

## **CODY'S 10 x 10. INTERVIEW 2, Fabian Hevia, drummer, percussionist, educator, composer**

Interview with: **Fabian Hevia**

Interview by: **Chris Cody\***



*Pianist Chris Cody... PHOTO CREDIT PAUL FAURE-BRAC*

*This interview appeared in “Loudmouth”, the e-newsletter of the Music Trust, on August 27, 2021, and can be read there at this link <https://musictrust.com.au/loudmouth/chris-codys-10-x-10-chris-cody-puts-10-questions-to-10-australian-musicians/>. It is number 2 in Chris Cody's series of 10 x 10 interviews, in which he puts ten questions to ten Australian musicians.*

***CODY'S 10×10 is a musician to musician interview series outside the usual format that is brief, relevant, informative and colourful. It gives a glimpse into well-known musicians from diverse fields and backgrounds by asking questions about their music making, experience and more.***

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*\*Chris Cody is a jazz pianist, composer and band leader. Based in Paris for 25 years, he performed across Europe with Chris Cody Coalition and musicians including Herb Geller and Rick Margitza, and released numerous albums of his own music on international labels. He has written for theatre, dance, and cinema. Since returning to Australia he has released several albums and composed recent larger works “Astrolabe” and “The Outsider”.*

*At present and over the period of 43 years, Fabian Hevia's artistic practice has consisted of being active as a drummer, percussionist, composer and educator. His career has led him to record, perform and tour with many Australian and international artists. He has been a long-standing member of The Catholics and Wanderlust for over 25 years, currently residing in South Australia.*



*Fabian Hevia: Chile was where the seeds of music were first planted and I had the advantage of being surrounded by musicians and my father's guidance. That formative experience was invaluable...*

**Chris Cody: What do you think of being a musician in Australia, and how does it compare to your experiences elsewhere?**

Fabian Hevia: I have now lived 46 years in Australia and the length and breadth of my musical experiences have predominantly taken place in this country except for short tours of Europe, Northern America and Asia. It is important to add that Chile was where the seeds of music were first planted and I had the advantage of being surrounded by musicians and my father's guidance. That formative experience was invaluable. I knew then as I know today that my path was to be Music in all its manifestations. Playing music to me is intrinsically linked to the whole experience of listening, from the immediate response of an audience to the response of fellow band members. This in my experience is the key driver for inspiration and refinement of one's musicality. So, to draw a comparison between making music in Australia and elsewhere one could fall into sounding biased. The notion of one place over another has no bearing on one's creative practice, actual music making happens anywhere and it is enhanced by those that feel its meaning.

### **What is the main thing that nourishes your music?**

The birth of a composition can sometimes be a mysterious event. Upon reflection, there have been times where it is hard to remember how the piece of music came to be. Sometimes, musical nourishment comes from visiting a forest, an art gallery or walking to the beach. However the stimulus presents itself to me – visually, aurally or emotionally, each experience holds something that needs to be acted on and not thought about too much... the “Aha” moment can take you by surprise!

### **List three things you would introduce to Australia to improve or enhance the music scene here.**

I love this question ... Firstly, comprehensive music education from pre-school to high school, meaning, dedicated music tutors teaching music fundamentals and appreciation of the art form. Secondly, create cultural hubs in every city for the young to perform and experience high levels of performance. Growing up Chile I would hear people speak of cultural hubs known as “Casas de La Cultura” and when I toured through Germany I was very pleasantly surprised to see and play at these “Cultural Hubs” where music, art, film and theatre were disseminated. Thirdly, share the talent with the rest of the world by interacting with other cultures via music exchange programs. Of course, all these ideas would have to be funded by a government that believes in the arts.



### **What are you practising or working on at the moment?**

During this very challenging time I have been learning new skills in arranging for strings, going back to some drumming basics and continuing to develop my work on micro rhythms. I have the luxury of space and so, I have set up numerous work

stations such as: the piano, vibraphone, guitars, congas, bata drums, drum kit, multiple melodic drum setups and the most exciting addition of a marimbula made by “small drum revolution” – so bass lines have been at the forefront in recent times. With music there’s never a time when you can say there’s nothing to do... the craft is endless.



*The catholics in 2021, L-R, Jon Pease, James Greening, Sandy Evans, Lloyd Swanton, Fabian Hevia, Hamish Stuart, Gary Daley...*

### **Would you like to share with us your best and worst musical memory?**

Umm .. let’s start with the worst... I have always had a propensity to look at the funny side of what we get ourselves involved in, perhaps not so amusing at the time but, hindsight can sometimes point to the humour. I recently told this story to some friends about the time when my father and I were in the same band for this particular gig. At this point I have to add that my father, being a saxophone player, could read anything. The gig involved a magician/entertainer back in the days when backing artists was very popular. I was about 17 years old and very inexperienced at the chart reading game. We get to the gig to sound check and then look at the charts for the artist for that night. Out comes a scroll of charts with every sign and instruction you could possibly imagine. Back in those days you sight-read the show with no time to run anything. The show begins with my feelings of desperation and deathly looks from the act. The juggling begins and I’m supposed to catch very specific hits, segues into odd bars, tempo changes, stops! starts! You get the picture. This is something that you would need to rehearse meticulously. It was a train wreck and doubly so because after the show I had to face my father’s talking to on our way back home. He was surprisingly kind but, from that moment on I understood that every musical situation has its challenges and that it is in your best interest and that of the “music”

to address the finer points of the craft. While there have been many inspiring musical memories there's one memory that is filled with feelings of joy and camaraderie that, to this day continues to remind me of the blessings of music. Picture a warm summer's evening in Rome, July 2004. I'm there with Wanderlust playing at the Villa Celimontana as part of an Australian cultural focus festival, "Jazz Australiano". The image and the sounds of that night were perfectly engraved in my mind: a full yellow moon ascended as we played our set. Thanks to our sound man Danielle D'Giovanni that became a live album, *When In Rome*.



