

7 & 8 March 2025



BOCCHERINI & BERWALD

Presenting Partner

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WELCOME

Welcome to **Boccherini & Berwald**, a captivating soiree in the intimate surroundings of the Utzon Room of the Sydney Opera House.

Handpicked Wines is delighted to be Presenting Partner of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's *Cocktail Hour with Handpicked Wines* Series, now in its second year.

At Handpicked, we understand the power of passion and artistry.

We draw on both technical skill and creative inspiration to craft wines that elevate and enhance experiences; just as the superb artists of the Orchestra invite us to open all our senses to music that enhances life.

Along with wine-making styles, the world of music includes composers whose work has been partially obscured over time, then re-discovered and appreciated in a future era.

This enchanting concert features the work of two of these composers – Luigi Boccherini and Franz Berwald.

Boccherini is now widely loved for his innovation and high spirits, while the lyricism and beauty of Berwald's music is an exciting discovery for modern audiences.

The carefully chosen wines, the 'up close' experience of the musicians of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and the music of Boccherini and Berwald are the perfect combination for an enchanting experience.

Handpicked and the Orchestra's shared values of creativity and technical excellence are the hallmark of everything we do, and it has been a great pleasure to see our partnership unfold.

I do hope you enjoy the **Boccherini & Berwald** concert and the wines we have selected to accompany this entrancing performance.



William Dong
Managing Director
Handpicked Wines

2025 CONCERT SEASON

COCKTAIL HOUR WITH HANDPICKED WINES

Friday 7 March, 6pm
Saturday 8 March, 6pm

Utzon Room,
Sydney Opera House

BOCCHERINI & BERWALD

REDISCOVERED GEMS

GENEVIEVE LANG presenter

LUIGI BOCCHERINI (1743-1805)
String Quintet G275, Op.11 No.5 (1771)

- i. Amoroso
- ii. Allegro con spirito
- iii. Minuetto e Trio
- iv. Rondeau: andante

LERIDA DELBRIDGE violin
VICTORIA BIHUN violin
STUART JOHNSON viola
CATHERINE HEWGILL cello
CHRISTOPHER PIDCOCK cello

FRANZ BERWALD (1796-1868)
Grand Septet (1828)
i. Adagio – Allegro molto
ii. Poco adagio – Prestissimo – Adagio
iii. Finale: Allegro con spirito

LERIDA DELBRIDGE violin
JUSTIN WILLIAMS viola
CATHERINE HEWGILL cello
DAVID CAMPBELL double bass
EMILY NEWHAM horn
FRANCESCO CELATA clarinet
MATTHEW WILKIE bassoon

Estimated durations

Boccherini – 25 minutes
Berwald – 25 minutes

This concert will run for
approximately one hour

Cover image

Alice Bartsch
Photo by Jay Patel

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT LUIGI BOCCHERINI

Born in the Italian city of Lucca, Boccherini was educated in music at first by his father, a singer and bass-player, and then by a prominent cellist; by his 20s, he had established himself as both cellist and composer. With his friend, violinist Filippo Manfredi, he undertook a concert tour in 1766, travelling to Genoa, Nice and Paris. His greatest successes came in Italy and France, and towards the end of the 1760s he began to attract notice for his compositions as well as his playing.

In 1768 it seems that Boccherini and Manfredi had joined an orchestra attached to a touring Italian opera company that was performing in Spain's various royal courts; Boccherini settled in Madrid in 1769 and the following year, recently married to a soprano with the company, he was offered full-time employment by Don Luis, the Infante (that is, a prince who is not the heir apparent) as 'chamber composer and virtuoso' at his palace at Boadilla del Monte; Luis supported a substantial musical establishment, including an in-house quartet consisting of a father and three sons by the name of Font. But his status suffered when left holy orders (he had been raised to the rank of cardinal deacon) and married morganatically (that is, to a commoner who was not granted a title); he was obliged to remove his court to the relatively obscure palace of Las Arenas.

Thus, like Haydn, Boccherini found himself slightly isolated, but at liberty to compose more or less as he wished for over a decade. He stayed in Spain, dying in Madrid in 1805, despite receiving the patronage of the likes of Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia.



