

DETAILED RECORDING NOTES: OFFSPRING BITES 1

JUAN FELIPE WALLER

Detone Retune (2014)

It is agreed that accidents play an important role in any creative moment. Da Vinci urged artists to search for inspiration in the dirt on walls, or the streaked patterns in stones. The fabrication of accidents is what Duchamp called "canned chance". F. Bacon was quoted saying, "I want a very ordered image, but I want it to come about by chance". In music, accidents become most evident to the listener through improvised music. As for composers, the freshness of a spontaneous or unexpected musical discovery during a compositional process is embraced without second thought...And rarely revealed as such. Xenakis' reverence to accident was solidly cemented with his stochastic processes, where probability and chaos are extraordinarily personified. During the composing process of my work, accidents manifest for diverse and unpredictable reasons. And yet, keeping the doors open for "things" to happen becomes a rather crucial aspect. And that's exactly where the tension between accident and intention become so significant, emerging as a common factor in my pieces.

In *Detone Retune*, this aspect becomes self evident to the listener, as a degree of unpredictability extended to the interpreters' performance is subject to a wavering fragility for the production of sound. For some time I've developed an interest in discovering sonorities by acoustic means, which are akin to electronic sounds. It often led to trying out different objects to produce sounds, such as ceramics, plastics and recyclable materials found in hardware stores. Threaded rods, tiles and styrofoam became the backbone of the sound world of this piece. The rest of the instruments 'tune-in' to the tones and harmonics produced by striking these materials, which percussionist Claire Edwardes executes in a central role in a sort of percussion concerto-maquette.

Detone Retune was commissioned by the Noisy Egg Creation Fund.

Note by Juan Felipe Waller

Juan Felipe Waller (b. 1971) is a Mexican-born composer currently based in Berlin. His music often involves what he terms a "lens of deformation". This compositional approach is reflected in his interest in harmonic imperfection and disrupting clean sonorities through the use of found-sounds and unconventional

instrumental techniques and preparations. Felipe was brought up in Mexico in a blend of cultures from his parents' mixed backgrounds. He first studied music in Mexico City at the Music Study and Investigation Centre (CIEM). From 1994 on he studied composition at the Rotterdam Conservatorium with Klaas de Vries, and electroacoustic music with Rene Uylenhoet, where he graduated with honourable mention in 1999. Some of his compositions include *Teguala*, a percussion quartet for 120 ceramic tiles and electronics, *Chemicangelo*, an odyssey for organ solo, and *Calumnia* for large orchestra, for which he received the first prize in the NOG Jonge-componisten concourse in Holland. His pieces have been widely performed in The Netherlands, Germany, England, Austria, France, Mexico, Taiwan, Australia and the USA by renowned orchestras, ensembles and performers. Through his collaborations he has worked across genres and art forms including in dance, experimental film and animation.

MARY FINSTERER

Silva (2012)

Silva was commissioned in celebration of Mary Finsterer's 50th birthday. Scored for the full sextet and featuring Ensemble Offspring's Artistic Director, Claire Edwardes, on solo percussion, *Silva* takes its name from the Latin word for 'forest'. Finsterer uses the idea of the forest as a metaphor: a creative reference-point that acts as both a germinating seed as well as a guiding character during the act of composition. The composer describes the first portion of the work as seeking the feeling of largeness through space: "as if to experience the forest through layers of branches and leaves, these represented by the whimsical, faster moving, soft gestures of the woodwinds and string harmonics." In contrast, the latter section evokes a stark and more earthy image of the wood and soil, highlighted by toms and gongs in the percussion. The work takes a traditional form - a simple ABA structure - and reflects the work that Finsterer has been developing since her orchestral work *In Praise of Darkness* in 2009, where the idea of memory is played out through recurring references, thematic fragments, inspired by Tallis's *Spem in alium* and Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* - a fitting quote for the recent passing of a dear friend.

Silva was commissioned with the support of the Australia Council for the Arts.

Note by Damien Ricketson

Mary Finsterer (b. 1962) is recognised as one of Australia's most original orchestral composers. Her work has won many awards around the world, including the prestigious Paul Lowin Orchestral Prize in 2009 for her work inspired by Jorge Luis Borges, *In Praise of Darkness*. In 2006, Mary received a Churchill Fellowship to compose alongside Marco Beltrami for the blockbuster movie *Die Hard 4*. During this time she continued to work on short films, including productions at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. *South Solitary*, written and directed by Shirley Barrett, is Mary's first feature film, the music of which has been released on the CD label ABC Classics | Universal. She has recently completed an opera entitled *Biographia*, commissioned by the Song Company.

TRISTAN COELHO

read/write error (2015)

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 dissecting a few recordings of a stuttering hard drive losing its mind. I found here a rich array of musical ideas, which helped me shape the work.

Note by Tristan Coelho

Tristan Coelho (b. 1983) is an award-winning Sydney-based composer who specialises in concert music, film and multimedia projects. With an interest in a wide range of music from experimental classical and electronic to world music and jazz, he strives for a unique balance in his scores and an individual sound for each project. Tristan graduated from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 2006, and then went on to study at the Royal College of Music from 2007-2008. He has studied composition formally with Michael Smetanin, Damien Ricketson, Mary Finsterer, Trevor Pearce and David Sawyer amongst others, and piano with Stephanie McCallum. In 2016, Tristan was a finalist in the Instrumental Work of the Year category in the APRA Art Music Awards. Tristan is a founding member of Sideband, a composer/performer collective supporting emerging Australian musicians which released their debut CD in 2014.