THE ANZAC DIMENSION

Friday 16th May 2008 7.30pm
Gallagher Concert Chamber
WEL Academy of Performing Arts
Programme

After Dürer

Martin Lodge in collaboration with Daniel Belton

HAMILTON PREMIERE

Martin Lodge - original concept, music, production, monk by the sea
Daniel Belton - choreography, set design, film direction, video editing, dancer
Jac Grenfell - digital animation
James Tennant - cello
Jeremy Mayall - music assistant

Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) is the most famous German artist of the Renaissance. Equally skilled as a painter, printmaker and theorist, Dürer’s formidable body of creative work was underpinned by his probing investigations into related areas of mathematics, perspective, proportion and symbolism.

One of Dürer’s most famous images is the engraving *Melencolia I*. Dating from 1514, this mysterious and overtly symbolical image, with its title evocative of the state of depression, has become one of Western art’s most extensively analysed and interpreted pictures. It remains just as powerfully intriguing today as when it was first printed five hundred years ago.

The impulse to create a response to *Melencolia I* originated in a long-held fascination with the engraving. The posture of the angel is rather like that of a cellist, which led to the idea of writing a piece for solo cello. Such a response seemed too limited, however, given the great richness of the picture’s symbolism and its implied movement and hallucinatory perspective games. The answer, I realised eventually, was to build music for solo cello into a larger matrix of design, dance and movement. This ambition was realised by working collaboratively with the international award winning choreographer and film-maker Daniel Belton.

The result is *After Dürer*.

Daniel was immediately enthusiastic about the project when approached, and the work grew collaboratively from that point. Our aim was to ‘compose out’ some of the symbolical elements of Dürer’s engraving. To music, sets, costume and dance we added the element of digital animation, for which we enlisted the special expertise of the brilliant young animator Jac Grenfell. Because the visual elements are so rich, the music has been kept relatively simple, all of it originating from the cello playing of James Tennant with some light digital processing.

Some of the elements from the engraving (see below) which readily can be seen to have found their way into *After Dürer* are the mysterious polyhedron (considered by some scholars to be impossible to exist in reality, but Jac Grenfell managed to animate it to apparently move in three dimensions, a world first as far as we know) the ladder (Jacob’s?) which turned sideways multiplies into both the lines of the musical stave and the strings of the cello; the curiously empty set of scales; the magic number square (which contains all the numbers from 1 to 16 arranged so that every line both vertically and horizontally – and diagonally – adds up to 34); distorted perspective; the transgression of normal laws of nature such as gravity; the dividers which facilitate proportions to be determined; and finally the sea in the distance, an ultimately immeasurable ocean.

*After Dürer* was premiered in October 2007 at The Body festival of dance and physical theatre in Christchurch. A short version of the film can be viewed on the internet video posting site Youtube.

Thanks to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Waikato, and The Body Festival, Christchurch for principal funding support, to the Dunedin College of Education for film studio space, and to the many people who provided input and support throughout the project.

- note by Martin Lodge
**Evocation**
written in memory of Daniel James McCluskey

**NEW ZEALAND PREMIERE**

Gabrielle Peake - piano

This piece was commissioned to commemorate the life of Daniel McCluskey, who died suddenly in January of 2006. He was an accomplished law and music student at the University of Melbourne and an orchestration student of mine in 2004 – a subject for which he received first class honours. In that same year he included ‘Evocation’ (from Albéniz’ cycle, Iberia) in his solo piano programme, and that piece provided a loose starting point for this one, with the idea that Daniel might have his own ‘Evocation’.

- note by the composer

**First Person Feminine**

Ian Cooper

Stephanie Acraman – soprano
Katherine Austin - piano

A cycle of 7 songs to the poems by Jane Adamson reflecting the feminine character at different stages of life in different moods and circumstances.

*All month the wind blows*
*Tell you sisters why you laugh*
*Did you see her at the mirror*
*That tree that scrapes against the house*
*You tell me I should leave*
*In a country far away*
*When you’re my age, dear*

**The Juniper Passion Prelude**

Michael Williams

**WORLD PREMIERE**

Stephanie Acraman - soprano
Lara Hall - violin
James Tennant - cello
Katherine Austin - piano

The Juniper Passion is the title of a forthcoming opera to be written by Michael Williams and librettist and director John Davies. This opera will be based on an ANZAC theme focusing on the battle of Monte Cassino.

