

# the baw baw trio and friends

Brian Chapman – piano / Daniel Stefanski – violin / Joan Evans – cello

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## 2015 Subscription Series

Wesley of Warragul

Victoria Street, Warragul 3820

— **CONCERT 3, SUNDAY OCTOBER 25th 2015** —

**Haydn** Trio in G major, Hob.XV:25 ("Gypsy")

**Beethoven** Trio No.5 in D, Op.70 No.1 ("Ghost")

— **INTERVAL** —

**Brahms** Quartet in G minor for Piano, Violin, Viola and Cello, Op.25  
with guest artist Lawrence Jacks

## PROGRAMME NOTES

### Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

#### Trio in G major for Piano, Violin and Cello, Hoboken XV:25

*Andante*

*Poco Adagio*

*Finale: Rondo alla Zingarese (Presto)*

Haydn composed thirty-one trios for piano, violin and cello, three of them with parts for flute as an alternative to the violin. The present *Trio* was published in 1795 as the first of a set of three trios dedicated to Mrs Rebecca Schröter (1751-1826), a lady who had taken pianoforte lessons from Haydn during his first visit to London in 1790-1, and who developed a passionate attachment for the composer, being over two years widowed from her late husband, John Samuel Schröter, a fine pianist who had succeeded Johann Christian Bach as music-master to the Queen from 1782.

The lady clearly made a profound impression upon Haydn, for not only did he favour her with the abovementioned dedication some years afterwards but he kept her letters until well into his old age when he is reported to have said of them:

Those are from an English widow who fell in love with me. She was a very attractive woman ... and had I been free I should certainly have married her.

As is well documented, Haydn had fallen in love in his youth with a wig-maker's younger daughter. When she entered a nunnery, the 28-year-old composer was persuaded against his better judgment by the wig-maker to marry his elder daughter, a woman who, according to Haydn, cared not a straw whether he was an artist or a shoemaker. Haydn's freedom from a marriage that gave him neither solace, support, nor children was not granted until he was nearly sixty-eight – five years after his leaving London forever.

It is not hard to imagine that something of the longing and regret that Haydn must have experienced in relation to his involvement with Mrs Schröter has been permanently captured in the beautiful *Adagio* movement of this *Trio*. For all its simplicity of structure and scoring, it is extremely heartfelt and seems to anticipate the exquisite beauty we so often associate with the early Beethoven *Adagio* movements that were soon to follow.

The first movement is a set of four variations on a charming theme that has the unusual feature of consisting of two ten-bar sections rather than the more usual eight-bar structures. The first variation is in G minor, followed by G major, E minor, and G major. The movement ends abruptly with no closing *coda* to round things off. After the *Adagio* already mentioned, the *Trio* comes to a brilliant, vivacious conclusion with a sparkling *Rondo* in the Gypsy style.

It is characteristic of Haydn's trio compositions that the cello part is mostly confined to doubling the left hand of the piano part. Although this is no disadvantage to Haydn's musical purposes, the result has been that professional piano trios tend to omit Haydn's literature from their public concert performances (apart from the present *Rondo* movement which is a popular favourite *encore* piece). Nevertheless, these works contain great charm and they generally display a formal perfection and cheerful outlook that are the hallmarks of Haydn's musical disposition.

### Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

#### Trio No.5 in D for Piano, Violin and Cello, Op.70 No.1

*Allegro vivace e con brio*

*Largo assai ed espressivo*

*Presto*

Beethoven's two Trios, *Op.70* were composed in 1808 with a dedication to the Countess Marie von Erdödy, and were published the following year in Leipzig by Breitkopf & Härtel. The nickname "*Ghost*" has long attached itself to the *D major Trio* owing to the peculiar music of the second movement.

The first movement is cast in Sonata Form and it is interesting to reflect on how little of the character of a work may be deduced simply from that fact. The other great *Trio* of Beethoven's maturity, the *Op.97* ("*Archduke*"), also commences with a first movement in Sonata Form. But while the opening *Allegro moderato* of *Op.97* is generously fashioned from long, lyrical themes into a broad, expansive structure, the present *Allegro vivace e con brio* offers a fascinating study of how Beethoven, by the process of repetition and obsession with a rhythmically distinctive figure, could build a completely satisfying movement out of the tiniest musical fragments.

The first or principal subject is in two halves: the first half is a terse, energetic statement lasting only a single bar with the three instruments in unison, but expanded by repetition of its last four-note figure into an ascending sequence over three bars; there follows an interrupted cadence with the cello left suspended and resolving into a more lyrical fragment lasting only two bars and forming the second half of the first subject. The second subject is even leaner than the first, comprising a simple cadential fragment set

against an undulating scale passage. Despite such economy of means, Beethoven develops all this into a movement of 270 bars dominated by the tension between the two contrasting elements of the principal theme. Particularly noteworthy is the lovely *coda* to this movement, built almost entirely out of the second, lyrical fragment of the main theme, with the final word coming from the terse opening fragment.

