dvořák's public statements about the origins of American national music, the premiere of his symphony, in 1893 on 16 December was a sellout. It also proved to be the highlight of the concert season and for Dvořák was probably the highlight of his musical career. In exhilaration, he wrote to a friend: 'The papers are saying that no composer has ever achieved a triumph such as this. I sat in a box, the auditorium hosted New York's finest, and people applauded for so long that I had to express my appreciation from my box like a king (don't laugh!)' According to the New York Herald: 'The day was an important one in the musical history of America. It witnessed the first public performance of a noble composition.' And the symphony's immediate success has lasted ever since. **J.K.**

Mosman Symphony Orchestra

Andrew Del Riccio – Musical Director



Educated in Australia, Switzerland and Canada, Sydney born Andrew Del Riccio is a highly accomplished teacher, conductor, trumpet player and instrumental teacher. Early career achievements include extensive performing with Opera Australia, Sydney Symphony and Australian Chamber Orchestras, creation of chamber ensembles (Blues Point Brass Quintet, St Peters Chamber Orchestra, The Unexpected orchestra) and free-lance work in genres ranging from baroque ensembles on original instruments, to music theatre and contemporary music groups. He started his private teaching practice in 1988, with excellent results in AMEB exams and many students successful in auditioning for placements in specialist music schools and other programs.

After studies in opera conducting and direction in Canada he taught at Sydney's Trinity Grammar School. Currently, he is the musical director of Mosman Symphony Orchestra, conducts in the Roseville Public School band program, directs the ensemble program at Burwood Girls High, plays with the Australian Brass Collective, Hourglass Ensemble, Australian Baroque Brass, and teaches brass at International Grammar and his 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 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*), Soojin Anna Choi, James Dong, Julian Dresser, Bettina Minogue, Peter Purches, Hayden White, Justin White

Second violin: John Philp (leader), Sarah Hatton, Annika Herbert, Macarena Herbert, Ernie Hurst, Daniel McNamara, Shauna Moloney, Kate Robertson, Darrell Wood, Yuting Jin

Viola: Eda Talu (leader), Mark Berriman, Zhiliang Chen, Bob Clampett, Anthony Dooley, Jane Hazelwood, Daniel Morris, Hannah Shephard

Cello: Michal Wieczorek (leader), Yvette Leonard, Rachel Terry, Jennifer Mast, Lewis Wand

Double bass: Clare Cory, Tom Wu

Flute: Linda Entwistle, Jacqueline Kent, Jan Squire

Oboe: Cate Trebeck, Jasper Wand

Clarinet: Judy Hart, Sally Lucas

Saxophone: Kim d'Espiney, Sally Lucas

Bassoon: Bob Chen, Graham Cormack

French horn: Adrian Barnes, Cath Lukin, Scott Rowe, Cindy Sims

Trumpet: Rachel Moshel, Mathilde Schoelpple

Trombone: Jai Cory, Greg Hanna, Lauren Smith

Tuba: Dominic Lukin

Percussion: Lisa Beins, William Hemsworth, Ben Kam, Lawrence Lau.

Harp: Katie Moloney

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

Mosman Symphony Orchestra Concert Dates

Concert 4: Nov 19 & 20 *Debussy, Beethoven, Rossini, Glinka, Humperdinck, and Tchaikovsky*

Concert 5: Dec 11 *Christmas Concert with Mosman Symphony Chorus*

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