

New Now

2022 COLAB SHOWCASE



A new generation of Australian musical voices

The musical works you will hear this evening were developed through an intensive collaborative process.

Earlier this year, five early-career composers were chosen through a competitive national selection process, and each set a challenge: to create a bold musical statement about who they are as young artists.

While we provided the time, space and expertise, including guidance from leading Australian and international mentors, these talented composers brought their ideas and ambitions to each workshop. These exciting works will be premiered here tonight at Australia's most famous concert venue.

This is the second annual New Now showcase and like the participants from last year, we look forward to following the exciting careers of our COLAB composers, while continuing to champion their talents within the industry.

A special thank you to our 2022 mentors Carl Vine, Missy Mazzoli, Nico Muhly, Gordon Kerry, Christopher Cerrone, Holly Harrison and Paul Mason for their insight, feedback and encouragement during the program.

The CoLAB: Composer Accelerator Program is a shared vision and we want to extend our deepest gratitude to those committed supporters who have helped us make this program possible. Tonight's performance is a tribute to your generosity and dedication to the future of Australian music.

The CoLAB program will continue with a new intake of talented composers in 2023. We hope you enjoy tonight's performance and look forward to seeing you again at next year's showcase.

2022 COLAB COMPOSER ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

New Now

JULIA POTTER

A Nostalgia I Have No Right to Own

CHRISTOPHER HEALEY

Piranesi

SOPHIE VAN DIJK

If I Place Myself There

MARKS HOLDSWORTH

Calon Arang

JOHN ROTAR

Coonarr

SYDNEY

Sydney Opera House

Thursday 3 November 2022

7:30pm

This performance will last approximately
70 minutes without interval.

Thank you to our 2022 CoLAB Sponsors

Sally & Geoffrey White, Darin Cooper Foundation, S Smee & P Schoff, John Claudianos, Julianne Maxwell and Mark Wakely in memory of Steven Alward

We encourage you to share your concert experience. However, taking photos during performance can be disruptive to both our musicians and other audience members. Instead, the best time to snap a photo (without flash) is as the ensemble takes a bow. Professional photography and video/audio recording is not permitted at any time.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and play, and honour their continued connection to Country and culture. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



omegaensemble.com.au
contact@omegaensemble.com.au
1300 670 050



Julia Potter (NSW)

A Nostalgia I Have No Right to Own

A Nostalgia I Have No Right to Own stems from the notion of borrowed memories and emotions; experiencing another's narrative so intensely that you too feel a sense of ownership and nostalgia for their recollection. Similarly, this sense of borrowed nostalgia evokes a sense of frustration and jealousy. You may never experience an intensity of emotion as strongly as the owner of this memory. You are left instead to your imagination, and long to feel this vibrance and warmth in your own human experience.

The piece is divided into three sections. The beginning section centres around a perpetual piano ostinato which rambles unpredictably, eventually unravelling to a moment of stillness. This stillness is a warm glow where the music focuses more on texture than harmony. The third section is playful, each instrument locking into place through various rhythmic ostinati before breaking loose to explore other threads.

About CoLAB:

It's not often that you get feedback at all stages of the process. We were pushed to expand and develop our works, and through this process I've learned that I should stick with my instincts and to trust myself as a composer. Seeing how the other composers work has also been so valuable. We've spent nine months watching each other's music grow, and watching the skill and care that the performers have brought to our music.

Julia Potter's music has been performed by The Penny Quartet, Syzygy Ensemble, The Australian Youth Orchestra and The Melbourne University Symphony Orchestra. In 2022, Julia was selected for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's Cybec 21st Century Composer Program and was previously selected for Ensemble Offspring's Hatched Academy. Her music for the documentary 'Acts for the Invisible' was featured at





Sydney Film Festival and the Mardis Gras Film Festival. In 2019 Julia was the recipient of the Melbourne Recital Centre/Melbourne Conservatorium of Music graduate commission and 2017 recipient of the Esther Rofe Composition Award. Julia is a Masters graduate of AFTRS and completed a Bachelor of Music with Honours at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music.

juliapotter.com.au



Christopher Healey (VIC)

Piranesi

Based on the book of the same name by author Susanna Clarke, *Piranesi* takes the listener through a series of halls of The House, an endless museum of sorts, filled with statues. Each episode of the work offers a glimpse of something: here tender, here uplifting, and here bittersweet. Rather than a series of separate vignettes, there is a single unfolding traversal of the world, unified by the melodic material used throughout.

