

# Tom O'Kelly

After freelancing in Melbourne with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO), ABC Show band and performing on various film and television recordings, Tom was appointed Principal Percussionist with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (TSO) in 1981. In 1983 Tom was invited to study with Sylvio Guala (solo timpanist, Paris Opera) at the Nationale Conservatoire de Versailles and in May 1985 was awarded Premier Prix de Percussion. During his time in France Tom worked with Pierre Boulez and the Ensemble Intercontemporain, Percussion Ensemble de Aix En Provence under the direction of Iannis Xenakis, which toured Europe playing music of Xenakis as well as various chamber and solo concerts.

On returning to Australia Tom was re-appointed Principal Percussion with the TSO and later Principal Timpanist. At this time Tom was very active performing and recording twentieth century music, teaching at the Conservatorium and tutoring the Tasmania Youth Orchestra. After touring Japan with the MSO in 1988, Tom returned to Melbourne to work with the MSO and in July 1989 he was invited by the then chief conductor Maestro Hiroyuki Iwaki to join Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa (OEK...Japan's first professional chamber orchestra) as Principal Timpanist.

In Japan Tom performed as soloist with OEK and also with the Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Sapporo, Kyushu and Kansai Symphony Orchestras. He recorded a solo CD at the invitation of JVC Victor, was a guest soloist at the opening of Izumi Hall Osaka, soloist on two Australian tours with OEK and had two concertos written for him and premiered at Suntory Hall Tokyo (both World Premieres). He toured Europe and Asia extensively with OEK and performed masterclasses and solo recitals throughout Japan.

In June 1998 Tom returned to Australia to take up the position of Lecturer in Percussion at the Tasmania Conservatorium of Music. During this time he toured China with the TSO as guest Principal Timpanist, was Music Director of the Mountain Orchestra (a community ensemble which also made their own instruments) Artist in Residence at Snug and Huonville Primary and together with David Jones formed DRUM (a groove based ensemble featuring the Drum Kit)

Since 2002 Tom has been based in Brisbane and is currently guest Principal Timpanist with OEK (performing over 40 concerts a year in Japan) he toured Japan and has worked in Australia with Elision, Timpanist for the Melbourne International Brass Festival, European tours with OEK 2004 and 2005, Australia and Asia tour with OEK 2006 and in 2007 did the European tour with the MSO. The percussion concertos by Milhaud and Jolivet were recorded live in Japan in 2004 and were released in May 2005 by Warner Classics. Current projects include duo performances with David Jones (Australia's master drummer/percussionist) and Geoff Payne (Principal Trumpet with the MSO). Both Tom and David have been involved in working with a 'Kids at Risk' program in Melbourne introducing percussion as a way of communication along with building confidence and self esteem.

Tom is currently co-ordinator of Percussion at the University of Queensland and also teaches at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and is guest tutor for the Queensland Youth Orchestra along with touring nationally and internationally as soloist, orchestral and chamber player.