

## MEDIA RELEASE

1 September 2004

### ***Special Drought Recovery Benefit Concert in Griffith – grand finale to Sydney Symphony's regional NSW tour***

***Wednesday 29 September at 7.30pm in Lismore City Hall  
Thursday 30 September at 8pm in the Lazenby Hall, Armidale  
Friday 1 October at 8pm at the Newcastle Civic Theatre  
Saturday 2 October at 5pm, Drought Recovery Benefit Concert,  
Griffith Regional Theatre***

A special Drought Recovery Benefit Concert in Griffith will be held on Saturday 2 October to raise much-needed financial assistance to those affected by drought in regional NSW. This concert will be the grand finale of a tour of regional NSW where the Sydney Symphony's new Chief Conductor **MAESTRO GIANLUIGI GELMETTI** is being introduced to audiences around the state for the first time since he took up his position at the beginning of the year.

Maestro Gelmetti directs the Sydney Symphony in Lismore, Armidale, Newcastle and Griffith with a program featuring Beethoven's Symphony No 7, Donizetti's Concertino for Cor Anglais featuring Sydney Symphony Principal Cor Anglais **ALEXANDRE OQUEY** and Bottesini's Concerto for Double Bass No 2 showcasing the talents of the Symphony's own Co-Principal Double Bass, **ALEX HENERY**.

"Maestro Gelmetti has thoroughly enjoyed getting to know Sydney very well and he's now very keen to bring the Sydney Symphony to audiences in Lismore, Armidale, Newcastle and Griffith. Now people from all around the state are able to hear his wonderful interpretations of Beethoven symphonies and concertos, which have been hugely acclaimed by both critics and audiences alike," said Libby Christie, Managing Director, Sydney Symphony.

"The Hon Ian Macdonald, Minister for Primary Industries, and our corporate partners are generously supporting the Sydney Symphony to give back to the community with the performance of a 'Drought Recovery Benefit' concert in Griffith. This offers us a great opportunity to give a substantial donation to those people affected by drought with funds raised through sponsorship and distributed by appropriate charities."

"Nearly 90 per cent of NSW remains in the grips of drought, and current weather forecasts don't offer much hope for immediate relief," Mr Macdonald said.

"Through this special partnership, the State Government and the Sydney Symphony hope to ease the burdens of drought – and provide extra financial support to charities that look after the welfare of our farming families."

Charities distributing proceeds from the Griffith Drought Recovery Benefit Concert include Adracare, Anglicare, St Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army, Red Cross and the Murrumbidgee Valley Rural Counselling Service.

Maestro Gianluigi Gelmetti took up his position as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony in January 2004. He was already well-known to the Orchestra having appeared as a guest conductor since 1993. Maestro Gelmetti will make three visits to Australia each year totalling twelve weeks and continues as Musical Director of the Rome Opera.

**ALEX HENERY** joined the Sydney Symphony as Co-Principal Double Bass in 1998 having worked with some of the finest orchestras in the UK including the London Philharmonia, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the London Symphony, the Royal Philharmonic and the BBC Welsh Symphony.

Currently Principal Cor Anglais in the Sydney Symphony, **ALEXANDRE OQUEY** was born in Switzerland. He is an active chamber musician, and has performed throughout Europe with many Orchestras. Before moving to Australia, Alexandre Oquey was also Associate Principal Oboe in the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra from 1990 to 1997.

The Sydney Symphony's annual regional tour is made possible by the Federal Government through the Australia Council for the Arts and the NSW Government through the Ministry for the Arts.

**Corporate partners have generously contributed to the tour and they include:**

**Lismore:** Rabobank, Telstra, Regional Express Airlines  
**Armidale:** Country Energy, Rabobank, Telstra, Regional Express Airlines  
**Newcastle:** Energy Australia  
**Griffith:** Country Energy, Visy Industries, Telstra, Rabobank, Regional Air Express, Rural Press

***Bookings and Enquiries:***  
***Lismore 02 6621 5600***  
***Newcastle 02 4929 1977***  
***Armidale 02 6772 4655 or 1800 627 736***  
***Griffith 02 6961 8388***

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