Building Relationships with Australia’s Chinese Community

Suzanne Dembo, External Relations & Strategy
About the MSO

- Australia’s oldest professional orchestra (1906)
- 4th largest employer in Australia’s performing arts sector
- 160+ performances p.a.
- 5.2 million total audience
- 372k total live attendance (performances and workshops)

Figures from 2018 Annual Report
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Case Study MSO
Building Broad Engagement with the Chinese Community

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
Introducing David Li AM

- MSO Deputy Chairman (2018)
- On the Board since 2013
- Accomplished violinist & property developer/ businessman
- Established Chinese New Year program (1st concert 2014)
- Drives Chinese Community Engagement
- Interests in Artistic Program, Touring and Partnerships

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
Diversity in Artistic Leadership

MSO Artistic Family

• Artistic Ambassadors – Tan Dun and Lu Siqing (2019 Soloist in Residence)

• Principal Guest Conductor Xian Zhang

• Tianyi Lu – Cybec Assistant Conductor

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
Artistic Programming

2020 East meets West Program

**JANUARY**
Chinese New Year
Friday 9 January | Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall
Celebrate the Year of the Rat with a program of Chinese masterpieces, featuring the works of Melbourne-based composers Wenghua Chu and Julian Yu. Envision Chinese conductor YI Chang and pianist Jeni Woh make their MSO debut in a musical celebration which blurs western and eastern musical traditions.

**MARCH**
Beethoven and Mendelssohn
Thursday 19 March | Melbourne Town Hall
Friday 20 March | Clavec Hall, Geelong
Christian Li, one of Australia’s most promising violinists, tackles a music concerto designed to please the mind of any aspiring concert violinist – Beethoven’s Violin Concerto in E Minor.

**JUNE**
Swan Lake and Saint-Saëns
Thursday 11 June | Melbourne Town Hall
Conductor Tengy Lu makes her Melbourne Town Hall debut for this magnificent performance of Tchaikovsky’s Swan Lake Suite, with brilliant Australian-Chinese cellist Li Wei-Gin tackling Saint-Saëns’ Cello Concerto.

**Dark Romance: Tchaikovsky and Bruckner**
Thursday 25 June | Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall
Friday 26 June | Costa Hall, Geelong
Grammy®-nominated pianist Joyce Yang performs Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1, showcasing the range and depth of late-romantic music in this deeply expressive and passionate concert.

**NOVEMBER**
Ode to Joy: Beethoven Symphony No. 9
Thursday 19 November | Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall
Friday 20 November | Robert Blackwood Hall, Monash
Saturday 21 November | Arts Centre Melbourne, Hamer Hall
MSO 2020 Festival Guest Conductor Kristian Wohlschläger leads a wealth of Australian and international talent in a live experience like all others. The MSO will also perform the world premiere of Choral Concerto: Nine, a new composition by MSO Artistic Ambassador Tan Dun developed in response to Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9.

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
Annual Chinese New Year

Highlights of Chinese New Year 2019

- **95% Capacity Audience**: 2158 live audience
- **8 Chinese Artists**
- **4 Broadcast Partners**: ABC Classic, Foxtel Arts, UNITEL, CCTV
- **20 Program Partners**: 3 International | 17 Local
- **59 Interstate Visitors**
- **87 Regional Visitors**
- **Tickets from AUD $28 to $145**
- **Facebook Reach**: 300,492 (18,608 through Chinese language advertisement)
- **Website (MSO Concert Web Page)**: 20,248 Total Page Views
- **International Coverage Through**:
  - Ministry of Culture and Tourism, People's Republic of China
  - CCTV
  - Phoenix TV
  - Xinhua News Agency
  - CNC News
  - China News
  - CRI Online

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
Cultural Diplomacy
Recognition in China

2018 China Tour

4 year partnerships:

- National Centre for Performing Arts, Beijing (2020-2023)
- Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra (2020-2023)

Awards:

- AustCham Westpac Australia-China Business Award for Business Innovation, Creative Industries and the Digital Economy

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
Recognition in China

BROADCASTS

• 2019 Chinese New Year Concert – 200 million people in China (CCTV)
• MSO Beijing Concert 2018 – 4 national broadcasts in China (CCTV) estimated reach 800M
• MSO China Tour Media & Publicity – 1.56 billion people cumulatively
Connecting with Community

- WeChat
- Seasonal campaigns with Chinese Marketing Agencies
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Lessons learned
What’s your Purpose?

• Internal strategy
  – Why the Chinese Community?
  – Timeframe?
  – Channels of engagement?
  – Internal communications
Sponsorship vs Donations

**Sponsorship**
- A process of negotiation
- Direct and indirect recognition
- Exceeding expectation through value adds
- The benefit of influence
- Keepsakes

**Donations**
- Building your network of influence
- Long term planning
- Tax deductions
- Recognition
- Keepsakes
Building Social Connections

• Cultural understanding
  – East meets West

• Networking & memberships
  – ACBC
  – Asialink
  – Asia Society
  – Tertiary Institutions

• Engagement with the Embassy and Consulate
  – Invitations
  – National Days/Cultural Festivals
Choose your Language

• Choose language that connects with your audience
• Repurpose existing videos/presentations with Chinese voice over & subtitling
• Promote stories of philanthropy and giving to create networks of supporters
• Differentiate content e.g. Performances, Education, Find us
Questions?