



Living Beethoven

Douglas Boyd launches Adelaide Symphony Orchestra's 2022-23 season with complete Beethoven symphony cycle

Conductor's interpretations explore contrasts of power and lightness, drama and poetry, bold gestures and fine detail

'Gutsy, powerful, vivid – this Mancunian Beethoven is something quite special', *Gramophone* review of Symphonies Nos.4&7 with Manchester Camerata

Beethoven's nine symphonies rank among the supreme measures of an orchestra's vitality and a conductor's artistic philosophy. Douglas Boyd is set to test both when he opens the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra's 2022-23 season with the complete cycle over the course of five evenings (14, 17, 21, 24 & 25 September). He has chosen to present the works in numerical order, starting with the classicism of the composer's First Symphony of 1800 and crowning the sequence with the adamant power and surging optimism of the Ninth Symphony, first heard in Vienna in 1824.

The Glasgow-born musician, praised by *Opera* magazine for his 'thrillingly uninhibited conducting', has a long and deep association with the music of Beethoven. During his twenty years as principal oboe of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe (COE), he took part in Nikolaus Harnoncourt's revelatory recordings of the symphonies and went on to earn critical acclaim as conductor of his own cycle, recorded live in concert with Manchester Camerata.

Douglas Boyd has since conducted all nine symphonies with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and explored individual works from the cycle during his time as Principal Conductor of the Orchester Musikkollegium Winterthur (2009-2016) and Music Director of the Orchestre de chambre de Paris (2015-20). His enthusiasm for each composition was supercharged by the unforgettable experience of performing the full set with Harnoncourt.

"Those interpretations were revolutionary," Boyd recalls. "I was brought up with old-school, Karajan-style performances of the symphonies. Listening to them, I never really got Beethoven's rhetoric and iconoclasm. Harnoncourt's performances were an epiphany for me. He had the combination of profound knowledge of the pieces and of working with period instruments. And above all, he brought fantasy to the music. He insisted that these are not museum pieces. That has always stayed with me. This music has to speak to people today; that's where its authenticity comes from and why it will always be relevant."

Beethoven has been part of life for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra since its foundation in the mid-1930s. The 75-strong ensemble, based chiefly at Adelaide Town Hall, has forged an international reputation thanks not least to its critically acclaimed performances of Wagner's *Ring* cycle in 1998 and 2004, tours to China, Korea and Singapore, and its debut at New York's Carnegie Hall.

"I was delighted when the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra invited me to return for the third time," comments Douglas Boyd. "It's a real honour to be asked to conduct all nine Beethoven symphonies with them. The Adelaide cycle will be different from any I've done before, not least because of what their terrific players will bring to the party. We will have a much larger group of strings than I had with Manchester Camerata, but it will still be lighter than a full-size symphony orchestra. That means we'll be able to generate enormous power in the sforzandos and the other revolutionary gestures that Beethoven makes but without them being overdone. This really is a terrific orchestra. They're completely open to new ideas and ready to think of these pieces as if they were being played for the first time. That's an exciting mindset for me and, I hope, for our audiences."

"I feel I'm doing my best work now but that things are still developing" he observes. "You could say that the garden is never finished! Something has deepened over the years. I think it's called life!"

<http://www.douglasboyd.co.uk/>

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BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY CYCLE

Adelaide Town Hall

Douglas Boyd conductor | **Adelaide Symphony Orchestra**

Wednesday 14 September 2022, 7.30pm

Symphony No.1
Symphony No.2
Symphony No.3

Saturday 17 September 2022, 7.30pm

Symphony No.4
Symphony No.5

Wednesday 21 September 2022, 7.30pm

Symphony No.6
Symphony No.7

Saturday 24 September 2022, 7.30pm

Sunday 25 September 2022, 3pm

Emma Matthews soprano | **Sally-Anne Russell** mezzo soprano | **Henry Choo** tenor | **Christopher Richardson** bass | **Elder Conservatorium Chorale** | **Graduate Singers Choir**

Symphony No.8
Symphony No.9