

DESPITE OUR
SILENT ELDERS

ensemble
three
Immel Brennan Murray

Described as “an inspiring example of forward-thinking classical music culture in Australia” (CutCommon), **Ensemble Three** is a unique group seeking to establish new, cutting-edge chamber music with a special focus on presenting performances that resonate with current-day audiences. Since forming in 2013, the ensemble has curated a collection of new works distinctive for its ingenious combination of trumpet, trombone, and guitar with live and pre-recorded electronics.

Their debut album, *Midnight Songs*, received numerous favourable reviews and has been described as an “intriguingly beautiful record” (CutCommon) that “hold[s] the listener enthralled” (Soundboard). They won the 2017 Melbourne Recital Centre Contemporary Masters Award, and ABC Classic FM showcased their work at the 2017 International Rostrum of Composers.

The members of Ensemble Three are on the music performance staff at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music (University of Melbourne) and wish to thank Conservatorium director Gary McPherson for his support in the creation of this album.

Don Immel (trombone) remains active internationally as a soloist, chamber, jazz and orchestral musician. He has held posts as Principal Trombone with the Danish Philharmonic and Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, and as Associate Professor of Trombone and Jazz Studies at the University of Washington.

Joel Brennan (trumpet) enjoys a diverse career as an orchestral, chamber, and solo trumpet player, performing with orchestras and presenting recitals throughout North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. A proponent of contemporary music and chamber music, Joel has given solo and collaborative recitals around the globe and has commissioned dozens of new works.

Ken Murray (guitar) has developed a singular career as a guitarist combining performance, composition, teaching and research. He has championed and recorded Spanish music from the early twentieth century, worked extensively with contemporary composers and has been an active performer South American musical styles. He plays Altamira classical guitars.



A high-angle photograph of a small, clear stream flowing through a dense forest. The water cascades over numerous large, dark rocks that are heavily covered in bright green moss. The surrounding forest floor is thick with ferns, moss, and fallen branches, creating a rich, textured environment. The lighting is soft, highlighting the vibrant green of the moss and the clarity of the water.

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ENSEMBLE THREE

“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.”

- Albert Einstein

Music can be a powerful medium for reflecting our thoughts and feelings about nature. Each piece on this album is concerned with the natural world and humankind's place in it. It is from the first work that the album receives its title: Elliott Hughes's *Despite Our Silent Elders* follows the life cycle of an Australian eucalyptus tree. Starting as a mature giant gently dropping seeds, the new seedlings growing towards adolescence as saplings, then maturing to again drop seeds. The environment's influences on the grand old tree – climate, soil, sunlight, even bushfire – are all present in the piece.

Perhaps it is over these very trees that the sun rises in *Aubade*, a piece that evokes the gentle radiance of a crisp, autumnal morning. Harry Sdraulig interweaves expressive harmony with mellifluous melodic lines in a tender evocation of lovers at dawn.

The title of Andrew Ford's *Slow Air* refers both to the fuel used to produce sound on a brass instrument - clearly heard amongst the strong initial statements - and to a traditional tune, an approximation of which is heard from the trumpet near the conclusion of the piece. The guitar accompanies the brass in the opening and closing sections but has its own dynamic solo in the energetic central interlude.

ddig hapus (Angry Happy) is Christian O'Brien's mediation on human nature, particularly how Autism Spectrum Disorder affects how people communicate and make sense of the world. The work takes its inspiration from Applied Behavioural Analysis, particularly 'stimming' (frantic playful rhythms reflecting constantly interrupted ideas) and the difficulties inherent in the relationship between parent and autistic child.

Though Katy Abbott's *Undercurrent II* could be likened to the unseen undercurrent of a creek or river, it is also a reflection on the human psyche - the movement and shift of human emotion from which we receive the old adage "still waters run deep."

The final work on the album brings us back to the Australian outback with the sounds of ravens sampled by Jane Hammond for *Side B: Country Crow Shuffle*. While writing the piece Hammond was living in Tamworth, NSW and reflecting on the ubiquitous presence of these dark birds in both rural and city landscapes. Her soundscape for this piece also incorporates a recording of an American Crow made by Dwight R. Chamberlain on 10 July 1965 in North Sterling, New York State, United States from The Macaulay Library at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Tamworth is the capital of country music in Australia and there are echoes of country guitar style scattered throughout the work.

Elliott Hughes is a composer, performer, and improviser with a passion for creating innovative new music across contemporary classical, jazz and electroacoustic music styles. His work has been recognised with multiple prizes and has been performed in a variety of venues ranging from concert halls to New York jazz clubs, fringe festivals to conservatories. elliottthughesmusic.com

The music of **Harry Sdraulig** is characterised by a tonal but richly chromatic harmonic language, primarily concerned with exploring the limits of tonality and motivated by a desire to expand the musical and expressive possibilities of traditional tonal music. Currently Composer in Residence at Abbotsleigh, his works are frequently performed and broadcast across Australia, and have been heard in Europe, the UK, and the USA. harrysdraulig.com

A composer, writer and broadcaster whose music is often a response to literature or the visual arts, **Andrew Ford's** work sometimes draws on his experience of people and places in the New South Wales Southern Highlands. He has been the recipient of numerous awards, including a Peggy Glanville-Hicks Fellowship, Australian Art Music Awards, Paul Lowin Song Cycle Prize, and Albert H. Maggs Award. andrewford.net.au

Christian O'Brien writes music that draws inspiration from often unlikely sources: from obscure moments in Australian history to issues of mental health and disability. Texturally and harmonically subtle, rhythmically inventive, Christian's music incorporates dashes of Reich-esque minimalism and pop influences to create thoroughly approachable musical textures. cobrienmusic.net

Katy Abbott is forensically curious about what makes us tick. Her music explores our passions, fears and motivations using contemporary musical flavours in traditional musical settings. Musing on the concepts of home, place and humour, Abbott's compositions are performed, published and recorded around the world. katyabbott.com

Jane Hammond is motivated as an artist by the desire to trace connections, to create meaningful pathways and relationships between performers and the music they play, between music and the histories it is part of, and between humans and the world they live in and share with non-humans.



1)	Despite Our Silent Elders	Elliott Hughes (b. 1988)	15:49
2)	Aubade	Harry Sdraulig (b. 1992)	06:15
3)	Slow Air	Andrew Ford (b. 1957)	11:30
4)	ddig hapus	Christian O'Brien (b. 1983)	04:28
5)	Undercurrent II	Katy Abbott (b. 1971)	10:15
Side B: Country Crow Shuffle Jane Hammond (b. 1960)			
6)	I	Canon	04:01
7)	II	Crows and Ravens	06:39

Ensemble Three: Don Immel (trombone), Joel Brennan (trumpet), Ken Murray (guitar).

Tracks 1, 2, 5 recorded 25-27 June 2018 in the John Hopkins Room, Melbourne Conservatorium of Music.
 Track 3 recorded 15 December 2014 in Melba Hall. Tracks 4, 6, 7 recorded 3 December 2015 in Wyselaskie Auditorium.
 Recorded and mastered by Jim Atkins. Edited by Jim Atkins and Brandon Jones.
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