

BENJAMIN SKEPPER ARTIST BIO

“Embodying classical aesthetic, music and culture, Benjamin Skepper is a musician with an extraordinary sense of the contemporary” (Rolling Stone Italy)

Worldly, experimental and blurring the lines between visual art, music and other art forms, Benjamin Skepper’s performance at MOFO embodied the festival and the MONA brand (Artshub Australia)

A Melbourne born classically trained musician, Benjamin Skepper creates at the confluence of art, science, technology, fashion, modern classical and the avant-garde. A respected performance artist, composer, art director, published author and scientific researcher (most recently 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.

His experimental, innovative and multidisciplinary artworks seek to expand our perception, and collapse the borders that divide us. His studio practice is research and collaboratively driven, focusing on the application of new technology and scientific innovation within the context of contemporary sound and visual arts. 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 healing.

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 Youth Ambassador. His passion continued with studies in the violoncello, touring and performing with symphonic orchestras and chamber ensembles Australia wide. His deep experience with classical music continues to inform his contemporary practice as an accomplished improviser and proponent of the electro-acoustic, modern classical and noise genres. He is a leader in avant-garde approaches to performance, musical notation, recording and electronics, sonification, and collaborates broadly across disciplines and cultures.

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, under the mentorship of Gillian Triggs and John Tobin. A qualified solicitor, he remains committed to human rights and children’s policy, volunteering with NGOs and charities such as Médecins Sans Frontières and The Red Cross.

In 2009 he founded his creative enterprise “contrapuntal” in Tokyo which operates 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 and ideation for major brands, sound design and 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. His foray into orchestral electronica landed him a music video exclusive with VICE (THUMP) Australia. His sixth release, recorded live at the Moscow Conservatory, is due in 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), "Astana Art Show" the inaugural contemporary Art Biennial (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 performer at MONA FOMA 2013 (Tasmania), dubbed a festival highlight by curator Brian Ritchie. By special invitation from The Hermitage Foundation, Benjamin performed at the opening of "Manifesta 10", The European Biennial of Contemporary Art (Saint Petersburg). He has also participated in a sound-art residency at Klanghaus (Austria) with acclaimed experimental violinist Mia Zabelka, and an underground exhibition in Shinjuku, Tokyo with sound artist Yoko Ono.

In the emerging field of Art + Science, 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, in collaboration with the Russian Academy of Sciences. As international Ambassador to this revolutionary new school of music, he presented a world premiere of genetic music on electric cello 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 media art performance for the inaugural exhibition opening "Blood" (2017). Building on this work, he premiered "*Praeludium & Fuga*" (2019) at the Moscow State Conservatory, to a sell out audience. The first ever original electro acoustic, audio visual work presented at the esteemed classical music institution, Skepper has set a precedent paving the way for new and diverse forms of experimental music and media art, challenging established cultural practices.

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

As a researcher and 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 11 March 2021, he performed “*For Our Freedom*” to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Tohoku, Japan. This was subsequently featured by Forbes and 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.

2023 started with a sold out performance of Praeludium y Fuga at the Melbourne Recital Centre, his next performance is at Phoenix Central Park in Sydney where Skepper will shoot a new music video at Phoenix during the VIVID season.

<https://benjaminskepper.com/>

ARTIST CHRONOLOGY (SELECTED WORKS)

MUSIC COMPOSITION, LIVE PERFORMANCES + FESTIVALS

- 2023 Phoenix Central Park (Sydney, June 2023)
“Praeludium y Fuga” at the Melbourne Recital Centre (Melbourne)
- 2022 “The GABAN” by Brook Andrew, for Art Gallery of NSW, Opening of Sydney Modern (Sydney)
- 2021 “For Our Freedom” Music and Documentary Project (Iwate, Japan)
- 2020 Signal Festival Asia (Bali)
Festival No.23 (Melbourne)
- 2019 “Praeludium y Fuga” at Moscow State Conservatory (Moscow)
Fields Festival (Moscow)
Cosmoscow Art Fair (Moscow)
- 2018 Astana Art Show (Astana)
Signal Festival at Nikola-Lenivets (Russia)
VIVID Ideas at Royal Botanical Gardens (Sydney)
Noise and Fury Festival (17th edition), DOM (Moscow)
- 2017 Science Gallery Melbourne Commission “Pump up your Blood”
Progressive Ginza Festival (Tokyo)
Acoustic Village Festival (Tokyo)
- 2016 MARS Center for Media Art with 404.zero (Центр МАРС) (Moscow)
Experimental Music & Art Expo at Vadima Sidur Museum (Moscow)
Future Ambient Experimental Music Event Launch, Wall&Wall (Tokyo)
Noor Bar with Andrei OID (Moscow)
Klanghaus Festival (Vienna)
Symmetry Festival (Vienna)

