



EDWARDS HEART OF NIGHT



CONCERTOS FOR OBOE, CLARINET & SHAKUHACHI  
MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

# HEART OF NIGHT

	<b>Bird Spirit Dreaming – Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra</b>	[17'57]
1	I. Wild Bird	4'23
2	II. Serenade and Love Duet	8'19
3	III. The Dance of Life	5'15
	Diana Doherty <i>oboe</i>	
	<b>The Heart of Night, for shakuhachi and orchestra</b>	[18'08]
4	I. Night Music	4'49
5	II. Journey into the Night	13'19
	Riley Lee <i>shakuhachi</i>	
	<b>Clarinet Concerto</b>	[23'23]
6	I. Introduction and First Dance	7'09
7	II. Magic Distance	11'24
8	III. Final Dance	4'50
	David Thomas <i>clarinet</i>	
	<b>Total Playing Time</b>	<b>59'38</b>

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra  
Arvo Volmer *conductor*

Ross Edwards made his second attempt at composing a concerto in 1982. He was 38 years old at the time, and, as the new Piano Concerto made clear, he was decisively outgrowing the niche he'd inhabited, since the mid-1960s, as one of Australia's most serious young musical modernists. Between the new concerto and his much earlier public debut work, a dissonant and rhythmically labyrinthine Wind Quintet chosen to represent Australia at the 1966 Stockholm Festival of the International Society of Contemporary Music (ISCM), yawned an audible gulf, not only in musical style and fashion, but also in personal outlook. Compared with almost all of his earlier scores, the brightly hued new work for piano and orchestra appeared, for the time, to be almost aggressively approachable. It dumbfounded some, delighted many, and drew stinging barbs from a critical few, who saw it as Edwards' defection from hard-edged serialism to soft-core minimalism. According to one London reviewer, Paul Griffiths, it was, 'music that gives A-major a bad name'. Edwards had anyway announced, possibly in the interest of salvaging his dented reputation as a modernist, that the aberrant work would be 'an absolutely one-off, I'm never going to write a piece like this again.'

Australian classical music was itself then undergoing one of its periodic sea changes. The influence of the post-war European avant-garde tradition that had so coloured the music of the leading Australian composers since the early

1960s was on the wane. Nowhere was this more glaringly evident than in the music of Edwards' former teacher, the late Richard Meale, who had over the preceding decade-and-a-half gradually turned away from highly wrought European abstraction, via calming Asiatic influences, to emerge, in his Second String Quartet of 1980, into a new romanticism and tonality. For the same English reviewer, Paul Griffiths, Meale's case was further evidence of the softening in Australian music generally. And another 1982 piano concerto, by Edwards' other former teacher, Peter Sculthorpe, seemed to embed the trend.

By contrast, studying with Richard Meale in the mid-1960s, and later with English composer Peter Maxwell Davies, Edwards had been groomed for his place as one of the second generation of an Australian avant-garde. The apogee of this engagement with hard-edged modernism came over the winter of 1970-71, when Edwards was living, as he recalls, in a 'rather squalid London basement'. There, according to his friend Meredith Oakes, he 'fell under the spell' of the young Australian piano virtuoso Roger Woodward. Enchanted by Woodward's iconoclastic fervour and very obvious talents (there was, as his then-manager James Murdoch observed, 'more than a little of the young Percy Grainger in Roger'), Edwards composed his fiendishly difficult, abstract piano work *Monos II* especially for him. Woodward

premiered it at his first major London recital, along with the first performance of Meale's aptly titled *Coruscations*, on Anzac Day 1971. Elder fellow-composer Don Banks, who was there, characterised the event as a triumph for Australian music, and described it as being 'the one day of the year'. Soon after, Woodward asked Edwards to recompose the solo *Monos II* with an added orchestral part for a projected ABC tour in 1973, and he duly spent the next winter in isolation in the countryside near York working up what was hoped would be a spectacular first piano concerto, called *Choros*.

English cold and depression got the better of him, and Edwards returned home to Australia in 1972, with *Choros* complete (and unperformed; he withdrew it soon after), but with the beginnings of a bad case of composer's block that would last for several years. 'I began to question everything: equal temperament, European serialism and the relevance of an art form cut off from the real life of people and remote from the natural world.' Out of the early part of this crisis emerged the earliest orchestral work he still acknowledges, *Mountain Village in a Clearing Mist* (1973), a work already much gentler in colouration and treatment of dissonance.

