



2020 TELSTRA ARIA MUSIC TEACHER AWARD

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MEDIA RELEASE – EMBARGOED until 30 September 2020

NOMINEES ANNOUNCED FOR 2020 TELSTRA ARIA MUSIC TEACHER AWARD

ARIA, Telstra and national arts education organisation **The Song Room** are excited to announce the nominees for the **2020 Telstra ARIA Music Teacher Award!** After an extensive search four finalists have been selected for their incredible contributions to music education.

The nominees, announced today, are **Thomas Feinberg** from Evans High School in Blacktown NSW, **Sarah Donnelley** from Wilcannia Central School in Wilcannia, NSW, **Christopher Shaw** from Palmerston District Primary School, ACT, and **Kathryn McLennan** from Virginia State School in Brisbane QLD.

ARIA Ambassadors **The Veronicas, Christine Anu, Jimmy Barnes** and **Brooke Boney** surprised nominees and their students with news of their nomination, celebrating the nominees hard work, creativity and dedication in what has been an extraordinary year.

This year, perhaps more than any other, we are reminded of the fundamental importance of teachers, as they adapt and adopt new teaching and learning techniques to keep working and connecting with their students. It has only served to underscore the importance of music education to engage students in their learning and to support their development and wellbeing.

The Telstra ARIA Music Teacher Award is a highlight at ARIA Awards for the music industry and music lovers across Australia.

Last year ARIA Ambassadors **Katie Noonan** and **yellow Wiggle, Emma Watkins**, awarded the 2019 Telstra ARIA Music Teacher of the Year Award to **Antonio Chiappetta** from St Andrews College in western Sydney, NSW. Antonio was ecstatic to receive the award.

“This kind of recognition is really special. I think it’s a win for music education,” he said. “Music can have such a big impact on students and I’m honoured to have the opportunity to highlight just how important and inspirational music can be.”

Alice Gerlach, CEO of The Song Room says music can transform the lives of Australian children.

“The Song Room is very proud to partner with ARIA in recognising passionate music teachers who make an enormous difference to the futures of so many young people. By celebrating our amazing music teachers,



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we shine a light on the importance of music education to engage students, improve learning outcomes, support well-being, and bring joy in a very challenging year.”

Dan Rosen, CEO of ARIA, says: *“The Telstra ARIA Music Teacher Award is one of my favourite moments at the ARIA Awards. Every musician knows how important it is to have inspiring, passionate teachers. But we also know exposing children to making music helps them become the best that they can be. I am moved by the stories of our four nominees this year, and I look forward to awarding one teacher with an ARIA Award this November. I want to thank Telstra for continuing to join us in celebrating our music teachers.”*

Genelle Sharples, Media, Sponsorships & Awards Principal for Telstra, says: *“We are delighted to be presenting the Telstra ARIA Music Teacher Award again this year. Music brings joy and has such power in bringing people together. This is something we’ve all come to appreciate even more during the challenges of this year.”*

The public are now able to vote for their favourite music teacher online at www.aria.com.au. Voting closes at **11:59pm on Wednesday 18 November**. The music teacher with the most public and industry votes will be announced during the 2020 ARIA Award ceremony held in late November.

About The Song Room

The Song Room is a national for-purpose organisation that levels the learning playing field for children experiencing disadvantage through an impactful and sustainable approach to Arts Learning. The Song Room works in partnership with schools and communities across Australia, using music and the arts to improve student outcomes, wellbeing and school engagement.

About ARIA

The ARIA Awards is the flagship event on the Australian music calendar – a celebration of all that is great in local music. The very first ARIA Awards were held in 1987, and since that time the ARIA Awards have developed into Australia’s pinnacle music awards ceremony, forging careers and playing host to countless memorable performances. For more information visit www.aria.com.au.

Access media assets [here](#), or to organise interviews with the nominees, please contact:

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