

MEDIA RELEASE

Stars of the Rome Opera join forces with the Sydney Symphony for a gala performance of Rossini's Stabat Mater

17 and 19 May 2007
Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

"I love playing these big choral works – being surrounded by and bathed in the rich splendour of massed choirs and great soloists, combined with the magnificence of the symphony orchestra." Rosalind Horton, Sydney Symphony violinist

Sydney, April 23 – This May, for two gala performances only, Sydney audiences will get the rare opportunity to see and hear Australia's leading orchestra, the Sydney Symphony, combine forces with the vocal strength of the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and members of Opera Australia Chorus and four of the world's leading operatic stars in Rossini's heartfelt and dramatic Stabat Mater.



Conducted by Sydney Symphony Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Maestro Gianluigi Gelmetti, this concert represents a melting pot of talent unlike anything Sydney audiences have experienced before. And there is no better work to express the full force of these combined voices and instrumentalists than Rossini's Stabat Mater.

A meditation on the Virgin Mary's vigil at the foot of the Cross, the Stabat Mater displays all the hallmarks of Rossini's genius - drama, sonority and lyricism. Rossini interprets the text not as a lament but as a prayer radiating peace and hope.

Rossini's Stabat Mater was premiered in Paris on 7 January 1842 and was received with enormous enthusiasm. The first Italian performance, at Bologna, followed in March under the direction of Donizetti, who wrote:

'The enthusiasm is impossible to describe. Even at the final rehearsal, which Rossini attended, in the middle of the day, he was accompanied to his home to the shouting of more than 500 persons. The same thing the first night, under his window, since he did not appear in the hall ...'

To re-create this masterful work for Sydney audiences, Maestro Gelmetti has invited four of the world's leading operatic stars and Rossini specialists from the Rome Opera Theatre, where he is Music Director, to take part in this special concert event – soprano Anna Rita Taliento, mezzo soprano Daniela Barcellona, tenor Vittorio Grigolo and bass Roberto Scandiuizzi.

Mezzo-soprano Daniela Barcellona last dazzled Sydney audiences with her Sydney Symphony performances in 2004 with the Sydney Morning Herald describing her voice as 'rich and agile' and praising her 'great demonstration of virtuosity.'



Joining Barcellona on stage is thirty-year-old Italian tenor Vittorio Grigolo who has made his name not only as an accomplished opera singer but as one of the hottest pop/opera acts in the world, a genre for which he has coined the phrase 'popera'.



Since making his debut at the age of 13 in the role of Pastorello in *Tosca* at the Rome Opera Theatre, Vittorio has gone on to win numerous scholarships and high profile roles and in 2000, at the age of 23, he made his debut at the prestigious La Scala Theatre in Milan, making him the youngest tenor ever to have performed at the famed opera theatre.

Vittorio's first album *In The Hands of Love*, entered the British Top Ten setting a new sales record confirming him as the leading classical solo artist.

Without doubt, the centrepiece of this exhilarating gala concert is the *Stabat Mater*, but the Sydney Symphony could not let four Italian opera stars go home without also performing a dazzling selection from Rossini's operas including *The Barber of Seville* and *Semiramide*.

ENDS

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

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Note to editors

Concert programs are now available free of charge to audiences. They are also available online for download before the concert at sydney-symphony.com

Concert details

ROSSINI STABAT MATER GALA PERFORMANCE

Thursday 17 May, 8pm
Saturday 19 May, 8pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

Gianluigi Gelmetti conductor
Anna Rita Taliento soprano
Daniela Barcellona mezzo soprano
Vittorio Grigolo tenor
Roberto Scandiuzzi bass
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs
Members of Opera Australia Chorus

ROSSINI Selections from the operas:
Mose in Egitto: *Dal tuo stellato soglio*
Barbiere di Siviglia: *Se il mio nome saper voi bramate*
Semiramide: *Ebben, a te, ferisci...*
ROSSINI *Stabat Mater*

David Garrett introduces the concert at 7.15pm in the Northern Foyer.

Tickets from \$72.

To book tickets, call the Sydney Symphony Box Office on 8215 4600 or visit www.sydney-symphony.com