

# Sandy Evans – Biography

*'protean, ethereal tenor saxophonist Evans in flights of scintillating, lucid post-Coltrane vernacular.'* Down Beat's Fred Bouchard, reviewing Sandy Evans' performance with Dutch percussionist Han Bennink at Wangaratta '99,

## **Winner of the Inaugural Bell Award For Australian Jazz Musician of The Year 2003**

Sandy Evans is recognised as one of the leading saxophonists (tenor and soprano) and composers in contemporary jazz in Australia. She leads the Sandy Evans Trio, and co-leads the internationally acclaimed Clarion Fracture Zone. She is a member of Ten Part Invention, The catholics, the Australian Art Orchestra, australYSIS, The Kristen Cornwell Quintet, Guy Strazzullo's Passionfruit and Kim Sanders and Friends. With percussionist Tony Lewis and koto player Satsuki Odamura, she co-leads the innovative world music trio Waratah. In 2004, together with composer Tony Gorman Sandy will launch a new 8 piece ensemble GEST8.

Sandy's composition Testimony about the life and music of Charlie Parker with poetry by the Pulitzer prize winning American poet Yusef Komunyakaa has been a highlight of her career in recent years. Testimony, commissioned originally by ABC Radio, was premiered by The Australian Art Orchestra in the Concert Hall at The Sydney Opera House for The Sydney Festival in January 2002.

Her project Sweet Freedom, a concert of Spirituals and Liberation Songs featuring Tina Harrod and Jackie Orszaczky premiered at the Sydney Opera House in 2003.

A favourite collaboration is the Bronson/Evans/Robson Quintet with outstanding Sydney saxophonists Andrew Robson and Edouard Bronson.

Sandy performs regularly in Sydney for The Sydney Improvised Music Association (SIMA) at The Side On Cafe.

Sandy is an experienced teacher and heads a Jazz Improvisation Course for Young Women run by SIMA as well as teaching privately.

For many years Sandy was a member of the Bulgarian folk-jazz fusion group MARA! touring with them in Europe, Canada and Australia and appearing on the ARIA Award winning CD Ruino Vino. Recently, Sandy has been playing with Kim Sanders and Friends.

Sandy played in the award winning show, The Theft of Sita, touring with the company in Australia, America and Europe. This extraordinary collaboration between Balinese and Australian musicians and puppeteers was written and directed by Nigel Jamieson with music by Paul Grabowsky and I Gde Yudana.

## **Special events in 2000**

Sandy was seen by a worldwide television audience on the roof of the Sydney Opera House at the dawn of the new millenium playing Ross Edward's Dawn Mantras. In 2000 she also performed at the opening ceremony of the Paralympics in Sydney.

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## Background

Sandy lives in Curl Curl, a beautiful beachside suburb of Sydney, Australia, not far from where she was born in Manly in 1960. Her twin passions of composing and improvising have been with her since her mother introduced her to the piano as a very young child. She studied classical flute, before moving on to the saxophone as a teenager when her interest in jazz and improvised music blossomed. She was a founding member of The Young Northside Big Band. Her first professional gigs were in hotels in Singapore, where she completed high school as a scholarship student at The United World College of South East Asia. Sandy is a graduate of the Jazz Studies Course at the NSW Conservatorium of Music. She also studied in the US, Germany, Hungary and the UK with the assistance of an Australia Council study grant.

## The 1980s

Sandy has played with and written for some of the most important groups in Australian jazz since the early 1980s including Great White Noise, The Bruce Cale Orchestra, the KMA Orchestra, the Bernie McGann Trio, Judy Bailey, the Gai Bryant Quartet and Jeremy Sawkins. Her group Women and Children First was a ground-breaking ensemble during the 1980s, undertaking an epic seven month tour by bus around the whole of Australia.

While living in Scotland in 1987, she played with the saxophone quartet SAXTC and the rhythm and blues band Tam White and The Dexters.

## Appearances with classical ensembles

Sandy has appeared as a soloist with several classical music ensembles including The Australian Chamber Orchestra, The Seymour Group and Synergy. With Synergy she premiered Colin Bright's award winning composition The Wild Boys for quartertone sax quartet and percussion quartet.

## Awards

**2003** Designer Rug Bell Award for Australian Jazz Artist of the Year

**1997** Australian Recording Industry Association Award (ARIA) for Best Australian Jazz Recording -Playground by Bernie McGann

**1996** Young Australian Creative Fellowship. (Sandy was one of ten young Australian artists to receive this award, colloquially known as a "Baby Keating")

**1996** ARIA Award for Best Australian World/Folk/Traditional Release - Ruino Vino by MARA!

**1995** APRA Award for Jazz Composition of the Year for her suite 'What This Love Can Do'

**1996** Mo Award for Jazz Performer of the Year in and for Female Jazz Performer of the Year in and three ARIA Awards.

**1993** Mo Award for Female Jazz Performer of the Year

**1990** ARIA Award for Best Australian Jazz Recording -Blue Shift by Clarion Fracture Zone

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## **Tours**

Sandy has toured extensively in Australia, Europe, Canada and Asia. Some highlights have been the North Sea Jazz Festival, WOMAD, the Brecon Festival, the Outside In festival, the Edinburgh Festival, Montreal and Vancouver Jazz festivals, the Knitting Factory (NY) the Wangaratta Jazz Festival, the Manly Jazz Festival, Sydney and Melbourne Jazz Festivals, the Brisbane Biennial, the Adelaide Festival, Jazz Yatra (India), the Sidmouth Folk Festival and the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival.

She has toured Russia, China, Estonia, Lithuania, Denmark, Holland, Italy, Germany, Finland, Singapore, Taiwan, India, Fiji, Western Samoa, Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea and Hong Kong.

## **Television, radio, documentaries and recordings**

She has been featured in several television programs for the ABC and Scottish television as well as radio broadcasts on the ABC, BBC and WDR (Germany). Sandy appears in the Australian jazz documentaries *Beyond el Rocco* and *Dr Jazz*.

Sandy composed the soundtrack for the documentary 'Hatred' and has written music for advertising.

Her recording career has been extensive including over 20 albums. See recordings page for more detail.