

Mr Vladimir Ashkenazy

The honorary degree of Doctor of Music was conferred upon Vladimir Ashkenazy by the Chancellor Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO at the graduation ceremony held at 9.30am on 28 May 2010.



The Chancellor and Vladimir Ashkenazy, photo, copyright Memento Photography.

Citation

Presented by the the Vice-Chancellor Dr Michael Spence

Chancellor, I present Vladimir Ashkenazy for admission to the degree of Doctor of Music (honoris causa).

Vladimir Ashkenazy is a giant in the world of music. Both as a pianist and conductor, he has thrilled audiences throughout the world for more than 40 years and has been a prolific recording artist including receiving six Grammy awards. His other awards and recognitions are numerous. Beyond that, he is an outstanding human being who has contributed immensely to the underprivileged and humanity in general, well beyond his contribution as a musician.

At the age of 18 in 1956, Vladimir Ashkenazy won first prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels and after graduating from the Moscow Conservatory shared first prize in the second International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1962. In 1963 he made his London debut and in 1969 began conducting.

In this year, he made his first visit to Australia, touring for the ABC where he appeared as concerto soloist and recitalist in Sydney as well as six other cities. In Sydney alone, he performed four different concertos in six concerts over a period of nine days, as well as two different piano recital programs earlier in the tour.

In 1977, Ashkenazy made his first conducting appearance in Australia as soloist and director of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He was featured artist at the 1984 Adelaide Festival as soloist-conductor with London's Philharmonia Orchestra. Vladimir Ashkenazy appeared exclusively with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra as conductor in 2004 performing the acclaimed Sibelius Cycle and in 2006 in an all-Rachmaninov program.

Ashkenazy was the principal conductor of the Royal Philharmonic from 1987 to 1994; Chief Conductor of the Czech Philharmonic from 1998 to 2003; and became Music Director of the NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo in 2004. He is also Conductor Laureate of the Philharmonia Orchestra.

He holds the positions of Music Director of the European Union Youth Orchestra and Conductor Laureate of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and maintains strong links with a number of other major orchestras, including the Cleveland Orchestra (of whom he is former Principal Guest Conductor), San Francisco Symphony and Deutsches Sinfonie-Orchester Berlin.

Ashkenazy has a most impressive array of recordings to his name, both as a pianist and as a conductor, all

of which have been released by the best recording labels. Of Ashkenazy's lengthy discography and excellent public performances, reviewers tend to choose lavish descriptors - natural, poetic, opulent, tonally rich, energetic, and virtuoso.

Vladimir Ashkenazy's stature as a musician, performer, conductor and recording artist cannot be disputed. But less known is his broader contribution to humanity, revealing a person of warmth, humility and generosity. Of his links to the University beyond music, he has contributed significantly to our University's Microsearch Foundation of Australia where he has volunteered for over 45 years. As one of our Professors has said, "Few prominent musicians of the Maestro's stature have had such an effect all over the world just for their contribution to music, but this man is a genuine quiet achiever in the humanitarian field, and uses his considerable influence in doing good deeds in this world".

Chancellor, I present Vladimir Ashkenazy for admission to the degree of Doctor of Music (honoris causa) and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.