

## MEDIA RELEASE

### ***“A feast for the ears!” declares Sydney Symphony cellist Leah Lynn***

#### ***Sydney Symphony and Simone Young bring to life a 20th century masterpiece, Messiaen’s Turangalila-symphonie***

*10, 11 and 13 August  
Sydney Opera House Concert Hall*

Sydney, 27 July – Demanding the utmost virtuosity from a huge orchestra, the *Turangalila-symphonie* is a defining work of 20th-century music. A piece of unbridled passion, joy and visionary intensity, it was declared by Messiaen himself to be ‘a hymn to love’. For three performances in August, Sydney audiences will get the chance to hear the full force of the Sydney Symphony, with over 90 players on stage, bring this epic love story to life under the baton of acclaimed Australian conductor Simone Young.



“I first heard the piece in the mid-80s and was overwhelmed,” says Young. “It had an immediate impact on me with its vast sound-world and powerful rhythms. The orchestral colours offer so much variety of emotional scope that our imaginations are constantly engaged. I think most audience members come to it to be impressed, and are surprised to find themselves deeply moved.”

Over 10 movements, the piece explores all facets of love from passion and playfulness to heartbreak and loss. In one of his essays on the piece, Messiaen writes that the concept of love which he seeks to express in the work is that of an overwhelming, unstoppable, outpouring of deep emotion.

The *Turangalila-symphonie* is like no other in the repertoire. Messiaen’s expansive orchestration sets off the imagination and captures love like it’s never been heard before, with an array of sounds from captivating birdsong to Hindu rhythms.

To bring this sound-world to life, the piece features a demanding solo piano part and the weird, soulful sigh of the ondes martenot, an electronic instrument with keyboard which generates eerie wavering notes. The ondes martenot gained prominence after featuring in a number of film scores including *Ghostbusters* and *Amelie*. Radiohead guitarist Jonny Greenwood is often credited with bringing the ondes to a larger audience through Radiohead’s many albums which feature the instrument.

For the Sydney Symphony performances, the ondes martenot (right) will be played by Cynthia Millar whose performances on the instrument are acclaimed world-wide. Cynthia returns to Sydney after performing the *Turangalila-symphonie* in 1999 with the Sydney Symphony, the last time the Orchestra performed the work.





Cédric Tiberghien © Photo Eric Manas

Tackling the piano part is 30-year-old French pianist Cédric Tiberghien who describes hearing *Turangalîla* for the first time as hypnotising. "This work has had such an emotional impact on my life. I discovered it when I was 10, and I even bought the orchestra score at that time! I was of course completely unable to play a single note of it. The piano part is awfully difficult, but so exciting".

"I am so fortunate to have now played the piece several times including once in Hamburg with Simone Young. The energy Simone creates when she conducts the piece is just unbelievable. Sydney audiences are in for a special experience that will undoubtedly stay with them forever."

Cédric Tiberghien's considerable talents will also be on show when he gives a solo recital on Monday 6 August at City Recital Hall Angel Place as part of the Sydney Symphony's International Pianists in Recital series. The program features the delicacy and refinement of Chopin and the emotional honesty of Brahms including his monumental transcription of Bach's famous D minor Chaconne for solo violin.

ENDS

For further information regarding these performances, interviews with musicians and photo opportunities, please contact:

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### **Concert details**

#### **TURANGALÎLA-SYMPHONIE**

Friday 10 August, 8pm  
Saturday 11 August, 2pm  
Monday 13 August, 7pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

**Simone Young** conductor  
**Cédric Tiberghien** piano  
**Cynthia Millar** ondes martenot

**MESSIAEN** Turangalîla-symphonie

Tickets from \$54 (booking fee may apply)

Pre-concert talk by Dr Wolfgang Fink, Sydney Symphony Director of Artistic Operations, at the Sydney Opera House Northern Foyer 45 minutes before each performance.

#### **CÉDRIC TIBERGHIEIN IN RECITAL**

Monday 6 August, 8pm

City Recital Hall Angel Place

**BRAHMS** Chaconne by JS Bach, arr. for piano left hand  
**BRAHMS** Four Ballades, Op.10  
**CHOPIN** Four Ballades

Tickets from \$48 (booking fee may apply)

Pre-concert talk by Ian Munro.  
First floor reception room, Angel Place, at 7.15pm