

 ensemble offspring



Sydney Grammar School  
The New Hall  
6.30pm, Friday 22nd November 2013

# sagittarius

## Ensemble Offspring

### Artistic Directors

Damien Ricketson & Claire Edwardes

### Program

Karlheinz Stockhausen

*Sagittarius*

Elena Kats-Chernin

*Chromatica*

David Lumsdaine

*Six Postcard Pieces for solo piano*

Jane Stanley

*Helix Reflection*

Magnus Lindberg

*Ablauf*

Alex Pozniak

*Crush*

Matthew Hindson

*Repetepetition*

Nicholas Vines

*Rustling the Deities (III)*

*(Australian premiere)*

Louis Andriessen

*Workers Union*

### Ensemble Offspring musicians

Zubin Kanga | *solo piano*

Lamorna Nightingale | *flute*

Jason Noble | *clarinet*

Claire Edwardes | *percussion*

Bree van Reyk | *percussion*

### Student musicians

Kimbrian Canavan

Tiger Chou

Grant Kynaston

Jacky Li

Thomas Pacino

Joseph Rianto

Nicholas Volfneuk



## About the performance

### **Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928-2007)**

*Sagittarius [from Tierkreis] (1975)*

*Sagittarius* is one movement from Stockhausen's *Tierkreis*: a collection of twelve melodies representing the signs of the zodiac. Originally written for specially-designed music boxes in the children's theatre piece *Musik im Bauch (Music in the Belly)*, the child-like simplicity of these melodies belie elaborately crafted musical formulae that capture the different character-types of the Zodiac. Completed in 1975, *Tierkreis* is not written for specific instruments but rather can be 'assembled' for every new performance. Each melody is like a piece of DNA - a magical set of relationships between pitches and rhythms - that can grow into innumerable forms. Ensemble Offspring's colourful arrangement is but one of many drastically different versions of the work.

### **Elena Kats-Chernin (b.1957)**

*Chromatica (2013)*

Elena Kats Chernin is a well-known Australian composer whose lively works have featured in many contexts ranging from the concert hall and theatrical productions to the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympics. Her *Eliza's Aria* from the ballet *Wild Swans* was used in Lloyds TSB TV commercials. Kats Chernin composed *Chromatica* for Ensemble Offspring on the occasion of its board member Sharon Kelly's 50th birthday.

### **David Lumsdaine (b.1931)**

*Six Postcard Pieces (1995)*

1. Overture
2. March
3. Rhapsody
4. Nocturne
5. Sonata
6. Toccata

For me, there are few more extraordinary pieces of music than Beethoven's last set of Bagatelles: resonance, wit, compassion, and an extraordinary sense of irony - and imagery that goes straight to the point. (It takes a most extraordinary musician to play them, too). It has been a lifelong ambition of this composer to create resonance, rather than more crotchets, and these postcard pieces are essays on the way to that goal. There is also this reward for the listener - you don't have to be told how to listen to these pieces. By the time you've read the programme note, they're finished... (David Lumsdaine)

### **Jane Stanley (1976)**

*Helix Reflection (2013)*

*Helix Reflection* is a concentrated meditation for flute and clarinet. An impetus for the piece was the image of a double helix. This is evoked musically through interweaving melodic activity between the two lines. The piece opens with the two instruments playing sustained notes separated by a small interval. Their sonorities are coloured with microtonal inflections, glissandi and variations in vibrato. Over time harmonic stasis gives way to greater mobility and melodic ornamentation. (Jane Stanley)

### **Magnus Lindberg (b.1958)**

*Ablauf (1983/88)*

*Ablauf*, by Finnish composer Magnus Lindberg, is characterised by a wild blustering clarinet solo. Almost liberating the performer through its use of highly notated flourishes and virtuosic polyphonic writing, the work is a tour-de-force of rough musical terrain punctuated with fortissimo bass drum blows from two percussionists.

