

PRESS RELEASE

November 6, 2015

The inaugural BBC Proms Australia to be held in Melbourne in 2016



BBC Proms, the world's largest classical music festival, is coming to Melbourne in 2016 for a limited debut season. Held over four days from April 13-16, 2016 at Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne, BBC Proms Australia will bring the magic of the Proms to Australian audiences, providing a taster of this iconic festival. This is the first time the Proms has been held outside of the UK in this way and promises to be a triumphant celebration of classical music. It will also mark the first time that orchestras from three Australian cities have played together in one program. BBC Proms Australia is being presented by BBC Worldwide Australia & New Zealand and Single Market Events.

In what will be a world-class concert experience, BBC Proms Australia will showcase the talents of a range of musicians, offering a mix of traditional repertoire alongside new Australian commissions from Nigel Westlake and Gordon Hamilton. Iconic works from Berlioz, Bernstein and Saint-Saëns stand side by side with contemporary pieces such as Gordon Hamilton's *Thum Prints*.

Internationally renowned Chief Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Sir Andrew Davis will be stepping up to the podium alongside QSO's newly announced Music Director Designate, Mexican Conductor Alondra de la Parra, who is known for her vibrant and spellbinding performances. The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra will be taking to the stage, joined by a stellar line-up of soloists, including:

- Laura van der Heijden, acclaimed cellist who was named BBC Young Musician in 2012
- Sergio Tiempo, Argentinian pianist described by Gramophone magazine as “perhaps the most dazzling and spontaneous pianist of his generation”
- Tom Thum, Australian star beatboxer who will perform *Thum Prints*, a contradiction for beatbox and orchestra, with Australian composer and conductor, Gordon Hamilton

BBC Proms Australia will also include the stunning *Life Story* Prom, based on the landmark BBC series of the same name and premiered in the 2015 BBC Proms in London, narrated for television by Sir David Attenborough. *Life Story* will feature the Queensland Symphony Orchestra performing excerpts of Murray Gold’s original score with footage sequences played on the big screen.

This festival of classical music will come to a climax with the *Last Night of the Proms*, an evening of popular favourites to round off the Australian season in traditional BBC Proms style. Audiences will be in the capable hands of British conductor Sir Andrew Davis, who has conducted more ‘*Last Nights*’ than any other modern conductor. The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra will perform Last Night staples including *Rule Britannia* and *Jerusalem*, alongside Australian works and many other crowd favourites.

In keeping with the Proms tradition, a limited number of tickets for all performances will be held back for sale on the door each night at a reduced rate of \$20.

For younger audiences, The Sydney Youth Orchestra will perform *Classics for Kids*. Aimed at children 2-6 years old and conducted and narrated by legendary music educator John Ockwell, these interactive concerts feature repertoire by history’s most popular classical composers, especially Haydn and Mozart. Presented in an entertaining, engaging and educational style, *Classics for Kids* are a celebration of music sure to delight little ones who may be surprised that the talented young musicians performing are in fact not much older than themselves! The concerts will be presented by CBeebies with a special guest appearance by costume character Hey Duggee.

In addition to these performances, BBC Proms Australia will include a series of talks, giving audiences extra context around the music, with insights from the conductors and musicians themselves.

Now in its 121st year, BBC Proms, as part of BBC Music, is a much-loved British tradition that aims to bring the best classical music to as wide an audience as possible. In the UK, BBC Proms is an eight-week summer season of concerts, talks, workshops and family events, culminating in the famous *Last Night of the Proms* at London’s Royal Albert Hall. Enthusiasm for the BBC Proms has never been higher, with the 2015 BBC Proms season attracting 300,000 attendees across 88 concerts. In the spirit of its founding mission to make the best music available to everyone, BBC Proms reached millions more music lovers via BBC radio, television and online.

Helen Pendlebury, Head of Business Development, BBC Worldwide Australia and New Zealand said: "It is an honour to be bringing BBC Proms to Australia. Every year in the UK, the Proms captures the hearts and minds of British music lovers and we are thrilled to be bringing a flavour of the world's greatest classical music festival to Australian audiences. Melbourne is known for its rich cultural heritage and is the perfect city to play host to this much-loved event".

Edward Blakeman, Director of BBC Proms 2015 in London comments: "It's hugely exciting to be launching BBC Proms Australia in Melbourne, giving audiences a chance to experience the world's greatest classical music festival in an entirely new live setting. I hope this taster of what the BBC Proms is about – bringing great classical music to the widest audience - will be a fantastic musical adventure, with four days of spectacular music-making led by a good friend of the Proms, Sir Andrew Davis. Whatever you come to, I hope you find something new to enjoy and have a wonderful time."

