



MEDIA RELEASE

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Garrett review is a good first step: musicians union

A review of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra headed by Peter Garrett is a positive move towards restoring the company's reputation following a period of poor management, says the union representing the MSO's musicians.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance welcomes the announcement of an external review of policies, procedures and governance as the first step towards repairing the damage done by management in the wake of the cancellation of pianist Jayson Gillham's August 15 performance.

It comes after a vote by musicians earlier this month of no confidence in Managing Director Sophie Galaise and Chief Operating Officer Guy Ross.

MEAA Chief Executive Erin Madeley said the review by Peter Garrett and the appointment of an interim Managing Director met two of the key demands of musicians.

"We welcome the swift action by the MSO Board to begin to address the concerns of musicians by appointing an external review," Ms Madeley said.

"Although we have yet to see the terms of reference, the review is a step forward after the debacle caused by the former Managing Director's decision to cancel Jayson Gillham's performance on August 15 and to ban political expression on the MSO's stages.

"As a former Arts Minister and a member of one of Australia's most respected bands who has never shied away from using his music to articulate a political viewpoint, Peter Garrett is highly qualified to conduct this review.

"His review must reaffirm the musical and artistic integrity of the MSO's musicians, of freedom of expression and of the centrality of the artist.

"The musicians of the MSO are committed to excellence, and that must be reciprocated by a management and Board which are consultative and inclusive.

"Poor communication and a lack of consultation by the previous management has resulted in poor decisions which have damaged the orchestra's reputation and led to a decline of morale by the musicians.

"Musicians want to play their part in the future of the MSO after this short recent period of turmoil, and this can only be achieved by a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect from management.

"The MSO's musicians and audiences deserve nothing less."

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