



TASMANIAN
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

VERTURES

DECEMBER 2016



TRISTAN TRIUMPHANT!

WAGNER LOVERS, opera fans and culture vultures of all stripes descended on Hobart for the TSO's concert performance of excerpts from *Tristan und Isolde* on Saturday 19 November. And no wonder: the performance boasted the world's finest exponents of Wagner's star-crossed lovers, Swedish soprano Nina Stemme and Australian tenor Stuart Skelton. Conducted with insight and sensitivity by Marko Letonja and featuring Slovenian mezzo-soprano, Monika Bohinec, in the role of Brangäne, the concert consisted of abridged versions of each of the opera's three acts including the scene between the lovers in Act I, the great love duet in

Act II and Isolde's transcendent "Love-death" at the close of Act III.

Isolde's final words, "highest bliss", reflected the mood in the hall at the end of the night with the audience leaping to its feet and showering the musicians with accolades. By common consent, it was a night for the ages. Arts Update, an online portal of the *Australian Book Review*, awarded the concert 5/5 as did *Limelight* magazine. The headline of Peter Donnelly's review in the *Hobart Mercury* said it all: "Historic event simply sensational". Given the star power of the artists, *Tristan und Isolde* attracted a very significant number of visitors from

around the country and overseas. In a boon for local businesses, 55% of single ticket buyers travelled to Hobart specifically for the performance and stayed a while to enjoy Tasmania's sights, food, wine, art and cultural heritage.

Above: Curtain call for Marko Letonja and the TSO with soloists (L-R) Monika Bohinec, Stuart Skelton and Nina Stemme.

Below: Marko Letonja thanks Concertmaster Emma McGrath.



Donald Campbell (NSW)
and Suzie Penny (NSW)

Christopher Lawrence, Simon Rogers, Anna Eklund-Tarantino (Sweden)
and Sonia Tsoukas (VIC)





- 1 Stuart Skelton and Nina Stemme.
- 2 Peter Rose (VIC) with Margaret and Ronald Farren-Price (VIC).
- 3 Gary Penny (NSW), Jennie Kennedy (WA) and Patricia Sablyak (VIC).
- 4 Pauline Hologerson (NSW), Anne Jones (ACT) and Sam Cairnduff.
- 5 Wayne Priddle, Warwick Oakman, Richard King and Matthias Hadorn (Switzerland).
- 6 Robyn and Christopher Johnson
- 7 Jenny Brukner (VIC) and Isolde Tornya (NSW).
- 8 Dinah Woods, who performed the cor anglais solo magnificently, takes a bow.
- 9 Daniel Thomas, Ron Radford and Alan Dodge (WA).
- 10 Sylvia Barrett and Julie Hawkins
- 11 Katharine Waterworth and Frances Underwood.
- 12 Jane Mathews (NSW) and Marshall McGuire (VIC).



GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SUPPORT FOR CHINA TOUR

THE BIG EVENT looming on the TSO's horizon is a two-week tour of China commencing 26 December. International touring is complex and expensive and the TSO is grateful to the State Government for providing a grant to help make the tour possible. In addition, the TSO has welcomed significant funding from the Hobart City Council. State Minister for the Arts, the Hon Vanessa Goodwin MLC, and Hobart Deputy Lord Mayor Alderman Ron Christie, will lead the government contingent accompanying the orchestra.

The TSO has also received a grant of \$35,000 from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade through the Australia-China Council. The Hon Julie Bishop MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, has described the forthcoming tour as "an outstanding example of cultural diplomacy". She added



that, "involving organisations like the TSO at the heart of our international engagement promotes Australia as a creative, innovative and diverse place to live, study and invest. The Australian Government supports the efforts to showcase our nation's musical excellence and deepen Tasmania's relationship with sister province, Fujian."

In addition to Local, Federal and State Government assistance, the TSO is delighted to have secured three corporate supporters for the upcoming tour: Hobart Airport, Nocton Vineyard and Bridestowe Lavender Estate.

Under the baton of Marko Letonja, the TSO will give nine concerts in seven cities including a concert in Nanjing on New Year's Eve. Australian repertoire will be showcased along with works by Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Johann Strauss II. Stuart Thomson, Principal Double Bass, will appear as soloist in Tan Dun's Contrabass Concerto: *Wolf Totem*. Accompanying the musicians will be the official tour mascot, Bridestowe Lavender Estate's Bobbie the Bear, an adorable lavender-filled teddy that commands a huge following in China.

Left: The Hon Julie Bishop MP.
Right: Bobbie the Bear.



