

MEDIA RELEASE

Tragedy & Triumph with the Sydney Symphony

Prepare for a walk on the dark side with the Sydney Symphony as it performs Shostakovich's intense and grief-stricken Eighth Symphony and the Australian premiere of a work by Sydney Symphony violinist, Georges Lentz.



Lentz's new work, *Monh* (a word meaning 'stars' in one of the Australian Aboriginal languages), was given its world premiere in 2005 by violist Tabea Zimmermann (pictured) and conductor Steven Sloane. *Monh* is dedicated to this husband-and-wife duo, and the Sydney Symphony is honoured to be presenting these two star performers in the Australian premiere of the work.

On describing his new piece, Georges Lentz says, "*Monh* is not a 'concerto' in the conventional sense, rather, the solo viola acts as a guide through the music. Dynamically speaking, much of the piece is rather soft which reflects the silence and isolation of the vast Australian landscape, an important influence on my music. To my mind, my music is ultimately concerned with the problem of how to bear this silence, with the problem of our existential loneliness."

"*Monh* is a work that is very close to my heart," says Lentz, "Tabea Zimmermann's command of its musical and spiritual content is absolutely breathtaking, more so than I ever could have imagined."

An avid violist since only the age of three, German-born Tabea Zimmermann has inspired many composers to write for her instrument, introducing many new works into the standard concert repertoire for the viola. Her natural charisma, astounding musical understanding and natural performing ability have earned her respect and admiration from both fellow musicians and audiences the world over. As well as being an in-demand performer, she has also released many successful recordings and holds teaching positions in major tertiary music institutions across Europe. She is considered by many to be the finest violist in the world today.

Grammy-nominated American conductor Steven Sloane has likewise established a name for himself in the classical music world, demonstrating a passion for rarely heard repertoire and innovative programming. His eclectic juxtapositions of music from divergent eras, his style and commitment to contemporary works and willingness to challenge convention have cemented his reputation as a bold champion for orchestral music.

Zimmermann and Sloane will be making their Sydney Symphony debut with these concerts in March.

Furthering the concert's exploration of the triumph of beauty over darkness will be a performance of one of the key works of 20th-century art. A requiem secretly dedicated to the victims of Stalin's war against his own fellow Russians, Shostakovich's Symphony No.8 has been described as music 'which by the power of its human emotion, surpasses everything else created in our time'.

Tickets to the performance are available from the Sydney Symphony Box Office by phoning 02 8215 4600 or visiting www.sydney-symphony.com.

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For more information, contact:

Yvonne Zammit, PR Manager
Sydney Symphony
Tel. + 61 2 8215 4612 / +61 410 761 578
yvonne.zammit@sydney-symphony.com

Stuart Fyfe, Publicist
Sydney Symphony
Tel: +61 2 8215 4653 / +61 404 092 377
stuart.fyfe@sydney-symphony.com

Note to editors: Concert Details

SHOSTAKOVICH 8

EnergyAustralia Master Series

Wed 26 Mar, 8pm

Fri 28 Mar, 8pm

Sat 29 Mar, 8pm

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

Steven Sloane conductor
Tabea Zimmermann viola

LENTZ Monh for viola, electronics and orchestra AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE

SHOSTAKOVICH Symphony No.8

Tickets from \$59*

Pre-concert talk by Dr Wolfgang Fink, Sydney Symphony Director of Artistic Operations, 45 minutes before each performance in the northern foyer of the Opera House Concert Hall.

Sydney Symphony concert programs are now available online in the week of a performance. Just visit www.sydney-symphony.com and click on calendar date for the concert program you'd like to see.

*Booking fees may apply