

TASMANIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

OVERTURES



MAY 2017

CHINA TOUR RESOUNDING SUCCESS

Cultural diplomacy a winner for Tasmania

LET'S START with some statistics: nine concerts in seven cities over a two-week period covering 1,600 kilometres. The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra's tour of the Chinese provinces of Jiangsu, Fujian and Shanghai, under Chief Conductor Marko Letonja, was gruelling but immensely rewarding. The tour brought the TSO and all things Tasmanian to one of our major trading partners, fostering cross-cultural goodwill and building awareness of our island state. The first of the nine concerts took place in the city of Suqian (population 4.7 million) on 29 December 2016 and the last in Shanghai (population 25 million) on 7 January 2017. In between, the TSO gave concerts in Zhenjiang, Fuzhou, Putian and Xiamen as well as a New Year's Eve concert in Nanjing, in which the orchestra was joined by the Jiangsu Performing Arts Group Symphony Orchestra.

As the New Year's Eve concert demonstrated, the tour was not just about the TSO bringing its expertise to China, but building bridges with local musicians and audiences. One of the centrepiece works of the tour was Tan Dun's Double Bass Concerto, *Wolf Totem*, with soloist Stuart Thomson, a work that has deep Chinese affinities and was co-commissioned by the TSO. Inspired by Jian Rong's acclaimed novel of 2004, *Wolf Totem* was brought to the cities on tour for the first time thanks to the TSO.

Overall attendances are estimated to have exceeded ten thousand people, with many more seeing the local media coverage throughout the tour. The TSO reached a still larger audience

through a radio broadcast of the final concert of the tour, in Shanghai, which is estimated to have reached many hundreds of thousands of listeners. That particular concert included *Wolf Totem* as well as selections from Elena Kats-Chernin's *Wild Swans* and Julian Yu's orchestration of Alban Berg's Piano Sonata (commissioned by the TSO).

Over and above the musical connections that were forged, the tour deepened engagement between Tasmania and China. Flow-on effects are expected to be felt in trade, tourism and education. Three of the concerts took place in Fujian Province — Tasmania's sister province — including Fuzhou, Hobart's sister city, and Putian, soon to be Launceston's sister city. State and local government representatives from Tasmania accompanied part of the tour including the Minister for the Arts, Vanessa Goodwin, and Hobart Deputy Lord Mayor, Ron Christie.

The TSO was welcomed in each city by local dignitaries, senior officials and business leaders. Indeed, the concert in Fuzhou coincided with the signing of a friendship agreement with the City of Hobart. The TSO is grateful to the State Government for providing the initial grant to help make the tour possible. The TSO would also like to thank both the Australian Government for its support for the tour, through the Australia-China Council of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Hobart City Council. Special thanks to an anonymous patron who made a very substantial donation to assist with the tour.



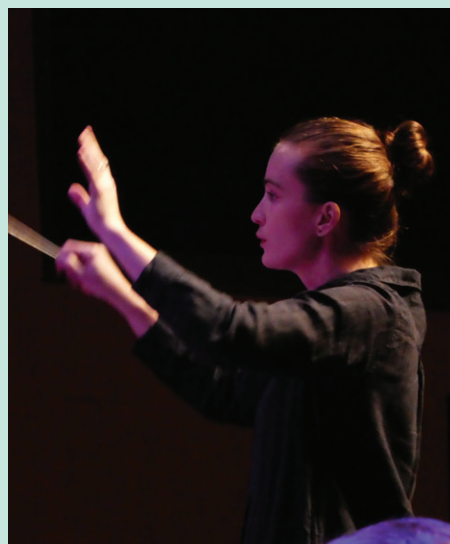
TAKE A BREATH WITH AMY DICKSON

Grammy Award-nominated saxophonist Amy Dickson, who appeared as soloist at *RACT Symphony under the Stars*, took time out to visit Tasmanian school children and give workshops on breathing techniques. Amy's custom-made program, called *Take a Breath*, was delivered to students at Risdon Vale Primary School in Hobart and Mowbray Heights Primary School in Launceston. Amy taught students to breathe in through their noses and out through their mouths, and introduced the concept of "elephant breaths" to get the message across. As she pointed out, correct breathing is necessary for a saxophonist and vitally important for us all. We can survive for a period of time without food and a shorter time without water, but we perish in no time at all without oxygen.



