

# SOUTHERN CROSS SOLOISTS

*'The Stars of Australian  
Chamber Music'*



## Annual Report 2023



A QPAC COMPANY IN RESIDENCE



# Chair's Report



2023 saw a continued year of exceptional growth for Southern Cross Soloists.

The Board for 2023, consisted of Chairperson Dr Di Khursandi and for an extended period Michael Byrom as Acting Interim Chair, member musicians Alan Smith, James Wannan, and Tania Frazer - Company Secretary and Artistic Director, and Peter Collins (Financial Director). The Board also welcomed new Director Rob Whiddon.

A requested succession plan by Chair Dr Di Khursandi due to ongoing health issues presented an opportunity for myself to be invited to the Chair position in early 2024, which I readily accepted. I take this opportunity to thank the previous board for their stewardship. Particularly their careful management and due diligence during the COVID years.

We continue to make strong gains in audience and brand development, marketing and publicity with new regional endeavours and an inaugural recital series developed and delivered successfully in 2023 - the *Sunset Soiree Recital Series*. Both the *14th QPAC Concert Series* (averaged audience attendance of 800 per concert) and the emerald anniversary edition of the much-loved *20th Bangalow Chamber Music Festival 2023* were very successful from audience numbers, and critical media response perspectives. The inaugural *Sunset Soiree Recital Series* shows promise to become a calendar highlight in future years with expansion to other regional spots top of mind for the Board and Management in 2024. The 10-year legacy project, the *SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project 2022 - 2032* gains more attention and sees SXS well prepared with new Australian works each year in time for the Cultural Program of the 2032 Brisbane Olympics.

Queensland artists continued to shine in 2023 with new talent unearthed and their talent displayed to enthralled audiences. Our focus on First Nations cultural engagement and promotion was on show in 2023 and it is a continued priority for the ensemble.

The Board successfully addressed finances ending with a nominal negative amount on the budget balance for 2023. Self-sustainable business models and own revenue sourcing are top of mind priorities for the Board and Management. My thanks to the excellent budget keeping and systems in place and to Financial Director Peter Collins and Accounts Manager Cath Charrington. General Manager Maxine Williamson works closely with Finance and Accounts and Producer and Marketing Manager Nikhil Deo, for strong budget control across all projects for good governance and accountability. A successful donor drive continued throughout the year and in the second half of the year we saw our Soloists sponsored for the 2024 Season. Our generous donors ensured we go into 2024 as an extremely viable and valued ensemble, with an exciting series of great music and new Queensland artists to wow audiences in 2024. We continue to achieve high excellence in creative programming and delivery in music making although we are at administrative capacity within our administrative team. The SXS administrative team has worked closely with QPAC marketing and publicity to grow the *14th QPAC Concert Series* which reached new audiences in 2023 with a 40% increase in patronage. Artistic Director Tania Frazer continues to program exceptional concerts to delight audiences along with finding new Queensland creative artists at the top of their game to wow audiences. We thank the Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO for her continued patronage.

**Marg O'Donnell AO**



# General Manager's Report

2023 was an extremely successful high output delivery year for Southern Cross Soloists. It was also a turning point for the company and a juncture to springboard our new strategic long-term plans. We continued our strategic focus on securing exceptional Queensland soloists returning home from studies overseas in the post-Covid world. One of our missions at SXS in 2023 and beyond

is to create a brains trust of virtuosic Queensland talent that may align with our three-decade successful brand in order to provide a performance and promotion platform so they may shine in Queensland. This state offers high calibre artists and SXS provides artist opportunities to avoid the dreaded 'brain drain' of artists exiting for work opportunities to southern states or overseas. We see SXS as an important conduit to providing ongoing creative employment opportunities to Queensland artists. SXS is all about virtuosity and I was thrilled to be able to spotlight numerous returning expat Queensland artists in 2023. We launched our inaugural *Sunset Soiree Recital Series* in 2023 and it was the first year of our strategic role out for regional expansion. The first stage of the regional network in 2023 was regional Gold Coast (Mudgeeraba) and Stanthorpe, with 2024 Stage 2 plans set to expand to new Queensland regional destinations. We are extremely proud of the continued evolution of our long legacy cultural project the *Didgeridoo Commissioning Project 2022-2032*. Its establishment sees SXS strongly positioned to showcase our virtuosity and First Nations culture and its ancient musical instrument to a world stage during the 2032 Cultural Olympiad. Its second year, three new hybrid Australian works were World Premiered by eminent artists and composers in a 50/50% collaboration with Wakka Wakka didgeridoo soloist and Chair of the Advisory Committee for DCP, Chris Williams. Our cultural protocols Wakka Wakka framework is led by First Nations Wakka Wakka Elder Professor Kevin Williams. Chris Williams received an Industry Placement funded program to pursue his ongoing leadership role as Chair of the DCP Advisory Committee. Through the support of our SXS International Ambassador Sean O'Boyle AM, 2023 DCP saw SXS work with eminent creatives; Australian trumpet legend James Morrison AM and Emmy award-winning, US multi-stringed instrumentalist, John Jorgenson. Through these associations, the DCP broadened into non classical genres which in turn broadened the audience appeal and generated record numbers in 2023 at QPAC. James Morrison AM has invited SXS to the prestigious *UKARIA* Residency Program in SA in 2024 and Queensland Ballet has invited SXS to participate in their inaugural First Nations Ballet - *Bespoke Series* - in 2024. The Sydney Mozart Society has also invited SXS to perform in 2024. The DCP project was also recorded in 2023 by ABC Classics with a roll-out of the CD set for 2024. Our QPAC concerts were also recorded by ABC Classics for their Lunchtime Concert series broadcast. In 2023, SXS was invited to perform our *Maps and Journeys* (First Nations Astronomy) project at the Melbourne Recital Centre with a Queensland Premiere of this fascinating project set for the short term and a US international tour as a long-term plan. SXS also performed an invited sell-out performance for the Sunshine Coast Chamber Music Festival 2023. This stellar year could not have been achieved without the due diligence of our exceptional Management Team with strong strategic and business leadership skills and the good governance of our Board of Directors. We continue to pursue self-sustainable own revenue finance models and remain in a strong financial position at the close of 2023. Our future business is to consolidate our Queensland business and artists to future proof for the 2032 Olympics in Brisbane. **Maxine Williamson**





**Southern Cross Soloists (SXS) are the stars of Australian chamber music.**

Successfully operating from Brisbane, Queensland since 1995, SXS have firmly established themselves as one of Australia's pre-eminent classical music ensembles. Championing chamber music globally and nationally, SXS, each year, continue to reach new heights. The collaborative nature of the ensemble and its creative direction, ensures a commitment and desire to form long-lasting, diverse cultural partnerships with Australia and, the world's, most notable musicians, and composers. Pursuit of excellence in the magical art of music making, connecting, and inspiring, a healthy, vibrant community, innovating, and creating new Australian works that highlight our First Nations culture, is at the heart of SXS, who are synonymous with delivering quality music in Australia and abroad.

