

Kristian Bezuidenhout brings out the wild side of Beethoven

BEETHOVEN'S EMPEROR

9–24 March

Wollongong, Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne, Sydney



Acclaimed pianist **Kristian Bezuidenhout** will make his electrifying return to Australia to perform Beethoven's most beloved work for piano, the **Emperor Concerto**, as he directs the **Australian Chamber Orchestra** in a national tour from 9–24 March.

Bezuidenhout will perform on a 19th-century-style fortepiano, an instrument he describes as bringing Beethoven's wild and revolutionary tendencies to the fore. A regular collaborator with the ACO, Bezuidenhout has a special affinity with historical instruments. He relishes the challenge of their complexities, bringing a world-class finesse to coax out a sound that the great composers of the 18th and 19th centuries – such as Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven – would have recognised.

Performing on historical keyboards poses its own challenges, as the instruments are notoriously temperamental. *"Sometimes you ask yourself why the hell you are doing this,"* Bezuidenhout explained to *The New Yorker*, *"But the need to adapt to changing circumstances is what makes it interesting. And there are times when the stars do align, when it's as if the camera has been perfectly set up, and it's the most beautiful thing you've heard in your life. It's really worth it for those moments."*

Media Contact

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Born in South Africa before moving to Australia as a child, Bezuidenhout's talents as a pianist saw him offered a place at the Eastman School of Music in New York, where he studied fortepiano with Malcolm Bilson and harpsichord with Arthur Haas. He rose to international fame at 21 upon winning first prize at the prestigious Bruges Fortepiano Competition and has since been acclaimed the world over as a soloist, director and chamber musician, particularly for his mastery of historical instruments.

Bezuidenhout credits his upbringing in Australia as being "truly remarkable" in shaping his musical development and outlook, saying *"Australia is a place that holds very strong and happy memories for me on many levels, most vividly because it's the place where I started learning piano. I recall Australia as being truly remarkable at that time for the richness and seriousness of its classical music education. There was this sense in both my primary school and high school that music is absolutely one of the most important aspects of a rich education and needs to be treated just as seriously as anything else."*

Joining Bezuidenhout and the ACO for these concerts are period-instrument wind and brass players from around the world, handpicked by Bezuidenhout to recreate Beethoven's soundworld. Centred around the Emperor Concerto, the program features works by musicians inspired by the great composer, from **Franz Schubert** to Swedish composer **Britta Byström**, who composed her way through the silence of lockdown in a beautiful response to Beethoven.

Concert Details

BEETHOVEN'S EMPEROR

- LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN Piano Concerto No.5 "Emperor"
- FERDINAND RIES Symphony No.2 in C minor, Op.80: I. Allegro ma non troppo
- FRANZ SCHUBERT Impromptu in B-flat major
- FRANZ SCHUBERT Rosamunde: Entr'acte No.3
- BRITTA BYSTRÖM A Walk to Beethoven's First Symphony (Australian Premiere)
- LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (arr. Franz Liszt) Symphony No.1 (excerpt)
- WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART Piano Concerto No.20: III. Allegro assai (Cadenza by Beethoven)

Kristian Bezuidenhout Director and Fortepiano
 Australian Chamber Orchestra

Wollongong Town Hall
 Sat 9 Mar, 7.30pm

Melbourne - Arts Centre Melbourne
 Sun 17 Mar, 2.30pm

Adelaide Town Hall
 Tue 12 Mar, 7.30pm

Sydney - City Recital Hall
 Tue 19 Mar, 8pm

Perth Concert Hall
 Wed 13 Mar, 7.30pm

Wed 20 Mar, 7pm
 Fri 22 Mar, 7pm
 Sat 23 Mar, 7pm

Melbourne Recital Centre
 Sat 16 Mar, 7.30pm
 Mon 18 Mar, 7.30pm

Sydney Opera House
 Sun 24 Mar, 2pm

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