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WAVES

Acclaimed Australian ensemble Halcyon presents fascinating programs of new vocal chamber music from the 20th century and beyond, to bring them to a wider audience. In the past decade Halcyon has commissioned and premiered over forty substantial new chamber works. The recent focus has been to record these wonderful and diverse pieces. *Waves III* features two Halcyon-commissioned works inspired by Greek mythology by Australian composers Raffaele Marcellino and Nigel Butterley.

1-3 Nigel Butterley *Orphei Mysteria*

I 9:35 II 5:11 III 9:37

Matthew Wood *conductor* Jenny Duck-Chong *mezzo-soprano* Alison Morgan *soprano*
Sally Walker *flute/piccolo/alto flute* Peter Smith *clarinet/bass clarinet* Alexandre Oguey
oboe/cor anglais Giuseppe Zangari *guitar* Victoria Jacono-Gilmovich *violin* James Wannan
viola Geoffrey Gartner *cello*

4-7 Raffaele Marcellino *A Strange Kind of Paradise*

I 5:49 II 4:37 III 4:35 IV 6:00

Alison Morgan *soprano* Belinda Montgomery *soprano* Jenny Duck-Chong *mezzo-soprano*
Jo Burton *mezzo-soprano* Genevieve Lang *harp*

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HALCYON is a dynamic force for the promotion of new and recent chamber music for voice. Originally formed by singers Alison Morgan and Jenny Duck-Chong in 1998, Halcyon presents rarely heard international works alongside offerings from some of Australia's most esteemed composers. A chameleonic ensemble of varied size and instrumentation, the line up is hand-picked for each project by current artistic director, mezzo soprano Jenny Duck-Chong.

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Orphei Mysteria (2008) – Nigel Butterley

Although he has written numerous orchestral and chamber works, the backbone of Butterley's output is a series of more than a dozen major vocal cycles, ranging from a capella choral to vocal-orchestral and including some pieces crossing genre boundaries (the radiophonic *In the Head the Fire* and the fusion of accompanied reading and song cycle in *Sometimes with One I Love*).

Most of these set texts are assembled by Butterley himself, whether from diverse sources or from the work of a single poet. The present work, however, is somewhat different in that the text is a miniature poetic cycle conceived as a whole - or perhaps a single poem divided into distinct sections. Melbourne writer Patricia Excell has drawn on a life-long love of Greek mythology and religion in this response to the Orpheus myth, a subject which has held particular fascination for composers of at least four centuries. The text of *Orphei Mysteria* is not a narrative retelling, but focuses on certain key images - particularly those important to the ancient Orphic cult - out of chronological order.

Although it calls for two voices, *Orphei Mysteria* is really a song-cycle for mezzo, with the soprano added only at key points: the Prologue and Epilogue (taken from an ancient Orphic grave inscription) and the refrain-like final lines of each section, as well as the resonant image at the exact midpoint of the symmetrical design ("You hold the shell of harmony / Wherein the stars are tuned"). While the musical response to the words is often expressive and lyrical, the introduction of the second voice takes the work out of the realm of the personal and strengthens the sense of ritual implicit in the structuring of the text.

- Elliott Gyger

A Strange Kind of Paradise (2013) – Raffaele Marcellino

A Strange Kind of Paradise is about abandonment - the contemplation of solitude and longing. The strange paradise is created in solitude when one is freed from the demands and emotion of family, relationships and society. The title is the converse of Sartre's '*L'enfer, c'est les autres*' (*Hell is other people*).

This work is inspired by the Monteverdi lamentation aria '*Lasciatemi morire*'. The lament is the only part of the Monteverdi opera, *Arianna*, that has survived to the present day. The myth of Ariadne speaks of her love of Theseus, who she helped slay the Minotaur, Ariadne's half-brother, and escape the labyrinth. This assistance of Theseus was a betrayal of her family and homeland and she set sail with him believing they would have a future together. Theseus abandoned her on the island of Naxos. This myth is a central myth in classical Greek mythology

and correspondingly has provided our modern culture with a rich range of symbols and narratives.

The lyrics for Movements I-III are a set of poems, *Ariadne's Lament* by Jordie Albiston, celebrated Melbourne-based poet. Movement IV uses a French translation of the lyrics from Monteverdi's original and is structured to include artefacts of Monteverdi musical fragments spun out along a structural thread.

- Raffaele Marcellino

Raffaele Marcellino (b. 1964) is a composer whose music has been performed by many of the leading Australian and international ensembles ranging from OzOpera, The Song Company, Ensemble Modern, Nouvel Ensemble Modern, The Seymour Group, Synergy, Sydney Alpha Ensemble, Continuum Sax, Halcyon and most of the Australian Symphony Orchestras. A significant part of his output has involved collaborations with living poets and lyricists as well as settings of canonic texts in English, Italian, Spanish French, German, Latin and Calabrian. Where text was not used, his music has drawn inspiration from literature and its forms.

Nigel Butterley (b.1935) has been recognised as one of Australia's leading composers since the 1960s, writing in a style which tempers modernist exploration with a distinctive understated lyricism. His oeuvre includes four string quartets, the radiophonic work *In the Head the Fire* (winner of the 1966 Italia Prize), major orchestral works such as *Meditations of Thomas Traherne* (1968) and *From Sorrowing Earth* (1991), and the opera *Lawrence Hargrave Flying Alone* (1988). The core of his output, however, resides in vocal settings of poetry, including the ambitious Whitman cycle *Sometimes With One I Love* (1976); *There Came a Wind Like a Bugle* (1987) and *Paradise Unseen* (2001), both for the Song Company; and the choral-orchestral *Spell of Creation* (2000), the culmination of a long fascination with the poetry of Kathleen Raine.

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