

# **BEETHOVEN'S NINTH**

30 June – 1 July / 7.30pm Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

## **Artists**

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
Xian Zhang conductor
Ning Feng violin
Madeleine Pierard soprano
Jacqueline Dark mezzo
Rosario la Spina tenor
Nathan Berg bass
MSO Chorus
Michael Fulcher chorus director

# <u>Program</u>

ZHAO JIPING Violin Concerto No.1
BEETHOVEN Symphony No.9

Duration: approx. Approximately 2 hours, inc. 20-min interval.

A musical Acknowledgement of Country, Long Time Living Here
by Deborah Cheetham AO, will be performed before the start of this concert.

# Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra is a leading cultural figure in the Australian arts landscape, bringing the best in orchestral music and passionate performance to a diverse audience across Victoria, the nation and around the world.

Each year the MSO engages with more than 5 million people through live concerts, TV, radio and online broadcasts, international tours, recordings and education programs. The MSO is a vital presence, both onstage and in the community, in cultivating classical music in Australia. The nation's first professional orchestra, the MSO has been the sound of the city of Melbourne since 1906. The MSO regularly attracts great artists from around the globe including Anne-Sophie Mutter, Lang Lang, Renée Fleming and Thomas Hampson, while bringing Melbourne's finest musicians to the world through tours to China, Europe and the United States.

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra respectfully acknowledges the people of the Eastern Kulin Nations, on whose un-ceded lands we honour the continuation of the oldest music practice in the world.













## Xian Zhang conductor

Following her successful MSO debut in 2018 conducting Dvořák's Ninth Symphony, Xian Zhang was appointed as the MSO Principal Guest Conductor in 2020.

Xian Zhang is currently in her sixth season as Music Director of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. She also holds the position of Conductor Emeritus of Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi following a hugely successful period from 2009–2016 as their Musical Director.

Xian Zhang has previously served as Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra & Chorus of Wales and was the first female conductor to hold a titled role with a BBC orchestra. In 2002, she won first prize in the Maazel-Vilar Conductor's Competition. She was appointed New York Philharmonic's Assistant Conductor in 2002, subsequently becoming their Associate Conductor and the first holder of the Arturo Toscanini Chair.

## Madeleine Pierard soprano

Award-winning soprano, Madeleine Pierard was a Jette Parker Young Artist with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where she has since sung numerous roles, including Contessa di Folleville (*Il Viaggio a Reims*), Musetta (*La Boheme* – London/Istanbul), Lisa (*La Sonnambula*), Berta, Noémie (*Cendrillon*) and Costanza (*L'isola disabitata*).

Other recent roles include Lady Macbeth with English Touring Opera; Violetta, Pat Nixon, Miss Jessel and Musetta with NZ Opera; Musetta at the Royal Albert Hall; the title role in Rufus Wainwright's *Prima Donna* and Mrs Julian (*Owen Wingrave*) with Grange Park Opera, UK.

Concert appearances include Beethoven's 9th Symphony at The Barbican and Britten's War Requiem at the Cadogan Hall with the RPO; numerous appearances with the NZSO and throughout Europe, including l'Orchestre Symphonique de Bretagne and Orchestre Symphonique de Strasbourg. In recital, Madeleine has performed at the Wigmore and Cadogan Halls, Royal Albert Hall and The Royal Opera House. Madeleine is also a noted interpreter of contemporary repertoire and has premiered numerous works.

Upcoming engagements include a tour of Mahler's 4th Symphony with the NZSO and a solo recital at The Royal Opera House, London.

# Ning Feng violin

Ning Feng is recognised internationally as an artist of great lyricism, innate musicality and stunning virtuosity. In 2019, the Washington Post described him as "a wonderful player with a creamy, easy tone and an emotional honesty," and BBC *Music* Magazine said of a recent recording "his silvery tonal purity, immaculate intonation and gently beguiling musicality have a way of making most other players sound decidedly effortful by comparison."

