

MEDIA RELEASE

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra announces its 2017 Season

"I can't wait for our audiences to hear and appreciate the sheer virtuosity of our musicians."
– SSO Chief Conductor and Artistic Director David Robertson.



Tuesday, 9 August 2016: The Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Chief Conductor and Artistic Director David Robertson are excited to announce their 2017 season, with offerings for every concert-goer, from classical music aficionados to lovers of new Australian music and those looking forward to their first orchestral experience.

David Robertson has again invited some of the world's greatest conductors and soloists to perform with your SSO, including Argentinean pianist Martha Argerich – who is set to make her Australian debut – and Swiss conductor Charles Dutoit in a celebration of his 40-year relationship with the SSO. Pianists Hélène Grimaud and Daniil Trifonov, violinists Baiba Skride and Janine Jansen, singers John Relyea and Susan Graham, and conductors Simone Young and Vladimir Ashkenazy will also appear in the 2017 season.

Robertson will be in Sydney four times in 2017 – conducting music ranging from Haydn and Richard Strauss to Stravinsky and works by Australian composers Nigel Westlake and Kate Neal. He will open his fourth season with Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, in a not-to-be-missed event featuring Maxim Vengerov as soloist in the Brahms Violin Concerto. Mahler's Third Symphony and Dvořák's Symphony No.9 (*From the New World*) also feature in the season, designed to give audiences the ultimate concert experience.

"The virtuosity of the SSO will be highlighted across several programs featuring big orchestral masterpieces in thought provoking programs," Robertson says. "I really want audiences to experience the full power of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra through these well-known symphonies."

Robertson's season will culminate in two epic choral works featuring Sydney Philharmonia Choirs: Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, starring Andrew Foster-Williams, and the Australian premiere of *Halleluja – Oratorium balbulum*, a secular oratorio by Hungarian Peter Eötvös, commissioned by the Salzburg Festival and the SSO. Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* makes a stunning finale to 2017 and continues Robertson's tradition of operatic performances in the concert hall with an all-star pairing in Michelle DeYoung and John Relyea.

Widely regarded as a living legend, Argentinean Martha Argerich will make her much anticipated Australian debut in June, performing Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.1 in a program with Charles Dutoit with whom she shares a special musical affinity. Together, Dutoit and your SSO will celebrate 40 years of musical collaboration with Debussy's operatic masterpiece *Pelléas et Mélisande*.

The 2017 season is a piano-lover's delight, with French pianist Hélène Grimaud performing Brahms's First Piano Concerto, Orli Shaham performing Mozart's Piano Concerto No.24 and young Russian superstar Daniil Trifonov making his Sydney recital debut.

Former SSO Principal Conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy will return, this time conducting a two-part tribute to Shostakovich featuring two great symphonies plus Australian-Taiwanese violinist Ray Chen in the First Violin Concerto and Daniel Müller-Schott in the First Cello Concerto.

Throughout 2017, three Australian singer-songwriters will feature in the popular Kaleidoscope series – Kate Miller-Heidke, Megan Washington, and Katie Noonan in her trio Elixir collaborating with Michael Leunig.

Following a successful revival in 2016, the Family Concert series will return to introduce children to the joy of classical music with three programs: Olympic Orchestra – Music for Sport, The Bush Concert and Carnival of the (Australian) Animals.

Australian composer and conductor Brett Dean embarks on his second year as the SSO's first-ever Artist in Residence, working closely with Robertson to support emerging Australian composers and bring the world's best contemporary music to Sydney in the SSO at Carriageworks series.

Several SSO musicians will step into the spotlight in 2017, starting with Principal Oboe Diana Doherty performing a concerto written especially for her by Australian composer Nigel Westlake.

"I wanted to feature all of the strong voices in the orchestra throughout the 2017 season," Robertson says. "I'm delighted that many fantastic opportunities are now coming to fruition and I can't wait for our audiences to hear and appreciate the sheer virtuosity of our musicians."

Principal Cello Umberto Clerici and Principal Viola Tobias Breider will also join Robertson to perform Strauss's *Don Quixote* in a June program that includes Carter's Variations for Orchestra.

And the popular Playlist series continues with Associate Principal Cello Leah Lynn, Trombone Nick Byrne and Associate Principal Oboe Shefali Pryor programming inspirational music for relaxed concerts at City Recital Hall. Concertmaster Andrew Haveron – whose performance of the Walton Violin Concerto was a highlight of 2015 – will lead two programs in the Mozart in the City series.

The SSO's fourth season under the baton of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director David Robertson promises to be one of world-class soloists, spectacular symphonic repertoire and surprising new programs – highlighting the artistry of Australia's flagship orchestra like never before.

Season packages for the 2017 season are now on sale and are available via the SSO box office.

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