TECTONIC Event launch, St Stephens Anglican Church (Melbourne)
 Bennetts Lane Jazz Club (Melbourne)

2015 Beyond the Bright Black Edge of Nowhere, Fed Square (Melbourne)
 Ormond Hall (Melbourne)
 Super Deluxe (Tokyo)

2014 The Hermitage Foundation - Manifesta 10 EU Biennial of Contemporary Art
 (Saint Petersburg, Russia)
 The Kelvin Club (Melbourne)

2013 MONA FOMA Festival Headline (Tasmania)
 Midsummer Nights Dream Festival (Moscow)
 Bennetts Lane Jazz Club (Melbourne)
 The Corner Hotel (Melbourne)
 Theatre Royal (Victoria)

2012 National Gallery of Victoria "Napoleon: Revolution to Empire" Featured Artist, Art
 After Dark (Melbourne)
 Palazzo Serbelloni x AMICA Magazine 50th Anniversary (Milan)
 Venice Carnivale – "The Forbidden Pleasures of Cassnova" (Venice)
 Theatre Royal (Victoria)
 The Toff in Town (Melbourne)

2011 Museo del Novecento Sunday sound improvisations (Milan)
 Fondazione Alda FENDI –Esperimenti di Quaresima (Rome)
 Promotional Video for Fabriano Jazz Festival Umbria (Rome)
 "Rooms 22" Japan Fashion + Design Trade Fair Installation (Tokyo)
 Chapel Off Chapel "Inimitable" album launch (Melbourne)

2010 "Gallery on the Hill" Opening (Tokyo)
 "United Nations Museum" Opening with butoh master Kudo (Tokyo)
 2nd Tokyo Photographic Art Fair - Opening Night Performance (Tokyo)
 ExperIstanbul at 60m2 (Istanbul)
 amfAR Gala Vienna Life Ball VIP event with Calvin Klein (Vienna)

2007 FINA International Swimming Championships at Fed Square (Melbourne)
 National Gallery of Australia 25th Anniversary Performance (Canberra)

2006-2007 Meredith Music Festival, Rainbow Serpent Festival, Folk Rhythm and Life
 Festival, St. Kilda Festival, Tasmanian Forest Festival (Australia) Revolver
 Upstairs (Melbourne), Abercrombie, Beach Hotel (Sydney), Solbar (Brisbane),
 Mojos Bar, Civic Hotel (Perth), Northcote Social Club (Melbourne), Corner Hotel
 (Melbourne), Esplanade Hotel (Melbourne), Evelyn Hotel (Melbourne), East
 Brunswick Club (Melbourne), Sidney Myer Music Bowl (Melbourne) with
 Melbourne Trip-Hop band "Miso"

2003-2004 Environ Sessions with Uberlingua at Loop Bar curated by Brendan
 Palmer (Melbourne)

1991 International Music tour as Suzuki Music Ambassador (New Zealand)

1987-1995 National tours with Carinya Strings Melbourne, The National Boys Choir, Percy
 Grainger Youth Orchestra, Melbourne String Ensemble and as a solo musician

MUSEUM COMMISSIONS + SOUND ART + ART EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 "A Taste of the Senses: Introspection" at Kudan House (Tokyo)
"Hibiki" Exhibition at Tiers Gallery Omotesando (Tokyo)
- 2020 "A Taste of the Senses" Launch at Kudan House (Tokyo)
- 2019 National Gallery of Australia with Nakaya Fujiko (Canberra)
- 2016 Cairotronica Multi Media Festival Installation (Cairo)
Symmetry Festival Exhibition Hungarian Institute (Vienna)
- 2015 World Premiere at Siggraph Asia – 16 ch. multimedia installation with NHK, Canon 8K Camera, Tokyo Denki University and The Hokusai Art Foundation (Kobe)
Sound Art Exhibition C'a D'Oro Gallery Chelsea (New York)
- 2011 "Dirty, Dirty! Sex, Sex!" ArtGig Tokyo Group Exhibition with Yoko Ono (Tokyo)
- 2010 Museo del Novecento Art Museum Inauguration (Milan)
"Sight & Sound: Music & Abstraction in Australian Art" at The Victorian Arts Centre: curator Steven Tonkin (Melbourne)
- 2009-2010 "No Mans Land" at the French Embassy: curator Helene Kelmachter (Tokyo)
- 2009 "requiem d'une marionette" at PLSMIS Art Gallery (Tokyo)
"requiem d'une marionette" at Frank Lloyd Wright's "Jiyu Gakuen" (Tokyo)
- 2007 National Gallery of Australia "Culture Warriors" Indigenous Art Triennial (Canberra)
"Bright Fires" performance artwork at Gertrudes Contemporary Art Spaces with Christian Thompson (Melbourne)

