

CHAMBER  
MADE  
OPERA

---

# Annual Report 2016

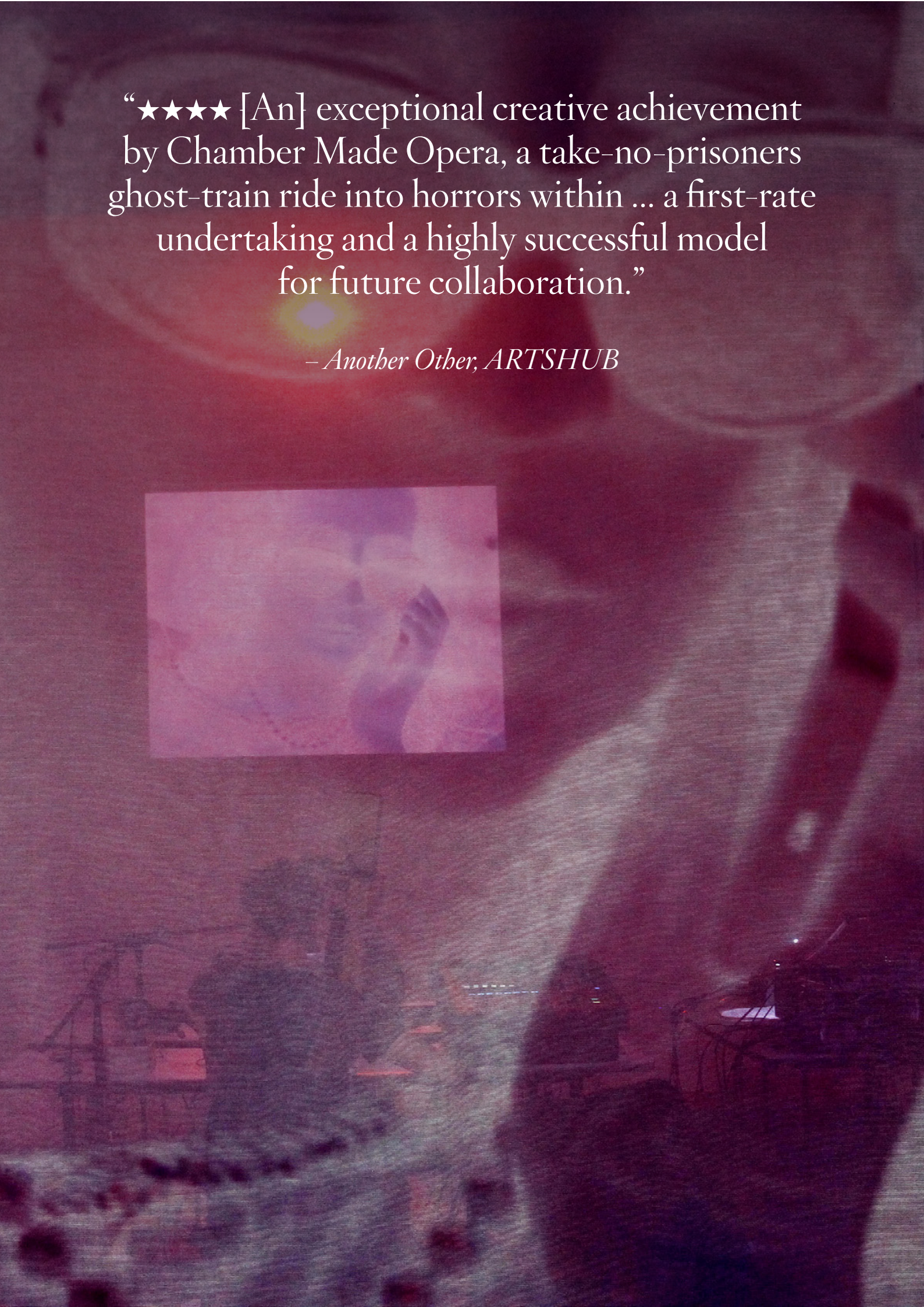
---





“★★★★ [An] exceptional creative achievement by Chamber Made Opera, a take-no-prisoners ghost-train ride into horrors within ... a first-rate undertaking and a highly successful model for future collaboration.”

– *Another Other, ARTSHUB*





# Contents

Message from the Chair

*page 4*

Vision & Artistic Statement

*page 5*

Creative Director's Report 2016

*pages 6-7*

Personnel

*page 8*

The Year at a Glance

*page 9*

Works 2016

*pages 10-16*

Research & Development 2016

*pages 17-22*

Relationships 2016

*pages 23-31*



# Message from the Chair

*Michael Bink*

## *“At the centre of something new”*

This continues to define the work of Chamber Made Opera. The artistic output of the company evolved significantly in 2016, thanks to the rich dialogue between Creative Director Tim Stitz and Artistic Associates Sarah Kriegler, Tamara Saulwick, Christie Stott and Erkki Veltheim. Our company may be in its 28th year, but this group of talented artists has ensured the company is as vital and relevant as ever. This was nowhere more evident than in the performances of *Another Other* at the Meat Market and the world premiere of *Permission to Speak*. Combined with the culmination of our Agile Opera research collaboration with RMIT’s SIAL studios in the end-of-year Agile Chambers presentation, these two remarkable works staked out the new territory occupied by the company.

In 2016 we undertook a deep strategic analysis leading to a new Strategic Plan. During this process we articulated the space that Chamber Made Opera occupies: that “centre of something new” which is the meeting point of Performance, Music and Visual Design, with the human voice holding these together. It is a powerful place: a crucible of artistic forces that I am sure will continue to surprise and delight our audience for years to come.

Thank you to Creative Victoria: Chamber Made Opera continues to be the dynamic, challenging organisation it is because of their informed,

genuine support for over 20 years. Together with the City of Melbourne, their funding underpins our core operations. Brian Eno recently said, “new [artistic] ideas are articulated by individuals, but generated by communities”. This is absolutely the case with Chamber Made Opera. In addition to our core funding and significant project funding from the Australia Council for the Arts and other federal government agencies, it has been the support of generous individuals and philanthropic organisations that makes our art making possible. We are deeply grateful to each and every one of them for their willingness to invest in the company. Similarly, our artistic team could not succeed without the highly skilled support of the broader staff team: Imbi Neeme, Emilie Collyer and Sally Goldner.

As always, I would like to acknowledge the ongoing great work of my fellow Board members: Greer Evans, Kylie Trounson, Erin Milne, Dave Maney and Michael Roper. In particular, I would like to thank retiring member, Fiona Sweet, who brought her incredible knowledge of communications, design and marketing into the company at a pivotal time. We wish her well in her new role as Creative Director of the Ballarat International Foto Biennale. Fortunately, we have found a highly qualified replacement in Rod Macneil, Head, Communication and Partnerships at Museum Victoria. This ensures we continue to maintain a strong mix of skills and experiences within the Board.



