



Australian Chamber Orchestra

Richard Tognetti

LIVE IN CONCERT

BEETHOVEN
SYMPHONIES 1, 2 & 3 *Eroica*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN 1770–1827

CD1

Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21

		[55'43]
		[24'44]
1	I. Adagio molto – Allegro con brio	8'48
2	II. Andante cantabile con moto	7'12
3	III. Menuetto: Allegro molto e vivace	3'20
4	IV. Finale: Adagio – Allegro molto e vivace	5'23

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36

		[30'59]
5	I. Adagio – Allegro con brio	11'32
6	II. Larghetto	9'55
7	III. Scherzo: Allegro	3'29
8	IV. Allegro molto	6'04

CD2

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major, Op. 55 'Eroica'

		[46'17]
1	I. Allegro con brio	16'26
2	II. Marcia funebre: Adagio assai	13'44
3	III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace	5'40
4	IV. Finale: Allegro molto	10'27

Total Playing Time 102'00

Australian Chamber Orchestra

With musicians from the **Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM)**

Richard Tognetti *Artistic Director and Lead Violin*

Recorded live in concert at City Recital Hall, Sydney.

Orchestra

Violin

Richard Tognetti *Artistic
Director and Lead Violin*

Helena Rathbone *Principal*

Satu Vänskä *Principal*

Glenn Christensen

Aiko Goto

Mark Ingwersen

Ilya Isakovich

Liisa Pallandi

Maja Savnik

Ike See

Meg Cohen ^

Phoebe Gardner ^

Sunkyoung Kim ^

Phoebe Masel ^

Leanne McGowan ^

Mia Stanton ^

Harry Ward ^

Viola

Stefanie Farrands *Principal*

Nicole Divall

Elizabeth Woolnough

Cora Fabbri ^

Ruby Shirres ^

Kate Worley ^

Cello

Timo-Veikko Valve *Principal*

Melissa Barnard

Julian Thompson

Nicholas McManus ^

James Morley ^

Double Bass

Maxime Bibeau *Principal*

Hamish Gullick ^

Caroline Renn ^

Flute

Sally Walker ¹ *

Mikaela Oberg

Oboe

Hélène Mourot ² *

Lidewei De Sterck

Clarinet

Ernst Schlader ³ *

Christine Foidl ⁴

Bassoon

Jane Gower ⁵ *

Lisa Goldberg

Horn

Olivier Picon*

Thomas Müller ⁶

Lionel Pointet*

Trumpet

Richard Fomison*

Leanne Sullivan ⁷

Timpani

Brian Nixon*

* Guest Principal

[^] courtesy of Australian
National Academy of Music
(ANAM)

¹ courtesy of The Australian
National University, School
of Music

² courtesy of Les Siècles

³ courtesy of University of
Music and Performing Arts
Graz, Austria

⁴ courtesy of Camerata
Salzburg

⁵ courtesy of Orchestre
Révolutionnaire et
Romantique

⁶ courtesy of Zurich Chamber
Orchestra

⁷ courtesy of the University
of Sydney, Sydney
Conservatorium of Music

Musings on B 1, 2, 3

From the Artistic Director

When we speak of music as an independent art, should we not always restrict our meaning to instrumental music, which, scorning every aid, every admixture of another art (the art of poetry), gives pure expression to music's specific nature, recognisable in this form alone? It is the most romantic of all the arts – one might almost say, the only genuinely romantic one – for its sole subject is the infinite. The lyre of Orpheus opened the petals of Orcus – music discloses to man an unknown realm, a world that has nothing in common with the external sensual world that surrounds him, a world in which he leaves behind him all definite feelings to surrender himself to an inexpressible longing.

– Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann, excerpt from *Beethoven's Instrumental Music*, 11 December 1813

How difficult it is to discuss or write about B without exhibiting a lofty sense of grandeur.

It was early 2020, the year to commemorate the 250th anniversary of B's birth. For all of us, it ended with somewhat deflated balloons; but while many of the 'big' orchestras were planning their B 9s to finish the year, we snuck in early with B 1, 2 and 3.

A collaboration with our woodwind and brass friends from around the world – performing on instruments from the time of B (or copies of) – and some string players from the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM), this project was our last shebang before the virus shut us down. It was fortunate that we had the foresight to hang some mics, because we've been humbly surprised by the results.

