

9 October 2025

HARRY BENNETTS

PERFORMS BEETHOVEN'S VIOLIN CONCERTO



SYDNEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Principal Partner



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PATRON Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The Orchestra's first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013, followed by David Robertson as Chief Conductor from 2014 to 2019. Australian-born Simone Young commenced her role as Chief Conductor in 2022, a year in which the Orchestra made its return to a renewed Sydney Opera House Concert Hall. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres, reflecting the Orchestra's versatility and diverse appeal. Its award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, and the Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

PERFORMING IN THIS CONCERT

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*Acting Assistant
Concertmaster*

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Georges Lentz

Alex Mitchell

Leone Ziegler

Benjamin Tjoa^o

Caroline Hopson*

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Principal

Emma Jezek

Assistant Principal

Alice Bartsch

Victoria Bihun

Rebecca Gill

Nicole Masters

VIOLAS

Richard Waters

Principal

Anne-Louise

Comerford

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Anthony Heinrichs

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[†] Sydney Symphony
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2025 CONCERT SEASON

CLASSICS IN THE CITY
Thursday 9 October, 7pm

City Recital Hall,
Angel Place

HARRY BENNETTS PERFORMS BEETHOVEN'S VIOLIN CONCERTO

INTIMATE FORCES, GRAND EMOTIONS

UMBERTO CLERICI conductor
HARRY BENNETTS violin

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)
Violin Concerto in D, Op.61 (1806)

- i. Allegro ma non troppo
- ii. Larghetto –
- iii. Rondo (Allegro)

INTERVAL

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)
Symphony No.4, D417, Tragic (1816)

- i. Adagio molto – Allegro vivace
- ii. Andante
- iii. Menuetto (Allegro vivace) – Trio
- iv. Allegro

Preconcert talk

By Andrew Bukenya in
the Function Room Level 1
at 6.15pm

Estimated durations

Beethoven – 45 minutes
Interval – 20 minutes
Schubert – 31 minutes

The concert will run for
approximately 1 hour and
45 minutes

Cover image

Associate Concertmaster
Harry Bennetts.
Photo by Daniel Boud.

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YOUR CONCERT AT A GLANCE

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827) **Violin Concerto in D, Op.61** (1806)

Like his Eroica Symphony, Beethoven's Violin Concerto radically expands the scale of its three-movement design, setting the template for the great Romantic concertos of Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Sibelius and so on. The first movement's stately pace allows for a variety of expressive moods; the slow movement is Beethoven at his most lyrical, and the finale a boisterous dance.

It was composed and premiered in 1806, the year that saw the abdication of the last Holy Roman Emperor, the publication of Noah Webster's first Dictionary and the completion of the circumnavigation of Australia by Matthew Flinders and Bungaree.

Contemporary music included Weber's Concertino for Horn and Orchestra, Carl Czerny's first composition and Méhul's opera *Uthal*.



Detail of a portrait of Beethoven by Joseph Willibrord Mähler (1778–1860), painted between 1804–05.

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828) **Symphony No.4, D417, Tragic** (1816)

Schubert almost certainly didn't consider this a 'tragic' work, but it does show him venturing into minor keys for the first time in his symphonies. The work though remains classical in the Haydn–Beethoven mould: it's in four movements, beginning with a slow solemn introduction that kicks off the sonata allegro; a genuine slow movement of great beauty; an elegant menuet and energetic finale.

It was composed in 1816 (though had to wait until 1849 for its public premiere), the year that saw the establishment of the University of Warsaw, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the Rum Hospital in Sydney.

Contemporary music included Cherubini's Requiem, Hummel's Septet and Rossini's *Barber of Seville*.



A portrait thought to be of a young Schubert c.1814, attributed to Austrian painter Josef Abel (1764–1818).

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

UMBERTO CLERICI conductor

After a career spanning more than 20 years as a gifted cello soloist and orchestral musician, Umberto Clerici has consolidated his diverse artist achievements to rapid acclaim as a conductor. Umberto is now the Chief Conductor of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

Umberto began his career as a virtuoso cellist making his solo debut at the age of 17 performing Haydn's D Major cello concerto in Japan. After years of performing on the stages of the world's most prestigious concert halls, Umberto took up the position as Principal cello of the Teatro Regio di Torino following which he was Principal Cello of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra from 2014–2021.

