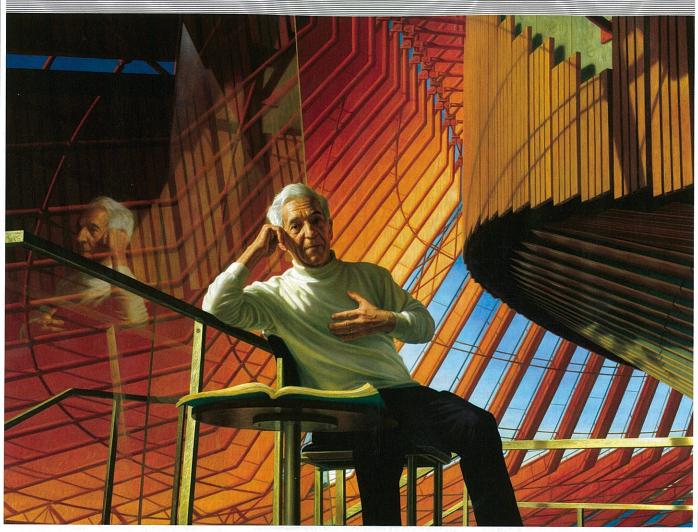**GALLERY VIEW**

Portrait of an artist

The partnership between the Sydney Symphony and principal conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy is a happy one by all accounts. Not only have the orchestra cemented their association with the pianist and conductor with a contract extension to the end of 2013, but their alliance has now been celebrated in a portrait by Australian artist Ralph Heimans. The painter first approached the conductor to sit for him a year ago. "I'm passionate about classical music and have always been a huge fan of Vladimir Ashkenazy's work," he said. "His leadership of the SSO represents an enormous contribution to the Australian cultural scene and it struck me that it would be wonderful to depict him within the iconic architecture of the Opera House." The result is a warm, yet highly structured work, reflecting Ashkenazy's "generosity of spirit" and "humility", in addition to his powers of intellect. In the words of the artist, "It shows Mr Ashkenazy in a vortex of architectural movement that resembles the insides of a musical instrument...and is a refection of the energy of this great musician." The work joins a long list of musician portraits, from instantly recognisable renderings of Bach, Handel and Beethoven, to bronze busts of Sir Georg Solti in Grant Park, Chicago and of Sir Henry Wood, overlooking the Proms each season at the Royal Albert Hall.

Lang Lang can now add an Honorary Doctorate Degree from London's Royal College of Music to his list of accolades. The piano star received the award from HRH The Prince of Wales in recognition of his "outstanding achievements". Composer James MacMillan and conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen also received Honorary Doctorate Degrees.

Opera director **Francesca Zambello** is to succeed Plácido Domingo as artistic advisor to Washington National Opera. The Spanish tenor announced he was stepping down last September after 15 years with the company. Zambello recently directed a new production of Wagner's *Ring* cycle for San Francisco Opera.