Canberra Symphony Orchestra

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They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Following the extraordinary performance by Claire Edwardes, explore the power of a single photograph in the National Photographic Portrait Prize 2019 exhibition.
CLAIRED EDWARDES
Percussionist

Internationally acclaimed percussion soloist, chamber musician and artistic director of Ensemble Offspring, Claire Edwardes has been described as a 'sorceress of percussion' performing with 'spellbinding intensity' and 'graceful virtuosity'. Her award-winning performances combine a theatrical energy with charismatic and original interpretations of a wide-range of repertoire.

Edwardes studied at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with Daryl Pratt, graduating as Student of the Year (1997) and went on to win the coveted Symphony Australia Young Performers Award (1999). She subsequently relocated to the Netherlands to undertake a Masters Degree at the Rotterdam and Amsterdam Conservatories under Richard Jansen, Peter Prommel and Jan Pustjens.

Whilst resident for seven years in the Netherlands, Edwardes received numerous international awards including first prizes at both the 2000 Tromp Percussion Competition and the 2001 Llangollen International Instrumentalist. Edwardes was the 2005 MCA/Freedman Fellow and she is the three-time winner (2007, 2012, 2016) of the APRA Art Music Award for Excellence by an Individual for her contribution to Australian music. In 2014 she was granted a prestigious Australia Council Music Fellowship and in 2016 Ensemble Offspring won the APRA Art Music Award for Excellence by an Organisation.

Edwardes has performed concertos with all the Australian orchestras, as well as numerous European orchestras, and has premiered works by a veritable roll call of composers – globally – including Harrison Birtwistle, Matthew Hindson, Elena Kats-Chernin and Matthew Shlomowitz. In her role as Artistic Director of Ensemble Offspring she programs and performs some of the most innovative and cutting-edge music being presented in the world today. Claire Edwardes is endorsed by Mike Balter Mallets and Adams Percussion. She teaches percussion at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and maintains a busy international concert schedule.

25-year-old Rhyan Clapham is a rapper, drummer, speaker and workshop facilitator under the rap pseudonym DOBBY. He proudly identifies as a Filipino and Aboriginal musician, whose family is from Brewarrina on Ngemba land, and is a member of the Murrawarri Republic in Weilmoringle, New South Wales. Clapham’s accomplishment as a composer was recognised in 2017 when he was awarded the prestigious Peter Sculthorpe Fellowship.

Of Drum Dreamer, Clapham writes:
Drum Dreamer is a dream sequence that takes me back to 2009 as a high school student. The dream depicts a confrontation that I had with a bully named Dylan, who wanted to take my rhyme book. Drum Dreamer fuses rap and snare drum into a unifying rhythm of momentum to tell a story of bullying, confidence, and perhaps even time travel. It was written for Claire Edwardes and commissioned by CSO.

Drum Dreamer (2019)
Michael Smetanin is one of the most distinctive figures among Australian composers. Born in Sydney in 1958 of Russian parents, he completed study at the Sydney Conservatorium in 1981 and then having been awarded an International Fellowship by the Music Board of the Australia Council and a Netherlands Ministry of Education and Science scholarship went on to study with leading Dutch composer Louis Andriessen at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague.

Smetanin's music has been extensively performed and recorded internationally with works appearing on over 30 individually released CD albums. The title of his work The Ladder of Escape was appropriated as the name of an entire new music CD series released by Attacca records and performances include Crash (Ireland) and Insomnio (Holland) whilst his fourth opera Mayakovski premiered in 2014. Most recently, Klang-Tek (2016) was premiered in Holland by Ensemble Klang, whilst pianist Zubin Kanga premiered Four Angels (2018). Michael Smetanin is an Associate Professor of Composition at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney.

Of Temple, Smetanin writes:

Temple is a short piece for one percussionist playing one set of five temple blocks. It was composed in 2015 for German percussionist Max Riefer, who premiered the work in Kuala Lumpur. The piece is ideally performed on traditional style Chinese temple blocks which are bell shaped and in possession of a less diatonic and tempered pitch set than the modern factory-made temple blocks which are rectangular prisms in shape.

