FUTURE RETRO
20 YEARS OF ENSEMBLE OFFSPRING

25th October 2015, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
Introduction from the Chair of Ensemble Offspring

Welcome to Future Retro — a celebration of Ensemble Offspring’s exciting future ahead and legacy of the past.

Twenty years young, as one of Australia’s leading new music ensembles, we commission diverse Australian and international work and mentor the next generation of musicians and composers to present the music of today and create the work of tomorrow.

Over time, our great art and artists have tested the realms of possibility and produced adventurous, fresh works—collaborating with creative disciplines like dance, theatre, film and installation, and creating unconventional sounds and instruments along the way.

On the precipice of change in the Australian arts sector, it is an honour to be part of an organisation that continues to give a voice to bold Australian artists and engages audiences with completely new ways of experiencing music and sound.

We thank our key funding partners—including the Australia Council for the Arts and Arts NSW—our philanthropic sponsors and donors for their generous assistance and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music for hosting this event.

And we are absolutely delighted to welcome Kim Williams as our patron. Indebted to his commitment, we look forward to joining forces to together champion new music composition and appreciation.

On behalf of the Board, we certainly hope that you enjoy our Future Retro celebration.

Elizabeth Hristoforidis, Chair of the Board

Introduction from the Dean of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney

Ensemble Offspring is an exotic, eclectic and extraordinary group of composers and musicians. 20 years ago an enthusiastic group of Sydney Conservatorium of Music (SCM) students led by Matthew Shlomowitz and Damien Ricketson, formed this ensemble to play new work and their experimental approach to music making has ensured their place as Australia’s premier new music group. During their 20 years they have commissioned works that include other prominent SCM composers such as Bozidar Kos, Michael Smetanin and Ivan Zavada. In this year of the SCM’s 100th birthday, they continue their tradition of commissioning new works. Today’s concert will include new compositions by final year SCM students Cassie To and Kezia Yap.

On the eve of our joint birthday celebrations, the SCM applauds the work of Ensemble Offspring, the efforts of their incredible players and composers and hope that for the next 20 years they continue to play on the edge.

Professor Anna Reid, Dean and Principal (Acting) of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music

Welcome from the Artistic Directors of Ensemble Offspring

Welcome to Ensemble Offspring’s official 20th Birthday celebrations! This time, just over 20 years ago a group of bright eyed young composers and performers got together as the Spring Ensemble and caused a stir in the Sydney new music scene. We weren’t to know at the time that the group would still be going strong 20 years later – still championing music by emerging and established living composers; adventurous music; innovative music; weird and wonderful music. Our perennial search for fresh artistic experiences has kept us stimulated and, as we look to the future, we wouldn’t have it any other way. We have to give our heartfelt thanks to the awe inspiring core musicians of Ensemble Offspring – their dedication is faultless. Likewise our wonderful General Manager Janine Marshman and our ever nurturing board, our steadfast industry support network and last but not least our loyal audience. We hope that you have as much fun as we will, celebrating this remarkable milestone through music.

Claire Edwardes & Damien Ricketson, Co-Artistic Directors
PROGRAM

3PM CONCERT 1: FUTURE

Dan Thorpe – Mercury Vapour Seismology (WP)
Samuel Smith – threaded through meridians (WP)
Kezia Yap – Coalesce (WP)
Cassie To – Avialae (WP)
Kate Moore – Fern
Tristan Coelho – read/write error (WP)

DRINKS & TALKS 4.45PM

Enjoy complimentary drinks, the launch of our CD ‘Cycles and Circles’, and a panel discussion about how new music has changed over the past 20 years and where it is headed:
John Davis (chair), Rachel Campbell, Claire Edwardes, Roland Peelman, Damien Rickatson & Kim Williams

6PM CONCERT 2: RETRO

Gerard Grisey – Talea
György Ligeti (arr. Ensemble Offspring) – Beyond Atmospheres
Louis Andriessen – Hoketus

PERFORMERS

Jacob Abela | piano/keyboards
Ben Carey | live electronics/saxophone
Claire Edwardes | percussion
Geoffrey Gartner | cello
Zubin Kanga | piano/keyboards
Martin Kay | saxophone
Peter Kossen | bass guitar
Martin Ng | turntables
Lamorna Nightingale | flutes/panpipes
Jason Noble | clarinets
Roland Peelman | conductor
Mary Rapp | cello/bass guitar
Bree van Reyk | percussion
Jodie Rottle | flutes/panpipes
Veronique Serret | violin
Diana Springford | clarinets
Elizabeth Welsh | violin
by Damien Ricketson

I am on the record stating that anniversary programming is what classical music types turn to when they run out of ideas. Therefore, I hope you will excuse me the indulgence of presenting you with exactly that: a multi-concert extravaganza celebrating our 20th birthday. As a group that has staked its identity on looking forwards, I hope you will permit me a brief moment to look back and reminisce on the history of what is, for me, an all-consuming project that has spanned my entire professional life.

