



STRATHFIELD SYMPHONY
Presents

Saturday 6 December 2008,
8pm
Strathfield Town Hall

Musical Geography



Coriolanus Overture – Beethoven
Norwegian Dances – Grieg
London Symphony No 104 – Haydn

Put the date in your calendar today!
www.strathfieldsymphony.org.au



STRATHFIELD SYMPHONY
Orchestra of the Inner West

*An Enchanted
Evening*

Chief Conductor & Artistic Director
Sarah-Grace Williams

Mozart | Don Giovanni Overture
Tchaikovsky | Violin Concerto
soloist – Susan Collins

Allegro Moderato / Canzonetta – Andante
Finale – Allegro vivacissimo

INTERVAL

Dvorak | Symphony no 8

Allegro con brio / Adagio – Allegretto Grazioso
Molto Vivace / Allegro ma non troppo

20th September, 2008
Marrickville Town Hall
303 Marrickville Rd Marrickville

www.strathfieldsymphony.org.au

Our Supporters



The solution for all your business writing needs

www.bewrite.com.au
(02) 8213-2383



2MBS-FM 102.5
Sydney's Fine Music Station

Classical music and jazz on radio, Sydney-wide. Australia's first FM station.

Our Supporters

Friends of the orchestra

Dr & Mrs N A Andersen
Mrs E M Astles
Mr Solomon Bard *
Viraf Bhavnagri
Robin Booth
Mr Ted Davis*
Mr Bruce Dunlop*
Miss C Edwards
Merryn Horrocks
Mr R Knight

Mr Vincent Leonard*
Mrs S Mahabeshwarwalla*
Mr B McBurney*
Mrs Sheila Myers*
Margaret Shirley*
Sally Trevena
Mr G Widmer*
Mrs J Widmer

*Denotes life member



Strathfield Symphony acknowledges and thanks
Strathfield Municipal Council for its support.



**Guest Principal Flute,
Svetlana Yaroslavskaya
and the flute section
choose to play
muramatsu flutes**

*for the widest selection
of the finest flutes*

*Beginner to professional
Sales - Repairs - Music - Tuition*

**FluteTree**
& THE WOODWIND GROUP

The WoodWind Group Pty. Ltd
Suite 1 / 111 Moore Street
Leichhardt 2040
info@woodwind-group.com.au
ph (02) 9564 1233
www.woodwind-group.com.au



www.russianconnection.com.au is a free comprehensive guide to cultural events with a Russian cultural flavour. It features events across a number of topics, including Art Exhibitions, Ballet, Classical Music, Concerts, Festivals, Kids events, Movies, Musical, Lectures, Opera, and Theatre.

Minister for Fair Trading, Citizenship, and Assisting the Premier for Arts



VIRGINIA JUDGE MP
MEMBER FOR
STRATHFIELD

For interviews, information and enquiries
please contact the Electorate Office at
176 Burwood Road, Burwood on
9747 1711 Fax: 9747 6054 or email:
strathfield@parliament.nsw.gov.au

www.virginiajudge.net

Virginia Judge

Conductor & Artistic Director ***Sarah-Grace Williams***

The 8th symphony has been called the most nationalistic of Dvorak's symphonies – mostly due to its mood and imagery rather than the quoting of specific melodies. Dvorak is reported to have said that in this symphony he wanted to express his ideas in ways that differed from the standard formal principles – he wanted to write something “different from other symphonies, with individual thoughts worked out in a new way.” (Steinberg, 1995)

This approach is clearly evident in the first movement, a masterpiece of melodic invention that follows the conventional sonata form design, but also shows an extraordinary abundance of thematic material – some of which is heard once only and never used again. The very first theme (played on the lower strings) is used as a kind of marking post for the movement's structure, as if it were a type of refrain. It occurs at the beginning of each of the three main sections within the traditional sonata form structure: at the very beginning of the movement, at the start of the central development section, and finally in glorious fashion in the brass at the bridge to the recapitulation. The movement's main theme is heard on the flute in the opening section and is accompanied by a second melody played immediately after it on the lower strings. These two themes are subsequently used as the focus of the central development section, being set in various ways and then transformed completely in character as the movement approaches its climax.

The adagio displays many characteristics of a slow march – more specifically a funeral march. The key of C minor in the lengthy introduction also indicates an allusion to the funeral march of Beethoven's *Eroica* symphony. However, the minor key does not remain too long and soon gives way to C major, at which point the movement's main melody appears in the flute and oboe and is accompanied by descending scales in the violins. The march is still present, but this melody has a brighter and more pastoral feel. A violin solo leads to a festive climax in the full orchestra and the section is then framed by a return of motives from the introduction. These same motives provide the basis for a more turbulent interlude, which gives way to a new march – this one forceful and agitated. However it breaks off abruptly, making way for the return of the main melody – this time in the violins – and the movement's conclusion.