HUGE RADIO AUDIENCE EXPECTED FOR TSO SHANGHAI CONCERT

In a first for an Australian orchestra, the TSO has arranged with Shanghai Media Group (SMG) to record the final concert of the tour, on Saturday 7 January. SMG is one of China's largest media and cultural conglomerates, with a portfolio that includes cable and satellite TV networks, pay TV channels, newspapers, magazines and radio stations. The TSO concert will be the featured weekend concert on Shanghai ERC Classic FM 94.7 on Saturday and Sunday, 14-15 January. The station estimates a weekend concert listenership of over 200,000 per broadcast.

Classic FM 94.7 was drawn to the TSO's distinctive program and international reputation for performing contemporary Australian Music, as well as the fact that the TSO is Australia's most recorded symphony orchestra, when deciding to record and broadcast the concert. In another first, SMG and the ABC are collaborating to rebroadcast the Shanghai ERC Classic FM 94.7 recording on ABC Classic FM. The program will be broadcast in its original and complete form with

SMG's bilingual compere providing all commentary and musical introductions. While the ABC and SMG have an existing in-principle agreement for the sharing of recorded content for rebroadcast, the TSO concert will be the first time that such a broadcast has been shared.

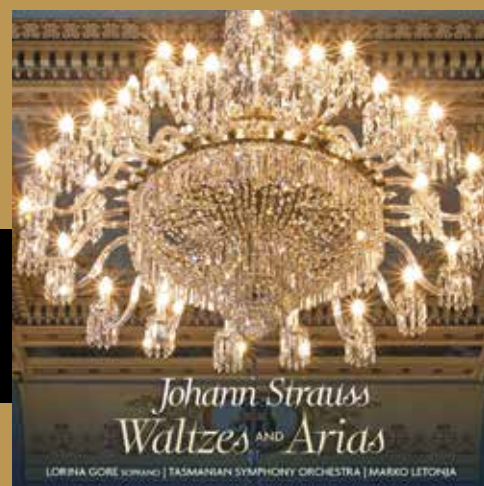
INNOVATIVE NEW PROJECT WITH RICHARD GILL

Leading music educator Richard Gill has recorded five videos with the TSO and students from a range of Tasmanian schools that will soon be available at the TSO's website. Titled "Some Insights into the Workings of Music with Richard Gill", the online resource forms part of a new education initiative, The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra in Your Classroom. The initiative was generously supported by the James N Kirby Foundation.

In the videos, Richard explains to students how music works and illustrates his points with examples performed by the TSO. The examples include works by contemporary Australian composers Julian Yu, Lisa Cheney and Gordon Hamilton, as well as music by Beethoven and Rimsky-Korsakov.

The TSO would like to thank the schools that took part in the project: St Aloysius Kingston, Goulburn Street Primary, Elizabeth College and The Friends' School.

NEW RELEASE FROM THE TSO



Here's some sparkling Viennese music for the Christmas-New Year Season! Marko Letonja, soprano Lorina Gore and the TSO perform arias, waltzes, polkas and marches by Johann Strauss II, Josef Strauss and Franz von Suppé.

Special TSO subscriber price \$22.50 (RRP \$25). Available at the TSO Box Office and at tso.com.au.

ABC 481 4671



COMINGS AND GOINGS

Having successfully completed a six-month trial, DOUGLAS COGHILL has been confirmed in the position of Tutti Viola. Observant concert-goers will have noticed Douglas playing in the orchestra over the years, having been employed as a casual musician from time to time. The 29-year-old studied at the Victorian College of the Arts where he completed a BMus in Music Performance. His teachers included Marco van Pagee and Fiona Sergeant. His studies at the VCA were followed by three years at the Australian National Academy of Music where he took lessons with William Hennessy, Roger Benedict and Chris Moore, and was tutored by a number of visiting artists including Anthony Marwood,

Michael Collins and Alban Gerhardt. Melbourne-born Douglas first performed with the TSO as part of the TSO-ANAM side-by-side project in 2011. His desk partner on that occasion was Anna Larsen Roach and Douglas remembers fondly the warm welcome he received from the entire viola section. The following year he moved to Hobart where, in addition to playing occasionally with the TSO, he became a founding member of the Huon Quartet. When he's not playing the viola, Douglas likes to spend his time gardening, fishing and renovating his recently bought house. He acquired a scooter licence not long ago so keep an eye out for him zipping about town on his Aprilia.

