

Beginnings to New Ends

Ensemble Offspring

Sunday 24 June 2018

Utzon Room

Principal Partner

SAMSUNG



Beginnings to New Ends

Now in its fifth year Ensemble Offspring's Hatched Academy has already proven to be a hot house of young and emerging talent in Australia – a much needed progression for the very best chamber instrumentalists and soloists to grow into successful professionals. This year for the first time we welcome our sole and featured Associate Artist, Georgina Oakes – a clarinetist who returns from 9 years in Europe to wow us with her new music pedigree having worked with the likes of Pierre Boulez and Tristan Murail. Beginnings to New Ends is just that – a program celebrating the local emerging talent we have in Australia with the likes of composers Elizabeth Younan and Ella Macens alongside elder statesmen Michael Smetanin (Sydney) and Christopher Fox (UK) and legend Pierre Boulez. It shows the beginnings of this music of our time right up to the present day – a veritable chronological feast for the ears!

Claire Edwardes, Artistic Director

Performers

Georgina Oakes

Clarinetist Georgina Oakes is inspired by the process of collaboration, experimentation and vivification of rarely heard works of new music. After nine years honing her craft as a performer in Europe, in 2018 Georgina returned to her hometown of Sydney and is Ensemble Offspring's Hatched Academy Associate Artist. Georgina has been awarded the Australian Music Foundation Young Musician Award, Swiss Thyll-Dürr Foundation Award and was a finalist in the Viennese Casino Austria Rising Stars Award. Having researched Boulez's clarinet concerto *Domaines* through her postgraduate studies in Austria, a major highlight of 2017 was her performance of this masterwork with the Webern Kammerphilharmonie, Vienna.

Claire Edwardes

Claire Edwardes is an internationally acclaimed percussion soloist, chamber musician and artistic director of Ensemble Offspring. She is the only Australian musician to win the APRA Art Music Award for Excellence by an Individual three times (2016, 2012, 2007), is the recipient of an Australia Council and Freedman Fellowship and the winner of numerous European instrumental and percussion competitions as well as 1999 Australian Young Performer of the Year. Recently appearing as soloist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra at the Myer Music Bowl and on *Play School* to an audience of thousands of children, Claire is passionate about percussion and new sounds being widely disseminated.

Program

Colour Burst (2017)

Composer: Ella Macens (b. 1991)

Composed for Claire Edwardes *Colour Burst* was inspired by the city of Guanajuato, Central Mexico. Macens reveals, "My mind was overloaded by the colours, the sound of footsteps on cobbled streets and the music of the Mariachi men. I was captivated by their energy, their charisma, and most importantly, their rhythms. It seemed so incredible that these large groups of musicians could so seamlessly transition from what seemed to be pre-planned musical ideas to more improvised mass music making. The main theme, which is heard at the beginning of the piece, was the primary driving rhythm used by one group of Mariachi men in the streets of Guanajuato."

Sydney based **Ella Macens** is a fast-emerging composer with a passion for choral, orchestral and chamber music writing. She is currently studying a Master of Music Composition under the Sydney Conservatorium of Music's inaugural National Women Composers' Development Program with the guidance of Professor Matthew Hindson. In 2017 she was awarded the Fine Music FM Young Composer Award for her first-ever orchestral piece, *Flight*.

Frozen River Flows (2005)

Composer: Dobrinka Tabakova (b. 1980)

Inspired by the beautiful phenomenon of a flowing river with a frozen 'crust', this piece is a short delicate meditation. The sinuous lines of the clarinet are blurred with hazy vibraphone drones and crystalline Morse code from the crotales. Commissioned by New Noise and originally scored for oboe and percussion, there is an arrangement for violin, accordion and double bass, and also an arrangement for 2 Flutes, Clarinet, Violin and Cello.

Like many composers of her generation, **Dobrinka Tabakova** had a bi-cultural upbringing, which explains some of the many influences heard in her music. Tabakova was born in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, and since 1991, has lived in London. Even as a teenager studying composition, conducting, and piano in the Junior Department of the Royal Academy of Music, her compositions were winning awards. She went on to attend the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and King's College London.

Domaines (Original) (1969)

Composer: Pierre Boulez (b. 1925 – d. 2016)

This, now classic, clarinet solo was completed by French composer Pierre Boulez in 1969. A pioneering work with its use of an aleatoric 'open-form' and atonal harmonic language, the piece was also unique in its non-traditional segmented notation and its utilisation of extended techniques. Although there are many choices that Boulez gives the performer, it should be noted that he did not see any merit in random acts of chance. Boulez adheres to a judicious use of indeterminacy, inviting the performer to create their own pathway through his various established networks.

