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Orchestra's New Triple Treat

The Sydney Symphony's education program can take a triple bow following the appointment of three former trainee musicians to full membership of the orchestra.

Mark Robinson, David Papp and Stuart Johnson have been elevated after proving their musicianship over many years in percussion, oboe and viola respectively and gaining performance experience in an array of settings.

But while the trio has travelled different paths to the top, they all share an abiding link to the Sydney Symphony's training orchestra, the **Sydney Sinfonia** – a "baptism of fire" that aims to bring out the best in budding talent.

Introduced in 1996, the Sydney Sinfonia has "shepherded" 356 students in the intervening years – 60 per cent of whom have gone on to secure permanent, casual or contract work with orchestras nationally and internationally.

Robinson, 29, of Seaforth, worked for two years with Sinfonia before travelling overseas. He has no doubt the training program was a "major influence."

"It gave me an opportunity to see how this orchestra operates. It sparked my interest in applying to actually work with the Sydney Symphony. It's great to be back in Sydney playing with such a great orchestra and making fantastic music with the country's best musicians," he commented.

Papp, 25, of Crows Nest, savours his time at both the SBS Youth Orchestra and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, but believes his Sinfonia training and year spent with the Sydney Symphony's Fellowship scheme contributed more to his development.

"I'm extremely happy to be working with musicians on this level, and feel very proud to be the new youngest member of the Orchestra."

Johnson, 31, of Newtown, spent three years with Sinfonia before moving to Melbourne for a stint with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. He believes the Sinfonia training assisted him in finishing ahead of 27 other candidates for the Sydney Symphony position.

Leading conductor and Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony Education Program, **Richard Gill** said: "It is very satisfying to see what were once student musicians blossom over the years to reach a standard of excellence.

“Sometimes you can see that younger people taking part in our programs have what it takes, but it never fails to excite when they – and others you thought were only on the cusp - show up many moons later and blow you away with their ability to perform.

“The success to this point of Mark, David and Stuart provides further proof of how important early and sustained music education is to the artistic development of our young people.”

The Managing Director of Sydney Symphony, **Rory Jeffes** said: “Through these appointments the Sydney Symphony is once again showing the calibre of its musician training initiatives and our education program’s ability to convert aspiring musicians into professional musicians.”

About the Sydney Sinfonia

Led by Richard Gill, this training and mentoring ensemble, which celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2010, provides outstanding tertiary students with invaluable experience working alongside professional musicians as part of a performing orchestra.

The Sydney Sinfonia performs alongside Sydney Symphony musicians in the **Discovery** series at City Recital Hall Angel Place and in the Sydney Symphony’s schools concerts in metropolitan Sydney and rural NSW.

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