



VASSE FELIX MUSIC FESTIVAL
4-6 DECEMBER 2009



VASSE FELIX



AUSTRALIAN
CHAMBER
ORCHESTRA

RICHARD TOGNETTI
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**VASSE FELIX MUSIC FESTIVAL
4-6 DECEMBER 2009**

FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER

7pm

Vasse Felix wines and canapés

7.45pm

Concert

SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER

5pm

Vasse Felix wines and canapés

5.45pm

Concert

8pm

Dinner

SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER

4.15pm

Vasse Felix wines and canapés

5pm

Concert



VASSE FELIX

**ACO 2010 SUBSCRIPTIONS NOW ON SALE
Phone 1800 444 444 or visit aco.com.au**

WELCOME TO VASSE FELIX

In 1967 the planting of vines at Vasse Felix signalled the emergence of Margaret River's first commercial vineyard. Forty-one years on, Vasse Felix exports to over 25 countries and has developed into an international brand which is synonymous with quality and consistency.

Daily, our underground cellar door welcomes visitors to explore the nuances and aromatic tones of a selection of premium wines in a calm environment with expert guidance.

Upstairs, the Vasse Felix balcony restaurant, recently listed in Australian Gourmet Travellers National Top 100 Restaurants of Australia, presents an exceptional menu showcasing the freshest local and organic produce.

Within the hypnotic ambience, guests may enjoy a sweeping vista of native forest and vineyard, and the melodic rhythm of the Wilyabrup Brook.

From our enduring passion to create both great wine and cuisine, the cultural path of Vasse Felix has also evolved, inspiring a stimulating environment for social, intellectual and artistic expression.

On the Vasse Felix sculpture walk, the spirits of art and nature are brought together in a harmonious interplay of light, colour and texture. Indoors, the contemporary and versatile art space within the 'old winery' regularly hosts important exhibitions from the celebrated Holmes à Court Art Collection.

Indeed, it is with this great cultural enthusiasm that we welcome the acclaimed Australian Chamber Orchestra, ardently led by Artistic Director Richard Tognetti, to reclaim centre stage for our fourth Vasse Felix Music Festival.

Since we last met here, there have been some major changes. Vasse Felix is now in the hands of my son, Paul, and I am delighted that he is as pleased to welcome you all here as I was under the previous structure.

How wonderful for us to have this talented, energetic and quite brilliant group of young musicians all to ourselves for three days.

Their music, combined with exceptional wine and delicious food prepared by the dedicated chefs in the Vasse Felix kitchen, ensures a perfect weekend.

JANET HOLMES À COURT

FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER

ELGAR Serenade for Strings

BARBER Adagio for Strings

TARTINI “Devil’s Trill” Sonata (Satu Vänskä, violin)

- INTERVAL -

MOZART Violin Concerto No.4, K218 (Richard Tognetti, violin)

HAAS “Horse, cart and driver” from String Quartet No.2

VERESS “Dobbantos” from Transylvanian Dances

SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER

GREIG Holberg Suite

RAVEL Kaddish and The Eternal Enigma (Richard Tognetti, violin)

PIAZZOLLA Kicho (Maxime Bibeau, double bass)

SIBELIUS Rakastava (The Lover): Suite

- INTERVAL -

CORELLI Concerto Grosso Op.6 No.8 “Christmas Concerto”

MOZART Piano Concerto No.12, K414 (Dejan Lazić, piano)

SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER

SCHUBERT Rondo Brillante (Satu Vänskä, violin & Dejan Lazić, piano)

BRAHMS Violin Sonata No.1 in G, Op.78 (Richard Tognetti, violin &

Dejan Lazić, piano)

- INTERVAL -

SCHUBERT Trout Quintet

Program compiled and edited by Michael Stevens from notes by Meurig Bowen, K.P. Kemp, Graeme Skinner, Katarina Šter, Michael Stevens and Morgan Wilson. The copyright of all these authors asserted. This program booklet © 2009, Australian Chamber Orchestra.

The Australian Chamber Orchestra reserves the right to alter scheduled programs or artists as necessary.

AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The Australian Chamber Orchestra was founded by John Painter in 1975. Every year, this ensemble presents performances of the highest standard to audiences around the world, including 10,000 subscribers across Australia. The ACO's unique artistic style encompasses not only the masterworks of the classical repertoire, but innovative cross-artform projects and a vigorous commissioning program.

