

## **Nexas Quartet**

Formed in 2002, Nexas Quartet are focused on promoting the musical diversity of the saxophone, showcasing its versatility and ability to cross genres. The group's success comes from a combination of personalities, virtuosic saxophone skills, and an ability to program concerts of a wide appeal that has seen the musicians perform in a multitude of settings. This unique approach has enabled Nexas Quartet to perform throughout Australia and internationally, performing a diverse repertoire that reflects their artistic direction. Ranging from transcriptions, standard and contemporary repertoire, to collaborations with theatre companies and premiering and commissioning new works. At the forefront of chamber music, Nexas Quartet are leaders in promoting existing and creating new repertoire for the saxophone quartet.

During the past few years Nexas performed at the prestigious APRA Awards as well as at the heart of Australia in Uluru for Darwin Symphony's Symphony at Uluru. 2014 was a landmark year for the ensemble as they launched their inaugural Concert Series featuring Nexas collaborating with some of Australia's finest musicians including Gerard Willems AM (pianist), Daniel Rojas (pianist), Nicky Crayson (jazz vocalist), David Theak (jazz saxophonist and bandleader), Frank Celata (SSO clarinettist) and Peter Coleman-Wright AO (opera singer).

Open-minded to new and innovative music, Nexas have commissioned many new Australian works and have had several works dedicated to them by composers such as Lachlan Skipworth, Amanda Cole, Anthony Moles, David Slater and Marcus Whale. In 2015 Nexas Quartet collaborated with composer and sound artist Drew Crawford on the Melbourne Theatre Company's production of *Jumpy* as well as performing the world premiere of Matthew Hindson and Cyrus Meurant's *Romeo and Juliet* with the National College of Dance Company.

In 2016 Nexas were once again engaged in their annual concert series featuring collaborations with trumpeter Matthew Dempsy and performing the world premiere of Matthew Hindson's *Romeo and Juliet Suite*. In November 2016 Nexas launched their debut album, *Current*, at the iconic Utzon Room in Sydney Opera House. The CD features world premiere recordings by Australian composers Matthew Hindson, Elena Kats-Chernin, Daniel Rojas, Matthew Orlorvich and Lachlan Skipworth.

A year of firsts, 2017 began with the collaboration with international operatic superstar Peter Coleman-Wright AO. This resulted ABC classics first ever saxophone quartet release "Ballads of the Pleasant Life". With their stage show "Composers in Exile" the quartet with Coleman-Wright appeared in numerous concerts including critically acclaimed appearances at the Adelaide Cabaret Festival and Sydney's Independent Theatre. Later that year, Nexas chalked up another first with an invitation to be the saxophone quartet in residence at the Australian Festival of Chamber Music.

**[www.nexasquartet.com](http://www.nexasquartet.com)**

## **Michael Duke- Soprano Saxophone**

Michael Duke completed his Bachelor of Music degree with honors at the Victoria College of the Arts with Graeme Shilton. Duke received his Master's and Doctorate Degrees in Music Performance from Indiana University studying with renowned classical saxophonists Eugene Rousseau, Thomas Walsh, Jean-Yves Fourmeau and Arno Bornkamp. While pursuing jazz studies at Berklee College of Music, Duke studied with Shannon LeClaire, Jim Odgren and George Garzone and performed in Phil Wilson and Joe Lovano's ensembles.

Throughout Australia and abroad, Duke has engaged in an extensive career, performing with many of Australia's premiere orchestras including the Melbourne Symphony, Orchestra Victoria, and the Australian Chamber Orchestra. He has also been invited to perform at numerous North American Saxophone Alliance National conferences, the World Saxophone Congresses and was a featured artist at the 2010 International Society for Contemporary Music World New Music Days conference. In April 2016 Duke presented in the Sydney Conservatorium of Music's "About Music" series on the topic of commissioning new works, collaborating with composers and seeing them to their final inception.

Duke has recorded three solo CDs:, *Duo Sax, Incandescence* (Saxophone Classics), and *Australian Portrait* (Cala) which features newly commissioned works by preeminent Australian composers. Recently, Duke gave the world premiere of Elena Kats-Chernin's saxophone concerto, *Macquarie's Castle*, with the Sydney Conservatorium Symphony Orchestra. In the same year he also performed the world premiere performance of Lyle Chan's *Dear Mr. Benjamin* with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra as part of the Brisbane Festival.

Duke is a Yamaha Australia Performing Artist.

**[www.michael-duke.com](http://www.michael-duke.com)**

## **Andrew Smith- Alto Saxophone**

Sydney based Andrew Smith is a musician at the forefront of classical saxophone. A highly active performer, Smith frequently appears in chamber, orchestral and diverse solo settings. He completed his Bachelor and Masters of Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music where he was the recipient of the Henderson Postgraduate Award. Throughout his studies he won numerous competitions and awarded many scholarships.