The *Largo* has the character of a night piece and makes much use of eerie, spine-chilling harmonies to achieve its effects. However, the terrors portrayed by this music relate more to the inner torment of the soul than to superficial 'spookiness' of an external nature. When, finally, the nightmare is over, Beethoven offers complete relief in a bubbling *Presto* that shines brilliantly with sunny optimism and good humour.

## **Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)**

### **Quartet in G minor for Piano, Violin, Viola and Cello, Op.25**

*Allegro*

*Intermezzo: Allegro ma non troppo*

*Andante con moto*

*Rondo alla Zingarese: Presto*

The *G minor Quartet, Op.25*, completed in 1861 near Hamburg, was among the compositions with which Brahms presented himself publicly for the first time in Vienna as pianist and composer. Concerning this occasion the prominent Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick wrote:

One cannot speak here of a beginner. But it is precisely in Brahms's latest works that one encounters question marks and picture puzzles which will be solved only in his next creative period ... Will his originality of invention and melodic richness hold pace with the ultimate development of his harmonic and contrapuntal art? Will the natural freshness and youthfulness continue to bloom untroubled in the costly vase that he has now created for them? Will they grow even more beautiful and free? Does that veil of brooding reflection which so frequently clouds his newest works presage a sudden burst of sunlight, or a thicker, less hospitable twilight? The very near future will tell.<sup>1</sup>

Hanslick seems to have been particularly troubled by the brooding first movement of the present work in which he found "the shadowy aspects of his creative spirit ... more decisively in evidence." While it is true that the movement as a whole is darkly coloured there is, in fact, almost a super-abundance of melodic invention that spills across the Sonata Form structure within which Brahms casts the movement.

The *Intermezzo* offers a rhythmically lighter contrast to the first movement but there is a fascinating tension deriving from the continuing dark colouration, coupled with melodies that seem deliberately 'caged' rather than being allowed free flight, as if the *ostinato* accompaniment set up by the cello keeps them grounded.

With the onset of the *Andante* we encounter one of the longest and richest melodies in Brahms's entire output. The contrasting timbres of the piano and strings are exploited to the full in singing out an impassioned statement that seems loath to cease. After almost sixty bars have elapsed the rhapsodic mood is replaced with a tense dotted rhythm and a return of more brooding harmonic and melodic fragments. Suddenly the mood changes with a lightly scored martial section in C major which gradually metamorphoses into a sense of foreboding. A crashing key change into A flat major heralds a restless chromatic section that leads to a blazing restatement of the C major martial theme. Eventually this leads back to an elaborately woven variant of the opening rhapsodic theme that reaches new heights of ecstasy and finally comes to rest in peaceful serenity.

The *Rondo* sets out on a fiery Hungarian gypsy dance that carries both performers and listeners along on a whirlwind tour of contrasting episodes and insistent reprises. This gives Brahms, the strict classicist, a rare opportunity to let his hair down and indulge in musical revelry. After the piano and the strings are each given two contrasting cadenzas in turn, they join together in a gradually accelerating chase which culminates in a final frenzied statement of the main theme that rushes brilliantly to a breathless conclusion.

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<sup>1</sup>Eduard Hanslick: *Music Criticisms 1846-99*. Translated and edited by Henry Pleasants. Peregrine Books 1963.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Melbourne-born **Lawrence Jacks** studied violin from seven years of age with Madame Kato Feutchersleben, changing instrument to viola five years later and, after undertaking advanced study with John Gould, began his professional career at age 23 as Principal Viola with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. In 1978 he became Associate Principal Viola in the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, becoming Principal from 1981 until 1990 when he was invited to take up the 1<sup>st</sup> chair Viola with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, a position he held until his retirement in 2006. He has appeared as soloist on many occasions with all three of these orchestras.

Lawrence was on the Music Faculty of the University of Western Australia for 13 years and a Board Member and conductor of the West Australian Youth Orchestra. He has also served on the Board of the Australian Youth Orchestra, of which organisation he remains a member of the Artistic Council. He has also conducted a very successful season of the AYO's "Young Symphonist" program for secondary aged string players. Throughout Lawrence's professional career he has been an active and dedicated educator, working with individual students and with schools in developing, conducting and raising the standards of school orchestras. His teaching involvements have been Australia wide and many of his students have subsequently won positions in Australia's symphony orchestras or continued their studies and careers overseas. Lawrence continues to teach with passion, "Teaching being a way of life and a pursuit of excellence".