Composed of leading soloists from across Australia, SXS creates and performs dynamic, unique, and world-class musical experiences for audiences of all ages. 2023 marked SXS **28<sup>th</sup> year of excellence in music making.** SXS balances breathtaking virtuosity with vibrant storytelling and unique, considered artistic programming.

Company in Residence at the pre-eminent cultural precinct in Brisbane, the Queensland Performing Arts Centre, SXS delivered in 2023, intoxicating virtuosity in its **14<sup>th</sup> QPAC Concert Series.** Enjoying the privilege of strong patronage and critical success, SXS's repertoire continued to gain notoriety and reached new enthralled audiences of 800 attendees for each of the three QPAC concerts.

Passionate exponents for new Australian music and renowned for fostering creative partnerships with leading international soloists and composers, SXS

has commissioned, to date, **over 180 World Premiere new works.**

2023, saw the second year of the ten-year cultural legacy project, the **SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project 2022 - 2032** featuring three new works for didgeridoo and chamber music by Australian and international composers, each year.

In 2023 SXS successfully launched the NEW annual **Sunset Soiree Recital Series** to reimagine the intimate salon soirees of eons gone by.

SXS are committed cultural ambassadors through metropolitan and regional areas, and are dedicated educators and mentors, of the rising stars of chamber music. Through its flagship 10th SXS Next Gen Artists Program 2023 and 8th Margaret Schindler Vocal Scholarship 2023, SXS in 2023, continued to nurture some of Australia's most in-demand young musicians today.

The 20th Bangalow Chamber Music Festival 2023, owned, operated, and presented by SXS, was a resounding success and is a major event in the Australian arts calendar. Performing with Queensland, Australian and international artists and providing meaningful community outreach to regional NSW. 2023 saw the Victorian premiere at the Melbourne Recital Centre of SXS's **Maps and Journeys: the world's first astronomers**, exploring the astronomical knowledge of Australia's First Nations people. 2023 also saw a SXS sold out performance at the Sunshine Coast Chamber Music Festival.

In 2023, SXS welcomed back Wakka Wakka **didgeridoo soloist Chris Williams** to continue as SXS permanent **Artist in Residence** and enthusiastically welcomed back world-acclaimed, award-winning pianist **Konstantin Shamray** as **2023 SXS Artist in Residence.**



# 2023, a year of growth for SXS

2023 was a year of immense growth for Southern Cross Soloists, in all areas including artists, management, fundraising and governance.

In 2023, SXS has:

- Extended the ground-breaking 10-year SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project 2022-2032, into cross hybrid art forms with each new Australian work a 50/50 collaboration between composer and First Nations Wakka Wakka SXS didgeridoo soloist Chris Williams.
- Toured *Maps and Journeys: The World's First Astronomers* with Eric Avery, Paula Nazarski and Chris Williams to the Melbourne Recital Centre for its Victorian premiere.
- Showcased First Nations content in 90% of our live performances.
- Delivered a live-streamed workshop moderated by composer Lachlan Skipworth as a resource for composers to learn how to include didgeridoo in their compositions.
- Workshopped five pieces by young emerging composers for didgeridoo.
- Broadcast 2 concerts with ABC Classic FM with a weekly listenership of 781,000.
- Increased our Audience growth by 40% in 2023, with over 2300 audience attending our performances at QPAC (pre-Covid our annual audience numbers were 900 per annum).
- Offered 150 paid employment opportunities to musicians, artists and arts workers .
- Mentored eight emerging musicians through the SXS Next Gen Artists program.
- Mentored one emerging Queensland First Nations opera singer through the SXS Margaret Schindler Vocal Scholarship.
- Launched a new touring concert series: the SXS *Sunset Soirée Recital Series* in 2023.
- Extended our audience reach to new regional venues in Gold Coast hinterland - Mudgeeraba, Stanthorpe and Sunshine Coast.
- Presented our QPAC 14th series in 2023 including three World Premieres; two with didgeridoo as the soloist.
- Presented four World Premiere works.
- Presented three new commissioned Australian works.
- SXS is highly experienced at delivering successful events, with 28 years of experience, a skilled management team and a qualified Board of Directors to oversee the governance and fiscal management of the company.
- Performed for a total of 3899 audience members over all activities for 2023.
- Presented 14 events at the 20th Bangalow Chamber Music Festival 2023.
- Received a second prestigious nomination for the 20th Bangalow Chamber Music Festival 2023 in the AMCOS APRA ART MUSIC AWARDS for Best Regional Event.
- Recorded four Didgeridoo Commissioning Project 2022-2032 Australian new works with ABC Classic FM.
- Performed a sell-out concert, including a World Premiere commissioned new Australian work at the Sunshine Coast Chamber Music Festival.
- Established relationship with Arts Major Queensland Ballet for inaugural First Nations ballet collaboration between SXS and Queensland Ballet's BESPOKE Series 2024.
- Established relationship with Queensland Music Trails for collaborative opportunities in 2025.