Origins

Ensemble Offspring began in 1995 when I was a final year composition student at the Sydney Conservatorium. A fellow student, Matthew Shlomowitz, and I wanted to conclude our studies with a bang. Rather than finish in silence with an orchestral work that would never get performed, we agreed to compose for the same large ensemble and put on a show. We wrote down every performer-friend we could think of who had shown any interest in playing new music and then looked at the line-up. It was a strange and unbalanced ensemble, but a predictive indicator of how the group would evolve in the future: an organisation built around personalities rather than instruments. We mailed a tentative pitch to Roger Woodward to see if he would include our concert as part of the then Sydney Spring Festival. He called the next day.

In today’s risk-averse climate I doubt any festival director would take on a program of yet-to-be written works composed and performed by students. And for that reason, a lot of budding young careers stop right there. Astonishingly, however, Woodward took us on. With one condition. We had to include a performance of Xenakis’s formidable Eonta. In hindsight, the addition of a ‘name’ composer set us off in a particular programming direction. This was not going to become a Philip Glass Ensemble or Michael Nyman Band that played only the music of its founding composers, but an ensemble that contextualised new works together with seminal existing work from the 20th century. On the 9th of September 1995, we took to the stage with Xenakis, two works by me, Lamina and Blech, and two works by Matthew Shlomowitz, his Piano Concerto and String Quartet.

When compiling the festival program, we were told the group of musicians needed a name. How about ‘Spring Ensemble’ came our pedestrian response. Of course, at the time we had no idea this was to become an ensemble. We thought it was a one-off event. In the end, the concert featured 31 student performers from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music including Corrado Palleschi (trumpet), Loretta Palmeiro (sax), Tonya Lemoh (piano) and Roger Woodward as soloists. With that many people involved, the ABC Goosens Hall easily sold out. We were on a high. We had to do more. Spring Ensemble was born.

The early years

The pattern of the early years involved a series of performances as part of the Sydney Spring Festival – we had become the de facto ensemble-in-residence – and the occasional gig outside. Sometimes we scrounged money through cultural attachés, for example ‘Sounds French’ with the Alliance Française, or ‘Transfigured Nights’ under the direction of Michael Finnissy’s as part of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (1997). In these days, the ensemble was led by Matthew Shlomowitz. I was studying in The Netherlands with Louis Andriessen: a composer who believed musical renewal was intrinsically tied up with the formation of artist-led outfits. He helped instill a strong DIY ethos that I was to bring home with me in 1998 at the same time Matthew went overseas permanently.

And DIY it was. We still didn’t really have any idea what we were doing. These were the days before business plans, risk assessments and budget-bottom-lines. We had ideas and acted on them. We stumbled enthusiastically if recklessly from one gig to another. Hopefully learning along the way. By the end of the 90s, our relationship with the Sydney Spring was coming to an end. In an attempt to assert an independent identity, we changed our name to Ensemble Offspring in a concert celebrating the opening of The Studio at the Sydney Opera House in 1999. At the time it was to be Sydney’s dedicated new music venue. It was short lived.

Staying viable was not easy. Although there were some great gigs – a tour to Perth as part of TURA’s Totally Huge Festival (2000), Cage’s Concert for Piano and Orchestra with Richard Toop (2001), and an early concert of ‘spectral’ music (2002) – the reality of paying performers was difficult and dragging along our friends for an audience was reaching its shelf-life. Nonetheless, performance standards during these times were advancing fast with a crystallised core of musicians including Carl Rosman (clarinet), Mark Knoop (piano), Kathleen Gallagher (flute), Thomas Talma (violin), James Eccles (viola) and Geoffrey Gartner (cello).
Starting to thrive
The first real turning point that put Ensemble Offspring on an upward trajectory came in 2003. We received funding from the then NSW Ministry for the Arts. With it came our first European tour to the prestigious Warsaw Autumn Festival and other gigs including our first edition of Partch’s Bastards which started attracting Sydney audiences outside our immediate circles. The upwards path was boosted by repeat invitations to perform at newly branded The Studio at the Sydney Opera House with projects such as The Art of Glass (2004) where we were allowed to perform Philip Glass’s early works that are usually reserved for his own ensemble. Other highlights from this period included a tribute to my former Australian composition teacher Bozidar Kos on the occasion of his 70th birthday and a growing number of collaborations with conductor Roland Peelman and the vocal group Halcyon including Floof! (2005) and Tehillim (2007): a massive event at the City Recital Hall that also included Synergy Percussion.

The great thing about being a composer and Artistic Director is that I can program all the music that I’ve been trying to write, or wish I had written. As such, many of my own compositional preoccupations – open forms, spectral techniques, just intonation, microtonality, hybrid performance – can also be found as recurrent threads in Ensemble Offspring’s programming history.

