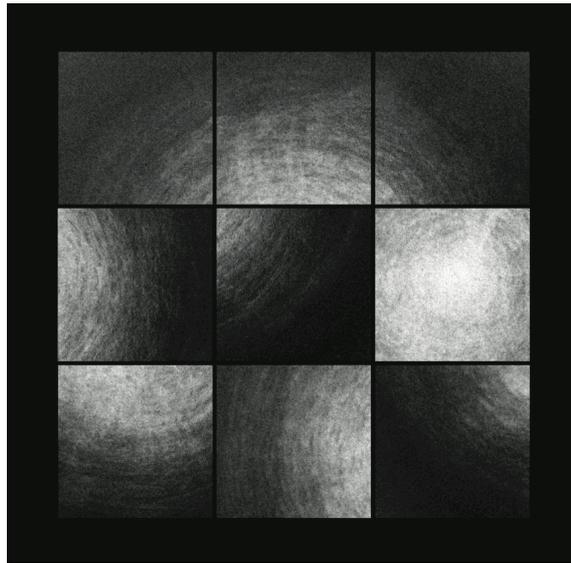


Decibel New Music Ensemble in partnership with TURA New Music and PICA Presents
A VOICE FROM THE DARK SPACE



Monday, 28 March, 2011, 8pm, Main Gallery Space, PICA.

1. Lindsay Vickery: *Night Fragments* (2011)

for mezzo soprano, flute/alto flute, clarinet/bass clarinet, cello, keyboard and electronics [world premiere].

2. Julian Day: *Beginning to Collapse* (2008)

for alto flute, Bb clarinet, guitar, keyboard, cymbal, cello and backing track [WA premiere].

3. Malcolm Riddoch: *Variations on Electroacoustic Feedback* (2010)

for multiband EQ filter, alto flute and cello.

4. Cornelius Cardew: *The Tigers Mind 'Night Piece'* (1967)

for voice, bass guitar, cello, bass clarinet, percussion and electronics. [WA premiere].

[Interval]

5. Alan Lamb: *Musicians Coping with Infinity* (2011)

for infinity machine and mezzo soprano [world premiere].

6. Adam Trainer: *Drone Mosaic* (2010)

for alto flute, bass clarinet, guitar and cello and four backing tracks [world premiere].

7. Cat Hope: *Longing* (2011)

for voice, viola, cello, bass clarinet, percussion and electronics [world premiere].

8. Ennio Morricone/Joan Baez: *The Ballad of Sacco and Vanzetti* (1971)

arranged by Decibel for mezzo soprano, choir, bass clarinet, bass guitar, guitar, keyboard, drum set, viola and cello.

Welcome to the first of three concerts at PICA in 2011. Decibel has deliberately chosen the gallery space to stage these concerts to engage with music that is not necessarily tied up with 'concert' conventions or specifications. Composers and installation artists have continued to explore different states in art, using the architectural qualities of music and sound to sculpt environments. Whether it is the feeling of a landscape, the sounds produced by the landscape, the effect of the room our environment is crucial to our understanding of music and sound. Tonight's program features landscapes that are remembered, imagined, depicted, reflected upon, fictionalised, or actual. Some are electromagnetic, acoustic, visual, created. Techniques of drone, repetition and texture are used to study the dark, the quiet and the mysterious landscape that is the focus of this program of works.

Cat Hope, Artistic Director, Decibel.

1. Lindsay Vickery: *Night Fragments* (2011 – world premiere)



The texts for this piece are taken from Belgian Surrealist author, poet and literary historian Françoise Daniéls' posthumously published *Journaux Intimes* (Gallimard). According to the author they were created using a variant of the Surrealist paranoiac-critical method that she described as "écriture de sommeil": noting thoughts at the twilight between sleep and wakefulness. The handwritten texts were arranged unusually the page, sometimes overlapping with one another. It is not known whether they were intended to be calligrams – visual poems - or if this was the result of the author "transcribing" them in the dark. *Night Fragments* was written for Caitlin Cassidy and Decibel, and has nine movements.

Françoise Daniéls around the time she was married and living the US during the second world war.

