

Dr Robyn Archer AO

Citation for conferral of Doctor of Music (*honoris causa*) Ceremony 10, Monday 4 May 2015, 11:00am

Chancellor, I present to you Robyn Archer.

The award of the Degree of Doctor of Music (*honoris causa*) acknowledges Robyn Archer's contributions as a singer, writer, composer, stage and artistic director, and public advocate of the arts in Australia and internationally.

Robyn Archer was born in 1948 in Prospect, South Australia. She graduated from The University of Adelaide with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and Diploma of Education, and took up a full-time singing career in blues, jazz, rock and cabaret.

Robyn Archer sang in the Australian premiere of Bertolt Brecht/Kurt Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* to open "The Space" at the Adelaide Festival Centre in 1974. She subsequently played Jenny in Weill's *Threepenny Opera*. Since then her name has been linked with the German cabaret songs of Weill, Eisler and Paul Dessau. Her one-woman cabaret *A Star is Torn* (which toured throughout Australia 1979-83 and played for a year in London's West End) and her 1981 show *The Pack of Women* both became successful books and recordings. Archer has written and devised many works for the stage from *The Conquest of Carmen Miranda* to *Songs From Sideshow Alley* and *Cafe Fledermaus*. Her ties to Adelaide have remained strong: In 2008 her play *Architektin*, on the life of Margarete Schütte-Lihotsky, premiered at the Dunstan Playhouse at the Adelaide Festival Centre and she gave the annual Hawke Lecture at the Adelaide Festival Centre in 2013.

Robyn Archer has directed many major arts festivals in Australia and overseas. These have included the National Festival of Australian Theatre (1993-95), The Adelaide Festival of Arts (1998 and 2000) and the Melbourne International Arts Festival (2002-2004).

She has also held many Board positions including that of Chair of the Community Cultural Development Board of the Australia Council (1993-95), Member, Board of Directors of the International Society of Performing Arts, and Patron, National Affiliation of Arts Educators. Her former South Australian and University of Adelaide-affiliated positions have included that of Inaugural Ambassador to the Adelaide Festival Centre, Trustee for the Don Dunstan Foundation and Board Member of the Helpmann Academy. Her current positions include that of Member of the European House of Culture (she is the only Australian member) and Patron of many organisations including The Arts Law Centre of Australia, National Script Centre, and The Australian Art Orchestra. She is Ambassador for both the Adelaide Crows and The International Women's Development Agency and an Advisor on the Centenary of Anzac. Archer is well known as a public speaker and presenter. Her recent public speeches are published under the title *Detritus* and in 2012 she was the first woman to deliver the Memorial Arthur Boyd Lecture in London.

A truly international figure, Dr Archer was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2000, and, for her services to France, she was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and, in Belgium, an Officer of the Crown. Among her many other accolades, she was awarded the Sydney Critics' Circle Award and the Henry Lawson Award in 1980 and gained an Aria award Best Soundtrack (for *Pack of Women*) in 1987. She was awarded the South Australian Premier's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012.

Robyn Archer has made an outstanding contribution to contemporary Australian music, theatre, cabaret and the artistic direction of festivals internationally. She holds 'first' in many of her fields of endeavor, and has been a mentor and inspiration to many.

I am very pleased and proud to present to you Chancellor, Dr Robyn Archer, Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Education, Doctor of Letters (University of Sydney), Doctor of the University (Flinders University), Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France), Officer of the Order of the Crown (Belgium), Officer of the Order of Australia, for admission to the honorary degree of Doctor of Music (*honoris causa*).