The music is made of materials mainly based on a non-retrogradable rhythm of time units with the length 3, 2, 1, 1, 2, 3. This rhythmic material is predominantly measured in 16th notes and overlaid in canon of varying numbers of voices at any one time. Claire Edwardes has now taken this work into her repertoire and has added an improvised cadenza at approximately three quarters of the way into the piece.

Benjamin Drury

Canberra-based Benjamin Drury is a composer, improviser and sound artist. His work across experimental, popular and classical genres is concerned with acoustics, noise and indeterminacy. Drury’s work has been performed by Eighth Blackbird, Ensemble Offspring and Lisa Moore, whilst the site-specific installation Pieces for Cars, Tunnel and Hexagonal Vents was included as part of the You Are Festival (2016).

As performer, Drury has appeared at the Canberra International Music Festival, SoundOut Festival, the International Conference of Auditory Design, Electrofringe and Art Not Apart. His first album Sentence Fragment: Consider Revising was released in 2017. Drury also appears regularly as a member of the ANU Experimental Music Studio and New Music Ensemble.

Stained Glass – featuring vibraphone accompanied by electronics – was written shortly after Drury returned from a trip to Europe. Drury writes of his work:

Stained Glass explores how new experiences can change and colour familiar places – like stained glass transforming light into new and unexpected patterns. The electronics were created using manipulated sounds of tapping, bowing and scraping glass objects found in my mother’s kitchen. This work was written on the land of the Ngunnawal people.

Stained Glass was commissioned by Arn Sprogis and Margot Woods for performance by Claire Edwardes at the 2017 Canberra International Music Festival.
Clare Strong (née Johnston) is an Australian composer, based in Melbourne. Strong holds a Bachelor of Music (2013) from the University of Melbourne where she was awarded the Esther Rofe Award for Composition. As recipient of the Doris Burnett Ford Scholarship, Strong later completed a Masters degree from the University of Sydney as part of the inaugural National Women Composers’ Development Program at the Sydney Conservatorium. Strong also completed her AMusA with Dr Mark McGee (2012).

Strong has composed for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, the Goldner String Quartet, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, PLEXUS, Claire Edwardes, Sarah Curro, Stefanie Farrands, Virginia Taylor, Alice Giles and Louise Johnson.

In 2015 Strong won the David Henkels Award for Composition and had her *Gypsy Trio* performed at the 3MBS Performer of the Year Awards. Concurrently, Strong was a selected composer at the Walden School Creative Musicians Retreat in New Hampshire, USA. She studied with Martin Bresnick and her work was performed by the Wet Ink Ensemble (New York City).

Other engagements have included the Atlantic Music Festival (Maine), where her works were performed and recorded by the festival’s Contemporary Ensemble and the AMF Orchestra. Clare was also a selected composer for the Australian Youth Orchestra’s National Music Camp (2015), where her music was conducted by James Judd.

Of her new work Strong writes: *Moonlight* was composed for Claire Edwardes using a special selection of five metallic instruments that she owns and helped select in consultation with me. Claire demonstrated different effects she could produce on these instruments with mallets and a temple bowl beater which helped to inspire the piece. This work is to be listened to as a reflective meditation.
Paul Mac is one of the leading figures in Australian electronic music. He is a composer, songwriter, musician and producer. Mac is a conservatorium graduate and a multi ARIA Award winner for his work with underground dance pioneers Itch-E & Scratch-E and for his own solo work. His collaborators include Sia, Kylie, Daniel Johns, and Ngaiire.

Mac scores music for films, TV and theatre and he has previously worked with Bangarra Dance Theatre on the acclaimed productions – Blak and Miyagan from OUR land people stories. Mac has also recently composed music for the Sydney Theatre Company’s new production of How to Rule the World by Nakkiah Lui. Mac is currently studying at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, completing a Doctor of Musical Arts in composition.

Dual Attractor (2018)

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Dual Attractor was jointly written by Mac and Edwardes during a residency at Bundanon and conceived of as the finale for the dance show: RECITAL.

Mac writes of the work:
This solo drum piece with pre-recorded manipulated percussion accompaniment also exists as a standalone work [without dance], it’s driving repetitive rhythms exploring polyrhythmic combinations of two lines on a simple combination of three small drums. In RECITAL, the dancer, Richard Cilli repeats his movements in a similar manner, over and over, until he is a whirring sweaty mess!
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