Richard Tognetti was appointed Artistic Director and Lead Violin in 1989 and subsequently appointed artistic director. Under his inspiring leadership, the ACO has performed as a flexible and versatile 'ensemble of soloists', on modern and period instruments, as a small chamber group, a small symphony orchestra, and as an electro-acoustic collective. In a nod to past traditions, only the cellists are seated – the resulting sense of energy and individuality is one of the most commented-upon elements of an ACO concert experience.

Regular international tours across Asia, Europe and the USA have drawn outstanding reviews for the ACO's performances at many of the world's prestigious concert halls, including Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, London's Wigmore Hall, New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Vienna's Musikverein, Birmingham's Symphony Hall and Washington DC's Kennedy Center.

In recent years, the ACO has made critically-acclaimed recordings for labels including Sony, BIS, Channel Classics, Hyperion, EMI, ABC Classics, Chandos and Orfeo. These recordings include Bach's Keyboard Concertos with Angela Hewitt, Vivaldi's Flute Concertos with Emmanuel Pahud and Bach's Violin Concertos with Richard Tognetti, which won the ACO its second ARIA award. The ACO also appears in the television series *Classical Destinations II* and the award-winning film *Musica Surfica*, both available on DVD and CD.

Visit aco.com.au to learn more, purchase tickets, subscriptions and CDs and sign up for ACOonline, our email newsletter for special offers and advance bookings.

VIOLIN

Richard Tognetti
*Artistic Director
and Lead Violin*

Satu Vänskä
Assistant Leader

Madeleine Boud

Alice Evans

Aiko Goto

Mark Ingwersen

VIOLA

Christopher Moore
Principal

Nicole Divall

CELLO

Timo-Veikko Valve
Principal

Julian Thompson

BASS

Maxime Bibeau
Principal

PIANO

Dejan Lazić



RICHARD TOGNETTI – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND LEAD VIOLIN

Australian violinist and conductor Richard Tognetti has established an international reputation for his compelling performances and artistic individualism. He studied at the Sydney Conservatorium with Alice Waten, in his home town of Wollongong with William Primrose, and at the Berne Conservatory (Switzerland) with Igor Ozim, where he was awarded the Tschumi Prize as the top graduate soloist in 1989. Later that year he returned to lead several performances of the ACO, and in November was appointed as Leader. He was subsequently appointed Artistic Director of the Orchestra.

Tognetti performs on period, modern and electric instruments. His numerous arrangements, compositions and transcriptions have expanded the chamber orchestra repertoire and been performed throughout the world.

A passionate advocate for music education, Tognetti established the ACO's Education and Emerging Artists programs in 2005 and toured regional Australia with a concert based on the inspiring documentary film, *Musica Surfica* (recently awarded at surf film festival in the USA, France, South Africa and Brazil). Richard Tognetti holds honorary doctorates from three Australian universities and was made a National Living Treasure in 1999. He performs on a 1743 Guarneri del Gesù violin, made available exclusively to him by an anonymous Australian private benefactor.

Visit aco.com.au to read Richard Tognetti's extended biography.



DEJAN LAZIĆ - PIANO

Pianist Dejan Lazić was born in Zagreb, Croatia, and grew up in Salzburg where he studied at the Mozarteum. He has quickly established a reputation worldwide as “a brilliant pianist and a gifted musician full of ideas and able to project them persuasively” (*Gramophone*). The *New York Times* hailed his performance as “full of poetic, shapely phrasing and vivid dynamic effects that made this music sound fresh, spontaneous and impassioned”.

As recitalist and soloist Dejan Lazić has appeared at major venues in Europe, North and South America, Asia, and Australia, and has been invited to numerous international festivals.

In 2008 he gave his orchestral debuts at New York’s Lincoln Center with the Budapest Festival Orchestra and at London’s Royal Festival Hall with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. During 2007/08 he also performed with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Bamberg, Atlanta, Seattle and Indianapolis Symphonies, Swedish Radio, Het Residentie and the Seoul, Hong Kong and Rotterdam Philharmonics.

2009/10 highlights include a tour with the ACO, engagements with the CBSO, MDR Leipzig, Danish National, Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo, Pacific Symphony and his debut with NHK Symphony.