*"Southern Cross Soloists is a remarkable group of Brisbane musicians whose unique interpretations breathe fresh life into classical repertoire. Their concert seasons offer an array of familiar classics and world premieres, masterfully showcasing the talents of the individuals of the ensemble. QPAC is committed to ensuring that as many people as possible are able to experience our ensemble in residence."*

**John Kotzas**  
Chief Executive,  
Queensland Performing Arts Centre

*"The Southern Cross Soloists have to be from Queensland. Their playing is full of Queensland sunshine. One might, paraphrasing the old slogan about Queensland, say of their playing: Beautiful one minute, perfect the next."*

**Australian Stage Online**

*"It's easy to hear why the Southern Cross Soloists are considered one of Australia's leading soloist chamber ensembles."*

**Stage Whispers**

*"The Southern Cross Soloists really are one of the ensembles that make Queensland music unique. Every member of the audience walked away from this performance with a smile on their face."*

**Limelight Magazine**

*"In all, it was a thoroughly refreshing concert, taking the listener on a journey through chamber music that danced, breathed, uplifted, haunted and stimulated."*

**The Creative Issue**



**Executive Board**

# 2023

### Administration

General Manager  
Artistic Director  
Producer & Marketing Manager  
Casual Staff

### Artists

SXS Core Artists  
Guest & Associate Artists  
Artists in Residence

### Partnerships & Development

Artist Chair Sponsors  
Donors  
Strategic Partnerships

### Education

10th SXS Next Gen Artists Program

9th Margaret Schindler Vocal Scholarship

5th BMF ADFAS Byron Bay Scholarship

**SXS Dideridoo Commissioning Project**  
2022 - 2032  
x 3 works a year

**Maps and Journeys: The World's First Astronomers**  
Astronomers School's Sidebar events

Composition Workshops

**Maps and Journeys: The World's First Astronomers**  
Victorian Premiere

### Performance

14th QPAC Concert Series  
Company in Residence

Inaugural Sunset Soirée Recital Series

20th Bangalow Chamber Music Festival

**Collaborations:**  
Sunshine Coast Chamber Music Festival  
Melbourne Recital Hall

### Other Projects

Australian Soloists Collective  
2025 - 2026

Queensland Chamber Music Festival

Super Strings 2026

### Publishing and Broadcast

SXS DCP New Works recorded by ABC Classic

ABC Classic Lunchtime Concert  
QPAC Concert Series

# 1995 - 2023





## **2023 PERFORMANCE SEASON**

14th QPAC Concert Series - 40% increase in Patronage

Inaugural Sunset Soirée Recital Series

20th Bangalow Chamber Music Festival

Sunshine Coast Chamber Music Festival

Melbourne Recital Centre

### **New Australian Works and Recordings**

10-year Didgeridoo Commissioning Project (2022-2032)

*World Premiered* Three new Australian commissioned works

ABC Classic Recordings of DCP new Australian works

ABC Lunchtime Concert Recordings of 14th QPAC Concert Series - 781,000  
listenership per week

### **Educational Programs**

Didgeridoo Composition Workshops and School Performances

10th SXS Next Gen Artists Program

8th Margaret Schindler Vocal Scholarship

5th ADFAS Northern Rivers Young Musician Award

### **2023 Overview**

Employed 150 artists and arts workers

Performed for 3899 audience members

World Premiered 4 new Australian works

Four regional locations



# 2023 Principal Artists

Ashley Smith | Clarinet



Tania Frazer | Oboe; Artistic Director



James Wannan | Viola



Alan Smith | Violin



Nick Mooney | French Horn



Chris Williams | Didgeridoo



Konstantin Shamray | Piano



## 2023 ARTIST CHAIR SPONSORS

Southern Cross Soloists would like to thank our 2023 Artist Chair sponsors for their generous support:

**Philip Dubois and Leanda Elliot** Viola Chair (James Wannan)

**Cass and Ian George** Violin Chair (Alan Smith)

**Jennifer Blake** Clarinet chair (Ashley Smith)

**Marg O'Donnell, Dr Diana Khursandi** Oboe Chair (Tania Frazer)

**Peter Collins** French Horn Chair (Nick Mooney)

**Shirley Leuthner** Flute Chair

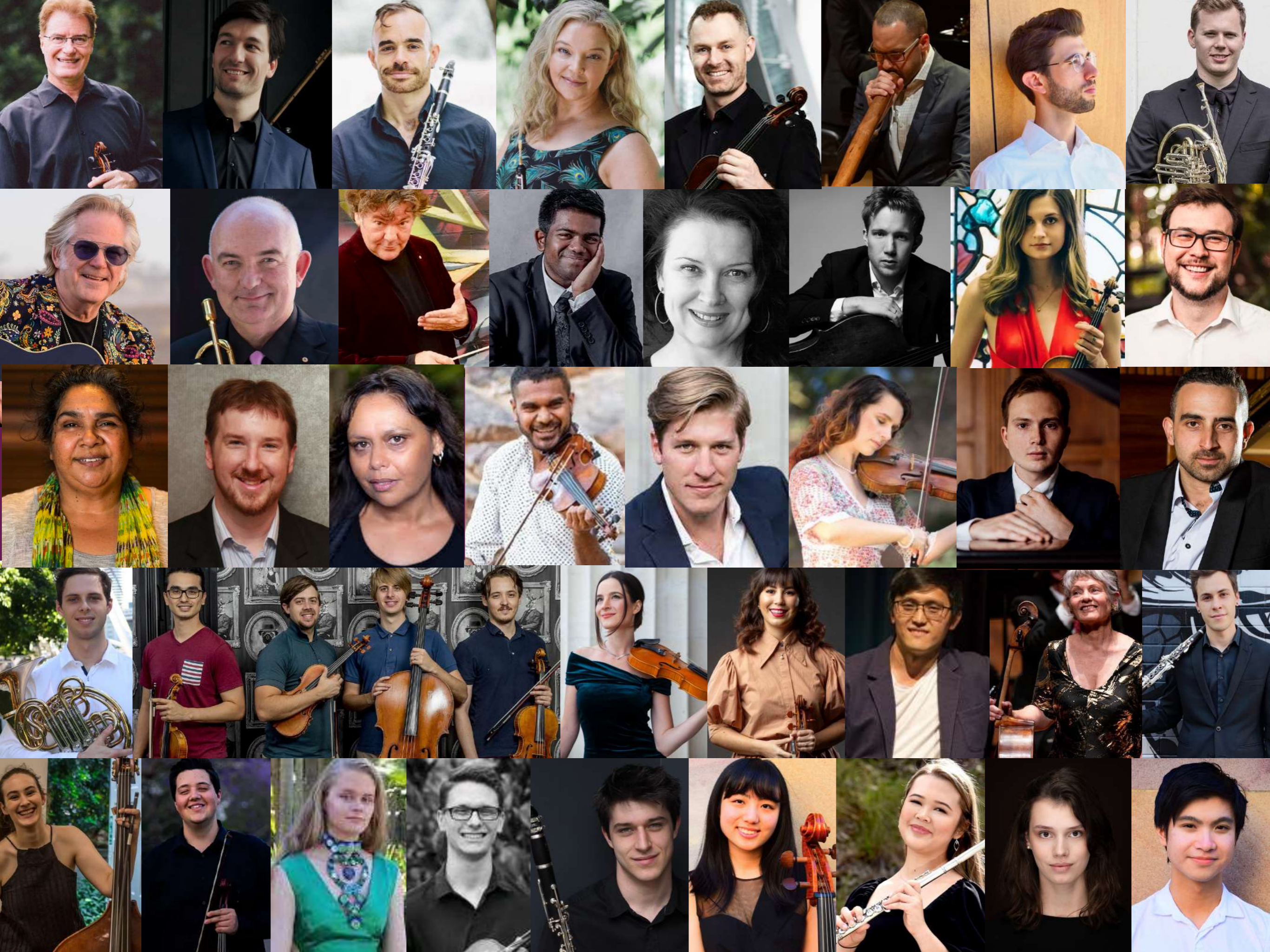
**James Pearson, Gillian and Ed Frazer**

