Composer's Note

Ghosts of Reason - Symphony No. 2 (2008) - Andrew Schultz

Ghosts of Reason - Symphony No. 2 is a one-movement work of about 18 minutes duration. The piece was commissioned for the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra as the Schueler Composition Award for 2008. This award was established through the generosity of Mr Norman Schueler and Mrs Carol Schueler, in honour of Mrs Gogo Schueler.

What I have in mind is the way that musical forms, like landscapes, can seem to be haunted by past inhabitants. I feel this applies to Australia a lot. I remember as a child growing up in Western Victoria, in a hamlet called Tabor, an abandoned place where I used to go to play. It had been a house years before and was just broken building bits with foundations but no walls now plus a fantastic wattle grove - cold but beautiful in winter. The sense of being somewhere remote but lived in before was palpable and that's even without thinking about the Aboriginal history before that. Musical forms are like this to me - for an Australian composer, Beethoven and Schubert seem to be wandering the Simpson Desert at times.

I am also interested to extend the idea of burnt ochre sonorities that were potent for me with the use of Aboriginal voices in my works, **Black River** and **Journey to Horseshoe Bend**. Namely, the kind of nasal and slightly strident tone colours that contrast with a Western, 'Italianate' roundness of tone. That was something I was trying to get at in the sound world of the recent orchestral work, **Endling**, and in the large-scale vocal work, **Song of Songs**. **Ghosts of Reason** is for large orchestra but I have focused on the double reeds (oboes, cor anglais and bassoons), sizzle cymbals and muted brass to try and achieve this kind of distinctive reedy timbre. Vibraphone, marimba, harp and strings provide a warm backdrop and as in much of my music, musical structure and logic is largely generated by harmony.

Starting out on the piece I had in mind the aspiration to create a prolonged sense of yearning mixed with silence and space but balanced by a sustained, rolling and uplifting climax. As Dante put it in the **Divine Comedy**, "And so we came forth and once again beheld the stars."

I wrote the piece over the last six months immediately after the opera **The Children's Bach**. The piece was sketched out whilst I was in residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada in a tranquil snowbound studio and then completed on the coast south of Sydney where stillness is often replaced by invariably brutal, winter Southerlies.

Andrew Schultz, July 2008.

Biographical Note

Composer Andrew Schultz was born in Australia in 1960 and lives in New South Wales on the coast south of Sydney. He studied at the Universities of Queensland and Pennsylvania and at King's College London and he has received awards, prizes and fellowships. His music, which covers a broad range of chamber, orchestral and vocal works, has been performed, recorded and broadcast widely by leading groups and musicians internationally. He has held many commissions, including from the major Australian orchestras. Andrew has written a number of large-scale works including three operas (**Black River, Going Into Shadows** and **The Children's Bach**), which have been presented live and on film around the world. Other major extended works include **Journey to Horseshoe Bend** for the Sydney Symphony and **Song of Songs** for the Song Company and ABC Radio. Both of these works have recently been released on compact discs whilst Tall Poppies has also recently released a new disc of his chamber music. Andrew has held residencies and academic posts in the UK, US and Australia including as Head of Composition at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He is currently Research Professor of Composition at the University of Wollongong. Works in progress include pieces for the Philharmonia Choir and Orchestra and the Sydney Chamber Choir.