ADVENTURES IN CHORAL & CONTEMPORARY SOUND & IDEAS
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Program details are correct at the time of printing.

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You can become a member of the Society on payment of FULL $30 (incl gst), CONC. $15 (incl gst). This entitles you to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

Concert Prices
Single ticket prices: FULL $35, CONC. $20 Concession includes students, low income earners, arts workers and seniors.
MUSIC STUDENTS $15

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APRIL: FELDMAN AMONG EAST AND WEST
JUNE: ANDREW BYRNE AT 50.
THE OTHERSIDERS SEPTEMBER: NOW AND THEN
OCTOBER: OCTOBER REVOLUTION 1917
DECEMBER: MEMORIES FOR FORGETFULNESS
Choral-instrumental works of Morton Feldman have been the focus of several Astra programs, towards an international CD release in 2017. Here his elemental *Chorus and Instruments* (1969) is placed among a panoply of works from different traditions of Western music. Feldman is joined by a rare choral creation of his close associate Earle Brown, both influenced by the dynamics of contemporary painting. Choir in contrasting abstract expressions – Feldman’s chorale-like chords set within luminous surrounding instruments, Brown’s bundles of voices interacting like physical objects.

Planes of sound almost physical in character are also created by Monteverdi and Max Reger and the contemporary Italian Gianandrea Pauletta, for texts on the finite nature of human experience set against larger imponderable forces. The theme is taken up in the words of the cosmologist Carl Sagan set by Australia’s Gordon Hamilton, *Who are we?*

Veneration as a musical moment finds an original vocal theatre with the 17th-century Abbess Chiara Cozzolani, and a searching reflection in the Australian Marguerite Boland. The old within the new likewise forms a musical path for a new work by Brisbane-based composer Paul Kopetz, to a traditional Polish text. East European sound also underlies another premiered work, Vlad Baciu’s wordless chorus inspired by a *doina* song from Maramureș in northern Romania.

Claudio Monteverdi, *Hor che’l ciel e la terra* (1638), choir, soloists, 2 violins, continuo

Gordon Hamilton, *Who are We?* (2014), 4-8 part choir

Earle Brown, *Small Pieces for Large Chorus* (1969), choir

Chiara Margarita Cozzolani, *Mass* (1642), soloists, choir, strings and continuo

Vlad-Razvan Baciu, *Duceți-vă, rândunele* (2016), 6-part choir 1ST PERFORMANCE

Gianandrea Pauletta, *Preludio secondo* (2016), 8-part double-choir

Paul Kopetz, *Matko Boska* (2015) 4-part choir with soloists 1ST PERFORMANCE

Morton Feldman, *Chorus and Instruments* (1969), choir and instrumental ensemble

Marguerite Boland, *Ave Maria!* (2015), 10-part choir

Max Reger, *O Tod, wie bitter* Op.110 No.3 (1912), 5-part choir

The Astra Choir with soloists and instrumental ensemble conducted by John McCaughey
Interactions between Australian and American elements form a special chemistry in this program for the 50th year of expatriate Australian composer, Andrew Byrne. A long-time resident of New York where he is now Artistic Director of Symphony Space, he has developed a characteristic individual technique of multiple rhythmic energies, nourished by an array of cultural sources.

The Othersiders is a composition from 2006 not previously performed, which he has revised and extended for this occasion. It explores a historical cross-Pacific phenomenon: the Australian colony in Paraguay called “New Australia”. In 1893, 300 Australians set sail from Balmain, Sydney, to establish a socialist utopia in the Paraguay jungle, inspired and led by the political activist and journalist William Lane. Byrne’s piece is a musical meditation on this audacious experiment, and incorporates verse and songs from the New Australian Newsletter of the early 1890s, including poems by Henry Lawson and Mary Gilmore.

More recent works for string quartet and stopped piano with instruments are integrated into the program. A new creation for brass band extends the historical-political theme to the Great Strike of 1917 in NSW and Victoria – a collaborative project with visual artist Tom Nicholson as part of centenary events at Carriageworks, Sydney in August.
Electro-acoustic music in its varied forms has been a recurring element in Astra concerts for over 30 years. In the context of choral concerts, however, it remains something that arises “now and then” in composers’ work. This series of six events over two weekends focuses more specifically on the medium in both of its traditional practices: the combinations with live performance, and the purely electronically assembled. The six programs present work of “now” from some of Australia’s leading researchers and creators in the field, both onshore and expatriate. Equally, they also seek to re-introduce something of the “then” of earlier decades, in a medium which by now has its own sonic history of a half-century and more.
BEYOND THE LONE INSTRUMENT
Simone de Haan & Erkki Veltheim
Two remarkable performer-presences in Australian contemporary music offer historical & current perspectives on solo playing & its extended environment:
– from Erkki Veltheim, new works for violin & electronics that explore digital signal processing as an interface between composition & improvisation.

