



REVOLUTION A MUSIC ADVENTURE FROM THE BARRICADES OF TIME

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PRESS RELEASE

New works take centre stage at this year's CIMF

For immediate release

A number of new creations are featured at this year's Canberra International Music Festival, by major Australian and international composers.

The strongest statement arguably lies in a new setting by Robert Davidson of Oodgeroo Noonuccal's powerful poem *White Australia*, set to premiere during the Festival's Opening Gala performance on 28 April. The work brings didgeridoo player William Barton back to Canberra and puts our connection with the first people of this country centre stage from the first moment of the 2017 Festival. Two days later, on 30 April, William joins local Indigenous musicians for an exploration of childhood, both white and black: nursery rhymes, as well as stories and songs that take us back to our roots, wherever they are. Both Brenda Gifford and Chris Sainsbury have new songs premiered here in Concert 6, 'Dreaming Across the Horizon', which promises to be one of the most moving events in this year's Festival.

In a Festival conceived around the idea of Revolution, *Stalin's Piano*, another world premiere by Davidson, is tailor-made for the Ukrainian-born pianist Sonya Lifschitz. The work deals with the often dramatic interface of art and politics, personified by Maria Yudina, who somehow survived Stalin's terror regime. The work will premiere on 30 April in the National Gallery of Australia, and is followed by a Q&A with the composer.

The Turell Skyspace at the National Gallery of Australia, one of Canberra's most magical locations, hosts a new piece by Ben Drury especially commissioned for the space, performed daily at sunset from 1-5 May. On May 5, 6 and 7, The National Carillon will present ten new miniatures by a swathe of Australian composers.

In the National Museum of Australia, several new pieces were contributed to Concert 14, 'Harvest of Endurance,' featuring the eponymous 50-metre scroll that maps the history of Chinese settlers in Australia. The performance is on 4 May and features photographer and storyteller, William Yang. An extraordinary new composition will premiere in Concert 22, 'Festival Finale' on 7 May with Hing-yan Chan's *Double Happiness*. This work is inspired by the ritual of a Hong Kong wedding party, and as a result it comes in eight courses, featuring William Yang as maître d' together with the famous Chinese soprano Shu-Cheen Yu (who stole the show in the last production of *The King and I*) and young rising star Jeremy Kleeman.

Two prominent Australian groups contribute most of the new work in this festival. Ensemble Offspring, fearless and never less than innovative, present a new show for little children

based on Blinky Bill on Sunday 30 April at the National Library of Australia, as well as an eye and ear-opening event around female composers in the National Portrait Gallery. The latter, Concert 12, 'Half the Sky', makes the case for creative women, and in particular for women composers, still a male-dominated bastion in today's music scene. And finally, Topology, the funky group from Brisbane, comes to Canberra for two not-to-be-missed events in the last weekend of the festival. Concert 17, 'Game on!' is a celebration of video-game music, including new works by musicians from ANU, while Concert 21, 'The Art of Speech,' is an event built around the greatest political speeches Australia has ever heard. From Curtin to Keating to Gillard, relive those moments when politics hit the mark and when we all could believe in Australia as a better place.

From its foundations in 1994, the Canberra International Music Festival has maintained a strong commitment to the commissioning and presenting of new works. Recent Composers-in-Residence have been Kate Moore (2015) and Gerard Brophy (2016). This year the American-Chinese composer Chen Yi is joined by the Belgian composer Frank Nuyts, Festival favourite Elena Kats-Chernin, as well as Robert Davidson and Andrew Ford. Artistic Director Roland Peelman is known as a champion of new work and believes strongly in the need to revitalize the repertoire, encourage young composers, and foster diversity in the artistic landscape. The 2017 Festival brings another proof of that commitment, by offering audiences a great smorgasbord of old and new, with musicians from around the globe.

Tickets now available - book online @

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For more information about the 2017 Canberra International Music Festival, please contact Marketing Coordinator Krista Vincent on 6182 0023 or krista.vincent@cimf.org.au