TURA NEW MUSIC

Award-winning Tura New Music is one of Australia's peak bodies for the production and presentation of new music events and a resource agency, promoter of new music events and advocacy/support network for Western Australian new music artists and performers.

Established in 1987 the company has presented hundreds of events featuring thousands of artists across WA, commissioned hundreds of new works, established an international class archive, facilitated dozens of projects with like-minded partners and taken new music to the far reaches of the state.

Patron - David Blenkinsop OAM
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Artistic Director - Tos Mahoney
Business Manager - Gabrielle Sullivan
Administration - Rachael Dease

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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DECIBEL would like to thank K. Ford (for making picks up and the promotional photography), Andrew Ewing (live photography), Jarred Byrd, Mikeala Davies (live recording), Chris Tonkin (UWA), Lindsay Vickery (for the title), Tos Mahoney, Gabi Sullivan and our student stage managers Sam Gilles and Suzanne Konowitz.
John Cage: mycologist and mushroom collector. A pioneer of chance music, electronic music and non-standard use of musical instruments, Cage also used this score to organise some of his public speeches. For Decibel’s version of Cartridge Music, the body is the surface played by the cartridges, becoming an integral part of the instrument.

Alvin Lucier: Still And Moving Lines Of Silence In Families Of Hyperbolas part 1. No. 3 (1972)

Pauline Oliveros: Antiphonal Meditation (1979)

Alvin Lucier: Still And Moving Lines Of Silence In Families Of Hyperbolas part 3. No. 12 (1972)

Laurie Anderson: Duet for violin and doorjamb (1976)

Lindsay Vickery: Antibody (2009)

Rainer Linz: Walk on Parts (1980)

Ros Bandt: Four + Five (1959)

Cat Hope: Abe Sada: Sada Abe 1936 (2006)

The Gift (1968)

Cartridge Music is an important piece in the history of electronic music as it is one of the first to deconstruct the turntable and use it as the only musical instrument. It employs a composition technique that is indeterminate, as the score consists of a number of transparent sheets that contain points, circles, a ruled line and a series of circles marked with a stopwatch. These sheets are placed over each other and read in performance to instruct the performers when to ‘play’ the cartridges which may be filled with objects other than a stylus needle, or change their volume and tone, or make use of other objects. Cage also used this score to organise some of his public speeches. For Decibel’s version of Cartridge Music, the body is the surface played by the cartridges, becoming an integral part of the instrument.

Decibel Design: Jessyca Hutchens

Stage Managers: Sam Gilles, Susanne Kosowitz

Decibel/Photo by K. Ford

Program

The Velvet Underground: The Gift (1968)

The Gift appears on White Light/White Heat, the second Velvet Underground album, and features John Cale reading a short story written by Lou Reed when he was a college student. The narrative focuses on love, poverty, sexual promiscuity and ends in decapitation. On the original release, this track was created with all the spoken word in one channel of a stereo mix, and the ‘band’ in the other, making use of an instrumental track that was originally developed from live band jams during the brief time in which Lou Reed was ill and unable to perform with the band. In the spirit of the original jam, DECIBEL recreates this track with a similar spirit and John Cale’s voice present in his original glory.

The Velvet Underground was an American experimental rock band formed in New York City, New York. First active from 1960 to 1973, The Velvet Underground first gained a degree of fame and notoriety in New York City in 1966 when they were selected as the house band for Andy Warhol’s Factory and his Exploding Plastic Inevitable events. The band’s music and lyrics challenged conventional societal standards of the time, and broke ground for other musicians to do the same. The band favored experimentation, and also introduced a nihilistic outlook through some of their music. Their outsider attitude and experimentation has since been cited as pivotal to the rise of punk rock and, later, alternative rock. Members and collaborators include John Cale, Lou Reed, Nico, Maureen Tucker and Sterling Morrison.

[Image: The original cover of the white light/white heat album by the velvet underground]
INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second DECIBEL concert. Decibel is a group of Western Australian musicians, composers, improviser's and sound artists who are devoted to the realisation of music where acoustic and electronic instruments are represented in musical works. In each DECIBEL performance, electronic instruments are treated as just that: performed instruments in their own right with their own sound quality and presence. The traditional stereo PA is rarely used at a DECIBEL concert since placement of performers and instruments in the space is an integral element in the sonic design of every DECIBEL concert. DECIBEL encourages the creation of new works for this combination as well as the representation of works by Australian and Western Australian artists, established and emerging.

SomAcoustica began as an idea for a program of works that examine acoustic phenomena and its effect on the human body: vibration, wave beats and other things that happen to the body when it shares space with sound. However, as the pieces evolved in rehearsal and composition, a variety of different approaches were developed to the theme of music and the body. Works were honed and developed to have that DECIBEL characteristic - a respect for electronic devices as musical instruments in their own right.

Some works on this program explore the very physics of the listening process. Alvin Lucier's works invite us to examine the magical characteristics of sound itself, where as my own work attempts to provide other ways of listening. Pauline Oliveros is interested in the ideas and process suggested by the very act of listening and performing, examining the body's implication in this process, as does Ros Bandt through her rigorous rhythmic patterns. Laurie Anderson uses the performers body in a very specific and idiosyncratic way, as does Rainer Linz by making his performer move around the performance areas. John Cage offers up an idea for an instrument that actually plays the body itself in the Decibel rendition of the piece, and Lindsay Vickery takes inspiration from the behaviour of our internal biology as a compositional starting point. The Velvet Underground simply provides us with a simple reminder of our very physical mortality.

Decibel aims to provide programs that combine a wide variety of musical styles in each program, demonstrating just how versatile both electronic and acoustic instruments can be. Each composer brings something unique to the program, and we hope that though each Decibel concert you may learn about another great aspect of music, a new and exciting composer or just enjoy listening.

Cat Hope
Artistic Director, DECIBEL
15 November 2009
http://www.decibel.waapamusic.com

PROGRAM NOTES

Laurie Anderson: Duet for violin and doorjamb (1976)

The violin has been a key part of Laurie Anderson's career as a composer and performance artist. Duet for violin and doorjamb is an early work that exemplifies Anderson's wit and creative approach to technology. Pick up microphones are attached to the doorjamb that the performer is encouraged to 'run into' with the bow. The electric violin is played back through a speaker in the room on the other side of the door, and can only be heard clearly when the performer swings the door with their foot.

American artist Laurie Anderson (b 1947) is known primarily for her multimedia presentations, but she has cast herself in roles as varied as visual artist, composer, poet, photographer, filmmaker, electronics whiz, vocalist, and instrumentalist. Initially trained as a sculptor, Anderson did her first performance-art piece in the late 1960s and became widely known outside the art world in 1981 when her single O Superman reached number two on the UK pop charts. As a composer, Anderson has contributed music to films by Wim Wenders and Jonathan Demme. She has created pieces for National Public Radio, The BBC, and Expo '92 in Seville.

Lindsay Vickery: Antibody (2009) World Premiere

Antibody explores a formal structure based on biological principles of mutation. Five musical cells, heard in their entirety at the beginning of the piece, are subjected to two layers of increasing "mutation" through the processes of deletion, duplication, inversion, insertion and translocation. In the first layer the score, read from laptop, is gradually reassembled, transforming the five cells into hybrid arrangements. The live performances of the five musicians are transformed electronically, employing analogous processes of mutation to create a second layer.

[Image: Laurie Anderson performing Duet for violin and doorjamb in 1977].