
Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

Season 2022



Wed 14–Sun 25 September
Adelaide Town Hall

BEETHOVEN: The Symphonies



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Beethoven: *The Symphonies*

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Listen Later These concerts will be recorded for later broadcast on ABC Classic

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.

Welcome

from **Vincent Ciccarello** Managing Director

It somehow seems fitting that my tenure as ASO Managing Director ends with Beethoven, just as it began in 2013 with Beethoven – an unforgettable performance of his Violin Concerto by the inimitable Pinchas Zukerman (who would go on to become our Principal Artistic Partner).

For all the reasons that Douglas Boyd articulates so beautifully in his own welcome message, Beethoven is as relevant today as ever. The universality of the themes and messages implicit in his music is beyond question; and the affect that his music has on our emotions, our thoughts and feelings, on our very being, is unlike that of any other composer. Let's not quibble: Beethoven is the greatest.

He also reminds us, however, of why we are here this evening – the joy that comes from coming together to share the experience of great music. It goes to the very heart of why the ASO exists and it is something that I hope is never lost.

The ASO, like almost every orchestra in the world, has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past decade. I would argue that the Orchestra is more intimately connected with our community than ever before, proving its value and relevance to the citizens of South Australia.

I am immensely proud to have led this remarkable institution. My wife Sandra and I leave having made literally hundreds of new friendships, inspired by your generosity, by your passion for music, and your love of the ASO.

Thank you for your support over the past nine years. And we look forward to seeing you at ASO concerts in the not-too-distant future.



from Douglas Boyd Conductor

In my previous life as principal oboe with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe I was fortunate to perform Beethoven with some of the greatest conductors of our time, such as Claudio Abbado, Bernard Haitink and, especially, Nikolaus Harnoncourt. His recordings with COE were a revelation, and influenced a whole generation of musicians.

I took these experiences with me, but forged my own path, when I turned to conducting. This will now be my third Beethoven symphony cycle, having performed (and recorded them) with Manchester Camerata, then in Melbourne with the MSO and now again here in Adelaide. Like Shakespeare in theatre, we can spend our whole lives exploring Beethoven's music searching for an unattainable truth.

Beethoven was, I believe, interested in the great ideas and philosophies of the human condition. The symphonies seem to me to be a constant argument between friends on the meaning of life. For example, the Fifth traces a journey from tyranny to freedom, whereas the Sixth – the *Pastoral* – looks at the world from a child's eye, thanking God for the nature around us. The Seventh's obsession with dance, from the saddest to the most hedonistic, contrasts with the celebration of the classical world of the Eighth. And finally the Ninth expresses... well everything! – but especially the hope that we can live together in peace.

Ultimately, Beethoven can express every emotion of the human spirit, from joy to tragedy and from love to terror. That's why his music is so relevant to 2022 and will be forever. I hope you get a sense of this in these performances with the wonderful ASO.





Beethoven, in a portrait by Joseph Karl Stieler (1820).

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

If the remains of a medieval fortress wall encircling Beethoven's home town of Bonn, close by the border with France, represented a psychological barrier to be transcended, so, too, did the Beethoven family's penurious dependence on the city's ecclesiastical prince, the Archbishop and Holy Roman Empire Elector.

Ludwig van Beethoven would live to break both those bonds. His compositions would become a cornerstone of Western music. Yet he would live to hear his late masterworks not with his ears but only, through a void of total deafness, in his imagination.

Young Ludwig learnt music from his father, Johann, a tenor in the service of the Electoral court, whose own father, also a singer, had been the Elector's Kapellmeister or music-director. Ludwig's first important teacher was the kindly court organist, Christian Gottlieb Neefe, to whom he became assistant orchestral harpsichordist (unpaid) at age 13. Already, probably at Neefe's instigation, the musical press had hailed him as a 'youthful genius' in the mould of the young Mozart.

The Elector, Maximilian Franz, son of Maria Theresia and brother of Marie Antoinette, also a devoted music-lover, allowed the 16-year-old

Beethoven a brief visit to Vienna in 1787, where he is said to have extemporised at the keyboard for an amazed Mozart and possibly had a few lessons as well. By now earning a small income as music teacher to aristocratic families in Bonn, Beethoven so impressed Haydn with a cantata he had composed when the latter visited Bonn on his journeys to and from London in 1790 and 1792 that the Elector agreed to let him study with Haydn in Vienna. His admiring friend, the young Count Waldstein, later the dedicatee of one of Beethoven's best-loved piano sonatas, famously farewelled him with the wish that he receive the spirit of Mozart, so recently deceased, from the hands of Haydn.

The music lessons in Vienna were no great sensation. It was probably less that the celebrated Haydn lacked time for correcting detail in Beethoven's routine exercises than differences of temperament – not least the student's impatience and ambition, mistrustful even of the teacher's very international renown and celebrity. The more methodical Albrechtsberger also found Beethoven a difficult pupil.



Portrait of Beethoven aged 13
- artist unknown.

Although Beethoven claimed that he never learnt anything from Haydn, he would nevertheless appreciate in later life that, far more than mundane counterpoint, his time with the great man had shown him what it meant to be original. It had shown him that musical form could liberate the creative spirit: that he could explore in music the range of human experience – all its passion and turbulence, the love and, above all, hope. This would be Beethoven's mission.

Beethoven would never see his home town of Bonn again. Home, for the rest of his life, would be Vienna. And he would never again be a servant in the employ of an aristocratic court. In Vienna, he could freelance between any number of wealthy patrons – aristocrats from around the Austro-Hungarian Empire who kept palaces or townhouses in the imperial capital, among them the princes Lichnowsky and Lobkowitz, to whom Beethoven had introductions from Count Waldstein.

Not only was Vienna the heart of empire, it was also the musical centre of Europe. The nobility and aristocracy lavishly displayed their devotion to music by hosting glittering musical soirées, some with their own orchestras or wind bands. Thus, an outstanding young virtuoso known to have been court organist and pianist to the Emperor Franz's uncle in Bonn, as well as a pupil of Haydn, was welcome everywhere. Beethoven's success was immediate and unchallenged. In due course he would be chosen as piano teacher by none other than the Emperor's youngest brother, the 16-year-old Archduke Rudolph, soon to become his most devoted patron.

Beethoven's compositions began appearing in print as early as 1782 – initially variations for piano, then in 1795 his official Opus 1, a set of three piano trios dedicated to Prince Lichnowsky. Publication provided both income and protection against rivals – his 'enemies' – who heard his celebrated improvisations and attempted to pass off his style as their own. Publishers soon competed for his works.

Emulating Mozart, Beethoven by 1795 was appearing in public concerts as both composer and soloist in his own piano concertos. In March he premiered probably his Piano Concerto No.2 in B flat, then in December, in a grand concert given by Haydn, played what may have been the first performance of his Piano Concerto No.1 in C. Concert appearances in Bohemia and Germany in 1796 affirmed his growing prosperity. A prized souvenir from Berlin was a gold snuffbox presented to him by the King of Prussia.

Giving his first public concert for his own benefit, in Vienna's Royal and Imperial Court Theatre (Burgtheater) on 2 April 1800, Beethoven the composer laid his musical cards on the table in the premiere of his First Symphony. As an earnest of the unsettling path he intended his symphonic career to pursue, he began a symphony in the purest key of C major with a discord. It was a beginning pregnant with promise.

Ominously, however, the young Beethoven, not yet 30, was already experiencing symptoms he would keep secret from even his closest friends for another year, symptoms of encroaching deafness which would end his career as a

concerto virtuoso by Christmas week, 1808, when he gave the first public performance of his Piano Concerto No.4. Though still able to accompany singers as late as 1815, Beethoven was stone deaf by 1818. Oblivious to thunderous applause for the scherzo at the premiere of the Ninth Symphony in 1824, he had to be turned towards the audience to acknowledge the acclamation. In his final years, visitors were forced to write to him in conversation-books. His last piano, preserved in the Beethoven House museum in Bonn, movingly testifies to the agony of his deafness in deep grooves worn by constant pounding on the keys for greater volume.

Despairing of his condition and its damaging effect on both his professional and social life, Beethoven admitted in a moving valedictory document known as the Heiligenstadt Testament, written in 1802 and found only after his death, that he would have contemplated suicide but for the supreme demands of his art. He wished to be remembered not as a misanthrope but as one whose deepest feelings were love of humankind and the desire to do good.

Beethoven's love attached in particular to women, usually aristocratic, often pupils. If not actually rejected by them, he always expected to be. Social barriers were an implacable obstacle. Perhaps only one woman reciprocated his passion and accepted him without reservation, one he addressed in a famous letter of 1812 as his 'immortal beloved'. If this never conclusively identified love was, as modern scholarship suggests, Antonie Brentano, and were she prepared to leave her husband to live with Beethoven in Vienna, the hitherto remote

prospect of a life of domestic bliss must suddenly have become more than he could personally or honourably contemplate. Beethoven never married.

