

Melbourne Windpower
A Night at the Opera

arrangements for winds 1791–1821

MOZART

The Marriage of Figaro • The Magic Flute

ROSSINI

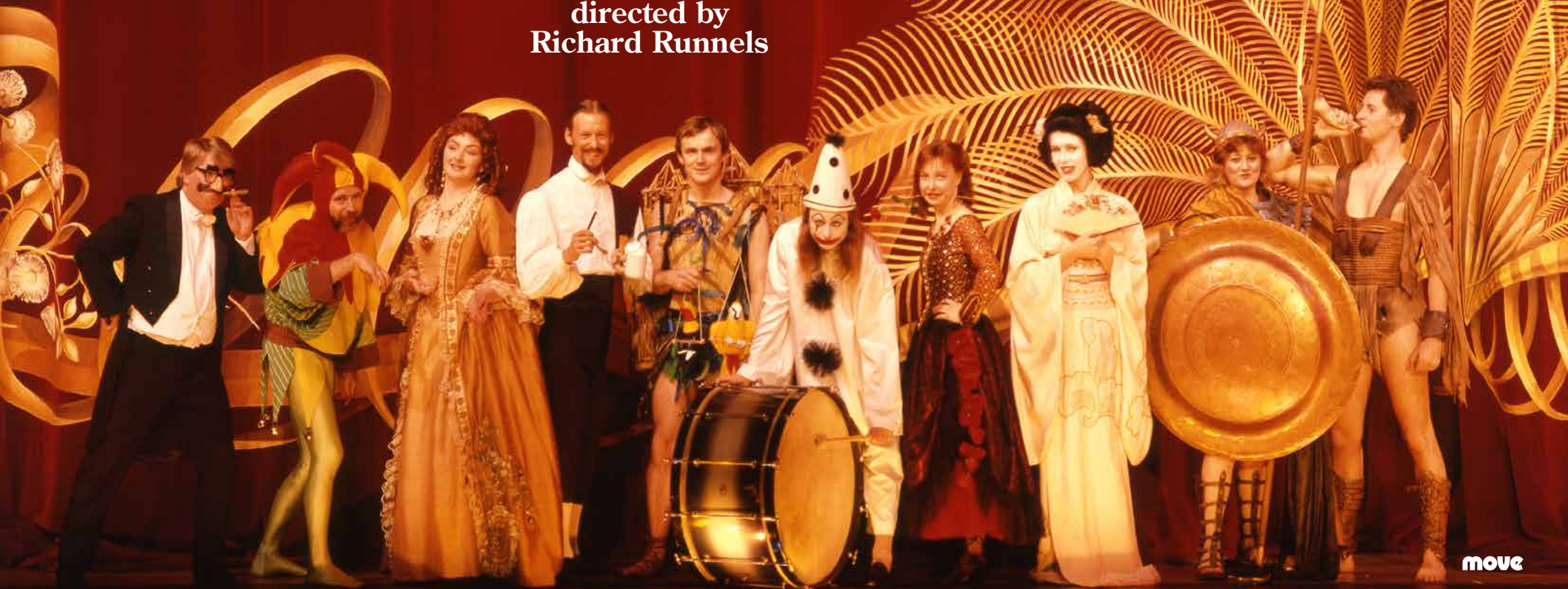
The Barber of Seville

BEETHOVEN

Fidelio

directed by

Richard Runnels





directed by RICHARD RUNNELS

Oboes — Stephen Robinson and Kazimierz Gorzadek

Clarinets — Kate Stockwin (first in Barber and Figaro) and Judy Neutze (first in Fidelio and Magic Flute)

Bassoons — Lucinda Cran, Wendy Cooper and Stephen Black

Contra Bassoon — Stephen Black

Horns — Philip Hall and Linda Hewett

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE – Gioacchino Rossini, 1816 / Wenzel Sedlak, 1821

- 1 Overture 6'44"
- 2 Largo al factotum 2'04"
- 3 La Calunnia e'un Venticello 4'10"
- 4 Di si felice innesto 2'43"

THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, 1786 / Johann Nepomuk Wendt, 1791

- 5 Overture 3'43"
- 6 Se a caso madama 2'24"
- 7 Voi che sapete 2'08"
- 8 Dove sono i bei momenti 4'26"
- 9 Ecco la marcia 2'36"

FIDELIO – Ludwig van Beethoven, 1804 and 1814 / Wenzel Sedlak, 1815

- 10 Overture 6'05"
- 11 O war' ich schon mit dir 2'03"
- 12 Mir ist so wunderbar 3'40"
- 13 Hat man nicht auch Gold 1'15"
- 14 Marsch 1'17"
- 15 O namenlose Freude! 2'45"

