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GROUNDBREAKING FREE ONLINE COMPOSER'S WORKSHOP SERIES FOR THE DIDGERIDOO ANNOUNCED BY SXS

The **Southern Cross Soloists (SXS)**, one of Australia's most formidable and long-running chamber music ensembles celebrating its 27th year of operation, announced today it has published under its *SXS Digital* arm, a world-first educational platform *The SXS Didgeridoo Composer's Workshop Series*.

This groundbreaking didgeridoo initiative, *The SXS Didgeridoo Composer's Workshop Series*, is now live and free on the website: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLuf-3lywV3oYMac17ztjDeVLoPUEVRnEQ>.

In collaboration with SXS Artist in Residence Chris Williams (didgeridoo), Sean O'Boyle AM, and the University of Queensland School of Music, SXS filmed a series of free online workshops to offer composers valuable insights into the didgeridoo's musical language and offer techniques and tools to assist them when composing for the didgeridoo.

The SXS Didgeridoo Composer's Workshop Series is a first of its kind, providing ideas and in-depth training for composers whilst exploring the versatility of the didgeridoo in the classical music setting.

A descendant of the Wakka Wakka people from Queensland, Australia, Didgeridoo player and SXS Artist in Residence, Chris Williams said of the project announcement, "*The SXS Didgeridoo Composer's Workshop Series is unique in the Australian art music scene and offers immense value. I'm excited to share my passion for both the didgeridoo and western classical music. It's an honour to help composers understand the technical capabilities and nuances of this wonderful instrument and we hope it will contribute to a more extensive output of work of the highest quality. This project is also an excellent platform for Australians to learn more about our unique and rich culture whilst connecting these two entirely different musical genres from different backgrounds.*"

SXS is committed to developing a substantial canon of new works for didgeridoo, in the lead up to the Brisbane 2032 Summer Olympics - Games of the XXXV Olympiad, building on their past successful didgeridoo new work commissions by Joseph Twist, Sean O'Boyle AM and William Barton.

Two commissioned pieces, one by Sean O'Boyle AM and one by Leah Curtis have been World Premiered this year by SXS to critical applause at the Concert Hall QPAC. A third world premiere new work by Matthew Dewey will occur in October 2022. The '**SXS Didgeridoo Commissioning Project**' is a culmination of all these activities and aims to formalise the past work and to elevate and promote the hybrid musical genre created when combining the ancient art of the didgeridoo and the culture of the world's oldest civilization with Australian art music. O'Boyle AM said of the commissioning project "*The Didgeridoo Commissioning Project is a powerful way to connect with First Nation's music making and culture. I have long dreamt to help connect composers with*

incorporating the didgeridoo with their western art music. For me it's an extraordinary path to gaining greater understanding of the rich heritage which surrounds us."

Announcing *The SXS Didgeridoo Composer's Workshop Series*, SXS Artistic Director Tania Frazer said,

"SXS has a long 27-year history of promoting the inclusion and showcasing of our First Nation's arts practices. We are deeply committed to presenting new Australian works and the versatility of the didgeridoo in classical music adds a remarkable cinematic quality that not only enhances the chamber music genre, but also creates a completely new hybrid sound that is unmistakably Australian. Working with Chris Williams since 2019 along with Sean O'Boyle has been incredibly exciting and we are thrilled to generate this important educational didgeridoo workshop series for composers to consider this ancient, versatile, and uniquely Australian instrument."

This project is supported by the **Queensland** Government through **Arts Queensland**.

About Southern Cross Soloists:

SOUTHERN CROSS SOLOISTS (SXS) are the stars of Australian chamber music. Since 1995, SXS have firmly established themselves as one of Australia's pre-eminent classical music ensembles. In 2022, SXS will deliver a program of intoxicating virtuosity in its 13th QPAC Concert Series as a Company in Residence at QPAC. Championing chamber music globally and nationally, SXS, in its 27th year of excellence in music making, continue to reach new heights working with Australia's and, the world's, most virtuosic musicians and notable composers, as the ensemble continues to gain broad notoriety with enthralled audiences. Composed of leading virtuosic soloists from across Australia, SXS creates and performs dynamic, unique, and world-class musical experiences for audiences of all ages. In 2022, SXS welcomes Didgeridoo soloist Chris Williams to continue as SXS's permanent Artist in Residence and enthusiastically welcomed world-acclaimed, award-winning super-star pianist Konstantin Shamray as 2022 SXS Artist in Residence.

Southern Cross Soloists respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land and their Elders both past, present, and emerging.

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SXS MANAGER/PUBLICIST: Maxine Williamson
EMAIL: Maxine@southernxsoloists.com
Mobile: +61 439 706 785