It was in Sydney in 2018 that Umberto made his conducting debut with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House. Following a swift trajectory of prestigious conducting engagements, Umberto is now in high demand with the major symphony orchestras throughout Australia and New Zealand.

In addition to his role Chief Conductor of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Umberto's recent conducting engagements have included conducting Elgar's Cello Concerto with Steven Isserlis for the Volksoper Vienna, and debuts with Orchestra del Teatro Massimo in Palermo and Orchestra Regionale Toscana. Umberto has also curated a three-week series with the Sydney Symphony for its Symphony Hour series and returned to the podiums of the Dunedin, Melbourne and West Australian Symphony Orchestras.

Umberto is also swiftly developing his career in the field of opera. Earlier this season he made his debut with Opera Queensland in Verdi's *Macbeth* and will return next season to lead a production of Puccini's *La bohème*. Future seasons will see Umberto leading productions of other operas in Europe.

Highlights in 2025 will include conducting Daniil Trifonov playing Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto with New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, a return to Teatro Massimo in Palermo and his second collaboration with Opera Queensland for which Umberto will conduct Puccini's *La bohème*.

As a cellist, Umberto remains beloved by audiences worldwide, having performed internationally as a soloist at New York's Carnegie Hall, Vienna's Musicverein, the great Shostakovich Hall of St Petersburg, Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome, the Salzburg Festival and is one of only two Italians to have ever won a prize for cello in the prestigious International Tchaikovsky Competition.

Umberto plays cellos by Matteo Goffriller (made in 1722, Venezia) and Carlo Antonio Testore (made in 1758, Milano).



Photo by Jay Patel

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

HARRY BENNETTS violin
*Associate Concertmaster,
Judy & Sam Weiss Chair*

Harry Bennetts is one of Australia's leading young violinists, acclaimed for his versatility as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral leader.

As a soloist, Harry has appeared with the Sydney, Melbourne, West Australian, Tasmanian, and Canberra Symphony Orchestras. He is a two-time winner of the Australian National Academy of Music Concerto Competition, taking the prize in consecutive years, and was also awarded first prize in the 2015 Kendall National Violin Competition. His recital performances have taken him to major venues including the Sydney Opera House Utzon Room, Melbourne Recital Centre, UKARIA Cultural Centre—where he performed at the venue's Opening Gala in 2015—and the Chatswood Concourse.

Harry is a founding member of the Chroma Quartet and a regular guest at festivals such as the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Townsville, Bendigo Chamber Music Festival, Martinborough Festival, and Blackheath Chamber Music Festival. His chamber music collaborations have also brought him to international stages including the Berlin Philharmonic Kammermusiksaal and the Cologne Philharmonie, and he frequently performs with Musica Viva Australia.

Currently Associate Concertmaster of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Harry has also appeared as Guest Principal with the London Symphony Orchestra and as Guest Concertmaster with the Melbourne and Queensland Symphony Orchestras. He has additionally performed with both the Berlin Philharmonic and the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

Harry's early training was with Philippa Paige, before continuing his studies at the Australian National Academy of Music with Dr. Robin Wilson and later at the Karajan Academy of the Berlin Philharmonic under the mentorship of first concertmaster Noah Bendix-Balgley.

Harry plays a 1716 Grancino violin, affectionately named the 'Hazelwood' Grancino, formerly belonging to Donald Hazelwood AO OBE, concertmaster of the Sydney Symphony from 1965–1998.

In 2019 a generous donor, Vicki Olsson, purchased the violin from Don and loaned it to the Orchestra; in 2024, Olsson donated the violin to the Sydney Symphony - her only stipulation was that the instrument be renamed the 'Hazelwood' Grancino in honour of Don.



