

**PROGRAM TWO:**

**AUSTRALIAN ROMANTIC & CLASSICAL ORCHESTRA AND ENSEMBLE OFFSPRING**

**TEXTURE & TIMBRE**

Welcome to the Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra's *Voyage of Musical Discovery Composition Kit* for 2018.

As you can see by the title above, the works being presented in this concert will be examined with an emphasis on texture and timbre. Both of these concepts are challenging to treat.

An extract of the definition of **timbre** from The New GROVE Dictionary of Music and Musicians, reads:

'A term describing the tonal quality of a sound; a clarinet and an oboe sounding the same note are said to produce different timbres.'

It is through the characteristic sounds of the instruments that we recognise the differences between instruments. Sometimes, musicians refer to the sound of an instrument as having 'colour' and often, in rehearsing music for example, will ask for colour changes in the sound such as lighter, darker, more transparent, and so on. These concepts are essentially abstract and impossible to quantify but make for interesting use of imagination when trying to interpret music.

Another extract from The New GROVE Dictionary of Music and Musicians defines **texture** as:

'A term used loosely when referring to any of the vertical aspects of a musical structure, usually with regard to the way in which individual parts or voices are put together. In discussions of texture a distinction is generally made between **homophony\***, in which all the parts are rhythmically dependent on one another or there is a clear-cut distinction between the melodic part and the accompanying parts carrying the harmonic progression (e.g. most solo song with piano accompaniment), and **polyphonic (or contrapuntal)** treatment, in which several parts move independently or in imitation of one another (e.g. fugue, canon).'

\* The bold is mine to help with clarity.

## SECTION ONE

### ARCO Chamber Soloists

The Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra is dedicated to the performance of late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century music in historically-informed style. Under the artistic direction of Richard Gill AO, Australia's most accomplished period-instrument performers are brought together to create vibrant interpretations of Romantic and Classical music, and to share their expertise with musicians of all ages and levels.

Established in 2013, the Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra is now a familiar presence in major venues of Sydney and Melbourne, as well as farther afield in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. As an orchestra and chamber ensemble, it continues to grow and aims to share its passion for music with listeners and learners everywhere. If you would like to participate in our youth orchestra projects (**Young Mannheim Symphonists**), or find out more about the orchestra and its activities, please visit [www.arco.org.au](http://www.arco.org.au).

### PETER VON WINTER

#### OCTET IN E FLAT MAJOR FOR WINDS AND STRINGS (1812)

The opening of this concert is the Octet in E flat major by the German composer, Peter von Winter. It is scored for violin, viola, violoncello, flute, clarinet, bassoon, and two horns and is in three movements, Allegro, Adagio, Rondo-Allegretto.

The inclusion of an Octet in our programming is an encouragement to teachers to explore with their students the huge variety of octet combinations in this style and the inherent compositional possibilities available for students. Why not have students compose an octet for eight instruments they happen to have on hand? Why not compose a percussion octet, for example?

Peter von Winter wrote this Octet in 1812 (the Youtube clip says 1813 but it is, in fact, incorrect). Von Winter was a composer directly associated with the Mannheim school and was indeed born in Mannheim in 1754 and died in Munich in 1825.

The Octet is clearly situated in the Classical period. It shows a relationship to Beethoven and Schubert and the earlier Mannheim school of composers.

(At the risk of being repetitive, there is a very useful article on Peter von Winter in The New GROVE Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Volume 20, page 455. The entry is under Winter, Peter von).

The following is a link to a Youtube performance of this work.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuwPypG5Wg>

The parts for the octet are available on the Petrucci websiteL

[http://imslp.org/wiki/Octet\\_in\\_E-flat\\_major\\_\(Winter%2C\\_Peter\\_von\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/Octet_in_E-flat_major_(Winter%2C_Peter_von))

So far as texture and timbre are concerned, this work is an excellent example of combining a wind quintet with a string trio and the inherent combinations of sound that such instrumentation produces.

