

ALAN HOLLEY

Sydney-born Alan Holley began his career in 1974 when several works were premiered in the Recording Hall (now The Studio) of the Sydney Opera House. By 1976 he had formed MUSED, a music theatre group which for several years promoted contemporary concerts with many prominent young musicians. In 1977, after being awarded an Australia-Japan Foundation travel grant, Holley met Japan's leading composers Toru Takemitsu and Yuji Takahashi. Not surprisingly, his sparse, static works following this period were described as having an Asian quality. The following year a Gulbenkian Foundation grant assisted study in England, and thereafter his work was supported by the Australia Council through composer fellowships and commissions.

An unhurried yet ongoing process of evolution over 30 years has resulted in a style characterised by the exploration of intense textures, simple structures and melodic fragments. In his lyrical vocal works the textures tend to be less dense and the fragments more extended. Holley's interest in orchestration was fostered through his role of conductor of more than 300 concerts of the standard orchestral, chamber and contemporary repertoire with Northern Chamber Orchestra, Sydney Bach Orchestra and The Gallery Players. Regularly performed and broadcast in Australia since the mid-1970s, and now grounded firmly in Western tonality and impressionism, much of Holley's music is influenced by the Australian landscape and 'soundscape', especially by his love of birds and their songs.

Compositions include the opera *Dorothea* (1988) and four song cycles, all written in conjunction with the librettist Jyoti Brunsdon, and numerous works for chamber orchestra, small groups and solo instruments. In recent years compositions include *Chamber Symphony* (2003) and *The Winged Viola* (2004) for solo viola and ensemble, together with the trumpet concerto *Doppler's Web* (2005) and *A Line of Stars* (2007), both works commissioned and performed in the Concert Hall of the Opera House by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, with Paul Goodchild the soloist in *Doppler's Web*. His *Opal Tide* (2006) was composed by request of the Sydney Symphony Brass Section, and premiered during their 2006 tour of New South Wales. Holley also teaches trumpet and composition. His flute and trumpet works are included in the Australian Music Examinations Board syllabus, and in 1995 EMI Australia published two collections: *Summer Bird and other pieces for trumpet* and *Birds of Opal and other pieces for flute*. CDs of chamber and vocal music include *Ophelia* and *Masquerade* on the MBS label.

Jyoti Brunsdon

In 2006 Paul Goodchild asked me to write a quintet for his Sydney Brass ensemble, who were planning a country tour. As I was considering what to do, I was saddened by the news of the death of Gyorgy Ligeti, one of the masters of late 20th century composition. I decided, therefore, that the piece for Sydney Brass would take the form of a tribute to Ligeti. A short lament for solo horn, preferably played off-stage, is followed by a movement for brass quintet. Remembering the languid, cross-rhythmic, descending two-note phrase in the opening bars of Ligeti's *Clocks and Clouds* (1973), I began the second section of my work with a repetitive 'ticking' two-note pattern.

The work was premiered by Sydney Brass in Townsville in October 2006. It was later performed by members of the Sydney Symphony Brass Ensemble in their 2007 season.

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