

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## A Symphony showcase for local talents

Sydney Symphony presents "A Guide to the Orchestra" in three performances at the Sydney Opera House in September.



Sydney, Wed 5 Sept – Sydney Symphony celebrates the talents of Sydney composer Elena Kats-Chernin (left) and good friend pianist Stephanie McCallum, and joins forces with Sydney broadcaster Andrew Ford in a special concert designed to introduce audiences to the joys of the orchestra. The concert features Britten's famous work *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* narrated in full by Andrew Ford, as the centrepiece to a musical journey through the sights and sounds of the Symphony. Part of the Sydney Symphony's hugely successful Meet the Music series, the concert represents a unique opportunity to delve into the colours of orchestral music, ranging from the classical to the contemporary. And with the humour and charm of Andrew Ford as presenter, audiences can expect a warm and welcoming experience to suit all ages from the young to the young at heart.

Britten composed his *Young Person's Guide* as an introduction to the individual characters of orchestral instruments. Every section of the orchestra gets to shine, as Britten ingeniously transforms Purcell's original tune into a witty, brilliant showpiece. The scores of Beethoven and Haydn symphonies were on Stravinsky's desk as he composed his Symphony in C, and the spirits of those Classical masters seem to hover over the work, bestowing balance, harmony and grace on Stravinsky's unmistakable angular charm.

Elena Kats-Chernin wrote *Displaced Dances* with her good friend Stephanie McCallum in mind and it represents a coming together of two of Sydney's great 'superwomen' of classical music who met as students at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, under renowned teacher Gordon Watson. Kats-Chernin says that with the piece she wanted to "create an overall feeling of displacement, as if one was lost in a strange city. This seems a theme of much of my work, playing with the familiar to create something new and creating a sense of musical déjà-vu where the past becomes new, and yet is oddly recognisable, like a half-remembered dream....all up, it's a strangely Australian type of concerto."

Pianist Stephanie McCallum premiered *Displaced Dances* in 2000 with The Queensland Orchestra and later recorded it for future CD release on ABC Classics with the Australian String Orchestra conducted by David Stanhope. The performance with the Sydney Symphony marks the first time it has been performed in Sydney. The work is a chain of 12 dances written for large forces and a colourful array of percussion!

Earlier this year Kats-Chernin wrote a special piece for the Sydney Symphony to perform in celebration of that other great icon with whom it shares a 75th birthday, the Sydney Harbour Bridge. She has also enjoyed cult success in the UK after her piece *Eliza's Aria* (from the *Wild Swans* ballet score) was licensed by Lloyd's TSB, a major bank, for a magical animated advertisement which ran on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3xe9dSY7zM> The piece also stimulated CD sales making it now the #1 selling classical album in the UK.

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Since returning to Australia in 1994 from studies in Europe, she has written three operas, 2 piano concertos and works for many performers and ensembles, including Sydney Alpha Ensemble, Bang on a Can All-Stars, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Sydney Symphony and others. Her music has featured at the opening ceremonies of the 2000 Olympic Games and the 2003 Rugby World Cup. The score for the ballet *Wild Swans* choreographed by Meryl Tankard for the Australian Ballet in 2003, won the Green Room Award as well as the Helpmann Award 2004 for the best original score. The music for the ballet was arranged by Kats-Chernin into a concert suite for soprano and orchestra and in June 2005 released as a CD by ABC Classics.

Accomplished Australian conductor Martyn Brabbins makes his debut appearance with the Sydney Symphony in *A Guide to the Orchestra*. With a strong international profile, he is renowned by his work with contemporary repertoire. The Sydney Symphony is delighted to welcome him for this concert, which combines the talents of three of Australia's unique musicians voices.

Tickets from \$54 - \$70. To book call Sydney Symphony on 8215 4600 or visit [www.sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com](http://www.sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com)

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For further information regarding *A Guide to the Orchestra* and interviews with Elena Kats-Chernin, Stephanie McCallum, Andrew Ford or Sydney Symphony musicians, and photo opportunities, please contact: Aimee Paret, Sydney Symphony T: 02 8215 4668 / 0423 335 617 E: [aimee.paret@sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com](mailto:aimee.paret@sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com)

### Concert details

#### CONCERT

Wed 12 Sept, 6.30pm  
Thurs 13 Sept, 6.30pm  
Fri 14 Sept, 11am (Britten  
& Stravinsky only)

#### PROGRAM

BRITTEN The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra  
KATS-CHERNIN Displaced Dances (Wed 12 & Thurs 13 only)  
STRAVINSKY Symphony in C

Concert Hall, Sydney  
Opera House

Sydney Symphony Education Manager Margaret Moore will present a free pre-concert talk on Wed 12 and Thurs 13 Sept at 5.45pm in the Northern Foyer of the Sydney Opera House.