



Megan Washington and the SSO

MEET THE MUSIC

Thursday 21 September, 6.30pm

KALEIDOSCOPE Friday 22 September, 8pm Saturday 23 September, 8pm

■ A BMW Season Highlight







Tea & Symphony Fri 22 Sep, 11am

Family Concerts

Sun 24 Sep. 2pm

Sydney Opera House

Sydney Opera House

CLASSICAL



Saint-Saëns in the Morning

A-Musing Animals

SAINT-SAËNS The Muse and the Poet. for violin, cello and orchestra SAINT-SAËNS Carnival of the Animals with words by Bradley Trevor Greive

Toby Thatcher conductor · Richard Morecroft narrator Kirsty Hilton violin · Catherine Hewgill cello Laurence Matheson piano · Peter De Jager piano

Carnival of the (Australian) Animals

An SSO Family Concert HINDSON Dangerous Creatures SAINT-SAËNS Carnival of the Animals with words by Bradley Trevor Greive

Toby Thatcher conductor · Richard Morecroft narrator Laurence Matheson piano · Peter De Jager piano

Dream Sequence

VELTHEIM Prelude and Coda PREMIERE **HULLICK** Were/Oblivion PREMIERE LIM The Heart's Ear **DEAN** Dream Sequence ŽIVKOVIĆ On the Guarding of the Heart Brett Dean conductor

SSO at Carriageworks Sun 15 Oct. 5pm Carriageworks

Meet the Music



Rachmaninoff on Fire

SIBELIUS Scene with Cranes from Kuolema **DEAN** Fire Music RACHMANINOFF Piano Concerto No.3 Brett Dean conductor Piers Lane piano

Wed 18 Oct. 6.30pm Thursday Afternoon Symphony Thu 19 Oct, 1:30pm Fmirates Metro Series Fri 20 Oct. 8pm Sydney Opera House



Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets™

In concert

The Harry Potter™ film series is one of those once-in-a-lifetime cultural phenomena that continues to delight millions of fans around the world. This concert will feature the SSO performing every note from Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets™.

Jeffrey Schindler conductor

Supported by Cobs

Wed 4 Oct, 7pm Thu 5 Oct. 7pm Fri 6 Oct, 7pm Sat 7 Oct, 2pm Sat 7 Oct, 7pm Sydney Opera House



Amadeus Live

In concert with your SSO

Amadeus on a vast HD screen while Mozart's most celebrated works are performed live by your SSO!

Jeffrey Schindler conductor Cantillation choir

Amadeus LIVE is an Avex Classics International production

Fri 13 Oct, 7pm Sat 14 Oct. 1.30pm Sat 14 Oct, 7pm Sydney Opera House

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MEET THE MUSIC

THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER, 6,30PM

KALEIDOSCOPE

FRIDAY 22 SEPTEMBER, 8PM SATURDAY 23 SEPTEMBER, 8PM

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL



David Robertson

Chief Conductor and Artistic Director



MEGAN WASHINGTON AND THE SSO

Benjamin Northey conductor Megan Washington vocals, keyboard Alex Bennison guitar

Songs by Megan Washington with other songwriters as credited including a full preview of her album SUGARDOOM

Achilles Heart

with Jason Wu, arranged by Iain Grandage

Kiss Me Like We're Going to Die

with Alex Evert, Alex Tirheimer & Sam Fisher, arr. Grandage

Catherine Wheel

arranged by Paul Hankinson

American Spirit

with Kyle Moorman & Peter Walsh, arr. Hankinson

Saint Lo

with Jason Wu, arranged by Joe Twist

The Give

arr. Twist

Dirty Churches

Body Double

with David Haddad, arr. Twist

Futureproof

with Max Hershenow, arr. Twist

Love You Best

with Tim Levinson & Mario Spate, arr. Twist

with

Skeleton Key

arr. Twist

Additional songs and program order to be decided on the night.

