

// **Helen Svoboda is a double bassist, vocalist, composer and nature-enthusiast.**

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— Andrew Ford, The Music Show ABC

“Extraordinary.”

— LIMELIGHT Magazine

Helen Svoboda is a double bassist, vocalist, composer and nature-enthusiast. Her work explores the melodic potential of the contemporary double bass, intricately weaving extended techniques and overtones with vocal tessiture amidst abstract song-writing and vegetable-themed compositions. “A musician who absolutely defies categorisation” (Andrew Ford – The Music Show, ABC), her performance practice emits a childlike, quirky energy, with a flair for "allowing difficult ideas to sound whimsical and free" (Kristin Berardi, AUS).

ARTISTRY //

With Finnish/Australian heritage, Svoboda lived and studied in the Netherlands and Germany between the years of 2018-20, specialising in soloistic double bass composition. Driven by the spontaneity of improvisation and the novelty of large wooden instruments, she emits a carefree, quirky energy into all aspects of her artistic practice. Her inner being channels facets of childlike playfulness and raw intensity amidst a “purposeful storm” (Charlotte Haesen, Jazz Maastricht), her music combining “soaring vocalisations ... twisted with intense displays of double bass” (Scott Murphy, Heavy Blog is Heavy 2020), with the sole aim of honest, soulful sentiment.

PROJECTS/ALBUMS //

Fueled by strange sonic frequencies, Svoboda has released albums across a substantial number of her own original projects to date: her solo releases **I Heard the Clouds** (Made Now Music, November 2022), **dormant, I lay.** (January 2021) and **Vegetable Bass** (Made Now Music, June 2020); Ambient, environmentally-themed alternative rock band/2019 QLD Jazz Music Award Winners **The Biology of Plants (Vol 2- Art as Catharsis 2019)**; Two albums with **MEAT SHELL**, her experimental-folk duo with saxophonist Andrew Saragossi (winners of Maastricht Jazz Awards 2020: **Since Subito** - Earshift Music 2021; **Afar** - Made Now Music 2019); minimalist chamber trio **Helen Svoboda's SPROUT (Sleep Architecture** - SuperSonic 2019); **AHA Trio's** debut album **Against All Odds** (2019), and two EPs with **Moon on Fire**, duo with Finnish vocalist Selma Savolainen (**Banff Sessions** 2020, **The Function of the Eye** 2021). Later this year (2023) she will release **The Odd River** - a large scale collaboration with filmmaker Angus Kirby, depicting genetically modified produce through sound and film (commissioned by the Freedman Jazz Fellowship 2020).

Svoboda has also featured on albums across a range of other projects: she was recently invited as a special guest as part of Sebastian Gramss' **Hard Boiled Wonderland** (2020) in which she composed and performed a spoken-word piece about the Australian Bushfires; Niran Dasika's **Assorted Drones** (2020); Caleb Colledge's folk/spoken word album **Yarns** (2018); and a number of improvised trios including an upcoming collaborative release with Melbourne pianist Joseph O'Connor (Aus National Jazz Award Winner) and Timothy Green (drums).

AWARDS //

Awards and accolades include: **2023-24 Musica Viva Australia FutureMaker**; **2020 Freedman Jazz Fellowship** in Australia for her work as a bassist, vocalist and composer; **2020-2021 Pathfinders Associate Artist** with the **Australian Art Orchestra**; **2020 Scriptiekunst Thesis Price (NL)**; **2019 QLD Jazz Award** with 'The Biology of Plants' ; **2020 Maastricht Jazz Awards (MEATSHELL)**; **2019 Maastricht Award for Innovation in Music** with **MEATSHELL** for their debut immersive theatre production "Peaceful Co-existence" which the duo wrote, produced and performed in.

COMPOSITION //

As a composer and musician, Svoboda channels the influence of some of her favourite artists including Charlie Haden, Debussy and Phillip Glass... "largely inspired by minimalism, her pieces feature energy and momentum from the bubbling rhythmic and melodic patterns; always familiar, yet never exactly the same" (CutCommon, AUS). Her works have been commissioned by a number of solo artists and ensembles including: 'Space Junk' which was performed at the 2018 Adelaide International Guitar Festival by 28-piece classical guitar orchestra Aurora Guitar Ensemble; 'Eavesdropping' - a commissioned work as part of the Trading Fours project (QLD Conservatorium of Music) in which she translated elements of coffee addiction into a three-part suite for jazz sextet (premiered October 2019); Molly Collier-O'Boyles 'Ephemerality' for viola/voice (releasing 2023); and Libby Myers' **Soundtrack to Solitude** for solo guitar (Made Now Music, 2022). In the Netherlands she was also commissioned to write and perform a piece for Dutch coffee roaster Blanche Dahl (2019) as part of a private showcase for thirty local baristas, and has since garnered interest in her solo bass scores, several of which have been published online at the **Double Bass HQ Online Music Library**.

PERFORMANCE //

Svoboda has performed with artists including Scott Tinkler (AUS), Paul Grabowsky (AUS), Emma Pask (AUS), Erik Griswold (AUS), Kari Ikonen (FIN), Kristin Berardi (AUS/SWITZERLAND - Montreux Jazz Festival Vocal Competition Winner), Katie Noonan (AUS - ARIA Award Winner), Cory Smythe (NYC - Grammy Award Winner), Sebastian Gramss (Cologne), Tamara Lukasheva (Cologne) and Mike Roelofs (Netherlands). // She has performed at venues including Hamer Hall (Melbourne), Stadtgarten (Cologne), Bonnefantenmuseum (Maastricht) and MONA (Museum of Old and New Art - Tasmania) and at festivals including the Melbourne International Jazz Festival, Wangaratta Jazz Festival, Woodford Folk Festival, Unknown Orbits Festival (Maastricht), Hasselt Jazz Festival (Belgium) and Clocked Out's Easter @ The Piano Mill (Stanthorpe). In 2019 she attended the renowned **BANFF International Workshop for Creative and Improvised Music** (2019) under the mentorship of Tyshawn Sorey, Vijay Iyer and Okkyung Lee.

CURRENT //

Svoboda is currently undertaking a three month solo residency at the **Helsinki International Artist Programme** on Suomenlinna, supported by the Australia Council for the Arts.

She is also studying a PhD in composition under the tutelage of Cat Hope at Monash University and is a Musica Viva Australia FutureMaker for 2023-24.