Octets, as a genre, have an interesting history when it comes to combinations of instruments. Apart from string octets, which tend to be double string quartets, the scoring for all other octets is immensely fluid including varying combinations of string, woodwind and brass instruments.

Stravinsky's Octet scored for flute, clarinet, two bassoons, two trumpets, tenor trombone and bass trombone, is a work which reflects his interest in classical forms and styles and is often considered to be pivotal to the style known as neo-classicism. It is, like the Peter von Winter, a work in three movements and well worth examining from the point of view of its structural reference to classicism within a twentieth-century sound world.

It is not intended to provide exercises or analysis of this piece as teachers already have considerable access to a world of information about form, content and style referring to works during this period. Instead I will concentrate on the four new works to be played as sources of inspiration for compositional activities.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **AUSTRALIAN MUSIC WITHIN THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS ENSEMBLE OFFSPRING**

The point of this section of the kit, as with the first kit in this series, is to give teachers and students ideas for composition exercises based on the music played.

The works, the composers, and the year of composition are:

Holly Harrison	Vibe Rant	composed 2016
Thomas Meadowcroft	Medieval Rococo	composed 2016
Cassie To	Aviale	composed 2017
Bree Van Reyk	Light for the First Time	composed 2018

As can be seen, these works have been composed in the last three years, therefore the composer's copyright must be protected. For this reason, we will provide access to the first page of the scores only.

Below are links to each work provided by the Australian Music Centre, giving schools an opportunity to purchase complete scores.

The links also give some background to the instrumentation and titles of the works which I won't duplicate here.

<https://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/work/harrison-holly-vibe-rant>

<https://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/work/meadowcroft-thomas-medieval-rococo>

<https://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/work/van-reyk-bree-light-for-the-first-time>

<https://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/work/to-cassie-avialae>

As mentioned in the first kit, writing for small ensembles – that is, chamber-sized ensembles such as duos, trios, quartets and the like – is a very special skill. However, when you write for such ensembles you have a good chance to hear all the lines and how they work together. This is great practice in writing for larger ensembles. As you write, it is important to think of each musical line as a voice. If you think of a musical line as a voice you will start to develop a sense of inner-hearing (audiation). You should also try out all your lines on instruments as well as voices wherever possible.

**‘Vibe Rant’ by Holly Harrison**

Transposing Score 1

## Vibe Rant

Holly Harrison

**Bright, Lively**  
♩ = 112

The score is arranged for three instruments: Flute, Bass Clarinet in Bb, and Vibraphone. It begins with a tempo of 112 beats per minute and a dynamic of *mp*. The Vibraphone part includes a 'pedal at discretion throughout' instruction. The score is divided into systems, with measures 5, 9, and 13 marked. A 'sing' section is indicated for the Flute part starting at measure 9. A section labeled 'A' begins at measure 13. Dynamic markings vary throughout, including *p*, *f*, *mf*, and *ff*. The Vibraphone part features a 'Ped' (pedal) marking at the end of several phrases.

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## Score observations

1. What does the word 'rant' mean?
2. What is meant by the term 'transposing score'?
3. Given the composer's choice of woodwind instruments, what implications does the instrumentation have for range, dynamics, texture and timbre?
4. What observations can you make about the vibraphone part and the instruction 'pedal at discretion throughout'?
5. What observations can you make about the rhythmic elements in each line?
6. How do you interpret the word 'sing' in bar 9 of the flute part?
7. What observations can you make about the melodic lines of each of the parts?
8. What is the essential difference between the vibraphone line and the other two lines?
9. Apart from a melodic contribution, what else can the vibraphone do to enhance texture?
10. What part does harmony play in this work?

