

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **Sydney Symphony Beethoven Festival**

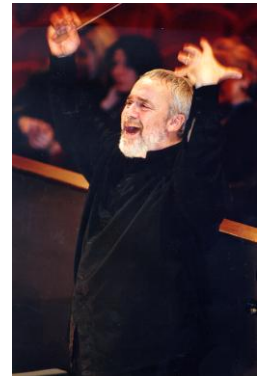
## **Musicians and audiences alike take a journey into the heart and mind of Beethoven**

**30 May – 11 June**  
**Sydney Opera House Concert Hall**

Sydney, May 4 – For two weeks in June, Sydney Symphony Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Maestro Gelmetti invites music-lovers to journey into the heart and mind of Beethoven. In a monumental music event, the Sydney Symphony presents the Beethoven Festival – a celebration of one of the world's best-loved composers. A highlight of Sydney's cultural calendar this year, it includes all the composer's symphonies and three piano concertos performed by the virtuosic pianist, Gerhard Oppitz.

Beethoven's nine symphonies lie at the very heart of classical music and harness the full power of the symphony orchestra. Full of fire and passion, energy and atmosphere, Beethoven's music changed the course of musical history, says Maestro Gelmetti. In its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, Sydney Symphony celebrates its own musical history with an event that showcases the dazzling talents and achievements of its world-class musicians.

"Playing all nine symphonies is the ultimate illustration of Beethoven's expressive power and one that the Sydney Symphony is excited to share with the city. It is music that inspires, excites, even terrifies. We encourage all of Sydney to come on a musical journey with us through all the Beethoven symphonies from the classical balance of his First Symphony to the world-changing awe of the Ninth," says Maestro Gelmetti.



Joining Maestro Gelmetti and the Orchestra on stage will be pianist Gerhard Oppitz in what can only be described as a super-human feat of musical stamina performing nine works in total! Oppitz will perform three piano concertos and five sonatas for the Beethoven Festival, then stay in town to give another performance with a chamber-sized group of Sydney Symphony musicians in the Orchestra's Homage to Mozart concert.

Described in 2006 by the Australian as "dazzling" and the Sydney Morning Herald as "impressive", Oppitz is internationally acclaimed for his performances of the Romantic masters and is attuned to Beethoven's drama and daring. A true 'student of Beethoven', Oppitz studied with the famed Wilhelm Kempff, heir to a glorious tradition of music-making that stretches in an unbroken line back to Beethoven himself.

To share the Beethoven Festival spirit with all of Sydney, the NSW Art Gallery, in collaboration with the Sydney Symphony, will host a special lecture on Gustav Klimt's The Beethoven Frieze including a look at the life and times of Beethoven. This special event, presented by Ursula Prunster, will be held on Sunday 27 May at 10am at the NSW Art Gallery. Sydney sculptor and psychologist Dr Rebecca Gladys-Lee has also been invited to display her recent bust of Beethoven in the foyer of the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall for the duration of the festival, offering a local perspective on the journey to understand the mind of this important composer.

To celebrate its 75th anniversary, the Sydney Symphony is treating audiences to three composer festivals in 2007 – Brahms, Beethoven and Rachmaninov. The Sydney Symphony played to sell-out crowds in February for its Brahms' Festival and is looking forward to presenting the works of Beethoven in June and Rachmaninov in November, with Vladimir Ashkenazy conducting the Orchestra. Concert programs are now free to all concert-goers and can be downloaded beforehand from [www.sydney-symphony.com](http://www.sydney-symphony.com). Pre-concert talks also offer insights into the music, and are held free of charge in the Northern Foyer, 45 mins prior to

each performance. For the Beethoven Festival, Australian composer Gordon Kerry will present the pre-concert talks.

To book tickets to the Sydney Symphony Beethoven Festival, contact the Sydney Symphony Box Office on (02) 8215 4600 9am-5pm, Mon-Fri or visit [www.sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com](http://www.sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com).

To hear musical excerpts from music to be performed at the Beethoven Festival, visit [www.sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com/beethoven](http://www.sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com/beethoven)

**Single tickets available from \$63. Beethoven Festival packages start at \$180.**

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For further information regarding the Sydney Symphony Beethoven Festival, interviews with musicians and photo opportunities, please contact:

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### **Beethoven Festival concert details**

**Gianluigi Gelmetti** conductor  
**Gerhard Oppitz** piano  
**Myrto Papatanasu** soprano  
**Deborah Humble** mezzo-soprano  
**Scott MacAllister** tenor  
**José Carbó** bass  
**Sydney Philharmonia Choirs**

### **Sydney Opera House Concert Hall**

**Pre-concert talk by Gordon Kerry 45 minutes before each performance in the Northern Foyer of the Opera House**

Wednesday 30 May, 8pm	Symphony No.4 Symphony No.7
Friday 1 June, 11am	'Moonlight' Sonata, Op.27 No.2 Symphony No.2
Friday 1 June, 8pm	Symphony No.2 Piano Concerto No.4
Saturday 2 June, 8pm & Sunday 3 June, 6.30pm	Piano Concerto No.5, Emperor Symphony No.5
Thursday 7 June, 1.30pm & Friday 8 June, 8pm	Symphony No.6, Pastoral Symphony No.3, Eroica
Saturday 9 June, 2pm	Symphony No.8 Piano Concerto No.3
Sunday 10 June, 2pm & Monday 11 June, 7pm	Symphony No.1 Symphony No.9, Choral

### **Gerhard Oppitz in Recital**

**Monday 18 June, 8pm**  
**City Recital Hall Angel Place**  
**Pre-concert talk: 7.15pm, First Floor Reception Room**

Following Gerhard Oppitz's performance of Beethoven piano concertos in the Beethoven Festival, he will perform four Beethoven piano sonatas including the great Appassionata, Op.57.

This concert is part of the International Pianists in Recital series presented by Theme & Variations Piano Services.

### **BEETHOVEN**

Sonata No.1 in F minor, Op.2, No.1  
Sonata No.4 in E flat, Op.7  
Sonata No.22 in F, Op.54  
Sonata No.23 in F minor, Op.57