

CODY'S 10 x 10. INTERVIEW 4, Nadjé Noordhuis, trumpet player

Interview with: **Nadjé Noordhuis**
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 October 31, 2021, and can be read there at this link <https://musictrust.com.au/loudmouth/chris-codys-10x10-interview-4-chris-interviews-trumpet-player-naadje-noordhuis/>. It is number 4 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.

**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”.*

Nadje Noordhuis is an Australian-born New York based trumpeter and composer. She is a member of the Maria Schneider Orchestra and Anat Cohen Tentet, and has released four albums of her own music on her own record label, Little Mystery Records. Her album with Luke Howard “Ten Sails”, was streamed over a million times on Spotify and Youtube. She is currently recording an album with her quintet with support from a Chamber Music America Performance Plus Grant.



Nadje Noordhuis: resident in New York since 2003... PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

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

Nadje Noordhuis: I'm in a really fortunate position of having an incredible musical network in Australia, and so when I'm visiting my family back home I get to play music with absolutely fantastic musicians. The Australian humour is always out in full force in rehearsals, so it's always a joy to play. There's usually a very relaxed vibe at gigs and in rehearsals – if something doesn't go to plan there's usually a funny look or a joke to fix it.

What is the main thing that nourishes your music?

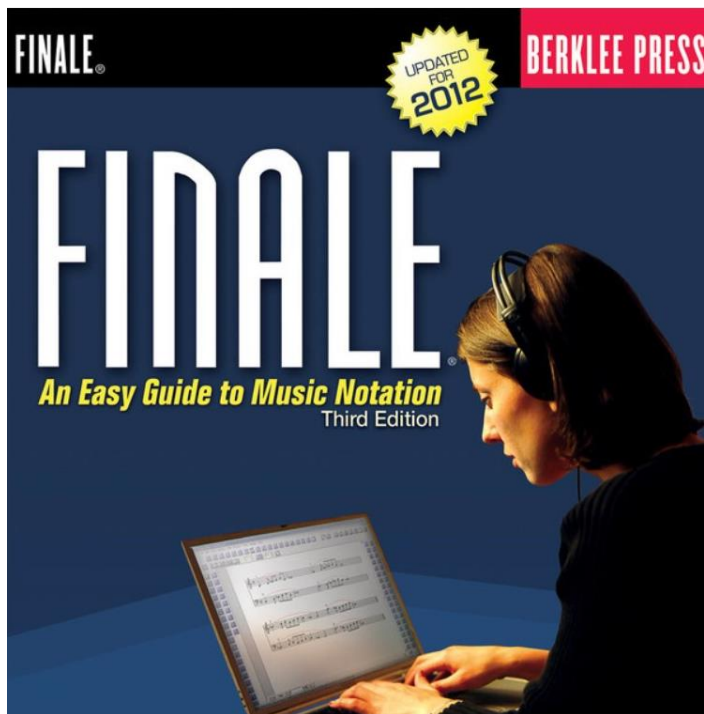
Any time that I spend in nature inspires my writing. The visual aspect is really important. If I can picture a place that I've been, or an experience that I've had, I like to write to it as if it were a soundtrack.

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

This is tough! I think if everyone were able to have access to and use great notation software, such as Sibelius or Finale, it would be a lot easier to sight-read charts. It's always going to be of benefit for everyone to improve their music reading skills. A lot of the local scene plays by ear, or at least starts learning the music that way. It has been really beneficial for me to improve my reading so I'm able to play more challenging gigs. Not everyone has a website – it's really hard to promote someone if I can't find any information on them! It only takes a day to put one together. One of the beautiful things about the Australian music scene is its fearlessness to combine music from a variety of influences. If there was an easier way to access live streams or having to know where to look for, say, great Ethiopian jazz, or Mongolian throat singing, or Nordic folk music, that would be amazing. I mean, one might say that it is called the internet, but usually you need to know specifically what you are searching for. I find it much easier to find things when searching online in the US, so it's more likely to be an international search engine restriction issue.