## Composition activities

1. Using the rhythm of the vibraphone in bars 5 and 6, invent a melodic ostinato to support a second line, on instruments of your choice. For example, the rhythm could be played by a keyboard instrument and the melody by a flute, clarinet, trumpet etc. The pitches used in the melodic ostinato could include:
  - a. C pentatonic
  - b. a modal set, e.g. Dorian mode
  - c. a diatonic set, e.g. F major scale
  - d. a chromatic set, e.g. eight chromatic notes from C to G or indeed the entire chromatic scale.
2. Repeat activity 1 using the vibraphone rhythm in bars 13/14/15.
3. Now try to combine these ideas to compose a fragment of 5 bars length which could be repeated to make a short work of ten bars. Include tempo instructions and dynamics, clearly marked.
4. Beginning with improvisation using two instruments of your choice and using the rhythmic material of the flute and bass clarinet in bars 9/10/11/12, improvise a series of bars using the pitch sets described in activity 1 above.
5. Follow this exercise with a written composition using the same material as in number 4. Remember to work quickly without constant revision – go for line and shape and don't spend excessive time correcting. This is an exercise which has an infinite number of possibilities. The idea is to explore and invent.



**'Medieval Rococo' by Thomas Meadowcroft**  
(the score is in C)

**Medieval Rococo**  
Thomas Meadowcroft

1. facile (♩ = 66)

The score is written for four parts: Alto Flute, Clarinet in Bb, Percussion, and Keyboard. The tempo is marked '1. facile' with a quarter note equal to 66 beats per minute. The music is in 3/4 time and the key signature is C major. The score is divided into three systems, each starting with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The first system covers measures 1-8, the second system covers measures 9-18, and the third system covers measures 19-28. The Alto Flute and Clarinet in Bb parts play a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Percussion part includes Glockenspiel (medium mallets), Vibraphone (medium mallets, motor on), and Harpsichord (patch). The Keyboard part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. Dynamics include *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *sim.* (sforzando).

## Score observations

1. What is meant by the word Medieval?
2. What is meant by the word Rococo?
3. What does the composer mean when he uses the words 'medieval' and 'rococo'?
4. What does the word 'facile' mean at the top of the composition?
5. What does the term 'medium mallets' mean as applied to the glockenspiel and the vibraphone?
6. What do the letters 'l.v.' mean as seen under the glockenspiel part?
7. What is the actual pitch of the glockenspiel?
8. In what ways is the alto flute different from the piccolo and the standard concert flute?
9. What can you say about the texture of this work and the use of dynamics?
10. What observations can you make about the rhythm on the first page of the score?

## Composition activities – exercises in texture and timbre contrasts

When choosing pitches for this exercise, be adventurous in contour and range. This is the time to experiment.

1. Choosing four instruments, compose a series of slow moving chords over eight bars in quintuple metre, using a constant dynamic range.
2. Repeat number one and change the dynamic in every bar.
3. Staying with the four-instrument concept, build a series of chords by adding parts at a bar's distance: for example, use 'cello in the first bar, add clarinet in the second bar, then violin in the third bar, and flute in the fourth bar. The 'cello will have to sustain for four bars, the clarinet for three bars, the violin for two bars, and the flute for one bar.
4. Reverse this procedure and/or alter the ways in which the instruments enter.
5. Develop this idea over sixteen bars and build very slowly from pp to ff and back to pp over the sixteen-bar period.
6. Create a sixteen to twenty bar segment and gradually increase the rhythmic activity over the period leading to a high degree of activity in the final bar.

## 'Light for the First Time' by Bree van Reyk

### Score observations

The first page of this work gives us a limited insight to the style which will follow. However, the slow tempo and the use of repeat bars give you an indication of how the work might unfold. Much is left to the players' attitudes to interpretation and the composer's intention is to provide the players with considerable musical freedom. A score instruction page is provided and it is suggested you read this thoroughly.

1. What does the box at the top of the composition mean, which contains '+/-'?
2. If the minim is 46 on a metronome, what are the subsequent crotchet and quaver markings and why is this information important?
3. Explain the rhythmic structures in the bass clarinet and violin parts in bar 3.
4. How do players count the bass clarinet part in bar three and the violin part in bar three?
5. At the opening, how does the concept of timbre work in the bass clarinet part? To answer this you need only to read the instruction for the bass clarinet.
6. Describe the note in bar 2 of the violin part.

