



## Ben Franklin

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Minister for the Arts

Minister for Regional Youth

Minister for Tourism

## MEDIA RELEASE

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**\*\*Photos available [here](#)**

### **AIJA DRAGUNS AWARDED 2022 CONDUCTOR FELLOWSHIP**

Emerging Sydney-based conductor, composer and arranger Aija Draguns has been selected as the NSW Government's 2022 Conductor (Early Career) Fellowship recipient to develop and support her personal, creative and career advancement.

The Fellowship, made available through Create NSW's Arts and Cultural Funding Program, will provide Ms Draguns financial and in-kind support, which will allow her to undertake broad ranging professional development over 12 months including professional mentoring, music intensives, and camps with leading conductors from across the sector.

Minister for the Arts Ben Franklin said the Fellowship demonstrates the NSW Government's commitment to growing the skills of NSW artists and musicians.

"This Fellowship addresses a significant gap in skills development for emerging conductors in NSW, and provides new opportunities for an early career conductor to hone their craft, build new skills in composition and conducting techniques and be mentored by leading experts in their field," Mr Franklin said.

"As an accomplished composer, Aija is an especially exciting choice for the Conductor Fellowship as she will be able to use her already tried and tested talents for composing when leading the orchestra."

Sydney Youth Orchestras CEO Mia Patoulios said opportunities such as the Fellowship are important for the future of orchestral music.

"I thank Create NSW and the Minister for fulfilling a need to support emerging conductors. We are delighted that we are part of Aija's journey, and we can't wait for her to lead and inspire our young musicians from the podium," Ms Patoulios said.

Ms Draguns said the Fellowship would provide a valuable pathway for her career and for other aspiring conductors.

"I feel that as a conductor you can only truly learn how to lead whilst in front of a live

ensemble, and I am so grateful to have this opportunity to work with the talented musicians of the Sydney Youth Orchestras,” Ms Draguns said.

“This opportunity will allow me to grow both as an orchestra conductor, and as a female musical leader. I hope it will encourage other female conductors to pursue this career path.”

Ms Draguns is the second recipient of the Conductor (Early Career) Fellowship, following Fellow Leonard Weiss.

Create NSW offers opportunities for individuals and groups to receive support through other Fellowships and the Arts and Cultural Funding Program.

For more information visit [www.create.nsw.gov.au](http://www.create.nsw.gov.au)

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