Beethoven delivered heroically on the promise of his early symphonies and concertos in 1804 and 1805 with the dramatic C minor Piano Concerto, No.3, and a symphony of breathtaking magnitude and force, the *Eroica*. His only opera, *Fidelio*, dealing with tyranny and liberation, appeared unluckily just as French forces occupied Vienna in November 1805. Surviving only three poorly attended performances, it underwent extensive revision before finally making its mark in 1814 as the tide of war turned.

Premieres of both Fifth and Sixth symphonies as well as the first public performance of the Fourth Piano Concerto, plus other works besides, challenged musicians and audience alike in an enormous concert Beethoven managed to mount for his own benefit in the bitter chill of Christmas week 1808. But soon Napoleon's army was again invading Vienna and Beethoven found himself hiding in his brother's cellar, pillows shielding his fragile hearing from the bombardment.

Already, however, he had been offered appointment as Kapellmeister to Napoleon's youngest brother, Jerome Bonaparte, styling himself King of Westphalia. Needing a reliable income in such difficult times, and prepared to commit himself to staying in Vienna, Beethoven secured his future through an annuity guaranteed by the Archduke Rudolph together with the princes Kinsky and Lobkowitz.

Beethoven's later life was disrupted by a four-year legal battle to win custody of his nephew Karl from his brother's widow. The victory allowed him a sense of the parenthood he had never enjoyed in his own right but was clouded by constant domestic upheaval and shattered when Karl attempted suicide.

His composing pursued an ever loftier course: the enormous *Hammerklavier* Sonata; the Ninth (*Choral*) Symphony, which affirms through Schiller's text his deep-seated belief in the brotherhood of mankind under a loving God; and, in a rare resort to conventional Christian usage, direct supplication to that loving God by means of the Latin Mass, the epic *Missa Solemnis* in D. The Mass stretched Beethoven's musical and spiritual imagination beyond any possibility of its being completed, as intended, for the Archduke Rudolph's installation as Archbishop of Olmütz (Olomouc) in Moravia.

Beethoven devoted his last years to a unique series of six string quartets which explore and extend the possibilities of the medium beyond all previous imagining. They include the extraordinary *Grosse Fuge* (Great Fugue), which would be the composer's last dedication to the Archduke Rudolph.

Anthony Cane © 2011

Anthony Cane (1935-2020) was a writer and broadcaster with a lifelong love of music. His annotations have graced the program books of the Australian symphony orchestras for more than five decades.



My Favourite
Beethoven Symphony
Andrew Penrose
Principal Timpani

My favourite would have to be the ground-breaking Ninth. Or maybe the brilliance of his Seventh. Perhaps the elegance of his First or Eighth. Or the fatalistic and ultimately triumphant Fifth. Or it could be the revolutionary character of the *Eroica* or the stunning pictures he paints in the *Pastoral*. So it seems impossible for me to choose my favourite. All of them were written by a genius with prodigious musical skill and intense passion.

Concert 1

Wednesday 14 September, 7.30pm
Adelaide Town Hall

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Symphony No.1 in C, Op.21 [26']

Adagio molto-Allegro con brio
Andante cantabile con moto
Menuetto (Allegro molto e vivace)
Finale (Adagio-Allegro molto e vivace)

Beethoven

Symphony No.2 in D, Op.36 [32']

Adagio molto-Allegro con brio
Larghetto
Scherzo (Allegro) and Trio
Allegro molto

INTERVAL

Beethoven

Symphony No.3 in E flat, Op.55 *Eroica* [47']

Allegro con brio
Marcia funebre (Adagio assai)
Scherzo (Allegro vivace)
Finale (Allegro molto-Poco andante-Presto)

Duration Approximately two hours and 20 minutes, including one 20-minute interval.

Classical Conversations Join us at the Meeting Hall (located just behind Adelaide Town Hall) one hour before the concert for our free *Classical Conversations* to hear conductor Douglas Boyd discuss Beethoven's life and music with Graham Abbott.



Vienna's Burgtheater, where
Beethoven's Symphony No.1
was premiered.

Symphony No.1 in C, Op.21

Adagio molto–Allegro con brio

Andante cantabile con moto

Menuetto (Allegro molto e vivace)

Finale (Adagio–Allegro molto e vivace)

When Beethoven presented his first symphony amid the gilt elegance of the Royal and Imperial Court Theatre (Burgtheater) in Vienna on 2 April 1800, he was already in his 30th year. Having lived in Vienna more than seven years, he was well established as the city's foremost piano virtuoso, with his first two piano concertos already behind him – one of them repeated in this, his first personal benefit concert. His program cannily included excerpts from the great success of the previous year, Haydn's new oratorio *The Creation*. But in choosing a Mozart symphony to open a program which would lead to his own symphonic debut, Beethoven was declaring himself more than ready to stand comparison with past masters.

And he invites comparison provocatively in the very opening chord of the symphony, which is not the expected C major but a discord. Though he shifts key in the third bar, it still is not the home key. Beethoven's audience would have been bemused by this groping for tonality. The unexpected modulations build tension throughout the slow introduction until the *Allegro* arrives, and with it the proper key of C major, which is hammered emphatically.

With an anchor in C major, Beethoven is able to switch from one key to another without losing sense of direction. Harmonic innovation is already a distinctive characteristic of Beethoven's symphonic style. He allows oboes and flutes, alternately, to lead the contrasting second subject, and crowns the movement with an extended and brilliant coda.

Beethoven begins the slow movement apparently intending to treat his winsome melody fugally, as if it were a counterpoint exercise for his teacher Albrechtsberger. But the graceful theme becomes a basis for inventive

elaboration, fragments of rhythm or melody developed sturdily or ornamented affectionately with already confident command of the orchestra. In a foretaste of the remarkably individual use he would make of his kettledrums in works to come, Beethoven here has the timpani tuned as if for a movement in the key of C, rather than F, as it actually is. Three times during the movement the 'wrongly-tuned' timpani delightedly provide soft bouncing support for a flowing, delicately-scored melody above.

Beethoven makes his first great contribution to symphonic form in the third movement, which he labels a minuet, though to all intents and purposes it is his first trademark symphonic *scherzo*. This is no longer dance music. But Beethoven resists the term *scherzo* (implying a joke); for the young tiger is in no particularly jocular mood. Under Beethoven, *scherzo* was to take on a new meaning, with its vigorous one-in-a-bar beat and totally new driving force.

Again outlandish to some in the conservative musical establishment was the apparent frivolity with which Beethoven opens his finale – violins fooling over several false starts before they eventually hit on the tune and then whirl away with great *brio*. One respected German conductor is said to have habitually cut the introduction lest it evoke laughter in the audience. The light-hearted finale culminates, like the first movement, in a coda already stamped with true Beethovenian power and authority.

Anthony Cane © 1978/2011

Performance History

William Cade conducted the ASO's first performance of Beethoven's Symphony No.1 in May 1943. The Orchestra played it most recently in a Master Series concert in May 2017, with Anthony Marwood directing from the violin.



My Favourite Beethoven Symphony

Lisa Gill
Flute

I love the First Symphony and how its opening is full of expectation before settling into the pure key of C major. It's like a preview of the astonishing music which follows throughout all nine works.

And then I can't go past Symphony No.7, thanks to its much-loved second movement. I particularly love its effective use during the most powerful scene in one of my favourite films, *The King's Speech*.



Beethoven, in an 1803 portrait by Christian Hornemann.

Symphony No.2 in D, Op.36

Adagio molto–Allegro con brio

Larghetto

Scherzo (Allegro) and Trio

Allegro molto

Composed in 1802 and premiered three years almost to the day after Beethoven's first symphony, the Symphony No.2 proved uncomfortable listening for those who heard its first performance on 5 April 1803. Critics fondly recalled the 'unaffected ease' of the First Symphony, compared with which the Second, 'striving [to be] new and striking', succeeded only in being 'bizarre, harsh and undisciplined'. To one imaginative critic, the abrupt, quivering figures of the finale seemed no less than a monster, 'a wounded, tail-lashing serpent, dealing wild and furious blows as it stiffens in its death agony...'

To a modern listener, the movement merely proclaims the composer's youthful vigour.

Beethoven was by now expanding symphonic form significantly. On one hand there is a vast slow introduction – by turns imposing, solemn and lyrical – which reaches a powerful climax in D minor (presaging the Ninth Symphony) before a mood of hushed expectancy gives way to an irresistible 'boil-over' directly into the *Allegro*. On the other hand, the outer movements culminate in bigger and grander codas than ever before. And, perhaps most significantly, we see unprecedented weight and emphasis on the last movement – the finale no longer just a high-spirited wrap-up but now beginning to bear a greater burden of symphonic argument.

