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ETERNITY

THE TIMELESS MUSIC OF AUSTRALIA'S COMPOSERS



ROSS EDWARDS b. 1943

[1] Dawn Mantras

7'15

Sydney Children's Choir, Cantillation, Jane Sheldon *soprano*, Matthew Doyle *didjeridu*, Jim Franklin *shakuhachi*, Rixon Thomas *cor anglais*, Ian Cleworth, Brian Nixon *percussion*, Lyn Williams *conductor*

LYN WILLIAMS b. 1963

[2] Ferry Me Across the Water

1'34

Marshall McGuire *harp*, Gondwana Voices, Lyn Williams *conductor*

PETER SCULTHORPE b. 1929

[3] Small Town

6'11

Guy Henderson *oboe*, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Stuart Challender *conductor*

GRAEME KOEHNE b. 1956

[4] Way Out West (excerpt)

2'31

Diana Doherty *oboe*, Sinfonia Australis, Mark Summerbell *conductor*

PERCY ALDRIDGE GRAINGER 1882-1961

[5] Dreamery

2'30

Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, David Stanhope *conductor*

NIGEL WESTLAKE b. 1958

[6] Wooden Ships from Antarctica Suite

4'13

Timothy Kain *guitar*, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, David Porcelijn *conductor*

DAVID HOBSON b. 1960 / DAVID HIRSCHFELDER b. 1959

[7] In Questa Stanza (Inside this room)

3'47

David Hobson *tenor*, David Hirschfelder *piano*, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Marco Guidarini *conductor*

GORDON KERRY b. 1961			
[8] Dream	2'26		
Duo Sol			
RAFFAËLE MARCELLINO b. 1964			
[9] Hymn I from Heart of Fire	1'05		
The Contemporary Singers, Sydney Alpha Ensemble, David Stanhope <i>conductor</i>			
ALAN JOHN b. 1958			
[10] Aftermath from The Bank	1'58		
Paul McMahon <i>tenor</i> ; Mark Donnelly <i>baritone</i> , Cantillation, Sinfonia Australis David Stanhope <i>conductor</i>			
RICHARD MEALE b. 1932			
[11] Prelude: Lake Geneva from Scenes from <i>Mer de Glace</i>	2'34		
Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, David Porcelijn <i>conductor</i>			
ELENA KATS-CHERNIN b. 1957			
[12] Russian Rag	3'41		
Sydney Alpha Ensemble, David Stanhope <i>conductor</i>			
SEAN O'BOYLE b. 1963			
[13] Molly	3'28		
Robert John <i>violin</i> , Orchestra Victoria, Sean O'Boyle <i>conductor</i>			
RICHARD CHARLTON b. 1955			
[14] A Sky for Dreaming from Capricorn Skies	3'49		
Guitar Trek			
MIRIAM HYDE b. 1913			
[15] Andante Tranquillo from Piano Concerto No. 2 in C-sharp minor	6'29		
Miriam Hyde <i>piano</i> , West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Geoffrey Simon <i>conductor</i>			
MALCOLM WILLIAMSON 1931-2003			
[16] Lane Cove from Sydney Diaries			
Antony Gray <i>piano</i>			
MARGARET SUTHERLAND 1897-1984			
[17] Jesu, meine Freude from Two Chorale Preludes			
David Lockett <i>piano</i>			
LYLE CHAN b. 1967			
[18] Forever #1 from Solo Piano			
Lyle Chan <i>piano</i>			
ALFRED HILL 1870-1960			
[19] Adagio from String Quartet No. 10 in E major			
Sydney String Quartet			
JOHN CARMICHAEL b. 1930			
[20] Quiet Evening from A Little Night Music			
Roger Armstrong <i>flute</i> , John Carmichael <i>piano</i>			
PEGGY GLANVILLE-HICKS 1912-1990			
[21] Gymnopédie III from Three Gymnopédies			
Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Myer Fredman <i>conductor</i>			
CARL VINE b. 1954			
[22] Movement II from Piano Concerto			
Michael Kieran Harvey <i>piano</i> , Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Edo de Waart <i>conductor</i>			

The Australian Sense of Timelessness

The horizon appears limitless as we speed along the straightness of the highway, seeking the most direct route to cover the hundreds of kilometres which separate one point of settlement from another. As far as the eye can see, the land hardly seems to undulate, and only grudgingly allows a few trees to break the visual monotony.

