

ENSEMBLE OFFSPRING

new radicals



30th March 2012 **UTZON ROOM SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE**

1st April 2012 **THE STREET THEATRE CANBERRA**

ENSEMBLE OFFSPRING

new radicals

Artistic Directors Claire Edwardes & Damien Ricketson

program

Matthew Wright: *Breakdown*

flute, clarinet, percussion, keyboard, violin & cello [AP]

Michael Norris: *Save Yourself*

flute, clarinet, accordion, synth, violin & cello [WP]

Øyvind Torvund: *Neon Forest Space*

clarinet, percussion, electric guitar, cello & electronics [AP]

- interval -

Ekrem Mülayim: *and we chart the topography of a moment*

solo percussion [WP]

Yannis Kyriakides: *Zeimbekiko 1918*

violin, electric guitar & electronics [AP]

Simon Steen-Andersen: *On And Off And To And Fro*

clarinet, vibraphone, cello & 3 megaphones [AP]

WP – World Premiere

AP – Australian Premiere

performers

Lamorna Nightingale: flute

Jason Noble: clarinet

Claire Edwardes: percussion

Zubin Kanga: piano

James Crabb: conductor/accordion

Zane Banks: electric guitar

Veronique Serret: violin

Geoffrey Gartner: cello

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Ensemble Offspring has always taken pleasure in introducing the unheard to Australian audiences. In *New Radicals* we have put together a program of international composers whose sounds we believe represent a fresh and optimistic assessment of the music of our time. All are unashamedly exploratory in their search for new ways to construct and receive music. And although all have now-established careers, all are relatively young, meaning that much of their musical contribution may still be yet to come.

Making proclamations about new trends and directions in music is reckless, especially when we are in the thick of it. However, despite the stylistic diversity of the works on this program, there are some definite shared tendencies with the composers' approach to writing.

One of the most striking is the rise of the auxiliary instrument. While the performance of odd objects for novel sound effect has long been the domain of that peculiar breed of musician – the percussionist – no performer in this program, regardless of instrument, escapes a complex multitasking excursion through a battery of unconventional sound-sources. Everything from megaphones in the case of the Steen-Andersen, to melodicas in the Norris and as for the Torvund ... the table on stage probably says it all.

Thanks to John Cage there are now several decades of rich and varied sound-based practices that have helped dispel the idea that the production of music is necessarily the output of conventional Western instruments. What is interesting in many of the works in this program, however, is the highly notated reassessment of those liberated sounds back into combination with traditional instruments.

In *New Radicals* the represented composers all express themselves using a large assortment of acoustic and electronic media. There is also a curious mashup of 'hi' and 'lo-fi' aesthetics at play. Although these works sit within a 'fine-music' tradition, with all the perfectionist trappings of meticulous notation and technical sophistication, their soundworlds tend toward the unrefined: DIY instruments, everyday objects and cheap technologies (be they kids instruments or \$1 contact-mics). The sound of imperfect media and all its unwanted sound-artifacts are not suppressed but embraced as a logical continuation of the pursuit of timbre.

The works of UK-based composer and turntablist **Matthew Wright** frequently employ DJs and specialist new music performers in combination with digital media. Wright describes his compositional aesthetic as "music at the edge of collapse", a type of ecstasy found at the limits or boundaries of musical material. The short yet monolithic

Breakdown walks a blurry line between momentum and stasis, the furious activity of the performers countered by a rock-like rhythmic stability. Wright describes the structure as “gradually, obsessively getting shorter”, likening it to the “progress of a glacier pushing back the earth around it”. He also evokes the confused energy at that moment in which a caged animal is set free.