The hallmark of Smith's activities are his collaborations with composers resulting in premieres of new works. Smith has collaborated with: Cyrus Meurant, Tristan Coelho, Paul Castles, Lachlan Skipworth, Mark Oliviero, Alex Pozniak, Andrew Batt-Rawden, Amanda Cole, and Matthew Hindson. As a member of the Nexas Quartet and the Chronology Arts Ensemble, Smith furthers the repertoire of the saxophone with collaborations and cross-art projects.

Smith has performed in the Sydney Festival 'Anatomy of an Afternoon', the Aurora Festival 'Quest', International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM), and the World Saxophone Congress as well as performances in Scotland, France and beyond. Smith has also performed on a number of live radio broadcasts on ABC Classic FM and Fine Music 102.5FM and is regularly employed as a saxophonist with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, performing alongside the likes of Natalie Cole and Ben Folds and most recently under the baton of John Wilson in the concert "Hollywood Rhapsody."

Smith is a highly sought after educator and lectures in saxophone and chamber music at the Sydney Conservatorium High School, Newtown Performing Arts, Barker College, The Scots College and the Saxophone Academy Sydney.

**[www.asmithsax.com](http://www.asmithsax.com)**

## **Nathan Henshaw- Tenor Saxophone**

Nathan Henshaw is a renowned saxophonist recognised for his musical diversity and interest in promoting the saxophone across genres and mediums. His commitment to the musical multiplicity of the saxophone has resulted in the creation of numerous new works for saxophone, across a broad range of styles.

Henshaw completed a Bachelor of Music (Honours) and Master of Music at Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where he is currently completing his Doctor of Musical Arts. His research examines the interpretive challenges faced by classical musicians (particularly saxophonists) when required to perform works in a jazz style.

From solo classical performances to jazz gigs, Henshaw's work as a freelance musician has seen him perform with a diverse range of renowned performers, such as Tim Minchin, Ben Folds, Randy Newman, Richard Gill, Eddie Perfect, Rhonda Burchmore, and more. He has also performed with the WIN Wollongong Symphony Orchestra, NSW Police Band, Sydney Conservatorium Saxophone Quartet, Compass, Continuum Sax, Chronology Arts, Rivers and Roads and SBS Television and Radio Orchestra. Henshaw also performed at the 2013 ARIA Awards, and has given radio broadcast performances on Fine Music 102.5FM. He is also a full-time member of Heavy Metal Quartet, Sax Summit, Sydney Saxophone Collective and Rarefied Air.

Henshaw teaches and lectures in saxophone, privately and at the Open Academy and Foundation Program at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music as well as in a number of schools across Sydney and regularly presents clinics and masterclasses.

Henshaw is a Selmer Paris Artist and Silverstein Works Artist.

**[www.nathanhenshaw.com](http://www.nathanhenshaw.com)**

## **Jay Byrnes- Baritone Saxophone**

Jay Byrnes is one of the most pre-eminent figures in the Australian saxophone scene. A passionate performer, arranger and educator, Byrnes is a specialist in the performance of transcriptions and new works. Renowned for his interpretations of music (from Bach to Piazzolla), Byrnes has developed a reputation as a versatile and vibrant musician; acclaimed for his dynamic stage presence and rigorous attention to stylistic performance. He regularly performs throughout Europe, South America and Australasia as both a soloist and chamber musician.

Byrnes is an authority on the interpretation of Latin American music for the saxophone. In 2016 Byrnes completed his DMA, researching the performance of tango music for the classical saxophonist. In 2015 Byrnes released his debut CD, *Al Asunto Del Tango*. Byrnes has also written over 200 arrangements that have been performed by many local and international ensembles including; The Nexus Quartet, Orquestra Portuguesa de Saxofones, The Four Baritones and The Sydney Saxophone Collective.

As an educator Byrnes has held teaching positions in the United Kingdom, Venezuela and Australia. He has also given masterclasses internationally and locally. Byrnes currently tutors music fundamentals at Sydney University. Byrnes is also the Director of Saxophone Academy Sydney. Recently, he adjudicated at the Australian-Chinese Music Festival held at Sydney Opera House where he was also invited as a tutor to students of the Sichuan Conservatorium.

Byrnes is an endorsed artist for both D'Addario and EGR ligatures. He is also a Yangaisawa Saxophones Domestic Artist and a Yanagisawa International Artist.

**[www.jaybyrnessax.com](http://www.jaybyrnessax.com)**