

ACO ORIGINALS

BRETT DEAN

Electric Preludes

BRETT DEAN born 1961

Electric Preludes

[21'55]

- | | |
|----------------------------|------|
| I. Abandoned playground | 4'01 |
| II. Topography – Papunya | 2'59 |
| III. Peripeteia | 1'23 |
| IV. The beyonds of mirrors | 2'57 |
| V. Perpetuum mobile | 5'49 |
| VI. Berceuse | 4'46 |

Richard Tognetti electric violin

Australian Chamber Orchestra

Brett Dean conductor

Electric Preludes by Brett Dean was commissioned for the Australian Chamber Orchestra and the 2012 Maribor Festival by Jan Minchin and premiered on 9 October 2012 at Union Hall, Maribor, Slovenia.

Brett Dean – Electric Preludes

‘Six fleeting sketch-like movements catching the evanescence, fragility and luminosity of sound in moods ranging from the disturbing to the nightmarish, from the intimate to the cosmic.’

– Peter McCallum, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 February 2013

It seems fitting that my new work for Richard Tognetti and the ACO, *Electric Preludes*, has been commissioned by Melbourne art curator and gallerist Jan Minchin. My work has always had a strong visual aspect to it, owing much to the long-standing partnership with my wife, Heather Betts, herself a painter. Several of my works, such as *Beggars and Angels* and *Night Window*, pay direct homage to the influence of Heather’s remarkable paintings on my own creative life.

These new preludes follow this line of creativity, owing much of their inspiration and development to visual stimuli. Whilst conceived as pieces of pure music, the lines, gestures and energies contained within nevertheless owe much of their ultimate shape to imagery.

Some of these came to my attention by traditional means; seeing the National Gallery of Victoria’s extraordinary exhibition *Tjukurrjtjanu: Origins of Western Desert Art* (in 2011), for example, proved to be an especially inspiring encounter. The magical cartographic works of Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri in particular, displaying such an encyclopaedic knowledge of his country, led directly to the second movement, ‘Topography – Papunya’, in which the music unfolds as if seen from above, taking in more and more detail as it scans and focuses, joining the dots as it were.

Another prelude was inspired simply by browsing through images on the web. The initial idea for the very opening of the piece, an ascending arpeggio over all six strings of Richard’s Violectra – and its subsequent descending counterpart heard somewhat later, reminded me of a rusty, squeaky swing in an abandoned playground. Just entering those two words in a google image search provided a beautifully wistful gallery of possible narratives and imagined sounds. Try it.

But the most striking image that fired my fantasy throughout the entire compositional process was that of Richard standing with the ACO, his exotic electric fiddle under his chin, taking mere breaths of sound and embryonic motivic shapes and transforming them, with the help of this impressive piece of electronics and sound designer Bob Scott at the mixing desk, filling the hall and enticing the orchestra’s manifold responses.

My heartfelt thanks to Richard and Bob for their invaluable contributions to this joyfully collaborative commission, and to Jan Minchin for her belief in the project and the financial support to allow us to realise it.

Brett Dean © 2012

Australian Chamber Orchestra

'The Australian Chamber Orchestra is uniformly high-octane, arresting and never ordinary.'

– *The Australian*, 2017

The Australian Chamber Orchestra lives and breathes music, making waves around the world for its explosive performances and brave interpretations. Steeped in history but always looking to the future, ACO programs embrace celebrated classics alongside new commissions, and adventurous cross-artform collaborations.

Led by Artistic Director Richard Tognetti since 1990, the ACO performs more than 100 concerts each year. Whether performing in Manhattan, New York, or Wollongong, NSW, the ACO is unwavering in its commitment to creating transformative musical experiences.

Testament to its international reputation, the ACO was invited to commence a three-year residency as International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court in partnership with London's Barbican Centre from the 2018/19 season.

The Orchestra regularly collaborates with artists and musicians who share its ideology: from Emmanuel Pahud, Steven Isserlis, Dawn Upshaw, Olli Mustonen, Brett Dean and Ivry Gitlis, to Neil Finn, Jonny Greenwood, Barry Humphries and Meow Meow; to visual artists and film makers such as Michael Leunig, Bill Henson, Shaun Tan, Jon Frank and Jennifer Peedom, who have co-created unique, hybrid productions for which the ACO has become renowned.

In addition to its national and international touring schedule, the Orchestra has an active recording program across CD, vinyl and digital formats. Recent releases include *Water / Night Music*, the first Australian-produced classical vinyl for two decades, *Beethoven*, a collection of the ACO's acclaimed Beethoven recordings, and the soundtrack to the acclaimed cinematic collaboration, *Mountain*.

aco.com.au

Producer Maxime Bibeau
Engineer Simon Lear
Electric Violin Programmer Bob Scott
Editing Maxime Bibeau
Mixing and Mastering Bob Scott

Cover Design Cameron Emerson-Elliott, Australian Chamber Orchestra

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