If the first-movement *Allegro* pursues a course of unprecedented brilliance and energy, it nevertheless remains essentially 'normal' until the coda, where, as musicologist Donald Francis Tovey suggested, Beethoven's orchestra rises to an intense climax assuming the grandeur of a great chorus.

To follow such exhilaration comes a *Larghetto* movement described by composer Robert Simpson as 'an outstanding marvel of beauty and grace'. Even with no indication of the normal sonata-form repeats, this leisurely movement is unusually substantial, causing Beethoven in a later arrangement for piano trio to indicate a marginally livelier tempo, *Larghetto quasi andante*.

The third movement is the first in a Beethoven symphony to bear the supposedly characteristic designation *Scherzo*, and is, in fact, the first of only two such movements in all Beethoven's symphonies. It reveals the composer in boisterous good humour, as he contrives to make music out of a variety of staccato three-note figures with impulsive chordal interjections, yet managing to sound joyful, as if he were out in the countryside free of all worldly cares.

Similar sharp dynamic contrasts characterise the finale – the movement which, more than any other, marks the composer's advance in the three years since the First Symphony. Like the *Larghetto*, this is a sonata movement without repeats, displaying great brilliance and good humour, and posing a problem of dissonant harmony which finds resolution in a massive coda more than half as long again as the main body of the movement. It is in the coda that Beethoven opens the magic casements briefly, poised on a knife-edge of hushed expectancy, to reveal a blissful glimpse of future glories in store. But it cannot last. Beethoven at age 32 can only round it off and bring us conventionally down to earth.

Beethoven completed the Second Symphony in the seclusion of rural Heiligenstadt, outside Vienna, where he was under doctor's orders to rest and try to restore his failing hearing. It was there that he realised his ailment was progressive and incurable, there that he was driven to pen his despairing, valedictory Heiligenstadt Testament. Yet at the same time he was able to compose a symphony of mingled exhilaration and bliss – a salutary reminder that he, unlike the Romantics, is to be interpreted by heart-on-sleeve analysis at one's peril.

Anthony Cane © 1998/2011

Performance History

William Cade conducted the ASO's first performance of Beethoven's Symphony No.2 in July 1939. The Orchestra played it most recently at a Tea and Symphony concert in March 2013, when it was conducted by Nathan Aspinall.



Napoleon Bonaparte, the original dedicatee of the *Eroica*, depicted in Jacques-Louis David's painting *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (1801-05).

Symphony No.3 in E flat, Op.55 *Eroica*

Allegro con brio

Marcia funebre (Adagio assai)

Scherzo (Allegro vivace)

Finale (Allegro molto–Poco andante–Presto)

The seeds of change embedded in Beethoven's first two symphonies blossom with startling suddenness in the *Eroica*, of 1804. It is hard to reconcile such a monumental landmark in music history with a mere two years' evolution from the Second Symphony. In a symphony at least half as long again as any ever written before, the whole structure of the classical symphony is expanded, broadened, strengthened; the span of musical thought soars higher and wider; the utterance is more deeply eloquent, more resoundingly public.

If the Second Symphony reflects Beethoven's sheer professional commitment to his work in the face of, indeed regardless of, apparently overwhelming personal calamities, in the Third he seems to take arms against his sea of troubles. The realisation in 1802 that his deafness was a progressive affliction, and incurable, that it presaged the end, sooner rather than later, of his career as a piano virtuoso, prompted his outpouring of anguish in the Heiligenstadt Testament. Yet about the same time he was writing to friends: 'I shall take Fate by the throat; it shall not wholly overcome me.' The *Eroica* embodies this spirit.

But the *Eroica* also reflects the turbulence of the age – not just politics and the war dragging on and on but ferment in the arts and literature, allied with expanding visions of liberty and opportunity. The intended dedication



Part of the Symphony's title page, with Beethoven's original dedication to Napoleon angrily crossed out.

to Napoleon and its dramatic abandonment when Bonaparte declared himself Emperor are facts of history but are not fundamental to the symphony. Beethoven was ready to honour a popular hero in a dedication, but the *Eroica* is not essentially music about Napoleon or any particular individual. Rather is it the idealised embodiment of heroic values, the selfless battle of the idealist for his fellow human beings against the hostilities of the material world, and the inevitable mortality of heroes, equally with the rest of mankind. If the symphony has any identifiable hero, Beethoven himself is he. But Beethoven's creation – the music – is arguably its own hero.

In the *Eroica*, Beethoven departs from his earlier methods of beginning a symphony. No longer the tonally ambiguous opening of the First, nor the vastly extended Haydn-ish slow introduction of the Second: Beethoven now opts to launch straight into the *Allegro* with two emphatic chords of the tonic E flat. Such complex adventures are to follow that the opening demands absolute directness. The first movement, nearly 700 bars in length, is of a magnitude which immediately establishes the scale of the symphony and sets it apart from anything which went before.

Yet despite its great length and magnificent expression of the 'will-to-power' concept of its heroism, perhaps the most characteristic features of the music are its great architectural strength, deriving above all from Beethoven's sure grasp of the sonata form he had inherited and his wide-ranging, action-packed exploration of tonality in which no event is mere routine. His exposition ends firmly in the dominant key of B flat, and in the development he constantly ventures to new keys. The gigantic coda begins with such dramatic strides to remote tonalities away from the tonic that when E flat is eventually reached at the end of the movement it is a supremely majestic homecoming.

The ensuing long slow movement, which Beethoven headed 'Funeral March', is the centrepiece and arguably the spiritual climax of the symphony. Beginning with solemn gravity, the music proceeds to encompass one after another of the moods of human grief – yearning, consolation, exaltation – and comes to a climax of intensity in a powerful fugato section. Thereafter the music disintegrates into desolate, short fragments before eventually resolving itself in a conclusion of calm, yet bleak, acceptance.

Funeral marches bring no finality, since for Beethoven the flame of heroism burns eternal. A further two movements, which defy any misguided attempt at literary analysis, present in effect a glossary on the life and death of heroes. The music affirms, perhaps, that heroes come and go but the world and the eternal spirit of heroism, transcending any individual, go on inexorably, nurturing new heroes to succeed them.

The purposeful bustle of the *Scherzo* brings release from the catharsis of the Funeral March, underpinned with firm reassurance in the bass, outlined lightly by the flutes, asserted confidently by the full orchestra; and eventually blessed with bucolic tenderness by the rich sonorities of three horns in the central trio section. This is only the second time Beethoven uses the term *scherzo* to designate a symphonic movement and it is the last. He seems intent on preserving its proper sense of a joke, or at least music which is light in spirit (though the world, notwithstanding, has freely adopted the term as a Beethoven-inspired label for any movement employing his driving one-in-a-bar beat).

There is no evidence that Beethoven in the great set of variations which make up his finale did more than simply make the ultimate use of a theme he had first used in his ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus* some three years before. There is nothing to suggest that he was in any sense carrying over the idea of a heroic godhead in the image of Prometheus who, saving humanity from destruction by Zeus, presented it the gift of fire stolen from heaven. This was the fourth and last time Beethoven used the theme, and if the three earlier versions (ballet, contredanse and piano variations) had served no other purpose than as sketches for the *Eroica*, then they served the cause of music bountifully. For a carefree 18th-century rondo would never have done to end a symphony of such unprecedented stature, nor even the much-expanded structure Beethoven had used in his Second Symphony. But the Prometheus variations, with an element of fugato, provide a masterly finale of fitting proportions and truly symphonic character. The tempo slackens unexpectedly, *Poco andante*, as the theme makes its last bow before the coda ends this pivotally funereal symphony on a note of triumphant affirmation.

Anthony Cane © 1998/2011

Performance History

Bernard Heinze conducted the ASO's first performance of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony as part of a Beethoven Festival, in March 1945.

The Orchestra played it most recently as part of *The Sound of History: Beethoven, Napoleon and Revolution* in March 2020, under Richard Mills' direction.



My Favourite
Beethoven Symphony
Sarah Barrett
Associate Principal Horn

As an orchestral musician I'm very familiar with all the symphonies, with each offering something different for musicians and audiences. My favourite one to play would have to be the Seventh and the *Eroica*, as the horn parts are such fun to play!

Beethoven: The Symphonies

Douglas Boyd
Conductor

Concert 2

Saturday 17 September, 7.30pm
Adelaide Town Hall

Symphony No.4 in B flat, Op.60 [34']
Adagio - Allegro vivace
Adagio
Allegro vivace - Trio (Un poco meno allegro)
Allegro ma non troppo

INTERVAL

Symphony No.5 in C minor, Op.67 [31']
Allegro con brio
Andante con moto
Allegro -
Allegro

Duration Approximately one hour and 35 minutes, including one 20-minute interval.

