

all  
about  
women



## Ensemble Offspring

Ensemble Offspring are champions of adventurous new music. Presenting music from seminal chamber work to free improvisation, alongside the creation of striking interdisciplinary productions, the group embraces open-minded music making of all forms.

Based in Sydney, Ensemble Offspring is led by acclaimed percussionist, Claire Edwardes, and features some of Australia's most innovative performers. The group has toured locations including Hong Kong, London, Bruges and Warsaw, performs at Australia's favourite festivals, Carriageworks, Sydney Opera House, and even the local bowling club.

Passionate about nurturing the work of emerging, as well as established composers, Ensemble Offspring has premiered over 200 works in its 21-year history.

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

[ensembleoffspring.com](http://ensembleoffspring.com)



# arc electric

## ensemble offspring

5 march 2017

In 2017 Ensemble Offspring present music exclusively by female composers in our core series. Arc Electric, as part of All About Women, is the first of this exciting series of concerts this year. We felt it was crucial to shine the spotlight on female composers for an entire season; to disrupt the status quo and make the work of a diverse range of women more visible. Sometimes I program to a theme, but for Arc Electric I wanted to select six works that excited me for their vast differences. Structurally they are all works that push boundaries and don't play out traditionally. Listen for unique sound worlds in a variety of exciting, and often new, combinations.

**Claire Edwardes,**  
Artistic Director

[sydneyoperahouse.com](http://sydneyoperahouse.com)  
#allaboutwomen

Event Partner  
  
MASERATI

Sydney Opera House  
Principal Partner  
**SAMSUNG**

## Performers

**Claire Edwardes**  
(Artistic Director), *percussion*

**Jason Noble**, *clarinet*

**Lamorna Nightingale**, *flute*

**Zubin Kanga**, *piano*

**Lachlan O'Donnell**, *violin*

**Blair Harris**, *cello*

### **Kate Moore, b. 1979 – Velvet (2010)**

Inspired by the depiction of cloth in Renaissance paintings, movement, vitality and earthiness are captured and distilled within the frame and stillness of the painting. The shades of light and dark are emphasised by the lines and creases where the sun catches its outlines. Where the tactile fabric is inverted, shadows are made darker by the turgid grottos and canyons carved into the tectonic landscape of its folds.

### **Liza Lim, b. 1966 – The turning dance of the bee (2016) Australian Premiere**

Commissioned by the Tage für Neue Musik Zurich on the occasion of their 30th-anniversary festival, for Ensemble für Neue Musik Zurich. Honeybees dance within the hive to share knowledge about sources of flowers rich in nectar and

## Program

**Kate Moore – Velvet**

**Liza Lim –  
The turning dance of the bee**  
(Australian premiere)

**Melody Eötvös – Tardigradus**  
(world premiere)

**Tatjana Kozolva-Johannes –  
Horizontals**  
(Australian premiere)

**Kaija Saariaho – Cendres**

**Cassie To – Avialae**

pollen. They perform a 'waggle' dance that traces circles or a looping figure eight, angling their movements against the direction of the sun as navigational information for fellow bees. That figure eight [∞] is also known as the infinity symbol: a mathematical concept and also a pathway of ecstasy traced by the bees. The work is in 2 parts: I solar, II lunar.

### **Melody Eötvös, b. 1984 – Tardigradus (2017)**

The Tardigrade (meaning slow stepper), also known as a water bear or moss piglet, is a microscopic animal that can survive in the most ridiculous and extreme environmental conditions, including the vacuum of space. In fact, they are the most resilient animal known to exist. With four pairs of legs, four to eight claws on each leg, and a segmented body formation, the Tardigrade can survive without food or water for more

than 30 years at which point they can revive from a state of holding only 3% of their original body water and continue living and reproducing once re-hydrated. Besides their talent for survival, this animal is also fascinating to me from a purely physical standpoint.

This work accompanies the Tardigrade as we delve into the microscopic world of moss and lichen to observe its detail as well as follow this remarkable slow stepping warrior through its paces.

*Tardigradus* was commissioned through Ensemble Offspring's Noisy Egg Creation Fund, with the generous support of the ensemble's patron, Kim Williams AM.

### **Tatjana Kozlova-Johannes, b. 1977 – Horizontals (2010) Australian Premiere**

The work's title derives from the fact that vertical dimension plays a minimal role in this composition. In spite of the fast movement through the entire piece, the general development of broader sound-masses is kept relatively slow.

### **Kaija Saariaho, b. 1952 – Cendres (1998)**

I found the basis of the musical material for this piece in my double concerto for alto flute, cello and orchestra. While writing *Cendres*, I was mainly concentrating on the interpretation of particular musical ideas by three different instruments of the trio, each of which has its unique character and palette of colours. Musical tension is created and regulated by sometimes bringing the instruments as close together as possible in all ways (pitch, rhythm, dynamics,

articulation, colour, etc.) or, at the other extreme, letting each of them express the music in their most idiomatic fashion. Between these two extremes, there is an unlimited number of possible ways to create more or less homogenous musical situations. The consciousness of this variety was the rope on which I was balancing whilst working on the piece.

### **Cassie To, b. 1994 – Avialae (2015)**

'Avialae' translated from Latin means 'bird wings' and is a reference to the scientific classification of birds as 'Clade Avialae'. The piece incorporates the bird songs of five endangered Australian species; Painted Snipe, Swift Parrot, Carnaby's Cockatoo, Regent Honey Eater and the Ground Parrot. Currently, these species are threatened by decreasing habitation, competition from other species and introduced feral animals.

Each birdcall is imitated and improvised by the performers and, throughout the piece, are transformed from literal interpretations to conventional musical melodies. *Avialae* explores a disappearing natural sound world and hopes to bring to attention our environmental situation, where if nothing is done to protect our ecosystems, these songs may permanently be silenced, only to exist in our imagination.

*Avialae* was composed for Ensemble Offspring's 20th birthday celebrations in 2015, with the support of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

*all program notes written by the composers*