

RHYTHMS OF CHANGE

CLAIRE EDWARDES



Introduction by Claire Edwardes

Rhythms of Change sees the creation of important new works for solo percussion by female identifying Australian composers, directly addressing gender equity in classical music programming now and into the future. The project was triggered by the realisation that the majority of the pieces that I had been performing throughout my career were written by men. To re-address this gender disparity, for *Rhythms of Change* I commissioned seven of my favourite emerging and established female identifying Australian composers to write new works for solo mallet percussion.

As a commissioning and performance project my *Rhythms of Change* initiative ensures that the next opus of Australian percussion music will be more fairly represented by women, so that the next generation of musicians can do what makes sense in our day and age – play music written equally by male AND female composers. The works are designed to be performed by a range of musicians – from high school to tertiary students, through to professionals, with the compositions made readily available for purchase through the Australian Music Centre. I hope you enjoy listening, and for those budding percussionists out there, I urge you to consider programming some of this awesome new music in your next recital!

"I am very grateful for your project and feel that the gender balance among composers for percussion is the most important challenge we face currently - I feel the need for greater equity more than ever right now. Thank you for your efforts Claire!"

Steve Schick (legendary American percussionist)

RHYTHMS OF CHANGE

CLAIRE EDWARDES | PERCUSSION

Maria Grenfell – **Stings and Wings**

1 Jack Jumper 3'19

2 Dragonfly 3'54

3 Moth Hunt 2'56

4 Ella Macens – **Falling Embers** 6'59

5 Ella Macens – **Verve** 4'26

6 Alice Chance – **Mirroring** 5'14

7 Peggy Polias – **Receptor** 6'56

8 Bree van Reyk – **Slipstreams** 6'06

9 Elena Kats-Chernin – **Violet's Etude** 3'16

10 Elena Kats-Chernin – **Poppy's Polka** 2'35

Anna Cawrse – **Dance Vignettes**

11 Meditations and Hymns 6'25

12 Fancy and Flight 4'05

13 Scamper and Scoot 3'10

Tracks 1–4, 6–8 & 10–13 recorded 2021 Golden Retriever Studios by Simon Berckelman.

Track 5 recorded 2020 Sydney Conservatorium of Music by Matthew McGuigan.

Track 9 recorded 2010 City Recital Hall by Belinda Webster originally for a Tall Poppies release.

All tracks mastered by Bob Scott.

Cover photo by Nat Cartney, Rolling Media Productions.

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From the set of Play School to the mainstage at the Sydney Opera House, Claire Edwardes is 'the sorceress of percussion' (City News, Canberra). The only Australian to win the 'APRA Art Music Award for Excellence by an Individual' three times, Claire leaps between her role as Artistic Director of Ensemble Offspring and concerto performances with all of the Australian and New Zealand orchestras plus numerous European orchestras.

Add her genre-spanning solo concerts, teaching at the Sydney Conservatorium, a broad spectrum of collaborations, premiering hundreds of new works by composers including Harrison Birtwistle and Unsuk Chin, to passionately advocating for gender equity in music and you begin to appreciate her astonishing energy.

Perhaps her most significant contribution, beyond her endless quest for excellence in performance, is in

breaking down the barriers between art music and audiences with her enthusiasm for bringing new music to unexpected places – including bowling clubs and old power stations.

claireedwardes.com

The composers

Maria Grenfell (1969) was born in Malaysia and raised in Christchurch, New Zealand, graduating with a Master of Music degree from the University of Canterbury. Maria is regularly involved in mentoring young composers through programs such as the TSO Australian Composers' School, the TSO Composer Project for Tasmanian pre-tertiary composition students, and the Sydney Conservatorium's Composing Women program 2016-2017. Maria is an Associate Professor at the University of Tasmania and resides in Hobart.

Ella Macens (1991) is a fast-emerging Sydney based composer with a passion for choral, orchestral and chamber music. Ella has received the Frank Hutchens Scholarship for Composition, the Fine Music FM Young Composer Award and was part of the Composing Women's program at the Sydney Conservatorium 2016-2018. Capturing qualities from both popular and classical music styles, her musical voice is heavily influenced by her Latvian heritage.