Classical Conversations Join us at the Meeting Hall (located just behind Adelaide Town Hall) one hour before for a virtual tour of the Beethoven-Haus in Bonn, with the Museum's director Dr. Nicole Kämpken as your virtual guide.

Countess Therese von Brunsvik, to whom Beethoven was romantically attached around the time he created his Fourth Symphony.



Symphony No.4 in B flat, Op.60

Adagio – Allegro vivace

Adagio

Allegro vivace – Trio (Un poco meno allegro)

Allegro ma non troppo

The deceptively spontaneous surge of creativity on which Beethoven had realised the mighty *Eroica* impelled him onward almost immediately into the fierce energy of a new symphony in C minor. But when in 1806 Count Franz von Oppersdorff commissioned a symphony from him, Beethoven laid aside the two movements he had already completed of the C minor work and produced for the Count an altogether different, less titanic symphony in B flat.

Having achieved symphonic strength on a grand scale in the *Eroica*, Beethoven was striving for an equivalent level of concentrated intensity in the new, more compact C minor work. But the *scherzo* was giving him problems, and the Oppersdorff commission, which he appears to have executed with uncommon speed, gave him breathing space in which to work them out.

The new symphony, which thus became the Fourth, is also compact and concentrated. Ostensibly sunny in character, its brightness is relative the shadowy world from which it springs and which occasionally darkens its path. The first-movement *Allegro*, evolving from the slow introduction, bursts forth in brilliance out of the gloom, a realm of mysteriously shifting harmonies, of strangely detached notes and chords. The recapitulation similarly emerges from a dramatically hushed reminiscence of the introduction and a crescendo over menacing drum rolls – procedures which may well have given Beethoven the clue to his problems with the Fifth and inspired the breathtaking link in the later symphony from *scherzo* into finale.

The core of the Fourth, as in the *Eroica*, is probably the slow movement, a spacious rondo of profound poetic qualities. Had Beethoven been given to revealing himself in his music, this serene idyll, based on a gentle rocking pulse, might well be seen as reflecting his attachment at the time to the young Countess Therese von Brunsvik – one of the more special of the many women in his life. With a passionate outburst in the central section, the music is subjectively 'romantic' in the widest sense.

The *scherzo* – though Beethoven no longer calls it that – brusquely dispels the calm of the *Adagio* with a vigorous, angular melody, copiously sprinkled with off-beat accents. A reflective trio section, marked fractionally slower than the main movement, makes not one but two appearances, giving the impression that the second-time *scherzo* impulsively failed to stop. The *scherzo* is thus obliged to make an unscheduled third appearance, though now severely condensed. In three short but pregnant bars, as Tovey says, the two horns abruptly 'blow the whole movement away'.

The finale scurries in with carefree abandon. But here, too, gaiety soon gives way to passages of elegant charm and quixotic strokes of angry, minor-key chords. Beethovenian boldness and power underlie the humour of this music as it runs its exhilarating course.

Despite its superficial similarity in form and scale with the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart, Beethoven's Fourth already inhabits a different spiritual world.

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Performance History

Bernard Heinze conducted the ASO's first performance of Beethoven's Fourth Symphony as part of a Beethoven Festival, in March 1945. The Orchestra played it most recently in July 2006 in a Master Series concert, when it was directed from the piano by Steven Kovacevich.



My Favourite Beethoven Symphony *Cecily Satchell* *Viola*

This is such a hard question. You can't beat the amazing experience of the finale of the Ninth Symphony. I also love the tranquillity of the slow movement of the *Pastoral*. But then the *Eroica* was the first one I played as a professional musician, and it has a special place in my heart. So the answer is: no I cannot name my favourite. They are all incredible. The writing, the orchestration, the colours and the keys. He was a genius.

Symphony No.5 in C minor, Op.67

Allegro con brio

Andante con moto

Allegro-

Allegro

But a scant group of Viennese music-lovers seems to have braved the bitter wintry weather of Thursday 22 December 1808 to attend the Theater-an-der-Wien where, with hindsight, we realise that music history of unparalleled magnitude was being created. Not only was Beethoven himself to play his G major Piano Concerto, introduced the previous year, in a public concert for the first time, but he was to direct the premieres of both his Fifth and Sixth symphonies; and (since he wanted to give the chorus something spectacular to round off the program) the specially composed *Choral Fantasia*, Op.80, as well. For good measure, he played an improvisation at the keyboard, and there were choral movements from his *Mass in C* and the scena *Ah! perfido*.

Not only was the theatre cold and the program too long (it ran from 6.30 to 10.30 pm), but the orchestra was antagonistic, the music under-rehearsed, and a confusion in the *Choral Fantasia* forced Beethoven to call a halt and begin again. In such untoward circumstances, pioneering lexicographer Sir George Grove declared, are the regenerators of humanity born into the world!

'So fate knocks at the door,' Beethoven is reported to have said of the peremptory four-note figure that opens this most famous of symphonies – probably at least a decade after the music was written. It may simply have reflected his mood at that moment. Beethoven was constantly concerned with his personal fate; and he was also prone to toss off casual remarks about his music which tended to be confusing or contradictory. There is no evidence that there was any cogent theme of Fate in his mind while he was writing the symphony.

At all events, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is indisputably a distillation and culmination of purely musical thought processes which had been developing in his mind – and his sketchbooks – for years. Themes for all first three movements exist in sketchbooks dating from at least as early as 1800 and 1801 – which were not for Beethoven years of disillusionment or burgeoning musical Romanticism. And he achieves his objective, after the broad grandeur of the *Eroica*, of creating a taut, compact symphony of unprecedented intensity. There is not a single surplus note.

In creating a symphonic drama of hitherto unparalleled power and tautness, Beethoven's means remain largely the traditional contrasts of subject and counter-subject; contrasts of dynamics and tempo, the drama of key relationships; and the established four-movement structure. His first movement adheres to classical sonata form, with two clearly contrasted groups of subjects, one powerful and assertive, the other gentler, more pliable. As for being built up out of its short, four-note opening figure, it was probably conductor Felix Weingartner who recognised that in fact the opposite is true: the movement is remarkable for the very length and variety of its sentences. The *Andante* is predominantly reflective but has moments of confident energy which are, however, dispelled by the darkly brooding scherzo and its ominously hushed transition to the finale, where trombones are about to blaze their way into symphonic history for the first time.

Where Beethoven builds on traditional form is in the brilliant bridge from scherzo to finale (an unusual, though not unprecedented, practice).

He uses the four-note figure at the opening of the first movement as a motif which has echoes in the *scherzo* (where it appears on the horns), in the transition to the finale (drum-tap rhythm), and in the finale itself (extensive use of basically the same rhythm). Also in the finale, a fragmentary return of the scherzo prepares the triumphant recapitulation, which then carries all before it.

Such musical links and back references have both a structurally unifying and dramatic effect, and it is tempting to read a philosophical program into them. The only certainty, however, is that the Fifth Symphony journeys from darkness in C minor, through some musical valley of the shadow of death, to a Beethovenian vision of heavenly light in C major. The composer knew well the example of light blazing out of C minor into the major at the words 'And there was light' in Haydn's *The Creation*.

If the symphony can be construed as in some way as a metaphor for the indomitability of the human spirit, then perhaps the triumph of the finale, emerging in starkest contrast from the gloom of the *scherzo*, asserts a conviction that the quality of achievement reflects the adversity overcome.

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Performance History

Bernard Heinze conducted the ASO's first performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in May 1940. The Orchestra played it most recently in March 2016 at a Master Series concert conducted by Nicholas Carter.



The Theater-an-de-Wien, in which the marathon concert took place which included the premiere of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.



My Favourite
Beethoven Symphony
Cameron Waters
Cello

It's so hard to nominate a favourite, as they're all so amazing. But as a tragic *Die Hard* fan, I'd probably have to say the Ninth! Then again the slow movement from the Fifth is also a favourite. It's a regular requirement for cello auditions so it's great to be able to perform it within the context of the whole work rather than just an excerpt in front of a panel.

Beethoven: The Symphonies

Douglas Boyd
Conductor

Concert 3

Wednesday 21 September, 7.30pm
Adelaide Town Hall

Symphony No.6 in F, Op.68 *Pastoral* [39']
Awakening of happy feelings on arrival in the country (Allegro ma non troppo)
Scene by the brook (Andante molto mosso)
Peasants' merrymaking (Allegro) –
Thunderstorm (Allegro) –
Shepherd's song: Thanksgiving after the storm (Allegretto)

INTERVAL

Symphony No.7 in A, Op.92 [36']
Poco sostenuto–Vivace
Allegretto
Presto–Assai meno presto
Allegro con brio

Duration Approximately one hour and 45 minutes, including one 20-minute interval.