I was also getting my programming mojo. 2006 was the first year I felt a coherent programming model develop that largely remains today: themed concerts combining world premieres and Australian premieres, emerging Australian work alongside seminal international names and collaborators both across genres and across artsforms. The 2006 program included mirrored amplified ‘open form’ gigs (Flexible Elastic & Plastic Noise in the casual At Newtown RSL) mixing up known figures such as Cage and Zorn with new works by Matthew Shlomowitz (Slow Flipping Harmony), Kate Neal (Hydrous) and our first forays into improvisation and collaboration with mentor Jim Denley. Then there were two multimedia events at The Studio (Surreal Interlude & Light is Calling) the former featuring new live scorings of historic films by Finnissy and Stephen Whittington. And in the middle was a monumental chamber program mixing up new works by Christopher Tonkin and the monolithic Australian premiere of Vortex Temporum by Gerard Grisey.

The next major turning point for the Ensemble was Claire Edwards. Although Claire had always been around – she was involved in the very first concert and performed in many others – she had spent 7 years living in Europe. As friends and passionate promoters of new music there was something inevitable about our joining forces on her return to Australia. The sheer energy and dedication brought by Claire together with the formation of our first board (2008) saw a massive increase in capacity as the company transitioned from a single-person operation to a genuine multi-person professional arts company.

In the coming years, with the help of our Chairs Penny Stannard, Kate Lidbetter and Elizabeth Hristoforidis, the Ensemble secured Key Organisation funding from the Australia Council and with it ability to pursue upwards of 30 events a year. In recent years, the Ensemble has settled into a healthy program of high-profile concerts, casual events such as our Sizzle series, education programs including our Hatched Academy and embarked on many interstate and international tours.

Sculpting forces
There are many forces that have sculpted our programming over the years, particularly the core people involved and the external environment.

Although both Claire and I have strong musical preferences as Artistic Directors, we also represent the collective taste of those involved in the group. The musicians have frequently changed over the years, many leaving to pursue international careers as experts in new music. As the core musicians have come and gone, their presence has been felt in our programming history, both in terms of musical taste as well as the evolving instrumentalations available. Today’s core of Claire (percussion), Jason Noble (clarinet), Lamorna Nightingale (flute), Veronique Serret (violin), Zubin Kanga (piano) and Bree van Reyk (percussion) are all friends who regularly thrash out their opinions in our creative committee meetings.

There is a lot of music we don’t play because it isn’t us. Then there is a lot of music we’d love to play, but we don’t have the available instruments or resources to do so. And then there is the mountain of worthy music, and composers we want to commission, that don’t get performed for external reasons. I have notebooks full of pieces and projects that will probably never see the light of day: a vast and silent playlist of unheard music.
Sometimes we throw everything we’ve got (including our personal finances) at something in which we believe to make it happen against all odds. Financially damaging as they are, these are some of our best projects. Notable examples for me include: Professor Bad Trip (2011), a concert that audiences, musicians and composers still cite years later as one of the most exhilarating they’ve experienced; Partch’s Bastards (aka Between the Keys) (2011-13), a project where we tried to rebuild music from scratch starting with a new tuning system, building new instruments and commissioning new works; and more recently the hybrid work The Secret Noise which was awarded “Instrumental Work of the Year” in the 2015 Art Music Awards.

Everything else that gets programmed depends largely on external partners and how well what we want to do aligns with what they want to do. As such, our programming has also been shaped by the institutions who have supported us. In the early years it was the Sydney Spring Festival, later The Studio at the Opera House and the Melbourne Recital Centre gave us a good run for a couple of years and more recently the Sydney Festival under Lieven Bertels. Many one-off collaborations that have also yielded rewarding projects. Such partnerships are not compromised. For example, our Sydney Festival collaboration with Mike Patton to present Berio’s Laborintus II is surely another of our highlights. However, the projects that do get to your ears represent only the tip of the iceberg of what we’d do if we could. True artistic autonomy is a slippery ideal.

Dan Thorpe – Mercury Vapour Seismology [2015, World premiere]

“I’d rather listen to fluorescent lights than Mozart” (Damien Ricketson). How does music sound when it’s held together by the skin of its teeth? Everything is always at a tipping point, but some things are more obvious than others. Mercury Vapour Seismology is an exercise in collapse. The ensemble play from scores generated in real time, which graph the breakdown in communication between the fluorescent lights and the flutist. Both are pushed to extremes beyond their operating specifications, flickering and breathy and eventually dissipating into air and low current hum.

—Dan Thorpe

Samuel Smith – threaded through meridians [2015, World premiere]

A meridian is a vast longitudinal line that spans the earth’s surface, dividing it at any point into two equal hemispheres. In threaded through meridians, the geographical is transposed into three vast meridians of spectra, vertically arranged at key points throughout the work. We are presenting two works from final year composition students at the Conservatorium: a modern take on birdsong in Cassie To’s Avialae and an integration of acoustic and electronic soundworlds in Kezia Yap’s Coalesce.

