



**DARKNESS
INTO LIGHT
EDWARD
COWIE**

**LAURA CHISLETT, FLUTE
ALICE GILES, HARP
EDWARD COWIE, PIANO**

EDWARD COWIE
DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

	La Primavera - Nine Figures in an Orange Garden - <i>for solo flute</i>	
1.	Prelude: The Orange Garden I	1:27
2.	I. Zephyrus	2:14
3.	II. Chloris	2:25
4.	III. Flora	1:53
5.	IV. Venus	2:46
6.	V. Cupid	1:37
7.	VI. The Three Graces	2:53
8.	VII. Mercury	2:10
9.	Harlequin Dances - <i>for solo harp</i>	13:50
	Australian Water Music - <i>for flute and harp</i>	
10.	Kiama Blowhole	5:43
11.	Black Swans at Dangar Lagoon	5:48
12.	Whales - Hervey Bay. Qld	6:03
13.	Darkness into Light - <i>improvisation for flute, harp and piano</i>	11:56
		Total playing time 61:12

LAURA CHISLETT, FLUTE
ALICE GILES, HARP
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DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

In 1977, I was commissioned by The State Opera, Kassel in Germany, to write an opera (my first), on a subject of my own choosing. I chose scenarios (*scenas* and *lazzi*), from the original 16th century (and partly improvised by the players), Commedia dell'arte. Its main characters were Columbina and Harlequin, the latter morphing into the later French character *Pierrot* and (later still) in an English morph, *Punch (and Judy!)*. During my university years and later in my late 20s, I had played *Pantalone* in a stage performance and then directed a performance of my own with some gifted amateur actors. The core of Commedia is a kind of mixture of black comedy and farce. Between 1973 and 1976, I had composed my *Gesangbuch* for 28 voices and 13 instruments; a work that was to put me further onto the international platforms as a composer '*inspired by the natural world*'. *Gesangbuch* was, I guess, my own *Four Seasons* - each movement dealing with the atmosphere(s) and sounds of four different landscapes - beginning with a movement in Autumn and finishing in Summer in the fourth movement. I've no doubt it was that work that prompted me to set my opera (entitled *Commedia*) in four acts - each one set in one of the four seasons but this time beginning with spring and ending in winter. Responses to both the Kassel production and the following one at Sadlers Wells in London were mixed to say the least! Most were hostile: claiming my lack of a 'sense of theatre' and creating an opera that failed to deal with **humanity-issues**. It was never my intention to write another *Lulu* or *Fidelio*. Though never picked up by critics, (though it was by the conductor, James Lockhart and both directors as well as members of the cast), there were more than shadows of *The Magic Flute* and *Cunning little Vixen....*

In the ensuing decades and as my music reached a bigger audience, criticism of my music describing me as '*evading both emotional and human issues*' proliferated. One BBC producer, someone I greatly admired and respected, once wrote '*Cowie's music is unquestioningly beautiful, but completely hides what kinds of emotional states are within and behind that music*'. I freely admit that I am probably more inspired by other living creatures than human ones! Nature has always created huge varieties of emotional and instinctive responses in me. I guess it's a 'Romantic' notion that a violent storm; a volcano erupting or

an earthquake are analogous to bouts of intense human emotion and upset and that a beautiful sunset, woodland setting; birdsong and fields full of flowers are metaphors of ecstatic and deeply pleasurable human emotions. Even in 1977, when I was composing *Commedia* (I wrote my own libretto on the advice and encouragement of Michael Tippett!), I imagined my six main characters as the embodiment of pretty-well all basic types of human personality. Casting them within a narrative of deceit, lust, playfulness, despair, avarice, greed, gullibility, innocence and nihilism, it might be that I unwittingly hid my feelings about the condition of being human too much in the 'theatre of nature's seasons'. I never completed an opera on the Australian Bush Ranger, Ned Kelly - commissioned by The Royal Opera House in London. My personal experience of opera was one of frustration and disappointment.

However, work on the opera; its completion and subsequent performances - did spawn a number of 'satellite' works inspired by characters from *Commedia*, namely my *Columbine* for soprano and chamber orchestra; *Commedia Lazzi* for solo guitar, *Brighella's World* for baritone and piano and *Harlequin* for solo harp. This latter work, first composed in 1979, was reshaped and re-composed in 2019. The decision was made because after three decades of writing for harp and collaborating with some of the finest harpists in the world, I accumulated a far greater understanding of this magnificent instrument and wanted to give more weight and substance to the subject of Harlequin. During the course of the earliest performances of *Commedia dell'arte*, the structures of these performances were divided into *scenas* where 'stock' scenarios were enacted without much new material. But these were interspersed with the dramatic counterpart to a classical *cadenza* for a solo instrument in an otherwise orchestral setting. Harlequin, deeply in lust/love with Columbine, is constantly rebuffed and deflected from consummate physical pleasure by her. At some point during a performance of the entire *commedia*, Harlequin performs one of the most famous of the *scenas*, namely *the suicide lazzi*, in which - his amorous devices rejected and his lust unrewarded, Harlequin 'rehearses' various ways in which to take his own life. This includes tickling himself to death; hanging himself from a small bush which of course can't support his body when he jumps; holding his breath until dead; drowning himself in a jug of ale and perhaps most delightful of

all, **dancing himself to death**. It is the idea of suicide-by-dancing that I explored in my *Harlequin Dances* which is the second work on this album.

