



KROUMATA

Kroumata is one of the world's leading percussion ensembles and features the talents of Roger Bergström, Pontus Langendorf, Ulrik Nilsson and Johan Silvmark.

The Australian Percussion community is pleased to welcome Kroumata Percussion to Australia this year for a wonderful series of concerts and programs in April.

The unequalled dynamism and energy of Kroumata's performances has dazzled audiences all over the world, the unique experience of a Kroumata concert appealing to audiences of all different ages and cultural backgrounds. Kroumata has a strong commitment to contemporary percussion music and has commissioned numerous works from Swedish and international composers. The group's extensive repertoire includes works by composers as diverse as Sofia Gubaidulina, John Cage, Iannis Xenakis, Hanna Hartman, André Chini, Steve Reich and Sven David Sandström. Over 220 works have received their World Premieres by Kroumata. Kroumata has made tours to some 40 countries and performed recitals to critical acclaim all over the world, for example the Berliner Philharmonie and Wiener Konzerthaus as well as tours to Brazil, USA, Belgium, Cyprus, Lithuania, Norway, Mexico, Taiwan, Portugal, Italy, Finland and Germany. In addition to recitals, Kroumata is increasingly in demand as a soloist-ensemble performing together with orchestras and other ensembles. The group has appeared with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Berliner Symphoniker, Lithuanian

National Symphony Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Iceland Symphony Orchestra and the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra to name a few of their collaborations. Kroumata has performed at many festivals, including Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Vilnius Festival, Belgium Percussion Festival, Cyprus Pharos Trust, Inventionen Berlin, PASIC USA, Oslo Ultima Festival, Wien Modern and the Hong Kong Arts Festival. Their list of achievements also includes a catalogue of 20 CDs, many of them in collaboration with other artists or ensembles. In its home country of Sweden, Kroumata has attained a loyal following, enjoying sold-out performances throughout the country. The ensemble's appeal is universal, and far reaching - His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden is a loyal supporter, and especially requested that Kroumata perform at his 50th birthday celebration in 1996. In June 2002, at the large-scale celebration of the City of Stockholm's 750th anniversary, Kroumata had the honour of organising and performing a concert in the grounds of the Royal Palace.

Recently I caught up with Kroumata member, Pontus Langendorf.

Hello Kroumata! Our Percussion Community is very excited about your tour of Australia. I am particularly keen to have this opportunity to introduce our readers to such a prestigious ensemble, would you please tell us a bit about your history and the wonderful international artists that you have worked with?

Kroumata was formed in 1978 and right from the start the focus was set on building an oeuvre of new music for percussion ensemble. Many composers have

written for Kroumata and many times chamber works with other musicians. We have had the privilege to work directly with composers such as Iannis Xenakis and Sofia Gudbaidulina and musicians such as Keiko Abe, Håkan Hardenberger and Erika Sunnegårdh. Kroumata has premiered 224 works; the latest one was a truly exciting piece, "Shadow Box" by Hanna Hartman. She is a Swedish composer living in Berlin and the piece she wrote was unusual, to say the least. Over the stage we hung a 5x5 metre net which had 200 paper bags hanging down to play on, blow air into and even smash. Other sound sources included crushing eggshells, walnut shells and using our knuckles to grind salt onto ceramic tiles. The piece was heavily influenced by boxing and even featured, as the title hints at, shadow boxing. Upcoming collaborations include a new piece for orchestra with us as soloists by Italian composer, Giovanni Verrando, and a quartet by Swedish-German composer, Lisa Streich.

Can you tell us about your upcoming Australian tour? Are you performing any new repertoire on this tour?

Kroumata is very excited about this tour, our first time in Australia! The tour will actually focus mainly around "older" percussion music. Last year marked the 75th birthday of Steve Reich, and this year is the John Cage centennial. This has of course an impact on our programming. Demands have been high for concerts and clinics around portal works such as Steve Reich's "Drumming". But of course we cannot pass up the opportunity to play some of our more recent finds, such as "Plato-Plastic Dialogues" (2010) by Dutch-Mexican composer Felipe Waller. We performed the Swedish premiere of this piece in 2011 and met with the composer. Like many other times our attention was caught by the freshness of sound and new approach that is present in this piece. Felipe has written for disposable plastic plates played with a threaded metal rod in a manner similar to bowing. From a Chamber Music point of view we had great fun working with it, and the result is a sound that has the same qualities as electronic sound.

The 100th Birthday of John Cage certainly provides



a wealth of opportunities to celebrate the enormous impact he had on the Percussion community. Is Kroumata programming any special programs in 2012 that focus on John Cage?

Cage has always been present in contemporary percussion in general and for Kroumata in particular. Almost all our programs include at least one piece by Cage: last couple of years it has been "Branches" (1976). We are also looking forward to giving an 'All-Cage' program during our Australian tour, with some real classics such as 'Credo in Us' (1942) and 'Third Construction' (1941). What's extraordinary with Cage music is that it remains so fresh to this day and I predict that he will follow the ensemble until our own 100th celebration!

It is an honour to have Kroumata participating in our first PAS Victorian Day of Percussion. How long has Kroumata been associated with the Percussive Arts Society? Have you ever performed at a PASIC?

Kroumata has performed at PASIC several times - 1984, 1988, 1995 - and we almost made it in 2010, but our connection from Frankfurt was

delayed so unfortunately the whole ensemble didn't make it, only me. The concert was cancelled and I ended up shaking a lot of hands and meeting a lot of nice people. Since this was to be my first performance at PASIC (I'm the newest member in the ensemble) I hope that we will have a chance to go there again.

In addition I can also say that this is a very exciting year, with a lot of touring, for the ensemble. We have just finished a large school project in Stockholm with 13 performances, for a total of 10,000 children, at the Stockholm Concert Hall. Right now we are preparing for a new collaboration with the New European Ensemble, playing Pierre Boulez's "Le marteau sans maître" and premiering a piece by Canadian composer, Graham Flett. The pieces will be performed in Amsterdam and The Hague. After returning from Australia we will go to Brazil and later in the year we will go back to South America to play in Argentina and Uruguay.

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