



Thursday, September 29, 2011

NEW INTERNATIONAL SERIES PUTS SPOTLIGHT ON BRISBANE

Premier Anna Bligh today announced a program of exclusive performances for Brisbane by the world's finest performing arts companies that will further cement the city's reputation as a dynamic arts and cultural hub.

A new partnership between the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC) and Events Queensland to deliver the *QPAC International Series* is set to draw national and international attention to Brisbane over the next four years.

"The *QPAC International Series* begins in August 2012 with a unique series of performances by all three of Hamburg's great companies - the Hamburg Ballet, Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra and Hamburg State Opera," Ms Bligh said today.

"This will be the first time any of these companies have ever performed in Australia and they are making their debut right here in Brisbane – and Brisbane only – which is a real coup.

"In 2013, the series will also see an exclusive Brisbane presentation by one of the most sought after ballet companies in the world, Russia's Bolshoi Ballet.

"This legendary company, which epitomises the centuries-old traditions of Russian Ballet, has not performed in Brisbane since 1987."

Premier Bligh said the calibre of companies, performers and repertoire in *QPAC's International Series* is such they will be must-see events on the national performing arts calendar that will attract audiences from around Australia and internationally.

In 2012, the Hamburg Philharmonic will be led by internationally renowned Australian conductor Simone Young.

Ms Young will conduct the performance of Mahler's mighty Symphony No. 2, known as the Resurrection Symphony which will feature soloists from the Hamburg State Opera.

Ms Young will also conduct the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra and Hamburg State Opera in two concert performances of *Das Rheingold*, the opening opera in Richard Wagner's greatest work, The Ring Cycle. In 2000 in Vienna, Ms Young made musical history when she became the first woman ever to conduct the complete *Ring Cycle*.

"Having one of the world's leading conductors perform *Das Rheingold* before its performed anywhere else in Australia in 2012 really makes a statement about Brisbane's growing status as an arts and cultural hub," Ms Bligh said.

"Led by the celebrated choreographer John Neumeier, the world-famous Hamburg Ballet company will premiere two works, *Nijinsky* and *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. The orchestra for the performances of *Midsummer Night's Dream* will be the

Queensland Symphony orchestra under the direction of young Brisbane-born conductor Simon Hewett who is Hamburg Ballet's resident conductor and is shaping an international career in both ballet and opera."

QPAC Chief Executive John Kotzas said the *QPAC International Series* would build on the Centre's recent successes and would continue the relationship with arts impresarios Leo Schofield AM and Ian McRae AO.

"QPAC has grown its international standing as a performing arts centre and that has been underpinned by our programs, growing commercial reputation and technical expertise," Mr Kotzas said.

Mr Kotzas said the 2012 presentation of the Hamburg's state performance companies was timely as the Brisbane performances take place on the eve of the 200th anniversary of Wagner's birth (1813).

"It will be a fitting prelude of the celebrations in 2013 that will see full scale *Ring Cycles* presented all over the world. It will be particularly special to have Simone Young, the first woman to ever conduct a *Ring Cycle*, to conduct this work in her home country," he said.

Mr Kotzas said that the *QPAC International Series* would not only bring performances from the world's best performing artists to Brisbane, but also generate a curated program of classes, talks and related activities.

Events Queensland CEO John O'Sullivan said the series was the latest addition to Queensland's dynamic and growing calendar of events.

"The Cultural Centre at South Bank is the heart of the city and great things are happening to entice visitors to Queensland," Mr O'Sullivan said. "This series, and the strong partnership with QPAC, comes in addition to the recent successes of the Paris Opera Ballet and Ballet Nacional de Cuba.

"And through a partnership with the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) we've also delivered other exciting exclusives delivered for Brisbane like Valentino, Surrealism and the upcoming Prado and Matisse exhibitions."

Further additions to the *QPAC International Series* will be announced in due course.

The national exclusive Hamburg presentation will run at QPAC from 23 August to 5 September 2012. Please go to www.qpac.com.au to join the waitlist. Tickets go on sale in 2012.

To find out more about great events coming up on the Queensland calendar visit www.eventsqld.com.au

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