Dejan Lazić’s recordings by Channel Classics include works by Scarlatti, Bartók, Schumann and Brahms, as well as a recording of Rachmaninov’s 2nd Piano Concerto with London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Dejan Lazić is also composes piano, chamber music and orchestral works (including String Quartet Op.9, written for Mstislav Rostropovich’s 70th birthday gala). In 2007/08 he premiered his piano cycle *Kinderszenen – Hommage à Schumann* Op.15 at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw.

www.dejanlazic.com

FRIDAY 5 DECEMBER

ELGAR

(1857 – 1934)

Serenade for Strings in E minor, Op.20
(composed 1892)

Allegro piacevole
Larghetto
Allegretto

Like Vaughan Williams and Tippett, Elgar's compositional maturity and subsequent success didn't reveal itself until well into his thirties. He was 34 when he wrote the Serenade, and it was the first of his works to be printed in full score. This was, significantly, by the German publishing house Breitkopf & Härtel. However easy it is to regard his music now as quintessentially *English* – dignified, grand, sometimes charmingly pompous – Elgar was more enamoured by Teutonic culture at the time. In the year of the Serenade's composition, he heard *Tristan and Isolde*, *Die Meistersinger* and *Parsifal* (twice) at the Bayreuth Festival, and in a vocal score of *Tristan* he wrote: "This Book contains the Height, the Depth, the Breadth, the Sweetness, the Sorrow, the Best and the whole of the Best of This world and the Next."

The scale of the Serenade's three movements is distinctly un-Wagnerian, but the expressive control and harmonic nuance in the exquisite *Larghetto* do indicate both an acquaintance with the sophistication of late-Romantic harmony and a leaning towards the sweeping grandeur of his later works. In other respects it is very much a work of the pre-modern age. There is nothing in the way of special string effects, and the spatial possibilities of divided strings, as explored in the later *Introduction and Allegro*, are not apparent. Just as Elgar thanked his wife Alice for making "these little tunes" what they are, it seems appropriate simply to describe this compact work as "small but perfectly formed".

BARBER

(1910 – 1981)

Adagio for Strings, Op.11 (composed 1936)

Thought of today as one of the quintessentially American composers, Samuel Barber does not in many respects fit that bill, as his nostalgic conservatism and deeply-wrought Romanticism are at odds with many of the dominant trends in American music. His famous Adagio is a case in point: a single, long melody strung out irresistibly over a bed of lush, passionate harmonies, it summons up Brahms, Strauss or Sibelius more readily than any of his compatriots or contemporaries.

An early starter as a composer, the Adagio dates from Barber's twenties. It commenced life as the central section of his String Quartet (Op.11), and he re-worked the piece for string orchestra in 1938, famously sending it to Toscanini only for the great conductor to send it back without comment. This was in fact no rejection: the conductor claimed to have memorised the score and so to have no further need for it, and he conducted the orchestral premiere in New York.

Played at innumerable state funerals and similar events, the Adagio is one of the world's commonest soundtracks for "sad", but that was never the composer's intention. It was, in reality, written in response to a short passage from Virgil's *Georgics*, depicting the rolling of ocean waves:

*As when far off in the middle of the ocean
A breast-shaped curve of wave begins to whiten
And rise above the surface, then rolling on
Gathers and gathers until it reaches land
Huge as a mountain and crashes among the rocks
With a prodigious roar, and what was deep
Comes churning up from the bottom in mighty swirls
Of sunken sand and living things and water . . .*

TARTINI

(1692 – 1770)

Violin Sonata in G minor,
“Devil’s Trill” (composed c.1745)

Arr. Fritz Kreisler

Larghetto affettuoso
Allegro energico
Grave – Allegro assai

Born in Piran, Giuseppe Tartini was one of the most famous violinists and musical theoreticians of his time. Pupils from all over Europe flocked to his violin school in Padua. As a composer he was above all a master of the sonata, which he frequently transformed into a stage for virtuosity. Particularly in his chamber sonatas (*sonate da camera*) he distanced himself from the established forms derived from the suite. His works surprised his contemporaries with their expressive power and affectation, as well as with their daring harmonies.

The famous “Devil’s Trill” sonata was already well-known before 1750, but it was published posthumously in 1798. Its name derives from dreams in which Tartini heard the devil playing the violin; when he woke he tried to notate the devil’s melody. Although the eponymous trill appears only in the last movement, the entire sonata is spiced with ‘devilishly’ difficult trills. With its characteristic dotted rhythms and the pastoral atmosphere of a *siciliano*, the opening *Larghetto* is the calm before the storm of the energetic and pugnacious *Allegro*. A short, slow *Grave* introduces the technically virtuosic *Allegro*, in which the sonata proves its name. The short, slow interludes are only breathing space and preparation for the final virtuosity of the solo *cadenza*.