This prelude is taken from some of the material that will be used in the opera in the opening scene. The location is the Abbey at Monte Cassino Italy, where many New Zealand soldiers fought and died in WWII in one of the most protracted and bloody sieges in the war. The abbey itself which was hundreds of years old was finally bombed to rubble by the allies in order to gain a strategic advantage. No advantage was really gained and the fight continued among the ruins. Fortunately, the abbey was rebuilt exactly the same as the original.

The text of this piece is taken from part of a Benedictine chant, which can still be heard today at the Monte Cassino abbey. The melody was also inspired by a Benedictine chant.

- note by the composer
Text and Translation


Listen, O my son, to the precepts of thy master,
And incline the ear of thy heart,
And cheerfully receive and faithfully execute the admonitions of thy loving Father,
That by the toil of obedience thou mayest return to Him from whom by the sloth of disobedience thou hast gone away.
To thee, therefore, my speech is now directed, who, giving up thine own will,
Takest up the strong and most excellent arms of obedience, to do battle for Christ the Lord, the true King.
In the first place, beg of Him by most earnest prayer,
That He perfect whatever good thou dost begin,
In order that He who hath been pleased to count us in the number of His children,
Need never be grieved at our evil deeds.
For we ought at all times so to serve Him with the good things which He hath given us,
That He may not, like an angry father, disinherit his children,
**The Composers**

**Ian Cooper** was born in Ballarat in 1934. He received his education at the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind. After graduating from the University of Melbourne, he was appointed to the music staff of Frensham in Mittagong. He taught there for the next 40 years, retiring from full-time teaching in 2000. While a student Ian played the trombone in the Australian Youth Orchestra and developed an interest in writing for brass. His continued association with Music Camps provided the opportunity to compose for a variety of ensembles. While at Frensham he wrote and arranged many pieces for large and small vocal groups as well as incidental music for dramatic productions. Ian had a long association with the Song Company for whom he made many arrangements as well as writing the comic mini-musical “Bull Thrip”. His song cycle, "First Person Feminine" was written in conjunction with Jane Adamson, to be performed by mezzo-soprano, Angela Giblin - a former pupil.

**Stuart Greenbaum** (Melb. 1966--) studied composition with Brenton Broadstock and Barry Conyngham at the University of Melbourne, where he now holds a position in the Faculty of Music as Senior Lecturer and Head of Composition. The Stuart Greenbaum sound has overt connections to jazz, pop and minimalism but goes beyond these important influences. *Nelson*, a 3–act opera written with long–time collaborator, poet Ross Baglin, was premiered at the 2007 Castlemaine State Festival. Current commissions include works for the Australia Ensemble, a double concerto for Sydney Omega Ensemble and a piece for the 2008 World Shakuhachi Festival. Greenbaum was a featured composer at the 2006 Aurora Festival in Western Sydney and has won a number of awards, including the Dorian Le Galliene Composition Award, the Heinz Harant Prize, and the Albert H. Maggs Composition Award. His most recent CD, *Mercurial*, was released in 2005.

**Michael Williams** was born in New Zealand in 1962 but left in 1984 for the UK and subsequently settled in Melbourne, Australia, until 1998 when he returned to his native country. He took up a lecturing post at the University of Waikato in 2001 and teaches across a number of fields including composition, harmony and counterpoint, digital music and music aesthetics. Since his return to New Zealand he has received substantial commissions from most of the country's major musical institutions including the NZSO, NBR New Zealand Opera and Chamber Music New Zealand and his music is regularly broadcast on RadioNZ Concert. Michael’s latest projects include a triple concerto commission from Opus Chamber Orchestra with the New Zealand Chamber Soloists – Lara Hall (violin) James Tennant (cello) and Katherine Austin (piano), and perhaps his most demanding; the completion of his full-length opera, *The Juniper Passion*.

**Martin Lodge** is Director of composition studies at the University of Waikato Music Department. A major commentator on New Zealand Music, he contributes to The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (Oxford University Press), and broadcasts on RadioNZ Concert. He has several creative projects in train at present including *Winterlight* for bassoon and orchestra commissioned by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. He is also completing a *Viola Concerto* commissioned by Timothy Deighton (USA), from which the cadenza was premiered as a standalone virtuoso study in July 2007 in Australia, followed by performances around the United States. In July of this year Martin will be travelling to Florence, Italy, to present his paper entitled 'The drowned Dionysus: classicism and neoclassicism in New Zealand music' at the *New Zealand and the Mediterranean* conference.
The Performers