Photo by Jez Smith



A portrait of Beethoven by Joseph Willibrord Mähler (1778–1860), painted between 1804–05.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

In the late eighteenth century Germany was a loose grouping of small principalities. The city of Bonn was the seat of the Archbishop Elector of Cologne and Beethoven was born here in 1770. His grandfather was a chief musician in the Elector's household; his father Johann was also a musician employed there. Johann was a violent alcoholic, and family life was far from happy, but young Ludwig nonetheless showed early promise as a musician and soon joined the Archbishop's retinue.

Beethoven almost certainly met Mozart briefly in Vienna in 1787, but in 1792 returned to that city to study with Joseph Haydn. They didn't get on. Late in life, Haydn was suddenly enjoying superstar status throughout Europe. Beethoven could be extremely rude and arrogant and felt that Haydn wasn't paying him enough attention.

Beethoven's status in Vienna was helped by the relative ease with which he was accepted into aristocratic circles. This is partly because he allowed people to think that the 'van' in his name meant he himself was noble (in German, 'von' indicates nobility), and he allowed a rumour to circulate that he was the illegitimate son of the King of Prussia! But it was mostly about the music, and a group of Viennese nobles supported him for the rest of his life (despite appallingly bad behaviour on occasions).

From the later 1790s he had been aware of the deterioration of his hearing, and by the early years of the new century his deafness caused him gradually to retreat from society. His was also chronically unlucky in love. This, along with his deafness, led him to the point of suicide and the heroic resolution to carry on which is documented in a kind of will he wrote at Heiligenstadt, his favourite holiday village, in the summer of 1802. The crisis launched his middle or 'heroic' period.

In May 1809 Napoleon's armies attacked Vienna and bombarded it with considerable violence. Beethoven took shelter with his brother Caspar Carl and his wife Johanna and to protect what was left of his hearing hid with pillows over his ears in the cellar. He wrote to his publisher: 'What a destructive, disorderly life I see and hear around me: nothing but drums, cannons and human misery in every form'. Despite his misery, Beethoven managed to work.

Beethoven's deafness was only part of the chronic ill-health which dogged him for most of his life, but it certainly made things worse. He retreated from society, became grumpy and paranoid (occasionally to the point of violence) and despite relative financial security often lived in squalor. His music, though, tells a completely different story. Beethoven's late works encompass a bewildering array of moods and styles.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT THE VIOLIN CONCERTO

In December 1806, Johann Nepomuk Möser attended a benefit concert which he reviewed for the *Wiener Theaterzeitung*. He wrote that ‘the excellent Klement’, leader of the orchestra at the Theater an der Wien, ‘also played, besides other beautiful pieces, a Violin Concerto by Beethhofen, which on account of its originality and many beautiful parts was received with exceptional applause’. Well, we might say, quite. But Möser went on to note that the ‘experts’ were unanimous, ‘allowing it many beauties, but recognising that its scheme often seems confused and that the unending repetitions of certain commonplace events could easily prove wearisome’. While it was rumoured that the wife of a 20th-century virtuoso used quietly to sing ‘At last it’s over, at last it’s over’ to the tune of the finale, it is still hard to imagine how the critics back then got it so wrong and why there was only one other documented performance during Beethoven’s life. (It was not until Joseph Joachim took the piece up in 1844, that it gained any currency at all.) Beethoven himself may have felt that the work had no future, as he made a version for piano and orchestra for the pianist, composer and publisher Muzio Clementi soon after the premiere. Then again, the soloist at the premiere had played one or two lollipops of his own composition (one, according to legend, with the instrument upside down) between the first and second movements, which, though not unusual practice, must have broken the spell. And to be fair, Beethoven, who had been working at tremendous speed in the latter half of 1806, only delivered the score at the last minute leaving little, if any, time for rehearsal. He had finally completed the first version of his opera *Fidelio* and then in quick succession composed the Fourth Symphony, Fourth Piano Concerto, the three ‘Razumovsky’ string quartets, the Violin Concerto and one or two other things before the end of the year.



Joseph Joachim, whose advocacy brought Beethoven’s concerto into the repertoire.

