

Emerging Classics: Policy for programming newly composed works

The Ady Ensemble's *Emerging Classics* Project

Since its inception, the Ady ensemble has performed & supported modern Classical (Western Art) Music, beginning with their first concert, in 2011, with the Australian premiere of John Davison's *Quintet*- for trombone and strings. This was soon followed by new works from Brisbane-based composer Thomas Green, & Sydney-sider Michael Forsyth. Since then, the ensemble has given numerous world & Australian premieres, including the Australian premiere of Philip Glass' *Third Symphony*, in 2012.

Emerging Classics is a long-term project for the ensemble, which involves the ensemble continuing its commitment to the performance of both newly composed works, & those works written from the beginning of the Twentieth Century to the present day. The following is the policy followed for collaborating with composers interested in writing new works for the ensemble- for both the composer's first & subsequent collaborations with the ensemble.

First collaborations: guidelines

When collaborating with a composer for the first time, the deadline by which a new work (or new arrangement of an existing work) needs to be completed (i.e. score, parts, & multimedia material) & received by the ensemble is prior to the concert preceding the work's premiere performance (for example, a new work commissioned to be performed in the ensemble's May 2015 concert must be completed & received by the Ady Ensemble prior to their next concert on the 8th of November, 2014). We also ask that when collaborating with a composer for the first time that the new work to be performed **does not exceed six minutes**. We ask the composer to follow these parameters for several reasons:-

- **Technical issues.** To allow the Principals & Le Grande Fromage to have time to identify, rectify, resolve- or inform the composer to resolve- any issues that may be contained within the score &/or parts, & for any additional indications to be added to them prior to the first full rehearsal.
- **Parts distribution.** Allow time to finalise any editing that needs to be done to the parts, prior to the ensemble distributing the parts to its rank-&-file members, which needs to be done in a timely manner prior to the first rehearsal- usually three months in advance of the concert.
- **Promoting the composer.** So that the composers can be introduced at the preceding concert, to talk briefly to the audience about the piece that will be performed at the ensemble's next concert. If practical, the ensemble may even play a couple of minutes of the work at this first concert, as a way to entice the audience to come to its premiere.

- **Marketing.** It is important to have the work completed prior to the start of the marketing schedule, to help avoid having to find alternative programming options if the work is not completed prior to the performance. This avoids having the marketing package not accurately reflect the actual concert programme. This will also allow the work's premiere to be advertised in the programme notes of the previous concert, & if a sample of the work is played in the preceding concert then this could potentially be used in the ensemble's advertising of the premiere.
- **Duration.** The ceiling of six minutes is a safeguard for all parties involved; it allows the composer to write a work that will let them get to know if further collaborations with us will be beneficial to them, without writing a work in this first instance that may in terms of logistics & duration exceed what the ensemble is capable of practically providing the composer. It will also allow the ensemble to see if further collaborations with the composer will be beneficial to both the composer's, & the ensemble's, aims & objectives. In short, the time duration limit is in place to encourage a trusting & workable relationship to develop amongst all of the parties involved (i.e. the composer, Le Grande Fromage & the Principals, the rest of the ensemble &, of course, the audience).

Further collaborations

If the first collaborative project is successful for all parties, & shows that a trusting & workable relationship is developing, then the possibility of future projects between the composer & the ensemble will be considered, which may involve more freedom with regards to the duration & other dimensions of a new work.

Instrumentation

The ensemble consists of approximately twenty-three strings (6+6+4+4+3), & keyboard. Additional instruments would be considered, & need to be discussed with the ensemble's Le Grande Fromage. Due to the substantial logistics involved, the hiring of large untuned percussion (i.e. timpani, bass drum, tam-tam), & large tuned percussion (i.e. marimba, xylophone, vibraphone) is currently not within the parameters of the ensemble's instrumentation. Works involving percussion would need to be negotiated with the composer, including the costs involved with the hiring, insurance, & transportation of such instruments.

Post-performance: score, parts, & audio/video recordings

At the closure of a project, the ensemble is happy to provide the composer with PDF files of the score, & some of the parts, with the performance markings added by the performers, so as to facilitate any editing or other changes that the composer may consider to undertake prior to future performances. The works will be recorded at the concerts, & audio & video footage will be posted to the ensemble's YouTube page & website. The ensemble is happy to provide copies of this footage to the composer on request.

The Project/Rehearsal Schedule

The Ady Ensemble is project-based ensemble, coming together for only a limited number of rehearsals prior to a live performance. Although in the future we may have projects where the main objective is that of undertaking a recording session rather than a concert, it is important to note that the acts of performing, rehearsing, & (commercially) recording are very different processes (particularly the latter two, despite the absence of an audience with both). With that in mind, the use of rehearsals leading up to a public performance as an opportunity to record a work cannot be considered due to the impracticalities involved. Recording sessions require numerous edits & takes, implying a considerable flexibility of time- something that the tight rehearsal schedules prior to the ensemble's concerts unfortunately do not lend themselves to.

Closing comments

Whilst there are several conditions mentioned above that limit some aspects of the collaborative process, particularly with regards to initial collaborations, there are still many possibilities for creativity to exist within an initial collaboration, as has been demonstrated by the success of the ensemble's past collaborative projects. In describing the ensemble's policy on collaborating with composers on new works, it is the ensemble's intention to provide interested composers with a clear understanding of what the collaborative parameters are, so as to avoid disappointment further down the track.

More importantly, these parameters are in place to allow composers to focus their creativity, refine their creative processes, & to allow all parties to get the most from collaborating with the Ady Ensemble.