THE MAGIC FLUTE – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, 1791/ Joseph Heidenreich, 1792

- 16 Overture 4'28"
- 17 Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja 2'03"
- 18 Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen 2'54"
- 19 Das klinget so herrlich 1'20"
- 20 Alles fühlt der Liebe Freuden 0'44"
- 21 Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen 3'35"
- 22 Papageno! Bist du mir nun ganz gegeben? 1'49"

Produced by: Martin Wright and Richard Runnels

Digital recording and editing: Martin Wright

Production Assistant: Richard Kerr

Recorded: May/June 1991 in the Melbourne Concert Hall

Program notes: © 1991 Richard Runnels

Costumes: Victoria State Opera

Photography: John Ingham, in the State Theatre, Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne

Performing editions prepared by Richard Runnels

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The Harmonie and Opera arrangements in Vienna

Visiting Vienna in 1772 while compiling 'The Present State of Music in Germany', Englishman

Charles Burney passed judgement on a new instrumental combination he heard –

“There was music every day during dinner ... but it was usually bad, particularly that of a band of wind instruments. This consisted of horns, oboes, clarinets and bassoons, all so miserably out of tune that I wished them a hundred miles off.”

Little more than ten years later another visitor recorded a startling development and rise in standard –

“Among all kinds of musical news which has been related to me, one piece that was to me especially remarkable concerned a group of musicians organised by the Kaiser, the sound of whose wind instruments has achieved a new high level of perfection. It is known in Vienna as the kaiserlich-königlich Harmonie. This group consists of eight persons, it performs by itself as a complete and full ensemble.”

Suddenly the Harmonie, a wind ensemble consisting of pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns became the most favored form for music outside the opera house. Austrian nobility quickly followed the example of Kaiser Joseph II – Princes Esterhazy, Grassalkowitz, Schwarzenberg, Lobkowitz and the Kaiser's brother, Maximilian Franz all soon patronised their own wind groups and competed to obtain the services of

the finest wind players. Shortly after his arrival to take up residence in Vienna in 1782 Mozart wrote to his father –

“I have my eye here on three sources. The first is young Prince Liechtenstein, who would like to collect a Harmonie, for which I should write the

music.”

The members of the Kaiser's Harmonie performed primarily in the Imperial Opera Orchestra; for this they were paid 350 Gulden per annum. For their duties in the Harmonie they received an extra 400 Gulden per annum, an indication of the level of importance of this ensemble. But what exactly were their duties? In another musical development, it appears that most of the group's repertoire

consisted of transcriptions of operas and ballets currently being performed in Vienna, played by the Harmonie as part of the Kaiser's dinner music. They rarely performed in what we would today think of as a concert. The performance of opera music on wind instruments surprised a visitor to Vienna who heard the Harmonie perform in 1783 –

“They even perform pieces which are in fact intended only for voices, such as choruses, duos, trios and even arias taken from the best operas; the place of the vocal lines is taken by the oboe and clarinet. One of this Harmonie (the Kaiser's), the virtuoso and composer, Wehend (sic), has arranged them.”

Johann Nepomuk Wendt played second oboe in the Harmonie. Born in Bohemia in 1745, he joined the Imperial Opera Orchestra in Vienna in 1777. He arranged most of the music for the Kaiser's Harmonie as well as working for Prince Schwarzenberg. He also composed original works for the groups. Some

of his opera arrangements were even published during his life, showing the popularity of wind ensembles at the time and the demand for music for them. Mozart seemed well aware of the commercial side of this art when he wrote to his father in 1782 –

“Well, I am up to my eyes in work, for by Sunday week I have to arrange my opera for Harmonie. If I don't someone else will anticipate me and secure my profits.”



Kaiser Joseph II



Mozart in 1789

The 'someone else' was most likely Wendt: he arranged Mozart's Abduction from the Seraglio, Così fan Tutte, Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni and Magic Flute!



There can be no doubt that the musicians involved in the courtly Harmonien were performers of the highest stature. Visitors to Vienna constantly remarked on their quality of performance. Reichardt, Kapellmeister to the King of Prussia, recorded during his visit to Vienna in 1783 –

“The discussion finally turned to Harmoniemusik, which was beginning at that time with great perfection ... This afforded a wholly delightful pleasure. The atmosphere and performances alike were pure and harmonious; some movements by Mozart were also exquisite.”