It's a landscape every Australian knows. We've spent hours, even days, travelling through the semi-arid landscape that awaits us each time we enter into the interior of the continent. At some time or other, we're bound to be struck by a sense of the special power that resides within this vastness: a spiritual resonance perhaps, or just a feeling of air, light and space.

This sense may not find its way overtly into the music of our composers, but there are many aspects in which their music shows a familiarity with what eternity looks and feels like. This CD demonstrates the diverse ways in which the sense of drawn-out time and huge open spaces pervades the music of Australia's composers, even though the sources of inspiration cover many aspects of Australian life and experience.

Ross Edwards wrote his **Dawn Mantras** for a performance on the sails of the Sydney Opera House that took place in the first light of the first

day of the year 2000, the beginning of the 'new millennium'. Incorporating diverse musical elements – didjeridu, shakuhachi, children's voices, percussion and Western instruments – the piece draws the multi-faceted aspects of Australian society and culture into a combined spiritual expression.

The piece illustrates another fundamental characteristic of Australian music: its diversity and multiplicity. The traditions that Australian composers build upon can derive from any part of the world, and as a consequence, our music is made up of a great variety of individual musical styles and personalities.

Lyn Williams is one of Australia's leading choral directors and founder of the highly regarded Gondwana Voices, a choir of children that draws its membership from around Australia. The poem **Ferry Me Across the Water** is by the 19th-century English poet, friend of the Pre-Raphaelites, Christina Rossetti. The piece evokes the shifting sea which is the setting for an exchange between a young woman and a boatman.

Peter Sculthorpe has undoubtedly contributed most to our feeling for the spiritual power of the Australian landscape. In **Small Town**, written in 1963, Sculthorpe turns his gaze to the settlements of rural Australia, which ubiquitously feature a statue of a digger as a memorial to those who served in war. The composition is a nostalgic evocation of such places, the

memories and faded history that lie behind the marble statues, and of the people living their lives honourably.

Way Out West is a title we'd associate firstly with America, and indeed the composer, Graeme Koehne, cites old western matinee movies as inspiration for the piece, extracted from his oboe concerto, *Inflight Entertainment*. As much as any American vista, though, the rolling melodic hills and dales of this music conjure up the prairie-like landscapes that characterise the composer's native South Australia.

This same landscape was cited also by Koehne's predecessor, Percy Grainger, the greatest of Australia's composers, as one source of his boundless inspiration. As an exile from his beloved Australia, sentimentality was one of Grainger's favourite feelings. **Dreamery**, Grainger's made-up word, describes the sensibility to a tee.

Nigel Westlake is one of Australia's most accomplished composers for films, and his music for the IMAX spectacular, *Antarctica*, yields much memorable and powerful music, responding to the awesome grandeur of the icy continent. In **Wooden Ships**, the mood is nostalgic, a kind of homage to the men who first ventured into the region in wooden ships that were under constant threat from the region's vicious elements.

Nostalgia also pervades the song **In Questa Stanza**, co-written by the tenor David Hobson and another of Australia's highly successful film composers, David Hirschfelder. The song's theme is the affective power of memory, reflected in the music's backward-looking style, rich in echoes of a past era.

Dream, by composer Gordon Kerry, is a meditation that draws upon the influence of ancient Aboriginal song. Here, time is halted, conveying a profound sense of quietude and the great span of time, in part a reflection on the birth of the composer's niece.

Raffaele Marcellino's piece draws its inspiration not from nature, but from the human spirit. The meditative **Hymn I** is from his orchestral work, *Heart of Fire*, written for the 2000 Paralympics, and portraying 'the struggle and achievement of paralympic athletes. The music is a journey through the emotions of arduous preparation, the struggle of competition, the nadir of defeat and the elation of triumph.'

The Bank is a movie dealing with the negative side of human character, a tale of contemporary corporate corruption. This excerpt, **Aftermath**, from Alan John's score reflects upon the events portrayed in the film with a sense of melancholy.

As Alan John is one of Australia's foremost composers for theatre, so is Richard Meale our foremost composer of opera. In his 1992 opera

Mer de Glace, Meale's neo-romantic style reached full maturity, and this excerpt, **Prelude: Lake Geneva**, sets the scene for the dramatic action of this rich work based on the relationships between the Shelleys and the Byrons.

