2011 SEASON

BEETHOVEN’S EGMONT
THE PERFECT HERO

FRI 21 OCTOBER 11AM
It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this final concert in the 2011 Tea & Symphony series.

This morning the Sydney Symphony performs two contrasting works in a program which spans a century. Charles Ives – an innovator who dealt in insurance by day and imaginative scores by night – was always striving for greater meaning in his life and work. We are invited to ponder the mystery of existence when he asks *The Unanswered Question*. Some hundred years earlier Beethoven was doing much the same: his incidental music for Goethe’s heroic tale of Count Egmont and his oppressors reminds us of the power of personal integrity.

Each composer stayed true to his ideals as a revolutionary, pushing the artistic boundaries the day – one the father of romanticism, the other the harbinger of modernism.

Kambly has epitomised the Swiss tradition of the finest biscuits for three generations. Each masterpiece from the Emmental Valley is a small thank you for life; a declaration of love for the very best; the peak of fine, elegant taste.

Kambly is a way of life, dedicated to all those who appreciate the difference between the best and the merely good. In this way it is fitting that we partner with the internationally acclaimed Sydney Symphony, whose vision is to ignite and deepen people’s love of live symphonic music.

Kambly is proud to be in its fourth year as sponsor of the Tea & Symphony series. We hope you enjoy this morning’s program and look forward to welcoming you to future concerts in the series throughout 2011.

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2011 SEASON
TEA & SYMPHONY
PRESENTED BY KAMBLY
Friday 21 October | 11am
Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

BEETHOVEN’S EGMONT: THE PERFECT HERO

Richard Gill conductor
Eddie Perfect narrator
Kiandra Howarth soprano

CHARLES IVES (1874–1954)
The Unanswered Question

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Egmont – Incidental music, Op.84
Text by Gordon Kalton Williams after Goethe and Grillparzer
Overture (Sostenuto, ma non troppo – Allegro)
Song – ‘Die Trommel gerühret’ (Beat the drum)
Zwischenakt I (Andante – Allegro con brio)
Zwischenakt II (Larghetto)
Song – ‘Freudvoll und leidvoll’ (Joyful and sorrowful)
Zwischenakt III (Allegro) – March (Vivace)
Zwischenakt IV (Poco sostenuto e risoluto – Andante agitato)
Death of Clara
Melodrama
Victory Symphony (Allegro con brio)
Kiandra Howarth Clara
Eddie Perfect Narrator and Egmont

The music on this program, together with Nigel Westlake’s Missa Solis, can be enjoyed again via the BigPond webcast, available On Demand. Visit bigpondmusic.com/sydneysymphony Audio for our webcasts is provided courtesy of ABC Classic FM.

Estimated durations:
6 minutes, 40 minutes
The concert will conclude at approximately 11.55am.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

IVES The Unanswered Question

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Who was Charles Ives?
A. Ives came from a well-off New England family with its fair share of eccentricity (‘...odd, but in a nice way,’ said his wife). He studied music at Yale then became a successful life insurance salesman who composed for the love of it. This freed him to be completely original without needing to court publishers and concert presenters. He didn’t belong to a particular stylistic school but he was hugely influential as the father of modern American music. When his Third Symphony won the Pulitzer prize he said ‘Prizes are for boys – I’m grown up!’ (He was 72.)

Q. What were his musical influences?
A. When Charles was a boy his father, a leading bandmaster, made him sing songs in one key while he accompanied him on the piano in a different key, which seems to have given him a healthy disdain for conventional harmony. Similarly, he was fascinated by things that we would call ‘wrong’: a mis-harmonised hymn tune, or the competing sounds of town bands marching in different directions, each playing their own music.

Q. What kind of music did he write?
A. Ives wrote in nearly every genre, including symphonies, string quartets, piano sonatas, organ music and songs. He often quotes hymns and popular tunes, and the influence of folk music is strong. But the risk of sentimentality is countered by playful experiments with harmony and rhythm.