Later, when a path out of his dilemma was becoming clearer, *The Tower of Remoteness* (1978) for clarinet and piano was already shaping up to be an early precursor of the quiet

music at the core of each of the wind concertos on this disc of almost 30 years later. By then, Edwards had settled at Pearl Beach, on the Pacific coast just north of Sydney, 'working in a room opening onto bushland, listening to the interplay of frogs, insects and night birds. These found their way into the texture of the music I was writing, accounting for its asymmetric rhythms and phrase structures, its sense of timelessness and an avoidance of climax and resolution. In this way, the seed of my musical language was sown.'

He also came to an appreciation that has since never entirely left him, as he later put it, of 'the privilege of living in a paradise of sun-blessed ocean and joyously shrieking parrots gyrating in the warm air'.

Despite his 1982 prediction, then, the Piano Concerto was not to be the sole work of its type. Rather, his music was never to return to the musical 'language' of its radical predecessors (though Edwards still believes that *Monos II* and a companion piece for solo cello, *Monos I*, encapsulate essentials of his later style). In 1988, his new violin concerto for Dene Olding and the Sydney Symphony, called *Maninyas*, was even more 'full of dance rhythms and open-hearted tonal or modal harmony', as fellow composer Gordon Kerry recently characterised Edwards' newly-coined 'dance-chant' idiom. *Maninyas* was widely

performed, and sales of Olding's recording for ABC Classics helped place Edwards among the vanguard of an entirely new and different musical (post)modernism, that began to be recognised internationally as a distinctive Australian contribution to new classical music.

As with the Piano Concerto, there were vocal doubters, and continue to be, especially among some academic musicologists who believe that attention accorded to Meale, Sculthorpe and Edwards since their modernist *volte face* directly caused the neglect of their continuing modernist contemporaries. But the veteran Adelaide reviewer Elizabeth Silsbury probably spoke for the silent, appreciative majority of ordinary concert-goers in greeting *Maninyas* as 'a fresh, original work, unmistakably of our time but calling on elements and qualities many contemporary composers believe to be exhausted ... [that] uses consonance with respect and dissonance with affection and sets up and teases out harmonic ideas with enough ingenuity to restore to minimalism the good name it had before its infinitely reflective possibilities became besmirched in grubby hands.'

In more meditative vein, Edwards' third new-style concerto *Yarrageh*, a 'nocturne' for solo percussion and orchestra, followed in 1989. By the early 1990s, Edwards was speaking of composing in two different but organically connected and complementary musical idioms,

his meditative 'sacred style', traceable back to *Mountain Village in a Clearing Mist*, and his more kinetic 'maninya' dance-chant style, which had an early pre-echo in the ebullient African-influenced *Madagascan Song* at the centre of the instrumental sextet *Laikan* (1979). (Edwards was later commissioned by the Sydney Peace Foundation to adapt *Madagascan Song* for performance at the University of Sydney ceremony conferring an Honorary Doctorate of Laws on Desmond Tutu.)

In 1995, he composed his Concerto for Guitar and String Orchestra for John Williams and the Darwin International Guitar Festival. But the work had to wait almost ten years for its first recording, by Richard Mills and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra with soloist Karin Schaupp in 2004 (ABC Classics 476 2270). In 2005 it won the Australian Classical Music Award for the best orchestral work (over nominations from Nigel Westlake, Graeme Koehne and Carl Vine). Edwards told *The Sydney Morning Herald* at the time of this award that classical music 'shouldn't be so esoteric, it has to actually seduce people.' And arguably, his music has achieved this more comprehensively than that of any of his Australian classical composer contemporaries.

The three concertos on this album all contribute to the now often-heard opinion, recently and succinctly put in *The West Australian* (15 September 2009), that Ross Edwards'

'idiosyncratic style makes him easily the most identifiable of all Australian composers.'

