DMITRY SINKOVSKY
AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA

Sydney and Melbourne July/August 2014

Dmitry Sinkovsky (Russia) guest director, baroque violin and countertenor
Paul Dyer AO artistic director
Australian Brandenburg Orchestra

PROGRAM

VIVALDI Concerto in C major RV 177
CORELLI Concerto grosso Op. 6 No. 11 in B flat major
VIVALDI Concerto in d minor RV 246

INTERVAL

VIVALDI Cantata RV 684 for alto, strings and continuo
AVISON/SCARLATTI Concerto grosso No. 3 in d minor
VIVALDI Concerto in d minor RV 242 Op. 8 No. 7 ‘Per Pisendel’

Sydney City Recital Hall Angel Place
Wednesday 23 July, Friday 25 July, Saturday 26 July, Wednesday 30 July,
Friday 1 August all at 7pm, Matinee Saturday 26 July at 2pm

Melbourne Melbourne Recital Centre
Saturday 2 August at 7pm
Sunday 3 August at 5pm

Chairman’s 11
Proudly supporting our guest artists

The duration of this concert is approximately 2 hours including interval.
We kindly request that you switch off all electronic devices during the performance.

AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS
Macquarie Group is again proud to be the principal partner of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra.

The Brandenburg’s exciting 25th year concert series features some of the baroque and early classical periods’ most renowned composers, as well as some more modern names. As the Brandenburg has done year after year, well-loved and lesser-known pieces are brought to life through the precision and passion of the orchestra, the Brandenburg Choir and some of the most talented names in international concert music.

This is a year of celebrating achievement. From small beginnings, the Brandenburg has become one of Australia’s great treasures. And although the orchestra has evolved over more than two decades, what has remained constant is its dedication, expertise and an unfailing pursuit of excellence.

Macquarie recognises that these qualities can deliver powerful outcomes. It is a privilege to support the Brandenburg as it shares its love of the music of centuries past with audiences today. Whether it is in the concert hall or in the classrooms visited as part of its education program, the Brandenburg continues to make an enduring contribution to the legacy of baroque music.

We congratulate Paul Dyer, Bruce Applebaum and the Orchestra on their 25th anniversary and for creating a wonderful year of concerts. We hope you enjoy the performance.

Greg Ward
Deputy Managing Director, Macquarie Group Limited

One of the things I love most about my role as Artistic Director of the Brandenburg is the opportunity to share with our audiences the exciting new baroque musicians that I come across in my research for each season. One such jewel is the multi-talented Russian baroque violinist, Dmitry Sinkovsky, our Guest Director for this concert series in his debut Australian performances.

Dmitry comes from an almost forgotten baroque tradition: not only is he a dazzling and energetic violin virtuoso, but he is also a countertenor. I am thrilled to share the stage with this unique musician who will perform some of Vivaldi’s lesser known but glittering concertos with the Orchestra. The technical demands and virtuosity of these concertos means that they are rarely heard, and we are thrilled to have this musician of exceptional ability join us to perform them.

This concert series is also a rare opportunity to experience the beautiful sound of Dmitry’s violin, on loan to him by the Jumpstart Jnr Foundation and crafted by Francesco Ruggeri in 1675, the first in a long line of exceptional luthiers. Ruggeri instruments are highly prized for their superior construction and tone, and it will be a thrill to hear this wonderful violinst with this very special violin.

Dmitry is at the forefront of today’s baroque specialists and it is a pleasure to welcome him to the Brandenburg stage.

Paul Dyer AO
Artistic Director and Conductor
The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, led by charismatic Artistic Director Paul Dyer, celebrates the music of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with excellence, flair and joy. Comprising leading specialists in informed performance practice from all over Australia, the Brandenburg performs using original edition scores and instruments of the period, breathing fresh life and vitality into baroque and classical masterpieces – as though the music has just sprung from the composer’s pen.