Bree van Reyk  
**Light for the First Time**  
 for Small Ensemble and Auxiliary Players  
 April 2017

Light for the First Time was commissioned by Ensemble Offspring with the generous support of Kim Williams. Premiere performance by Ensemble Offspring and guests at the Petersham Bowling Club, April 23rd 2017.

Program Note: Light for the First Time imagines the experience of opening one's eyes for the first time. The unfolding of the piece reflects a desire to be able to relive that moment endlessly, in slow motion, as if bathed in the brand-new memory of light. It is dedicated to my daughter, Claude van Gold.

Notes for performance:

The piece is scored for Flute, Bass Clarinet, Vibraphone, Piano, Violin and Auxiliary Players, but other instruments can be substituted - e.g. other wind or brass instruments, Viola or Cello in place of Violin, Electric Guitar or Harp in place of Vibraphone or Piano, or pre-recorded playback in place of Auxiliary Players etc.

+ / - indicates rhythmic notation which the performer should interpret closely, but inexactly, and with variation in the repeats. Pitch material is as written. The start of each bar should be synchronous within the ensemble.

x3-4 indicates suggested number of repeats. Players can make independent decisions regarding the number of repeats providing they are within a range of 1-3 bars of each other and that all players arrive at letter 'A' at the same time.

= indicates notation which should be performed as written.

l indicates a set of phrases/cells to be played and repeated ad libitum. Improvisation in a similar style and moments of silence are welcome.

z on note stems or in place of note stems indicates a pulsing, tremolo or some kind of repetition of the pitch/es. Fluctuating accel and decel, cresc and decresc, tremolo, trills, timbral trills, flutter tongue etc should be used here.

Pause bars at letters D and D2 are stasis points held for approximate time indicated. Similarly the bars at E, E1 and E2 are of approximate durations indicated.

Auxiliary players should be interspersed throughout the performance space and amongst the audience, and play from memory, or use discreet cue cards (no music stands). Auxiliary players can move throughout the space whilst playing if they wish to.

If using pre-recorded playback in lieu of auxiliary players, the speakers should similarly be interspersed throughout the space and audience. The pre-recorded playback is available from the composer, or you can make your own.

www.breevanreyk.com

**Light for the First Time**  
for Claude

Bree van Reyk

$\text{♩} = 46$

Flute

Bass Clarinet in B $\flat$

Vibraphone

Piano

Violin

Auxiliary Players A

Auxiliary Players B

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## Composition activities

Works of this nature are very fine examples of the use of texture and timbre, providing young composers with a fundamental compositional problem.

How do you make one note sound interesting? What are the devices you can employ to make compositions from single notes? These are excellent opportunities for improvisation and experimentation, and Bree van Reyk's work is rich with such invention. Precedents for this style exist in early medieval music.

Below is a two-part work, probably written in 1175, by Leoninus (Leonin) from the school of Notre Dame. This style is known as two-part organum. Your teachers will explain this style to you and no doubt you will be able to sing some organum.

### Extract of a two-part Organum from the School of Notre Dame composed by Leoninus 1175

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is a single melodic line with a complex, rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is a single melodic line with a sustained note 'Be' followed by a few notes and rests.

1. Have a bass line instrument play a sustained note over say eight bars, while a second instrument moves closely around that note exploring semitones either side of the bass note.
2. Reverse that procedure by creating a bass line which is active and an upper part which is sustained.
3. Experiment with wind and brass instruments in a manner similar to the bass clarinet solo at the beginning of Bree van Reyk's work. Play the instruments in combination and try to notate the sounds.
4. The concept of overlapping or alternating sounds also has its origins in early music and was known as a 'hocket.' Again, I refer you to Grove for an excellent article on hocket. Now try to write something in this style using overlapping parts.