### **Alex Pozniak (b.1982)**

*Crush (2008)*

*Crush*, written for Zubin Kanga, is a virtuosic work for solo piano whose short and sharp title and moments of flamboyantly dense music both convey a crushing force. The title however also suggests the other type of 'crush', an intense though short-lived romantic infatuation. The work therefore takes on, musically and metaphorically, those large and inexplicable issues of passion and desire in the face of musical abstraction. Contrasting the opening's impulse towards the more violent aspect of passion, a contrasting serenade emerges where the two hands, presenting unrelated material, float around one another's trajectories, in perhaps a more peacefully negotiated coexistence. This tendency towards counterpoint motivates all aspects of the work, presenting dense textures that maximise the piano's wide range, treating the instrument to some extent like a noisemaker of immense crushing power. (Alex Pozniak)

### **Matthew Hindson (b.1968)**

*Repetepetition (2008)*

The music of Australian composer Matthew Hindson is often characterised by popular

music elements applied to a classical music context. The composer describes *Repetepetition* as a "short, snappy piece based around musical ideas that either get longer or shorter as the piece progresses." The work exists in a variety of versions from solo viola to soprano saxophone and piano. This version for flute and vibraphone has been arranged especially for Ensemble Offspring.

### **Nicholas Vines (b.1976)**

*Rustling the Deities [Movement III]*  
(2012-13 AP)

*Rustling the Deities* is the second of two pieces inspired by the ancient rhyton, the first being *Of Rhytonous Things* for recorder(s) and harpsichord. But while the latter explores many varied notions of mimesis, from the vessel's domestic function and imitative shapes through to its evocation of nature, bacchanalia and divinity, this work focuses entirely on the personalities of its creatural depictions. Rhyta can embody anything, from benign sheep to the mythological griffin, and at times explicitly, often taking the form of animal heads. In this case, the musical decanter, or more accurately, set of four decanters is not quite so emphatic, avoiding as it does direct mimicry or meta-mimicry. Rather, it draws from the strong lines, bold filigree and vivid representations characteristic of its concrete cousins to form a collection of strange, fantastical and purely sonic creatures of its own.

The third movement is a three-way contest, perhaps a fractious love-triangle. In typical rhytonous fashion, each protagonist is presented separately, in stylised, pointedly

contrasting poses which highlight their idiosyncratic powers. Interplay between these three animal-gods is only ever hinted at, a promise of frisson never quite fulfilled. It is hoped their clarity might tap into a singular power of rhytons: to take run-of-the-mill subjects and imbue them with mythic qualities which transcend any sense of domesticity, sentimentality or caricature. (Nicholas Vines)

### **Louis Andriessen (b.1939)**

*Workers Union (1975) [excerpt only]*

Most of the Dutch composer Louis Andriessen's music aspires to the physical sonic force of rock: he wants a sound more like a Rolling Stones' speaker stack than a classical chamber recital. *Workers Union* is no exception, although it's up to the performers to choose which instruments they'll use to get the effect: Andriessen only specifies that the piece is to be played by "any combination of loud-sounding instruments." Many aspects of the work, in fact, are left up to the performers: only general directions in pitch are notated, rather than exact notes, and, in keeping with Andriessen's usual practice, he only gives very general instructions as to playing style "make the piece sound dissonant, chromatic and often aggressive."

Andriessen wants players to cultivate their own, individual styles in his works, rather than take the classical tradition's approach of blending carefully with each other, and this idea of a collective of individuals working to a common goal, but not subsumed by it, resonates with the composer's generally socialist political convictions "only in the

case that every player plays with such an intention that his part is an essential one, the work will succeed; just as in the political work." Andriessen further writes that "the title refers to labor movements, where the members have common interests and want to reach their goal in a persistent, hard-headed but difficult matter," and the piece sounds like protest music: loud, rhythmically exciting and often repetitious. The music also sits in the middle of each instrument's register, in the range of pitches beginner players are usually most comfortable in, so the effect is not that of the niceties of musical colour an expert can coax from an instrument, it's rather a kind of vernacular, untrained yelling. (Rachel Campbell)

