

MEDIA RELEASE

26 February 2009

## Revisiting Russia

Ashkenazy conducts the Sydney Symphony in Shostakovich's most powerful symphony

Thur 5 March, 1.30pm

Fri 6 March, 8pm

Sat 7 March, 2pm

Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall

Following his 2009 season opening gala performances of Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (25 Feb – 2 Mar), Sydney Symphony Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor Vladimir Ashkenazy conducts the Sydney Symphony for three performances of two inspiring works – Shostakovich Symphony No.10 and Dvořák Violin Concerto with soloist Janine Jansen.

Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony is a key to the spiritual world of 20th-century Russia and no-one knows that world better than Ashkenazy. Just months after Stalin's death in 1953, Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony had its Moscow premiere. A young Vladimir Ashkenazy was in the audience. "It was an event," says Ashkenazy, "an incredible success. It is the most complete of the Shostakovich symphonies – powerful and complex."

Shostakovich wrote the Tenth Symphony during the "Thaw" period in Soviet history, when the extreme cultural oppression of the Stalinist regime was being relaxed. Nevertheless, tragedy, fear and unease are heard throughout the symphony's four movements, and the music dives between tragic tension and brittle vivacity, brooding lyricism and epic gestures.

In contrast to this ominous work, the concert also features the poetry and high spirits of Dvořák's Violin Concerto. It's been 10 years since the Sydney Symphony last performed this work and what a treat for audiences to experience its beauty and lyricism with the supremely gifted 31-year-old Dutch violinist **Janine Jansen**.

Jansen and her 1727 'Barrere' Stradivarius dazzled Sydney audiences at her hugely successful Australian debut in 2006, performing Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5, with the *Sydney Morning Herald* commenting that her performances were "full of the ardour of youth".

The glamorous Jansen made her London debut in 2002, with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Ashkenazy, and they have since performed together several times, Ashkenazy remarking that "this young woman has everything". Now, these amazing artists collaborate once again with the Sydney Symphony, presenting beautiful music from two vastly different worlds in one outstanding concert.

## **CONCERT DETAILS**

### **ASHKENAZY CONDUCTS SHOSTAKOVICH**

**Thu 5 Mar, 1.30pm (Presented by Trust)**

**Fri 6 Mar, 8pm (Presented by Emirates)**

**Sat 7 Mar, 2pm**

**DVOŘÁK** Violin Concerto

**SHOSTAKOVICH** Symphony No.10

**Vladimir Ashkenazy** conductor

**Janine Jansen** violin

Tickets from \$35 (booking fee may apply). To book tickets call the Sydney Symphony box office on: 8215 4600 or visit [www.sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com](http://www.sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com)

Pre-concert talk in the Sydney Opera House Northern Foyer 45 minutes before the start of each performance.

For further information or interviews please contact:

Yvonne Zammit  
PR Manager, Sydney Symphony  
p. 02 8215 4612 | m. 0410 761 578  
e. [yvonne.zammit@sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com](mailto:yvonne.zammit@sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com)

Stuart Fyfe  
Publicist, Sydney Symphony  
p. 02 8215 4653 | m. 0404 092 377  
e. [stuart.fyfe@sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com](mailto:stuart.fyfe@sydneyphilharmonicsymphony.com)