Western Australian composer and performer **Lindsay Vickery** has created a consistently innovative body of work, notably drawing on non-linear formal structures, interactive music and improvisation. As a performer he has played an important role in the Australian New Music scene as a founding member of Alea, Magnetic Pig, SQUINT and HEDKIKR. He has had significant collaborations with The California Ear Unit (USA), the MATA Ensemble (NYC), Scintilla Divina Ensemble (GER), Jon Rose, Clocked Out, skadada and The Tissue Culture and Art group, performing at the Shanghai, Perth, Adelaide and Sydney International Arts Festivals, as well as Music at the Anthology (NYC), NWEAMO (Portland and San Diego) and the LA County Museum of the Arts Music series.

2. Julian Day: *Beginning to Collapse* (2008)

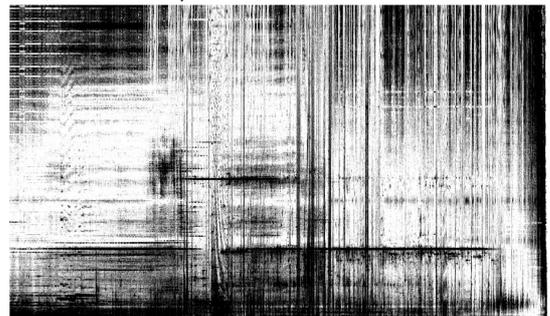
Beginning To Collapse is about instability and negative momentum. It is inspired by a series of paintings by Rachael Freeman depicting a series of condemned buildings in the process of being demolished. Each work showed a building at a particular stage of its implosion, whether still teetering, in the process of collapsing or completely destroyed. This led me to ponder that point of transition between two states of stability, a frightening and tremulous zone where an outcome is brutally inevitable yet still unresolved. It is this moment of inevitability that I wished to capture, where the old structures are still faintly visible before becoming just an after-image. *Beginning To Collapse* submerges a mixed chamber ensemble beneath a pre-recorded CD, gently teetering between the fixed and the nebulous.

Julian Day is a composer, sound/visual artist and broadcaster based in Sydney, Australia. Described as "an epic and intimate formalist", Julian is interested in creating evocative works through simple yet surprising means. Julian has worked with many leading musicians including Lisa Moore and Mark Stewart (Bang On A Can All Stars), Mark Dancigers (NOW Ensemble), David Longstreth (Dirty Projectors), Genevieve Lacey, The Song Company, Orchestra Victoria and Perihelion. Julian has studied composition with Gerard Brophy, Elena Kats-Chernin, Louis Andriessen, Michael Gordon, David Lang and Julia Wolfe. Julian is also a broadcaster, hosting New Music Up Late on ABC Classic FM.

3. Malcolm Riddoch: *Variations on Electroacoustic Feedback* (2010)

This piece makes use of audio feedback – also known as the Larsen effect - as an instrument in its own right. Microphones are used to record various natural resonant frequencies that exist in the PICA gallery, and these frequencies are highlighted and controlled by the manipulation of a multi band equalizer and EQ filter. Cello and flute listen to these and play the nearest microtonal equivalent in pitch, loudness and duration to these frequencies, and thus feedback into it. As the acoustic instruments play in adjoining galleries, the main space becomes an instrument in its own right, performed and manipulated by the electronic artist, interacting with the acoustic instruments as a true ensemble member.

A spectrograph of 'Variation on electroacoustic feedback' recorded in the Velika Sala space, Studentski Kulturni Centar, Beograd, Serbia 1/9/2010



Dr Malcolm Riddoch has a background in science, communications and philosophy, and currently lectures in Music Technology at WAAPA, Edith Cowan University. He has been actively involved in electronic music and digital media arts since 1990 and works in the multimedia industry specialising in interactive design for the internet, digital audio production, animation and collaborative server development. He is also a founding partner in independent online music label Hidden Shoal Recordings.

