

# DISRUPTION! THE VOICE OF DRUMS

Jeremy Rose & The Earshift Orchestra,  
featuring Simon Barker & Chloe Kim



Earshift Music

I have always been fascinated by the power of drums. Drums can create ecstatic states of mind and alter our brain waves. Drums have been used in ancient rituals, religious ceremonies and to instil discipline in the military. More recently, drums have been the *élan vital* of music whose purpose is to disrupt, featured in protest songs across the world from Hong Kong, to Russia and the United States.

Sydney is also home to arguably one of the world's greatest drummers, Simon Barker. Versed in jazz, Simon has spent 20 years investigating traditional shaman drum music from South Korea. He is a leading expert on the Koreanisation of the Western Drumset, and is recognised world-wide for his collaborations with Pan Sori singer Bae Il Dong and trumpeter Scott Tinkler. Simon has developed ways of playing things on the drums that are technically impossible for ordinary drummers, so much so that he has had to warn drummers of trying his techniques for fear of injuring themselves!

Korean-born Chloe Kim, is Simon's protégé and the first to embrace his ideas whilst creating her own distinctive voice. At only 24 years old, she shows great energy in performance and her various projects. The reciprocal nature of their relationship is unique to them - Simon's reimagining of Chloe's musical heritage through Western ears, whilst Chloe is finding a musical path of discovery of rock, hip-hop and jazz through her Korean-informed approach.

In searching for material to draw upon for a possible collaboration between the three of us, I turned to their respective solo drum music to arrange music for; Chloe's *Right Turn*, and Simon's *Urgency! (Vol.1 & Vol. 2)*, *On Running, 1 & 2*, amongst others. This body of work highlights their respective musical backgrounds whilst demonstrating a quest to create new languages to themselves. In particular, Simon's use of dense, fast rhythms and rhythmic variants

(‘entangling’) posed exciting compositional opportunities. *Disruption!* was therefore begging to be created.

The challenge of composing music for solo drums was that harmony and melody typically dictated the direction of the music and how I wrote for the ensemble. For *Disruption!*, drum parts became the foreground, with the other instruments moving in and out of focus. Harmony and chords often had the reverse effect of diminishing rather than adding to the music. I navigated this by creating layers of sound that need not lock in with the drums. These layers served to enhance and provide space for Simon and Chloe's performances.

The music of *Disruption!*, along with powerful images by video artist duo Peachy Mosig, provides a soundtrack to the year that's been – 2020. This has been one of the most disruptive years in history. With bush fires, global pandemic, civil unrest and a growing ecological disaster, 2020 was a historic year. Whilst challenging us all, we hope this work offers an opportunity to reflect.

- **Jeremy Rose**  
Artistic Director, Earshift Music  
Composer, Saxophonist

*Chant 12 for Pacific Islands* (Barker/Rose)

*Wave Sad Weave Slow* (Kim/Rose)

*The Trace* (Kim/Rose)

*Appear To Be* (Kim/Rose)

*Here Again* (Kim/Rose)

*Hold Tight* (Rose)

*Road to Body* (Barker/Rose)

*Mirage Returns* (Barker/Rose)

*O,Yeok,Chil-Chae* (traditional)

*Currents and Tides* (Barker/Rose)

## Jeremy Rose

Artistic Director,

Composer, Saxophone

## Simon Barker

Composer, Drumming Soloist

## Chloe Kim

Composer, Drumming Soloist

## Ben Carey

Modular Synthesizer

## Jacques Emery

Bass

## Hilary Geddes

Guitar

## Novak Manojlovic

Piano/Keyboards

## Thomas Avgenicos

Trumpet

## Paul Mosig & Rachel

## Peachey

Video Artist

## Duration

60 minutes

## Acknowledgements

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts and Sydney Improvised Music Association.

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## ABOUT THE WORK

My four drumming pieces in *Disruption!* have their origins in a project I began in 2015. The idea was to develop drumming vocabulary from scratch, and that primary questions associated with aesthetics, rhythmic organisation, and patterning forms, would be answered through a dialogue with long distance barefoot running, a practice that I've been deeply committed to since 2012. Initially, the project led to several rhythmic areas which I employed to generate a series of drum chants in solidarity with communities in the Pacific facing upheaval due to climate change.

*Chant 12 for Pacific Islands and Currents and Tides* originated in a solo drum work created in solidarity with Kiribati and the Marshall Islands. This was the first work to employ an original rhythm/sticking vocabulary that I call "coiling", the coils being dense layered collections rhythmic patterning. *Chant 12 for Pacific Islands* expands on an initial set of rhythmic shapes and adds a form of rhythmic morphology that allows them to be reimaged for this context.

*Road to Body* is an expansion on coil forms which emerged during a period of long distance running in the mountains near Mino, Japan. The idea for this piece was to try and generate a series of rhythmic forms that connected to physical experiences associated with bare feet touching unique patches of road. In this case, each step is like a handful of sand featuring unique contours, textures, and amounts of information transmitted from the road to the body. The rhythmic forms appearing in *Road to Body* were created as "chunks" of rhythmic material that differ in amount from momentary event to event.

