

LIZA LIM

DIABOLICAL BIRDS (1990)

Commissioned by The Seymour Group with the generous financial assistance of the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council.

First Performance:

Instrumentation

piccolo

bass clarinet (sounding maj 9th lower than written)

pianoforte

violin

violoncello

vibraphone (vibr mallets and bass bow)

Diabolical Birds is the second work in a series of three:

1. *Voodoo Child* (1989) - soprano, fl/picc, cl, vln, vc, trb, perc, pf
2. *Diabolical Birds* (1990) - picc, bass cl, pf, vln, vc, vibr
3. *Voodoo* (1990/91) - fl, bass cl, pf

all of which share similar materials (pitch and rhythmic structures, gestural formations, timbral combinations) yet attached to different frameworks (duration of work and of internal sections, instrumentation). The most obvious similarity however, is the presence of flute, clarinet and piano in all three works, this trio playing a primary role until it totally 'takes over' and erases the other instruments in the third work, *Voodoo*.

Whilst one of the main concerns of *Voodoo Child* was to explore as many connections as possible between the instruments (eg. how to create ambiguity so that a trombone can sound and act like a soprano, a 'cello like a piccolo etc.), the relationships between instruments in *Diabolical Birds* are much more stratified. There are few 'tutti' passages but instead an interplay of trios (particularly picc, bass cl, pf versus vln, vc, vibr), duos and solos.

All three works in the series seek to explore the expressive intensity of feelings of vertigo, convulsiveness, losing control, claustrophobia...