Classical Conversations Join us at the Meeting Hall (located just behind Adelaide Town Hall) one hour before the concert for our free *Classical Conversations* with ASO violinist Lachlan Bramble in discussion with Senior Audiologist from Can:Do Hearing, Lauren Buckley.

Symphony No.6 in F, Op.68 *Pastoral*

Awakening of happy feelings on arrival in the country (Allegro ma non troppo)

Scene by the brook (Andante molto mosso)

Peasants' merrymaking (Allegro) –

Thunderstorm (Allegro) –

Shepherd's song: Thanksgiving after the storm (Allegretto)

When Beethoven sought tranquillity in the wooded environs of Heiligenstadt, outside Vienna, during the summer of 1802, and his attention was drawn to a shepherd's flute sounding in the fields, the composer heard nothing. The realisation of the extent of his encroaching deafness was crushing. Months later he recalled the incident in the agony of his Heiligenstadt Testament. While Beethoven could face the prospect of being cut off from normal human communication, he was in despair at the thought of no longer hearing the voice of his best friend, Nature.

In choosing to glorify Nature in his Sixth Symphony, Beethoven does no more nor less than give praise to God for all His works. There is no descent from the titanic Fifth Symphony to mere pictorial music in the Sixth: Beethoven made it clear that his descriptive program for the work was 'more an expression of feeling than tone-painting'. If the C minor Symphony was an assertion of his confidence in human will, then the F major Symphony proclaims his confidence in a divine Creator. It is the spiritual reverse of the same coin.

Indeed, composition of the two symphonies proceeded more or less concurrently, on parallel and complementary lines, and they were premiered together in the same concert in Vienna on 22 December 1808, the one expansive and joyous, the other concise and forceful.



Watercolour (1821) by Johann Tobias Raulino of the Church of Heiligenstadt, then just outside Vienna. Beethoven often sought tranquillity in these wooden environs.

The first two movements of the Sixth, inspired by the calm of Heiligenstadt (now, alas, virtually engulfed by the sprawl of suburban Vienna), establish tranquillity as a state of being, the idyllic existence, Nature pure and unspoilt. In the third movement, humankind intervenes with the merrymaking of peasants, raucous and bucolic; the forces of Nature react in one of the most graphic storms in music; and when the dark clouds lift, leaving the land cleansed and purified, voices are raised in heartfelt praise.

So in the Sixth, as in the Fifth, there is a sense of catharsis in reaching the finale. Though the Storm is identified as an independent movement, it nevertheless serves as a bridge passage similar to the transition linking the last two movements of the Fifth – a link between *scherzo* and finale, yet psychologically a hazard or trial through which humankind must pass. The promised land in one case is human exultation, in the other spiritual exaltation. The *Pastoral* Symphony describes a full circle, from a state of tranquillity through the intervention first of human forces, then the fury of nature, to a plateau of peace. Beethoven sings praise to God in the serenity, the joyousness, and the elemental turbulence of His manifold creations, but ultimately in the innate beauty of all of them.

The representation of birdsong at the end of the slow movement (nightingale on flute, quail on oboe, and cuckoo on clarinet) forms an idyllic coda to one of the most deeply felt sonata-form structures Beethoven ever created. But this, like the Storm, is no naïve pictorialism. Beethoven insisted that he only ever depicted sounds which were in themselves musical and, as critic William Mann pointed out, the 'long liquid trill' of the nightingale is just the way Beethoven himself sometimes expressed happiness.

Beethoven's use of pictorial elements in the *Pastoral* Symphony, therefore, and the superficially radical structure of two closed movements followed by three linked movements played without a break, are clearly mere extensions and embellishments of the traditional form. So it is that the *Pastoral* has been described as a perfect classical symphony, one in which Beethoven communes more closely with God than in any other of his symphonies except, perhaps, the Ninth.

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Performance History

William Cade conducted the ASO's first performance of Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony No.3 in September 1940. The Orchestra played it most recently in July 2014 at a Master Series concert, when it was directed from the violin by Richard Tognetti.



My Favourite Beethoven Symphony *David Schilling* *Section Principal Double Bass*

Whenever we play one of these symphonies it really is like seeing an old friend again. I love the First for its classical structure and symmetry, the Fifth for its hefty bass moments in the third movement, and the *Adagio* of the ninth is just sublime.

But if I had to pick then it would be the *Pastoral* – it's such wonderful painting in music. As soon as it starts you can't help but think of nature, and the effect it had on Beethoven and us all. It puts our small lives in perspective. After the storm (fourth movement), that's fiendishly difficult to play for the basses, comes the sound of resolution and absolute joy in the final *Thanksgiving*. Magic. He was a genius.

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Beethoven's
nephew Karl.

Symphony No.7 in A, Op.92

Poco sostenuto–Vivace

Allegretto

Presto–Assai meno presto

Allegro con brio

Richard Wagner's famous depiction of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony as the 'apotheosis of the dance' pinpoints one of the work's most vital characteristics – rhythm for rhythm's sake.

Beethoven's sketches for the symphony show that he was preoccupied from the outset with expression through rhythm. Rhythm was to be a dominant and unifying force throughout. An insistent skipping (or 'dotted') 6/8 rhythm almost totally pervades the main body of the first movement (*Vivace*). A solemn march tread underpins the second movement which, at a slow tempo, would be funereal but which, being *allegretto*, becomes post-funereal – elevated to a dream-like consciousness, freed of earthly shackles. And there are repeated rhythmic patterns also in both *scherzo* and trio, and heavy syncopation in the main theme of the headlong finale – 'a veritable dervish-whirl' in the words of critic William Mann. Whilst maintaining basic rhythmic consistency throughout each movement, Beethoven nevertheless keeps the music alive and fluid through many subtle variations.

More recently than Wagner, however, composer Robert Simpson argued persuasively that Beethoven's greatest innovation in the Seventh is his treatment of harmony, the symphony being in effect a struggle for supremacy between the home key, A major, and two 'foreign' keys, C and F.

Completed in the summer of 1812, the Symphony No.7 helped to usher in a period in which Beethoven not only enjoyed great artistic success in the concert hall but also earned commensurate financial rewards. He turned the money into bank shares, which he held as a legacy for his nephew Karl.

Compared with the Fifth and Sixth symphonies of about four years earlier, the Seventh appears quite conventional, with the normal four movements, no tone-painting and no additional instrumentation. Even so, Beethoven was obliged in 1819 to condemn the poetic fancies of a critic so carried away as to analyse it in terms of a political revolution.

Beethoven conducted the first performance of the Seventh in an extraordinary charity concert for wounded Austrian and Bavarian soldiers at the old University in Vienna on 8 December 1813. Giving their services in the national cause, and playing in the orchestra under Beethoven (which would normally have been beneath their dignity), were numerous eminent musicians, including Salieri, Spohr, Mayseder, Schuppanzigh and, in the cello section, Mauro Giuliani, now better known as a pioneering composer for guitar.

Also in the program, besides Johann Mälzel's latest novelty, the Mechanical Trumpeter, playing a pair of marches, was the premiere of Beethoven's occasional piece *Wellington's Victory or The Battle of Vittoria*. Given the patriotic nature of the occasion and the heightened public enthusiasm aroused by the turning tide of the war, applause for the latter work, it was reported, 'rose to the point of ecstasy'. However the *Allegretto* of Beethoven's new symphony was also an immediate popular success, being encored at the first performance and again when the concert was repeated four days later.

If the long slow introduction to the symphony seems to be groping its way through darkness, this is because the strange tussle of tonalities described by Robert Simpson is already under way. Immediately after the opening chord of A major, a simple, insinuating oboe melody begins pulling in a different direction. The orchestra unites as if to set the music back on course but ends up on yet another tack, and the symphony for the moment is lost in a limbo of three juxtaposed tonalities – the intended A major, the oboe's C major, and the orchestra's F major. The alien keys so permeate the symphony as a whole that they seem to be different dimensions rather than different keys, like planets in another galaxy.

The alien keys are less remote in the *Allegretto*, which is in A minor; but their appearances, while less outlandish, are nonetheless magical. When Beethoven unexpectedly launches the third movement in F, we find that A has suddenly become a foreign key in its own symphony. And when the scherzo first modulates from F to A, the latter key suffers a crisis of identity because in this context it cannot sound like itself and must masquerade as an element of D major – until the central trio section comes to its aid, resplendent in that very key.

Once the scherzo has ended, as it began, in F, only the finale remains to restore A as the rightful home key. The most forceful means are thus required to make the alien C and F again sound as remote as they did at the beginning. Hence one of the most stunning and vehement finales in all of Beethoven, thanks, in Simpson's view, to the limitless energy generated by this dramatic new, 'progressive' use of tonality – a procedure Mahler would exploit decades later (though we may recall hints of it back in the introduction to Beethoven's Symphony No.1).

