AWO CHIEF CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ALEXANDER BRIGER, APPOINTED AN OFFICER OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA

The **Australian World Orchestra** (AWO) is thrilled to announce that **Alexander Briger,** AWO's Founder, Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, was today recognised in the 2016 Australia Day Honours List, appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia by the Governor-General "for distinguished service to the arts, particularly to orchestral music performance as a leading conductor, and as founder of the Australian World Orchestra."

The Order of Australia is the pre-eminent means of recognising Australians who have demonstrated outstanding service or exceptional achievement. Officers of the Order of Australia are appointed for distinguished service of a high degree to Australia or to humanity at large.

AWO Board Chair Neil Thompson said," The Board of AWO is delighted that Alexander has been bestowed with this honour, which not only acknowledges his overall contribution to the arts, but which also validates his vision to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Australian musicians performing across Australia and around the world through the AWO."

It was Alexander Briger's creative vision and drive that led to the formation of the Australian World Orchestra in 2010. Since its inaugural concert series in 2011, AWO has established itself as one of the most exciting orchestral initiatives in Australia's cultural history, dazzling audiences in Australia and overseas and performing with some of the world's greatest conductors including Sir Simon Rattle (2015) and Maestro Zubin Mehta (2013, 2015). In 2011 the AWO was proud to have pre-eminent Australian Simone Young AM conduct the AWO's inaugural performance with Alexander.

One of Australia's premier conductors, Alexander Briger led the AWO on their inaugural performance in 2011 and he returns in 2016 for the five-year anniversarycelebrations. The 2016 ensemble includes 94 Australian musicians from theworld's leading orchestras, including the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras, Chicago and London Symphony Orchestras, Concertgebouw and Gewandhaus, and Australia's great local ensembles including the State Orchestras, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Brandenburg Orchestra and the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra.

Over the past 25 years, Alexander Briger has conducted many of the world's leading orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Konzerthaus Orchester, Berlin, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, BBC Symphony Orchestra and all the Australian State Orchestras. He regularly performs in Europe and engagements in 2015 included conducting The London Symphony Orchestra's Discovery Concerts, the Teatro Dell'Opera di Roma, Toulon Opera, touring with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Pacific Opera and the Sydney Youth Orchestra. He has conducted a range of operas both in Australian and overseas including *Madama Butterfly*, *La Boheme*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Jenufa*, *House of the Dead, Katya Kabanova*, *Cosi fan tutte, Le Marriage de Figaro*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He is the Conductor and Artistic Director of the Sydney Youth Orchestra, and the Founder, Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the AWO.

AWO Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, Alexander Briger AO said, "I am absolutely thrilled and honoured to have been recognised in this way within my home country, and I thank musicians and music lovers alike in realising my dream."

To celebrate the AWO's five-year anniversary in 2016, the orchestra will perform two electrifying concerts at the Sydney Opera House on September 28 and 29.

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