The third movement with its broad sweeping melodies is thoroughly pastoral in character. The middle part of the piece features subtle cross rhythms in the accompaniment and the main melody, which is very folk-like in character, originated as a theme from Dvorak's one act opera *The Stubborn Lovers* from 1874. The coda is lively (even boisterous) and again conveys a very peasant-like quality.

A trumpet fanfare heralds the opening of the finale and is followed by the movement's main theme, a nostalgic melody played on the lower strings. It is not long however before far more excited version of this theme appears in the full orchestra. The design of the movement is a loosely structured theme and variations, but this is juxtaposed with a contrasting middle section based on a chromatically descending melody – a formal innovation giving the movement an overall three-part structure. The variations in the first part of the movement are more virtuosic in style, whilst the variations in the last part convey a more pastoral character. A rather poignant moment brings the music near to a standstill before the return of the theme in its grandiose form and the triumphant finale.

Sarah-Grace Williams has gained a reputation as one of the leading Australian conductors of her generation. Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of Strathfield Symphony Orchestra since 2006, Sarah-Grace also holds the positions of Musical Director and Conductor of the Sydney Opera House Proms Orchestra, Associate Conductor of The Occasional Performing Sinfonia (TOPS) and Musical Director of the AIM Showcase Vocal Ensemble 'Proclaim'. Additionally, Sarah-Grace is regularly engaged as a Guest Conductor and Presenter with many other ensembles including the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, The Queensland Orchestra, Penrith Symphony Orchestra, Australian Institute of Music ChAIMber Orchestra and Kur-ing-gai Philharmonic Orchestra.



An accomplished clarinettist and pianist, Sarah-Grace received her Bachelor of Music Degree with Distinction, majoring in performance and composition. She went on to achieve First Class Honours in Conducting before continuing conducting studies with Alexander Polishchuk (Russia) and Jorma Panula (Holland). A principal graduate from Symphony Australia's prestigious Conductor Development Program, Sarah-Grace has also studied with esteemed conductors Johannes Fritsch, Janos Furst, Christopher Seaman, Daniel Porcelijn and Marco Zucarrini. She has conducted most of Australia's major orchestras including the Melbourne Symphony, Tasmania Symphony, Adelaide Symphony and The Queensland Orchestras and was selected as one of only five conductors to participate in the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra's Graduate Conductors Program in 2005, resulting in an invitation to conduct a concert series the following year.

Sarah-Grace has been awarded numerous prizes including the Symphony Australia Podium Scholarship, University of Western Sydney Prize for Academic Excellence, the Sound Devices Prize for excellence in Performance and the Guitar Factory Scholarship.

Sarah-Grace currently lectures at both the Australian Institute of Music (AIM) and the Australian International Conservatorium of Music (AICM) and is regularly engaged as Musical Director and Vocal Specialist for the Catholic Schools Performing Arts (CaSPA). She has composed, arranged and recorded music for films, theatre productions, symphonic ensembles and chamber groups and remains a highly sought after Vocal Coach and adjudicator. Sarah-Grace continues to work as a freelance Clarinettist and Pianist.

Acknowledgements

Programme Notes: Justin White
Sponsorship & Artwork: Rowena Cseh and Bruce Lane

Soloist *Susan Collins*

The Australian violinist Susan Collins returned to Australia in 1991, at the completion of her studies in Europe and America. From 1992 until 2001, Susan enjoyed a rewarding collaboration with the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra. In 2003 Susan was awarded the Australian *Centenary Medal* for 'contribution to Australian society through opera and ballet'. Susan has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Creative Arts through the University of Wollongong.



After receiving the Diploma of the State Conservatorium of Music (Sydney) she then headed to Berlin where she studied at the HdK under Thomas Zehetmair in 1989. Susan received her Master of Music degree from Indiana University at Bloomington in 1991. Prior to commencing tertiary study in Australia Susan was the recipient of a scholarship from California State University as well as from the American String Teachers Association, enabling her to study in the USA. She was awarded many scholarships and awards available to young Australian musicians.

In 1992 Susan was awarded the position of Deputy Concertmaster of the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, a position that she held until 2001, regularly acted as Concertmaster, as well as engagements as Guest Concertmaster for the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, the State Orchestra of Victoria and the Sydney Opera House Orchestra.

In 2002, Susan worked as Guest Concertmaster of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. She also appeared as soloist in 'Opera in the Vineyards' with Yvonne Kenny.

