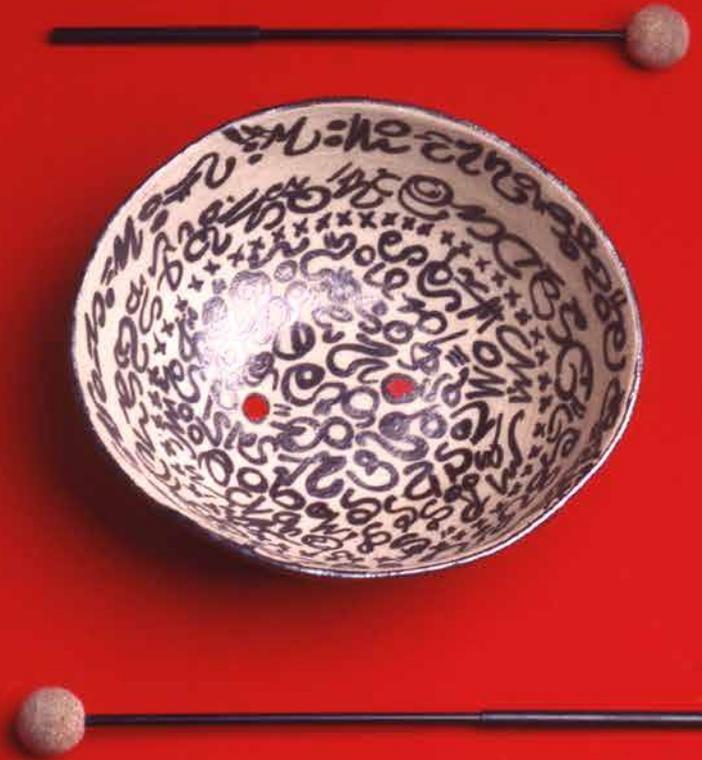


GLASS & CLAY



ROS BANDT

GLASS & CLAY

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1 Ocean Bells

2 Shifts

3 Annapurna

4 Alchemy

5 Gulf Song

6 Night on the Indian Ocean



magical resonant sounds of glass and clay

1-3 originally on the LP Soft & Fragile (1982)

GLASS & CLAY

Since building the glass playable sound sculpture in 1978, the flagong, Ros Bandt has been exploring the subtle, shimmering and precarious sound qualities derived from glass. An invitation from the master ceramic artist, Judy Lorraine in 1978, extended this interest to ceramics. An entire musical practice, known as the **Soft & Fragile Music**, original glass and clay bell music, has continued since that time.

The materials **glass and clay** are brittle and vitreous, easily broken, but charming in their irregularities. Their qualities determine the timbral resonance, speed of attack and possible loudness of the music. **Soft and Fragile** are special limitations from both the playing and compositional points of view. An intimate relationship develops with exposed and vulnerable instruments, particularly as the act of hitting them with mallets, ultimately precipitates their end. It's a delicate love affair. The visual and tactile qualities of these sculptural forms are irresistible invitations to play them.

Just as the instruments are potentially short-lived, so too is the nature of improvisation and the preciousness of realtime composition. Transience and the precariousness of existence are essential conditions in **Soft and Fragile**. It's experiencing the life-cycle of each sound and travelling

with the music through space.

"I consciously strive for an elegant and sensual music where the body and mind have time to reflect and catch up with the moment as it passes. Pieces evolve which still leave room for the necessity of music to change with the time of day, the mood, the place, the season or occasion. It is a music intended for respite."

THE MUSIC OF GLASS & CLAY

1 **Ocean bells 1982 GLASS**

Ros Bandt: flagong and tape
This solo piece for flagong and tape is a large passacaglia. A "one breath" time unit contains the lowered harmonic ground bass which supports the ebb and flow of the additive and subtractive pitch groups above it. This breathing becomes a biological pathway, an invitation to the listener to sink into the sounds of the ocean bells and float with them on an individual journey.

2 **Shifts 1982 CLAY**

LIME: gamelan bells
Shifts is a tightly structured piece which investigates possible rhythmic, melodic and harmonic combinations of the 15 gamelan bells, using the sequencing and patterning procedures common to bell ringing and heterophonic music. The outcome can also be listened to as a rondo-sonata form or alternatively as a piece of repetitive

music focusing on the continuous present, feeling each shift and change as it comes.

3 **Annapurna 1982 GLASS & CLAY**

LIME: Vocal drone tape, flagong, temple bells, gamelan bells.
Annapurna was made for a film set in the Nepalese mountain of Annapurna. The sung drone made from 8 loops of vocal chanting is a metaphore for the mountain's strength which supports the spasmodic rhythms of people scurrying over its surface.

4 **Alchemy 1987/93 ELECTRONIC CLAY**

Ros Bandt: gamelan and ceramic bells, sampler.
A simple pitch set of 5 ceramic bells is transformed through the use of sampling procedures. The fingers on the electronic machine process the recorded clay sounds into new chemical relationships not possible with the acoustic instruments alone, thus the title. 10 fingers operate 10 switches to gate up to 10 part counterpoint derived from the single looped melody at any one time. The piece was made in real time as a performance composed on the keyboard.

