

## BEETHOVEN & MOZART

Friday 9 April, 5.30pm and 8.30pm  
Federation Concert Hall, Hobart

TSO musicians perform chamber music

**Yue-Hong Cha** violin

**William Newbery** viola

**Andrew Seymour** clarinet

**Jennifer Marten-Smith** piano

**BEETHOVEN** Violin Sonata No 5 in F, 'Spring'

**MOZART** Trio in E-flat for Clarinet, Viola and Piano, K 498, 'Kegelstatt'

The fifth of ten sonatas for violin and piano by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), the 'Spring' Sonata Op 24 was composed in 1800-1801. Beethoven was writing a lot of solo and chamber music in the run-up to these years, including many of his 32 piano sonatas, his first collection of string quartets (Op 18) and the very popular Septet Op 20. The opening movement of the 'Spring' commences with one of the loveliest themes in all of Beethoven's music. We're in the key of F (Beethoven's 'pastoral' key) and the theme is a beautifully shaped, ten-bar melody in the singing style enunciated by the violin and immediately taken up and repeated by the piano. We venture onto the flat side, the key of B-flat, for the second movement, Adagio molto espressivo. The opening theme is delivered in the first instance by the piano, a good example of the equal partnership between the instruments. The languid theme returns a number of times in the course of the movement but is always slightly varied, variation technique being one of Beethoven's specialties. The serenity of the second movement quickly vanishes with the arrival of the Scherzo, the third movement (the 'Spring' is the first of Beethoven's violin sonatas to contain a scherzo). This is like a palate cleanser: it's upbeat and lively but is also very short, lasting scarcely more than a minute. Finally, the sonata ends with a movement marked Allegro ma non troppo. The genial finale is in rondo form, which means that the opening theme returns a number of times during the course of the movement and in-between those appearances we hear contrasting episodes. That said, the opening theme is never exactly the same when it reappears, Beethoven once again revealing his love for variation.

The Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano K 498 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) goes by the nickname 'Kegelstatt' which, roughly translated, means 'bowling alley'. It was once believed that Mozart composed the work at a skittles (i.e. bowling) party but that has since been disproved. Nevertheless, the nickname has stuck. Trios with piano at this time usually included violin and cello so the choice of clarinet and viola is highly unusual. Mozart most likely wrote the work with the clarinetist Anton Stadler in mind and it would appear that Mozart himself played the viola at the first performance (which was probably in 1786). The pianist on that occasion would seem to have been once of Mozart's pupils, Franziska Jacquin. The trio is in three movements and commences, oddly enough, with a slow or slowish movement, an Andante (it would be more usual to open with a quick movement). The middle movement consists of a robust Menuetto in B-flat and a contrasting Trio in G minor (note the viola's triplet figuration). Finally, we end with a moderately fast rondo, marked Allegretto. Like the movements which precede it, the finale is easy-going in mood and tone. All three instruments take turns in delivering the principal theme.

Robert Gibson, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, © 2021

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