—Damien Ricketson

Future Retro

Two decades and hundreds of concerts since our first performance, we mark our anniversary today with Future Retro: a double-concert, peppered with talks and celebratory drinks. The Retro half of the event features some of the major works from our past that have left indelible echoes in our ears (Grisey’s monumental Talea, Beyond Atmospheres – our creative remake of György Ligeti’s famous work and Andriessen’s Hoketus). In the Future half, we hand the event over to emerging composers. Kate Moore’s Farm was commissioned for our 2013 European tour. The rest are all world premieres: Tristan Coelho’s read/write error indulges in the beauty of broken sounds. We are thrilled to introduce our Hatched emerging composers with a lush and colourful work from Melbourne-based Samuel Smith and a curious work from Adelaide-based Daniel Thorpe for solo flute, fluorescent light bulbs and ensemble. Finally we are presenting two works from final year composition students at the Conservatorium: a modern take on birdsong in Cassie To’s Avialae and an integration of acoustic and electronic soundworlds in Kezia Yap’s Coalesce.

—Damien Ricketson
a technique where two notes can be used to generate a collection of related notes. Between these meridians weave a sinuous and constantly rotating series of duets that include all fifteen possible duo combinations of the ensemble. Some of these duets are featured more prominently, while others are used to create an accompaniment or texture.

All of the duets seek to showcase the members of Ensemble Offspring, demonstrating their versatility and virtuosity as both chamber musicians and soloists.

—Samuel Smith

Kezia Yap – Coalesce
[2015, World premiere]

Coalesce brings together two of the things that interest me the most in music: colours created through texture and combining acoustic instruments with electronically produced sounds. It explores a world of shifting textures that manifest through the combination of cello, vibraphone and electronics. Beginning as spacious textures that manifest through the combination of cello, vibraphone and electronics, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as the piece has taken many different shapes and forms, it has settled as

—Kezia Yap

Kate Moore – Fern [2013]

A fern is an enchanting plant, ancient and universal. Its fronds overlap with intricate self-similar patterns, expanding and contracting. The ever-increasing crosshatch fibres are like feathers or wings depicted that these sounds are not supposed to be made but still come across highly expressive to me. Imagine the warbling tune of a fridge or the crunchy explosions of a gearbox or the gritty strains of a tired old printer. With this in mind I had a long hard listen to a variety of broken technology and started analysing and improvising by the performers and, throughout the piece, are transformed from literal interpretations to conventional musical melodies. Avaluale 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 sounds may permanently be silenced, and exist only in our imagination.

—Kate Moore

Tristan Coelho – read/write error
[2015, World premiere]

Commissioned by the Noisy Egg Creation Fund read/write error is a glitchy, beat-driven work that draws upon ideas surrounding the digital, data-driven world we find ourselves in. I imagined three types of music being like data scattered across a failing hard drive. Bits of information are strewn here and there with interspersed contrasts brought about by ‘hard cuts’ between ideas (almost like video editing techniques), the fragments of which are then assembled in various ways.

These thoughts were informed by a general interest in exploring a kind of ‘brokenness’ in music – a beauty brought about through roughness and imperfection. I extended this further by considering the actual sounds emitted by technology as it goes haywire or malfunctions. What I like about this is that these sounds are not supposed to be made but still come across highly expressive to me. Imagine the warbling tune of a fridge or the crunchy explosions of a gearbox or the gritty strains of a tired old printer.

With this in mind I had a long hard listen to a variety of broken technology and started analysing and improvising by the performers and, throughout the piece, are transformed from literal interpretations to conventional musical melodies. Avaluale 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 sounds may permanently be silenced, and exist only in our imagination.

—Tristan Coelho
György Ligeti (arranged by Ensemble Offspring) – Beyond Atmospheres [1961/2013-15]

György Ligeti’s Atmosphères (1961) was a pioneering orchestral work that helped establish a dense approach to composition that focused on sound mass. The sculpted glistening textures, which the composer termed ‘micropolyphony’, not only made a significant impact on future Classical music, but entered the public consciousness via Stanley Kubrick’s use of the work in his 2001: A Space Odyssey.

Dependent on huge instrumental forces, the massed effect of this work, and the entire repertory of sound mass compositions that have subsequently proliferated, have largely been unavailable to small dedicated new music chamber groups such as Ensemble Offspring. However, the growing integration of electronic music within the context of chamber music does present the opportunity to expand the timbre and mass of smaller performing groups. This performance features strings, percussion and turntable that are augmented by both pre-recorded material as well as live electronics that act like a halo of sound—an offstage chorus—filling the sound space that may otherwise be out of reach of the acoustic instruments.

Beyond Atmospheres is not Atmosphères, but a creative fantasy on the indelible impression this work has left in our collective musical vocabulary. The distilled instrumentation follows the same shapes and sequence of the original, but is time-stretched to almost double its duration, slowing down the drama of the original and indulging in its rich soundworlds as though suspended in slow motion.