4. Cornelius Cardew (USA) - *The Tigers Mind "night piece"* (1967)

The Tigers Mind is made of two parts, 'Day Piece' and 'Night Piece', and we are performing the latter. This is the first piece Cardew composed for AMM, a free improvisation ensemble made up of himself playing cello and piano, guitarist Keith Rowe and the drummer Eddie Prévost. Out of frustrations born of performances of his graphic score *Treatise* (1963-67), Cardew decided to compose this work using English prose, commenting "The ability to talk is almost universal, and the faculties of reading and writing are much more widespread than draughtsmanship or musicianship. The merit of 'The Tiger's Mind' is that it demands no musical education and no visual education; all it requires is a willingness to understand English and a desire to *play* (in the widest sense of the word, including the most childish)." He was unsure that musically trained musicians could achieve this sense of play. Decibel attempt to prove him wrong!



Cornelius Cardew.

Cornelius Cardew (1936-1981) was an English experimental music composer who developed a philosophy of experimental notation and indeterminacy that influenced art music throughout the world. He was a deeply moral thinker, engaged in a constant struggle for truth in art, life, the political world, and himself. He stood with his personal, political and aesthetic beliefs against British musical conservatism, and later, against the avant-garde movement of which he had himself developed.

[INTERVAL]

5. Alan Lamb: *Musicians Coping with Infinity* (2011)

Alan Lamb's recent work has involved the idea of 'Infinity Machines', constructions that use wires activated and manipulated by electric current and magnets, then enhanced further by interaction with natural elements or performers. For this commission, Lamb has constructed a 'portable' Infinity Machine that Decibel operates and interacts with. Stuart James has been trained in the operation of the machine, and it will be driven on other levels by being 'sung into' in ways devised by Lamb for mezzo soprano. This piece is the beginning of an exploration of this new instrument, and the result is a rich exploration of sound – surprising and chaotic. Please feel free to wander the space to enjoy this piece.

Alan Lamb is based in Dwellingup in regional Western Australia. Lamb is an artist, biomedical research scientist and General Practitioner. After completing his PhD in Physiology at the University of Edinburgh 1975, Lamb permanently returned to Australia to undertake a Senior Research Fellowship in Neurophysiology at the University of WA. In 1976 Lamb's began working with 'The Wires' with his discovery of a 1km stretch of abandoned telephone wires on a farm in the Great Southern region of Western Australia. The 12 telegraph poles and 6 unsheathed wires made a soft "...singing" noise. Lamb called these wires the *Faraway Wind Organ*, and learnt to record them and later devised compositions with these recordings. Lamb has collaborated with many artists including Sarah Hopkins, Joan Brassill, Kaffe Matthews, Simone de Haan and Julian Knowles.

6. Adam Trainer: *Drone Mosaic* (2010)

This piece was inspired by American composer Glenn Branca's work in the late 1970s and early 1980s with large guitar ensembles where each of the instruments were specifically tuned to create walls of drone, as well as the album *'Flora'* by Chicago improvisational ensemble Chord, whereby each track consists of a single chord and each player contributes a single note to it. However, both of these approaches are somewhat static, and this piece works more around single notes being used to create a slowly shifting body of sound. Instrumentalists playing single notes contribute to a mosaic like effect where changes are gradual and the piece moves through a number of different phases. The central idea of this first staging of the piece is that the individual instrumentalists draw from textural cues and that these cues are incorporated into the whole tied together through the shifting chord patterns played by the ensemble.

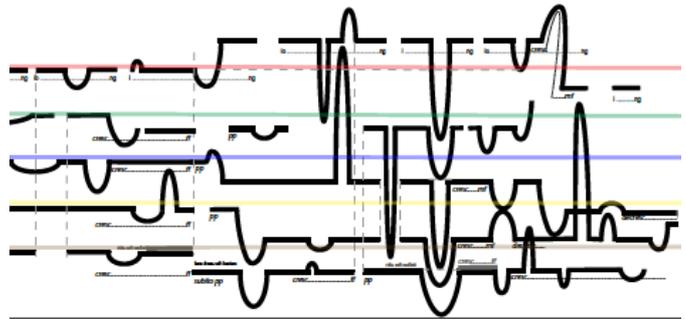
Adam Trainer is a musician, DJ and music journalist from Perth, and is the music director of RTR FM. He has played in indie bands Radarmaker, Polaroid Ghost and the Ghost of 29 Megacycles, and currently performs with improvisational duo Sparrow. Adam has released both an EP and an album under his own name, and has also worked alongside fellow West-Australian sound artist M. Rosner in both live and recorded form. Adam also works in independent radio. Adam was the composer in residence at WAAPA in 2010 and this piece was written as part of that residency.

