

The Armidale Symphony Orchestra

Violin 1

Errol Russell

Kate Chapman

Colin Sholl

Marita Arnold

Rachel Menzies

Sujita Allan

Linley Birkett

Violin 2

Lucette Tolhurst

Jessica Stanley

Yvonne Arnold

Anne Gates

Roland Lubett

Maurice Anker

Graham MacKay

Tiffany Jones

Violas

Laurie Pulley

Chris Cunningham

Annie Chapman

Carissa Hutchinson

Violincellos

Claire Chapman

Stephanie Arnold

Rachel Meredith

Pauline Gorman

Bronwyn Jones

Doublebass

Wendy Griffiths

Flutes

Geoffrey Derrin

Sharon Davidge

Oboes

Judith Tudball

Amy Gow

Clarinets

Christopher Garden

Anthony Birkett

Bassoon

Damian Easton

Kirsten Stoddart

French Horns

Kerry Hawkins

Bruce Menzies

Trumpets

Wayne Elliott

David Arnold

Timpani

Tamsin Loyd

Harpichord

Pam Flynn

Armidale Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Greg McPhan

28 October 2001, Lazenby Hall

Handel's Messiah

Armidale Choral Society and New England Sinfonia

Soloists: Samantha Cobcroft, Rowena Teege, Tom Moran, Laurie Pulley

Wednesday 21 November 8 p.m.

St Mary's Cathedral

Donation \$10 - \$5

Symphony in E major for two orchestras

Johann Christian Bach (1735 – 1782)

- (i) *Allegro moderato*
- (ii) *Andante*
- (iii) *Tempo di minuetto*

At the start of the 18th century the symphony was mostly just an interlude between numbers in theatrical works. From the death of J.S. Bach in 1750, to Beethoven's birth in 1770 it was transformed to become the principal mode of expression of orchestral music. This little symphony was written by the youngest of the sons of J.S. Bach. It is a conversation between two orchestras of more or less equal balance. While to some people two orchestras on the same stage is akin to having two pieces of water in a bottle, the throwing of the musical lines from one side of the stage to the other makes for good theatre. The first movement is in sonata form and is followed by a graceful slow movement. The final movement is an elegant minuet with the trio section in a minor key.

Fingals Cave (The Hebrides)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)

By 1830, when this overture was published, music performance had transcended the private entertainment of the 18th century and was offered by subscription concerts in large halls. Mendelssohn responded to the need for large single-movement works to open such performances. He had travelled the British Isles and was greatly impressed by Fingal's Cave in the Western Isles of Scotland. This is a magnificent sea cavern with the sides supported by natural hexagonal basalt columns so symmetrical that they appear to be the design of an architectural genius. While the overture is not intended as programme music, the shimmering strings, the grand crescendos and abrupt climaxes of the music recall the swell of the waves as they glide into the cave and crash against its walls.

Rumanian Folk Dances

Béla Bartók (1881 – 1945)

- I. *JOC CU BATA, (Stick Dance) Allegro Moderato*
- II. *BRAUL, (Sash Dance) Moderato*
- III. *PE LOC, (In One Spot) Andante*
- IV. *BUCIUMEANA, (Horn Dance) Moderato*
- V. *POARGA ROMANASCA, (Rumanian Polka) Allegro*
- VI. *MARUNTEL, (Fast Dance) L'istesso tempo*
- VII. *MARUNTEL, (Fast Dance) Allegro vivace*

Bartók was an inveterate collector of the folk melodies of the Magyar, Slovak, and Rumanian peoples. While mostly in simple duple or triple rhythms and replete with unusual and beautiful melody, few of these tunes used the conventional diatonic scales of classical Western music. These folk tunes, with their ancient scale patterns, directed Bartók towards new harmonic possibilities and tonal systems in his compositions. This selection of Rumanian dance tunes is a small sample from Bartók's prodigious collection. They were collected from four regions in Transylvania and would originally have been played on the Shepherd's flute or violin. Originally written for piano in 1915, the orchestral version appeared two years later.

INTERVAL

Symphony No. 4 in B flat major

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

- (i) *Adagio: allegro vivace*
- (ii) *Adagio*
- (iii) *Scherzo: Allegro vivace*
- (iv) *Allegro ma non troppo*

After the Haydn-esque First symphony, Beethoven's even numbered symphonies 2, 4, 6 and 8 are cast in poetic and lyrical moulds in contrast with the grand dramas of numbers 3, 5, 7 and 9. There are few surviving sketches for the Fourth, and this symphony, developed between 1804 and 1806, was most likely more fluently composed than the preceding 'Eroica' and the following 'Mighty Fifth'. Nevertheless, the B flat symphony was begun before the Eroica was complete and after the Fifth was already well started. Before the work was first performed and published in 1806 Beethoven also had sketches for the Sixth under way. This working on several giant works at once seemed to refresh his inspiration, and indeed completion of the Fourth cleared the way for that most famous work to follow, and which had until then been stalled.

Robert Schumann characterised the Fourth Symphony as a 'slender Greek maiden between two Nordic giants'. With due respect both to Schumann and slender Grecian maidens, this greatly undersells the work. Lyrical and poetic as the Fourth is, it is no facile lightweight composition. The crafting of the work is impeccable. The outer movements with their impetuous string passages, exquisite wind and brass melodies and lightly tapping, rolling or thundering tympani move from light to shade, from piquant wit to profound comment.

The glowing adagio is the true soul of this symphony, and is one of those indescribably beautiful slow movements that reveal the true depth of Beethoven's genius. It has much in common in its style with the *Largo e mesto* of the Piano Sonata Op 10 No 3, and the *Adagio affetuoso ed appassionato* of the String Quartet Op 18 No 1. In contrast with the great sadness and pathos of those movements, however, this *adagio* expresses a profound and joyous tranquility.

The Scherzo, with its accented rests and complex interchange of duple and triple rhythms, pushes the music ever onward with rapid conversations, many of them witty 'one liners', exchanged between the orchestral sections. The trio, with lyrical wind passages over murmuring strings, is reiterated after the second return of the Scherzo, and an abbreviated form of the Scherzo returns yet a third time as a coda. This completes the five-part form — scherzo, trio, scherzo, trio, scherzo — which Beethoven then used in the corresponding movements of all subsequent symphonies save the Eighth.

The last movement is full of irrepressible vigour in which Beethoven (almost) puts to one side the syncopated rhythmic forms of the first and third movements — although he maintains an important thematic and tempo links with the first movement. The overall effect is of unleashed joy which is only temporarily interrupted a few bars before the movement ends.