—Damien Ricketson

Louis Andriessen – Hoketus [1976]

Hoketus is the result of the minimal art project I started in January 1977 at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. This project’s purpose was to study the history of the American avant-garde movement both theoretically and practically, and I intended to finish the project by performing a composition that, making use of certain stylistic devices of minimal art, would at the same time criticise this style. The principal quality of minimal art compositions is the consistent limitation of musical material: the advantage is that all possibilities of one single musical aspect (usually rhythm) can wholly be explored and worked out. It is true that this is at the expense of other musical aspects.

Hoketus, too, has only one musical subject: the hoketus. The hoketus is a stylistic device of the Ars Nova (14th century, Machaut and others): the melodic tones are divided between two or more descants. The ensemble Hoketus consists of two identical quintets: panflute, piano, Fender-piano, bass-guitar and percussion. The pitch material of both groups is (nearly) identical. This applies to the rhythm as well. It is, however, complementary: in Hoketus the groups never play simultaneously. What makes the piece Hoketus differ from most minimal art compositions is that the harmonic material is not diatonic but chromatic, and that it radically abandons the tonal continuous sound-masses characteristic of most minimal art, with the inclusion of all accompanying cosmic nonsense.

—Louis Andriessen

Ensemble Offspring

Ensemble Offspring is a dynamic Sydney-based organisation dedicated to innovative new music. Led by Artistic Directors Claire Edwardes (percussion) and Damien Ricketson (composer) the virtuoso team of musicians boasts broad ranging backgrounds and talents. Driven by open-mindedness, 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 the most virtuosic chamber works recently written to striking interdisciplinary productions. Dedicated to a living classical music tradition, Ensemble Offspring has premiered more than 100 new works, toured Europe and China twice and featured in many prestigious venues and events including the Sydney Festival, Canberra International Music Festival and ISCM World Music Days.

ensembleoffspring.com

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS
Core Ensemble Offspring

Claire Edwardes – percussion

Percussionist Claire Edwardes is a highly regarded interpreter, performer and passionate advocate of contemporary classical music as well as the Co-Artistic Director of Ensemble Offspring. Career highlights include solo appearances at the Sydney Festival, Vivid Sydney (New Wave Sound), Huddersfield Festival of Contemporary Music (UK) and Gaudeamus Muziekweek (NL). She is the recipient of an Australia Council Music Fellowship (2014/2015) and in 2012 & 2007 she was awarded the AMC/APRA Art Music Award for Excellence in Australian Music. In 2005 she was the MCA/Freedman Fellow and in 1999 was named Symphony Australia Young Performer of the Year. Highlights in 2015 include concerti with the Melbourne Symphony, WAYO, Canberra Symphony and Sydney Conservatorium Wind Symphony.

claireedwardes.com

Zubin Kanga – piano/keyboards

London-based Australian pianist, Zubin Kanga has performed at many international festivals including the BBC Proms (UK) Metropolis New Music Festival, (Australia), IRCAM’s Manifeste Festival (France) and Borealis Festival (Norway) as well as appearing as a soloist with the London Sinfonietta and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Zubin has collaborated with many of the world’s leading composers, including Michael Finnissy, George Benjamin and Thomas Adès and premiered over 50 new works. He is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Nice and IRCAM, Paris and a Research Fellow at the Royal Academy of Music, London.
zubinkanga.com

Lamorna Nightingale – flutes

Lamorna Nightingale has been playing with Ensemble Offspring since 2007 and is a core member. She has appeared regularly with Sydney’s best orchestras and chamber groups. She has performed on two recordings of new Australian flute music ‘Eat Chocolate and Cry’ and ‘Spirit of the Plains’ and has created several pedagogical volumes of repertoire for young flute players through her publishing company, Fluteworthy. Recently, Lamorna produced and performed as a soloist in the Australian premiere of Sciarrino’s work for 104 flute players, Il cerchio tagliato dei suoni. 2015 has also been filled with 8 performances a week of Les Miserables!

Jason Noble – clarinets

Jason Noble is an in-demand Bondi clarinetist specialising in all members of the clarinet family including the bass clarinet, saxillo, clarins and glove bagpipe. He has been an integral member of Ensemble Offspring since 2002 featuring in such projects as Bargain Garden, Fractured Again and The Secret Noise. Jason has twice travelled to the Afghanistan National Institute of Music in Kabul as an educator and clarinet teacher. He has collaborated variously with popular musicians Sally Sellemann and Holly Throsby, the indigenous women’s choir of the Twi Islands and most recently performed with Nick Wiles and the Shaun Parker Dance Company in the production Am I. Jason performs regularly with Halcyon, soprano Jane Sheldon and The Song Company.

Bree van Reyk – percussion

Bree van Reyk has toured and recorded extensively throughout this country and around the globe with the likes of Paul Kelly, Holly Throsby, Sarah Blasko, Lior, Katie Noonan, Darren Hanlon, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and many other songwriters and ensembles. Bree is a long-standing member of Ensemble Offspring, Associate Director of Synergy Percussion, and is 2015 Artist in Residence at Campbelltown Arts Centre. Her projects at Campbelltown this year see the creation of a new work, In Stereo, with Brussels-based artist Kate McIntosh, and MASSIVE BAND with 100 high-school girls and women musicians.