Now, you might wonder, who needs another recording of B's symphonies? We do. Here in Australia we've been fairly late adopters of the big B, considering Captain Cook didn't disturb these shores until the year of B's birth.¹

Wham Bam Thank You ANAM. Don't be fooled into thinking that these 'students' are simply a talented but callow lot. The 2020 group came bolting out of this elite finishing school, before many of them were sent packing on a one-way journey to Europe. Amongst them were Harry Ward, who in 2023 gained a spot in the Berlin Phil; James Morley, now at the Musik-Akademie Basel; and Ruby Shirres, who at the time of writing has just won the String Quartet Prize at the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition.

¹ Please see below for a reveal of Australian history and Beethoven.

B 1

Written five years after Haydn's last symphony ('London', No. 104) and twelve years after Mozart's last ('Jupiter', No. 41 – also in C major), B 1 presents effortlessly. There's no sense that B is writing Mozart's 42nd symphony (unlike Brahms, who was very much writing B's 10th, and in doing so evolved the symphonic genre in one grand swoop). B seems to be picking up the ball in a leisurely gait, striding somewhere down the easy symphonic lane of the middle periods of Haydn and Mozart.

We deliberately roll the first chord of B 1 like a keyboard, which somehow suits the 'look at me' chord he uses to kick start his engine. Imagine beginning on the dominant seventh of F, and then trying to dig your way out of it so it all sounds reasonable and rational. And so with B's inimitable decisiveness we embark on his symphonic journey, which will alter the course of musical history, politics and even social behaviour.

B 2

With a flair more reminiscent of *opera buffa*, B's 2nd has often been regarded as one of his less beloved works. It is inevitably overshadowed by the 'Eroica'. There's a certain irony that he never achieved grand success in opera, and that this symphony is the most operatic of them all.

Apocryphal tales travel because they sound believable. Whether true or not, the following serves as an inspiration. It's widely acknowledged that B faced diverse health challenges, including gastrointestinal problems, and given that his humour often manifested in his compositions, one could speculate that the introductory phrase of the last movement in his Second Symphony might represent these health concerns in a semiotic and very 19th-century manner. He never refuted this. However, it's crucial to recognise that this interpretation remains speculative, as musical hermeneutics inherently rely on subjective responses. Therefore, I draw your attention to the idea that our phrasing is based on the assumption that this speculation could hold some truth. In simpler terms, hot air or not, if you press play on the last movement of this symphony, you'll hear our musical rendition of *scoreggia*.

(OK, *fast*).

B 3 (Mozart 42)

But, of course, more than gastric issues plagued B. He was already acutely aware of his deafness: his Heiligenstadt Testament was written just a year earlier, in 1802.

But perhaps this is one reason why he identified so readily with Bonaparte, whose own shortcomings transmogrified into superhuman strengths? (The Bonaparte idea was seeded in his mind many years before he embarked on this epic journey – which to this day still can appear as 'heroic' and epic, even (or perhaps especially) under its new 'Eroica' moniker, as it would have when first hatched.)

‘The title of the Symphony is really “Bonaparte”.’

No more profound declaration could be made than that: of Napoleon Bonaparte, a figure whom B saw as having emerged from obscurity to command immense authority, reshape the world, and champion the cause of human freedom. Imagine nowadays even considering naming a symphony after a ‘defining’ figure of the age: the ‘Trump’, ‘Putin’ or ‘Morrison’. (In the latter case you may as well call it the ‘What?’)

This symphony takes us into the realm of the time-space continuum where the most expansive auditory spectrums are navigated. It exists in a musical realm where no prior human has been. Complex harmonies act as curvature, much like how gravity warps the fabric of space-time in the universe. B’s harmonies create gravitational wells and distortions.

Just as gravity in the physical universe causes objects to move along curved paths, the emotional and thematic content of B’s music can move the listener along intricate and sometimes unpredictable musical trajectories. With this allegory B’s music becomes a sonic representation of the interconnectedness of time and space, where each note and measure has a specific place and moment, and the composition as a whole forms a unique musical universe with its own rules and dynamics. B’s music challenges our perception of time and space and the relationship between the two.

The spirit, rhythms and meaning of dance pervade this symphony. In the words of Friedrich Schiller (who penned the words of universal brotherhood in B’s Ninth Symphony), ‘I can think of no more fitting image for the ideal of social conduct than that of an English dance ... It is the most perfectly appropriate symbol of the assertion of one’s own freedom and regard for the freedom of others.’

The length is exhausting and overwhelming. Is this the birth of maximalist music?