The Orchestra’s name pays tribute to the Brandenburg Concertos of J.S. Bach, whose musical genius was central to the baroque era. Celebrating their 25th anniversary in 2014, the Brandenburg continues to deliver exhilarating performances. The Brandenburg has collaborated with such acclaimed and dynamic virtuosi as Andreas Scholl, Fiona Campbell, Philippe Jaroussky, Kristian Bezuidenhout, Emma Kirkby, Andreas Staier, Elizabeth Wallfisch, Genevieve Lacey, Andrew Manze and more.

Through its annual subscription series in Sydney and Melbourne, the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra performs before a live audience in excess of 40,000 people, and hundreds of thousands more through national broadcasts on ABC Classic FM. The Brandenburg also has a regular commitment to performing in regional Australia. Since 2003 the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra has been a member of the Major Performing Arts Group, which comprises 28 flagship national arts organisations supported by the Australia Council for the Arts.

Since its beginning, the Brandenburg has been popular with both audiences and critics. In 1998 The Age proclaimed the Brandenburg “had reached the ranks of the world’s best period instrument orchestras”. In 2010 the UK’s Gramophone Magazine declared “the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is Australia’s finest period-instrument ensemble. Under their inspiring musical director Paul Dyer, their vibrant concerts and recordings combine historical integrity with electrifying virtuosity and a passion for beauty.”

The Australian proclaimed that “a concert with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is like stepping back in time, as the sounds of period instruments resurrect baroque and classical works with reverence and authority.”


Discover more at brandenburg.com.au
PAUL DYER

In January 2013 Paul Dyer was awarded the Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his ‘distinguished service to the performing arts, particularly orchestral music as a director, conductor and musician, through the promotion of educational programs and support for emerging artists’ in recognition of his achievements as Co-founder and Artistic Director of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Brandenburg Choir.

Paul Dyer is one of Australia’s leading specialists in period performance styles. He founded the ABO in 1990 and has been the orchestra’s Artistic Director since that time. Paul has devoted his performing life to the harpsichord, fortepiano and chamber organ as well as conducting the Brandenburg Orchestra and Choir.

Paul completed postgraduate studies in solo performance with Bob van Asperen at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague, performed with many major European orchestras and undertook ensemble direction and orchestral studies with Sigiswald Kuijken and Frans Brüggen.

Paul appears as a soloist, continuo player and conductor with many major ensembles including: the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Orchestra, Australia Ensemble, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Opera Australia, Australian Youth Orchestra, Victorian State Opera, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Pacific Baroque Orchestra, Vancouver, and the Brandenburg Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, London.

Paul has performed with many prominent international soloists including Andreas Scholl, Cynthiabaden, Elizabeth Wallfisch, Andreas Staier, Marco Destribé, Christoph Polgardis, Hiromi Suzuki, Manfredo Kraemer, Andrew Manze, Yvonne Kenny, Emma Kirkby, Philippe Jaroussky and many others. In 1998 he made his debut in Tokyo with countertenor Derek Kirkby, Philippe Jaroussky and many others. In 1998 Paul was a laureate of the Adagio holding the audience spellbound (after a concert in Carnegie-hall , New York Times, 20 Nov 2012).

Virtuoso violinist Dmitry Sinkovsky was being groomed for an international career by the Moscow Conservatory, where he graduated in 2005, when he decided to change direction and concentrate on historical performance practice. He studied baroque violin with Marie Leonhardt in Amsterdam and singing with Michael Chance in Den Haag, Jana Ivanilova in Moscow and Marie Daveluy in Montreal. He has since been awarded numerous prizes in major competitions including the Premio Bonporti in Italy (2005), the Bach Competition in Leipzig (2006), the Musica Antiqua Competition in Bruges (first prize, audience prize and critics’ prize - 2008), the Romanus Weichlein prize at the Biber competition in Austria in 2009 for his “extraordinary interpretation of the Biber’s Rosary sonatas” and first prize at the Tekemann Competition in Magdeburg (2011). Critics and public alike praise his ability to “play from the heart” whilst performing music of dazzling difficulty.