Piano Artist in Residence (Konstantin Shamray)

**Kay Feeney, Christine Dauber, Michelle May**

Didgeridoo Artist in Residence (Chris Williams)









**"Southern Cross Soloists Final concert for 2023, The New World had it all including the finest exposition of Rhapsody in Blue I have ever heard. Shamray cut loose and his playing was central and perfectly fused jazz and classical.**

**Ashley Smith on the clarinet was a revelation. Guest star John Jorgenson was a special touch and he seemed completely at home with didgeridoo star Chris Williams and the rest of the ensemble. Adding him and his new composition was a stroke of genius. The program was perfectly balanced and had a few surprises and overall it was a delight."**

**Phil Brown**

# KONSTANTIN SHAMRAY

## SXS Artist in Residence 2023

"SXS Artist in Residence 2023, Konstantin Shamray with his Nosferatian fingers was incredible. Ominously racing up and down scales and arpeggios as if the music was playing at double speed. The glossy Steinway piano lid enabled you to watch hundreds of hammers hitting the strings almost simultaneously. I saw audience members with their mouths open in wonder at Shamray's fantastic feverish fingers. I can only hope when my macabre day of judgement comes, that I can hear his interpretation of the menacing octaves!" Dr Gemma Regan

"Shamray tackled it head on, with some extraordinary playing across and at the extremes of the instrument. Technically assured, he delivered a rich, colourful palate of sound that was equally well played in the frenetic, tempestuous sections as it was in the tender and lyrical moments. A marvellous performance." Suzannah Conway, Limelight Magazine

"The fabulous piano skills of Shamray raised the roof with the famous glissando of Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, one of my favourite pieces. His energetic execution of the notes was spectacular to see and hear, thrusting us into the American jazz scene of the early 20s. Despite it not being the end of the show, the audience was uncontrollable giving him a raucous standing ovation for his vibrant virtuosity." Dr Gemma Regan

"Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue is an amazing experience from the first chords right to the finish." John Patton

"A gibbon-armed, grim-faced Shamray approached the piano, resigned to his daunting one-handed task. As he sat down he placed his right hand casually on his knee, as if it were natural to play solely with a left hand to gave a performance unlike any other! His left hand, usually consigned to chords and ditties, flew over the keys as if possessed. The audience were stunned throughout the four movements, wondering if he had signed his soul over to the Devil to be capable of such an incredible feat. At one stage, his right hand unconsciously sneaked towards the keyboard desperate to participate, which he instantly reprimanded with a firm shake. Shamray's fervent possession continued until abruptly he dropped his phantom-led hand and head in exhaustion. As the last notes faded into the starry night, the audience erupted into congratulatory applause, incredulous at witnessing such a supernatural skill, whilst Shamray bowed and stretched his tortured left hand with a smile of relief."

Dr Gemma Regan



2023

2023  
14th QPAC  
CONCERT  
SERIES

 **QPAC**  
QUEENSLAND  
PERFORMING  
ARTS CENTRE  
Company in Residence



**SOUTHERN CROSS  
SOLOISTS**





# QPAC CONCERT 1

## City of Lights: from Paris with Love, March 2023

"What an incredible introduction to the Southern Cross Soloists' 2023 Season! The QPAC was brimming with 800 excited music lovers under the blue starry-night-themed Concert Hall. Gone are the days when the audience sat in reversed seats surrounding the stage, as now the musicians proudly perform to a sea of friendly faces. *The City of Lights: from Paris, with love*, was the theme of the first concert of a series of three. The program has been designed by the Southern Cross Soloists to musically journey across the globe by exploring a smorgasbord of sounds by hearing the influence each destination has had on compositions." Dr Gemma Regan



"The Southern Cross Soloists certainly reached for the stars with their preternatural portrayal of *The City of Lights - From Paris, With Love*! Such a momentous performance will be difficult to supersede!" Dr Gemma Regan

CITY OF LIGHTS, QPAC Concert Hall March, 2023  
800 Patrons in attendance



Southern Cross Soloists and OPAC present



**Nina Korbe, Soprano.**

**SXS Margaret Schindler Vocal Scholar 2023**



# QPAC CONCERT 2

## FROM THE HEARTLAND: Vienna to Budapest

QPAC Concert Hall

June, 2023

**"Talk about Star Power!"**  
Phil Brown Arts Writer

**"The SXS, Williams and Morrison, the Antipodean Armstrong were in the zone with their World premiere of *Co-incidence*. Morrison and Williams stunned the audience when combining the flugelhorn and upturned Dizzy Gillespie-styled bent trumpet with the droning didgeridoo. The eclectic combination was smooth and jazzy and only one of many highlights from Southern Cross Soloist's second concert of their 14th QPAC Concert Series, highlighting Middle-European folksongs from the old country.**

**Dr Gemma Regan, June 2023**

From the Heartland, June 2023  
805 Patrons in attendance



# QPAC CONCERT 3

**THE NEW WORLD QPAC Concert Hall October, 2023**

"The anticipation was palpable in the crammed concert hall as the audience awaited the final concert of the Southern Cross Soloists' Series for 2023 with *The New World*. Featuring American guest guitar soloist, John Jorgenson hot off the plane from the USA to present his World premiere of *Global Rivers Rising* composed with Artist in Residence Chris Williams. It is the third composition of 2023 to add to the SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project to commission three new works for didgeridoo and classical ensemble for the 10 years running up to the 2032 Olympics, to be held here in Brisbane." Dr Gemma Regan

**"It was a privilege to hear the Southern Cross Soloists perform these wonderful compositions with clarity and passion."**

**John Patton, Weekend Notes**

**"Further interactions between the didgeridoo and orchestra will be most welcome!"**

**John Patton, Weekend Notes**



**The New World October 2023  
783 Patrons in attendance.**

**"The final concert in a star spangled concert hall delivered an eclectic, energetic and eccentric mix of music from the New World which was as American as apple pie." Dr Gemma Regan**



# Didgeridoo Commissioning Project 2022 - 2032

The SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project (DCP) since announced in February 2022 has world premiered six new Australian works for didgeridoo and chamber ensemble. ABC Classic has recorded these new works in 2023 for digital release in 2024. The project has also delivered school performances and composer workshops in 2023. A media call was held in October 2023 to coincide with the Composer Workshop which included American Grammy award winner multi-stringed instrumentalist John Jorgenson and cultural advisor/consultant Prof. Kevin Williams.