He plays regularly with all the major orchestras in China and in some of the finest concert halls in the world including halls in London, Vienna and Berlin, both with orchestra and in recital.

The recipient of prizes at the Hanover International, Queen Elisabeth and Yehudi Menuhin International violin competitions, Ning Feng was First Prize winner of the 2005 Michael Hill International Violin Competition (New Zealand), and in 2006 won first prize in the International Paganini Competition.

Ning Feng plays the 1710 Stradivari violin known as the 'Vieuxtemps Hauser', by kind arrangement with Premiere Performances of Hong Kong, and plays on strings by Thomastik-Infeld, Vienna.

## Jacqueline Dark mezzo

In 2016, Jacqueline Dark starred as The Mother Abbess in the National Tour of The Sound of Music before returning to Opera Australia as Fricka in their revival of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. The following year, she sang Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana* for State Opera South Australia and the title role in *Prima Donna* for the Adelaide Festival.

Most recently, Jacqui appeared in The Nose for Opera Australia, as Mrs Sedley in *Peter Grimes* for the Brisbane Festival, in *Candide* with New Zealand Opera and Herodias in *Salome* for Opera Australia. In 2022, she returns to Pinchgut Opera as Aristes in Cesti's *Orontes*, is guest vocal soloist with The Australian Ballet in *Anna Karenina* and appears in concert with the Melbourne Symphony and in recital for Opera Queensland. Jacqui also performs her critically-acclaimed Jacques Brel cabaret show at major venues around the country.

International appearances have included Giovanna (*Rigoletto*), Grimgerde (*Die Walküre*) and Mercedes (*Carmen*) in Vienna and Herodias (*Salome*) for Opera Hong Kong.

In August 2014, Jacqui received her second consecutive Helpmann Award – for her work as Fricka in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.

© Patrick Togher Artists' Management 2022

## Rosario la Spina tenor

Rosario La Spina made his Opera Australia debut as Cavaradossi (*Tosca*) in 2005 and has subsequently appeared for the national company as Radames (*Aida*), Alfredo (*La traviata*), Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), The Duke (*Rigoletto*), The Prince (*Rusalka*), Calaf (*Turandot*), Macduff (*Macbeth*), Rodolfo (*La bohème*), Don José (*Carmen*) and the title role in *The Tales of Hoffmann*. His American debut was as Rodolfo for Seattle Opera in 2007; he returned to Seattle as Radames and made his first Canadian appearances in this same role.

Most recently, Rosario La Spina has sung The Duke for Opera Queensland, Manrico (*Il trovatore*) for West Australian Opera, Pollione (*Norma*) and Canio for Victorian Opera, Samson (*Samson et Dahlia*) in Tokyo, Cavaradossi, Turiddu and Canio for State Opera of South Australia and The Prince (*The Love for Three Oranges*), Turiddu, Canio and Calaf for Opera Australia. Future engagements include his debut as Siegmund in Opera Australia's new production of *Die Walküre*, Rodolfo (*La bohème*) for State Opera of South Australia and Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*) in Belgium.

© Patrick Togher Artists' Management 2022

## Michael Fulcher chorus director

Michael is a conductor, chorus master, and vocal coach. A graduate of the University of Queensland, Queensland Conservatorium of Music, and Guildhall School of Music and Drama (London), he studied conducting with John Curro, David Porcelijn (ABC Young Conductors Mastercourse), Robert Rosen, and with Sir Charles Mackerras and Sir Mark Elder in the U.K.

Michael has conducted performances for Opera Queensland (*Elixir of Love* 1998), the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (*Postcard from Marocco* 2001), Victorian State Opera (*Don Giovanni* 1996), and the Queensland Conservatorium Opera School (*Billy Budd* 1993, *L'elisir d'Amore* 1994, *Elijah the Opera* 1995, *Going into Shadows* 2001, *Pilgrim's Progress* in the presence of Ursula Vaughan Williams, 2002). Oratorio conducted or chorusmastered includes *Dream of Gerontius* (Elgar), the Bach passions and B minor mass, Beethoven's Ninth, Mozart, Haydn and Schubert masses, the requiems of Verdi, Brahms and Mozart, and, for the New Zealand International Arts Festival *Parsifal* (Wagner), Macmillan's 'Quickening' (2006), and Mahler's Eight Symphony (2010, Ashkenazy).

