

MEDIA RELEASE

Sydney Improvised Music Association (SIMA) together with the **Sydney Conservatorium** has today announced their popular **Young Women's Jazz Workshops** are open for applications. The highly anticipated annual workshops have become an important rite of passage for young women interested in pursuing a professional career in jazz and improvised music with entry by audition and written application.

The workshops are facilitated by leading female jazz musicians who teach beginner, intermediate and advanced ensembles. The workshops culminate into a public concert where participants gain the experience of performing live and showcasing their new skills. This year's tutors include saxophonist Sandy Evans OAM, vocalist Elana Stone trombonists Alex Silver, bassist Hannah James, guitarist Jess Green and pianist Monique Lysiak.

Started in 2002 with a small group of 10 students as a joint effort between SIMA and multi-award winning saxophonist and composer Sandy Evans OAM, the workshops have steadily grown to capacity numbers of 40 students. In 2010 the course partnered with the Sydney Conservatorium Open Academy. Each year, the standard of applicants has risen significantly, indicating that the course is having an impact on the number of women seriously studying and practising jazz and improvised music. The workshops have been a catalyst in addressing the gender imbalance that has plagued the jazz sector and the course actively encourages more young women and specifically instrumentalists to undertake jazz as a career.

Sandy Evans OAM says of the genre 'Sadly, women are still very under-represented in jazz – professionally and in tertiary courses. This course provides a supportive environment for aspiring female jazz musicians to explore their creativity and develop their skills in this exciting and challenging musical genre'.

Since 2005 female intakes into the jazz stream at the Sydney Conservatorium has increased by more than 20% and in 2013 five young women were accepted into jazz as a direct result of the course. Craig Scott, Head of Jazz Studies at the Sydney Conservatorium said "This course has been a great programme for getting female jazz students into the Con. I was always slightly bemused by the fact that if 160 people turned up to audition, 155 of them were males" He goes onto say "That is starting to turn around, thank goodness"

A vibrant community of female musicians has evolved through the course, with many young women going on to study jazz and form professional bands of their own, supporting each other in their pursuit of excellence and creativity in jazz and improvised music. One highly visible band resulting from the YWJW is the 17-piece all-female SIRENS ensemble of which 14 of the band members have undertaken the course once if not several times.

SIMA and the Sydney Conservatorium are pleased to announce that in 2013 they will offer small number of subsidies for families who are experiencing financial hardship. Please contact amy@sima.org.au to find out how to apply. As part of a commitment to furthering opportunities for young women, the workshops also offer 4 annual mentorships to promising young students and the chance to participate in the Jann Rutherford Memorial Award (JRMA).

IMPORTANT DATES:

Young Women in Jazz **Applications Close** on May 31

Auditions are on June 15 and **workshops** commence on July 21 Application forms can be downloaded from www.sima.org.au or contact Amy Curl on 02 9036 6292

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Media partner