## World Premiere New DCP Works for Didgeridoo and Small Ensemble

- The Wise Woman - Williams/O'Boyle - Sunshine Coast Chamber Music Festival
- Co-incidence - Morrison/Williams - QPAC Concert Hall, June 2023
- Global Rivers Rising - Jorgenson/Williams - QPAC Concert Hall, October 2023.

## Composers 2023



### Professor Seán O'Boyle AM

Awarded the Order of Australia in 2015 for services to music, Sean's compositions have been performed and/or recorded by all the major Australian orchestras. European Orchestras include; Berlin Philharmonic, Orchestre Symphonique Divertimento, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, and by North American orchestras including the Dallas, Atlanta, Tacoma, Lexington, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestras and the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra. Sean has written and produced music for more than 150 CDs recorded in collaboration with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, numerous television shows, sporting events and for film. Sean is proud of his 25-year relationship with the SXS.



### James Morrison AM

James Morrison is, by anybody's standard, a virtuoso in the true sense of the word. Besides the trumpet, this multi-instrumentalist also plays trombone, piano, saxophone and double bass. At the age of six he started on piano, at seven he took up brass, at nine he formed his first band and at thirteen he was playing professionally in nightclubs. His international career developed just as quickly with a debut in the USA at the Monterey Jazz Festival at age sixteen. Following this were performances at the world's major jazz festivals, including Montreux, North Sea, Nice and the Hollywood Bowl, playing with many of the legends of jazz - Dizzy Gillespie, Herbie Hancock, Dave Brubeck, Chick Corea, George Benson, Quincy Jones, Ray Charles, B.B. King, Ray Brown and Wynton Marsalis to name a few. James also frequents the world's most famous



### John Jorgenson

Grammy award winning guitarist and multi-instrumentalist John Jorgenson is known for his blistering guitar and mandolin licks and mastery of a broad musical palette. His reputation as a world-class musician has been accomplished through his frequent collaborations with artists such as Elton John, Tommy Emmanuel, The Byrds, Bob Dylan, Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, Barbra Streisand, and Luciano Pavarotti. Jorgenson continues to expand his dynamic range of musical offerings, exploring new elements of world music, bluegrass, rock and classical. First coming to national attention in the mid '80s as co-founder of successful country-rock act The Desert Rose Band, an eclectic array of artists such as Bonnie Raitt, Bob Seger and Barbra were drawn to add Jorgenson's artistry to their own recordings. While a member of the Desert Rose Band, Jorgenson won the Academy of Country Music's "Guitarist of the Year" award two consecutive years.



Global Rivers Rising World Premiere New Work  
THE NEW WORLD QPAC Concert Hall October, 2023



Co-incidence World Premiere New Work  
THE NEW WORLD QPAC Concert Hall June, 2023



# Didgeridoo Commissioning Project Recordings ABC Classic Studios



Southern Cross Soloists entered the ABC Classic studios in 2023 under the guidance of ABC Producer Lucas Burns to produce and record the first four new composition works for didgeridoo and small ensemble as a part of the long legacy project, the SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project 2022 - 2032. SXS received an auspicious PPCA grant to record. Four tracks were laid with the recordings to be launched in 2024.



## Artists

Tania Frazer (core)  
James Wannan (core)  
Ashley Smith (core)  
Alan Smith (core)  
Nick Mooney (core)  
Chris Williams (Artist in Residence 2023)  
David Silva (guest flute)  
Guillame Wang (cello)  
Daniel Le (guest piano)  
Courtenay Cleary (violin)  
Justin Edward Bullock (double bass)

## Composers

Williams/Joe Twist – The Ancient Rainforest  
Williams/Sean O’Boyle – ‘Beerwah’ The Mother of the Glasshouse Mountains  
Williams/Leah Curtis – The Ground  
Williams/Matthew Dewey – Kunanyi Skies



# Didgeridoo Commissioning Project

## Education Tier 2022 - 2032

Parallel to the commissioning and performance deliverables, SXS established an Educational Tier to the *SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project* to nurture the next generation of composers as well as introducing school students to this unique cultural project.

The first iteration of this was the premiere and release of six free online composer workshop videos in February 2022, as a resource for composers to learn how to include didgeridoo in their compositions. This series is part of SXS's ongoing SXS Digital initiatives and activities. Live-streamed composer workshops were also held in 2022.

On 19 October 2023, SXS presented a simultaneously world live streamed Didgeridoo Composer Workshop in the Judith Wright Art Centre which included a QPAC led Media Call. This workshop allowed composers to submit works and have their pieces workshopped in real time and receive feedback from workshop moderator Australian esteemed composer Lachlan Skipworth. Didgeridoo soloist Chris Williams, American guitarist John Jorgenson, SXS musicians, and Cultural Consultant, First Nations Elder Professor Kevin Williams were in attendance and spoke with the attendees. Italian composer Denis Feletto was also in attendance. Elaine Seeto from Queensland Symphony Orchestra was a workshop attendee along with composers from across the country.

The aim of these workshops is to encourage and inform composers who wish to include the didgeridoo in their compositions and/or learn more about the didgeridoo's musical language as well as discussing the essential cultural protocols involved in collaborating with First Nation's artists.



The *SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project 2022 - 2032 (DCP)*, took SXS on an excursion to Sunshine Coast schools which is an ongoing priority for the company. Following on from a successful dress rehearsal performance of *Maps and Journeys: The World's First Astronomers*, Immanuel Lutheran College (Buderim) hosted an engaging and interactive one hour Q&A and Workshop on the Didgeridoo and Indigenous storytelling through music. The event was attended by approximately 300 students and staff across five high schools in the region. First Nations' high calibre creatives conducting the Q&A and workshop were Paula Nazarski (actress), Eric Avery (violinist, composer) and Chris Williams (didgeridoo, composer, Chair of DCP Advisory Committee). The schools have requested an additional workshop in 2024 for DCP.