### ***Bird Spirit Dreaming – Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra***

Ross Edwards composed the Oboe Concerto in 2002 as a result of a commission from Andrew and Renata Kaldor to write a solo work for Diana Doherty, the principal oboist of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and the visiting American conductor Lorin Maazel. As in his bicentennial violin concerto *Maninyas*, Edwards set out to write a work that melded the soloistic display of the traditional concerto format with the trademark elements of his sacred and maninya styles, derived from bird and insect sounds, dance and ritual chant. But after the music score itself was finished, for the work's premiere, in the Sydney Opera House on 4 August 2002, Edwards decided to add an extra theatrical element, sketching a scenario of semi-choreographed stage movement inspired by Doherty's highly kinetic performance style:

'An atmosphere of expectation. Hall and platform lights fade rapidly to darkness leaving a pool of light where the soloist would be expected to stand. The soloist begins the performance offstage in darkness. The lights on the orchestra's music stands fade up, and when the glockenspiel sounds, the soloist steps, bird-like, beak (oboe) upraised, into the spotlight. From here the platform lights begin to fade up, until it

is suffused with dim, mysterious light, the conductor spot-lit. The soloist turns and walks to join the woodwind ensemble on a podium beside the cor anglais. The lighting gradually becomes brighter, whiter – an optimistic dawn. Darkening, the stage becomes pale, intimate and mysterious, and, still intimate but gorgeously rose-tinted, it fades to darkness. Lights begin to come up as the soloist returns to the front of the front platform, and a defined area where free movement can take place. The soloist and conductor vividly lit; the orchestra in semi-darkness. Abrupt blackout with final chord.'

Edwards had previously composed one other short work for Doherty, called *Yanada* (1998), an unaccompanied solo that she has described as 'extremely difficult because it was so simple', but restricting for her as a performer: 'I felt I couldn't go for it in the usual sense. I tend to be a very kinetic performer, which I've tried to control over the years.' So in the concerto Edwards set out to compose a work that Doherty would find more compatible. Edwards describes his soloist as 'a small, alert, physical person who could have been a dancer', and composed the concerto's opening music with an image in his mind's eye of Doherty 'as a bird with the oboe as her beak'. Doherty and choreographer Paulina Quinteros (who had previously devised a dance score for Edwards' *Madagascan Song*) later worked up the movement plan she had used in live performances of the work. Since making this

recording with Arvo Volmer and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in 2004, Doherty has performed the concerto, with movement, with the New York Philharmonic and Lorin Maazel three times at New York's Avery Fisher Hall in 2005, in Liverpool (UK) with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic in 2006, and with the Hong Kong Philharmonic and Japan's Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa, as well as around Australia.

The 2004 recording of the work appeared as simply 'Oboe Concerto'. Edwards has since added the characteristic title *Bird Spirit Dreaming*. His sometime collaborator, the Anglo-Australian astronomer Fred Watson (who wrote the words for Edwards' choral Fourth Symphony, *Star Chant*) has described the concerto's halting opening as 'a wild bird soliloquy ... arrested by what sound like phrases from a Lutheran chorale before embarking on a rhapsodic melodic journey, unified by drones, ritornelli and episodes of canonic variation.' In his introductory note in the published score, Watson also points to Edwards' references to birdsong, plainsong, Hebrew cantillation, scales from south-east Asia, and rhythmic counterpoint inspired by the sound patterns of insects and frogs in what is scored as a long melodic unfolding.

As the *New York Times* reviewer Anthony Tommasini heard it, the 'ruminative and mystical middle episode' is coloured by hints of 'Mr. Edwards's ear for pungent harmony (remnants of his early days as a serialist?)'. This

slowly arching structure, in which the oboe's main melody is gently counterpointed first by the strings, culminates in a languid love duet between the soloist and the orchestral cor anglais, specifically composed for the work's first performance. (Doherty's husband, Alexandre Oguey, is the principal cor anglais player with the Sydney Symphony.) Orchestral clapsticks (like the title, another gesture from, and to, Indigenous culture) start the transition into the kinetic finale, its returning drones and riffs strong audible references back to the sound world of *Maninyas*.

