Ensemble Offspring

LUMEN MACHINE

SATURDAY, 12 APRIL 2025, 7:30PM
THE NEILSON, ACO ON THE PIER
PRE-CONCERT TALK 6:45PM

SUNDAY, 13 APRIL 2025, 3:30PM
HAROLD LOBB HALL, NEWCASTLE
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Welcome

Welcome to our first mainstage concert of 2025, our 30th birthday season. Years in the making, Lumen Machine is a performance we've eagerly anticipated; it's a chance to reunite with our former pianist, Zubin Kanga, and collaborate on this stunning selection of brand-new works, including three new concerti. Lumen Machine is both a celebration of our past - reliving the great times we've shared with Zubin - and a glimpse into the future - showcasing cutting-edge music technology.

Many of the featured composers are longtime friends of Ensemble Offspring. The Cole and Coelho commissions continue a legacy of collaborations spanning many years. We are also very excited to premiere a work by the remarkable German composer Brigitta Muntendorf, with whom we are honoured to be working for the first time. We hope you enjoy Lumen Machine and that it transports you to new musical dimensions!

Claire Edwardes OAM, CEO & Artistic Director

About Ensemble Offspring

Australia's leading new music group, Ensemble Offspring, marks its 30th anniversary in 2025 with a bold season that looks to the future while celebrating its pioneering past. Known for performances that "burst with imagination, energy, and inspiration" (Seesaw Magazine), the ensemble continues to push artistic boundaries. Founded on September 9, 1995, as the Spring Ensemble by Sydney Conservatorium composer students Damien Ricketson and Matthew Shlomowitz, the group emerged from the visionary Sydney Spring Festival with the approval of piano great and festival director, Roger Woodward. When the festival concluded, Ensemble Offspring was born.

With over 350 world premieres to its name, Ensemble Offspring is internationally acclaimed and set to make its highly anticipated New York debut this May. Our development programs support marginalised musical voices including female-identifying, emerging and First Nations artists. Committed to subverting the classical tradition with gripping performances that transcend time and place, Ensemble Offspring navigates the future with open-mindedness and equity for all.

Program

Brigitta Muntendorf *Weight and Load #2* (2025)*
solo piano, infrared sensors, lasers, flutes, clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, live electronics

Zubin Kanga *From the Machine (after Eastman)* (2025)*
keyboard, live electronics

Amanda Cole *Dream Garden* (2025)*
solo Lumatone keyboard, flutes, clarinets, violin, cello, piano, percussion

Anna Meredith *Bumps Per Minute* (2021, arr. Jessica Wells 2023)
Joy Subdivision, Deep Thought Panda, Norcanoe, Tom Cruise Runs
vibraphone, keyboard, backing track

Tristan Coelho *Hot Take* (2025)*
solo piano, keyboard, Genki Wave ring, flute, bass clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, live electronics

* World Premiere

The new works by Brigitta Muntendorf, Amanda Cole and Tristan Coelho were commissioned by Zubin Kanga as part of Cyborg Soloists, supported by a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship and Royal Holloway, University of London.

Pre-Concert Talk (Sydney) presented by Stephen Adams, featuring composers Tristan Coelho and Amanda Cole.

Artists

Zubin Kanga
piano, keyboard, Genki Wave, Lumatone, infrared sensors, lasers soloist

Claire Edwardes
Artistic Director, percussion

Lamorna Nightingale
flutes

Jason Noble
clarinets

Véronique Serret
violin

Blair Harris
cello

Benjamin Carey
sound and live electronics

Veronique Bennett
set and lighting design

Notes

Brigitta Muntendorf

Weight and Load #2* (2025)
solo piano, infrared sensors, lasers, flutes, clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, live electronics

Weight and Load #2 is the second in a trilogy exploring the tension between solidity and movement within harmonic structures. Built around two chords, the piece examines their apparent immobility while revealing continuous, subtle shifts - sometimes in unison, sometimes independently. Inspired by Stockhausen's *Piano Piece IX*, it engages with binary systems, opening sonic windows into uninhabitable spaces and presenting chords as self-contained worlds.

"Weight" embodies mass and pressure, while "Load" represents the dynamic burden - what bends, deforms, or threatens to break. Throughout the piece, Heiner Müller's words, *"Only strong forms help against pain,"* served as a guiding mantra. Another of his reflections, *"What I analyse cannot depress me,"* suggests that analysis might offer resilience - an idea tested in the work's unfolding. This second piece in the trilogy revisits and reinterprets its predecessor through new instrumentation and technological extensions. The series as a whole examines how emerging technologies and shifting instrumental constellations reshape the understanding of existing material.

The German-Austrian composer, **Brigitta Muntendorf**, explores the fragility of socio-political and techno-social concepts in multilayered musical narratives and modes of expression. In her works, she embodies concepts of Radical Listening, Environmental Storytelling, or Immersive Theater, established the concept of Social Composing and appeals to media sensuality and collaborative forms of production. Her settings range from instrumental, choral, and orchestral music to audio-visual (AR-)installations and trans-digital music/dance theater. Her artistic research on 3D-Audio and AI-Voice Clones takes place in scientific-artistic collaborations with partners such as d&b audio and S+T+ARTS / Ars Electronica.

brigitta-muntendorf.de

Zubin Kanga

From the Machine (after Eastman)* (2025)
keyboard, live electronics

From the Machine (after Eastman) is part of a series of works exploring piano repertoire I've played in the past, using instruments, devices and techniques I'm now using in Cyborg Soloists. This work is inspired by American composer Julius Eastman who, after dying homeless and in obscurity in the 1990s, has risen to international prominence in the last decade. I performed in the UK premieres of Eastman's major works for multiple pianos, and this piece draws on selected moments from them, including the luminescent ending of *Gay Guerrilla*.

