

GUITAR QUARTET No. 2

“Impromptus” for Four Guitars

Composers’ comments:-

Composed in a relatively short period of time (16/1/84 to 20/1/84) I felt they had an improvised and spontaneous air, hence their title!

The work was written for the “The Sydney Guitar Quartet” whose members were then, Raffaele Agostino, Janet Carroll, Sally Hillier and myself. We premiered them at a concert in the “Old Darlington School” at Sydney University on the 24th of November 1984.

Since then they have been performed by quite a few other groups including the “Delphin Guitar Quartet” from the Netherlands, the Northern Territory University Guitar Quartet and student quartets in Perth, Canberra and Melbourne. One memorable performance was at a recital during the 1997 Darwin Guitar Festival where the members of the quartet were none other than John Williams, Timothy Kain, the Spanish guitarist, Jose Maria Gallardo del Rey and Adrian Walter, the Festivals’ director.

Although composed for four guitars these pieces work well for a large ensemble. They have been performed many times by the “Jugend-Gitarren Orchester” (The Youth Guitar Orchestra of Germany) and this present edition was set on computer from the original hand-written score by their conductor Helmut Oesterreich.

There are 5 short movements that can be played from the score with the exception of movements 3 & 5. (Parts for these are in the back.)

- *Vivace* - a sort of burlesque waltz
- *Nocturno* - in a quiet, reflective mood
- *Allegro Scherzando* - like the buzzing of insects, pairs of guitars play lines a major second apart.
- *Marcia Funebre* - a solemn theme over an ostinato which breaks into aleatoric notes in boxes (ie played in free rhythm)
- *Presto Agitato* - a sort of “Keystone Cops” car chase from an early silent movie! (lots of fun providing you don’t crash!)

Richard Charlton

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