21st AUG

the firm 2006

six Adelaide concerts

concert five

The Firm dedicates this concert to conservationist and civil activist Bob Brown for his sustained public contribution to holding the Enlightened humanist line in the face of present and ever encroaching barbarism.

The Firm supports the Amnesty International campaign against the practice of 'extraordinary rendition', one of the strategies employed by the US in the 'war on terror'. Please consider supporting the campaign by signing and posting the Amnesty International Australia petition postcard.

Pilgrim Church provides wheelchair access via the rear (northern) doors.

Toilets can be accessed through the door on the left of the performance area.

Leigh Harrold *piano*

K. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**
Sonata Op. 3	**Leopold Spinner**
Eight Bagatelles	**Quentin Grant**

Interval

Three Pieces	**Grahame Dudley**
Sonata	**Luke Altmann**
Variations on a Minuet by Mozart	**Raymond Chapman Smith**

Five Pieces **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**
(1756 – 1791)

Minuet in G Major K. 1 (1761-2)

Minuet in F Major K.2 (1762)

Allegro in B-flat Major K. 3 (1762)

Minuet in F Major K. 4 (1762)

Minuet in F Major K. 5 (1762)

A hairdresser who suddenly went mad and decapitated a duke, allegedly a member of the royal family, with a razor and who is now in the lunatic asylum in Reading – formerly the famous Reading Gaol – is said to have declared himself ready to make his head available for those scientific purposes which, in his opinion, would be rewarded with the Nobel Prize within at least eight to ten years.

Thomas Bernhard

Sonata Op. 3 (1943) Leopold Spinner (1906-1980)

I. Moderato

II. Allegro

III. Allegro – Allegro poco moderato

TWELVE QUESTIONS for LEOPOLD SPINNER

1. The entry under your name in the 1954 edition of grove's Dictionary gives the following biographical information: that you were born in 1906, of Austrian parentage, in Lwów, Poland; that you obtained a D.Phil at the University of Vienna; that you studied composition in Vienna with P.A. Pisk from 1926 to 30, and then with Webern from 1935 to 1938; and that you settled in the United Kingdom in 1939. Is there anything you would now wish to add to those details?

LS: *No, thank you.*

2. Was Pisk your first composition teacher?

LS: *Yes.*

3. What brought you to him?

LS: *A recommendation.*

4. Pisk himself had studied composition with Schreker and then with Schoenberg. But he evidently did not belong to the circle closest to Schoenberg; and to judge from the reactions to an article in which he had dared to crticize Karl Kraus's Offenbach performances, there were some in that circle who considered him very much an outsider. But was his teaching nevertheless related to that of Schoenberg?

LS: *To some extent.*

5. So did it only go as far as Schreker, or did it (to judge from some of the works Pisk was publishing in the early 1930s) diverge in the direction of Eisler?

LS: *I wouldn't know.*

6. The fact that five years elapsed between the end of your studies with Pisk and the start of them with Webern is striking, and suggests one or two explanations: either that in 1930 you felt your studies had taken you as far as you needed to go, but that you changed your mind in the light of works you composed subsequently; or that during those five years you were in some sense looking for a suitably complementary successor to Pisk. Which was the case? Or is there a third explanation?

LS: *Probably both – and probably a third as well.*

7. During that interim period your music first attracted international attention: a string trio was given at the 1932 ISCM festival and a string quartet at the same festival two years later; a symphony won the Emil Hertzka prize in 1934, and a passacaglia the Henri-le-Boeuf prize (Brussels) a year later. In Slonimsky's *Music Since 1900* the trio is described as 'introspective and neo-Mahlerian'. Leaving aside the oddity of the second term in the context of chamber music, what did you feel at the time and do you feel now about Mahler's music?

LS: *The greatest admiration.*

8. Does the fact that you only began giving your works opus numbers with the Sonata for violin and piano of 1936 mean that you repudiated the earlier works?

LS: *No.*

9. In your view can any useful ideas of the methods and style of those early works be gleaned from a short music example?

LS: *I don't think that such an example would be much use for anything.*

10. Whether or not the works without opus number remain rooted in tonality it is perhaps worth recalling the lecture Webern gave in Vienna on 4 February 1933 as part of the series 'The Path to the New Music'. It began with these words: 'Today we shall examine tonality in its last throes. I want to prove to you that it's really dead. Once that's proved, there's no point in going on dealing

with something dead.' Did Webern ever make any such statement in your presence?