But still let us remind ourselves of the humble congruity of the opening melody to Mozart’s early attempt at opera, *Bastien und Bastienne*.

Conductorless?

Strange silent dictator, not.

I actually make a sound whilst I ‘conduct’ – I’m doing it from the violin. The ACO is not conductor-less (as in headless).

Metronome markings aren’t just about speed. Rather they’re about the proportions. You don’t argue with his keys or time signatures. Why take on his metronome markings? Some of those mid-century recordings, that sink a lot of B’s ideas along the way, should have a caveat saying they’re arrangements.

Original instruments. Gut strings.

The hardware gives us a renewed sense of balance and texture. These 'ancient' instruments are often temperamental and always full of character.

The players we employ are amongst the best on the planet. Often with modern winds and brass we have to play louder to adapt; with these old quirky beasts, and with a size of orchestra familiar to B, a better balance is more naturally achieved.

This is the first Australian recording of B 1, 2, 3 on original instruments.

Some early intersections of Beethoven and Australia

22 August 1770: Lieutenant James Cook, captain of HMB *Endeavour*, makes land in Australia and claims New South Wales (as he names it) for the British Crown.

17 December 1770: B is baptised.

20 November 1805: *Fidelio* is premiered in Vienna. You might think that the prisoners in B's opera provide fertile inspiration for the Australian citizen to ponder our own tarnished background.

29 September 1837: John Phillip Deane, alongside his sons and the Irish violinist William Wallace, performs B's Op. 18 string quartets in Sydney. This is, we think, the first recorded performance of B in Australia.

1920s: Henri Verbrugghen, newly arrived in Sydney, establishes the New South Wales State Orchestra. He conducts, *inter alia*, the symphonies and piano concertos, and 13 performances of the *Missa solemnis*.

1940: Sir Thomas Beecham tells a Melbourne reporter, on his arrival for an Australian tour, that he brings with him B's 10th, 11th and 12th symphonies: 'I found them in the British Museum. And inasmuch as they come from the British Museum, they *must* be genuine.'

1943: Bernard Heinze mounts a cycle of B symphonies in Sydney. Neville Cardus, reflecting on the 'poetic significance' of B's music during a time of war, describes the concerts as 'a refreshing and necessary sign of grace. In fact, a miracle.'

Richard Tognetti, 2023

Symphony No. 1

On 2 April 1800, Beethoven held a concert for his own benefit at the theatre of the Hofburg, a prestigious venue that had played host to the premieres of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Haydn's *Creation*. These imposing musical figures, role models to the young Beethoven, epitomised the Viennese tradition to which Beethoven considered himself the heir.

The benefit concert, for which Haydn was probably in attendance, served to announce Beethoven's talents to Vienna and acknowledged his Viennese roots in its assortment of styles, genres and forms. It was ambitious, but played to its Mozart- and Haydn-loving audience with seven works that included a new septet, a new piano concerto and solo piano improvisations, concluding with 'a new grand symphony' in C major.

The symphony, Beethoven's first, was a rush job, aimed solely at finishing the concert with a bang. And it worked: one reviewer called the event 'probably the most interesting concert for a long time'. The symphony earned itself no shortage of favourable reviews, with one remarking that 'in the symphony, he finds very much art, novelty, and a wealth of ideas'.

There wasn't much to dislike about the symphony, which was very much derived from Haydn's model and musical spirit. It opens (intentionally) in the wrong key with a series of cadences, but is otherwise a Haydnesque sonata-allegro movement. In its second movement, Beethoven perfectly captures the lyrical 'galant' style of his Classical predecessors.

His third movement is not a stately minuet but a brisk, magical scherzo, and the finale is the most significant of the four movements – something we now consider commonplace in the symphonies of Beethoven (think the Ninth), but the polar opposite of a Classical symphony in which the first movement is given the most weight.

By Beethoven's standards as we've come to know him, the First Symphony (which would quickly become an audience favourite) is a cautious first step. But Beethoven's ambitions for the genre would soon take off.

Symphony No. 2

If Beethoven's First Symphony was a cautious, rushed foray into the symphonic landscape left by Mozart and Haydn, then the Second Symphony was a more considered, original and ambitious treatment of the form.

The Second Symphony seems unlike any other work Beethoven wrote – not overtly serious, imposing or awe-inspiring in style (though it may have been the longest symphony ever written up to that point), but akin to comedy, perhaps in the style of *opera buffa*.

