

sonic boom



two concerts by young composers

5.15 p.m.
monday, 15 april
tuesday, 16 april

adam concert room
school of music
victoria university

concert one

THE FRIVOLOUS CAKE (1991) (premiere performance)

Helen Bowater

Linden Loader - mezzo soprano
Alexa Still - flute/piccolo
Rachel Nicholson - clarinet/bass clarinet
Andrew Pask - soprano saxophone/bass clarinet
Jane Holborow - cello
Diane Cooper - percussion

Have you ever been chased by a knife or wanted to penetrate a cake with more than your teeth?

The Frivolous Cake is a favourite poem of Fuschia (sister of Titus) who devours it alone in an attic - her secret sanctuary where she is free to make believe.

The Frivolous Cake is a setting of a poem with the same title from *Titus Groan* by Mervyn Peake. Mervyn Peake (1911-1968) was an English poet, writer and artist (born in China) with a scintillating sense of the fantastic.

This composition was compiled with financial assistance from: The Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, and The New Zealand Composers Foundation.

(Helen Bowater)

A freckled and frivolous cake there was
That sailed on a pointless sea.
Or any lugubrious lake there was
In a manner emphatic and free.
How jointlessly and how jointlessly
The frivolous cake sailed by
On the waves of the ocean that pointlessly
Threw fish to the lilac sky.

CHORUS: Oh plenty and plenty of hake there was
 Of a glory beyond compare.
 And every conceivable make there was
 Was tossed through the lilac air.

Up the smooth billows and over the crests
Of the cumbersome combers flew
The frivolous cake with a knife in the wake
Of herself and her curranty crew.
Like a swordfish grim it would bounce and skim
(This dinner knife fierce and blue).
And the frivolous cake was filled to the brim
With the fun of her curranty crew.

Around the shores of the Elegant Isles
Where the cat-fish bask and purr
And lick their paws with adhesive smiles
And wriggle their fins of fur.
They fly and fly 'neath the lilac sky -
The frivolous cake, and the knife
Who winketh his glamorous indigo eye
In the wake of his future wife.

The crumbs blow free down the pointless sea
To the beat of a cakey heart
And the sensitive steel of the knife can feel
That love is a race apart.
In the speed of the lingering light are blown
The crumbs of the hake above.
And the tropical air vibrates to the drone
Of a cake in the throes of love.

Helen Bowater graduated from Victoria University with B.Mus (Hons) in 1982 and subsequently began writing music. This year she received a substantial composition grant from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council. "This has enabled me to work only half-time as a clerk in the area of sexual abuse counselling for A.C.C. The other half I spend as a composer and technophobe in the world of synthesizers, sound mixers and other such machinery. I also receive singing tuition, give piano tuition, sing with Cantoris and sing and play with the Victoria University Gamelan."

SONATINA FOR SOLO FLUTE/PICCOLO (1988)

Martin Lodge

Alexa Still - flute/piccolo

Preludio
Arietta
Scherzo
Ritornelli

In all four movements of the *Sonatina* an important concern is to develop some aspect of melody. The first movement is exploratory, the performer invited initially to improvise. The second movement is gently lyrical in character. The expressiveness of the melodic line is extended by the use of quarter tones, glissandi and alternative fingerings. For the scherzo the performer switches to piccolo. Two fast, darting, outer sections frame a slower and quieter middle in which the piccolo reminisces briefly over fragments from the 'Arietta'.

The work concludes with a vigorous invention in two parts for the normal flute. This is called 'Ritornelli' in recognition of the frequent return of the opening rhythmic figure throughout the movement.

Sonatina for Solo Flute/Piccolo was completed in 1988 and is dedicated to the composer's friend Brad Lochore, a New Zealand painter now living in Britain. This is the first complete concert performance of the work.

(Martin Lodge)

Martin Lodge first studied music at Victoria University from 1979 to 1981. Then, on returning from living overseas for several years, he completed a Master of Music degree in composition between 1986 and 1988. At the same time he worked as a freelance musician in Wellington, including teaching part-time in the School of Music.

Currently Martin is the Mozart Fellow (composer in residence) at Otago University. As well as writing some chamber works this year he will also fulfil commissions from the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and the Dunedin Sinfonia.

QUESTIONS, REASONS, BOUNDARIES (1991) (Premiere performance)

David Downes

Video

Questions, Reasons, Boundaries is a result of my continuing interest in the fusion of visual material with sound. Since most of my music has been composed specifically for tape, the video medium is more or less a simple extension of the technology for which I am already familiar. The art however is something quite new to me. I created the scenario for *Questions, Reasons, Boundaries* with simple outlines within it for sections of dance. I asked Daniel Belton to choreograph and perform these sections keeping the original ideas in mind. We came up against our own questions, reasons and boundaries while working on the piece which caused it to go through a lot of changes. The changes however, were mostly good and I think ultimately the work, and we, grew from them.

This video was created with financial assistance from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council.

(David Downes)

David Downes completed his Honours degree in composition in 1989 and since has been working as a freelance musician. He has composed music soundtracks for modern dance productions, drama, and commercial and training videos.

SHORT INTERVAL

WHEN OWLS DO CRY (1984-91) (premiere performance)

Mark Langford

Rachel Nicolson - clarinet
Diane Cooper - percussion
David Guerin - piano

When Owls Do Cry was commissioned by Grant Cooper of Fredonia University, New York, and funded with support from the Composers' Foundation and the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council.

The 22 note melody - which is used throughout this 16:27 minute work - came from a 1979 composition called 4:7:11. Initially, *When Owls Do Cry* was set at mm=120, which meant the 'tune' was over in 2.5 seconds. What was I going to do with the other 16:24.5 minutes ...?

- cheat?
- go slower?
- play it upside down so no one would notice?
- give up?

All of the above. For me the challenge was to maintain interest while being compositionally 'stingy' with the musical material.

I hope you enjoy this premiere performance ... oh! and thank you for supporting New Zealand Made.
(Mark Langford)

Mark Langford was born in Takaka and spent his first 13 years on his families pedigree Jersey farm. "The most musical accompaniment to my piano playing was the howling dog outside and rhythmic chatter of the milking machine. He was thrust into my role as an organist when I was 10 and continued until my retirement some 15 years later.

I majored in piano in the Executant Music Course at Wellington Polytechnic, then switched to composition while studying at Victoria University. There the gamelan music thankfully saved me from endless years of vertical thinking caused by playing of hymns. I then studied digital and analogue music at the Institute of Sonology in Utrecht for one year."

TRIPTYCH (1988) (premiere performance)

Nigel Keay

Dan Williams - trumpet
Ross Harris - horn
Marc Taddei - trombone

In *Triptych* I have treated the three instruments as equal forces in terms of the melodic and rhythmic material, to create an interdependent web of contrapuntal lines, often with a constantly changing metre. The composition is essentially abstract and as the title suggests the work is in three movements, all using similar ideas and material but with a different rhythmic slant.

(Nigel Keay)

Nigel Keay at present lives in Nelson where he manages to find a reasonable amount of time to compose. Since writing *Triptych* he has completed a work for string orchestra (*Symphony for Strings*), and is now in the middle of writing an opera which uses gamelan with orchestra plus on stage musicians. The new work is scheduled to be performed in one year's time at the Nelson School of Music.

CREDITS:

Concerts co-ordinated by Jack Body and John Young
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