



MUSIC AND WORDS WITH SAMUEL WAGAN WATSON

30 NOVEMBER 2008, BRISBANE



Media kit

Media interviews and images

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MEDIA RELEASE

1 award-winning poet + 23 poems + 23 composers: Southern Cross Soloists put poetry in motion with Samuel Wagan Watson and 23 guest composers – 30 November.

Much applauded chamber ensemble **Southern Cross Soloists** (SXS) is joined by award-winning **Brisbane poet Samuel Wagan Watson** in an exhilarating new performance piece based on Watson's breathtaking cycle *Smoke Encrypted Whispers*.

The concert takes place on **Sunday 30 November at 3pm at Brisbane's State Library of Queensland** and is the Soloist's final performance in their entertaining *Music and Words* series and concert program for 2008.

For the 23 poems, SXS invited **23 composers, all with a Queensland connection**, to **write 100 seconds** of music to complement Watson's poetic cycle. Composers include Richard Mills, William Barton, Paul Dean, Gerard Brophy, Stephen Cronin, Stephen Stanfield, Tom Adeney, Damian Barbeler, Betty Beath, Lisa Cheney, Peter Clark, Robert Davidson, Louise Denson, John Gilfedder, Ralph Hultgren, Michael Knopf, Stephen Leek, Mary Mageau, Freeman McGrath, Sean O'Boyle, Peter Rankine, Marian Scholem and Toby Wren.

Artistic Director of SXS **Paul Dean** is confident the performance will appeal to a wide audience.

"The Soloists are really taking their musical mastery to a new level. The work features 23 poems accompanied by interludes especially commissioned from 23 hand-selected composers.

"The show is sure to capture the imaginations of music and poetry lovers alike," Dean said.

Queensland poet Samuel Wagan Watson is of Munanjali, Birri Gubba, German and Irish descent and grew up on the Sunshine Coast before returning to Brisbane. A self confessed 'Guerrilla wordsmith', he has published four collections of poetry and an opera *die dunkle Erde (The Dark Earth)* that premiered in Brisbane in 2004. Wagan Watson has toured Australia, New Zealand, Germany and Norway, with translations of his work published in German and Norwegian.

Curated with leading Brisbane identity **Craig Munro**, Dean masterminded the *Music and Words* series after a chance hearing of Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*, which was inspired by Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

This performance will be the final instalment of the Soloists' *Music and Words* series for 2008 which celebrates the bond between music and the written and spoken word.

MUSIC AND WORDS SERIES CONCERT THREE

Sunday 30 November 2008, 3.00pm

Auditorium 1, Level 2, State Library of Queensland

Southern Cross Soloists with Special Guest: Samuel Wagan Watson

Tickets: \$25 – \$48 | manager@southernxsoloists.com | 07 3735 6351

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MEDIA: For information, images & interviews please contact (02) 8904 0822, Prue Vercoe 0410 541 663, prue@tjc.com.au

SOUTHERN CROSS SOLOISTS

Since its formation in 1995, **Southern Cross Soloists** has established a firm reputation as one of the most respected, innovative and exciting music ensembles in Australia, developing an international reputation for ground-breaking performance along the way.

The group's unique combination of oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, piano and soprano allows for the performance of a wide variety of repertoire in many different genres and their concert programs regularly range from Baroque cantatas through the standard (and not so standard) classical and romantic compositions for winds and piano, to works combining voice and instruments, in particular songs with instrumental obligato.

The Soloists maintain a busy schedule of performing, teaching, conducting, presenting masterclasses and recording. They have undertaken successful international tours, most recently to Canada (February 2008) and China (November 2007), where they received very enthusiastic responses. Previous tours have included the United States, New Zealand, Canada and South Korea. The ensemble also makes national tours within Australia each year, in 2008, with guitarist Slava Grigoryan, to coincide with the release by ABC Classics of the CD they recorded together in 2007. In previous years, they have toured with Yossi Arnheim (Principal Flute with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra) and Slava Grigoryan (2006) and harpist Marshall McGuire (2007). They have also appeared at the Camden Haven Music Festival in Port Macquarie, the Brisbane Festival, the Canberra International Chamber Music Festival and the Port Fairy Festival. .