Since 2004 Susan has been performing with the Berlin Chamber Orchestra, has performed the Brahms violin concerto with Willoughby Symphony Orchestra and has worked with Symphony Australia as violin soloist for a conductor-training program.

In addition Susan has recorded many times for ABC FM, 2MBS FM and 3MBS FM radio stations in live performance broadcasts as well as studio recorded recitals and has appeared as soloist with orchestras, performing throughout Australia, the USA, and Europe.

Susan has recently completed editing the complete works for violin and piano by the Australian composer Raymond Hanson. She has recorded these works with pianist David Miller. She has also recently formed a piano trio with Sue-Ellen Paulsen and the pianist Duncan Gifford. Susan currently lectures in Violin and Viola at the Newcastle Conservatorium.

The second theme makes no attempt to provide contrast, but simply expands the overall sense of lyricism that pervades the movement. And in a similar fashion to Mendelssohn the improvised cadenza near the end is omitted. In its stead is a carefully written out cadenza – placed not at the end of the movement, but at the end of the central development section. The solo part is never virtuosic for its own sake. Rather, it always seems to spring from the musical development – even in the cadenza.

The second movement provides a moment of calm contrast, with an underlying sense of melancholy. The Canzonetta, or little song, is an emotionally restrained and purely lyrical piece in the common song form – comprising outer sections based on the main theme and a central contrasting melody. The melody is reserved for the solo violin, played with the violin muted – unusual for a concerto solo part. It is an effect that serves to reinforce the introspective character of the movement.

The Canzonetta leads without break into the cadenza-like opening of the finale. The movement's theme is a vigorous (almost frantic) *trepak*. Unashamedly Russian in character, it is a whirlwind of virtuosity and is a distinct precursor of the famous Russian dance from the Nutcracker. This main theme is contrasted by a second theme of a more relaxed, folksong like character – complete with imitation bagpipe drones in the orchestral accompaniment. The linked second and third movements thus form a complimentary pair and a balance to the expansive opening movement.

History has proven Hanslick wrong., and Leopold Auer did eventually take up the concerto, performing it on numerous occasions (including at a memorial concert shortly after the composer's death). He even composed a number of variants (embellishments) on the solo part, which are commonly played to this day.

Antonin Dvorak (1841– 1904) *Symphony no. 8 in G major Op. 88*

1. Allegro con brio
2. Adagio
3. Allegretto Grazioso – Molto Vivace
4. Allegro ma non troppo

Dvorak composed his 8th Symphony in G major in the summer of 1889, while he and his family were staying at their summerhouse in the Czech countryside, finishing the orchestration on his return to Prague. It shows a much more cheerful outlook than the 7th symphony (written four years earlier). Although it has not achieved the enormous popularity of his 9th symphony *From the New World* it is widely considered one of his best – some consider it to surpass the great and dramatic 7th symphony in D minor. The premiere took place in Prague on the 2nd of February 1890 with Dvorak conducting.



Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)

Violin Concerto in D major Op. 35

1. Allegro Moderato
2. Canzonetta – Andante
3. Finale – Allegro vivacissimo

Tchaikovsky's violin concerto is revered as one of the greatest and most widely loved of all violin concertos. It would then surprise many to know that it was initially met with criticism – even hostility – from commentators. When the Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick came to review the premiere performance given by Adolf Brodsky with the Vienna Philharmonic on December 4th 1881 he wrote:

“In discussing lascivious renderings, Friederich Vischer once claimed that there are “pictures that reek.” Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto is the first to suggest the frightening thought that there might also be compositions in which one can hear the stench.” (Kolneder, 1972)



Hanslick was not alone in his criticism of the concerto – for many among the Viennese press concurred. In fact Leopold Auer – the concerto's original dedicatee – refused to play it, regarding it as awkward and too difficult, and even went so far as to counsel others not to play it either. Such criticism, while not entirely new to Tchaikovsky (the first piano concerto had met with total disdain from the pianist Nikolai Rubinstein), must have been difficult to take and he later wrote that Auer's rejection “cast my poor child for many years into the abyss”. (Brown, 1992) The planned first performance, which was to be given by Auer in March of 1879, was cancelled and the concerto was not performed before the public until Brodsky gave the premiere in Vienna – over three and a half years after its completion. As a result Tchaikovsky changed the dedication, giving the honour to Brodsky. Despite its difficult early life, the concerto soon gained acceptance and was performed on numerous occasions in the composer's presence.

