

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: SOPHIE MIN

Sophie Min is a Korean-Australian jazz pianist and composer based in Brisbane. Having toured and performed across the world, Sophie is a prolific recording artist and is completing her masters research. Sophie's "Bellwether" is the bonus track available with this copy of Dingo, the title track from the debut Sophie Min Orchestra release.

- What's your musical background?

I started piano at a quite young age like how other kids from K-family normally do and I have always enjoyed listening to rearranged church music and transcribing them. I studied jazz in Korea then transferred the degree to Australia and while I was undertaking my Masters of Music Studies, I toured with the JM World Jazz Orchestra in Europe and that experience inspired me to write for a large ensemble. Also, a residency with world-class musicians at Centrum and Banff Workshop encouraged me to broaden my artistic spectrum. I focus on creating mixed music ranging from jazz to improvisational music.

- What is jazz?

Well, if the question was asking for my personal opinion apart from Wikipedia or Google's term on it, I see the term "jazz" as a communal, social and cultural art form consisting of musicians in performance together with their audience's interpretation and reaction. As I learn more about the history and tradition of jazz, I now perform jazz to reflect the creation of my musical language as well as lifestyle. However, when the audience becomes involved in the experience of music, additional appreciation engages and expands the meaning of our playing and composing. Jazz needs good listeners.

- What excites you about composing?

I utilise composing as a musical speaking material and I get excited when I have the best way to express myself through it and if people feel the same way from my compositions, that'd be the best compliment ever. It's like cooking and you serve your meal to people.

- What is the vision behind "Bellwether"?

“Bellwether” is my artistic expression of an imaginative journey of the wild road of Messiah. It expatiates the story utilising the fertile sound of strings and horns, whose great varieties of harmonic adventure reveals the secret of one’s true character. I especially wanted to embrace the advantages of the ensemble by using the length of notes and breath, combined with the harmonic properties of jazz arranging techniques. My artistic vision behind the ensemble is about constantly discovering potential works through practice and study and enjoy playing with my companions.

- What else are you working on?

I’m currently finishing my thesis entitled “Narrative Driven Practice: the Process of Arranging and Composing Music through Piano Improvisations” which is about investigating transformative short progressions from piano improvising and carry through the inventive methods into my orchestra works.

In May 2022, I will release Wind and the End, performed with a seven-piece version of the Sophie Min Orchestra. I also have some ongoing projects including the second album for Min/Sherlock project (James Sherlock on guitar and myself on piano) as well as the second album for experimental duo Shamin. and some gigs to follow for my newly formed quartet project with local favourite musicians.

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“Bellwether” is the title track from Sophie Min Orchestra’s first album with the 11-piece ensemble comprising four strings, four horns and rhythm section. Look out for the ensemble’s follow-up release Wind and the End, due May 2022.