

# SONYA LIFSCHITZ

**Sonya Lifschitz** is an award-winning Ukrainian-Australian pianist, performance-maker, pedagogue, artistic researcher, and cultural leader at the forefront of classical and contemporary art music. With repertoire spanning from 15th century Faenza Codex to works written for her today, she is known for her fiercely imaginative, daring collaborations across theatre, dance, film, visual art, and spoken word to create work that positions art music at the cutting edge of interdisciplinary performance practices. Described as *"a life force of extraordinary density and capacity"* and praised by the New York Times and The Age for her *"dynamic"* and *"powerful"* performances, Sonya's artistry combines bold adventurousness with *"miraculous keyboard technique and musicianship"* (Woodstock Times). Her unwavering commitment to advancing the sustainability and impact of art music practices in Australia and the uncompromising rigour she brings to her work was recognised in 2024 through the prestigious Australian Women in Music 'Excellence in Classical Music' Award.

A distinguished, high-profile performer, Sonya's work has been championed by some of the world's leading festivals and venues, including the Barbican Centre (London), Venice Biennale (Italy), De Doelen (Rotterdam), Bargemusic (New York), Detroit Institute of Art (USA), and all of Australia's major festivals including Adelaide Festival, Sydney Festival, Melbourne Festival, Brisbane Festival, Canberra International Music Festival, Darwin Festival, Extended Play (Sydney), Metropolis (Melbourne), MONAFOMA (Hobart), Four Winds (Bermagui), and Ten Days on the Island (Tasmania).

Dedicated to pushing the boundaries of musical expression and redefining the concert experience in the 21st century, Sonya has collaborated with Australia's leading composers and artists from a diverse range of disciplines to create innovative, culturally relevant, and socially urgent performance works. Notable collaborations include video artist Angelica Mesiti, sound designer Bob Scott, and composer/director Max Lyandvert (Assembly, which represented Australia at the 2019 Venice Biennale); choreographer Rafael Bonachela and the Sydney Dance Company (YEARS, music-dance film which premiered in 2021 to an international audience of 6000 at the Brighton Digital Festival, UK); dancer-choreographer Martin Del Amo (Mirage, commissioned by Campbelltown Arts Centre and presented by the 2022 Sydney Festival); performance artist Christine Johnston (Clothing Music, 2022, Crumb's Lyre, 2019, Above/Below, 2017, Cosmic Mechanics, 2016, presented by Melbourne Recital Centre, City Recital Hall, Ten Days on the Island, Canberra International Music Festival, UKARIA, BackStage, and Australian National Academy of Music); composer/media artist Damian Barbeler and interactive video artist Tim Gruchy (Duet for One, premiered at 2025 Canberra International Music Festival).

**"A recital for the modern day. Lifschitz is a theatre actor, an orchestra and a soloist all at the same time."** The Age, 2019

A fierce advocate for new Australian music, Sonya has commissioned and premiered works by Australian composers Kate Neal, Robert Davidson, Alice Chance, Damian Barbeler, Andrew Schultz, Jessica Wells, Felicity Wilcox, Anthony Lyons, Larry Sitsky, Bree Van Reyk, Max Lyandvert and Steve Adam among others. She regularly works with pioneering new music ensembles, including Ensemble Offspring, Topology, and members from Clocked Out, Bang on a Can All-Stars (USA), International Contemporary Ensemble (USA) and Eighth Blackbird (USA), to champion music of the 21st century. From 2014-2016 she was the Artistic Co-Director of award-winning new music ensemble Press, Play, receiving the Contemporary Masters Award from the Melbourne Recital Centre in 2015.

A regular ABC Classic presenter, Sonya has been featured on ABC and SBS TV and on national radio, including ABC Classic's Legends, Duet, Festival of Female Composers, New Waves and ABC Radio National's Music Show. As a Fulbright Scholar, she studied with the legendary American pianist-conductor Leon Fleisher at the Peabody Conservatory of Music (John Hopkins University, USA) and holds a PhD from the University of Melbourne.

In addition to making work, performing, and researching, Sonya is a passionate educator who strives to inspire and nurture the unique creative potential in all her students. She is an ardent advocate for music as a powerful agency to affect positive social change and uplift the human spirit. In pursuit of pedagogical excellence, she has designed and delivered a range of music courses and ensembles at the University of NSW that are unanimously recognized by peers and students as innovative, boundary-pushing, transformative, and current with the increasing demands of the creative industries. As leader of Music Creative Practice at UNSW, Sonya fosters bold, resilient, independent, and rigorously trained artists equipped to thrive in a rapidly changing cultural landscape.