

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Sydney Symphony Orchestra announces 2015 annual results

**3 May 2016**

The increase in competition in the commercial concert market and rising operational costs have been reflected in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's 2015 annual results, released today.

The SSO recorded a net loss for 2015 of \$896,811 after making a modest profit of \$16,345 last year. This loss equates to 2% of the company's \$39 million operating budget.

According to SSO Managing Director Rory Jeffes, the market for commercial and popular crossover performances has become increasingly overcrowded, the outcome of which was evident in 2015.

"The sheer amount of product in the market meant we were unable to attract the level of support we had previously enjoyed because there were so many choices available to people," Mr Jeffes said. "We responded by restructuring our approach to commercial programming and it is already paying dividends in 2016."

"While costs in the orchestral sector are still rising, we are working tirelessly to match that growth through ticket sales and philanthropic support, the latter of which continued to trend upward in 2015 and has a critical part to play in the future artistic success of the organisation."

"We do not foresee a loss in 2016," he added.

While total tickets sold were down by 3% as compared to 2014 across all categories, they were up by 1% as compared to 2014 when commercial concert activities are excluded. Occupancy for classical concerts remained strong at 82%.

The Orchestra self-generated 63% of its total income in 2015 and continues to be the only state symphony orchestra in Australia that generates significantly more revenue through its activities than the level of funding it receives from Federal and State Governments.

Philanthropy accounted for 8% of revenue (\$3,059,146), having grown by nearly 100% over the past two years. Sponsorship was a steady 5% of revenue (\$2,069,678) in 2015, a year that saw the SSO welcome Sydney Airport onboard as the official Presenting Partner of its award-winning Schools Concert Program.

In its second year under the baton of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director David Robertson the Orchestra performed more than 179 concerts and more than 100 unique programs to more than 286,000 people. These included two free outdoor concerts, *Symphony in the Domain* and *Parramatta Park*, attended by 23,727 and 6,000 people respectively.

Audiences in Albury, Wagga Wagga and Griffith experienced the SSO through the Orchestra's annual regional touring program; while audiences in Orange and Wollongong also enjoyed performances as part of the *Mozart in the City* concert program.

More than 30,500 people connected with the SSO through its learning and engagement activities, spanning concerts to special school performances, teacher training and orchestral workshops. Among them were 13,564 school children and their teachers who attended one of 32 schools concerts across greater Sydney, Albury, Wagga Wagga and Griffith.



Principal Partner



Under the leadership of Mr Robertson the SSO continued to solidify its position as the premiere orchestra of the Asia-Pacific region by undertaking an Asian tour; its fourth visit to China and second to South Korea. As part of that tour the Orchestra held a day-long workshop with the talented students at the Seoul National University. The SSO also hosted four students from the Shanghai Orchestra Academy in Sydney for a 10-day performance residency, following a new Memorandum of Understanding signed by the organisations in 2015.

In a season of soaring artistic heights Mr Robertson mounted exciting and ambitious projects including Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, the third instalment of an Opera in Concert series that is fast becoming an annual Sydney tradition.

Other artistic highlights included:

- Opening the season with Schumann's symphonies and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony
- Performances by virtuosos including Chinese pianist Yuja Wang, cellist Daniel Müller-Schott and violinists Janine Jansen, Gil Shaham, Adele Anthony, Christian Tetzlaff and Anne-Sophie Mutter, and the SSO's own Concertmaster Andrew Haveron
- The world premieres of:
  - o Australian composer James Ledger's *War Music*, a significant co-commission with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra for the Anzac Centenary
  - o A new Oboe Concerto written for Associate Principal Oboe Shefali Pryor by Australian composer Alan Holley
- The Australian premieres of:
  - o A new work by First Violin Georges Lentz, co-commissioned with the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg
  - o *Sound Lur and Serpent* by Australian composer Andrew Schultz, originally commissioned for the SSO's 2014 China tour
  - o New Zealand composer Michael Williams' *Letters from the Front*, also for the Anzac Centenary project with the NZSO

The SSO also completed several innovative media initiatives targeted at sharing the orchestra's outstanding performances with global audiences, further expanding its reputation as one of the world's leading orchestras.

In *Visions of Vienna* the SSO became the first professional orchestra to be projected live in concert on to the sails of the Sydney Opera House; a video of the spectacle on YouTube has attracted more than 24,000 views to date. The SSO also participated in a presentation of *The Planets* for Earth Hour which saw musicians around the world launch their own pop-up performances to play along to Mr Robertson on a YouTube "Conductor Cam". Backstage News+ – the SSO's own dedicated site for the latest stories, videos, galleries and recordings from the Orchestra – was also launched in 2015.

The SSO thanks and acknowledges the support of the Federal and State Governments, its Principal Partner Emirates, and its many other partners, donors, patrons and volunteers.

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