

Biography

Wally Gunn, Composer



Wally Gunn grew up in Ballarat making dodgy Casiotone keyboard “albums” on cassette with his best friend. After high school, he joyfully misspent the nineties in rock bands, writing and co-writing music, recording and releasing albums independently, and touring nationally and internationally with acts such as Scarecrow Tiggy, The Mavis’s, Kirsty Stegwazi, Something For Kate and Disaster Plan.

In 2002, Wally commenced a degree in Composition at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, and completed with Honours in 2006. During this time,

he won the VCA’s Quip Quip Competition for best composition, received the John Gaitskell Memorial Mensa Award for academic excellence from the VCA, and was the recipient of the Alan C. Rose Memorial Project Grant, which afforded him the opportunity of travelling to the United States for two months to research American composer collectives and contemporary music ensembles.

Wally is a co-director of contemporary music presentation collective Dead Horse Productions, alongside fellow composers Bidy Connor and founder Kate Neal. The company presents and promotes the concert music of these and other contemporary Australian and international composers, encourages the creation of new work, and facilitates collaboration with artists from other disciplines. Dead Horse Productions produced two major events in 2007; the first, **Ground Elastic Sound**, at The Forum, and the second, **Trot, Canter, Gallop**, at Fairfax Theatre as part of The Arts Centre’s Full Tilt program. Wally’s work has been commissioned for saxophonist Michael Lichnovsky, violist Phoebe Green and percussionist Eugene Ughetti for Speak Percussion, and has been performed at Loop, The Meat Market @ North Melbourne Arts House, The Forum and The Arts Centre.

As well as working with visual artists, dancers, and filmmakers, Wally has worked extensively in the theatre. The most recent productions to feature his original composition and sound design have included: The Eleventh Hour’s 2006 production of William Shakespeare’s **The Winter’s Tale** directed by Anne Thompson (nominated for Green Room Awards); Melbourne Workers Theatre’s development of The Shrimp Company’s 2007 production of Dominic Golding’s **Shrimp** directed by Peta Hanrahan (awarded Drama Victoria’s Best Performance For Young People 2007); and The Eleventh Hour’s 2007 adaptation of William Shakespeare’s **Othello, I Am Not What I Am - Othello Retold**, again directed by Anne Thompson.

Wally provided instrumental arrangements for singer/songwriter Laura Jean’s debut album of 2006 **Our Swan Song**, featuring string, woodwind, brass and chamber orchestra arrangements, and his string orchestra arrangements are featured on Lior’s 2008 release **Corner Of An Endless Road**.

This year Wally will be creating original music and sound design for a production of Donal Kelly’s **Catalpa**, performed by Des Fleming and directed by Alice Bishop. Later, as well as devising (in collaboration with actor / director Wes Snelling) and composing a musical theatre piece for Platform Youth Theatre to be staged in July.

In September of this year, Wally will commence a Master of Music in Classical Composition at the Manhattan School of Music in New York City.

He still plays in rock bands.