LS: *No; and he would never have left it at that.*

11. It is, in itself, a characteristically radical statement, and one to which many who called themselves Webern's followers in the decade after his death would have subscibed without further investigation. Yet it is not characteristic in so far as it may be quoted in support of a (still active) opposition to Schoenberg and to the view that led Schoenberg, only a year later, to the composition of that remarkable and much undervalued Suite in G for strings. How would you account for the statement?

LS: *Out of context it is misleading. Its context is the sequence of lectures entitled 'The Path to Twelve-tone Composition', where Webern describes the gradual disintegration of tonality: the loosening of tonal relationships through suspended tonality, and their final disintegration. Here he refers in particular to the development in Schoenberg's music of the years 1906-14. As for the Suite, the answer is in Schoenberg's essay 'En Revient Toujours': ' a longing to return to the older style was always vigorous in me; and from time to time I had to yield to that urge'.*

12. The question of tonality recurs in one of Webern's letters which Reich published in the appendix to his edition of the lectures.
Webern writes of *Building a tonality*, but one that uses the possibilities offered by the nature of sound in a different way, namely on the basis of a system that does 'relate only to each other' (as Arnold has put it) the 12 different notes customary in Western music up to now, but doesn't on that account (I should add to clarify things) ignore the rules of order provided by the nature of sound – namely the relationship of the overtones to the fundamental. Anyway it's impossible to ignore them if there is still to be a *meaningful* expression in sound!

What Webern here adds by way of 'clarification' is surely essential, and certainly characteristic of his musical thought and ear. It seems no less so of yours .... To have asked what you once thought and now think of Mahler's music was perhaps within the bounds of legitimate if banal enquiry; but to put to you the same question about Webern's music would surely be a gross impertinence, not only because the first and simplest answer – that you revere it – leaps from the pages of your published scores, but also because whatever the answers to the consequent and increasingly complex questions, they cannot properly come from you, since they concern the very essence of your work – its individuality, and the singularity of what it seems to stand for in contemporary music: namely the idea of a Webernian *classicism* which is as strict in its appearances as it is potentially liberating in its spirit.

LS: Here I would like to comment – and without 'reticence'. I don't think that a list of my works could testify to anything beyond the mere fact of their existence. But more important for me and much more difficult to comment upon is 'the first and simplest answer' which 'leaps from the pages of my published scores', namely that I revere Webern's

music. Yes, this is quite true; I do, very much; and I don't see why it should be a gross impertinence to ask such a question, even if the answer does already leap from the pages of my scores. However, I also have the greatest admiration for the music of Mozart and Haydn, Bach, Beethoven and Schubert, Brahms, Schumann, Bruckner and Mahler, Schoenberg and Berg. Does nothing of that leap from the pages of my scores? I certainly would have thought a relevant question important – and welcome. But you don't even hint at it. I suspect it is a case of not seeing the wood for the trees (and also quite possibly not so much in my scores as in Webern's). Admittedly my relation to Webern was in one particular way different, as it was also personal. That might perhaps account for something – but not for everything! Might it not be that there is a factor more decisive than admiration, personal or otherwise? For instance, a wide range of characteristics, from the very specific to the quite general, is common to the music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven (the development of structural aspects through the homophonic presentation), to Wagner, Bruckner and Wolf (the development of harmonic aspects), and again, to Mahler and Schoenberg (the expansion of form-functional concepts). Might it not be that such more or less common characteristics are not only the expression of personal implications, but are also the reflection of fundamental historical considerations determining the evolution of purely musical concepts? I believe that if the true historic significance of Webern's music were better understood in all its aspects – for instance, the predominance and total engagement of motivic obligation as the structurally unifying factor in a complete fusion between traditional homophonic concepts and the strictest polyphonic presentation – then perhaps it might be possible to refer in factual terms to purely musical concepts and leave all reverence and admiration to take care of themselves. At any rate, I would have preferred this.

On his way back from Moscow, where he had been the guest of the Academy of Sciences, the world-famous French philosopher who has for decades been called the most important of his time came to Vienna to give the same lecture to the Viennese Academy of Sciences that he had already given in Moscow. After his lecture I was the guest of two professors and members of the Viennese Academy who, like me, had heard the French philosopher's lecture. The one called the lecture, and thus the French philosopher as well, profound, the other called it shallow, and both of them produced solid grounds for their assertions.