As late as 1790 wind music was still the subject of conversation –

“Kaiser Joseph II was a great supporter of wind instrument music. He had himself selected eight virtuosi on instruments of this kind and whose performances were executed in so masterly a fashion that through them they must have satisfied even connoisseurs who were hard to please.”

Not a dinner or royal function was complete without a Harmonie in

attendance. The Wiener Zeitung noted in 1786 –

“On Tuesday the Kaiser gave a Fête at Schönbrunn. While His Majesty, together with the distinguished foreigners and guests, partook of the meal, the musicians of the Harmonie were heard performing on wind instruments.”

Count Zinzendorf recorded in his diary of 1787 –

“Dined with Prince Schwarzenberg, music from Cosa Rara divinely played by the wind instruments.”

– and again in 1794 –

“Dined at Princess Schwarzenberg's ... pretty music from The Magic Flute.”

Perhaps the arrangement he heard was that of Joseph Heidenreich (1753-1821).

As early as 14

January, 1792, shortly after Mozart's death, Heidenreich himself had advertised in the Wiener Zeitung –

“Since several music lovers have expressed the wish to own a Harmonie arrangement of the popular opera, The Magic Flute, the last work of the great Mozart, the undersigned flatters himself that he will not be giving unwelcome news when he says that the aforesaid opera set for eight parts will be issued ...”



Beethoven in 1814



Rossini in 1820



Wenzel Sedlak (1776-1851), a clarinetist, was to become the most important transcriber for Harmonien in Vienna in the early 1800s. Kapellmeister to Prince Liechtenstein, he was engaged by the publishing firm Artaria in 1814 to work on an important new arrangement. Ludwig van Beethoven himself had placed the following notice in the Wiener Zeitung on 1 July, 1814 –

“The undersigned, at the request of the Herren Artaria and Co., herewith declares that he has given the score of his opera Fidelio to the aforesaid music establishment for publication under his direction in a complete pianoforte score, quartets or arrangements for Harmonie ...”

Beethoven was a fierce protector of his creations and at this same time wrote to his publisher –

“I will not suffer that any man – no matter who he may be – change my compositions.”

We can therefore assume that he supervised Sedlak's authorised transcription of Fidelio. There are many cuts and alterations to the original which must have had Beethoven's approval. Sedlak's Fidelio appeared on 27 January, 1815.



Wenzel Sedlak made over 60 opera transcriptions from composers such as Bellini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer and Weber. But Rossini seems to have been his favorite – he arranged *The Barber of Seville*, *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, *Elizabeth*, *Queen of England*, *Semiramide*, *The Siege of Corinth*, *Tancredi*, *William Tell*, *Zelmira*, *Othello*, *The Thieving Magpie*, *Corradino*, and probably others. Sedlak expanded the original octet *Harmonie* with contra bassoon, trumpets, even flutes and trombones.

Sedlak's final transcriptions (*Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Meyerbeer's Les Huguenots*) date from 1837 and 1839. It appears that this marks the end of both the *Kaiser's Harmonie* and that of *Prince Liechtenstein*. Economic and social conditions had changed to such an extent that nobility could no longer maintain large numbers of servants and musicians. Opera itself had changed, becoming more grand, complex, and difficult to transcribe for a small wind group. Thus closed six decades where wind ensembles and the opera transcriptions they played were one of music's most favored forms.



Melbourne Windpower brings the late-18th century tradition of wind ensemble music to the present day. The members of Melbourne Windpower perform with the State Orchestra of Victoria. Melbourne Windpower's first CD has evoked excellent reviews:

“Melbourne Windpower continues to impress with its stylish interpretations ... excellent performances ... sonorities and tunings between instruments almost ideal.”
(The Age).

The group is directed by Richard Runnels whose first solo CD, *Horn Destinations*, has received critical praise:

“Enticing ... this recording is a delight.”
(The Age).



L to R: Stephen Robinson, Linda Hewett, Lucinda Cran, Judy Neutze, Richard Runnels, Kate Stockwin, Philip Hall, Kazimierz Gorzadek, Stephen Black, Wendy Cooper



Richard Runnels and his Melbourne Windpower ensemble ham it up in operatic guise at the State Theatre: from left, Runnels (as Groucho Marx in 'A Night at the Opera'), Kazimierz Gorzadek (Rigoletto), Wendy Cooper (Comtesse de Coigny, from 'Andrea Chenier'), Stephen Robinson (Figaro, 'The Barber of Seville'), Stephen Black (Papageno, 'The Magic Flute'), Judy Neutze (Canio, 'Pagliacci'), Lucinda Cran (Carmen), Kate Stockwin (Madam Butterfly), Linda Hewett (Brunnhilde, from the 'Ring' cycle), Philip Hall (Siegfried).