# SUNSHINE COAST CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

## JUNE 9-11 2023

Southern Cross Soloists was invited to perform at the Sunshine Coast Chamber Music Festival to what was a sell-out concert. The program by SXS included the World Premiere performance of *The Wise Woman*, a part of SXS's Didgeridoo Commissioning Project 2022 - 2023.

### The Wise Woman

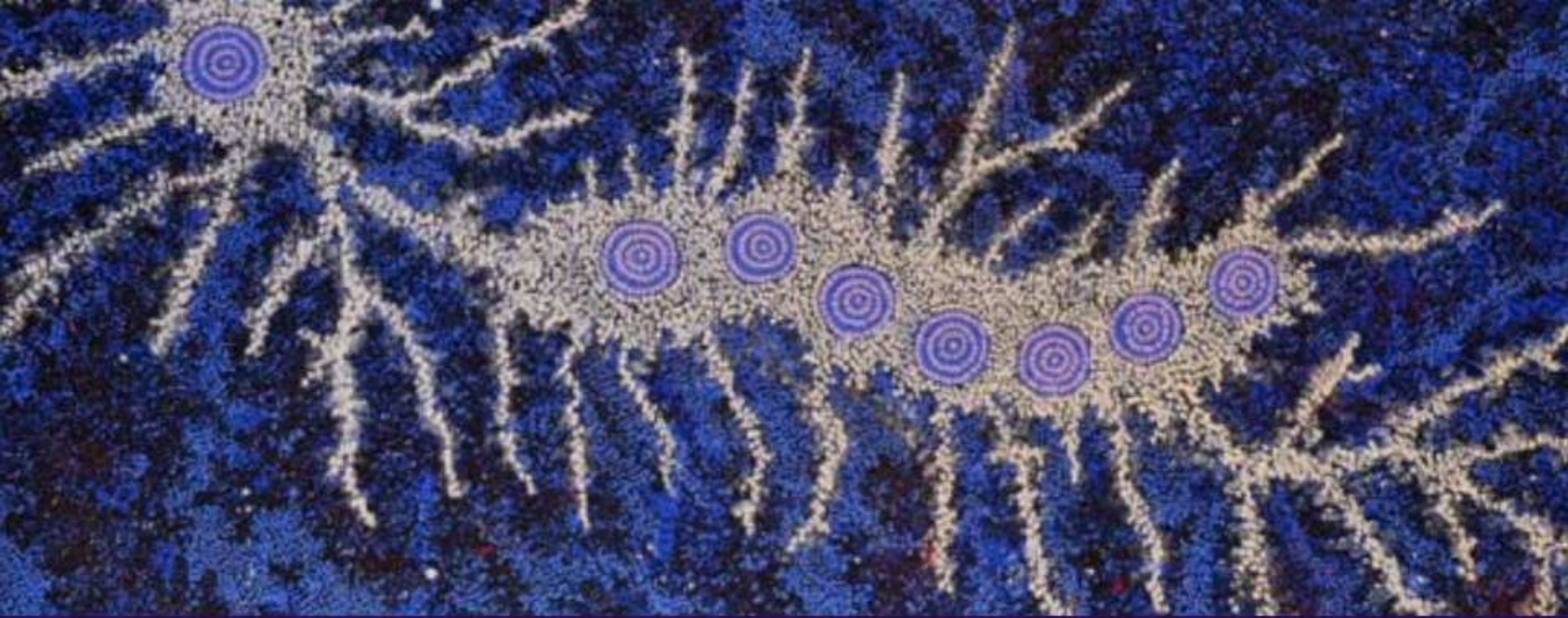
"I was honoured to be asked to co-compose this new work, *The Wise Woman*", based on an extraordinary Wakka Wakka woman who touches the lives of so many. *The Wise Woman* is Didgeridoo Maestro, Chris Williams Grandmother - Maureen Williams.

I was enthralled with the stories told to me by the children of Maureen: Uncle Kevin, Auntie Pat and grandson Chris." Composer Sean O'Boyle AM



"On the previous night at Beerwah Community Hall, the *Earth & Sky* event held its capacity audience spellbound with a sextet of musicians from Brisbane-based Southern Cross Soloists performing works that were, by turns, engaging, challenging, poignant and occasionally boisterous. True to its name, the SXS ensemble made space for its members to perform solo pieces, with James Wannan (viola), Tania Frazer (oboe), Courtney Cleary (violin), Guillaume Wang (cello) and Daniel Le (piano) delivering works from Massenet's evocative *Méditation* to Debussy's *Clair de lune* and Piazzolla's tango-inspired *Primavera*. It's said that a small ensemble can only be as good as its members and these players are very, very good. Main man at Beerwah, however, was didgeridoo master Chris Williams (also a highly regarded classical trumpeter) who delivered three sonorous works, including the world premiere of his composition *The Wise Woman* written in collaboration with renowned Australian composer Sean O'Boyle. This work pays tribute to Wakka Wakka Elder Maureen Williams whose passion for education blessed her with an extended family of well-qualified children and grandchildren, among them Chris Williams who holds a Masters Degree from London's Royal College of Music." Review by David Bentley





Southern Cross Soloists present:

# **Maps and Journeys: the world's first astronomers**



## 'Maps and Journeys: the world's first astronomers'

Held its Victorian premiere at the Melbourne Recital Centre in early 2023. The program explored the rich astronomical traditions and extraordinary navigational abilities of our First Nations people over the past 65,000 years, a culture of astronomical traditions believed by experts to be the oldest in the world. The project featured new works by First Nations composers Brenda Gifford and Eric Avery, working alongside didgeridoo soloist Chris Williams (Wakka Wakka people), vocalist and violinist Eric Avery, Actor/writer Paula Nazarski (Ngugi Woman from North Stradbroke Island), composer Sean O'Boyle, SXS AD Tania Frazer and SXS musicians. The premiere has visual elements projected on screen.