Link this with *La Primavera* (after Botticelli) for solo flute, a work inspired by one of the most beautiful, mysterious and cryptic paintings of all time. There are a total of **nine** figures in this painting: six of them are independent figures and three (women) - the Three Graces - make up the rest. The painting is steeped in allegory - this being the simultaneous representation of something literal and symbolic. The subject is both illusive and allusive. Not only is the magical geometry of the painting hidden under the many layers of paint, but also the **meaning** of the presence and actions of these characters is deliberately both disguised and transformative. Even the setting - some kind of jungle-like orange grove is more a commentary on the complexities of human mood and memory than it is of a representation of an ornate garden. My treatment then, of this setting and this painting is vastly different (for example) from Vivaldi's *La Primavera (Spring)*, from his *Four Seasons*. He disposes a vigorous dance-like movement into episodes of tutti energies with intrusions of birdsongs. There are no singers in the Botticelli, but pretty-well **all** of the characters are either dancing or captured in poses that suggest dance-like actions either about to start or just having finished.

When I first saw the original painting of *La Primavera* in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, I was totally overwhelmed. It's a massive work which literally radiates light and movement. The nine figures are cast in varying degrees of interrelationship(s) so this connectivity (especially the Three Graces) suggested a work that moved smoothly from one 'sonic portrait' to another. I first explored 'sonic portraits' in my *National Portraits* - a joint commission from the National Portrait Gallery in London and BBC Radio 3 - a work for 24 voices a cappella. I chose (as it happens) **nine** famous people whose portraits hang in the National Gallery. I arranged for 'sittings' with each subject (one of the portraits was a double one of Sir George and Lady Mary Christie). Sitters were sent questions before I met them which were then followed up with conversations about their 'histories'; sensory memories (especially of sounds), and their feelings and experiences of music itself. Thus I was able to compose a sound-

portrait that would include word-and-image references to what emerged during our 'sittings'. Each character in *La Primavera* is quite distinctive though the six female figures of (from right to left) *Chloris*, *Flora*, *Venus* and *the Three Graces* have remarkably similar looks and features with the exception of *Chloris*, who has a look of startled near-fright at the outreaching grasp (some would suggest 'grope') of the figure of *Zephyrus* in the extreme right of the picture. There are many forms of hidden symmetries in the painting which include the direction(s) of gaze by the subjects. *Chloris* looks-back right in the right of the picture whilst, on the left edge, the figure of *Mercury* looks to the left but sharply upwards - the opposite of *Chloris*. Bisecting the two groups of **four figures** is the diminutive and baby-like image of *Cupid*, who looks directly downwards but slightly to the left of the painting. Looking closely at this rather whimsical figure, I was surprised to notice (for the first time) that although *Cupid* is caught in the act of firing an arrow, he is actually blindfolded! This is further evidence of the overt and covert influences and 'messages' in this famous allegorical painting. The whole impact is threaded through with ambiguity, suggestion and mystery.

I've stressed the amount of study that went, by me, into this painting. My choice of solo flute was easy. I've conducted *L'après-midi d'un Faune* and of course knowing other Debussy works like *Syrinx* - both works inspired by figures in ancient Greek mythology. All the figures in *La Primavera* have their roots in mythology though Botticelli either deliberately or accidentally confuses the names of the figures in the painting between ancient Greek and Roman names! I wanted to compose a work that epitomises the limpid and hugely flexible sonorities and brilliance of the flute. After the *Prelude in an Orange Garden*, the music 'pans' (pun intended!) from right to left in a series of sequential *variants* on themes that are **blown** into the music by *Zephyrus* who is, of course, creating the **breath** of the flautist. The atmosphere of the entire work is to be both contemplative and meditative. It should (and in this recording - does) sound like carefully rehearsed (remembered) improvisations. The symmetries of the Botticelli are carefully embedded in the music. *Zephyrus* 'blows' us into the music and *Mercury* 'flies' us out of it!

Harlequin Dances also looks deeply into the ‘theatres of consciousness’. Written, as is the solo flute piece, for one of the most ancient instruments in musical history, but inspired by dramatic forms and techniques from as early as the 16th century. A study of the earliest unwritten forms of *Commedia* suggested all kinds of musical actions and forms. I also studied Renaissance music from the mid 16th century including works by Girolamo Frescobaldi in an attempt to fuse music of that period with some of the gestures and theatrical devices of the *Commedia* itself. Though sometimes sounding comedic and flippant, the underlying mood of the music is far from superficial. It is music inspired by genuine human emotions stirred (in some cases) by unrequited love, loneliness, anger, anxiety and despair. But there was always something hopeful and luminous about *Commedia* plots and performances. The closing few minutes of *Harlequin Dances* is, for me at least, some of the most beautiful and transcendental music I have ever composed.

