

## SONIA CROUCHER

Sonia Croucher joined the West Australian Symphony Orchestra as Principal Piccolo in 2024.

Growing up in rural Queensland, Sonia started learning piano and 70's Electone Organ by ear. Her flute journey began through the Queensland Schools free Instrumental Music Program, introduced by her primary school head teacher - her father!

This led to fortnightly 400km trips to Brisbane for lessons, culminating in a double major in flute and piano at university, where she earned both the Queensland Conservatorium and Griffith University Medals for academic excellence.

Sonia's career has taken her around the world. After teaching at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and freelancing with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, she served as Principal Piccolo with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) for over two decades. This multicultural ensemble of 105 musicians from 22 nations deeply influenced her musical perspective. Her tenure included more than 1,500 concerts, tours across Asia and Australia, and several CD recordings under the BIS label. She collaborated with renowned artists like Lorin Maazel, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Sir Neville Marriner, José Carreras, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Sumi Jo, Sir Willard White, Branford Marsalis, Joshua Bell, and the Count Basie Orchestra.

Her international performing career includes appearances with orchestras from Canada to Norway, to New Zealand and here in Australia with Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Sonia's public speaking appearances began with a live BBC Radio interview during the Malaysian Philharmonic's *Proms* collaborations with the BBC Orchestra. This led to MC roles for in-house MPO concerts, including narrating Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*.

Education remains close to Sonia's heart. She mentors young composers, coaches Youth Orchestras, and teaches at the University of Western Australia. With a Kodály Primary Level 1 qualification and her keen eye for detail, Sonia's approach to teaching draws from her other fields of study, including Yoga, Reiki, and Scuba Diving. She focuses on overall musicianship and performance psychology, nurturing both accuracy of technique and mental resilience.

Sonia performs on an Anton Braun hand-made C-foot Piccolo and a Brannen silver flute with gold Lafin head.

