

Artistic Director

Claire Edwardes

Engineer/Producer

Bob Scott (tracks 1, 2, 3, 4)

Andre Shrimski &
Jason Blackwell (track 5)

Mastering

Bob Scott

Recording Venues

Recital Hall West,
Sydney Conservatorium of Music
Eugene Goossens,
ABC Ultimo (track 5)

Cover

Traianos Pakioufakis

Layout

Dale Harrison

Photo

Heidrun Lohr

Video Artists

Rowena Crowe – Avialae
Su-An Ng – Vibe Rant
Sam James – Light for the First Time
Peter Humble – Love in Solitude

T H A N K Y O U

We are grateful for the donors and funding partners who supported the commissions on this recording, many through Ensemble Offspring's own Noisy Egg Creation Fund.

Avialae was composed for Ensemble Offspring's 20th birthday celebrations, with the support of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and premiered in 2015 at *Future Retro*.

Vibe Rant was commissioned by Ensemble Offspring's Noisy Egg Creation Fund with the generous support of Penny Le Couteur and Greg Dickson and premiered in 2016 at *Kontiki Racket*.

Light for the First Time was commissioned by Ensemble Offspring's Noisy Egg Creation Fund with the generous support of Kim Williams and premiered in 2017 at Sizzle.

Tardigradus was commissioned by Ensemble Offspring's Noisy Egg Creation Fund with the generous support of Kim Williams, and premiered in 2017 at Arc Electric.

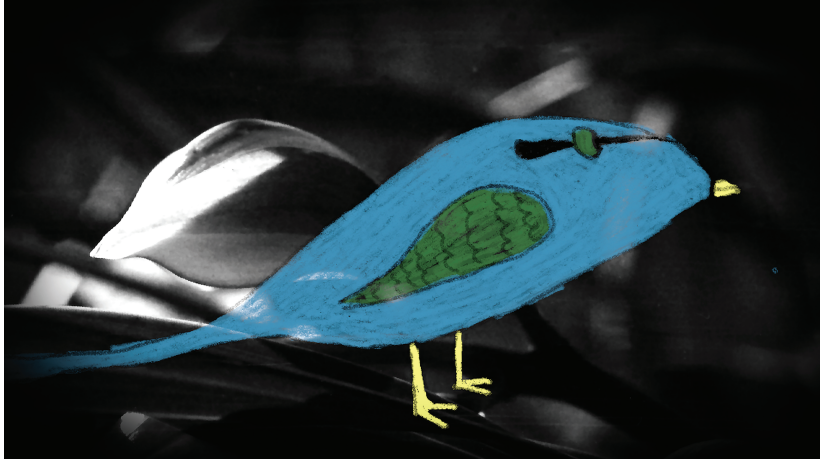
Love in Solitude was commissioned as part of the 2017 Meryl Myer Commission, in association with the Melbourne Recital Centre and premiered in 2017 at The Salon, MRC.

Thanks to Stephen Adams, Andre Shrimski and the team at ABC Classic, sound engineer extraordinaire Bob Scott, and Su-An Ng for video credit animation.

All program notes by the composers and filmmakers.

Watch Offspring Bites 2 films here:
vimeo.com/ensembleoffspring

**OFFSPRING
BITES****2****ENSEMBLE OFFSPRING**



Andrea Keller – Love in Solitude (2017)

Composed as a result of winning the 2017 Merlyn Myer Composing Women's Commission, Love in Solitude is a meditation on the eloquent thoughts presented in Letters to a Young Poet by Rainer Maria Rilke. Alongside the live ensemble, the work features a backing track consisting of pre-recorded, highly manipulated sounds made by the performers on stage, in studio. Jem Savage was an important collaborator on this soundscape and the voice of Miroslav Bukovsky (a Canberra based trumpet player) recites the text. This substantial work moves through numerous moods as depicted in Rilke's thoughts, beginning with solitude as an essential state for any artist, sadness and pain and their inevitability, and finally patience, love and optimism, of paramount importance.

Love in Solitude – film by Peter Humble

The film, Love in Solitude, could be described as a database film. That is, it was edited together from a personal database, primarily of hand processed 16mm images, shot over a period from 2011 to the present day. Shot, as they were, in solitude, coaxed slowly and in darkness out of a chemical soup. It felt right to be paring them with this work, with Andrea's moving score and Rilke's quiet insistence on the necessity for patience and solitude in creation. In the edit, I let Andrea's music take the lead; Rilke's text already providing a strong conceptual framework and the shifting textures and repetitions of the sound helped guide the final form of the film.

Andrea Keller (b.1973) has received three ARIA Awards, six Australian Jazz 'Bell' Awards, two Art Music Awards, an APRA Professional Development Award, the Merlyn Myer Composing Women's Commission, and fellowships from the MCA/Freedman Foundation and the Australia Council. She holds a Bachelor of Music in Improvisation (Honours) from the Victorian College of the Arts (2001) and a Master of Arts (Research) from Queensland University of Technology (2011).

