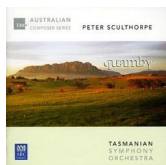


Peter Sculthorpe - Quamby & other orchestral works (2005)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 14 August 2017 14:06 -

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1 *Cello Dreaming, for cello & ensemble* 18:07 Quamby, for chamber orchestra (with optional didjeridu) 2 *Prelude* 3:15 3 *In the Valley* 5:23 4 *From High Hills* 4:59 5 *At Quamby Bluff* 7:43 6 *Nourlangie for guitar, strings & percussion* 21:19 7 *Music for Bali, for orchestra* 3:56
Sue-Ellen Paulsen - cello Karin Schaupp - guitar Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra Richard Mills – conductor

Sculthorpe is the senior figure in the Australian Composer Series and this marks the tenth and last volume I've reviewed. They have all impressed me. The level of booklet information has been consistently thoughtful – the mixture of biographical and textual detail has been just right. And the playing of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, here under Richard Mills once again, has been irreproachable. You can be assured that these are no sight-reading sessions – a lot of time and effort went into these recordings and the results reflect well on all concerned.

Cello Dreaming was written in 1988. Its quiet and meditative writing is immediately arresting. Suggestions of indigenous melody is here and with Sculthorpe taking the soloist very high we hear – or think we hear – the sound of birdsong. Predominately lyric Sculthorpe is meticulous in keeping his orchestration clear – the lines are never occluded or clogged. And the gently tumbling motifs, whilst more orthodox, also add to the sense of variety and vibrancy – note also what sounds like a didgeridoo imitation at about 12:00.

Quamby derives from Sculthorpe's Fourteenth String Quartet and was arranged for chamber orchestra in 2000. It's cast in four movements - *Prelude*, *In the Valley*, *From High Hills* and *At Quamby Bluff*. There are certainly graver intimations – especially the ominous horn writing in the second movement - but there are also warm ones too; try the liquid flute melody in *From High Hills*. In the final movement we hear not only the horns' unease but a hymnal passage and

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the resolution that the winds in general - and the flutes in particular - bring. Nourlangie is a work that resonates with the sense of space and chorale beauty that Sculthorpe so often brings. It was dedicated to John Williams and is here most adeptly played by Karin Schaupp. Dance patterns are at its heart and a light, breezy freedom brings with it more athletic flamenco-inspired athleticism and a renewal of the avian cries that populated Cello Dreaming.

Music for Bali is by a long way the earliest work, dating from 1968. It took on a deeper resonance after the 2002 terrorist bombings. Brief, slow and evocative it derives from a larger-scale work for wind quintet and percussion called Tabuh Tabuhan.

The only glitch at all concerns too short a gap between the first two pieces but other than that, as noted in my first paragraph, this is an excellently realised disc and part of a model series. ---Jonathan Woolf, musicweb-international.com

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