

The Armidale Symphony Orchestra

Violin 1

Errol Russell
(Concertmaster)
Colin Sholl
Margaret Howard
Kate Nash
Steven Ellison
Marie McKenzie
Gunar Daniel
Lucy Warren

Violin 2

Marian Barford
Maurice Anker
Yvonne Arnold
Melanie Bird
Beth Kenrick
Anne Gates
Marita Arnold

Violas

Laurie Pulley
Chris Cunningham
Hannah Rowland
Tara Houghton
Violoncellos
Sue Metcalfe
Ian Slater
Rachel Meredith
Camilla Tafra
Rhonda Davey
Stephanie Arnold
Jessie Allen
Xenia Schmalz
Alice Tierney

Double Basses

Sarah Christopher
Vicki Harbison
Arlene Fletcher
Flutes
Geoff Derrin
Sharon Davidge
Nick Negerevich
Tomo Romaedo

Oboes

David Rowe
Graham Maddox

Clarinets

Chris Garden
Jane Growns
Janet Million
Bass Clarinet
Ben Sindel

Bassoon

Alex Bell
Melissa Norris
Contra Bassoon
Graeme Widmer
Saxophones
Sam Prosser
Lydia Tasker
Nick Negererich

French Horns

Alastair Finco
Kerry Hawkins
William Arnold
Bruce Menzies

Trumpets

Wayne Elliott
Greg Hebblewhite
Jason Heise

Trombones

Dave Brown
Simon Hughes
Margaret Sharpe

Tuba

Brian Glover

Piano

Robyn Bradley

Keyboard

Peter Maddox

Tympani

Melinda Bryant

Percussion

Murray Winton
Daniel Bale
Ben Stanley

Armidale Symphony Orchestra

Conductor

Wendy Huddleston

Soloist.

Deidre Rickards - Piano

3 pm Sunday 2 December 2007
Lazenby Hall, UNE

www.armsymph.org

Fiori Musicali

A Service of Lessons and Carols for Advent

Guest Conductor Wendy Huddleston

Ursuline Chapel

5.30 pm Thursday 6 December 2007

Footsteps at Four Creeks

Conducted by the composer.

Graham Howard

Footprints at Four Creeks was commissioned by Parramatta Council for the 2006 Mayor's Concert. It was composed following visits to four of the tributaries that feed Parramatta River: Darling Mills, Quarry Branch, Toongabbie and Hunt's Creeks. Its name refers not only to the composer's visits, but also to the concept of 'carbon-footprints' and the effects upon the creeks of the surrounding suburbs. There are three linked movements.

1) Darling Mills Creek

Darling Mills Creek runs from the Cumberland State Forest near Pennant Hills through to the Parramatta River, with numerous smaller tributaries joining along the way. It is followed for most of its journey by some stunningly beautiful bush tracks that wind along its banks. When Graham visited Darling Mills Creek for the first time in 2005, he was amazed at the peacefulness of the area. Spending hours there on his first visit, he instantly fell in love with the beautiful spots that dominate the tracks.

2) Quarry Branch and Toongabbie Creeks

Quarry Branch Creek is a relatively short creek that begins in Winston Hills (where Graham spent much time as a child), and joins with Toongabbie Creek shortly after. Toongabbie Creek merges with other creeks before joining Parramatta River from the west. Even on his first visit, Graham could see that these two creeks were in a struggle for survival – an obvious theme depicted in the music for the movement. Their location amongst ever growing suburbs is creating an increasing number of impacts to their environment. Nevertheless, there are still some beautiful and peaceful spots to see, particularly along the walking tracks next to Quarry Branch Creek.

3) Hunt's Creek and Hunt's Creek Falls

Hunt's Creek is well known to locals for two main reasons: the waterfall at North Rocks and the man made Lake Parramatta. The falls are usually just a trickle flowing over a wide spread rock wall. But after heavy rain, the falls transform into an unbelievably spectacular display which roars over the 30 metre wide drop. It is almost impossible to believe that it exists so close to Parramatta, but luckily it does, and is worth visiting soon after strong rains.

While not referred to musically, Lake Parramatta was the first part of the northern creek systems that Graham visited after moving to Parramatta in 1997. It is an incredible place and is home to numerous types of native wildlife, particularly birds.

Armidale Choral Society and New England Sinfonia

Handel's MESSIAH

Conductor Graham Maddox

Soloists

Samantha Cobcroft, Inga Southcott,
Tom Moran, Laurie Pulley

2 pm Sunday 16 December

Lazenby Hall UNE

Tickets at the door. \$20, \$15 concession

ARMIDALE MUSIC FOUNDATION

11th weekend of music making for orchestral musicians and singers

Friday 14 March – Sunday 16 March 2008

“Hymn of Jesus” - Holst,

Conductor Richard McIntyre OAM
Choral Director Paul Holley

The Armidale Music Foundation's Annual Choral Weekend provides an opportunity for instrumental musicians and singers from NSW and further afield to perform large scale choral works under the guidance of some of Australia's foremost instrumental and choral tutors.

