

**Rudolf Escher** was a composer and music theorist. He left compositions for chamber orchestra and orchestra, vocal, and one electronic composition. Escher was also an accomplished poet, painter and writer. He studied at the Toonkunst Conservatoire in Rotterdam in 1931, where he majored in piano with the cello as minor. From 1934 to 1937 he studied composition with Willem Piiper as his teacher. During the Second World War Escher composed *Musique pour l'esprit en deuil* (1941–3), overnight making him the most important composer in the Netherlands. Describing his compositions from the war, he wrote:

'My work from this period has a gravity, a doggedness here and there, which makes it clear that it has grown amid disasters. For me, personally, that is the ethical significance of it: they are constructions of the mind, in a time that 'mind' (if you can still call it that way) is used almost exclusively for destructive purposes.' Soon after the war Escher wrote weekly for the *Groene Amsterdammer* as a contributor for visual arts and music. He was a talented poet, publishing poetry in literary magazines up to the 1950s.

**Peter Handsworth** completed an Honours degree in Music Performance before pursuing two postgraduate performance diplomas at the renowned Hochschule für Musik in Karlsruhe, working intensively with the Wolfgang Meyer (Clarinet) and Peter Eötvös (Modern Music). He has a long-standing commitment to commissioning, performing and recording contemporary music world-wide, and has been invited to perform at pre-eminent international festivals, including Lockenhaus and Schleswig Holstein. Peter has recorded Berio's *Sequenza IX*, and most recently completed a studio recording of Australian music for Bavarian Radio and two collaborative new music CD's entitled, *Bridges* and *Conversations*.

**Gabriella Smart** is a pianist, educator and artistic director of the Soundstream Collective. She has performed as a soloist in the International Melbourne Festival and the Adelaide Festival Centre's OzAsia Festival, in Europe at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, and in China at the Forbidden Palace, Beijing and the Shanghai Conservatory.

Gabriella was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2010, and was the recipient of a Helpmann Award in 2009. She is artistic director of the Soundstream: Adelaide New Music Festival, which received a Ruby Award for Best Event in South Australia in 2009. Gabriella studied with Eleonora Sivan, concert pianist and pedagogue whose school is recognised internationally. She teaches piano part-time at the Elder Conservatorium of Music, and records regularly for ABC Classic FM.

**Erkki Veltheim** is a composer, improviser and performer. He is a member of Elision and the Australian Art Orchestra, and has also performed with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Opera Australia, Ensemble Modern (Frankfurt) and Ensemble musikFabrik (Dusseldorf). His works have been performed by the London Sinfonietta, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Australian String Quartet and the Twitch Ensemble, and his installations, music theatre and intermedia works have been exhibited/performed in Australia, Spain and Finland.

**Elizabeth Layton** has a distinguished career as soloist and chamber music player working with some of Britain's finest ensembles and orchestras. Born in London and a graduate of the Yehudi Menuhin School and the Juilliard School in New York, she is a former member of the Nash Ensemble. Elizabeth has appeared as soloist with orchestras including the Philharmonia, English Chamber Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra and London Mozart Players, as well as the Academy of St Martin in the Fields of which she was Associate Leader. She has performed and broadcast chamber music worldwide and made chamber music recordings for labels including DG, Hyperion, Chandos, BIS and Collins Classics. From 1999–2010 Elizabeth Layton was Leader of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra with whom she broadcast as soloist with conductors including Osmo Vanska, Ilan Volkov, Jerzy Maksymiuk and Martyn Brabbins. She regularly directed the orchestra, broadcasting for the BBC with soloists such as Michael Collins, Alison Balsom and Martin Roscoe, and has been a Professor of Violin at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, UK.

**Imants Larsens** has held the position of Associate Principal Viola with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra since 2008. He performs regularly as a soloist and chamber musician on both violin and viola, collaborating with artists such as Natsuko Yoshimoto, Janis Laurs, Emma-Jane Murphy, Juerg Daeler, Timothy Young and the Australian String Quartet.