We often describe the early years of the nineteenth century as Beethoven’s ‘heroic decade’ as the music includes works such as the *Eroica* and Fifth Symphonies that dramatise seemingly titanic struggles and epic victories on a scale unimagined by previous composers. It is almost too easy to see this as reflecting Beethoven’s own heroic response to the deafness which began to hamper his professional and personal life at the time; it may also reflect radical upheavals in European society: Napoleon’s armies occupied Vienna three times in the course of the decade. But the period also produced works of great serenity – especially the Fourth Symphony, Fourth Piano Concerto and the Violin Concerto. They remain large-scale works, but their emotional worlds are far from the violent tensions of the odd-numbered symphonies.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Beethoven had toyed with the idea of a Violin Concerto in the early 1790s: there exists a fragmentary first movement in C, and it is possible that one of the Romances in F or G was intended as a slow movement for the uncompleted work. While he may have abandoned the early concerto, by the time of the D major work he had nonetheless composed nine of his ten sonatas for piano and violin. From the 1802 Op.30 set on, he invested these with the same complexity of emotion and expanded scale that we have noted in the symphonies and string quartets. But Beethoven's interest in the concerto medium was, until 1806, primarily in composing works for himself as soloist – the first four piano concertos; after that time his hearing loss made concerto playing too risky.

At one remove, as it were, in this work he could concentrate on the problem of reconciling the principles of symphonic composition – which stress dramatic contention and ultimate integration of contrasting thematic material – and concerto composition, which adds the complication of pitting the individual against the mass.

In the Violin Concerto Beethoven uses a number of gambits to bring about this synthesis. As in a number of works of this period, the Violin Concerto often makes music out of next to no material: the opening five drum taps, for instance, are a simple reiteration in crotchets of the key note (D). This gesture, seemingly blank at the start, returns several times during the movement, most strikingly when the main material is recapitulated: there the whole orchestra takes up the motif. Similarly, the *largo* slow movement has been famously described by Donald Tovey as an example of 'sublime inaction' – nothing *seems* to be happening, though in fact subtle changes and variations of material stop the piece from becoming monotonous. The seemingly improvised transition into the last movement was not so much to preclude Clement from playing something with his teeth or behind his back, but to dramatise the gradual change from that immobility to the release of energy in the finale. Throughout the work Beethoven expertly creates and frustrates our expectations: the soloist only enters after a fully symphonic introduction, and only then with an ornamental flourish, rather than any thematic

material. The beautiful second theme is, as Maynard Solomon notes, perfectly composed to exploit the richness of the lowest string of the instrument, but the soloist only gets that theme at the movement's end. This large scale plotting of the work allowed Beethoven to expand the dimensions of the violin concerto beyond all expectations, and lay the foundation for the great concertos of Brahms and Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky and Sibelius.

Beethoven's Violin Concerto is scored for 1 flute, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets and 2 bassoons; 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, strings and violin soloist.

It was premiered 23 December 1806 in the Theater an der Wien in Vienna, with Franz Clement as soloist.

The Sydney Symphony first performed the work in May 1938, with soloist Tossy Spivakovsky conducted by Georg Szell.

Many of the great violinists have performed the work in Sydney, including Szymon Goldberg conducted by Joseph Post (1946), Ricardo Odnoposoff/Post (1951), Wolfgang Schneiderhan/Eugene Goossens (1953), Isaac Stern/Alceo Galliera (1954), Ruggiero Ricci/Kurt Wöss (1957), David Oistrakh/Nicolai Malko (1958), Yehudi Menuhin/Malko (1962), Leonid Kogan/Jascha Horenstein (1962), Igor Oistrakh/Vladimir Cosma (1963), Henryk Szeryng/Fritz Rieger (1968), Ruggiero Ricci/Peter Erős (1969), Stern/Moshe Atzmon (1971), Pinchas Zukerman/Willem van Otterloo (1972), Dene Olding/Gunther Herbig (1987), Gil Shaham/Christopher Seaman (1998), Joshua Bell/Tuomas Hannikainen (1999), Nigel Kennedy play-directing (2008), Renaud Capuçon/Kristjan Järvi (2010), Anne-Sophie Mutter/Vladimir Ashkenazy (2012), James Ehnes/Ashkenazy (2016) and Simone Lamsma/Alexander Shelley (2019).