Alice Chance (1994) is a sought-after composer, conductor, arranger, and lyricist from Sydney. Her works are performed in concert halls (Sydney Opera House, The Kennedy Centre, City Recital Hall, Angel Place), and cathedrals (St Mary's Cathedral Sydney, Stanford Memorial Church California, Trinity Church Wall St New York City.) But her music is also performed in paddocks, and showers all around Australia. She recently relocated to Paris to undertake a Masters in Composition.

Peggy Polias (1981) is a Sydney-based composer, music engraver and she co-curates the new podcast Making Waves. In 2015, Polias was awarded the inaugural Peter Sculthorpe Music Fellowship and in 2018 she commenced a Doctor of Musical Arts at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, participating in the Composing Women program under the supervision of Prof. Liza Lim. As part of this undertaking she has composed for NY flautist Claire Chase, Sydney Chamber Opera and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra Fellows.

Bree van Reyk (1978) is a drummer, percussionist, composer and sound artist who makes unconventional and tradition-challenging performance works. She is a member of Ensemble Offspring and has been

friends with Claire since they were teenagers. Her music resides in the intersection between contemporary classical, indie-rock and performance art and is equally warm-hearted, celebratory, and focussed on issues of equality.

Sydney composer, **Elena Kats-Chernin** (1957), was born in Tashkent, now the capital of independent Uzbekistan, but then part of the Soviet Union. From the age of fourteen she was enrolled at the Gnesin Academy of Music in Moscow until migrating to Australia in 1975. Her energetic and vivid music communicates a mixture of lightheartedness and heavy melancholy, combining strong rhythmic figures with elements of cabaret, tango and ragtime.

Anne Cawrse (1981) is an award-winning Adelaide-based composer of acoustic orchestral, chamber, solo and choral works. With a particular love of text setting, Anne has been prolific as a composer of art song, choral works, and opera. She holds a PhD from the University of Adelaide, teaches composition at the Elder Conservatorium and is the Artistic Director of the ASO's She Speaks series.

The music

Maria Grenfell - *Stings and Wings*

(marimba solo) 2021

Jack Jumper

Dragonfly

Moth Hunt

Stings and Wings is a three-movement piece for solo marimba. Each movement is a musical picture of an insect. *Stings and Wings* was commissioned by percussionist Claire Edwardes, as part of a project to increase the marimba repertoire by women composers and aimed at advanced school-level difficulty.

The first movement, *Jack Jumper*, depicts a particularly poisonous ant that is native to Tasmania. Recitative-like passages with tremolo and chromatic scales feature in *Dragonfly*, creating an image of the insect that can fly vertically up and down like a helicopter, catching all its food in mid-air. The fast final movement, *Moth Hunt*, is based on music originally composed for the documentary film *Quoll Farm*, and its scene of Eastern quolls running around at night hunting the Tasmanian Corbie moth, which hatch

on rainy nights, beating their wings as the quolls hunt them for a delicious night-time snack.



Ella Macens - *Falling Embers*

(vibraphone & crotales solo) 2020

Falling Embers was composed as a meditation for peace and relief from the fires that raged across Australia in the summer of 2020/2021. The work traces a glowing particle suspended above desolate land where all has been lost and destroyed. *Falling Embers* represents the last moments of something.

Says Ella: "When I was 11 years old I noticed a huge, peculiar cloud in the sky. It was New Years Day, the start of 2002, and the whole family was milling about the kitchen in pyjamas. Unaware of what

I was seeing, or what this unusual cloud signalled, I continued with my breakfast and the merriment of New Year's Day. Twenty minutes later our neighbour rang the doorbell, and in his broken English he told me 'The fire is coming!'. We ran to the upstairs balcony and looked out to see a valley of bellowing smoke and flames. Cheltenham, my home, was on fire. One of my strongest memories comes from the evening that followed, after the army of fire engines retreated and a feeling of safety restored. My sister Kate and I awoke in the lounge room. We stood side by side and gazed out through the big glass doors and watched as embers fell like hot snow from the sky all over our backyard. They melted and turned to ash as they hit the damp soil. We thanked the wind that day, and the modest creek that saved our home from burning fire. The elements were certainly on our side that day."