Since 2013, Michael has been founding Artistic Director of Polyphonic Voices and Director of Music at Christ Church South Yarra.

## Nathan Berg bass

A "tall, majestic bass" with "impeccable technique" and "a palpable presence on stage," Canadian bassbaritone Nathan Berg has enjoyed a career spannning a vast range of repertoire on the concert and operatic stage. He has recently earned worldwide acclaim for his portrayals of the title role in *Der fliegende Holländer* in his Bolshoi Theatre debut, Alberich in *Das Rheingold* with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra and Minnesota Opera, Doktor in *Wozzeck* with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the Houston Symphony, for which he won a Grammy Award, and his company debut at Teatro alla Scala in Robert Carsen's world-premiere production of Battistelli's CO2.

In the 2021–2022 season, Mr. Berg makes his Metropolitan Opera stage debut as The Father in the New York premiere of Matthew Aucoin's *Eurydice*, conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin, returns to Theater Basel as Philippe in *Don Carlos*, and debuts the role of Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde* with the Taiwan Philharmonic. He will also lead a residency with Opera Lafayette in Taos, New Mexico, culminating in performances of Grétry's rarely-performed *Silvain* in both New York and Washington, DC.

## **MSO Chorus**

For more than 50 years the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Chorus has been the unstinting voice of the Orchestra's choral repertoire. The MSO Chorus sings with the finest conductors including Sir Andrew Davis, Edward Gardner, Mark Wigglesworth, Bernard Labadie, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Manfred Honeck, and is committed to developing and performing new Australian and international choral repertoire.

Commissions include Brett Dean's *Katz und Spatz*, Ross Edwards' *Mountain Chant*, and Paul Stanhope's *Exile Lamentations*. Recordings by the MSO Chorus have received critical acclaim. It has performed across Brazil and at the Cultura Inglese Festival in Sao Paolo, with The Australian Ballet, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, at the AFL Grand Final and at the Anzac Day commemorative ceremonies.

The MSO Chorus is always welcoming new members. If you would like to audition, please visit mso.com.au/ chorus for more information.

### **SOPRANO**

Philippa Allen Julie Arblaster

Aliz Cole

Kylie Constantine Veryan Croggon

Isabelle Dennis Susan Fone

Camilla Gorman

Aurora Harmathy Gina Humphries

Tania Jacobs

Anna Kidman Theresa Lam

Judy Longbottom

Caitlin Noble

Karin Otto
Jodie Paxton

Amanda Powell Natalie Reid

Jodi Samartgis

Jemima Sim Christa Tom

Fabienne Vandenburie

Julia Wang

Jasmine Zuyderwyk

### **ALTO**

Satu Aho Ruth Anderson Emma Anvari Tes Benton

Catherine Bickell Kate Bramley

Jane Brodie Eva Butcher

Alexandra Chubaty

Mari Eleanor-Rapp Nicola Eveleigh

Claudia Funder

Jill Giese

Ros Harbison Jennifer Henry

Kristine Hensel

Helen Hill

Julie Lotherington Christina McCowan

Penny Monger

Sandy Nagy Catriona Nguyen-

Robertson

Nicole Paterson

Natasha Pracejus

Kate Rice

Helen Rommelaar Kerry Roulston Helen Staindl

Libby Timcke

## **TENOR**

Adam Birch Kent Borchard Steve Burnett Peter Campbell

Ed Chan

Keaton Cloherty
James Dipnall
Daniel Griffiths
Lyndon Horsburgh
Nader Masrour
Michael Mobach
Colin Schultz
Robert Simpson

