

# MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

9-24 OCT 2009

UK

# SIREN

BY RAY LEE



## Arts House, Meat Market

5 Blackwood St, North Melbourne

Tue 20 – Fri 23 Oct at 6.30pm & 8.30pm

Sat 24 & Sun 25 Oct at 4.30pm & 6.30pm

45min no interval

## WARNING

Low-level lighting, the audience will be standing for the duration of this presentation

Presented by Melbourne International Arts Festival by arrangement with Arts Projects Australia

Photos: Ray Lee & Steven Hicks

[www.invisible-forces.com](http://www.invisible-forces.com)

[www.artsprojectsaustralia.com.au](http://www.artsprojectsaustralia.com.au)

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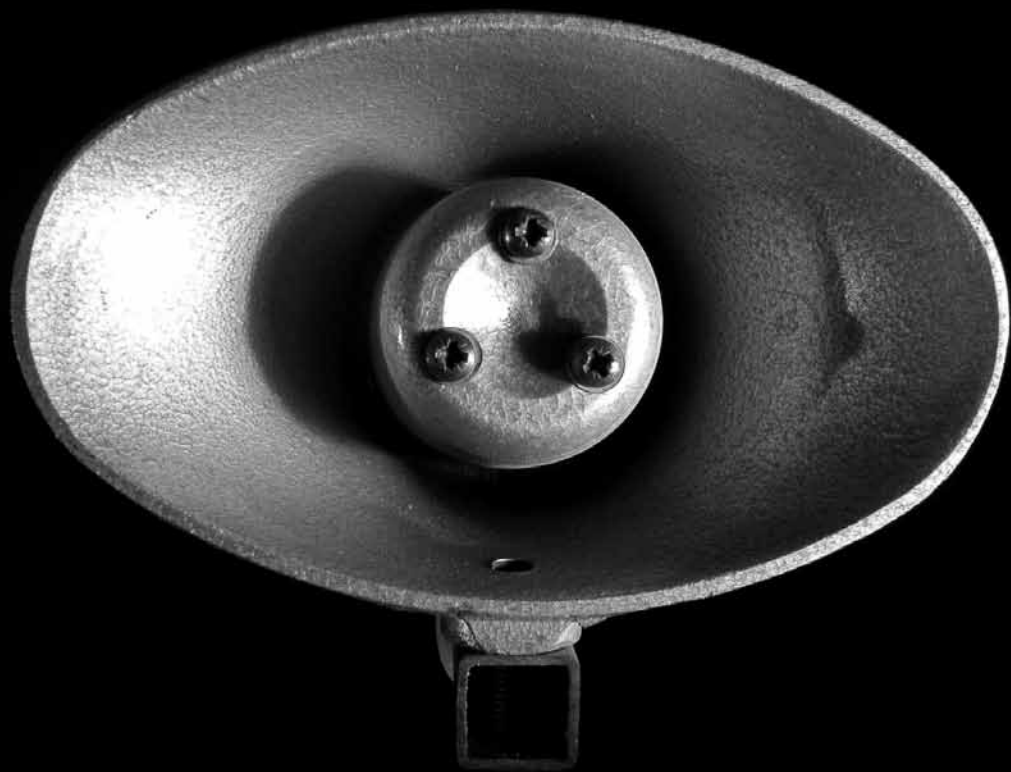
# CREDITS

**Creator** Ray Lee

**Performer** Harry Dawes

**Producer** Simon Chatterton

**Technician** Stavroula Kounadea



# NOTE ON SIREN

BY RAY LEE

*Siren* was originally created for a disused F1-11 Fighter Jet hanger at a former US Air Force base in the UK. The title came from the associations that this bleak, ex-cold war location suggested. Yet the sound that *Siren* makes, when all the arms are spinning and the sound is at its most intense, is more like a strange ethereal choir than the warning air raid tones you might expect from the word siren. In this sense the play on the word's associations with both air raid warnings and with the Sirens of mythology, whose song enchanted passing sailors, seemed appropriate to me. It is a sound that can only be experienced live. The Doppler Effect, generated by the whirling arms, means that wherever you stand in the space the sound will be different, and also the fact that the sound is being physically propelled around the room means that the air almost seems to be vibrating, oscillating with sound.

For the audience *Siren* is a piece to explore, to investigate, and to discover. I do not impose an intended meaning on the audience, but audiences rarely come out of the experience unmoved. The openness of the work means that audiences are able to make their own associations and the mesmerising quality of the spinning sound and light makes the work a space for not knowing, not understanding. For me the work is successful if it allows space for wonderment, a step outside our rational lives.

My own view of *Siren* is as a vision of the future of sound, the future of live electronic music, but one envisioned from maybe a hundred years ago. I try to work from first principles and make sculptures, machines and sounds that I have created to do what I want them to do. Reusing, reinventing, reclaiming technology to make it a tangible, pliable media to be used or abused and not locked up in inaccessible black boxes with 'access for qualified personnel only'. As such I align myself with the growing movement of circuit benders and hardware hackers who seek to reclaim control over the technology that runs our lives.



# BIOGRAPHIES

## RAY LEE

Ray Lee is an artist, composer and performer. His work investigates his fascination with the hidden world of electro-magnetic radiation and in particular how sound can be used as evidence of invisible phenomena. He is interested in the way that science and philosophy represent the universe, and his work questions the orthodoxies that emerge, and submerge, according to the currently fashionable trends. He creates spinning, whirling and pendulous sound installations and performances that explore 'circles of ether,' the invisible forces that surround us.

*Siren* was a hit at the 2007 Edinburgh Fringe winning a Herald Angel Award and receiving 5 star reviews. *Siren* was featured at the 2007 Ars Electronica Festival in Austria and has gone on to tour the world with performances in 12 countries including the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and several countries in Europe.

His recent work *Force Field* received a Digital Music award at the 2008 Prix Ars Electronica.

## HARRY DAWES

For the last 25 years, Harry Dawes has worked continuously as a musician, composer, photographer and teacher. Based in the UK, he has worked with such companies as IOU Theatre and Motionhouse Dance Company and in 1993 formed the performance company Lee and Dawes with Ray Lee. Lee and Dawes toured for seven years, creating work about radio waves,

magnetism and the ether, using live music, stereoscopic projections, Super-8 films, magic and text. Dawes has also worked extensively as a trombonist and thereminist, currently playing in Pram, Birmingham's ulterior indie band, Tim Hill's brass laden band Tongues of Fire, and lounge core duo Big Hair. He has worked for 20 years with people with learning difficulties and currently trains teachers in the use of music with children with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

## SIMON CHATTERTON

Simon Chatterton works as an independent producer creating multi-disciplinary arts events and collaborative performance projects. His background spans 18 years working in the performing arts as a programmer, promoter and Festival Director. His main areas of focus include outdoor performance, music, visual theatre, circus and site-specific work. His work has ranged from commissioning large-scale outdoor spectacle for audiences of several thousand to creating site-specific performances in unusual locations. Recent projects include *Inside Out* – a festival of large-scale international work across a range of outdoor locations in Dorset, UK and *Luminox* – a nocturnal fire installation and contemporary music event for 25,000 people in the historic city centre of Oxford, England. Simon is closely involved in the strategic development of contemporary site-specific performance and works regularly as a consultant and adviser to cultural organisations and funding bodies.

