



Melbourne
International
Jazz
Festival

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
and the Melbourne International Jazz Festival present

Kurt Elling

Saturday 30 May at 7pm
Sunday 31 May at 2pm
Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall

MSO PRINCIPAL PARTNER



Welcome

MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Diversity of repertoire and audiences comprises an important part of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's existence. As it is with these two concerts in conjunction with the Melbourne International Jazz Festival's opening weekend.

We are delighted to have the chance to perform with the great Chicago-born jazz vocalist Kurt Elling, whose four-octave range and inexhaustible imagination cover many musical fields – from improvisation and scat to spoken word and poetry.

Elling is one of the most imaginative and acclaimed artists of today. *The New York Times* has described him as 'the standout male vocalist of our time', and the late American poet Robert Creeley said Elling's 'words are informed by a powerful poetic spirit'. As Elling himself defines the art of improvisation: 'It is necessarily created in real time, in front of an audience. That's what jazz singers do.'

MSO welcomes Elling, along with his quartet, for these special concerts, under our Associate Conductor Benjamin Northey. We look intensely forward to making music with this astonishing artist.



André Gremillet
Managing Director
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this landmark event and the first ever collaboration between the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the Melbourne International Jazz Festival (28 May – 7 June 2015).

This thrilling concert sees a meeting of two musical worlds – Melbourne's own symphony orchestra and the leading jazz vocalist of our time, Kurt Elling, performing with his formidable Quartet.

A daring and dynamic musician at the forefront of jazz for over two decades, Elling has radically expanded the possibilities for jazz vocals. He is joined by leading jazz artists: pianist Mads Baerentzen, guitarist John McLean, bassist Clark Sommers and drummer Kendrick Scott.

This year's Festival program offers an extraordinary range of events to delight those with a deep connection to jazz, as well as those who are new and curious. I'd like to thank Festival Event Supporter Australia Post and invite you to explore this year's exciting Festival program and immerse yourself in the word of jazz.

Michael Tortoni
Artistic Director
Melbourne International
Jazz Festival

Established in 1906, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra has earned a reputation for excellence, versatility, and innovation. It currently performs live to more than 200,000 people annually, in concerts ranging from subscription series at Hamer Hall at Arts Centre Melbourne, to annual free concerts at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl. The Orchestra also delivers programs to audiences of all ages through its Education and Community Engagement initiatives.

Sir Andrew Davis gave his inaugural concerts as Chief Conductor in April 2013, having made his debut with the Orchestra in 2009. Highlights of his tenure have included collaborations with artists such as Bryn Terfel, Emanuel Ax, and Truls Mørk, recordings of music by Percy Grainger and Sir Eugene Goossens, a 2014 European Festivals tour, and a multi-year cycle of Mahler's symphonies. The Orchestra works regularly with its Principal Guest Conductor, Diego Matheuz, Associate Conductor, Benjamin Northey, the MSO Chorus, and with guest conductors such as Thomas Adès, John Adams, Tan Dun, Jakub Hrůša, Markus Stenz, and Simone Young, as well as non-classical musicians such as Burt Bacharach, Ben Folds, Nick Cave, Sting, and Tim Minchin.





Kurt Elling Live in Concert

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Saturday 30 May at 7pm
Sunday 31 May at 2pm

**Melbourne Symphony
Orchestra**

Benjamin Northey
conductor

Kurt Elling
vocalist

Kurt Elling will be accompanied
by the MSO, and his Quartet:

Mads Baerentzen piano
John McLean guitar
Clark Sommers bass
Kendrick Scott drums

The performance on Sunday
31 May will be broadcast live across
Australia on ABC Jazz Extra.



Benjamin Northey
conductor

Benjamin Northey has rapidly
emerged as one of the nation's
leading musical figures. He holds
the Patricia Riordan Associate
Conductor Chair of the Melbourne
Symphony Orchestra.

Internationally, he has conducted
the London Philharmonic Orchestra,
Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg,
Hong Kong Philharmonic, National
Symphony Orchestra of Colombia,
New Zealand and Christchurch
Symphony Orchestras, and the
Southbank Sinfonia of London.

In Australia, Northey has made many
critically-acclaimed appearances
as a guest conductor with the
six state symphony orchestras as
well as leading seasons of *L'elisir
d'amore*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*,
La sonnambula, *Don Giovanni* and
Così fan tutte. In 2015, he returns to
all the major Australian orchestras,
the HKPO, the NZSO and conducts
Turandot for Opera Australia.

In 2015 he also holds the position of
Chief Conductor of the Christchurch
Symphony Orchestra.