A sense of melancholy infuses **Russian Rag** by Elena Kats-Chernin, who emigrated to Australia from Russia in 1975. The light-heartedness of the work reflects its origin as a diversion from heavier compositional tasks, but the piece is a hugely appealing expression of the composer's affection for her Russian heritage.

Sean O'Boyle's heritage is Celtic, and he's long been intrigued by this extraordinarily rich musical tradition. **Molly**, composed for his daughter, was first performed at the centenary concert of the Queensland Irish Association in 1998, and was recorded on an album *Uillean Sunrise*, echoing the ancient Celtic traditions and songs.

The unusual ensemble Guitar Trek – comprising a quartet of guitars of different sizes and range – has drawn compositions from many Australian composers. Composer Richard Charlton wrote them a piece reflecting upon the various moods conveyed by Australian skies and landscapes. **A Sky for Dreaming** is the most contemplative of the five movements, achieving its stretched-time effect through an innovative rhythmical elasticity.

From an earlier generation, Miriam Hyde developed a personal 'neo-Romantic' style which

is full of vitality and melodic verve, and always expertly crafted. She is in reflective mood in the slow movement of her second piano concerto.

Andante Tranquillo demonstrates her modest but noble artistic aspiration: to create music which 'can be a refuge for what beauty and peace can still be omnipresent ... I make no apologies for writing "from the heart", with such craftsmanship as I have acquired through earnest study and a foundation of academic discipline.'

Appointment to a post as prestigious as Master of the Queen's Music would have to rate as possibly the highest position in terms of international status ever attained by an Australian composer. Though he spent most of his life in London, Malcolm Williamson never lost sight of his Australianess, and his broad outlook and strong sense of place and landscape marked him as a true Australian composer. The piece **Lane Cove** comes from his *Sydney Travel Diaries* which date from the early 1960s and are charming, reflective pieces intended for the amateur pianist.

A generation before Williamson, Margaret Sutherland was a pioneer in bringing Australia out of its Anglo-centric isolation, having studied in Vienna in the 1920s when the place was abuzz with a spirit of innovation. Her music adapts the style and techniques of Hindemith, Bartók and the impressionists, always building

upon a firm sense of tradition, as reflected in this prelude based on the Bach chorale **Jesu, meine Freude**.

Contemporary composer Lyle Chan's music extends from the aesthetic of minimalism, using simple harmonies and an extreme extension of time to counter the busyness and violence that characterise the modern world. His **Forever #1**, part of a larger, constantly evolving single composition called simply *Solo Piano*, was written in response to the events of September 11, 2001.

Alfred Hill studied in Leipzig in the last years of the 19th century, and his music is imbued with the grand Romantic style, as if seeking to translate Australian landscapes and experience into the great Classical forms of the Western tradition, the symphony and the string quartet. The **Adagio** from the String Quartet No. 10 was written in 1935 and conveys a wistful, serene sensibility in keeping with the pastoral tradition of Classical art and music.

Like Malcolm Williamson, John Carmichael has also made his career in London, but retains powerful and constant links with his Australian homeland. Carmichael is widely respected as a fine composer in a sensitive, highly melodic and lyrical style that could be characterised as 'light music'. Typical of this style, the piece **Quiet Evening** comes from the three-movement suite for flute and piano *A Little Night Music*.

London was the first port of call for Peggy Glanville-Hicks when she left Australia to pursue her musical ambitions in the 1930s, but she eventually made her base in the USA, where she became a respected figure as an imaginative composer, especially for theatre, and as a critic. **Gymnopédie III** comes from her *Three Gymnopédies* which were written in the 1930s as her own reinvention of the genre created by Erik Satie to evoke Greek athletic rituals.

The association between composer Carl Vine and pianist Michael Kieran Harvey has been one of the most productive in recent Australian music. The Piano Concerto of 1997 reflects the personality of both musicians: they are both on the same wavelength, you might say, in terms of developing a reinvigorated style that blooms from the great late-Romantic and early 20th-century repertoire. In **Movement II**, the slow movement of the concerto, Vine unleashes his sentimental side, creating a melodic piece of moving eloquence and grace.

James Koehne

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