

MENDELSSOHN & HOPE

February 9, 2024 • 8:00 PM

ESO Pairings presented by Tumbler & Rocks

Featuring:
Jessica Cottis, conductor – *see bio on page 4.*

To read the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra roster, see page 6.

This performance does not include an intermission.

Please hold your applause until the end of each piece.

D'NETTO
uncertain planning (8')*

MENDELSSOHN
Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Op.56 "Scottish" (40')*

I - Andante con moto – Allegro un poco agitato – Andante come prima

II - Vivace non troppo

III - Adagio

IV - Allegro vivacissimo – Allegro maestoso assai

Program subject to change.

*indicates approximate performance duration

uncertain planning

Connor D'Netto

(b. 1994)

First performed: February 10, 2021, in Sydney, Australia

This is the first time the ESO has played any work by Connor D'Netto

Balancing driving rhythm, heartfelt lyricism drawn from his background in classical voice, a lushly textural approach to orchestration, and the delicate incorporation of electronic music elements, Connor D'Netto's work is a constant attempt to bring together sprawling artistic interests, and in doing so, create connections across audiences and communities.

In 2021, Connor was the recipient of the APRA AMCOS Professional Development Award in the Classical/Experimental category. Early in the year, *The Australian* listed Connor as one of their "21 Hottest Creative Artists of 2021." In 2019, Connor was the Composer-In-Residence of the 2019 Australian Festival of Chamber Music, the youngest in the festival's history. Connor has also held residencies and fellowships with the prolific New York new-music collective Bang On A Can in 2017 and with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in 2016. He has been awarded numerous other prizes, including an APRA Art Music Fund Award 2018, the Brisbane City Council's Lord Mayor's Young and Emerging Artists Fellowship 2018, a Brisbane Arts and Cultural Innovation Award 2017, the Percy Brier Memorial Composition Prize 2016, the Donald Tugby Musicology Prize and Scholarship 2015, and the Australian New Works Award 2015.

Connor is the Co-Director of the Brisbane-based non-profit organization Dots+Loops, Australia's post-genre music and arts series, inclusively exploring the spaces in between a traditional classical concert, an underground club gig, and an experimental art show. As a performer, Connor explores the intersections of experimental electronica, ambient, and electroacoustic music, combining hardware synthesizers, live instruments, guitar pedals, and DIY creations.

Connor D'Netto is a trained classical singer, a talented photographer, videographer, and visual artist, creating artworks for gallery exhibits and installations, and collaborating with artists internationally. He completed his Masters of Music at the Royal College of Music in London. Connor has a Bachelor of Music (Honours, First-Class) from the University of Queensland, where he currently holds a position as an adjunct lecturer.

Of tonight's work, Connor D'Netto has written:

uncertain planning was written in the midst of 2020. Though my work rarely explicitly intends to convey any message, meaning or certain evocation, it's hard not to let living through a year like 2020 influence you – for your own inner workings to not colour ever-so-slightly your art. Knowing my new commission would be premiered (in 2021) alongside Dvořák's "*New World*" *Symphony*, a work which looked forward with a joyous sense of optimism, strangely brought these feelings into stark relief. Spending my days in my writing studio became an escape from the new world, as did creating art; these also became spaces for catharsis. While diving deeper and deeper into the music itself, in the day-to-day practice of writing's beautifully abstract ways, taking small musical ideas and obsessively reworking and exploring permutations, unfolding floral fractal-esque layers that all-encompass gestures and whole structures, searching for systems to carve out imagined spaces with sound, a broken world continued to turn outside my window and the uncertainty outside inevitably spread in – anxious stillness, distant, constant

uneasiness and unknowing; overwhelming frustration, searing anger; gentle hope and burning determination.

Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Op.56 “Scottish”

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

(b. Hamburg, 1809 / d. Leipzig, 1847)

First performed: March 3, 1842, in Leipzig

Last ESO performance: February 2016

As did many of the children of the wealthier classes in the 19th century, young Felix Mendelssohn spent a good part of the first five years of his third decade on a tour throughout Europe. It was a fruitful venture, inspiring some of his most famous works, including what would become his third and fourth symphonies. He toured England and Scotland in 1829, and was deeply impressed by much of what he saw, including a visit to Holyrood. “In the depths of twilight we visited today the palace where Queen Mary lived and loved ...,” he wrote his family on July 30 of that year. “The chapel door is missing its roof now, much grass and ivy are growing there, and the decrepit altar is where Mary was crowned Queen of Scotland ... I think that there today I have found the beginning of my Scottish Symphony.” Obviously inspired, still Mendelssohn did not get around to finishing the symphony until some 13 years later, and after several other works, including his *Fourth Symphony*, were composed. So while it was the second of his mature symphonies to have been started, it was the last to have been completed.

Mendelssohn was among the first composers to lobby against audience noise between movements of his large-scale works, and with this symphony, as with other works, he mandated that the four movements be presented with little or no pause between movements. No actual Scottish tunes are quoted in the piece; rather, we are given vivid orchestral depictions of the young German’s emotions and impressions of his Scottish visit.

The first movement begins with a slow introduction, presenting the main theme which will form the Allegro following the more slowly-paced opening. The second movement is the work’s Scherzo, and was inspired by folk music Mendelssohn heard during his time in Scotland. The clarinet presents the sprightly tune first, taken up by the full orchestra. The slow third movement is one of those “singing movements” Mendelssohn’s wrote so well, a long and rich cantabile underpinned by soft pizzicato. The final movement contrasts two ideas, both apparently of Scottish origin; the first is a march-like melody with the violins swirling above it, while the second is a stately, triumphant processional.

Beware the labels one attaches to one’s works! Knowing that his friend Mendelssohn had written an “Italian” symphony, Robert Schumann wrote, upon hearing it, that it evoked a beautiful picture of Italy. Kind words, but unfortunately, the work he had actually listened to was Mendelssohn’s “*Scottish*” *Symphony*. Oops.

Program notes © 2024 by D.T. Baker, except as noted.

Biographies

Jessica Cottis

Conductor

Award-winning conductor Jessica Cottis, named ‘2019 Classical “Face to Watch”’ (The Times, UK), is much in demand, working regularly with leading orchestras across the globe. Cottis grew up on her family’s sheep farm in south-eastern Australia and quickly developed a lifelong interest in both music and the natural world. She is especially interested in the relation between music, nature and science, and the act of listening. A gifted communicator who is described as a “cool, contained, super-articulate and engaging” (The Scotsman), she is a frequent contributor on BBC radio and television, commenting on a wide range of arts-related topics, from opera to architecture, synaesthesia, the environment, and acoustics.

Jessica Cottis is Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra. Under her leadership, the orchestra has already developed a number of important new initiatives, including significant commissions, the championing of Australian works, and integrating local culture in to the output of the orchestra. In the 22/23 season she will present two world premieres, the first by Leah Curtis and the second *Kinds of Blue* by Miriama Young. She will also conduct Sibelius’ Violin Concerto, Scriabin’s Piano Concerto No. 3, Stravinsky’s *Petrushka* and Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade*.

She begins the 22/23 season with The Royal Danish Opera, rehearsing and conducting *The Handmaid’s Tale*, and then will return to the National Symphony Orchestra in Dublin to work with Leticia Moreno, Vasteras Sinfonietta, Prague Radio to work with Benjamin Grosvenor, Charlotte Symphony to conduct Mendelssohn *Lobgesang*, and Opera Holland Park to premier *Itch* by Jonathan Dove. She will make her pandemic-delayed debuts with the National Arts Center Orchestra Ottawa and Uppsala Chamber Orchestra, and will also work for the first time with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Romanian Radio and Basel Sinfonietta.

