

Matinée *Series*

4 – Evolution

Wed 16 October
Elder Hall



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4

Evolution

Nicholas Braithwaite
Conductor

Mark Gaydon
Bassoon

—
Duration
60 mins (no interval)

Wed 16 October
Elder Hall

Acknowledgement of Country

Buckskin & Goldsmith arr. / orch. Ferguson
Pudnanthi Padninthi

[2']

Weber

Euryanthe: Overture

[8']

Hummel

Concerto for Bassoon in F

[25']

1. Allegro moderato

2. Romanza: Andantino e cantabile

3. Rondo: Vivace

Brahms

Variations on a Theme of Joseph Haydn Op.56

[19']

Chorale St Antoni: Andante

Variation I: Poco più animato

Variation II: Più vivace

Variation III: Con moto

Variation IV: Andante con moto

Variation V: Vivace

Variation VI: Vivace

Variation VII: Grazioso

Variation VIII: Presto non troppo

Finale: Andante

Listen Later ABC Classic is recording this concert for later broadcast. You can hear it again on Tuesday 5 November at 1pm.

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.

About the Program

'I shall never compose a symphony,' Brahms proclaimed in 1870. As we know, the composer did not keep his promise – and six years later, the first of his four symphonies premiered in Germany. But he first tested the waters with a number of orchestral compositions, including his 1873 **Variations on a Theme of Haydn**. As Brahms was inspired (and intimidated) by Beethoven, he was also moved by the music of Haydn. Or so he thought.

Brahms studied Haydn's compositions at the behest of his friend Karl Ferdinand Pohl, a historian who had written about Haydn, and who worked as librarian of the Vienna Philharmonic. Pohl brought Brahms a manuscript to look at – the *Chorale St. Antoni* – believing it was an authentic Haydn composition. He was mistaken. Brahms based his set of variations on the *Chorale St. Antoni* theme, entirely unaware that it was not written by Haydn at all. It was most likely the work of Ignaz Pleyel, an Austrian composer who had studied and become friends with Haydn, and had even written part of his opera *Das abgebrannte Haus*. So while the title of Brahms' work may be misleading, it nevertheless remains a set of variations on a theme composed in the spirit of respect and admiration for Haydn.

Brahms wrote *Variations on a Theme of Haydn* for two pianos, and performed its premiere as a duet with virtuosic concert pianist and composer Clara Schumann. Clara was also married to composer Robert Schumann, and Brahms was close friends with the couple. He was also in love with Clara – but for the purpose of this note, their personal connection ends here: after the piano performance, Brahms quickly moved on to an orchestral version of his variations. He was also involved in this premiere, conducting the Vienna Philharmonic through its 1873 performance. He was deeply satisfied with his work.

The *Chorale St. Antoni* theme is the first musical statement you will hear. This melody is performed at a leisurely *Andante* pace and immediately repeated, reinforcing the way it sounds so the listener may identify it with ease when it evolves through each variation. Brahms takes this initial musical idea and makes alterations to its tempo, rhythm, and mood. Where his second variation is combative and fiery, his third is sweet (*dolce*) and evenly spaced. Each variation carries its own character, and functions as a showcase of Brahms' versatile and increasingly confident voice in orchestral composition.

This afternoon's program explores a variety of musical forms. Surrounding the theme and variations, we hear two more compositional styles – an overture and a concerto. An overture offers a musical summary of the production to come. The composer extracts the most exciting or important themes from the narrative of their opera, play, or ballet – then arranges those themes into a standalone piece, which is performed at the very beginning of the event. Overtures often surpass in longevity and popularity the full production on which they are based; think Beethoven's overture to the play *Egmont*, or Rossini's overture to the opera *William Tell*. Carl Maria von Weber's **Euryanthe**: Overture comes from his 1823 opera, and is far more accessible than the hours-long production in full. It contains melodies we may associate with the concept of a 'leitmotif' – a musical idea that is linked to one event, character, or emotion. In his *Euryanthe* overture, Weber introduces a complicated tale of love and ghosts in medieval France. Like Brahms' variations, this work also premiered in Vienna.