In 2002 the ensemble established the Bangalow Music Festival, held annually in the northern NSW heritage village of Bangalow. The Festival offers a weekend of diverse programs, breathtaking performances and camaraderie between musicians and the audience, inspiring Peter Sculthorpe to label the event as the "finest Festival held outside of a capital city". Guests at the Festival have included Ilya Konovalov (Concertmaster of the Israel Philharmonic), Tankstream Quartet, Australian String Quartet, Peter Sculthorpe, Tel Aviv Trio, Genevieve Lacey, Brett Dean, Marshall McGuire, David Berlin, Stephen McIntyre, the Melba Quartet, Collusion, Slava and Leonard Grigoryan, Fusion Piano Duo and Mark Gasser. The Festival has also featured the premieres of seven works in its short history. Australian composers featured at the Festival have included Peter Sculthorpe, Brett Dean, Gerard Brophy, Paul Stanhope, Gordon Kerry, Andrew Schultz, Kat McGuffee and Damian Barbeler.

An established and demonstrated dedication to music education takes the ensemble throughout regional Queensland each year, giving individual and group lessons, workshops and concerts. In 2007 they visited Bundaberg and Cairns to inspire music students over a concentrated weekend of masterclasses and performances. Their partnership with Major Player Enterprises in Rockhampton has ensured the continued growth and expansion of these programs, which have now benefited thousands of students in regional Queensland. During one week in July 2005 alone, the ensemble gave instruction to over 1600 music students from Emerald, Blackwater, Rockhampton and Yeppoon.

2006 witnessed the launch of the SunWater and Stanwell Winter Music School held in Rockhampton in July. 112 high-school music students from across Queensland gathered for an intensive week of concerts, classes, workshops, rehearsals and lessons, which culminated in a sold-out Grand Finale Concert showcasing the student's spectacular outcomes. The success of this event has ensured that the Winter Music School will become a regular biennial event in Rockhampton during the Queensland June/July school holidays.

The Southern Cross Soloists has a strong commitment to commissioning and performing Australian music. The group released an all-Australian CD in late 2004 featuring the music of Gordon Kerry, Paul Stanhope, Richard Mills, Steven Stanfield and Vincent Plush, amongst others. Other recordings available include *LIVE* (2002), *NINA* (2002), *Russia* (2000) and *Concert Sampler* (1998). **Would you like me to add a line in about latest CD release? Yes please.**

2007 saw the premieres of new works by Stuart Greenbaum and Andrew Schultz, commissioned by the ensemble with funds provided by the Australia Council for the Arts. Further new works were commissioned from James Ledger and William Barton and performed in 2008. Southern Cross Soloists is currently *Ensemble in Residence* at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University.

The group features six of Australia's leading musicians:

Director and clarinettist **Paul Dean** is much in demand as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral player. He regularly appears at national Festivals and with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Grainger Quartet and the Endeavour Trio.

Tania Frazer, formerly the principal oboe with the Israel Symphony Orchestra enjoys a busy career as a soloist and teacher and regularly appears as the principal oboist with the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

Leesa Dean is on the staff at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, the University of Qld and the University of Southern Queensland. She makes regular guest appearances with The Queensland Orchestra and, with Tania and Paul, performs for the Musica Viva in Schools program throughout Queensland.

Lyric soprano **Margaret Schindler**, a Senior Lecturer at Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, is a nationally recognised teacher who is also in great demand as a recitalist, particularly for her performances of baroque and contemporary repertoire.

Horn player **Peter Luff** is also a Senior Lecturer at the Queensland Conservatorium as well as principal horn with The Queensland Orchestra. He is highly regarded as a player and teacher throughout Australia while also developing a successful career as a conductor.

Kevin Power pursues a busy freelance career as a pianist, performing regularly as a soloist, accompanist and chamber musician. He was formerly on the staff of the Queensland Conservatorium, and is the Chorus Master and Musical Director of The Queensland Choir.

SAMUEL WAGAN WATSON - POET

Samuel is of Munanjali, Birri Gubba, German and Irish descent. He grew up on the Sunshine Coast before returning to Brisbane.

Samuel has published four collections of poetry and an opera, die dunkle Erde (The Dark Earth), premiered in Brisbane in 2004. He has toured Australia, New Zealand, Germany and Norway, with translations of his work published in German and Norwegian. He classifies himself as a 'Guerilla wordsmith'.