**Citation – Professor Geoffrey Lancaster AO**

Doctor of Music - Tuesday, 26 April 2022, 9.30am

Pro-Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present Professor Geoffrey Lancaster AO to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Music (honoris causa) in recognition of his considerable contribution to music in Australia and across the globe, and his commitment to the preservation of Australia’s keyboard heritage.

Born in Sydney, Geoffrey grew up in the New South Wales country town of Dubbo, commencing piano lessons with nuns at the local convent. His talents were recognised early, and he won a scholarship to the NSW State Conservatorium to study piano and harpsichord. Supported by a Commonwealth Scholarship, Geoffrey went on to complete a BA in music at the Canberra School of Music.

Geoffrey then completed fortepiano specialist studies at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, a Master of Music at the University of Tasmania, and a PhD at Sydney University under Dr Philomena Brennan OAM. Geoffrey was the first Australian to win a major international piano competition. He was awarded First Prize in the 23rd Festival of Flanders International Fortepiano Competition in Bruges in 1986, launching him onto the world stage.

Living for a decade in Tasmania, Geoffrey lectured at the Tasmanian Conservatorium and worked closely with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra as guest director and conductor. Upon returning to Sydney to lecture in classical performance practice, he donated his own Viennese-style fortepiano to the Sydney Conservatorium as a resource for research and teaching, helping to establish early keyboard performance as a focus at the Conservatorium. After serving as Associate Professor at the Royal College of Music in London in 1996, he moved to Perth to join the music faculty at the University of Western Australia. He received the UWA Excellence in Teaching Award in 1999, before being named the 2000 HC Coombs Creative Arts Fellow at The Australian National University.

For 12 years, Geoffrey was Professor and Head of Keyboard at the ANU, during which time he also developed and curated an exceptional resource of historical keyboard instruments culminating in the inception of the ANU Keyboard Institute. He led research into the piano in Australia’s social history with Australian Research Council Discovery Projects funding and served on the ANU Academic Board. After retiring Emeritus from the ANU in 2013, he returned to Perth where he was appointed Vice-Chancellor’s Research Professor at Edith Cowan University’s Western Australian Academy for Performing Arts.

Throughout his career, Geoffrey has been a driving force in fostering generations of musicians as a councillor of the Australian Youth Orchestra, and peer assessor for the Australia Council. His commitment to tertiary music education and to live performance has seen him sustain a dual career as a scholar-musician and organologist. He has published three books and 60 albums. He has held academic appointments as a teacher of 17th and 18th century performance practice and fortepiano at some of the world’s leading conservatoires, including at the Basel Schola Cantorum. He was also Curator of Musical Instruments at Sydney’s Powerhouse Museum, supporting the conservation and display of musical treasures from Australia’s design archive.

Geoffrey played a significant role in the preservation of Australia’s keyboard heritage. He has united over 190 historical keyboards spanning the 18th to the 21st centuries to form Australia’s largest and most important public collection of early keyboard instruments. He leads projects of international significance to preserve and train the skills of historical keyboard performance, and of keyboard instrument restoration, conservation, and maintenance.

Among the world’s most influential forte pianists, Geoffrey is working at the forefront of the historical performance practice movement as an educator, earlier keyboard performer, and orchestral director. He has directed and performed to critical acclaim on modern and early keyboard instruments for 50 years with leading orchestras and ensembles across the world and was the harpsichordist with the first Western baroque orchestra to tour China since the baroque.

Geoffrey was one of 65 distinguished Australian artists to be awarded an Australian Artists Creative Fellowship in recognition of his outstanding artistic contribution to the nation. His other honours include the ARIA Best Classical Album, Honorary Fellowship of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, Fellowship of the Australian College of Educators, and the Order of Arts and Letters. In 2006, he was named Australian of the Year for the Australian Capital Territory and a Member of the Order of Australia. Recognising a lifetime of cultural investment as a musician and mentor, he was promoted to Officer of the Order of Australia in 2022 for his distinguished service to the arts, particularly music, through education, performance, research, and philanthropy.

An influential figure among the many distinguished alumni from the Conservatorium during a fertile period for tertiary music education and for the Arts in Australia, his considerable contributions to music in Australia and internationally are a lasting legacy of his brilliance and dedication.

Pro-Chancellor, I present Professor Geoffrey Lancaster AO for admission to the degree of Doctor of Music (honoris causa) and invite you to confer the degree upon him.