

Dream, Spill, Fear, Percussion

Music and kinetic sculpture merge in the percussion compositions of Erik Griswold.

In *Spill* a large cone-shaped pendulum swings through the space, gently spilling out 20 kilos of rice grains. The solo performer humbly offers bowls, temple bells, rice paper and other sounding materials to produce delightfully unexpected rhythms. "*Strings Attached* (1999)



for six snare drummers magnifies the small performance gestures normally associated with that instrument by means of an inventive system of attached strings that enables an audience almost literally to see the music...If the strings are brightly illuminated against a black background, the effect is not of rope, but of waves of white light that exactly mirror the sounds of the piece" (Steven Schick, *The Percussionist's Art*). In *Fear* three pulsating gongs reflecting harsh searchlights create a sense of foreboding

Brisbane's Clocked Out joins forces with Melbourne's Speak Percussion to present these groundbreaking works and other evocative music for prepared piano and percussion.

Dream, Spill, Fear, Percussion was premiered at the Incinerator in Melbourne as part of the Big West Festival, where it was recorded for ABC Classic FM. *Strings Attached* has been performed at major festivals in New York, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Chengdu and many other international venues.

"Through the intricately choreographed score of rolls and accents, the quivering ropes suggested gusts of wind or sound wave phenomena, in what became a percussion tour de force and kinetic sculpture all in one."

- Josef Woodard, Los Angeles Times

"For those brave enough to weather the [Bang on a Can Marathon] in its entirety, two of the works challenged the 'Bang on a Can' status quo, moving the festival into vital new territory...In the second of these prophetic works - Erik Griswold's



'Strings Attached' - left/right coordination is studied with the help of a large maypole, with ropes attached to the sticks of four snare drummers positioned around the pole. The ropes' vibrations, and the movements of two other snare drummers, create visual models for how waves (sonic or otherwise) are emitted and received."

- Gregg Wager, Newsday



Eclectic composer-pianist **Erik Griswold** fuses experimental, jazz and world music traditions to create works of striking originality. Specializing in percussion, prepared piano, and toy instruments, he has created a musical universe all his own that is “sincere” (neural.it), “playful” (igloo magazine), “colourful and refreshingly unpretentious” (Paris Transatlantic). Griswold performs as a soloist, in Clocked Out Duo (with percussionist Vanessa Tomlinson), and collaborates with musicians from diverse backgrounds as well as visual artists, writers, dancers and circus performers.

His compositions for percussion have been performed internationally by ensembles such as Speak Percussion (Melbourne), Ba Da Boom & Isorhythmos (Brisbane), Defying Gravity (Perth), Red Fish Blue Fish (San Diego), Los Angeles Percussion Collective, Tambuco (Mexico City), Schlagwerkensemble Derndorfer (Linz, Austria) and by many university percussion ensembles.

Startlingly fresh imagery....intelligent, intuitive and original. - The Courier Mail
An enchanting world of miniature keyboards, wit, whimsy and unexpected beauty. - The Age

Clocked Out Productions is the creative outlet of musicians Erik Griswold and Vanessa Tomlinson. Originally based in Melbourne, they moved to Brisbane in 2002. Since its inception, Clocked Out has developed and produced innovative concert series, interarts performance series, cross-cultural music and dance productions. Through their many and varied collaborations, they have sought to bring together musicians, performers and artists from diverse backgrounds. Their work has often explored the boundaries between musical styles and artistic disciplines.



Speak Percussion is Melbourne's most diverse percussion arts enterprise, its activities span a wide variety of contexts and genres ranging from regular music festival concerts to experimental hybrid-arts events. Speak Percussion presents a cross-section of

percussive arts activity engaging percussion soloists through to large ensembles. Speak Percussion has collaborated with installation artists, choreographers, dancers, instrument builders, visual artists, lighting designers, sound designers and architects. Speak has been responsible for commissioning and premiering many Australian percussion works. Speak Percussion toured many capital cities in Australia and the European continent. Speak Percussion promotes Australian artists and pushes percussive activities into extraordinary territories.

At the end, the roar from the floor lifted the roof off the primitive performance space where four young men and one woman dazzled in a display that said all things positive about contemporary entertainment for the now generation."

- The Australian

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Simple Addition (2004) 12'
For marimba, vibraphone and found objects

Ten feet to nowhere (2007) 7'
For three percussionists

In the Dream (2004) 12'
For percussion sextet

Spill (2007) In collaboration with sculptor Cameron Robbins 12'
For Solo Performer

Interval

Concerto for prepared piano and percussion (2007) 23'
For prepared piano and four percussionists
Commissioned through the generous support of Conrad Gargett Architecture, 2007.