Luigi Boccherini playing the violoncello (c.1764–1767) by Pompeo Batoni (1708–1787). Source: National Gallery of Victoria.

Like Haydn, too, he was a prolific composer of chamber music, with a catalogue of over 100 string quartets alone. The writer Charles Burney believed that Boccherini and Haydn 'occasioned a revolution' in string music 'by the fertility and boldness of their invention'; one wit suggested that Boccherini 'never listened to any music but his own.' Also unkindly, he was derided as 'Haydn's wife' by one contemporary, and indeed Boccherini's works seldom aspire to the kind of fusion of comic wit and intricate sophistication that we find in Haydn. In fact, as Stanley Sadie has noted, 'the directions "soave", "con grazia" and "dolce" or "dolcissimo" are among the commonest in his music'; Boccherini's work places great value on grace and elegance, though not at the expense of emotional richness. He was especially fond of string quintets with two cellos, of which he wrote about 150.

Several of Boccherini's works explicitly mine the music of Spain for inspiration. He used traditional dances such as the fandango, and his quintet subtitled *La musica notturna delle strade di Madrid*, sometimes known as the *Ritirata notturna di Madrid*, is an evocation of nightfall in the capital.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT THE STRING QUINTET, G275

Boccherini is best known today for his celebrated Minuet (old-movie tragi-comics will know it from Ealing's *The Ladykillers*). It has undergone an enormous number of arrangements for a bewildering variety of instrumental ensembles, its ubiquity such that even senior musicians sometimes forget who wrote it. This evening offers a rare opportunity to hear the Minuet in its intended instrumentation and context as the third movement of his E major quintet.

Boccherini wrote his quintets between 1771 and 1795, and the E-major work is among the first. It was published in 1775 as Op.11 No.5.

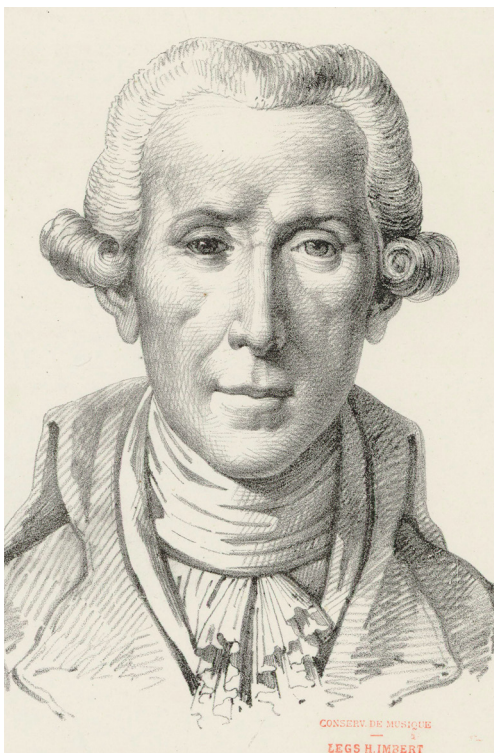
Like most of the quintets it is cast in four separate movements, but is unusual in that the outer movements are the slowest. The first is marked *Amoroso*, which is of course hardly specific about tempo, for which reason some editions mark it as *Andantino mosso*. (That, meaning 'very much a tiny bit quicker than *andante*', is marginally more helpful.) What it is not, though, is a traditional opening 'sonata *allegro*', though it is in sonata form.

Its amorous nature is suggested in several ways: all the instruments are muted, and the melodic lines are marked *dolce* – 'sweet'. Those lines, furthermore, are almost always presented by two instruments, with the second closely doubling the lines a third below, which gives them an extra sweetness and richness. At the start, for instance the two violins start things off with a phrase that also sets up a subtle tension between triplets (three notes to a beat) and semiquavers (four) and which is answered by the viola and first cello. The second subject, as sonata form would have it, is a much slower-moving tune with long notes that leap up and down the octave, again doubled in thirds.