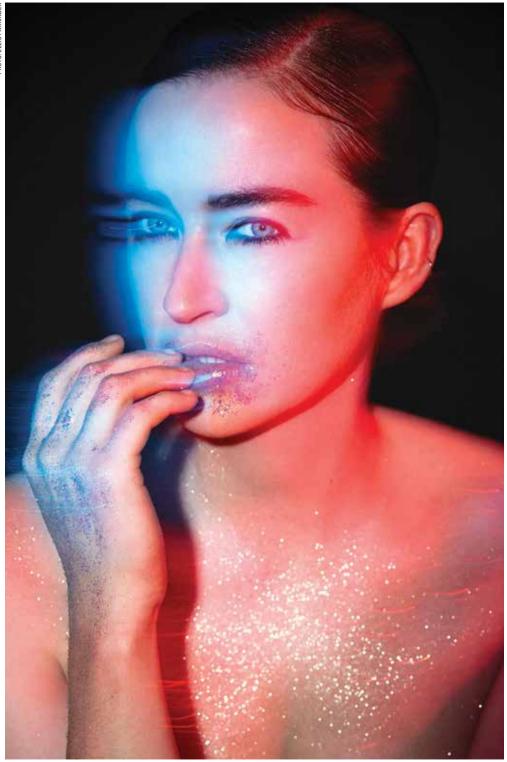
Pre-concert talk by conductor Benjamin Northey in the Northern Foyer 45 minutes before each performance.

The concert will be performed without interval and will conclude at approximately 8pm (Wed), 9.30pm (Fri, Sat).

The performance on 23 September is a BMW Season Highlight







ABOUT THE ARTIST

Megan Washington

Megan Washington is one of Australia's new icons of song. Originally performing jazz and studying at the Oueensland Conservatorium. her style evolved to indie pop and alternative rock, where she sings and plays piano and quitar. In 2010, she released her debut album. I Believe You Liar, which peaked at number three on the ARIA Albums Chart, was certified platinum, and saw her earn the Best Female Artist and Breakthrough Artist ARIA awards, while receiving five further nominations.

The following year she released the minialbum Insomnia, which culminated in her first performance at the Sydney Opera House (as well as concerts in Paris, London and New York) in a darker and more introspective counterbalance to I Believe You Liar.

2014 saw Megan release her second fulllength record, There There, which debuted as an ARIA Top 5 album. It received rave reviews from fans and critics alike, with accompanying performances throughout Europe and the United Kingdom in 2015. There There was co-written with Sia/Adele collaborator Sam Dixon and was recorded in the UK with Stella Mozgawa (of Warpaint) on drums and Leo Abraham (Roxy Music) on guitars. Appearances at Falls Festival, Splendour in the Grass and Triple J's Beat the Drum celebration followed.

and Megan concluded 2015 with the Tangents Tour - a national run of 34 shows throughout every Australian state and territory.

Megan Washington has served as a mentor on The Voice Australia, and inspired the world with her honest and personal story, 'Why I Live In Mortal Dread Of Public Speaking, via a captivating TEDxSvdnev talk, which has received more than 2 million views and was also highlighted on the ABC's Australian Story program.

For the past 18 months, Megan has been based in Los Angeles, writing and recording her fourth studio album, for release in early 2018. The first single, 'Saint Lo', was released last vear. She has collaborated with a slew of worldclass songwriters, including Tim Levinson aka Urthbov, Max Hershenow (MS MR), Kyle Moorman (Lea Michele, Miley Cyrus) and Peter Thomas (Betty Who, Coin), and the album is set to be produced by Eric J Dubowsky (Flume, Chet Faker).

This week's shows with the SSO - the first in a series of collaborations with some of Australia's premier orchestras – are a unique and exclusive opportunity to experience the album in full prior to its release, with full orchestral accompaniment in one of Australia's most beautiful concert halls.



Sugardoom Symphony

A fortunate alignment of creative projects sees Megan Washington introduce her new album live on stage with symphony orchestra. She spoke to Aaron Curran

Megan Washington finds herself in an unusual and exciting artistic position planning her latest Australian tour. Yes, she's thrilled to be performing with full symphony orchestra for the first time in her career, but more than that the repertoire she has chosen is predominantly new songs from her as-yet-unreleased album (currently titled *Sugardoom*, not due until 2018). So audiences are not only hearing her new songs for the first time but in orchestral arrangements that will be radically different from their recorded counterparts.

