

Atlas of the Sky

Monday 18 June 7.30pm
Elisabeth Murdoch Hall
Presented by Melbourne Recital Centre



ARTISTS

Speak Percussion

Eugene Ughetti percussion/
musical director

Matthias Shack-Arnott percussion

Kaylie Melville percussion

Jessica Aszodi soprano

'Crowd' performers

Chris Ardley

Simon Aubor

Elisabeth Bodey

Owen Bomford

Melisand Box

Debbie Brady

John Cheong-Holdaway

Madi Chwasta

Kay Cooper

David Cramond

Kris Eira

Jonathan Griffiths

Perri Hammond

Jim Hill

Lee Zelda Hunt

Alexandra Lovejoy

Journey Lu-Spencer

Alexander Meagher

Mungo Moje-O'Brien

Zela Papageorgiou

Zoe Petch

Madison Petherick

Gillian Tang

Katherine Walsh

Emily Wans

Jo Lloyd movement director

Tilman Robinson sound designer

Keith Tucker lighting design

Shio Otani costuming

Michaela Coventry producer

Sheah Sutton producer

PROGRAM

LIZA LIM (b. 1966)

Atlas of the Sky – world premiere

1. Crowd of the dead
2. Military crowds (the orchestra, the army, the hunting pack)
3. Surveillance
4. Protest
5. Crowds of the living
6. Communion between the living and the dead

Please join us for a post-concert discussion with the composer and artists in the Ground Floor Foyer.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Liza Lim invokes the universal mythologies of the stars as the foundation of *Atlas of the Sky*. The work is based on three striking poems. The first is 'The Stars' by Eliot Weinberger, a text which unfolds a rich set of resonances, exploring the tension between the shifting meanings attributed to the stars from one human culture to the next. Lim has also drawn on two poems by contemporary Chinese poet Bei Dao, who connects constellations of the stars with notions of the 'Crowd' – its potency and mercurial power. In many ways *Atlas of the Sky* is a ritual journey across a range of emotions and states connected to crowds, mobs, protest and communion.

THE TEXTS

ELIOT WEINBERGER

'The Stars' (excerpt from *An Elemental Thing*)

The stars: what are they? They are chunks of ice
reflecting the sun; they are lights afloat on the
waters beyond the transparent dome; they are nails
nailed to the sky; they are holes in the great curtain
between us and the sea of light; they are holes in
the hard shell that protects us from the inferno beyond;
they are the daughters of the sun they are the
messengers of the gods; they are shaped like wheels
and are condensations of air with flames roaring
through the spaces between the spokes; they sit in
little chairs;
they are strewn across the sky; they run errands for
lovers; they are composed of atoms that fall through
the void and entangle with one another; they are
the souls of dead babies turned into flowers in the sky;
they are the birds whose feathers are on fire; they
impregnate the mothers ...

they portend war, death, famine, plague, good and bad
harvests, the birth of kings; they regulate the prices
of salt and fish; they are the seeds of all the
creatures on earth

they are spheres of crystal
and their movement creates a music in the sky; they are
fixed and we are moving; we are fixed and they are
moving;

the stars
are an enormous garden, and if we do not live long
enough to witness their germination, blooming, foliage,
fecundity; fading, withering, and corruption, there are
so many specimens that every stage is before our view;
we and all the stars we see are just one atom in an
infinite ensemble

BEI DAO

Whetting

When I whet the knife with dawn's faint light
I find the spine getting sharper
while the blade stays blunt
the sun flares
the crowds in the high street
are trees in huge shop windows
the silence roars
I see the stylus gliding
across the tree stump's rings
towards the centre

The Answer

Debasement is the password of the base,
Nobility the epitaph of the noble.
See how the gilded sky is covered
With the drifting twisted shadows of the dead.

The Ice Age is over now,
Why is there ice everywhere?
The Cape of Good Hope has been discovered,
Why do a thousand sails contest the Dead Sea?

I came into this world
Bringing only paper, rope, a shadow,
To proclaim before the judgment
The voice that has been judged:

Let me tell you, world,
I–do–not–believe!
If a thousand challengers lie beneath your feet,
Count me as number thousand and one.

I don't believe the sky is blue;
I don't believe in thunder's echoes;
I don't believe that dreams are false;
I don't believe that death has no revenge.

If the sea is destined to breach the dikes
Let all the brackish water pour into my heart;
If the land is destined to rise
Let humanity choose a peak for existence again.

A new conjunction and glimmering stars
Adorn the unobstructed sky now;
They are the pictographs from five thousand years.
They are the watchful eyes of future generations.

Texts © by Eliot Weinberger and Bei Dao (translated by Bonnie S. McDougall & Chen Maiping). Used with the permission of the publisher (New Directions Books).