NURTURING CONDUCTORS

A generous bequest to the TSO by the late Dr Louise Crossley is already making an impact. Dr Crossley specified that her gift support the work of women conductors. For some time the TSO recognised the need for an Assistant Conductor and had identified Elena Schwarz (pictured) as a primary candidate. Dr Crossley's bequest allowed the position to be financially viable and gave the TSO the wherewithal to appoint Elena to the role. Elena has already assisted on the China Tour and with concerts in the main subscription season. Dr Crossley's bequest also supported the engagement of Jessica Cottis as conductor of this year's *RACT Symphony under the Stars*. Should you wish to make a bequest to the TSO Foundation and create your own legacy, please contact Ed Benyon, Director Development, on 03 6232 4430 or benyone@tso.com.au.



PRINCIPAL GUEST CONDUCTOR ANNOUNCED

Johannes Fritzsch will take up the new position of TSO Principal Guest Conductor from the start of 2018. Johannes is no stranger to the TSO and Tasmanian audiences having first conducted the orchestra in 2001 and returned as a guest conductor on many occasions since then. In addition to conducting concerts in the TSO's main subscription series, he has been actively involved in some of the orchestra's other activities, notably leading training programs for up-and-coming conductors from all around the country and overseas. "I have always enjoyed working with the TSO," he said, "it is a very fine orchestra with an extraordinary sense of ensemble, not just musically, but also personally and as an organisation." Johannes is married to violinist Dr Susan Collins, Coordinator of Strings and Orchestral Music at the Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.





RACT SYMPHONY UNDER THE STARS

“GIRL POWER” might be said to have been the theme of this year’s *RACT Symphony under the Stars* with conductor Jessica Cottis at the helm and saxophone soloist Amy Dickson appearing as special guest artist. Together, conductor and soloist held the audience spellbound.

As always, a family-friendly atmosphere prevailed. Indeed, children were invited to share in the concert by making their own instruments before

the event got underway — the RACT set up workstations expressly for this purpose — and playing along with the orchestra during one of the encores.

Held in Tolosa Park Glenorchy on Saturday 18 February and City Park Launceston on Saturday 25 February, *RACT Symphony under the Stars* attracted many thousands of concert-goers.

The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra is delighted to welcome the RACT as its Principal Partner, the orchestra’s highest category of corporate philanthropic support. Stacey Pennicott, Executive General Manager, Membership & Community at the RACT, said that the RACT was pleased to be able to further support the TSO through its Principal Partner sponsorship. “The TSO is a well-respected and highly successful organisation providing Tasmanians with an outstanding program of performances. The ongoing success of the RACT’s community *Symphony under the Stars* concerts in Hobart and Launceston has encouraged us to further support the TSO and the Tasmanian community in the delivery of the overall concert series.”



Principal Partner





REACHING A NEW AUDIENCE

**Crowds flock to outdoor Live Sessions
at Hobart's Macquarie Point**

IN AN EFFORT to reach a wider and more diverse audience, the TSO last year inaugurated the Live Sessions. The first Live Sessions concert for this year was an outdoor event featuring the Wind, Brass and Percussion of the TSO with guest artist, vocalist Maria Lurighi. Held in the Red Square at Macquarie Point on 4 February, the concert attracted a capacity audience of 600. An easy-going mood prevailed. Bean bags were provided (thank you RACT!), many concert-goers brought camp chairs, and food trucks were on hand to feed the masses. To top it all off, the summer weather was perfect. A post-concert survey revealed that 46% of the audience was aged under 45, 37% hadn't attended a TSO concert in years (if at all), and 95% would attend another TSO Live Sessions. The TSO Live Sessions are made possible through the generous support of Blundstone, Clemenger Tasmania, Foot & Playsted, Graeme Wood Foundation and the Hobart Brewing Company. Thank you all!



WE ARE THE MUSIC

You have your reasons for loving music.
We all do.

Beethoven believed that music can change the world. Chopin wrote to a friend that, "I tell my piano the things I used to tell you." Stevie Wonder knows that music is a world within itself, that it's a language we all understand. What do you think?