In previous seasons, Cottis has worked with such orchestras as the London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic, Singapore Symphony, Sydney Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, Opéra Orchestre national Montpellier, Orchestre National de Bordeaux Antiquaine, L’Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi (*laVerdi*), l’Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo, new music ensembles such as London Sinfonietta and *Bang on a Can*, and has enjoyed numerous re-invitations at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and the prestigious BBC Proms. She has recorded for the BBC, ABC, and Decca Classics labels.

One of the most outstanding Australian conductors working today, Cottis is recognised for her engaging, wide-ranging and thought-provoking programming, and she works extensively as an advocate for classical music. She has given masterclasses for the Royal Philharmonic Society and Royal Academy of Music, and has led courses for emerging women conductors for the Royal Opera House. She sits on the Board of new music organisation and record label Nonclassical, and is Chair of the Music Board of the Tait Memorial Trust for Young Australians, a body that supports young Australian and New Zealand performing artists studying in the UK.

Cottis' early musical career was as an organist. Awarded first class honours at the Australian National University, she continued her studies in Paris with pioneering French organist Marie-Claire Alain. After a wrist injury halted her playing career, she began conducting studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London, studying with Colin Metters and Sir Colin Davis. She went on to serve as Assistant Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and at the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, where she worked closely with mentors Sir Donald Runnicles, Charles Dutoit, and Vladimir Ashkenazy. More recently she was honoured with the titles of Associate of the Royal Academy, and Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the School of Music, Australian National University.

Jessica Cottis resides in London, and outside of music pursues her passion for butterflies all over the world.

Meet the Musicians

Michael Stern, Artistic Advisor

Cosette Justo Valdés, Resident Conductor and Community Ambassador

William Eddins, Music Director Emeritus, Conductor

Violin I

Robert Uchida, Concertmaster

The John & Barbara Poole Family Concertmaster Chair

Eric Buchmann, Associate Concertmaster

Broderick Olson

Ewald Cheung

Joanna Ciapka-Sangster

Laura Veeze

Anna Kozak

Aiyana Anderson-Howatt

Anita Walsh

Violin II

Dianne New – Principal

Susan Flook – Assistant Principal

Heather Bergen

Yue Deng

Danielle Greene

Buon Park

Yeeun Ha

Zoë Sellers (on leave)

Viola

Keith Hamm – Principal

Ethan Filner – Assistant Principal

Clayton Leung

Rhonda Henshaw

Stefan Jungkind

Cello

Rafael Hoekman – Principal

The Stuart & Winona Davis Principal Cello Chair

Julie Hereish – Assistant Principal

Ronda Metszies

Meran Currie-Roberts

Victor Pipkin

Bass

Hilda Cowie – Principal

Chris Jones – Acting Assistant Principal

Janice Quinn

Rob Aldridge

Chantel Leung

Douglas Ohashi (on leave)

*The ESO works in proud partnership with the AF of M
(American Federation of Musicians of the United States
and Canada) Local 390.*

Flute

Elizabeth Koch – Principal

Sarah Pollard – Assistant Principal

Oboe

June Kim – Principal

Paul Schieman – Assistant Principal

The Steven & Day LePoole Assistant Principal Oboe Chair

Clarinet

Julianne Scott – Principal

David Quinn – Assistant Principal

Bassoon

Bianca Chambul – Principal

Edith Stacey – Assistant Principal

Horn

Allene Hackleman – Principal

Megan Evans – Assistant Principal

Ryan Garbett – Assistant Principal

Donald Plumb – Assistant Principal

Trumpet

Robin Doyon – Principal

Frédéric Payant – Assistant Principal

Trombone

John McPherson – Principal

Kathryn Macintosh – Assistant Principal

Bass Trombone

Tyler Cairns – Principal

Tuba

Scott Whetham – Principal

Timpani

Barry Nemish – Principal

Percussion

Martin Bui – Principal

Harp

Nora Bumanis – Principal