**Brad Warburton** 

### **BASS**

Maurice Amor Kevin Barrell David Bennett Richard Bolitho Roger Dargaville Andrew Ham Andrew Hibbard John Hunt Jordan Hyndman Jordan Janssen Gary Levy

Douglas McQueen-Thomson Nick Sharman

Matthew Toulmin Caleb Triscari

# Program Notes

### **ZHAO JIPING**

(born 1945)

Violin Concerto No.1

The Violin Concerto No. 1 turned nearly a decade of my ideas into notes. From the establishment of the structure to the piano composition to the completion of the score, the entire process took me about a year to finish. The creative process was not a struggle, but rather a calm, pleasant experience.

The work's structure basically follows the principles of sonata form, but does not rigidly adhere to them and adjusts according to the needs of the music. In terms of musical language, it has a very

strong Chinese color, whereas the theme borrows from traditional European concerto form. Through this open fusion, I hope this Violin Concerto can speak with the world in a Chinese voice.

The origins of the Chinese elements in the work do not have obvious directivity, but are natural revelations of my focus and accumulation of Chinese elements in my years-long practice of composing. Chinese elements are deeply rooted in the music, from its orchestration to its harmonic language. The colorful composing techniques in the development section also reflect the Chinese flavor of the work. At the same time, this work carries a meaning

of love with a lively sub-theme and a development section featuring inner conflict, which is ultimately attributed to the true, the good, and the beautiful within love. I hope that this work in which I express my love for humanity can cross borders and warm more listeners.

© Zhao Jiping and China's National Centre for the Performing Arts Orchestra

## **LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**

(1770 - 1827)

Symphony No.9 in D minor, Choral Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso

Scherzo (Molto vivace – Presto)

Adagio molto e cantabile – Andante moderato

Presto – Allegro molto assai (Alla marcia) – Presto

Madeleine Pierard soprano
Jacqueline Dark mezzo
Rosario la Spina tenor
Nathan Berg bass
MSO Chorus

Michael Fulcher chorus director

On 7 May 1824, Beethoven summoned Vienna's leading musicians in the Kärnthnerthor Theatre to give the premiere of the Ninth Symphony. Profoundly deaf, Beethoven was long past being able to conduct, but stood beside the leaders, indicating the speeds. At the end, he was unaware of the applause, so that the contralto soloist had to turn him around, producing 'a volcanic explosion of sympathy and admiration that seemed it would never end'. The applause was probably more for the composer than the performance. Two rehearsals were insufficient to prepare the most difficult orchestral piece the musicians had ever encountered. Nevertheless, one reviewer found the opening Allegro 'bold and defiant, executed with truly athletic energy'. Punctuating its enormous 15-minute design, strategically placed returns of its colossal opening idea underpin the almost fissile energy generated by the sheer mass of scraping, blowing and drumming. Never before had sounds of such sustained violence been imagined, let alone produced by instruments.

Wagner later pictured the second movement as a Bacchanalian spree of worldly pleasures. But while its motoric force is compulsive, Beethoven hardly thought of his big scherzo as mindless. Far from it; he keeps its overflowing energy meticulously controlled and channelled, not least when the predominant four-bar triple beat is

dramatically jerked into three-bar phrases.

Berlioz imagined the slow movement 'might better be thought as two distinct pieces, the first melody in B flat, four-in-a-bar, followed by an absolutely different one, in triple-time in D'. Yet, in Beethoven's interweaving of this unlikely pair, Berlioz heard 'such melancholy tenderness, passionate sadness, and religious meditation' as to be beyond words to describe.

Everyone in the first Vienna audience in May 1824 must have known that something extraordinary was about to take place. Certainly, the London press intimated in advance of the British premiere a year later: 'In the last movement is introduced a song! - Schiller's famous Ode to Joy which forms a most extraordinary contrast with the whole, and is calculated to excite surprise, certainly, and perhaps admiration.' But why did Beethoven take the unprecedented step of fitting out an instrumental symphony with a vocal finale? He had toyed with two distinct plans for a symphony with added chorus. In 1818, he made very preliminary notes for a 'symphony in ancient modes' on ancient Greek religious themes, including a choral *adagio*. But by 1822, he was sketching a 'German symphony', with chorus singing Schiller's To Joy, though to an entirely different tune.