TSO WELCOMES NEW CHAIR PATRON

In the last issue of *Overtures*, we reported that Chris and John Sandow had become TSO Chair Patrons, sponsoring the Principal Trumpet Chair. Our newest Chair Patron is Michelle Warren (below right), who has decided to support the Chorusmaster position, held by June Tyzack (below left). Michelle has been a member of the TSO Chorus for the past 17 years so is delighted by the "brilliant fit" of sponsoring the Chorusmaster. Should you be interested in becoming a TSO Chair Patron, please phone Ed Benyon on 03 6232 4430 or email benyone@tso.com.au.



SUPPORTING WOMEN COMPOSERS



As part of a new training partnership with the University of Sydney, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, the TSO hosted a workshop on 5 October for four composers enrolled in the inaugural National Women Composers' Development Program (NWCDP). Composers Clare Johnston, Ella Macens, Natalie Nicolas and Elizabeth Younan were joined by NWCDP director, Matthew Hindson, and visiting tutor Maria Grenfell, in the TSO studio as the TSO workshoped and recorded original works with conductor Eduardo Diazmunoz. Veronika Vincze and Toby Frost from ABC Classic FM recorded all works for archival and training purposes. Next year the four women composers will return to the TSO with new compositions that they will now begin writing, utilising skills learned at this year's workshop.

Above: Composer Elizabeth Younan addresses the orchestra from the conductor's podium.

TSO AND TYO COMBINE FOR BIG REHEARSAL



This year's Big Rehearsal – a cooperative venture between the TSO and Tasmanian Youth Orchestra (TYO) – took place in Federation Concert Hall on Saturday 24 September. Conducted by Johannes Frittsch, the combined orchestra of 65 musicians rehearsed works by Mozart, Schubert, Brahms and Khachaturian.

For the TYO players, the Big Rehearsal is a chance to work with a top-name conductor as well as career musicians in a real-life professional context. For the musicians of the TSO, it is an opportunity to offer advice and tips to the young players and to lead by showing, which is an important way of imparting information in what is literally a "hands-on" profession. Special mention must be made of TYO violinist Alice Pickering, who appeared as soloist in Mozart's Violin Concerto No 3.

RECORD ATTENDANCE AT CHAIRMAN'S LUNCH

LEADERS FROM many different businesses – including finance, law, media, advertising, hospitality, automotive and the arts – turned out in force for the Chairman's Lunch, held at the Henry Jones Art Hotel on Friday 11 November. Dr David Rich, TSO Chair, welcomed special guest, Rupert Myer AO, Chair of the Australia Council for the Arts and a dynamo in corporate and philanthropic circles, who addressed the capacity audience with a thought-provoking talk titled, "Why Supporting the Arts Makes Sense for Everyone".

In addition to the captivating address, guests took advantage of the opportunity to become better acquainted with business leaders from diverse fields while enjoying fine dining.

The TSO would like to thank all those who attended and acknowledge Unica Wealth, the Henry Jones Art Hotel, Saffire Freycinet and Pennicott Wilderness Journeys, whose generous support makes the Chairman's Lunch possible. Further events of this kind will be held in 2017. Should you wish to attend next year, please contact Ed Benyon on 03 6232 4430 or benyone@tso.com.au.

Proceeds from the Chairman's Lunch go towards the TSO's Education and Outreach Programs.

- 1 Rupert Myer (right) with David Rich, TSO Chair, and Glenys Rich.
- 2 Nicholas Heyward, the Hon Vanessa Goodwin MLC and Damon Wise.
- 3 (L-R) Rod Black, Pat Leary and Allanah Dopson.
- 4 (L-R) Rupert Myer, Nicholas Heyward, Dominic Mulchay, Luke Roberts and Cameron Pereira.
- 5 Guests from MONA.



CONDUCTORS' SCHOOL

Over a three-day period in late September, Maestro Johannes Fritzsch imparted invaluable knowledge, advice and assistance to four participants in the TSO's Conductor Training Workshop, which forms part of the Symphony Services International Conductor Development Program. Carlo Antonioli, John Keene, Natalia Raspopova and Luke Spicer rehearsed the First and Third symphonies by Brahms and the Overture to *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss II. This was the last event of its kind to be operated in conjunction with Symphony Services. The TSO is committed to offering training programs for promising musicians and from next year will offer its own National Conductor Training Program.



Emma McGrath (centre) with David and Sue Wills.



Jennifer Marten-Smith (right) with parents Anje and Russell Smith.

