

## Nightscales

7.30PM, Thursday 10 July  
Auckland Town Hall

**Conductor** Giordano Bellincampi  
**Violin** Andrew Beer  
**Oboe** Bede Hanley

**Clarinet** Jonathan Cohen  
**Bassoon** Ingrid Hagan  
**Horn** Gabrielle Pho

## Programme Notes

**Johann Strauss II** (1825-1899)  
*Emperor Waltzes* (1889)

DURATION: c.12'

The early waltz had Hungarian origins and was brought down the Danube with the increased boat traffic that fed Vienna's 19th-century growth. In the 1850s, it caused a scandal when couples danced it, holding each other close. However, by the 1860s the waltz had clearly come to stay and its natural home seemed to be with the Viennese, whose love of dancing, theatre, and romantic gossip made it flourish.

Strauss's *Emperor Waltzes*, written late in his productive career, received the heady catalogue number of Op.437. In fact, the title 'Emperor' was not given by Strauss, but by his publisher, as a kind of advertising boost in 1889 when Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany was crowned. Today, even the Viennese continue to think that the Emperor in the title is the Austrian Emperor. And who are we to gainsay them?

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756-1791)  
*Sinfonia Concertante for Four Winds* (c.1778)  
I. *Allegro*  
II. *Adagio*  
III. *Andante con variazione*

DURATION: c.30'

Despite countless efforts by an army of music scholars and historians, the origins and authorship of this enchanting work are lost in historical darkness. The first information comes from a letter that Mozart wrote from Paris to his father in April 1778. There, he mentions his current work on a *sinfonia concertante* for orchestra and four wind soloists, in a line-up of flute, oboe, horn and bassoon. He already knew the intended concert series and the date of performance, but at the very last moment, his work was bumped off the programme and replaced by a different *concertante* piece by Giuseppe Cambini, a prolific producer of fashionable *sinfonies concertantes*, and, as Mozart darkly suspected, an unscrupulous wheeler-dealer. In the end, Mozart's work was not performed, and the music disappeared.

Almost 100 years later, an anonymous manuscript of a *sinfonia concertante* turned up from the collection of Otto Jahn, Mozart's first biographer. Nobody knows whether this is a copy of the lost original work or a different work entirely. In the 1980s, Harvard professor Robert Levin wrestled mightily over this score, and eventually produced a 500-page book entitled *Who Wrote the Mozart Four-Wind Concertante?*

The answer was disappointing: no-one knows. But the surviving music does certainly fit Mozart's Paris style. The first movement blends sonata form with the older *concerto grosso* alternations (*ritornelli*) between soloists and orchestra. A gentle, unruffled surface covers the second movement and leads to a sparkling finale — a

theme with ten variations and a coda that ups the pace to a dancing 6/8 exit.

## INTERVAL

**Richard Wagner** (1813-1883)  
*Träume* (arr. for violin and orchestra)

DURATION: 5'30"

Because of his prominent role in Dresden's 1849 uprising, Wagner was forced to flee the city. He managed to slip into Switzerland, where a music-loving couple, Otto and Mathilde Wesendonck, made a small cottage available to him on their Zurich estate. Wagner and the winsome Mathilde saw a lot of each other. The inevitable happened and their love story was to become enshrined in the music-drama of *Tristan und Isolde*.

Mathilde had a sensitive nature and an artistic streak that found expression in a kind of highly wrought, subjective poetry that appealed to Wagner.

Wagner composed song settings for voice and piano to five of these poems. The songs occasionally prefigure the music of *Tristan* and have come down to us as 'The Wesendonck Lieder' of which the brooding *Träume* is the final poem of the five.

In December 1857, Wagner orchestrated this song for a small instrumental group and conducted it as a birthday present for Mathilde.

**Arnold Schoenberg** (1874-1951)  
*Verklärte Nacht* (1899)  
FIVE SECTIONS, PLAYED CONTINUOUSLY

DURATION: c.30'

In 1889, at 15 years of age, Schoenberg had his formal education cut short, following the thunderbolt of his father's sudden death. Thrust into the role of family breadwinner, he had to leave school and take a job in a bank. He also joined 'Polyhymnia', the local amateur music society, where he came to the attention of composer Alexander von Zemlinsky.

Until now, Schoenberg's musical idol had been Brahms, but the modernist Zemlinsky soon had him soaking up the sounds and ideas of Richard Wagner. In 1899, his first major work *Verklärte Nacht* (Transfigured Night) appeared, and showed that Schoenberg was beginning to blend the styles of these two composers. He owed this blended style, he said, to the Expressionist author Richard Dehmel. "... your poems have had a decisive influence on my development as a composer," he said in a letter, "they were what first made me try to find a new tone in the lyrical mood."

*Verklärte Nacht* is the first fruit of this 'new tone'. It is played without a break yet is based closely on the five sections of Dehmel's poem. A man and a woman trek through a darkening forest. The woman confesses that, to fulfil herself through motherhood, she had become pregnant by another man and now expects a child. The second section mirrors

# Programme Notes cont.

the man's deep reflection and resulting compassion. Because their love is so strong, he says, the unborn child will become his too. D minor tips over into D major, and the following three sections move from darkness to the light of acceptance.

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## **Verklärte Nacht ('Transfigured Night')** **by Richard Dehmel**

Two people are walking through a bare, cold wood;  
the Moon keeps pace with them and draws their gaze.  
The Moon moves along above tall oak trees,  
there is no wisp of cloud to obscure the radiance  
to which the black, jagged tips reach up.  
A woman's voice speaks:

"I am carrying a child, and not by you.  
I am walking here with you in a state of sin.  
I have offended grievously against myself.  
I despaired of happiness,  
and yet I still felt a grievous longing  
for life's fullness, for a mother's joys  
and duties; and so I sinned,  
and so I yielded, shuddering, my sex  
to the embrace of a stranger,  
and even thought myself blessed.  
Now life has taken its revenge,  
and I have met you, met you."

She walks on, stumbling.  
She looks up; the Moon keeps pace.  
Her dark gaze drowns in light.  
A man's voice speaks:

"Do not let the child you have conceived  
be a burden on your soul.  
Look, how brightly the universe shines!  
Splendour falls on everything around,  
you are voyaging with me on a cold sea,  
but there is the glow of an inner warmth  
from you in me, from me in you.  
That warmth will transfigure the stranger's child,  
and you bear it me, begot by me.  
You have transfused me with splendour,  
you have made a child of me."

He puts an arm about her strong hips.  
Their breath embraces in the air.  
Two people walk on through the high, bright night.