### ***The Heart of Night, for shakuhachi and orchestra***

As with his first oboe piece, Ross Edwards' first work for the Japanese bamboo flute, the shakuhachi, was an unaccompanied solo, *Raft Song at Sunrise*. It was composed in 1995 for Riley Lee to perform the following January as an integral part of a three-way collaborative installation with visual artist Ross Mellick at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney. Mellick's output already shared with Edwards' an avowed connection to natural cycles of the environment. (Later that same year Mellick also co-curated the influential *Spirit + Place* exhibition of art with spiritual connections to the land at Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art.) He described his remarkable *Raft* sculptures in bamboo as having been designed 'in collaboration' with Edwards' music for Lee's bamboo flute. Characteristically, Mellick quoted

the mystic Thomas Merton in describing the joint work as 'a pilgrimage in search of a centre, a source...' Rilke's anguished cry from the first *Duino Elegy*, 'Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the angels' hierarchies?' was another of its starting points, and one that Edwards would return to later.

The shakuhachi's bamboo construction and its spiritual history as an instrument played by the mendicant Buddhist monks, the *komusō* ('priests of nothingness'), were linking factors in the exhibition. Edwards' second score with shakuhachi, for Bruce Beresford's 1997 World War Two film drama *Paradise Road* (starring Glenn Close and Cate Blanchett), simultaneously confronted the instrument's inescapable association with an oppressive Japanese war machine. In *Tyalgum Mantras* (1999), Edwards brought together Lee's shakuhachi with didjeridu for the first time, while his millennium work *Dawn Mantras*, broadcast around the world from the roof of the Sydney Opera House in 2000, has solos for shakuhachi, didjeridu and saxophone. In 2003, another culturally symbolic dance work, *Koto Dreaming*, featured pairs of Japanese instruments (koto and shakuhachi) and Western instruments (cor anglais and cello), accompanied by recorded water sounds and Butoh dancing.

When Edwards first approached writing for shakuhachi in 1995, he tried to remain aloof from technical aspects of its traditional repertoire, and concentrate on the instrument

itself, a simple five-holed, end-blown tube. Composing for it at first, he recalled, 'I found it is just writing for a bamboo flute, which can do all sorts of things that Western instruments can do, but does them rather differently.' But working, over time, with Lee, his music has inevitably begun to mediate some of the richness of the instrument's tradition, and to reflect the fact that, though an apparently simple instrument, it is capable, in the hands of a master performer, of an astonishing range of expression and colour.

Likewise, when a commission from the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Symphony Australia gave him the chance to compose for shakuhachi and orchestra, he purposely chose not to reacquaint himself with the already considerable body of music by Japanese composers (including Tōru Takemitsu and Hōzan Yamamoto) featuring the instrument with Western orchestra. Instead, he cast his mind back to his student days in the 1960s, and recollections of playing records of traditional shakuhachi solos at night before he fell asleep. This, echoing the instrument's original use as a meditation aid, was his starting point for *The Heart of Night*.

These same early experiences of the shakuhachi's classical *honkyoku* repertory had long before become an audible influence in Edwards' music, particularly in the clarinet-and-piano work, *The Tower of Remoteness*: 'This had happened naturally: I'd come to regard certain of

my own works as musical contemplation objects and my source of inspiration was the timeless and mysterious continuum of the natural sound world, especially the insect chorus. And since these works were designed to focus attention inwards and create trance-like stillness, the similarity to the honkyoku was as inevitable as my being drawn to compose for the shakuhachi.'

The only new technical issue he recalls having to consider in writing the work was the same problem of balance that confronts putting many soft instruments with orchestra. But it was one he also put to creative use. As he explained, the shakuhachi 'can be very easily swallowed up by the swell of an orchestra. That actually happens at the close of *The Heart of Night*, but in that case it's deliberate.'

Following on from the Oboe Concerto, Edwards again directed special staging effects in performance. At the premiere, in Hamer Hall, Melbourne, on 7 April 2005 (with Riley Lee and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra conducted by the late Hiroyuki Iwaki) reviewer Clive O'Connell noted in *The Age*: 'A theatricality is generated with lowered lights in the auditorium, a raised platform for Lee who performs in Japanese garb and kneeling, the orchestra relegated to theatre-pit status by the use of desk-lights.'