7. Cat Hope: *Longing* (2011)

This work uses a graphic score to examine ideas about glissandi and drone. Each instrument has a part that relates to the others in terms of pitch and time but is also self referential to a central 'pitch line'. The tempo is set within an

automated score player that enables the performers to keep together. The composers interest in drone music relates to its textural and maximalist tendencies, the way small details that in other music seem insignificant can seem very large when there is not a lot of change in rhythmic or pitch materials. This piece is written for Decibel, but can be interpreted by any 5 instruments.

An excerpt of the score of *Longing*, by Cat Hope.



Cat Hope is an accomplished composer, sound artist, performer, songwriter and noise artist whose practice is an interdisciplinary one that often crosses over into video and installation. She has written soundscapes for dance and theatre companies as well as completed commissions to write music for film (winning the Pandora’s Box Film Festival Best Score award in 2000) and pure music works. Cat is a classically trained flautist, self taught vocalist and experimental bassist who plays as a soloist and as part of small ensembles, such as Gata Negra, Lux Mammoth and Abe Sada. She tours often and her work is published worldwide. She is currently a Research Fellow at WAAPA, ECU.

8. Ennio Morricone/Joan Baez: *The Ballad of Sacco and Vanzetti* (1971)

Sacco and Vanzetti is an Italian docudrama made in 1971 written and directed by Giuliano Montaldo. It presents a dramatization of the events surrounding the trial of Italian immigrants Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, anarchists who were convicted of murdering two men during a 1920 armed robbery in Massachusetts, USA. Decibel’s arrangement of the song reflects Morricone’s interest in improvisation, electronic sound textures and the juxtaposition of rhythm. Joan Baez performed and contributed the lyrics to Morricone’s music.



A poster advertising the original film “Sacco and Vanzetti”.

Ennio Morricone (b1928) is an Italian composer and conductor. He is considered one of the most prolific and influential film composers of his era having composed and arranged scores for more than 500 film and TV productions to date. He is well-known for his long-term collaborations with international acclaimed directors such as Brian De Palma, Barry Levinson, and Giuseppe Tornatore, but none more that Sergio Leone, with whom he collaborated on many of his ‘spaghetti westerns’.

Decibel:

- Cat Hope - Director, flutes, bass guitar
- Lindsay Vickery - Reeds, max programming
- Stuart James - Keyboards, percussion, Infinity Machine, Max programming
- Tristan Parr - Cello
- Malcolm Riddoch - Guitar, electronics, networking and other programming

Special guests:

- Mezzo Soprano _ Caitlin Cassidy
- Keyboard: Joe Stawarz
- Viola/violin: Aaron Wyatt
- Chorus: Rachael Dease, Clare Nina Norelli, Jarryd Bird, Max Vickery

Technical:

- Front of House: Jessica
- Lighting and technical support: Andrew Beck
- Stage Assistants: Bob White, Charlie Daly

Thank You:

Tos Mahoney, Gabrielle Sullivan, Josh Webster, KFord

If you would like regular updates (but not spam!) on what Decibel do, please go to our web site and subscribe:
<http://decibel.waapamusic.com/subscribe>

The next Decibel concert at PICA is on June 20, and is entitled *Pretty Things*, which features music where objects not usually associated with music are used to create different sound worlds.

You may purchase the debut CD by Decibel, *Disintegration: Mutation* and the book *Audible Designs* from the PICA front of house desk.



decibel decibel.waapamusic.com





decibel: a voice from the dark space

28.03.2011

@ Main Gallery Space, PICA

Review by: **sam gillies**

There was a hint of disbelief in the air pre-show as word slowly filtered round the PICA bar that Decibel's first performance for the year had sold out and that aspiring concertgoers were being turned away. A new 'classical' music event packing the house? Yes, it happened. With this in mind it is fair to say that the expectations for Decibel's first of three PICA performances for the year, and they did not disappoint. Utilising a quadraphonic surround sound Decibel's first performance for 2011 was a well-rounded exploration into the use of texture and drone in modern electro-acoustic chamber music.