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English-born pianist **Brian Chapman** studied in Brisbane with Nora Baird from 1952, and in Melbourne from 1954 with Lindsay Biggins, J.A. Steele and Roy Shepherd. Early achievements included the performing diplomas AMusA (1958) and LMusA (1965), and Victorian State finalist in the ABC's Instrumental and Vocal Competition (now Young Performers Award) in 1966 and 1968 (equal State winner). He appeared in nine televised episodes of Channel 10's "Showcase" during 1968-1970.

Brian has performed widely in Melbourne, interstate and overseas, including the United States, Mexico and Germany. He has made over 100 ABC studio recordings and broadcasts, including chamber music with Andrew Bain, Rhonda Bruce, the Ciampi Quartet of Duke University, Jeffrey Crellin, Joan Dargavel, Graeme Evans, Tania Ferris, Phillip Green, David Griffiths, Brian Hansford, Louisa Hunter-Bradley, John Kennedy, Janis Laurs, Frances Lehmann, Chris Martin, Phillip Miechel, Max Neil, Merlyn Quaife, the Rowe Quartet, David Thomas, Trio Victoria, Henry Wenig, and Matthew Wilkie. He has released five audio CDs of music for piano solo, together with CDs of Schubert's *Winterreise* with soprano Louisa Hunter-Bradley and the Piano & Wind Quintets of Mozart and Beethoven. He has appeared in recital with international virtuosi Hermann Baumann (horn), Thomas Indermuhle (oboe) and Denis Wick (trombone), and has also organised major musical events including Monash University's 1983 Brahms Chamber Music Festival and 1997 Schubert/Brahms Festival.

Brian teaches piano privately and was honorary accompanist to the West Gippsland Chorale from 2001 to 2009. In 2014 he retired from his career as an academic physiologist, the last six years of which were spent as Associate Professor at Monash University's Gippsland Medical School.

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**Daniel Stefanski**, an infectious diseases physician at the West Gippsland Hospital in Warragul, has pursued his dual passions of medicine and music around the world for the past 20 years, having deferred medicine in 1995 for two years of musical work in Europe. After busking around Ireland, he won a place in the *Finnish National Opera Orchestra*, studied at the *East Helsinki Music Institute* and spent the summer in Germany in the prestigious *Schleswig-Holstein Festival Orchestra Academy*, working with soloist Yo-Yo Ma and conductors Herbert Blomstedt, Dmitri Kitajenko and Krzysztof Penderecki. Invited by Penderecki, Daniel won a scholarship to the *European Mozart Academy* in Kraków. He studied Bartók string quartets with Gabor Takacs-Nagy and intensive classes with renowned pedagogues Grigori Zhislin, Xenia Jankovic, Gyorgy Pauk and Aurele Nicolet, performing in Kraków and Budapest.

In Melbourne, Daniel studied violin with Lim Kek Tjiang, Donald Scotts and Mark Mogilevsky. He was associate concertmaster of *Phantom of the Opera* orchestra, has played in the *State Orchestra of Victoria*, has recorded for film and television and been session musician with Stevie Wonder, Deborah Conway and Dandelion Wine.

In 1997 he was a founding member of improvising and avant-garde string quartet deFlocKed, which debuted at the Melbourne International Festival performing alongside UK composer Gavin Bryars in Australian premieres of his own work. deFlocKed performed widely in Melbourne for Musica Viva, ABC Radio and Television and collaborated with artists Slave Pianos before disbanding in 2001. Daniel has also collaborated in chamber groups with Australian composer Jane Hammond.

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New Zealand-born cellist **Joan Evans** studied initially with her cello-teaching mother, Dorothy Wallace, winning a Queen Elizabeth Arts Council bursary at the age of 16 to study at the Guildhall School of Music in London with the legendary William Pleeth. During her time there she also studied with the famous cellist Jacqueline Du Pré before winning the Toussaint Award for cellists at the conclusion of her course.

On her return home she was a finalist in the New Zealand Concerto Competitions and a member of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra for 2 years before taking up the Principal Cello position with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. During her Tasmania sojourn Joan was cellist in the Lyrian String Quartet and Viola da Gamba player in the Tasmanian Renaissance Consort. She performed in many chamber concerts and broadcasts as a member of these ensembles and was also active as a soloist in broadcasts for the ABC. During later visits to New Zealand, Joan recorded for Radio New Zealand with the late Maurice Till, performing sonatas by Beethoven, Brahms and Shostakovich.

Joan moved to Melbourne to take up the position of Associate Principal Cello in The Elizabethan Trust Orchestra (now Orchestra Victoria), joining the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in 1980 and where she remained until her retirement in 2012. In addition to the extensive orchestral repertoire, she has maintained her active enjoyment of playing chamber music, appearing frequently in the MSO Chamber Music Series.

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