Knowing and then planning a potential album that would include these two major works for solo flute and solo harp, and knowing the superb brilliance of Alice Giles on Harp and Laura Chislett on flute, I immediately thought of writing a work for harp and flute together. Both instruments are capable of tremendous velocities of notes as well as delicious richness and expressivity in slower music. **Water** has been a recurrent and enduring obsession of mine both as composer and visual artist. Though not born or growing up with easy access to the sea, I fell deeply in love with water in all its multitudinous forms from my earliest childhood. I composed many works inspired by tempests at sea; tidal bores and currents; still and turbulent lakes and rivers; rainstorms and deluges; waterfalls and limpid placid pools. The wildlife that lives-on, flies-above, and dives deep into water has also been a potent source of inspiration. There is, of course, something almost liquid in the way notes and sounds can emerge from a flute: the first arabesques and fluttering liquid sounds of an ocean in motion in Debussy’s *La Mer* are given to a pair of flutes! His *Sonata for Flute Viola and Harp* is often redolent of the movement(s) and dynamic reflectivity of water. Perhaps an even greater ‘undercurrent’ of musical memory for me was playing violin, as a student, in a performance of Ravel’s *Introduction and Allegro* for flute, clarinet, harp and string quartet. The *Allegro* opens with a definite sonic transfiguration

from the movement of water into fibrillating and scintillating filigree flotations of rapid arpeggios, reminiscent of the opening 'liquidity' of the same composer's Second Suite from *Daphnis and Chloe*. All of these memories flooded in as I contemplated another work inspired by water - this time the multifarious behaviours of water in Australia and (in one case) birds associated with it.

This album features three of the original four movement work - there simply wasn't time to rehearse and record the movement (number 3) inspired by Australia's Great Barrier Reef. The three on this album are twice inspired by ocean phenomena - the final one being focused on Hervey Bay in Queensland and the presence and 'songs' of humpback whales, and once by the flotation and water-ballet and choruses of native Australian Black Swans on a lagoon that is located only 20 minutes drive from where I now live on the New England Tablelands in the city of Armidale. The title of this suite of pieces is a not very subtle allusion to the *Water Music* of George Frederik Handel. Here's something I've not put into print before and that is my more or less utter delight in his music. Again, I played in a performance of Handel's *Water Music* on a pontoon on the River Thames near London in 1963. It left a lasting impression, not the least that I noticed how wonderfully suited the texture and dynamics of the music were for performances where the **sound carries across water!** But more than this, a subsequent study of what I feel is a very special kind of usage of **counterpoint** and **closely interlocking harmonies and rhythmic elements**, has sometimes been a hidden inspiration undercurrent (again pun intended) for my music.

Thus, like Handel, I have cast the music as an act of individuation for each instrument alone, and also as a form of quasi *ritornello* where recurrent thematic and motivic materials are re-sounded and re-worked in a dynamic dialogue between flute and harp. The first movement sets the scene for continuous **evocation** and **invocation** of the behaviour and sonic realisations of water in stillness and movement. During rehearsals on *Harlequin Dances* with the illustrious and astonishing Alice Giles, passages that I had written for sounds (flickering but 'singing') in registers well above the top line in the treble-stave, had worried Alice when she first saw them in the score! She was surely right to doubt that this was either good or effective harp-writing. Yet within a few

weeks of rehearsing these passages (like the ending of *Harlequin Dances*) and some of the closing passages of *Whales-Hervey Bay*, she was able to conjure (like bringing an unexpected sonic ‘rabbit’ out of a musical hat) sounds of such wondrous iridescence and acoustic **charm** that I returned to it in closure of the suite...

Improvisation is no stranger to Laura Chislett and I, having begun improvising together as a piano/flute(s) duo in the late 1980s. We returned to this in the production and recording of *In Two Minds*, which was released (to delightful and delighted reviews), on Métier in early 2024. But when I suggested to Alice that she might like to join Laura and me in a three-way improvisation to close this album, she cast a look of bemused doubt. But typical of her relentless curiosity for making new music - even **music in the moment** - like this, she came to the recording and conquered all! It was a magical experience to discuss our shared experience of darkness and light in general, and The Great Barrier Reef especially. My Australian visual artist wife (whose paintings are front covers for almost all my Métier releases!) painted a series inspired by diving on The Great Barrier Reef, called *Into the Deeps*. One especially is ranged from the deepest, darkest blues (almost black) to shimmering aquamarines on or close to the ‘surface’. I vividly remember, during numerous dives I made on The Great Barrier Reef, hovering in shallow and luminescent waters but drifting over the reef edge to stare down into a receding blackness as the reef gave way to the abyss. It’s a metaphor of course for transcendence into some kind of divine light from some kind of impenetrable and engulfing darkness (of mind and spirit) that forms the basis for this improvisation - all done in one continuous and shared exploration of **darkness into light**. Working with two giants of the musical world in this process was pure and undiluted pleasure.

Finally, and because I think it’s not frequently-enough acknowledged, I want to personally thank three recording wonders for their invaluable and inspired input to this recording. First to Louis Montgomery, who, as recording engineer, was there **in the moment** of recording in Canberra ACT, Australia. He captured the raw but focused material of those magnificent recordings. Given the fantastic technical wizardry needed to bring *La Primavera* to its fullest splendours, Laura

invited the brilliant Ralph Lane OAM to 'intricate' and further refine the recording of the solo flute piece: a superb bit of work thank you Ralph. And finally, but not least, to Paul Baily who captured and encapsulated all that's magical about these performances into a final mastered production, my admiration and reverence.

To Heather for her wondrous painting on the cover, to UMP for publishing the music, and to the ever-supportive and superbly professional team at Métier, my unbounded gratitude....

Edward Cowie. Armidale. NSW Australia November, 2025.

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DANGER LAGOON. with Black Swan Song. 14.03.2025.



