



Blackheath
Chamber
Music
Festival



ENSEMBLE OFFSPRING with ELIZA SHEPHARD

Saturday 20 April 2023, 4:00 pm
Phillips Hall | Blackheath Blue Mountains NSW

Alexandra Osbourne | violin
Claire Edwardes | percussion
Benjamin Kopp | piano
with Eliza Shephard | flute

PROGRAM NOTES

Brenda GIFFORD [1968-] | *Bardju* (arr. quartet) [2017]

Bardju represents our collective journey and tells us that we should tread lightly on Mother Earth; and it also represents my personal journey as a Yuin woman. Through this piece, I recalled my memories of country. My music grounds me in, and gives voice to, my culture. I do not create in a vacuum, and my culture is at the core of my creativity.” ~ Brenda Gifford

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Eric AVERY | *Wind of Ancestors* (violin, vibes) [2022]

“*Wind of Ancestors* is a piece inspired by the feeling of the wind near the cliffs of Bronte and Bondi. These cliffs are symbols of contemporary Sydney life, memories I have being with family, by myself pondering life and the coastal walk are fondly kept. The feeling of the wind here can be strong and I tried to encapsulate this in the musical piece, the way the violin strongly plays these lines with the piano is important to the style. Phrasing was made with these images in mind.” ~ Eric Avery

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Ross EDWARDS [1943-] | *Ecstatic Dance* (violin, flute) [1990]

In 1979 Ross Edwards contributed a flute duet to a garland of pieces by Australian composers celebrating Peter Schulthorpe's 50th birthday. A revised and expanded version of this duet was incorporated into this *Ecstatic Dance*.

“Ecstatic Dance has special significance for me as the earliest manifestation of my so-called maninya style, the extrovert antithesis of the contemplative music I had been writing in the 1970s. It is radiant and insistently melodic to befit its celebratory function.” - Ross Edwards

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**Stuart GREENBAUM** [1966- ] | *Two Interludes in Space* (violin, piano, vibes) [2000]

These two interludes are adapted from the middle two movements of *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, written in 2000. This trio adaptation was made specifically for percussionist Claire Edwards and Duo Sol to play together on tour in 2007.

1: *Alone in Space*

“After eighteen days of a space mission I was convinced that all visible space—the black emptiness, the white, unblinking stars and planets—was lifeless. The thought that life and humankind might be unique in the endless universe depressed me and brought melancholy upon me, and yet at the same time compelled me to evaluate everything differently.” - Yuri Glazkov

2: *The Infinite Heartbeat*

“What struck me most was the silence. It was a great silence, unlike any I have encountered on Earth, so vast and deep that I began to hear my own body: my heart beating...” - Aleksei Leonov

“Another Australian work, two atmospheric pieces for violin, piano and percussion by Melbourne composer Stuart Greenbaum and titled *Alone in Space* and *The Infinite Heartbeat* set quiet extended violin cantilenas over equally quiet sounds from piano and percussion to effectively convey the infinite stillness of space.”

W. L. Hoffman, *The Canberra Times*, May 2007

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John ADAMS [1947-] | *Road Movies: Relaxed Grooves* (violin & piano) [1995]

“The title *Road Movies* is total whimsy, probably suggested by the ‘groove’ in the piano part, all of which is required to be played in a ‘swing’ mode (second and fourth of every group of four notes are played slightly late).

Movement i. is a relaxed drive down a not unfamiliar road. Material is recirculated in a sequence of recalls that suggest a rondo form.

Movement ii. is a simple meditation of several small motives. A solitary figure in an empty desert landscape.

Movement iii. is for four-wheel drives only, a big perpetual motion machine called “40% Swing”. On modern MIDI sequencers the desired amount of swing can be adjusted with almost ridiculous accuracy: 40% provides a giddy, bouncy ride, somewhere between an Ives ragtime and a long rideout by the Goodman Orchestra, circa 1939. It is very difficult for violin and piano to maintain over the seven-minute

stretch, especially in the tricky cross-hand style of the piano part. So relax, and leave the driving to us.” - John Adams

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Ivan TREVINO [1983-] | *Empathy* (piano & percussion) [2017]

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Empathy (2017) is a duo for vibraphone and piano commissioned by a consortium led by Back Pocket Duo.

“Given the seemingly endless divisiveness we currently face, I'm still optimistic we can reach understanding through empathy. I encourage whoever hears this piece to try harder, to envision yourself in the shoes of another, perhaps someone you may have overlooked, and empathize with their situation.

With *Empathy*, motives are woven together and constantly traded between the two parts. The work's final moments produce a simple gesture of understanding.” - Ivan Trevino

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Astor PIAZZOLLA [1921-1992] | *La Muerte del Ángel* (flute, violin, piano) [1962]

La Muerte del Ángel (*Death of an Angel*), was composed as incidental music for the 1962 play *Tango del ángel* by Alberto Rodriguez Muñoz. In the play an angel heals the spirits of the residents of a shabby Buenos Aires neighbourhood but is ultimately killed in a knife fight.

This distinctive piece shook the conservative world of tango.

“Nuevo tango = tango + tragedy + comedy + whorehouse”, was the equation Piazzolla used to define his new direction of writing. “Greater harmonic sophistication, chromatic lines over chains of dominant sequences and an elusive jazz swing” was the new recipe.

La Muerte del Ángel was frequently played by Piazzolla in concert, and he recorded it on at least fourteen different occasions.

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Harry SDRAULIG [1992-] | *The Colours Change* (quartet) commissioned by Mountain Productions | World Premiere (2024)

Inspired by Henry Lawson's poem: *The Blue Mountains*

*Now in the west the colours change,
The blue with crimson blending;
Behind the far Dividing Range,
The sun is fast descending.*

*And mellowed day comes o'er the place,
And softens ragged edges;
The rising moon's great placid face
Looks gravely o'er the ledges.*