# 'Aviale (Bird Wings)' by Cassie To

## Bird Calls Improv Gestures Percussion

Ground Parrot: Rhythm is not to be played strictly. Motif is to give impression of triplet figure increasing in speed while retaining rhythm.  
 Can be played in its entirety or in fragments. Rhythm can also be reversed while still ascending and utilising pitch gliss.  
 Dynamic: Soft  
 Texture: lyrical/smooth line.

**WATER PHONE**

Australian Painted Snipe: Motif is to have a mixture of pitched and 'muted/percussive' (mutes, clusters, etc) as indicated with staccato and accent.  
 Notes are to be roughly sounded at indicated pitch and can include a small clusters  
 Dynamic: Any  
 Texture: Percussive

**VIBRAPHONE**

Regent Honey Eater: Motif is 'conversaional' and has a mixture of pitched and 'muted/percussive' (dead stork) sounds as indicated  
 Motif may be played in its entirety or in fragments, phrases of the motif indicated by the slurs.  
 Dynamic: Any  
 Texture: Smooth, percussive on notes indicated.

**VIBRAPHONE**

Cambarys Cockatoo [only half of the bird song]: Motif is to have harsh, metallic quality to it  
 Quick descending pitch glissando on the last note of the motif/any high pitch  
 Played in response to cockatoo call from another instrument  
 Dynamic: Loud  
 Texture: Smooth but piercing, harsh/unlcear pitches

**BOWED VIBRAPHONE**

**WATER PHONE**

Swift Parrot: Motif is high pitched and chattery.

Avialae

Cassia To

I Freely, without sense of pulse (ca  $\text{♩} = 70$ )  
Improvisation to be conversational and playful between performers

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Percussion II

Piano

Violin

Violoncello

*ppp cresc.*

*gliss.*

*pp cresc.*

Full Score

9

H.

Cl.

Perc.

Pno

Via.

Vc.

*mp*

*pp*

*cresc.*

*p*

*pp*

*mf*

*sub. pp*

*mf*

*norm*

*p*

## Score observations

This is a complex work and is best approached by reading the notes at the front of the score where considerable explanation and performance instructions can be found.

Notice the instruction on page one of the work where players are encouraged to play freely and without a sense of pulse and that the improvisations should be conversational and playful. Simple as this may sound, this type of instruction requires expert players to perform the music convincingly.

Three pages of the score have been included, without infringing on copyright.

The first deals with four of the birds mentioned and contains detailed instructions from the composer on how to interpret the lines. The second page is the opening of the work featuring the violin and cello and the third page is an example of the percussion and keyboard writing.

Obviously, one thinks of Olivier Messiaen when it comes to writing music influenced by bird song. I would urge you to find a Youtube performance of a work of Messiaen's known as *Le Merle Noir* (The Blackbird).

1. What is the device used by the violin and 'cello in the opening bars?
2. Suggest some dynamic levels you expect the players might reach at the end of each of their passages? The score simply states a starting dynamic followed by crescendo.
3. Examine the writing for piano on the third page and make some observations about the use of pitch and rhythm.
4. Tom-toms using rim knocks play the bars beginning at 49. What observation can you make about this rhythm?
5. Comment on the violoncello and violin writing at bars 52 and 53.
6. What do you observe about the texture at bars 52 to 55 when you take all the instruments into consideration?

## Composition activities

1. Using the rhythm played by the tom-toms in bar 49, add a melody to that rhythm using a bass clef instrument.
2. As for 1, but use a treble clef or higher voiced instrument.
3. Combine 1 and 2 against the rhythm of the tom-toms and compose an extended three-part work of approximately eighteen bars. Be adventurous with your pitch choices.
4. If you are competent at writing harmonics, compose a short passage for a small group of strings using harmonics. If you aren't competent at this activity find a string player who can explain how harmonics work and how you write them in a score.

Best wishes for your work.

We look forward to seeing you at the May concert.

**Richard Gill AO**

Artistic Director

Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra