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Cat Hope talks gender, sound art, and the work of Éliane Radigue

CAT WILL PREMIERE ÉLIANE'S NEW MUSIC AT CARRIAGEWORKS

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BY STEPHANIE ESLAKE

If you are looking to explore French electronic music created in the past century, the name Éliane Radigue certainly springs to mind.

The French composer is one of the most significant in her field, having created electronic soundscapes throughout the mid-20th Century and, though she is in her 86th year, she continues to inspire today.

Look to the other side of the world and you'll find Cat Hope, a 21st Century sound artist and the head of the Sir Zelman Cowan School of Music at Monash University.

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Llewellyn Hall

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Australian composer and Canberra Youth Orchestra alumna Sally Whitwell talks about having her work 'Running-Resting-Reeling' selected for the CYO's upcoming concert.

via [@cut_common buff.ly/2K9HpgS](https://cut_common.buff.ly/2K9HpgS)

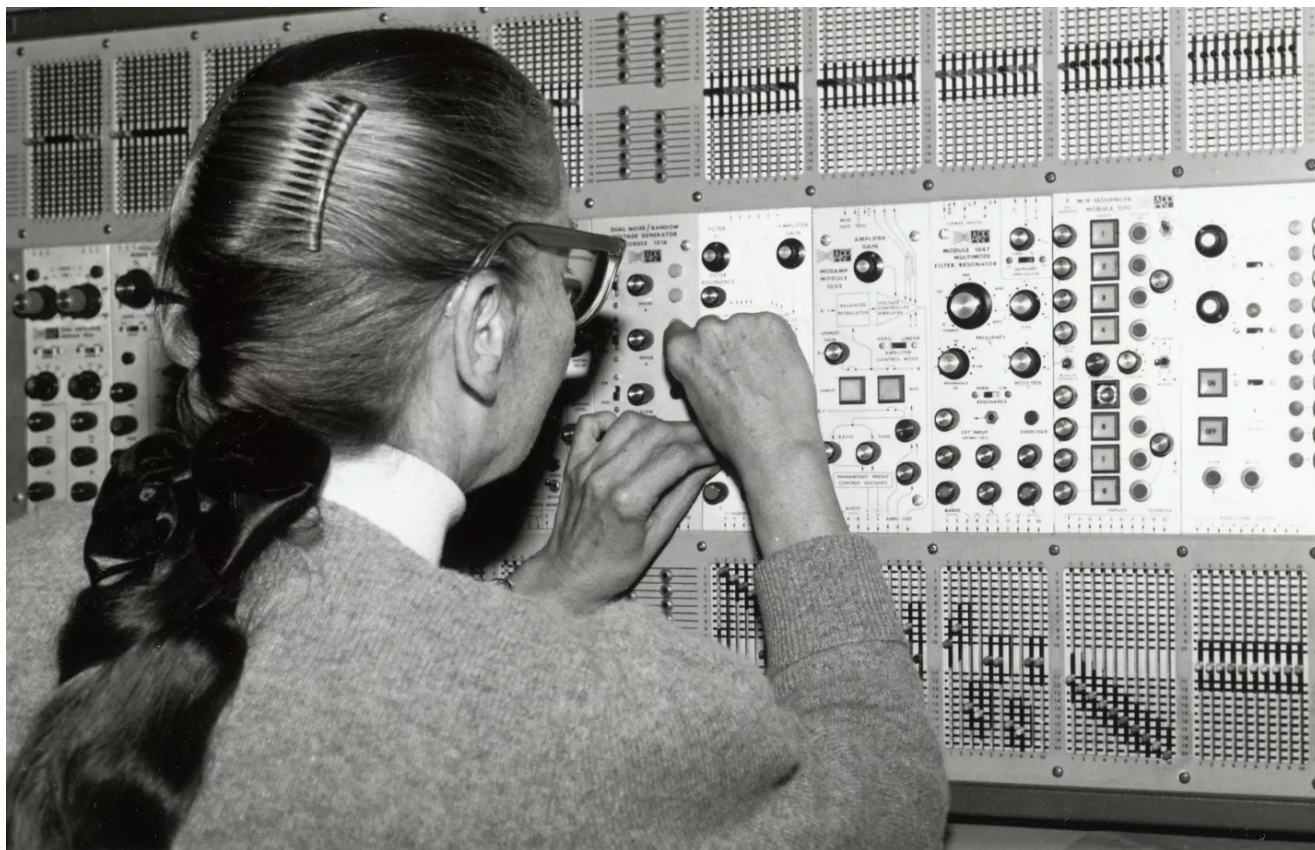


Jun 23, 2018

FACEBOOK

In an extraordinary meeting of minds, Cat travelled to Paris to work and learn with Éliane. And you'll get to hear Cat premiere this French veteran's composition *Occam Ocean 1* in a performance commissioned by Carriageworks.

Cat tells us all about it.



Éliane Radigue captured by Yves Arman.

Cat, tell us how you came to work with Eliane Radigue.



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I have long been a fan of her music, but when I heard she was writing for acoustic instruments, I wrote her a letter asking to commission a piece for my ensemble Decibel. We premiered *OCCAM HEXA II* at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, for five instruments, co-composed by Radigue and Carol Robinson; the latter who came out to Perth to develop the work in 2015.

You travelled to France to be instructed by Eliane. What was this like?