Pierre Boulez followed a trajectory common to his generation; that is, from twelve-tone organisation through integral serialism to open forms. Drawing upon influences ranging from Symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé to American musical anarchist John Cage, Boulez explored the notion that musical form could be variable or open-ended. As a man of mathematical training though, he abhorred imprecision, so these experiments were always carefully controlled. Boulez thus created his own musical language: one that represented the context of a Central Europe traumatised after WWII. *Domaines* is one of Boulez's most extensive examples of mobile form.

Ladder of Escape (1984)

Composer: Michael Smetanin (b. 1958)

The title of the work is taken from a painting by Twentieth Century Spanish artist Joan Miro who died in 1983 and to whose memory the music is dedicated. *Ladder of Escape* was begun on the day Miro passed away and was finished in 1984 for the Dutch Bass Clarinet virtuoso the late Harry Sparnaay and his ensemble Het Basklarinetten Kollektief. The fundamental material of the work is based on an expansion of a twelve bar 'dance' bass line, typical of the dance genre in the early 80's. The version for soloist and fixed media is used.

Temple (2015)

Composer: Michael Smetanin (b. 1958)

Temple is a short piece for one percussionist playing one set of five Temple Blocks and was composed for German percussionist Max Riefer. The piece is ideally performed on traditional style Chinese Temple Blocks which are bell shaped and in possession of a less diatonic and tempered pitch set than the modern factory-made versions which are rectangular prisms in shape. The music is made of materials mainly based on a non-retrogradable rhythm of 3, 2, 1, 1, 2, 3 predominantly measured in semiquavers and overlaid in canon of varying numbers of voices at any one time.

Sydney composer **Michael Smetanin** is one of Australia's most distinctive composers. He completed study at the Sydney Conservatorium in 1981 and three years study with Louis Andriessen at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague between 1982-84. Smetanin's music has been extensively commissioned, performed, and recorded internationally with works appearing on over 30 commercially released CD albums. Commissions include those from Schoenberg Ensemble, Bang on a Can All Stars, Orkest de Volharding, Elision and major orchestras in Australia.

Electors of Middlemarch (2017)

Composer: Elizabeth Younan (b. 1994)

Composed for solo percussionist Claire Edwardes, *Electors of Middlemarch* takes excerpts from George Eliot's novel, *Middlemarch* (1871–72). In three sections, this work explores the different relationships possible between the voice and percussion, creating both rhythmic and timbral counterpoint. Many of the rhythmic patterns recur in different contexts, providing subtly shifting variations, which create a sense of instability.

Elizabeth Younan has garnered numerous accolades for her music, including the Jean Bogan Youth Prize for Piano Composition, the Ignaz Friedman Memorial Prize, and the 102.5 Fine Music Young Composer Award. As one of Musica Viva's featured Australian composers for the 2018 International Concert Season, her work for pianist Joyce Yang will be premiered in July, and as Ensemble Offspring's "Noisy Woman" composer, her work for flautist Lamorna Nightingale will be premiered next February.

Reeling (1983)

Composer: Christopher Fox (b. 1955)

Reeling for very high clarinet and hi-hat was written in 1983 for Roger Heaton and arose out of a fascination with the relationship between melody and rhythm in both Irish traditional music and bebop jazz.

Christopher Fox often works at a tangent to the musical mainstream. He has based his compositional career around close collaborations with particular performers, including Roger Heaton, Ian Pace, Anton Lukoszevieveze and Philip Thomas, and the instrumental groups the Ives Ensemble, KNM Berlin and Apartment House. His work is the subject of the book *Perspectives on the music of Christopher Fox: Straight lines in broken times* (Ashgate-Routledge, 2016). He is editor of TEMPO and professor of music at Brunel University London.

Ensemble Offspring

Ensemble Offspring are champions of new music. Presenting concerts of seminal chamber music to free improvisation, alongside the creation of striking interdisciplinary productions, the group embraces open-minded music making in all its forms. Ensemble Offspring is led by acclaimed percussionist, Claire Edwardes, and features some of Australia's most innovative performers. The group has toured to locations such as Hong Kong, London and Warsaw, are regularly featured at MONA FOMA, Sydney and Melbourne Festivals, and have a cult following at their Sizzle series at Petersham Bowling Club. Passionate about nurturing the work of emerging, as well as established composers, Ensemble Offspring has premiered over 200 works in its 22-year history. Committed to giving back to the next generation, Hatched Academy is now in its 5th year and consists of an Associate Artist, Open Mic and Composer Summer School.

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