Q. How did he come to write The Unanswered Question?
A. The Unanswered Question was one of a pair of pieces, first performed as interludes in a New York theatre (the other was Central Park in the Dark) and together known as Two Contemplations. The flexibility of the theatre-orchestra tradition is reflected in the instrumentation: trumpet (which can be replaced by English horn, oboe or clarinet), flute quartet (third and fourth flutes replaceable...
by oboe and clarinet) and string orchestra or string quartet. Another theatrical aspect of the piece emerges in the staging instructions, which include placing instruments offstage.

Around this time, 1906, Ives was busy experimenting with new musical ideas. He revised *The Unanswered Question* in the 1930s and composer Elliott Carter arranged for its formal premiere in 1946.

Q. What does the title mean?

A. The original title was ‘A Contemplation of a Serious Matter’ or ‘The Unanswered Perennial Question’. (*Central Park in the Dark* was ‘A Contemplation of Nothing Serious’.) Ives’ own comments suggest metaphysical themes behind the music:

> The quiet strings…represent the conventional life. We get up, and go to the office, and come home again, have dinner with the family, sit around in the evening…But sometimes there comes a Question: Is this all my life is good for? Shouldn’t I be doing something courageous for the good of humanity? This question crosses the conventional life, doesn’t fit with it. The flutes and other people try to answer, more and more intensely, but can’t seem to get through. Meanwhile the conventional life goes on, and when the Question is asked for the last time, it is still not answered.

Q. What will it sound like?

YVONNE FRINDLE ©2008

This performance of Ives’ *Unanswered Question* uses a scoring of four flutes, one trumpet and, positioned off stage, a string quartet.

The Sydney Symphony first performed the work in a 1968 Town Hall Proms Concert, conducted by John Hopkins, and most recently in 2001, conducted by Bruno Weil.

...a healthy disdain for conventional harmony.
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
German composer
(1770–1827)

BEETHOVEN
Egmont – Incidental music, Op.84

Beethoven is associated in the popular mind with the ideals of the French Revolution – liberty, equality and fraternity. Details of his public career support this: the sentiments of the opera Fidelio, and the incident in which he tore up the original dedication to Napoleon on the front page of the Eroica Symphony upon hearing the news of Napoleon’s self-coronation (‘Now he also will trample on all human rights and indulge his ambition. He will place himself above everybody else and become a tyrant.’).

But Beethoven probably identified less with equality than with the idea of a meritocracy. He wrote in 1820, admittedly some years after the Eroica and Fidelio, that ‘the common citizen should be excluded from higher men’. And it was probably the Wise Ruler, personified notably by Don Fernando, the Minister of State in Fidelio, who most faithfully reflected his political ideal.

Goethe’s Egmont likewise is no Spartacus. He does not die for the overthrow of the aristocracy. However he does oppose the unnecessarily harsh reinforcement of the status quo. And it is easy to see how Goethe’s story, with its politised heroine (Clara, or Klärchen), its depiction in the early scenes of a contented, benignly-ruled live-and-let-live society, and the stand of a brave individual against that society’s cruel suppression, appealed to Beethoven’s particular political orientation.

Lamoral, Count Egmont, was the 16th-century hero of the Low Countries. A war hero who had driven back the invading French, he led the people in resisting Spanish domination but was eventually executed by the Spanish in Brussels in 1565. His death was regarded as the harbinger of the eventual revolt and liberation of the northern provinces. Goethe’s five-act tragic drama was first produced in 1789; Beethoven was commissioned in 1809 by the Burgtheater in Vienna to write incidental music for the long-awaited Viennese premiere in 1810. Beethoven so admired the work that he refused a fee from the theatre.

Besides the overture, which is so justly famous, Beethoven wrote nine other numbers for Egmont. These are rarely
played in concerts, which is remarkable. Hearing the complete *Egmont* incidental music allows us to grasp the grandness of the theatrical conception in a way that isolated performances of the overture cannot do.

Composers appreciated Goethe's poetry for its concrete imagery, clear narrative exposition, and vibrant rhythms. Beethoven's admiration was reflected in a number of settings of the poet's work. 'The Song of the Flea' (from *Faust*) and the cantata *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* are two examples that spring to mind. However, the meeting between the two men at the Bohemian spa of Teplitz in 1812 was rather a tense occasion. Goethe's polished urbanity clashed with the manners of Beethoven, a self-made man who, when he sensed he was being patronised by an aristocrat, had a habit of exaggerating his rough edges.