The first of our two world premieres in tonight’s program is from New Zealand composer and software developer **Michael Norris**. Written for Ensemble Offspring, Norris’ new work **Save Yourself**, requires the musicians to utilise conventional instruments (flute, clarinet, violin, cello) in combination with melodicas and flexitones. Accordion and a soft-synth (built especially for the work) complete the sonic picture. The composer writes: “*Save Yourself* forms part of a series of works that attempt to find sonic analogues for ideas and techniques in the visual arts. The general ‘theme’ of the work is the establishment of a series of monohued “colour fields” that are overwritten with surface figurations and gestures. The accordion and melodicas provide the basis of a cyclical progression of harmonic fields—subtly coloured by gliding sine tones from the synth—whilst winds and strings create aggressive gestural layers. The contrapuntal writing gradually decays into more synchronized figures towards the end of the piece, whilst at the same time “blurring” into a development of noise-based timbres from the very opening.”

Mangling gestures from highfaluting baroque to garish 80s pop to distorted metal, the music of Norwegian **Øyvind Torvund** resists categorisation. His ongoing *Bandrom* installation, for example, see musicians and spectators teaching one another compositions by ear in informal spaces (such as caravans) in an epic exploration of oral tradition and the imperfect reproduction of ideas. Folk music makes a tangible appearance in his **Neon Forest Space**, with a traditional Norwegian melody. The clarinetist’s grammar of ornamentation, however, is extrapolated to ludicrous extremes in a manic accompaniment of prepared electric guitar and percussionist performing ruler, velcro, zipper, combs (to name but a few). The extensive use of mundane objects including CD players, radios, a spray can and an electric milk frother could risk being gimmicky if it weren’t for their highly performed role within the ensemble. The opening movement, for example, sees a transistor radio latched to a solo cello as though it were some kind of polished orchestral double.

With a background in visual arts and theatre, the music of **Ekrem Mülayim** often borders on performance art. Much of his work is concept-driven. Rather than working from within a prescribed medium, such as the chamber music tradition, the originating idea generates its own medium from scratch including the required sound-sources, to the grammar and notation through which it is articulated and sometimes even the very context in which it takes place. The com-

poser, by way of example, invented an entire culture with its own history, language and scripts, just as a means of arriving at a notional folk music. The second of our world premieres tonight, **and we chart the topography of a moment**, explores the idea of examining a snapshot of time detached from the continuum in which it exists. The work furthers the DIY instrumentation in tonight's program with a series of chime-like bells dangling from especially knitted gloves. In creating the mechanism by which the instrument speaks, Mülayim sets up a symbiotic dynamic between sound and physical gesture with the resulting work as much a choreography as a musical work. The composer poetically comments: "Halt a slice out of time fleeting and gather around it like a whisper of moths around light, fluttering. Layer onto layer, sphere into sphere, cause unto effect, past into present, infinity. In the blink of an eye a vast infinite geography."

Yannis Kyriakides' music frequently combines traditional performance practices with digital media. Born in Cyprus, raised in Britain and resident in The Netherlands, **Zeimbekiko 1918**, draws inspiration from an old recording of a Zeimbekiko dance the composer encountered during a youthful look into his own Greek heritage. His response, however, is hardly a 'Bartokian' transcription of antique folk modes, meters and melodies, but more of an evocation of the frail recorded medium on which the music exists. Not long into the opening violin and guitar musings, an electronic layer enters sug-

gesting the hiss and pop of an old gramophone with all its fragility and nostalgia of bygone eras. Like other works in Kyriakides output, this piece reveals his fascination as both a carrier and corrupter of a message.

Many of the works of Danish composer **Simon Steen-Andersen** play with dynamic and spatial expectations of sound. His works are often hyper-amplified and feature close-miking which promotes those minuscule mechanical artifacts of instrumental technique – the subdued breaths, scratches, clicks – to the fore. **On And Off And To And Fro** begins with a chamber trio performing an intricate riff and amplified with megaphones by three assistant-performers. This detailed soundworld is simultaneously expanded and focused by the directionality of the megaphone's horn, and timbrally filtered by the decidedly lo-fi circuitry. Not satisfied with their role as passive assistants to the instrumentalists, the three megaphonists become increasingly interfering. At first they act like gates, turning on and off and shifting our spatial perception of the soundworld, before eventually screeching into life as dominant performers. By the second half of the work, the megaphones have transformed themselves from a medium, a tool to deliver a message, into instruments unto themselves: megalomaniacal contraptions generating their own material in a cadenza of sirens, foghorns and feedback.