***"The Southern Cross Soloists ensemble is a finely cohesive ensemble and their performance of these songs is impeccable with some very challenging instrumentation."***

***Creating the sounds of the sky, the rainforest, the animals and the desert on orchestral instruments really shows the expertise and agility of this ensemble.***

***SXS are excelling in their advocacy of First Nations arts practices and are proving to be frontrunners in creating beautiful collaborative productions that promote First Nations artists and their artistic expression to the wider Australian general public."***

Marshall McGuire Director of Programming  
Melbourne Recital Centre

## MAPS AND JOURNEYS DRESS REHEARSAL SCHOOLS' CONCERT

SXS held a dress rehearsal performance of Maps and Journeys for Sunshine Coast schools in the lead to traveling to Melbourne for the Victorian premiere. Immanuel Lutheran College (Buderim) hosted an engaging and interactive one hour Q&A and Workshop on the Didgeridoo and Indigenous storytelling through music. The event was attended by approximately 300 students and staff across 5 high schools in the region.

***"The Southern Cross Soloists ensemble is a finely cohesive ensemble and their performance of these songs is impeccable with some very challenging instrumentation. Creating the sounds of the sky, the rainforest, the animals and the desert on orchestral instruments really shows the expertise and agility of this ensemble."***

Weekend Notes, February 2023

<https://www.weekendnotes.com/southern-cross-soloists-maps-melbourne-recital-centre/>



Clockwise from Left:  
Brenda Gifford, Chris Williams, Eric Avery,  
Paula Nazarski







**Maps and Journeys at the Melbourne Recital Hall 2023  
Videography Adam Schneideman**



# 20th BANGALOW CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

The much loved **20th Bangalow Chamber Music Festival (17-20 August 2023)** owned, operated and delivered by Southern Cross Soloists was celebrated in style with strong audience attendance and a stellar artist lineup and program. The Northern NSW township of Bangalow came alive for a weekend of chamber music in August 2023. Although attendance was slightly down on the previous year, the event was a financial and critical success.



**\*3 NIGHTS \*4 DAYS \*14 EVENTS \*5 WORLD PREMIERES BY AUSTRALIAN COMPOSERS \*28 ARTISTS \*33 COMPOSERS \*TWO-TIME APRA AMCOS NOMINATED FOR EXCELLENCE IN A REGIONAL AREA - 2022 and 2023.**

**“A WEEKEND IN THE COUNTRY, FINE FOOD, STUNNING SCENERY AND EXQUISITE CHAMBER MUSIC: THAT’S WHAT THE BANGALOW MUSIC FESTIVAL HAS TO OFFER.” CLASSIKON**



**“It features Queensland artists aplenty but also others from all over Australia with international guests too. Musicians love it. I spoke to the great New Zealand baritone Teddy Tahu Rhodes after a performance at QPAC in Brisbane last year and we chatted about Bangalow. “I love Bangalow,” Tahu Rhodes said. He has performed as part of the festival people refer to as “Bangalow” and seemed to hope he might get asked back. Soon. Hint hint.” Phil Brown InQueensland**

Nina Korbe, soprano and the Orava Quartet, 20th Bangalow Chamber Music Festival 2023



**A NEW RECITAL SERIES LAUNCHED BY SOUTHERN CROSS SOLOISTS IN 2023 AND BEYOND!**

# SUNSET SOIRÉE RECITAL SERIES

Extraordinary music, intimate venues

*'The Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts in Fortitude Valley was the perfect space for an intimate evening of chamber music. Guests could relax, sip their drinks, and watch the sunset between the city buildings, whilst listening to the music.'*

**Claire Matthews, classikON**

Established in 2023, the inaugural Sunset Soiree Recital Series (SSRS) has delivered five successful recital series to inner city Brisbane and regional Gold Coast and Stanthorpe audiences. It received critical success for its programming and high excellence in music delivery with good audience attendance and growth in numbers between the recitals.

The SSRS template will continue to be developed over the coming years, to bring extraordinary music, played by outstanding Queenslanders, to intimate venues around the state.

**11 PERFORMANCES**

**14 ARTISTS**

**3 LOCATIONS**

**500+ ATTENDEES**





# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Nurturing the next generation

## NEXT GEN 2023

Under the guidance of the Southern Cross Soloists, the Next Gen Artists are a select group of emerging artists on the cusp of their professional careers in Australia. In 2023, our 9th Next Gen Program included: Chaeun Oh (violin), David Tan (violin/viola), Mya Watson (cello), Jessica Walther (flute), Lewis Blanchard (clarinet) and Feodora Zu Hohenlohe (piano).

From February to November, and under the mentorship of SXS core violist, James Wannan, our Next Gen artists performed as part of our QPAC Concert Series, Sunset Soirée Recital Series, the 20th Bangalow Chamber Music Festival, as well as private concerts.

Proudly supported by the Queensland Government and a donation by Siok Tan.

## ADFAS

As part of the 20th Bangalow Chamber Music Festival, SXS was proud to announce Robert Smith, as the 2023 recipient of The Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society scholarship.

Robert Smith is a proud alumnus of the SXS Next Gen program, and is now on contract with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.





# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Nurturing the next generation

