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SYDNEY SYMPHONY ON SONG WITH MUSIC EDUCATION OUTPUTS

Music excellence doesn't stop at concert performances, with the Sydney Symphony "on song" to better its 2009 targets for student and teacher music education programs.

Inspired by the fact that 75 per cent of music teachers nationally have not received specialist training, the Sydney Symphony has boosted its tuition initiatives across NSW primary and secondary schools to benefit a record 600 teachers and 40,000 students.

And to extend the opportunities for reaching more schools and pupils, the organisation has directed around half of its 2009 schedule of 190 performances to outer metropolitan, regional and rural centres.

The Managing Director of the Sydney Symphony, Rory Jeffes, said the delivery of professional development training for teachers was integral to its operations and mission.

"I think it is fair to say that the orchestra is known nationally and internationally as a flagship for high calibre musicians and concerts, but equally important for us is the work we do to assist music education," Mr Jeffes said.

"Our commitment to spreading the joy and benefits of music very much runs parallel to our efforts to nurture young people and the people best placed to help them in the classroom – teachers.

"We have, in fact, been involved in education since 1924, so it is extra special for us to be sharing our expertise to help up-skill school music teachers and to be ahead of target in 2009."

Mr Jeffes said the impacts of the world financial crisis had not made the delivery of its suite of training programs easy, but the Sydney Symphony was pressing ahead for additional improvement in outcomes in 2010.

"What is spurring us on is the Federal Government's recent announcement that the arts will be included as a core subject in the new national curriculum, with music forming a significant part of classroom learning by 2011," added Mr Jeffes.

"This decision, combined with responses to the 2020 Summit, indicate the importance of the arts and creative enterprise to Australia's identity, community and economy.

"And as one of the nation's leading arts education providers, the Sydney Symphony is enthused to be doing its bit for excellence in music tuition, in any school, and anywhere.

“We definitely want to be helping to drive down that figure of 75 per cent of music teachers currently not receiving specialist training, and certainly it is critical that funding is available to ensure the momentum that we and other orchestras are achieving is sustained.”

Sydney Symphony’s Education Program is based, in part, on a three-pronged approach:

1. Teachers attend a **Professional Development Seminar** presented by leaders in the field of music education
2. Teachers receive and work through a **Teaching Kit** – a set of syllabus-linked lesson plans and activities they can use in the classroom – from kindergarten to Year 12 - for a whole year. They also prepare students for the live performance they will attend later in the year.
3. Teachers and students attend the **live Sydney Symphony performance**. By this stage, the students have learnt about the music, can participate in the group activities and understand how the music is “put together”.

Comprehensive research and development goes into the six Teaching Kits produced every year - each tailored to the annual cycles of the music curriculum. They are written by the best music educators in Australia.

Snapshot of Sydney Symphony Education Initiatives

- School Concerts Series, attended by 18,000 students
- Meet the Music concerts, seminars attended by 17,383 teachers and students
- Sydney Sinfonia Regional Tour, nine performances, attended by 4,454 students
- Discovery Program, presentations by leading conductor Richard Gill, attended by 4,404 people
- Fellowship Program
- Training orchestra
- The Playlink residency program
- Sinfonietta Composition Project

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