

Beethoven's Apotheosis of the Dance
Maestro Concert 6
Queensland Symphony Orchestra
Conductor Eivind Aadland
Piano Sergio Tiempo
Concert Hall, QPAC

Reviewer: Suzannah Conway

Reviewed: Saturday 25 June 2011

Commencing with extracts from Wagner's tragic love story, *Tristan and Isolde*, the bar was set high for what proved to be a powerful and compelling concert program from the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

The heightened emotions of both the *Prelude* and *Liebestod* were passionately conducted from the whispered opening of cellos and woodwind through the intensity of strings and brass, with *Isolde's Liebestod* a climactic highlight.

Venezuelan-born virtuoso, pianist Sergio Tiempo, took on Liszt's mighty *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major* demonstrating an impressive technique with precision and an infectious, flamboyant style.

In the first movement, Tiempo's cadenza after the main orchestral theme spanned four octaves with impressive ease, moving to a beautiful duet with clarinet. The languid pianistic melody of the *Adagio* movement, overscored by winds, produced exquisite pianistic arpeggios bringing out the full colours of piano and orchestra alike. The *Scherzo* offered playful interaction between piano and triangle with the final breathtaking cadenza uniting previous themes. The polyrhythmic passages of the last movement were a lesson in synchronicity between conductor and pianist who ricocheted off each other in a series of hair-raising, split-second musical timings. The whole was brought to an outstanding dramatic climax through Tiempo's astounding stylistic delivery.

He further demonstrated his virtuosity with a contrasting and ravishing encore of a Chopin nocturne that was warmly received.

Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7 in A major*, even by his own impressive standards, is considered one of this master's supreme musical achievements. Principal Guest Conductor, Eivind Aadland, clearly relishing this work, gave an impassioned and confident interpretation conducting this fiendish symphony without the benefit of a score and with his trademark sweeping and impressionistic style, here used to great effect.

The sonata form of the *Vivace* first movement was briskly paced, dominated by lively dance-like rhythms from the orchestra and a fixation with repetitive notes from the woodwind.

The famous *Allegretto* second movement offered pure classicism with its simple and clear musical intent. The ostinato of constant rhythmic notes in various formats across the orchestra was expertly crafted.

The third movement, including both a scherzo and a trio, was strongly controlled by Aadland with an emotional intensity that was further heightened in the final 'fortississimo' movement. Here Aadland became a powerful and unrelenting driving force bringing the symphony to a masterful conclusion that was as moving as it was impressive in its power.