To Adolph Bernhard Marx – the early 19<sup>th</sup> century music historian whose writings helped enshrine Beethoven as 'supreme master' and Germany as centre of the 'cult of music' - Beethoven's earlier symphonies had suggested that instrumental music could be even more eloquent than words. Yet finally, Marx believed, Beethoven showed that this was not so: 'Having devoted his life to instrumental sounds, he once again summons his forces for his boldest, most gigantic effort. But behold! - unreal instrumental voices no longer satisfy him, and he is drawn irresistibly back to the human voice.'

As the orchestra introduces brief flashbacks to each of the first three

movements, the cellos and basses attempt an unlikely recitative: 'but when the string basses painfully attempt their ungainly imitation of human speech; and when they begin to hum timidly the simple human tune, and hand it over to the rest of the orchestra, we see that, after all, the needs of humanity reach beyond the enchanted world of instruments, so that, in the end, Beethoven only finds satisfaction in the chorus of humanity itself.' Despairing of instruments' feeble efforts, the solo baritone announces (the introductory lines are Beethoven's own, not Schiller's):

O friends! No more these sounds! Instead let us sing out more pleasingly, with joy abundant!

Graeme Skinner © 2014

## Ludwig van Beethoven Symphony No. 9 in D minor Choral

O Freunde, nicht diese Töne! Sondern lasst uns angenehmere anstimmen, und freudenvollere!

Freude, schöner Götterfunken, Tochter aus Elysium, Wir betreten feuertrunken, Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!

Deine Zauber binden wieder, Was die Mode streng geteilt; Alle Menschen werden Brüder Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

Wem der grosse Wurf gelungen, Eines Freundes Freund zu sein Wer ein holdes Weib errungen Mische seinen Jubel ein!

Ja, wer auch nur eine Seele Sein nennt auf dem Erdenrund! Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle Weinend sich aus diesem Bund!

Freude trinken alle Wesen An den Brüsten der Natur; Alle Guten, alle Bösen Folgen ihrer Rosenspur.

Küsse gab sie uns und Reben, Einen Freund, geprüft im Tod; Wollust ward dem Wurm gegeben, Und der Cherub steht vor Gott.

Froh, wie seine Sonnen fliegen Durch des Himmels prächt'gen Plan Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn, Freudig, wie ein Held zum Siegen.

Freude, schöner Götterfunken...

Seid umschlungen, Millionen! Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt! Brüder, überm Sternenzelt Muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.

Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen? Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt? Such' ihn überm Sternenzelt! ÜberSternen muss er wohnen.

Freude, schöner Götterfunken...

O friends, no more these sounds! Instead let us sing out more pleasingly with joy abundant.

O joy, pure spark of God, daughter from Elysium with hearts afire, divine one, we come to your sanctuary.

Your magic reunites what custom sternly separated; All mankind become brothers beneath your sheltering wing.

Whoever has known the blessing of being friend to friend, whoever has won a fine woman, whoever, indeed, calls even

one soul on this earth his own, let their joy be joined with ours. But let the one who knows none of this steal, weeping, from our midst.

All beings drink in joy at Nature's bosom, the virtuous and the wicked alike follow her rosy path.

Kisses she gave to us, and wine, and a friend loyal to the death; bliss to the lowest worm she gave, just as the cherub who stands before God.

Joyously, as His dazzling suns traverse the heavens, O, brothers, run your course, exultant, as a hero claims victory.

O joy, pure spark of God, etc.

Be enfolded, all ye millions, in this kiss of the whole world! Brothers, above the canopy of stars must dwell a loving Father.

Do you fall down, ye millions? In awe of your Creator, world? Go seek Him beyond the stars! For there assuredly he dwells.

