

The stuff of fairy tales: Sabine Meyer and the Alliage Quintett

Star clarinetist joins saxophone/piano ensemble in magical retelling of favourite classics



Image: Ira Weinrauch

“The Quintett creates the extraordinary illusion of the sound of a big orchestra with four saxophones and a piano; joined by Sabine Meyer they create musical magic.” – Classic FM (UK)

From **23 February - 12 March 2018**, join legendary clarinetist **Sabine Meyer** on a journey through musical fairy tales when she tours nationally for **Musica Viva** with the **Alliage Quintett**, a unique ensemble of four saxophones and a grand piano. From Bernstein’s *Candide* to the *Firebird* and the *Sorcerer’s Apprentice*, they cast a spell over beloved classics in *Fantasia* – a stunning collection of masterworks arranged especially for them.

Sabine Meyer is one of the reasons solo clarinetists exist at all. One of the first women to be offered principal positions with leading European orchestras, her extraordinary abilities took her on an exclusive path to become one of the most famous clarinet soloists ever.

Born in Crailsheim near Stuttgart, she famously abandoned her coveted position with the Berlin Philharmonic to focus on her solo career. Eight Echo Klassik Awards later, she’s performed with over 300 orchestras worldwide and counts membership of the *Academy of Arts Hamburg* and the French title of *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* among her many accolades.

Four saxophones and a piano may not seem an obvious match for the classical clarinet, but then the Alliage Quintett is famed for its unusual collaborations. Founded by Germany’s first professor for classical saxophone, Daniel Gauthier, the group takes its name from the French word for ‘alloy’ - a reference both to its celebrated blend of styles and epochs and to the copper and zinc of the saxophone itself.

“I was delighted when the Quintett approached me with the idea,” says Meyer. “They often work with guests like gypsy violinist József Lendvay or Baroque soprano Simone Kermes, so I was excited to see what we’d create together.”

The collaboration has already produced a highly-acclaimed CD, *Fantasia*, which forms the basis for this tour. “We found that pieces like *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice* or Stravinsky’s *Firebird* worked especially well for us, and someone suggested ‘fairy tales’ as a common theme,” she explains. “From there, we came up with the title *Fantasia* – a name understood in many parts of the world.”

MEDIA RELEASE



But they couldn't simply order sheet music online: "None of the pieces have been performed on this combination of instruments, so they all had to be arranged especially for us," she says. "People often remark that they sound better than the originals!"

The program opens with a nod to Leonard Bernstein, who would have turned 100 this year. "To me, he's the 'primal' musician," says Meyer. "He brought such incredible energy to everything he did."

The conjurers of *Candide* give way to a magical arrangement of Dukas' *Sorcerer's Apprentice* and Milhaud's *Scaramouche* – a piece named for a children's theatre on the Champs-Élysées.

Next, Stravinsky's *Firebird* is displayed in full flight thanks to arranger Sebastian Gottschick. "It's all there," comments Meyer, "and it's such a tremendously exciting piece to play. So are the *Polovtsian Dances* by Borodin. Everyone knows them and they really give the clarinet a chance to shine."

Exquisite works by Shostakovich are the "sorbet between the main courses," according to Meyer. "We play them in smaller groups to add new textures."

And why do fairy tales still fascinate us? "If you have children, you can easily understand their magic," she concludes. "We all need stories because they let our imaginations run free."

Sabine Meyer and the Alliage Quintett will tour to Newcastle, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra, Adelaide and Perth. For bookings and further details, please visit www.musicaviva.com.au/meyer.

They will also mentor talented young students at masterclasses in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Members of the public are welcome to attend. For details, please see www.musicaviva.com.au/masterclasses.

SABINE MEYER & ALLIAGE QUINTETT

TOUR DATES

Newcastle **23 Feb 2018 7:30 PM**
Sydney **26 Feb 2018 7:00 PM**
Melbourne **27 Feb 2018 7:00 PM**
Brisbane **01 Mar 2018 7:00 PM**
Melbourne **03 Mar 2018 7:00 PM**
Canberra **06 Mar 2018 7:00 PM**
Adelaide **08 Mar 2018 7:30 PM**
Sydney **10 Mar 2018 2:00 PM**
Perth **12 Mar 2018 7:30 PM**

VENUES

Adelaide: **Adelaide Town Hall**
Brisbane: **Conservatorium Theatre**
Canberra: **Llewellyn Hall**
Melbourne: **Melbourne Recital Centre**
Newcastle: **Newcastle Conservatorium**
Perth: **Perth Concert Hall**
Sydney: **City Recital Hall**

ARTISTS

Sabine Meyer clarinet

Alliage Quintett:

Daniel Gauthier soprano saxophone
Hayrapet Arakelyan alto saxophone
Simon Hanrath tenor saxophone
Sebastian Pottmeier baritone saxophone
Jang Eun Bae piano

PROGRAM - 'FANTASIA'

BERNSTEIN (arr Sobol) - Overture to *Candide*
DUKAS (arr Schottstädt) - *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*
SHOSTAKOVICH (arr Atovmyan) - Prelude & Gavotte (from *Five Pieces*)
MILHAUD (arr Pottmeier) - *Scaramouche*
STRAVINSKY (arr Gottschick) - *The Firebird*
SHOSTAKOVICH (arr Atovmyan) - Waltz, Elegy & Polka (from *Five Pieces*)
BORODIN (arr Gassot/Pépin) - Polovtsian Dances (*Prince Igor*)

Adelaide Concert presented in association with Adelaide Festival. Sydney Weekday Concert: Charles Berg Tribute Concert. Melbourne Weekday Concert: Graeme Watson Tribute Concert. Brisbane Concert: Steven Kinston Tribute Concert

¹Musica Viva's Masterclass program is supported by principal patrons Stephen Johns & Michele Bender, the Sydney Conservatorium Association (NSW), Lyn Hamill & Ian Dover (Queensland), Wesfarmers Arts (Western Australia), Anonymous Donor (South Australia), Mary Turner OAM (Newcastle).

Brisbane Masterclass presented in partnership with Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University. Melbourne Masterclass presented in partnership with Melbourne Recital Centre. Perth Masterclass presented in partnership with The University of Western Australia. Sydney masterclass presented in partnership with Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

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