The first movement could easily be compared to the overture of a comic opera in its surprising, rhythmic escapades. The second movement has a distinctly operatic quality, akin to a Mozartian aria that explores the deepest emotions. Following the typically Beethovenian scherzo is a rondo finale in which, as with the works of Haydn or the comic operas of Mozart, the spirit of fun and celebration wins out in the end.

One journal called the symphony 'a masterpiece that does equal honour to his inventiveness and his musical knowledge ... this symphony can justly be placed next to Mozart's and Haydn's.' For Beethoven, however, equal footing with his musical predecessors did not mean a favourable, superficial comparison with them. It meant evolving the artform, just as they had done before him.

Beethoven would never write another piece like the Second Symphony, and hoped to find some other way to position himself as a leading artistic figure of his time.

Symphony No. 3 'Eroica'

For Beethoven, large works such as symphonies were not mere entertainment. They were statements: dramatic and emotional, but also holding certain ideals for humanity within them. In Beethoven's time, there was no greater statement being made than Napoleon Bonaparte, a figure who, in Beethoven's eyes, had risen from nothing to wield great power, conquer the world and liberate humanity.

And so the Third Symphony was to be called 'Bonaparte'. It would be modelled not only on Napoleon's personality and personal story, but on the image of a hero who intended to bring a new order of freedom and peace to Europe. Beethoven chose the key of E-flat major – in his time a noble, heroic, humanistic key (like that of Mozart's Masonic pieces and *The Magic Flute*) and proceeded to develop the symphony using a small theme and bass line from his ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus*.

Beethoven, in his quest to position himself as a leading artistic figure of his time, had hoped to align himself with the most powerful and inspiring figure of the day, in the same way other leading artists and thinkers had done already. He planned to move to Paris and present the symphony to Napoleon himself, thus elevating himself and his artform to the greatest heights imaginable.

The depiction of Napoleon's military life in the symphony is unmistakable from the start. Guns are blazing, horses galloping; there is chaos, terror and decisive victory in battle. But there is also the depiction of a single free hero – the first movement's 'hero' theme is derived from the finale of *Prometheus*, in which one figure defies the gods to bring fire to humanity. Throughout the first movement we hear this hero struggling to break from his boundaries to lead as a free man, with the best-known instance being the solo horn's statement of the hero theme before the recapitulation, where it resolves triumphantly after 10 minutes of struggle.

The second movement, a *Marcia funebre* (funeral march), is the inevitable aftermath of war: the burial and commemoration of the dead. In the third movement Beethoven conjures a return to joy and celebration through raucous folk song that envelops a Trio in which horns call out the first movement's hero theme once again.

The whole symphony culminates in the finale, a series of variations on the 'englische' theme from *Prometheus*. The theme symbolises not only the Promethean figure of Napoleon, but Beethoven's ideal for society. In the words of Friedrich Schiller (who penned the words of universal brotherhood in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony), 'I can think of no more fitting image for the ideal of social conduct than that of an English dance ... It is the most perfectly appropriate symbol of the assertion of one's own freedom and regard for the freedom of others.'

Therefore, the symphony is not just a depiction and celebration of Napoleon's life, but a depiction of Napoleon and humanity united through triumph, liberty and joy. Beethoven had depicted the leading forces and ideals of his age through music, and had forever changed what a symphony could be. Beethoven's secretary, writing to his publisher, remarked, 'It is the greatest work he has ever written ... I believe that heaven and earth will tremble when it is performed.'

In May of 1804, Beethoven's secretary delivered news that Napoleon Bonaparte had been declared Emperor of France. The news infuriated Beethoven – Napoleon was in it for himself all along, an ordinary man who would 'place himself above everyone else and become a tyrant!' Beethoven took the title page of the symphony, ripped it in two, and threw it away.

The symphony now marked the end of a dream for Beethoven. It was no longer the celebration of a great man, but, as the published title would read, 'composed to celebrate the memory of a great man' – although Beethoven still wrote to his publishers, 'The title of the symphony is really "Bonaparte".'

The symphony received its premiere in Vienna on 7 April 1805. The audience had no knowledge of the symphony's background – it was not yet titled 'Eroica' and could not be titled 'Bonaparte' due to recent political tensions between Austria and France. As such, audiences were perplexed and challenged by the new symphony. For critics, it had 'great and daring ideas' but was too long and difficult.

But soon, the symphony began to resonate with audiences, and within the next two years public and critical opinion reversed completely. One journal called it 'the greatest, most original, most artistic and, at the same time, the most interesting of all symphonies'. Until the Ninth, Beethoven considered the 'Eroica' his favourite, and it would have lasting impacts on all music that followed.