O joy, pure spark of God, etc.

### Jaime Martín

Chief Conductor Dr Marc Besen AC and the late Dr Eva Besen AO#

## Xian Zhang

**Principal Guest Conductor** 

### **Benjamin Northey**

Principal Conductor in Residence

### Carlo Antonioli

Cybec Assistant Conductor Fellow

## Sir Andrew Davis

Conductor Laureate

## Hiroyuki Iwaki †

Conductor Laureate (1974–2006)

### **FIRST VIOLINS**

Dale Barltrop Concertmaster David Li AM and Angela Li\*\*

Sophie Rowell Concertmaster

The Ullmer Family Foundation#

Tair Khisambeev Assistant Concertmaster Di Jameson and Frank Mercurio\*

Peter Edwards Assistant Principal

Kirsty Bremner

Sarah Curro

Peter Fellin

Deborah Goodall

Lorraine Hook

Anne-Marie Johnson

Kirstin Kenny

Eleanor Mancini

Mark Mogilevski

Michelle Ruffolo

Kathryn Taylor

### **SECOND VIOLINS**

Matthew Tomkins Principal

The Gross Foundation#

Robert Macindoe Associate Principal

Monica Curro Assistant Principal Danny Gorog and Lindy Susskind\*

Mary Allison

Isin Cakmakcioglu

Tiffany Cheng

Freya Franzen

Cong Gu

**Andrew Hall** 

Isy Wasserman

Philippa West

Andrew Dudgeon AM\*

Patrick Wong

Roger Young Shane Buggle and Rosie Callanan\*

#### **VIOLAS**

Christopher Moore Principal

Di Jameson and Frank Mercurio#

Lauren Brigden

Katharine Brockman

Anthony Chataway Dr Elizabeth E Lewis AM\*

Gabrielle Halloran

Trevor Jones
Anne Neil#

Fiona Sargeant

### **CELLOS**

David Berlin *Principal* 

Hyon Ju Newman#

Rachael Tobin Associate Principal

Nicholas Bochner

Miranda Brockman Geelong Friends of the MSO\*

Rohan de Korte Andrew Dudgeon AM#

Sarah Morse

Angela Sargeant

Michelle Wood

Andrew and Judy Rogers#

#### **DOUBLE BASSES**

Benjamin Hanlon Frank Mercurio and Di Jameson#

Rohan Dasika

Suzanne Lee

### **FLUTES**

Prudence Davis Principal

Anonymous#

Wendy Clarke Associate Principal

Sarah Beggs

### **PICCOLO**

Andrew Macleod Principal

#### **OBOES**

Thomas Hutchinson Associate Principal

Ann Blackburn The Rosemary Norman Foundation\*

### **COR ANGLAIS**

Michael Pisani Principal

#### **CLARINETS**

David Thomas Principal

Philip Arkinstall
Associate Principal

Craig Hill

## **BASS CLARINET**

Jon Craven *Principal* 

## **BASSOONS**

Jack Schiller Principal

Elise Millman Associate Principal

Natasha Thomas Dr Martin Tymms and Patricia Nilsson\*

### CONTRABASSOON

Brock Imison Principal

### **HORNS**

Nicolas Fleury
Principal

Margaret Jackson AC#

Saul Lewis Principal Third The Hon Michael Watt QC

and Cecilie Hall# Abbey Edlin Nereda Hanlon and

Michael Hanlon AM#
Trinette McClimont

Rachel Shaw Gary McPherson\*

### **TRUMPETS**

Owen Morris Principal

Shane Hooton Associate Principal

William Evans

Rosie Turner John and Diana Frew<sup>#</sup>

### **TROMBONES**

Richard Shirley

Mike Szabo Principal Bass Trombone

#### **TUBA**

Timothy Buzbee *Principal* 

### **TIMPANI**

## PERCUSSION

John Arcaro *Anonymous*#

Robert Cossom Drs Rhyl Wade and Clem Gruen\*

## HARP

Yinuo Mu Principal