MEET THE MUSICIAN

Does a Concertmaster ever feel justified in throwing her violin at a soloist? According to **Emma McGrath**, TSO Concertmaster, the answer is a resounding "Yes"! During a recital for TSO Friends on 21 August, Emma related how in the midst of a performance of Dutilleux's Violin Concerto with the Seattle Symphony, the soloist, French violinist Renaud Capuçon, suffered the misfortune of having two pegs on his instrument suddenly unwind. Emma noticed what had happened and quickly tossed him her violin. Mr Capuçon handed her his instrument and the concerto continued with the soloist hardly missing a beat. Meanwhile, Concertmaster Emma largely mimed her part! Emma's brilliant recital for TSO Friends included excerpts from a wide variety of works including *The Four Seasons*, Bruch's Violin Concerto No 1 and Holst's *St Paul's Suite*. Her lively and wide-ranging presentation to a large and appreciative audience also touched on bowing and other aspects of violin playing and the goals she is striving to achieve in her position as TSO Concertmaster.

Two weeks after Emma's presentation we had the pleasure of hearing pianist **Jennifer Marten-Smith**. On 4 September, Jen delivered a stunning hour-long performance which included the first movement of Mozart's Sonata in A minor K310, Schubert's Impromptu Op 90 No 2, Liszt's "Liebestraum", the Bach-Busoni Toccata BWV 565 and Granados' "The Maiden and the Nightingale".

On 25 September the TSO's three resident bass players, **Stuart Thomson**, **James Menzies** and **Aurora Henrich**, were joined by **Matthew McGrath** in a delightful medley of movie music, including an arrangement of *The Pirates of the Caribbean* and Harold Arlen's "Dorothy's Bases" (from *The Wizard of Oz*), both arranged by Ashley Frampton; two movements from the Quartet for Double Bases by Joseph Lauber; and "Georgia on My Mind" by Hoagy Carmichael.

On 13 October we had the pleasure of hearing TSO musicians **Will Newbery** and **Anna Larsen Roach**, together with **Mary Self** (viola), **Chrissie Berryman** (viola da gamba), **Caitlin Duhig** (cello), **Philip Smith** (double bass) and **Lorentz Lossius** (harpsichord), in a fascinating program that included Telemann's Tenth Fantasia (as transcribed from the violin), the slow movement of JS Bach's *Italian Concerto* (played on harpsichord); the Rondeau from Marin Marais' *Five Old French Dances*; and JS Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto* No 6. Extraordinarily, all of the instruments, with the exception of the harpsichord, had been made by Philip Smith.

TSO Friends would like to thank all of these musicians for so generously giving of their time and performing for us. Additionally, a big thank you to **James Menzies**, Player Representative, for arranging these wonderful events.

CLARINET WORKSHOP

Andrew Seymour, TSO Principal Clarinet, conducted a clarinet workshop and masterclass in Launceston on 3 September.

The day was highly successful and very well attended. The workshop alone attracted fourteen participants and four aspiring clarinetists took part in the masterclass. Thank you so much Andrew!

2017 SEASON PREVIEW

On 8 October a large and enthusiastic group of TSO Friends gathered to hear **Simon Rogers**, Director Artistic Planning, give a preview of the orchestra's 2017 season. While there are too many delights to mention in full, some that caught the audience's attention included the season-opening concert of Beethoven's Symphony No 9, a concert performance of *Carmen* and the complete Rachmaninov piano concertos with the father-son team of Howard and Alexander Shelley. Since Simon first began offering these previews some years ago they have rapidly become a not-to-be-missed event on the TSO Friends' calendar. Our sincere thanks to Simon for the trouble he takes in allowing us a private peek into the future!

CHRISTMAS MORNING TEA

TSO Friends hosted TSO musicians and staff to a mouth-watering Christmas morning tea on 23 November. TSO Friends took the opportunity to present a cheque for \$20,000 to Nicholas Heyward, Managing Director, to enable the purchase of a sound desk and to help fund an upgrade of stage lighting in Federation Concert Hall.

(L-R) Anna Larsen Roach, Will Newbery, Mary Self, Lorentz Lossius, Chrissie Berryman, Caitlin Duhig, and Philip Smith.

(L-R) Stuart Thomson, James Menzies, Matt McGrath and Aurora Henrich.



LUNCH WITH THE STARS

THE MOST ANTICIPATED Conductor's Circle Luncheon of the year took place at the Source Restaurant, MONA, on Sunday 20 November with guests of honour, Swedish soprano Nina Stemme and acclaimed Heldentenor Stuart Skelton. Hosted by Marko Letonja, the fundraising luncheon attracted 60 guests from Tasmania, interstate and overseas.