*Work that reflects the complicated times  
in which we live, providing new ways of  
speaking, listening and interpreting.*

## **Vision**

Chamber Made Opera will be a leader in interdisciplinary arts creation, presentation and investigation; supporting artists to be rigorous, adventurous and artistically ambitious and inviting audiences to embrace the new and unknown.

## **Mission**

Chamber Made Opera is the only Australian arts company wholly dedicated to creating original works located at the nexus of music and performance. The company is renowned for redefining artform boundaries and producing works that emerge from a deep collaborative dialogue across artform disciplines. Bringing contemporary composition and performance dramaturgy together into conversation, we create intimate works that grapple with the resonant themes of our times.

## **Artistic Statement**

Over the years Chamber Made Opera has carved out a unique space for artists and audiences who are hungry to interrogate the status quo and step into the unfamiliar. Reshaping the edges that define artform boundaries, we collaborate with outstanding artists to create works that examine and express aspects of contemporary experience. In an increasingly black and white world, we advocate for and celebrate the many and varied shades of complexity.

At Chamber Made Opera, we are risk-takers and artform-shapers. The company offers a provocation for musicians, composers, sound artists, theatre directors and performance-makers who wish to explore beyond the borders of their artform and, through collaboration, to deepen and re-imagine the possibilities of their practice. Our artistic output manifests in ever-shifting forms and has been presented in theatres, recital halls, lounge-rooms, galleries, as well as on large screens, tablets and online.

In addition to creating new works, Chamber Made Opera is dedicated to making an enduring contribution to the broader Australian performing arts landscape. We create a locale for engagement, research, collaboration and innovation in cross-artform practice.

Our program is structured with a view to working with both emerging and established artists, fostering genuine artform R&D, integrating new technologies into our artistic output and distribution, and continued cross-cultural and artistic exchange through artist-to-artist projects. We create professional development pathways for mentees, engage with performing arts students and community youth, and participate in rigorous academic research and exchange. We foster an ongoing dialogue with our audiences and the general public through the open access stream of our program. All of these activities, which occur in parallel to the making and producing of new works, sow the seeds for a deeper and more nuanced engagement with contemporary performance practice, both within and beyond the company.





# Creative Director's Report 2016

*Tim Stitz*

Our year in 2016 was packed full of events and activities, book-ended by two particularly busy periods.

In February we hit the new year running with the premiere of *Another Other* at the Meat Market, a production which attracted lively and robust responses from audiences, critics and artists. This multi-media work, based on a radical re-reading of Ingmar Bergmann's *Persona* fused experimental opera, expanded cinema, sound art and installation to investigate the nature of identity. The Salon associated with this work was a fascinating discussion between artist Erkki Veltheim and sound artist Byron Scullin around the creation of the sound design and spatialisation for this work, along with some insights about the human experience of sound and live performance from Dr Greg Hooper.

Our Little Operations in March, *The Embassy of Flowers*, was an exploration created and performed by Margaret Meran Trail,

Carolyn Connors, Chris Lewis and guests at the Conservatory, Fitzroy Gardens.

CMO continued its collaboration with the Sichuan Conservatory of Music, further developing our new work *Between 8 & 9* via intensive development periods with Australian artists and a short rehearsal and development period in Chengdu. This work has a confirmed world premiere as part of the inaugural Asia Pacific Triennial of Performing Arts (AsiaTOPA) with seasons at Melbourne Recital Centre and the Phee Broadway Theatre, Castlemaine as part of Castlemaine State Festival, in March 2017.

Artists from *Between 8 & 9* were invited to perform at the Sichuan Victoria Sister State Banquet in Chengdu. As part of a significant Victorian delegation I also attended this dinner along with two Australian artists, who were joined by three Chinese artists for the performance.

“... we at Chamber Made Opera believe that the operatic form is still very much a work in progress; an open-ended genre that invites collaboration between new and existing artforms ...”

– *Tim Stitz, ARTSHUB*

In other national and international events, Artistic Associate Tamara Saulwick and I both attended the Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM) in February, in particular to pitch the work *Permission to Speak* to national and international producers and presenters. Together with lead artist Madeleine Flynn I also presented at the International Society of Performing Arts (ISPA) conference in June, as it was held in Melbourne (ISPA takes place annually in New York and in a different satellite city each year). This presentation was to pitch *Between 8 & 9* to national and international producers and presenters. Also in June, our Communications Coordinator Emilie and Program Coordinator Imbi attended the Australia Council for the Arts Marketing Summit in Adelaide.

In September, a newly imagined, hybrid version of CMO work *Turbulence* was presented as part of the Lorne Festival of Performing Arts. This brought the film version of the work together with live performance elements.

November saw the world premiere of *Permission to Speak*, co-presented by CMO and Arts House. This new work by Tamara Saulwick and Kate Neal paired contemporary performance with musical composition to construct a revealing portrait of various parent and child relationships as they exist and evolve through a lifetime. Audiences responded with great warmth to this work, the delicacy and emotive potency

of it as well as the sophisticated composition and stunning performances from the four incredible vocalists. We hosted a Salon to accompany this season, an enlightening conversation with Tamara and Kate about the inception, development and evolution of the work.

Our final public presentation for this year was part of our three year Australian Research Council (ARC) project. We presented *Agile Chambers*, a week of open research labs and performances at RMIT Design Hub. Artists from CMO and researchers from RMIT University who are investigating the relationship between live performance and digital artworks presented performances, research panel discussions and keynote presentations as part of this project.

Once a year is hardly often enough to mark our deep appreciation to all of our audiences, partners, artists, advocates and donors. 2016 was a tough year on some fronts for arts organisations and indeed, world events rocked many of our foundations. To have the support and continuing conversation with so many passionate and dedicated arts lovers is endlessly uplifting and deeply necessary in such times. We appreciate it every day. In particular the dedication, commitment and hard work of our Committee of Management and the unfailing generosity and whole hearted support of our donors via our Navigator program.

