

CLAIRE EDWARDES

520 WORD BIOGRAPHY

From the set of Play School to the mainstage of the Sydney Opera House, internationally acclaimed powerhouse Claire Edwardes OAM is 'the sorceress of percussion' (Canberra City News). The only Australian to win the 'APRA Art Music Luminary Award' four times and recently awarded an OAM for her services to Australian music, Claire leaps between her role as Artistic Director of Ensemble Offspring and concerto performances with all the Australian orchestras.

With her roots grounded in classical music (starting piano age 5), Claire has focused her career as a percussionist on the music of our time. She is passionate about the wide dissemination of living new music to audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Collaboration is at the heart of her musical practice, having worked with many of Australia's leading and emerging composers and performers to expand the percussion and chamber music repertoire. She has had over 50 works written for her as a soloist, and Ensemble Offspring have commissioned over 350 new works throughout their 30 years in the industry.

Her recent project Rhythms of Change presents new solo percussion music by Australian female composers written for high school and tertiary percussionists to bring better gender equity to student programming. Claire is the Australian Keychange Ambassador as well as the Donne Women in Music Ambassador and as such has a strong focus on gender equity in all that she does. For this work she was recognised in 2023 with the Australian Women in Music Creative Leadership Award. Since 2017 Claire has also had the opportunity to work closely with First Nations Composers through Ngarra-Burria: First Peoples Composers with Ensemble Offspring and is a staunch champion of Australian First Nations musical voices.

Claire's stellar career spans over 25 years of performing, commissioning, collaborating and championing new music both in Australia and Europe. She is the most recent percussionist to win the Australian Young Performers Award back in 1999. She undertook a Bachelor of Music (First Class Honours) at the Sydney

Conservatorium of Music from 1994-1997 and from 1999-2006 while resident in the Netherlands, she developed a successful international career as a percussion soloist and versatile chamber musician. During this time, she undertook a Masters of Music at the Rotterdam and Amsterdam Conservatories, won the Tromp Percussion Competition (Eindhoven, 2000), Llangollen International Instrumentalist (Wales, 2001) and Concertgebouw Vriendenkrans Prize (Amsterdam, 2001). She also founded her percussion group Duo Vertigo and collaborated regularly with new music legends Ictus Ensemble, Slagwerk Den Haag (now HIIT) as well as pianists Nicolas Hodges and Tomoko Mukaiyama and composers Sir Harrison Birtwistle and Unsuk Chin.

Under Claire's leadership (Artistic Director and CEO), her group Ensemble Offspring is now one of Australia's most significant commissioners and exponents of new music and in recognition they were awarded a prestigious 2019 Sidney Myer Performing Arts Group Award. As a soloist and with Ensemble Offspring, Claire has performed at international festivals from Mona Foma (Tasmania) and Gaudeamus Muziekweek (Utrecht) to Music on Main (Vancouver) and Shanghai New Music Week (China). Claire is endorsed by Adams Percussion and Vic Firth and is on the percussion faculty at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.