

Jonathon Welch

Australian Performance Artist, MC, Keynote Speaker & Workshop Facilitator

Dr Jonathon Welch is a renowned and diverse Australian artist who has worked alongside some of the world's finest, among them Baz Lurhmann and Dame Joan Sutherland. A multi-award winning singer, conductor, teacher, composer, director and recording artist, he is perhaps best known for his work with marginalised and homeless communities, which led to the creation of the award-winning Choir of Hard Knocks and School of Hard Knocks programs.

A consummate professional, who is approachable, reliable and accommodating, Jonathon is increasingly engaged as an MC for events that have included the National Disability Awards in Canberra with the Prime Minister. An engaging keynote speaker with a unique story to tell, his presentations inspire empathy, change and action, at all times are tailored to meet the event organiser's objectives and reflect its core values.

As a workshop facilitator, Jonathon runs a two or three-part program, tailored to meet your objectives with activities that include icebreaker games, vocal exercises, song writing and performances. Every workshop is guaranteed to stretch participants' ability and teach them new ways to use their voices and work together. Jonathon is happy to talk about his work with the award-winning Choir of Hard Knocks and School of Hard Knocks programs and answer any questions. He can use some footage of the choir in action to demonstrate his work.

More about Dr Jonathon Welch AM:

Jonathon Welch has performed around the world alongside many of the finest singers, directors and conductors including Baz Lurhmann, John Farnham, Jimmy Barnes, kd Lang, Grace Bumbry, Frederica Von Stade and Dame Joan Sutherland in some of the world's great Concert Halls and Opera Houses including Carnegie Hall, New York, Royal Albert Hall, London and Sydney Opera House.

In 2007, his work creating choirs for the homeless and disadvantaged in Australia was the subject of the internationally acclaimed ARIA, Logie and Helpmann award winning TV documentary Choir of Hard Knocks. He also created the Jailbirds documentary in the Victorian Women's Prisons in 2009, and was a judge on the highly successful Battle of the Choirs TV series for Channel 7.



Jonathon was named the Victorian and Australian of the Year Local Hero 2008, ANZAC of the Year 2009, and has received an Honorary Doctorate, an Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2009 and an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Council of Educational Leaders in recognition of his outstanding commitment to the music industry, youth music education and his work with marginalised and homeless communities.

In 2009, he created and launched 'Social Inclusion Week' making Australia the only country in the world to celebrate Social Inclusion nationally, and in September 2012 launched his vision for the future of arts, cultural and wellbeing programs for those experiencing homelessness and disadvantage with the School of Hard Knocks.

In 2011 Jonathon produced and directed Beyond Hard Knocks a follow-up documentary on the journey of a Choir of Hard Knocks member, and in 2012 and 2013 he returned from his charity work in Uganda, to direct and produce the documentary Choir Man in Africa with the African's Children Choir.

Jonathon conceived and co-wrote Street Requiem, a major choral work in memory of those who have died on the streets in June 2014. The work was premiered at the Melbourne International Singers Festival and was a Finalist in the prestigious American Prize in the USA. It has been performed extensively throughout Australia and the world. Jonathon made his New York debut at Carnegie Hall, conducting and singing in his award winning Street Requiem in September 2016 with legendary mezzo soprano Frederica von Stade.

Other engagements on the world's stages have included Rome, Milan and Royal Albert Hall, London in 2015 and a return to Sydney Opera House in 2016 to perform with the Choir of Hard Knocks for their 10th anniversary, and to reprise his award-winning roles in Deborah Cheetham's Pecan Summer, Australia's first Indigenous Opera.

Jonathon is regularly engaged as a guest conductor and is the Choral Director for Queensland Music Festival's You're the Voice family violence project, along with his ongoing commitments as Founding Artistic Director for Melbourne International Singers Festival since 2010, Founding Artistic Director for the School of Hard Knocks and the Choir of Hard Knocks.

Client Testimonials



Wow! It doesn't get any better than a standing ovation from an AMP audience. All the delegate feedback rated Jonathon's presentation as the most outstanding presentation on the main plenary which is only fitting for a man who has made such a difference to so many disadvantaged lives and has forced a nation to look at the homeless and destitute through a fresh pair of eyes. Our production team really appreciated the amount of work that Jonathon was prepared to put in prior to the event to get it just right for this very critical audience. It's a powerful story that Jonathon tells, which needs to be told again and again and again. We have no hesitation in providing a personal reference to any client who is thinking of using Jonathon at one of their events.

Australian Business Theatre



Jonathon's presentation was truly inspirational. The relevance to the conference was perfect and he is a total professional.

Corporate Communique



Just a quick note to let you know that Jonathon was absolutely terrific at the Novartis conference. He went over and above the call of duty with his workshop which everyone absolutely loved. He had an exhausting trip from Hobart to Port Douglas and still spent about 3 hours on his speech and workshop. He certainly was a highlight and loved by all. He also spent a lot of time at the end mingling with guests and discussing the Choir at length.

Graffiti Group



Jonathon was such a lovely person and was a pleasure to work with. His presentation and indeed his story was captivating and inspiring.

Macquarie International

Client Testimonials



They thought he was fantastic, all reviews were wonderful and the guests were still talking about him after he left which is always a great sign and shows that he had certainly made an impact.

Corporate Travel Management



He was very well received, he actively engaged our diverse audience and his material was relevant and inspirational.

BP

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