

Amy Dickson



Biography

Leading the way in her field, saxophonist Amy Dickson, has gained renown in all corners of the globe and is recognized widely for her remarkable and distinctive tone and exceptional musicality and technique. Her unique style and impressive versatility have inspired composers throughout the world. Her passion for new music has led to the creation of a number of works and she is constantly in demand as a soloist, regularly appearing with the world's leading orchestras. She plays with a beauty of tone and elegance which led Ivan March of *Gramophone* magazine to write:

“She has an individual and unusual tone, luscious, silky-smooth, sultry and voluptuous by turns; her phrasing is beautifully finished, her control of dynamic infinitely subtle. She plays very songfully, is often gentle and restrained, at times sounding like the chalumeaux of a clarinet. But she can rise to a passionate climax, as in *Danza de la moza donosa*, or slinkily respond to Debussy's *La plus que lente*.”

She performs with orchestras including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Dickson is deeply committed to the development of new repertoire for the saxophone, and has made a substantial contribution to the orchestral, chamber and solo repertoire. Whilst proving to be a brilliant interpreter of contemporary music, she is equally devoted as a champion of established saxophone repertoire, regularly performing the concerti of Glazunov, Debussy, Villa Lobos, Ibert, Larsson and Milhaud. In 2010 she performed Harrison Birtwistle's *Panic* with Bramwell Tovey, David Jones and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

She regularly commissions new works, and makes arrangements of existing works from other instrumental repertoire. She has performed her arrangement of Philip Glass' *Violin Concerto* with a number of orchestras, and gave the first performances of it with Otto Tausk and the Auckland Philharmonia, and also the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, in 2008. In 2012 she returns to Australia to perform it with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Benjamin Northey. Her arrangement has been published by Chester Novello.

Currently, composers writing for her include Peter Sculthorpe, Geoffrey Gordon, Piet Swerts and Jessica Wells. In the past, Ross Edwards, Graham Fitkin, Steve Martland, Huw Watkins, Martin Butler, Michael Csanyi-Wills, Cecilia McDowall and Timothy Salter have all dedicated works to her. In 2012 she will perform a new concerto by Ross Edwards, *Full Moon Dances*, with the Adelaide, Perth, Hobart and Sydney Symphony Orchestras.

Edwards also arranged his oboe concerto, *Bird Spirit Dreaming* for Dickson, and the first performance was with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Nicholas Milton, in May 2011. In October 2011, she gave the first performance of a new arrangement of Graeme Koehne's concerto, *InFlight Entertainment*, with Brad Cohen and the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, at the opening Gala concert at the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.



In recital and chamber music Dickson has appeared at venues including the Wigmore Hall, Bridgewater Hall, and the Queen Elizabeth Hall in the UK; in cities including Prague, Amsterdam, Harare, Beirut, Hong Kong and throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Her duo partners have included Catherine Milledge, Martin Cousin and Simon Mulligan, and she is currently presenting works for saxophone and string quartet with the Mandelring and Chilingirian string quartets. As a chamber musician she has appeared at festivals including the George Enescu, Cheltenham, Al Bustan, and Harare festivals, and the Australian Festival of Chamber Music.

Dickson's impressive discography includes recordings of a variety of repertoire. A recording artist for Sony Music, Dickson has now released two critically acclaimed albums on the RCA Red Seal label. Her first, *Smile*, was released in 2008. Her second album, *Glass, Tavener, Nyman*, comprises the Violin Concerto by Philip Glass and *The Protecting Veil* by John Tavener (both arranged by Dickson), and *Where the Bee Dances* by Michael Nyman. The album was featured as Editor's Choice in Gramophone magazine, March 2010. She has also made recordings of McDowall's concerto *Dancing Fish*, Larsson's *Konzert* and Dubois' *Divertissement*, and has appeared on Bollywood composer Mithoon Sharma's album *Tu Hi Mere Rab Ki Tarah Hai*.

In 2010, with Carl Davis, Melvyn Tan and the Philharmonia Orchestra, Dickson recorded Davis' suite from the film score for *Hotel du Lac*, which he had especially arranged for saxophone, piano and orchestra. In 2011 she joined the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and George Vass to make world premiere recordings of Holbrooke's saxophone concerto, and *Seven Country Dances* by Richard Rodney Bennett.

Born in Sydney, Dickson made her concerto debut aged 16, playing the Dubois Concerto with Henryk Pisarek and the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra, and subsequently became a recipient of the James Fairfax Australian Young Artist of the Year award. On her 18th birthday she recorded the Dubois *Divertissement* with John Harding and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. The following year she moved to London where she took the Jane Melber Scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music with Kyle Horch, and the Conservatorium van Amsterdam with Arno Bornkamp. During this time she became the first saxophonist to be awarded the Gold Medal at the Royal Overseas League Competition (2004), the Prince's Prize (2005), and to become the winner of the Symphony Australia Young Performer of the Year Competition (2004).

Dickson is an ambassador of the Prince's Trust and the Australian Children's Music Foundation. She is a Selmer Paris Performing Artist, is dressed by Armani, and is endorsed by REN skincare.

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