The other form of composition on the program is the concerto, which is designed to showcase a solo instrument against an orchestral backdrop. Depending on the composer's style, the instrument and orchestra will behave like a team – or play in competition with each other, in which case the soloist often dominates the work in an aggressive display of virtuosity. Johann Nepomuk Hummel's 1805 **Bassoon Concerto in F major** exhibits the friendlier side of this musical relationship. He was in his 20s when he composed the work; by this age, he had already studied with the likes of Haydn, Mozart, and Salieri. The solo double reed instrument does not enter until about two minutes into the piece, at which point the soloist repeats the main melody that was introduced at the beginning of this work. As the bassoonist performs, the orchestra takes a more supportive role and offers a gentle accompaniment. They continue in this cordial fashion, orchestra rising in energy when the bassoon takes its rest. This gives Hummel's music the flow of a polite conversation, with minimal interjection or competition between the musical parties.

At the time of its composition, Hummel was employed by the noble Esterházy family. While there is no clear record of its premiere, we may imagine a warm reception for this sophisticated music, had it been performed in the noble Hungarian estate.

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Nicholas Braithwaite
ASO Conductor Laureate

Nicholas Braithwaite's career has spanned five continents and 15 countries. Highlights include the Orchestre National de Belgique, Orchestre National de France, Oslo Philharmonic, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Odense Symphony Orchestra, Aarhus Symfoniorkester, Aalborg Symphony Orchestra, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, and Collegium Musicum Copenhagen.

Nicholas studied at the Royal Academy of Music, Bayreuth Festival Master Classes, and in Vienna. His career began as Associate Conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, followed by Associate Principal Conductor of English National Opera where his performances of Wagner's Ring cycle received widespread critical acclaim. He was then Music Director of Glyndebourne and Principal Conductor of the Manchester Camerata.



Mark Gaydon
Bassoon

Mark has been Principal Bassoonist with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra since 2003. He has appeared as soloist performing works by Mozart, Weber, Zwilich, Strauss and others. He has also appeared as guest Principal Bassoon with the Sydney, Queensland, Tasmanian and New Zealand symphony orchestras.

As a chamber musician, he has performed with ELISION Ensemble, Southern Cross Soloists, New London Chamber Ensemble, Tancibudek Wind Quintet, and his own group Ensemble Le Monde.

An avid teacher, Mark has been Associate Instructor at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music; a guest artist at the Australian National Academy of Music; bassoon tutor for the Australian Youth Orchestra, National Music Camp, and Young Symphonists programs; and bassoon instructor at the Elder Conservatorium of Music.

Mark has a PhD in music from the University of Adelaide and was awarded a Dean of Graduate Studies Special Commendation for Thesis Excellence. In 2005 he won the ABC Young Performer of the Year – wind, brass and percussion section. Mark is a keen supporter of Australian composers and has commissioned and premiered works for the bassoon by Gerard Brophy, Andrew Schultz, Katy Abbott, James Cuddeford, Luke Altmann and Charles Bodman Rae. Mark's teachers include Kim Walker and Stéphane Lévesque.

Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

Mark Wigglesworth Chief Conductor Designate

Violins

Kate Suthers**
Concertmaster
Cameron Hill**
Associate Concertmaster
Liam Osborne
Acting Principal 1st Violin
Alison Heike**
Principal 2nd Violin
Lachlan Bramble~
Associate Principal 2nd Violin
Ann Axelby
Minas Berberyan
Gillian Braithwaite
Hilary Bruer
Belinda Gehlert
Danielle Jaquillard
Michael Milton
Ambra Nesa
Julie Newman
Alexander Permezal
Alison Rayner
Kemeru Spurr
Niki Vasilakis

Violas

Jacqui Cronin**
Guest Principal
Linda Garrett~
Acting Associate
Martin Alexander
Anna Hansen
Natalie Maegraith
Michael Robertson

Cellos

Martin Smith**
Guest Principal
Joseph Freer
Shuhei Lawson
Gemma Phillips
Cameron Waters

Double Basses

David Schilling**
Harley Gray~
Acting Associate
Jacky Chang
Holly Little

Flutes

Kim Falconer**
Lisa Gill

Piccolo

Julia Grenfell*

Oboes

Joshua Oates**
Renae Stavely~

Clarinets

Mitchell Berick*
Acting Principal
Lewis Blanchard

Bassoons

Jackie Newcomb~
Acting Principal
Leah Stephenson

Contra Bassoon

Tim Rosen*

Horns

Adrian Uren**
Emma Gregan
Philip Paine*
Timothy Skelly

Trumpets

David Khafagi**
Martin Phillipson~

Trombones

Colin Prichard**
Ian Denbigh

Bass Trombone

Amanda Tillet**

Timpani

Andrew Penrose*

Percussion

Steven Peterka*

** denotes Section Principal
~ denotes Associate Principal
* denotes Principal Player

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