We also performed the concerto in Tokyo, Nagoya and Nishinomiya on our 2011 International Tour, with Sayaka Shoji conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy.

Our most recent performances were in 2022, with James Ehnes conducted by Simone Young.



A portrait thought to be of a young Schubert c.1814, attributed to Austrian painter Josef Abel (1764–1818).

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT FRANZ SCHUBERT

Schubert almost too neatly fits the stereotype of the Romantic artist: phenomenally productive though poor and largely unrecognised during a life that tragically ended when he was barely 31 years old.

Unlike Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven, who made Vienna their home, Schubert was born there in 1797. The family was by no means well off, but, as his father was a schoolmaster, Schubert was well educated, especially in literature and music: he began learning keyboard at the age of five. From 1805 he sang in the choir of the local parish church in the Viennese suburb of Lichtenthal for two years; then, having been auditioned by Antonio Salieri – the Kapellmeister who didn't kill Mozart – he joined the Imperial Chapel choir in 1808, and was enrolled in the Stadtkonvikt School, where he remained until 1813. He briefly took up teaching from 1814, by which time he had already produced original music including his Fantasy for piano duet (D.1), his first song, the beginnings of an opera and his First Symphony. The next two years would see several masses, symphonies and hundreds of songs, establishing Schubert's ability to set poetry of hugely variable types and qualities. A number of works were performed in the Schubert home; what history knows as the Schubert circle, people who loved him and his music and gave him practical, moral and financial support, begins to form.

Over the next few years Schubert had some success as a composer for the stage, though his wish to create operas in German was swamped by the craze for Rossini. He continued composition of songs and dance music and more than one unfinished symphony.

In 1823 Schubert began to experience the severe illness which would carry him off five years later, but work carried on unabated, seeing the composition of the great string quartets, the string quintet, large scale piano sonatas and song cycles *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise*.

In 1827 Schubert was a torch-bearer at Beethoven's funeral. As a student of Salieri, the young Schubert had thought Beethoven's work deliberately odd and grotesque but seeing the first performance of the final version of *Fidelio* may have catalysed his conversion.

Schubert's final year saw the only known public concert of his music – a great success. He began to study advanced counterpoint toward the end of the year but his condition worsened and he died on 19 November 1828.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT SCHUBERT'S *TRAGIC* SYMPHONY

Yvonne Frindle writes:

Did Beethoven set out to write an heroic symphony when he began his Third, or a bucolic one with his Sixth? Both these symphonies support their titles so very well that we can be sure conception and intent went hand in hand with the naming of them. No one ever announces, or even cautiously suggests, that the 'Eroica' lacks nobility or that the 'Pastoral' is too urbane.

Schubert's 'Tragic' Symphony, on the other hand, seems to have generated nothing but uncertainty in the minds of those who have written about it ever since his early symphonies gained public attention in the 1930s. It would be fair to say that most listeners – if encountering Schubert's Fourth Symphony for the first time in a 'blind hearing' – would be unlikely to christen it 'Tragic'. And so paragraphs are given over to either defensively beefing up the 'tragic' elements in an attempt to justify the title, or dismissing it altogether as a youthful whim on the part of the composer.

The title is uncharacteristic of Schubert. It was the first and only time that he gave a title of any kind to an abstract instrumental work like a symphony or sonata. It was not his way to conceive of such music as explicitly programmatic, nor did he do so for his Fourth Symphony. He added the title later, possibly for a performance that was given by the private orchestra that had grown up around the Schubert family string quartet in which he played viola.

That the appellation was not given at the time Schubert completed the symphony – after just a few weeks' work in April 1816 – undermines the idea that he aspired to write a 'Tragic' symphony. And although Beethoven's symphonies (including the titled ones mentioned earlier) were in everyone's ears, Schubert's addition of a title appears to owe more to an earlier practice of appending nicknames to symphonies than it does to Beethoven's efforts to create with each new symphony an individual musical character. After all, Haydn's 'Surprise' Symphony isn't full of surprises – one is sufficient; the 'Drum Roll' doesn't overdo the percussion; and the 'Clock'

Symphony restricts its tick-tocking to just one movement. In the same way, Schubert's Fourth Symphony isn't imbued with tragedy – it was simply the symphony that was in a minor key and that began with a particularly dark and powerful slow introduction. Tragedy is a distinguishing rather than a defining feature.