Dmitry Sinkovsky is now much in demand as a soloist and conductor, performing extensively in Europe, Canada, Australia, Russia and the USA. He heads the ensemble La Voce Strumentale, which he founded in 2011 and works with some of the finest Baroque orchestras today including Il Giardino Armonico (Italy), Concerto Köln (Germany), Il Complesso Barocco (Italy), Anon Baroque Orchestra (Canada), Australian Brandenburg Orchestra (Australia), Armonia Atenea (Greece), the Helsinki Baroque Orchestra (Finland), and the Seville Baroque Orchestra (Spain).

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After supper I received a visit from Vivaldi, the famous composer and violinist … He let me listen to his very difficult and quite inimitable fantasias on the violin, so that, being close at hand, I could not but marvel even more at his skill.

Johann von Uffenbach, Venice, 1715

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the concerto was the pinnacle of instrumental music. Originally the term “concerto” simply meant any piece performed by a group of voices and/or instruments playing together. By the late seventeenth century the term had gained its more modern meaning of an instrumental piece featuring one or more soloists, whose parts were set in relief against the background of the accompanying strings. This kind of solo concerto was developed by musicians in northern Italy in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and took Europe by storm in the hands of Antonio Vivaldi, whose vivid concertos for a variety of instruments but above all for solo violin were widely disseminated across Europe beginning in the 1710s.

ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678–1741)
Concerto in C Major RV 177

Allegro ma poco
Largo
Allegro

If rapid and acute tones are evils, Vivaldi has much of the sin to answer for. “It is very usual,” says Mr. Wright in his Travels through Italy, from 1720 to 1722, “to see priests play in the orchestra. The famous Vivaldi, whom they called the Prete Rosso, very well known amongst us for his concertos, was a topping man among them at Venice.”

Charles Burney, A General History of Music, 1789

Vain, egotistical, boastful, grasping, with an extraordinary zest for life – these words, amongst many others, have been used to describe Antonio Vivaldi, known as “the Red Priest” because of the colour of his hair. He was ordained as a priest in 1703 but had to stop saying mass only three years later because of a debilitating chest complaint (probably bronchial asthma). “I almost always stay at home and go out only in a gondola or carriage, since my chest ailment … prevents me from walking.” It did not stop him from becoming one of Italy’s most successful opera composers in the first decades of the eighteenth century, however. He claimed to have written over ninety operas, although so far only forty nine have been identified. Unlike most other musicians in the first half of the eighteenth century, Vivaldi was never employed on a long-term basis by either a member of the nobility or the church; but in his home town of Venice he was hailed as a teacher and violin virtuoso, and for most of his life his services as a composer were in constant demand.

He was particularly associated with the Pio Ospedale della Pietà, one of four Venetian ospedali which cared for orphans and children of the destitute and which maintained an all-female orchestra and choir as a means of providing the girls with a source of income. A number of the girls grew into renowned virtuosos, and many lived their whole lives at the ospedali, performing and teaching.

Vivaldi was hired as a violin teacher in 1703 by the Pietà, and under his guidance their orchestra became one of the finest and most versatile ensembles in all of Italy and attracted travellers from throughout Europe. Charles de Brosses, a French politician who visited Venice in 1739, wrote:

The most exquisite music here is that of the Ospedali. The one of the four Ospedali I visit most often and like best, is La Pietà; it is also the foremost because of the perfection of the orchestra. What precision of performance! Only here does one hear those superb ways of bowing which are admired … at the Paris Opéra.”

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Vivaldi composed some five hundred concertos, of which two hundred and thirty were for solo violin. We know very little about the origins of most of the concertos, not even when they were written, or for whom, although many of them would have been for the Pietà, for whom he worked on and off most of his life. Surviving records show that even when he was away from Venice he was still contracted by the Pietà to compose new concertos for them.

