

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Rare guitars donation creating a sweet sound

A private collector has made a major investment in the future of Australian music, donating 130 rare and beautiful guitars to the University of Tasmania's Conservatorium of Music.

The Tasmanian donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, has made it clear: the instruments should be played.

The Conservatorium's Deputy Head of Music and Head of Contemporary Guitar, Dr Glen Hodges, is overseeing the formal evaluation and cataloguing of the collection.

"This gift is unique in my experience and is extremely generous given the quality of the instruments and the fact that the donor had been accruing the collection for many years," Dr Hodges said.

"There are a number of items that are quite unique, such as a 1920's Harmony Parlour guitar, a circa 1885 Reliance 5 string banjo, and Guild Finesses, two of only eleven made worldwide."

Dr Hodges said the collection included a number of handmade guitars from well-known and respected Australian luthiers as well as famous brands such as Guild, Lowden, Santa Cruz, Tacoma, Martin and Fylde.

One of the Guild Finesses was played by celebrated bluesman Phil Manning. There is also a Santa Cruz formerly owned by Melbourne blues and roots guitarist Nick Charles.

The donor has promised to donate close to 40 of his very best guitars in the future.

Dr Hodges said the collection would be available for the students to play, with some even awarded as prizes for outstanding graduates.

"One of the most gratifying aspects of making the transfer of instruments was getting to know the donor, who took an active interest in the proposed uses for the collection," he said.

“They were extremely pleased with the potential for positive impact on young contemporary guitarists and songwriters at the Conservatorium.”

The various uses for the collection include assigning certain archetypal instruments for recording and concerts, with others offered as rotational scholarships for use while a student studies at the Conservatorium.

“These instruments are meant for playing - a number of Australian luthiers feature in the collection and the Conservatorium is planning to showcase these and other instruments during future concerts,” Dr Hodges said.

University of Tasmania Foundation CEO and Executive Director Advancement, Young Dawkins, said the institution was incredibly grateful for the generous donation.

“This is a very significant contribution, not just to the Conservatorium of Music, but to contemporary music in Tasmania,” he said.

Director of the Conservatorium, Associate Professor Andrew Legg, said the unprecedented donation would provide new musical opportunities for the budding musicians.

“The donation of these wonderful guitars is the most amazing gift - it will sow richly into the cultural fabric of the Conservatorium and the broader community, and most importantly, into the lives of our amazing students,” Associate Professor Legg said.