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Speak Percussion has shaped the sound of 21st-century Australian percussion music through the creation and presentation of ambitious arts projects. Internationally recognised as a leader in the fields of experimental and contemporary classical music, Speak Percussion constantly seeks to redefine the potential of percussion. Ranging from solo concerts to massed sound events, Speak Percussion's 'breathtakingly impressive' (*The West Australian*) work is presented throughout the world in concert halls, theatres, galleries and site-specific locations.

Liza Lim has been described as 'an artist of the contemporary globalised era drawing on an exceptionally wide range of influences, from ecology to Asian ritual; from modernism to an Australian Aboriginal aesthetic of 'shimmer'.' (*Tim Rutherford Johnson*) Lim's music has been performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Modern, Ensemble intercontemporain and ICE. She has written several operas including *The Oresteia* (1993), *The Navigator* (1996) and *Moon Spirit Feasting* (2000) – a Chinese street opera – all commissioned by ELISION Ensemble. Her fourth opera, *Tree of Codes* (2016), was commissioned by Opera Cologne and MusikFabrik, and was recently staged at the Spoleto Festival in the U.S.A.. She is a professor of composition at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and the University of Huddersfield. Her work is published by Casa Ricordi. Lim's honours include the 2018 Don Banks Prize, the Paul Lowin Prize for Orchestral Composition (2004) and selection in the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin program (2007–08).

Eugene Ughetti is the founding artistic director of Speak Percussion. His artistic output is primarily an exploration of the materiality of percussion, but his work also engages with ideas such as drum aged rum, supersonic performance and the percussive military. Eugene is known for tackling complex and ambitious art music projects whether as director, composer, performer or conductor. He has worked with some of the world's guiding lights in new music including Pierre Boulez, Steve Reich and John Zorn. Eugene has performed as a soloist at MaerzMusik (Berlin), Roulette (New York), Lucerne Festival (Switzerland), SIPFest (Jakarta) and the National Museum (Singapore), among others. Eugene won the inaugural Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship (2012), the MCA Freedman Fellowship for Classical Music (2011), the OZCO Creative Music Fellowship and various national art music awards for his work with Speak Percussion.

Australian vocal artist **Jessica Aszodi** is genre bounding and label defying. Her primary interest is to unpack the body as a site for experimentation and meaning through the voice. Jessica has performed as a soloist with the Melbourne, Chicago, Sydney, Tirolean and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras; with Pinchgut and Victorian Operas; with ensembles such as ICE and Musikfabrik; and in festivals around the world. She has a doctorate from Queensland Conservatorium and her articles appear in several books and journals. Jessica has recorded for Chandos, Ars Publica and Hospital Hill. In addition to her scholarly research and work as a performer and recording artist, Jessica has held the positions of co-director at Resonant Bodies Australia, artistic associate at BIFEM and resident artist at High Concept Labs Chicago. She has been nominated at the Greenroom Awards for 'best female operatic performer' in both leading and supporting categories.

Jo Lloyd is an influential Melbourne dance artist whose work positions choreography as a social encounter, which can reveal behaviour over particular durations and circumstances. A graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, Jo has presented her work in gallery spaces and theatres in Japan, New York, Hong Kong, Dance Massive, the Biennale of Sydney, Liveworks, Dark MOFO and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney. In 2016 Jo was the resident director of Lucy Guerin Inc.. Recent projects include: *All Our Dreams Come True*, created with Deanne Butterworth for MPavilion and BUS Projects; *Mermermer*, Chunky Move's Next Move commission in 2016, which received Helpmann and Green Room Award nominations; *Confusion for Three* (Arts House, 2015); and choreography for Nicola Gunn's award-winning *Piece For Person And Ghetto Blaster* (Dance Massive and COIL 2017 festival in New York). Jo has worked with Chunky Move, Gideon Obarzanek, Shelley Lasica, Sandra Parker, Prue Lang, Shian Law, Deanne Butterworth, Ranters Theatre, Back to Back Theatre, David Rosetzky (*Half Brother*, 2013), Stephen Bram (Melbourne NOW, 2014) and Alicia Frankovich (ACCA and Melbourne Festival, 2014). Jo was the recipient of two Asialink Residencies (Nibroll, Japan) and the Dancehouse Housemate Resident in 2008. Jo is currently developing her new work *OVERTURE* which premieres later this year. Jo is a resident artist at The Substation, Melbourne.

jolloyd.com

lizalimcomposer.wordpress.com

Speak Percussion would like to thank the following people and organisations:

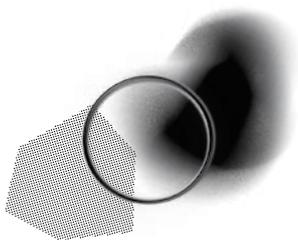
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