

Matt Laing long bio

Matt started composing whilst completing his studies in viola, graduating with honours from the University of Melbourne followed by two years at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM). Described by the Flinders Quartet as “one of the most exciting young composers we have encountered” and by the Sydney Arts Guide as “obviously an intelligent, effective composer...(displaying) the ability to create simple, simply beautiful and fresh ways... to touch us deeply”, Matt has been working as a composer and arranger since 2014.

His first string quartet *Shapes* (2017) was workshopped and performed by the Flinders Quartet, and Matt was awarded the Scarlet’s Fund prize resulting in a residency in Hobart in May 2018. The Flinders Quartet commissioned *Out of Hibernation* in 2019, and Matt was awarded an Ian Potter Cultural Trust grant to work on the quartet with mentoring from Brett Dean in Berlin and London in January 2019.

In 2021 Matt was Young Composer in Residence with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra with mentorship from Elliot Gyger, and awarded a Peggy Glanville Hicks Composers' House Trust residency at Collingrove Homestead near Angaston in SA for 2021.

Matt was in the Musica Viva Australia FutureMakers program (2021-23), has had multiple residencies at the Bermagui Four Winds Festival, participated in Ensemble Offspring's Hatched Academy, and attended the 2023 Darmstadt Summercourse in Germany, with lessons from Dai Fujikura and Katherine Young.

One of Australia’s most sought-after young composers, recent premieres have included a bassoon concerto for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, a piano trio for Z.E.N. Trio in their Musica Viva 2022 August Tour, and a string quartet for Affinity Quartet premiered in November 2022. His work has been performed around Australia and the UK, and more recently with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra at the International Double Reed Society Conference in Bangkok.

Other works have been commissioned by the Australian String Quartet, Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, Melbourne Chamber Players, Ossicle Duo, the Australian National Academy of Music and Wattleseed Ensemble, and has arranged works for the Auric Quartet and the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra.

Matt’s practice is increasingly collaborative, initiating and directing projects with improvising trumpet player Callum G’Froerer in a residency at the Four Winds Festival, and leading a large scale dance work/installation *UTOPIA* with Lilian Steiner for 2023, supported in development by Musica Viva Australia.

As a performer, Matt’s been a professional viola player since 2012, as a core member of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra, and plays with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria and Australian World Orchestra.

Matt commissioned and first performed Luke Paulding’s *repose and vertigo, in diluvial light..* and was soloist in the first complete performance in Australia of Morton Feldman's *The Viola in My Life* with an orchestra of ANAM musicians. He has also performed in the Australian Octet, with the Australian String Quartet, with the Andrea Keller Quartet and in Melbourne-based ensembles Quartz, Affinity Quartet, Rubiks and Arcko, as well as a variety of musicals, television, pop and commercial/film recordings.

Arts festival engagements as a performer have included the Perth and Melbourne International Arts Festivals, the Australian String Quartet's Dunkeld festival, and on multiple occasions at the Bermagui Four Winds Festival performing in a variety of roles in the Auric Quartet with Giovanni Sollima, and viola and electronics at the 2023 festival.