I'm sitting in a café in Taipei early in 2012 and across from me is a family at a table, in attendance. Well, a woman, a man and two small children. I'm sort of weirded-out by what I assume to be the father, transfixed upon his telephone, held in landscape all blurry with colour and sound, who at this moment is profoundly engaged in that flicking and tapping motion (you know the one; you do it every day). He seems to be taking life very much on his own terms. I'm wondering why the child next to him, hanging about her chair like a sad, bored orangutan hasn't stood up and left. Perhaps she's waiting for her turn.

I'm not that good at the Internet, but I still manage to survey the tides. Am I a willing participant or do these memes break around me anyway? I'm a console gaming native who after playing for 25 years can sometimes be gone for hours... days... weeks. Sometime around November 2011 I was invited to compose a piece for DECibel and it was then that I started playing Skryim.

A year later and I'm still playing Skryim and thinking more and more about myself as an organic vessel moving through time as I sit barely upright in the epiphran 'other' world of games. Still, even as an experienced gamer all this instant tech interface stuff scares the shit out of me.

In her book Alone Together Sherry Turkle writes: We discovered more about myself as an organic vessel moving through time as the network—the world of connectivity—to be uniquely suited to protection against loneliness even the network, this music creates an atmosphere designed to depict the disturbed mind of the killer known as 'Scorpion'. Featuring a mythical lead role of 'Dirty' Harry Callahan by Clint Eastwood, and directed by Don Seigel, the first iteration of Dirty Harry shocked audiences for its depiction of violence and mental disturbance on American streets.

Lalo Schifrin is an Argentinean composer, pianist and conductor. Associated largely with jazz, despite his training as a classical violinist, Schifrin has written many award winning film and TV soundtracks, including Mission Impossible, Bullitt and Enter the Dragon. He studied with Oliver Messian at the Paris Conservatoire and performed as a pianist with Astor Piazzolla and in Dizzy Gillespie's quintet. In the early 1960s he moved to Hollywood where he began his film music career where he has composed music for Cool Hand Luke, one of the most iconic projects where he carefully crafted pre-recorded sounds become a score the live musicians. Memory and its relationship to space plays an important part in Miss Fortune X, as it does in the way urban recordings inform the score for Mace Francis’s From Traffic Rises. The homage to Erik Griewold’s namesake in his work Bury the Sound takes forms beyond the aural, and even Schifrin’s sound world created for Dirty Harry may be seen as a journey to a different space, imaginatively, musically and stylistically. We are excited to feature the final of our new series of commissions for Perth songwriters as part of our program, in our collaboration with Chris Cobilis.

Welcome to the final of Decibel’s Perth concert series for 2012. This concert focuses on the way music of different musical genres respond to acoustic space. Highlighting works with jazz, indie, noise, music concrete and minimalist influences, the concert integrates the acoustics of the museum space as an important part of the works.

As always with curating Decibel concerts, what starts and what becomes can be radically different things. In this concert, we feature two French contributions represent rather different approaches to space; Muriel’s spectral memories of the European Winter is a wonderful foil to the acoustomatic constructions of Lionel Marchetti, where the carefully crafted pre-recorded sounds become a score the live musicians. Memory and its relationship to space plays an important part in Miss Fortune X, as it does in the way urban recordings inform the score for Mace Francis’s From Traffic Rises. The homage to Erik Griewold’s namesake in his work Bury the Sound takes forms beyond the aural, and even Schifrin’s sound world created for Dirty Harry may be seen as a journey to a different space, imaginatively, musically and stylistically. We are excited to feature the final of our new series of commissions for Perth songwriters as part of our program, in our collaboration with Chris Cobilis.

Thanks to you all for your support up to now, we can’t do it without you coming to our concerts! And of course... Happy Birthday Tura.

Cat Hope,
Artistic Director, Decibel.

Winter Fragments shows us snapshots of winter, static instances depicting the frozen character of snow-covered landscapes. The cracking of dead wood and the breaking up of ice give the music its fragile character. Made up of five large sections, the work features silences alternating with microtonal acoustic parts and echoing electronics that make for a chilling sound space. In this wonderful examination of spectral fabric, Murail creates a fractal yet cohesive sound world where electronics are carefully interwoven with the instruments.

Tristan Murail is a French composer who received degrees in classical and North African Arabic as well as economics before turning to composition. A student of Olivier Messiaen, he won the Prix de Rome in 1971 and spent two years at the Villa Médicina. Upon his return to Paris in 1973, he founded Ensemble Lineaire with a group of young composers and performers. The group became widely renowned for its ground-breaking explorations of the relationship between instrumental performance and many aspects of electronics. In the 80’s, Murail began using computer technology to further his research into acoustic phenomena. This led him to years of collaboration with the IRCAM, where he taught composition from 1991 to 1997 and helped develop the Patchwork composition software. Murail has also taught at numerous schools and festivals worldwide, including the Darmstadt Ferienkurse, Wadham College, Oxford, and the Centre Acanthes. He is currently professor of composition at Columbia University, New York.

