

LAUNCH OF *OPUS HOUSE*
BY MRS FRANCES UNDERWOOD
WIFE OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE TASMANIA, 13 MAY 2013

His Excellency:

It is a great pleasure for me and my wife to welcome you all here this evening to this exciting event; the launch of Opus House - an exciting new addition to the music scene - but as my wife is the Government House Artistic Director and cooked all this up with Jabra Latham I shall hand over to her to tell you all about it.

Mrs Underwood:

The music tonight will speak for itself, as it should. But I just wanted to say a few words about this project. I have known Jabra Latham for many years as a student at the conservatorium, as a tutor in saxophone, as an outstanding musician and as an inspirational leader to young musicians such as the 22 SQ saxophone quartet and as a mentor to disengaged young people both here in Tasmania and in aboriginal communities in the north of Australia. As a high school student he was introduced to the saxophone through the Education

Department's school instrumental program, and he hasn't looked back since.

Jabra Latham's playing has been described in the media as astonishing, noting his virtuosity and energy. His performances, including work with the Malaysia Philharmonic Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Saxophone Quartet, Gilmour Ensemble and Hobart Chamber Orchestra, have earned him critical praise as a an orchestral and chamber musician and soloist. His recognitions include a Fellowship from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, a Bachelor of Music with with First Class Honours, a Licentiate of Music Australia with Distinction and a Residency at The Banff Centre. He has performed in Australia, the USA, Europe, Canad and South-East Asia. As a member of the Gilmour Ensemble Jabra can be heard on ABC Classic FM and has twice broadcast for Sunday Live. He has spearheaded several recordings of new music, including the albums You Say You've Seen Seven Wonders, Seven Things I'll Do Tomorrow, Ride and Eleven Duos.

So when someone with this background told me about his project, Opus House, I was frankly inspired and excited. Other members of this ensemble have equally impressive backgrounds. They are elite young musicians and well deserving of our support.

How to meet the live instrumental music expectations of the ipod shuffle generation is something that has exercised my mind. While western classical music is big business in China, with a staggering number of people studying music, and concert halls are full, in the west music is flowing out of concert halls into more accessible venues and, like an ipod on shuffle, the borders between genres are becoming creatively blurred. Never before has access to music been easier and perhaps never before have so many known so much about music but for these “culturally aware non- attenders” actually going to concerts is another thing altogether.

So what do you do? Take the music to the people, of course, especially young people, in various accessible performance spaces around Hobart, both indoors and outdoors, where people naturally gather. Break down the barriers of perception by connecting people and music at the street level. *Opus House* is as much about sharing music and building a new audience, as it is about the music itself but I will let Jabra tell you more about that in music and words.

We are here tonight to launch this new project and I have great pleasure in doing just that.