

MEDIA RELEASE

The Sydney Symphony brings Drought Relief to Orange as Maestro Gianluigi Gelmetti conducts an all-Beethoven program

Saturday 22 October at 6pm at Orange Civic Theatre

The sound of music will once again help families affected by drought when the Sydney Symphony visits Orange for a special drought recovery benefit concert at Orange Civic Theatre on Saturday 22 October at 6pm.

The NSW Government, the Sydney Symphony, and the Orange City Council have come together in partnership to raise \$100,000 to assist those affected by this prolonged period of drought. The money will be distributed through the local Australian Red Cross, the Salvation Army, St Vincent DePaul and Anglicare, each of which is on the State Government's Drought Welfare Committee.

"The Orange performance is part of the Sydney Symphony's 2005 regional tour and is designated as a special Drought Recovery Concert," said Libby Christie, Managing Director of the Sydney Symphony. The tour then continues in Griffith, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong in November.

"The success of last year's Drought Recovery Benefit Concert in Griffith has inspired us to once again help communities still struggling with this terrible drought," Ms Christie said

"Regional touring is a very important part of our work. The Sydney Symphony belongs to all the people of NSW and the Orchestra performs throughout regional NSW regularly each year, thanks to the support of the NSW Government and our generous sponsors.

"I know the musicians thoroughly enjoy their time 'on the road' and getting to know our supporters and audiences outside the metropolitan area.

"Maestro Gianluigi Gelmetti, our Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, made his first visit into regional NSW last year and I know is delighted to see more of the State this year when he brings the Sydney Symphony to Orange for such a special performance."

The all-Beethoven program will feature two of the best-loved works in the orchestral repertoire, Beethoven's Violin Concerto starring the international guest violinist Cho-Liang Lin, and Beethoven's Symphony No 5.

The Hon Ian Macdonald, Minister for Primary Industries said "The drought recovery concert will lift morale for people in the bush while also providing a financial boost for charities that do so much to help families cope with these tough times."

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Mayor of Orange, Cr John Davis, said the Council was also planning a host of community events to complement the Sydney Symphony's Orange performance.

"Orange City Council is greatly committed to the project and is donating the cost of the Theatre, together with the proceeds from the Drought Recovery Benefit Concert to drought relief," he said.

"Council is also holding an exhibition titled '*Watermarks; reflections on the water history and culture of Orange and District*' at the Orange Regional Gallery to complement the concert.

"In addition, a community festival will be held on the Sunday following the concert. The festival will include workshops and musical entertainment to highlight the importance of water in our lives and the plight of drought-affected farmers."

Partners for the Drought Recovery Benefit Concert in Orange include: the NSW Department of Primary Industries, Regional Express, Country Energy, Telstra, Xstrata Coal, Cadia Valley Operations, St.George Bank, and the Orange City Council.

Other performances of the Sydney Symphony's 2005 regional tour include Griffith (Thursday 17 November), Wagga Wagga (Friday 18 November), and Wollongong (Saturday 19 November).

Mr Macdonald said this year's partnership was another example of the State Government finding innovative ways to help communities meet the challenge of drought.

"Since July 2002, the Carr Labor Government has spent more than \$160 million on drought support measures – and we will keep spending until this drought breaks," he said.

"We have more than 30 drought support programs, including several that help deal with the emotional toll of drought.

"This includes our Drought Support Workers program, our support for Rural Financial Counsellors, and the Drought Household Relief program which is coordinated through the NSW Department of Community Services."

Tickets are available from the Orange Civic Theatre on 6393 8111

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