'I made a very deliberate decision because it was way too early for a "Best Of", frankly,' she laughs. 'I don't think I've quite earned a retrospective just yet. Plus the artists that are more interesting to me, they're always looking forward, celebrating new work. And this [tour] was such an amazing opportunity to work with orchestras and musicians of the highest calibre that could give my new music a whole other set

of clothes, their Sunday best in fact. That was so exciting that it just didn't make sense to be looking backwards.'

While symphonic sound was far from Washington's mind when she was writing her new record, when the chance arose to play with orchestras across Australia she found both projects musically synchronous. 'The timing of [this tour] coming together has been spookily fortunate because, of everything that I've written so far, I think this new body of work is most sympathetic to the gorgeousness and lushness of a symphony orchestra. That wasn't intentional. There's a line from Frankenstein that goes something like: "And when I looked and saw what I had created, my heart froze in horror, as it looked nothing like I had intended." That's guite true for most creative people I think. Clear ideas can still end up taking you somewhere unplanned, and this time that different place I find myself in lends itself really well to an orchestra too. But



perhaps that was an unconscious intention all along.'

Given that this interview may, for many, serve both as introduction and guide, Megan is keen to outline the new songs' origins and objectives. 'These songs are like melted candy. The album is about love and, while I've never written any capital 'L' love songs before, it was something that I really wanted to explore with this new record. Though with me being who I am, the songs have some shadows. I guess they are more the type of love song that you would have heard in the 1960s...they're from the underside of love, the dark side, there's heartbreak and anger but it's all wrapped up in something very sweet.'

'I've been thinking a lot about Roy Orbison,' she adds. 'A classic romantic pop songwriter but with such dark lyrical twists, he used arrangements and sound in a way that still sounds modern to me. It's still pop but with such a dramatic and cinematic combination of music and lyrical elements. Playing songs like that with a full orchestra, you are able to extrapolate and amplify those elements and that affects what's heard and the emotions that are felt.'

Washington's initial aim for these Sugardoom songs was also tempered with something more utilitarian but no less vital. 'I needed to write myself an album of "breathers". Most of my songs are such belters that in my live shows I found myself having to boom it all out for two hours with no respite because I hadn't written any. So this time I focused more on percussive vocal melodies. I was more interested in a style closer to sung rap or recitative, and songs like "I Want You" by Savage Garden or "One Note Samba" by [Antonio Carlos] Jobim. Rapid-fire, machine gun, semi-spoken singing that requires control, not just volume and power. I'm trying to chill out, effectively.'

Such a practical and corporeal approach to creativity is resonant of one of the key reasons Megan became a musician in the first place, as she revealed in her now-famous talk at TEDxSydney in 2014 and raises again when the discussion moves to her education.



'One key reason for me getting so deeply into music is that I've always had a pronounced stutter. Part of my speech therapy was singing lessons, as vocal exercises like singing really help people with speech problems. After about ten years of lessons, at 14 or 15, I'd gotten quite good. I became guite serious about theory, completing the Trinity and AMEB exams. Then I went to the [Queensland] Conservatorium and studied jazz composition and voice. I'd grown up listening to show tunes mostly, singers like Judy Garland and Barbra Streisand. I never really found my way to pop or rock music but as I got older I became more interested in them as their own forms. At uni I'd transcribe each instrument of songs by The Strokes or The Beatles, every note, and that helped me to understand what was actually going on in this music that was so new to me... bass, drums, how everything talked to each other. My whole education in the modern music world has been guite recent and autodidactic given my childhood was all show tunes and jazz.'

The first years of Megan's professional career were similarly jazz-focused, touring and recording with musicians like esteemed pianist Paul Grabowsky. What does she think such a fundamental grounding in jazz gave her? 'There's a fearlessness I love in jazz, but mostly what I loved about singing the Great American Songbook are the succinct and beautiful stories, the strong sense of narrative in that era of songwriting.

Though that's also the main reason why I stopped singing jazz: I didn't want to sing anyone else's stories any more, I wanted to sing my own.

The songs of Cole Porter are amazing but they weren't my life, they didn't really relate to the experiences of a 20-something woman who'd grown up in Papua New Guinea and was living in Melbourne in the 21st century, you know?'

