

**MICHAEL SALVATORE GREBLA (b.1989)**

**COMPLETE BIOGRAPHY INCLUDING ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF COMPOSING**

Spreading music described as “a testament to the universal strength and endurance of the human spirit” by Cut-Common Magazine, Michael is an international award-winning emerging composer from Western Australia based in New York City. With a deep conviction for the role music play as a unifying mechanism in society, constructing identity and building community, he endeavours to create meaningful and inclusive cultural experiences, bridging tradition and the present through his music. In recent years his works have dealt with ideas of journey, displacement, transience, and spirituality, offering his own deeply introspective expression and examination of the human experience, touching audiences throughout recital venues in Australia, the United States, Europe and Asia.

His work has been recognised with awards from the New York Composer’s Circle, the Zodiac Music Festival in France, as well as with grants from the Australia Council for the Arts and the Australian America Association. In addition to working with institutions to create new music, Michael is entrusted and supported by a diverse community of patrons and co-commissioners to deliver an engaging season of works, projects and appearances each year through his annual ‘crowd-commissioning’ initiative.

His compositional interests rest largely with the creation of concert music. He is an avid writer of chamber and orchestral musical and an active contributor to international music festivals. Michael has presented works at TUTTI Festival, Alba Festival, Connecticut Summerfest, Atlantic Music Festival, Tura New Music’s “Total Huge New Music Festival”, The Australian Youth Orchestra’s National Music Camp, Charlotte New Music Festival and shortly also Indiana State University’s Music Now Festival. At the heart of his career is a joy for collaboration with other artists which has led to projects internationally with groups including ETHEL, Hub New Music, Beo String Quartet, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Youth Orchestra, Atlantic Contemporary Ensemble and the New England Conservatory Symphony Orchestra.

Knowledge and expertise from other fields have permeated and shaped Michael's compositions. The idea for his sinfonietta "Euler's Music" was inspired during his study of mechanics while completing his Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering Degree at the University of Western Australia. Described as "imaginatively constructed" by The West Australian upon its premiere by the West Australian Symphony Orchestra Sinfonietta, the music explored the mechanical principles of gyroscopic precession (demonstrated by the science education toy "Euler's Disk") as a guiding structure for pitch, harmonic rhythm and form. Music reciprocally inspired his engineering research. He earned high distinction for his honours research dissertation, an acoustical examination of the interactions of a grand piano's lid angle with the frequency response of a venue and its implications when accompanying other performers.

In part due to his activities as a photographer, Michael's earlier works heavily explored the incorporation of extramusical influences, particularly visual art, to create cross media pieces with the goal of generating new innovations in musical expression and more engaging and meaningful concert experiences. During this time, he received a commission from the Laurence Wilson Art Gallery to contribute a musical work influenced by the exhibition's theme "Memento Mori". His work "Respiration" for solo bass clarinet was recorded and subsequently published on the album "Memento Mori Compositions" displayed alongside works in the gallery. The work was premiered by Ashley Smith as part of Michael's first public recital and photography exhibition "Portraits of the University of Western Australia," a series of musical and photographic portraits of the grounds, and wildlife of the iconic Perth campus. One work in the series was a commission from St George's College, a work for solo piano titled "Youth" premiered by Adam Pinto for the inauguration of their new Concert Grand Fazioli the year prior. Beyond composing, musical intersections with visual art became the subject of his academic writing at the time. His honours dissertation and research project "Music and visual art in the post-tonal era: a semiotic exploration of Roger Smalley's Diptych: Homage to Brian Blanchflower" investigated the ability of visual art to provide structure to music through examination of a work by composer Roger Smalley that was influenced by the visual art of Brian Blanchflower.

Composition collaborations have also extended outside of concert music to film makers. He has provided soundtracks to documentaries, short films and branded content both in the United States and Australia. Recently he completed the score for

the short film “The Statue” in New York collaborating with director Elina Street, as well as the sound-tracks of a series of mini-documentaries for French Perfumer “Robertet” collaborating with New York director Louise de Nexon. In Australia, Michael’s work has appeared in the soundtracks for projects with the Australian Square Kilometre Array and the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Alongside composing, Michael has established himself as a highly reputable and trusted practicing photographer, helping bring visibility to the stories of countless individuals, artists, and organisations as they spread their message, brand, and special moments. Though quite different to music, Michael finds photography to be an extension of the broader artistic principals and logic that give shape to his compositions. His work has been focused mostly on live event, concert, portraiture, and marketing photography. His works have featured in the publications and content of The West Australian, The Sunday Times, The Post, The Western Suburbs weekly, Perth Concert Hall, Fazioli Pianos, Musica Viva Australia, The West Australian Symphony Orchestra, The University of Western Australia, The Georgian Magazine, The Rotary Club of Western Australia, New England Conservatory, The Australian American Association, The General Sir John Monash Foundation, The Australian Youth Orchestra, The University of New South Wales, The United Church in the City and more.