Veronique Serret – violin

Veronique has established herself as an extremely versatile violinist whose repertoire ranges from baroque to contemporary classical, folk, rock and improvisation. In 2014, Veronique joined the Sydney Dance Company performing J.S Bach’s Partita Nr. 2 in D Minor, which she has recorded as her debut album. Recently she was soloist with the Sydney Symphony in Arvo Pärt’s Tabula Rasa and has led orchestras for Megan Washington, Sarah Blasko and Giorgio Moroder. Veronique is a founding member of CODA and currently plays with singer Inga Liljestrom and improvising string quartet ‘the Noise’. She was lead violin and backing vocalist for Joanna Newsom from 2010-2012, is a long-time member of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and was recently appointed Concertmaster of the Darwin Symphony Orchestra.

veroniqueserret.com
Jacob Abela – piano/keyboards
Jacob Abela is a Melbourne-based pianist and ondes martenot player acclaimed for his work in the new music field. Jacob has appeared at the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival, BIFEM, Shanghai New Music Week, Metropolis Festival, ISCM World New Music Days, and Sydney Festival. Jacob is currently a student at ANAM, studying with Timothy Young. Jacob has worked with renowned musicians and ensembles including Brett Dean, T’ang Quartet, Bang on a Can All-Stars, Vicki Ray, Synergy Percussion and Ensemble Offspring. He has also a member of the 2015 Ensemble Offspring Hatched Academy, and a recipient of the Australia Council’s ArtStart grants.

Ben Carey – live electronics/saxophone
Ben Carey is a Sydney-based saxophonist, composer and technologist with interests in contemporary classical, interactive, improvised and electro-acoustic music. His recent research and practice incorporates equal parts improvisation, composition and the development of musical software systems. His work has been featured at numerous international festivals and conferences including the dbâle festival of electronic music (Basel), IRCAM Live @ La Gaité Lyrique (Paris), Vivid Live (Sydney), the Australasian Computer Music Conference (Brisbane/Auckland), the Conference on New Interfaces for Musical Expression (Ann Arbor/London), and the International Computer Music Conference (Perth). www.bencarey.net

Geoffrey Gartner – cello
Geoffrey Gartner’s cello playing is known for its drama and intensity. Solo and chamber music is his specialty. He is deeply new music savvy and many challenging works have taken shape under his bow. He often performs with the voices of Halcyon, and this year toured Australia playing ambulatory cello with Sydney Dance Company in its production De Novo.
Alway the versatile musician, Geoffrey conducts, plays piano and loves singing choral communion at St Mark’s, Darling Point. He is a product of Sydney Conservatorium and University of California, San Diego.

Martin Kay – saxophone
Martin Kay is saxophonist, clarinetist, improvisor and composer. In 2014 Song Fwoa, an experimental trio of sax, guitar and drums released their second album Sona Of No Guins, For We Are Anomalous. In the same year Martin released a double album of his chamber works: Chamber Music Feasts One and Two. Martin is a founding member of Continuum saxophone quartet, who over the past fifteen years have commissioned many compositions from Australian composers.

Peter Kossen – bass guitar
Peter Kossen is an electric bassist performing in a wide variety of settings, from warehouse shows to contemporary classical concerts. His primary groups Making and Tanned Christ both explore the extremities of rock music and have performed a number of Australian tours and international appearances, such as the prestigious Camp A Low Hum festival in New Zealand (2013 and 2014). Peter is also an undergraduate musicologist at the Sydney Conservatorium and received the Dorothy Priest prize for musicology in 2015.
Martin Ng – turntables
Martin Ng is a Sydney-based experimental DJ and cardiologist. Ng creates his own work using the turntable as a compositional engine to deconstruct and reassemble finely detailed soundworlds. Current projects include a duo with Oren Ambarchi and Beta Erko (with laptop artist Robin Fox, analogue synth Anthony Pateras and tri-lingual rapper Vulk Makedonski). He has also collaborated with Robbie Aveniam, Chris Abrahams (The Necks), Jim Denley and Paul Miller aka DJ Spooky to name a few.

Roland Peelman – conductor
Acclaimed musician of great versatility, Roland Peelman was born in Belgium and has been active in Australia over more than 25 years as a conductor, pianist, artistic director and mentor to composers, singers and musicians alike. He has received numerous accolades for his commitment to the creative arts in Australia and specifically for his 25-year directorship of The Song Company, one of Australia’s most outstanding and innovative ensembles. At the end of the 2015 season he is stepping down from the Song Company in order to pursue new directions as well as the directorship of the Canberra International Music Festival.

Mary Rapp – cello/bass guitar
Australian double bassist/cellist/vocalist/composer/sound artist/educator, Mary Rapp, is a multidisciplinary musician who has gained wide acclaim for her distinctive approach, which integrates jazz, classical, experimental and world music traditions. Perpetually curious, Mary’s practice defies categorisation; she works in the spaces between categories, between genres, and between cultures. Mary’s work as both performer and composer is regularly featured in a range of ensemble settings and solo work.

