

MEDIA RELEASE

SEEING MUSIC, HEARING ART

David Robertson Returns to Sydney!

STRAVINSKY'S FIREBIRD: Wed 6 Aug | Fri 8 Aug | Sat 9 Aug

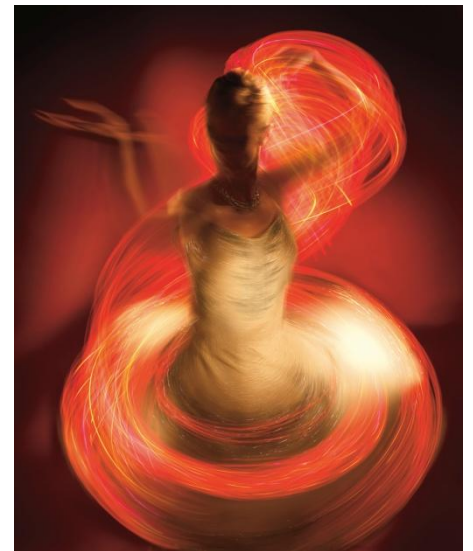
STUART CHALLENGER LECTURE: Thu 7 Aug

THE COLOUR OF TIME: Fri 22 Aug

"A persuasive new-music conductor and an insightful interpreter of the standard canon"
- The New York Times

This August, the Sydney Symphony will perform with one of the leading interpreters and exponents of twentieth-century classical music, American conductor David Robertson, for two awe-inspiring programs: Stravinsky's *Firebird* and a musical lecture, *The Colour of Time*, examining the intrinsic link between music and the visual arts.

Described by *The New York Times* as "a brilliant musician and a master programmer", Robertson has established himself as an artful communicator with the ability to make music accessible to new audiences with an attention-grabbing combination of passion and intellect whilst maintaining the highest artistic standards.



Robertson will begin his Sydney Symphony performances with Stravinsky's breakthrough work, *The Firebird*, a spectacular fairytale about a prince rescuing his princess from an evil monster with the help of a spectacular mythical bird. Despite its popularity, the work is rarely heard in its entirety, making these performances all the more special for Sydney audiences. The concerts will also feature Grammy Award-winning guest pianist, Yefim Bronfman, performing Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No.1.

In recognition of the centenary of the birth of one of twentieth century's greatest composers, Olivier Messiaen, Robertson will direct the Orchestra in a one-off illustrated musical lecture called *The Colour of Time*. The concert, on Friday 22 August, will feature works by Messiaen and Debussy accompanied by classic artworks projected onto a large screen, demonstrating the link between art and music, and inviting audiences to mingle aural and visual senses. The performance will also be narrated by David Robertson.

Of Messiaen, Robertson said: "I had the honour of working with Messiaen on a number of his works such as *Poemes pour Mi*, *L'Ascension* and *Turangalila* and I visited him in Paris several times in my 20s and 30s where he was only too willing to give his time to work on scores with me.

“Messiaen ‘heard’ colours and ‘painted’ his music accordingly. One day when while I was standing with the great composer looking at a projection of the stained glass of La Saint-Chapelle in Paris I asked him what he saw to which he replied, “A symphony of colour.”

David Robertson presented his Debussy, Messiaen and Monet inspired program to great acclaim last year with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and now brings the experience to Australia for the first time.

As a recognised music authority, inspiring communicator and respected educator, Robertson is a fitting figure to present the Sydney Symphony’s 2008 Stuart Challender Lecture on Thursday 7 August at Customs House in Sydney. For this year’s lecture, David will use his own personal perspectives and the selected audio samples to address the question, ‘Is classical music relevant’? The Stuart Challender lecture is presented annually by the Stuart Challender Fund, established by the Orchestra’s late Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, Stuart Challender, as a way to provide training opportunities for Australian conductors. Robertson joins an illustrious line-up of past presenters including Leonard Slatkin, Michael Steinberg, Simone Young and the controversial music journalist Norman Lebrecht.

An inspiration on and off the podium, Robertson has revived the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra during his past four years as Music Director, engaging the community outside the concert hall with groundbreaking outreach programs that have seen the orchestra contribute to arts education in local schools.

He is married to pianist Orli Shaham, who joins him on his visit to Australia to perform with the Sydney Symphony herself in mid-August.

Tickets for these performances can be purchased by phoning the Sydney Symphony Box Office on 02 8215 4600 or by visiting www.sydney-symphony.com.

ENDS

For additional information, contact:

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PREVIEW:

See David Robertson conduct The Julliard Symphony, New York City, in Messiaen’s *Oiseaux Exotiques*

PART I : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPtt94pHSrY>

PART II: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-5WwtfMpgM&feature=related>

Note to editors:

STRAVINSKY’S FIREBIRD

Energy Australia Master Series

Wed 6 Aug, 8pm

Fri 8 Aug, 8pm

Sat 9 Aug, 8pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

David Robertson conductor
Yefim Bronfman piano

TCHAIKOVSKY Piano Concerto No.1
STRAVINSKY The Firebird – Ballet

Tickets from \$35*

A pre-concert talk will be presented by Yvonne Frindle in the northern foyer of the Opera House 45 minutes prior to each performance.

STUART CHALLENGER LECTURE 2008 – Is Classical Music Relevant?
Thursday 7 August, 6.30pm

Barnet Long Room,
Customs House, Circular Quay

Presenter: David Robertson
Emcee: Libby Christie
Managing Director, Sydney Symphony

Free Admission – reserve tickets by phoning the Sydney Symphony Box Office on 02 8215 4600.

THE COLOUR OF TIME
Fri 22 Aug, 8pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

David Robertson conductor

DEBUSSY Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune
DEBUSSY Jeux
MESSIAEN Chronochromie

Tickets \$45*

**Booking fees may apply.*