

2023 set to be an epic year of music for Queensland Symphony Orchestra

Chief Conductor Umberto Clerici announces Mahler Cycle – with a twist – and more!

Be curious! That's the message from Queensland Symphony Orchestra's new Chief Conductor **Umberto Clerici**, who today has unveiled Season 2023: a year of grand masterpieces and intimate chamber moments, world premieres, and experimental music experiences, anchored by some of Queensland's biggest music names in **Ray Chen**, **Piers Lane** and **William Barton**, and featuring some of the greatest music in the world in *Don Quixote*, *The Planets*, Beethoven's heroic Symphony No.9, and what will be one of the most spectacular productions of 2023, Wagner's Ring Cycle.

"My ambition for these next three years is to create a web of interconnected programs in which each single concert has a clear and unique storyline that develops into a unified arc, embracing the entire season. My theme for 2023 is *humanity*, for after the past few challenging years I felt we needed music that celebrates sociality, friendship, and community," said Maestro Clerici.

"An important priority for me is to feature soloists from within our orchestra and showcase the abilities of single sections. Our strings, wind, brass, and percussion will all have their chance to shine, both at QPAC and in our studio, which I consider our 'painter's atelier' where we showcase our experiments and new projects."

He said the message this year was to be curious. "Come and explore unknown paths with us; listen, even if you don't yet know every piece in a concert, I am confident there will be many things you will discover and love."

QSO's famed Maestro Series opens on 17 February with three performances of **ODE TO JOY** – a concert for the ages.

ODE TO JOY will see Maestro Clerici lead the Orchestra, with internationally acclaimed didgeridoo virtuoso **William Barton** and powerhouse violinist **Véronique Serret** along with soprano **Eleanor Lyons**, mezzo soprano **Deborah Humble**, tenor **Andrew Goodwin**, baritone **Michael Honeyman** and the Brisbane Chamber Choir performing Beethoven's magnificent Symphony No.9 (*Choral*) along with Sculthorpe's celebrated *Earth Cry*. Barton and Serret will also perform, for the first time in the Concert Hall, their collaboration *Kalkani*, described as 'a message of peace and love carried by the eagle spirit', transformed into a stunning orchestral version.

In April, it's Gustav Holst's mighty masterpiece **THE PLANETS** under the baton of South Korean conductor **Shiyeon Sung**, with the fascinating *Three Songs for Soprano and Orchestra* by Argentinian composer Osvaldo Golijov featured, with soloists **Sara Macliver** and **The Australian Voices**.

The epic music continues in May with **DON QUIXOTE**. Featuring a mix of theatrical and visual elements, all built around the music of Richard Strauss, Maestro Clerici and the Orchestra will tell the famous story of the nobleman who deludes himself into thinking he is a knight. Then it's drama of a different kind when Queensland favourite **Piers Lane** performs Mozart's 24th Piano Concerto - one of his most dramatic pieces for piano and orchestra.

In June, it's time for dynamic young music makers to shine. **TERRIFIC TRUMPET** stars new Section Principal Trumpet **Rainer Saville**, performing French composer Henri Tomasi's spectacular Trumpet Concerto, under the baton of the brilliant young Finnish conductor **Tarmo Peltokoski**.

In 2021 Peltokoski conducted the Bremen Chamber Philharmonic orchestra in Germany and so impressed the orchestra that - *at age 21!* - they employed him as their Principal Guest Conductor. Around the same time, he was offered the role of Music and Artistic Director of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra. In an amazing coup, QSO will bring this young rising star to Brisbane to conduct Sibelius' Symphony No.2.

Then in July, Ray Chen returns to perform with QSO! Over two nights **RAY PLAYS TCHAIKOVSKY** will see Brisbane's celebrated son perform one of the greatest of all works for violin and orchestra - Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto. Under the baton of **Giancarlo Guerrero**, who wowed Queensland audiences in 2018 with his rendition of Shostakovich's 10th Symphony and will again in leading the Orchestra, QSO will this time deliver Shostakovich's Symphony No.8.

Also in July are two **BEETHOVEN AND ELGAR** performances. Triple-threat conductor (also violinist and composer) **Joseph Swensen** will bring his deep musical knowledge to the complex challenge of Elgar's Symphony No.2. Joining him on stage will be acclaimed Australian pianist **Jayson Gillham**, recognised as one of the most refined pianists of his generation, sharing his interpretation of Beethoven's sparkling Piano Concerto No.1.