Jodie Rottle – flutes [Hatched performer]
Jodie Rottle is an American contemporary flutist. Comfortable in any space, Jodie has performed at the Brisbane Festival of Toy Music, Seattle’s Town Hall, New York’s Le Poisson Rouge, and the boiler room of Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. Now based in Australia, she is a member of Kupka’s Piano, ensemble-in-residence at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts in Brisbane and is a long-distance member of the New York based new music trio Dead Language. Jodie holds a Masters degree from the Contemporary Performance at the Manhattan School of Music and teaches as sessional faculty at the Queensland Conservatorium.

Elizabeth Welsh – violin
Lizzy Welsh is a violinist, baroque violinist and improvisor based in Melbourne, Australia. As either soloist or chamber musician, Lizzy has appeared at the Bendigo International Festival of Exploratory Music, the Adelaide Festival, the Melbourne International Arts Festival, the Melbourne Jazz Festival, Springfest at the University of California San Diego, the Castlemaine State Festival and the Woodend Winter Arts Festival, to name a few.

Lizzy has performed with Golden Fur New Music Project, Elision Ensemble, the Argonaut Ensemble and the Australian Art Orchestra and has presented many Australian and World premieres.

Diana Springford – clarinets
Diana Springford has played clarinet with Ensemble Offspring, Halcyon Ensemble, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Chambermaids Wind Quintet, Symphony Australia and the Sydney Wind Ensemble, among others, and has recorded for SBSTV, Fine Music and the ABC. She has taught clarinet and saxophone for many years and, at the University of Wollongong, tutored and lectured all sorts of philosophy courses. She completed her PhD thesis on the philosophical understanding of the relationship between music and politics.
Louis Andriessen

Influenced by American Minimalism, jazz and Stravinsky, Louis Andriessen (b. 1939) is one of the most influential Dutch composers of his generation. His often loud and forceful music for large unusual combinations of instruments has come to embody the Hague School of composition. Andriessen’s work is driven by his socialist political convictions which is reflected in the subject material of many of his works, for example the famous De Staat (based on Plato’s Republic), to his formation of ‘protest’ ensembles, De Volharding (Perserverance) that have transformed the musical landscape of The Netherlands and influenced many ensembles around the world from the Bang on a Can All Stars to Ensemble Offspring.

Tristan Coelho

Tristan Coelho has worked across a range of disciplines including concert music, film and multimedia projects. His works have been performed in Australia and internationally and he has participated in a range festivals including the Dartington International Summer School, ECCE Ensemble’s Etchings Festival, the Young Composers Meeting in the Netherlands and the NYU/ASCAP Film Scoring Workshop in New York. He has written for numerous ensembles and soloists including the Melbourne and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras, Ensemble Offspring, Kammer Ensemble, the Song Company, Orkest de Ereprijs, Chronology Arts, the Royal College of Music Symphony Orchestra and ECCE Ensemble. Tristan is the co-founder of Sideband, a composer-performer collective which aims to promote Australian music through performance and recording projects. www.tristancoelho.com

Gérard Grisey

French composer Gérard Grisey (1946–1998) is often cited as one of the father figures of “Spectral music”: a school of composition that is informed by the acoustic properties of sound focusing on timbre as its primary generative element. Working to the precept that ‘music is made with sounds, not with notes’, Grisey’s exploration of spectral techniques is best encapsulated in his vast Les espaces acoustiques, a 90 minute cycle of works that are a veritable lab-test of experiments in rewriting acoustic knowledge as music.

György Ligeti

György Ligeti has been described as a musical pioneer of dazzling imagination and authority who made the avant-garde approachable. The music of his early period follows in the tradition of Kodály and Bartok. After Ligeti escaped to Western Europe, he made a name for himself as a composer of vast sound mass compositions in works such as Apparitions, Atmosphères and Lux aeterna. Despite the novel dense clusters of notes, the sensuous atmospheric effect of the music attracted many to his “micropolyphonic” approach, not least Stanley Kubrick who used his music in several of his films. In Ligeti’s latter period, growing interests in non-European musics (eg. Central African and Latin/Caribbean) and algorithmic art (fractals, iterative processes), saw the composer becoming more referential – reintroducing musical conventions from the past such as ostinato and melody.
Kate Moore
Kate Moore is an Australian composer based in The Netherlands. She creates worlds of sound for acoustic and electroacoustic media and writes instrumental music, concert music, sound installations and more. Her interests lie in research with particular respect to the history and origin of music and musical instruments and the exploration of sonic architecture, acoustics and the physics and psychoacoustics of sound. Moore specialises in creating surprising performance scenarios that feature virtuosic instrumentalists and musicians set amidst unusual and alternative performance circumstances. Her work has been described as “a giant tsunami of sound” New York Times, “a fascinating exercise in micro- and macro-rhythm” Sydney Morning Herald, “from the haze she creates, graceful, ambling melodies emerge and evaporate, and those give the music its allure.” New York Times, “her intent seems to be to create a dream, an alternative reality” UT San Diego.

