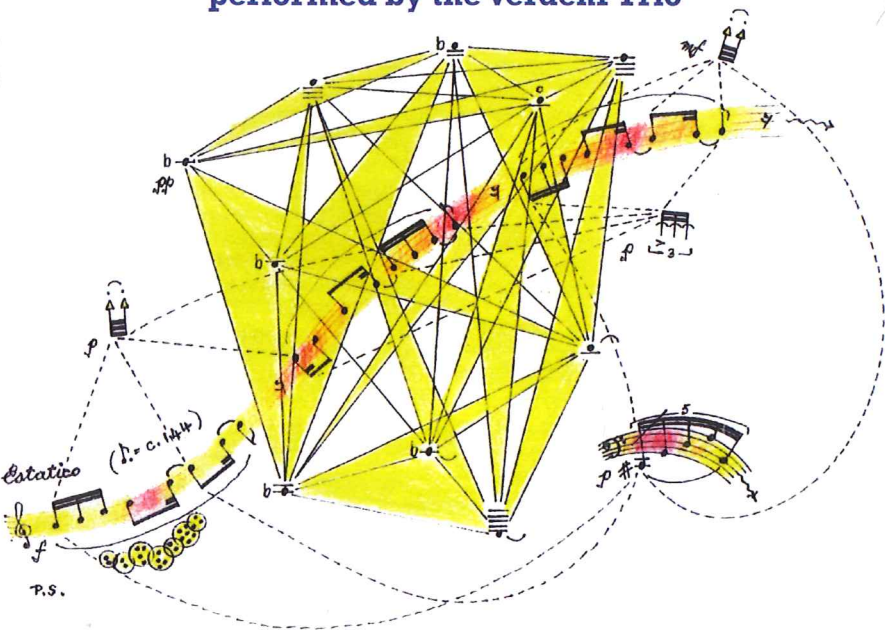


Music from Down Under

Peter Sculthorpe, Barry Conyngham, Richard Mills,
Douglas Knehans, Christopher Marshall

performed by the Verdehr Trio



THE VERDEHR TRIO

Walter Verdehr, Violin Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr, Clarinet
Silvia Roederer, Piano

PETER SCULTHORPE

1. **Baltimore Songlines (2006) – 15:11**

pub. by Faber Music

BARRY CONYNGHAM

2. **Playground (2002) – 13:53**

pub. by Boosey & Hawkes

DOUGLAS KNEHANS

3. **rive (2002) – 11:56**

pub. by Armadillo Editions

RICHARD MILLS

Four **Miniatures (1992) – 10:50**

4. Lento (2:11)

5. Allegro (2:24)

6. Adagio (3:26)

7. Presto (2:45)

pub. by Michigan State University Press

CHRISTOPHER MARSHALL

Three **Aspects of Spring (2003) – 15:07**

8. October Idyll (4:16)

9. Bushwalk (4:11)

10. Synergy (6:31)

pub. by Vaia'ata Print

TOTAL TIME – 67:22

Recording Engineer: Sergei Kvitko

Cover Art: "Dreamtracks" by Peter Sculthorpe

Folder design: Peter Christ

Sculthorpe's piece was commissioned for the Verdehr Trio by the Phillips Collection and the Australian Embassy in Washington, D.C., the Baltimore Aquarium, and Michigan State University. The other works were commissioned by Michigan State University and the Verdehr Trio.

For over 40 years **The Verdehr Trio** has molded and defined the personality of the violin-clarinet-piano trio. The Trio has commissioned over 200 new works as well as rediscovered and transcribed 18th and 19th century pieces for inclusion in its concert programs.

The Verdehr Trio has performed throughout the world in major concert

halls and international festivals, including 17 European countries, the former Soviet Union, South and Central America, Asia, Australia, and in all 50 states of the United States of America.

The Verdehr Trio is in residence at Michigan State University in East Lansing. An article about the Trio appears in the new Grove Dictionary of Music.

