

clocked out presents

# the thrilling wire

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The Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts  
420 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley

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## GOLDEN FUR

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October, 7.30 pm

### "CONTROL AND ABANDON"

Luc Ferrari – *Bonjour, Comment Ça Va?*  
Marco Fusinato – *Parallel Collisions*  
Sam Dunscombe – *New Work*  
Luigi Nono – ... *Sofferte Onde Serene...*  
Natasha Anderson – *New Work*

### PLAYERS

Samuel Dunscombe – clarinet, laptop  
Judith Hamann – violoncello  
James Rushford – keyboard, viola

"terse jockeying of disjunct accents and patterns ... savage virtuosic oration ... benign emotional deliberation ..." – The Age



## ENSEMBLE OFFSPRING

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> October 7.30 pm

### "TIERKRES"

Stockhausen – *Tierkreis*  
Polansky – *Ensembles Of Note*  
Scelsi – *Ko Lho*

### PLAYERS

Jason Noble – Clarinet  
Lamorna Nightingale – Flute  
Claire Edwardes – Percussion  
Bree van Reyk – Percussion

"a colourful array of instrumental combinations ... conveyed a sense of daring"  
– RealTime



## DECIBEL

Thurs 11<sup>th</sup> November, 7.30 pm

### "STILL AND MOVING LINES:

#### *The music of Alvin Lucier"*

*Shelter* (1967); *Carbon Copies* (1989)  
*In Memoriam Stuart Marshall* (1993)  
*Nothing is Real* (Strawberry Fields Forever) (1990); *I Am Sitting In A Room* (1970);  
*Indian Summer* (1993); *Ever Present* (2002)

### PLAYERS

Cat Hope – artist director, flute, electronics  
Stuart James – piano, MaxMSP programming.  
Lindsay Vickery – clarinets, saxophones,  
Max/MSP programming  
Malcolm Riddoch – programming, electronics  
Tristan Parr – Cello, electronics.

"a lesson in acoustic phenomena ... and an ecstatic experience of sound" – RealTime

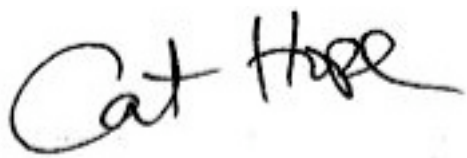
## Introduction

Part of Decibel's annual programming includes monograph concerts - concerts devoted to the work of a single composer. The music of American composer Alvin Lucier (b. 1931) is the focus of this concert.

Lucier's works engage with acoustic phenomena and auditory perception. They examine the physical properties of sound itself: resonance of spaces, interference between closely-tuned pitches, and the transmission of sound through physical media such as walls and objects. The works move between sound art, installation, recording and notated composition. His compositions are loosely focused around three areas of musical exploration: attempts at making the inaudible audible, the revealing of sound shapes, and investigations into the acoustics of space. In programming this concert, I have aimed to choose works that cover all of these areas, and in doing so created the first concert fully dedicated Alvin Lucier in Perth, featuring a number of Australian premieres.

Many of Lucier's works were written before the digitisation of sound, making use of technology such as tape. Lucier views technology as a tool, shaped by little more than what will get the job done at the time. Bearing this in mind, Decibel has modernised the technology to use what is available to us today. In fact, digital technology is what has made many of these pieces more performable. The speed of computer processing means the wait for tapes to rewind or the splicing knife to cut and edit sound are no longer required. Being mindful of differences between digital and analogue sound reproduction quality, we have aimed to replicate the sonic nature of analogue technology in the program much as possible.

The importance of Alvin Lucier's work is only now being recognised. I think you will find his compositions are eloquent, imaginative, poetic and expressive in a way that makes Lucier's contribution unique in modern music.



Artistic Director, Decibel.