Peter Humble is a cross disciplinary artist working between film, video, sound and music. For many years he specialised in drums and percussion and developed a unique electro acoustic approach to the drum kit. He has performed and had his film work screened in a wide variety of contexts including national and international festivals, theatre, dance & galleries. Recent highlights include Music for Dirty Film (2018) screened at the 2018 Sydney Underground Film Festival.



Cassie To – Avialae (2015)

'Avialae' translated from Latin means 'bird wings' and is a reference to the scientific classification of birds as 'Clade Avialae'. The piece incorporates the bird songs of five endangered Australian species: Painted Snipe, Swift Parrot, Carnaby's Cockatoo, Regent Honeyeater and Ground Parrot. Each birdcall is imitated and improvised by the performers and, throughout the piece, transformed from literal interpretations to conventional musical melodies. Avialae explores a disappearing natural sound world and hopes to bring to attention our environmental situation, where if nothing is done to protect our ecosystems, these songs may permanently be silenced, only to exist in our imagination.

Avialae – film by Rowena Crowe

Avialae was a serendipitous project for me. For some time I had been collecting children's drawings of birds for a project that had been brewing in my mind. When Ensemble Offspring approached me about the Offspring Bites project, I was immediately drawn to Cassie To's Avialae not knowing her composition was concerned with the disappearance of birdsong after species extinction. Discovering her ideas behind the composition, I came to interpret it as a kind of sonic witness. I loved the progression of the piece musically and it became important to me to mirror this visually but without stepping on the music so much that it became predictable. The drawings I animated are from 7 year old drawings of Australian birds. The black and white film imagery I made as imagined bird memories.

Cassie To (b.1994) completed her Bachelor of Music in Composition (Honours) at Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 2015. She has already composed for a variety of ensembles such as Sydney Youth Orchestra String Ensembles (2013), Ensemble Offspring (2015), Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (2016 – 2017), Adelaide Wind Orchestra (2018), West Australian Symphony Orchestra (2017), the Chinese Music Ensemble and Adelaide Wind Orchestra. She has also had works performed internationally in the USA by the Aura Ensemble, and Italy by the chamber ensemble I Solisti Veneti for International Women's Day (2018).

Rowena Crowe has a visual practise which has been predominantly time based but it is constantly evolving to include other mediums and materials. Her work often uses temporal elements to describe a feeling or a thought and is fuelled by her curiosity of our common experiences. She is influenced by early Russian film theory of montage and the kinetic energy that happens when you put one image after another.

Cassie To – Avialae
for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, piano

Holly Harrison – Vibe Rant (2016)

Vibe Rant not only refers to the abbreviated form of vibraphone: 'vibes', but also 'rant', which originally comes from the Dutch word 'ranten': to talk nonsense, connecting with my interest in Lewis Carroll's nonsense literature. Together these words form 'vibrant', which is the overall mood of the piece. Like its earlier sister trio, Frogstomp (also written for Ensemble Offspring), Vibe Rant sets up a series of juxtapositions, creating a stylistic patchwork that embraces influences from vernacular genres including jazz, pop, hip-hop, dance, rock, and metal. Vibe Rant is written with three main moods in mind: rambunctious and cheeky, pitted against glimpses of a lighter, more ethereal and, perhaps, 'cuter' sound-world, and a darker passage inspired by rock and metal elements.

Vibe Rant – film by Su-An Ng

A playful, abstract interpretation of a day in the life of an old squabbling couple. The quirks and nuances of this relationship is explored through a cacophonous world of shapes, colours and textures. Vibe Rant is a visual response to the rhythmic energy of Holly Harrison's original composition.

Holly Harrison (b.1988) is a composer from Western Sydney whose music embraces stylistic juxtapositions, the visceral energy of rock, and whimsical humour. Her work has been performed at festivals including Gaudeamus Muziekweek (NL), Young Composers' Meeting (2014–16) (NL), Mizzou International Composers' Festival (USA), and the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music (USA) and by Eighth Blackbird (USA) on a Musica Viva Australian Tour.

Su-An Ng is an animation filmmaker who works with various techniques in moving images. An award-winning animation graduate from the Emily Carr University of Art & Design, Su-An has shown her work in film festivals across Canada and internationally. She's recently been selected for the 2018 Situate Arts Lab in Tasmania, Australia, where she will work towards developing concepts for large-scale public artwork.

'Solitude

Going into oneself and not meeting anyone for hours.

If it were possible for us to see further than our knowledge reaches, and a little beyond the outworks of our intuitions, perhaps we should then bear our sadnesses with greater assurance than our joys. For they are the moments when something new enters into us; something unknown to us, our feelings, shy and inhibited, fall silent, everything in us withdraws, a stillness settles on us, and at the centre of it is the new presence that nobody yet knows, making no sound.

Great inner loneliness

There is only one solitude, and it is vast and not easy to bear and almost everyone has moments when they would happily exchange it.