# Personnel

## STAFF

Tim Stitz  
*creative director / ceo*

Sarah Kriegler  
*artistic associate*

Tamara Saulwick  
*artistic associate*

Christie Stott  
*artistic associate*

Erkki Veltheim  
*artistic associate*

Imbi Neeme  
*program coordinator*

Emilie Collyer  
*communications  
coordinator*

Sally Goldner  
*finance officer*

Liam Bellman-Sharpe  
*intern*

## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Michael Bink  
*chair*

Greer Evans  
*treasurer*

Kylie Trounson  
*secretary*

David Maney

Erin Milne

Michael Roper

Rod Macneil (joined  
November 2016)

## ARTISTIC COLLABORATORS 2016

Esther Anatolitis  
*arts leader*

Natasha Anderson  
*creator/performer*

Jim Atkins  
*sound designer &  
operator*

Anneli Bjorasen  
*performer*

Danni von der Borch  
*community artist*

Jeff Busby  
*photographer*

Pier Carthew  
*photographer*

Kellie-Jayne  
Chambers  
*production manager*

Marco Cher-Gibard  
*technical supervisor*

Emilie Collyer  
*dramaturg & text  
consultant*

Carolyn Connors  
*vocalist*

Georgie Darvidis  
*vocalist*

Edward Fairlie  
*vocalist*

Madeleine Flynn  
*sound artist*

David Forrest  
*academic*

Nicholas Gruen  
*economist*

Guo Si-Cen  
*musician*

Lawrence Harvey  
*academic*

Jenny Hector  
*lighting designer*

Felix Ching Ching Ho  
*dramaturg*

Juliana Hodgkinson  
*composer*

Greg Hooper  
*neuroscientist, media  
artist & mircolab  
participant*

Marg Horwell  
*costume designer*

Edward Hubber  
*research assistant*

Peter Humble  
*film-maker*

Tim Humphrey  
*sound artist*

Dave Jones  
*animator*

Kang Yan-Long  
*vocalist*

Deborah Kayser  
*vocalist & ukulele  
player*

Kofi Kumpke  
*percussionist*

Sarah Kriegler  
*writer/director*

Joshua Kyle  
*vocalist*

Chris Lewis  
*performer*

Simon Maisch  
*audio technician*

Sam McGilp  
*PhD candidate  
Agile Opera project*

Alexia Maddox  
*digital sociologist &  
mircolab participant*

Sabina Maselli  
*creator/performer*

Greg More  
*academic*

Kate Neal  
*composer*

Tracey Nguyen  
*research assistant*

Daisy Noyes  
*photographer*

Steph O'Hara  
*sound engineer/operator*

Cobie Orger  
*videographer*

Anthony Pateras  
*creator/performer*

Tamara Saulwick  
*performance maker &  
dramaturg*

Matthias Schack-  
Arnott  
*percussionist*

Byron Scullin  
*production manager/  
audio*

Professor Gan  
Shao-Cheng  
*associate producer &  
project liaison*

Bosco Shaw  
*lighting designer*

Gian Slater  
*vocalist*

Tim Stitz  
*creative producer*

Christie Stott  
*digital artist*

Adrian Tien  
*academic advisor &  
text consultant*

Cynthia Troup  
*librettist*

Margaret Trail  
*academic &  
theatre artist*

Anna Tregloan  
*designer*

Erkki Velthiem  
*musician/composer*

Jacob Williams  
*puppeteer*

Mark Williams  
*lawyer*

Nick Wollan  
*production manager*

Ari Woodcroft  
*audio technician  
assistant*

Jethro Woodward  
*sound designer*

David Young  
*composer*

Wang Shuai  
*percussionist*

Wang Zheng-Ting  
*master Sheng player  
& associate producer/  
project liaison*

Zhu Hui-Qian  
*vocalist*

The children of  
The Venny  
*performers*



# The Year at a Glance

## JANUARY

*Another Other*, pre-production & rehearsals

## FEBRUARY

*Another Other*, performance season, Meat Market, Melbourne

Tim and Tamara attend APAM, pitch  
*Permission to Speak*, Brisbane

## MARCH

*Little Operation* with Margaret Meran Trail, Fitzroy Gardens Conservatory

## APRIL

Salon: *Another Other*, RMIT Design Hub, Melbourne

*Agile Opera* Microlab, RMIT Design Hub, Melbourne

## MAY

Tim attends ISPA, pitches *Between 8 and 9* (*Chengdu Teahouse Project*), Melbourne

## JUNE

*Agile Chambers*, workshop residency, RMIT Design Hub, Melbourne

Imbi and Emilie attend Australia Council for the Arts Marketing Summit, Adelaide

## JULY

*Between 8 and 9* (*Chengdu Teahouse Project*), creative development, Melbourne

## AUGUST

*Permission to Speak*, creative development, Melbourne

Weekly workshops at The Venny

## SEPTEMBER

Tim presents at Creative Partnerships Australia Conversations in Funding Event, Melbourne and Hobart

Tim and artists from *Between 8 & 9* (*Chengdu Teahouse Project*) visit Sichuan and perform at Sichuan Victoria Sister State Banquet, China  
Dinner and concert at The Venny  
Communal Backyard

## OCTOBER

Tim attends China Shanghai International Arts Festival and Performing Arts Fair (ChinaSPAF) 2016, China

## NOVEMBER

Salon: *Permission to Speak*, Arts House, Melbourne

*Permission to Speak*, world premiere season, Arts House, Melbourne

## DECEMBER

*Agile Chambers*, open research lab in partnership with SIAL, RMIT Design Hub, Melbourne

*Agile Opera* Microlab, RMIT Design Hub, Melbourne

End of year function for Navigators, Supporters and Artists, RMIT Design Hub, Melbourne

---

# Works 2016

---







# Another Other

*Experimental Opera. Expanded Cinema.*

## Premiere Season

18 – 21 February 2016

*Another Other* was originally commissioned by Chamber Made Opera with the support of the Australia Council for the Arts, Creative Victoria, Sue Kirkham and Charles Davidson.

This project was assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

## Artistic Credits

Created and performed by

Erkki Veltheim  
*Creator & Performer*

Sabina Maselli  
*Creator & Performer*

Natasha Anderson  
*Creator & Performer*

Anthony Pateras  
*Creator & Performer*

Jude Anderson  
*Dramaturgical Assistance*

Byron Scullin  
*Production Management & Audio*

Jenny Hector  
*Lighting Design*

Marco Cher-Gibard  
*Technical Supervision*

*Another Other* was a 79 minute multimedia performance created by four of Australia's leading experimental artists.

Investigating the nature of identity, authenticity of self and the roles we play, the work created an immersive and multi-sensory experience for audiences that mirrors these concerns.

Through moments of darkness, silence and sensory overload the audience was invited to move between speculative self-reflection and losing themselves in the ecstatic saturation of contemporary media society.

Fusing experimental opera, expanded cinema, sound art and installation, *Another Other* was based on a radical re-reading of Ingmar Bergman's film *Persona* (which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2016).

*Another Other* was a work that shook the illusion of the self. An unsettling, darkly comical and visceral live performance work.

“★★★★ [An] exceptional creative achievement by Chamber Made Opera, a take-no-prisoners ghost-train ride into horrors within ... a first-rate undertaking and a highly successful model for future collaboration.”

– ARTSHUB

“★★★★ An absorbing, thoughtful, and crisply performed fantasia on the film's aural and visual textures ... the sensuousness of the experience is what is most valuable.”

– THE AGE



“ ... a level of sophistication at work in the realisation of the projections and sound design which is particularly virtuosic.”