These pieces are not notated, so you learn them from the composer directly. And then, you can pass them on to others. I worked with Eliane at her home for several days on the development of *OCCAM XXIV* for bass and alto flute. This involved experiments, conversations over cups of tea, and dinners together. She also listened to recordings of my music. After that, I came away with a piece that I need to refine and build upon.

How did you find the experience of working with a veteran in electronic music composition?

Eliane's acoustic music is very special. I think it sounds electronic – not in that 'musique concrète instrumentale' kind of way, but in the way it focuses the listening of performers and audience. The detail in sound is the champion of the piece, and Eliane teaches you how to look, find, and develop that in the piece she makes for you.

I believe Eliane's time with electronic music developed an attention to the detail in sound that she now seeks – and can more readily find – in acoustic instruments. For the flute, this means finding new sound potential and breaking away from established ways of playing the instrument. If you are familiar with Eliane's electronic music, her acoustic music is even more rewarding.

Having worked intimately with Eliane, but also a leading figure in composition yourself, how would you define some of the key progressions in electronic music composition throughout Eliane's lifetime?

This is a difficult question – I think everyone has different ideas about it! Personally, the development of the electronic musician is the most exciting, ongoing development. These are musicians who create and operate electronics fluently in real-time in ensembles with any other kind of instrument. As a composer, I enjoy the challenges of writing for them. It is great to see the flexibility electronic



WHICH YOUNG ENSEMBLE WILL WIN?



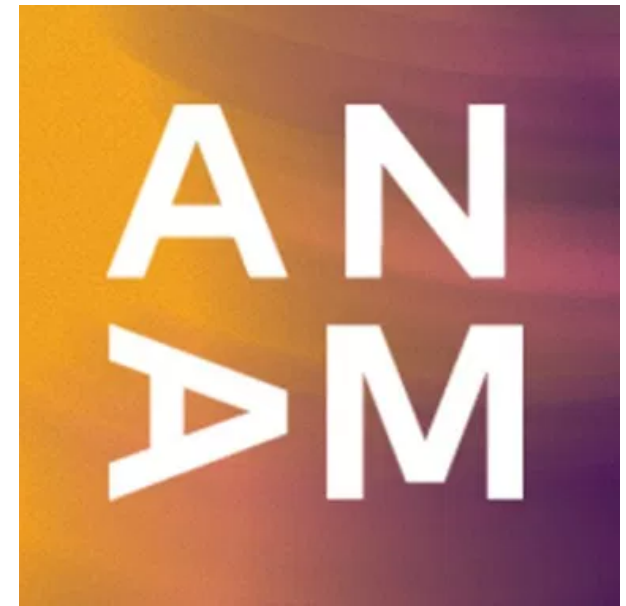
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music has brought about for all music – composing that is notated, not notated, or somewhere in between; with or without physical instruments; driven by production techniques; quick sharing of or fishing for sounds; interactivity; links to images – so many great aspects.