Strings Attached (1999) 12'
For six drummers

Act 1 - 50 minutes
Interval – 20 minutes
Act 2 - 40 minutes

Performance Space Requirement:

Area: 10m W x 6m D

Rigging: To withstand hanging of 25kg

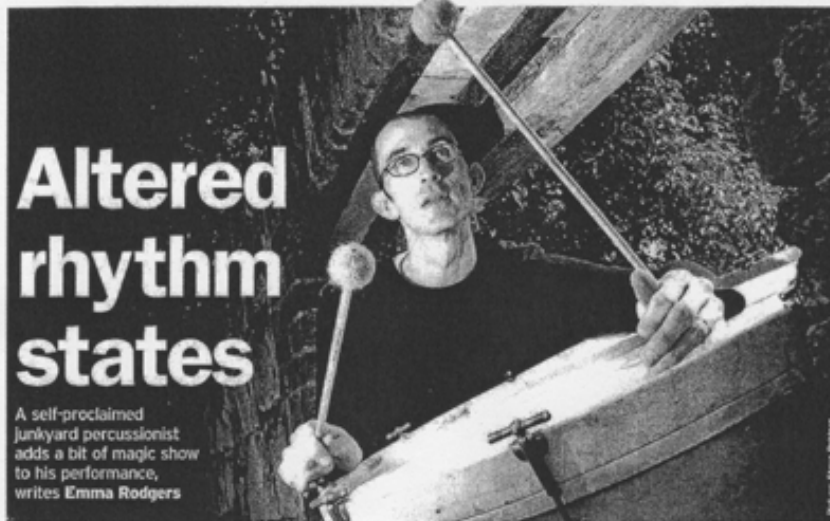
Lighting Requirements:

Sample lighting plot available on request.

Equipment Requirement:

1	Grand Piano with lid off	2	China Cymbals
1	Xylophone (at least 3.5 oct.)	4	Suspended Cymbal
1	Glockenspiel on stand	1 set	Hi-hat
1	Marimba (5 oct)	3	Gongs
1	Vibraphone	1	Gong Rack
1 set	Chimes	5	Boom Cymbal Stands
1 set	Crotale	6	Straight Cymbal Stands
4	Snare Drums on stands	6	Trap Tables
4 sets	Bongos on stands	10	Music Stands
2	Bass Drums on stands	3	Brake Drums
8	Tom Toms on stands	3	Wood Blocks
		1	Log Drum (at least 2 pitches)
		2	Rain Sticks
		5	Springs

The Courier Mail - 05 September 2006



Altered rhythm states

A self-proclaimed junkyard percussionist adds a bit of magic show to his performance, writes Emma Rodgers

You can make an unbelievable percussion set up out of your kitchen
Erik Griswold

MUSICIAN Erik Griswold does not need expensive instruments to make his music — finding melodies and rhythms in everyday objects from flower pots to hub caps to bottles and tin cans.

In the pursuit of finding new acoustic sounds the Brisbane-based composer and pianist, originally from the US, has spent the past 15 years creating percussion music which combines styles and traditions from around the world with his experimental and improvisational techniques.

Griswold's compositions use traditional orchestral instruments such as drums, vibraphones and marimbas with anything he can find in and around his house, creating what he describes as "junkyard percussion".

"With a little bit of care in choosing the instruments you can make an unbelievable percussion set up out of your kitchen," he says.

But his experimentation in creating contemporary music does not end with the use of household objects.

Since 2000 Griswold has been working on altering the sound of his piano by placing foreign objects such as screws, elastic and cardboard between its strings, turning the instrument into a mini-

percussion ensemble.

Griswold admits the technique, known as prepared piano, sometimes horrifies traditional pianists but the sound never fails to surprise audiences.

"There's a little bit of magic show aspect to it," he says. "There's a lot of little subtle details, for example if you get two screws in there next to each other you can get a really amazing sound a bit like a cymbal or a high hat."

"But it's really unpredictable. You can almost never get exactly the same sound twice."

In his latest composition Griswold has married the prepared piano with classical Indian percussion music after a meeting with musician Dheeraj Shrestha.

Shrestha, who plays the Indian hand drums known as tablas, became intrigued with the sound of prepared piano after the two met last year.

The pair have been working together for the past few months to fuse the unpredictable sounds of Griswold's altered piano with the rhythm of Shrestha's tablas.

"We have had a great time just improvising together but it's also a learning experience," he says.

"He has lots of experience of playing with people from different traditions but not doing something this experimental."

"The Indian musical tradition has very distinct structure to it. It's like trying to find a meeting place for those two cultural traditions."

The piece, *Rhythm Sutras*, will make its premiere on Thursday night as part of a retrospective concert celebrating Griswold's works.

Several of the pieces on the program have been written especially for the Queensland Conservatorium of Music ensemble, Ba Da Boom, and Griswold is excited at the prospect of being able to hear his old and new works together in one concert.

As well as *Rhythm Sutras*, Griswold will perform several pieces with his wife, Vanessa Tomlinson, also a percussionist, as part of the Clocked Out duo.

The evening's entertainment will culminate with *Strings Attached*, which Griswold describes as a unique piece of visual music.

Six percussionists play snare drums with ropes attached to the end of their playing sticks and as the sticks move so do the ropes, making the musical phrases visible to the eye.

"So you get these kinds of almost holographic shapes happening in the air floating above the ensemble," he says.

Clocked Out presents:



Current Productions: The Wide Alley
Kinetic Music
Soundings...
Clocked Out Duo

Artistic Director: Erik Griswold
Artistic Advisor: Vanessa Tomlinson
Manager: Paul Lin

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ABOUT CLOCKED OUT