The musical language of this work melds a combination of old and new, to create something vital but with an overarching Hellenistic quality. As we experience the otherworldly yet ever-beautiful qualities of The House, sometimes we tread reverently, sometimes we linger, and sometimes we are even moved to skip fleet-footed through its many halls and vestibules. Wherever we turn, we find two vital things: The House, and ourselves.

About CoLAB:

The collaborative nature of the CoLAB program has held up a mirror to my creative process and the music I write. The thing I've loved most about collaborating directly with musicians is that you're not dealing with sound in the abstract, but with people. You can sense when the music brings joy or moves the performer. There is an honesty and human-centredness to the process which is otherwise missed. Music is about connection and I love that we could spend so much time exploring music and looking for those meaningful moments together.

Christopher Healey has received commissions and performances from organisations and ensembles around the world including Flinders Quartet, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, 4MBS Classic FM, Bendigo Symphony Orchestra, Camerata - Queensland's Chamber Orchestra, Duo Piaggio, BRON Saxophone Quartet, BoB-Best of Brass, Divisi Chamber Singers & Ensemble Ancien, Ensemble Françaix, and numerous individual musicians.

He completed his Bachelor of Music at the Queensland Conservatorium and also holds a PhD in Composition from the University of Queensland.

christopherhealey.net



Sophie Van Dijk (NSW)

If I Place Myself There

- I. In a city of cloud-grazing buildings
- II. In a sanctuary

If I Place Myself There tells the story of sanctuary, journeying to a place of peace amidst attention-grabbing daily noise. The 'place' itself can be either literal or metaphorical, or both. I was captured by the stark contrast between bustling lives and restful moments, and the creative potential to capture the visceral, embodied feeling of reprieve. Divided into two connected movements, this piece is inspired by the captivating imagery that Julia Baird uses in her book *Phosphorescence*, describing our need for safety, place, belonging and rest. The first movement creates a world that is all-consuming, frenetic, unstable and uncertain. In stark contrast, the second movement is grounded by warm chords and still string figures. There are echoes of themes from opening sections in the background, out of focus and overlaid with a sense of deep calm and stability.

About CoLAB:

This year has challenged me in every single way possible. It pushed me to interrogate what sort of music I want to make and why. Mentor Holly Harrison said: write music that sounds like you. It sounds obvious, but it was something I needed to hear at that moment. It spurred me on to make some serious changes, re-discover myself in my own music, and to have more confidence and trust in my own voice.

Sophie writes music to offer reflection on the world around her, inspired by community, nature, friendship and faith. She has been previously accepted for the Australian Youth Orchestra's Composers Stream and Coro Innominata Women Composers' Development Program. Recently, Sophie has written for Ensemble MUSE, Ensemble Terra, Trinity Grammar School and Radford College, as well as partnered with visual artists on the short documentary 'Merge'. She is a copyist for Jigsaw Music and Treasurer of Konzertprojekt. Sophie holds a Bachelor of Music (Composition) with first class honours from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

sophievandijk.com



Mark Holdsworth (WA)

Calon Arang

Calon Arang derives from the 12th-century Javanese folktale of the same name. The eponymous antagonist is a rancorous sorceress who besets the kingdom of Kediri with disease and death. The king sends forces to defeat Calon Arang; however, their efforts are futile. Eventually, the king's cleric intervenes and uses the sorceress's scriptures against her; he defeats Calon Arang, cleanses the lands, and resurrects the deceased.

Calon Arang draws from the musical traditions of Java (gamelan) and Islam and combines these with Western art music traditions to explore my ethnic heritage. The opening sets up a foreboding and sinister ambience depicting Calon Arang's intensifying spite. The second section is a 'dance of death' referring to Calon Arang's invocation of the goddess Durga through ritual sacrifice, and the conflict between her and the king's army. The third section comprises a violin cadenza that references the call to prayer; it refers to the entreaty for the cleric's intervention. The final section depicts the purging of evil and the triumph of good.

About CoLAB:

This is the first time I've decided to derive musical influences from my own cultural background and integrate them into my existing style and voice. Drawing from the rich culture and music of Java is something I've wanted to do for a long time, but never felt like I had the freedom. It's a complex thing to attempt. When you are given a commission you have limited time and don't have the opportunity to workshop ideas beforehand. It's just been too big a risk. Being brave enough to be vulnerable has been a big part of this experience.

