

MEDIA RELEASE

An epic symphony, a violin superstar and a new Australian work launch David Robertson's best season yet

Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House

Vengerov Plays Brahms: 17-18 Feb

Robertson conducts Tchaikovsky: 20 Feb

Colour & Movement: 22-24 Feb



Sydney Symphony Orchestra Chief Conductor and Artistic Director David Robertson will open his 2017 season with music spanning Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, Brahms' Violin Concerto with superstar Maxim Vengerov as soloist and the world premiere of a new concerto written by Australian composer Nigel Westlake for Principal Oboe Diana Doherty.

In what will be his fourth season at the helm of Australia's flagship orchestra, Robertson will conduct three concert programs in February at the Sydney Opera House, starting with the Season Opening Gala program **Vengerov Plays Brahms: Tchaikovsky 5**.

"Maxim Vengerov has been a musical powerhouse on the international stage due to his deep interpretive abilities, his incredible virtuosity and his broad interest in music's tremendous transforming power," Robertson says. "This season is meant to inspire in so many ways and our opening program, with Tchaikovsky's Fifth and the Brahms Violin Concerto, covers an enormous range of emotional richness that I see resonating throughout our entire 2017 season."

New Australian music is especially prominent in Robertson's 2017 season, with a highlight being the world premiere of a concerto for oboe and orchestra by eminent Australian composer Nigel Westlake (*Babe and Paper Planes*). Written for SSO Principal Oboe Diana Doherty – widely regarded as one of the world's best oboists – *Spirit of the Wild* is a reflection on the Tasmanian wilderness inspired by Westlake's visit to Bathurst Harbour last year with environmentalist Bob Brown.

"When I was writing the piece I was invited by Bob Brown to join him in exploring the southwest coast of Tasmania in the World Heritage area and he took me to Bathurst Harbour which is almost completely devoid of modern human intrusion," Westlake says.



Principal Partner



“It is a magical patchwork of buttongrass moorlands, heathlands and estuaries, bordered by jagged peaks, wild rivers and rugged coastlines. That journey really was ever present in my mind when I was writing the concerto.

“I’ve always been a huge fan of Diana Doherty. To have her on board and so enthusiastic about this piece has been an absolute thrill and joy,” Westlake added.

Doherty, who joined the SSO as Principal Oboe in 1997, says “working with Nigel on this concerto has been a joy from the very first meeting”.

“I am thrilled with what the piece has become,” Doherty says. “Nigel has created a work with earthy rhythmic patterns and heavenly floating melodies. I absolutely love it, and I hope the audience does too!”

Spirit of the Wild was commissioned by the SSO with the generous support of Jane Mathews AO and Symphony Services International. It will feature in a program with Ligeti’s early Romanian Concerto, Four Orchestral Pieces by Bartok and Ravel’s iconic *Bolero*. Audiences can also experience the Ligeti and Bartok with Tchaikovsky’s Fifth in the first Monday evening concert of 2017 with the SSO and Robertson.

Robertson’s 2017 season features some of the world’s greatest conductors and soloists, 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 Nobuyuki Tsujii 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.

#ENDS#

CONCERT DETAILS:

**VENGEROV PLAYS BRAHMS:
TCHAIKOVSKY 5
BRAHMS** Violin Concerto
TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No.5

17 Feb, 8pm
18 Feb, 8pm

David Robertson conductor
Maxim Vengerov violin

**ROBERTSON CONDUCTS
TCHAIKOVSKY
LIGETI** Romanian Concerto
BARTÓK Four Orchestral
Pieces
TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No.5

20 Feb, 7pm

David Robertson conductor

**COLOUR & MOVEMENT:
RAVEL’S BOLERO
LIGETI** Romanian Concerto
WESTLAKE Spirit of the Wild –
Oboe Concerto [World
Premiere]
BARTÓK Four Orchestral
Pieces
RAVEL Bolero

22 Feb, 6.30pm
23 Feb, 1.30pm
24 Feb, 8pm

David Robertson conductor
Diana Doherty oboe

Tickets available from sydneyssymphony.com or (02) 8215 4600.

WATCH the Sydney Symphony Orchestra’s 2017 trailer [HERE](#).

For more information, pictures and interviews please contact:

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Principal Partner