Notes by **Bernard Rofe**

Richard Tognetti

Artistic Director & Lead Violin

Richard Tognetti is Artistic Director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra. He has established an international reputation for his compelling performances and artistic individualism.

After studying in Australia with William Primrose and Alice Waten, and overseas at the Bern Conservatory with Igor Ozim, he was appointed the ACO's Artistic Director and Lead Violin in 1990. He performs on period, modern and electric instruments and has appeared with many of the world's leading orchestras as director or soloist. In 2016 Richard was appointed the first Artist-in-Residence at the Barbican Centre's Milton Court and he was Artistic Director of the Festival Maribor in Slovenia from 2008 to 2015.

Richard's arrangements, compositions and transcriptions have expanded the chamber orchestra repertoire and been performed throughout the world. He curated and co-composed the scores for the ACO's documentary films *Musica Surfica*, *The Glide*, *The Reef* and *The Crowd & I*, and co-composed the scores for Peter Weir's *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* and Tom Carroll's film *Storm Surfers*. Richard collaborated with director Jennifer Peedom and Stranger Than Fiction to create the award-winning films *Mountain* and *River*, the former of which went on to become the highest-grossing homegrown documentary in Australian cinemas.

Richard is the recipient of six ARIA Awards, including three consecutive wins for his recordings of Bach's violin works. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2010, holds honorary doctorates from three Australian universities and was made a National Living Treasure in 1999. In 2017 he received the JC Williamson Award for longstanding service to the live performance industry.



Australian Chamber Orchestra

‘The Australian Chamber Orchestra is uniformly high-octane, arresting and never ordinary.’

– *The Australian*

The Australian Chamber Orchestra lives and breathes music, making waves around the world for its explosive performances and brave interpretations. Steeped in history but always looking to the future, ACO programs embrace celebrated classics alongside new commissions, and adventurous cross-artform collaborations.

Led by Artistic Director Richard Tognetti since 1990, the ACO performs more than 100 concerts each year. Whether performing in Manhattan, New York, or Wollongong, NSW, the ACO is unwavering in its commitment to creating transformative musical experiences.

The Orchestra regularly collaborates with artists and musicians who share its ideology: from Emmanuel Pahud, Steven Isserlis, Dawn Upshaw, Olli Mustonen, Brett Dean and Ivry Gitlis, to Neil Finn, Meow Meow, Jonny Greenwood and Barry Humphries, to visual artists and film makers such as Bill Henson, Shaun Tan, Jon Frank and Jennifer Peedom, who have co-created unique, hybrid productions for which the ACO has become renowned.

In addition to its national and international touring schedule, the ACO has an active recording program across CD, vinyl and digital formats, winning numerous awards and plaudits in the international press. Recent releases include *Water | Night Music*, the first Australian-produced classical vinyl for two decades, and the ARIA and AACTA Award-winning soundtrack, *River*.

In 2023 the ACO launched its digital streaming platform, ACO On Demand, which hosts the Orchestra’s award-winning season of cinematic concert films, ACO StudioCasts, alongside live concert streams and premium on-demand content.

aco.com.au

Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM)

The Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) is an international, dynamic and outward-facing cultural institution, training and performance company, with a demonstrated commitment to engaging with its communities. It is internationally renowned as the only purely performance classical music training academy in Australia, and one of the few in the world.

ANAM has industry partnerships with over 20 organisations, including the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Sydney, Tasmanian, Melbourne and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, Musica Viva Australia, a range of national music and arts festivals, and internationally with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Bavarian State Opera Orchestra (Munich), Mahler Chamber Orchestra (Berlin) and London's Royal College of Music.

Alongside NIDA, The Australian Ballet School, NAISDA Dance College and other leading institutions, ANAM is a member of the Australian Government-funded Arts8 group of performing arts training organisations. The Arts8 are committed to providing the high level and intense studio-based training necessary to ensuring that the national performing arts sector has a pipeline of creative talent that will enable it to continue telling Australian stories for generations.

ANAM alumni are found in many of the world's leading orchestras and ensembles, and ANAM's intensive schedule brings together a global network of artists and performers who provide invaluable mentorship and guidance for emerging young musicians through public performances, in-residence masterclasses and other programs.

anam.com.au

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ANAM GOVERNMENT PARTNERS





Artistic Director Richard Tognetti

Managing Director Richard Evans

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