

Precis

WEBER CLARINET CONCERTO

Friday 25 March, 7.30pm, Federation Concert Hall, Hobart

Saturday 26 March, 7.30pm, Albert Hall, Launceston

Eivind Aadland conductor

Andrew Seymour clarinet

Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

MENDELSSOHN A Midsummer Night's Dream, Overture and Scherzo (17')

WEBER Clarinet Concerto No 1 in F minor, Op 73 (18')

Allegro

Adagio ma non troppo

Rondo (Allegretto)

INTERVAL (20')

MOZART Symphony No 40 in G minor, K550 (35')

Molto allegro

Andante

Menuetto and Trio (Allegretto)

Allegro assai

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) was aged only seventeen when, in 1826, he composed the Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream, a twelve-minute work that captures the magical world of Shakespeare's play. The feather-light orchestration suggests the quicksilver movement of the fairies; the heavy chords the leaden gestures of the amateur theatrical troupe, the mechanicals; the 'hee-haw' motif the transformation of Bottom into an ass. Exactly seventeen years later, in 1843, Mendelssohn returned to Shakespeare's play and composed an entire suite of incidental music. The Scherzo performed in this concert comes between Acts I and II. Act II is the point in the play when Shakespeare introduces us to the fairies' realm. As such, Mendelssohn reprises the gossamer-light fairy idiom familiar to us from the Overture. Note in particular the prominent part for solo flute.

In 1811 Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826) composed three works for clarinet and orchestra for virtuoso clarinetist Heinrich Baermann. The middle of these was the Clarinet Concerto No 1 in F minor. Weber would go on to make a name for himself as a composer of opera, following the colossal success of Der Freischütz in 1821, but we can already hear the incipient opera composer in the dramatic first movement of the F-minor Clarinet Concerto. The clarinet's singing qualities are exploited in the lyrical middle movement, which is in the key of C major (but for a brief animated episode in the key of C minor). The upbeat finale is in F major, opening with a compact and jaunty theme that returns four times as the movement unfolds. The contrasting episodes make much use of scale figuration, frequently taking the solo instrument from the top of its range to the bottom.

Despite the popularity of the G-minor symphony, we know very little about the circumstances surrounding its composition. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) composed it in the middle of 1788, which is when he also wrote the symphonies on either side of it: the Symphony No 39 in E-flat and his last symphony, the Symphony No 41 in C, Jupiter. But its early performance history remains a mystery. It is inconceivable that Mozart would have composed these three grand symphonies without performances in sight, yet documentary evidence remains sketchy. The symphony opens with one of Mozart's most memorable themes. Tuneful and perfectly proportioned, it exemplifies Mozart's uncanny ability to fashion an original theme from the simplest of materials. After the Sturm und Drang of the first movement, the Andante presents an altogether more serene world. In the key of E flat, it has a wonderfully transparent texture, allowing for the tone colours of the various instruments to shine through. The robust Menuetto, back in G minor, has a strong forward momentum, while the Trio, in G major, offers bucolic quietude. The powerful upward thrust of the opening theme of the finale (the G-minor triad through two octaves) and the energetic tempo, Allegro assai, establish a tempestuous mood and a seriousness of purpose that is maintained to the very end. The symphony closes with an emphatic cadence in G minor.

Robert Gibson, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, © 2022

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MOZART Symphony No 40 in G minor, K550

Violin

Emma McGrath *Concertmaster*

Jennifer Owen *Associate Concertmaster*

Lucy Carrig-Jones *Principal Second*

Edwina George *Principal First*

Miranda Carson

Yue-Hong Cha

Michael Johnston

Christine Lawson

Elinor Lea

Susanna Low

Ambra Nesa

Christopher Nicholas

Rohana O'Malley

Hayato Simpson

Viola

Caroline Henbest#

Nara Dennis

Henry Justo

Anna Larsen Roach

William Newbery

Cello

Jonathan Békés*

Nils Hobiger

Ivan James

Martin Penicka

Double Bass

Stuart Thomson*

Aurora Henrich

Matthew McGrath

Flute

Douglas Mackie*

Lloyd Hudson *Piccolo*

Oboe

Stephanie Dixon#

Dinah Woods *Cor Anglais*

Clarinet

Brian Catchlove#

Eloise Fisher *Bass Clarinet*

Bassoon

Tahnee van Herk*

Gillian Hansen *Contrabassoon*

French Horn

David Evans*

Wendy Page#

Roger Jackson

Trumpet

John Foster#

Mark Bain

Tuba

Tim Jones*

Timpani

Matthew Goddard*

* principal player

guest principal