MOZART

(1756 – 1791)

Violin Concerto No.4 in D major, K.218
(composed 1775)

Allegro
Andante cantabile
Rondeau: Andante grazioso – Allegro ma non troppo

For reasons now known only to himself, in April 1775 Mozart started to write violin concertos. Interestingly, the five concertos written that year between April and December seem to be the only works of their kind that he ever produced – though there are a number of others whose authenticity is either doubtful or else completely discredited. The more popular of his violin concertos are among the earliest works by Mozart still heard regularly in the concert hall.

The arrival in Salzburg in 1776 of the Neapolitan virtuoso Antonio Brunetti compelled Mozart to re-visit and revise the later concertos, and it is in this form they have come down to us. It’s tantalizing to consider, though we’ll never know for sure, whether Mozart himself would have been capable of playing these great concert works in their final form. The fascination with Brunetti didn’t last long however, his reputed coarseness and womanizing proving too much for the teenaged Mozart.

Looking at the five concerti as a set, most observers find that the first two are less than perfect, apparently written by a 19 year old testing the waters. With the third and fourth, Mozart began to hit his stride. The first movement is a bold *Allegro*; a lyrical slow movement follows; and the finale is a *Rondeau* which contrasts two different, competing forces: an elegant *Andante grazioso* and a faster *Allegro*. The unexpected dance section of this movement resembles a “Strassburg” dance, which has led some scholars to identify this work with the “Strassburg concerto” referred to in Mozart and his father’s letters.

HAAS

(1899 – 1944)

String Quartet No.2, Op.7, “From the Monkey Mountains” (composed 1925)

Arr. Richard Tognetti

Cart, Driver and Horse

A dramatic, colouristic writer, Pavel Haas was attracted to the Modern movement in art, itself influenced by jazz. He wrote a number of film scores and incidental music for the Provincial Theatre in Brno, and his tragicomic opera *Šarlátan* (The Charlatan) was well received there in 1937. He was transported by the Nazis to Theresienstadt in December 1941. He stayed for three traumatic years before being transferred to Auschwitz, where he was gassed on the day of his arrival, 17 October 1944.

Haas’s String Quartet No.2, subtitled *From the Monkey Mountains*, is effectively a four-movement tone poem, and recollects in colourfully descriptive terms a summer holiday Haas spent in the gently sloping Czecho-Moravian Highlands. In the periodical *Music Review* he wrote of the work: “The whole of this carefree piece is dominated by movement – whether the rhythm of the open countryside and birdsong, or the irregular motion of village carts, or the warm song of the human heart and cool quiet play of moonbeams, or the wild abandon of a night of revelry...”

The second movement, *Cart, Driver and Horse*, includes a witty, ultra-vivid portrait of a rickety cart, the wheezing horse and its possibly not entirely sober driver. Haas makes it all work with his vivid performance instructions – *sforzandi*, sharply defined swells and fades, the *furioso* demi-semi-quavers, and *glissandi* that ‘must sound like squeaking and groaning’.

VERESS

(1907 – 1992)

Dobbantós from Four Transylvanian Dances (composed 1943–49)

Sándor Veress, a native of Transylvania, was a student of Kodály and Bartók. His *Four Transylvanian Dances* were written for conductor Paul Sacher and the Basel Chamber Orchestra, and first performed in 1950 in Switzerland where Veress had recently settled. As the composer explained, his Dances are not settings or arrangements of actual folk melodies, but newly composed pieces based on dance genres from Székely region of eastern Transylvania. The final *Dobbantós* is a wild ‘stamping dance’, traditionally performed by men alone. Veress visited Australia in 1967–68 as a guest of the University of Adelaide, where his students included composers Ross Edwards and Martin Wesley-Smith. While in Adelaide, Veress also wrote a madrigal cycle *Songs of the Seasons* to texts by the Australian poet Christopher Brennan.

SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER

GRIEG

(1843 – 1907)

Holberg Suite, Op. 40 (composed 1884–5)

Praeludium: Allegro Vivace

Sarabande: Andante

Gavotte and Musette: Allegretto

Air: Andante religioso

Rigaudon: Allegro con brio

Holberg is not necessarily a familiar name to anglophones, but in Scandinavian countries his literary status resembles that of Shakespeare or Moliere. To celebrate his bi-centenary Grieg wrote both a male-voice cantata and a suite for piano *From Holberg's Time*. With its sequence of dance movements closely allied to the 18th century baroque suite, this was Grieg's musical homage to Holberg's age.

