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Title: Adelaide Youth Orchestras 10th Anniversary Gala Concert – Celebrazione (Celebration)

Publication: GLAM Adelaide

Date: 1 July 2011

URL: <http://www.glamadelaide.com.au/main/adelaide-youth-orchestras-10th-anniversary-gala-concert-celebrazione-celebration/>



The Adelaide Youth Orchestras are celebrating their tenth anniversary and, judging by their current members, and those past members who were with them a decade ago who came along to join in on this concert, they have plenty to celebrate. There are three groups within the Adelaide Youth Orchestras: the Adelaide Youth Strings, The Adelaide Youth Sinfonia and the Adelaide Youth Orchestra. The first two orchestras took a turn each playing in the first half of the concert and the third orchestra played two longer works for the second half.

The Adelaide Youth Strings, under the baton of their conductor, Martin Butler, opened the concert with four short pieces, beginning with *Final Quest*, by Daniel Chisham. This was featured recently in the Grandparents Concert, as was their final piece, Postcards from Russia, a medley of traditional folk tunes arranged by Carrie Lane Gruselle. These were as well received as in that earlier concert and showed a little more polish from the extra rehearsals.

They also played that haunting tune, *A Time for Us*, also known as the *Love Theme*, from Franco Zeffirelli's film **Romeo and Juliet**, composed by that prolific film music composer, Nino Rota. The Strings gave a nicely sensitive performance of this work before being joined by a few of the 2001 members for quite a workout with the rhythmically very difficult introduction to the piece, *Mantras*, by Richard Meyers. The lyrical centre section led to more rhythmically challenging work to close the piece. This was one of the works played by the Strings back in 2001. There was some fine work from the Strings in all of these works, and a nicely executed short solo from Lilla Davies-Ardill.

The Adelaide Youth Sinfonia were conducted in their first piece, Melbourne composer Katy Abbott's *Carmen Vitae: Songs of Life for Orchestra*, by guest conductor, Dr. Joanna Drimatis. Written in 2000 this was a challenging work, with lots of percussion, woodwind and brass and very dense scoring. The Sinfonia handled this powerhouse piece with confidence, injecting lots of excitement into the performance.

The Sinfonia's own conductor, Philip Paine, conducted the other three pieces, starting with Johann Strauss II's *Thunder and Lightning Polka, Op. 324*. This lively piece is always well received and certainly drew plenty of applause on this occasion.

Vaughan Williams wrote his English Folk Song Suite for military/concert band but it proved so popular that it was later arranged for symphony orchestra. This, too, was presented in the recent Grandparents Concert and was a welcome inclusion in this concert.

Khachaturian's *Sabre Dance* from **Gayane** concluded the first half of the concert, again giving the Sinfonia a chance to show their skills with rhythmically difficult pieces. There was some very good playing by this orchestra, making light of the often tricky passages in all four of these works.

Following the interval, the Adelaide Youth Orchestra, conducted by Keith Crellin, began with Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 23*. They were joined by internationally renowned cellist, Pei-Sian Ng, as the soloist. He even stayed on to join the cello section for the final piece.

The multi-award winning Pei-Sian Ng, principal cellist with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, often performs duo cello works with his twin brother Pei-Jee Ng, who also has won several awards, as well as pursuing his own solo career. The orchestra seemed inspired by his presence as the soloist, giving a remarkably fine performance of this work. The theme and seven variations cover a lot of ground, musically speaking, and showed the orchestra's great skill in performing such a wide ranging work. Pei-Sian Ng's playing throughout, and especially in the cadenzas, was thrilling.

Their second piece, and last for this concert, was Respighi's *Pines of Rome*. Respighi was not only a composer but also well-known for his work as an orchestrator, so it is no surprise that his own works show his skills in that area, this work even including an organ, not as a solo instrument, but as a part of the ensemble. He even calls for a recording of a nightingale's song. The four movements, played consecutively, are a symphonic tone poem depicting four locations around Rome. Off-stage brass instruments are called for and these were placed across the aisle in the balcony giving as much distance as possible from the orchestra to get a good effect.

This proved to be an extremely enjoyable concert and, once again, showed that young musicians are being well catered for in their education in orchestral technique through involvement with the AdYO. There was high quality playing from all three orchestras and a packed Adelaide Town Hall continually burst into deafening applause at the end of every piece. Watch for future concerts by these fine orchestras.

[Photographs by Tony Lewis]

Reviewed by Barry Lenny, Arts Editor, Glam Adelaide.