The work's opening woodwind flourishes, starting with the orchestral bassoons and rising from a persistent drone, create another audible

link with the sound world of the Oboe Concerto, heightened in the second part of this introductory sentence with more sustained melodic material rising through the strings. But, as if to ask Western listeners to leave their normal expectations of some sort of structural development – like their shoes – behind at the door, this music is interrupted by the ringing of eleven tiny handbells as a ritual ushering in of the soloist. Thereafter, Edwards conceives of the work as entering into an intuitive nocturnal state of consciousness 'in which linear, or clock time is suspended and listeners are invited to turn their attention inwards in present-centred contemplation ... the response you'd expect to the traditional honkyoku pieces which have the effect of relaxing the body while keeping the mind calmly alert.

'This capacity to still the unquiet mind has been universally recognised through the ages as one of music's great blessings to humanity, but it's been neglected in the Western world in recent centuries. One cause for optimism in these turbulent times is that we're beginning to rediscover its importance.'

### **Clarinet Concerto**

In the 2007 Clarinet Concerto, almost 35 years on from his own personal sea change, Ross Edwards' first entranced responses to the sounds of the bush around Pearl Beach – frogs, birds and cicadas – have become, in his own words, 'indispensable symbols'. Through

his pursuit of 'musical techniques and devices implied by the material gleaned from nature', Edwards has developed a musical language suffused with what he calls 'universal' markers, including, along with earlier Australian and Asian references, a fuller re-assimilation of European concepts, especially ritual plainsongs, medieval scales, and increasingly elaborate counterpoints.

The Clarinet Concerto was the result of a 2004 request from the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra to compose a work especially for its principal clarinetist, David Thomas. Thomas had wanted a work by an Australian composer that 'was audience-friendly but a little challenging and well-written for the instrument, and Ross was the composer who sprang to mind. I approached him after an MSO performance of his Third Symphony and gave him a CD of some of my clarinet performances so he had an idea of my style, and he started work on it about a year later.' By then, the work had been officially commissioned for Thomas by the MSO and Justice Alan Goldberg AO, in memory of his parents, Margery and Geoffrey Goldberg and his sister Jenny Goldberg. It was premiered in the Melbourne Town Hall on 30 November 2007, conducted by Oleg Caetani.

The concerto begins eccentrically – quite literally off-centre, and off-stage – apparently with a reference back to the Oboe Concerto, a distant unaccompanied oboe solo in two sinuous phrases, at the end of which the oboe's sound morphs miraculously into a clarinet. The oboe

melody is, in fact, a complete and unaltered statement of the medieval European plainsong *Ave Maria gratia plena* ('Hail Mary, full of grace'), or the 'Angelic Salutation'. Fragments of the tune recur in altered guise throughout the work, as Edwards explains, 'as a symbol of the universal Earth Mother, source and nurturer of all living things'. But on this first appearance, the angelic plainsong immediately breaks up, symbolically, into a volley of birdsong. The soloist then leads the orchestra through a barrage of explosive dance-like entries, including one that the composer likens to 'a shriek of parrots'.

Continuing without a full break, the concerto's core is a long nocturnal piece (in live performances to be played almost in darkness, with the soloist alone gently spot-lit), a gradually unwinding cadenza for the soloist quietly earthed in orchestral drones, at the centre of which are further quiet chant-like commentaries from the strings, before drones re-anchor the soloist's music. As with *The Heart of Night*, but now also adding very different, more Western-derived musical materials, Edwards aims again at subverting the listener's sense of linear time. Finally, in a further symbolic expansion of the maninya style, Edwards describes the closing dance-chant as 'an obsessive, kaleidoscopic interplay of symbolically charged fragments – a sort of Australian dervish dance'.

**Graeme Skinner**

## Diana Doherty

Diana Doherty was born in Brisbane and completed her undergraduate degree at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, studying oboe with Stephen Robinson. She then went to Switzerland to study with Thomas Indermühle at the Zurich Conservatorium, and became Principal Oboe of the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra until 1997, when she returned to Australia to take up the position of Principal Oboe with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, a position she still holds today.