Composer-studies towards the music



Black Swans at Danard Lagoon. 14.03.2025.

possible penning
of 'Black Swans'

Composer-studies towards the music

MYSTERY IN AN ORANGE GARDEN

The individual movements of Edward Cowie's *La Primavera* form a series of "sound portraits" which relate to the nine figures in Sandro Botticelli's glorious painting of the same name. Visitors to the Uffizi Gallery in Florence can't help but be moved by Botticelli's painting, for its delicately floating imagery, its profound significance in Western culture, and for its mysterious symbolism.

Musical interpretation is a private and mysterious process, usually, just between the performer and the score. In the initial stages there are certain parallels with an art gallery visitor seeking those very symbols in a painting which might unlock the essence of the artwork. The few paragraphs that follow describe some aspects of my methodology which have resulted in this recorded interpretation of Edward's score.

Naturally the first stage is to rehearse the notated elements of each movement, revealing melodic patterns, symmetries, connection and development between sections. Once this base level is established, the next stage is to arrive at an overall intent for the performance. An audiated performance model is seeded into my mind, like an internally audible "map" of the entire work.

Of course, that map is much more than just a stream of notes. It also takes account of the structure of each movement, the nature of the musical material, the pacing and manipulation of tempo. There are far too many subtleties to name them all, and naming them would only demystify them, which goes against the nature of performance. I don't want to break the magic of the fourth wall.

However, one technique that is possibly widely used is visualisation, in this case in relation to contours of line and dynamic. This concept came to me many years ago when I was in rehearsal in a concert hall with a particularly beautiful acoustic. The conductor was asking for a brief passage to be repeated by the wind section (a symphony by Shostakovich). I was playing piccolo. The vibrant sounds of the wind instruments bounced off the back wall and came back to us perfectly formed each time, resembling solid "sound objects". It seemed to

me a perfectly logical extension to translate these echoed sound objects into three dimensional visualised shapes. This construct helps me to assess the all-important connection and proportion between phrases and sections, in such a way that an evolutionary “logic” is established. It’s this logic which can guide the listener along the path of the performance map, rather like the way a painter can encourage the viewer’s eye to move in a certain way around a painting.

As a performer it’s wonderful to know that you have the support of the composer in taking certain performance liberties. Usually these are not planned liberties, they just burst into your mind “in the moment”, though in my experience they are most likely to appear during a public performance, one which is observed, such as a live concert or a recording. Perhaps that is to do with the extra brain activity that such situations generate and the extra adrenalin.

In the performance of works of the Classical Canon these performance liberties are known as Expressive Deviations (from the score), and of course they have been studied, with the conclusion being that they bring a performance “alive” and effect the characterful distinction between one performance and another. I deeply appreciate Edward’s openness to performer input, via the many Extended Playing Techniques, and also in regard to spontaneous deviation. It was a profound pleasure to work towards this interpretation of *La Primavera*, which Edward has imbued with alluring and vibrant expression, and finely-crafted logic.

© Laura Chislett

HARLEQUIN DANCES

Composers who both love and understand the essential nature of the harp are rare. Edward shows a fine skill in using the resonances and wide range of timbres of the instrument in this vibrant and quixotic piece. Rapid changes in mood correspond to changes in colour - a challenge and a delight to explore as a performer. At times startling, beautiful, dramatically pathetic, with restless energy and playful delight.

Dramatic arpeggiated gestures with quick dynamic changes, pedal buzzes, pedal slides, palm slaps striking bass strings, soundboard knocks, all burst onto the scene, juxtaposed against bell-like harmonics and quiet phrase endings; long left hand melodic lines (often using harmonics) are accompanied by filigree right hand passages that vary in pattern and rhythmic emphasis. These fluctuating patterns create a feeling of the varieties of patterns in nature, linking the piece with a wider expression beyond the Harlequin story.

The harp sound is mostly left to resonate, overlap, and die away naturally, with just a few staccato stopped sounds creating a contrast. Restless short sections, each with a different character and tempo, are interspersed with longer sections of calm which create a sense of beauty and subtlety. Especially of note is an extended passage towards the end of the piece using both hands in the extreme upper register of the harp in rapid passage-work, creating a very unusual and distinctively sparkly sound.

As mentioned, the pedals of the harp are sometimes used for percussive effect through allowing the mechanism to “buzz” against the strings. In addition, the diatonic nature of the harp (the ability to use only seven notes of the scale at one time, with changes in accidentals created through using the seven pedals) is embraced while the harp strings continue to ring, with pedal changes creating their own overtones and new colours.

A harpist has direct control, through touch and release of the string, of an infinite range of tone colour, dynamic and subtle energy of the sound. This for me is the joy of the instrument and Harlequin Dances allows this aspect full reign.

© Alice Giles



*The composer with engineer Louis Montgomery and soloists
Laura Chislett and Alice Giles at work on Australian Water Music*

EDWARD COWIE

‘Considered by many to be the greatest living composer directly inspired by the Natural World’

Edward Cowie’s first Prom commission was *Leviathan*; a large scale orchestral work premiered by the BBC Symphony Orchestra in 1975. It marked the first major event in a career that was to gain him national and international recognition for a new kind of ‘voice’ in the music world. Its title, arising from a conjunction between the mighty whale and a book by Hobbes with the same name can be seen as a signal of a composer whose imagination is deeply embedded in and inspired by the forces of nature. Throughout the 1970s and beyond, a stream of works inspired by wild places on this planet flowed into being, works like his sumptuous *Gesangbuch* (1975/6), (just released on Signum Classics), the *American Symphony* (1984), *Mount Keira Duets* (1985), and his powerful *Choral Symphony*, ‘*Symphonies of Rain, Steam and Speed*’. This immersion in the study of nature was born of a childhood spent in rural Suffolk and the Cotswolds and continues to form the core of his fertile imagination today.

