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# WEST END COMPOSERS COLLECTIVE

Founded by trumpeter/composer Laura Kahle and pianist/arranger Steve Newcomb, the 10-piece West End Composers Collective began in 2003 as a monthly gathering of Brisbane's creative improvising musicians, composers and arrangers to workshop original works at the Tongue and Groove café, West End. With the success of these monthly gatherings, the growth in repertoire and a grant from Arts Queensland, they launched their debut album "Downstream" in February 2004. This launch supported internationally acclaimed artists Ingrid Jensen (Trumpet) and Jon Wikan (Drums), on tour from the USA.

Since the collective's inception, it has appeared at Brisbane's more established venues such The Zoo, Jazzworx Club, Rics Café and held a regular monthly performance at the Milk Bar in Paddington. In late 2004 they were guests at the Melbourne Women's International Jazz Festival, a performance broadcast live on ABC Radio National. The group was featured in concerts of original music written by saxophonist Rafael Karlen at the Metro Arts theatre, The Brisbane Jazz Club and the Jazzworx club throughout 2006-7.

They performed at the 2006 Valley Jazz Festival, the 2007 Palmer Street Jazz Festival in Townsville with special guests Kristin Berardi (voice) and Dave Theak (saxophone) and at the 2008 Brisbane Jazz Festival. Mace Francis from Perth was featured in 2008 as a guest composer with the ensemble.

In 2008, the group recorded their second album, "Driving Hat", featuring original compositions for the ensemble by Rafael Karlen. This project was funded with financial assistance from the Australia Council for the Arts and the Foundation for Young Australians and was released in August, 2008 through Pinnacles music. Two tracks from this CD were nominated for the finals of the Jazz category in the 2008 Qsong Songwriting competition.

*"On "Driving Hat", excellent Brisbane big band, The West End Composers Collective, plays the nicely individualistic music of Swedish-born Australian-raised saxophonist Rafael Karlen. Megan Washington and Hanna Macklin sing a piece each and guitarist James Sherlock, baritone saxophonist Graeme Norris and trombonist Mikael Strand shine in this selection of 10 of Rafael's compositions and arrangements that show that the little big band is alive and well in Australia."*

-Lucky Oceans, The Planet ABC Radio National

In 2009, the ensemble will tour nationally through financial support from Arts Queensland and the Sound Travellers initiative.