Éliane Radigue captured by Yves Arman.

You are an outspoken activist for gender equality in the music industry; of course, Eliane has worked as one of France's few female electronic music composers of her day. Were there any



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discussions surrounding gender roles or attitudes in electronic music when you worked with Eliane?

We talked a bit about the difficulties for her in the electronic music studio when she was an assistant to Pierre Henri in the 1960s. But we didn't talk much about issues today. In fact, I get the feeling the gender issue is felt more acutely in the Anglosphere. That's not to say there is parity in Europe and elsewhere, as the recent work in Darmstadt and *MaerzMusik* by Georgina Born and Ashley Fure highlights.

Eliane is still a practising composer now at 86 years old. Though you are an established composer, you have many years of your own working life ahead of you! What do you hope to accomplish by 86 – for yourself and for the industry?

I'm a day-at-a-time kind of person when it comes to artistic practice. It is a shame the wide recognition and visibility Eliane enjoys now couldn't have come earlier in her life. But she has lived a life full of different twists and turns.

One of the highlights of working with Eliane has been learning about her life. It is much harder for women to ever be thought of as a 'master'. In fact, the word implies a man as default.

On an aesthetic level, what will we expect from your performance of Eliane's work?

On the surface, the work may seem simple. But close listening will reward you – there is a lot of detail and delicacy in the work. It sparkles and shimmers, beats and whispers. Its unfolding and development is measured and rich. It is warm and intimate. This music is difficult to record, and is never amplified. So being at the live performance of a Radigue composition is very, very special, let alone a world premiere!

What advice would you give young female composers, emerging in the electronic music field, who might find inspiration in Eliane and your work?

Build your skills, confidence and humility in parallel. Be brave and take risks. Keep practising your skills. Be out there talking to people. Make your work visible. This combination will enable you to find

Comfortable to play in.

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING IN TASSIE



and engage in opportunities, whilst understanding that we are always, forever, learning.



Eliane today, captured by Vincent Pontet.

See Éliane Radigue's *Occam XXIV* performed by Cat Hope (world premiere) at 8pm June 28 for Carriageworks. More information and the full program [on the website](#).

Shout the writer a coffee?

Did you enjoy the read? We volunteer our time here at CutCommon. Shout Stephanie a coffee – or even treat her to a fancy meal. It's completely up to you.



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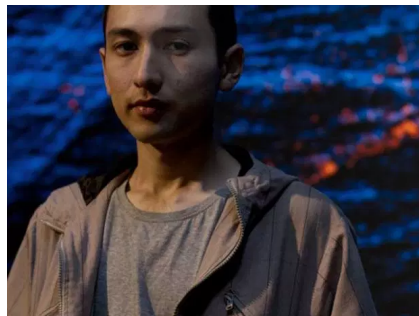
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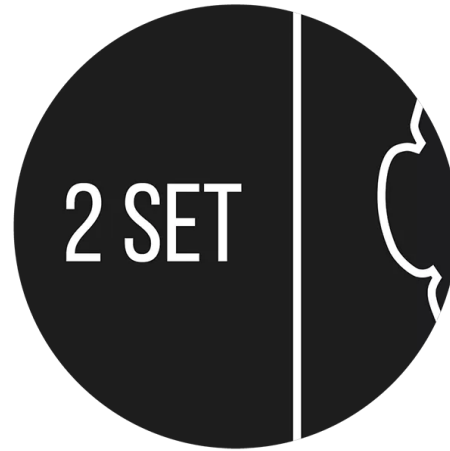
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