But two further strands underpin and inspire Cowie’s musical practice and ideas. His undergraduate studies in Physics and practical studies in Painting have been integrated into a kind of ‘fusion-world’ of ideas where science, the visual arts and music coalesce in a kind of creative continuum. In recent years, he has increasingly worked towards his music by means of ‘field studies’, theoretical research and painting-drawing. Studies and collaborations with leading physicists, for example, have not only seen exhibitions of his pre-compositional drawings, but have added a body of new music that directly translates scientific theory and experiment into music. His monumental solo piano series *Rutherford’s Lights* was inspired by a study of the relationships between theories of light and colour, and his more recent *Particle Partita* for two violins – with a sonic time-line of the history of particle physics.

These 'fusions' of disciplines, the bridges between study and practice are an essential part of the composer's quest for new ways of forming. Parallels can be found between the linear and pointillist textures, forms, and motifs in his music with the writings and paintings of Klee and Kandinsky. During his period as first Composer in Association with the BBC Singers (2002-5), Cowie produced a string of large and small-scale pieces that moved through landscapes and natural habitats all over the world. Gaia, INhabitAT, Lyre Bird Motet, Bell Bird Motet are classic examples of a music that engages with all of the senses in a profound respect for the power that nature has to move us.

Cowie was the first Granada Composer/Conductor with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra between 1982/4. This led to many conducting dates with other orchestras including the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra; the BBC Singers, ABC symphony orchestras of Sydney, Adelaide, Queensland and Tasmania and the Seymour Group and the Australia Ensemble. He was the first Composer in Association with the BBC Singers between 2003/5 and first Artist in Residence with The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) for the same period. His work for television has included a major film on Edward Lear for Granada TV and his acclaimed BBCTV2 film Leonardo of 1986. He has also written and presented major radio series commissioned by ABC FM Australia as well as for BBC Radio 3 and 4.

Major public lectures include the Gertrude Langer Memorial Lectures in Australia, and the Kate Springett Memorial Lecture in London as well as a Ruskin Lecture at Oxford. He has been invited to give keynote lectures and recitals all over the world. As a visual artist he has had over 40 one-man shows in important galleries in the UK, Germany, USA, Australia and New Zealand and his paintings and drawings are in public and private collections in 19 countries.

Other musical honours have included a Gulbenkian Award to study at The Royal Ballet; The Radcliffe International Composer's Prize and a Chopin Fellowship to study with Lutoslawski in Poland. Cowie acknowledges Alexander Goehr as

a major influence (as Cowie's professor and teacher) on his life and work- an acknowledgement that continued in a warm and ongoing friendship.

As an academic, Cowie has held major professorships in two Australian and one British University as well as Visiting Professorships in Germany and the USA. He has two doctorates- a PhD which includes studies in physics, mathematics, music and fine arts and was awarded the first Doctorate in Music (DMus) from the University of Southampton for his work as a composer. He was awarded a Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship for inspirational visits to Africa and California, both leading to major compositional outcomes concerned with bringing music to the world that 'warns of the dangers to the wild and living world through the continuing destruction of it at the hands of humanity'.

Cowie's reputation continues to grow world-wide, and new recordings emerge with high praise and appreciation. His collaborations with major soloists and chamber groups are also enlarging and deepening. He still regards the human voice and the chamber-music mediums as 'the most fabulously rich and varied palette of possibility in the expression of emotion and sensation'.

Cowie returned to Australia to live there permanently in November 2023. He and his visual artist wife, Heather Cowie, intend to continue their exploration of the natural world as vigorously and comprehensively as ever!

www.edwardcowie.com



LAURA CHISLETT - FLUTE

Laura Chislett has developed a reputation as a dynamic interpreter of extraordinary music.

“For reasons and repertoire and performance there is nothing like this anywhere” (Fanfare)

“Laura performed with such commitment and mastery that some of the audience could never be certain if it was the works themselves or her performance that left such a profound impression.” (Roger Woodward in ‘Beyond Black and White’)

“This is a fascinating release... the rewards are great indeed.” (Fanfare)
“bravura impressionante” (La Nazione)

Laura’s career has not followed the usual path. As a student at the Sydney Conservatorium she played for several seasons with the Australian Youth Orchestra but was then encouraged, under the guidance of renowned musicologist and mentor Richard Toop, to study in Europe. This led to inspiring encounters with some of the foremost interpreters and composers of modern music in Europe at that time. She has subsequently pursued a portfolio career, combining performance as a soloist and in chamber music settings, and teaching at tertiary level.

Documentation has always been an important focus, resulting in a substantial body of recordings for radio, CD, and digital platforms. Rather than focusing solely on the established flute repertoire, Laura has explored music from across the globe, seeking points of connection between diverse cultures. Her most recent releases are ‘100 Years of Australian Flute Music’ with pianist Stephanie McCallum on the Wirripang label, and an album of spontaneous improvisations titled ‘dos+’ with Brad Gill, vibraphone, on Bandcamp.

