

24 June 2009

## **Dame Kiri Te Kanawa returns to Australia for two special performances with the Sydney Symphony**

**Thu 3 & Sat 5 September, 8pm**

**Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall**

The Sydney Symphony is proud to present one of the world's most-loved artists, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, in her first Australian performances since 2006. For two nights only in September, Dame Kiri will perform with the Sydney Symphony at the Sydney Opera House in a program featuring operatic favourites by Strauss, Mozart, Puccini and others.

One of the most famous sopranos in the world, Dame Kiri gained legendary status almost overnight after her sensational debut as the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 1971. From then, she moved rapidly into the front rank of international opera.

Of her return to Sydney to perform with the Sydney Symphony, Dame Kiri says; "What a thrill it will be for me to once again be standing on the Opera House concert hall stage. Sydney means so much to me and to be performing with the Sydney Symphony is truly wonderful."

Born in New Zealand, Dame Kiri carries the exotic blood of Maori aristocracy. By the time she was 20 she had won the major vocal prizes available in the South Pacific, and had already begun her recording career. After moving to London and studying at the London Opera Centre, she was engaged to sing one of the Flower Maidens in *Parsifal* at Covent Garden. Sir Colin Davis' attention was caught, and the young Kiri Te Kanawa was marked for Mozart's Countess, after first appearing as Carmen in Britain and New Zealand.

Dame Kiri is a familiar figure in the leading opera houses of the world – Covent Garden, The Met, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Paris Opera, Sydney Opera House, the Vienna State, La Scala, San Francisco, Munich and Cologne. Her lyric soprano heroines include the three major leading roles by Richard Strauss (Arabella, The Marschallin, and the Countess in *Capriccio*); Mozart's Fiordiligi, Donna Elvira, Pamina and, of course, the Countess Almaviva; Verdi's Violetta, Amelia Boccanegra, Desdemona; Puccini's Tosca, Mimi and Manon Lescaut; Johann Strauss' Rosalinde, and Tchaikovsky's Tatiana, also Bizet's Micaela and Gounod's Marguerite.

As a soloist at the wedding of HRH Prince Charles in St Paul's Cathedral in 1981, she faced one of the largest direct telecast audiences of any singer in history (estimated to be over 600 million people).

Created a Dame Commander of the British Empire in 1982, she was also awarded the prestigious Order of New Zealand in 1995 as part of the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Dame Kiri is also an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music.

In 2004, she launched The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation, a charity which aims to give support and financial aid to the new generation of young New Zealand singers and musicians.

Dame Kiri continues to perform in concert halls and arenas throughout the world, with performances in New Zealand, Japan, Korea, England, Brazil, Turkey, Jersey, the USA, Canada, Hungary, Spain, Thailand, Hong Kong and China.

Kiri Te Kanawa's Sydney Symphony performances will be conducted by Australian, Brian Castles-Onion.

Tickets to 'Sydney Symphony presents Dame Kiri' are on sale from Monday 29 June.

**## ENDS ##**

For more information, contact:

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**Note to Editors: Concert Details**

**DAME KIRI TE KANAWA WITH THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY**

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 8pm**

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September 8pm**

**Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall**

Tickets from \$35 (Booking fee may apply)

To book tickets: Call Sydney Symphony box office on 8215 4600 or visit [sydneysymphony.com](http://sydneysymphony.com)