ARTIST RESIDENCIES, FELLOWSHIPS

- 2018 Astana Art Show Residency (Kazakhstan)
- 2017 Science Gallery Melbourne inaugural artist residency (Melbourne)
- 2016 Klanghaus (Vienna)
Moscow State Conservatory Research Fellowship (ongoing) (Russia)
- 2015 St Petersburg State Conservatory of Music (by invitation) (Russia)
- 2009-2010 "No Mans Land" artist residency at the French Embassy (Tokyo)

FASHION | LUXURY COMMISSIONS + EVENT ACTIVATIONS + ART DIRECTION by CONTRAPUNTAL

- 2021 H&M x Simone Rocha – Immersive Media Art Installation + Bespoke Fashion x Art Retail Experience (Tokyo)
- 2018 FENDI private event (Rome)
COEDO Beer Brewery Installation (Japan)
- 2016 VOGUE Fashion's Night Out x Tsvetnoy Central Market Kinetic Media Installation (Moscow)
Gazprom Corporate Event (Moscow)
- 2015 Spring Fashion Week Music Direction and Performance (Melbourne)

- DULUX Color Awards Sound Design and Performance (Melbourne)
 Crown Casino Melbourne VIP Fashion Night Sound Design and Performance (Melbourne)
 SENSIS Corporate Event (Melbourne)
- 2014 Milan Fashion Week Sound Installation for Rachel Skepper Millinery at White Trade Show (Milan)
 Milan Fashion Week for KRIZIA at Palazzo Litta (Milan)
- 2013 Opening for The Four Seasons Hotel Lions Palace with Blancpain and Tourbillon (St. Petersburg)
- 2011 Phillip Treacy Private VIP Fashion Show, Christines (Melbourne)
 FIAT 500 by GUCCI “Chicnic” Car Launch, Italian Embassy (Tokyo)
- 2010 Rooms 22 Fashion + Design Trade Fair 3 day sound installation and performance, Harajuku National Sports Stadium (Tokyo)
 Paris Fashion Week for The Viridi-Anne, Tour Jean sans Peur (Paris)
- 2009 Tokyo Fashion Week for Yohji Yamamoto, Olympic Stadium (Tokyo)
- 2008 Claska Hotel Opening (Tokyo)
- 2007 Australian Greens Party Federal Campaign Launch (Melbourne)
 Victoria Department of Environment Conference (Melbourne)

SOLO ALBUM RELEASES – RELEASED by *contrapuntal* RECORDS JAPAN

- 2015 “Apodictic” at Ormond Hall (Melbourne)
- 2013/14 “In The Field” at Konno Hachiman Shrine (Tokyo)
 at The Kelvin Club (Melbourne)
- 2012 “Inimitable” at Konno Hachiman Shrine (Tokyo)
 at The Toff in Town (Melbourne)
- 2010 “Parnassus” at Konno Hachiman Shrine (Tokyo)
- 2009 “Eika 詠歌” at “Jiyugakuen” Frank Lloyd Wright/T. Ando (Tokyo)

COMPOSITION COMMISSIONS, ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS and FILMWORKS

- 2012 Dom Pérignon composition commission, live media installation and digital campaign (Tokyo)
 “Fairytale in Tokyo” – short film co-producer and Director of Music
- 2010 Electrolux “UltraSilencer” vacuum cleaner live performance + YouTube Advertising Campaign for Press Launch event (Japan)
- 2009-2010 “No Mans Land” Exhibition Documentary Film, French Embassy (Tokyo)
- 2007 “Boodjarri Business” Documentary Film Music Director for the Western Australian Government Department of Health (Perth)
 Qantas Airways “Inflight Entertainment” BGM (Australia)
 ABC TV “First Tuesday Book Club” program BGM (Australia)

