

MEDIA RELEASE

Sydney Symphony bound for hospital

The award-winning Sydney Symphony and MBF *music4health* program for 2008 will begin on Tuesday 18 March with a string quartet and a conductor from the Orchestra paying a special visit to the young patients at The Children's Hospital, Westmead.

Winner of both the national and state community awards in the 2007 Australia Business Arts Foundation awards, *music4health* sees Sydney Symphony musicians visit hospitals across the state each year in order to provide uplifting and entertaining experiences for patients, their carers and hospital staff.

"Research has shown that, among many potential health benefits, music has the ability to relax patients, improving their responses to treatment and therapy." Dr Christine Bennett, MBF Chief Medical Officer explained. "In addition to experiencing the therapeutic power of music, the concerts are great fun and a welcome break for the children from the routine of hospital life."

"Now in its fifth year, the *music4health* program has developed into the cornerstone of our outreach and community work," said Sydney Symphony Managing Director Libby Christie. "And the feedback we get shows just what a powerful impact music can have in people's lives."

The Children's Hospital at Westmead has been the site of numerous visits since the program began in 2004, always proving to be rewarding occasions for the musicians, seeing young faces light up in response to their performances.

The concerts also provide the young children with an engaging and interactive introduction to classical music, encouraging them to play with the musicians as part of a "Toy Symphony." Accounting for those patients who are unable to attend the public performance, the Sydney Symphony musicians also make beside visits to several wards.

The *music4health* program was originally devised in 2003 when the Sydney Symphony began to explore opportunities to bring the experience of live classical music to those that are unable to attend concerts due to limited mobility, illness or other circumstance. Collaboration with MBF, one of the country's leading health organisations, led to the first visit at Calvary Hospital, Wagga Wagga in 2004.

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Music4health has now seen the Sydney Symphony visit more than 20 hospitals around New South Wales including The Children's Hospital at Westmead, Orange Public Hospital, Liverpool Hospital, Royal North Shore Hospital and Tamworth Public Hospital.

The performance on Tuesday 18 March will take place in the Starlight Room at 11am.

ENDS

Media are welcome to attend and photograph the performance. Please contact:

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Note to editors

MBF *music4health* 2008 Hospital Visits

- 18 March The Children's Hospital, Westmead
- 16 May Royal North Shore Hospital, Sydney
- 12 July Bathurst, NSW (venue TBC)
- 17 July The Children's Hospital, Westmead
- 29 July St Luke's Hospital, Potts Point, Sydney
- 12 August TBC
- 16 September The Children's Hospital, Westmead
- 21 November TBC