

The University of South Australia confers the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University to a person of eminence who has made a distinguished contribution to public service, or a field of academic endeavour or artistic pursuit.

It is my pleasure to present Mr Gautier for the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University in recognition of his distinguished contributions to the arts.

Douglas' career in the arts spans nearly five decades across the UK, Hong Kong and Australia.

After graduating from Flinders University in 1975 with a Bachelor of Arts, Douglas began as a trainee director and actor with the South Australian Theatre Company.

He later worked in the BBC's music and arts department in London, which led to an invitation to Hong Kong to establish a music and arts radio channel.

Over 25 years in Hong Kong, Douglas held roles in radio, television, tourism and music, and developed a deep appreciation for Asia's cultures. His last post there was as Director of the Hong Kong arts festival.

In 2006, Douglas returned to Adelaide as CEO and Artistic Director of the Adelaide Festival Centre, a role he held until 2024. He spearheaded a major program-led revival that boosted audiences and made the Centre a hub for Asian-Australian cultural exchange.

He founded key events including OzAsia and the Adelaide International Guitar Festival, and reimagined the children's arts festival as DreamBIG. He also expanded the Adelaide Cabaret Festival and brought major productions – such as Disney live shows – to South Australia for the first time.

Douglas was instrumental in launching First Nations programming at the Centre, beginning with 'Our Mob' in 2008, and later expanding to 'Our Worlds' and 'Our Stories'. During this time, he also oversaw the redevelopment of the award-winning Her Majesty's Theatre.

In 2015, under Douglas' leadership, Adelaide became Australia's first and only UNESCO City of Music, enhancing its global cultural footprint. A year later, he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his contributions to the arts.

Throughout his career, Douglas has also contributed to the arts and tourism through various appointments to boards and committees both in Australia and internationally.

Recently, he has stepped down as Deputy Chancellor of Flinders University to become the inaugural CEO of the Royal Arts Complex in Saudi Arabia.

Douglas's exceptional career is defined by his passion for and dedication to the arts. He has made a lasting impact across the arts sector both internationally and in Australia. It is therefore fitting that we recognise his distinguished contribution.

Chancellor, I present Douglas Alexander Gautier AM for the honorary degree of Doctor of the University.