

### 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 the Symphony *Da Pacem Domine*, Earth Spirit Songs (Symphony No.2), the violin concerto *Maninyas* and the internationally acclaimed *Dawn Mantras*, which ushered in the new millennium from the sails of the Sydney Opera House.

For more information, see the Ross Edwards Web Site: [www.rossedwards.com](http://www.rossedwards.com)

### White Ghost Dancing (1999)

There are recorded instances of Aboriginal People mistaking early Europeans in Australia for the ghosts of their ancestors, since ghosts were believed to be light-coloured.

As I composed *White Ghost Dancing*, the concept of a 'white ghost' came to symbolise non-indigenous Australia's innate Aboriginality - its capacity to transform and heal itself through spiritual connectedness with the earth.

I believe that music, which has enormous therapeutic properties and, for me, a close relationship with ritual - and especially dance - is destined to make an important contribution to this transformation and healing, hence the title.

Typical of my *maninya* (dance/chant pieces), *White Ghost Dancing* is a compact mosaic of unconsciously processed shapes and patterns from the natural world: fragments of birdsong, insect and frog rhythms, as well as fleeting references to other works of mine and fusions of Australian Aboriginal and Gregorian chant. I believe that Australia has a great deal to learn from the profound wisdom of the Aboriginal Peoples it has dispossessed, and that the time has come to seek reconciliation for the misunderstanding and consequent mistreatment they suffered as a result of European colonisation.

*White Ghost Dancing* was commissioned by Symphony Australia, with assistance from the Australia Council, especially for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and its conductor, David Porcelijn, to whom it is dedicated. The first performance was given in the Odeon Theatre, Hobart, on July 5th 2000.

R.E.