For all its ostensibly conventional form, the Seventh remains one of Beethoven's compelling and exhilarating works, a life-affirming celebration of physical vigour and spiritual delight. While Beethoven was not one to reveal himself in his music, there could be a happy coincidence in the probability that his famous letter to the unidentified 'Immortal Beloved' was written within weeks, or even days, of the completion of the Seventh Symphony.

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Performance History

George Szell conducted the ASO's first performance of Beethoven's Symphony No.7 in June 1939. The Orchestra played it most recently on a Metropolitan tour in January 2016, when it was conducted by Jessica Cottis.



My Favourite Beethoven Symphony *Julia Grenfell* *Principal Piccolo*

Symphony No.7: there's incredible optimism and energy about it. Whilst the *Ode To Joy* in the last movement of the Ninth Symphony is the ultimate uplifting experience, on a smaller and more traditional scale I love how the first and fourth movements of Seventh are just so celebratory and life-affirming!



Portrait of Beethoven by Willibrord Mähler in 1815.

Beethoven: The Symphonies

Concert 4

Saturday 24, 7.30pm
Sunday 25, 3pm
September
Adelaide Town Hall

Douglas Boyd
Conductor

Emma Matthews
Soprano

Sally-Anne Russell
Mezzo-soprano

Henry Choo
Tenor

Christopher Richardson
Bass-baritone

Elder Conservatorium Chorale
Carl Crossin Chorus master

Graduate Singers
Karl Geiger Chorus master

Symphony No.8 in F, Op.93 [26']
Allegro vivace con brio
Allegretto scherzando
Tempo di minuetto
Allegro vivace

INTERVAL

Symphony No.9 in D minor, Op.125 *Choral* [65']
Allegro, ma non troppo, un poco maestoso
Molto vivace – Presto
Adagio molto e cantabile – Andante moderato
Presto – allegro assai – allegro assai vivace

Duration Approximately two hours, including one 20-minute interval.

Classical Conversations (Saturday evening only) Join us at the Meeting Hall (located just behind Adelaide Town Hall) one hour before the concert when conductor Douglas Boyd and Guest Concertmaster Elizabeth Layton discuss Beethoven's final symphonies, with broadcaster Russell Torrance.

Symphony No.8 in F, Op.93

Allegro vivace con brio

Allegretto scherzando

Tempo di minuetto

Allegro vivace

The Eighth must surely be a young man's symphony, bursting on us as it does with the boundless energy of a frisky colt.

Yet Beethoven was already in his forties by the time he composed it in 1811 and 1812. The time he was most busily working on it, following the completion of Symphony No.7 in mid-1812, is widely thought to have been the occasion when he penned the rapt letter to his unnamed 'Immortal Beloved'. He spent that summer in Bohemia, taking the waters of various spas for his notoriously delicate health, and he finished the symphony at Graz in October.

If Beethoven was a middle-aged man helplessly in love, it is not reflected in the robust, down-to-earth vigour of this symphony. But as his faithful friend and biographer Franz Wegeler wrote, 'there was never a time when Beethoven was not in love'; and his compositions, in any case, were the fruit of long periods of gestation, not created on impulse. Even if the Eighth Symphony was, relatively speaking, rather tossed off after the labours of the Seventh, it still derived from sketches going back at least a year.

Since the two symphonies were composed virtually in tandem, and derived from the same collection of sketches, it is hardly surprising that they have characteristics in common – specifically, the use of rhythm as a motive force, some untraditional turns of tonality and, overall, an Olympian stance – detached from the problems of the world and unaffected by tragedy or emotional turmoil. But while the Seventh is relatively relaxed and expansive, the Eighth is taut and highly compressed.

Wasting no time with any sort of introduction, Beethoven launches straight into the main theme, self-confident and self-sufficient, in no doubt that all is well with the world. The graceful second subject also has not a care in the world, apart from a habit of appearing in the 'wrong' key, and having to be corrected. The movement presses forward with such boundless enthusiasm, and to such an exuberant climax in the big coda, that it needs no further emphasis and quietly subsides at the end in evident contentment. As in the Seventh Symphony, Beethoven does without a true slow movement, but on this occasion he adds a qualification to the *Allegretto* marking: *scherzando*. This neat, deceptively straightforward little movement can thus be invested with the light-heartedness of a *scherzo*, allowing the third movement to be an 'old-fashioned' minuet rather than the fierce Beethovenian *scherzo* which listeners had come to expect. These two middle movements foreshadow the way Beethoven would later use short intermediate movements of great variety in such works as the String Quartet in B flat, Op.130.

Archaic the minuet may seem: indeed, composer Hector Berlioz, echoing the audience at the first performance, suggested that 'the antiquity of the form seems somehow to have stifled the composer's thought'. Yet Beethoven derives no fewer than three short figures from the initial flowing melody, which he then proceeds to treat with the complexity of a Bach fugue.

A scurrying theme in the home key of F major begins the finale in all innocence, *pianissimo*, only to be crudely dismissed by a loud and irrelevant unison chord of C sharp. This immediately unleashes the whirlwind. In a remarkable movement, by dint of omitting formal repeats, Beethoven manages (in composer Robert Simpson's analysis) to produce two complete developments and two complete recapitulations, together with a coda. And if we thought the C-sharp incursion was a mere accident of history, we encounter a shock when it reappears in the second recapitulation, crashing into the F major theme with sufficient force to shunt everything unceremoniously into F sharp minor. From this point, the battle is on to re-establish the home key, so that it can be reinforced, with a certain amount of nervous relief, in an emphatic conclusion.

Beethoven conducted the first performance of the Eighth Symphony before a packed house in the Grand Redoutensaal (Imperial-Royal Ballroom) in Vienna on 27 February 1814. The crowd, buoyed by improving news from the war front, was aroused less by the new symphony than both the jingoistic *Wellington's Victory* and the earlier Symphony No.7. Beethoven was stung into declaring the new symphony 'much better' than its predecessor. Unconvinced, however, some conductors subsequently sought to inflate the Eighth by replacing the proper second movement with the *Allegretto* of the Seventh.

There are signs among Beethoven's sketches that he was contemplating a symphony in D minor as a companion to the pair of 1812, but as the Napoleonic Wars neared their end, the composer was entering a period during which work would be difficult for him, and that project was not to be realised for more than a decade.

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Performance History

Malcolm Sargent conducted the ASO's first performance of Beethoven's Symphony No.8 in August 1939. The Orchestra played it most recently as part of a Beethoven Festival in September 2014, when it was conducted by Nicholas McGegan.



Poet, playwright and philosopher Friedrich Schiller, whose *Ode To Joy* Beethoven set in the finale of the Ninth Symphony. Portrait (1794) by Ludovike Simanowiz.

Symphony No.9 in D minor, Op.125 *Choral*

Allegro, ma non troppo, un poco maestoso

Molto vivace – Presto

Adagio molto e cantabile – Andante moderato

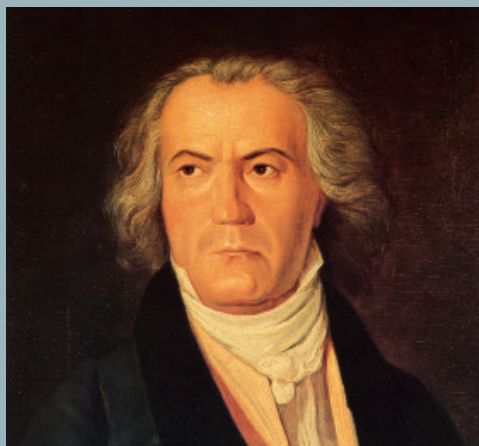
Presto – allegro assai – allegro assai vivace

Beethoven's last symphony seems to have been an amalgamation of two separate symphonic ideas which the composer was sketching between about 1815 and 1822. One was intended for London. The other was to be a 'German symphony' which might include a choral section on a religious text as well as popular 'Turkish' military music. In the event, one symphony made do for both purposes.

Lurking in the wings was a poem Beethoven had long wanted to set to music - the ode *An die Freude* (To Joy) by Friedrich Schiller. That Beethoven had remained obsessed with the ode since 1793 is testimony to the force with which its ideas struck him when he encountered them as a young man in the aftermath of the French Revolution. During the planning and sketching of this symphony Beethoven composed such other works as the *Missa solennis*, the final three piano sonatas and the monumental *Diabelli Variations*. By 1823 composition was well advanced on the first three movements of this symphony.

It was at this late stage that Beethoven decided that the symphony and Schiller's ode belonged to each other. He put aside the purely instrumental finale he had intended, later recasting it as the finale of String Quartet, Op.132, and created a finale of heaven-storming optimism in place of one that would have been subdued and elegiac.