A story, perhaps apocryphal, tells of Goethe's annoyance as people bowed to him along a path and of Beethoven's response: 'Don't give it a thought, your Excellency, the compliments are perhaps meant for me.'

Goethe had not heard Beethoven's *Egmont* music by the time of this meeting (his respect for Beethoven's musicianship was limited to his piano playing), but when he heard the *Egmont* music in a concert performance in 1821 he remarked of the last scene, Egmont's melodrama: 'Beethoven has followed my intentions with admirable genius.'

That concert performance in 1821 presented Beethoven's numbers with linking text supplied by Friedrich Mosengeil. In 1834 Franz Grillparzer, the leading Austrian poet of his day, revised this text in unrhymed verse. It is this text which serves as the basis of this morning's presentation. Elements of Goethe's original play that were retained by Grillparzer remain in our version. These are the two song texts and the melodrama (the orchestrally accompanied spoken monologue) that ends the play.

While providing an effective narrative for the incidental music, Grillparzer's text removes detail from the political aspect of Goethe's play and leans more heavily towards the romantic relationship between Egmont and Clara. Characters such as Margaret of Parma the Spanish Regent, Machiavelli her advisor, and the Duke of Alva's two henchman (Gomez and Silva) are omitted. Though today's version does...
not restore those characters, the text has been adapted to give some sense of the political dangers at stake in the early part of the story. There is, therefore, increased opportunity to appreciate the original underscoring effect of Beethoven’s music and of the juxtaposing effect of the Zwischenakte (literally ‘between acts’ music, or entr’actes) which originally commented on the action just past and foreshadowed the action to come. The re-balancing of the plot lines also injects deeper motivation into Clara’s eventual adoption of a political stance.

The striking thing is that a sense of the original text for which this music was written enhances the genius of the music, and actually increases our appreciation of what Grillparzer described as ‘the mighty sounds which a great mind conjured up…when he allied himself to one [whom Grillparzer considered] even greater’.

GORDON KALTON WILLIAMS
SYMPHONY AUSTRALIA ©1993

**Synopsis and Vocal Texts**

After the familiar overture, the narrator describes the setting of the story, extols Egmont’s virtues and introduces Clara (Song – *Die Trommel gerühret*).

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*Die Trommel gerühret!*

Beat the drum!

*Das Pfeifchen gespielt!*

Sound the fife!

*Mein Liebster gewaffenet*

My beloved, in armour,

*Dem Haufen befiehlt,*

commands his troops,

*Die Lanze hoch führet*

holds high his lance,

*Die Leute regieret*

rules his men.

*Wie klopf mir das Herze!*

How my heart beats!

*Wie wallt mir das Blut!*

How my blood races!

*O hatt ich ein Wamslein,*

Oh, if only I had doublet

*Und Hosen und Hut,*

breeches and helmet!

*Ich folgt ihm zum Tor naus*

I would follow him through the gate

*Mit mutigem Schritt,*

with valiant tread,

*Ging durch die Provinzen,*

and march through the provinces,

*Ging überall mit.*

march all over with him.

*Die Feinde schon weichen,*

The enemy wavers

*Wir schiessen darein*

as we fire into them.

*Welch Gluck sondergleichen,*

What joy unequalled

*Ein Mannsbild zu sein!*

to be a man!
The narrator foreshadows ominous events (Zwischenakt I Andante – Allegro con brio). Then expresses the anxiety caused by Egmont’s heedlessness. But Egmont is able to forget political dangers in Clara’s company (Zwischenakt II Larghetto) The threat to Egmont’s and Clara’s happiness looms closer (Song – Freudvoll und Leidvoll).

Freudvoll
To be joyful
Und leidvoll
and sorrowful,
Gedankenvoll sein,
to be pensive,
Langen
to long
Und bangen
and dread
In schwebender Pein,
in lingering pain,
Himmelhoch jauchzend,
to exult to heaven,
Zum Tode betrubt,
cast down unto death
Glucklich allein,
happy alone
Ist der Seele, die liebt.
is the soul that loves.