Grieg arranged this set of Holberg pieces for strings and it is this version that has become the better known. With the sparkling opening it is hard to imagine this music any other way. Immediately afterwards, a tender melody from the first violins prepares us for the more sentimental moments of the music that follows. It is a charming, vigorous opener, with a grander, slightly pompous conclusion that leads us into the more intimate enclosed world of the Sarabande.

With the Gavotte's dual pastoral and courtly roots, Grieg cleverly achieves a pompous rusticity. Prior to the 19th century, the 'musette' (a French bagpipe) lent its name to another lively peasant dance, which Grieg evokes through raw, sustained fifths and rustic bounce.

Grieg invests much nostalgic warmth in the elaborate lines of his 'religioso' fourth movement. And if there is any sense of tragedy or despair here, it is entirely released with the fresh, unbuttoned start of the Rigaudon – an Anglo-French dance popular in baroque opera.

RAVEL

(1875 – 1937)

Kaddish and The Eternal Enigma

(composed 1914)

Arr. Richard Tognetti

With the arrangement, early on, of some Corsican folksongs in 1895, Ravel's interest in traditional melodies from varied cultures was sustained for nearly two decades.

Between 1904–6 he worked on eight Greek songs from the island of Chios, and in 1910 he entered a competition run by the Maison du Lied in Moscow with a set of "Popular Songs" from Spain, France, Italy, Belgium, Russia and Scotland.

The two *Chanson Hébraïques* followed soon after the completion and premiere of Ravel's extraordinary settings of three songs by Mallarmé. His treatment of the Hebraic songs are, perhaps inevitably, much sparer and less ambitious. The second song, a folksy, tra-la-la tune called *The eternal enigma* (*Lenigme éternelle*) contrasts substantially with the fervent lament Kaddish, with its rhapsodic melismas and cantorial pleadings weaving round the ancient Aramaic text. (Neither song is in fact in Hebrew, as *The eternal enigma* is Yiddish.)

According to Ravel's pupil Manuel Rosenthal, his setting of these Hebrew melodies caused ripples many years later, in a very different context: "When the first refugees from Hitler's Germany arrived in Paris, simply because he had composed the Hebrew Melodies... Jews expelled from Germany came and rang his doorbell to ask for help. And I discovered, not from him of course but from his housekeeper, that considering his own slender resources, he used to give them extremely substantial cheques."

PIAZZOLLA

(1921 – 1992)

Kicho (composed 1969)

Arr. Maxime Bibeau

Astor Piazzolla, although considered the quintessential Argentinian composer, in fact spent many of his formative years in New York. It was his accordion-playing father who purchased his first bandoneón (a type of accordion which is at the heart of tango bands) from a secondhand shop. Hoping to find a better life than in Depression-hit America, the Piazzollas returned to Argentina in 1930, but nine months later they went back to New York. In 1937, the Piazzollas again returned to their homeland, where Vincente opened a bar called Nuevo York. Tango groups played in the bar, as did Astor. This was the beginning of Piazzolla's real interest in the tango. However, he loathed the hidebound approach of tango traditionalists: his heart was really with classical music.

In 1946 Piazzolla started his own band, but his love of the classics kept wider popular success at bay. He was writing “for ears, not for dancing”, and this confused and annoyed many tango aficionados. But his unique blend of tango, jazz and classical music is at the heart of his popular acclaim. He went on to form various ensembles to record and play his music. His synthesis of styles became known as *Tango Nuevo*.

“Kicho” was the nickname of Piazzolla's long-time bass player, Enrique Diaz, who Piazzolla called “the father of all bass players”, and this rarely-heard work was originally recorded by Piazzolla's quintet, featuring Diaz, on the 1970 live album *En Vivo En El Regina*.