Yet there's still a thread linking her jazz past to her more polyvalent present. 'The strong narrative of jazz and the almost cinematic approach to storytelling is something that still figures in what I do now. It's definitely present on the new record. There's a new song called "Catherine Wheel", I'm not game enough to say it sounds like Hoagy Carmichael but if you had to file it somewhere, I think its position is much



closer to him than contemporary pop. The other element of a jazz education is an understanding of harmonies, subtly altering the harmonic landscape underneath a melodic skyline in order to enhance or amplify the drama of the lyric. Again I think "Catherine Wheel" is an example of that.'

Her enthusiasm is infectious when she mentions the three musicians writing the orchestrations. 'Iain Grandage and I have worked together on several of Meow Meow's shows, so I knew that I definitely wanted Iain's genius on board. I hadn't met Joe Twist before this project, but over the course of a few months I've learnt he's extraordinarily gifted. There are two arrangements coming from Paul Hankinson who is one of my very favourite musical minds, he's a songwriter and pianist who lives in Berlin. His arrangements are very idiosyncratic and sympathetic to the emotional tone of the songs. I love what these three all bring to the work, each of them brings something that's quite different but very, very good.'

Megan sounds like she can't quite believe her luck at launching *Sugardoom* in such musically lavish circumstances. 'These new songs are a strong step somewhere different, not a complete departure or anything but my songwriting has evolved and I'm very happy with where it has taken me. More than anything, I want people to feel this music. I think this suite of songs lives much more in the body than in the head. These are songs to be physically felt. Luckily orchestras do just that, right?'

AARON CURRAN @ 2017



MORE MUSIC

MEGAN WASHINGTON DISCOGRAPHY

Albums

There There MERCURY (2014)

I Believe You Liar

Named Breakthrough Songwriter of the Year, 2011 APRA Awards

EPs

Insomnia MERCURY (2011)

Rich Kids MERCURY (2010)

How to Tame Lions
MERCURY (2009)

Winner of the 2009 Vanda & Young Songwriting Competition

Clementine MERCURY (2008)

Bennetts Lane – with Paul Grabowsky INDEPENDENT (2007)

Nightlight – with Sean Foran SPACEBAR, NEWMARKET (2007)

Named Best Australian Jazz Vocal Album (2008 Australian Jazz Bell Awards)

Selected Singles

Saint Lo

(from Sugardoom, 2016)

Who Are You and Limitless

(from There There, 2014)

Riders on the Storm (2012)

I Believe You Liar (2011)

Holy Moses

(from Insomnia, 2011)

Bed of Nails (2011)

Sunday Best and The Hardest Part (from I Believe You Liar, 2010)

www.meganwashington.com

PRODUCTION CREDITS

For Megan Washington

Tour Crew:

Jorden Brebach *Production Manager & Sound*Engineer

Peter Rubie Lighting Designer & Lighting Operator Tim Whitten Monitor Engineer

Management:

Andrew Stone & Michael Chugg (Chugg Music)

Broadcast Diary

September-October



92.9 ABC

abc.net.au/classic

Thursday 28 September, 8pm

DANCING WITH THE ORCHESTRA

James Gaffigan conductor

Alina Ibragimova violin

Kodály, Bartók, Rachmaninoff

Saturday 30 September, 2pm

SYMPHONY FOR THE COMMON MAN

Benjamin Northey conductor

Simon Tedeschi piano

Ford, Rachmaninoff, Copland

Tuesday 17 October, 8pm

MORNING INSPIRATION

Andrew Haveron violin-director

Roger Benedict viola

Haydn, Mozart arr. Haveron

Saturday 28 October, noon

TCHAIKOVSKY'S PATHÉTIOUE

Andris Poga conductor

Baiba Skride violin

Wagner, Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky

SSO Radio

Selected SSO performances, as recorded by the ABC, are available on demand: sydneysymphony.com/SSO_radio



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HOUR

Tuesday 10 October, 6pm

Musicians and staff of the SSO talk about the life of the orchestra and forthcoming concerts.

Hosted by Andrew Bukenya.

finemusicfm.com

THE ARTISTS



Benjamin Northey conductor

Since returning to Australia from Europe in 2006, Benjamin Northey has rapidly emerged as one of the nation's leading musical figures. He has held the position of Associate Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra since 2011 and in 2015 he became Chief Conductor of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra.

