Pianos and percussion present iconic 20th century masterpiece

Igor Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*, with its innovative rhythmic structures and use of dissonance, is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential musical compositions in history.

Renowned composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein, in his *Six Talks at Harvard*, said that this 20th century orchestral masterpiece has “the best dissonances anyone ever thought up, and the best asymmetries and polytonalities and polyrhythms and whatever else you care to name.”

Stravinsky’s own arrangement of *The Rite of Spring* for two pianos, which captures all of the rhythmic drive of the original orchestral version, will be performed on Thursday 2 April in the Music Auditorium of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. Pianists Anna Sleptsova and David Wickham will be joined on stage by WAAPA’s percussionists to recreate the full barbaric effect of the pagan ritual dances. The colourful ‘Suite’ from Prokofiev’s ballet *Cinderella*, arranged for piano by Russian virtuoso Mikhail Pletnev, will balance the program with bittersweet finesse.

Originally from the Ukraine, pianist Anna Sleptsova holds a Masters with Distinction in Concert Performance and Teaching from Kiev State Conservatorium, where she also worked as a senior and associate lecturer. Moving to Australia in 1995, Sleptsova is now regarded as one of the country’s finest concert pianists. She has released a CD album of classical works by Sergei Rachmaninov and Mikhail Glinka, and teaches from her home in Perth.

Senior Lecturer in Piano at WAAPA, London-born David Wickham emigrated to Perth in 2003. While on the music staff of the Australian Opera Studio from 2003-2006, Wickham was music director for numerous productions. He has broadcast recitals for ABC Classic FM, BBC Radio 3 and UK Classic FM, and is in high demand as an accompanist and jazz pianist. As a repetiteur, Wickham has worked for the English National Opera, Welsh National Opera and Scottish Opera, also spending nine seasons with Garsington Opera.

“Anna Sleptsova is… a convincing keyboard athlete with a capacity to generate enormous volumes of sound, negotiating hazardous terrain with ease, leaving little doubt of her skills in coping with ferociously demanding works.” – *The West Australian*

“David Wickham led from the front with a superb display of musicianship, playing the orchestral reduction with extraordinary flair and directing at the same time. He provided the bounce and rhythmic lift which permeated the entire production.” – *Opera Opera*

**Performance Information: Piano Masterpieces – Cinderella and The Rite of Spring**

Thursday 2 April at 7.30pm.

Music Auditorium, WAAPA, Edith Cowan University, 2 Bradford St, Mt Lawley.

Tickets are $20 full/$15 concession. Bookings through WAAPA Box Office on 9370 6636.

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Media Release

For further information or to discuss interview opportunities, please contact:

Anton Maz
Marketing Manager
Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts
Phone: (08) 9370 6817    Mob: 0404 699 772    Email: a.maz@ecu.edu.au