

PETER KNIGHT SELECTED PRINT MEDIA:

Jazzwise review of Hand to Earth Pierre Boulez Saal concert, June 2022

“Trumpeter Knight’s tender yet icy splintery tone in the vein of a Nils Petter Molvaer or Arve Henriksen, was electronically layered and well complemented by vocalist Daniel’s pungent blend of grace and animalism.

It was testing at times, mesmerizing at others, but always extraordinarily intriguing in its organic synthesis of the ancient and contemporary. Within this immersive ‘live’ performance space, the song cycles, circular breathing, microtonal and drone elements that characterize AAO’s music carried with it an air of timelessness.” [LINK](#)



Best jazz on Bandcamp Crossed & Recrossed on Hospital Hill August 2021

“Jazz minimalism as a source of pure strength is on display on the two extended pieces here, and their slow builds lead to dramatic peaks of intensity—like a heart straining to contain more happiness than it was built to hold.”

[LINK](#)

Downbeat review of The Plains performance at JazzFest Berlin 2019

“Presenting another dynamic vision of cooperation was the Australian Art Orchestra, which works deeply with indigenous conceptions of landscape. Solos here were like songlines, not paving superhighways through a compositional infrastructure but leaving faint footprints in a soundscape that evolved as organically as an ecosystem.” [LINK](#)

The Wire Review of The Prey and the Ruler release on ROOM40 2022

“... while Senyawa’s music could never have been tagged as ordinary, The Prey is astonishingly strange, its organic and synthetic noises assembled into sublime ambient mutations that teeter between delicate sound art and unnerving dynamism.” [LINK](#)

DOMI NIDEK ON THE UP

Our Aus-resident correspondent **Jane Cornwell** meets some of the leading lights of the vibrant Australian jazz scene, from AAO's Paul Grabowsky and Peter Knight to composer-saxophonist Jeremy Rose

Questing, resourceful, unique: if any entity embodies the relationship between the improvising musician and the idea of Australia, it is the Australian Art Orchestra (AAO). For really, what is the vast, challenging Australian continent but an improvisation? A land whose apparent un-inhabitability underscores the age-old ingenuity of its traditional owners; and whose conditions demand creative solutions to problems, the ability to make decisions on the fly.

"The notion of the improvising musician is something particularly suited to the Australian way of thinking," says Paul Grabowsky, the polymathic composer, bandleader and pianist who founded Australian Art Orchestra in 1994 after returning from a stint in Europe (impressed by the boundary-pushing brilliance of Mathias Rügge's Vienna Art Orchestra), writing a suite for music for a large ensemble and needing a like-minded cast to play it.

From what would become the seminal 1995 album *Ring the Bell Backwards*, a meditation on memory and history via the reimagining of European wartime songs ("I doubt anything of its kind has been released since, and little before it, either," wrote UK critic John Gill), this orchestra has amassed a multifaceted repertoire involving some of the most exciting collaborations undertaken in Australia. Such projects have included Danish trumpeter Palle Mikkelborg and the late American soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy, and alliances with musicians from India, Indonesia and remote Arnhem Land in northernmost Australia.

"Paul's vision recognised that we live in a place of abundance and as 'jazz' musicians and artists we need to respond to what is around us rather than look primarily to America and Europe for inspiration," states Peter Knight, composer, trumpeter, sound artist, literature graduate and since 2013, the AAO's artistic director, on the AAO website. "That vision is more relevant than ever."

Today, sitting in his studio in Seddon, in West Melbourne, dressed in a Necks T-shirt and surrounded by instruments including gongs and bamboo percussion – features of *1988*, a forthcoming live show co-composed with Sydney-based multi-instrumentalist Dung Nguyen that fuses contemporary jazz and Vietnamese folk music – Knight emphasises the AAO remit with a reference to American experimental music scholar, George E Lewis.

Photo: Sarah Walker

Main photo: AAO artistic director Peter Knight, pictured earlier this year. Right: The AAO in action, with Grabowsky on the left and Knight on the right

Forced Exposure review of Shadow Phase release on ROOM40 2022

Peter Knight, resolves his extensive work as an improviser and band leader into his first solo recording in a decade, Shadow Phase. This is a recording which charts out a sense of perpetual opening, in a time of restrictive movement. It is a music of verticality, spiraling simultaneously up and down, effortlessly generating a depth and openness that is reflected both compositionally and texturally. Shadow Phase is also a music of light and dark, of elements being revealed and concealed with unerring patience. [LINK](#)

Feature article in The Age and Sydney Morning Herald newspapers 2022

Full article [LINK](#)

