

BENJAMIN SKEPPER

“Embodying classical aesthetic, music and culture, Benjamin Skepper is a musician with an extraordinary sense of the contemporary” (M. Pugliese, Director Museo 900 for Rolling Stone Italy)

Benjamin Skepper creates experimental, innovative and multidisciplinary artworks that seek to expand our perception, and collapse the borders that divide us. His practice is research driven, focusing on the application of new technology and scientific innovation within the context of contemporary sound and visual arts practice. Benjamin actively explores the human body as a musical instrument, issues around human identity and human rights, and the relationship of sound and medicine (neuroscience and genetics) in the context of human and medical healing.

A Melbourne born classically trained musician, Benjamin operates at the confluence of art, science, technology, fashion, modern classical and the avant-garde. A respected performer, composer, art director, published author and scientific researcher (most recently appearing in Leonardo Journal, MIT 2020), he is a cultural advocate with deep interests in Russia and Japan. His talent and curiosity have taken him across musical boundaries and artistic borders for which he has garnered international acclaim.

A child prodigy, commencing piano at two years of age, Benjamin began touring at seven as a solo pianist, boy soprano, ballet dancer and the youngest self-taught harpsichordist in Australia. He embarked on his first international solo piano tour at 10 years old, performing a Mozart concerto with full orchestra in New Zealand, as a Suzuki Music Young Ambassador. His passion continued with studies in the violoncello, touring and performing with symphonic orchestras and chamber ensembles nationwide.

Alongside his two decade long professional classical career, Benjamin also completed an Arts/Law degree with Honours at the University of Melbourne, majoring in Public and International Law, specialising in Children’s Rights. A qualified solicitor, he remains committed to human rights and children’s policy, volunteering with NGOs and donating work to charities including Médecins Sans Frontières and Red Cross Japan.

In 2008 he founded “contrapuntal” in Tokyo, a creative enterprise operating globally. Over the past decade, he has established an international practice in site-specific multi artform installations, encompassing large scale commissions and live performances, art direction for major brands, sound composition, and creative production. Clients range from Museums, Festivals, commercial and luxury brands, fashion, TV, theatre, film and government agencies.

Under contrapuntal he also launched his independent music label with five self-produced solo releases, licensing original music for film, commercials and online digital content, collaborating with major record labels, including Columbia Music and Ninja Tunes, as well as a music video exclusive with VICE (THUMP) Australia. His sixth release, recorded live at the Moscow Conservatory, is due for release early 2023.

In the field of contemporary art, he has presented performance art works and sound installations, most recently at the National Gallery of Australia with Nakaya Fujiko (Canberra), the inaugural contemporary Art Bienial “Astana Art Show” (Kazakhstan), Museo del Novecento (Milan), “Culture Warriors”, Australia’s first Indigenous Art Triennial at the National Gallery of Australia (Canberra), as artist in residence at “No Mans Land” (French Embassy, Tokyo), “Sight & Sound: Music & Abstraction in Australian Art” (Arts Centre, Melbourne), “Rooms” International Fashion and Design Trade Fair (Tokyo), White Trade Fair (Milan), “Art After Dark” for the National Gallery of Victoria’s exhibition “Napoleon: Revolution to Empire” (Melbourne), and as a headline

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performer at MONA FOMA 2013 (Tasmania), dubbed a festival highlight by curator Brian Ritchie. By special invitation from The Hermitage Foundation (Russia), Benjamin performed at the opening of "Manifesta 10", The European Biennial of Contemporary Art (Saint Petersburg). He recently undertook a sound-art residency at Klanghaus (Austria) with Mia Zabelka, and has participated in an underground exhibition in Shinjuku, Tokyo with Yoko Ono.

In the emerging field of Art + Science collaborations, Benjamin's sound work was commissioned for transmission into Outer Space and the ISS from MONA (2015). In 2016 he was appointed Australia's first Research Fellow of the Moscow State Conservatory, in the ground breaking field of music and genetics, an ambitious collaboration with the Russian Academy of Sciences. As international Ambassador to this new school of music, he presented a world premiere of genetic music in Vienna at the Symmetry Festival (2016). This led to a commission as the first resident artist at Science Gallery Melbourne, to create a new live performance artwork for the inaugural exhibition opening "Blood" (2017). Building on this work, he premiered a "*Praeludium & Fuga*" (2019) at the Moscow State Conservatory, to a sell out audience. In collaboration with Radugadesign, Russia's premiere visual design studio, this was the first modern audio visual work to be presented at the esteemed classical music education institution, setting a precedent for the presentation of new and hybrid forms of performance.

As a cultural advocate and creative consultant, Benjamin has worked closely with local and federal government bodies to research and identify international collaborations and exchange opportunities as Australia's Cultural Ambassador to Russia, understanding the powerful role of art and culture in driving social change and shifting mindsets.

As a writer, Benjamin published his first book "Artist Thinking", with Japan's premiere publishing house President Inc, to expand on his creative ideas in the sphere of art, innovation and sustainable futures. On March 11 2021, he launched a music video "For Our Freedom" to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Tohoku, Japan. This was featured in an artist editorial for FORBES Japan and on NHK National TV Japan.

Artist features include Rolling Stone Italy + Russia, AMICA Italy, GQ Japan, L'Officiel Kazakhstan, and Good Weekend Magazine (Australia). Benjamin also holds multiple Brand Ambassadorships, including YAMAHA Music, Oyaide and Ableton (Germany).

<https://benjaminskepper.com/>