Tchaikovsky composed his only Violin Concerto during the months of March and April in 1878, whilst at Clarens on Lake Geneva in Switzerland. The young Russian violinist Iosef Kotek, a former pupil with whom Tchaikovsky had developed a close friendship, joined the composer in Clarens in mid March and within a few days work on the concerto had begun. The sketches were finished by the end of the month but the original second movement was replaced with the *Canzonetta*. The orchestration work followed and the concerto was complete by April 11th. The original slow movement was not discarded however, and remains with us today as the *Meditation* from the *Souvenir d'un lieu cher* Op.42.

The Violin Concerto is in many ways typical of the romantic era instrumental concerto, and presents a dazzling array of lyricism and virtuosity. The solo violin enters after only a brief introduction from the orchestra and proceeds to announce the movement's main theme.

Want to get involved?

From the flyer that told you about this concert, to the tea you will drink at interval, everything at Strathfield Symphony is done by volunteers. Why not get involved?

If you would like to get involved in publicity, front of house, stage management, catering, or simply would like to lend a hand with the many tasks that run an orchestra, we would love to hear from you. We have many interesting and varied opportunities to get involved with your local community.

Call Laura on (02) 9292 1768 during business hours or email publicity@strathfieldsymphony.org.au



Strathfield Symphony turns

40 in 2009

Mostly Mozart Chamber - Sunday, 15th March 2009

A night at the Movies - Saturday, 4th April 2009

It's a party! 40th Birthday Gala - Saturday, 4th July 2009

Orchestral Masterpieces - Saturday, 26th September 2009

Immortal Beloved - Saturday, 5th December 2009

Don't miss out. Plan your 2009 concert diary now and join us for a Fantastic year of Music and Soloists as we celebrate our 40th Anniversary. For subscription packages go to www.strathfieldsymphony.org.au

Program notes

Orchestra

Paul Pokorny - Concertmaster
Justin White - Associate Concertmaster

Violin 1

Paul Pokorny*
Wolf Frishling
Sarah Haddad
Carol Henson
Marie Hodsdon
Karen-Inge Karstoft
Julia Park
Sarah Seo
Wendy Trott
Justin White

Violin 2

Elizabeth Cooney*
Karina Barnard
Diana Barraga
Simonil Bhavnagri
Michael Brewer
Philip Hazell
Michelle Hood
Laura Jamieson
Greta Lee
Stephen Matthey
Agnieszka Rypel-
Polkas
Behram Taleyarkhan

Viola

Danielle Norton*
David Angell
Will D'avigdor
Chris Elenor
Helena Hatumale
Kate Hughes
Julia Pokorny
Bob Warton

Cello

Laura Hitchcock*
Jennifer Ainsworth
Rowena Cseh
Serena Devonshire
Alicea Gedz
David Oldroyd
Haydn Skinner
Danni Yi Ding

Double Bass

Jack Clegg
Nicole Murray-Prior
Mark Szeto
Ryu Yoshimoto

Flute

Svetlana
Yaroslavskaya*
Bruce Lane

Oboe

Robin Darroch*
Adele Haythornethwaite

Clarinet

David Abbott*
Rachel White

Bassoon

Long Nguyen*
Alex Thorburn

Horn

Sharon Hatton*
Ngoc Long Vuong
Annalisa Gatt
John Trezise

Trumpet

Gary Clarke*
David Young

Trombone

Lindsay Smartt*
Tom Kavanagh
Aubtin Namdar

Tuba

Andrew Watkins

Timpani

Steve Machamer

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Overture to Don Giovanni

Mozart's previous opera, *Le nozze di Figaro*, enjoyed tremendous success in its Prague season of 1786-7. This success led to a commission from a local impresario for a new opera. The result was *Don Giovanni*, which is widely regarded as one of Mozart's greatest achievements. Although normally categorized as a comic opera it shows Mozart's extraordinary abilities as a musical dramatist. An important aspect of this is the underlying ambiguity, or even duality, of the opera. Is the Don a loveable rogue who refuses to conform to the rules of society, or a cad who uses and discards women selfishly, and who eventually gets what is coming to him? Or both?



The musical material of the slow opening section is adapted from the dramatic climax of the whole opera - the final scene, where the stone statue of the Commendatore (killed by Giovanni in the opening scene) accepts the Don's invitation to dinner and then drags the unrepentant Don down to hell. The ominous opening chords (which represent a thunder clap when the statue appears in the doorway) foreshadow the drama to come.

The more conventional allegro section does not contain any music directly taken from the opera, but expertly intertwines two themes.

Popular history has it that the overture was not actually written until the day before the first performance, and that the Prague theater orchestra sight-read it on the night. That he wrote it after finishing the rest of the opera is entirely in keeping with his regular practice of leaving the composition of overtures for his operas until last.

* Principal