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AUSTRALIAN
COMPOSER SERIES

CARL VINE



TASMANIAN
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Carl Vine b. 1954

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|----|-------------------------------|---------|
| | Oboe Concerto | [17'10] |
| 1 | I | 6'09 |
| 2 | II | 5'17 |
| 3 | III | 5'44 |
| | Diana Doherty <i>oboe</i> | |
| 4 | Canzona | 11'50 |
| | Suite from The Tempest | [22'26] |
| 5 | Overture | 2'23 |
| 6 | Prospero and Miranda | 4'42 |
| 7 | The Conspirators | 3'06 |
| 8 | Ferdinand and Miranda | 6'19 |
| 9 | Prospero relents | 3'25 |
| 10 | Finale | 2'31 |
| 11 | Smith's Alchemy | 18'45 |
| | Total Playing Time | 70'16 |

Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra
Ola Rudner *conductor*

When Carl Vine was a ten-year-old aspiring trumpeter living in Perth, he fell from a tree and fractured three vertebrae in his back ending up in traction for three months. While convalescing, he gave away the trumpet and took up the piano, and suddenly a world of compositional possibilities opened up for him.

'It was probably the beginning of composing as a way of life,' the Artistic Director of Musica Viva Australia and leading Australian composer says now of the childhood accident. 'I couldn't play trumpet any more because of the diaphragm, so I started on the piano. I soon realised that I could put notes together and make interesting things – which is easier to do on piano than on a trumpet!' He went on to become an accomplished pianist, going from Grade One to Grade Five on the instrument in a year, and in 1974 winning the state final of the ABC's Instrumental and Vocal Competition with a performance of the Rachmaninov *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*.

Now, on the release of this CD of his works for chamber orchestra, he still finds it strange that modern composers tend not to be performers themselves: 'This is a modern phenomenon, probably started by Xenakis. In the 19th century it was unthinkable for a composer not to be a performer of some sort. And you can go back to Bach – all he did was play music and procreate, non-stop!'

But Carl Vine himself denies the virtuoso tag: 'When I was younger I thought I was going to be a great pianist and I had dreams of studying with Ashkenazy in Reykjavik. I didn't quite have the guts to go through with it and I think it was just as well. I don't think I would ever have made a great pianist. I started far too late. In terms of career opportunities, if you're not extraordinary by the age of nineteen then you've missed the boat.'

Playing piano as co-founder of the important contemporary music ensemble Flederman from 1979 to 1989 also had an oddly adverse effect on his pianism. 'We were doing 30 or 40 concerts a year and a different programme at each concert, so there was a "quick and easy solution" to every concert which augured against becoming a better performer.

'By the end of the 1980s it was no longer a pleasure to play piano. It was simply a job – that was the time to give up.' Now he only plays when composing.

Since his breakthrough in 1978 with the brilliant score to the dance work *Poppy* for the Sydney Dance Company, he's always been the man to watch in the generation of Australian composers which followed Peter Sculthorpe, Richard Meale and Nigel Butterley.

Through six symphonies, many chamber works, and, in the early years in particular, dance

scores, he's built up a number of reputations: superb orchestrator, flexible stylist, rhythmic master (transforming the static landscapes of 1960s Australian composition), devotee of pastiche, but perhaps most of all, the composer-most-likely.

His two piano sonatas bear the hallmarks of greatness, while several of his six symphonies are now mainstream orchestral fare, and the list of new commissions is never-ending. While he has always been interested in electronic music and modernist compositional techniques, his catalogue is peppered with titles drawn from the Baroque and Classical traditions. He's written works titled Sonata, Concerto Grosso, Symphony, String Quartet and Concerto and his much-vaunted rhythmic momentum is perhaps as much Baroque in its inspiration as it is minimalist, finding a widespread and genuinely devoted audience. Many of his chamber pieces like *Café Concertino* and *Miniature IV* can remind listeners of Les Six in their virtuosity, their instrumental polish, their rhythmic vibrancy and sense of humour.

But it's in his works for small orchestra, captured here in performances by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, that Carl Vine finds unique compositional challenges. 'Music for chamber orchestra doesn't have the intimacy, say, of the string quartet, nor the diverse timbral range of a full orchestra,' he says, 'so all these works on the CD – and in particular the *Suite from The*

Tempest – deal with those two problems. The only exception in this particular collection is the Oboe Concerto, which was actually written for full orchestra.'

Smith's Alchemy derives from the composer's String Quartet No. 3 which was commissioned by the Smith Quartet (London) and first performed by them in 1994 at the Brighton Festival. When the Goldner String Quartet played it at the opening of the Angel Place Recital Hall in Sydney in 2000, its dramatic, virtuoso style caught the ear of Richard Tognetti, Artistic Director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and at his request it was rearranged by the composer for chamber orchestra.