Diners were treated to a lunch menu of inventive yet simple elegance with each course matched with a specially selected wine. All those present were still swooning from the performance of excerpts from *Tristan und Isolde* the night before, so it was a thrill to sit at close quarters with the artists who made it happen. Marko spoke to the assembled guests and explained the background to the TSO luring to Tasmania the two most acclaimed Wagner singers of our time. He also discussed the challenge of condensing Wagner's huge opera into a smaller yet coherent work. A special highlight was hearing from both Nina Stemme and Stuart Skelton, who talked about their artistic backgrounds, answered questions from the guests and, together with Maestro Letonja, moved from table to table throughout the luncheon to give everyone the opportunity to meet and talk with them.

For all those present, it was an occasion that, like the *Tristan und Isolde* concert, was truly unforgettable.



- 1 (L-R) Stuart Skelton, Nina Stemme and Marko Letonja.
- 2 Susie and Martin Dickson.
- 3 (L-R) Marjorie Sutton, Alison Malcolm and Marilyn Canterford.
- 4 Kathryn Arneman and Ian Chambers.
- 5 (L-R) John Dickens and Ian Payne.
- 6 David and Colleen Canterford.



CODETTA

Dr David Rich, TSO Chair, recently announced that Marko Letonja, Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, has had his tenure extended for a further year, which means that he will remain at the helm of the orchestra until the end of 2018, when the orchestra will be celebrating its 70th anniversary. "Since taking up the role of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director in 2012, Marko has been brilliant, so we are delighted to have successfully negotiated the extension of his contract," said Dr Rich.

Three violinists from the orchestra – Lucy Carrig-Jones (Principal Second), Jennifer Owen (Principal First) and Monica Naselow – were among the musicians of the Australian World Orchestra for concerts in Sydney and Singapore in late September and early October. Conducted by Alexander Briger and Stanley Dodds, the AWO performed Beethoven's Symphony No 7, Dvořák's Symphony No 9 and a specially commissioned work by Elena Kats-Chernin, among other works. In addition to performing in Singapore, Monica gave a masterclass for primary-school children at Avondale Grammar School.

In case you were wondering, the abridged version of *Tristan und Isolde* performed by the TSO on 19 November was specially prepared by conductor Marko Letonja. The great challenge was to take Wagner's monumental work and condense it while still maintaining its musical and dramatic integrity. Transitions are particularly tricky when making musical abridgements but they flowed seamlessly in this case.

The TSO welcomed 33 musicians from the Australian Youth Orchestra for the Master Series concert on 15 October, which featured Holst's *The Planets*. Seven wind, brass and percussion musicians from AYO remained in Hobart for a further week to take part in intensive preparations for professional casual auditions. Happily, four passed their auditions for a place on the TSO's casual musician register.

Conductor of *The Planets* was Johannes Fritzsch who also conducted the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) Concerto Competition, held in Federation Concert Hall on 4 November. This year's competition was a string showcase: Alexander Arai-Swale (NZ) performed Bottesini's Double Bass Concerto No 2, Caleb Wong (NSW) performed Elgar's Cello Concerto and Harry Bennetts (NSW) performed the Brahms Violin Concerto. All three soloists played magnificently but there can only be one winner and that was...Harry Bennetts. Congratulations!

All those who heard vocalist Mary Carewe in concert – she appeared with the TSO in *I Dreamed a Dream* – will be aware of her generosity as a performer. That generosity was on display on 31 October when she gave a masterclass in the TSO Studio for eight young singers from various local schools and UTAS. Mary honed in on aspects of presentation and technique and offered constructive criticism. The young singers came away edified and enriched.

In an Outreach initiative, a quintet of musicians from the TSO gave a hugely entertaining and interactive concert at the Southern Support School on 1 November. Miranda Carson (violin), Martin Penicka (cello), Andrew Seymour (clarinet), Wendy Page (horn) and Tim Jones (tuba) captivated the young audience with a variety of music specially arranged by Tim. A return invitation was issued immediately!

In further Outreach news, a large group of seniors involved with programs at the Hobart City Council activity centre, Mathers House, attended an open rehearsal on 24 November for the TSO concert, *I ♥ America*. For the past two years, TSO musicians have been giving "Meet the TSO Musicians" presentations at Mathers House, so it was pleasing to welcome a group from Mathers House to Federation Concert Hall, the home of the TSO.

TSO PARTNERS

CORE PUBLIC SUPPORT



The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and the Tasmanian Government through the Minister for the Arts, and the Tasmanian Icon Program.

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Photographs of *Tristan und Isolde*, Chairman's Lunch and Conductor's Circle Luncheon by Alastair Bett.