The style of this concerto has led to it being dated to around 1734. Like many other eighteenth century composers, Vivaldi frequently recycled his own work, and the main theme of the first movement comes from the sinfonia (overture) to his opera L’Olimpia, which premiered at the Teatro Sant’Angelo in Venice on 17 February 1734.
Corelli was fortunate in attracting the patronage of powerful people, particularly of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, nephew of the Pope and an extremely wealthy and influential patron of the arts who was described by Charles De Brosses as “without morals, without reputation, debauched, ruined, a lover of the arts, a great musician”. Under Ottoboni’s patronage Corelli devoted most of his time to composition, and finally retired from performing altogether in 1708.

Corelli’s fame came from the dissemination of his works, boosted by the boom in music publishing which occurred throughout Europe around 1700. His six published volumes of trio sonatas and concertos were enormously influential across Europe for many years after his death, and in England his works developed almost as red as fire, and his eyeballs to roll as if in an agony.”

Corelli’s landmark Opus 6 set of twelve concertos was published posthumously in 1714. Corelli composed slowly, polishing and revising his works until he considered them fit for publication, and the composer Georg Muffat reported hearing these or similar pieces played in Rome as early as 1682. Corelli’s concerti grossi were written for festivals in Rome for which huge orchestras of sometimes more than one hundred players were assembled. Contemporary accounts indicate that Corelli was an exacting orchestra leader: he insisted not only on accuracy of pitch but that the bows of all players should synchronise exactly with each other.

Like many concerti grossi, this concerto was based on a set of dance movements. After a slow prelude, the concerto grosso in d minor RV 246 by Antonio Vivaldi played a solo accompaniment – splendid – to which he appended a cadenza which really frightened me, for such playing has never been nor can be: he brought his fingers up to only a straw’s distance from the bridge, leaving no room for the bow – and that on all four strings with fugues and incredible speed. With this he astonished everyone...

Vivaldi structured the first and last movements of his concertos around repeating refrains. This is now referred to as a ritornello form, from the Italian “ritorno”, meaning return. The refrain is played first by the full orchestra, and this is followed by an episode for the solo instrument which contrasts with the ritornello and uses different melodic material. After each new episode the full orchestra returns with the ritornello but now varied in some way, and so on throughout the movement. This sometimes very loosely followed structure provided the platform for Vivaldi’s musical imagination to run riot. The endless variation of the ritornellos and episodes, as they cycle through a number of different tonalities, is what gives the music much of its typical “Vivaldian” drive and energy.

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Arcangelo Corelli was the first composer whose fame came exclusively from instrumental composition, the first to gain an international reputation primarily through music publishing, and the first to compose “classic” instrumental works which were admired long after his death. He was educated in Bologna but spent almost all his adult life in Rome, and by 1676, at the age of only twenty three, he was already one of the city’s foremost violinists. His playing was described as “learned, elegant and pathetic,” although one witness commented that when he played he appeared “half mad” and that “it was usual for his countenance to be distorted, his eyes to become as red as fire, and his eyebrows to roll as if in an agony.”

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Cessate, omai cessate
rimembranze crudeli
d’un affetto tiranno;
già barbarie e spietate
mi cangiaste i contenti
in un immenso affanno.

Cessate, omai cessate
di lacerarmi il petto,
di trafiggermi l’anima,
di toglier al mio cor riposo e calma.

Ah, ch’infelice sempre
mi vuol Dorilla ingrata,
ah, sempre più spietata
m’astringe a lagrimar.

Per me non v’è ristoro,
per me non v’è più spene.
E il fier martoro e le mie pene,
solo la morte può consolar.

A voi dunque ricorro,
omin di cherubì, taciturni orrori,
solitari ritiri ed ombre amiche;
tra voi porto il mio duolo
perché spero da voi quella pietade
che Dorilla inumana non annida.
Vengo, spelonche amate,
vengo, spechi graditi,
alune meco involto
in mio tormento in voi resti sepolto.