*Mirage Returns* is a layered rhythmic structure that was created in response to the sometimes overwhelming

experience of information received by the feet during long barefoot runs. I've had many experiences, especially on rough roads, where the forward view is blurred due to the amount of information from ground to foot. Also, I'm very interested in the experience of time being stretched or contracted during long hill runs where any sense of how much time has passed is obscured. These two experiences are central to running for me, and *Mirage Returns* is an attempt to create music in response to these feelings.

As a drummer who spent the first 20 years of my career performing in a range of ensemble contexts, the idea of creating solo drumming music did not come naturally. For me, it took many years of mentorships in body motion and its relationship to rhythm, as well as learning (from numerous teachers) organisational systems and aesthetic principles of drumming, to begin to see how I could express within a solo drum set context.

Throughout the past five years, it's been a huge pleasure to witness Chloe Kim's development into one of Australia's most extraordinary young drummers, and to hear her incredibly clear vision for self-expression within a solo drumming context.

For me, solo drumming offers the chance to explore body motion, energy, physicality, rhythmic melody, and rhythmic illusion as the primary foregrounded aesthetic. It's a very different space to pitch and harmony focused music, and allows for alternative forms of musical expression. Many thanks to Jeremy Rose for his invitation to participate in this project, and for his vision for how this solo drum set music could be employed as the scaffold for a large-scale ensemble work.

- **Simon Barker**  
Drumming soloist, composer

Since moving to Australia in 2012, I have been involved with a variety of jazz and improvised music communities. This has been one of the biggest blessings in my life. Learning about the music of my Korean homeland in a new world from a great teacher such as Simon Barker has strengthened my appreciation of my heritage. It has also provided a sense of freedom and self-discovery, as I found pathways through confusing thoughts on identity and personal growth.

I am thrilled that the outcome of this process - my first solo drum album *Right Turn* (2019) - was part of the impetus for *Disruption!* I am grateful for Jeremy's vision and commitment in bringing this project to life. I also respect and value all the Earshift Orchestra members' friendship and musicianship - thank you to you all.

*Wave Sad Weave Slow* focuses on an expression of my sonic explorations on drum kit. Each sound has a special relationship with a variety of detailed timbre and textures.

*The Trace* involves an up-tempo energetic groove. It emphasises the drum kit's ability to produce melodic concepts like any other melodic/harmonic-focused instrument.

The drumming in *Appear To Be* is inspired by a small green bird which flew past me whilst practicing outdoors. Although scared of birds, I was moved by its speed, which created interesting sounds from the wing movements.

*Here Again* features my expressive approach to 'Tasrum', a traditional Korean rhythmic cycle.

- **Chloe Kim**  
Drumming soloist, composer

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Saxophonist-composer **Jeremy Rose's** career spans a dozen releases of original music with collaborative and solo projects across the world including The Earshift Orchestra, Jeremy Rose Quartet and The Vampires. His project *Iron in the Blood* was a critic's pick of the 2020 Sydney Festival. Rose is director of the Earshift Music record label and has performed at festivals venues and concert halls throughout Australia, Europe and the UK. Rose has been described as "one of the most creative and restless musicians in the Australian jazz scene" (Australianjazz.net) "a brilliant jazz composer and instrumentalist a young man with a social purpose" (The Australian) and "a bold emerging Aussie voice" (Limelight Magazine). [www.jeremyrose.com.au](http://www.jeremyrose.com.au)

**Simon Barker** is one of the world's most creative improvising drummers. With a background in jazz, Barker has created a unique voice through his 20-year exploration of Korean traditional music. He has performed throughout the world including the Lincoln Centre in New York and was the feature subject in the documentary 'Intangible Asset 82.' [www.simonbarker.com.au](http://www.simonbarker.com.au)

Korean born **Chloe Kim** is an outstanding talent on the brink of her career with a fresh voice to her music fusing experimental rock, jazz and other styles. Described by AAO's Peter Knight as "at the centre of a fascinating movement of cross-cultural jazz" and SMH as "the first percussionist to draw on the innovations of Australia's master-drummer Simon Barker," Kim has become one to watch. [www.chloekimdrums.com](http://www.chloekimdrums.com)

Described as "a new generation of creative talent" (Paul Grabowsky), **The Earshift Orchestra** highlights the diversity and forward-thinking practice of today's jazz artists. Founded in 2009 by Jeremy Rose, Earshift Music is a Sydney based jazz record label reflecting the next generation of jazz talent with a global reach. Described by NYC Records as "hell bent on pushing the very definition of jazz," Earshift Music not only promotes new music but develops creative strategies for musicians in a rapidly evolving music industry. [www.earshift.com](http://www.earshift.com)