

1925

Etching and stipple on paper

31.6 x 36.7 cm

\$12,500

*Norman Lindsay Etchings: Catalogue Raisonné* (Odana Editions and Josef Lebovic Gallery, 2006, cat.269) Norman's profound understanding of Beethoven's music is awe-inspiring. *Allegro Vivace 8th Symphony* is Norman's visual conception of the last movement of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 8 in F major, Op.93* (1812).

In Kenneth Slessor's article 'An Interview with Norman Lindsay', published in the 1930 Norman Lindsay Number of *Art in Australia*, Norman spoke at length about the etching: ... *it is one of the few works of my own that I can look at with pleasure — though that is possibly because it but roughly defines the enormous delight the Eighth Symphony itself has been to me. I like the etching because I believe it follows fairly closely the musical form of the final Allegro Vivace — its general background of pattering, downward-rushing little figures, culminating in a rollicking, scrambling crescendo, and swaying out into the swooning, mooning lovers, with the stamping, thundering, blundering giants of a full orchestra behind, and the little trembling, squeaking single fiddle hopping before. For pure mad humour, nothing has ever touched, or ever will touch, that movement.*

Years later Norman wrote a more detailed description to John Hetherington: *Our response to great art is balanced between what we get out of it and what we bring to it. I had this brought home to me with rather staggering effect the other night when I put on the record of Beethoven's 8th Symphony. I once did an etching on the last movement of that symphony. The composition of the etching was this — In the sky, a couple of giants, stamping and rollicking among the clouds, and roaring with laughter (full orchestra — allegro vivace). Down in one corner, a couple of tiny fauns, skipping (single violins — scherzo). The whole centre of the composition, a mass of figures rushing down hill; leaping, cavorting, tumbling over each other till they reach level ground on which couples sway off in the sentimental embrace of the waltz (allegro vivace — minuetto). I don't doubt that all that is in the music. All I did was to translate it into my own form imagery.*