'The intention of the original work was to transform four stringed instruments into a single "super" instrument while capitalising on their natural singing qualities – a kind of aural alchemy,' the composer says. 'Although the very structure of the original work was predicated on the techniques used to create certain effects, this remains much the same in the new version for string orchestra, and some parts required little amendment. The potential to "share" difficult techniques across more than one instrument has in many ways liberated the music, allowing greater emphasis on its lyric qualities.'

Deeply moving in its slow section (with a prominent solo violin), and with the strings swirling furiously in its outer reaches, *Smith's*

Alchemy has an emotional depth and appeal that has seen it hailed as one of Australia's finest concert works for small orchestra.

But equivalent to those successes in the concert hall, Carl Vine has always had a reputation as a 'natural' composer for the theatre. His music for *The Tempest* was composed for The Queensland Ballet, with choreography by Jacqui Carroll, in 1990. It was a highly stylised version of the Shakespearean play, but retaining all of the same characters and action. 'Because at the time the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra was small in numbers – fewer than 20 – the score contained equal amounts of electronic/pre-recorded and orchestral music, plus a certain amount which was a combination of both,' Vine says. To compile the concert suite, he extracted about 20 minutes of the most poignant sections for orchestra alone (the full score ran to 90 minutes).

The opening movement is an overture depicting the tempest at sea – the first scene of the play. From here, the Suite follows the sequence of the Shakespearean original, albeit in a truncated form, with the second movement featuring Prospero and Miranda – one of the play's early scenes – and then the Conspirators emerge. The fourth movement depicts one of the duets between Ferdinand and Miranda, before the suite then cuts out the middle section of the play, picking up the action once more as Prospero relents and gives his blessing to Ferdinand and Miranda,

before resolving in the Finale.

An earlier work (and bearing one of those distinctive early-music titles), **Canzona** was commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra in 1985. 'The term "Canzona" is used here in its broadest possible sense as a "song for instruments," Vine says. 'As the simplest of starting-points, then, the chamber orchestra is viewed as a collection of "singing" instruments presented either in melody or in complex counterpoint.'

Canzona is cast in a single movement consisting of two principal sections. 'The first evolves from a simple melodic movement into a slow waltz-like figure. The second is based on a straightforward chord progression that undergoes a series of convolutions leading to the "presto" finale,' the composer says. When Jacqui Carroll used *Canzona* as the score for a new dance work for The Australian Ballet in 1986, Carl Vine wrote a Prologue for it, which served as a 'curtain-raiser', the inclusion of which is now at the discretion of the performers. While that introductory section is not performed here, the composer himself is pleased with this particular recording. 'It's the first time I've heard the work in ten years and it actually seems like a much better piece than I ever thought it was!' he laughs.

As a one-time soloist himself, the concerto form can bring out the best in Carl Vine the

composer, but the prospect of writing an **Oboe Concerto** (for oboist David Nuttall and the Canberra Symphony Orchestra in 1996) presented considerable challenges. 'Although it's one of the finest melodic instruments, the oboe is easily overpowered, is a little harder to control than other wind instruments, and lacks the timbral range of, say, the string or percussion families,' he says. 'The solution here was to limit the form to "monody," or simple accompanied melody, and to limit orchestral size to a wind quartet, two horns, two trumpets, percussion and strings.' Opening in a minor mode (mostly with a flattened second), the sound-world is filled with arabesques idiomatic to the oboe. According to the composer, 'it progresses smoothly into a regular motoric section that concludes with brilliant trills on the oboe. This is followed by an extended slow movement that moves into reassuringly romantic, major-chord territory.'

The third and final section of the concerto opens in the same minor modality as the opening, but in an energetic, syncopated rhythm. 'This falls away abruptly to an unmeasured melismatic solo and a brief cadenza before returning to close the work, this time in an unashamed major key,' the composer says. Dramatic, but most of all lyrical, it's composed with the technical facility and depth of expression which characterises all four pieces on this engaging, imaginative, and intensely expressive CD.

Martin Buzacott

Diana Doherty

Diana Doherty was born in Brisbane and began studying violin, piano and oboe at the ages of six, seven and eight respectively. She studied at Queensland Conservatorium and at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, where she was awarded the MENSA prize for top graduating student. She won the Other Instruments section of the ABC Instrumental and Vocal Competition and was named Most Outstanding Competitor Overall for 1985.

