

AUSTA NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2022

NEW MUSIC FROM THE PANDEMIC - PROGRAM

Simply For Strings Recital Room, Monday July the 4th at 2.00 pm.



COMPOSERS:

Dr Johanna Selleck

Melvyn Cann

Dr Roger Alsop

PERFORMERS:

Barbara Hornung - Viola

Johanna Selleck - Flute

## EPISODIC REVERIE, MELANCHOLIC for Flute and Viola - Johanna Selleck

This piece may be thought of as a conversation between flute and viola. At times, it follows 'question and answer' line of conversation; at other times, the voices come together in agreement or elements of surprise and more animated interactions ensue. Familiar threads of the conversation return, giving the piece its 'episodic' character. The overall mood is sad and reflective, as though the speakers cannot quite break out of the feelings of melancholy. *Episodic Reverie, Melancholic for Flute and Viola* was commissioned by Barbara Hornung and was first performed at the private house concert CLIMATE in Elsternwick, Melbourne on February the 6th.

## CATCH-22: A Study in Dynamics for Solo Viola - Johanna Selleck

Catch-22 was composed in April 2021 for the 2021 ANZVS Viola Composition Competition. It was awarded First Place in the open 'Solo Viola' category. The piece uses dynamics as the main compositional element, with all other parameters secondary to this. This has been designed to make the most of the natural resonances of the viola and the unique timbral qualities of individual strings and parts of the viola's range. The dynamics are extreme and often appear contradictory — challenging the performer to solve the paradox. The apparent contradictions come about through 'layering' of dynamics. For example, within an overall crescendo, a second layer of 'sub-dynamics' can introduce dynamics swells in the context of and subservient to the overall *crescendo*. The piece is deliberately designed to be somewhat of a 'brain teaser' but at the same time, an excursion into the vast realms of dynamic expression.

## BRANCHES for Viola Solo - Melvyn Cann

*Branches* was composed in 2021 and is an intricate, profound and deeply expressive work which was inspired by nature. In Melvyn's words: *The link to organic forms in Nature, as distinct from the rectilinear forms we create for our artificial environments, informs all of my work. The piece is by no means metronomic: the branches can sway in the wind, whilst retaining their form.* *Branches* was first performed by violist Barbara Hornung at the private house concert CLIMATE in Elsternwick on February the 6th, 2022.

## ROSELLA - Roger Alsop

The pandemic has been very worrying for many, but is irrelevant to rosellas, in fact it may be of benefit. However, climate change is having a significant effect on rosellas, changing their colouring and the shape of their bills, and negatively affecting their environment.

*Rosella* is inspired by the song of its namesake. It is an interaction between: the rosella, the composer, the musician performing the score, the location it is in, and its audience. The music surrounds its audience, like a flock of rosellas singing to each other, hopefully building a connection, a relationship of humans, our place, and the rosella. *Rosella* was commissioned by Barbara Hornung and was first performed at the private house concert CLIMATE in Elsternwick, Melbourne on February the 6th, 2022.

## Dr Roger Alsop

Dr Roger Alsop is a composer, musician, and mixed-media artist, focusing on developing interactive and collaborative approaches that enhance and exemplify the hybrid, genre-breaking nature of modern creativity. He supervises research students and teaches Interactive Art, Research Skills, Electronic Music, and Mixed Media. His writings and artworks are presented internationally.

## Melvyn Cann

Melvyn Roy Cann is frequently described as a polymath: he was born June 26 1941, at Norwood, Adelaide, South Australia. He is an accomplished violinist, pianist, philosopher, artist, poet and healer. Family legend recognised his intellectual gifts from an early age, but excluded music. "Good at all his schoolwork but hopeless at music...can't sing in tune or march in time...doesn't know his right foot from his left." However, at the age of ten, under the inspiration of a school music teacher, Paul Trudinger, and after being overwhelmed by hearing Bach's unaccompanied Sonata in C, played by the French violinist, Christian Ferris, all of that changed. He began learning violin and recorder, and within a short time was composing simple songs, mostly as gifts to family members, for Birthdays and Christmas.

Very soon, Fate seemed to deal a cruel blow when he was struck down, severely paralysed by poliomyelitis. He spent nearly a whole year in bed, unable to stand, to walk, or turn his head. His fingers, however, were strong enough to play the recorder, which, by all accounts, he did, for several hours each day. In the light of later experience in healing (he is a trained acupuncturist and Elder and medicine man of the Wirradjuri people in New South Wales) he now attributes his recovery substantially to his passion for the recorder, the purity of its sound and the profundity of its neurological effects.

At the age of twelve he resumed study of the violin and four years later joined the South Australian Symphony Orchestra, with whom he remained for eight years, playing sometimes viola, sometimes violin. He became deeply involved in the National Music Camps and three times was concertmaster of the Australian Youth Orchestra. Other orchestras he has led include the Orchestra of the University of Oxford, The Orchestra of the Victorian State Opera, The Melbourne Musicians, and The Melbourne Chamber Orchestra and recently, the Maruki Community Orchestra in Canberra.

The seemingly cruel blow of poliomyelitis proved a blessing. During his year confined in bed, his mother organised lessons in harmony and counterpoint by correspondence, from a music teacher, Faith Harvey. This laid the foundations for a degree of mastery of traditional harmonic and contrapuntal principles. These principles nourish even his most extreme ventures into the *avant-garde*, electronic music and *musique concrète*.

Melvyn has written over three hundred musical compositions, some of symphonic proportions, a selection of which can be found by searching his name on [soundcloud.com](https://soundcloud.com/melvyncann). Not all tracks are live recordings, but even computer renditions can give a passable impression. He has two published books, one of political philosophy, *Crossing the Floor*, and the other, a substantial collection of his poetry, *Inside Outside*. Three more volumes of poetry and a volume of short stories are in preparation, as well as material concerning Philosophy of Medicine. Pdfs of most of his compositions can be obtained on request and some Cds. ([melvyncann@gmail.com](mailto:melvyncann@gmail.com)). He has made two documentary films (*Just play naturally I & II*) on the application of the Alexander Technique to musicians, and one film, *The Last Dance*, in memory of his mother.

## Dr Johanna Selleck

Dr Johanna Selleck is a composer, flautist, and musicologist. She holds a PhD from the University of Melbourne, where she is currently an honorary fellow. Her compositions have been performed by renowned artists in Australia and overseas including Europe, Israel, Japan and the USA. Her research is widely published including Cambridge Scholars Press and Lexington Books. Publishers of her music include Lyrebird Press and the Australian Music Centre. Her recordings appear on labels including Move Records and Albany Records USA. Prizes for composition include the Percy Grainger Prize for Composition, the Albert Maggs Composition Award, and the 2021 ANZVS Viola Composition Competition. Her solo harp piece 'Spindrift' is included on the CD *Quest* listed on the 2022 Grammy Awards. Johanna Selleck recently released her CD 'Becoming' with Move Records (MCD 629).

Many thanks to the AUSTA National President, James de Rosario, Karen Kyriakou and all on the Committee.