

MEDIA RELEASE

PIANIST TAKES HER CUE FROM AUDIENCE

Grieg's Piano Concerto: Wed 3 Sept | Fri 5 Sept | Sat 6 Sept – Sydney Opera House
Gabriela Montero in Recital: Mon 8 Sept – City Recital Hall, Angel Place

Performing in front of an audience when thoroughly prepared and well rehearsed can be daunting enough, but imagine standing on stage before a packed concert hall without any idea of what you are about to perform...

Sydney audiences will have the opportunity to seize control of a concert when master pianist and improviser, Gabriela Montero, takes to the City Recital Hall stage inviting audiences to suggest musical themes on which she will improvise in her signature style, both funky and classical.

As part of the Sydney Symphony's International Pianists in Recital Series, Gabriela's performance will also include works by Bach, Chopin and Ginastera before handing over control to the audience to provide her inspiration.

At concerts the world over, Montero has been asked to spontaneously perform pieces ranging from a Haydn symphony to the Star Wars theme and has even had audience members come to the stage to play a piece of their own choice that she then uses as her inspiration. Far from being a gimmick or stage trick, Gabriela says, "Improvisation is a means for me to express myself in an alternative and unique manner. Since I first began to learn the piano I always improvised, using it as an outlet for my imagination, playing out characters, stories and feelings just as other children might draw or paint."

Though classical improvisation had been popular in the past with composers such as Beethoven, Liszt, Mozart and Bach, it fell out of fashion in the early twentieth century, no longer used as entertainment in the manner that the great composers had envisaged it - taking cues directly from their audience in spontaneous, live performances. Though it remained a common facet of live jazz performance, it quickly became used far less in classical circles. However, it is now beginning to gain popularity again with gifted improvisers like Gabriela, Fazil Say and Jacques Loussier able to blend the classical with the contemporary.

As well as her solo recital, Gabriela will also take to the Sydney Opera House concert hall stage with the Sydney Symphony giving several performances of Grieg's much-loved Piano Concerto – the only concerto



written by the composer before his death in 1907. The concerts, conducted by 36-year-old Norwegian, Eivind Gullberg Jensen, will be a stylish introduction to Montero's lyrical talents.

After making her debut with the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra at age eight, Montero was granted a scholarship from the Venezuelan government to study in the US but found her new environment to be overly competitive and contemplated giving up music altogether. At a chance meeting with respected though reclusive Argentine pianist Martha Argerich, Gabriela was encouraged to embrace her talents for improvisation and her indisputable passion has seen her become recognised internationally for the rare gift she brings to her art.

Tickets to both programs can be purchased by phoning the Sydney Symphony Box Office on 02 8215 4600 or visiting www.sydney-symphony.com.

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PREVIEW: See Gabriela improvise on a song suggested by her audience
<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=QUghPoA5bIY>

NOTE TO EDITORS: Concert Details

MONTERO PLAYS GRIEG'S PIANO CONCERTO

EnergyAustralia Master Series

Wed 3 Sep, 8pm

Fri 5 Sep, 8pm

Sat 6 Sep, 8pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

Eivind Gullberg Jensen conductor
Gabriela Montero piano

GRAINGER Danish Folksong Suite

GRIEG Piano Concerto

HONEGGER Liturgical Symphony

Tickets from \$59*

**Booking fees may apply*

GABRIELA MONTERO IN RECITAL

International Pianists in Recital

Mon 8 Sep, 8pm

City Recital Hall, Angel Place

Gabriela Montero piano

BACH (Transcribed Busoni): Chaconne in D minor

CHOPIN Polonaise-Fantaisie in A-flat major, Op.61

DEBUSSY: L'isle joyeuse

GINASTERA Piano Sonata No.1

MONTERO Improvisations on themes suggested by the audience

Tickets from \$38*

**Booking fees may apply*