

ASTRA

Concerts 2017 | Musical Director: John McCaughey



ADVENTURES IN CHORAL & CONTEMPORARY SOUND & IDEAS

ASTRA

Astra Chamber Music Society Inc.

Astra Concerts – The Astra Choir – Astra Publications

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Program details are correct at the time of printing.

**CREATIVE
VICTORIA**



Astra Membership

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

Bookings

Tickets can be purchased online at trybooking.com or at the Astra office on 03 9326 5424

Subscription (20% discount)

10 concert package:
FULL \$210, CONC. \$125
4 concert package:
FULL \$110, CONC. \$65

Subscription pass for Now & Then:

FULL \$100, CONC. \$60

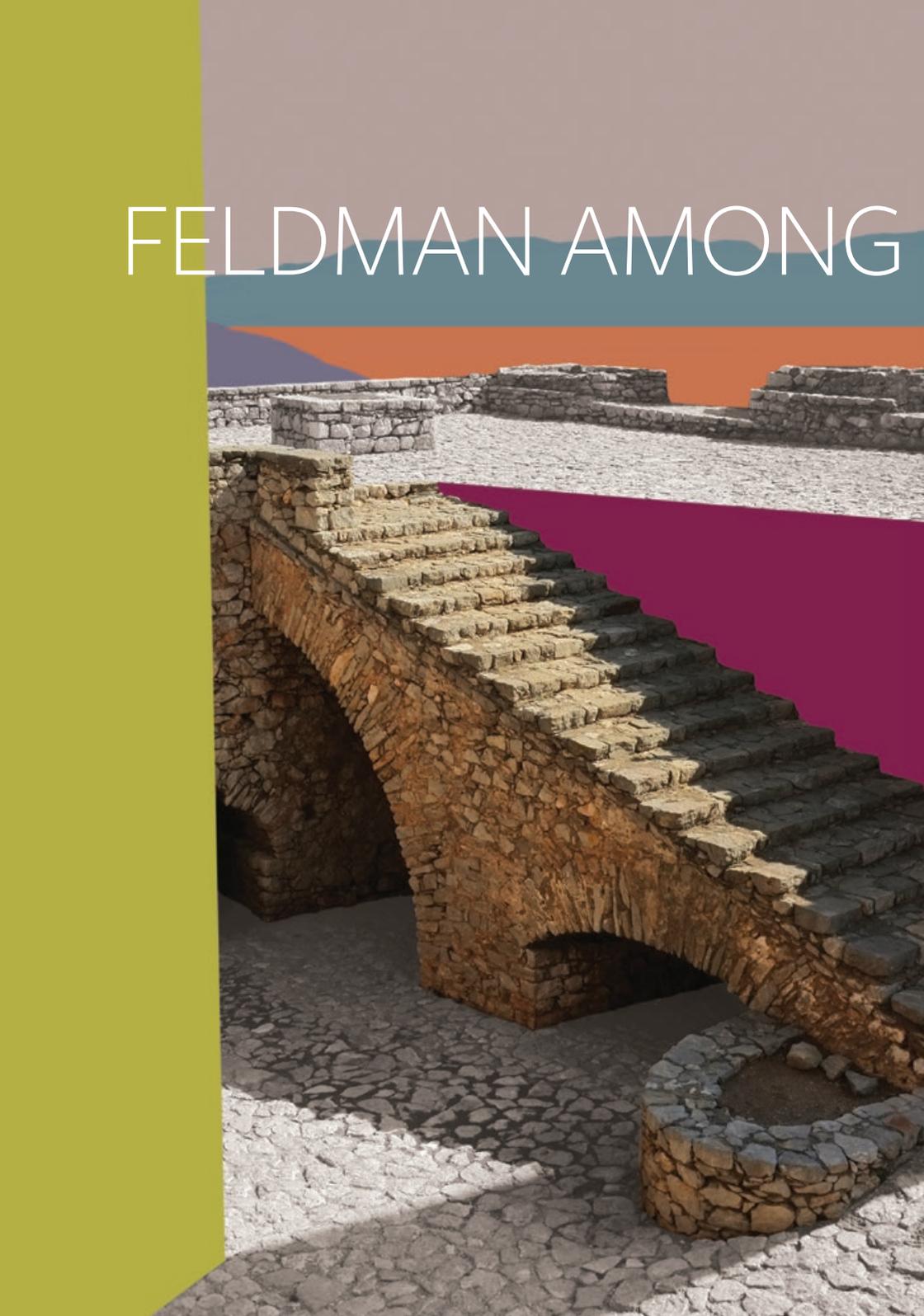
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 APRIL: FELDMAN
AMONG EAST AND
WEST  JUNE:
ANDREW BYRNE AT 50.
THE OTHERSIDERS 
SEPTEMBER: NOW AND
THEN  OCTOBER:
OCTOBER REVOLUTION
1917  DECEMBER:
MEMORIES FOR
FORGETFULNESS