In Spring Chief Conductor Umberto Clerici embarks on his Mahler cycle – with a twist!

"Every new Chief Conductor starts a Mahler cycle, but few make it beyond his Fourth or Fifth Symphony. So, I decided to continue a cycle started by **Alondra de la Parra** in 2016: we will restart from Mahler's Sixth Symphony, the Tragic, and continue the journey in years to come. We will also hear the world premiere of a new symphony by Justin Williams, a personal friend of mine, and colleague at Sydney Symphony Orchestra. His music ideally continues the late Romantic idiom and could be the natural continuation of Strauss and Mahler," said Clerici.

CLERICI CONDUCTS MAHLER is presented in association with Brisbane Festival on 22 and 23 September and promises to be one of the most epic performances of the QSO in the Concert Hall in 2023.

For Maestro Clerici's final performances of 2023, he has packed in as much symphonic goodness as possible into the concert **MICRO-MASTERPIECES**. Each work is less than half an hour, with one of the most famous Italian compositions of all time - *The Barber of Seville* overture - sure to star. Mozart's Symphony No.39 also features, with Clerici saying it signals the beginning of a mini cycle of the last three Mozart Symphonies (rarely played by QSO) which will continue from 2023 to 2025.

In December QSO will take part in one of the standout music events of 2023: **THE RING CYCLE**, Wagner's Magnum Opus, presented in association with Opera Australia and exclusive to QPAC.

This spectacular new production by visionary Chinese director **Chen Shi-Zheng** — the pinnacle of opera and a 15-hour epic performed over four nights - explores Wagner's legendary tale through a futuristic lens. His global vision imagines a parallel universe where many cultures walk together. Towering, moving digital panels will create an immersive virtual world while the music of QSO will fill the Lyric Theatre.

QSO Chief Executive **Yarmila Alfonzetti** said in 2023 and beyond, QSO would be everywhere, all the time.

"On the mainstage, in our studio, in the pit for the opera and the ballet, and touring all over this vast State; QSO thrives as an arts company for all Queenslanders. Be in no doubt that the QSO underpins a significant portion of the major performing arts sector in Queensland," she said.

"We are thrilled that our partnership in The Ring Cycle will showcase to all of Australia the impressive level of excellence within the QSO. As we start our 10-year journey towards the Olympics, our part in this significant opera event will leave no doubt that we are ready to work at scale for the advancement of our cultural landscape."

Season 2023 also includes QSO's new Up Close series, designed to celebrate music written for chamber orchestra, which opens on 10 February, featuring a world premiere of a new work for brass and percussion by QSO's Section Principal Percussion David Montgomery.

Another season highlight is the return of pianist **Sergio Tiempo**, a favourite with Queensland audiences and a musician described as 'a colourist in love with the infinite variety a piano can produce', in an intimate one-of-a-kind piano recital on 21 March in the QSO Studio, South Bank.

The blockbuster classical music event **CINEMATIC** returns in 2023 in May over three concerts with the biggest line-up ever of film music from the screen, and in June QSO and QPAC present **THE LOST THING**, a magical concert experience of the much-loved children's book *The Lost Thing*, by Australian illustrator and author Shaun Tan.

Ms Alfonzetti said the Orchestra would continue performing across Queensland. “We will venture into classrooms and town halls in regional centres and remote communities. We will play alongside young musicians and seek to inspire their creativity and ambition and we will continue to produce digital performances for those who can’t access us live. It is also incumbent upon us to support the great music teachers of the future through professional development opportunities with our musicians,” she said.

“The Orchestra will also continue to connect with First Nation communities to create collaborative music that champions, educates and inspires. On the regional touring front, the Orchestra is committed to sharing the power of music with as much of the state as possible – from Longreach to Bundaberg, Toowoomba to Atherton. We look forward to making a unique announcement in this space at the beginning of 2023.”

Key Dates:

2023 Season subscription packages are on sale from 9am Wednesday 5 October

Single tickets to all concerts on sale 9am Thursday 8 December

Subscriptions: Packages available via Queensland Symphony Orchestra

Website: qso.com.au

Phone: 07 3833 5044

Single tickets available via QPAC

Website: qpac.com.au

Phone: 136 246

Imagery and more:

QSO 2023 Calendar, Season Imagery:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/hqj52syuhjtsqwy/AABteBOygWYdLgX6mIKKNLj-a?dl=0>

For more media information, interviews, and additional imagery, please contact Kath Rose on 0416 291 493 or email kath@kathrose.com