Competition successes have included the Prague Spring Festival (First Prize for oboe, 1991) and the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, which she won in 1995, and she has received the MO award for Classical/Opera performer of the year (for the premiere of the oboe concerto *Inflight Entertainment* by Graeme Koehne) and an ARIA award for the premiere of the Ross Edwards Oboe Concerto. She has also performed the Edwards concerto with the New York Philharmonic under Lorin Maazel at the Lincoln Center in New York, with the Liverpool Philharmonic in the UK, and with the Hong Kong Philharmonic and the Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa, as well as throughout Australia.

Her recordings for CD include concertos by Haydn, Mozart, Martinů and Zimmerman with the Symphony Orchestra of Lucerne, released in Europe on Pan Classics; Graeme Koehne's

*Inflight Entertainment* for Naxos; a CD with the Goldner Quartet and Paul Grabowsky for the HUSH Collection benefitting children's hospitals in Australia; and, for ABC Classics, *Romantic Oboe Concertos* with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra under Werner Andreas Albert, *Blues for DD* (a recital program of folk- and jazz-influenced works with pianist David Korevaar); *Souvenirs – Sublime Music for the Oboe*, Carl Vine's Oboe Concerto with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, the Bach Concerto for Violin and Oboe with Richard Tognetti and the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and *The Bach Album: Concertos for Oboe and Oboe d'Amore* with the period-instrument ensemble Ironwood.

## Riley Lee

Riley Lee began playing the shakuhachi in Japan in 1970, where he lived for over eight years. He studied with shakuhachi masters representing three lineages, Ichizan Hoshida II, Chikuho Sakai II and Katsuya Yokoyama. His eight years of training in Japan included playing his flute while barefoot in the snow, in blizzards and under waterfalls, as well as running marathons. He was a founding member of the Sado Island taiko group now called Kodo.

Riley Lee earned the rank of *dai shihan* (Grand Master) in 1980, and received his PhD in musicology from Sydney University in 1992. He has been instrumental in bringing traditional Japanese music to the USA and Australia.

Riley Lee performs extensively worldwide, notably with guitarist Jeff Peterson, harpist Marshall McGuire and with TaikOz, which he co-founded with Ian Cleworth in 1997. He has composed and arranged over 300 pieces for shakuhachi and has released over 50 commercial recordings on various labels. He was the Artistic Director and Executive Producer of the 2008 World Shakuhachi Festival in Sydney, which offered more than 70 events including concerts, workshops and lectures, and featured ten world premieres for the shakuhachi.

Riley Lee taught at the University of Hawai'i for six years, and in 2007 started a shakuhachi program at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. In 2006 and again in 2009, he lectured in the Comparative Literature Department at Princeton University (USA), as a Humanities Council Visiting Fellow. He teaches privately and at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

### **David Thomas**

Born in Melbourne, David Thomas was educated at the University of Melbourne and the Vienna Conservatorium. He has held the position of Principal Clarinet with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra since 2000, and was previously Associate Principal Clarinet with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra.

As well as performing the standard concerto repertoire (Mozart, Copland, Françaix, Debussy,

Rossini) with the MSO and other Australian orchestras, David Thomas has become increasingly involved with the performance of contemporary music for the clarinet, often working closely with the composers. He has given well-received performances of the Ross Edwards Clarinet Concerto in metropolitan and regional centres, and has premiered concertos by Australian composers Nicholas Routley and Philip Czaplowski, as well as Richard Mills' *Diary of Transformations* for clarinet and string quartet.

David Thomas teaches clarinet and chamber music at the University of Melbourne and the Australian National Academy of Music, where he is Coordinator of Woodwind.

### **Arvo Volmer**

Arvo Volmer is the Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

He began his professional conducting career with the Estonian National Opera in 1985, while still a student at the Estonian Music Academy. He made his debut with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra in 1987, became their Associate Conductor in 1989 and was their Music Director between 1993 and 2001. Arvo Volmer was Music Director of the Oulu Symphony Orchestra from 1994 to 2005, and is currently Artistic Director of the Estonian National Opera.

Arvo Volmer has conducted almost all the symphony orchestras in Scandinavia, including

the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Copenhagen and Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestras and Stockholm's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He has conducted orchestras in the UK, France, Germany, Russia, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Israel and Iceland. He made his Australian debut in 2001 and has conducted the Adelaide, Tasmanian, West Australian and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and The Queensland Orchestra.

