



Orchestra excels with two masterful works



CURTAIN UP

Queensland Symphony Orchestra Maestro Series: Return to Life

Soloist: Paul Dean (clarinet)
Where: Concert Hall, QPAC
When: February 20
Reviewer: Suzannah Conway

THE Queensland Symphony Orchestra's first Maestro Series concert for 2010 featured a masterly program of Mozart and Mahler pieces.

Mozart's celebrated *Clarinet Concerto* is a technically astonishing piece to test the greatest of clarinetists.

Queensland's Paul Dean attacked the work from the very first note.

With assured technical prowess, Dean's joyful interpretation demonstrated the depth and breadth of his skill, wringing every nuance of colour from his instrument.

Dean's brisk pace in the allegro movements – and his interaction with the orchestra – was delightful to watch, while his sensitive

phrasing of the haunting adagio movement was spine-tingling. The stylistic playfulness of the repetitive themes and arpeggios – eliciting a comparison to Papageno and his pipes – would have gleefully thrilled the great composer himself.

There can be no higher recommendation of this breathtaking performance by Dean.

The first professional performance in Queensland of Mahler's *7th Symphony* is an important milestone in this 150th anniversary year of the Austrian composer's birth.

Performed rarely, this vast and complex work – with its underlying morbidity and lack of harmonic coherency across the five movements – was tackled with

gusto by Johannes Fritzsich. His clarity of interpretation and attention to detail brought the various themes to life, making sense of the cacophony of sound and multilayered ideas of Mahler's flawed score.

He was assisted by some fine playing from the orchestra, with excellent solos from the principal brass (Jason Redman on tenor horn, Peter Luff on French horn), the first desk of the strings and woodwind and some impressive work from the percussion.

It is exciting to see the orchestra come of age in such a challenging work and praise should go to Fritzsich as chief conductor.



THRILLING RENDITION: Paul Dean performs a Mozart concerto with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

Picture: Neil Reeves