- *LIMELIGHT*



# Permission to Speak

*What will we say?*

## World Premiere

23 – 27 November 2016

*Permission to Speak* was presented by Chamber Made Opera and Arts House.

*Permission to Speak* was commissioned by Chamber Made Opera with support from Helen & Peter Murdoch and Sue Kirkham. The project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. *Permission to Speak* has also been supported by the City of Melbourne through Arts House and by the Australian Research Council and SIAL Sound Studios through the Agile Opera Project.

## Artistic Credits

Tamara Saulwick  
*Concept, Direction, Text & Libretto*

Kate Neal  
*Composition, Libretto, Instrument Design*

Georgie Darvidis, Edward Fairlie,  
Josh Kyle, Gian Slater  
*Vocalists*

Jethro Woodward  
*Sound Design*

Bosco Shaw  
*Lighting Design, Prop Design & Construction*

Marg Horwell  
*Costume Design*

What do we want to say to the people who brought us into this world? What do we want to say to those whom we leave behind?

Delicately poised between concert and theatre, *Permission to Speak* explored the dynamic relationship of parent and child as it exists and evolves through a lifetime. Marking the first collaboration between director Tamara Saulwick and composer Kate Neal the work paired contemporary performance with musical composition to construct a revealing portrait of what is often left unspoken.


Built from interviews with people of all ages, *Permission to Speak* interwove the complexities, parallels and paradoxes of this most universal of relationships – manifested through the speaking, sounding, singing human voice.

“★★★★ *Permission to Speak* not only allows us to understand and empathise with other memories it allows us come to terms with and acknowledge our own childhood.”

– ARTS HUB

“★★★★1/2 *The interweaving harmonies composed by Kate Neal are so beautiful, so delicate, that it feels like such a privilege to witness the creation of this sound on stage ... Performed with a stylised simplicity that in no way diminishes complexity, this piece is a soft joy, a catharsis, an honest act of connecting.*”

– THEATRE PEOPLE

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black dress, is shown in profile, focused on a task. She is holding a thin, sharp object, possibly a knife or a tool, which is balanced on the rim of a clear, faceted glass. The background is dark, and another person is visible in the background, also working with a similar setup. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the woman's concentration and the delicate balance of the objects.

*“Permission to Speak [is] remarkable ...  
What Director, Tamara Saulwick, and her cast  
and crew have made is a piece built on ferocious  
discipline, yet still manages to feel fresh ...  
Sonic high-wire artists without a net,  
they caught each other every time.”*

*– AUSTRALIAN ARTS REVIEW*





# Between 8 and 9 (Chengdu Teahouse Project)

*A convening of voices, electronics, instruments and audience.*

## **Creative Development / Project Development** 18 – 22 July 2016 (Melbourne) 20 – 25 September 2016 (Chengdu)

This project has been made possible with support from the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body, the Ministry for the Arts' Catalyst – Australian Arts and Culture Fund, the Australia China-Council of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Cultural Diplomacy Grants Program.

Significant development support has been provided by Sichuan Conservatory of Music. The creative development of this project was supported by Darebin Arts, City of Darebin. Preliminary planning for this collaboration was enabled with support from the Playking Foundation.

This project is supported by the Sidney Myer Fund and by Arts Centre Melbourne through Creative Victoria for Asia TOPA. Asia TOPA is a joint initiative of the Sidney Myer Fund and Arts Centre Melbourne and is supported by the Australian and Victorian Governments.

### **Artistic Credits**

**Created by all artists involved in a collaborative process led by Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphrey.**

**Collaborating performing artists:** Carolyn Connors (vocalist/accordion/winds); Madeleine Flynn (pedal organ/toy piano/vintage electronics); Guo Si-Cen (erhu); Tim Humphrey (brass/electronics); Kang Yan-Long (vocalist); Wang Shuai (percussion); Wang Zheng-Ting (sheng/winds); and Zhu Hui-Qian (vocalist)

**Collaborating artists:** Jim Atkins (acoustic facilitation); Felix Ching Ching Ho (dramaturgy); Ben 'Bosco' Shaw (lighting); and Anna Tregloan (installation and costume)

**Production collaborators:** Emilie Collyer (text consultation); Professor Gan Shao-Cheng (Chengdu project liaison); Tim Stitz (creative producer); Adrian Tien (academic consultation); and Dr Wang Zheng-Ting (Melbourne project liaison)

*Between 8 & 9 (Chengdu Teahouse Project)*, a Chamber Made Opera work in partnership with Sichuan Conservatory of Music. Co-presented by Castlemaine State Festival and Melbourne Recital Centre for Asia TOPA.

In 2017 Chamber Made Opera will present the world premiere of *Between 8 and 9 (Chengdu Teahouse Project)* – a 70 minute sound installation created by Australian and Chinese artists featuring traditional instrumentation, new composition, electronics, sculptural design and vocal performance.

Intertwining ancient Chinese musical theory with ancient European spatial thinking, *Between 8 and 9* is between Chengdu and Melbourne; between audience and artists; between a meeting room and a restaurant; and between music, sonic design, live art and performance.

The two creative development periods in 2016 allowed this team of artists to start shaping the work in readiness for the two seasons scheduled for 2017 as part of AsiaTOPA.

The project was given a wonderful opportunity when we were invited to send artists to perform at the Sichuan Victoria Sister State Banquet in Chengdu. Two Australian artists were joined by three of our Chinese artists along with Tim Stitz. This event connected the project and the team to potential audiences in China and also back in Australia as a short extract of the performance was televised via Channel 7 news.



# Turbulence

*Conflict as an act of intimacy.*

## Presentation at Lorne Festival of Performing Arts (FOPA)

3 – 4 September 2016

A hybrid version of *Turbulence* was presented at FOPA.

*Turbulence* was originally commissioned by Chamber Made Opera and premiered in Melbourne in 2013 as part of the Living Room Opera Series. It was presented in association with the New Music Network & Melbourne Fringe. The *Turbulence* film was created in 2015 as part of the internet eBook LIGE, for the Danish Ministry of Gender Equality in collaboration with the Danish Agency for Culture, and launched at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts.

### Artistic Credits

Peter Humble  
*Filmmaker*

Juliana Hodkinson  
*Composer*

Cynthia Troup  
*Librettist*

David Young  
*Director*

Tim Stiz  
*Producer*

Jethro Woodward  
*Sound Designer*

Deborah Kayser  
*Mother*

Anneli Bjoransen  
*Daughter*

Steph O'Hara  
*Sound Engineer / Operator*

Set high in the sky in an airline passenger cabin, *Turbulence* invites you to witness a musical drama playing out between a mother and daughter.

*Turbulence* was first born as a live living room opera work, and then re-imagined as a stunning film.