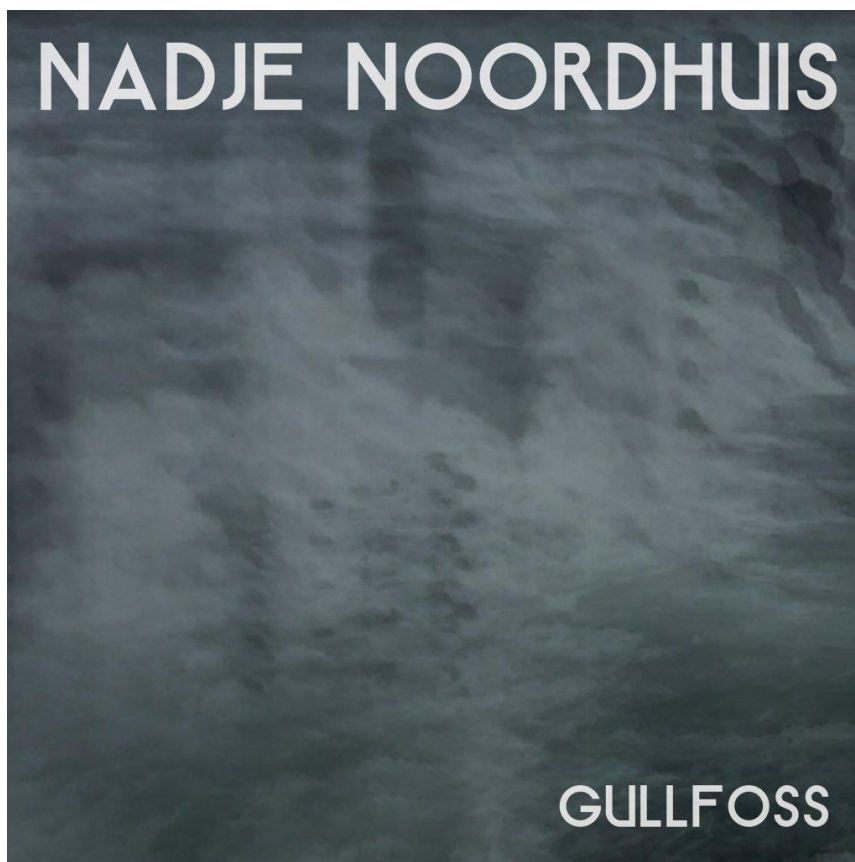


If everyone were able to have access to and use great notation software, such as Sibelius (left) or Finale (see next page), it would be a lot easier to sight-read charts.



What are you practising or working on at the moment?

I'm preparing for my next album at the moment. We start rehearsals in a few weeks.



Nadje Noordhuis's new album "Gullfoss", originally recorded live in Muri, Switzerland for vinyl label Newvelle Records, is released digitally on Little Mystery Records...

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

One of the worst memories was doing a restaurant gig in Greenwich Village in New York. The band I was playing with was very under rehearsed, and the music was challenging. I had to come in with the melody after a random bar of 7/4, and I miscounted. Instead of continuing on, the bandleader wanted me to restart the melody and try again. But he didn't give the instruction to the rest of the band, who kept going. I tried maybe four times to restart and it sounded terrible. I got really frustrated and may have sworn very loudly. I never got asked to do that gig again. One of my best musical memories is doing my first run of gigs with the Maria Schneider Orchestra. That has been my dream band for 20 years, and I'm lucky to have been a member of the group for the last six years. It has made all my years of struggle completely worth it.



Maria Schneider: her orchestra has been Nadjé's "dream band" for 20 years, and Nadjé has been playing with Schneider's band now for some six years... PHOTO COURTESY FACEBOOK

Can you describe your challenges and how you surmount them ?

There's a lot on the list, but I'll name a couple. I have to wear so many different hats in my career: ensemble musician, teacher, composer, bandleader, record label owner, publicist, and many others. It's hard to swap from one to the other, especially when

things feel quite stagnant. I have had to come up with a way of keeping up with all these different jobs, and find that different times of the day work best for certain tasks. For example, I write better in the mornings. I do administration work better when I'm listening to music. Working out some hacks to make it easier to accomplish tasks has been really helpful for me. The pandemic has also created some huge challenges. I lost all my gigs and half my income overnight. All my tours were cancelled, and they won't come back until next year. When I look back on how I navigated the last 18 months, I've noticed myself going with flow. I tend to look out for opportunities and head in that direction to investigate the possibilities. I've lived in three different cities in the last 18 months. I'm now back in New York, but in a different borough than where I lived for ten years.



Noordhuis (above) is wearing many different hats: ensemble musician, teacher, composer, bandleader, record label owner, publicist, and many others...

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

A higher tolerance for practice, and a deeper understanding of musical theory and harmony. And Jacob Collier's ears.



If Nadjé could wave a magic wand, she would wish for Jacob Collier's ears...

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

I'd design and build wood furniture.

Who or what are you listening to at the moment?

It's an eclectic mix. In the last week, I've listened to Yebba, Chelsea Wolfe, Silverchair, Ólafur Arnalds, and Meshuggah.

What are your other interests?

Nadjé: Is coffee a hobby? I love checking out great cafes and restaurants with friends, or traveling to a new destination and wandering about. I knit, read, check out art galleries, and love shopping for handbags online.

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 2 with Fabian Hevia, can be read on this website at this link <https://ericmyersjazz.com/essays-page-102>

Chris Cody's 10 x 10 interview 3 with Zela Margossian, 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>