



MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE

# Media Alert

*Melbourne Recital Centre in arrangement with Mistletoe presents*

## HOLLY HERNDON



Avant-garde pop artist **Holly Herndon** plays her first Melbourne show in the glorious Elisabeth Murdoch Hall at Melbourne Recital Centre on 21 January.

Technology empowers creation of all kinds. By way of modern advancements and innovations, new artforms prosper, life expectancy extends and artificial intelligence gains awareness. The capabilities of such developments should be explored, employed and embraced. Rather than dimming and darkening the future, they burgeon and brighten it.

Case in point, Holly Herndon operates at the nexus of technological evolution and musical catharsis. On her third full-length album *PROTO* (4AD/Remote Control), the performer and composer fronts and conducts an electronic pop choir comprised of both human and A.I. voices over a musical palette that encompasses everything from synths to Sacred Harp stylings.

Holly lifted the lid on the creative process of her latest album via *Birthing PROTO*, a six-minute documentary directed by Theresa Baumgartner and Zoya Bassi. Filmed in Holly's home studio and at Volksbühne, where Herndon headlined recently with her vocal ensemble, it offers an insight into the making of third studio record *PROTO* and translating their extraordinary work to the live stage.

Holly explains:

‘Our vision of technology is that it enables relationships and liberates us to be more human together, which it so often is not designed to do. There’s a pervasive narrative of it as



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dehumanizing. We stand in contrast to that. It's not like we want to run away from technology; we're very much running towards it.'

Since her arrival in 2012, Holly has successfully mined the edges of electronic and avant-garde pop and emerged with a dynamic and disruptive canon of her own. Her musical palette started to expand as she utilised the laptop as 'the most intimate instrument', cultivating live voice processing systems and eventually developing custom vocal patches to construct experimental pieces to be performed in real-time.

As she researched platform politics for her PhD at Stanford, she assembled her 2015 sophomore offering *Platform*. *Platform* closed out 2015 by gracing year-end lists from *Pitchfork*, *The Guardian*, *NME*, and *The Wire*. In the aftermath, Radiohead handpicked her to open its European tour.

Along the way, she quietly pieced together what would become *PROTO* alongside cohort **Matthew Dryhurst**. In addition to assembling a Berlin-based 'ensemble of vocalists', Holly and Mat 'gave birth to an A.I. baby' affectionately named **Spawn** – who also joined the fold.

Speaking of the ensemble, Holly says:

'We wanted to put together a community of artists for this. There's no escaping the hours in front of the computer, but we also craved a very physical in-person sound and the experience of music-making. Choosing to work with an ensemble of humans was a statement of principle that also relates to A.I. I don't want to live in a world in which humans are automated off stage. *Spawn* was an ensemble member. Everyone was unique, but could work together as a unit. The meetings created a baseline trust, so they'd be willing to try something seemingly crazy.'

## **CONCERT DETAILS**

**Holly Herndon**

Tuesday 21 January 2020, 7.30pm

Elisabeth Murdoch Hall (Two hours & 30-mins incl. interval)

Tickets from \$45

Presented by Melbourne Recital Centre in arrangement with Mistletoe

For more information and to book tickets visit: [melbournerecital.com.au](http://melbournerecital.com.au) | 03 9699 3333

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