Notes by Damien Ricketson

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Zane Banks electric guitar

Zane Banks is very active in the contemporary music scene, having recently performed at the Rainy Days Festival of Contemporary Music in Luxembourg where he premiered Georges Lentz's unaccompanied electric guitar composition *Ingwe*. He is also currently working on his PhD at the Sydney Conservatorium focusing on *The Electric Guitar in Contemporary Art Music*.

James Crabb conductor/accordion

James Crabb is widely regarded as one of the world's leading exponents and ambassadors of the classical accordion. He has been soloist with many orchestras including the BBC Scottish, the Philharmonia, London Philharmonic, Sydney, and Melbourne symphony orchestras and ensembles such as the London Sinfonietta. His highly acclaimed recording as soloist and arranger of the works of Astor Piazzolla was released with the Australian Chamber Orchestra (*Song of the Angel*). James' world premiere performances and recordings include works by Harrison Birtwistle, Thomas Adès, Luciano Berio and Sofia Gubaidulina and has an ongoing collaboration with multi-media sound designers Ian Dearsden and David Sheppard alias 'Sound Intermedia'.

Claire Edwardes percussion

Percussionist, Claire Edwardes, is a leading interpreter of contemporary classical music and Co-Artistic Director of Ensemble Offspring. Recent career highlights include concertos with the Radio Chamber Orchestra (The Netherlands), The Queensland Symphony Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony as well as solo festival appearances at the Woodend Winter Arts Festival (Victoria), Ozasia Festival (Adelaide) and the Huddersfield Festival of Contemporary Music (UK). In 2007 she was awarded an AMC/APRA award for outstanding contribution to Australian music, in 2005 she was the recipient of the MCA Freedman Fellowship and in 1999 she was named Australian Young Performer of the Year.

Geoffrey Gartner cello

Geoffrey Gartner is an exponent of the upside-down cello and a passionate advocate of the Fluxus ethos. Conductor, cellist and performance artist, he has brought countless new works to life and collaborated with many composers in Australia and abroad. Geoffrey holds a Doctorate in Contemporary Music Performance from the University of California, San Diego. He is a faculty member in the Department of Academic Studies at the Australian Institute of Music, where he brings his unique performer's perspective to the lecture theatre.

Zubin Kanga keyboard

Based in London, Zubin Kanga has recently performed at the Aldeburgh, Southbank and Many Hands Festivals in the UK, the Borealis Festival in Norway, as well as appearing as soloist with the London Sinfonietta. In 2010 Zubin was the recipient of the Michael Kieren Harvey Scholarship as well as the Limelight award for Best Newcomer. After graduating with the University Medal in Music from the University of Sydney he completed his Masters at the Royal Academy of Music, London where he is now undertaking a PhD.

Yannis Kyriakides composer

Yannis Kyriakides studied music at the University of York, and later moved to the Netherlands to study composition at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. He currently lives in Amsterdam where he is artistic director of Ensemble MAE, co-founder of the record label UNSOUNDS and composition teacher at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. He has been associated with ensembles such as the Asko Ensemble, musikFabrik, Ensemble Integrales and musicians such as Andy Moor. He also regularly collaborates with visual artists and filmmakers. In 2007 he was featured composer at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival and his opera An Ocean of Rain opened the Aldeburgh Festival in 2008. Prizes have included the Gaudeamus International Composers Award.

Ekrem Mülayim composer

Ekrem Mülayim is an Australian composer born in Istanbul, Turkey. Currently undertaking a post-graduate degree in composition at Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Ekrem has worked with some of Australia's leading theatre and dance companies as well as orchestras and ensembles. He has written for the Song Company, Australian Voices, Bell Shakespeare and several Belvoir theatre productions including Yellow Moon, Cut and The Kiss. He is currently working on a new project called Food; a co-production between Belvoir and the dance company Force Majeure and on his personal project Hermitage - an endurance piece involving a month-long performance.