**Stephanie Acraman** was raised in Hawke’s Bay and studied at the Eastern Institute of Technology before taking up a scholarship to study under internationally acclaimed voice tutor, Anthea Moller at the Australian National University where she graduated with a Bachelor or Music Voice – (Hons), and a Grad. Dip Music – Voice (High Dist.) Stephanie now resides in Sydney, and has a busy career singing on the operatic stage, in concert halls, and open-air venues. She has recorded with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and performed in many Festivals in both New Zealand and Australia, including Hamilton’s Fuel Festival. Most recently Stephanie has appeared as the featured soloist in the Philharmonia Choir and Festival Orchestra’s concert, Handel’s Hits held at the Sydney Opera House. Roles include Countess Almaviva in Mozarts’ *Marriage of Figaro*, Adina in Offenbach’s *The Elixir of Love*, Fiordilig in Mozart’s *Cosi Fan Tutte*, Mary and Anna in Michael F. Williams’ *The Prodigal Child*, Nedda in Leoncavallo’s *I Pagliacci*, Kitty Hart in 2007 Sydney production of *Dead Man Walking*. Her repertoire also includes soprano soloist for many choral works, including Handel’s *Messiah*, Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis*, Vivaldi’s *Gloria*, Haydn’s *Creation*, Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*. Stephanie is also an active teacher of voice in Sydney and conducts various choirs including the Sorelli and Fratelli youth choir. Stephanie enjoys contemporary repertoire a great deal, and is delighted at the opportunity to sing some of the wonderful repertoire that has been recently written for voice, especially the premiere of Michael Williams’ piece, *Prelude* from ‘The Juniper Passion’.

**James Tennant** is well-known throughout New Zealand as a cello soloist and teacher. He has performed in over sixteen countries worldwide including the USA, England, South America and throughout Europe. He was principal cellist of the Auckland Philharmonia for eight years before relinquishing this position in favour of solo and chamber music performance and teaching work, and is currently Senior Lecturer in cello at the University of Waikato. James is also a National Recording Artist for Radio New Zealand Concert.

**Katherine Austin** performs regularly around New Zealand as a concerto soloist, chamber musician and solo recitalist. She tours frequently for Chamber Music New Zealand and is a National Recording Artist, broadcasting regularly for Radio New Zealand Concert. She has performed throughout Europe and has been a major competition winner both there and in New Zealand. Katherine is also Lecturer in piano at the University of Waikato.

University of Waikato violin lecturer, **Lara Hall**, holds a Doctorate from the University of Michigan. She has performed extensively as a soloist with orchestras including the Auckland Chamber Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia and Christchurch Symphony. Lara has also led orchestras ranging from the Auckland Philharmonia to the Michigan Baroque Orchestra and has toured on a number of occasions as a chamber musician in the US and Europe.

**Gabrielle Peake** is currently in her second year of a Bachelor of Music performance studying piano with Katherine Austin. Earlier this month Gabrielle was the recipient of the 2007 Lili Kraus Piano Award for outstanding commitment and artistic progress in piano studies. A promising composer, Gabrielle’s piece *Three Expressions* won a performance prize in last year’s Lilburn Trust Student Composition awards adjudicated by Susan Frykberg.
Okta - contemporary performance ensemble

Okta is the specialist contemporary music ensemble of the University of Waikato Music Department. It was founded in 2001 by composers Martin Lodge and Michael Williams, with the inaugural concert taking place in May 2002. Okta’s home is the Gallagher Concert Chamber in the WEL Academy of Performing Arts.

Okta takes its name from an old transliteration of the Greek word for eight. In traditional numerology, the number seven signifies completeness, including the four elements plus the three spiritual essences. Number eight – Okta - consequently signifies a new beginning but also an embracing of the past.

Okta presents a wide spectrum of artistic styles and approaches in its concert events and its programming deliberately encompasses divergent aesthetic positions. Repertoire performed ranges from established twentieth century classics to very recent work, with a special emphasis on the inclusion of multimedia pieces and work involving computer technology.

Patron: Gillian Whitehead NZOM, Arts Laureate 2000
Artistic Directors: Martin Lodge and Michael Williams
Technical Direction: Katie Reichmuth and Brad Thomson
Lighting Design: Dave Jones
Administrative Support: Kim Johnson

A special thanks to the staff and students of the University of Waikato Music Department and the Academy of Performing Arts.

Website: www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/music/okta.shtml

Next Okta concert: September 2008