

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **DIDGERIDOO MEETS ORCHESTRA**

### **WORLD PREMIERE PERFORMANCE BY THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY**

**2, 3 and 4 April, Sydney Opera House Concert Hall**

This April, the Sydney Symphony is set to join forces with Australia's leading didgeridoo player, William Barton, in a performance of a new work, *Kalkadungu*, written by Barton in collaboration with Australian composer Matthew Hindson.

The 23-minute piece is scored for orchestra, electric guitar, solo voice and didgeridoo, and the three solo parts will be performed by Barton. The music is based around the events and ramifications of the history between the Kalkadungu tribe in far north Queensland and European settlers when, in the late 1800s, the Kalkadungu people conducted a 15-year campaign of guerrilla warfare against the Europeans before being defeated in battle in 1889 at Battle Mountain, near Mount Isa.

Of the piece, Barton says, "Matthew Hindson and I came up with the score based on a song I wrote in my own language when I was 15 years old. I wrote it when I was back in my country of the Kalkadungu being inspired by its culture and the landscape. The song itself is about the passing of the Kalkadungu culture from one generation to the next. Matthew and I thought this would be a great starting point for our composition as a way of combining Australia's rich cultural heritage within a classical context."



According to Matthew Hindson, compositional collaborations are rare in the classical music world, which makes this premiere even more significant for Australia's classical music scene.

"It was very interesting to be part of a co-commission. This approach may be common in the popular and jazz music traditions, but I can't think of many examples from classical music where this has happened (the orchestral works of Paul McCartney, perhaps). Writing an orchestral work is such an intricate task that it doesn't normally lend itself to compositional collaboration, but in this case we used a common starting point, being the Aboriginal chant William wrote when he was 15," says Hindson.

*Kalkadungu* has been commissioned by Roger Allen and Maggie Gray whose philanthropic support helps the needs of indigenous people in the community. In addition to several community projects, Roger and Maggie have provided scholarships for young people in education and the arts and have also established a venture capital fund through *Indigenous Capital Limited*, designed to help create, nurture and grow indigenous businesses by providing meaningful and sustainable employment opportunities for indigenous communities.

"With the official apology to the Stolen Generation and an increased focus on the desperate situation in many indigenous communities, it's timely to recognise the great achievements of many indigenous men and women throughout Australia," says Allen.

"Maggie and I have commissioned this new work to support two highly talented young musicians – indigenous and non-indigenous – who have collaborated to showcase Australia's unique culture. We are privileged to have the Sydney Symphony premiering the new piece and commend them on their vision to bring contemporary Australian culture and music to the fore in our community," adds Allen.

William Barton is one of Australia's most accomplished didgeridoo players and composers and has performed with many symphony orchestras around the world. Born in Mount Isa, he was taught the instrument by his uncle, an elder of the Waanyi, Lardil and Kalkadungu tribes of Western Queensland. At 17, William played his first classical concert with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. In September/October this year, William will tour Italy with the Sydney Symphony performing in Liza Lim's *The Compass*.

The Sydney Symphony's Didgeridoo Meets Orchestra concert is being conducted by Sydney Symphony Education Program Artistic Director Richard Gill and will also feature Weber's overture to *Der Freischütz*: and Schumann's Symphony No.4.

**For programme notes on *Kalkadungu*:**

[www.hindson.com.au/wordpress/index.php/2005/01/14/kalkadungu-2007/](http://www.hindson.com.au/wordpress/index.php/2005/01/14/kalkadungu-2007/)

**For more information on William Barton:** [www.williambarton.com.au](http://www.williambarton.com.au)

**For more information on Matthew Hindson:** [www.hindson.com.au](http://www.hindson.com.au)

**## ENDS ##**

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### **Note to Editors: Concert Details**

#### **DIDGERIDOO MEETS ORCHESTRA**

Wed 2 April, 6.30pm

Thu 3 April, 6.30pm

Fri 4 April, 11am

Sydney Opera House Concert Hall

**Richard Gill** conductor

**William Barton** didgeridoo/voice/electric guitar

**WEBER** Der Freischütz: Overture

**SCHUMANN** Symphony No.4

**BARTON & HINDSON** Kalkadungu WORLD PREMIERE

Tickets from \$47\*

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\*Booking fees may apply