**Can you describe your challenges and how you surmount them?**

I think intention has a big part to play in how I look at overcoming a challenge. For me it has been challenging to put myself out there as a band leader and gain confidence in my ability to write music. My role for many years has been as a drummer / percussionist and it is inevitable that being a sideman can become a stream that you are very comfortable in. Writing has made me more aware of the overall picture, a better musician and in my view it is an obvious progression so why resist it. So my intention is to continue to write and develop and when the opportunity arises hear my music through the ears of musicians and audiences alike.

**If you could wave the magic wand over your music making, what would you wish for?**

I wish for nothing more than to document my music and share it with an audience.



*An early version of Miroslav Bukovsky's group Wanderlust, back row L-R, Carl Orr, Adam Armstrong, Alister Spence, James Greening; in front, Fabian Hevia, Bukovsky... PHOTO CREDIT ERICA MURRAY*

**If you weren't a musician what would you do?**

This question has come up a few times in the past and I can only say that cooking and baking would be where I would place my energies. There too is creativity and sharing.

**Who or what are you listening to at the moment?**

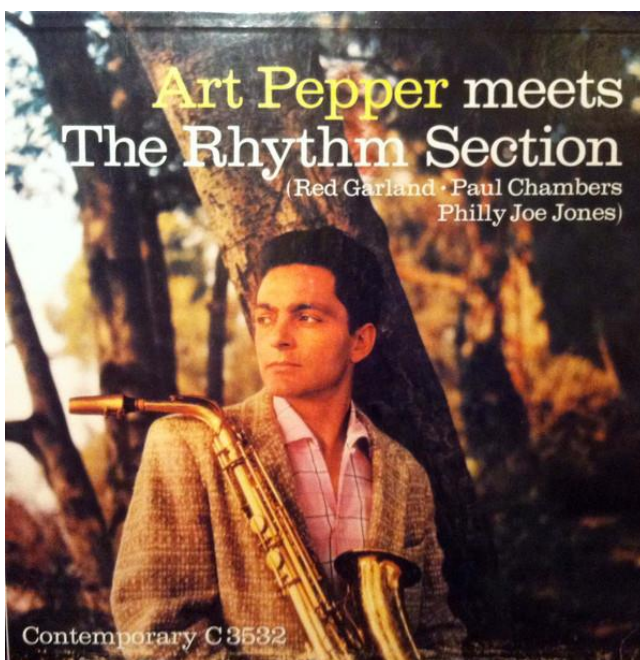
On any given day my iPod is on random so, anything can catch my attention. I've been listening to the sound of strings and one album in particular *Living* by Paul Cutlan; an album of piano pieces by Mahani Teave, *Rapa Nui Odyssey*; Randy Weston's *Spirit! The Power Of Music*. Also, books have been an influence so, as I read about Bob Marley and Miles Davis I listened to their music to reinforce the reading.

**Living** Paul Cutlan String Project



## What have been your main influences?

The first seven years of my life were spent in a place that is embedded on the Chilean Andean mountain range by the name of "Sewell" (UNESCO). That's where the majority of the musical influences took shape. My father played a variety of albums over and over... amongst them Duke Ellington & Johnny Hodges *Back to Back*, Art Pepper Meets The Rhythm Section, Perez Prado, Sergei Prokofiev, *Peter & The Wolf*. I went to a performance and heard tango music for the first time. My father and his brothers had a band and so I heard them rehearse and perform Cuban music as well as jazz tunes. The foundations were laid and when I arrived in Australia in 1975 I would listen and play along to an album by the Daly-Wilson Big Band as well as *Santana 3*. Then, sometime in 1978 I bought Chick Corea's *Friends*; that album was the turning point that would lead to so many more influences.







*Chick Corea's album "Friends": this album was a turning point for Hevia, that would lead to so many more influences...*

### **What are your other interests?**

I'm very interested in having a connection with nature and that in itself has influenced my connection to my physical and spiritual well-being. I practice yoga, meditation and tai chi. I have become more interested in literature and particularly books in Spanish, I'm fascinated by words and their origins. Coming to Australia was a blessing in so many unforeseen ways and I'm grateful to be able to speak and write in two languages hence, my love of the "bilingual pun"... but that's enough about baking!! So, just to bring you up to speed, "pan" is Spanish for "bread".

### **Where and what do you see yourself doing in ten years time?**

In these uncertain times the future can be the furthest thing from one's mind. For me music is a humbling experience and I know that I will continue to apply myself to its teachings. So far I have applied simple intentions and seen them unfold so, in ten years time I feel that I will still be teaching in some capacity, writing and performing and most definitely ... I will create an intention to record my music.

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### **Other 10 x 10 interviews in this series**

*Chris Cody's 10 x 10 interview 1 with Helen Svoboda, can be read on this website at this link <https://ericmyersjazz.com/essays-page-102>*

*Chris Cody's 10 x 10 interview 5 with Lloyd Swanton, can be read on this website at this link <https://ericmyersjazz.com/essays-page-101>*