

**MEDIA RELEASE: 14 January 2016**

## **cleverhorse release new album - *50:fifty* out now on Jazzhead**

***melodic and cinematic meets frenetic and quirky on  
an album that shuns convention***

***50:fifty*** is the new release by Melbourne five-piece instrumental ensemble **cleverhorse**. Led by composer/guitarist Robbie Melville, the band cites influences from ambient to avant-garde, funk to folk, jazz to jam band and world music.

With this, their second album, cleverhorse present seven of Melville's compositions and six improvised studio experiments. Half of the album features stylised, well-structured compositions that are interspersed with shorter improvised pieces. The group developed these improvisations as diversionary musical challenges intended to help maintain their energy, spark and creativity throughout the recording process.

The result is a body of work that contrasts the melodic and cinematic with the frenetic and quirky, on an album that shuns conventions of jazz and improvised music.

"Half the album is very ordered. The longer pieces have an intentional use of space and melodicism. The other half of the album is the direct opposite of that - mischievous, funky shorter pieces that are really quite idiosyncratic. The two styles of music are intended to complement and enhance each other. Listening to the album in its entirety is a bit of a roller coaster ride. The more "beautiful" pieces are made more so by being surrounded by the more "frenetic" pieces, and vice versa. This is the key feature of the album and why it's entitled *50:fifty*", Robbie said.

The first single from the album, ***Reich*** is a group improvisation inspired by the work of minimalist composer Steve Reich. It features two distinct sections, the first being a slow, ambient introduction that transitions into an intense, rhythmic sonic expanse. The accompanying clip for it was filmed in County Limerick in Ireland, directed and edited by Melbourne's Jean Poole. The video's dark images of the forest leading up to an abandoned castle match the broody nature of the music perfectly; it's like a mini musical suspense film.

Other pieces on the album are based on personal themes of family and friendship, life and death, and are informed in equal measure by contemporary jazz, Norwegian folk, the sonic space of the soundtracks of films by Wim Wenders, and the sparse and playful writings of Richard Brautigan. The variety of influences on the music of cleverhorse means it reaches beyond jazz to resonate with music lovers across all genres, in a unique category of its own.

In addition to Robbie Melville on guitar, the band comprises Monty Mackenzie on alto saxophone, Gideon Brazil on tenor saxophone, Luke Hodgson on electric bass and Dan Macdonald on drums.

***50:fifty* CDs** are available on the Jazzhead label at [www.jazzhead.com](http://www.jazzhead.com) or at JB Hi Fi, Thomas' Music and Sanity.

**Digital albums** are available via iTunes and Bandcamp.

**Album Launch:** The album will be launched on **Friday 12 February at Bella Union** at Trades Hall Carlton, from 8:30pm. Tickets are \$20 or \$15 concession from [www.bellaunion.com.au](http://www.bellaunion.com.au) or at the door on the night.

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/cleverhorse>

Bandcamp - <https://robbiemelville.bandcamp.com/album/50-fifty>

Soundcloud - <https://soundcloud.com/cleverhorse50fifty>

[www.jazzhead.com](http://www.jazzhead.com)

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## About cleverhorse

cleverhorse formed in Melbourne in 2004 when Robbie and Monty met while studying music together. Finding a shared love of both jazz and pop, the two began inviting friends to perform with them, forming a musical unit that is based as much on strong social ties (and food) as it is on a shared musical lexicon.

cleverhorse released their debut album ***Goodnight, Mr. Monster*** in 2007, featuring both Robbie and Monty's compositions, combined with loops, samples and a string section. The group subsequently undertook a short national tour. John Clare of the Sydney Morning Herald wrote:



*“They have given a lot of thought to an overall sound, to an attractive surface, to listenability as well as creativity or simply ‘getting it on’... It was seductive and euphoric... They are onto something. They are undoubtedly creative... A band to be watched”.*

Since the release of their first album, cleverhorse have continued to develop and experiment musically as a group. Several years spent experimenting with compositional forms and vehicles for improvisation have led to a more focused and original ensemble sound, and the birth of ***50:fifty***.

Bandleader **Robbie Melville** is a composer and guitarist. He has toured several times with triple platinum Irish artist Mundy and had guest appearances with American singer Krystle Warren and John Murry. He spent several years in the guitar chair of the Australian Pops Orchestra, performing alongside artists such as James Morrison, Guy Sebastian and Marina Prior. Leaving Australia in 2008, he relocated to Shanghai, China, where he spent two years performing. He currently divides his time between working on his original material with cleverhorse, Antelodic – a contemporary classical trio featuring Gideon and Monty, and a solo guitar project, as well as collaborating and touring with folk singer/bassist Liz Frencham, and Irish artists Aine Tyrrell, Gallie, and Roesy. He is also the in-house guitarist and horn/string arranger at producer Mark Stanley's Red Room Recording Studio.

**Monty Mackenzie** (alto saxophone) is currently co-composer, vocalist, multi-instrumentalist and programmer in his duo Harmless with Cesar Rodrigues (Blue King Brown). He has performed with numerous ensembles including Flow and Plenty, Nathan Slater, The Basics, and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra/Melbourne Youth Orchestra Series.

**Gideon Brazil** (tenor saxophone) plays saxophone for Gotye and has toured with Wally DeBacker and his other project The Basics. He has also performed with Paul Kelly, Eddie Perfect, Adam Simmons Toy Band, Luke Howard, Orchestra Victoria, and Kimba Griffith.

**Luke Hodgson** (electric bass) played on *I Feel Better* from Gotye's Grammy Award winning album *Making Mirrors*. He's also played in Australia with Ed Sheeran, Robben Ford, Geoff Achison, Pete Murray, Ross Wilson, Toni Childs and Jeff Martin.

**Daniel Macdonald** (drums) honed his craft playing with Melbourne's King of Roots Andy Baylor. He has most recently been a member of both Kate Vigo and Kathryn Rollins' bands, and has also appeared live on the ABC's *Spicks and Specks* with the New Orleans-styled Hoodoo Mayhem Brass Band. Daniel currently divides his time between performing and designing sound for films and mobile apps.

**Photo credit:** Sean Healey

**Caption:** Front Robbie Melville, from left to right – Luke Hodgson, Gideon Brazil, Monty Mackenzie, Dan Macdonald.