

STARSTRUCK

Friday 23 July, 7.30pm

Saturday 24 July, 7.30pm

Federation Concert Hall, Hobart

Johannes Fritzsch conductor

Douglas Mackie flute

David Nuttall oboe

Andrew Seymour clarinet

Tahnee van Herk bassoon

Greg Stephens French horn

Yoram Levy trumpet

David Robins trombone

MARTIN Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments (22')

Allegro – Adagietto – Allegro vivace

DUPARC Aux étoiles (6')

MOZART Symphony No 35 in D, K 385, 'Haffner' (18')

Allegro con spirito – Andante – Menuetto; Trio – Finale (Presto)

Swiss composer Frank Martin (1890-1974) wrote the Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments in 1949. Post-Baroque concertos for two instruments are rare enough, let alone for seven, and his choice of a wind quintet plus trumpet and trombone makes for a one-of-a-kind ensemble. The instruments are introduced one by one (commencing with oboe, ending with bassoon and flute) in the opening section of the first movement, Allegro, allowing the distinctive tone colour of each to make an impression. Martin permits himself the liberty of treating the wind and brass players as soloists in their own right (against the background of the string orchestra) while at other times setting up subgroups within the concertino so that one instrument will come to the fore while other soloists take on accompanying roles. Take note also of the prominent role given to the timpani, particularly in the Finale.

Frenchman Henri Duparc (1848-1933) was a master of the small scale. He composed no symphonies, no concertos and no operas but, instead, focused on songs for solo voice and piano. Even then, he composed scarcely more than a dozen. Aux étoiles (To the Stars) was originally the opening movement of a three-part orchestral work from 1874, Poème nocturne, of which the second and third movements are lost (or were consigned to the dustbin by the composer). As befitting a nocturne, Aux étoiles is soft and dreamy. It rises to a forte only once and, with rare exceptions, the strings are muted throughout. On the basis of Aux étoiles, we can only mourn the loss of the two additional movements of Poème nocturne.

The Symphony No 35 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) began life as a serenade composed to celebrate the ennoblement of Sigmund Haffner, a friend of the Mozart family in Salzburg. This would explain the symphony's grand and imposing opening bars. Mozart wrote the 'Haffner' during his first year or so in Vienna, having quitted Salzburg to make a career for himself as a freelance performer and composer. Mozart's career was going swimmingly at this point – his German language opera Die Entführung aus dem Serail (The Abduction from the Seraglio) was staged around this time (mid-1782) and would go on to become the greatest operatic success of his life. In transforming the 'Haffner' from a serenade to a symphony, Mozart jettisoned some movements and added clarinets and trumpets, making it one of the most richly orchestrated of all his symphonies. Indeed, the 'Haffner' is one of only three symphonies by Mozart published during his lifetime.

Robert Gibson, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, © 2021

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