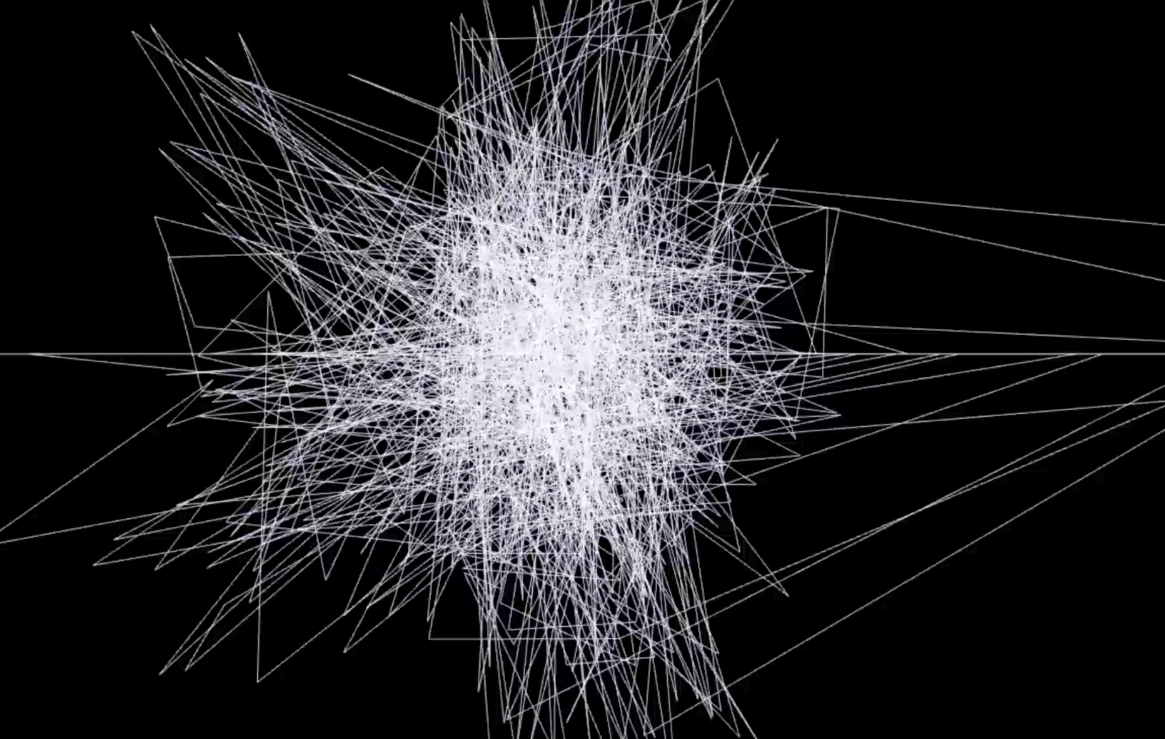




# **Electroluminescence**

19 January 2022 | 7:45pm | Lyric's Underground



## About the Show

It may seem odd that a classical guitarist is performing a concert entirely of works for electric guitar. After stumbling across the multimedia works of Icelandic guitarist/composer Gulli Bjornsson, I became intensely interested in the expressive possibilities of the electric guitar, particularly its pairing with visual elements to create immersive multimedia works that are greater than the sum of their parts.

Gulli graciously agreed to write for me, which sparked a commissioning project to create new works for electric guitar and visual projections, as well as a collaboration with Perth-based photographic artist Lyle Branson. This evening's performance is the culmination of that process, and I am tremendously grateful to have had the support of Tura New Music in making it happen.