PLAYING THE BUILDING
Steve Stelios Adam & Michael Hewes
Spatial études and other past and present works and processes in electro-acoustic performance from two of the country’s noted musicians in physical engagement with the medium.

with Jenny Barnes &
The Astra Improvising Choir
new work for voices in space, from Melbourne’s singer/composer/improvisor.

Saturday 9 September,
3 pm / 5 pm / 8 pm
Eleventh Hour Theatre
170 Leicester Street, Fitzroy

A day of three electronic-pure concerts:
3 ⊡ at 3 pm
THEN ...
a gallery of short electro-acoustic pieces from Australian composers, reaching back to earlier decades.

3 ⊙ at 5 pm
... NOW ...
new electro-pieces from the new generation of students and recent graduates

3 ⊢ at 8 pm
... AND EVER SHALL BE
Warren Burt, Mosaics and Transparencies (2017)
A seminal figure of electronic music presents a new 60-minute composition for electronic sounds PREMIERE

VOICES MULTIPLE & COMMUNAL
Ian Bonighton, Music For Sleep (1968), 16-part choir and tape
Cindy John, Hope (2001), choir, cello, percussion, keyboard, computer
Greg Schiemer, Transposed Dekany (2016), violin & iPhones
Tom Hall, Private Papers (2017), choir, percussion, keyboards, electronics 1ST PERFORMANCE
Graham Hair, Lament For Hagia Sophia (2000/rev. 2017), 8-part soloists & choir with computer-processed bells

The Astra Choir with soloists and instrumental ensemble conducted by John McCaughey
Marking the centenary of the Russian Revolution (October 25 in the Julian calendar).

After many commemorations for the centenary of World War I, the parallel seismic event of the Russian Revolution is marked in this program with music from Germany, Russia and Australia. The sounds of politically-engaged art and theatre are combined with the raw edge of Futurism, which also defined the era.

Hanns Eisler/Bertolt Brecht, Ballads from The Mother (1931), cantata after Maxim Gorky’s novel of the 1905 Revolution in Russia – soloists choir and 2 pianos

Eisler/Brecht, Litany of Breath (1939), Three Pieces Op.13 (1927) choir a cappella

Resolution of the Paris Communards (1935), voices and piano

Stefan Wolpe, Chinese Epitaphs (1927) – choir and percussion

Martin Friedel, Songs for ‘The Measures Taken’ (1982) with solo piano works by Alexander Mosolov, Nikolai Roslavets and Stefan Wolpe

The Astra Choir with soloists
Kim Bastin, Peter Dumsday and Joy Lee (pianos) and guest instrumentalists conducted by John McCaughey

This concert is dedicated to the memory of actor-singer Jan Friedel (1947-2017)
Memories for Forgetfulness: Max Reger, Schoenberg, Pertout, Whiffin, Odeh-Tamimi

Max Reger’s Three Motets Op.110, on texts from the Book of Job, are his major choral achievement, on a par with Schoenberg’s classic Peace on Earth Op.13 for the new scale and adventure of the choral writing. Following the performance of the third motet in the April concert, this program brings No.1, the largest of the three, with its massive double-fugue on the words “I know that my Redeemer lives”. It joins Schoenberg’s overwhelming choral plea for peace, along with solo piano works from contemporary Palestinian composers. Samir Odeh-Tamimi’s piece takes title and inspiration from the novel of the leading Arab poet Mahmoud Darwish, Memory for Forgetfulness. August, Beirut, 1982.

Set among these are choral works from Romania (Dan Dediu) and Melbourne composer Andrián Pertout, whose background includes both the country of his birth, Chile and years spent in the Slovenian border region of Italy. His new choral piece weaves near-orchestral sounds into a cappella writing in a re-composition of an earlier setting for choir and string orchestra, based on Horace’s famous Ode on soldiering, “Angustam amice”. Composed both as a tribute to the Estonian composer Arvo Part and as commemoration of World War 1, it is the final premiered work of the 2017 season.

Max Reger, Mein Odem ist schwach (My breath is weak) Op.110 No.1 (1911), 6-part choir

Andrián Pertout, Angustam Amice (2014/2016), version for 8-part choir a cappella

Dan Dediu, O magnum mysterium (2013), 6-part choir

Samir Odeh-Tamimi, A Memory for Forgetfulness (2006), solo piano with bamboo chimes & Chinese cymbal

Arnold Schoenberg, Friede auf Erden (Peace on Earth) Op.13 (1907), 8-part choir

with solo piano works by Lawrence Whiffin and contemporary Palestinian composers

Publication Launch:
Lawrence Whiffin, Études for piano

The Astra Choir with soloists Kim Bastin, Peter Dumsday and Joy Lee (pianos) conducted by John McCaughey
Concert Manager
Margaret Lloyd

Accompanist
Kim Bastin

Sound engineer
Michael Hewes

Astra Publications
Kim Bastin, Allan Walker

Vocal soloists including
Catrina Seiffert, Leonie Thomson, Louisa Billeter, Robert Macfarlane, Ben Owen, Steven Hodgson

The Astra Improvising Choir
Director Joan Pollock

The Astra Choir
Conductor John McCaughey