

Symphony Series 4

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August

Thu 12, Fri 13 & Sat 14
Adelaide Town Hall





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Symphony Series 4

Thu 12, Fri 13 & Sat 14 Aug

Adelaide Town Hall

Nicholas Braithwaite Conductor

Jamie Goldsmith
(arr./orch. Ferguson)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Pudnanthi Padninthi II – Wadna
(‘The Coming and the Going’)

[2']

Wagner

Lohengrin, Act I: Prelude

[10']

Mozart

Symphony No.35 in D, K.385 *Haffner*

[24']

Allegro con spirito

Andante

Menuetto – Trio

Finale (Presto)

Interval

Tchaikovsky

Symphony No.6 in B minor, Op.74 *Pathétique*

[46']

Adagio – Allegro non troppo

Allegro con grazia

Allegro molto vivace

Finale (Adagio lamentoso – Andante)

Duration

This concert runs for approximately one hour and 40 minutes, including a 20 minute interval.

Listen later

This concert will be recorded for later broadcast on ABC Classic. You can hear it again at 1pm on Friday 10 September.

The ASO acknowledges that the land we make music on is the traditional country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains. We pay respect to Elders past and present and recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that this is of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today. We extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are with us for this performance today.

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WELCOME

Under current circumstances, it's almost miraculous to be presenting this concert for you, and to have back with us on the podium one of the great figures in the ASO's history, Nicholas Braithwaite, who has agreed to step in for Simone Young at very short notice, when border restrictions made it impossible for her to get to Adelaide.

You'll have noticed that the program you'll hear tonight has changed slightly from the one we advertised; it won't surprise you to know that this change is also Covid-related. In line with our policy of featuring music by women throughout the *Symphony Series* this year, we were planning to open this concert with a new work, by the Tasmanian-based composer Mary Finsterer. This work was commissioned by the Sydney Symphony as part of its *50 Fanfares* project. As the commissioning organisation, the SSO have the exclusive rights to the first performance. The latest Sydney lockdown has obliged the Orchestra to postpone the concerts in which Mary's work was to be premiered, so we must also postpone our performance; we look forward to bringing it to you in the future.

From my conversations with many of you, I know that you appreciate the fragility of these times for everyone who makes music for a living, and indeed everyone who works in our profession. This concert reminds us that the moments when we come together as audiences and performers in spaces made for music are among the most life-giving of all.

With thanks for your support and encouragement.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vincent'.

Vincent Ciccarello
MANAGING DIRECTOR

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CONDUCTOR
Nicholas Braithwaite

Nicholas Braithwaite's career has been wide-ranging, musically and geographically. He has held positions as Music Director or Principal Conductor from Norway to New Zealand and many places in between, including the Tasmanian and Adelaide Symphony orchestras.

Concurrently with his Australian activities he was Principal Conductor of the Manchester Camerata. Other orchestral appointments have included Permanent Guest Conductor of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, and Associate Conductor with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. A frequent guest conductor for all the major UK orchestras, he also toured Japan and Korea with the London Philharmonic Orchestra as Associate Conductor to Sir Georg Solti.

In addition to appearances with all the major Australian orchestras, he has appeared with, among others, the Orchestre National de France, the Oslo Philharmonic, Auckland Philharmonia, Danish National Radio Symphony and the Collegium Musicum Copenhagen.

He has conducted more than 80 operas, holding appointments as Associate Principal Conductor of Sadler's Wells/English National Opera, Music Director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera, and Musiksjef of Gothenburg's Stora Teatern. He has also conducted opera at Covent Garden, Hamburg, Norwegian Opera, Scottish and Welsh National Operas, and many companies in Australasia. With Lyrita Recorded Edition he has conducted more than 30 albums of music by English composers, conducting the London Philharmonic, London Symphony, Royal Philharmonic, and Philharmonia orchestras.



1813—1883

Richard Wagner

***Lohengrin*, Act I: Prelude**

This is not an operatic curtain-raiser that parades the themes we will hear in the ensuing work; it is a poetic introduction to the work, creating in one breath an image against which the ensuing plot may be compared. As Wagner said about this Prelude:

Out of the clear blue ether there seems to condense a wonderful yet at first hardly perceptible vision; and out of this there gradually emerges ... an angel host bearing ... the sacred Grail.

The shimmering instrumental effect well illustrates Wagner's image. Gradually a theme emerges which will gain significance later in the opera as the Grail theme. Skilfully introducing deeper and deeper instruments, Wagner suggests a long descent. The horns and brass gradually enter and the Prelude gathers force, until 'the Grail is revealed in all its glorious reality.' Having reached a climax, the music returns to its quiet origins in the rarefied atmosphere of the higher strings. The angels return to heaven, says Wagner, 'having once more made pure the hearts of men.'