The second movement is much more what a conventional first movement would sound like: fast and with short, crisp rhythmic phrases given out by pairs of instruments. Indeed for some time the viola can't get much more than a terse motif in edgewise. Allegiances shift, of course, as the rhythmic cells of the piece are passed from one voice to another to keep the music in a state of buoyant energy.

The Minuet is in A major – at least in its outer sections whose material is what we most often hear in arrangements. The instruments are again muted, but the movement differs from what we've heard so far in that the melody is concentrated solely in the first violin; in the central trio section, the pairing of instruments resumes.

The finale is a rondo, where repeated statements of densely scored material full of urgent dotted rhythms (the 'A section') are contrasted with episodes where Boccherini explores much more transparent, and frequently ingenious two- and three-voice textures in different keys.



Pencil drawing of Luigi Boccherini by Étienne Mazas.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT FRANZ BERWALD

Now regarded as the most important Swedish composer of the 19th century, Franz Berwald was shamefully neglected in his lifetime, both in Sweden and in wider Europe, despite being born into an influential musical family, and attracting the admiration of Franz Liszt and Hans von Bülow. His experiments in form – for instance ‘nesting’ whole movements within other movements – play creatively with classical genres; his symphonies inhabit an imaginary land between those of Mendelssohn and Bruckner.

Berwald was the son and nephew of two German musicians who had travelled north to join the Royal Court Orchestra in Stockholm and began playing the violin at the age of five. He joined the Orchestra in 1812 and had three stints there as violinist and/or violist at various times until 1828.

He began composing, largely self-taught, and his earliest works date from 1816. He was industrious, and by 1818 had completed a work for violin and orchestra, a ‘Free Fantasy for orchestra, a concerto for two violins, two string quartets and an early version of the Grand Septet, for the same forces as Beethoven’s Septet. With the exception of the Septet, the reception of Berwald’s music was quite positive at this time, but as more of his work was put before the public the critical response became actively hostile.

Nevertheless over the next decade he persisted, producing a raft of new pieces including concertos, a cantata celebrating the betrothal of a royal couple, an early example of the tone poem, and an opera, *Gustav Wasa*, about the first King of Sweden after the country broke away from Denmark.



Franz Berwald c.1860. Source: National Library of Sweden (Kungliga biblioteket).

In 1828 Berwald moved to Berlin in the hope of making his name as a composer, with next to no success. Fortunately he had some talent as an orthopaedist, and in 1835 set up a practice for which he invented and manufactured therapeutic devices, some of which resemble the machines in a Pilates studio. Despite the considerable success of this venture, Berwald moved to Vienna in 1841 where his work was favourably received, but the following year returned to Stockholm where, over the next few years works including symphonies, opera and operetta met with mixed responses.

Again Berwald left home, travelling to Paris (which didn’t appreciate his work) and again to Vienna (which did, sort of – he was made a member of the Mozarteum, Salzburg in 1847) but the sort of paying positions he sought continued to elude him. So, as one does, he began managing a glass works in the town of Sandö from 1850, moving to a similar facility in 1858.

It was about now that he produced a number of works which were greeted well, such as piano concerto and several major pieces of chamber music, and the opera *Estrella di Soria* was bleated staged and well-received.

In 1864 he became a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music and was, not without controversy, appointed its first professor of composition in 1867. Sadly he didn’t live to enjoy this much-delayed recognition, dying of pneumonia in early 1868.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ABOUT THE GRAND SEPTET

When in 1818 a benefit concert in Stockholm featured a septet by Berwald for the same forces as Beethoven's celebrated work, one critic lamented that Berwald was not sufficiently 'friendly with the rules of harmony and counterpoint'. Ten years later we read of a second septet, though on the available evidence it seems that this was a reworking of the 1818 piece, and is the version known today.

