

## BEETHOVEN'S SIXTH

Saturday 20 November, 7.30pm  
Federation Concert Hall, Hobart

**Eivind Aadland** conductor  
**Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra**

**STRAVINSKY arr STOKOWSKI** Pastorale (3')

**LARSSON** Pastoral Suite, Romance (5')

**BEETHOVEN** Symphony No 6 in F, Op 68, 'Pastoral' (39')

Awakening of cheerful feelings on arriving in the countryside. Allegro ma non troppo  
Scene by the brook. Andante molto mosso  
Merry gathering of peasants. Allegro –  
Thunderstorm. Allegro –  
Shepherd's song. Joyful and thankful feelings after the storm. Allegretto

The Pastorale by Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) was originally composed as a wordless song for voice and piano. That was in 1907, just a few years before his ground-breaking sequence of ballets, *The Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913). Stravinsky revisited the work some decades later, arranging a version for soprano and wind ensemble in 1923 and another for violin and piano in 1933. In this concert, the Pastorale is heard in an arrangement by renowned conductor Leopold Stokowski. It is for a small group of soloists – violin, oboe, cor anglais, clarinet and bassoon – and string orchestra.

The music of Lars-Erik Larsson (1908-1986) is little known outside his home country of Sweden. His works include symphonies, string quartets and concertinos for various instruments. Larsson worked for Swedish Radio for more than a decade and later held academic positions as a teacher of music composition. His own composition studies included lessons with Alban Berg in Vienna. In this concert we hear a movement from Larsson's Pastoral Suite, which was composed in 1938. While Larsson ventured into serial and polytonal realms at times, his musical language is flagrantly romantic in this work.

The Symphony No 6 by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) was premièred in Vienna in 1808 in a concert that saw the first performances of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Fourth Piano Concerto, among other works. Unlike the Fifth and, indeed, unlike any other Beethoven symphony, the Sixth carries a title: Pastoral. In addition, each movement has a title, all of which were provided by Beethoven. The title of the first movement – Awakening of cheerful feelings on arriving in the countryside – makes plain Beethoven's great love for the outdoors (he escaped built-up Vienna for the countryside whenever he could). Unfolding at a leisurely pace, the first movement eschews the wound-up tension of many of Beethoven's opening movements favouring major chords and keys and a cheerful mood throughout. Beethoven takes a pictorial approach in the second movement – Scene by the brook – with rippling figuration in the lower strings suggesting the bubbling stream. Listen out for bird calls in the winds towards the end: nightingale, quail and cuckoo. The three remaining movements segue one into the other. The third movement, Merry gathering of peasants, introduces country revellers who enjoy a robust, foot-stomping contredanse in the contrasting 'trio' section. But the merrymaking is brought to an abrupt end when the key of F minor signals the approaching thunderstorm. Piccolo, timpani and trombones, silent up until this point, underscore the storm's fury. But the storm subsides, and the final movement brings a return to F major and the gentle, pastoral lilt of a shepherd's song. A feeling of calm takes hold. But not just calm, there's joy and deliverance as well or, as Beethoven tells us in the movement's title: Joyful and thankful feelings after the storm.

Robert Gibson, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, © 2021

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