The prelude foreshadows the story. The knight Lohengrin arrives in Brabant to champion the falsely-accused Elsa. In return he requests that she never ask his name or origin, and they pledge themselves to each other. Elsa's accuser Friedrich of Brabant is defeated, but he and his wife later sow doubt in Elsa's mind, and on their wedding day Elsa asks Lohengrin to reveal his identity. Publicly he reveals that he is the son of Parsifal; he is a knight of the Grail whose assistance to Elsa and the German people was conditional on his anonymity. His anonymity destroyed, he leaves Brabant and Elsa, who falls lifeless to the ground.

Lohengrin was an important step toward music drama, Wagner's German brand of grand opera. But it did not fully succeed in balancing the musical and dramatic elements; at times, the music forces the drama to move too slowly. Fortunately, *Lohengrin* is one of Wagner's most beautifully melodic scores.

The composer was not able to attend the premiere in Weimar in 1850; he was in exile in Switzerland for his part in the 1848 Dresden uprising.

Edited from an annotation by Gordon Kalton Williams

Symphony Australia © 2003/2015

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

The ASO first performed the Prelude to Act I of *Lohengrin* in October 1950, conducted by Otto Klemperer. Arvo Volmer conducted the Orchestra's most recent performance, in May 2013.



1756—1971

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Symphony No.35 in D, K.385 *Haffner*

Allegro con spirito

Andante

Menuetto – Trio

Finale (Presto)

This symphony was the first Mozart completed after moving from Salzburg to Vienna in 1781. It is known as the *Haffner*, as it was composed for a celebration in Salzburg, when the Mozarts' friend Siegmund Haffner was ennobled. Mozart composed festive music in six movements, including two minuets and a march.

The next year, 1782, when planning a concert in Vienna, Mozart asked his father to send him from Salzburg the 'Haffner music'. When he received it, he wrote back 'I was quite surprised by the new *Haffner* symphony, for I had forgotten every single note of it; it must certainly be very effective'. For the concert on 22 March 1783 Mozart added flutes and clarinets to the first and last movements, and deleted the march and the first minuet. The result is a grand and rather festive symphony.

The first movement of the *Haffner* Symphony begins with a striking gesture to make a talkative audience sit up and pay attention. The two leaps of an octave followed by a rhythmic flourish are the main substance of the first movement – as in many of the first movements of Mozart's older colleague Joseph Haydn, there is no contrasting second theme.

The grace of the *Andante* in G major has been related to its serenade origins. Relaxation was just what was needed after an unusually tightly written first movement, with so much imitative counterpoint.

The Minuet is grand without being pompous – a minuet which asks to be listened to, no mere dancing background music, and with delicate subtleties in the Trio.

The finale recalls the opera Mozart was writing at the time (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*), especially the blustering triumphant rage of the overseer of the Harem, Osmin. In this finale, which he said should go 'as fast as possible', Mozart imitates the quicksilver patter of Italian musical comedy. The final bars even anticipate Rossini.

Annotation by David Garrett ©1999

Edited from an annotation by David Garrett © 2004

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

The ASO first performed Mozart's *Haffner* Symphony in May 1941, conducted by Bernard Heinze. Karina Canellakis conducted the Orchestra's most recent performance, in November 2018.



1840—1893

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Symphony No.6 in B minor, Op.74 *Pathétique*

Adagio – Allegro non troppo

Allegro con grazia

Allegro molto vivace

Finale (Adagio lamentoso – Andante)

The original audience for the Sixth Symphony was uncomprehending and ambivalent. Tchaikovsky had expected this, writing to his nephew and the dedicatee, 'Bob' Davidov, that he wouldn't be surprised if the symphony were 'torn to pieces', even though he considered it his best and most sincere work. The critic Hermann Laroche suggested that audiences who 'did not get to the core' of the symphony would 'in the end, come to love it.' As it turned out, it took them only 12 days. In the intervening period its composer had died, and for the second performance, in a memorial concert, it was promoted with the composer's subtitle: *Pathétique* (or *Pateticheskaja Simfoniia* – 'impassioned symphony' – as he had conceived it in Russian). The symphony was declared a masterpiece.

The myth of the-*Pathétique*-as-suicide-note (not to mention Tchaikovsky's 'suicide' itself) has been more or less debunked in the past two decades. There are no grounds for doubting that Tchaikovsky died from post-choleric complications; the theory that his old classmates decided in a 'court of honour' that he should commit suicide to avoid disgrace has been undermined; and his social, financial and artistic situation all speak against any other motivation for suicide, even if he continued to be troubled by his homosexuality.

The Sixth Symphony, specifically, seems to have been a source of immense pride, satisfaction and joy to him. And shortly after its premiere he's reported to have said 'I feel I shall live a long time'.

He was wrong. His audience, now in mourning and seeking 'portents', immediately heard the Sixth Symphony (the *Pathétique*) in a new way. New significance was given to the appearance in the first movement of an Orthodox burial chant, 'Repose the Soul' – a hymn sung *only* when someone has died – and to the otherworldly, dying character of the *adagio* finale.