Some of the composers with whom Laura has had a close working relationship, or who have written works dedicated to her, are Gerard Brophy, Sharon Calcraft, Edward Cowie, Chris Dench, James Erber, Andrew Ford, Christopher Fox, Richard Karpen, Elena Kats-Chernin, Rósa Lind, Jane O'Leary, Riccardo Piacentini, Horațiu Rădulescu, Michael Smetanin, Giorgio Colombo Taccani, Katia Tiutiunnik, Reza Vali, Maurice Weddington and Julian Yu.

www.chislett.au



ALICE GILES - HARP

Celebrated as one of the world's leading harp soloists, Alice presented her debut recital in Sydney at the age of 13 and won First Prize in the 8th Israel International Harp Contest 1982. She has given solo recitals internationally including in New York Merkin Hall and 92nd Street Y, London Wigmore Hall, Frankfurt Alte Oper, and performed concertos with orchestras and appeared as guest artist at festivals in Europe, USA and Australia.

Regarded by Luciano Berio as the foremost interpreter of his Sequenza II, she has given many premiere performances for her instrument, including for electro-acoustic harp, and was founding Director of the Seven Harp Ensemble (SHE), touring and recording new works by Australian composers. Her wide discography includes solo, chamber music and concerto repertoire.

As recipient of an Australian Antarctic Division Arts Fellowship, she performed a solo concert at Mawson Station in 2011 and presented her multi-media program "Alice in Antarctica" which included commissioned Australian works, in San Francisco, Oslo, Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra.

Artistic Director of the 2014 World Harp Congress in Sydney, she is elected Chair of the WHC from 2026. A dedicated teacher, she hosts AGOnlineHarpResource, a video teaching resource, with in-depth courses from beginner to advanced levels, and is Lecturer at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. She founded the Harp Centre Australia, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the harp in Australia.

Alice was awarded an AM (Member of the Order of Australia) in the 2017 Queen's Birthday Honours for "significant service to the performing arts as a harpist, mentor and educator, and through contributions to Australia's musical landscape." She lives on a rural property near Yass NSW, with pianist husband

Arnan Wiesel, where she seeks a balanced life and enjoys the peace, beauty and space nature provides.

www.alicegiles.com



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Editor La Primavera - Ralph Lane AOM

Paul Baily - Producer and mastering

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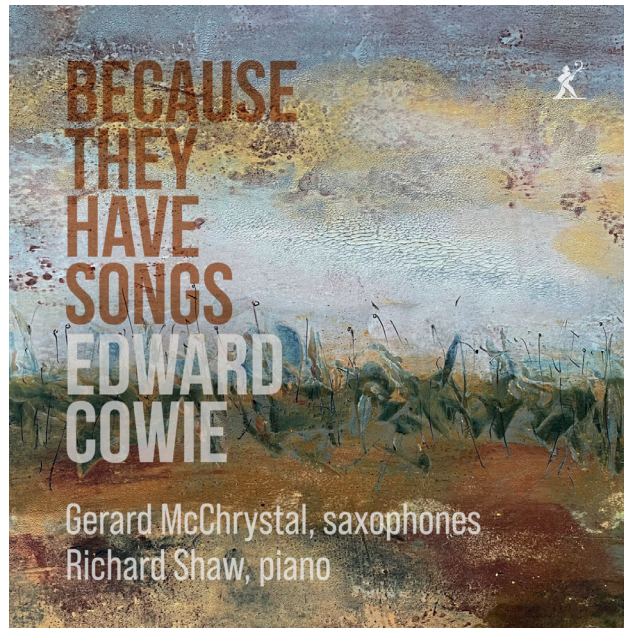
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Further Recordings from Edward Cowie

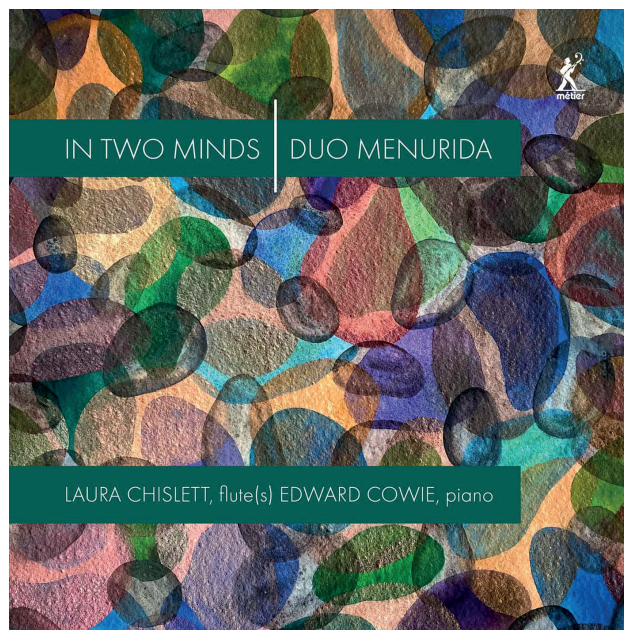


Because They Have Songs

Because They Have Songs is the fourth in Cowie's epic series of duo-works featuring cycles of stunning 'sonic portraits' of birds he has encountered on his travels across the world, exploring the relationships between the bird singers, and where and how they sing.