This hybrid version brought together both live performance elements and the film, to create an intimate work where parallel monologues of the singing mother and speaking daughter were performed to tilt, weave, collide and soar.



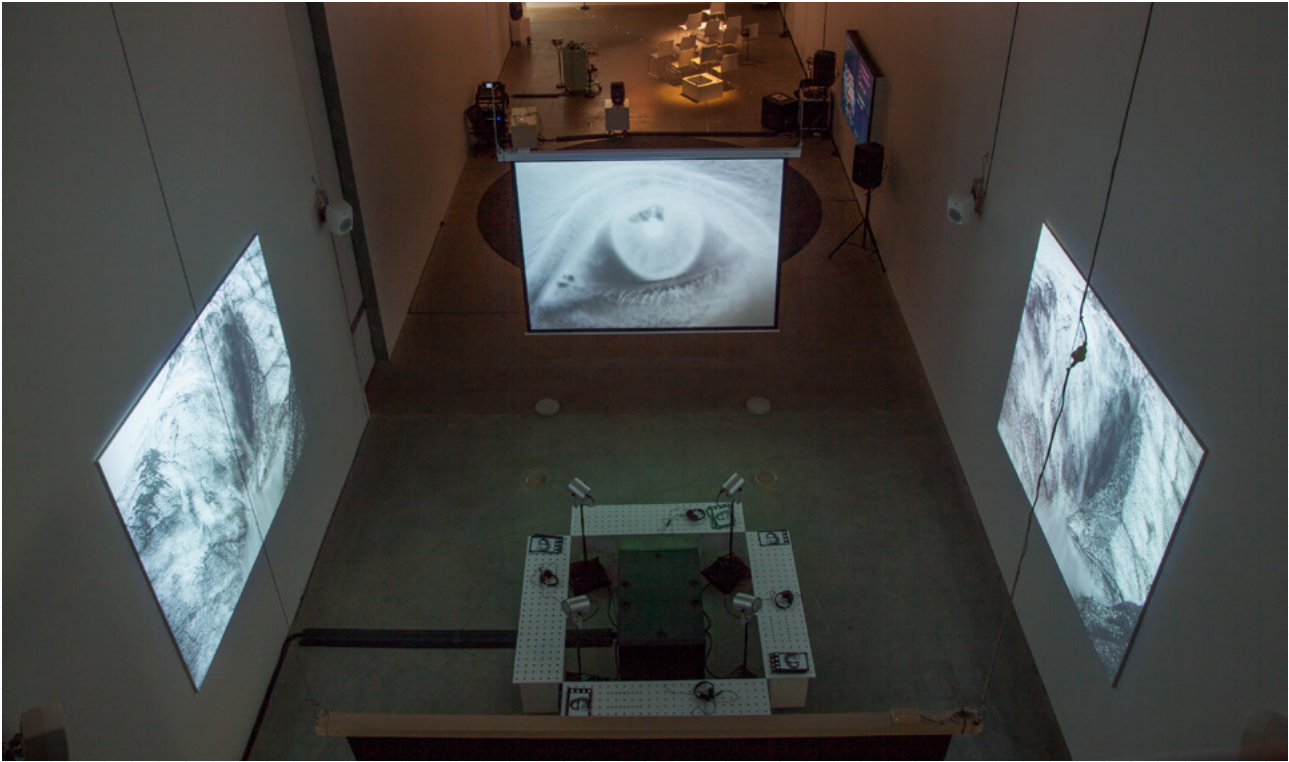
---

# Research & Development

---







# Agile Opera

*Developing new operational models for performing arts organisations in Australia, especially those exploring experimental and niche artwork.*

**An Australia Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project**  
2014 – 2016

*A partnership between Chamber Made Opera, RMIT University, the Australia Council for the Arts and Fed Square.*

RMIT University  
(Administering Organisation)  
*Associate Professor Lawrence Harvey (SIAL),  
Professor David Forrest (School of Art / School  
of Education), Greg More (SIAL – Spatial  
Information Architecture Laboratory)*

Australia Council for the Arts  
(Emerging and Experimental Arts)  
*Andrew Donovan / David Sudmalis*

Fed Square  
*Matt Jones*

Chamber Made Opera  
*Tim Stitz, Christie Stott Sarah Kriegler,  
Tamara Saulwick, Errki Veltbeim*

*Research Associate: Dr Margaret Trail, RMIT  
PhD Candidate: Sam McGilp, RMIT*

*The Agile Opera* project continued in 2016, with meetings between the research team and project partners throughout the year. There were two Project Microlabs in 2016; April & December.

The April Microlab invited Dr Greg Hooper, Dr Alexia Maddox and economist Nicholas Gruen and generated a discussion around audience impact, connection and digital platforms.

In December the Microlab was part of our *Agile* Chambers event and focussed on digital platforms and repositories, incorporating contributions from interdisciplinary artist Lz Dunn, artist/curator Joel Stern and research associate Dr Margaret Trail. Greg and Alexia were also participants again.

Titled *Agile Opera*, the overarching question the project has addressed is how the distinctive forms of intimacy found in chamber performance can be transferred to 21st century digital formats and platforms. It has interrogated the new spatial relationships with audiences that are being created by designers, performers, composers and makers that will challenge dominant forms of contemporary communication.

The formal research period culminates in 2018, the ongoing application of the research findings will inform the company's work in the following years.

The project is based at RMIT University's state-of-the art Design Hub.





# Agile Chambers

*A week of open research labs and performances.*

## RMIT Design Hub

6 - 10 December 2016, Carlton

This program is part of a three year Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project between RMIT University and Chamber Made Opera in collaboration with the Australia Council for the Arts and Fed Square investigating ways the intimacy of live performance can be preserved across digital media.

*Agile Chambers* is supported by the Australian Research Council and SIAL Sound Studios through the *Agile Opera* Project.

Produced by Chamber Made Opera in partnership with SIAL Sound Studios

*Agile Chambers* was a week of open research labs and performances.

Artists from Chamber Made Opera and researchers from RMIT University are investigating the relationship between live performance and digital artworks and the week consisted of performances, research panel discussions and keynote presentations at RMIT Design Hub.

### Program of events

Tuesday 6 December  
6pm - 8pm: Opening night launch

Wednesday 7 December  
11am - 6pm: *Turbulence* Open Working Lab  
12.30pm - 2pm: Lunch time performance of *Turbulence* followed by artist talk

Thursday 8 December  
9.30 am - 6.00 pm: Micro Lab (not open to the public)  
12.30pm - 2.00 pm: Lunch time keynote presentation (Tim Stitz in conversation with Associate Professor Lawrence Harvey and Research Associate Margaret Trail)

Friday 9 December  
11am - 6pm: *Permission to Speak* Open Working Lab  
12.30 - 1.30 pm: Lunch time artist talk

### Works on show

*Another Other*  
*Captives of the City*  
*Permission to Speak*  
*The Box*  
*Turbulence*

# Little Operations

The Little Operations to date have been a series of one-night-only public showings of new works in development which aim to spotlight fresh ideas. Little Operations events have been an opportunity for artists and groups, emerging and established, to enter into a conversation with Chamber Made Opera and our audience. Each Little Operations project is supported through a small amount of seed funding, as well as having access to space, Chamber Made Opera staff and appropriate resources.

