



UNIVERSITYof
TASMANIA

Monday 13th September 2021

To Queenstown and beyond: winning student musician hits the road

Singer-songwriter guitarist Christian 'Karai' Hemara embarks on a tour of Tasmanian towns next week as the winner of the University of Tasmania's 2021 Ossa Music Prize.

The Melbourne-born, Hobart-based musician is in his second year of a Bachelor of Music at the University of Tasmania.

Hemara's free concert of beautiful and original songs is called Rivets & Ribbons. He will perform in Queenstown, Ulverstone, Launceston, Swansea and Hobart.

"It's really appealing to me to visit these towns and in some cases to connect with people who may not get to see a lot of original live music," Hemara said.

The title Rivets and Ribbons is the name of a song Hemara wrote during a tutorial with well known singer/songwriter Monique Brumby. Looking out the window, he noted the stark contrast of a nearby building site with the ribbons of cloud in a blue sky above. This prompted him to think about life's contrasts of highs and lows, beauty and utilitarianism. "Rivets and ribbons is a metaphor for life; the peaks and troughs, heartaches and triumphs," he said

Hemara's tour will include school visits at each stop. "I'm looking forward to playing for students, asking and answering their questions and getting a sense of where they are at with their music. It would be awesome if I also got to hear some of their music," he said.

Hemara grew up listening to his parents' and grandparents' collections. These included 1950s crooners and African-American blues and soul from the 1960s and 70s. He began singing at a young age and attended the same Newcastle high school as the band Silverchair, whose legacy meant the school had a vibrant contemporary music program compete with recording studio and in-house producer. At the age of 18 he was ready to pursue a musical career and has been singing professionally since 2007, touring Australia with artists including Prinnie and Mahalia, Chet Faker, Ngaiire, Sampa the Great, Okenyo, New Venusians and Sex on Toast. He has also performed alongside Ngaiire, supporting Leon Bridges and the Black Seeds.

"Karai's musical skill is matched by thoughtful and poetic lyrical content that demonstrates his empathy with the human condition," the Head of Music at the University, Dr Arabella Tenniswood-Harvey, said.

"The funded tour provides invaluable performance opportunities through which Karai will learn to adapt to differing venues and audiences, and have the opportunity to refine and reimagine his program along the way," said Dr Tenniswood-Harvey.

The Ossa Prize is named after Tasmania's highest mountain peak and was established in 2018 by University alumnus Mr Rod Roberts to help students pursue excellence in musicianship. In addition to supporting a young artist to embark on a Statewide performance tour, the prize includes \$2,500 for musical equipment or tuition.

Hemara was one of three finalists who competed for the prize at a public performance on 2 July at the Hedberg before judges Dr Tenniswood-Harvey, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra's Simon Rogers and Australian trumpeter Scott Tinkler.

Tour dates:

Queenstown 20 September 6pm – Mountain Heights School
Ulverstone 21 September 7pm – The Wharf
Launceston 22 September 7pm – Scotch Oakburn College
Swansea 23 September 6.30pm – Swansea Town Hall
Hobart 2 October 7pm – The Ian Potter Recital Hall | The Hedberg

Free tickets at: ossa-prize.eventbrite.com.au

Available for interview:

Christian 'Karai' Hemara

Media inquiries: Miranda Harman, University of Tasmania 0427 199 562;
miranda.harman@utas.edu.au

Information released by:

Communications Office
University of Tasmania
+61 3 6226 2124

Communications.Office@utas.edu.au

[Twitter.com/utas_](https://twitter.com/utas_)