

Ross Edwards (b.1943)

One of Australia's best-known composers, Ross Edwards' distinctive sound world combines shapes and patterns from nature with a variety of musical influences which reflect and celebrate Australia's cultural diversity.

In his *maninya* (dance/chant) pieces he has tried to restore to 'serious' music such qualities as lightness, spontaneity and the impulse to dance. His belief in the healing power of music is reflected in a series of profoundly contemplative works influenced by birdsong and the mysterious polyphony of summer insects.

His compositions include four symphonies, the violin concerto *Maninyas* and the internationally acclaimed *Dawn Mantras*, which ushered in the new millennium from the sails of the Sydney Opera House. Scores and recordings can be purchased from the Australian Music Centre, info@amcoz.com.au

For more information, see the Ross Edwards Web Site: www.rossedwards.com

Raft Song at Sunrise (1995) for solo shakuhachi

Although this was my first attempt to write for the shakuhachi, an end-blown Japanese bamboo flute, people had been observing for years that the phraseology of some of my more quiescent works, notably *The Tower of Remoteness* (1978) for clarinet and piano, recalls the traditional shakuhachi repertoire of meditational pieces (*honkyoku*). This similarity wasn't consciously intended but perhaps it's not surprising: I'd come to regard my own works as musical contemplation objects and my source of inspiration was the timeless and mysterious sound world produced by insects. *Raft Song at Sunrise* takes advantage of the astonishingly expressive qualities of the shakuhachi to introduce a human voice into this sound world. It was composed especially for Riley Lee to perform during the exhibition of Ross Mellick's bamboo construction *Raft No. 3* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in January 1996. Later that year Riley was to make an important contribution to my music for Bruce Beresford's feature film *Paradise Road*.

R.E.