THE AGE

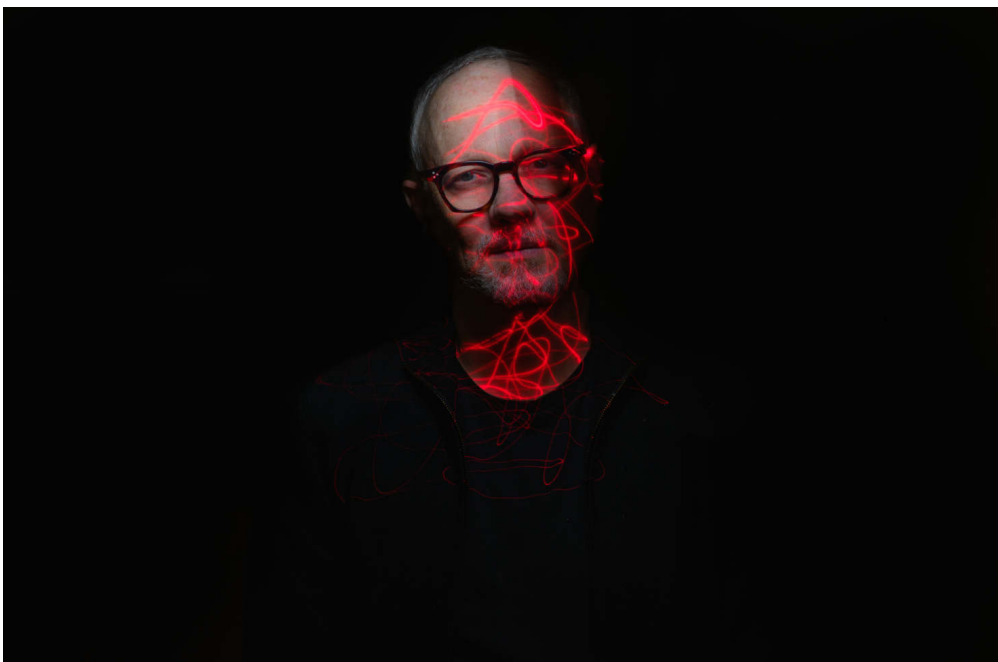
Culture Music Arts

After accepting the award, he knew it was time to walk away

Jessica Nicholas

October 4, 2022 – 5.30am

When the Australian Art Orchestra was recognised with a prestigious Art Music Luminary Award last month, Peter Knight gave a gracious acceptance speech as the orchestra's artistic director. What few people at the ceremony knew was that Knight was planning his departure from the AAO, making the night one of mixed emotions for the trumpeter and sound artist.



**Songlines
review of Hand
to Earth release
2021**



**Australian Art Orchestra, Daniel Wilfred, David Wilfred, Sunny Kim, Peter Knight & Aviva Endean
Hand to Earth**

AAO Recordings (45 mins)



An exquisite combination of ancient and modern sounds



A collaboration initiated by the Melbourne-based Australian Art Orchestra, *Hand to Earth* is an adventurously creative project. The Australian Art Orchestra's artistic director, trumpeter-composer-sound artist Peter Knight teams up with indigenous Arnhem Land songman Daniel Wilfred and his brother David Wilfred on *yidaki* (didgeridoo), along with Korean vocalist Sunny Kim and Australian Art Orchestra clarinet and flute player Aviva Endean. Founded in 1994 by jazz pianist Paul Grabowsky, the multi-award-winning orchestra is one of the country's leading contemporary ensembles, with a long history of cutting-edge composition and performance.

Developed during an Australian Art Orchestra residency in remote Tasmania, the core of this new project is the ancestral *manikay*

(song cycles) of the Yolgnu people, the Aboriginal custodians of a 40,000-year-old oral tradition based in south-east Arnhem Land. Almost surprisingly, Daniel's remarkable traditional voice blends seamlessly with Kim's more improvisational Asian-based vocals on the tracks 'Guguk' and 'Nunguryu Nunguryu', while Knight's electronically-enhanced ambient trumpet merges easily with the pulsing bed drone of David's *yidaki*. Elsewhere Endean's woodwind contributions gently weave additional sound colours into the 'Birrik Birrik' mix.

While many contemporary projects strive to combine ancient and modern influences, this innovative and ethereal musical alliance actually achieves that lofty goal – with old cultural ground being respected, while new artistic ground is broken. *Hand to Earth* is a truly exquisite album.

SETH JORDAN

TRACK TO TRY *Guguk*

**TOP
OF THE
WORLD**



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**Limelight review of Hand to Earth
release 2021**

"...a unique and beautifully poised collaboration between Yolŋu songman Daniel Wilfred, Korean-born vocalist Sunny Kim, and trumpeter and composer, Peter Knight. While I have worked with Wilfred for many years, recording the songs and stories of his ancestral homeland, I have never quite heard anything like this. It is a diverse gathering which seems unprecedented within Australian music."
[LINK](#)

**The Wire review of Fish Boast of Fishing
release 2012**

"Peter Knight creates hard-to-categorise music between jazz, contemporary composition, and minimalist improv... a hauntingly memorable set of explorations."
[LINK](#)

**The Age review of '1988' world premiere
2022**

"The music and imagery take us on a multi-layered journey, blending Western and traditional Vietnamese instruments; acoustic and electronic sounds; delicate folk-like tunes and abstract improvisations. On Homeward Groove, Helen Svoboda's explorations on arco bass build a sweeping momentum, propelled by Erik Griswold's minimalist motifs on prepared piano and Peter Knight's reverb-enhanced trumpet."
[LINK](#)

**Headphone Commute preview of
Shadow Phase release 2022**

"A carefully curated exercise in reflective restraint, dreamy atmospherics, ebbing dynamics." [LINK](#)

**Salt Peanuts review of Shadow Phase
release 2022**

"This arresting meditation searches for the most profound vibrations – sonic and otherwise – that move and motivates us and evoke deeper reflections and understanding of the human state of mind in such unsettling times." [LINK](#)