Egmont and Clara spend one last night together (Zwischenakt III Allegro) before the Spanish enter the city (March). Egmont is trapped (Zwischenakt IV Poco sostenuto e risoluto) and Clara, though weak with grief, tries to rouse her countrymen (Zwischenakt IV Andante agitato). Clara dies (Death of Clara). Egmont is condemned and passes his last night in prison. In his dreams, Egmont sees a vision which portends the eventual liberation of the northern provinces (Melodrama), and before his death makes a speech exhorting his countrymen to rise up against the tyrants (Victory Symphony).

Beethoven’s Egmont music calls for two flutes (one doubling piccolo), two oboes, two clarinets and two bassoons; four horns, two trumpets; timpani and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed the incidental music in 1969 with soprano Netania Davrath and conductor Peter Robinson, and most recently in 1993 with conductor Franz-Paul Decker, soprano Malvina Major, and actor Hugo Weaving using the script by G.K. Williams.
Richard Gill conductor

Richard Gill is internationally respected as a music educator, specialising in opera, musical theatre and vocal and choral training. In addition to his role as Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony’s Education Program, he is Music Director of Victorian Opera. He has also been Artistic Director of OzOpera, Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and the Adviser for the Musica Viva in Schools program.

In recent seasons he has conducted Sydney Symphony Meet the Music concerts and Discovery concerts with the Sydney Sinfonia, as well as directing the Sinfonietta Project for young composers. He has also conducted the Melbourne, Queensland, Tasmanian and Canberra symphony orchestras, Orchestra Victoria, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, and the Australian, Western Australian and Sydney youth orchestras. In addition to OzOpera and Victorian Opera, he has conducted for Opera Australia and Opera Queensland. He also conducted The World’s Biggest Singing Lesson at the UWA Perth International Arts Festival and Sing Your Own Opera at the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts, and was Chairman of the Jury for the ABC/OA Operatunity OZ project (2005–06).

His diverse operatic repertoire encompasses baroque opera, core works such as The Marriage of Figaro and Rigoletto, operetta and 20th-century classics. His productions for Victorian Opera have included a Stravinsky double bill (Les Noces and Oedipus Rex), Così fan tutte, The Coronation of Poppea, Noyes Fludde, The Snow Queen, Don Giovanni, Duke Bluebeard’s Castle and Ariadne auf Naxos.

An advocate for new music, he has conducted premiere performances of Rembrandt’s Wife (Andrew Ford), The Love of the Nightingale (Richard Mills, Brisbane and Melbourne premiere seasons), Lindy (Moya Henderson), The Eighth Wonder and Through the Looking Glass (Alan John). His music theatre repertoire includes Jonathan Mills’ Ghost Wife and Eternity Man. Most recently in Sydney, he was the music director for the Sydney Theatre Company production of The Threepenny Opera.

Richard Gill’s numerous accolades include an Order of Australia Medal, the Bernard Heinze Award, an Honorary Doctorate from the Edith Cowan University of Western Australia, the Australian Music Centre’s award for Most Distinguished Contribution to the Presentation of Australian Composition by an individual, and the Australia Council’s prestigious Don Banks Award.
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Kiandra Howarth soprano

Kiandra Howarth made her professional debut with Opera Queensland in 2009, creating the role of Josie in the youth opera Dirty Apple. She is currently a Young Artist with Opera Queensland, recently understudying the role of Despina in Cosi fan tutte, and next year she will join the Opera Australia Young Artist Program, singing Papagena (The Magic Flute) and Zerlina (Don Giovanni).

Kiandra Howarth graduated from the Queensland Conservatorium in 2010, while also a member of the Opera Queensland Developing Artist Program. For the Conservatorium she appeared in the title role in Massenet’s Cendrillon. That same year, in the Australian Singing Competition, she won the Guildhall School of Music and Drama Award, the Mozart Opera Institute Award, the Symphony Australia Young Vocalist Award, and the Dr Handa Prize. She also won the Southeast Queensland Aria and Concerto Competition and received an Acclaim Italian Fellowship Award for study in Italy. In 2013 she will undertake a year’s study at the Mozart Operatic Institute in Salzburg.

