



Graham Abbott Conductor

Sydney-born Graham Abbott is a graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium and in 1985 was awarded the ABC / Willem van Otterloo Conducting Scholarship, during the tenure of which he studied with Myer Fredman at the Sydney Conservatorium and taught at that institution. In 1986 Graham was appointed Conductor-in-Residence at the Elder Conservatorium of Music at the University of Adelaide. He was Musical Director of Adelaide Chorus (now Adelaide Philharmonia Chorus) from 1986 to 1992 and made his professional orchestral debut with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in 1987. Since then he has been a frequent guest conductor with all of the major Australian orchestras. He has also conducted the Hunter Orchestra, the State Orchestra of Victoria (now Orchestra Victoria), the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra, the Queensland Philharmonic, the Canberra Symphony, The Australian Classical Players and many new music and early music ensembles. Graham is also a respected teacher and speaker on music. Since 2003 he has been producer and presenter of Keys To Music on ABC Classic FM.

While his repertoire in orchestral, choral and operatic fields spans almost all periods and styles, Graham Abbott is most respected as a conductor of, and enthusiast for, the music of Handel. He has conducted *Messiah* with all the major Australian orchestras, and with many other organisations as well and has given first Australian performances of major Handel works such as *Athalia*, *Ariodante*, *Agrippina* and *La resurrezione*. Graham is a Life Member of the American Handel Society.

Graham was Associate Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra from 1993 to 1997. During this period he conducted a vast range of music, from both Bach Passions to Australian premieres of Philip Glass symphonies, major Australian works and much standard repertoire. He was also Musical Director of Melbourne Chorale from 1994 to 1997, during which time he helped to re-establish that organisation as Melbourne's premier choir, conducting it in its own innovative concert series as well as preparing it for engagements with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

An experienced conductor of opera, Graham's repertoire includes *Julius Caesar*, *Orlando*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *La traviata*, *Il trovatore*, *Don Pasquale*, *Un ballo in maschera* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. He was also Assistant Conductor for the Australian premiere season of John Adams' *Nixon in China* at the 1992 Adelaide Festival. In 2001 and 2002 Graham was Music Advisor to Chamber Made Opera in Melbourne.

For the first three months of 1997, Graham lived in Glasgow as the acting Chorus Master of the Chorus of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. Guest conducting engagements during this time included *Messiah* with the Edinburgh Royal Choral Union, orchestral programs with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and with the Ulster Orchestra in Northern Ireland. In 1998 Graham returned to Scotland twice to conduct performances that included the Dvořák *Stabat Mater* in Edinburgh.

In addition to orchestral concerts around Australia, performance highlights in recent years have included Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* with the Prague Chamber Orchestra and Bach's *St Matthew Passion* for the Perth Festival, the Australian premiere of Handel's complete Carmelite music with the Adelaide Chamber Singers and the world premiere of Legrenzi's *Matins for Christmas Day* with the Choir of St Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide.

In 2010 Graham conducts *Aida* for State Opera of South Australia, Symphony Under the Stars with Barbara Bonney and the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, *L'elisir d'amore* for Opera Queensland, ASO's *Al Fresco* concerts at Mount Lofty, Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra's *Unwrap the Music* series and concerts with the Sydney Chamber Choir and Adelaide Philharmonia Chorus.

Graham Abbott's Manager Worldwide is Graham Pushee: graham@artsmanagement.com.au

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Telephone (+61 2) 9211 9422 Facsimile (+61 2) 9211 9466