PETER SCULTHORPE, born in Launceston in 1929, was educated at the University of Melbourne, and Wadham College, Oxford. He is now Emeritus Professor at the University of Sydney, where he began teaching in 1963. He has also taught at various music institutions and universities both within and outside Australia, and he holds honorary doctorates from Tasmania, Melbourne, Sussex, and Griffith. An Officer of both the Order of Australia and the British Empire, he was elected one of Australia's Living National Treasures in 1998. In 2002, he was elected to Foreign Honorary Membership of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Sculthorpe has written works in most musical forms, and his output relates easily to the unique social climate and physical characteristics of Australia. Furthermore, his country's geographical position has caused him to be influenced by much of the music of Asia, in particular that of Japan and Indonesia. The most important influences upon him in recent years have been Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island music and culture. Certainly he is Australia's best-known composer, and his works are regularly performed and recorded throughout the world.

Baltimore Songlines (2006)

Notes by Peter Sculthorpe

During the 1990s, I began a series of works that incorporate material suggested by the indigenous music of northern Australia, together with Balinese gamelan-like figurations and bird-song. These works were inspired by Bruce Chatwin's book, *Songlines*. In it, Chatwin writes about the Aboriginal concept of totemic ancestors singing themselves into existence and journeying across the land with their songs. *Dreamtracks* and *From Nourlangie*, both written for the Verdehr Trio, are two of these works.

Baltimore Songlines was also written for the Verdehr Trio, for first performance at the National Aquarium in Baltimore, MD, celebrating the opening of the Australian Wing of the Aquarium. An enormous river gorge has been built inside the aquarium. It houses the whole range of flora and fauna that exists in such gorges.

Set in one movement, it seems to me that the music of *Baltimore Songlines* is self-explanatory. Apart from the opening, which is based upon an indigenous lullaby, all the material, especially the tumbling chant that follows the lullaby, was inspired by visits to the Northern Territory. Towards the end of the work, a section for solo

piano suggests the music of the didjeridu, an instrument that has its origins in Australia's north.

I feel that *Baltimore Songlines* is the summation of my so-called 'Songlines period'. Unlike the other works in the series, some of its thematic material tends to recede over the course of the work, giving way to new ideas. In this way, I was able to suggest both journeying and the continual renewal of the natural world.

The Verdehr Trio premiered this work on October 26, 2006 at the Baltimore Aquarium.

BARRY CONYNGHAM was born in Sydney, Australia, in 1944 and studied with Peter Sculthorpe in Australia and with Toru Takemitsu in Japan. He has received numerous awards, prizes, and grants for composition. His contribution to his country is recognized by being a Member of the Order of Australia. He has written over 70 works and has about 40 recordings featuring his compositions. The images of his music are diverse and include a fascination with notions of place, both specific and general. He has also used his emotional reaction to dreams and natural phenomena in structuring his music.

Playground

Notes by Barry Conyngham

The title references the starting point

of the work, a real playground near Harvard Square on the gate of which is a plaque: 'In memory of a little boy who loved to play' also indicating the short life of the dedicatee. The piece evolved into a reflection on playgrounds – about many things involving playgrounds: children playing, lots of games, running all over the place, childish freedom, energy, exploration, etc. However, while playgrounds are wonderfully joyous places when full, they are particularly sad and lonely when they are empty. Thus they are timeless – to the adult full of memories and nostalgia, to the child full of potential and possibility. Each day playgrounds witness drama and emotion, which is at once both trivial and profound.

DOUGLAS KNEHANS, born 1957, St. Louis, Missouri, received his initial music education at the Canberra, Australia, School of Music. After graduating from Queens College, Knehans graduated Yale University in 1993 earning the Woods Chandler Memorial Prize for best composition in a larger form. He received a doctorate from Yale University in 1996. He has been the recipient of numerous commissions, awards and fellowships in Australia and the United States, including the

(continued on other side: Notes)

Walter Verdehr was born in Gottschee, Yugoslavia and received his first violin instruction at the Conservatory of Music in Graz, Austria. He was the first violinist to receive a doctorate at The Juilliard School and as a Fulbright Scholar, he studied at the Vienna Academy of Music. He has taught at the International Congress of Strings and has served on the juries for the Naumburg and Prague Spring International violin competitions. Professor of Music at Michigan State University, he received the Distinguished Faculty Award in 2004. He has made numerous appearances as soloist with orchestras and in solo and chamber music recitals in the U.S. and Europe, and is currently completing a DVD series featuring interviews and performances with eminent composers commissioned by the Verdehr Trio.. He performs on the ex 'Stephens-Verdehr' Stradivarius of 1690.

Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr studied at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and at the Eastman School from which she received a Performer's Certificate and the DMA degree. She has performed, lectured, and given master classes at numerous national and international Clarinet Congresses and for several years was a participant in the Marlboro Music Festivals and touring groups. She has appeared frequently in the U.S., Canada,

and abroad as a recitalist, clinician, and soloist with orchestras and as principal clarinetist of the Grand Teton Festival Orchestra. As a member of the Richards Wind Quintet, she played in more than half of the United States, Canada, and at the White House. She was recently awarded a Distinguished Faculty Professorship at Michigan State University and her students occupy numerous university and orchestral positions throughout the U.S. and abroad. In 2007 she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Clarinet Association.

Silvia Roederer was born in Argentina, but her musical training began in the U.S.A. After graduating from the Eastman School with high honors, she completed her doctoral degree at the University of Southern California. She was the winner of several important competitions, including the Joanna Hodges International Piano Competition. Her Los Angeles debut was an acclaimed recital at the prestigious Ambassador Auditorium. She recently performed for the Myra Hess Series in Chicago. As chamber musician, she has appeared in mainland China, Austria, London, Paris, and New York's Carnegie Hall. She is currently Professor of Music at Western Michigan University.

(NOTES: continued from other side)

inaugural \$20,000 Victorian Council for the Arts Composition Fellowship (1987-88), a bicentennial orchestral commission for the Canberra Symphony Orchestra (1988) from the Australian Bicentennial Authority, over a dozen commissions for various media supported by the Australia Council Performing Arts Board, and Fellowships from the MacDowell Colony (1989) and the Leighton Artist Colony (1989).

In 1999 Knehans won the National Symphony Orchestra (Washington, D.C.) Composition Competition Commission Prize, which led to a chamber work premiered at the Kennedy Center by National Symphony musicians.

In 1993, Knehans was appointed to the University of Alabama School of Music, where he was Chair of the Composition, Theory and Electronic Music area and the Director of the SCREAM (Southern Center for Research into ElectroAcoustic Music) Studio. In January 2000, Knehans became Professor and Head of School of the Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania (Australia). In September, 2008, he became Dean of the University of Cincinnati—College Conservatory of Music.

rive (2002)

Notes by Douglas Knehans

'rive' literally means a ripping or tearing apart. When the Verdehr Trio visited Tasmania in 2001 they were taken

with the severity of such primal ripping and tearing as expressed in the feeding habits of the Tasmanian Devil. We had toyed with the idea of a piece about this and what it distilled to in my mind was a structural approach to musical material, which was based on such muscular dismemberment of materials. In my approach to this work the whole of it is formed from a dramatic disaggregation of the materials unfolded in the opening 10 or so measures. All of this material is recycled, recombined, reharmonised, and variously reconfigured such that it morphs from one idea to the next while always relating back to the central initial ideas. This holds true also of the broader formal harmonic structure, which reflects the same harmonic underpinnings of the initial clausal arc of the first large phrase group. This work represents somewhat of a departure from previous works of mine in its immediacy of expression and clarity, even its traditionalism in many ways. *rive* was written over a period of nine days at the Arthur Boyd property Bundanon, now the Bundanon Artists Centre, in New South Wales. It is dedicated with affection to the Verdehr Trio.

RICHARD MILLS, born 1949, is one of Australia's most sought-after composers, conductors, and music directors. His music has found wide acceptance and popularity, and his works are

performed throughout the world. He has conducted all the major orchestras in Australia and performs regularly at major Australian festivals. He is Artistic Director of the West Australian Opera, a post held since 1997. He is also Artistic Consultant with Orchestra Victoria and Director of the Australian Music Project for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. He has been the recipient of many prizes and awards including the Don Banks Music Fellowship, the Sir Bernard Heinz Award for service to music in Australia, and an Order of Australia.