Although the main theme of the first movement eventually emerges from the nebulous haze of the opening with considerable force on the entire orchestra, it collapses no sooner than it has announced itself. A further



Portrait of Beethoven in 1823
by Ferdinand Waldmüller.

statement emerges likewise from the mist. The clouds lift somewhat with a second-subject group based on two lyrical melodies tripping in one after the other on woodwinds, but even these are subjected to hammerblow interjections. The haze of the introduction returns to mark the beginning of the development section. But at the recapitulation the main theme bursts forth in a grimly exultant D major. The huge coda that ends this movement bids fair to become another development section, but Beethoven brings the movement to a terse and uncompromising conclusion.

Emerging from the strenuous journey of the first movement, Beethoven plunges directly into feverish activity. The relentlessly driving, minor-key first section of his *scherzo* is actually a very large sonata structure, even dabbling briefly in a five-part fugue on the opening theme. A shift into overdrive with the ensuing trio section marginally increases the speed, but the oppression is lightened by adoption of the major key and some chirpy writing for winds. Following the regulation repeat of the *scherzo*, the trio attempts an unscheduled reappearance and is brusquely cut off.

At last, Beethoven introduces a period of sustained calm with one of his sublime slow movements. This is a stupendous set of variations on two themes - a deeply meditative *Adagio* followed by a gently flowing *Andante*. Both themes in turn are treated in the first variation, after which a rapt, expectant interlude leads to a second variation, now using only the *Adagio* theme. Successive brassy eruptions are soothed by the expressive opening notes of the *Adagio* theme, as further free variation proceeds to end the movement blissfully in a long coda.

The finale explodes on to the scene with angrily impatient recitative. As if to recover a lost sense of direction, Beethoven briefly reviews the leading themes of the first three movements. Each in turn is dismissed. Immediately, *sotto voce* at first but growing in confidence, enters the noble, yet simple, principal theme of the finale which will become the hymn to joy. After the third variation, the harshly dissonant recitative of the opening violently reasserts itself.

This sets the scene for the entry of the human voice, Schiller's *Ode To Joy* as the culmination of the mighty work. But first, in words of his own devising, Beethoven has the baritone clarify the rationale – the rejection of what has gone before and the need to sing a new song.

The variations on the great 'joy' theme resume, now with vocal soloists and chorus, and joined to Schiller's inspiring text (selected and rearranged by Beethoven).

The finale of the Ninth is extraordinary not merely because it introduces the human voice for the first time into a symphony, but also because the contrast of musical texture provided by the vocal forces enables him to follow one magnificent variation movement with another.

Extraordinary is the fact that the finale is layered on no fewer than four separate but integrated structural levels. It is not simply a setting of Schiller, nor a huge set of variations. As writer and pianist Charles Rosen pointed out, the variations themselves combine to create the symmetry of a huge sonata-form movement. And again, from the opposite end of the telescope, as it were, Rosen views the cantata on Schiller's ode as a microcosm of the entire four-movement symphony structure.

That the symphony has achieved a unique festive, even spiritual, status in the western world is due not so much to its introduction of vocal forces as to the very melody Beethoven devised for his hymn to joy. The tune is simple to the point of banality. Yet Beethoven agonised over it, and consciously made it 'popular'. Was not his noble message one of universal brotherhood?

Notwithstanding the force of the 'joy' theme, Beethoven keeps a new and solemn theme in reserve for the spiritual heart of the work, his setting of the words 'Seid umschlungen, Millionen'. Here, the idea of brotherhood progresses immediately to the corollary, a loving Father beyond the stars. The work ends with a heaven-storming coda in which the final word is a jubilant cry for the joy promised by the 'pure spark of God'.

Beethoven in the Ninth attains a sense of deep spiritual joy not unlike that of Haydn in his late masses, and through like technical means: a structure rooted in sonata form – though so enlarged and extended as superficially to bear little resemblance – with the singers bringing the voice of humankind to the expression of jubilation. The difference is that Haydn's joy comes straightforwardly from willing belief and acceptance, Beethoven's from titanic struggle of superhuman proportions. The result is a musical colossus which in its scale and sustained intensity constantly stretches human ability and understanding to the limit.

Anthony Cane ©2001

Performance History

Bernard Heinze conducted the ASO's first performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as part of a Beethoven Festival, in March 1945. The soloists were soprano Sylvia Fisher, contralto Gwen Collett, tenor William Herbert and baritone Ian McMutrie. The ASO's most recent performance was in November 2018 with conductor Nicholas Carter. The soloists were soprano Jacqueline Porter, mezzo-soprano Anna Dowsley, tenor Paul O'Neill and bass Andrew Collis with Adelaide Chamber Singers.

*O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!
Sondern lasst uns angenehmere
anstimmen, und freudvollere.*

*Oh friends, no more these sounds!
Instead let us sing out more
pleasingly, with joy abundant.*

*Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!
Deine Zauber binden wieder
was die Mode streng geteilt:
alle Menschen werden Brüder
wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.*

*O joy, pure spark of God,
daughter from Elysium,
with hearts afire, divine one,
we come to your sanctuary.
Your heavenly powers reunite
what custom sternly keeps apart:
all mankind become brothers
beneath your sheltering wing.*

*Wem der grosse Wurf gelungen
eines Freundes Freund zu sein,
wer ein holdes Weib errungen,
mische seinen Jubel ein!
Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele
sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund!
Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle
weinend sich aus diesem Bund!*

*Whoever has known the blessing
of being friend to a friend,
whoever has won a fine woman,
whoever, indeed, calls even
one soul on this earth his own,
let their joy be joined with ours.
But let the one who knows none of this
steal, weeping, from our midst.*

*Freude trinken alle Wesen
an den Brüsten der Natur,
alle Guten, alle Bösen,
folgen ihrer Rosenspur.
Küsse gab sie uns und Reben,
einen Freund, geprüft im Tod;
Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben,
und der Cherub steht vor Gott.*

*All beings drink in joy
at Nature's bosom,
the virtuous and the wicked alike
follow her rosy path.
Kisses she gave to us, and wine,
and a friend loyal to the death;
bliss to the lowest worm she gave,
and the cherub stands before God.*

*Froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen
durch des Himmels prächtgen Plan,
laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn,
freudig, wie ein Held zum Siegen!*

*Joyously, as His dazzling suns
traverse the heavens,
so, brothers, run your course,
exultant, as a hero claims victory.*

*Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!*

*O joy, pure spark of God,
daughter from Elysium,
with hearts afire, divine one,
we come to your sanctuary.*

Deine Zauber binden wieder
was die Mode streng geteilt:
alle Menschen werden Brüder
wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

*Your heavenly powers reunite
what custom sternly keeps apart:
all mankind become brothers
beneath your sheltering wing.*

Seid umschlungen, Millionen,
diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!
Brüder, über'm Sternenzelt
muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.

*Be enfolded, all ye millions,
in this kiss of the whole world!
Brothers, above the canopy of stars
must dwell a loving Father.*

Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?
Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt!
Über Sternen muss er wohnen.

*Do you fall down, ye millions?
In awe of your Creator, world?
Go seek Him beyond the stars!
For there assuredly He dwells.*

Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
wir betreten feuertrunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!

*O joy, pure spark of God,
daughter from Elysium,
with hearts afire, divine one,
we come to your sanctuary.*

Seid umschlungen, Millionen,
diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!

*Be enfolded, all ye millions,
the whole world in this kiss!*

Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?
Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?
Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt!
Brüder, über'm Sternenzelt
muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.

*Do you fall down, ye millions?
In awe of your Creator, world?
Go seek Him beyond the stars!
Brothers, above the canopy of stars
must dwell a loving Father.*

Freude, Tochter aus Elysium!
Deine Zauber binden wieder
was die Mode streng geteilt!
alle Menschen werden Brüder
wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

*O joy, daughter from Elysium!
Your heavenly powers reunite
what custom sternly keeps apart!
All mankind become brothers
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Seid umschlungen, Millionen,
diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!
Brüder, über'm Sternenzelt
muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.

*Be enfolded, all ye millions,
the whole world in this kiss!
Brothers, above the canopy of stars
must dwell a loving Father.*

Freude, schöner Götterfunken!
Tochter aus Elysium!
Freude, schöner Götterfunken!

*O joy, pure spark of God!
Daughter from Elysium!
O joy, pure spark of God!*

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Douglas Boyd Conductor

Douglas Boyd has held the positions of Music Director of L'Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, Chief Conductor of the Musikkollegium Winterthur, Music Director of Manchester Camerata, Principal Guest Conductor of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Artistic Partner of St Paul Chamber Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of City of London Sinfonia. In 2020 he received the highly prestigious Grand Vermeil Médaille de la Ville de Paris for services to music, in recognition of his work as Music Director of L'Orchestre de Chambre de Paris.