Ensemble Offspring alumnus, **Zubin Kanga**, is a London-based pianist, composer, and technologist. For over a decade, he has been at the forefront of creating, co-creating and performing interdisciplinary works that seek to explore and redefine what it means to be a performer through interactions with new technologies. He is the Director and Research Lead of Cyborg Soloists, a 7-year UK Research and Innovation Future Leaders Fellowship project based at Royal Holloway, University of London, where he is also Senior Lecturer in Musical Performance and Digital Arts. Cyborg Soloists is unlocking groundbreaking approaches to composition and performance using cutting-edge technologies including AI, interactive visuals, motion and biosensors, and new hybrid instruments. He has premiered over 160 works and performed as soloist at many international festivals including hcmf//, Modulus Festival (Canada), Klang Festival (Denmark), Gaudeamus Festival (Netherlands) and Paris Autumn Festival (France).

zubinkanga.com

Amanda Cole

Dream Garden* (2025)
solo Lumatone keyboard, flutes, clarinets, violin, cello, piano, percussion

Dream Garden creates and explores a surreal and unfamiliar musical landscape through the use of microtonal tuning. The first movement 'Unfurling' is a canon using fibonacci number patterns found in natural spirals such as ferns. The second movement 'Insects' has a pointillistic texture with insect-like sounds that use an array of extended techniques. Movement three 'Rain' features rain inspired rhythms, textures and timbres. The final movement 'Rainbows' highlights the harmonic series and spectral harmony.

The 48-note per octave just intonation scale created for this piece was made using an Ervin Wilson tuning lattice. I imagined that in my dream garden, exotic colourful flowers would grow on a tuneable wooden lattice. The piece moves through a series of harmonious just intonation chords which are a glimpse into different parts of the garden.

Amanda Cole is a Sydney based composer of experimental instrumental and electronic art music. Her compositions feature microtonal structures, overtones, interference beats and fusions of electronic and acoustic timbres. She writes her own interactive software and works in collaboration with other artists for New Media projects. Amanda has a Bachelor of Music (Hons.1) and a PhD in Composition from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. She is currently a sessional lecturer in composition at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and Sydney University.

amandacolemusic.com

Anna Meredith

Bumps Per Minute (2021, arr. Jessica Wells 2023)
Joy Subdivision, Deep Thought Panda, Norcanoe, Tom Cruise Runs
vibraphone, keyboard, backing track

Bumps Per Minute was originally written as an installation piece for bumper cars/dodgems set in the famous courtyard in London's Somerset House. For the installation I wrote 20 miniature electronic pieces that would be triggered at random by the bumps of the cars. Like a kind of jumbo bump-triggered audio shuffle! Each new track was written as a mini character study and to plunge the dodgem rink into a new mini world for the few seconds (or longer!) before the next impact. For these new arrangements for Ensemble Offspring, Claire chose her favourite tracks for these versions and they were arranged by Jessica Wells in close collaboration with Anna Meredith.

Anna Meredith is a composer, producer and performer of both acoustic and electronic music. Her sound is frequently described as "uncategorisable" and "genre-defying" and straddles the different worlds of contemporary classical, art pop, techno, ambient installations and experimental rock - or as the Guardian said: "majestic bangers". She was voted Number One in The List's Hot100 (of Cultural Contributors to 2016), was voted No 31 in the 2018 Women's Hour Power List and awarded an MBE for services to music in the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

annameredith.com

Tristan Coelho

Hot Take (2025)
solo piano, keyboard, Genki Wave ring, flute, bass clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, live electronics

Hot Take explores the rapid-fire nature of modern discourse, where crude, noisy messaging often bubbles to the top, aiming to grab our attention at the expense of more nuanced conversations. The shock-driven nature of politics and online commentary ensures that the loudest and most sensationalist voices are frequently heard.

At the centre of all the drama is the piano soloist, our protagonist, armed with a suite of electronic sounds to amplify their message. The ensemble latches on, swayed by this influence, and echoes their gestures and energy. Like the relentless churn of soundbites, the music embraces a cycle of contradiction and excess, with each idea competing for prominence before being quickly discarded in favour of the next. Towards the centre of the work, we cut through the noise to reveal a moment of 'truth' and authenticity, carried forward by a sensitive violin solo - marked by a slower pace, warmth, and clarity. This moment quickly gives way to the relentless push once again, shifting suddenly from the lyrical back to the performative. At the end of it all, the question remains: which 'hot takes' are a bit of fun or simply provocative, and which ones have more serious consequences?

Brisbane-based composer **Tristan Coelho** composes music inspired by nature and the digital world, blending glitch, noise, and ambient elements to create immersive sonic landscapes. His acclaimed works include *Hokusai Mixtape*, performed by the Australian Debussy Trio and winner of the 2022 APRA/AMCOS Art Music Award for Work of the Year: Chamber Music, plus *Ice Monuments* for Melbourne pianist Kristian Chong. He has collaborated with Inventi Ensemble, Tambuco Percussion, Ensemble Offspring, and soloists including Zubin Kanga, Claire Edwardes and Emily Granger. His music is performed worldwide, with recent and upcoming appearances in Germany, Japan, France, the UK, the US, and South America. As an arranger, he has worked with Hitoshi Sakimoto, Brenda Gifford, and Joseph Tawadros. Passionate about education, Tristan teaches students of all levels, writes for student ensembles, and leads creative music workshops.

tristancoelho.com

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Lumen Machine is kindly sponsored by Tony Berg and Carol Berg. Our heartfelt thanks to Tony and Carol for being champions of Australian arts, and for their generous support of Ensemble Offspring's 30th Anniversary Season.

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