Kurt Elling
vocalist

Kurt Elling is among the world's
foremost jazz vocalists. His rich
baritone spans four octaves, and
he is a renowned artist of Vocalese
– the writing and performing of
words over recorded improvised jazz
solos. In recent years he has toured
vigorously, with trips to Australia,
New Zealand, South America,
Japan, South Africa, Europe and
across North America. In that
time he has led his own ensemble
and collaborated with many of
the world's finest orchestras and
big bands. He was also Artist-in-
Residence for the Singapore and
Monterey Jazz Festivals.

His latest recording, *1619 Broadway:
The Brill Building Project*, includes
interpretations of songs like 'On
Broadway', 'A House Is Not a Home'
and 'So Far Away'. Each of his ten
albums has been nominated for a
Grammy Award.

American jazz legend Kurt Elling, hailed as ‘the standout male vocalist of our time’, speaks with Michael Shmith.

‘Man! I just try to have an interesting life’

Kurt Elling

To describe Kurt Elling as a jazz singer is only part of the story. He is also an explorer, a scholar, a poet, an historian, a photographer, a traveller and a widely acknowledged king of his artform.

At once, and in his stylish, idiosyncratic way, Elling’s vast repertoire pays homage to jazz’s rich musical heritage while taking it into new and exciting creative territory. It is this combination – always expressed in his own voice, so to speak – that has made the Chicago-born Elling so popular.

‘It’s a pleasure to play music with a lot of other dedicated musicians and have time with a dedicated audience,’ Elling says down the line from Toulouse, one of his stops on a recent tour of France.

Elling and his musicians spend around 150 to 200 days a year on the road. It is a punishing schedule, and Elling misses New York and his wife and nine-year-old daughter. But that’s the cost of being an in-demand vocalist who really belongs to the world.

Does being in a particular place – say, Toulouse – make Elling feel any different about what he does? ‘Every audience has its own personality and level of energy, and sounds depend on the shape of the room,’ he says. ‘I do as well as I can on any given night to meet that energy – to romance it, I guess, into a higher state. But it’s a thrill and pleasure for me to perform and I hope it’s something of an equal pleasure and thrill for the audience.’

For his Melbourne audiences, Kurt Elling’s two Hamer Hall concerts feature numbers from his latest album, *Passion World*, which will be released around the same time. ‘It’s a collection of compositions I’ve been gathering as I’ve visited countries over the years,’ he says. ‘There are lots of things I hope people will enjoy. I’ve been to France so many times, and there are some pieces in French. I’ve re-harmonised some Brahms, and there are a couple of pieces in Spanish from visits to Cuba.’



Although influenced by classical music – Elling began his singing life as a chorister – he says he’s never felt he has the purity of voice to be a classical singer. ‘It has a lot more nooks and crannies in it,’ he says. ‘I’m interested in doing things that haven’t been done before in new combinations. As a performer, I continue to be pretty diverse in my interests.’

Kurt Elling’s true calling is the art of Vocalese: defined as the writing and performing of words over recorded improvised jazz solos. Words, indeed, matter very much to Elling, who often sets his own lyrics. The distinguished American poet Robert Creeley has written that Elling’s words ‘are informed by a powerful poetic spirit’.

In Elling’s view, words and music must be equal partners. ‘You’re telling a story and you’re trying to invite people along to what is sometimes a complicated event, lyrically speaking. I must have a clear musical presentation so people get lost as few times as possible in the course of a set.’

Writing lyrics can, he says, be hard. ‘It’s an interesting challenge for sure, and it changes with every project. You can rack your brains for the right words, the right rhyming scheme and the right story to tell. In a Vocalese piece you need to marry the content, let alone the rhyming scheme and the flavour of the words. Then you have to keep not only to the original intention of the soloist, but the original composer. There are quite a few directions I’m pulled in.’

One of Elling’s recent albums, *1916 Broadway: the Brill Building Project*, is a tribute not only to New York, where the singer and his family moved in 2008, but to an evocative piece of midtown real estate. From the mid-1930s to the 1970s the Brill Building’s tenants were associated with the pop music industry, most of them composers and lyricists. The Brill Building Sound lives on, even though the building itself is now being turned into apartments.

For Elling, the Brill, and the immortal music it produced, provided the perfect inspiration. ‘I’d often walk by the building on the way to my manager’s office, and I could hear the ghosts coming out of there,’ he says. ‘At the time, I was working on a project to investigate New York more thoroughly. I’d done so many projects over the years for my hometown of Chicago, through theatrical things and literary things and poetic things. In New York I wanted to reach out for some of that history. It was a happy coincidence.’