MAJOR PRESS EDITORIALS

2023	Limelight Magazine, June Edition
2021	Forbes Japan, March edition
2018	L'Officiel Hommes (Kazakhstan), November Edition
2017	Good Weekend Editorial Artist Feature (Australia)
2015	VICE THUMP AU Interview and Music Video Launch March Edition
2013	Time Out Magazine Russia, July Edition
2012	GQ Japan, December Edition
	AMICA Italy, May Edition
2011	Rolling Stone Magazine Italy, Edition #91
	Rolling Stone Magazine Russia, Edition #84

TELEVISION

2021	NHK Japan Sendai Piano
2010	MTV Italy Interview (Milan)
2009	Tokyo Television Morning News (3 December, Tokyo)
	iTunes Japan "Versus" TBS Television Network (Tokyo)
1990	"New Faces" Channel 9 Television Network (Melbourne)
1989-1991	"Carols By Candlelight" with The National Boys Choir (Melbourne)

SELECTED CHARITY WORK

2013	Police Look Beyond – Featured in Photographic Book by Giovanni Gastel et al. to raise money for Médecins Sans Frontières in response to the Sahel emergency in Africa (Italy)
2010	"Black Wave: Help Haiti" Charity Event for Japan Red Cross (Tokyo)
	"Mode for Charity" for the White Ribbon Alliance and W.H.O (Tokyo)
2004-2006	Youth Affairs Council Victoria Policy Advisory Group Board Member (Melbourne)
2002	Non-Timber Forest Products NGO Human Rights Advocate (Cambodia)
2006	Fundraising event for the Gyuto Monks of Tibet (Melbourne)
1996	Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria Performance (Melbourne)

PRIVATE PERFORMANCES AND PATRONS

2010	Friends of Le Centre du Pompidou (Tokyo)
2009	Archduchess of Austria TB-A 21 Founder, Francesca von Hapsburg (Tokyo)
	Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Nakamatsu (Tokyo)
2007	The Gyuto Monks of Tibet (Melbourne)
1995	Welcome Ceremony for His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet (Melbourne)
1990	Sir Sidney Ballieu Myer (Melbourne)

MUSIC CONFERENCES AND MASTERCLASSES

- 1994-1996 Melbourne String Ensemble directed by Dr. Fintan Murphy (Melbourne)
- 1994-1995 Melbourne Youth Music (Melbourne)
- 1990-1991 “Studio Appia” directed by Richard Owen (Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney)
- 1991 Suzuki Music at Cambridge University (New Zealand)
- Adelaide University with “Carinya Strings” directed by Andrew Schellhorn and patronised by Sir Sidney Ballieu Myer (Adelaide)
- 1989-1991 “The National Boys Choir Australia” directed by Mr. Peter Casey (Melbourne)

GOVERNMENT GRANTS + SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2022 Creative Partnerships Australia
- 2019 Creative Partnerships Australia
- 2019 Australia Japan Foundation
- 2018 Creative Partnerships Australia MatchLab Recipient
- 2016 Creative Victoria Quick Start Grant
- 2002 Melbourne University Exchange Scholarship
- 2002 Association of International Education Japan Scholarship

QUALIFICATIONS

- 2008 JLPT Certificate Level 1 Japanese Language Proficiency
- 2007 Certificate IV in Small Business Management RMIT University Melbourne
- 2006 Admitted to the Supreme Court of Victoria as solicitor/barrister
- 2006 L.L.M University of Melbourne (presently deferred)
- 2005 B.A / L.L.B (hons) University of Melbourne

BRAND AMBASSDORSHIPS | ENDORSEMENTS

Yamaha Music | Ableton | Oyaide

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

“Artist Thinking” (2021), President Publisher (Japan), October 1 (Japanese language)

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Quhenberger R, Skepper, B, Stepanian I. (2020) [C G A T] *Epita Matrix Genetics*: Toward a Visualization of Genetic Codes via “Genetic Music”, MIT Leonardo Journal, Volume 53, Issue 1, February 2020, p.88-89.

Skepper, B., Stepanian I. (2017). *Bioinformatics: Towards a New Culture of Science and Art*, Journal of Biomedical Radioelectronics, Radiotekhnika, Moscow, Russia.

ARTS PUBLICATIONS

Limelight Magazine, Cutting Edge Column, June 2023