

# Case study

## Diana Tolmie

### Details

**What:**

With investment through the Individuals Fund, performer and academic Diana Tolmie conducted and toured the Queensland Conservatorium Saxophone Orchestra to Manchester, Paris and Strasbourg and as well attending the six day XVII World Saxophone Congress, Strasbourg.

The performances were of predominantly Brisbane-composed 2015 commissioned Australian works. She also coordinated and conducted the Australian Saxophone Orchestra for two high-profile featured performances in the XVII World Saxophone Congress. One featured on the outdoor stage in the centre of Strasbourg and was open to the public and televised. As well, Diana performed as featured soloist with the acclaimed Mulhouse Symphony Orchestra premiering Brisbane composer Tom Green's especially written concertino as part of the Congress.

The Congress (which only happens every three years) also offered recitals, masterclasses, networking opportunities and trade shows.

**When:**

June/July 2015

**Where:**

Manchester, UK & Paris and Strasbourg, France



Diana Tolmie photographer: Chris Osborne

**Arts Queensland contribution:**

\$5,000 – Individuals Fund

**Contact for further information:**

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**Links:**

<http://webtv.saxopen.com/event/world-premiere-from-australia-directed-by-diana-tolmie/>

<http://webtv.saxopen.com/event/the-australian-saxophone-orchestra-performance-2/>

<http://www.selmer.fr/actionagendadetail.php?id=518>

<http://www.robbuckland.com/content/rncm-saxophone-orchestra-queensland-saxophone-orchestra>

## Outcomes

- Diana used this opportunity to further develop her international profile. This was achieved through touring of the tertiary saxophone school and performing the well-received newly commissioned Australian works to an international audience of her peers.
- As one of two females performing solo with an orchestra, Diana was able to contribute to the rising awareness of the female classical saxophonist. According to Diana, while the saxophone is increasingly regarded as a feminine music education instrument, this is not translating as prominently to the industry.
- This opportunity provided exposure to new knowledge, repertoire and networks. As Diana has not been formally trained on the classical saxophone, knowledge has been gained through self-exploration so attending congresses allows an understanding of new trends, repertoire and affirmation of best-practice methods.



Diana performing with acclaimed Mulhouse Symphony Orchestra  
Photographer: Jason Hawkins

## Learnings and reflections

Diana gained tremendous satisfaction in watching her students develop in the various learning environments especially when they understood that the exporting of national new music was commended as something “very special”. Likewise, she noticed an increase in confidence, capability and strength as musicians throughout the tour.

As a performer and teacher, Diana saw this as invaluable information regarding the attitudes of the future generation of musicians, and the interventive actions mentors can take to pave the best path for emerging musicians operating in such a volatile industry.

While performing solo in front of 600+ classical saxophone specialists was a daunting task, it recalibrated Diana’s priorities of self-focus in performance, to a more extrinsic approach of considering the composer, the Australian music heritage, and the future of new music in Australia. This resulted in performance anxiety being minimised if at all present.

Diana reflected:

*This completely transformative experience has redefined my whole approach in performance and pedagogy of the classical saxophone – or any instrument for that matter. I learnt that this attitude may change others’ approaches to their craft.*

She was surprised at the lack of women performing as featured soloists at the Congress. The Australian Saxophone Orchestra represented a balanced demographic as she included students, noting:

*What I learned was that female classical saxophonists may still have an uphill battle to be recognised in their field, and require collegial endorsement, mental steel, strong networking capabilities plus savvy business planning. I will endeavour to further develop these capabilities and encourage my own students to do the same.*