

## *Daughter of the Southern Cross – Artist & Partner Bios*

**Aminah Hughes** (songwriter, co-arranger, producer, vocals):

When Aminah steps on stage she does more than fill the room with her honeyed voice. She draws her audience into nostalgia, calling us to remember the beauty and rebelliousness of an analogue world. “Inspiring” and “strong” are words that are often passed around at her performances as she embodies the empowerment we are all aching to feel. “An intelligent and vocal woman of extraordinary musical talent – a powerful musical force” (**Robert James**, GANGgajang/Yothu Yindi), Aminah is unafraid to touch the rawness, giving voice to pain, laying it bare, and finding the light in its grace.

An Australian musician who plays in between the worlds of folk, roots and jazz, Aminah is a seasoned performer in Australia and Europe. She performed in the Sydney Opera House at the age of sixteen and has shared stages with **Tommy Emmanuel**, **Declan O'Rourke**, **KILA**, **Maria Doyle Kennedy** and Waterboys fiddler **Steve Wickham**. She has been featured in US magazines, appeared on **Irish TV**, **RTÉ** and **BBC Radio Ulster** and performed with various orchestras both as a singer and flautist.

A prolific songwriter, producer, vocalist, flautist and spoken word artist, she appeared on eleven albums in Australia and Europe (including albums by Australia’s **Shane Howard**, Ireland’s **Martin O’Connor Band** and European folk-fusion outfit **No Crows**) before producing her debut solo album, **Blue Wooden Boat**.

Recorded in Ireland, USA, Australia and Germany, the album features special guests Emmanuel, Wickham and Nashville gospel singers, **The McCrary Sisters**. Mixed in Nashville and mastered in Memphis by GRAMMY® Award winning engineers, it launched her independent label, **Blue Wolf Records** and secured her a worldwide distribution deal with **MGM**. The album has earned her a growing list of accolades, including two award wins and a nomination at the **Independent Music Awards** (New York), a best song nomination at the **Berlin Motion Picture Festival** and finalist status in the **International Songwriting Competition** (Nashville). It has received airplay in Australia, UK, Ireland and in 26 states across the US, charting as high as #6 on US Core and College radio charts.

“A strong, soulful singer” (**All About Jazz**), her voice appears on a variety of productions, including Australia’s **Who Do You Think You Are?** and highly anticipated NBCUniversal game, **Battlestar Galactica: Deadlock**.

An award-winning screenwriter and director who also helms her own music videos, **Musical Notes Global** (New York) cites Aminah as “a true Renaissance woman.” Her music videos have premiered in New York, Nashville and Melbourne and screened at local and international film festivals.

Some press quotes from Aminah’s debut solo album, Blue Wooden Boat:

“A gorgeous emotional journey...Hughes demonstrates powerful vulnerability...enhanced by stunning, soulful vocals...not only does *Blue Wooden Boat* have something for everyone but it will open and heal those parts of your heart that need it most.” - *Music Notes Global (New York)*

“Nothing short of spectacular...a song cycle that will have enduring appeal” - *Around the Sound magazine (Perth)*

“Where heartbreak and struggle blur into uplifting gospel – a perfect song for healing.” – *American Songwriter Magazine (Nashville)*

“A hint of Eva Cassidy's vocal versatility and interpretive powers...(Aminah's) own songs of nature and self-examination enchant...★★★” - *The Weekend Australian*

“A wonderful ability to invoke realms of magic and beauty.”- *Scenestr (Melbourne)*

“Trying to pin down what this singer can do with her voice is hard because she can do some amazing things. She can belt out a roof-raising blues tune just as readily as she can deliver a folk tune sweet enough to make you cry.” - *Nadia Mitsopoulos, ABC Radio Perth*

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### **Ben Matthews** (co-arranger, musical director, piano)

After nearly a decade performing as both a sideman and bandleader with some of Australia's most illustrious musicians, jazz pianist and contemporary keyboardist Ben Matthews turned his focus to composition in late 2015. He has composed soundtracks for computer games, including Norway's 'This Is The Police,' music for short film, a double album of jazz/neo-soul instrumentals entitled 'LiveWyre,' a collaborative EP of contemporary ballads with vocalist Edwina Masson entitled 'An Open Letter of Imperfections' and recorded a seven track, entirely improvised solo piano album entitled 'My Story.' Three of his compositions have been nominated for a WAM Song of the Year Award. His current aspiration is to create honest and emotional music that balances creativity with accessibility. He aims to develop as a solo improviser, drawing influence from modern jazz greats such as Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Hiromi Uehara and Keith Jarrett, and screen composers such as John Williams, Joe Hisaishi and Ryuichi Sakamoto. He is interested in composing and arranging pieces that blend stylistic qualities with fusion to produce an original, refined and unique style of music.

### **Andrew Winton** (slide and electric guitars)

Andrew Winton is a multi-award winning musician based in Perth. An accomplished instrumentalist, vocalist and songwriter, he underwent diverse training that includes a Diploma of Music (Jazz - electric guitar) from the prestigious West Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA). Specialising in lap-slide guitars, he has performed at major national and international festivals.

Andrew has released 6 albums and 2 DVDs with influences ranging through blues, roots, folk, jazz and gospel. He continues to attract audiences with his incredible lap slide playing and unique collaborative instrument designs. He has shared stages with Jeff Lang, Mamadou Diabate, Lior, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, Lucky Oceans, Nick Barker, Josh Pyke, Ash Grunwald, Ian Moss, Daryl Braithwaite, Jim Conway's Big Wheel, Jeff Martin, Tim Freedman, My Friend The Chocolate Cake, Chris Wilson, Dan Sultan, Chris Smither, Eric Bogle, Dallas Frasca, Harry Manx, Hoodoo Gurus, Mike Compton, Bill Chambers and The Waifs. He has been a feature artist on Radio National's The Daily Planet and appeared live on state-wide television in Alabama.

### **Lee Buddle** (recording engineer)

Lee Buddle has been a music producer and recording engineer since 1986 and has worked with an extensive list of accomplished domestic and international artists including James Morrison, Katie Noonan, Joe Camilleri, Tim Minchin, Lucky Oceans, Tom O'Halloran, WA Ballet Co, WA Opera Co, WA Symphony Orchestra, WA Youth Jazz Orchestra, Gina Williams, Sara MacLiver and Justin Bieber. He has performed with the likes of Anthony Warlow, Dave Weckyl, Doug Parkinson, Glenn Shorrock, Jerry Lewis, Jersey Boys, Natalie Cole & Ray Charles.

### **Brodie Stewart** (recording engineer)

Brodie Stewart is an award-winning multi-instrumentalist, composer, producer, and audio engineer based in Perth. At the forefront of WA's jazz and contemporary music scenes, Brodie's forward-thinking musicianship has resulted in him being in high demand as a recording, mixing and mastering engineer. Brodie is equally comfortable behind a keyboard rig and is fluent in complex sound design and synth programming. A recipient of the Channel 7 Award for Jazz, and a WAAPA graduate with First Class Honours in Jazz Performance, Brodie now lectures in Contemporary Music at WAAPA. His music has been performed throughout Australia, America, and Europe.

### **Session musicians** (double bass, drums, didgeridoo/yidaki)

Professional session musicians will be selected dependent upon availability. Local musicians on these instruments with whom Aminah and Ben have previously worked include Daniel Susnjar, Michael Perkins, Karl Florisson, Alistair Peel, Phil Waley-Stack, Heath Bergersen, Richard Walley and Si Mullumby.