

ANAM RECITAL: TOM ALLEN (HORN)

Song of a New World

MONDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 11AM
ROSINA AUDITORIUM, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

Joseph HAYDN (1732-1809) Horn Concerto No. 2 in D Major, Hob. VIId:4 (1781) 5'

iii. Allegro

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791) Horn Quintet in E-flat Major, K. 407 (1782) 17'

i. Allegro

ii. Andante

iii. Rondo. Allegro

Mason BATES (b. 1977) *Mainframe Tropics* (2011) 14'

i. Silicon Blues

ii. Marine Snow

iii. Greyhound

Richard BISSILL (b. 1960) *Song of a New World* (2014) 10'

Tom Allen (VIC) horn

Jasmine Milton # (SA) violin

Angelina Kim # (QLD) viola

Hanna Wallace # (NSW) viola

Fergus Ascot # (VIC) cello

Po Goh # (VIC) piano

Daniel Le (ANAM Associate Faculty) piano

Approximate duration: 50 minutes

Tom is supported by ANAM Syndicate donors Gordon Ainger, Viorica Samson.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Performing concertos in their entirety has been common practice for some time and are programmed weekly by most major symphony orchestras, however, this was not so before the twentieth century, where performers would often isolate single movements and fragments from the whole. While presenting merely the third movement of a concerto seems a little unusual – even for the eighteenth century – I find the third movement of **Joseph Haydn**'s second horn concerto to be a particularly joyous and driving movement; a fitting work to open a recital. Like many pieces of the period, little is known about this particular concerto: the piece may have been written by either Joseph or Michael Haydn and there are doubts as to whether the piece was written for the horn at all. Set in a jubilant D major, the concerto is nevertheless an important early work for solo horn and one of which I am very fond.

Much like his teacher Haydn, **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** was a pioneer of solo horn repertoire, and his four concertos and concert rondo are true test of a horn player's musicianship. Though written for a chamber setting, his quintet for horn and strings functions like a concerto, where the horn's prominent voice is complemented and encouraged by the accompanying strings. Not quite a string quartet, Mozart instead writes for two violas, matching the mellow timbre of the horn's middle and upper range. The genesis of the quintet is relatively unknown as Mozart never made an entry in his own catalogue and therefore gave no exact date of its composition, but it is generally understood that it was written before the concertos and is both more melodic and virtuosic. The opening of Allegro starts with the strings, but the horn soon becomes the dominant voice, often trading melodies with the violin. The following Andante is the piece's longest movement and a more equal partnership between the horn and strings, exploring the lyrical possibilities of the instrument. The final rondo continues the conversational interplay between the horn and strings, cheerily bringing the piece to a close.

Mason Bates is not a name we hear spoken or performed often in Australia, but he is one of the most programmed living composers in the United States today. His opera *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* (2017) won a Grammy for Best Opera Recording, and his newest opera, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*, is currently being premiered by the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Both a composer and electronic dance music DJ, Bates seems very interested in the combination of the electronic and acoustic in his compositions and offers a unique sound world that seems to be continually gaining acceptance within classical music. The title of his horn trio, *Mainframe Tropics*, is verbally exciting, but does not appear to have a clear meaning, though Bates likens the final movement to an 'old-fashioned mainframe computer doing a lopsided dance'. The first movement, titled *Silicon Blues*, is insistent with an irregular rhythmic drive – similar to that of contemporary techno – interrupted by brief moments of calm. *Marine Snow* is slower and sustained, offering more sonorous melodic opportunities for the trio. The final movement, *Greyhound*, is aptly named for its propulsive sprint towards the finish, recalling many of the melodic and rhythmic elements of the first movement. Despite being a trio, the piano doubles as a fourth member, lending a percussive element to the piece through minor preparations.

Richard Bissill's *Song of a New World* could not be further from the work of Mozart and Haydn, propelling the horn into the realm of blues and jazz. Though unusual to write for the horn in this way, it is a vehicle in which to exhibit some of the instrument's technical extremes, particularly the low register, which, for centuries, was rarely utilised in solo repertoire. It is also an opportunity to play in a style not closely associated the horn, a style which is often dismissed as inappropriate for the instrument. Written for low horn of the Berlin Philharmonic, Sarah Willis, the piece is now regularly programmed in solo recitals.

I would like to thank Jasmine, Angie, Hanna, Fergus, and Po for sacrificing their time to play in my recital today, my associate artist Daniel, and my teachers Carla and Ben for their weekly guidance and support.

Words by Tom Allen