

THE AUSTRALIAN

Eclectic Richter draws on varied DNA to reimagine Vivaldi's seasons

MURRAY BLACK THE AUSTRALIAN NOVEMBER 25, 2014 12:00AM



German-born, British-raised composer Max Richter has absorbed minimalism, pop, rock and electronica into his musical DNA. Source: Supplied

TODAY'S contemporary classical composers are an eclectic bunch, absorbing influences from a range of genres. These creators are playing a key role in determining how the future of the art form will evolve.

German-born, British-raised composer Max Richter is typical of their ilk. He studied at London's Royal Academy of Music and with Italian composer Luciano Berio but he also has absorbed minimalism, pop, rock and electronica into his musical DNA.

His Sydney Opera House concert offered two quite different examples of his style. The 2010 work *Infra* began life as a 25-minute ballet score for the Royal Ballet, which Richter has expanded to almost double the length of the original. Scored for piano, string quintet and electronics, *Infra* comprises a series of 13 distinct yet related sections.

Richter juxtaposed eerie washes of electronic sound with minimalist-style repeated piano phrases and

rippling, intensely expressive string figures.

Tempos generally were slow and steady, and the work's colours were largely subdued and shadowy. The effect was hypnotic and haunting, even despite the largely superfluous projected images.

In places, Richter's piano riffs took on a distinctly Schubertian tinge, echoing the sound-world of the impromptus and moments musicaux without obviously quoting them. It exemplified his ability to pay homage to the past while looking forward to the future.

The main drawcard for the audience was Richter's 2012 *Recomposed by Max Richter: Vivaldi, The Four Seasons*. Commissioned by his record label Deutsche Grammophon, *Recomposed* was a massive hit, topping the iTunes classical chart in Britain, the US and Germany. The idea of rearranging and remixing the popular *Four Seasons* is not new. What Richter has done, however, is quite different. He has genuinely recomposed it into a new work. It is exhilarating and intriguing, but also bizarre and unsettling.

In some movements (Autumn 1, Summer 1), Richter has kept long stretches of Vivaldi's original before completely reframing it by bending the rhythms to move them in entirely new directions. Elsewhere, he takes the merest snatches of Vivaldi's themes and transforms them by applying the repeated phrase-pattern style of minimalism and dance music.

Backed by Richter's grinding, propulsive electronic undertow and tight-knit, energetic accompaniments from her Wordless Music Orchestra colleagues, soloist Yuki Numata Resnick impressed with her clearly articulated realisation of the virtuosic passagework. In the slower movements, Resnick's fluidly phrased, warm-toned solos floated above the mesmeric, often high-pitched backdrop.

Only the slightly compressed sound of the orchestral amplification detracted from what was otherwise a stimulating musical experience.

×

Share this story

Facebook ([http://facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/music/eclectic-richter-draws-on-varied-dna-to-reimagine-vivaldis-seasons/story-fniwj43s-1227133389296&t=Eclectic Richter draws on varied DNA to reimagine Vivaldi's seasons](http://facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/music/eclectic-richter-draws-on-varied-dna-to-reimagine-vivaldis-seasons/story-fniwj43s-1227133389296&t=Eclectic+Richter+draws+on+varied+DNA+to+reimagine+Vivaldi's+seasons))

Twitter ([https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/music/eclectic-richter-draws-on-varied-dna-to-reimagine-vivaldis-seasons/story-fniwj43s-1227133389296&text=Eclectic Richter draws on varied DNA to reimagine Vivaldi's seasons](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/music/eclectic-richter-draws-on-varied-dna-to-reimagine-vivaldis-seasons/story-fniwj43s-1227133389296&text=Eclectic+Richter+draws+on+varied+DNA+to+reimagine+Vivaldi's+seasons))

LinkedIn ([http://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&url=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/music/eclectic-richter-draws-on-varied-dna-to-reimagine-vivaldis-seasons/story-fniwj43s-1227133389296&title=Eclectic Richter draws on varied DNA to reimagine Vivaldi's seasons](http://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&url=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/music/eclectic-richter-draws-on-varied-dna-to-reimagine-vivaldis-seasons/story-fniwj43s-1227133389296&title=Eclectic+Richter+draws+on+varied+DNA+to+reimagine+Vivaldi's+seasons))

Google (<https://plus.google.com/share?url=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/music/eclectic-richter-draws-on-varied-dna-to-reimagine-vivaldis-seasons/story-fniwj43s-1227133389296>)

Email ([mailto:?body=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/music/eclectic-richter-draws-on-varied-dna-to-reimagine-vivaldis-seasons/story-fniwj43s-1227133389296&subject=Eclectic Richter draws on varied DNA to reimagine Vivaldi's](mailto:?body=http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/music/eclectic-richter-draws-on-varied-dna-to-reimagine-vivaldis-seasons/story-fniwj43s-1227133389296&subject=Eclectic+Richter+draws+on+varied+DNA+to+reimagine+Vivaldi's))

seasons)