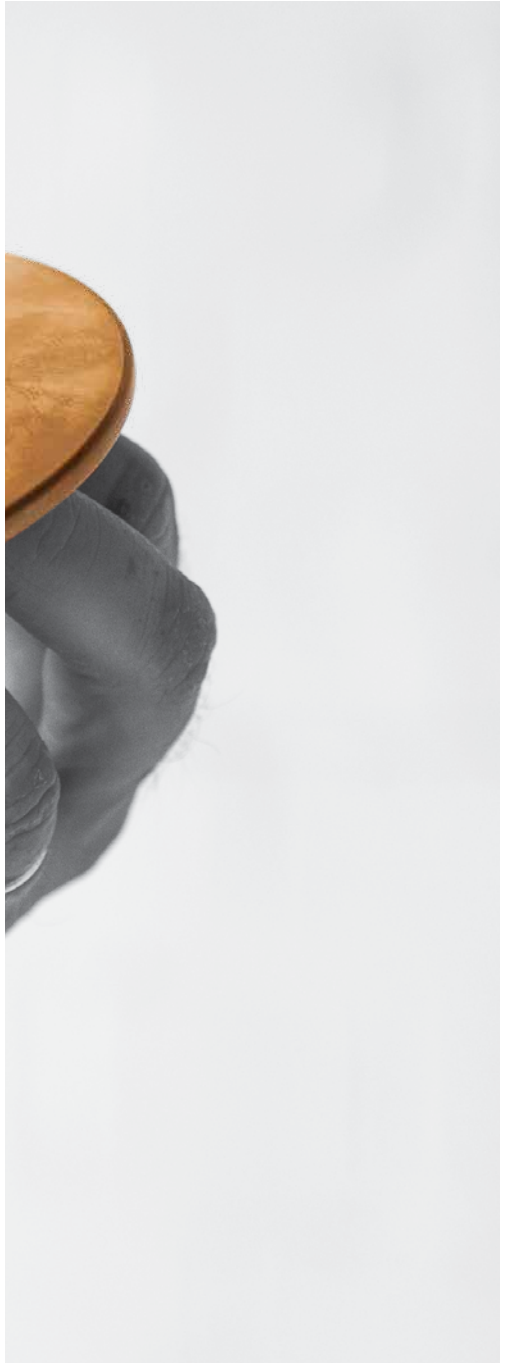




DUO BLOCKSTIX

WORKS FOR PERCUSSION AND RECORDER





DANIEL ROJAS			MARK OLIVEIRO		
1	...of magic and realism FOR RECORDER AND MARIMBA	[6:59]	Auto Dafe Suite FOR BASS RECORDER AND MARIMBA	[8:37]	
PETER MCNAMARA			5	I. Sesquialtera Ritual	1:42
2	Duo-Generare FOR BASS RECORDER, MARIMBA AND SUSPENDED CYMBAL	[7:55]	6	II. Rentak Silat Ritual	2:51
JULIAN DAY			7	III. Iteration Ritual	2:10
3	Five Easy Pieces FOR RECORDER AND MARIMBA	[5:00]	8	IV. Reflection Ritual	1:54
DAMIAN BARBELER			TIM HANSEN		
4	Resonant Voice FOR BASS RECORDER AND PERCUSSION	[6:44]	Pencils FOR RECORDER AND MARIMBA	[6:01]	
			9	I. The Cartoon Philosopher	1:45
			10	II. Five Year Arrival	2:20
			11	III. Self Portrait in HB	1:56
			PAUL CUTLAN		
			12	Affirmations FOR BASS RECORDER (AMPLIFIED) AND MARIMBA	[10:43]
Total				[51:57]	

All tracks performed by Duo Blockstix, recorded and mastered by Ross A'hern. Tracks recorded in The Founders Studio at Fine Music 102.5, mastered at The Chapel of Sound. Track 1 mixed by Daniel Rojas, Alicia Crossley and Ross A'hern. Track 2 mixed by Peter McNamara, Alicia Crossley and Ross A'hern. Track 3 mixed by Julian Day, Alicia Crossley and Ross A'hern. Track 4 mixed by Damian Barbeler and Ross A'hern. Tracks 5-8 mixed by Mark Oliveiro, Alicia Crossley and Ross A'hern. Tracks 9-11 mixed by Duo Blockstix and Ross A'hern. Track 12 mixed by Paul Cutlan, Alicia Crossley and Ross A'hern.

