

Assoc Professor. Robert Burke  
Performance (Jazz & Improvisation)  
Email: Robert.Burke@monash.edu

## Biography

Robert Burke is Associate Professor in Jazz and Improvisation at the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music at Monash University of Melbourne. He holds a BMus and MA from the Victorian College of the Arts (University of Melbourne), and a PhD at Monash University. Robert was the initiator and convenor of jazz and improvisation from 2002 - 2019 at Monash University, founder and currently president and (AJIRN) Australasian Jazz and Improvisational Research Network (2015 to current) and has held the position of Head of the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music from 2011 – 2014.

Robert's practice and research interests include composition, improvisation, human-machine relationships and gender studies in music (PCI on ARC grant 2020 -2023). At the heart of Rob's research lies the question: *what happens when we improvise?* His main research collaborator is Associate Professor Andrys Onsman.

More recently Rob has collaborated with a team of researchers that are exploring online music-making as social connection in relation to wellbeing, agency, and split-second decision making in improvisation. The team consists of Raymond MacDonald at the Uni of Edinburgh (Professor - music psychologist and saxophonist), Tia DeNora from Exeter University (Professor - Sociology of Music), Maria Sappo Donahue (pianist, improvising artist based in Huddersfield University) and artist/film maker Ross Birell (Professor - Glasgow School of Art). Rob also leads an ARC grant that is investigating gender diversity in Jazz and Improvisation. The team includes: Professor Margaret Barrett, Dr Clare Hall, Professor Cat Hope, Dr Louise Devenish and Dr. Nicole Canham.

An internationally acclaimed improvising performer and composer, Robert has released 15 CD's under his own name and has composed and performed on a further 300 CD's. His sensitive and balanced perspective has allowed Rob to traverse many different styles and this has, in part, been expressed as collaborative performances with international leaders in classical, jazz and experimental music. His embrace of many genres of music and the clear expression of his diversity in his role as an educator, researcher and performer, has given rise to a vibrant dialect that resonates through his students and also his performances.

Robert has also embarked on numerous musical collaborations within Australia and overseas and has established research, educational and artistic ties with institutions, researchers and musicians in Italy, USA (New York), Japan and Brazil. Collaborators include: Professor George Lewis, Columbia University – NYC; Professor Raymond MacDonald, Edinburgh University; Dave Douglas, USA; Enrico Rava, ITL; Hermeto Pascoal, Brazil; Kenny Werner, USA; Mark Helias, USA; Ben Monder, USA; Tom Rainey, USA; Tony Malaby, USA; Nasheet Waite, USA; George Garzone, USA; Paul Grabowsky; Tony Gould; Debasis Chakraborty, India; and Paulo Angeli (Italy).

Recent publications include a co-written book: Onsman, A. & Burke, R. *Experimentation in Improvised Jazz: Idea Chasing* (Routledge 2019), editor for *Perspectives of Artistic Research in Music* (Lexington 2017) and a co-written chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education*, Vol 1, (2012, 2019)

'A stunning jazz album that identifies Melbourne as a significant contributor of talent and inventive and pioneering jazz on the world stage. Beautifully recorded and presented. This record is a collaboration of some of the most influential protagonists on the Melbourne scene and is undoubtedly a masterpiece.' - Eddie Naran - *Jazz on the Street*.

'An exciting tour of Melbourne. There are moments where you will get chills down your back' 4.5\* - *The Age*.

'There is a romance in the tracks that comes from an exploration of a stage of jazz which has pleased many for a long time. While gentle, it is quietly persuasive of all the life, clarity and brilliance to be found in mainstream jazz. Emotional and relaxing.' *Canberra Times*.

<https://robburke.com.au/>

Robert Burke is both an FMR-UK and JazzHead recording artist.

## Employment

### Associate Professor

Performance (Jazz & Improvisation)  
MONASH UNIVERSITY  
28 Feb 2000 → present

### President

Australasian Jazz and Improvisation Research Network

Melbourne, Australia  
1 Jun 2016 → present

### **Board Member**

Melbourne Jazz Co-operative  
Bentleigh, Australia  
1 Jan 2014 → present

## **Research outputs**

### **Negotiating hegemonic masculinity in Australian tertiary jazz education**

Hall, C. & Burke, R., 2023, *The Routledge Companion to Jazz and Gender*. Redden, J., Herzig, M. & Kahr, M. (eds.). 1st ed. Abingdon UK: Routledge, p. 336-347 12 p. (Routledge Music Companions).

