

PROGRAMME

Jean Sibelius (1865-1903) – “Valse Triste”

In 1903, Sibelius wrote six numbers for *Kuolema* (Death), a play by his brother-in-law, Arvid Järnefelt. The play was unsuccessful but a year later Sibelius salvaged one of the numbers, reworked it and called it *Valse triste*. These simple but haunting bars were written for a scene in which a woman on her deathbed rises to dance with a series of spectral partners. One can only conjecture how it might have worked in its original dramatic context but, on its own, it is wonderfully evocative of darkness, delirium, and collapse. Sibelius tried in later years to recapture his music in *Valse lyrique* and a *Valse chevaleresque*, but it eluded him and the *Valse triste* remains stubbornly unique.

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) – “Lieutenant Kije”

In 1932, Prokofiev was offered a job by a Soviet movie studio: to compose his first film score for one of the country's earliest talking pictures, *Lieutenant Kije*. His talent and his wide experience in composing for dance and opera resulted in a smooth entry into the new medium. He made notes while Aleksandr Fayntshamer was directing the film in Leningrad. He composed the score in Paris then sent it off, piece by piece. The scenario, based on an allegedly true incident (and a story by Yuri Tynyanov), is a witty fable satirizing both the military and the aristocracy. Through a bureaucrat's error with a pen, the name Lieutenant Kije (literally Lieutenant "etc.") is inscribed in the register of military personnel. This unusual name is noticed by the eccentric, militarily-obsessed Tsar, Pavel I, the son of Catherine the Great, who ruled Russia from 1796 to 1801. His staff, not wishing to admit their error, invented an entire career for Lieutenant Kije. He is assigned to guard duty; blamed for waking the napping tsar; flogged and exiled to Siberia; restored to duty by the merciful tsar; married (in absentia) to a lovely maiden and is promoted to the rank of General.

Prokofiev reworked the sixteen brief snippets that make up the score into a concert suite. Its charm and melodiousness have made it one of his most popular creations. It opens with a cheeky, mock military march depicting Kije's creation, and continues with a deliberately heavy handed, overly sentimental romance which portrays the imaginary soldier's legendary amorous exploits. Kije's wedding is then celebrated with pompous fanfares and clumping, oom pah dance tunes. A brisk, joyful sleigh ride follows. Finally, to a review of previous themes, Lieutenant Kije (or rather, an empty casket) is laid to rest with full military honours.

INTERVAL

Henryk Gorecki (1933-2010) – Symphony No. 3 (Sorrowful Songs)

Gorecki's third symphony, titled "Symfonia Pieśni Załoznych," or "Symphony of Sorrowful Songs," is a beautiful, devastating dirge for the age-old tragedy of human suffering, especially suffering that parts mothers and children. He composed the symphony in 1976, as he was moving from his early dissonant style to a tonal, meditative one that draws heavily on pre-modern sacred music and postmodern minimalism.

Gorecki takes his time and paints in rich, fluid layers—the hour long symphony bears listeners along like a river, a more sombre, powerful version of Smetana's "The Moldau." The first of three movements starts with low, languorous bass canon—little more than a drone—which slowly builds, eventually met by an ascending flight of lighter strings, lush and sad. The long opening is motivated by a warm, muscular mood of tense foreboding. The listener is both lulled and wary. Thirteen minutes in, the soprano voice enters, strong and earthy, with the words of a 15th-century Polish lament. It is Mary mourning for her crucified son, which translates as "you are already leaving me, my cherished hope."

The second movement starts ambiguously bright but soon settles into a more muted, plaintive register. The text of this section was found inscribed on the wall of a Nazi jail cell, where a young woman, imprisoned, wrote "Mother, don't cry. Most chaste Queen of Heaven, support me always. Ave Maria." The vast resignation and tiny hope of the jail cell envelopes the listener. The movement offers no triumphant liberation, growing slower and more subdued as it reaches its end.

The text and melody of the final movement are drawn from a Silesian folk song, again from the perspective of a grieving mother. In this case, her son has not returned from war and she berates his imagined killers: "In the name of God, the most Holy, tell me, why did you kill my son?" The orchestra maintains and varies the gentle, pulsing theme of the second movement. The final stanza reads: "Oh, sing for him God's little song-birds, since his mother cannot find him. And you, God's little flowers, may you blossom all around so that my son may sleep happily." There is comfort here, but no blissful end to suffering and death. Life simply sustains its steady flow.

Conductor: Philip Paine

In 1988, after completing his Bachelor of Music degree at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, Philip moved to Sydney to take up his first appointment as a tutti horn player with the Elizabethan Theatre Trust (now the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra). During his final year there he became acting associate principal in the orchestra.

In 1992 Philip was appointed to a tutti position in the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. He then completed a Masters degree in performance at the University of Adelaide in 1995. Around this time Philip was appointed as principal third horn in the ASO, before resuming in 2011 his original position at the ASO as a tutti horn player.

Philip has performed with the QSO and ACO as a tutti horn player and also with the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra, TSO and MSO as a principal horn player. He has also played as a member of the Adelaide Brass Quintet.

As a soloist Philip has performed with the Burnside and Unley Symphony Orchestras. He has also appeared as a soloist at the Barossa Chamber Music Festival and with the ASO.

Philip's first introduction to conducting was in 1988 with the Glenorchy City Concert Brass. In 2009, after a considerable break, Philip was appointed as music director of the Hahndorf Town Band.

This was followed up in 2010 by an appointment as music director of the Adelaide Sinfonia (the second orchestra in the Adelaide Youth Orchestra group). In 2012 Philip led the BSO in its third concert of the year. Philip is a tutor in Horn at the Adelaide Conservatorium. He has also been a tutor for the Australian Youth Orchestra and been selected as a specialist in brass to audition the AYO candidates. Philip was appointed music director of the Burnside Symphony Orchestra in 2013.

Soloist – Kirsti Harms

Kirsti Harms is an award-winning opera singer who has performed for Opera Australia for many years, as well as the State Opera of South Australia. She has been the winner of the prestigious Remy Martin Australian Opera Award, and been nominated on several occasions for Helpmann Awards and a Green Room Award.

Burnside Symphony Orchestra

The Burnside Symphony Orchestra was formed in Adelaide, South Australia in 1956 to provide the opportunity for amateur musicians to play major works from the symphonic repertoire, and to allow aspiring conductors and soloists to gain experience of performing with a full symphony orchestra.

For information on future programmes: www.bso.org.au

Proceeds from this concert are donated to AnglicareSA

Burnside Symphony Orchestra



Clayton-Wesley Uniting Church
Cnr. Portrush & The Parade, Norwood
April 2nd 2014 – 8.00pm