Ella Macens - *Verve* (marimba solo) 2016

Verve is a work for solo marimba, which Ella composed for Claire Edwardes in 2016 in conjunction with the Sydney Conservatorium of Music's inaugural Composing Women's program. Whilst composing the work, Ella pondered:

“How much can be achieved with one simple idea?” Thus, this piece came to be based on a series of small ostinato-like motifs and gestures that expand and grow as the music twists, turns and weaves through a variety of textural and harmonic landscapes. As Claire and Ella worked through a series of drafts together, there was a point where Claire said “I need 6 hands to play this!” And so this piece also now exists in expanded form as a work for symphony orchestra, titled *Flight!*

Alice Chance – Mirroring (vibraphone solo) 2021
Mirroring can describe the reflection of an image, the creation of symmetry, and the act of imitation between people. Written amidst various lockdowns, the piece reflects on the warmth created between people when they mirror each other, whether in speech or body language, and the saddening refractions

and distortions which can take place when this communication is moved online. Moving between cold and warm timbres on the vibraphone, cycling arpeggiations undergo small changes as if unreliably mirrored in a digital world. Dissonant mid and high-register notes emerge and linger towards the end of the piece, settling into lostness rather than a sense of finality.



Composer Peggy Polias and Claire

Peggy Polias - Receptor (marimba solo) 2021
Composition of *Receptor* commenced in 2020, as the COVID-19 Pandemic took hold worldwide. This piece is a response to the pandemic, specifically the physicality of the tiny virus entity: protein spikes and

complex spiral molecules wreaking so much havoc and tragedy. The piece is in sections titled “Binding”, “Sequencing”, “Defending” and “Fading”, referring to the health and research battle waged against the disease, with optimism towards the eventual end of pandemic. Composed with admiration for the health and science workers on the frontline and with much sympathy for the millions of people who have sadly succumbed.

Bree van Reyk - Slipstreams (vibraphone solo) 2021
Slipstreams was commissioned by and is dedicated to my dear friend, Claire Edwardes. With a brief of writing specifically for emerging percussionists, my thoughts were focused on what I’d like to impart musically on my younger self: a focus on quality of sound above quantity of notes; making the most of each moment, each thread; being playful; resonating something warm and true. These are the same things that I try to remember in my own performance practice now.

Elena Kats-Chernin - Violet's Etude
(marimba solo) 2010

I wrote *Violet's Etude* the middle of 2010 as a thank you gift to Claire Edwardes for her immense input into the creation of *Golden Kitsch*. Claire premièred my new Percussion Concerto with the Sydney Youth Orchestra in July 2009. Each time we discussed and workshopped the concerto at Claire's studio, I was met by her ever growing and charismatic young daughter Violet. I wrote this little piece in Violet's honour, and the work's fast pace represents her energetic nature.

Elena Kats-Chernin - Poppy's Polka
(vibraphone solo) 2020

A few years ago I wrote *Violet's Etude* for Claire Edwardes and her bass marimba in dedication to her young energetic daughter Violet. Recently, in 2020 I wrote a miniature *Poppy's Polka* for vibraphone for her younger daughter Poppy. It is inspired by Bach's two-part invention in A Minor. I was imagining Poppy's school day, with a bright start to the day, then studying, and later eating dinner, then going to sleep, dreaming of the next day.

Anne Cawrse - Dance Vignettes
(marimba solo) 2021

Meditations and Hymns
Fancy and Flight
Scamper and Scoot

These three short solo marimba works came into being at the request of Australian percussionist Claire Edwardes, and were composed over the summer of 2020-2021. They are intended to offer attractive and suitable repertoire options for late high school and early tertiary music students wanting to explore contemporary Australian music. Each work endeavours to not be overly intellectual, but simply responds to the particular feeling or image indicated by the title. That said, there are plenty of 'compositional devices' embedded within each work, making them excellent studies for musical analysis.

Meditations and Hymns is a contemplative and gentle exploration of a simple melodic line, repeated in varying harmonic and textural contexts through arch form (ABCBA).

Fancy and Flight is structured in a loose ternary form, and gains most of its harmonic and melodic material from

various applications of the Perfect 5th interval. With its predominantly modal harmony and alternating irregular time signatures, it pays homage to Ross Edwards' maninya style.

Scamper and Scoot incorporates rapid note alteration, fast and virtuosic scalar runs, surprising rhythmic irregularity and a cheeky hidden quote, all encompassed within a 3-minute whirlwind that demonstrates the possibilities of 2-mallet marimba playing.