It opens with a sombre, ceremonial gesture that, as is common in this work, then explores a variety of tonal centres. This slow introduction serves as a foil for the more comic Allegro section that follows. Here, too, Berwald often lays out sequences of chords (the Allegro opens with an especially 'Baroque' sequence, with its sighing suspended dissonances), which are then varied in mood and character. Here there are 'Alberti' or broken-chord figurations, sudden patches of Romantic shimmer, and harmonic sequences derived from the Allegro opening, which gain their impulse from repeated notes from strings, scales for winds, and punctuating horn calls. A lyrical clarinet melody opens the Poco adagio, and is then doubled by violin. Horn triplets and scale passages for winds introduce a contrapuntal elaboration of chord sequences. The clarinet often appears to signal a new section, and the witty central Prestissimo acts as the work's scherzo.

The finale has a cheerful theme with an amusing use of grace notes à la Haydn. The use of short, two- and three-note motifs, including one cuckoo call, creates excitement.

Gordon Kerry © 2025



A bronze bust of Franz Berwald by Swedish sculptor Carl Eldh (1873-1954), on display in Gothenburg Concert Hall.

YOUR HANDPICKED COCKTAIL HOUR

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Regional Selections DOC Prosecco

Pale light-yellow with a delicate, complex bouquet of peach, green apple and lemon, intertwined with floral and Mediterranean notes. Fresh and soft on the palate with a delicate creamy foam and balanced acidity. Grapes are gently pressed and fermented at a controlled temperature before blending for secondary fermentation.



Trial Batch Murray River Vermentino

A light and lively Vermentino featuring fresh citrus and pear flavours with a hint of bitter almond. Partial skin fermentation adds texture, while its bright acidity makes it a refreshing match for various foods. Originating from northern Italy and the islands of Sardinia and Corsica, Vermentino embodies Mediterranean charm.



Regional Selections Yarra Valley Chardonnay

Embark on a sensory journey with this Yarra Valley Chardonnay, boasting vibrant aromas of fresh citrus and stone fruit delicately mingled with hints of oak. On the palate, crisp acidity accentuates the bright fruit flavours, complemented by a creamy texture that adds depth and complexity. The result is a harmonious balance of fruit expression and meticulous winemaking, culminating in a clean, refreshing finish.



Regional Selections Barossa Shiraz

Bursting with aromas of ripe blackberry, sweet cherry and vanilla, intertwined with hints of mixed spice and roasted nuts. The palate indulges in the supple texture and juicy flavours, showcasing fleshy richness and a silky-smooth flow. This classic vintage is a testament to the ideal ripening conditions, resulting in outstanding quality fruit with vibrant colour and intense flavour.



Regional Selections Yarra Valley Pinot Noir

With tangy cherry fruits, fresh basil and a hint of menthol, this wine tantalizes the palate with its vibrant flavours and impeccable balance. Awarded an impressive 95 points by James Halliday, this wine is a true standout of the vintage. From the cool weather to the slow flavour accumulation, every element contributes to the allure of this remarkable wine.

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Sydney Morning Herald

RELIVE THE MAGIC OF THIS LANDMARK EVENT IN AUSTRALIAN MUSIC

Simone Young's tenure as Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra began in emphatic style in July 2022, with unforgettable performances of Mahler's *Symphony No. 2, Resurrection*, and *Song of the Earth* by First Nations composer William Barton.

Broadcast live around the world, this concert also marked the reopening of the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall after two years of extensive renovations.

Now you can relive the magic of that landmark event in your own home, with its release on vinyl, CD and digital via Deutsche Grammophon – the first time an Australian orchestra has been released exclusively on under the famous yellow label in its 127-year history.



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Operations Manager
Tom Farmer
Production Manager
Elissa Seed
Production Manager
Jacinta Dockrill
Production Administrator
Shanell Bielawa
Production Coordinator

ORCHESTRA MANAGEMENT

Aernout Kerbert
Director of Orchestra Management
Brighdie Chambers
Orchestra Manager
Emma Winestone
Orchestra Coordinator

PEOPLE & CULTURE

Daniel Bushe
Director of People & Culture
Rosie Marks-Smith
Head of Culture & Wellbeing
Yen Sharratt
People & Culture Manager
Keanna Mauch
People & Culture Coordinator
Sue Burnet
Work Health & Safety Specialist

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ARRANGEMENT



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