FELDMAN AMONG EAST AND WEST

CONCERT 1

Sunday 30 April, 5pm

Carmelite Church, Cnr Richardson & Wright Street's, Middle Park

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 Baciú's wordless chorus inspired by a *doina* song from Maramureş 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 Baciú, *Duceți-vă, rândunele* (2016), 6-part choir **1ST PERFORMANCE**

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

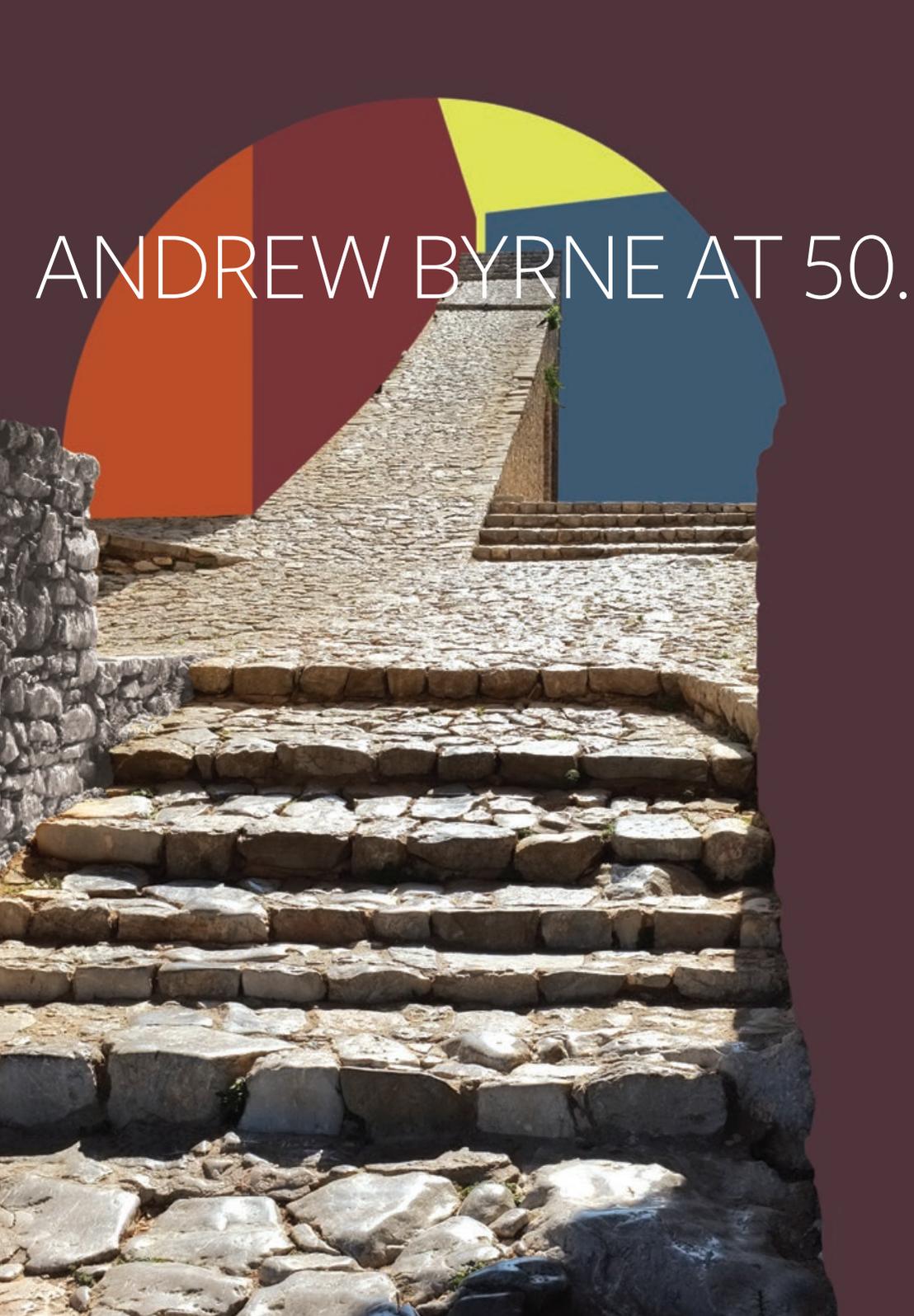
Paul Kopetz, *Matko Boska* (2015), 4-part choir with soloists **1ST PERFORMANCE**

