

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Tuesday 16 February

Tickets on sale to the general public Friday 19 February

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE PRESENTS

CULTURE CLUB**Talking about artists, the arts, and the world around them***"The object of art is to give life a shape." – William Shakespeare*

Do women still face an obstacle race in the arts? What would Shakespeare choose to immortalise if he were writing now? If everyone can 'dance', what is dance and who do we want to see on stage? Find out when Sydney Opera House's newest talks program, *Culture Club*, returns in 2016 for a second series of compelling conversations with contemporary cultural thinkers about the forces shaping the art of today.

"*The Boys Club*" kicks off the conversation with a steel-toe boot. This special *Culture Club* talk, chaired by Sydney Festival Head of Programming **Fiona Winning**, featuring writer and critic **Van Badham**, Griffin Theatre Company Artistic Director **Lee Lewis**, and Head of the School of Arts, English and Media at the University of Wollongong, **Sarah Miller**, will discuss why so few women make it to top artistic positions. Is it better or worse than other industries? This event is part of the *All About Women* festival at Sydney Opera House on Sunday 6 March. For more info: <http://aaw.sydneyoperahouse.com/line-up/the-boys-club>,

What comes next is a weekly slate of stimulating daytime conversations focusing on issues of the moment, including:

- Bell Shakespeare's Artistic Director **Peter Evans**, director **Marion Potts** and Sport for Jove's **Damien Ryan** discussing what Shakespeare would write about today on the quincentenary of the Bard's death. This event will be chaired by **Jane Caro**;
- Sydney Dance Company's **Rafael Bonachela**, DV8's **Lloyd Newson** and Force Majeure founder **Kate Champion**, who directed last year's feather-ruffling work *Nothing to Lose* for Sydney Festival, on how dance has shifted from a rarefied art form to something more diverse and accessible. What is the current climate and what does this mean for the future of dance?;
- The Museum of Contemporary Art's **Elizabeth Ann McGregor**, Artistic Director of the Biennale of Sydney **Stephanie Rosenthal**, University of Sydney's **Jacqueline Millner** discussing what makes contemporary art exciting, how artists continue to push limits, and how contemporary art becomes timeless;
- On the eve of the 190th Anniversary of Ludwig van Beethoven's death, award-winning classical pianist and writer **Anna Goldsworthy** and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's **Benjamin Schwartz** discuss the maverick composer's artistic life and what they hear when they interpret, play and listen to Beethoven. This event will be chaired by **Yarmila Alfonzetti**, CEO of Sydney Youth Orchestras and former Head of Classical Music at the Sydney Opera House. The session will conclude with a short piano performance by Anna Goldsworthy.

Sydney Opera House Head of Talks and Ideas Ann Mossop says: *"What better place than Sydney Opera House to enjoy a rich and diverse discussion of art, ideas, artistic practice and history? We are excited to host even more of our resident company artists and industry colleagues to share ideas with arts-lovers through Culture Club."*

Culture Club launched in late 2015 to discuss the forces shaping culture now and take audiences behind the curtain, painting and performance, into the mind of the artist. The inaugural series that featured Sydney Theatre Company's **Sarah Goodes** in conversation with **Annamarie Jagose** about Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*; Bangarra Dance Theatre's **Stephen Page** and Sydney Festival's **Wesley Enoch** on telling other people's stories in a contemporary context; Opera Australia's **Lyndon Terracini** with ABC Classic FM's **Christopher Lawrence** about arts criticism; and a very special talk with visual artist **John Olsen** in front of his Opera House mural, *Salute to Five Bells*, commissioned by Jørn Utzon. View highlights of John Olsen's talk online:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3z4b30kJuY>



Sydney Opera House Talks and Ideas presents ideas, conversation and debate from leading thinkers and culture creators from around the world, extending the reach of live events with unique content online. As well as a year-round program of inspiring events, Sydney Opera House Talks & Ideas features annual festivals *All About Women* and the *Festival of Dangerous Ideas*, one-day talks events *For Thought* and *Carnegie Conversations*, and the arts talks series *Culture Club*.

INFORMATION:

What: Culture Club
When: 11am, Tuesday 15 March, Tuesday 22 March, Tuesday 29 March & Tuesday 5 April
Where: Sydney Opera House, Utzon Room
Tickets: \$15 single talks / 3 for \$36 / 5 for \$50 (no booking fee)
More info: <http://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/cultureclub>

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