### **Gender as performance, experience, identity and, variable: A systematic review of gender research in jazz and improvisation**

Canham, N., Goh, T., Barrett, M. S., Hope, C., Devenish, L., Park, M., Burke, R. L. & Hall, C. A., 28 Nov 2022, In: *Frontiers in Education*. 7, 14 p., 987420.

### **Analysis and observations of pre-learned and idiosyncratic elements in improvisation: a methodology for artistic research in jazz**

Burke, R., 2022, *Artistic Research in Jazz : Positions, Theories, Methods*. Kahr, M. (ed.). 1st ed. Abingdon Oxon UK: Routledge, p. 135-154 20 p.

### **Teaching Undergraduate Jazz Ensembles within Virtual Spaces**

Burke, R., Vincs, R. & Williamson, P., 1 Dec 2021, In: *Journal of Music, Health, and Wellbeing*. 2021, 16 p.

### **Our Virtual Tribe: Sustaining and Enhancing Community via Online Music Improvisation**

MacDonald, R., Burke, R., De Nora, T., Donohue, M. & Birrell, R., 23 Feb 2021, In: *Frontiers in Psychology*. 11, 1, p. 1-19 19 p., 623640.

### **Distortion: Enhancing the saxophone's scope**

Burke, R., Monder, M., Malaby, T., Rainey, T. & Grayson, B., 2020

### **Theatre of home: Online Improvisation for large improvising ensembles**

MacDonald, R., Burke, R., Donohue, M. & Birrell, R., 2020

### **The blending of Western and Indian music through the microtonal techniques on the saxophone**

Burke, R., Charkroborty, D., Magnusson, S. & Evans, S. J. N., 2019

### **Experimentation in Improvised Jazz: Chasing Ideas**

Onsman, A. & Burke, R. L., 11 Oct 2018, New York: Routledge. 192 p.

### **Pathways to Learning and Teaching Indigenous and World Music Ensembles**

Burke, R. L. & Evans, S. J. N., 28 Jun 2018, *2018 Vocal, Instrumental, and Ensemble Learning and Teaching: An Oxford Handbook of Music Education*. McPherson, G. & Welch, G. (eds.). 1 ed. UK: Oxford University Press, Vol. 3. p. 347-363 17 p. (An Oxford Handbook of Music Education).

### **Manipulating Hip Hop Beats: Collaborative improvisation and composition**

Burke, R., Grabowsky, P., Nakamura, N. & Choulai, A., 2018

### **Discordant methodologies: prioritizing performance in artistic research in music**

Burke, R. & Onsman, A., 17 Jan 2017, *Perspectives on Artistic Research in Music*. Burke, R. & Onsman, A. (eds.). Lanham Maryland USA: Lexington Books, p. 3 - 17 15 p.

**Disturbing perspectives of research in music**

Onsman, A. & Burke, R., Jan 2017, *Perspective on Artistic Research in Music*. Burke, R. & Onsman, A. (eds.). Lanham Maryland USA: Lexington Books, p. 201-214 14 p.

**Perspectives on Artistic Research in Music**

Burke, R. & Onsman, A., Jan 2017, Lanham Maryland USA: Lexington Books. 228 p.

**The Gravity Project: The Noh Theatre Exploration**

Burke, R. L., Grabowsky, P., Nakamura, N. & Obina, K., 2017

**Sardinian Liturgy: an investigation choice in a musical spontaneous group improvisation.**

Burke, R. L. & Murray, J. R., Jun 2016

**Investigation into Intercultural practices of jazz performance and the musical philosophy of Zen Buddhism**

Burke, R. L., 2016

**The Power of the Idea**

Burke, R. L., Jun 2015

**A sustained exploration of the relationship between predetermined composition and improvisation in a jazz context [new composition]**

Burke, R. L., 2015

**Now and Then: a transcendental sensory approach to artistic creation**

Burke, R. L., 2015

**Do True**

Burke, R. L. & Werner, K., 29 Aug 2014

**At the Cole Face**

Burke, R. L., Jan 2014

**Bela**

Burke, R. L., Jan 2014

**Indeterminacy in Jazz composition: A portfolio of compositions**

Burke, R. L., 2014

**Tik Tok**

Burke, R. L., 2014

**Burke - Investigation of improvisation inclusive of the Jazz and Classical Canon**

Burke, R. L., 2013

**Mercurochrome**

Burke, R. L., 2013

**Pathways to learning and teaching indigenous and world music ensembles**

Burke, R. L. & Evans, S. J. N., 2012, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education, Volume 1*. McPherson, G. E. & Welch, G. F. (eds.). New York USA: Oxford University Press, p. 890 - 906 17 p.

