

MEDIA RELEASE

Pack your passports!
Sydney Symphony takes audiences on a journey through Italy with Mendelssohn's joyous Italian Symphony

30, 31 March and 2 April
Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

Sydney, March 23 – In May 1830, at the age of 21, a young adventure-seeking composer by the name of Felix Mendelssohn began his extensive Grand Tour of Europe, a tour that was to last three years and encompass the great cities of Europe and England. Of all the countries he visited, it was Italy that Mendelssohn loved most, the country so seducing the young traveller that he put all his efforts into capturing the enchanting atmosphere through music. It was during his travels through Italy, with its sites and sounds as his backdrop, that Mendelssohn composed one of his best-loved works, his *Italian* Symphony.

Mendelssohn declared that all of Italy features in his *Italian* Symphony: its people, its landscapes and its art. Overflowing with charm and exuberance, the symphony is a musical postcard that brings Italy and its mediterranean flair alive for all to hear.

It has been nine years since the Sydney Symphony last performed Mendelssohn's *Italian* Symphony, but this month, under the baton of Dutch conductor Hubert Soudant, audiences will once again have the opportunity to be transported to Italy when the Orchestra fills the Opera House concert hall with Italian charm.

Also as part of this concert program, Maestro Soudant and the Sydney Symphony will be joined on stage by 29-year-old German violinist Viviane Hagner and her Stradivarius in Prokofiev's melodious and cheeky Second Violin Concerto.

Described by the Sydney Morning Herald as "brilliant" and "accomplished" following her 2004 performances with the Orchestra, Viviane is again set to again dazzle audiences with her glamorous looks and breath-taking command of her instrument.

Born in Munich, Viviane has been appearing in public with the world's finest orchestras since her international debut at the age of 12. She's won numerous awards, been loaned a Stradivarius from the Nippon Music Foundation, champions new works by the world's leading contemporary composers, and in January 2008, will make her debut with the New York Philharmonic under Lorin Maazel.

The Sydney Symphony is thrilled to be welcoming back the much-loved and much-admired Viviane for her performances with the Orchestra.

Also on the concert program is the world premiere of *A Line of Stars* by Australian composer Alan Holley. Commissioned by the Sydney Symphony for its 75th anniversary year, the piece was inspired by an African football team Holley had heard of which was referred to as 'a line of stars'.

"Instantly I decided that was to be the name of the new piece," says Holley. "I liked the play on words: on one hand, a line of 'star' musicians, on the other, an imagined connection between

several brilliant stars in a seemingly endless night sky. I decided that I would focus on the wonderful palette of colours of a symphony orchestra, rather than trying to be too virtuosic. In particular, I wanted to bring to the audience's attention three wonderful instruments not often heard as soloists in the standard orchestral score – the bass clarinet, the tuba and the contrabassoon.”

A Line of Stars was commissioned by the Sydney Symphony with the generous support of James Smith, Leonie Burrige and Richard Wingate and is dedicated to the Sydney Symphony and its Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, Gianluigi Gelmetti.

A Line of Stars is one of four Australian compositions being given its world premiere by the Sydney Symphony in 2007.

ENDS

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

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Concert details

MENDELSSOHN'S ITALIAN SYMPHONY

Friday 30 March, 8pm
Saturday 31 March, 2pm
Monday 2 April, 7pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

Hubert Soudant conductor
Viviane Hagner violin

HAYDN Symphony No.2
PROKOFIEV Violin Concerto No.2
HOLLEY A Line of Stars (World Premiere)
MENDELSSOHN Symphony No.4, Italian

Tickets from \$54

Pre-concert talk by Yvonne Frindle at the Sydney Opera House Northern Foyer 45 minutes before each performance.