**Ewen Bramble** is well known to Adelaide audiences as Associate Principal Cello of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and to music lovers nationwide as cellist of the Benaud Trio, winners of the Piano Trio Prize at the 2005 Asia-Pacific Chamber Music Competition. He has made recital appearances at the Port Fairy Chamber Music Festival, the 2010 Adelaide Symphony Orchestra Schumann Festival, the 2011 Adelaide International Cello Festival and more recently Ewen made his concerto debut as soloist with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. He has also lectured in Chamber Music and Cello at the Elder Conservatorium of Music. Ewen's instrument is the 2011 Adelaide International Cello Festival Cello.

**Charles Bodman Rae**????

**Chris Mortensen** is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Adelaide. He has doctorates in philosophy and mathematics from the University of Adelaide, and is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities. His research interests lie in the theory of inconsistency, wherein he has published two books *Inconsistent Mathematics* 1995, and *Inconsistent Geometry* 2010. He currently heads the Inconsistent Images project at the University of Adelaide, and is particularly interested in the masterpieces of M.C. Escher.



## Art & Heritage Collections

# Cultural Musing

**The Soundstream Collective** is the University of Adelaide's new music Ensemble-in-Residence, auspiced through the J.M. Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice. The Collective is committed to creating a vibrant culture of new music through artistic excellence, innovative programming, composer collaborations, the commissioning of new works and community participation.

The Collective embraces the performance, practice and reception of new music at all levels of engagement.

Get the latest news from Soundstream at [www.soundstream.net.au](http://www.soundstream.net.au) and be the first to know about:

- § Soundstream Collective 2012 concert series
- § Great Music In Great Spaces series of events
- § New Waves Listening Club (just like a book club, for music)
- § Lectures and workshops

And, a fixture in the Adelaide festival calendar: the award-winning *Soundstream: Adelaide New Music Festival* returns Thursday 11 October through to Monday 15 October, 2012

## To breathe fresh air through closed eyes

A concert celebrating the art of Maurits and Rudolf Escher

8.00pm Tuesday, 8 May 2012

Elder Hall

The University of Adelaide, North Terrace Campus

### Free concert— all welcome

The two Eschers: Maurits (1898–1972), celebrated artist of so-called impossible structures, and his nephew Rudolf (1912–1980), composer, were both fascinated by the symbiosis between mathematics and art. Professor Chris Mortensen, School of Philosophy and scholar of inconsistent images, takes us into M.C. Escher's world. We will listen to the music of Rudolf, one of the key figures in Dutch 20th century music, with 'closed eyes' while the musicians perform in darkness to enable the full scope of Maurits' images to be experienced.

The concert concludes with a vivid 21st century perspective—an electronically transformed soundscape that blurs defined process and improvisation.

Composed by acclaimed Finnish-Australian composer and violinist Erkki Veltheim, the soundscape was commissioned by Soundstream Collective.

Soundstream Collective, New Music Ensemble in Residence at the University of Adelaide, will also launch its 2012 Concert Series at the *Musing*.

*Soundstream Collective: shaping Australian culture through new music*  
[www.soundstream.org.au](http://www.soundstream.org.au)

*Soundstream is supported by Simon Hackett Wines.*

*With special thanks to the Elder Conservatorium of Music and the Division of Services and Resources of the University of Adelaide for their continued support.*

For more information please contact Art & Heritage Collections on 8313 3086 or email [art.heritage@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:art.heritage@adelaide.edu.au)

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image  
Rudolf Escher  
Trio for clarinet, viola and piano (excerpt)



It is with immense pleasure that I welcome you to the launch concert of the Soundstream Collective 2012 season, the new contemporary music Ensemble-in-Residence at the Elder Conservatorium. Its title, *To breathe fresh air through closed eyes*, encapsulates the individualism and genius of two great artists of the twentieth century. It also refers to the creation of a unique and innovative collaboration of performers and composers, to promote and develop multi-disciplinary new music practice and performance. My sincere thanks go to Mirna Heruc from Art & Heritage Collections, University of Adelaide, for sharing our vision in tonight's concert presentation.

In Rudolf's music we hear impressionist washes of sonority from his inner world. They are not voyeuristic impressions of the outside world as in the French school, but contain the same emotional detachment as separate spotlights might on a dark stage. The voices weave together horizontally, but they are lone voices in a crowd.

