

Australian Voices 3: DAMIEN RICKETSON

Thursday 23 June 6pm, Salon

Presented by Melbourne Recital Centre and Australian National Academy of Music

ARTISTS

Claire Edwardes, curator/percussion

Damien Ricketson, electronics/turntables

ANAM Musicians

PROGRAM

DAMIEN RICKETSON

Same Steps [Part 1] (2007)

Kim Falconer (VIC), flute

Kenny Keppel (NZ), clarinet

Julian Baker (NZ), violin

Nils Hobiger (QLD), cello

James Townsend (NSW), percussion

BOZIDAR KOS

Fatamorgana (2004)

Jennifer Timmins (NZ), flute

Mitchell Jones (QLD), clarinet

Julian Baker (NZ), violin

Jonathan Bekes (NSW), cello

Thea Rossen (WA), percussion

Claire Edwardes, conductor

DAMIEN RICKETSON

Time Alone (2014)

Hamish Upton (NZ), percussion

Damien Ricketson, electronics

DAMIEN RICKETSON

Not by Halves (2015)

Eliza Shephard (NSW), flute

Kenny Keppel (NZ), clarinet

Julian Baker (NZ), violin

Nils Hobiger (QLD), cello

LOUIS ANDRIESSEN

Klokken voor Haarlem (2002)

Mathew Levy (NSW), percussion

Berta Brozgul (VIC), piano

Nicholas Young (NSW), celeste

Claire Edwardes, keyboard

DAMIEN RICKETSON

Heaven Only Empty (2014)

Kenny Keppel (NZ), bass clarinet

Hamish Upton (NZ), percussion

Claire Edwardes, percussion

Damien Ricketson, turntables

ABOUT THE MUSIC

A note from Damien Ricketson (unless otherwise stated) . . .

I am attracted to heterophony. The same story recounted by many voices, the same scene observed through many eyes. I like plurality in music: the work, an object deliberately open to a multiplicity of possible perspectives. As such, *Same Steps* is in the tradition of 'open form' music - two movements each exploring different facets of 'openness'. In this performance, however, we will only hear Part 1. Rather than provide the musicians with a score that represents specific technical instructions to execute a singular sonic image, the score includes a selection of unconventional interpretive markings designed to elicit a more open and evaluative response from the performer. I have adopted a system of "physical" indicators modeled on Rudolph Laban's Theory of effort-actions. In Laban's theory there are eight physical movement types, each based on combinatorial descriptions of space, weight and time. Although usually found in choreographic practice, the musicians interpret the markings to describe the transference of physical energy from the performer to the instrument.

Klokken voor Haarlem is a quartet that uses wide, unison chords to emulate the sound of bells. This piece challenges the small ensemble to make perfect entrances amidst long pauses across each measure of 7/4 time. The chords are seemingly atonal, but as the piece progresses a clear harmonic progression makes itself apparent, changing the tone and mood of the piece. After several bell statements is a mad flurry of sextuplets in each part. Later on, a melody makes its way through the noise, but cannot prevail, and the piece ends with the bells as it started. (By Robert McCarthy)

Not by Halves continues my interest in the 'open-form' and musical forms that stimulate a multitude of possible versions. In the tradition of John Zorn's 'game pieces', *Not by Halves* is a text-based work: a set of rules that governs

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the way in which performers cooperate without specifying exactly how they should sound. Scored for any quartet of homogenous instruments and looking more like a flowchart than a traditional score, the game plays out in two halves (plus a half-time intermezzo), whereby the musicians try to halve prevailing musical structures such as pitch and rhythm that in turn triggers chains of interactions and musical patterns.

Time Alone is a vibraphone solo from *The Secret Noise*: a collection of works inspired by music-making that has been deliberately shielded from public life. Other works in the series explore a variety of secret and private music-making ranging from forbidden ceremonial music to 'legally extinguished' compositions to music cliques and 'backmasking'. *Time Alone* was originally conceived in response to the proposition that music is increasingly becoming a private rather than social activity. The theme of isolation is reflected in a sparse work where solitary vibraphone notes barely connect to one another and the performer hums to themselves as if in their own world. Another layer of fragmentation occurs via the gradual intrusion of an electronic part that further disintegrates the natural resonance of the instrument.

Traditionally the word fatamorgana (or Fata Morgana) has been used to describe an optical illusion (mirage) in deserts, resulting from a heated or a very cool air, when a traveller sees objects that don't exist. In my composition, the title **Fatamorgana** is used as a metaphor for a deceptive/illusive hope. This was the first composition I wrote after my wife's death. During a relatively short period of her illness she was undergoing a series of tests, each associated with some hope that the disease could be beaten, only to be followed by a series of disappointments and eventually by a cruel realisation of the inevitable. (Edited from notes by Bozidar Kos)

Heaven Only Empty is an extractable quartet from *The Secret Noise*. Where *Time Alone* explored music-making from a private or personalised perspective, *Heaven Only Empty* is a playful response to 'backmasking': the tradition of hiding secret messages in vinyl recordings. The work is a mashup of three golden-era rock songs that have variously been accused of containing subliminal messages when played backwards. The turntablist in the ensemble conceptually interferes with the bass clarinet, vibraphone and drumkit by skipping, rewinding and generally manipulating the speed and direction in which the rest of the band play their music.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The music of Sydney-based composer **Damien Ricketson** is characterised by exotic sound-worlds, novel forms and is frequently integrated with other media. Recent large-scale works have included *Fractured Again*, a multimedia production (Sydney Festival and toured China) and *The Secret Noise*, a hybrid music-dance work about music and secrecy that was awarded 'Instrumental Work of the Year' in the 2015 Art Music Awards. Damien has studied with renowned Dutch composer Louis Andriessen and with Bozidar Kos. Damien co-founded and for 20 years co-directed Ensemble Offspring. He recently stepped down from this role to take up the role of Chair of Composition at the Sydney Conservatorium.

Internationally acclaimed percussion soloist, chamber musician and artistic director of Ensemble Offspring, **Claire Edwardes** has been described as a "sorceress of percussion". She was recently granted a prestigious Australia Council Music Fellowship, is a two time recipient of the AMC/APRA Art Music Award and winner of the Symphony Australia Young Performers Award. From 1999-2006 Claire was resident in Europe where she had success in numerous international competitions and performed solo in Het Concertgebouw (Amsterdam) and Queen Elizabeth Hall (London). In Australia, she has performed with all of the leading orchestras. Recent highlights include performances of Iain Grandage's new percussion concerto with the MSO and TSO and Ensemble Offspring's 20th Birthday celebrations.

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NEXT CONCERT

ANAM Gala Concert - Simone Young Conducts

Friday 19 August 7.30, Elisabeth Murdoch Hall

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