Benjamin Northey studied with John Hopkins at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and then with Jorma Panula and Leif Segerstam at Finland's Sibelius Academy. In 2009 he was selected as one of three conductors worldwide to the Allianz International Conductors' Academy where he conducted the London Philharmonic and the Philharmonia orchestras under the mentorship of Vladimir Jurowski and Christoph von Dohnányi.

Internationally, he has conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, New Zealand and Christchurch symphony orchestras, Auckland Philharmonia, Malaysian Phiharmonic Orchestra and the Southbank Sinfonia of London.

In Australia, he has made his mark through critically acclaimed appearances as a guest conductor with all the Australian state symphony orchestras, as well as in opera productions such as The Elixir of Love, The Tales of Hoffmann and La sonnambula (State Opera of South Australia), and Don Giovanni and Così fan tutte (Opera Australia). His recordings include award-winning releases with the Melbourne, Sydney, Tasmanian, Adelaide and West Australian symphony orchestras.

Recent engagement highlights have included return visits to all the major Australian orchestras, the HKPO and NZSO, and Opera Australia conducting *Turandot*, as well as conducting the MSO and Christchurch Symphony Orchestra.

Benjamin Northey's numerous awards include the 2010 Melbourne Prize Outstanding Musician Award, the Brian Stacey Memorial Award, the Nelly Apt Scholarship and the 2007 Limelight Magazine Best Newcomer Award. He is an Honorary Fellow of the University of Melbourne Conservatorium, where he is also a lecturer in conducting.

His most recent appearances with the SSO include this year's Sydney Festival conducting an all-Rautavaara program, a program of music by Ford, Rachmaninoff and Copland, and concerts with Kate Miller-Heidke.

www.benjaminnorthey.com



Alex Bennison guitar

Alex Bennison is a Sydney-based guitarist, vocalist and songwriter. Having performed, recorded and collaborated with artists such as Andy Bull, Hungry Kids Of Hungary, Meg Mac, Dustin Tebbutt, Jack River, Kita Alexander and Walker/Talker, he is well established within the Australian music scene. He has performed on multiple sold-out Australian tours, Triple J's 'Like A Version', and renowned Australian festivals such as Splendour in the Grass, Falls Festival and Laneway Festival.

Alex Bennison first rehearsed with Megan Washington three years ago, and has since become a key, collaborative member of her live band – performing alongside her on hundreds of national and international dates.

'The first rehearsal I had with Meg,' says Alex,
'I can remember the moment I heard her voice
coming out of the PA speakers and instantly being
blown away, not only by the effortlessness in her
delivery, but also that incredible natural tone....It
makes me want to give the shows everything I've
got, because you can sense that the captain up
front that is leading the band will to put everything
on the line at every single show like it's her last.
I've been super excited about these orchestra
shows and am so grateful be up there on stage
with some of the best musicians in Australia.'



David Robertson Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Clocktower Square, Argyle Street, The Rocks NSW 2000 GPO Box 4972, Sydney NSW 2001

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SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



DAVID ROBERTSON

THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PATRON Professor The Hon. Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the SSO also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

Well on its way to becoming the premier orchestra of the Asia Pacific region, the SSO has toured China on four occasions, and in 2014 won the arts category in the Australian Government's inaugural Australia-China Achievement Awards, recognising ground-breaking work in nurturing the cultural and artistic relationship between the two nations.

The orchestra's first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013. The orchestra's history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

The SSO's award-winning Learning and Engagement program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. The orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and commissions. Recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards, Lee Bracegirdle, Gordon Kerry, Mary Finsterer, Nigel Westlake, Paul Stanhope and Georges Lentz, and recordings of music by Brett Dean have been released on both the BIS and SSO Live labels.

Other releases on the SSO Live label, established in 2006, include performances conducted by Alexander Lazarev, Sir Charles Mackerras and David Robertson, as well as the complete Mahler symphonies conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy.

This is David Robertson's fourth year as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.

THE ORCHESTRA



David Robertson THE LOWY CHAIR OF CHIEF CONDUCTOR



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