2. Lindsay Vickery: Agilus, Mimoid, Symmetriad (2012)

Agilus, Mimoid, Symmetriad takes its name from three of the ‘oceanic formations’ of the sentient planet Solaris, as described by Stanislaw Lem in his 1961 novel of the same name. The work employs a scrolling score allowing for coordination of complex and continuously evolving structures. The original string quartet version of the work, premiered earlier this year, is here augmented by piano and electronic processing of the acoustic instruments.

Lindsay Vickery is active as a composer and performer across Europe, the USA and Asia. His music includes works for acoustic and electronic instruments in interactive-electronic, improvised or fully notated settings, ranging from solo pieces to opera and has been commissioned by numerous groups for concert, dance and theatre. He was a founding member of Aeta New Music Ensemble (1987/1992), Magnetic Pig (1992-2003), GRIT (2001), HEDKKRR (2002), and multimedia group SQUINT (2002). Recent Projects include guest collaboration at the International Computer Music Conference in Huddersfield, the Musico logical Society of Australasia in Dunedin and the Australasian Computer Music Conference in Canberra.


The sound of a standing on a pedestrian bridge over the Mitchell Freeway. From the persistently irregular wash of sound rises melody. Vehicles passing in each direction. The initial hum of traffic focuses into individual voices approaching and then passing. The recorded soundscape surrounds you. The vehicles become pitches, approaching and passing. The recorded soundscape morphs into an acoustic soundscape surrounding you. From traffic rises the single pitch, swirling around you, spiralling upwards and then downwards resting at your feet where you were originally standing on a pedestrian bridge over the Mitchell Freeway. The work was commissioned by Decibel with generous assistance from the Australia Council for the Arts.

Mace Francis has been establishing himself as a predominant figure and advocate for original Australian big band music since forming his 14-piece ensemble in 2005 – the Mace Francis Orchestra (MFO). MFO have recorded 5 CDs, toured nationally four times, performed with international artists Tim Pugh (USA), Jon Gordon (AUS), John Hollenbeck (NY), Satofo Fuji (JAP), Ed Partiya (BRA) and Theo Bleckmann (NED). Mace also works as lecturer in Arranging and Composition at WAAPA and as Artistic Director of the WA Youth Jazz Orchestra. Currently Mace is embarking on a three-year journey into a PhD at WAAPA exploring site-specific composition.

4. Lionel Marchetti: Première étude (les ombres) (2012)

By mixing recorded sounds broadcast by loudspeakers located amongst the musicians who faithfully imitate these same recorded sounds, Marchetti is seeking to create a source of friction or discord for the ear – a spark – which, with a fire produced by rubbing two pieces of wood together for a long period, is able to spread warmth and light. Marchetti does not use notes to compose music – this work was composed in the studio, in front of the loudspeakers, with these sounds, and numerous sonic units - which he calls shadows - destined to be reproduced by imitation through a living, spatial interpretation. An analogue tape recorder is used to produce loops which are deliberately irregular and altered – one could even say pulverized - whereas other sonic sequences have been composed using electroacoustic techniques.

This concrete approach to the production of sounds is not intended to be fixed, as is Marchetti’s usual approach, but rather conceived for performance and for a scenic interpretation, in the theoretical thoughts on Musique concrète and the art of the concrete. He has built his own recording studio, and has composed in the Groupe de Recherches Musicales in Paris since 1993. Marchetti also performs improvised music with microphones and loudspeakers as a du pont Jérôme Noetinger, as part of the group quintetAvant, and with the collective Le Cube, which performs live music and interactive film. Marchetti’s book Le Musique Concrète De Michel Chion was published by Editions Metamkine in 1998. He also writes poetry, and develops theoretical thoughts on Musique concrete and the art of the loudspeaker.

5. Erik Griswold: Miss Fortune-X (2012)

Miss Fortune-X is the name of a radio controlled model airplane my father built and flew several iterations of throughout his lifetime. The work uses segments of the base plan as a guide for the construction of the score, and in more detail, the piano part, where an elbow and roughened electret are used to alter the timbre of the instrument. The original plan, from a magazine, had been copied and resized many times over many years, creating a layer of visual noise in later copies which is also included as musical material for the work. The piece continues my explorations of drone and glissandi, and the sonic colour of radio static, which carries a new metaphorical meaning in this work. It is dedicated to Douglas Campbell Hope (1937 – 2012).

Cat Hope is a composer, sound artist, performer, songwriter and noise artist whose practice is an interdisciplinary one. Cat is a classically trained flautist, self taught vocalist and experimental bassist who plays as a soloist and as part of small ensembles, which have included Gata Negra, Lux Mammoth and Abe Sada. In 2011, she was a finalist in the WA Citizen of the Year Awards in the culture and arts category, and was awarded the Inaugural Award for Excellence in Experimental Music at the APRA AMCOS awards for her work with Decibel. She tours often and her work is published worldwide. Her double organ concerto Black Emperor was selected as a finalist for the Newcastle International Space Time Concerto competition this year where she was awarded the Peoples Choice Award.