"Pianist Richard Shaw...is...superb. Gerard McChrystal makes his saxophones chirrup, twitter or sing smoothly...Together, the two performers bring both the birds and their backgrounds in the African veldt brilliantly to life." —Alan Cooper, British Music Society

Gerard McChrystal, saxophones
Richard Shaw, piano
MEX 77122 (2xCD)

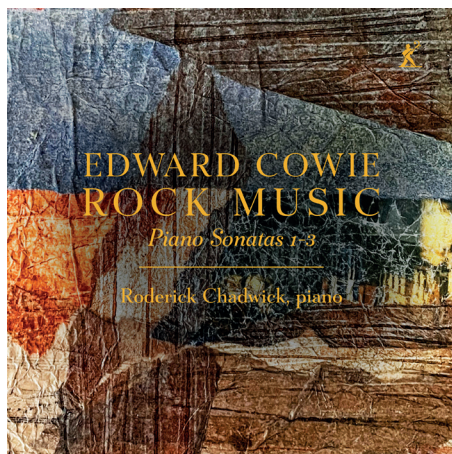


In Two Minds - Duo Menurida

Duo Menurida is the collaboration between composer Edward Cowie (piano) and renowned Australian flautist, Laura Chislett. The album, a testament to their enduring creative connection, offers a unique fusion of musical expression and the natural world.

"The recording quality is second to none and compliments the often intimate nature of these improvisations...I enjoyed this release immensely...The impact is sensuous, inventive and often fantastic." — John France, MusicWeb International

Edward Cowie, piano
Laura Chislett, flutes
MEX 77121



**Rock Music:
Piano Sonatas 1-3**

This collection of sonatas is an odyssey through the earth's geological heart, celebrating the interplay of form, motion, and metamorphosis. Rock Music is a testament to Cowie's genius and Chadwick's exceptional artistry.

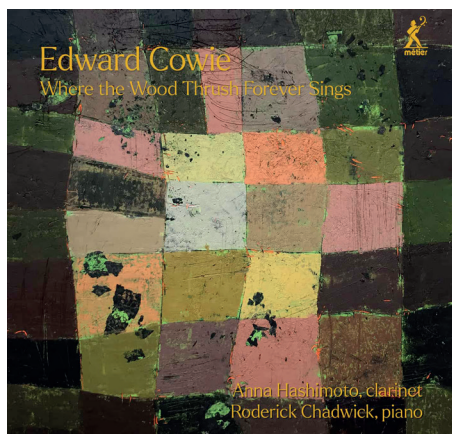
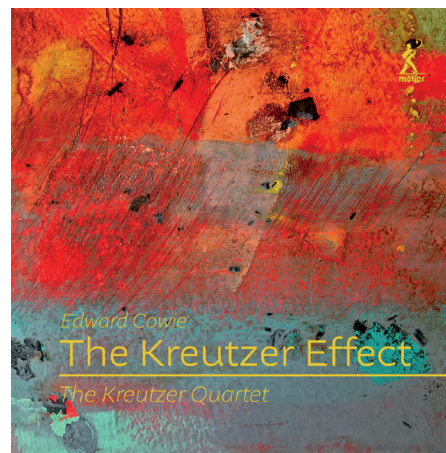
Roderick Chadwick, piano
MEX 77123

The Kreutzer Effect

Delving into the heart of Australia's rugged landscape, Cowie's quartet captures the awe-inspiring vastness and ancient beauty of Western Australia.

"...the seventh quartet...is breaking new ground. The Kreutzer Quartet, which specializes in modern music and in particular the music of Edward Cowie, offers technically superior interpretations both in the ensemble and in the solo works.

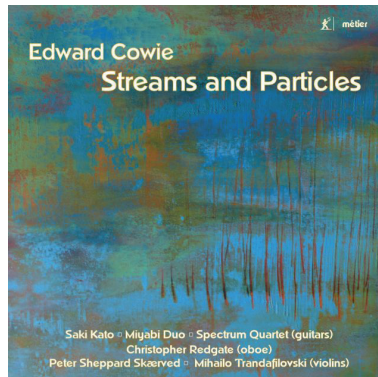
" —Uwe Krusch, Pizzicato
The Kreutzer Quartet
MEX 77103



Where the Wood Thrush Forever Sings

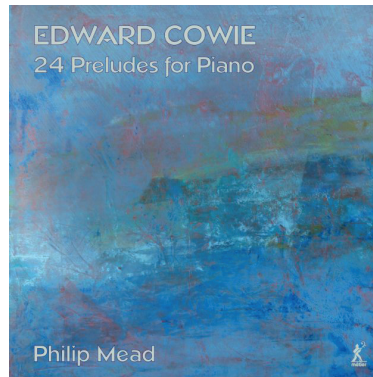
The third of the 'Bird Portraits' cycles. In this latest cycle, Cowie draws inspiration from the avian wonders of the Americas, presenting a symphonic ode to 24 distinct bird species.