Decibel opened with Lindsey Vickery's "Night Fragments". Utilising surrealist author Francilon Daniels' text 'Journax Intimes (Gallimard)', the dynamic work for mezzo soprano, flute, clarinet, cello, keyboard and electronics was one of the most texturally varied of the evening. Unfortunately this reviewer was seated at the back of the space and close to one of the speakers, which meant that much of the ensemble was drowned out by the electronic aspects of the music, one of the downsides of a surround sound setup. No doubt the piece sounded great for those that had arrived early and got a good position in the centre of the speaker arrangement. At nine movements the piece was on the long side but in effect this helped to set the pace for the evening.

Julian Day's "Beginning to Collapse" was a standout from the evening. Drawing from the work of Rachael Freeman and her series of paintings depicting condemned buildings in the process of being demolished, the haunting electro-acoustic drone work consists of delicate interplay between the acoustic and electronic components. It is a piece that consists of small gestures that accumulate over time to create a sense of the inevitable.

Mesmerising, without being boring or repetitive, "Beginning to Collapse" kicked off the evening's exploration of drone as a medium of expression.

Malcolm Riddoch's "Variations on Electro-Acoustic Feedback" continues to explore an area that Riddoch has been exploring on his own for a while now. An elaborate feedback loop is at the heart of the piece as sound is recorded, manipulated and processed throughout various feedback loops that occur in parallel. In past performances of this concept Riddoch has processed the complex sounds of audiences before and during the show. However, on this occasion Decibel explored the use of this arrangement to process acoustic instruments in the space. While there was a nice interplay at work between the performers, and the acoustics of the gallery helped to mesh the ensuing sounds into an appropriately thick texture, the piece itself felt a little too stagnant. The feedback loops effectively turned into pure sine waves, which lacked the variation, and complexity, that was evident



in previous performances of this concept. While it was not out of place in the program, the decidedly homogeneous sound quality made for a less engaging listen.

Cornelius Cardew's "The Tigers Mind - Night Piece", on the other hand, was endlessly engaging. With the members of Decibel walking through the reverberant PICA main gallery and making full use of the space, Cardew's word-based score was brought to life as dense textures meshed together to create another enjoyable drone-based work.

During the intermission the chairs were rearranged to a circular formation to allow the audience to better appreciate Alan Lamb's latest instrument, 'The Infinity Machine'. Working with Lamb's familiar theme of resonating wires the infinity machine is something of a miniaturisation of Lamb's larger wire structures, powered by a car battery. On all accounts it can quite happily keep resonating on its own accord for some time. While the program notes for the evening invited the audience to

wander around the space during the piece, there were no takers and everyone remained seated throughout. Small changes were made to yield large results as movements of magnets on the strings would excite different strings and generate new drone material. Soprano Caitlin Cassidy lent her vocal abilities to the piece, singing into the machine at different intervals which seemed to capture her intonation and preserve it in the resonating strings.

Adam Trainer's contribution to Decibel was next with "Drone Mosaic", which was written as part of his residency at WAAPA in 2010. The subtle droning material was familiar by this stage in the concert, but filtered through Trainer's post-rock perspective, this material was given a new life. The use of spatialised sound was better integrated with the performances in this piece (although that could have just been because I wasn't sitting directly in front of a speaker this time round) and the slow-burning rock build up of the piece was engaging in its application of

an accessible form to otherwise challenging new music.

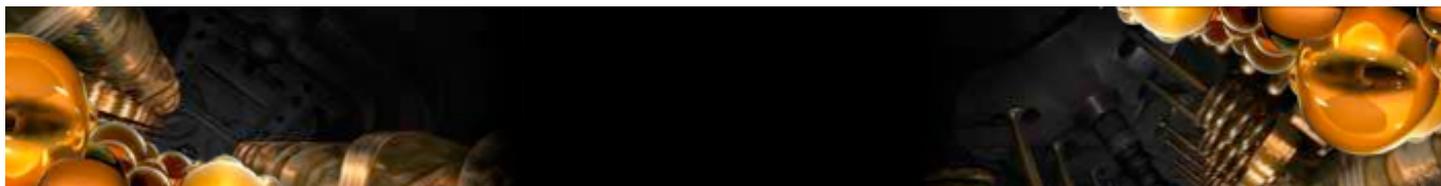
Cat Hope's piece "Longing" was a decided step back to the world of contemporary classical music. A graphic, scrolling score of lines to indicate pitch (half the score was helpfully printed with the program notes for the evening) directed the performers and once again inside the PICA performance space this piece came alive. The lurching nature of the music was brought vividly to life by the performers, with Stuart James's bass tom adding the necessary grunt to the piece.