Originally an oboist and one of the founding members of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Douglas's formative musical training was under musicians such as Claudio Abbado and Nikolaus Harnoncourt, who remain a significant influence on his style and approach to this day.

In the UK and Europe he has worked with many major orchestras including all of the BBC Orchestras, the Philharmonia, Royal Scottish National, Scottish Chamber, London Mozart Players, City of Birmingham Symphony, Bournemouth Symphony and Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Bergen Philharmonic, Basel Sinfonieorchester, Finnish Radio Symphony, Gävle Symphoniker, Orchestre National de Lyon, Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine, Tonhalle Orchester Zürich, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne, as well as Munich Chamber Orchestra and Kammerakademie Potsdam. Further afield he has conducted the Nagoya Symphony Orchestra in Japan and regularly visits Australia where he has conducted the Adelaide,

Melbourne and Sydney Symphony orchestras, including a complete Beethoven symphony cycle with the MSO in 2011. He also regularly conducts across North America and Canada.

Operatic engagements have included *Die Zauberflöte* for Glyndebourne Opera on Tour, Salieri's *La grotto di Trofonio* for Zürich Opera and Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito* with Opera North. For Garsington Opera he has conducted *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Fidelio*, *Così fan tutte*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Capriccio*, Roxanna Panufnik's *Silver Birch* in its world premiere, concert performances of Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with members of the Royal Shakespeare Company and Haydn's *The Creation* with Ballet Rambert. This season he conducts Dvořák's *Rusalka* for Garsington and at the Edinburgh Festival, and Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* for the Winteroper, Potsdam.

Douglas Boyd's extensive discography includes the complete Beethoven symphonies with the Manchester Camerata, Schubert symphonies with the St Paul Chamber Orchestra as well as several recordings with Musikkollegium Winterthur. His recordings with L'Orchestre de Chambre de Paris include *Intuition* with Gautier Capuçon, and a disc of Haydn symphonies.



Emma Matthews Soprano

Australia's most highly awarded soprano, Emma Matthews performs regularly with all the Australian opera companies, symphony orchestras and festivals, and is now Head of Classical Voice and Opera Studies at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Edith Cowan University, Perth.

Emma's operatic repertoire includes the title role in *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and Opera Australia); Amina (*La sonnambula*), the four heroines (*The Tales of Hoffmann*) and Strauss Gala (State Opera); and for Opera Australia, among others, *Lulu*, *Lakmé*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Partenope*, *Violetta* (*La traviata*), *Gilda* (*Rigoletto*), *Cleopatra* (*Giulio Cesare*), *Juliette* (*Roméo et Juliette*), *Marie* (*La fille du régiment*), *Konstanze* (*The Abduction from the Seraglio*), *Leila* (*The Pearlfishers*) and *Rosina* (*The Barber of Seville*).

Emma's recordings include *Emma Matthews in Monte Carlo* (Deutsche Grammophon/ABC Classics), *Mozart Arias* (ABC Classics), *Agony and Ecstasy* (ABC Classics) and Opera Australia productions of *La Traviata* and *Lakmé* on DVD.



Sally-Anne Russell Mezzo-soprano

Sally-Anne Russell has performed in 25 countries and has a large discography, including her solo disc *Enchanting* with the ASO. Awards include an ARIA for Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* and nominations for Young Australian of the Year, Young Achiever of the Year, and Green Room and Helpmann Awards.

She has over 80 operatic roles in her repertoire and works with all the major opera companies and symphony orchestras in Australia. International highlights include the Spoleto Festival Italy, Washington National Opera (DC) and Carmel Bach Festival.

2021/22 appearances include *Hermia* in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Adelaide Festival, Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* for Canberra Festival and Handel's *Messiah* for the MSO.

Sally-Anne is co-artistic director of Albury Chamber Music Festival, a member of the Kathaumixw Festival International Artistic Council, Canada and the Belvedere International Singing Competition, Vienna. Sally-Anne is proudly sponsored by the Bee Family Foundation.



Henry Choo Tenor

Regarded as one of Australia's most versatile tenors, Henry is a graduate of the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) and the young artist programs of Opera Australia and Opera Queensland. He is a multiple Green Room Award winner and has appeared regularly in leading roles for Opera Australia, WA Opera, State Opera of South Australia and Melbourne Opera, and at the Edinburgh Festival and Macau International Music Festival.

He engagements as an oratorio soloist include appearances with all the Australian symphony orchestras, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the World Peace Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Christchurch Symphony and Auckland Philharmonia, and for the Sydney Philharmonia Choir and Melbourne Bach Choir.

Henry's appearances with the ASO have included Handel's *Messiah* and previous performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.



Christopher Richardson Bass-baritone

Bass-baritone Christopher Richardson has performed with the Melbourne, Sydney, Queensland and Tasmanian Symphony orchestras, Auckland Philharmonia, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra, and the Allegri Ensemble. His opera roles include Thoas (Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride*) and Idreno (Haydn's *Armida*) with Pinchgut Opera; Ptolemy in *Alexander Balus* and the title role (*Hercules*) with the Canberra Choral Society; Zebul in 'The Vow' (*Jephtha*) with Handel in the Theatre, Canberra; and Bass soloist in *Abandon* (Handel arr. Crabb) for Opera Queensland/Dancenorth.

Recent highlights include Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and Handel's *Messiah* with Sydney Philharmonia, Brahms Requiem with The Song Company, and *The Enchanted Island* for *Ten Days on the Island Festival*, Tasmania. Christopher features on an album of Calvin Bowman's art songs, *Real and Right and True* (Decca Records). His awards include the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Aria Award, and the Frances MacEachron Award (Oratorio Society of New York's Solo Competition) at Carnegie Hall, New York.



Elder Conservatorium Chorale

The Elder Conservatorium Chorale was formed in 2002 by its conductor Carl Crossin and draws its membership from the student body of the Elder Conservatorium of Music, the University of Adelaide at large, and from the wider community. While unaccompanied choral music is the heart of the Chorale's repertoire, the choir has also performed with the ASO on several occasions over the past 20 years as either the core of the Adelaide Symphony Chorus or in combination with Graduate Singers.

Performances have included Beethoven's Symphony No.9, Brahms' *German Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina burana*, Mahler's Second, Third and Eighth symphonies, Verdi's Requiem, Britten's *War Requiem*, and Iain Grandage's *Toward First Light*. With the Elder Conservatorium Symphony Orchestra, Chorale has performed Bach's *St. John Passion* and *St. Matthew Passion*, Handel's *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*, Mozart's Requiem, Fauré's Requiem, Michael Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* and Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony*.



Graduate Singers

Graduate Singers, or 'Grads', is one of Adelaide's finest choirs and has been a dynamic member of the vibrant local choral music scene for more than 40 years. Directed by Karl Geiger since 2012, Grads has received critical acclaim as an exponent of fine choral music, and enjoys a reputation for excellence in every aspect of presentation and performance.

Grads is committed to presenting high quality, accessible, and diverse concerts, keeping the choral tradition alive and fresh. Grads prides itself on its versatility, being equally at home with major choral standards and intimate chamber works.

Grads regularly collaborates with the Elder Conservatorium Chorale and ASO for large-scale choral works – most recently, *Carmina burana*, the world premiere of Richard Mills' Christmas oratorio *Nativity*, and, as part of the Adelaide Festival, Michael Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* in 2021 and *Prayer for the Living* in 2022.



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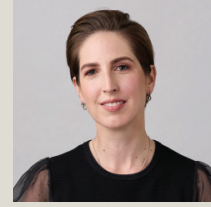
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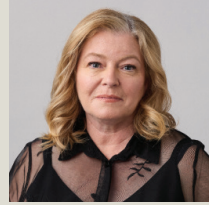
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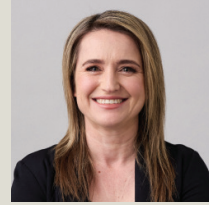
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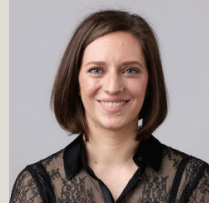
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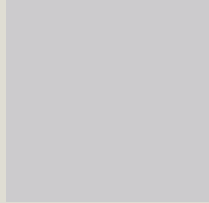
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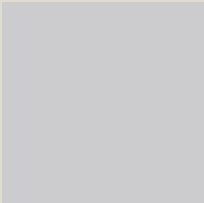
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The ASO gratefully acknowledges recent bequests left to the Orchestra

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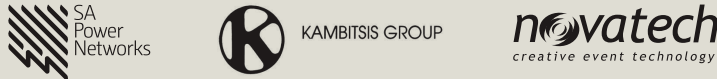
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