5 **Gulf Song 1991 VOICE, CLAY & TAPE**

Ros Bandt: Mesopotamian bells, voice and tape
This is an elegy for the innocent victims of the Gulf war who paid the price

for the meaning of oil as a powerful international currency. The voice mourns the priceless treasures of ancient western civilisation housed in the Baghdad Museum which are gone forever. The Mesopotamian set of ceramic bells were lent by the artist by their creator, Judy Lorraine at Easter time.

6 Night on the Indian Ocean 1992/3 GLASS & TAPE

Ros Bandt: flagong, environmental recording of the Indian Ocean at night, Quinns Rocks, Western Australia, 1990.

“Warm silver light dances between
still
and
deep night
mirrors
reflecting the ocean deep.”

THE GLASS & CLAY INSTRUMENTS

All of these percussion instruments are technically bells having their strongest vibration at the rim unlike gongs which have the strongest vibrations in the centre.

GLASS: Ros Bandt — The flagong: Glass percussion instrument. Height 180 cm, 200 cm, width 50 cm. The flagong is an original microtonal instrument consisting of a three-tiered wooden frame with 31 suspended glass objects. Apart from the ‘found’ glass lampshade and insulator, all

items are cut glass containers, mainly flagongs. They are arranged in family constellations based on compatible pitch and timbral formations. The string lengths are staggered to allow maximum movement space for fast playing. Inspired by Harry Partch’s cloud chamber bowls, the flagong differs in its function as a predominantly solo instrument and the much greater pitch field. There are over 70 possible glass gongs.

CLAY: Judy Lorraine — The gamelan bells. Fifteen small bells of different sizes and pitch are fired in a special blackware process which strengthens the clay and brightens the tone quality. Each bell is hollow with a vertical slit rounding off to a small circle on each side to allow the sound to escape. They are played with light mallets.

The temple bells — Three large blackware bowls are coil pots made on a wok base. The pitches are unequally distributed within a minor third, being microtonal. Their special blending properties are due to the overtones which are audible over their long decay time of 6 or more seconds. Special mallets covered with hide, felt and cord give variation of possible attack.

The Mesopotamian bowls — These are five microtonal ceramic dishes fired in black ware with elaborate arabic motives on their interiors. Together they make the mode Eb-, A+, E, A, Eb.

Technical Information: The pieces Annapurna, Ocean Bells and Shifts were recorded at the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery in 1981 by Les Craythorn. Gavan McCarthy prepared the tape loops for Annapurna. They were released as SOFT & FRAGILE: MUSIC IN GLASS & CLAY, 1982 on Move Records. Digitally remastered by Martin Wright. Alchemy was made using an Akai sampler at Warren Burt’s studio and edited and electronically treated at Move Records using Pro Tools on a Mac computer. Thanks to Warren Burt for use of his AKAI 900 and Martin Wright for processing on a Sony MUR 201 reverberator and Sound Tools. Gulf Song and Night on the Indian Ocean were recorded and edited in Move Studios with the help of Martin Wright. Ocean tape by Ros Bandt.

Artistic direction & production: Ros Bandt
Editing & mastering: Martin Wright
Photographs: Ponch Hawkes (clay bowls), Howard Birnstihl (flagong, Ros Bandt and headphones)
Design: Ros Bandt
Notes: Ros Bandt

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© 1983 and 1995 MOVE RECORDS, AUSTRALIA
THE COMPOSER/PERFORMERS
Ros Bandt

Flagong



*Compressed
waveform
of "Night on
the Indian
Ocean"
(10'42")*

Timeline 0:00 — 1:00 — 2:00 — 3:00 — 4:00 — 5:00 — 6:00 — 7:00 — 8:00 — 9:00 — 10:00

Ocean FX





Ros Bandt is an internationally acclaimed sound artist: composer, performer and sound sculptor who lives and works in Melbourne. Her work includes musical compositions, improvisations, sculptures, collage, play sculptures, interactive installations, sound art, environmental sound landscapes, visual notations, writings and spatial music. Her "sounding spaces" are constantly in demand in Europe, America and Australasia. Recent commissions include Radio Cologne, ISCM Warsaw, Transit, Austria, Radio Vienna, and the Sound Symposium New Foundland. She curated the first woman's sound art show in Australia in 1994. In 1990 she was the first woman to win the Don Banks Composers Award and in 1991 won the ABC/WDR joint Sound Art Prize. In 1993 she was inaugural Benjamin Cohen peace fellow at Ball State University, Indiana. She also tours and records with two ensembles, the early music quartet La Romanesca, and the cross cultural group Back to Back Zithers.

LIME: Live Improvised Music Events.
Julie Doyle, Carolyn Robb,

Gavan McCarthy and Ros Bandt

LIME is a group of 4 composer-performers who met while studying composition and improvisation at LaTrobe University in 1978. In 1992, they recorded *Revolutions* for amplified music boxes in memory of John Cage for the ABC. Other recordings are on the *Move*, *Rash* and *L'Agence des Refuses* labels.





1 *Ocean Bells* (1982)
Ros Bandt 17'45"

2 *Shifts* (1982)
LIME 8'36"

3 *Annapurna* (1982)
LIME 9'39"

4 *Alchemy* (1987)
Ros Bandt 11'08"

5 *Gulf Song* (1991-2)
Ros Bandt 4'17"

6 *Night on the Indian
Ocean* (1993)
Ros Bandt 10'42"

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