ASTRA and INLAND

CONCERTS 2026

8 pm, Friday 17 July
Church of All Nations, Carlton, Melbourne

Anthony Burr, clarinet
Erkki Veltheim, electronics
Rohan Drape, organ & electronics

Rohan Drape & Anthony Burr

Brief Lives (2026)
for clarinet, organ & electronics

Erkki Veltheim & Anthony Burr

Spectropia (2026)
for clarinet & electronics

Astra and Inland acknowledge the sovereign peoples of the Kulin Nations
on whose unceded land Astra and Inland are based.
We pay respect to their ancestors and elders past, present and emerging,
and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Brief Lives is a sequence of seventeen discrete musical portraits, all but one in miniature. The subjects, as it were, are the observed geometries of very small objects. These recorded geometries, published as numerical tables, can be interpreted as musical materials, and here are read, obliquely, as the control signals for a digital synthesiser. It is, in general, difficult to say what the subject of music is, though it cannot be "the transcendental laws of numbers, of which the perceptible laws of our illusory world give only an imperfect and approximate image." (A. Daniélou, 1943)

--Rohan Drape

Spectropia takes its name from a book by J.H. Brown published in 1864. Its full title is *Spectropia, or Surprising Spectral Illusions Showing Ghosts Everywhere and of Any Colour*. It's a curious volume that sits in that peculiarly 19th-century overlap between psychophysics, magic tricks, and the occult. Brown, distressed by the enthusiasm for spiritualism and ghosts, allegedly created the book to debunk paranormal phenomena by demonstrating their basis in scientifically knowable facts about perception (after-images). Of course, in the debunking he also offered a handbook in how to make oneself see ghosts everywhere!!! If you look at the picture on the page long enough, it will be there on your wall when you turn around!!!

We approached this piece as an attempt to create an analogue. There is no direct analogue in hearing to the phenomenon of after-images, but there are ways to get close. In the piece, the laptop electronics hear what the bass clarinet plays and then has various ways of adding sounds to it to try to contextualize it in various ways. The clarinetist is then free to try to trace between these additions (things like refigured upper partials, harmonization, modulation) and the process works back and forth on itself. Depending on your perspective the clarinet tones could become the after-image of the electronics or vice versa. Or maybe they are, at times, indistinguishable. The relationship between the two elements shifts throughout the the piece.

--Erkki Veltheim & Anthony Burr

Front of House: Sebastiano Baldocchi Byrne

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INLAND
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