Recent highlights have included concerts with the Orchestre National de France, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Berliner Symphoniker, Russian Philharmonic Orchestra of Moscow and the St Petersburg Orchestra. Arvo Volmer made his Los Angeles debut with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra as part of Australia Week in January 2009.

Arvo Volmer is also active as a conductor of opera, working frequently with the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Finnish National Opera, Norwegian Opera and Oulu Opera.

Arvo Volmer has recorded extensively, including the complete symphonies of Eduard Tubin and the complete orchestral works of Leevi Madetoja, as well as discs of Swedish and Estonian contemporary music. His recordings with the ASO of the Sculthorpe Requiem and symphonies by Sibelius, both on the ABC Classics label, have received international acclaim.

## **Melbourne Symphony Orchestra**

With a reputation for excellence, versatility and innovation the internationally acclaimed Melbourne Symphony Orchestra is Australia's oldest orchestra, established in 1906. Following integration with the Melbourne Chorale in 2008, the Orchestra has responsibility for its own choir – the MSO Chorus.

The Orchestra is renowned for its performances of the great symphonic masterworks with leading international and Australian artists including Mariss Jansons, Jessye Norman, Jennifer Larmore, Bryn Terfel, Maxim Vengerov, John Williams, Osmo Vänskä, Paavo Järvi, Yan Pascal Tortelier, Donald Runnicles, Andrew Davis, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Barbara Bonney, Yvonne Kenny, Simone Young, Lang Lang, Nigel Kennedy, Jeffrey Tate and Midori. It has also enjoyed hugely successful performances with the Three Tenors, Frank Sinatra, Kiri Te Kanawa, Elton John, John Farnham, Dionne Warwick, Harry Connick Jr, k.d. lang, Ben Folds, KISS, Meat Loaf, Burt Bacharach, The Whitlams, Human Nature and Sting.

Key musical figures in the Orchestra's history include Hiroyuki Iwaki (Chief Conductor and then Conductor Laureate, from 1974 until his death in 2006), Markus Stenz (Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, 1998–2004) and Oleg Caetani (Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, 2005–2009).

The MSO has received widespread international recognition in overseas tours to the USA, Canada, Japan, Korea, Europe, China (2002), Russia (St Petersburg, 2003) and Japan (2005). In 2007 Oleg Caetani led the Orchestra on its second European tour, to Spain, Paris, Berlin and Milan.

Each year the Orchestra performs to more than 250,000 people in Melbourne and regional Victoria, and reaches an even larger audience across Australia through its regular concert broadcasts on ABC Classic FM. The Orchestra's considerable ceremonial role in Victoria has included participation in the opening ceremony of the 2006 Commonwealth Games, the 2009 bushfire memorial service *Together for Victoria* and, most recently, the 2010 AFL Grand Final.

Some performances are presented on ABC-TV, including the documentary *To Russia with Love*, following the MSO's St Petersburg tour, and *MSO Century*, in celebration of 100 years of the Orchestra. In 2007 the Orchestra also published the centenary book *Crescendo*, by Stella M. Barber.

Recent recordings include major CD releases on the Chandos and ABC Classics labels. The MSO's three Chandos recordings of Alexandre Tansman's symphonies with Oleg Caetani all received *Diapason d'Or* awards. In 2005 the Orchestra launched a new live-in-concert CD

series, MSO LIVE, through ABC Classics. One of these CDs is devoted to Charles Mackerras' final Australian concert, in November 2007 with the MSO.

Members of the Orchestra have featured on numerous film soundtracks including *Babe*, *IQ*, *Hotel Sorrento*, *Six Degrees of Separation*, *Babe II – Pig in the City* and *The Dish*. The MSO has also recorded music for a number of computer and console-based games based on films such as *Jurassic Park* and *The Polar Express*.

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### **Melbourne Symphony Orchestra**

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**Principal Guest Conductor** Tadaaki Otaka

**Director, Artistic Planning** Huw Humphreys

**Director of Operations** Lou Oppenheim

Recorded 30 June 2004 in Robert Blackwood Hall, Monash University, Melbourne [1]-[3] and 11 July 2008 [4], [5] and 4 October 2010 [6]-[8] in the Iwaki Auditorium, ABC Southbank, Melbourne.

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