

# Herald Sun

## Burt Bacharach in love with us

Font size: Email article: Print article:

Kate Lahey

January 30, 2008 12:00am

THERE'S a piece of advice Burt Bacharach received as a student composer that stuck with him - never be ashamed of a melody.

Bacharach said he was studying under French composer Darius Milhaud when he wrote a sonatina that embarrassed him as a budding "serious composer". "I was almost apologetic and didn't want it to be played in the class," Bacharach said yesterday.

"It wasn't what everybody else was doing.

"Milhaud took me aside afterwards and he said: 'It's very good. Never be ashamed of a melody'."

Six decades and almost 50 Top 10 hits later, Bacharach has written an 11-minute "love letter" to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Looking fit and relaxed in an armchair in Melbourne yesterday, the 79-year-old said he wrote his new piece, entitled *For the Children*, because he wanted to give his Australian audiences something new. To premiere tonight at the Sydney Opera House, it is without lyrics and was written for all children, Bacharach said.

"It's a vague title but it's how the music spoke to me after it was written," he said.

"It's a love letter to the Sydney Symphony. I had a very good time with them five nights in a row the last time I was here in July."

Bacharach said he hoped the idea of writing songs would survive changes in modern music. "You can't whistle the technology, you can't remember the technology, you can remember the slickness and the gloss, the techno beats, the industrial sound of the dance music -- but peel it back, there'd better be a melody." And having created such hits as *Walk on By*, *Close to You*, *This Girl's in Love With You*, and *What the World Needs Now is Love*, his melodies remain among the most memorable there are.

Bacharach will perform in Melbourne with the Melbourne Symphony orchestra from February 6-9 for the first time. ~ AAP