The symphony is distinguished in several other ways as well. When compared to the first three it reveals a greatly increased musical maturity and improved technical facility. There is a new feeling of concision (not quite terseness) that is unparalleled in his expansive early symphonies. It was his first foray into minor-key territory after symphonies in the sunny key of B flat or the more martial D. And while it may not convince as a vehicle of emotional drama, it is not lacking in purely musical drama as Schubert skilfully handles his thematic material and bold harmonic ideas.

Schubert's language is still that of the Classical masters, but the content, the aspirations, and even the choice of key for the Fourth Symphony suggests the influence of Beethoven. Like Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Schubert's Fourth begins in C minor and ends in C major. But Schubert treads the path twice (in the first and last movements) and the means and the effect are quite different.

The opening gesture brings in the full orchestra with a dramatic unison – pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons and trumpets, two pairs of horns, timpani and strings, all playing the note C. There is nothing to suggest whether this will be a major or a minor key symphony, but the suspense is quickly broken by throbbing violas and second violins followed by the entry of the main theme in the first violins. From this point on the introductory *Adagio molto* constantly shifts its harmonic ground with striking changes of key and highly chromatic lines, resolving finally in C minor for the beginning of the main part of the first movement, *Allegro vivace*.

Despite its minor key, the *Allegro vivace* is more sprightly and energetic than dramatic or solemn. Even restless passages of tension and climax are insufficient to weigh down the optimistic quality of the theme, constructed from rising thirds. Schubert's increasing technical confidence is most evident in this

ABOUT THE MUSIC

movement – the born melodist for once shakes his compulsion to think in ‘tunes’ and with a new-found concision develops his themes with a pithy symphonic dynamism.

The second movement is the most exquisite in the symphony, summing up all that is lovable in Schubert’s music – poetic expansiveness and songful beauty. It was for a time the only movement from all of Schubert’s first six symphonies that had been published in score (by Peters in 1871). If the Fourth Symphony were to be truly tragic then this would have been Schubert’s opportunity – an *Adagio*, no less, mournful and languishing. Instead we hear the *Andante*, nostalgic and lyrical. The trumpets, drums and second pair of horns are omitted, leaving the woodwinds (and especially the oboe) to shine in serenely breathed fragments of thematic material over palpitating strings.

Schubert’s early *Menuetto* movements dance a line between the Austrian Ländler and the Beethovenian scherzo. This one is perhaps closest to the true scherzo; certainly it is a far cry from the elegance of an 18th-century ballroom. It has a brashness partly brought about by the suggestions of cross-rhythms, partly by astringent confrontations in the harmony, and partly by the presentation of its melodies in strong unisons. The level of melodic chromaticism is unusual for Schubert and only confirms that this is no minuet for dancing. By contrast the *Trio* is plaintive and candid in character.

The agitated finale has two qualities we can expect in Schubert’s early symphonies: an apparently limitless supply of imaginatively lyrical material, and the development of ideas through melodies rather than harmony or thematic motifs. This is the work of a composer who spent the eight months between his third and fourth symphonies composing more than 200 songs. The effusiveness of the *Allegro* finally draws to a close – as in the first movement – in a resoundingly optimistic C major. The same open unison that had pronounced a mood of tragedy in the first movement returns to triumph over Schubert’s ‘Tragic’ Symphony.

Schubert’s Fourth Symphony is scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets and 2 bassoons; 4 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings.

It was not premiered until 19 November 1849 in Leipzig, more than two decades after Schubert’s death.

The Sydney Symphony has not performed this work very often. Our first performance was in July 1951, led by our Chief Conductor Eugene Goossens, with the only subsequent performances those led by John Hopkins (1966 Proms), Jorge Mester (1988) and Bruno Weil (2001).

Notes by Gordon Kerry © 2025 (composer biographies) © 2008 (Beethoven), Yvonne Frindle © 1999 (Schubert)

Scoring and history by Hugh Robertson

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