## MARGARET SCHINDLER VOCAL SCHOLARSHIP

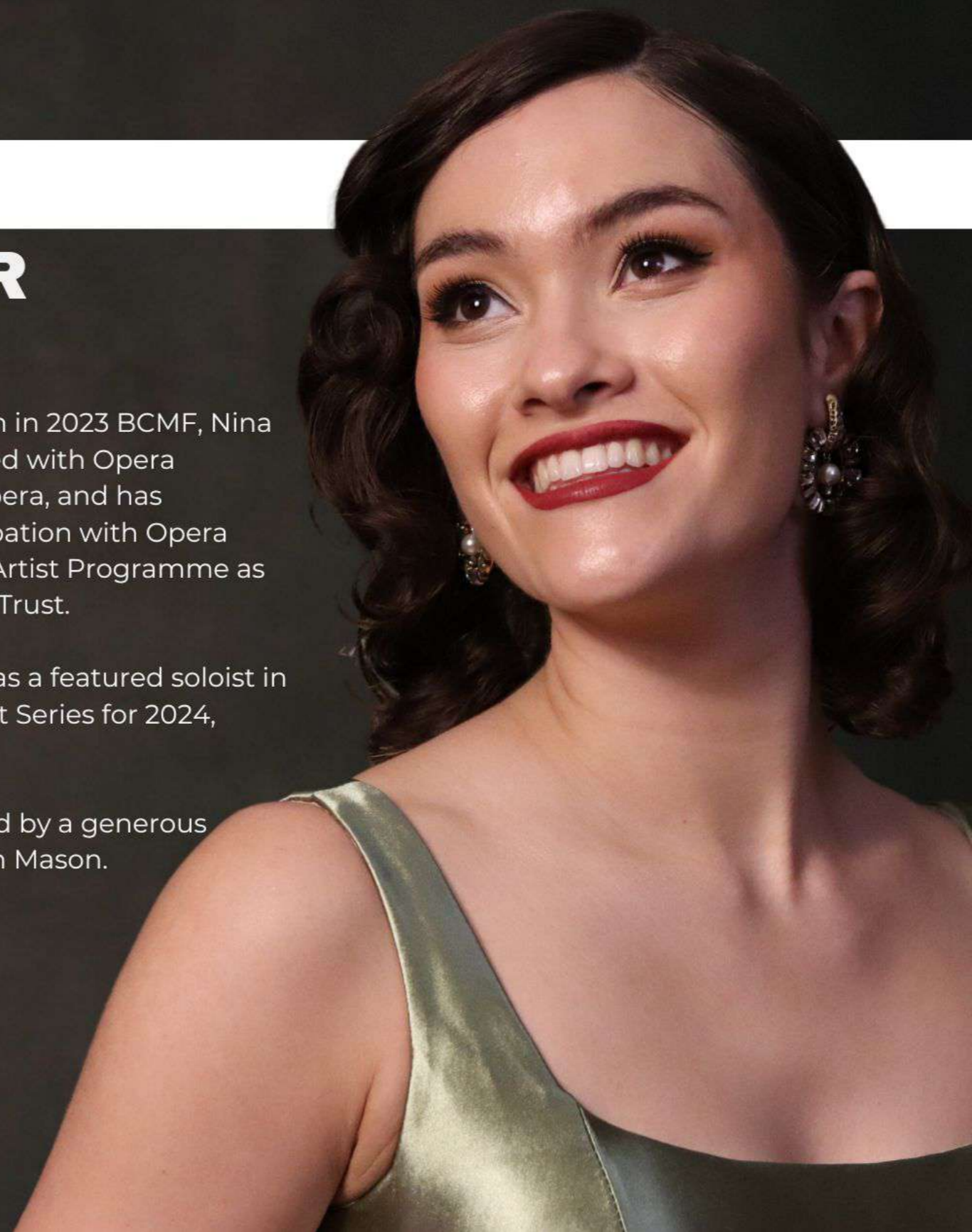
SXS established the Margaret Schindler Vocal Scholarship in 2015 to provide mentoring, professional development and performance opportunities to emerging singers at the cusp of their professional careers, under the expert tutelage of Margaret Schindler in the area of chamber music. The recipient receives lessons throughout the year plus performance opportunities through a variety of SXS's annual activities, including at the Bangalow Chamber Music Festival.

The 2023 recipient was soprano and proud Koa, Kuku Yalanji (Wakka Wakka) woman, Nina Korbe. She received her Bachelor of Music Performance from the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University before heading to London to undertake the Master of Arts studies at Royal Academy of Music in London from which she graduated with Distinction in 2022.

Since her participation in 2023 BCMF, Nina has now been engaged with Opera Australia, Victorian Opera, and has continued her participation with Opera Queensland's Young Artist Programme as well the Melba Opera Trust.

Most recently, Nina was a featured soloist in our 2nd QPAC Concert Series for 2024, Perfumes of the East.

The MSVS is supported by a generous donation from Carolyn Mason.





# MEDIA 2023

2023 Media link:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/  
1x6u3GRiep9MveV2o8JE1jHHC8mdERz2n?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1x6u3GRiep9MveV2o8JE1jHHC8mdERz2n?usp=sharing)







**Southern Cross Soloists received in donations  
for 2023 \$106, 003.25  
We thank all those who contributed to helping  
SXS deliver excellence in music making in 2023.**

**THE NEW WORLD QPAC Concert Hall October, 2023**





# OUR PEOPLE

## Patron:

The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO

## Board of the Southern Cross Soloists:

Di Khursandi Chair  
Michael Byrom Acting Chair  
Peter Collins Finance Officer  
Alan Smith  
James Wannan  
Tania Frazer  
Rob Whiddon

## Our Team:

### Artistic Director:

Tania Frazer

### General Manager & Donor Management:

Maxine Williamson

### Marketing Manager & Producer:

Nikhil Deo

### Production Assistant:

Sophie Ainsworth

### Account Manager:

Cath Charrington

## Next Gen Co-ordinator:

James Wannan

## Principal Artists:

Tania Frazer  
Dr Ashley Smith  
Nick Mooney  
Dr Alan Smith

James Wannan

## Artists in Residence:

Dr Konstantin Shamray  
Chris Williams

## Featured Guest Artists:

James Morrison AM  
John Jorgenson

## Guest Associate Artists:

Courtenay Cleary  
Guillaume Wang  
David Silva  
Daniel Le  
Justin Bullock  
John Rotar  
Alexandra Osborne  
Dusan Walkowicz  
Quinn Ramsey  
Lachlan Skipworth  
Hyung Suk Bae  
Max Foster  
Linsey Pollak  
Emma Sholl  
Rachel Siu  
Nina Korbe  
Orava Quartet  
Vatche Jambazian  
Meagan Turner  
Paula Nazarski  
Eric Avery  
Gemma Kneale

## Education Programs

### 10th SXS Next Gen Artists:

David Tan  
Chae Eun Oh  
Mya Watson  
Jessica Walther  
Lewis Blanchard  
Feodora Zu Hohenlohe

### 8th Margaret Schindler Vocal Scholarship:

Nina Korbe

## International Ambassador:

Sean O'Boyle AM

## SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project Executive Advisory Committee:

Chair: Chris Williams  
Professor Seán O'Boyle AM  
Tania Frazer  
Cultural Consultant and Advisor:  
Prof Kevin Williams





# SOUTHERN CROSS SOLOISTS

FB: Southern Cross Soloists

IG: @southerncrosssoloists1

LI: Southern Cross Soloists

FB: The Soloists' Chamber Music Festival

IG: @soloistscmf

"...a remarkable group of Australian musicians whose unique interpretations breathe fresh life into classical repertoire..."

John Kotzas  
Chief Executive  
QPAC



A QPAC COMPANY IN RESIDENCE

PO BOX 849 INDOOROPILLY CENTRAL QLD 4068

[maxinewilliamson@southernxsoloists.com](mailto:maxinewilliamson@southernxsoloists.com)

John Jorgenson and SXS, October QPAC Concert  
Photography Darren Thomas