Do you believe, like Rachmaninov, that "music is enough for a lifetime, but a lifetime is not enough for music?"

Do you believe that music connects people? Moves people? Makes the world go 'round?

Is music your medicine? Your release? Your excuse? Your passion?

Does your life have a soundtrack, too? What does it sound like now? How has it changed over time?

Is listening to a favourite piece of music like catching up with an old friend?

Do you thrill to the experience of live performance? Seeing how the bows move up and down in unison? Feeling yourself sway along with the subtle dance of the oboist? Catching your breath after a crash of percussion? Sharing your response to the music with the musicians' response to making it?

For you and all of us, music is not just what we like. It's who we are.

Soon, the TSO will send you a letter, or an email, or call you to ask if you would contribute to the annual campaign to support your orchestra through the TSO Fund.

We are all the music. Play your part.

Make your gift to the TSO... for all your musical reasons.

KINDY CLASSICS

School children came from far and wide – Bridgewater in the north, Geeveston in the south and Lauderdale in the east – for *Kindy Classics* in the TSO Studio on 28 March and 3 April. The four concerts attracted 1,000 children from 15 different schools.

Specially designed for Preparatory and Grade 1 students, *Kindy Classics* introduces children to the instruments of the orchestra and to the different instrument families: strings, winds, brass and percussion. Children are able to sit close to the 15-piece ensemble and immerse themselves in the music-making. And, indeed, to make music themselves!

It was never a dull moment with compere Arabella Wain, who captivated the children with her lively antics and had them singing along and up and on their feet too! In a happy coincidence, the concerts were conducted by her father, Gary Wain, TSO Principal Percussion. Gary even relinquished the baton from time to time to give young volunteers from the audience a stab at conducting an orchestra. In one of many lessons learned on the day, the youngsters discovered that the job is much harder than it looks!

The TSO would like to thank Hydro Tasmania for making it possible for a number of schools to attend through the Hydro-sponsored AccessTix program.



TRIUMPHANT START TO HOBART SEASON



THE TASMANIAN Symphony Orchestra's 2017 Hobart season got off to a triumphant start with an inspiring performance of Beethoven's Symphony No 9, under the baton of Marko Letonja, on Saturday 4 March. The TSO was joined by the TSO Chorus and soloists Valda Wilson, Fiona Campbell, Henry Choo and James Clayton. Peter Donnelly,

writing in the *Hobart Mercury*, described it as the finest TSO performance of Beethoven's Choral Symphony in living memory, adding that "Marko Letonja's interpretation and the TSO's playing exerted enormous grip". As ever, Beethoven's Symphony No 9 attracted a huge audience, with Federation Concert Hall filled to capacity.

VALE SUSAN WILLIAMS

The concert on 4 March was dedicated to Susan Williams, who passed away on 4 January. Susan — or Susie, as she was better known — was a great friend and supporter of the TSO, having served on the TSO Board, TSO Foundation Board (of which she was Chair for a number of years), Education Advisory Committees and the TSO Friends Committee (including several terms at President). Susie worked tirelessly on behalf of the orchestra — whether in the form of raising funds, raising awareness or lending her expertise.

Susie loved to sing and was an inaugural member of the TSO Chorus. Indeed, she loved to appear on stage generally and worked as a freelance actor and stage manager for a number of Tasmanian theatre companies. She presented concerts on ABC Classic FM and wrote, produced and presented many programs for ABC Radio Education. Her passion for acting and education came together in her day job at The Friends' School, where she taught drama and was a Co-Head of High School. "We remember Susie as a warm, considerate and astute person," said Dick Shoobridge, TSO Foundation Chair. "We will miss her."