From 2017 onwards our Little Operations program will shift to be a more focussed research and development stream for the company, through which we will seed and explore new ideas and new collaborations.



22 March 2016  
The Conservatory, Fitzroy Gardens,  
East Melbourne

Presented by Chamber Made Opera  
with thanks to generous support from  
City of Melbourne

#### Artistic Credits

Margaret Meran Trail  
*Concept and Direction*

Carolyn Connors and Chris Lewis  
*Performance Collaborators*

## Little Operations with Margaret Meran Trail: The Embassy of Flowers

*Conservatory Conservatory* was a performance-ritual addressing plant-life. It took place in the Conservatory, Fitzroy Gardens, re-imagined as *The Embassy of Flowers*. The performance considered how forms of non-human life may have something to say, even though it is unlikely that humans will ever figure out what that 'something' is. In a spirit of mutual-mystification, humans indicated their respect for plant-life, and flowers graciously received the diplomatic gestures of the humans.

The ritual, performed by Margaret Meran Trail, Carolyn Connors, Chris Lewis and guests, was made through sonic vibration and symbolic gesture. It took the form of a structured improvisation in percussion, voice and electronic samples.



# Salon Events

Chamber Made Opera's Salon series continued in 2016. The Salon Program is an opportunity for audiences to delve deeper into the content and context of our works. Based on a keynote presentation model, each Salon is set around themes and ideas underpinning current artworks and research projects of the company.



## Spatial sound and the experience of performance

13 April 2016  
RMIT Design Hub

This Salon event was presented by SIAL Sound Studios.

### Artistic Credits

Erkki Veltheim  
*Artistic Associate, Chamber Made Opera  
and Co-creator Another Other*

Byron Scullin  
*Sound Artist & Designer Another Other*

Dr Greg Hooper  
*Guest Research Associate, ARC Linkage Project*

Our first Salon event for 2016 focused on spatial sound and the experience of performance.

Chamber Made Opera Artistic Associate Erkki Veltheim and sound artist and designer Byron Scullin talked through the process of composition, sound spatialisation and multi-channel recording for *Another Other*. Doctor Gregory Hooper presented his paper "The experience of performance in the arts", which explores how the brain responds to live performance.



## Permission to Speak

26 October 2016  
Arts House, North Melbourne

This Salon event was presented with support from Arts House.

### Artistic Credits

Tamara Saulwick  
*Artistic Associate, Chamber Made Opera  
and co-creator Permission to Speak*

Kate Neal  
*Composer and co-creator Permission to Speak*

Emilie Collyer  
*Communications Coordinator, Chamber Made Opera  
and panel convenor*

In this Salon event Chamber Made Opera Artistic Associate Tamara Saulwick and composer Kate Neal were in conversation with Emilie Collyer about the collaborative process behind the world premiere season of *Permission to Speak* at Arts House North Melbourne Town Hall in November.



# The Venny

*A cross-cultural arts education project that develops skills and fosters self-confidence*

Chamber Made Opera in partnership with The Venny, Kensington.  
Supported by The Hugh Williamson Foundation.

## Artistic Credits

Sarah Kriegler  
*Co-Director*

Nick Tsiavos  
*Bass Guitar*

Danielle von der Borch  
*Co-Director & Community Liaison*

Dave Kutcher  
*Manager, The Venny*

Aviva Endean  
*Instrumentalist/  
Sound Experiments*

**The Kids of The Venny**  
Abdiraman, Abigail, Adem, Aisha, Aleasha, Analise, Brandon, Chloe, Emily, Fadumo, Hayden, Jafir, Jonathon, Jules, Litea, Marc-Anthony, Mohamed, Nabat, Phoenix, Sarah, Shakira, Shannon, Tony.

Lloyd Greenland  
*Workshop Assistant*

Deborah Kayser  
*Voice/Ukelele*

Mick Meagher  
*Bass Guitar*

Kofi Kunkpe  
*Percussion/Drumming*

Matthias Schack-Arnott  
*Instrumentalist/  
Sound Experiments*

In 2016 Chamber Made Opera ran ongoing music workshops with the children of The Venny. A special dinner and performance was held in September for family and friends to attend.

2016 was the fifth year of this seven year project.

The Venny is a communal backyard for children at-risk and the wider community of Kensington, inner-city Melbourne, Victoria. CMO has been partnering with The Venny since 2012, developing musical skills and original performances with The Venny kids.

CMO strongly believes that the arts can act as a vehicle for social inclusion and community building, and as such The Venny Project is a significant part of the company's core artistic practice. In 2016 The Venny experienced some tremendous challenges to its funding structures, which threatened its ongoing operation and viability. What resulted was a large community-driven campaign that led to confirmed and ongoing support from the City of Melbourne.



---

# Relationships

---



# Audience

The conversations we have with our audiences are fundamental to our identity, development and planning as an organisation. Chamber Made Opera is in the fortunate position to have an enthusiastic core audience, many of whom come to multiple works and events each year. To be in dialogue with these audience members as we evolve and present new artistic works is a great privilege.

Alongside this core group the company's activities attract many known colleagues and associates from the arts landscape and a healthy contingent of new audience members who are engaging with us for the very first time. New audience members discover us via a range of pathways. These include: existing audiences of co-presenting partners, loyal fans of artists with whom we collaborate, festival goers and regular attendees at venues where our work is presented.

As always we aim to reach more audience members each year, those who may be interested in the work we make but who have not yet come across the company. We also aim to learn more about our existing audiences, how and why they engage with our work and what this connection means to them.

Ways we investigated and engaged with audience of all kinds in 2016 included:

- *Another Other* brought together four of Australia's leading experimental artists, each of whom has their own existing audience base and the capacity also to attract a new audience demographic to CMO work (including younger, students and those with a keen interest in experimental performance work in the areas of sound, music, film and installation).

- Tim Stitz and Tamara Saulwick attended the Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM), to pitch our new work *Permission to Speak* to potential presenting partners, sparking much interest among peers and industry about this work in advance of its world premiere in November 2016.

- Our Little Operations event *The Embassy of Flowers* was presented at the Fitzroy Gardens Conservatory, continuing the company's engagement with site-specific and site-inspired work and attracting an audience keen to experience work in this unusual setting.

- Tim Stitz presented a pitch for our new work *Between 8 and 9 (Chengdu Teahouse Project)* at the International Society of Performing Arts (ISPA) Conference in Melbourne, exposing the work to potential international partners and presenters for future touring opportunities.