Receiving an Australia Council Overseas Study Grant, she studied in Zurich with Thomas Indermühle and took courses with Maurice Bourgue. She won first prizes in the International Lyceum Club Competition, the International Chamber Music Competition in Martigny and the Prague Spring Festival Competition of 1991, where she was awarded an additional prize for best interpretation of a Czech concerto, performing Martinů. She was joint winner of the 1995 Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York. She was subsequently presented in New York and Washington recital debuts to critical acclaim, and toured extensively within the US doing recitals and masterclasses. She also performed in the chamber music series at the Spoleto Festival in South Carolina, as well as a concerto performance at the Lincoln Center.

Between 1990 and 1997, Diana Doherty was Principal Oboe in the Symphony Orchestra of

Lucerne and a member of the Basler Kammerensemble, the Lucerne Wind Soloists and the trio La Patisserie. Her first CD, of concertos by Haydn, Mozart, Martinů, and Zimmerman with the Symphony Orchestra of Lucerne, was released in 1995.

She joined the Sydney Symphony as Principal Oboe in July 1997. Her album *Romantic Oboe Concertos* with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra under Werner Andreas Albert was released in 1998, and the CD *Blues for DD* – a recital program of folk and jazz-influenced works with pianist David Korevaar – was released in 2000.

Her most recent album, *Souvenirs*, was released in late 2003 to great acclaim.

In 2001 Diana Doherty won a MO award for Classical/Opera Performer of the Year for her premiere performance of Graeme Koehne's oboe concerto *Inflight Entertainment*.

In 2002 Diana performed another new Australian oboe concerto, this time by Ross Edwards, with the Sydney Symphony under the direction of Lorin Maazel. For this performance she received the 2003 APRA Australian Music Centre Award for best performance of an Australian work. Another highlight of 2002 was a tour for Musica Viva with the Belcea Quartet.

Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra is acclaimed as one of the world's finest small orchestras. German-born Sebastian Lang-Lessing is the orchestra's Chief Conductor and Artistic Director.

The TSO presents an exciting and diverse annual concert series in Hobart and Launceston as well as concerts in regional centres. With a full-time playing strength of 47 musicians, its core repertoire is that of the Classical and early Romantic periods. It is, however, a versatile orchestra, performing repertoire from Baroque to jazz, popular music, opera and ballet, and is recognised for championing contemporary music.

The TSO records regularly for radio broadcasts, compact discs and soundtracks for television and film. It was the first Australian orchestra to record the complete Beethoven symphonies, and its recent recordings on international and Australian labels have been received with critical acclaim. In 2003, the orchestra launched its Australian Music Program and in 2004 releases the first recordings of orchestral music as part of the TSO Australian Composer Series.

Encouragement of young talent is of paramount importance to the TSO. It provides an education program and collaborates extensively on a range of programs with Symphony Australia, the Australian Youth Orchestra and the Australian Music Centre.

The TSO has performed in most of the major Australian festivals and regularly travels to mainland Australia, touring both capital cities and regional centres. It has performed in Greece, Israel, Indonesia, South Korea, China, Argentina, Canada and the USA.



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Ola Rudner

Swedish-born Ola Rudner began his career as a violinist – he is a prize winner of the Paganini Competition in Genoa and in 1979 was awarded the annual prize of the Association of Critics in Copenhagen. After ten years as a soloist he took up conducting, and has been Kapellmeister at the Vienna Volksoper, Artistic Director of Philharmonia Wien and Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. In 2004 he takes up the position of Chief Conductor of the Haydn Orchestra in Italy.

Conducting highlights include work with the Sydney Symphony, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, The Queensland Orchestra, Bergen, Belgrade and Oslo Philharmonic Orchestras, Scottish and Swedish Chamber Orchestras, Stockholm Sinfonietta, Thüringen Philharmonie, Gothenburg, Aalborg, Trondheim and Erzgebirge Symphony Orchestras, Frankfurt and Swedish Radio Orchestras, NTO Tonkünstler Orchestra, Vienna Volksoper, Izmir State Symphony, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Haydn Orchestra, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie and Latvian National Symphony Orchestra.

His debut in 2001 with Opera Australia at the Sydney Opera House (*The Gypsy Princess* and *Così fan tutte*) immediately led to new engagements for 2002: *Fidelio* in the Sydney summer season and *The Marriage of Figaro* in

the Melbourne spring season, and a concert with the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra and the Opera Australia Chorus performing Mozart's *Symphony No.25* in G minor and Brahms' *German Requiem*. In recent seasons he has also directed modules of Symphony Australia's Conductor Development Program.

Engagements in 2004 include a European tour with the Philharmonia Wien, concerts with the Haydn Orchestra, Stuttgart Radio Orchestra, RAI Orchestra Turin, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (including recordings for ABC Classics) and the Sydney Symphony and, for Opera Australia, *The Magic Flute* in Sydney.

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For more information on Carl Vine, please visit
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