Details available in the New Year.

For further information contact Bill Driscoll 6772 1349 or
Bruce Menzies 6772 8626.

Allegretto. A wry Scherzo, owing to Mahler again, this movement is predominantly heavy, with sometimes shrill scoring and elements of parody and dance style as well as a vulgar march. The contrasting sparsely scored trio section with the burlesque of the solo violin only serves to reinforce the disturbing quality of the rest of the movement.

Largo. Shostakovich omits brass instruments in this movement, and creates a chamber-like quality for this expressive heart of the symphony. Again we hear long sustained melodic lines but the searing climax with piano, high strings, xylophone and piccolo creates an excruciating tension. The movement ends quietly with a poignant melody played by harp and celesta over high tremolo violins.

Allegro non troppo. The final movement ends with seemingly triumphant D major brass fanfares and battering drums, having begun with a “fierce and lacerating” desperation broken only by a quiet but brooding middle section. Whilst some commentators originally treated this symphony as a progression from the post-Beethoven style beginning in conflict and arriving at an apotheosis, comments from Shostakovich late in his life have turned this idea upside-down. ‘I think that it is clear to everyone what happens in the Fifth. It’s as if someone was beating you with a stick and saying “your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing”, and you rise, shakily, and go off muttering “Our business is rejoicing, our business is rejoicing”.’

Graham Howard

Graham Howard was born in Penrith in 1973. In 1987 he began to conduct publicly and to compose his first short pieces. He co-won the Sydney Symphony Orchestra School Composer's Competition in 1990 and 1991 and also conducted many of his own compositions during this period, including numerous fanfares and a choral fanfare at the Secondary Instrumental and Choral Festivals organised by The Performing Arts Unit of the Department of School Education.

Graham completed a Bachelor of Music (Hons) at The University of Sydney in 1996, majoring in Composition. His composition teachers included Anne Boyd, Ross Edwards and Peter Sculthorpe. In 1997, he accepted a position with the State Rail Authority as a railway traffic controller, until resigning in February 2004 to return to music full time. He taught composition and lectured at The Australian International Conservatorium of Music in 2003, and taught at The King's School, Parramatta from 2003 to 2005, where he was Head of Composition in 2005. Graham is also the photographer for The Nature Conservation Council of NSW, a role he has been undertaking since 2005.

Deidre Rickards

Deidre Rickards is well known to audiences in the North West region of NSW. She has led music departments in schools, taught music method at UNE and, when the New England Ensemble and String Quartet were resident at UNE, Deidre gave sonata recitals with individual members. On previous occasions she has played the Grieg A minor and the Rachmaninoff second concertos as well as the *The Carnival of Animals* by Saint-Saens, with Wendy Lorenz and the Armidale Symphony Orchestra. She has also conducted the orchestra in works by Peter Maxwell Davies, Margaret Sutherland and Prokofiev to name a few. Other artists Deidre has worked with include Carl Pini, Jane Hazelwood, Peta Blythe, and her daughter Alice who is a violinist in the UK.

Deidre is a graduate from Newcastle Conservatorium, Deakin University and the Royal College of Music in London and has her L.Mus. with the AMEB. As a student she gave recitals for ABC regional and national radio and has played in master class for Stephen Kovacevich and John Lill at the Dartington International Summer School in the UK.

In 2007 she has been conducting the New England Singers who recently performed in Sydney Town Hall, the exciting Earle Page College choir and the Armidale Youth Orchestra who gave a successful tour which led to a well attended performance in the Queensland Art Gallery. Next year she is looking forward to presenting a two piano recital with pianist Ann Pettigrew.

Wendy Huddleston

Wendy Huddleston has been a member of the Armidale music community for more than 40 years, having conducted the Armidale Symphony Orchestra, the Armidale Youth Orchestra and the Choral Society on many occasions over that period. A graduate of Sydney Conservatorium of Music and Sydney Teachers College majoring in piano and voice, Wendy taught at Armidale High School for more than 30 years, her final position being that of Head Teacher of Performing and Creative Arts.

