

MEDIA RELEASE

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1931 MILITARY FIELD DRUM MAKES ITS MSO STAGE DEBUT

A 1931 rope-tensioned military field drum donated to the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra makes its stage debut in Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique* in the hands of its lifelong player.

An amateur percussionist and member of the South Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Mr John Marsh will join the MSO's percussion section to perform a long drum roll at the end of the fourth movement which Berlioz wrote especially for this type of instrument.

MSO percussionist John Arcaro said "We're absolutely delighted to receive such a treasured gift from Mr Marsh. With its original rope, leather straps and natural skins, the Drum produces a unique and authentic military sound. It's in excellent condition."

The field Drum and its owner will make their appearance in the MSO's concerts on 12, 13, 14 December at the Arts Centre, Hamer Hall conducted by Chief Conductor and Artistic Director Oleg Caetani.

Speaking about his field Drum, Mr Marsh said "I'm very pleased to donate it to the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra."

"I want it to be used, and in donating it to the Orchestra, I'm ensuring that it will be cared for and played for many years to come."

Now in his eighties, Mr Marsh has owned the Drum since it was commissioned by his father as a gift for his eighth birthday. He has played it constantly throughout his life, in school, university and community concerts, both sharing a long and rich history together.

The Drum was made in Charlestown, Massachusetts by William F. Mackintosh. It is typical of the rope-tensioned field drums for military and civilian use that were used in the 1800's and during the American Civil War. Music played an important role in motivating the troops before, during and after conflicts on the battlefield. Towards the end of the 19th century, metal or rod-tensioning became popular and remains so in modern drums today.

The MSO welcomes donations of property which address significant gaps in its instrument bank, or if you wish to donate to the MSO Foundation, please contact Jessica Frean, Philanthropy Manager on 03 9626 1107.

Concert details:

BERLIOZ' FANTASTIC VISION – Master Series 10
Thursday 11, Friday 12 and Saturday 13 December at 8:00pm
the Arts Centre, Hamer Hall
Bookings: www.mso.com.au or 1300 136 166

RAVEL *Une barque sur l'océan*
STRAUSS *Burleske*
BERLIOZ *Symphonie fantastique*

Oleg Caetani conductor
Marc-Andre Hamelin piano

ENDS

For interviews or photo opportunities please contact Debora McInnes on 03 9626 1106 or mcinnesd@mso.com.au