Four Miniatures (1992)

Notes by Richard Mills

The opening gestures of this work contain all the elements of harmony and melody which form the textures of the later movements. Movements I and III are relatively darker in color than their counterparts and the formative gestures of the first miniature recur as a refrain in Miniature IV, whose more direct harmonies place them in a new context. Miniature II is toccata-like, Miniature III is an extended development of the material from Miniature I, the opening chord of which forms the climax point of Miniature III in an extended articulation across the range of the keyboard. Miniature IV is scherzando in quality and the piece concludes with a witty transformation of the opening

gesture, ending with a wry comment from the piano. *Four Miniatures* was composed for the Verdehr Trio.

CHRISTOPHER MARSHALL, born 1956 in Paris, France, is based in Orlando, Florida where he has been Composer in Residence at the University of Central Florida since 2006. He was raised in Australia and New Zealand and lived several years in Samoa. His music moulds diverse influences into a distinctive personal style notable for its lyricism, rhythmic ingenuity, and structural integrity.

Prior to his Orlando residency Marshall was Fulbright Composer in Residence at the Eastman School in Rochester, New York, and before that, Mozart Fellow at the University of Otago in Dunedin. He holds a Fellowship in composition from Trinity College, London. His music is now internationally commissioned and has been performed in such venues as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Barbican in London.

Three Aspects of Spring (1995 rev. 2003)

Notes by Christopher Marshall

I remember the first occasion I heard the Verdehr Trio. It was in 1994 while I was living in Dunedin in the far south of New Zealand—a recording of Bartok's *Contrasts*. I had never heard that piece, or indeed any piece for violin, clarinet,

and piano. It made such an impression I immediately looked up the contact details of this trio and wrote to them. As you can imagine I was honored and delighted when they commissioned this piece.

Three Aspects of Spring consists of three movements in three distinct but complementary styles. The first, *Idyll*, is the simplest and most romantic. A song-like phrase is constantly repeated over an evolving accompaniment. The second movement, *Bushwalk*, a pointillistic canon, uses fragments taken from the songs of three New Zealand birds, the tui, the kereru (or giant wood pigeon) and the korimako (or bellbird). You will hear the same material played four times: by the piano (left hand), the clarinet, the piano (right hand), and finally the violin. The final movement, *Synergy*, is built on a jaunty 7/8 ostinato derived from a Solomon Island panpipe tune which works with and against two more conventional tunes in 6/8 and 3/4 respectively.

Three Aspects of Spring is dedicated to the Verdehr Trio. They gave its world premiere at Casa Thomas Jefferson in Brasilia on September 20 2002 and the US premiere at The Phillips Collection in Washington DC on February 22, 2003. They have since taken it on tour with them throughout the world.

Other Verdehr Trio CDs on Crystal include:

CD741: Bartok, Contrasts; Hovhaness, Lake Samish; Pasatieri, Theatrepieces; Mozart, Trio; Frescobaldi, Canzoni

CD744: Dickinson, Hymns, Rags and Blues; Husa, Sonata a tre; Freund, Triomusic; James Niblock, Trio (1980)

CD745: Arutiunian, Suite; David, Triple Concerto; Sculthorpe, Dream Tracks; Schickele, Serenade for Three.

CD746: Diamond, Trio & Sonata No. 2; also Corigliano, Violin Sonata, and Schulthorpe.

CD941: Gian Carlo Menotti, Trio; Max Bruch, Trio; plus Constantinides & Deak.

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CD944: Austrian Images – music by Thomas C. David, von Einem, and Eröd.

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The Verdehr Trio, an acknowledged leader in the field of new music, for over thirty years has concentrated on molding and defining the personality of the violin-clarinet-piano trio. The Trio has created a large repertoire by commissioning over 200 new works from some of the world's most prominent and exciting composers, thus "making a medium." This is volume 18 of The Making of a Medium CD series, which has presented more than 60 premiere recordings. The Verdehr Trio is in residence at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. This CD features music written for them by composers from Australia and New Zealand.

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