Mark's music has been performed by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Australian Youth Orchestra, Australian String Quartet, and Arcadia Winds, among others. In 2019, Holdsworth was the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's Young Composer in Residence and is a recipient of the Arcadia Winds Composition Prize, Australian Postgraduate Award, Rupert Thackray Prize for Music Education, and Dorothy Ellen Ransom Prize for Composition. Mark is a graduate of the University of Western Australia's Conservatorium of Music where he completed a Masters of Music. He also holds a Masters of Counselling from the University of Notre Dame.

markholdsworth.com



John Rotar (QLD)

Coonarr

The title, *Coonarr* refers to an area slightly south of Bundaberg, where I grew up. Locally when one says 'Coonarr' you are almost always referring to Coonarr Beach, which to me is one of the most beautiful places in the world. It's the sort of beach which we would jokingly call crowded if there was even just one other person within our sightline along the long, uninterrupted stretch of shore. The beach, bush, creeks, salt pans and coral covered rocks under the waves all formed an important part of my childhood, and of my imagination of the world. There is something about growing up being surrounded by the beach and bush which has deeply affected me in a way I think comes through my music; I hope maybe a glimmer of the blue sky and deep green water of Coonarr Beach comes through in my piece.

About CoLAB:

I think CoLAB is a great place to be noticed. There are few composition programs in Australia where people go: those guys are worth commissioning because we've seen their work and they were part of that program. I think CoLAB is a place that people will continue to look to when they're thinking, 'Oh I want to commission a young composer'.

John Rotar's music has been performed by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Opera Queensland, Southern Cross Soloists, Australian Youth Orchestra, Queensland Youth Orchestras and many others. His work has garnered awards including the 2021 Cybec 21st Century composers program, The ANAM Set, a finalist for the 2021 Queensland Music Award, and 2018 Künstlerhaus Boswil International choral composition competition. In 2022, John was named the inaugural composer in Opera Queensland's Young Artist Program. He is also an active performer and is the current Artistic Director and Conductor of The Australian Voices.

johnrotarcomposer.com



The Ensemble

Hailed as 'the best chamber music outfit in town' (Sydney Morning Herald) and 'one of Australia's most exciting and forward-thinking ensembles' (Limelight), Omega Ensemble is one of Australia's most dynamic chamber music ensembles.

With a mission to champion extraordinary Australian musical talent through high-energy and impactful performance, the Ensemble tour their National Concert Season to metropolitan and regional audiences across Australia, as well as frequent appearances in national music and cultural festivals.

At the heart of the Ensemble's success is the talent it supports, including some of Australia's most accomplished classical musicians and artistic collaborators. With a commitment to preserve and present foundational repertoire, the Ensemble also proudly stands at the forefront of new musical expression, with frequent commissions and premieres from leading Australian and international composers.

Profiling Australian musical voices also forms the foundation of the Ensemble's education and outreach programs, presenting in-school workshops, developing a growing resource of educational resources, and supporting professional development through the CoLAB: Composer Accelerator Program.

Principal Ensemble

David Rowden, clarinet
Alexandra Osborne, violin
Peter Clark, violin
Neil Thompson, viola
Paul Stender, cello
Vatche Jambazian, piano

omegaensemble.com.au

Living Music Project



Brenda Gifford, Ross Edwards and Holly Harrison. Photo: Jordan Mumms

Commissioning new music is a powerful vehicle for creating boundary-pushing performance while helping us to better understand the modern world in which we live.

The **Living Music Project** is Omega Ensemble's fierce and long-standing commitment to working with the world's leading musical voices, underpinned by our vision to uncover new musical perspectives and a contemporary relevance for Classical Music on Australian stages.

2023 projects include commissions by **Brenda Gifford, Ross Edwards, Holly Harrison, Caroline Shaw** and **Gabriel Prokofiev**.

Join our Commissioning Circle

Commissioning, creating and touring groundbreaking new music would not be possible without the shared vision of our dedicated supporter community.

To find out more about joining our Living Music Project Commissioning Circle, visit omegaensemble.com.au/support

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★ = Visionary Supporter. Those who have shared our long-term vision by supporting the Ensemble for five years or longer.

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Omega Ensemble is proudly supported by the NSW Government through CreateNSW and by the City of Sydney cultural grants program.

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