SIBELIUS

(1865 – 1957)

Rakastava (The Lover): Suite for String Orchestra, Op.14 (composed 1893/1911)

The Lover – Andante con moto

The path of his beloved – Allegretto

Good evening!...Farewell! – Andantino

Sibelius' reputation has always been as a distinctly Finnish composer. In 1893, Sibelius set three poems from a collection of folk-poetry, *Kanteletar*, for male voices. These were reworked the next year, and again in 1898. Over a decade then passed before he turned to these pieces (entitled *Rakastava* after the first movement's name “The Lover”) again; this in the same year as the Fourth Symphony, a work rather more austere than the Romantic warmth of the early nationalist works. So this string-suite *Rakastava* is an intriguing blend of early, full-blooded tunefulness (with certain shades of Grieg and Tchaikovsky) and the chillier, atmospheric Sibelius of later years.

At no point is the choral-to-strings conversion conspicuous or clumsy. The hushed, triplet *tremolandi* in the first two movements – incidental in the first, pervasive in the second – are entirely suggestive of Sibelius' distinctive string writing in the symphonies. And the delicate, elfin charm of the second movement in particular (with all instruments muted and playing at the point of the bow) is so classically Sibelian that any other version seems hard to imagine. The third movement moves into darker, less easy-going territory – delivering at a central point one of those moments of understated, Nordic angst which Sibelius could conjure so well. He was apparently fond of this work: “there's an earthy fragrance about it. Earth and Finland.”

CORELLI

(1653 – 1713)

Concerto Grosso in G minor, Op.6 No.8,
“Christmas Concerto” (composed 1680s)

Vivace - Grave - Allegro

Adagio - Allegro - Adagio

Vivace

Allegro

Pastorale ad libitum (Largo)

Corelli's fame and subsequent influence throughout Europe in the 18th century was based on just six volumes of published music. He had the dual distinction of being the first composer in musical history to gain a reputation through instrumental music only – solo sonatas, trio sonatas and *concerti grossi* – and to have acquired that fame through the enormous growth of music publishing from around 1700 onwards. Each of his six opus sets was issued dozens of times through the 18th century, and his Op.6 concertos were particularly popular in England. Corelli's 12 concertos, published posthumously in 1714 as his Opus 6, are often held up to be the source and model for the late-Baroque *concerto grosso*.

Like another famous “Christmas” Concerto by his Bolognan contemporary Torelli (his Op.8 No.6, also in G minor), Corelli's Concerto was composed for performance in church during Christmas midnight Mass, in connection with the solemn reading on that occasion of the gospel account of Christ's birth. This text quite specifically provides the imagery for the opening and closing sequences of Corelli's dramatic, multi-sectional work, beginning in the sudden appearance of the angel (*Vivace*) followed immediately by the dissonant yawning of the waking shepherds (*Grave*) and their frightened reaction (*Allegro*). In the final *Pastorale*, the rustic peace is restored to the accompaniment of “bagpipe” drones and lilting (long-short / long-short) rhythms.

MOZART

(1756 – 1791)

Piano Concerto No.12 in A major, K.414
(composed 1782)

Allegro

Andante

Rondeau (Allegretto)

The group of three ‘little’ concertos K.413, 414 and 415 were written in Vienna for semi-public performance (no riff-raff) where the composer himself was almost certainly the premiere soloist. Mozart composed them with an eye to publication, and this is probably why he made a point of advertising their suitability for performance with forces as small as a string quartet and piano – it implied that these could be played as a bit of domestic post-dinner entertainment.

The first movement of K.414 opens with an introduction to the lively but gentle principal themes. The pianist then presents this music his own way, solo. As the music heads into the development section and then the recapitulation, the demands on the pianist increase, culminating in the joyous brilliance of the final cadenza. A tiny orchestral *ritornello* finishes the movement.

Theologian Karl Barth said he thought angels played Bach when God was around and Mozart at all other times. The second movement of this concerto seems like a case in point, with its celestial principal theme.

The third movement has that effortless character we so often associate with Mozart. It hides some hard work though as it was almost certainly his second try at writing a finale for this concerto. A similar Rondo, K.386, seems to date from exactly this time, and it seems highly likely that Mozart discarded it in favour of the exuberant charm of this one.

SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER

SCHUBERT

(1797 – 1828)

Rondo Brillante (composed 1826)

The first notices for Schubert's *Rondo Brillante* were highly positive; for example, this review in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst*: "A fiery imagination animates this piece and draws the player to the depths and heights of harmony, borne now by a mighty hurricane, now by gentle waves."