Lamorna Nightingale flute

Joining Ensemble Offspring in 2007, Lamorna has been featured in numerous marathon length Feldman performances, regional Australian tours and Sizzles. She regularly performs with the Sydney Symphony, the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra as well as the Australian Chamber Orchestra. As a soloist she recently released a recording of new Australian music for flute, Eat Chocolate and Cry and in her role as a flute mentor, she has published a range of flute teaching materials.

Jason Noble Clarinet

Jason Noble is a freelance clarinetist specialising in contemporary classical repertoire. He has per-

formed at many prestigious festivals such as the Warsaw Autumn, Aldeburgh Festival, Musica Viva Festival and Sydney Festival. Jason has been an integral member of Ensemble Offspring for many years whilst also performing with Halcyon, Sydney Children's Choir, the indigenous womens group from the Tiwi Islands, Ngarukuruwala and singer Holly Throsby. He teaches in the Musicology faculty at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and maintains a strong interest in teaching his craft to the next generation. Recent projects have included a collaboration with dance group Sean Parker and Company on a new work *Am I*.

Michael Norris composer

Michael Norris (b. 1973) is a Wellington-based composer. He holds composition degrees from Victoria University of Wellington and City University, London, and is currently Senior Lecturer in Composition at the New Zealand School of Music in Wellington. In 2003, Michael won the Douglas Lilburn Prize, a nationwide competition for orchestral composers. He is also co-founder and co-director of Stroma New Music Ensemble, and has participated in composition courses featuring leading composers such as Peter Eötvös, Alvin Lucier, Christian Wolff and Kaija Saariaho. His recent chamber orchestra work *Sgraffito* was commissioned by the SWR (Südwestdeutsche Rundfunk) and premiered at the Donaueschinger Musiktage 2010 by the Radio Chamber Orchestra Hilversum, conducted by Peter Eötvös.

Veronique Serret violin

A founding member of Ensemble Offspring, violinist Veronique Serret graduated from the Sydney Conservatorium before being awarded the Sydney Symphony Orchestral Fellowship and the Young Artist Chair with The Australian Chamber Orchestra. She tours the world performing with the Malaysian Philharmonic, Joanna Newsome and Inga Liljeström. Active in the field of popular music her recent appearances in Australia were at The Big Day Out, the Woodford Folk Festival, the ARIA awards and the Independent Film Awards.

Simon Steen-Andersen composer

Simon Steen-Andersen (b.1976) studied composition with Rasmussen, Spahlinger, Valverde and Sorensen in Aarhus, Freiburg, Buenos Aires and Copenhagen. He has received numerous prizes and grants, including the Kranichsteiner Music Award 2008, the International Rosstrum of Composers and the DAAD Berliner Künstlerprogramm 2010. Simon has received commissions from ensembles and festivals such as Ensemble Modern, ensemble recherche, Donaueschinger Musiktage, Wittener Musiktage and the French National Orchestra. Simon is active as a performer, installation artist and lecturer, teaching composition at the Royal Academy of Music in Aarhus, Denmark.

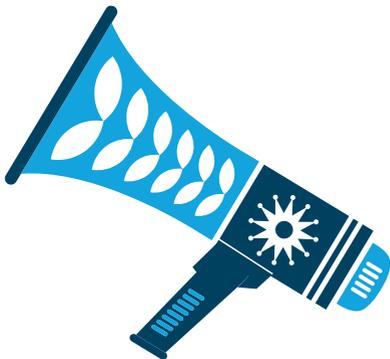
Øyvind Torvund composer

Øyvind Torvund studied composition at the Norwegian Academy of music and at the Universitet

der Künste, Berlin. He has taken private lessons with Michael Finnissy and Julio Estrada. His music is based on free associations between various sounds and approaches to music. His recent pieces are often a collage of naïve melodies, baroque ornaments played by a child, norwegian folk music, synth sounds, animal growls and field recordings.