Maurits' kaleidoscopic drawings are also an innate expression of his inner world. Inspired by the 14th century Alhambra palace in Granada with its complex Islamic decorations, he became obsessed with the regular division of the plane, and he later became obsessed with wanting to represent music in graphic terms. In 1959 he wrote:

*By keenly confronting the enigmas that surround us, and by considering and analyzing the observations that I had made, I ended up in the domain of mathematics... I often seem to have more in common with mathematicians than with my fellow-artists.*

Likewise, Rudolf's interest in mathematics led him to infuse his music with metric irregularities that he transcribed in painstaking detail, encased in the perspective of long phrases. Rudolf was for many years the Scientific Senior Lecturer at the Institute for Musicology at the University of Utrecht.

#### Gabriella Smart

Artistic Director, Soundstream Collective  
May 2012

#### Rudolf Escher *Sonata for solo clarinet* (1973)

The Sonata for clarinet is in two contrasting movements. The first is slow and rhapsodic, whilst the second movement contains the subtle irregularity of complicated dance rhythms, possibly reflecting the composer's experience of living in the Dutch East Indies as a child. It is slow and contemplative, and most effectively exploits the expressive elements of the clarinet, particularly at pianissimo.

#### Rudolf Escher *Trio for clarinet, viola and piano* (1978)

The Trio for clarinet, viola and piano was one of the last works that Escher ever wrote. It is an expression of Rudolf's inner world, one where scars from his war experience continued to reside. The three movements are through composed, reflecting a journey that begins with the deepest emotional concentration and cries of angst through to the third movement, where layers of abstract sounds are woven in the style of Debussy. One hears the long phrases and open fifths so prevalent in the language of the Scandinavian composers. Dutch musicologist Leo Samama describes the Trio as belonging to "the works of a master - one of the few our country has known; an artist that has developed such a personal language, a personal grammar, a personal sound, that every statement about external influences, whether German or French, whether old or new music, or whether about place and time, are futile and meaningless."

#### Erkki Veltheim *Glossolalia* (World Premiere)\*

Glossolalia is a kind of quixotic homage to the private language games that so preoccupied the modernists of 20th Century; games that, like a candle to a moth, have always both fascinated and repelled me. This work's rhythmic material is derived from the main propositions of Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus via translation into morse code, an early and now officially obsolete mode of digital communication. In his arch-modernist treatise, Wittgenstein rages against the vagueness of language by trying to limit its scope to the binary values of truth and falsehood, but in the end falls on mystical silence to escape his logical labyrinth and find expression for the less coherent aspects of human experience. My harmonic elements are gleaned from Elliott Carter's fixation with highly isomorphic all-interval chords, an equally obsessive quest to maintain a sort of precarious balance and symmetry in the materials of communication. These rigid structures are corroded from the outset through the use of playing techniques that continuously destabilise and obscure them, as well as a gradual detuning of the top and bottom string of each instrument until they are completely slack. As the players begin to battle with the increasingly volatile and failing instruments, the musical language moves closer to a kind of involuntary onomatopoeia, resembling the sounds of concrete nature more than abstract culture. In the end it is a happy requiem, a hope that the exquisite corpse of modernism feeds maggots of a different breed; ones that embrace and celebrate the arbitrariness and uncertainty of existence rather than bracketing and analysing it.

\* This work was commissioned by Soundstream Collective with assistance from the Australia Council for the Arts

## Programme

### Gabriella Smart

Welcome and Introduction

### Rudolf Escher

*Clarinet Sonata*  
Australian Premiere

### Rudolf Escher

*1978 Trio for clarinet, viola and piano*  
Australian Premiere

### Interval

### Prof Chris Mortensen

Talk on the art of M.C Escher, accompanied by illustrations of 'impossible objects'

### Erkki Veltheim

*Glossolalia 1 String Quartet*  
World Premiere

## Artists

**Peter Handsworth** Clarinet

**Gabriella Smart** Piano

**Erkki Veltheim** Violin

**Elizabeth Layton** Violin

**Imants Larsens** Viola

**Ewen Bramble** Cello

**Charles Bodman Rae** Conductor

**Chris Mortensen** Speaker