Chief Conductor of the MSO, Sir Andrew Davis, said: "The BBC Proms have played an enormously important part in my life ever since my aunt took me to my first one when I was eight - the first time I had heard an orchestra live. When I actually came to conduct a Prom for the first time in 1971 it was the fulfilment of a dream, as was the occasion 43 years later when the MSO and I performed there last year. One of the works we played was Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* which is on the programme of the opening concert in this extraordinary Melbourne Proms week. All through the '90s, when I was Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, I led many Prom concerts, not least the famous Last Nights, which in their exuberance and sense of fun were always a fitting end to what is, in my opinion, the most important orchestral music festival in the world. I thank the BBC for having the wisdom to export this taster of the Proms to Melbourne."

BBC Proms Australia is supported by the GREAT Britain campaign.

British High Commissioner to Australia HE Menna Rawlings CMG said "we are delighted to support BBC Worldwide ANZ in bringing this iconic festival of classical music to Australia. The GREAT Britain campaign shares the BBC Proms' ambition of celebrating tradition with a modern edge by delivering world-class performance and showcasing UK cultural creativity."

BBC Proms Australia Program

Prom 1 – First Night, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra	
Wednesday April 13 7.30pm Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne	NIGEL WESTLAKE <i>Dream of Flying</i> CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS <i>Cello Concerto No.1 in A minor</i> HECTOR BERLIOZ <i>Symphonie fantastique</i> (Episode in the Life of an Artist), Op. 14 Conductor: Sir Andrew Davis Cello: Laura van der Heijden

Prom 2 – Queensland Symphony Orchestra	
<p>Thursday April 14 7.30pm Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne</p>	<p>GORDON HAMILTON featuring Tom Thum - <i>Thum Prints The Concerto for Beat Box and Orchestra</i> ALBERTO GINASTERA <i>Piano Concerto No. 1</i> GEORGE GERSHWIN <i>Cuban Overture</i> LEONARD BERNSTEIN <i>West Side Story Symphonic Dances</i></p> <p>Conductor: Alondra de la Parra / Gordon Hamilton (<i>Thum Prints</i>) Piano: Sergio Tiempo. Beat Box: Tom Thum</p>
Prom 3 - Life Story, Queensland Symphony Orchestra	
<p>Friday April 15 7.30pm Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne</p>	<p>One for the nature-lovers, this Prom is inspired by the landmark Sir David Attenborough BBC series <i>Life Story</i>. The concert will feature excerpts from Murray Gold's original score performed by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra along with sequences of footage on the big screen.</p> <p>Conductor: Jeremy Holland-Smith</p>
Prom 4 – Matinee, Life Story, Queensland Symphony Orchestra	
<p>Saturday April 16 2.00pm Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne</p>	<p>As above</p>
Prom 5 - Last Night of the Proms, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra	
<p>Saturday April 16 7.30pm Hamer Hall, Arts Centre Melbourne</p>	<p>Come in fine voice one and all, and prepare to revel in patriotic glory for a Best of British special event! It's the <i>Last Night of the Proms</i> with iconic British conductor Sir Andrew Davis, Chief Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Embellish yourself with red, white and blue and fly your flag high with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.</p> <p>Conductor: Sir Andrew Davis Contralto: Liane Keegan</p>

Further details available at www.bbcpromsaustralia.com

Tickets on sale Monday November 16.

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For more information please contact: Nicole Hurren: +61 2 9744 4551 mob: +61 420 538 200



Nicole.hurren@bbc.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

About BBC Worldwide Australia & New Zealand

Australia & New Zealand (ANZ) is a priority territory for BBC Worldwide, focusing on growth across all its core business areas. Recently relocated to McMahons Point, BBC Worldwide ANZ wholly owns six channels: BBC First, UKTV, BBC Knowledge and CBeebies on Foxtel and Fetch TV in Australia; UKTV and BBC Knowledge on Sky TV in New Zealand; and is responsible for the distribution and promotion of BBC World News which transmits in both countries. BBC Worldwide ANZ distributes great British content from the BBC and other producers to free-to-air, subscription channels and SVOD platforms in Australia and New Zealand. It works with partners to bring BBC Worldwide DVDs, consumer products, entertainment formats and live events to the local market, as well as offering advertising opportunities for the BBC's world renowned bbc.com news site. In 2014/15, it generated headline sales of £81.9m, up 7.8% year-on-year.

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