Patience

Let every impression and the germ of every feeling come to completion inside, in the dark, in the unsayable, the unconscious, in what is unattainable to one's own intellect, and to wait with deep humility and patience for the hour when a new clarity is delivered.

Patience is all!

Grow and ripen like a tree which does not hurry the flow of its sap and stands at ease in the spring gales without fearing that no summer may follow. It will come. But it comes only to those who are patient, who are simply there in their vast, quiet tranquility, as if eternity lay before them.

Everything must be possible'

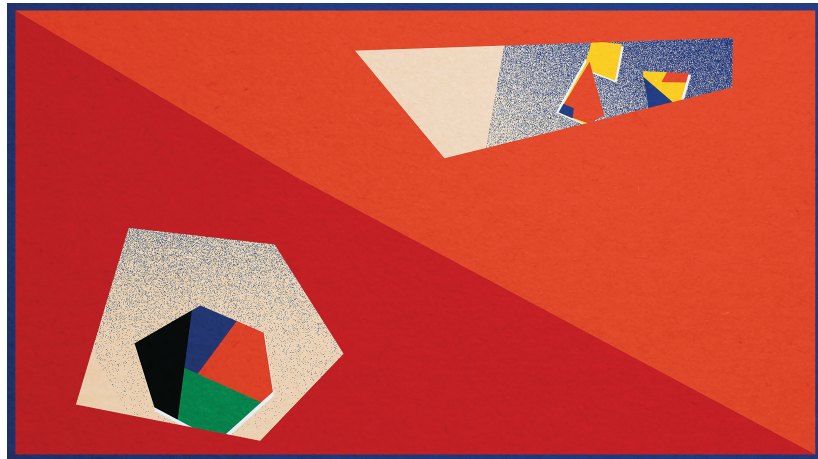
Rainer Maria Rilke

Melody Eötvös – Tardigradus (2017)

The Tardigrade (meaning slow stepper), also known as a water bear or moss piglet, is a microscopic animal that can survive in the most ridiculous and extreme environmental conditions, including the vacuum of space. In fact, they are the most resilient animal known to exist. With four pairs of legs, four to eight claws on each leg, and a segmented body formation, the Tardigrade can survive without food or water for more than 30 years at which point they can revive from a state of holding only 3% of their original body water and continue living and reproducing once re-hydrated. Besides their talent for survival, this animal is also fascinating from a purely physical standpoint.

[Tardigradus - no accompanying film]

Melody Eötvös (b.1984) is an Australian composer who holds a Doctorate of Music from Indiana University and a Master of Music from the Royal Academy of Music, London. She has been the recipient of awards including an APRA PDA (Australia 2009), the Soundstream National Composer Award (2012), and a Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commission from the League of American Orchestras, the EarShot Foundation which premiered at Carnegie Hall. She is now part of the composition faculty at the Melbourne Conservatorium.



Bree van Reyk – Light for the First Time (2017)

Light for the First Time is dedicated to my daughter, Claude van Gold. It imagines the experience of opening one's eyes for the first time, which occurs at around 28 weeks' gestation. The unfolding of the piece reflects a desire to be able to relive that moment endlessly, in slow motion, as if bathed in the brand-new memory of light. The sound of breath alone gradually expands into a universe of vibrant sound and colour, and the core ensemble of musicians is augmented by echoes of themselves, ghosts of prior performances and imagined futures.

Light for the First Time – film by Sam James

The idea for this film was to respond with reflections of abstracted light to build a precognitive, experiential sequence of light objects which could perhaps be the subconscious perception of an unborn child. The further I went into this process, the more I strived to create phenomenological states of feeling that did not define the outside world, which was quite difficult. This is an attempt to create pre-figurative imagery without any conception of the infinite phenomenon of the material world. It is like being in a bubble of pure perception without reflexivity. To see, but without a concept of matter, the sight of a being which is yet to be born.

Bree van Reyk (b.1978) has been a member of Ensemble Offspring since 2002. Her performance career includes tours and recordings with artists such as Gurrumul, Paul Kelly, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Synergy Percussion, Holly Throsby, Katie Noonan and Bell Shakespeare Company. Bree has been commissioned by organisations such as Sydney Chamber Opera, Sydney Festival, Marrageku Dance Theatre, Urban Theatre Projects, Performance Space, Sydney Dance Company, Canberra Youth Orchestra, AGNSW, GOMA and the MCA, who acquired her performance work with visual artist Lauren Brincat, Molto Echo, for their permanent collection.

Samuel James has worked as a video artist and projection designer in Sydney for twenty years, collaboratively creating over 200 projects with live performance, theatre and dance. He participates in international residencies to develop video works on phenomenology at places such as ARTELES Finland, The Banff Arts Centre Canada and Calcutta, India. Commissions include Tanks Arts Centre Cairns, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Performance Space and Artspace Sydney to make performative video installation works.