## Decibel

Decibel is a new music ensemble based in Perth, Western Australia, that presents compositions combining electronic and acoustic instruments. Formed in 2008, the group has presented three major concerts to date, *Tape It!* at the 2009 Totally Huge New Music Festival, *SomAcoustica* and *Still and Moving Lines* as part of the Tura New Music Scale Variable Chamber music series in 2009 and 2010. They have commissioned four new Australian works from established and emerging composers, and adapted others for performance. In June this year Decibel performed selections of this program as part of Liquid Architecture in Sydney and Melbourne, and later this year will present concerts in New Zealand. Decibel have been recorded by the ABC and featured on their *New Music Up Late* program. They are currently finalising their first recording, a collection of works by Alvin Lucier.

Cat Hope – artist director, flute, electronics.

Stuart James – piano, MaxMSP programming.

Lindsay Vickery – clarinets, saxophones, Max/MSP programming.

Malcolm Riddoch – programming, electronics.

Tristen Parr - Cello, electronics.

<http://decibel.waapamusic.com>

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## Still and Moving Lines: The music of Alvin Lucier

1. *Shelter* (1967) for vibration pickups, amplification system and enclosed space.
2. *Carbon Copies* (1989) for saxophone, piano, cello and playback.
3. *Still and Moving Lines of Silence in Families of Hyperbolas, Part 1 No. 1* (1984) for clarinet and pure wave oscillator.
4. *Nothing is Real (Strawberry Fields Forever)* (1990) for piano, amplified teapot, tape recorder and miniature sound system.

### Interval

1. *I Am Sitting In A Room* (1970) for voice and electromagnetic tape.
2. *Indian Summer* (1993) for electronic cello.
3. *Ever Present* (2002) for flute, saxophone and piano with slow sweep pure wave oscillators.

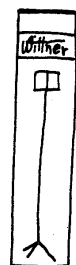
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### 1. *Shelter* (1967) for vibration pickups, amplification system and enclosed space.

In *Shelter*, Lucier offers the sounds of outside the auditorium translated through its very walls. The auditorium itself becomes the *Shelter*, and the activity outside the room enters the loudspeakers within it. By strategically placing contact microphones on walls, doors and doorframes that separate the auditorium space from the outside world, it is possible to capture the transmission of sonic energy through the very structure of the building. The entrance and settling of the audience, the air conditioning and power systems, lighting and the musicians playing in the rooms outside are reduced to vibrations picked up by sensors that are equalized and amplified. What you will hear are the sounds filtered by the physical characteristics of the building.

### 2. *Carbon Copies* (1989) for saxophone, piano, cello and playback.

In this work, performers prepare a continuous recording of sounds from their environment as a continuous piece. In the performance, they are required to attempt to play exactly what they have recorded, using their own musical instruments, whilst being reminded of the recording the same recording is shared with the audience through loudspeakers. Lucier first investigated this idea of imitating the environment in an earlier work, *(Hartford) Memory Space* in 1970. It was inspired by the ability of animals to imitate certain physical characteristics of their environment in order to survive. Lucier posits that imitating our sonic environment will help us relate to it more



Rain, Middletown

fully. The performers almost disguise themselves by blending in with the sounds around them. In this way, they are required to remove the 'art' from their playing, an idea that appears in much of Lucier's work. This is not an improvised piece - the copying is very controlled and learnt beforehand, driving the musicians out of their musical comfort zone. The work was commissioned by the American ensemble *Challenge*, an ensemble active in the 1980s and featuring Antony Braxton, David Rosenboom and William Winant.

**3. *Still and Moving Lines of Silence in Families of Hyperbolas, Part 1 No. 1* (1984) for clarinet and pure wave oscillator.**

*Still And Moving Lines Of Silence In Families Of Hyperbolas* is a series of works for instruments and sine wave generators. They are influenced by science and explore the physical properties of sound itself: resonance of spaces, phase interference between closely tuned pitches, and the transmission of sound through physical media. The instrumentalist plays against the two tone generators, which are set to specific frequencies not found on the tempered scale. The slightest movement of the listener's body will change the way the sound is perceived. Lucier's work is musically rich while simultaneously exploring the many acoustic phenomena and auditory perception.