Even if the symphony is not a suicide note, there is a programmatic and semi-autobiographical underpinning to the symphony that is the source of its unusual form and turbulent emotions. Tchaikovsky admitted the existence of a program but was cagey about the details, perhaps because it reflected his romantic feelings for Davidov. The closest we have is a sketched scenario, devised originally for an abandoned symphony in E flat but appearing to correspond with much of the Sixth Symphony:

Following is essence of plan for a symphony *Life!* First movement – all impulse, confidence, thirst for activity. Must be short (Finale *death* – result of collapse). Second movement love; third disappointment; fourth ends with a dying away (also short).

There are aspects of this program and the Sixth Symphony that suggest suffering, but for Tchaikovsky the composition of the symphony was a cathartic experience rather than an expression of current sufferings. He himself wrote: 'Anyone who believes that the creative person is capable of expressing what he feels out of a momentary effect aided by the means of art is mistaken. Melancholy as well as joyous feelings can always be expressive only out of the Retrospective.'

In its art this is Tchaikovsky's most innovative symphony. He dares to conclude with a brooding slow movement and uses boldly dramatic gestures to give the music its emotional impulse. The 'limping' elegance of the second-movement waltz would have been less surprising, to Russians at least – its five-beat metre was a part of a tradition that was embraced by Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky (in his *Pictures at an Exhibition*), and later Rachmaninov (in *The Isle of the Dead*).

In the Sixth Symphony Tchaikovsky comes to terms with his professed inadequacies in structural matters. His solution in the first movement was to extend the exposition section, so well suited to his melodic gifts, and to compress the development section in which he felt his skills inadequate. The music begins in the depths with the dark colour of the bassoon and yet somehow Tchaikovsky sustains a downward trajectory, or the impression of one, for the whole work.

In the third movement the idea of 'disappointment' is replaced by something more malevolent. In purely musical terms it conflates two musical figures – feverish tarantella triplets and a spiky march – but the juxtapositions and incursions into each other's thematic territory create a disturbing sense of antagonism. The movement's applause-provoking conclusion *could* be triumphant, or it could be the crash of self-delusion.

The finale may not fit the formula established by Tchaikovsky's classical predecessors, but within the emotional journey of the symphony its stark sense of tragedy provides an inevitable conclusion – all the more powerful for the grace and jauntiness of the preceding movements.

Yvonne Frindle ©2008

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

The Adelaide Symphony Orchestra first performed Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* Symphony, conducted by Bernard Heinze, in May 1941. The ASO's most recent performance took place in June 2016, when the Orchestra was conducted by Alexander Bloch.

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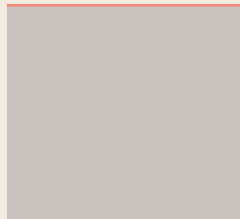
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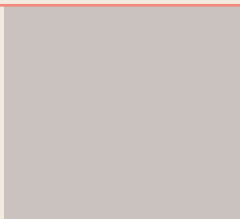
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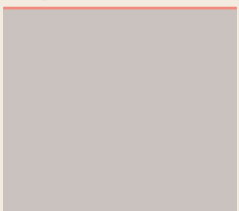
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Shivani Marx, Mark Ferguson, Steven Peterka, Jack Buckskin, Grayson Rotumah

Acknowledgement of Country

Adelaide Symphony Orchestra recently commissioned a Kurna Acknowledgement of Country that will be performed at the start of ASO concerts. Read on to learn about the significance of the piece.

The musical Acknowledgement is collaboration between Kurna Narungga musicians and composers Jack Buckskin and Jamie Goldsmith with arrangements by Mark Simeon Ferguson. The result is titled *Pudnanthi Padninthi* ('The Coming and the Going'). As shared by Jack Buckskin, the pronunciation of the title in Kurna language is Boodhandi Baadnindi.

ASO Managing Director Vincent Ciccarello says, "ASO's musical Acknowledgment of Kurna Country is a step towards building respectful relationships, learning, and sharing cultures through music. Many months in the making, this project has been a true collaboration and forms part of our strategic priority to showcase and develop new Australian work and support the goals outlined in our Reconciliation Action Plan."

Composer Jack Buckskin said music, song and dance were an important part of Indigenous culture. "Music's just another educational tool. It's one thing to be told a story, but you can forget the story very quickly. Song is the next stage of learning"

ASO Percussionist Steven Peterka plays the Wadnas in the acknowledgement, he says "The Wadnas make a unique and ancient sound, one we can't produce with standard orchestral percussion instruments. To be entrusted with the role of playing them in the orchestra is an honour, a humbling experience every time I hold them."

Shivani Marx, ASO General Manager, People, Culture and Operations, spoke of the importance of the musical acknowledgement and how it forms part of the ASO's greater commitment to reconciliation. She believes nothing is lost by the absence of words.

"In fact, what I hope is that something is gained by connecting it to what we do as an orchestra. We live and we make music on Kurna land. And so for us, there's nothing more meaningful than using music to convey the connection to the land and to pay our respects," Shivani says.

ASO wishes to thank the project collaborators including Grayson Rotumah, Jack Buckskin, Jamie Goldsmith and Mark Simeon Ferguson for bringing this project to life.

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