- Program Manager Imbi Neeme and Communications Coordinator Emilie Collyer both attended the Australia Council for the Arts Marketing Summit in Adelaide giving them the opportunity to share knowledge, learn new skills and tips in relation to a variety of marketing techniques, theories and audience development strategies.

- We presented a new, hybrid version of our work *Turbulence*, combining film and live performance, at the Lorne Festival of Performing Arts (FOPA). This introduced the company's work to new audiences both geographically and culturally, as the festival has a primary focus on broadly appealing / entertaining works. *Turbulence* was one of few works programmed that sits more within a contemporary performance context, challenging some audience members with both form and content.



“I do not go to a lot of theatre ... and when I do go I’m often restless, but *Permission to Speak* gripped and moved me.”

– *Audience member, Permission to Speak*

- Tim Stitz was a panellist at the Creative Partnerships Australia Conversations in Funding Event, held in both Melbourne and Hobart, creating many new connections and potential relationships with representatives from other arts organisations.

- Tim and artists from *Between 8 & 9 (Chengdu Teahouse Project)* were invited to the Sichuan Victoria Sister State Banquet, China, where Chinese and Australian artists from our team performed an extract of the work to a full room of local and international guests, planting seeds for potential future performances of this work in China. A small part of the performance was televised as a news story by Channel 7, reaching an estimated 1,171,000 viewers.

- Tim Stitz attended the China Shanghai International Arts Festival and Performing Arts Fair (ChinaSPAF) 2016, enabling him to get a strong sense of the Chinese arts market and international market interested in works coming out of this region.

- The world premiere of *Permission to Speak* was presented in partnership with Arts House (North Melbourne). This was the first work CMO has co-presented with Arts House, enabling us to bring awareness of our work to a new audience sector.

- *Agile Chambers*, a week of open research labs and performance at the RMIT Design Hub, and part of our ongoing ARC Project with SIAL Sound Studios, presented CMO works in a new context – that of a gallery/exhibition space, and also at a university. The program also allowed us to test many of our new suite of Digiworks, enabling the planning of further iterations of works at new venues, festivals and in new contexts both here and overseas.

- Our two Salon events in 2016 were both aligned with new works (*Another Other* and *Permission to Speak*), providing the opportunity for existing audience members and those newer to our company curious about our work to engage with artists about creative process.

# Navigators

In 2016, we worked on consolidating our Navigator program (launched 2015).

We see our Navigators as:

- adventurous and committed champions of Chamber Made Opera
- vital supporters of the work and ongoing longevity of the company
- advocates for the unknown who urge us to explore the limits of the artform

Generous donations from our Navigators allow us to be bold and courageous by directly supporting:

- new commissions
- emerging and established artists through our Little Operations program
- a generation of young people in our inspiring community partnership with The Venny
- the evolution and growth of our organisation's capacity, including ongoing professional development for members of our fiercely determined team

As an example, contributions from our Navigators lead the way in:

- helping pay artists, contributing to new work commissions
- paying a weekly wage for a musician, performer, creative or crew on a creative development of a new work
- helping pay an emerging artist to work in our office or as part of an artistic laboratory
- paying for an artist to conduct workshops at The Venny across four weeks

## Navigators

- Cash donations of \$1,000 and up
- And in-kind donations of \$2,000 or more
- Navigators who give amounts of \$5,000 or more will be recognised as Co-Commissioners and Instigators of nominated new works and projects
- Navigators that give amounts of \$10,000 or more will be recognised as singular Commissioners and Instigators of nominated new works and projects

Our Navigators regularly attend Chamber Made Opera productions and events. They are valued and dear friends to the company and to the artists with whom we work.

We look forward to further exploring the Navigator program in 2017 as we continue to question and evolve notions of income, sustainability, growth and patronage in these challenging economic and political times.

*“My memories of Chamber Made Opera performances go back through the work of several Artistic Directors. There were Greeks and The Two Executioners at Malthouse and Anthill and a stunning The Cars that Ate Paris performed in a garage. In the last few years the works performed have become even more interesting and original. The brilliant puppetry of the rat in Captives of the City was a highlight, also the several performances of Turbulence. Last year Another Other was a mesmerising and beautiful memory of the themes of Bergmann’s Persona played to the exact time frames of the film. Then the year finished with the new and stunning Permission to Speak where the audience was moved by the real stories as told and sung in the very accomplished performance. As a Navigator it has been a privilege to have a very small part in helping to bring some of these wonderful performances into being. Chamber Made Opera has been a part of my theatre going life for many years and I congratulate all the performers and creative staff involved.”*

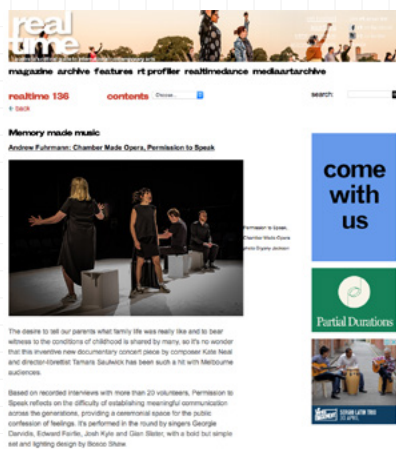
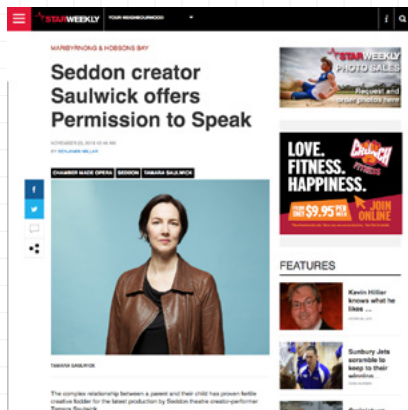
– Sue Kirkham



# Media

“Opera can be small and large; beautifully lyrical and narrative-based, and also abstract, transcendental and challenging. Most of all the artform must ensure that it is contemporary ... For us, it is this unceasing search for new kinds of artistic expression afforded by such collaborations that sustains opera as a relevant and critical force in culture, allowing it to reflect and question the human condition in the 21st Century and create aesthetic experiences that are inspiring, surprising, thought-provoking and, most of all, truly contemporary.”

– *Tim Stitz, ARTSHUB*



# Social Media

In 2016 our Communications Coordinator Emilie Collyer drove our social media engagement, with all staff also contributing. New initiatives included a behind-the-scenes video series of *Permission to Speak* that was shared via Vimeo, Facebook, Twitter and our eNews.