CONNECTING WITH LAUNCESTON BUSINESS LEADERS

The TSO enjoys an active Northern Advisory Group that helps strengthen connections with communities in northern Tasmania. The TSO joined forces with Corporate Partners Bell Bay Aluminium and Launceston Mazda (representing Mazda Australia and Tasmanian Mazda Dealers) to host a Launceston Chamber of Commerce networking event on 15 March. The program focused on the mutual benefits of collaborations with the TSO for Launceston and northern Tasmanian businesses, and the many ways in which the TSO promotes business opportunities in the region. More than 85 people representing 38 local businesses shared

ideas and insights while enjoying canapés and a glass of wine. Ray Mostogl, Bell Bay Aluminium Managing Director, explained how his company supported its employees and their families through an ongoing partnership with the TSO to provide school concerts for children in the George Town area. Nicholas Heyward, TSO Managing Director, reinforced Ray's comments by relating the orchestra's recent tour of China and the positive connections that were forged for Tasmanian business. The evening concluded with beautiful solo flute pieces performed by Katie Zagorski.



(L-R) Ed Jones, Steve Bence, Tim Holder, Jan Davis, Nicholas Heyward, Katie Zagorski, Ray Mostogl and David Rich.

ROB CLARK RETIRES AFTER 43 YEARS

After nearly 43 years as TSO Principal Bass Trombone, Rob Clark has retired from the orchestra. His last concert with the orchestra was on 7 April; his first concert, for the record, was in September 1974! Rob went out with Bruckner's Symphony No 6. "I timed my retirement to coincide with Bruckner's Sixth – a complex work that provides plenty of challenges but also plenty of rewards." It followed hot on the heels of another challenging but gratifying work, Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. Looking back on his long career with the TSO, Rob singles out conductors Charles Dutoit and Kurt Sanderling, pianists Michele Campanella and Howard Shelley, and singers Julia Lezhneva and Nina Stemme for special mention. As for his post-TSO life, Rob is looking forward to continuing Japanese studies at UTAS, skiing, bushwalking and travelling. Oh, and playing the trombone for his own pleasure.

TSO FRIENDS QUIZ NIGHT

Calling all quiz enthusiasts! TSO Friends will be holding a Quiz Night in the TSO Studio, adjacent to Federation Concert Hall, on Saturday 6 May, 6.30pm for 7. Open to everyone, the Quiz Night will raise funds for a variety of TSO Friends projects. The cost is \$20 per person, which includes supper. Recent purchases by TSO Friends include a digital mixing console for the orchestra, a vital piece of equipment for concerts that require amplification. The console has already been put to good use by Ian Wollstein, TSO Technical Coordinator, at the TSO Live Sessions at Macquarie Point, the Family Classics *Sneetches* concert and *Kate Miller Heidke + the TSO*. TSO Friends have also made a significant financial contribution to the refurbishment of the Green Room, currently nearing completion. For more information on TSO Friends, including becoming a member, visit tsofriends.com.au.



The balloons say it all — this hardy group of 12 choristers sang with the TSO Chorus in 1992 and 10 have remained continuous members of the chorus since then (marked *). Bravo all! (L-R) Grant Taylor*, Reg Marron, Julianne Panckridge*, Beth Warren*, John Ballard*, Duncan How*, Michael Kregor*, June Tyzack (Chorusmaster since 2001), Simon Milton, Stephanie McDonald*, Felicity Gifford*, Beth Coombe*, Tony Marshall*.

TSO CHORUS CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

IT ALL STARTED back in 1992 with a performance of Verdi's opera *La traviata*. Since then, the TSO Chorus has gone from strength to strength, performing not only with the TSO in repertoire including symphonies, masses and operas, but with interstate choirs and orchestras including Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, and the Sydney, West Australian and Adelaide symphony orchestras.

In 2012 choristers made their international debut performing with the Hong Kong Philharmonic

Orchestra, and a sizeable contingent will join singers from all around the world in Berlin later this month as part of Mitsingkonzert 2017.

Given the quarter-century milestone, the TSO Chorus Alumni has been formed. All former choristers, chorusmasters, répétiteurs and administrators are encouraged to register and to take part in a range of events, commencing with a "Big Sing" in Federation Concert Hall on Saturday 27 May. For further information and to register, visit tsochorus.com.au/join-us/alumni.

PARTNERS

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT



The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and through Arts Tasmania by the Minister for the Arts, and the Tasmanian Icon Program.

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Photo Credits: China Tour, Becher Townshend and Ian Wollstein; RACT Symphony under the Stars, Live Sessions, Kindy Classics and Beethoven's Ninth, Alastair Bett; Launceston Business Leaders, Rob Burnett; TSO Chorus, Richard Jupe.

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