

www.ringtonesociety.com

Clandestinely operating out of an Australian Centre for the Moving Image studio in Melbourne late last year were a couple of softly spoken Dutch nationals with a bold agenda: To positively transform public aural space using mobile phone ringtones. Of course you can't imagine anything positive coming out of the use of, say, the Crazy Frog ringtone and this is why the Ringtone Society travel the world inviting alternative, experimental and avant-garde Musicians and Composers to construct and perform pieces which the Society then program into ringtones.

In Melbourne the Artists all recorded their tracks in front of a live audience as a free Melbourne Festival event. Some of the Artists invited the audience to contribute to their ringtones with drums, voice and, in the case of composer Sydney Composer Max Lyandvert, wild cheering. All of the tracks recorded in Melbourne, as well as dozens more recorded by Artists from around the world, are available as downloads from the Society's website. Genres range from hip hop to indigenous to metal and even to 'non music' tones but you can have a listen to the various tracks before you download them. Acquiring a ringtone requires that you have a WAP-enabled handset with service provided by either 3, Telstra, Optus or Vodafone.

The ringtones will set you back a couple of bucks each but when your incoming call alert busts out with some crazy prepared piano instead of 'You Sexy Thing' you'll know it was worth every cent.

Written by Gibson Nolte