

spring series

new chamber music

CONCERT 3

GABRIELLA SMART

Piano

PROGRAMME

David Kotlowy
Ashen Traces

Melita White
Sonatina

John Polglase
Quiet This Metal

INTERVAL
(10 minutes)

Raymond Chapman Smith
.....after "Tristia"

Quentin S. D. Grant
seven mysteries

Luigi Nono
.....sofferte onde serene...
(*serene waves suffered*)

david kotlowy
Ashen Traces

"Firewood becomes ash, and it does not become firewood again. Yet, do not suppose that the ash is future and the firewood past; you should understand that firewood abides in the phenomenal expression of firewood, which fully includes past and future and is independent of past and future. Ash abides in the phenomenal expression of ash, which fully includes future and past."

Dogen Kigen (1200 - 1253)
founder, Soto Zen, Japan

We are here; we hear here. Morton Feldman used the term "The Departing Landscape" to describe our hearing of sound, which is always "leaving us, rather than coming toward us." Goal oriented music does not exist here; we must therefore turn our listening around. In doing so, there is no longer any attempt to hold onto a sound – as if we somehow could – in order to consider how it relates to others that follow. However, we must listen carefully, in order to let go of each sound as it leaves us in the Departing Landscape of our hearing.

This is vastly different to hearing the relations we usually impose upon and between the sounds. When we let each sound go, we find that it leaves an impression, a trace. Through careful, deep listening, we hear each sound, and are aware of the impression it leaves upon us. In fact, what was once discerned as relations between sounds are now experienced as qualities inherent in those sounds. "Leading notes" go nowhere, apart from returning us to the present.

My notation of this piece is a pencilled scrawl of ashen traces upon the paper. Restricting myself to a handful of pitches, I find a

myriad of possibilities in them. Each simple gesture carries great intensity. There is nowhere to go; each trace fully includes future and past.

(duration 30 minutes)

David Kotlowy

melita white
Sonatina
I Andante comodo
II Allegro con moto

This piece, in two movements, marked the beginning of my fascination with motivic use and development.

Traditional Classical structures are used throughout, from the smallest to the largest unit. Motives, sentences, sequences and periods are used, as well as strict ternary and binary forms. Most phrases are of a Classical four or eight bar length and break down into two obvious halves.

Melita White

john polglase
Quiet This Metal - third movement, 'Dances'

More than ten years ago now I was approached by Rodney Smith and asked to compose a work for solo piano for an upcoming concert, which gave me the opportunity to write a large work which reflected a pianistic tradition to which both he and I owed some deference. As a result, *Quiet This Metal* is a work which takes its influence from, as much as anything, a way of playing, rather than any particular style of composition; either contemporary or not.

The title is taken from a poem by Ezra Pound which deals with an alchemist's song-like chant over a transformation of metals and seemed an appropriate parallel for this piece which is really a sonata in three movements following that standard form of a fast, weighty first movement followed by a more lyrical second movement and ending with a fast, dramatic finale.

Tonight's performance will consist of the third movement only. Titled *Dances* it is a furious 'totentanz' beginning with a pulsed motive on F sharp. The movement is an extended rondo with the angry, stabbing principal subject recurring regularly, often dominating other material simply by its relentless nature. Other musical sections are no less energetic but are more likely to share or borrow motives from each other.

John Polglase

**THERE WILL BE A SHORT INTERVAL OF 10 MINUTES
FOLLOWING THIS PIECE**

raymond chapman smith
.....after "Tristia"

- I Lento
- II Allegretto
- III Allegro
- IV Allegretto

The "Tristia" of the title refers to Osip Mandelstam's remarkable cycle of lyric poems that were written between 1916 and 1924. Absorbing this poetry, and recalling Gabriella's fine playing of

Scriabin, triggered several 'Russian' responses which eventually emerged as this brief suite.

All the material ofafter "Tristia" is derived from Scriabin's "Promethean" synthetic hexachord, a harmonic device which is at the core of much of his late music.

While beginning this piece I also came upon the piano works of Nikolay Roslavets (1881-1944) who expanded Scriabin's harmonic explorations into a unique, globally chromatic system which also plays a part in the unfolding of my four, miniature poems.

Raymond Chapman Smith

quentin s. d. grant
seven mysteries

light - out of nothing, darkness and no-breath, away from the moment of loss - at first gentle, always gentle, the breath of light feels like a touch on the soul, is like a caress, becomes a quiet and joyful sigh

ascent - out of the depths the breath rises and becomes lighter but stronger, and the face touches the air fully, it absorbs and releases the breath of the air, and rises

form - the sensation of realisation, and of the connection and union of elements: in the rising sense of completion comes joy: the moment is complete

essence - from a stillness that is of presence and nothing else: a memory flickers for an instant, but then disappears like a phantom leaving, once again, only the elemental vitality

thought - out of the stillness comes movement: the movement is contained within itself, a thing itself, but a thing that grows

and takes its place in the world, and turns towards the sun
being - manifest, present, explicit - the moment of intrinsic

balance past, and the different elements solidify, harden and, with a lumbering, awkward logic, move along in a line *time* - a vertigo that is all embracing, but that then dissolves into the solidity of the moment, and the moment seems like crystal: there is silence, nothing but silence, close and immense

Quentin S. D. Grant

luigi nono (1924-1991)

...sofferte onde serene... (serene waves suffered)

This piece, written in 1976 for piano and compact disc, was dedicated to Maurizio and Marilisa Pollini; Maurizio performs the piano part on the disc.

The piece contains personal elements: sorrow for the death of relatives of Nono and Pollini, and the sound - world of Nono's home town of Venice.

A description of the work is best summed up by Nono himself:

'In my house on the Giudecca in Venice the sound of various bells rung in different ways and with different meanings reach our ears continuously, day and night, through the fog or in the sunshine.

They are indications of life on the lagoon, on the sea. Calls to work and to meditation, warnings. And life continues there in the painful and calm necessity of the 'balance of the deep interior', as Kafka says."

GABRIELLA SMART - PIANO

Gabriella Smart obtained her B.Mus. (Performance) from the Elder Conservatorium in Adelaide in 1988 and continued post-graduate studies at the University of Tasmania.

Smart has recorded extensively for ABC FM and regional radio stations, specialising in new Australian music and especially that of women composers. In 1992 she received support from Arts Tasmania to study with Pascal Roge in Paris, residing at la Cite Internationale des Arts where she gave recitals and premiered new Australian works.

Smart's interest in women composers saw her being invited to give a key note speech at the 1994 Australian Women Composers Festival in Melbourne and to perform in the same festival in Sydney in 1997. Her growing interest in the fusion of music and other performance mediums, has led to work in theatre and various collaborations with artists in the staging of concerts. She has worked with the State Theatre of South Australia (1995) on their successful production of MEDEA by Euripides. In this production she collaborated with Director/Composer Constantine Koukias, improvising around his semi - notated score, playing prepared piano and percussion.

In December 1995 Gabriella established 'Soundstream', an ensemble performing the works of contemporary Australian and international composers. soundstream, with Smart as soloist, undertook an Australian tour in 1996 of new music for piano and electronics, premiering pieces by such Australian and international composers as Ros Bandt, Stephen Whittington, Allen Strange and Katherine Norman.

**All are invited to join Gabriella and the composers for drinks
and convivial conversation after the concert.**

**We wish to express our gratitude to the following
organisations for their support:**

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