- Jonathan Fitzgerald



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*Cover: "The Fall", Lyle Branson, 2020*

*Above: Video capture from Victor Arul's "Akrasia", 2021*

# Program

*Performed by Jonathan Fitzgerald, electric guitar*

## **Until it Blazes\* (2001)**

visuals by Cory Arcangel (b. 1978)

**Eve Beglarian**

(b. 1958)

## **Overgrown Towers\*\* (2021)**

visuals by Lyle Branson (b. 1980)

**James Ledger**

(b. 1966)

## **Akrasia\*\* (2021)**

visuals by Victor Arul

**Victor Arul**

(b. 2000)

*with Victor Arul, live electronics*

## **For Wiek\* (1994)**

visuals by Lyle Branson

**Alison Isadora**

(b. 1962)

## **Svart Hvít Sky á Himmi\*\* (2019)**

visuals by Gulli Bjornsson

**Gulli Bjornsson**

(b. 1991)

## **Resurrection Power\* (2009)**

visuals by Jan Boiten (b. 1963)

**Jacob ter Veldhuis**

(b. 1951)

**\*\*World Premiere**

**\*Australian Premiere**

# About the Works

## **Until it Blazes (2001) - Eve Beglarian (USA)**

*Until it Blazes* is a minimalist work of variable duration for piano or plucked string instrument, digital delay, and optional visuals, inspired by a line attributed to Jesus in the gnostic Gospel of Thomas. The stereo delay sets up a perpetual 2-against-3 cross rhythm, against which short melodic patterns are repeated. By accenting different notes within a repeating pattern, new melodies emerge from the accents, cutting against the pattern's grouping and creating yet another layer of polyrhythm. For example, if in a repeating three-note pattern every fourth note is accented, a new melody will emerge; if every fifth note is accented, a different melody will emerge. *Until it Blazes* is structured around the gradual growth and decay of these various melodic patterns, building to a climatic conclusion as the simmering fire grows to a blaze and consumes the sound.

The visuals are by Cory Arcangel (b. 1978), a contemporary American multimedia artist. The video is essentially a data reduction, presenting a black and white pixellated view of a streetscape, which slowly increases in resolution over the course of the work. The pixellation creates a "sizzling" effect, visually alluding to the apocalyptic theme of a world on fire. In addition to the visual aesthetics, this choice was also practical - Arcangel wanted to make a video that could be sent easily, which in 2001 (when most people were still on dial-up internet), necessitated very small file sizes.

[www.evbvd.com](http://www.evbvd.com)

## **Overgrown Towers (2021) - James Ledger (WA)**

Inspired by the return of flora and fauna to the Chernobyl exclusion zone, *Overgrown Towers* is a work for solo electric guitar. Heavily influenced by rock music, the piece features driving rhythms, dissonance, and grungy distortion throughout. It begins with a study of the open strings of the instrument, exploring the timbral differences that result from playing the same pitch on different strings, before moving on to a harmonic language permeated by crunchy dissonance.

While Ledger conceived *Overgrown Towers* as an abstract instrumental



work without a visual component, with his permission Perth-based photographic artist Lyle Branson has developed a series of still images to accompany the piece.

[www.jamesledger.com](http://www.jamesledger.com)

### **Akrasia (2021) - Victor Arul (WA)**

Written for electric guitar, live electronic processing in Ableton, and live visuals in Max MSP, *Akrasia* marks Arul's first venture into composing a multimedia work, and is to my knowledge the first work for solo electric guitar and visuals by an Australian composer. The most experimental work on the program, *Akrasia* utilises two guitars: one is played "traditionally", while the other lays flat on a table, prepared with alligator clips, and is played at various points with a piece of twine, a metal rod, and a bass bow. The work is divided into three distinct sections: the first explores the sounds of alligator clips rebounding off the strings; the second presents a glacially slow recurring pattern juxtaposed with moments of frenetic electronic processing; the third features unconventional playing techniques, all with heavy distortion and effects that create a wall of sound, bringing the work to a climactic conclusion.

Victor also developed the visuals for this work, which are randomly generated interactive three dimensional objects in black space. The shapes respond in real-time to the sounds of the live performance, and are directly correlated to the input amplitude - the louder the sound, the bigger and more opaque the object.

[www.victorarul.xyz](http://www.victorarul.xyz)

### **For Wiek (1994) - Alison Isadora (NZ)**

*For Wiek*, for electric guitar with octaviser, e-bow, and whammy bar, explores extremes of register and timbre. Through the use of an octave pedal, Isadora expands the range of the guitar to a full five octaves, often juxtaposing extremes of range in close succession. Similarly, timbres (*sul tasto* - by the neck, and *sul ponticello* - by the bridge) are precisely notated and often starkly juxtaposed. Relaxed and atmospheric, the work has a longing, wistful quality, with mildly dissonant, jazz-inspired harmonies.

