

NOTES ON THE MUSIC

Refractions was composed for the Strano sisters (Catherine and Silvina) and was premiered by them on the 14th of September 1996 at the Pitt street. Uniting Church, Sydney. They subsequently performed it on their 1996 Tour of Spain, Italy and the USA. The title refers to the many ways light can be refracted and I made use of the imagery of ‘light through a prism’ in defining some of the rhythmic elements of the piece.

The opening Harmonics are played in the style of ‘Chet’ Atkins -

Eg. in the first bar - hold down the notes - F, C#, A, E . (from 1st string down to 4th.) in 1st Position and then play the artificial harmonics by "touching" the string(s) with the index finger and plucking with the thumb. The natural notes that come in between can then be played with the (a) finger. This is then repeated with similar chord shapes in other bars.

Romanza, as stated in the preface, was originally part of a work called “Sonata Nostalgica” composed for the Duo Agostino in 1988. It was re-cast as the slow movement of “Stoneworks” (guitar quartet no.7) in 2002 – “*Stones of desire, emerald green, ruby fire . . .*” In spite of this it does have the ability to stand alone as a purely musical work of a “romantic” nature.

The original version was recorded by the Duo Agostino for Radio 2MBS-FM. “*Stoneworks*” is recorded by *Saffire* (the Australian Guitar Quartet) on their award winning CD of the same name. (ABC Classics – 476 701-2)

Nightsongs is a “nocturne” and in the introduction, tries to evoke the sounds of insects and frogs on a warm summer evening. This introduction requires the use of a 20¢ coin by Guitar 1. The coin is used to imitate a frog sound by scraping the ridged-edge over a fret, back & forwards to make a soft “*ribbet*” sound. A slightly different sound (deeper) is obtained by scraping over the cog of the machine heads. (*see diagram over page*) Guitar 2 makes chirping sounds by plucking with the RH thumb behind various “stopped” notes as indicated in the score.

The Harmonics in bars 31 & 32 are played as follows – hold a $\frac{3}{4}$ barre at the position indicated, then LH 2 on 3rd string, 3 on the 2nd string, 4 on the 1st string. Harmonics are then played with the RH thumb & “i” finger; “a” finger plucks the natural notes (LH 4th finger slurs to the barre) – *see also above the directions for “Refractions”*.

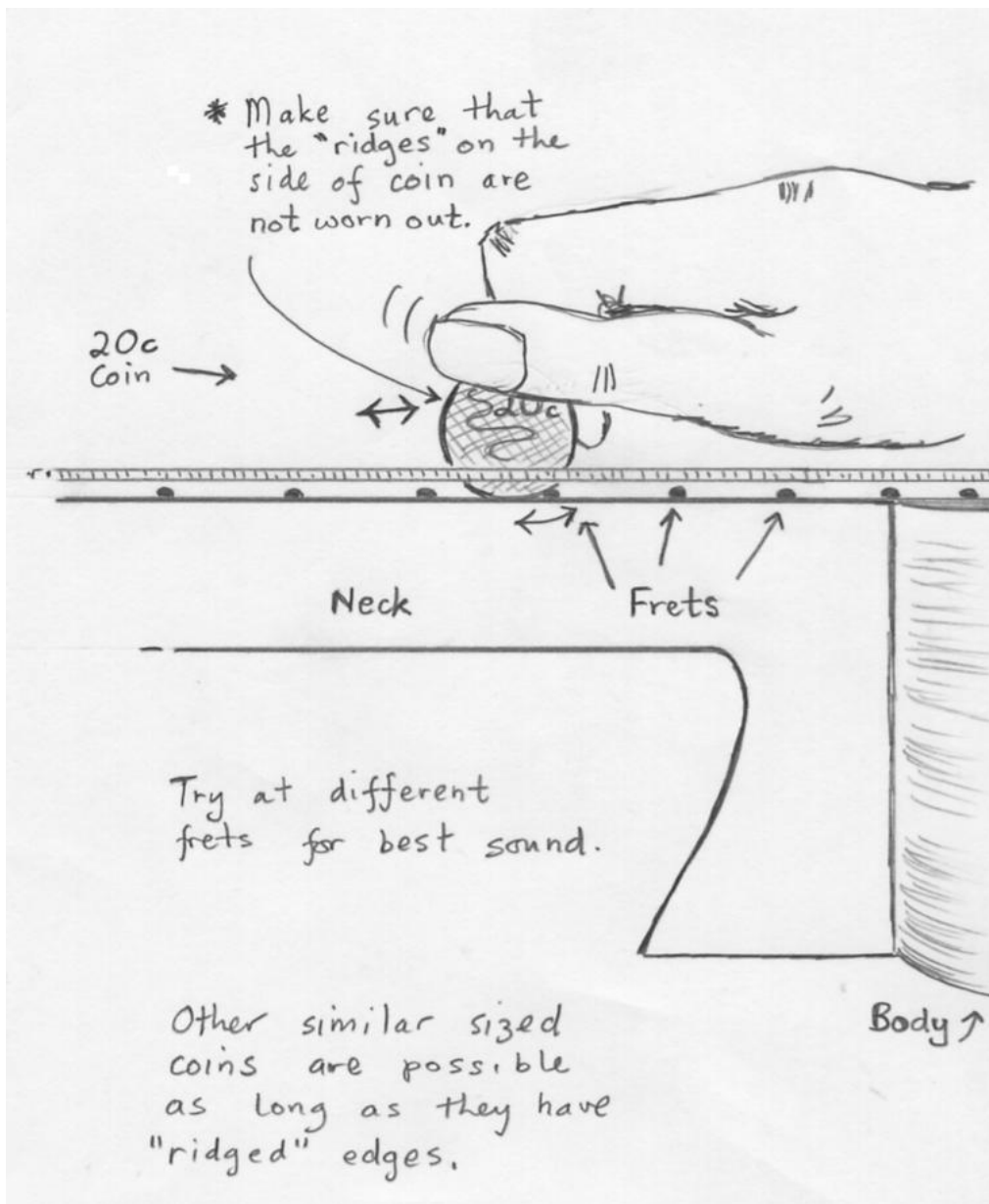
My initial ideas for **Spiral Ellipse** were somewhat unrelated but yet joined? I came to think of the two lines of music as “rotating” - at times they intersected with their material, then at other times, they go their own way! The twin concepts of the “spiral” and the “ellipse” seemed to echo this idea. The central slow section may be thought of as the “focal point” of the ellipse?

This work was commissioned by the *Duo Lenz* and completed in December 2000. It was premiered July 8th 2001 and is recorded on their CD “*Illusie*” (ArtsWA – DLCD-012001)

R. Charlton December 2003
Vaucluse

How to make the
“frog” sound in
Nightsongs duo.

Guitar 1



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