

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PRESENTS ICONIC NEW YORK STORIES ALONGSIDE AUSTRALIAN PIANIST SIMON TEDESCHI



Australian pianist Simon Tedeschi – credit: Daniel Boud

Wednesday 8 March, 2023 – Sydney, AUSTRALIA – The Sydney Symphony Orchestra and acclaimed Australian pianist **Simon Tedeschi** will take audiences on a journey through New York with Gershwin’s iconic jazz-era masterpiece *Rhapsody in Blue*, while Bernstein’s music from *West Side Story* paints a different picture of the city. The concert will also feature the world premiere of a new work by Australian composer **Paul Bonetti**.

Led by guest conductor Andrea Molino in his Sydney Symphony debut, [Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue \(17-19 March\)](#) will transport audiences to the ever-inspiring New York City with a program of instantly recognisable works – from the jazz era spark forever captured in Gershwin’s pioneering work *Rhapsody in Blue*, Ives’ radical musical landscape painted in *Central Park in the Dark*, to Bernstein’s timeless *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*.

Like a wailing siren, the famous opening notes of the clarinet sets the scene for George Gershwin’s Jazz Age masterpiece, *Rhapsody in Blue*. Known for its pioneering integration of jazz rhythms and classical music, the work was originally commissioned for American bandleader Paul Whiteman’s *An Experiment in Modern Music* concert at New York’s Aeolian Concert Hall. Reminded only by a newspaper article that he was meant to write a new composition, Gershwin wrote the now-iconic work in under five weeks before the premiere. On a train from New York, the American classic *Rhapsody in Blue* was born; a musical kaleidoscope of the city – inspired by its vast melting pot, the unduplicated national pep, blues and metropolitan madness. Audiences have been mesmerised by *Rhapsody in Blue* since its premiere in 1924 and in this performance, renowned Australian pianist Simon Tedeschi will keep the magic alive, bringing his own unique interpretations to the challenging and virtuosic piano solos alongside the Sydney Symphony Orchestra .

Audiences will then find themselves on a park bench in Central Park on a hot summer night with Charles Ives’ *Central Park in the Dark*. Composed in 1906, the piece is considered one of the most radical works of the 20th Century, painting a vibrant musical landscape that transcends the senses. Through the innovative layering of independent instruments – strings that depict the sounds of the night, winds and percussion that interrupt the tranquillity through street parades and a ragtime piano from a nearby apartment – audiences are given a picture-in-sounds of New York city.

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Brazen, strident, brassy – the hustling, bustling New York of Bernstein’s 1957 Broadway musical and 1961 film adaptation *West Side Story* will fill the Concert Hall. Featuring well-known songs such as *Mambo*, *Maria*, *Somewhere* and *America* the retelling of Romeo and Juliet explored themes of love, passion and conflict in a way that has resonated with audiences for generations, with the enduring tale inspiring a 2021 re-make of the film. In this performance, *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story* will give audiences the opportunity to experience the brilliance of Bernstein’s work, scored for a full symphonic orchestra. Taking the most iconic musical themes and melodies from the musical, *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story* will have audiences feeling the tender ache of Tony and Maria’s first love once again.

Also featured in the program will be the world premiere of Australian composer Paul Bonetti’s *The Bright Day Clarion Calls the Quaking Earth*. Fitting seamlessly into this program of curious and pioneering composers, Bonetti’s genre-crossing work incorporates eclectic elements including a hip hop derived rhythmic groove, trumpets, bass, and pizzicato strings. This new work is made possible through the Sydney Symphony Orchestra’s *50 Fanfares* project – a major commissioning project supporting 50 Australian composers to write new work and expand the Australian classical music canon.

#ENDS#

[Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue](#)

Friday 17 March – 7pm
Saturday 18 March – 7pm
Sunday 19 March – 2pm

Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House

Program includes:

PAUL BONETTI *The Bright Day Clarion Calls the Quaking Earth*
50 Fanfares Commission
GERSHWIN *Rhapsody in Blue*
IVES *Central Park in the Dark*
BERNSTEIN *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*

Artists

Andrea Molino
Simon Tedeschi

Adult tickets from \$62, concessions available.

Tickets available from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra Box Office on (02) 8215 4600 or choose your own seat at sydneysymphony.com

FOR INTERVIEWS, PHOTOS OR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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