Matthew Wright composer

Matt Wright is a composer, sound artist and turntablist who specialises in concert/club/gallery/web hybrids. He is the Programme Director of the BA Creative Music Technology degree at Canterbury Christ Church University and he works especially closely with Ensemble Klang in the Netherlands, Blindman in Brussels, with his own ensemble, Splinter Cell in the UK, as well as in performances in the UK, in New York and Paris with saxophonist Evan Parker, with whom he recently co-composed a studio album named 'Trance Map'.



Ensemble Offspring

Ensemble Offspring is a dynamic Sydney-based organisation dedicated to the performance of innovative new music. Driven by open-mindedness and performance excellence, Ensemble Offspring's activities promote diverse and emerging music practices that expose audiences to new ways of experiencing sound. The group embraces a broad and progressive repertoire from seminal chamber music of the past 50 years, to free improvisation and the creation of striking interdisciplinary productions.

Led by Artistic Directors Claire Edwardes (percussion) and Damien Ricketson (composer), the ensemble comprises a team of virtuoso performers with broad ranging talents: some performing concerto's with renowned symphony orchestras and others touring the world with indie pop bands.

In 2011 Ensemble Offspring was nominated in nine categories at the 2011 Art Music Awards. Recent highlights include the 2010 Sydney Festival, ensemble-in-residence at the 2010 ISCM World New Music Days and an international tour to China (2011). Performing in venues ranging from the Sydney Opera House to local Sydney bowling clubs, Ensemble Offspring has developed a reputation for its uniquely adventurous and engaging programs.

www.ensembleoffspring.com

COMING SOON

the composers - steve reich in residence

The Godfather of minimalism, one of “a handful of living composers who can legitimately claim to have altered the direction of musical history” (The Guardian), Steve Reich’s influence can be heard everywhere from the concert hall to the nightclub. His music proves that sometimes less really is more, as deceptively simple patterns and phrases interlock to create transcendent moments of sheer crystalline beauty.

Now Steve Reich makes a rare visit to Australia to be the first in Sydney Opera House’s new series The Composers. In residence for a week, Reich will work in collaboration with New Music pioneers including Synergy Percussion, Eighth Blackbird, Halcyon, Ensemble Offspring, ACO Qantas Emerging Artists, Orava String Quartet and Sydney Symphony Sinfonia Quartet and feature a performance of his classic *Music for 18 Musicians*.

Steve Reich, A Celebration
Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House
Sunday 29th April, 6pm

sizzle

Warming up your winter, Sizzle makes a much anticipated return to the Petersham Bowling Club in 2012. Ensemble Offspring get contemporary classical music off its high horse and takes it to the people in a series packed full of fun and surprise.

Expect avant-garde contemporary classics mashed up with pop music, early music, late music and wtf music all dished up in a casual and cosy Sunday arvo setting, Bring your family, friends and flatmates along and roll up your sleeves for a sizzling smorgasbord of sensory seduction with all the chilled comforts and cheap drinks of your local bowlo.

1. Sydney Petersham Bowling Club
Sunday 15th July 3pm

2. Sydney Petersham Bowling Club
Sunday 19th August 3pm

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Sydney performance of New Radicals is
co-presented with the support of the
New Music Network.

new music network

The Canberra performance of New Radicals is
co-presented with the support of
The Street Theatre.



Michael Norris' *Save Yourself* has been written as part of the Trans-Tasman Composer Exchange, a partnership between SOUNZ, the Centre for New Zealand Music, and the Australian Music Centre. Michael Norris' residency with Ensemble Offspring is supported with funding from Creative New Zealand



Ensemble Offspring is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts advisory body and the NSW Government through Arts NSW.



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innovative new music

Artistic Directors **Claire Edwardes & Damien Ricketson**

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