

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **BE SEDUCED**

**Sydney Symphony opens its 2008 season with the romanticism of Ravel**

**Sydney Symphony 2008 Season Opening Gala,  
Thursday 14 February, Sydney Opera House**

*“Ravel is one of the greatest composers of all time.”  
- Maestro Gianluigi Gelmetti*

Sydney Symphony Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, Maestro Gianluigi Gelmetti, is set to open his final season with the Orchestra with a tribute to Ravel, one of his favourite composers. The Maestro will conduct a series of concerts beginning in February, taking audiences on a sensual journey through the works of the much-loved French composer.

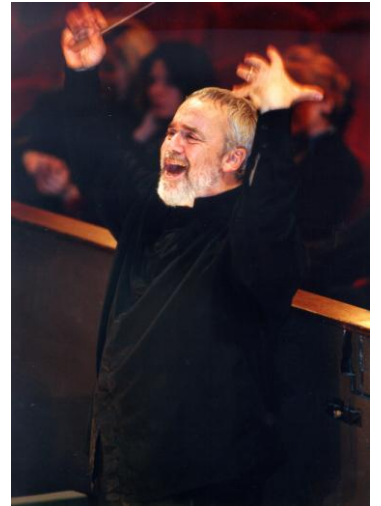
“Ravel was the master of the greatest instrument ever invented – the orchestra,” says Maestro Gelmetti. “Ravel’s music is sophisticated, complex, technically perfect. He was a superb artist, and for this reason his music never fails to delight.”

Throughout his tenure with the Sydney Symphony, Maestro Gelmetti’s Ravel interpretations have received widespread critical acclaim and on 14 February, Sydney audiences will be reminded why when he conducts the Orchestra’s Season Opening Gala concert, Ravel’s *Romances*. The repertoire for the evening will be a showcase of Ravel’s most sensual and seductive works, a perfect night out for Valentine’s Day.

The night begins with Ravel’s *Rapsodie espagnole*, one of the composer’s first major works for orchestra written between 1907 and 1908. The piece is alive with colour and sensation and reflects the profound influence of the Spanish musical heritage that was imparted to Ravel by his Basque mother. Continuing the night of romance is *La Valse*, a vibrant and seductive dance bearing a distinctive and enticing hint of mystery and darkness. Though originally considered a tribute to the waltz, it is in fact a reflection on the decay of the genre and an observation of life in post World War I Europe.

Joining the Sydney Symphony and Maestro Gelmetti on stage for the finale to the Season Opening Gala will be the Cantillation Chorus, in suites 1 and 2 from Ravel’s paeon to love, *Daphnis et Chloe*. Ravel described his voluptuous ballet score, the work was described by Ravel as a “choreographic poem” and the scenario inspired some of his most tender and moving music, evoking mythical Greece - a fantastic world alive with nymphs, gods and pirates.

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For those that are unable to attend the opening night fiesta, the program will be performed again in daytime concerts on Friday 15 and Saturday 16 February.

The second program in Maestro Gelmetti's Ravel celebration features the composer's most famous work, *Bolero*, a ballet that the composer surprisingly considered trivial and "a piece for orchestra without music" when originally composed. Regardless, *Bolero's* 1928 debut at the Paris Opéra received widespread critical acclaim. Built atop an addictively unchanging ostinato rhythm, its slow burning tension has been described as an 'exultation of the erotic' and *Bolero* remains Ravel's most popular composition to this day.

Demonstrating Ravel's diversity, the program will also feature the musical fairytale, *Mother Goose*, Ravel's sophisticatedly naive reflection on the wonders and terrors of childhood, as well as *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, his personal tribute to comrades lost while serving in World War I (Ravel was too short to fight but worked as an ambulance driver during the conflict). Drawing on dance forms inspired by the sensibilities of Baroque music, this powerfully emotive piece also pays personal homage to his French cultural heritage.

2008 marks the fifth and final year of Maestro Gelmetti's tenure as the Sydney Symphony's Chief Conductor and Artistic Director. Throughout the year, the Orchestra will pay tribute to the enigmatic Italian through a number of concerts featuring his most treasured composers and one of his own compositions, culminating in a special farewell concert in September.

Tickets for the 2008 season are now available by phoning the Sydney Symphony Box Office on 8215 4600 or online at [www.sydney-symphony.com](http://www.sydney-symphony.com).

**## ENDS ##**

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**Listen to a preview of the repertoire for the Season Opening Gala:**

<http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewIMix?id=266250701>

**Watch the preview commercial for the February concert series:**

[http://www.sydney-symphony.com/sysfiles/attachments/rav\\_online.mov](http://www.sydney-symphony.com/sysfiles/attachments/rav_online.mov)

**Note to Editors: Concert Details**

**SEASON OPENING GALA: RAVEL'S ROMANCES**

Thur 14 February, 8pm

**Tea & Symphony – presented by Kambly**

Fri 15 February, 11am

**The Great Classics Series – presented by APIA**

Sat 16 February, 2pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

**Gianluigi Gelmetti** conductor  
**Cantillation** chorus

**RAVEL**

Rhapsodie espagnole  
La Valse  
Daphnis et Chloé: Suites

Tickets from \$47\*

**RAVEL's BOLERO**

**EnergyAustralia Master Series**

Wed 20 February, 8pm

Fri 22 February, 8pm

Sat 23 February, 8pm

**Thursday Afternoon Symphony – presented by Trust**

Thur 21 February, 1.30pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

**Gianluigi Gelmetti** conductor

**RAVEL**

Le Tombeau de Couperin  
Mother Goose: Suite  
Alborada del gracioso  
Menuet antique  
Pavane pour une infante défunte  
Bolero

Tickets from \$56\*

*Sydney Symphony concert programs are now available online before a performance, just visit [www.sydneyorchestra.com](http://www.sydneyorchestra.com) and click on calendar date for the concert program you'd like to see.*

\*Booking fees may apply