ARIA
Nell’orrido albergo,
ricetto di pene,
potrò il mio tormento
sfogare contento,
potrò ad alta voce chiamare spietata
Dorilla l’ingrata,
mostrare potrò.

Andrò d’Acheronte
su la nera sponda,
tingendo quest’onda
di sangue innocente,
gridaio vendetta
ed ombra baccante
vendetta farò.

Nell’orrido albergo ...

* From Greek mythology: Acheron is the river that flows through Hades (hell); the Bacchantes were followers of the Greek god Bacchus, capable of great ferocity.
Charles Avison was an English organist, composer, teacher, and concert manager. He was also one of the most important English writers in the field of musical aesthetics, publishing his controversial and influential Essay on Musical Expression in 1752. In this essay and in the extensive notes he wrote to accompany his published compositions he promoted an aesthetic which favoured moderation and shunned the extravagance, found, according to Avison, in the music of Vivaldi and Handel. He disliked the display of virtuosity or excessive ornamentation, considering it was done “merely from a Desire of being distinguished”. For him, an effective solo performance was to be found “in the tender and delicate Touches, which to such indeed are least perceptible, but to a fine Ear productive of the highest Delight”.

Avison lived all his life in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and probably because of this his compositions were limited to only two genres: accompanied keyboard sonatas and string concertos. They were intended primarily for amateurs and the small orchestras which could be mustered in a provincial city. The four movement concerto grosso or “grand concerto” was the main type of orchestral music composed in England in the first half of the eighteenth century, long after it had been superseded in Europe by the Vivaldian three movement solo concerto. However it was an ideal form to use when composing for provincial orchestras, as the difficult solo sections could be played by professional musicians and the easier tutti sections by the gentleman amateurs who made up the rest of the ensemble. There was a great demand for pieces of this type in the middle of the century, and Avison was one of the most prolific and accomplished composers of them, writing no less than ninety-two.

An Essay on Musical Expression, 1752

What to Listen For

Avison based a set of concertos, including the one we hear tonight, on enormously popular keyboard pieces by Italian composer Domenico Scarlatti, son of the equally famous Alessandro Scarlatti. Avison modeled these concertos on those of his teacher, the Italian violinist Geminiani, and of Corelli, structuring each one in the typical concerto grosso movement form of slow–fast–slow–fast. Despite what he wrote about the music of other composers, his own concertos are full of baroque exuberance and energy. They were certainly popular in their own day. When he announced the project to publish the concertos, one hundred and fifty one subscribers signed up to buy the music sight unseen.

Antonio Vivaldi

Concerto in d minor RV 242 Op 8 No 7 ‘Per Pisendel’

Allegro
Largo
Allegro

Vivaldi dedicated a number of his concertos to Johann Pisendel, one of the most famous violinists of his time. Pisendel spent thirty years as a violinist and later Konzertmeister (concert master) in the Dresden court orchestra, which was then the finest orchestra in Europe. In 1716–17 he spent nine months in Venice as part of the entourage of his employer, the Prince-Elector of Saxony, and during that time he studied with and became a close friend of Vivaldi. He acquired a large number of manuscripts by Vivaldi, and copied out some of the scores of his concertos, like the two other Vivaldi concertos featured in this concert. Under his leadership the Dresden orchestra became the major promoter of Vivaldi’s music outside Italy, and this was to have a far-reaching influence on German composers such as JS Bach.

This concerto was published in 1725 in a collection of twelve violin concertos with the title Il cimento dell’ammonia e dell’inventione (“The Battle between Harmony and Invention”). The collection also included “The Four Seasons” concertos.

What to Listen For

As usual, the first and third movements are built around repeating ritornelli, with the solo violin making florid appearances between them. The brilliance of the writing for solo violin suggests just how greatly Vivaldi respected Pisendel’s abilities. The beautiful Largo second movement belongs almost exclusively to the soloist, who performs above a bare accompaniment from the orchestra.
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TWELFTH NIGHT, WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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