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), 5-8part choir

The Astra Choir with soloists and instrumental ensemble conducted by John McCaughey



ANDREW BYRNE AT 50.

CONCERT 2 | two performances

Saturday 10 June, 5pm

Sunday 11 June, 5pm

Eleventh Hour Theatre, 170 Leicester Street, Fitzroy

THE OTHERSIDERS

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.

The Othersiders. New Australians in Paraguay (2006/ revised 2017)

3 solo voices, 2 pianos 8 hands, violin, cello, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, Improvising Choir and male chorus

1ST PERFORMANCE

with:

Stopped Piano Plus (2015-17)

solo pianists with instruments

Striking (2011) amplified string quartet and chopsticks

Music for brass band (2017) **1ST PERFORMANCE**

CONCERT 3 | Six events
September 1 – 10

NOW AND THEN

A MINI-MULTI-CELEBRATION OF VOICES & ELECTRONICS
FROM PAST & PRESENT.

Guest soloists and instrumentalists

The Astra Improvising Choir directed by Joan Pollock

The Astra Choir conducted by John McCaughey

Technical direction: Michael Hewes

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.

NOW AND THEN

3 A

Friday 1 September, 8pm
Church of All Nations
cnr. Palmerston & Drummond Streets
Carlton

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 Simone de Haan, earlier works for trombone & tape by Dan Senn (1983), Keith Humble (1987), Warren Burt (1987), Robert Douglas (1988)

– from Erkki Veltheim, new works for violin & electronics that explore digital signal processing as an interface between composition & improvisation.

3 B

Sunday 3 September, 5pm
Church of All Nations
cnr. Palmerston & Drummond Streets
Carlton

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

A day of three electronic-pure concerts:

3 C at 3pm

THEN ...

a gallery of short electro-acoustic pieces from Australian composers, reaching back to earlier decades.

3 D at 5pm

... NOW ...

new electro-pieces from the new generation of students and recent graduates

3 E at 8pm

... 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**

3 F

Sunday 10 September, 5pm
Church of All Nations
cnr. Palmerston & Drummond Streets
Carlton

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),
choir & 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



OCTOBER REVOLUTION 1917

CONCERT 4

Sunday 22 October, 5pm

Kensington Town Hall, 30 Bellair Street, Kensington

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* (1930), *Three Pieces Op.13* (1927) choir a cappella *Resolution of the Paris Communards* (1935), voices and piano **Stefan Wolpe, *Chinese Epitaphs* (1937) – 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

CONCERT 5

Sunday 3 December, 5pm

Church of All Nations, cnr. Palmerston & Drummond Streets, Carlton

FORGETFULNESS:

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 Dediú) 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 Pärt 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

1ST PERFORMANCE

Dan Dediú, *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

ASTRA

Concerts 2017

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