**Rob Burke Live at Bennetts Lane**

Burke, R. L., 21 Nov 2011

**LMFF - Loreal Melbourne Fashion Festival**

Burke, R., 2009

**The Edge of Today: A Mapping of the Melbourne Sound**

Burke, R. L., 2005

**Now Festival**

Burke, R. L., 2004

**Robert Burke - Wide Eyed**

Burke, R. L., 2003

**Off Line**

Burke, R. L., 2000

**Prizes****Bell Award - Best Avant garde record**

Burke, Robert (Recipient), Grabowsky, Paul (Recipient), Williamson, Paul (Recipient) & Murray, Jordan Robert (Recipient), 15 Mar 2014

**Bell Award - Monash Art Ensemble - Zephyrix**

McAll, Barney (Recipient), Grabowsky, Paul (Recipient), Williamson, Paul (Recipient) & Burke, Robert (Recipient), 30 Apr 2019

**Monash Art Ensemble - Hexis**

Burke, Robert (Recipient), Grabowsky, Paul (Recipient), Williamson, Paul (Recipient) & Murray, Jordan Robert (Recipient), 12 Mar 2015

**The Australian Bell Award - Best Produced Album**

Williamson, Paul (Recipient), Burke, Robert (Recipient), Murray, Jordan (Recipient) & Grabowsky, Paul (Recipient), 23 Sept 2019

**Projects****Salzer Foundation for the Monash Art Ensemble (MAE)**

Burke, R., Williamson, P. & Murray, J.

3/09/19 → 3/09/22

**Australia-Japan Collaborative Jazz Ensemble**

Grabowsky, P., Burke, R., Zion, J., Andresen, L. & Ishiwaki, S.

2/09/16 → 30/12/18

**Beyond Borders and Barlines**

Burke, R.

Creative Victoria

24/05/15 → 31/07/15

**Continued musical development of a cultural, research and pedagogical exchange between Brazil and Australia**  
Burke, R.  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) (Australia)  
1/05/10 → 31/07/10

**Diversifying Music in Australia: Gender Equity in Jazz and Improvisation**  
Burke, R., S. Barrett, M., Hall, C., Hope, C., Devenish, L. & Canham, N.  
1/05/21 → 30/04/24

**Guitar x 6 and Bass Amplifiers x 3**  
Burke, R.  
Collier Charitable Fund  
6/01/11 → 31/12/11

**HERE NOW HEAR: Manufacture & promotion of 8 new Australian works recorded by Monash Art Ensemble**  
Williamson, P., Burke, R., Murray, J., Grabowsky, P. & Burslem, M.  
6/05/19 → 29/10/19

**Monash Art Ensemble visit to Iwate Prefecture**  
Grabowsky, P., Burke, R., Zion, J. & Andresen, L.  
16/08/16 → 11/09/16

**MAE : Monash Art Ensemble: Composition, Recording and Performance (2023 - 2026)**  
Burke, R. & Williamson, P.  
Minsmere Pty Ltd  
5/12/23 → 4/12/26

**Monash Arts Ensemble Commissioning Program 2022-24**  
Burke, R., Williamson, P. & Grabowsky, P.  
1/07/22 → 30/06/25

**Musician and Machine: composition for large improvising ensemble**  
Burke, R.  
Australia Council for the Arts  
1/01/16 → 30/09/16

**Paul Grabowsky and Robert Burke present the Gravity Project - Japan 2018**  
Burke, R. & Grabowsky, P.  
Monash University – Internal Faculty Contribution  
23/08/18 → 10/10/18

**Post Graduate Jazz and Improvisation Scholarship**  
Burke, R., Williamson, P. & Murray, J.  
Cripps Foundation  
29/11/18 → 28/11/24

**Salzer Foundation for the Monash Art Ensemble (MAE)**  
Burke, R., Grabowsky, P., Williamson, P. & Murray, J.  
1/07/18 → 30/06/19

**The Monash Art Ensemble and the Young Wagilak Group present 'Nyilipidgi'**  
Burke, R. & Williamson, P.  
17/03/17 → 18/03/17

To record, mix and master a CD of Rob Burke's compositions with pianist Kenny Werner  
Burke, R.  
Australia Council for the Arts  
1/10/13 → 31/07/14