Elling has also devised a touring show, *Elling Swings Sinatra*, as a tribute to the great singer, whose centenary falls in December. ‘You’re never going to outdo Sinatra, and it would do me no good to try,’ he says. ‘At this point, I’m almost 50 years old, and I’m going to sing the way that I’m going to sing.’

For full interview go to mso.com.au

MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Sir Andrew Davis
Diego Matheuz
Benjamin Northey

Harold Mitchell AC Chief Conductor Chair
Principal Guest Conductor
Patricia Riordan Associate Conductor Chair

FIRST VIOLINS

Dale Barltrop
Concertmaster
Eoin Andersen
Concertmaster
Sophie Rowell
Associate Concertmaster
Peter Edwards
Assistant Principal
Kirsty Bremner
MSO Friends Chair
Sarah Curro
Peter Fellin
Deborah Goodall
Lorraine Hook
Kirstin Kenny
Ji Won Kim
Eleanor Mancini
Mark Mogilevski
Michelle Ruffolo
Kathryn Taylor
Jo Beaumont*
Jacqueline Edwards*
Robert John*
Oksana Thompson*

SECOND VIOLINS

Matthew Tomkins
The Gross Foundation
Principal Second
Violin Chair
Robert Macindoe
Associate Principal
Monica Curro
Assistant Principal
Mary Allison
Isin Cakmakcioglu
Freya Franzen
Cong Gu
Andrew Hall
Francesca Hiew

Rachel Homburg
Christine Johnson
Isy Wasserman
Philippa West
Patrick Wong
Roger Young
Aaron Barnden*
Clare Miller*

VIOLAS

Christopher Moore
Principal
Christopher Carlidge
Acting Associate Principal
Lauren Bridgen
Katharine Brockman
Simon Collins
Gabrielle Halloran
Trevor Jones
Fiona Sargeant
Cindy Watkin
Caleb Wright
Ceridwen Davies*
Sophie Kesoglidis*

CELLOS

David Berlin
MS Newman Family
Principal Cello Chair
Rachael Tobin
Associate Principal
Nicholas Bochner
Assistant Principal
Miranda Brockman
Rohan de Korte
Keith Johnson
Sarah Morse
Angela Sargeant
Michelle Wood
Svetlana Bogosavljevic*

DOUBLE BASSES

Steve Reeves
Principal
Andrew Moon
Associate Principal
Sylvia Hosking
Assistant Principal
Damien Eckersley
Benjamin Hanlon
Suzanne Lee
Stephen Newton
Emma Sullivan*

FLUTES

Prudence Davis
Principal Flute Chair –
Anonymous
Wendy Clarke
Associate Principal
Sarah Beggs

PICCOLO

Andrew Macleod
Principal

OBOES

Jeffrey Crellin
Principal
Ann Blackburn
Rachel Curpatrick*

COR ANGLAIS

Michael Pisani
Principal

CLARINETS

David Thomas
Principal
Philip Arkinstall
Associate Principal
Craig Hill

BASS CLARINET

Jon Craven
Principal

BASSOONS

Jack Schiller
Principal
Elise Millman
Associate Principal
Natasha Thomas

CONTRABASSOON

Brock Imison
Principal

HORNS

Zora Slokar
Principal
Geoff Lierse
Associate Principal
Saul Lewis
Principal Third
Jenna Breen
Abbey Edlin
Trinette McClimont

TRUMPETS

Geoffrey Payne
Principal
Shane Hooton
Associate Principal
William Evans
Julie Payne
Joel Walmsley*

TROMBONES

Brett Kelly
Principal
Don Immel*

BASS TROMBONE

Mike Szabo
Principal

TUBA

Timothy Buzbee
Principal

TIMPANI

Christine Turpin
Principal
Brent Miller*

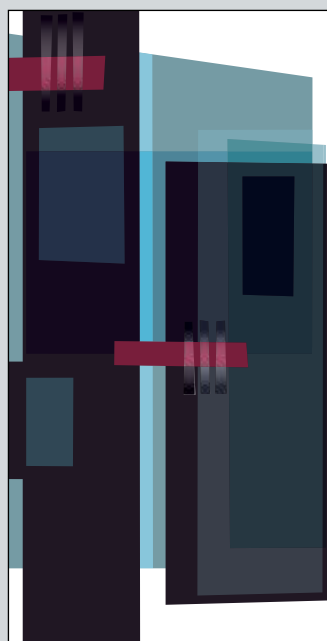
PERCUSSION

Robert Clarke
Principal
John Arcaro
Robert Cossom

HARP

Yinuo Mu
Principal

*Guest musician



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