

SEPT. 25TH

**the
firm**

**series
2000**

concert three

string orchestra

**Members of the Adelaide
Symphony Orchestra,**

Conducted by

Nicholas Milton

programme

j s bach

In dir ist Freude

chorale prelude BWV 615

(transcribed by Raymond Chapman Smith)

john polglase

Concertino for Strings

david kotlowy

blossom drift

short interval

quentin sd grant

Elegy - On the Death of Robert Schumann

raymond chapman smith

Sinfonia

John Polglase

Concertino for strings

I Prelude

II Vivace

III Adagio, poco mesto

IV Postlude, allegro risentito

This four movement work was completed a scant week before I left for another jaunt about the Swiss Alps courtesy of the music festival held in the wine growing region of the Bündler Herrschaft. The title 'Concertino' is a temporary one, as the work itself is, I think, a bit too long for the '-tino' suffix ; the length of the four movements coming to a total of about twenty minutes.

As with other recent works of mine there are principals of construction which bind the separate movements together; the Postlude shares and reworks the thematic material of the Prelude while having formal similarities to the second movement, and all four movements are loosely based on a twelve tone row, a technique I haven't consciously used since my student days. This row can be heard initially evolving from the opening figure together with the rising motive of the violins but its application is not strict and remains more of a unifying resource from which more overtly thematic material can be derived and developed.

The movements are laid out slow, fast, slow, fast; alternating more atmospheric and colouristic slower pieces with faster more energetic, rhythmic ones. I enjoyed both the quick pace I set myself in the composing of this piece and the resultant work which has a large feel combined with the wonderful intimacy which strings, both solo and en masse can provide.

David Kotlowy

blossom drift

For me, *blossom drift* is somewhat like Arvo Pärt's *Fratres* and George Dreyfus' "Sebastian the Fox" – it is a work that I have subjected to a variety of arrangements. The Kidney Art Ensemble, Elder New Music Ensemble, Lights, and the Australian Chamber Orchestra have all performed versions of it.

blossom drift comprises three or four predominantly descending melodic fragments. Through them, I attempt to cultivate the beauty of simplicity and full attention affirmed by Li Po (701 - 762):

Asked why I live in the green hills,
I smile and give no answer.
Peach blossoms fall.
Streams flow freely.
I am at peace in this transient world.

The beauty of simplicity can only be revealed through stripping back, rather than dressing up with additional decoration. "Carvers do not faces make, but that away, which hid them there, do take." (John Donne.) This asceticism – the word literally means "training" – is rightly understood as enhancing life through restrictions, through setting limits. (Saint Bernard said that the first benefit of fasting is that afterwards one appreciates the taste of food so much more.)

Simplicity and transience are affirmed by precisely linking sound to breath cycles. Each performance has its own rhythm that must have our full attention to reveal its beauty.

Streams flow. Blossoms fall. Each thing in the world asks us, "What makes you think I am not something you like?" Legend has it that Li Po drowned after drunkenly leaning out of a boat to embrace the moon's reflection.

Quentin SD Grant

Elegy - on the Death of Robert Schumann

The starting point of this work is, apart from the unfortunate and much mourned early death of Schumann, a quote from one of his Album for the Young pieces entitled "Erster Verlust" (The first loss). This is heard at the work's opening and serves a two-fold purpose from there: firstly as the germ from which the many disparate elements of the piece grow and, secondly, in a many varied form, as the "voice" of the recently deceased composer. Other elements include an oft repeated "funeral theme", dances and a final, triumphant, chorale.

The elegy, though written specifically for a colleague who through his music remains close to many of us, is, like all elegies, a meditation on the mortality we all share.

Raymond Chapman Smith

Sinfonia

1. *Sostenuto - Allegro non troppo*
2. *Andante sostenuto*
3. *Allegretto - poco piu lento - Allegretto -Sostenuto - Prestissimo*

My Sinfonia for String Orchestra was mostly composed during the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra's recent and wonderful Brahms Series - a correspondence which may explain some of my choices of tessitura, tempi and syntax but I don't think Dr. Brahms should be seen as overly responsible for these outcomes.

In fact the initial model for this piece was the set of six, three movement Sinfonias, Wq.182 by C.P.E. Bach, a work which, in its turn, was very probably the inspiration for Felix Mendelssohn's post-natal String Symphonies - which Mendelssohn, as it happens, called Sinfonias and which are certainly my favourite pieces for this medium.

A sustained Introduction presents, in skeletal fashion, the essential material of the Sinfonia and this is followed by a very compressed sonata movement. The Andante Sostenuto is a partial palindrome with a barcarolle somewhere in the mists of its family tree and the finale is in the familiar Allegretto and Trio format only disrupted by the reappearance of the Introduction before a quick coda and the piece's rather startled discovery of its key centre.

Performers

1st Violin

Margaret Blades

Gillian Braithwaite

Jennifer Newman

Julie Newman

2nd Violin

Michael Milton

Judith Polain

Alexis Milton

Ann Axelby

Viola

Juris Ezergailis

Carolyn Mooz

Lesley Cockram

Cello

Sarah Denbigh

Cameron Waters

David Sharp

Double bass

David Schilling

About the Players of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

An orchestra's place in its community extends much further than the concerts it presents: it is an integral part of the fabric of a town's cultural life. Adelaide's orchestra enjoys a much closer integration with its community than many other orchestras do. The interaction ranges from the highly-visible participation in large-scale community celebrations to activities such as those of The Firm, where public profile is not so much the issue.

Over a period of years Adelaide's active and wonderfully self-motivated community of composers have drawn on the members of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra to help in the realisation of their works, building, unselfconsciously, a long-term collaboration that has become a fantastic little tradition.

The benefits are mutual: as well as airing the works of local composers the musicians also develop their skills as chamber musicians and interpreters of contemporary music. What's more, they enjoy the music-making and the discovery of new music.

James Koehne, Artistic Administrator
Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

acknowledgments

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The players

The Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

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