Like many of Schubert's works (including the "Trout" Quintet) the *Rondo Brillante* was written with specific performers in mind, in this case violinist Josef Slavik and pianist Karl Maria von Bocklet. The Fantasia in C, D.934 was also written for the same pairing, in 1827, and von Bocklet was the dedicatee of the D major Sonata, D.850, and was part of the trio that premiered the E flat Piano Trio, D.929, also in 1827. Slavik, for his part, was described by Chopin as "a great and inspired violinist... a second Paganini". Together they premiered the *Rondo* in Schubert's presence in early 1827 at a promotional party given by the publisher of the work, Domenico Artaria.

The comparison of Slavik with Paganini is telling, as the Rondo and the Fantasia are evidence of Schubert beginning to cede to the "virtuoso" craze, writing showpieces under the influence (or following the example) of Liszt and Paganini even though, unlike them, he was not capable of performing the pieces himself. That there was such a craze, and the Schubert still managed to position himself above it, is noted further in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst* review: "Although the whole is brilliant, it is not indebted for its existence to mere figurations, such as grin at us in thousandfold contortions from many a composition and fatigue the soul. The inventive spirit has here often beaten its wings mightily enough and lifted us up with it."

BRAHMS

(1833 – 1897)

Violin Sonata No.1 in G, Op.78

(composed 1878)

Viva ma non troppo

Adagio

Allegro molto moderato

Brahms completed three violin sonatas, all in the decade immediately following the premiere, in 1878, of his only Violin Concerto. The first of these, all works of Brahms' maturity, displays an easily-worn, expansive lyricism that betrays its indebtedness to the song form. Like Schubert, Brahms was an adept composer of *lieder*, and the first Violin Sonata is an example of him following Schubert's lead in composing a large-scale instrumental work based on songs – in this case, Brahms' *Regenlied (Rain Song)*, Op.59 No.3 to a text by Klaus Groth.

The poem is deeply nostalgic, evoking childhood memories of rain as a symbol for lost innocence and simplicity, and Brahms' melody, in the minor key, sets the text with appropriate wistful longing. The key feature, though, is rhythmic: a dotted figure depicting the falling of rain. This figure is heard as a central motif of Brahms' sonata, and not only in the final movement which so obviously draws on the earlier song; indeed, the dotted pattern is heard at the very opening of the sonata.

The nostalgia does not come across as sadness, though, and Brahms' lyricism never gives way to melancholy. The work as a whole is an amalgam of expressive beauty and barely repressed emotional pressure, sustained by an extraordinarily fluid melodic current: "sweetness and light", as one critic summed it up. Certainly when the minor key rain of the final movement finally gives way to the long-awaited rainbow, the effect could not be more exhilarating.

SCHUBERT

(1797 – 1828)

Piano Quintet in A major, D.667, “Trout”
(composed 1819)

Allegro vivace

Andante

Scherzo: Presto

Theme (Andantino) and Variations (Allegretto)

Finale: Allegro giusto

It seems incredible that what is now one of Schubert’s most famous and popular works was not written for public consumption but for private performance, at the request of a cello-playing mining official. Sylvester Paumgartner was also a patron of music in Steyr, and it was for his musical circle that he imagined Schubert’s quintet, its unorthodox instrumentation based on Hummel’s 1802 quintet, for which it was to be a companion piece. The result is one of the sunniest of compositions – often criticised for its lightness, whereas in fact it is a work of almost unparalleled melodic invention. Certainly for profundity and even for sheer compositional technique there are many more worthy contenders in Schubert’s canon, but the combination of the spectacular Steyr countryside (once referred to by a German critic as the “secret collaborator” in the composition of the work) and the congenial relationship between his fellow musicians produced a charming, enchanting, and irresistible work.

The “Trout” of the title is Schubert’s 1817 song *Die Forelle*, D.550, on which are based the set of variations on the fourth movement of the Quintet. It is above all a study in motion – water, light, fish – and a celebration of the joy in rural life by a composer who had spent most of his life in the city. The long first movement sets the joyful mood, followed by an expressive, lyrical *Andante*. The *Presto* third movement follows swiftly before the theme and variations of the signature fourth movement, and, finally, the gypsy dance-like quality of the finale.



AUSTRALIAN
CHAMBER
ORCHESTRA

RICHARD TOGNETTI
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

THE GIFT OF MUSIC

Share exhilarating evenings with your partner, send your parents on musical adventures or introduce a friend to the most exciting classical music in Australia. 2010 highlights include Tognetti's Mozart, Bach for Easter and Romantic Symphony.

**GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS,
GIFT CERTIFICATES
AND CDs NOW AVAILABLE**

ACO.COM.AU