Anna Hashimoto, clarinet
Roderick Chadwick, piano
MEX 77104



Streams and Particles

MSV 28612



24 Preludes for Piano

MSV 28625



Orchestral Works

MSV 92108



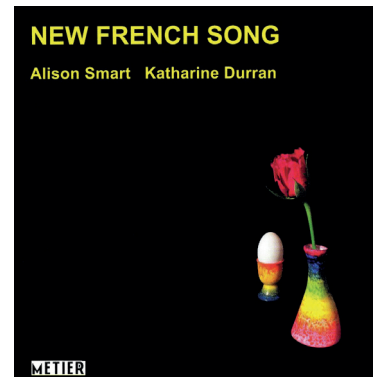
Three Quartets and a Solo

MSV 28603



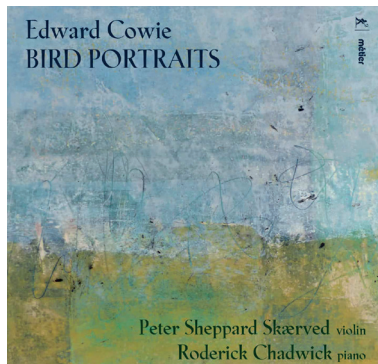
New Music for Oboe Vol. 2

MSV 28531



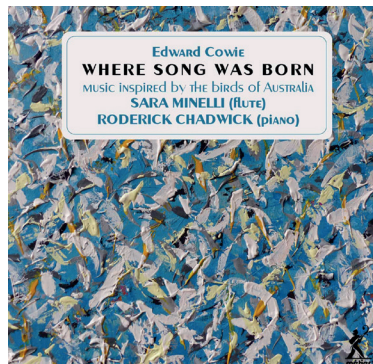
New French Song

MSV 92100



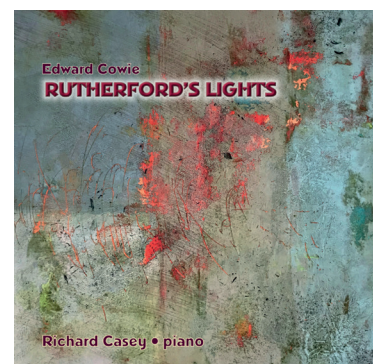
Bird Portraits

MSV 28619



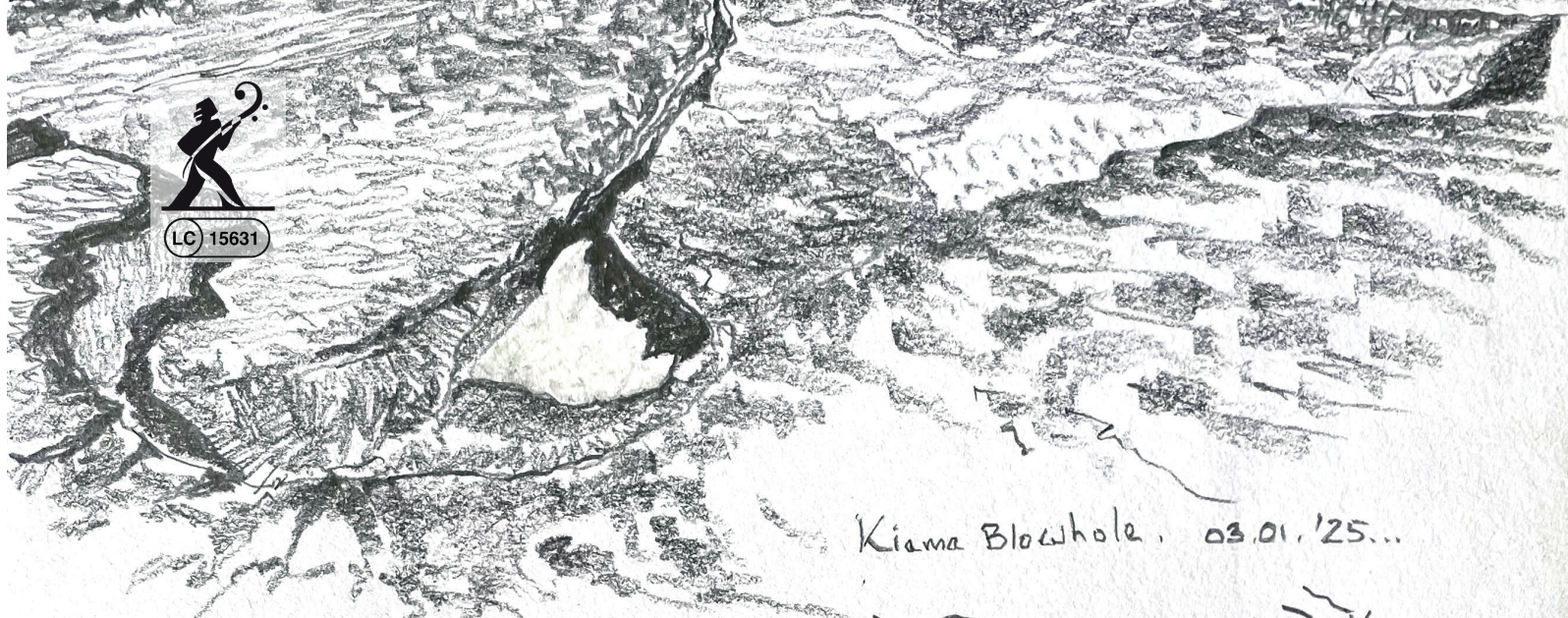
Where Song was Born – 24 Australian Bird Portraits

MSV 28620



Rutherford's Lights

MEX 77116



Kiama Blowhole, 03.01.'25...

Single pre-blow pulse...