Recorder and percussion, with their earthy, woody tones and striking articulation, make a vibrant, stimulating and versatile ensemble. When we, Duo Blockstix, made the decision to embark on this recording, our primary aim was to highlight the virtuosic scope of our ensemble by engaging a range of Australian composers to create new works influenced by our distinct instrumentation. Each composer has embraced the textural, timbral and sonic potential of this unique ensemble, infusing it with their distinct compositional styles, resulting in an eclectic collection of pieces ranging from dramatic ritualistic compositions to poetry inspired wordscores.

DANIEL ROJAS

...of magic and realism (2017)

FOR RECORDER AND MARIMBA

...of magic and realism pays homage to the literary genre commonly referred to as “magical realism”, an approach to literature that has found ubiquitous appeal throughout Latin America. One of the key facets of such authors as Mario Vargas Llosa and Gabriel Garcia Marquez is their uncanny adroitness to fashion minute and even seemingly trivial detail, so the reader becomes hyper aware of a most convincing physical or emotional reality. This condition, however, may be obtrusively intercepted by supernatural threads, thus drawing into question how quotidian life would respond to magical intervention. This piece for recorder

and marimba is suggestive of such detailed perception that is embodied in the intricacies of repeated rhythmic events wrought within the twofold (and at times, threefold) layer of texture that conflict to create picayune moments of tension, and their subsequent denouement. There are moments that offer a modicum of lyrical respite, which to me can suggest a degree of subjectivism or of the magic itself; perhaps these are born of the same fabric...

PETER MCNAMARA

Duo-Generare (2007-8/2014)

FOR BASS RECORDER, MARIMBA AND SUSPENDED CYMBAL

Duo-Generare combines two instruments that could be described as a musical ‘odd couple’ – recorder and marimba. Both instruments possess a completely contrasting performance tradition, and were developed in different musical generations – one from the baroque era and the other in the 20th century.

Despite these differences, these two instruments still combine together well,

such as the haunting combination of bowed marimba with the sustained lower pitches of the bass recorder featured in the unmeasured opening. This is proceeded by melodic and rhythmically regular material using the same pitch material established in the opening, where the recorder is often more percussive. This material is developed using syncopation and polyrhythms, which accumulates energy in a climax at the end of the work.

JULIAN DAY

Five Easy Pieces (2017)

FOR RECORDER AND MARIMBA

In the 1970 film *Five Easy Pieces* Jack Nicholson plays Bobby, an erratic oil rigger escaping his early life as a piano prodigy. The film centres on his complex and mostly crumbling relationships with those around him - his girlfriend, father, sister and sister-in-law-to-be – whom he simultaneously relies upon and rejects. Similarly this piece is built on relationships, although nowhere near as destructive as Bobby's. The two players depend on one another for their cues and individually follow a memorised

mixture of scripted instructions and generative game rules. The result is a series of ‘easy pieces’ that begin identically but develop in unexpectedly directions depending on how the players respond and choose to progress. As the interactions are deliberately interdependent, the piece continually resets itself each time it is played or recorded. Despite the title, the duration is actually flexible: whilst five movements are recorded here, any number could emerge.

DAMIAN BARBELA

Resonant Voice (2017)

FOR BASS RECORDER AND PERCUSSION

Resonant Voice is a work for bass recorder and a collection of multiple metallic percussion instruments, focusing especially on cymbals ranging from high to low. The idea is to create an impossible, musical-vocal hybrid, with Alicia's bass recorder providing the lower foundation of a sometimes sung, sometimes spoken text and Josh's colourful collection of metals a sometimes shimmering, sometimes crackling resonant halo above. In this sense they are to be thought of as a single voice created from many

individual components. The phrases you hear do not follow a pulse but rather are the product of the two players performing a series of texts which they read silently together while performing. The effect is a shared vocal ebb and flow, with natural speech inflexions implying some emotional content the specifics of which remain just out of reach for the listener. The specific text we used to make this work was a poem, however I have chosen not to include it here as I would rather the listener try to guess the nature of the poem, and learn the language of this alien resonant voice.