*"@ChamberMadeOper's Another Other: freaking wonderful."*  
– Vincent Giles @VincentGiles 20 Feb 2016

*"@ChamberMadeOper's Another Other is in Melbs this weekend – I'd be glad to see it every year for the rest of my life..."*  
– Ben Byrne @Ben\_A\_Byrne 19 Feb 2016

*"@\_esther @ChamberMadeOper Absolutely thrilled to have experienced #AnotherOther. And it contains the power to influence our notion of opera!"*  
– Paul Selar @OperaChaser 18 Feb 2016

*"Resonating all over with Another Other's sensations. @ChamberMadeOper have once again tickled my every tendril."*  
– Esther Anatolitis @\_esther 18 Feb 2016

# 1,299

*Facebook Likes*

(15.9% increase from 1,092 at end 2015 compared with 23.1% the previous year)

# 1,982

*Twitter Followers*

(4.89% increase from 1,885 end 2015 compared with 14.3% the previous year)

# 1,450

*e-news subscribers*

A total of eleven eNews communications sent out to 1,450 subscribers (9.79% increase from 1,308 subscribers in 2015) with an average open rate of 31.1% and an average click rate of 9.66%.

# 13,359

*Website Visits*

## 9,481

*Unique Visitors*

## 30,721

*Page Views*

## 69.9%

*New Visitors  
(9,337 Visitors)*

## 30.1%

*Returning Visitors  
(2,992 Visitors)*

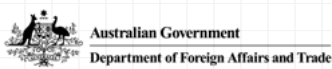


# Supporters & Partners

## Our Navigators (Donations of \$1,000 or more)

Michael Bink & Jenny O'Connor, Helen Brack, Rosemary Forbes and Ian Hocking,  
Sue Kirkham, Margaret Leggatt & Eugene Schlusser, Helen & Paul Murdoch,  
Meredith Rogers, Fiona Sweet & Paul Newcombe, Anonymous (4)

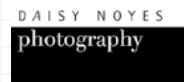
## Government Partners



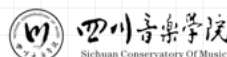
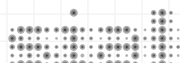
## Trusts & Foundations



## Business Partners



## Project Partners



Chamber Made Opera is a proud member of the New Music Network  
and a supporter of PBS and 3RRR.

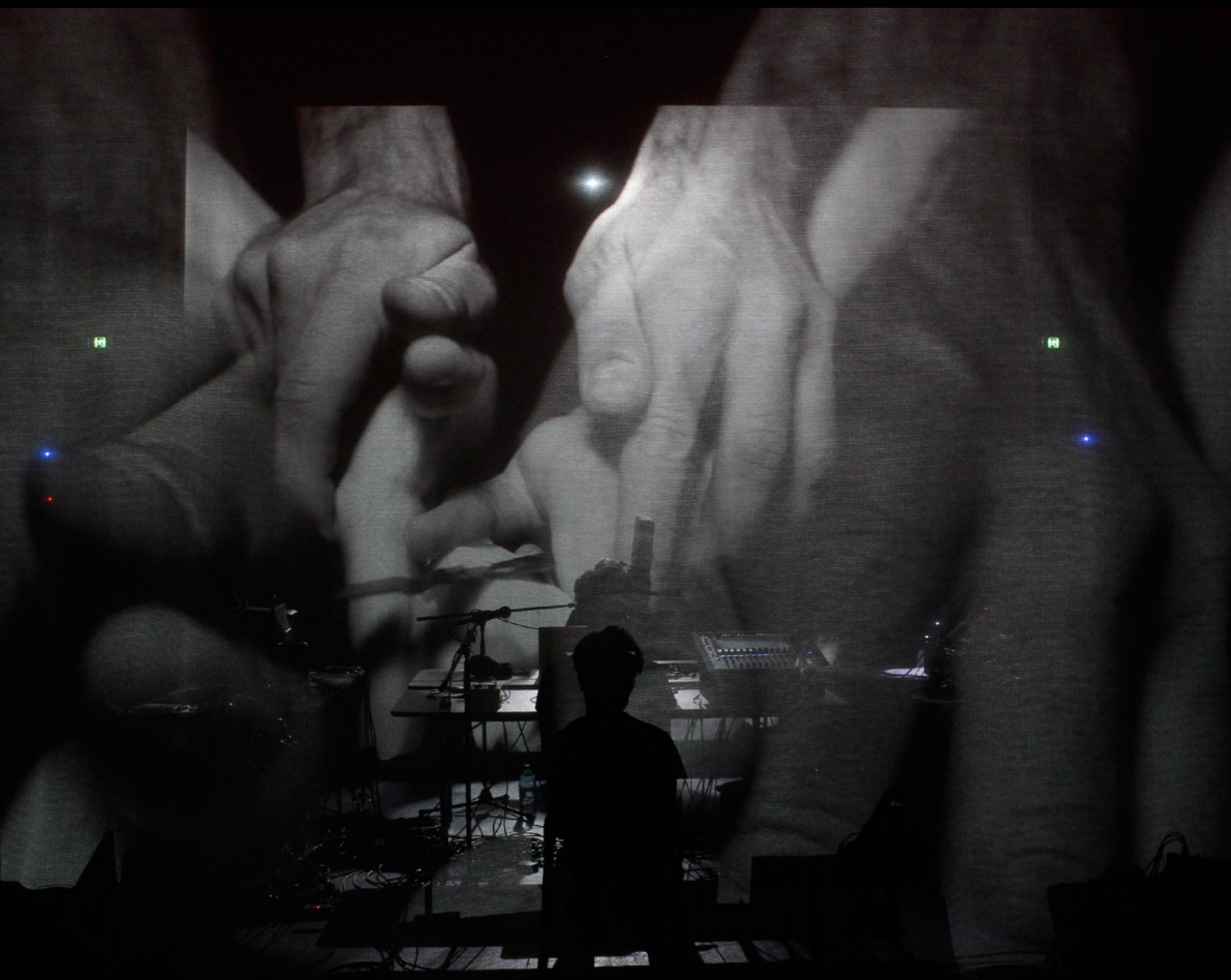
Photographs by: Jeff Busby, Pier Carthew, Sabina Maselli, Daisy Noyes, Tim Stitz.



“Unforgettable – a sonic world of story sculpted into music – intimate moments of unique personal experience expand into the universal, like opening exquisite origami foldings to the paper they were formed from.”

– *Audience Member, Permission to Speak*





“Stunning. Brilliant. Cutting Edge. Different.  
You never know what you’re going to receive from  
CMO. Except that you know it will be brilliantly  
performed, intriguing & intelligent.”

– *Audience Member, Another Other*

---

CHAMBER  
MADE  
OPERA

Meat Market  
Office 22, 44 Courtney Street  
North Melbourne VIC 3051  
AUSTRALIA

PO Box 302  
North Melbourne VIC 3051  
AUSTRALIA  
+61 3 9090 7095

[chambermadeopera.com](http://chambermadeopera.com)

ABN 84 490 162 765