Samuel Smith [Hatched composer]
Samuel is a Melbourne-based composer working primarily in the field of notated, acoustic music. Variously described as ‘beguiling, mysterious and gentle,’ (Canberra City News) or ‘glistening with totally gorgeous sonorities’ (The Australian), Samuel’s music focuses on the integration of slowly unfolding process, instrumental colour and virtuosic gesture. Samuel holds degrees from the Australian National University - where he studied composition with Larry Sitsky and Jim Cotter, and guitar with Tim Kain - and the University of Melbourne. He is currently a Masters candidate at the University of Melbourne where he studies composition with Elliott Gyger.

Dan Thorpe [Hatched composer]
Dan Thorpe is a Composer/Performer based in Adelaide. Described as “one of Adelaide’s most exciting young performers” (FiveThousand, 2015), Dan’s work is curious, experimental and genre defying, linked together by a love of storytelling and sense of irreverence for existing forms. There is always a focus on collaborative, open approaches to composition that stress the importance of performers’ creative input in musical expression. His work has been featured on Making Waves, as part of Electroacoustic Winds in Aveiro, Portugal, and performed by Kelsey Walsh (San Francisco/Berlin), Soundstream Collective (Adl.), the Australian String Quartet and others. As a performer, he is half of the flute and electronics duo Stereo//Mono, a founding member of CrashCatalyst, has performed as part of Format Festival, Soundstream Adelaide New Music Festival, the Adelaide Fringe, COMA and as a regular improvisor and soloist on Piano, Electric Guitar, Electronics and Tenor Saxophone. He has also made work for installation, contemporary dance and theatre. In 2015 he is in residence with Ensemble Offspring as part of their Hatched Academy, and Creative Original Music Adelaide’s Composer Feature.

Cassie To [Sydney Conservatorium composer]
Cassie To is a fourth year honours student at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Her music is inspired by composers such as Joe Hisaishi, Max Richter and John Adams and is interested in incorporating environmental sounds into acoustic composition. In 2013 she was composer in residence for Sydney Youth Orchestra’s string orchestras. She has also been involved in collaborative projects with artists and musicians, being one of the founding composers of the Cosmos Project (2014) that involved eight composers and artists collaborating to produce new contemporary art, as well as working with indie singer Eli Wolfe in arranging his music for chamber ensemble in the concert Musikgarten.

Kezia Yap [Sydney Conservatorium composer]
Kezia Yap is a Sydney-based composer, producer and pianist studying at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. She specialises in acoustic chamber works, and has thriving interest in computer music and mixed-media projects. She is passionate about supporting young and emerging composers, artists and musicians and is involved in producing collaborative events and projects as part of a collective co-founded with fellow composition students from the Sydney Conservatorium. Outside of study and compositional activities, Kezia is involved with teaching music, and has interned and continues to volunteer at various companies and organisations, including new-music organisation, Chronology Arts, and producing a weekly show on FBi Radio.

24
Ensemble Offspring is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts advisory body, and the NSW Government through Arts NSW.

Future Retro is supported by the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and the University of Sydney.

The Hatched Academy is supported by the APRA AMCOS grants program.

Ensemble Offspring also thanks ABC Classic FM and the Australian Music Centre for their on-going support of the organisation.

Ensemble Offspring would like to thank the following organisations for their generosity in supporting FUTURE RETRO:

Willie the Boatman for bringing the beer
Aquas Australia for keeping us hydrated
JP Finsbury Bespoke Joiners
Corner Smith
The Red Rattler Theatre

Thanks also for the gifts from:

Limelight Magazine
The Innocent Kitchen
Molton Brown
KMS California

Ensemble Offspring would also like to acknowledge production manager Neil Simpson as well as David Kim-Boyle, Jarrod Saxon, Sem Di Santi, Jan Marshall and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music staff who have helped make today's event possible.
Noisy Egg Creation Fund

Tristan Coelho’s world premiere, read/write error, was commissioned through Ensemble Offspring’s Noisy Egg Creation Fund. Many thanks to our donors: Barrie Collins, Michael Smetanin, Kate Lidbetter, Sylvia Jamieson, Peter Howard, John & Irene Garran, Penny Le Couteur, Shane Simpson, Alan Watt, Ian Cleworth, Merry Pearson, Natasha Cramer, Carus Mistry, Paolo Iamigo, Neil Burns, Stewart Jackson, John Christo, Lamorna Nightingale, Harold Carousid, John Grill, Richard Toop, Rachel Steff, Sharon Kelly, Louise Haggerty, Damien Ricketson, Elizabeth Hristofoirdis, Andrew Fellowes, Claire Edwades, Yarmila Alfonzetti and Rob Glass.

Donate today and create the music of tomorrow

Join us on a unique musical journey in creating the music of tomorrow, music that inspires and arouses, excites and provokes.

Visit: ensembleoffspring.com/donate