*For Wiek* is only other piece on the program which was not originally

conceived as a multimedia work. Lyle Branson has again developed still images to accompany the music.

[www.sounz.org.nz](http://www.sounz.org.nz)

### **Svart Hvít Sky á Himmi (2019) - Gulli Bjornsson (Iceland)**

Gulli Bjornsson has carved out a niche creating multimedia works which combine electronics, live instruments and visuals to explore experiences in nature. *Svart Hvít Sky á Himmi* is one such work, scored for electric guitar, live electronics and visuals. The title translates to “Black and White Clouds in the Sky”, and was inspired by the dual nature of clouds - they can be beautiful and peaceful, but can also quickly become an ominous source of fear and even destruction.

One common feature among many of Gulli’s compositions is the use of complex preprogrammed live processing effects which play an integral role in creating the form and structure of the piece. This work is no exception - the effects transform over the course of the piece, with the work’s overall dramatic trajectory directly linked to the audio processing. One of the most aurally prominent effects is the rhythmic envelope generator, which utilises a step sequencer to create rhythmic patterns out of sound disappearing from the texture.

Gulli has also developed the visuals for this work, which feature real-time audio reactive manipulations of a short 30 second stock footage clip of moving clouds. Using Max MSP, Gulli has created swirling ominous dark grey cloud formations that emerge and decay against a black backdrop and respond to the sounds of the live performance.

[www.gullibjornsson.org](http://www.gullibjornsson.org)

### **Resurrection Power (2009) - Jacob ter Veldhuis (Netherlands)**

Dutch composer Jacob ter Veldhuis (better known as “Jacob TV”) has built a career specialising in multimedia works structured around samples of the human voice, in this case a South Carolina televangelist’s fiery (and thoroughly creepy) TV sermon. Perhaps the most accessible work on the program, ter Veldhuis’ setting is essentially a jazz fusion tune peppered with sound samples of the preacher’s voice, which serve as a recurring leitmotif.

[www.jacobtv.net](http://www.jacobtv.net)

# About the Artists

American-born Australian classical guitarist **Dr Jonathan Fitzgerald** is a multi-award winning performer and educator, maintaining a career at the intersection of performance, teaching and artistic research. Jonathan's artistic interests are diverse, ranging from traditional classical guitar repertoire to experimental works for electric guitar and electronics.

An in-demand performer, past concert highlights include performances with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Opera (Verdi's *Otello*), radio performances for ABC Radio National, RTRFM (WA), WXXI and WCNY (New York), and solo concerts across the United States and Australia. His playing has been recognised through numerous awards, including the Great Lakes International Guitar Competition in which he was a prize-winning finalist and winner of the "Audience Choice" award.

A dedicated educator, Jonathan serves as Chair of Strings & Guitar at UWA's Conservatorium of Music. He received his formal education in the United States, earning Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music, and a doctorate from the Eastman School of Music.

**Lyle Branson** is a Perth-based photographic artist. In 2018, Branson was selected to present his work at the Rotterdam Photo Festival in the Netherlands as part Perth Centre for Photography exhibition program. Branson has been a finalist in the Fremantle Art Centre Print Award 2015, Perth Centre for Photography CLIP Award in 2016, 2018, and the City of Joondalup 2016 Community Invitation Art Award. He has also taken part in the Art Residence program at Perth Centre for Photography and Fremantle Art Centre. He has held solo exhibitions at Central TAFE Showcase Gallery 2012, Free Range Gallery 2015, Perth Centre for Photography 2018, and Victoria Park Centre for the Arts 2021. Branson studied Visual Arts at TAFE and Edith Cowan University.

**Victor Arul** is a composer who has previously studied under Elliott Gyger at the University of Melbourne and James Ledger at the University of Western Australia. Victor has collaborated with a variety of groups including the Australian Youth Orchestra, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, the Perth International Arts Festival, Piñata Percussion and the University of Western Australia's wind and symphony orchestras. Some of Victor's upcoming projects include pieces for the Halcyon Ensemble, the Melbourne Chamber Choir, a subset of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, and an artist residency at Bundanon. Victor has won numerous awards and is a Schenberg fellow.



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