

FABIAN RUSSELL – BIOGRAPHY

Fabian Russell was born in Sydney, Australia in 1968. In a career spanning more than three decades, he has been at the forefront of the Australian classical music industry as a multi-award winning conductor, artistic director, pedagogue, orchestral musician and solo performer.

Fabian has received invitations to guest conduct orchestras including the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Victorian Opera, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, Australian National Academy of Music Orchestra, Australian Youth Orchestra, Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, Malaysian Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, Niedersächsisches Jugensinfonieorchester, Sydney Youth Orchestra, Darwin Symphony Orchestra, Geelong Symphony Orchestra, University of Tasmania Conservatorium Orchestra, Griffith University Queensland Conservatorium of Music Symphony Orchestra, Monash University Academy Orchestra and the University of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. In recent years he has also undertaken residencies with the orchestras of Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Griffith University Open Conservatorium and the Sydney Conservatorium High School. Fabian has collaborated with leading international soloists including legendary American pianist Gary Graffman, Brett Dean, Richard Tognetti, Leslie Howard, Daniel de Borah, Stefan Cassomenos, Michael Kieran Harvey and Kristian Winther.

Fabian has held numerous conducting positions including Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of The Orchestra Project since 2002, Associate Conductor/Assistant Conductor of the Australian Youth Orchestra for twenty-eight performance seasons since 2002, Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Melbourne Youth Orchestra from 2008-2012, Principal Conductor of the Monash University Academy Orchestra from 2011-2015, Conductor of the University of Melbourne Conservatorium Symphony Orchestra from 2011-2017 and Principal Conductor of the New South Wales Youth Orchestra from 2016-2018.

In 2002 Fabian founded The Orchestra Project – the Melbourne based training orchestra comprised of Australia's pre-eminent emerging artists who perform alongside members of Australia's professional orchestras. Fabian serves as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of The Orchestra Project, receiving significant support from the Australian National Academy of Music. The Project has completed twenty-eight performance seasons since its inception. The Orchestra Project's Sydney debut took place in December 2019, performing Mahler *Symphony No. 4*. Its 2020 season will include performances of Mahler *Symphony No. 2 'Resurrection'* and the Beethoven *Missa Solemnis*.

In addition to his substantial orchestral repertoire, Fabian has a strong interest in commissioning and performing new music. He has conducted world and Australian premieres of more than thirty major works by composers including Gordon Kerry, Brett Dean, James Ledger, Mary Finsterer, Stefan Cassomenos, Tamil Rogeon, Harry Sdraulig and Kate Moore. He has also recorded extensively for film, television and radio, and has conducted Film and Orchestra projects for IMG Classics with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra.

In 2013, Fabian made his Victorian Opera debut in a new production of John Adams' *Nixon in China* that receiving considerable critical acclaim resulting in the 2014 Green Room Award for *Outstanding*

Conductor, as well as the 2014 Helpmann Award nomination for *Best Music Director*. *The Age* described these performances as “nothing short of a triumph, Fabian Russell’s superb direction of Orchestra Victoria shows up the clarity and dynamism of Adams’ extraordinary score, but also its inner beauty and moments of reflective stillness.” *The Australian* also stated that “Musical polymath Fabian Russell conducted Nixon in China with energy and finesse, drawing a powerful performance from Orchestra Victoria and an excellent cast of nine principals and chorus of twenty four.” Other Victorian Opera productions include Engelbert Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*, Ernst Toch’s *Die Prinzessin Auf Der Erbse* and Calvin Bowman’s *The Magic Pudding*. In 2020, Fabian will return to conduct Franz Schubert’s *Friends of Salamanka*.

Fabian has enjoyed a long relationship with the Australian Youth Orchestra as Associate Conductor, where he has been engaged to conduct the Orchestra in the preparation of twenty-six seasons since 2002, including three international tours. He has prepared the Orchestra for various Guest Conductors including Lawrence Foster, Diego Masson, Benjamin Zander, Alexander Anissimov, Rossen Milanov, Alexander Shelley, John Nelson, Thomas Dausgaard, Simone Young, Manfred Honneck, Antony Hermus, Christoph Eschenbach and violinist Joshua Bell. In 2013 he was a Conductor in Residence at the AYO National Music Camp in Adelaide.

In 2008 Fabian was invited to be Principal Guest Conductor of the Melbourne Youth Orchestra and was subsequently appointed Principal Conductor and Artistic Director. Under his leadership, MYO grew to become what was considered to be one of Australia’s leading pre-professional orchestral training programs, providing unique opportunities for young orchestral musicians to perform works such as John Adams’ *Harmonielehre*, Olivier Messiaen’s *Turangalila Symphonie*, Mahler’s *Symphony No. 5* and many of the major ballet works of Stravinsky and Ravel.

At the age of nineteen, Fabian accepted a contract position as Guest Principal Tuba of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra where he remained for three years. Following this he was appointed to a Principal position with Orchestra Victoria. In 1993, he was appointed to the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra where he remained for fourteen years until the end of its 2006 season. Fabian has performed under some of the world’s finest conductors including Sir Georg Solti, Charles Dutoit, Mariss Jansons, Neeme Jarvi, Edo de Waart and Yuri Temikarnov. He has also performed with some of the world’s great soloists including Dame Joan Sutherland, Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo, Frank Peter Zimmerman, Yuri Bashmet, Mischa Maisky and Barry Tuckwell. He participated in seven major international tours with the Sydney Symphony and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, performing in many of the major concert halls throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. During his time with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Fabian was awarded the 1999 Elton John Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Scholarship. He has also toured throughout Japan with Orchestra Ensemble Kanizawa. In addition to his orchestral posts, Fabian performed as soloist with numerous Australian orchestras, including the Sydney Symphony Orchestra as a finalist in the 1997 Symphony Australia Young Performer Awards, the Melbourne Symphony and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. During these two decades he established an international reputation as a leading brass musician of his generation.

Fabian Russell holds a Masters Degree in Music (Research) from Griffith University Queensland Conservatorium of Music, where he undertook a research project titled *‘Introducing Pre-Professional Training Orchestras to Austro-Germanic Works of the Late Romantic Period: A Conductor’s*

Perspective'. He was a recipient of a Sir Winston Churchill 2012 Fellowship to research leading American youth orchestra programs. He has been an international adviser to the London-based Australian Music Foundation since 2012. Fabian's 2019/20 engagements include concerts with the Australian National Academy of Music Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Victorian Opera and The Orchestra Project.