### **ABOUT 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 musicians with broad ranging talents. Performing in venues ranging from the Sydney Opera House

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to local Sydney bowling clubs, Ensemble Offspring has developed a reputation in Australia for its uniquely adventurous and engaging programs. Recent projects have included *Between the Keys* showcasing newly invented musical instruments and tuning systems, *The Listening Museum*, an installation-performance event with Brisbane's *Clocked Out Duo* and has recently returned from a European tour where they performed in The Hague (The Netherlands), Brugge (Belgium), London and Glasgow (UK). [www.ensembleoffspring.com](http://www.ensembleoffspring.com)

## PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Co-artistic director and percussionist *Claire Edwardes* won the coveted ABC Young Performers Award in 1999 and is the two-time winner of the Art Music Award for Outstanding Contribution to Australian Music. Resident in Europe for seven years between 1999-2006, she was the recipient of many international prizes including first place at the Tromp Percussion Competition, Llangollen International Instrumentalist, Vriendenkrans Competition and third prize at the Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition with *Duo Vertigo*. Claire is a passionate advocate of contemporary percussion music, working tirelessly with composers on the creation of new works. Her latest solo disc, *ONE* showcases her latest musical obsessions. [www.claireedwardes.com](http://www.claireedwardes.com)

London-based Australian pianist, *Zubin Kanga* has recently performed at the BBC Proms, Aldeburgh, Borealis (Norway) and London Southbank festivals as well

as appearing as soloist with the London Sinfonietta and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. A member of Ensemble Offspring, he also performs with Halcyon, Synergy Percussion, Ensemble Plus-Minus, Endymion Ensemble and the Kreutzer Quartet. Zubin has been awarded the Michael Kieran Harvey Scholarship, the ABC Limelight Award for Best Newcomer and the NSW State Award for Excellence at the Australian Art Music Awards. He has collaborated with many of the world's leading composers including Thomas Adès, Michael Finnissy, George Benjamin, Steve Reich and Beat Furrer. [www.zubinkanga.com](http://www.zubinkanga.com)

*Jason Noble* is a freelance clarinetist specialising in contemporary classical repertoire. He has performed 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, and Ngarukuruwala, the indigenous women's group from the Tiwi Islands. He teaches in the Musicology faculty at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Jason recently returned from a music education project in Kabul, Afghanistan.

*Bree van Reyk* is a Sydney based percussionist, drum-set player, casio keyboard enthusiast and occasional composer. She has been a member of new music groups Synergy Percussion and Ensemble Offspring for many years, and tours and records regularly with Holly Throsby. Bree has worked with choreographer Shaun Parker

as co-composer (with Nick Wales) for Love Installment (SDC 2008) and Happy As Larry (2010), and was Composer/Performer for Bell Shakespeare's King Lear in 2010. She recently returned from a national Australian tour with Paul Kelly. [www.breevanreyk.com](http://www.breevanreyk.com)

Joining Ensemble Offspring in 2007, *Lamorna Nightingale* 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. Lamorna specializes in the repertoire of the 20th and 21st century and has established strong working relationships with many composers. As a soloist she recently released a recording of new Australian music for flute, Spirit of the Plains, and her previous disc, Eat Chocolate and Cry had the critics raving. In her role as a flute mentor, she has published a range of flute teaching materials. [www.fluteworthy.com.au](http://www.fluteworthy.com.au)

## UPCOMING

Ensemble Offspring in Sydney Festival 2014

Ensemble Offspring and The Song Company join rock legends Mike Patton (Faith no More) and Lee Ranaldo (Sonic Youth) in a genre-defying event featuring Luciano Berio's iconic masterwork *Laborintus II*.

City Recital Hall Angel Place  
16th January 2014, 8pm  
[sydneyfestival.org.au](http://sydneyfestival.org.au)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sagittarius is presented by  
Sydney Grammar School.



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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## Ensemble Offspring

### **Artistic Directors**

Claire Edwardes & Damien Ricketson

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

[youtube.com/ensembleoffspring](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)



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