Ennio Morricone's "The Ballad of Sacco and Vanzetti, Part 2" closed the evening, and was evidently the popular set piece for the evening. Sitting alongside the other drone-orientated works from the evening the piece seemed like a sharp about-turn in musical focus, but this diversity is part of what makes a Decibel program so engaging. The arrangement for Decibel seemed to allow the work to take on a new energy, to bring the night to an ultimately uplifting close, a white light from a dark space.





Web Search



Decibel goes to infinity and beyond

STEPHEN BEVIS, The West Australian
March 22, 2011, 1:00 pm

A new electrified wire instrument called the Infinity Machine will be the centrepiece of Perth new-music group Decibel's first of three concerts in the main gallery at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts.

Decibel, an ensemble of performers, sound artists, programmers and composers led by Cat Hope, has commissioned prominent WA sound artist Alan Lamb to create a new work for its A Voice from the Dark Space concert inspired by the dark, the quiet and the mysterious landscape.

The program includes new works by ensemble members Hope and Lindsay Vickery, Perth composers Adam Trainer and Malcolm Riddoch as well as by Cornelius Cardew, Julian Day and Ennio Morricone, whose The Ballad of Sacco and Vanzetti will feature mezzo- soprano Caitlin Cassidy and a small chorus on the balcony.

As well as Hope and Vickery, Decibel comprises Stuart James, Tristan Parr and Riddoch.

Lamb's Infinity Machine is an electrified wire instrument built into a box.

It was originally designed to "play itself" out in the elements and Lamb's early experiments with this idea took place on the porch of his home. Decibel members will be given magnets with which to play the wires.

Decibel's new CD Disintegration: Mutation (hellosquare recordings) and book Audible Designs were launched at PICA last week.

A Voice from the Dark Space is at PICA next Monday at 8pm. Bookings: pica.org.au or 9228 6300.

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opening at PICA. Decibel are a Perth new music group who present music featuring acoustics concert formats. Sounds interesting? You are correct. The first in a series of three concerts in ice From The Dark Space is all about studying the dark, quiet and mysterious landscape of music into composition, installation and sound art divisions – bringing them all together. happening next Monday, March 28, at PICA, at 8pm. Tickets are \$20 and \$15 for ica.org.au or on (08) 9228 6300. For more info on all things Decibel, head to

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NEWS

SOUNDS ON THE SWAN

The 2011 series of free, all ages Kulcha On Swan concerts have got something special in store for fans of multi-cultural music. As part of the Guildford Heritage Festival, traditional village music masters Hot Paprika will be bringing the sounds of Hungary and Transylvania to Kulcha On Swan. The group learnt from the Hungarian folk masters TaKA and even further refined their craft with a research trip to Hungry last year.

[Read more...](#)

DARK SPACE

There's always something happening at PICA. Decibel are a Perth new music group who present music featuring acoustics and electronic instruments in concert formats. Sounds interesting? You are correct. The first in a series of three concerts in the main space at PICA, A Voice From The Dark Space is all about studying the dark, quiet and mysterious landscape and challenging the diffusion of music into composition, installation and sound art divisions – bringing them all together.

[Read more...](#)

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FASHION



THE PERFECT POLISH

If your nails are looking a little worse for wear, be sure to put aside some time on Friday, March 18, to pop in to the Kit Cosmetics store at enex100 where a team of nail technicians will be giving free makeovers in the latest shades. Whether you don't have the dexterity required to perfectly polish your nails, or just don't have time to do it yourself, the folks at Kit will come to the rescue with their 10 minute paint 'n' polish promotion. Pop in to Kit from 11am to 2pm or 5pm to 7pm, choose your favourite shade and let the experts do the rest!

[Check out Autumn Fashion](#)