

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, 12 August 2019

18th Festival closes with standing ovations and 2020 dates announced.

THE 18TH BANGALOW MUSIC FESTIVAL 9-11 August, 2019

The **18th Bangalow Music Festival 2019 (BMF)**, proudly owned, operated and presented by **Southern Cross Soloists (SXS)**, one of Australia's most formidable and long-running chamber music ensembles, performed its final concert No 9 *Scheherazade* at the historic A&I Hall in Bangalow yesterday to stupendous applause. The sell-out audience honoured the 15 musicians on stage, conducted by Colorado Symphony Assistant Conductor, Christopher Dragon with multiple, rousing standing ovations. The stellar 18th BMF (9-11 August) program under the theme of *Conversations through Chamber Music* played host to over 30 internationally regarded and young up and coming artists, with 15 featured artists across nine well attended and curated concerts and three side-bar events.

To close out the successful 18th edition of the Festival, yesterday afternoon's finale Concert 9 consisted of a Concerto for Two Cellos in G minor, RV 531 by Antonio Vivaldi performed by SXS cellist extraordinaire Blair Harris and highly regarded international guest of the festival, New Zealand Chamber Soloist and cellist James Tennant. The 18th BMF finished on an absolute highlight with Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* in a chamber version of this exotic tale of love, intrigue and adventure as the audience relived the story of *One Thousand and One Nights from the Arabian Nights*. This large-scale grand finale, arranged by SXS Composer-in-Residence John Rotar, showcased the virtuosic talents of the SXS ensemble and the high calibre of the Featured Artists of the 18th BMF.

Further standouts of the 18th BMF were internationally regarded classical guitarist Karin Schaupp and the Orava Quartet, each stirring audiences to rapturous ovations. Packed audiences were enthralled by Concert No. 2 - Eastern European folk music and Jewish mysticism with Mahler's vocal masterpiece and Golijov's epic composition about the great mystical Kabbalist rabbi from 800 years ago, known as *Isaac the Blind* which featured Orava Quartet and SXS virtuoso clarinetist Ashley Smith. Concert No 6 shone a spotlight on the virtuosity and artistry of the SXS, finishing with the remarkable Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* led by uber-talented SXS pianist Alex Raineri, as well as the mesmerising double concerto *Sanctuary* by Australian composer and jazz pianist Joe Chindamo.



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Artistic Director Tania Frazer thanked the Patrons, Sponsors and audience, both returning and new, stating it was *'the best festival yet'* and announced dates for the 19th Bangalow Music Festival – 13-16 August 2020, which includes the official Festival program and pre-Festival events.

The Festival was overwhelmed with support from a record number of local businesses including Ninbella Gallery, Zentvelds Roastery, Bangalow Real Estate, the Country Women's Association (Bangalow), The Cellar Bangalow, Butcher Baker, The Italian Diner, Seaweed Cuisine and JuJu Byron and The Wine Tradition, and Elements of Byron.

Interstate and international visitors came from as far as New Zealand, Newcastle, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, with some having to drive from southern capital cities due to the climatic chaos causing scheduled flights to be cancelled over the weekend.

The Festival also included the announcement of the winner of the 2019 Bangalow Art Prize supported by SXS and the BMF, Ninbella Gallery, MHL Legal & Notary and the Bangalow Business Community Sponsors. The Bangalow Art Prize is a fine art competition with a cash bursary prize of AU\$1000 awarded to the winning artist's impression of the Bangalow region that "portrays the vibrant and/or diverse makeup of the Bangalow landscape and community". The prizewinner's work along with the two runners were on display in the foyer of the A&I Hall for the duration of the Festival and will be exhibited at a later stage at Ninbella.

The competition drew a record 37 entries across multiple mediums with three nominees selected. The three top place getters were determined by two celebrated arts luminaries. Australian, local artist Lindy Lee and established National curator Alison Kubler. The winner of the 2019 Bangalow Art Prize is Rune Al-ith for her woven sculpture *9 Cocoons (Inflorescence of the Bangalow Palm)*.

A further announcement at this year's 18th BMF was the recipient of the Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society (ADFAS) Byron Bay inaugural: *2019 BMF Young Musician Award*. Award winner and local Lismore/Goonellabah flutist, Jemima Drews also performed at the Festival this year. The BMF Young Musician Award will be presented annually to an outstanding young musician from Northern NSW.

The Bangalow Art Prize

Supported by Southern Cross Soloists and the Bangalow Music Festival, Ninbella Gallery, MHL Legal & Notary and the Bangalow Art Prize Business Community Sponsors:

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Southern Cross Soloists

SXS is a not for profit organisation, operating successfully for 24 years. It proudly prepares for its Silver Jubilee in 2020. SXS is one of Australia's most formidable chamber music ensembles and is a Company-in-Residence at Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC). In addition to presenting fine chamber music nationally and internationally with world-renowned, virtuosic artists, the SXS run educational programs across Queensland, and present the regional festival, Bangalow Music Festival each year in New South Wales.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

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