



Australian Art Orchestra

Paul Grabowsky – artistic director

www.aao.com.au

The Australian Art Orchestra is Australia's premiere contemporary music ensemble

The AAO was formed in 1994 with the aim to create a national ensemble of improvising musicians drawing on a diversity of approaches to music making, with individual expression within a group context, as well as a high level of ensemble playing being central to the band's effectiveness.

Each member of the AAO has charted a unique, personal, expressive course in their careers and while the AAO has become richer as a result of those 20-odd personal journeys we have remained true to our commitment to new Australian music.

Within this framing we have a vision of Australia as a nation in constant and meaningful dialogue with the world around us; a nation open to new ideas, interested and critically engaged, but not driven by a 'nationalist' paradigm in any narrow, jingoistic sense.

The driving idea behind the AAO is that music is a language which establishes and builds connections between people, whether as individuals, societies, cultures or as nations.

Along with commissioning in excess of 40 new Australian works the AAO is a respected trans-cultural collaborator. It has performed, recorded and toured Europe and India with South Indian percussion virtuoso Guru Kaaraikkudi Mani (INTO THE FIRE) and its acclaimed music theatre work, THEFT OF SITA, involving AAO and Balinese gamelan musicians has toured to Europe and New York. Currently the AAO is involved in a long term collaboration with traditional song keepers from Arnhem Land called CROSSING ROPER BAR.

It is now beyond doubt that the role of the improvising musician both as creator and interpreter of new music has returned to the heart of any discussion surrounding current and future directions in concert music. The AAO has boldly championed these concepts and at the Melbourne Recital Centre it will have the opportunity to reveal itself, to new audiences, as a major player in Australian music

"... an artistic enterprise of tremendous scope whose ambitious aims are executed with passion and commitment... I was unprepared for the sheer beauty, power and originality of the group."

Peter Jordan, Sydney Morning Herald