



Tectonics Adelaide

9 and 10 March 2014

Welcome to Tectonics Adelaide, co-presented by Adelaide Festival and Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. Launching in 2012, Adelaide is the fifth Tectonics Festival with previous events held in Reykjavik, Glasgow and Tel-Aviv.

Much of this programme focuses on Australian composers, instrumentalists, improvisers and sound artists. We have also invited several legendary international performers to join the project including Takehisa Kosugi, Ikue Mori, Aki Takahashi, Stephen O'Malley, and Attila Csihar amongst others. It's also fantastic to feature two leading Australian new-music ensembles – Gabriella Smart's Soundstream Collective and Speak Percussion led by Eugene Ughetti.

I love the curatorial freedom of Tectonics – for example, the licence to profile new orchestral commissions alongside hard-core experimental solo electronic sets. On one hand young and emerging composers and improvisers while on the other, the rarely performed, pioneering works from the 60's and 70's. It is this variety that is distinctive to Tectonics and hopefully the audience comes along for the ride. By challenging the perceived barriers between contemporary classical and other experimental music and forms I hope to create an exciting and powerful mix of events.

One of the first names that came to mind while planning the programme was David Ahern (1947-1988). Ahern was a unique Australian figure who worked with Stockhausen and Cardew as well as his own improvisation pursuits with Teletopa and other groups. He died young and was a real outsider; regrettably his work is still underperformed in Australia. Two of his works are presented here - the early orchestral classic *After Mallarmé* and the piece for solo wind *Stereo/Mono* played by Jim Denley.

Fellow Australian Jon Rose introduced me to the music of Ahern. After working with Jon years ago with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in Glasgow we finally have a chance to present a new orchestral work of his, *Elastic Band*, a composition co-written with Elena Kats-Chernin. Jon plays a solo part for violin in this piece while I use the notated material provided by the two composers.

Three additional new or recent works by young Australian composers are presented - a percussion ensemble piece by James Rushford, Erkki Veltheim's string quartet and an orchestral work by Adelaide-born Matthew Shlomowitz featuring a solo part for drum kit.

James collaborates with many leading Australian improvisers while also writing fully notated works. Now teaching in London, Matthew is a unique composer incorporating movement and unusual techniques in his compositions and Erkki is an exceptional violinist using electronics, improvisation and unusual instruments in his work.

I also wanted to include the work of two pioneering and towering figures of the 20th century who remain as relevant today as they were 50 years ago - Giacinto Scelsi and Iannis Xenakis. Both composers were fascinated by ancient rituals and symbols. Although their work is quite different they share a clear connection with interests in ancient cultures, powerful and concentrated moments of time, titanic sound blocks and much more - in a similar sense they write shamanistic and ritualistic music. This program showcases a collection of their repertoire for ensemble, chamber works and solo piano.

So much music has been influenced by Scelsi and Xenakis including the work of leading guitarists Stephen O'Malley and Oren Ambarchi who come from different backgrounds altogether. Here they will perform a recent Tectonics premiere called *Criss-Cross* composed by Alvin Lucier – two electric guitars playing soft and gliding pitches.

Romanian spectralist Iancu Dumitrescu's new work for two guitars and computer sounds will be a stark contrast. This is a unique opportunity to hear Ambarchi and O'Malley performing composed pieces. Following an orchestral improvisation with Ambarchi at the first Tectonics Festival in Reykjavik (2012), here we present a new semi-improvised work for brass, percussion, double-bass and electric guitar conducted without the use of conventional notation and guided instead by cues and signals.

Speaking of risk taking... Ambarchi's close collaborator Robbie Avenaim performs an ensemble piece for 16 instruments and solo percussion with the musicians surrounding the audience. Premiering at Tectonics Tel-Aviv last June, Avenaim's *Evraki* is a gem. Judith Hamman with Carolyn Connors and Vanessa Tomlinson perform an acoustic trio of cello, voice and percussion, harnessing the natural acoustic of Queens Theatre to full effect.

The program also features solo performances by leading music innovators including former Taj Mahal Travellers and Merce Cunningham Dance Company Music Director, the legendary Takehisa Kosugi in a rare solo appearance and an Australian first. Also on the program are prominent international and Australian artists delivering intense and gripping solo sets including Crys Cole (electronics), Marco Fusinato (electric guitar), Joel Stern (lo fi electronics and lights), Ikue Mori (electronics and video) and Attila Csihar (voice and electronics).

The program culminates in a grand finale with the first-ever performance in Australia of Gravetemple – the trio of Csihar, Ambarchi and O'Malley. As SUNN O))) they have performed together many times but the visceral qualities of Gravetemple make them an entirely different band. An Adelaide coup, this performance comes almost 8 years after the first Gravetemple performance- at Levontin 7, Tel-Aviv – my very first tour as curator and producer.

Hope you have a blast!

Ilan Volkov, Curator