Eddie Perfect actor

Eddie Perfect studied at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, graduating in 2001. Since then he has become known for his versatility – as an actor, comedian and musician.

His television credits include Offspring, the 2011 Logie Awards, and Spicks and Specks, as well as performing his own comedy. His theatre and comedy appearances in Sydney include Keating! The Musical (Company B Belvoir), Shane Warne The Musical, Misanthropology (Sydney Festival) and The Threepenny Opera (Sydney Theatre Company, with Richard Gill).

He has written and toured several shows, including Angry Eddie as well as Shane Warne The Musical, Misanthropology, and most recently Songs From The Middle, a collaboration with the Brodsky Quartet and the Australian National Academy of Music. He has also composed music for several Malthouse Theatre productions, for the Helpmann, Aawgie and Inside Film Awards and for Offspring.

Eddie Perfect’s accolades include several Green Room Awards, mostly recently for Best New Australian Musical (Shane Warne The Musical), the 2009 Victorian Premier’s Literary Award for Best Music Theatre Script, and Helpmann Awards for Best New Australian Work (2009) and Best Cabaret Performer (2011). This is his debut appearance with the Sydney Symphony.
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Sun Yi
Associate Concertmaster
Kirsten Williams
Associate Concertmaster
Fiona Ziegler
Assistant Concertmaster
Julie Batty
Jennifer Booth
Marianne Broadfoot
Brielle Clapson
Sophie Cole
Amber Davis
Georges Lentz
Nicola Lewis
Alexandra Mitchell
Léone Ziegler
Emily Qin#

Second Violins
Kirsty Hilton
Alexander Read*
Emma West
Assistant Principal
Jennifer Hoy
A/Assistant Principal
Susan Dobbie
Principal Emeritus
Maria Durek
Shuti Huang
Stan W Kornel
Benjamin Li
Emily Long
Maja Verunica
Alexandra D’Elia#

Violas
Anne-Louise Comerford
Sandro Costantino
Jane Hazelwood
Graham Hennings
Stuart Johnson
Justine Marsden
Felicity Tsai
Leonid Volovelsky
Rosemary Curtin#
David Wicks#

Cellos
Leah Lynn
Assistant Principal
Timothy Nankervis
Elizabeth Neville
Adrian Wallis
David Wickham
Eleanor Betts*
Mee Na Lojewski*
Mathissha Panagoda*

Double Basses
Alex Henery
Neil Brawley
Principal Emeritus
David Campbell
Steven Larson
David Murray
Hugh Kluger†

Flutes
Janet Webb
Carolyn Harris
Rosamund Plummer
Principal Piccolo
Katie Zagorski†

Oboes
Diana Doherty
Alexandre Oguey
Principal Cor Anglais

Clarinets
Francesco Celata
Craig Wernicke
Principal Bass Clarinet

Bassoons
Roger Brooke
Fiona McNamara

Horns
Ben Jacks
Geoffrey O’Reilly
Principal 3rd
Euan Harvey
Marnie Sebire
Sebastian Dunn*
Katy Grisdale†

Trumpets
Paul Goodchild
John Foster
Anthony Heinrichs

Trombones
Scott Kinmont
Nick Byrne
Christopher Harris
Principal Bass Trombone

Tuba
Steve Rossé

Timpani
Richard Miller

Percussion
Rebecca Lagos
Colin Piper
Mark Robinson
John Douglas*
Brian Nixon*
Philip South*

Harps
Louise Johnson
Genevieve Lang*

Keyboards
Josephine Allan#

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Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony has evolved into one of the world’s finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world’s great cities.

Resident at the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony also performs in venues throughout Sydney and NSW. International tours have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence, most recently in a European tour that included the BBC Proms and the Edinburgh Festival.

The Sydney Symphony’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, Zdenek Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. The orchestra’s history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

The Sydney Symphony’s award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of symphonic music, and the orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and commissions.

The Sydney Symphony Live label has captured performances with Alexander Lazarev, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Sir Charles Mackerras and Vladimir Ashkenazy. The orchestra has also released recordings with Ashkenazy on the Exton/Triton labels, and numerous recordings for ABC Classics.

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