

Swiss conductor Charles Dutoit celebrates 40 years of collaborating with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Pelléas et Mélisande: 23-24 & 28 Jun

Martha Argerich plays Beethoven: 29-30 Jun & 1 Jul



One of the most authoritative conductors of French music in the world today will celebrate four decades of working with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (SSO) with two stellar concert programs this June. Eighty-year-old Swiss conductor Charles Dutoit will conduct Debussy's operatic masterpiece *Pelléas et Mélisande* before joining Argentinean pianist Martha Argerich in the following week for Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.1.

Sydney Symphony Orchestra Principal Timpani Rick Miller says Dutoit is a "wonderful colourist". "I remember Dutoit's very first performances with this orchestra," says Miller, who has been a member of the SSO for 42 years. "During this time he has been unsurpassed in the way he conducts French music. He really knows how to set the mood."

Louise Johnson, SSO Principal Harp, agrees: "Maestro Dutoit has a magical touch with French music bringing a sense of finesse, beauty and je ne sais quoi."

According to SSO Principal Piccolo Rosamund Plummer, the flute section always gets a bit nervous when Dutoit is in town! "He pushes the players for technical perfection," Plummer says. "Being a specialist in French music, he knows the wind parts very well. His repertoire involves wonderful but difficult music. It's always so exciting to be challenged – and the result is well worth it."

Dutoit made his SSO debut in 1977 when he conducted Stravinsky's *Petrushka* in the then new Sydney Opera House. On his most recent visit in 2015, conducting Ravel and Debussy, he was commended by *The Sydney Morning Herald* as "a master of quiet, supremely refined delicacy".

The conductor will be joined by mezzo-soprano Michaela Selinger (Mélisande) and baritone Elliott Madore (Pelléas) in three rare Sydney outings of Debussy's opera on 23, 24 & 28 June. Based on Belgian writer Maeterlinck's play, the opera centres on a story of forlorn love in which a prince marries a young woman with a mysterious past who falls in love with his younger brother.

In his second program on this visit, Dutoit will be joined on stage by Argentinean piano legend Martha Argerich, who will be making her long-awaited Australian debut with the SSO in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.1. The pair have a daughter together (Annie Dutoit) and share a long-held musical affinity, having first performed together in 1959 when Argerich was just 17 years old.

In this program the SSO will also perform the Australian premiere of Stravinsky's youthful tribute to Rimsky-Korsakov, his *Funeral Song*, [miraculously rediscovered](#) last year after having been thought lost for more than a century.

#ENDS#

Concert details:

PROGRAM ONE

Pelléas et Mélisande:
Opera in the Concert Hall

Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House

Fri 23 Jun, 7pm

Sat 24 Jun, 7pm

Wed 28 Jun, 7pm

DEBUSSY Pelléas et Mélisande
Sung in French with English surtitles

Charles Dutoit conductor
Michaela Selinger Mélisande
Elliott Madore Pelléas
Marc Barrard Golaud
Jérôme Varnier Arkel
Julie Mathevet Yniold
Anna Dowsley Geneviève
Daniel Sumegi Doctor
Simon Lobelson Shepherd
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Pre-concert talk by David Garrett at 6.15pm

Tickets: \$39-\$149

Tickets available from the SSO Box Office on (02) 8215 4600 or choose your own seat at sydneyphilharmonia.com

For interview and photo requests or further information, please contact:

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PROGRAM TWO

Martha Argerich Plays Beethoven
Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House

Thu 29 Jun, 8pm

Fri 30 Jun, 8pm

Sat 1 Jul, 8pm

STRAVINSKY Funeral Song
BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No. 1
FALLA The Three-Cornered Hat: Suites
RAVEL La Valse

Charles Dutoit conductor
Martha Argerich piano

Pre-concert talk by Scott Davie at 7.15pm

Tickets: \$79-\$203

BIOGRAPHIES

Charles Dutoit

Charles Dutoit is one of today's most sought-after conductors, having performed with all the major orchestras of the five continents. He has been a regular visitor to Sydney since 1977, and his most recent appearance with the SSO was in 2015.

Presently Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the London Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, he collaborates every season with the orchestras of Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles, and is also a regular guest on the stages in London, Berlin, Paris, Munich, Moscow, Beijing, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, amongst others.

For 25 years, he was Artistic Director of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. Other titled posts have included Music Director of the Orchestre National de France (1991–2001) and Principal Conductor then Music Director (1996–2003) of the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo, where he is now Music Director Emeritus. He was also Music Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra's season at the Mann Music Center for 10 years, and for 21 years at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center.

When still in his early 20s, he was invited by Herbert von Karajan to conduct the Vienna State Opera. He has since conducted at Covent Garden, the Metropolitan Opera, Deutsche Oper in Berlin, Rome Opera and Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires.

Dutoit's recordings for Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI, Philips and Erato have garnered multiple awards and distinctions including two Grammys. He holds honorary doctorates from the Universities of McGill, Montreal, Laval and the Curtis School of Music. A globetrotter motivated by his passion for history and archaeology, political science, art and architecture, he has travelled in all 196 nations of the world.

For an extended biography visit [HERE](#).

Martha Argerich

Martha Argerich was born in Buenos Aires and started taking piano lessons with Vincenzo Scaramuzza when she was five years old. In 1955 she went to Europe with her family and received tuition from Friedrich Gulda in Vienna. After winning the piano competitions in Bolzano and Geneva in 1957, she embarked on an intensive program of concerts. Her victory in the Chopin Competition in Warsaw in 1965 was a decisive step on her path to worldwide recognition.

Argerich rose to fame with her interpretations of the virtuoso piano literature of the 19th and 20th centuries, and her repertoire ranges from Bach through Beethoven, Schumann, Liszt, Debussy and Ravel, to Bartók. She has toured Europe, America and Japan with Gidon Kremer and Mischa Maisky, and has also recorded much of the duet and duo repertoire with the pianists Nelson Freire, Stephen Kovacevich, Nicolas Economou and Alexandre Rabinovitch. Argerich takes a great supportive interest in young artists and in 1999 the inaugural International Martha Argerich Piano Competition took place in Buenos Aires, a competition which not only carries her name but in which she is president of the jury.

Martha Argerich has close ties with Deutsche Grammophon, dating back to 1967. Her extensive discography includes solo works by Bach, Brahms, Chopin, Liszt and Schumann; recordings of concertos by Chopin, Liszt, Ravel and Prokofiev with Claudio Abbado, Beethoven with Giuseppe Sinopoli, and Stravinsky's *Les Noces* with Leonard Bernstein.



Principal Partner