MARK OLIVEIRO

Auto Dafe Suite (2017)

FOR BASS RECORDER AND MARIMBA

Auto Dafe (Four Wooden Rites)...

Extracted from medieval Portuguese to mean "act of faith", *Auto Dafe Suite* is a series of four short works that explores iterative, expanding rhythms and pitch clusters within discreet explorations of the wooden timbre. Drawing upon a Latin/East-Asian combination of influences, Japanese *Sho* clusters, medieval European melodic modes and Malaysian





Kompang rhythms are arranged in a complexity of poly-rhythms and melodic counterpoint for the bass recorder and marimba. Allusions to penitential rites and religious inquisition makes reference to the historical precedent of this melding of Roman Catholicism and Iberian expansionism and its violent effect on Asian culture.

TIM HANSEN

Pencils (2014)

FOR RECORDER AND MARIMBA

Pencils always feel so full of creative potential to me. They smell good and they brim with purpose, and there's something indescribable about the sensation of taking a pencil and making the first mark on a blank sheet of paper. I still prefer to sketch music by hand, and my handwriting improves markedly from when I use a pen (drunken chicken scratchings) to when I use a pencil (lovely if odd cursive). I've loved holding and using pencils ever since I was a little kid, I still own a pencil case full of them, and to this day I avoid pens whenever I can.

These three pieces are from a series of six miniatures based on pencils. But not just any old pencils. It sounds nuts, but I went searching for pencils with “purpose”. The resultant pieces are about the person who owned the pencil and what they used them for. Cartoon Philosopher is based on the work of Michael Leunig, whose cartoons - part political commentary, part social critique, part ‘slow down and smell the roses’ - have become internationally famous and are (to me anyway) as Australian as it gets. Five Year Arrival is about the work of Shaun Tan, specifically his beautiful picture book *The Arrival*, which conveys the immigrant experience in vivid detail. It doesn’t use a single word of text, and yet takes about an hour to read; it took him five years to complete. It’s an incredible piece of Australian literature. Finally, *Self Portrait in HB* is about me and my favourite kind of pencil - a plain old HB. With one of those and a blank piece of manuscript paper, I’ve composed my way through the last fifteen years of my life, ever since I made the decision to become a composer of music.

Thankyou

Duo Blockstix would like to thank the wonderful composers, Ross A'hern, Fine Music 102.5, Emily French and David Boyce for making this recording possible.

Photos by Emily French Photography. CD and Booklet design by David Boyce, Viqtor Studio

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PAUL CUTLAN

Affirmations (2016)

FOR BASS RECORDER (AMPLIFIED) AND MARIMBA

The original version of *Affirmations* was scored for amplified bass recorder, cello with electronic effects and didgeridoo. It was commissioned by the Aurora Festival, with my aim being to write a positive piece with strong rhythmic groove. The title *Affirmations* refers to the way the musical material develops: melodic and rhythmic gestures tend to reinforce the forward momentum, rather than set up conflict. At regular intervals, a chant-like melody is revealed by degrees, with the complete tune being played before the final climax. The bass recorder takes on several guises, including Irish fife, Indian flute and exotic bird! The marimba has its work cut out, maintaining a sense of the drone and rhythm which the didgeridoo originally supplied, as well as melodic passages and harmonies which were the domain of the cello.

Notes by the composers.







Duo Blockstix are a unique and vibrant Australian ensemble featuring recorder player Alicia Crossley and percussionist Joshua Hill. With a shared love for contemporary music, Alicia and Joshua formed Duo Blockstix in 2014 and have performed in concerts and festivals around Australia. The duo perform repertoire spanning 800 years, presenting innovative new works and textural soundscapes alongside traditional masterpieces. Duo Blockstix are also passionate supporters of Australian music and strive to collaborate with Australian composers to encourage the creation of inspired, conceptual, and virtuosic new compositions.