RICHARD RUNNELS is a man of unexpected talents. As principal horn with the State Orchestra of Victoria and leader of the Melbourne Windpower octet, he can talk passionately about the history of wind ensembles in Mozart's era. He has also raced cars, played jazz piano, been a professional rock drummer and is learning to play blues guitar — another passion — on a recently acquired Stratocaster.

Mr Runnels, 41, spent his boyhood in Cincinnati, Ohio, and recalls going to jazz concerts to hear pianist Dave Brubeck and his quartet, as well as making the annual pilgrimage to the Indianapolis 500 car race. He played piano from an early age, switched to drums and spent his last high school year studying classical horn at the Interlochen Arts Academy in North Michigan, where he played drums in a rock band with Brubeck's son, Chris, on bass.

His photo album includes concert snapshots of Jimi Hendrix, The Grateful Dead, Cream and Jefferson Airplane, along with pictures of himself with long, blond hair — a teenage drummer in the local support band. The extra cash came in handy, especially an extended spot in the Bee Gees' touring group that paid for his post-graduate classical studies, at the Salzburg Mozarteum in Vienna.

At 21 he landed a job with the Vienna

Windpower: rise of a musical energy source

INTERVIEW

MIKE DALY

Symphony Orchestra and two years later became a full-time member of a multicultural chamber group called Ensemble I, whose frequent visits to Melbourne resulted in Mr Runnels' present position. He joined the SOV in 1977 (then the Elizabethan Theatre Orchestra, which accompanies the Australian Ballet, Australian Opera and Victoria State Opera).

Recently he established Melbourne Windpower with eight members of the orchestra's oboe, bassoon, horn and clarinet sections (the latter including his wife, Judy Neutze). Their second CD, 'A Night at the Opera' (Move Re-

cords) is just out, featuring wind arrangements from Mozart's 'The Marriage of Figaro' and 'The Magic Flute', Beethoven's 'Fidelio' and Rossini's 'The Barber of Seville'.

Its amusing cover photograph was taken onstage at the State Theatre. The VSO dressed up each member of the ensemble as an operatic character, while Richard Runnels adopted Groucho Marx guise for the title role.

Mr Runnels' extensive notes to the recording explain the evolution of wind ensembles in the 18th Century. "It is a tradition that was very active at a certain time and place, but has since fallen by the wayside," he says. "I came up with an amazing amount of literature documenting the royal patronage of wind ensembles."

The most famous group was Har-

monie, an octet organised by Kaiser Joseph II in Vienna, mainly playing transcriptions of opera and ballet. Such was its popularity that a succession of similar ensembles sprang up at other royal courts. Two of their most prolific arrangers were Johann Wenzel, an oboe player in Kaiser Joseph's Harmonie, and clarinetist Wenzel Sedlak, who dominated the genre in the early 19th Century, earning the approval of Beethoven to transcribe his 'Fidelio'.

"The composers themselves wanted to arrange their own operas and got annoyed when others did," says Mr Runnels. Mozart, concerned at losing custom (probably to Wenzel) wrote to his father in 1782: "I am up to my eyes in work, for by Sunday week I have to arrange my opera for Harmonie. If I don't someone else will anticipate me and secure my profits."

On Tuesday at the Assembly Hall, Collins Street, Melbourne Windpower will perform selections from Rossini's 'Barber' as well as Milhaud's 'Dixtour', Janacek's 'Mladí' (Youth) suite and a Dvorak wind serenade.

In this bicentenary year of Rossini's birth (29 February, in Pesaro, Italy), the 'Barber' arrangement for wind by Wenzel Sedlak was an ideal opener for both CD and concert. "Besides, it's a good way to start with a piece people recognise," Mr Runnels says.

The concert falls on Bastille Day and 1992 is also the centenary of Milhaud's birth (4 September, in Aix-en-Provence), hence the inclusion of 'Dixtour', an unusual, six-minute wind symphony by Milhaud — in whose presence Mr Runnels performed at a music festival in Aspen, Colorado in 1969.

There is another French connection: Rossini moved to Paris in his thirties, eventually gave up writing operas and lived it up for the next 40 years or so.

Richard Runnels thinks stardom is long overdue for wind players. "Over the last 200 years we've had to take a second-row seat behind string and keyboard players, particularly in chamber music. It's nice to think there was a period in history when we were the favored bunch... and paid very well."