Thomas Bernhard

Eight Bagatelles **Quentin Grant**

These eight little pieces were written as an exercise around material borrowed from the Beethoven Sonata n E major, Opus 109. They were attempts to broaden my technique and to somehow touch, from afar (from far below) the music of the mighty Beethoven. Such miniatures seem apt to programme alongside the works of Mozart's early childhood.

I don't like flowers - they do remind me often
Of funerals, of weddings and of balls;
Their presence on tables for a dinner calls.

But sub-eternal roses' ever simple charm
Which was my solace when I was a child,
Has stayed - my heritage - a set of years behind,
Like Mozart's ever-living music's hum.

Anna Akhmatova

Three Pieces **Grahame Dudley**

These pieces are a portion of a work-in-progress.
The first took form over a long period, well into which I realised I was looking at an unconscious distillation of the first piece I ever learnt to play (by ear and feel and helpful parent), the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata in C-sharp minor Op.27 No.2, "The Moonlight". The sustained octave melody, encased in triplets in the right hand, the octave left hand with its see-sawing pivots with the right, and the strange occasional dissonances all appear in some form.
The second piece - partly transitional – quite consciously refers to a wonderful old French Carol called 'Picardy'.
The final piece began as a dramatic journey, but I became more involved in its actual musical material; dissonant chordal suspensions created by closely counterpointing a simple melodic idea. It seems to connect with another favourite work of mine; the slow movement of Brahm's first piano concerto.

A businessman from Koblenz had made his life's dream come true by visiting the pyramids of Giza and was forced, after he had finished visiting the pyramids, to describe his visit as the greatest disappointment of his life, which I understand, for I myself was in Egypt last year and was disappointed above all by the pyramids. However, whereas I very quickly overcame my disappointment, the Koblenz businessman took vengeance for his disappointment by placing, for months on end, full-page advertisements in all the major newspapers in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, warning all future visitors to Egypt against the pyramids and especially against the pyramids of Cheops, which had disappointed him most deeply, more than all the others. The Koblenz businessman used up his resources in a very short time with these – as he called them – anti-Egypt and anti-pyramid advertisements and plunged himself into total penury. In the nature of things, his advertisements did not have the influence upon people that he had hoped for; on the contrary, the number of visitors to Egypt this year, as opposed to last year, has doubled.

Thomas Bernhard

Sonata **Luke Altmann**

Piano Sonata (2006)

In two parts - slow and fast - with a brief and unexpected closing. The main material is slowly revealed in the first part, and in the second part delivered at four times the speed. Melody and variations are often derived from the interaction of two ostinatos of different lengths played simultaneously. Written with Leigh Harrold's particular technical ability in mind, and humbly dedicated to him.

Professor Moosprugger said that he had gone to the West station in Vienna to pick up a colleague whom he did not know personally but knew only from correspondence. He had expected a different person from the one who actually arrived at the West station. When I drew Moosprugger's attention to the fact that the person who arrives is always someone different from the person we expect, he got up and left simply and solely for the purpose of breaking off and abandoning all the contacts he had ever established throughout his life.

Thomas Bernhard

Variations on a Minuet by Mozart

Raymond Chapman Smith

Thema: Tempo di Menuetto (Mozart, K.1) G Major

Var. I	Tempo di Menuetto	E-flat Major
Var. II	Allegretto	C minor
Var. III	Andante Sostenuto	A-flat Major
Var. IV	Presto	F minor
Var. V	Adagio sostenuto	D-flat Major
Var. VI	Allegro, ma non troppo	A Major
Var. VII	Andante	F-sharp minor
Var. VIII	Vivace	D Major
Var. IX	Allegretto	B-flat Major
Var. X	Allegro	G minor
Var. XI	Larghetto *'For Sarastro'*	E-flat Major
Var. XII	Allegro molto	G Major
Coda		

You are invited to join us after the concert for complimentary drinks and a selection of Tortes by Gabriele.

Next Firm concert

8pm Monday, 20th November 2006

Langbein String Quartet
Leigh Harrold , *piano*
Harley Gray, *double bass*

MOZART *Piano Concerto in A major, K414*

LEITNER *String Quartet(After Mozart)* with

and new works by

GRANT, GEHLERT and CHAPMAN SMITH

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