

Precis

ELGAR CELLO CONCERTO

Friday 27 May, 7.30pm, Federation Concert Hall, nipaluna / Hobart
Saturday 28 May, 7.30pm, Albert Hall, Launceston

Marko Letonja conductor

Jonathan Békés cello

Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

BEETHOVEN

King Stephen, Overture, Op 117 (8')

SCHUBERT

Symphony No 3 in D, D200 (25')

Adagio maestoso – Allegro con brio

Allegretto

Menuetto (Vivace) – Trio

Presto vivace

INTERVAL (20')

ELGAR

Cello Concerto in E minor, Op 85 (30')

Adagio – Moderato

Lento – Allegro molto

Adagio

Allegro – Moderato – Allegro, ma non troppo

In the summer of 1811, Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) accepted a commission to write incidental music for two new plays by August von Kotzebue to be presented at the inauguration of a theatre in the Hungarian city of Pest (one half the city that became Budapest in 1872). One of those plays was König Stephan (King Stephen), which dramatises events from the life of Hungarian king Stephen I (975-1038). Beethoven composed an overture and nine numbers (the great majority of them choruses). The overture, which is in the key of E flat (Beethoven's 'heroic' key), commences with an introductory episode (Andante con moto) before leading to the main section proper (Presto) with its lively syncopated theme. Motivic working out is kept to a minimum in this work; instead, Beethoven chooses to juxtapose and repeat thematic ideas. Kotzebue's König Stephan, with music by Beethoven, was premièred in Pest in February 1812.

A few years later, in 1815, 18-year-old Franz Schubert (1797-1828) composed his Symphony No 3. Schubert had a gift for combining words, melody and piano accompaniment into mini dramas of remarkable poignancy and power. Two of his finest song settings – Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel and Erl-King (Erlkönig) – were composed on either side of the Symphony No 3. His orchestral works, by and large, are less remarkable, but they are not without their beauties. Taking his cue from Haydn (and early Beethoven, for that matter), Schubert commences the Symphony No 3 with a slow introduction. The first movement's principal theme, announced by the clarinet, arrives at the start of the fast section (Allegro con brio). An easy-going tunefulness pervades the second movement (Allegretto) with the clarinet again coming to the fore in the middle episode. The lively Menuetto swings to a rustic beat while the more serene Trio brings oboe and bassoon into prominence. The symphony comes to a close with a lively tarantella, a dance in 6/8 that originated in southern Italy and soon conquered concert rooms throughout Europe.

In 1918, while recovering from a tonsillectomy, Edward Elgar (1857-1934) began sketching what would become his last orchestral work, the Cello Concerto in E minor. As it turned out, the work occupied him for well over a year, receiving its première in London in October 1919. Elgar had the good sense to orchestrate with a light hand to ensure that the solo instrument would carry across the orchestra. Additionally, he sought advice from renowned English cellist Felix Salmond. The four-movement concerto falls into two broad sections, the slow movement (Adagio) marking the start of the second part. The concerto commences with a cry from the depths from the solo instrument, a wonderfully arresting gesture. A somewhat mournful melody pervades the first movement, while rapid repeated notes characterise the scherzo (Allegro molto). The slow movement is a heartfelt song and the finale keeps two contrasting themes in play before the 'cry from the depths' gesture returns towards the end.

Robert Gibson, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, © 2022

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BEETHOVEN King Stephen, Overture
SCHUBERT Symphony No 3 in D, D200

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ELGAR Cello Concerto in E minor, Op 85

Violin

Jennifer Owen *Concertmaster*
Rohana O'Malley *Associate Concertmaster*
Lucy Carrig-Jones *Principal Second*
Miranda Carson *Principal First*
Yue-Hong Cha
Frances Davies
Michael Johnston
Christine Lawson
Elinor Lea
Susanna Low
Ambra Nesa
Christopher Nicholas
Hayato Simpson

Viola

Stephen King #
Douglas Coghill
Andrew Jezek
Henry Justo
William Newbery

Cello

Ivan James #
David Moran
Martin Penicka
Sophie Radke

Double Bass

Stuart Thomson *
Aurora Henrich
Matthew McGrath

Flute

Douglas Mackie *
Rachel Howie *Piccolo*

Oboe

Sarah Young #
Dinah Woods *Cor Anglais*

Clarinet

Andrew Seymour *
Eloise Fisher *Bass Clarinet*

Bassoon

Tahnee van Herk *
Gillian Hansen
Simone Walters *Contrabassoon*

French Horn

Emily Newham #
Jules Evans
Roger Jackson
Wendy Page

Trumpet

Owen Morris #
Mark Bain

Trombone

David Robins *
Amanda Tillett

Bass Trombone

Mitchell Nissen *

Tuba

Tim Jones *

Timpani

Matthew Goddard *

* principal player

guest principal