**4. *Nothing is Real (Strawberry Fields Forever)* (1990) for piano, amplified teapot, tape recorder and miniature sound system.**

This work came about when Japanese pianist Aki Takahashi commissioned Lucier to arrange a Beatles tune for her to perform. Not wanting to make yet another Beatles cover to the list of hundreds, Lucier decided to displace the tune by altering and manipulating its sound quality. The original melody is broken into clusters played over the entire range of the piano, more like Lucier remembers them than how they were written in the song. These clusters are left to hang and decay in the space, only to reappear replayed from a speaker hidden in a teapot that sits on the top of the same piano, rearticulating the sounds through the very body of their source, and manipulated by movements of the teapot lid and surfaces.

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**Interval (20 minutes)**

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### **1. *I Am Sitting In A Room* (1970) for voice and electromagnetic tape.**

*“Every room has its own melody, hiding there until you make it audible.” Alvin Lucier, 1994.*



Alvin Lucier performing *I am Sitting in a Room*.

This classic of electronic music has existed for many years as a piece of recorded sound art. It is important because it was an early example of process music, and was one of the first works to really examine the acoustic space of a room as a compositional element. Digital technologies have made this work more readily performed live, a possibility always suggested on the score. The spoken fragment of text serves not only to tell what will happen to itself, but also provide the sonic material to start the piece. This voice is gradually altered as it is repeatedly played and recorded many times in the space. What was once a short paragraph of spoken word slowly becomes a piece of music, the meaning of the words is lost, and all that remains is the rhythm of the original voice. The acoustic space has taken over the voice, it is the main performer in this piece. The human voice intersects in a very direct way with its immediate environment. The original recording of this piece features Lucier's own

voice, which has a stutter making it very distinctive. This version features Brisbane musician and personality, John Rodgers.

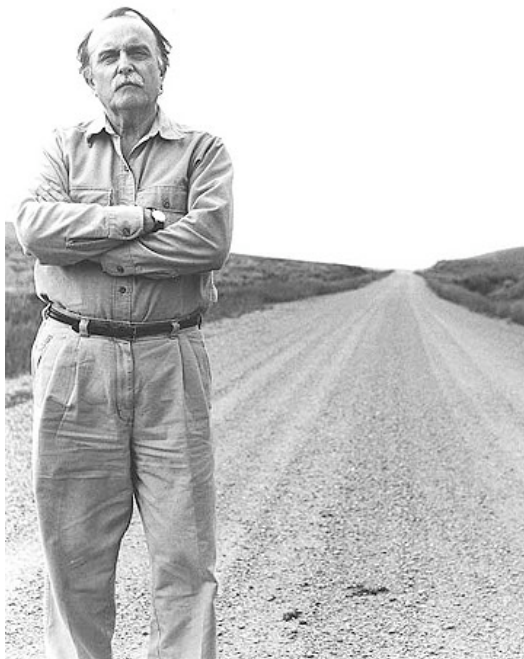
### **2. *Indian Summer* (1993) for electronic cello**

This work was composed for cellist Jeffrey Kreiger who played a specially designed electronic cello with a built in delay system. The performer improvises using the rhythmic beating of a slightly detuned, rising unison double-stop. A pedal controlled harmonizer allows the performer to slightly detune one speaker producing a second set of acoustical rhythmic beats, challenging the performer to improvise using these two interacting sets of beats. At times there is almost a physical sensation of being gently pushed or lifted by the rhythmic beating patterns coming from the stereo speakers.

The title refers to the warm days in Autumn that seem to hark back to summertime, a time when Native Americans harvested their crops, then rested. However, Lucier claims there is no relation between the title and the concept of the piece, noting that he does remember a sentimental popular American song from the thirties of the same name that his mother would often play on the piano whilst his family family sung around the dinner table after supper.

**3. *Ever Present* (2002) for flute, saxophone and piano with slow sweep pure wave oscillator.**

Soon after the composition of *Still and Moving Lines of Silence in Families of Hyperbolas*, Lucier expressed interest in creating pieces that used more than one waves and instruments. This work iterates this idea in wonderfully subtle, involved way. The two sine wave generators interact with each other in acoustic space, interrupted and enhanced by the acoustic instruments. The combination of electronic and acoustic timbres create complicated patterns in the space that change depending on where you are in the room. The sine tones are part of the music ensemble alongside other instruments, controlled and mediated by performers.



This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts through the Sound Travellers program.