## **AUDIO ENGINEER & VIDEOGRAPHY**

Since 2012, Michael has operated his own audio recording business to service the needs of the classical music community. Originally named “Grebla Media”, he developed a brand of quality, reliability, and professionalism, using his sensibilities as a musician and technical understanding of acoustics to produce tasteful and flattering recordings for artists. This quickly expanded to also offer high quality multi-camera video recording and postproduction. His work is chiefly focused on location recording outside of a studio including the recording of live concerts, auditions and dedicated recording projects for orchestras, chamber groups and individuals.

With 8 years of experience, he has recorded for the Australian Youth Orchestra, Fremantle Symphony Orchestra, Swan Philharmonic, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, University of Western Australia, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, St George's College, the Australian Music Examination Board, Perth Rotary Vienna Pops Orchestra and countless individuals and groups throughout Australia and the US. He has recorded in major performing arts venues such as Llewellyn Hall, Government House Ballroom Perth, Perth Concert Hall, Callaway Auditorium, Winthrop Hall, West Australian Academy of the Performing Arts, St George's Cathedral Perth, the John Inverarity Music and Drama Centre, St George's College and more.

In 2016 he was a participant in the Australian Youth Orchestra's (AYO) National Music Camp Sound Engineering program, where he received intensive mentorship and training from long time Australian Broadcasting Corporation Sound Engineer Andrew Dixon. During this program he was responsible for recording and mastering all performances of the AYO as well as working with producers from the ABC to run live national radio broadcast from National Music Camp.

### **ARTS LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

In conjunction with his composition career, Michael's passion for music and community is exemplified through his dedication and leadership as an entrepreneur within the field. In 2012 at the age of 23, driven by a desire to see greater participation of ordinary folk in concert music and help retain and develop opportunities for and the talents of his fellow artists, Michael had the vision to create a hub for chamber music for the state of Western Australia – an entity that would create a point of convergence between the community, emerging talent and the greatest national and international artists. While studying acoustical engineering, Michael observed and subsequently tested the acoustic profile of the Hackett Dining Hall at St George's College and identified that in addition to its iconic architecture, it was an acoustically ideal venue for chamber music, lacking only an equally fine instrument. This vision manifested in 2013 with the creation of "Music at St George's" when he subsequently successfully championed the acquisition and installation of a \$250,000 Fazioli concert grand

piano in. The venue and associated programming quickly became West Australia's premiere experience for intimate high quality chamber music, providing opportunities to emerging artists whilst also through strategic partnerships with leading arts organization including Musica Viva Australia, The University of Western Australia and The West Australian Symphony Orchestra deliver significant international talent to West Australians including Maxim Vengarov, Angela Hewitt, Kathryn Stott, and more.

Michael's tenure as "Director" of Music at St George's lasted until the afternoon he left for the United States to pursue his Masters, just over three and a half years, and in that time had produced and curated some 55 bespoke concerts experiences engaging hundreds of performers and welcomed over 13,500 audience members. Among these were the establishment of an annual concert series including "Christmas in the Quad" which continues to attract audiences upward of 2000, a state-wide intercollegiate piano competition, the residents' "Classic's Dinner" as well as cultural collaborations with organizations such as the Wanger Society and Confucius institute.

As the "Music at St George's" matured, Michael continued to recruited two music fellows, Raymond Yong and Prof. Paul Wright, and established three resident ensembles as part of a mentoring program to foster excellence and provide a platform for emerging talent in the state of Western Australia. The mentoring program was a huge success, with ensembles winning multiple awards in their first year and for the first-time spreading music in the community beyond St George's. In the years since program participants earned entry into some of the world top institutions including Yale, Royal Academy of Music, Royal Conservatory in The Hague and the National Academy of Music in addition to prestigious scholarships including the Fulbright and Monash Scholarships.

The impact of the initiative was broadly recognised, highly valued and cherished by the community, raising in excess of \$800,000 from supporters in the form of scholarships, endowments and instruments to support promising young artists and to ensure the program's enduring impact and longevity. The program has

continued to grow under the guidance of an advisory board and remains an important cultural institution for the State of Western Australia.

Michael completed a Master of Music with Honours at the New England Conservatory where he studied with Kati Agocs with the support of highly competitive scholarships from the General Sir John Monash Foundation, The New England Conservatory and American Australian Association. Prior, he completed a Bachelor of Music at the University of Western Australia with First Class Honours studying with Christopher Tonkin and James Ledger and was awarded the University's Matilda Prize for Cultural Excellence and the West Australian Wagner Societies Bayreuth Prize. He was resident during his studies at St George's College where he resided as the Wolff Scholar (2011, 2012, 2013) and Knight Scholar (2014).

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