Wendy has been the recipient of a number of awards for her contribution to music education, including the Barbara Mettam Award from the Australian Society for Music Education. She has, on many occasions, conducted major choral works for massed choirs and orchestra in the Sydney Opera House. Wendy's commitment to music education has continued since her retirement from the classroom with her involvement as an accompanist and coach for young musicians as well as her work with the AYO and the NECOM Cantilena Singers. Over the years Wendy was a member of the Armidale Singers and has sung with and directed Fiori Musicali. Studying singing again, with Inge Southcott, is of great importance. Eisteddfod adjudicating has also figured largely in Wendy's career in recent times.

Wendy will continue in 2008 in her role as répétiteur for Cantilena, the Music Foundation Choral Weekend and for the first time, répétiteur for the Seniors Choral Festival to be held in Sydney in July.

Armidaale Symphony Orchestra

The Armidaale Symphony Orchestra was established in 1943 and gave its first concert on August 11 to a packed Town Hall. Mrs Lois Kesteven, a violinist with experience from the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the ABC Orchestra, was the first conductor. The music critic for the Express described the concert as memorable due to “clockwork precision”, “lack of fuss and ostentation” and “many other significant details”!

The ensuing 64 years have seen a consistent development as the orchestra has become a vibrant large ensemble. The orchestra has been privileged for many years to have as its Concertmaster Errol Russell, formerly a member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Members of the New England Ensemble and the New England String Quartet were valuable contributors and Janis Laurs from the former, a vital conductor. Nowadays the orchestra has a mix of highly experienced and extremely talented younger players. Today’s concert welcomes several outstanding former players as well as some visitors.

The orchestra has embarked on a number of ambitious concerts amongst which has been the concert of the Mahler 2nd Symphony with the Sydney TOPS Orchestra conducted by Mal Hewitt. Next year builds on the orchestra’s policy of featuring works by Australian composers, including local Armidaalian Peter Maddox whose work *Blood and Carnations* will be performed again in May. In addition the second concert in August will premiere a work by Stephen Thorneycroft, whilst the final concert in December will be *God’s Drawing Board* with music by foremost Australian composer Elena Kats-Chernin.

The orchestra has for the last decades seen a number of talented conductors at the helm such as Errol Russell, David Gee, Bruce Menzies, Peter Maddox, Graham Maddox, Deidre Rickards, and Stuart Pavel as well as today’s Wendy Huddleston

Piano Concerto No. 2 in A major Soloist Deidre Rickards

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Completed in 1849 and first performed on January 7, 1857 Liszt’s second Piano Concerto represents the quintessential expression of Liszt’s perspective on the Romantic Period Concerto. Liszt had made first sketches for both his piano concertos before he reached the age of twenty but neither was completed or performed until he was in his forties. An explanation for this may be that Liszt was inexperienced in writing for orchestra and he enlisted Joachim Raff (a minor composer) for help in orchestration. It was not until 1854 that Liszt felt sufficiently confident to dispense with this assistance.

The concerto is a single, long movement constructed on the principles of Sonata form with a continuously unfolding “cyclic” structure in which Liszt employs his “metamorphosis of themes” technique to great advantage. “Virtuosity is never absent in this work, but is sustained by an abundance of substance well beyond the norm for mere display pieces.”

The opening bars contain the romantic and intrinsically beautiful material which is subsequently exploited with great skill. Liszt transforms this into a variety of aural “costumes”. At times it is dramatic, yearning, martial, sensuous, serene, heroic and scherzo-like. The D flat section features the opening idea played on the cello with the piano accompanying. It shows the “bel canto” element in Liszt at its most uninhibited and this is the compositional technique favoured by the great pianist Busoni. He described it as an exquisite “cantilena.”

Liszt possessed a powerful revolutionary intelligence which he sought to express in his music. It is appropriate that this work is presented in concert with the Shostakovich Symphony No 5.

INTERVAL

Symphony No. 5

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

This Symphony was written in 1937 when Shostakovich realised that he needed to abandon his “modernist” style if he was to remain safe and in favour with the Stalin regime. The symphony has sometimes been referred to as “the practical creative answer of a Soviet artist to just criticism”. He had been officially condemned for his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* earlier in 1936.

Moderato-allegro. There is a sense of unease in the opening of this symphony as it begins with an aggressive doom-laden theme in the strings. The ensuing long, lyrical paragraphs create an enormous space, both brooding and desolate. Shostakovich here demonstrates his mastery control of “slow pacing and pared down textures”. With the development section the mood becomes gradually more frenzied as melodies originally lyrical in nature are blazoned at the climax in a grotesque Mahlerian-style march. When the movement finally brakes it is with a feeling of numb exhaustion - it finally achieves stillness but not serenity.

Armidaale Symphony Orchestra

Next concert.

3:00 pm Sunday May 4

Conductor: Peter Maddox

Emmanuel Chabrier - Joyeuse Marche

R P Maddox - Blood and Carnations

C V Stanford - Irish Symphony