

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ENSEMBLE OFFSPRING'S
CLAIRE EDWARDES**



Co-artistic Director Claire Edwardes has been awarded a highly sought Australia Council Fellowship. The award will enable Claire to pursue diverse artistic collaborations and solo endeavours including a project with guitarist Karin Schaupp, a children's show, a trip to Berlin and the development of her solo project ONE. Other recipients were pop producer and composer Paul Mac, Matthew Robinson (singer, lyricist and composer) and Karin Schaupp.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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RIVERSIDE 2014

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 to local Sydney bowling clubs, Ensemble Offspring has developed a reputation in Australia for its uniquely adventurous and engaging programs. Recent projects have included a European tour and a collaboration with rock icons Mike Patton and Lee Ranaldo as part of the 2014 Sydney Festival. www.ensembleoffspring.com

BIOGRAPHIES

CLAIRE EDWARDES – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/PERCUSSION



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

LAMORNA NIGHTINGALE - FLUTE



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

John Cage (1912–1992) – Three2 (1991)

In Three2 each performer is requested to choose a palette of unspecified sounds (they need not be traditional 'musical' sounds). Cage then uses chance methods to indicate which of the sounds the performer should perform as well as chance derived 'number-brackets' to describe in seconds when a performer should start or stop their given sound. The sonic result is an ambient type of music. Beautiful purposelessness. The sounds do not have any musical function, they do not lead anywhere or mean anything. They simply exist. The music and writings of Cage collectively challenge the very definition of music. By basing compositional decisions on chance procedures, he tests the notion that music need be the willful creation of the composer. Through his exploration of alternative instruments, found sounds, noise and silence he invites the listener to find beauty in all sounds. Encountering the music and ideas of Cage is a gentle and friendly reminder that the creation of music ultimately lies in the act of listening.

— Damien Ricketson

Jane Stanley (b. 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

Matthew Shlomowitz (b. 1975) – Letter Piece 8 (Sit up Stand down) (2012)

Matthew Shlomowitz's Letter Pieces are an ongoing series of short performance works combining physical action, text and sound. Each Letter Piece has a score that defines a limited palette of physical actions and sound objects in a fixed order. The score, which is expressed as sequence of letters – hence the title – is effectively a form into which the performers invent their own content. As such, any two performances may sound and look entirely different. Letter Piece No.8 was written for the Italian group Alter Ego and first performed by them at the Piteå School of Music in Sweden in 2012.

— Damien Ricketson

JASON NOBLE - CLARINET



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.

PROGRAM

Oscar Bettison – Vamp (Movement 1)
David Lang – Lend Lease
Jukka Tiensuu – Asteletsa (Australian Premiere)
Tom Johnson – Counting Duets
David Lang – Thorn
Damian Barbeler – Deviations on White (World Premiere)
John Cage – Three2
Jane Stanley – Helix Reflection
Oscar Bettison – Vamp (Movement 2)
Matthew Shlomowitz – Letter Piece 8 (Sit up Stand down)

PROGRAM NOTES

Oscar Bettison (b. 1975) – Vamp (2004) (Australian Premiere)

Unusually for me, Vamp is a series of miniatures and was written over a long period of time. The fourth movement was written first, in 2001, when I was a fellow at Tanglewood and working with the choreographer Eliza Miller. A few years later Eliza and I decided to work together again, and the piece Vamp was born. I wanted to put the last movement in relief, but I also felt that there was much more to say with the combination of piccolo, e-flat clarinet and percussion. The first two movements, which are both fast, pit the percussion against the winds in different ways.

— Oscar Bettison

David Lang (b. 1957) – lend/lease (2008)

The United Kingdom was actively engaged in World War II for two years before the United States became involved. During those two years many Americans wanted to help the war effort, but our country was officially neutral. 'lend/lease' was a programme created as a dodge round that supposed neutrality.

The USA would funnel arms to the UK forces, technically as weapons purchased on credit but really as gifts, as an advance payment on its eventual entry into the war. When Andrew Burke asked if I would contribute a piece to the London Sinfonietta's birthday celebration I remembered the history of co-operation between our two countries, and, in the spirit of international brotherhood, I said yes. Happy Birthday, London Sinfonietta!

Jukka Tiensuu (b. 1948) – Asteletsa (1999) (Australian Premiere)

The music of Finnish composer Jukka Tiensuu resists easy categorisation. The eclectic range of techniques and styles found in his musical language slide seamlessly between brash and lyrical. In the solo bass clarinet work Asteletsa (which also exists in a version for bassoon), the performer not only needs to learn a vast array of unusual techniques such as multiphonics (playing multiple notes simultaneously), quarter-tones (notes in between the regular chromatic scale) and slides but also needs to walk around the stage whilst playing. The score comes with a set of instructions that direct the performer to limp, shuffle and curtsy. The movement pattern also provides a visual clue to the palindromic musical structure.

— Damien Ricketson

Tom Johnson (b. 1939) – Counting Duets (1982)

Maths and music are frequently lumped together. Seldom, however, is the relationship as literal as found in the music of Tom Johnson. Now based in France, the American composer's complete avoidance of traditional musical gestures in favor of expressionless number sequences rendered as sound has both entertained and infuriated audiences alike. (Some critics have even questioned whether his work can qualify as music at all.) A self-proclaimed Minimalist composer, Johnson's music is similar to the early work of Steve Reich in that it is driven by transparent audible processes that simultaneously define form and content. The Counting Duets, of which you will hear two, are a collection of performed number patterns. The need for program notes illuminating the work are rather redundant: what goes on in these works will be entirely self-evident.

— Damien Ricketson

David Lang (b. 1957) – Thorn (1993)

My first idea for thorn was to embed a single spike somewhere in the middle of a long, slow, quiet melody. I thought that the listener would then spend the first part of the piece in fear and the second part in shock, and this would change the ways that the tune would be perceived. The problem with this was that the spike turned out to be the most interesting part of the piece, and, ultimately, I couldn't resist the temptation to add many, many more of them.

—David Lang

Damian Barbeler (b. 1972) – Deviations on White (2014) (World Premiere)*

Composers are always using light and colour as inspiration for music. I do it all the time, and Deviations on White is my latest example. At the start of the piece you hear a single chord which I'm thinking of as white light. The rest of the piece is just versions of this chord, in effect, changing shades and hues of this first light. If you imagine light moving across a landscape on a bright day with fast moving clouds you'll get the idea. The intensity and colour of the same basic light can change dramatically from moment to moment. It's a captivating scene for a viewer and I hope to grab some of that dramatic allure and bring it into the concert hall for the listener.

— Damian Barbeler