

# BROLGA DAWN

3:30PM

SATURDAY 15 OCTOBER 2022

DRILL HALL



**Anne Norman *Shakuhachi***

**Michael Fulcher *Choral Director***

**Polyphonic Voices**

**Soprano: Hannah Hornsby, Ailsa Webb, Jane Wiebusch**

**Alto: Elizabeth Chong, Renée Heron, Alex Ritter**

**Tenor: Will Carr, Jonathan Glenning, Max McConnell**

**Bass: Lachlan McDonald, Paul McDonald, Joshua McLeod**

**TRAD. HONKYOKU *Nesting Cranes* 鶴の巣籠**

1.8 shakuhachi

*Tsuru no Sugomori* is an iconic piece from the *honkyoku* (zen meditation) repertoire of the shakuhachi, depicting the voice and the activities of the crane through flutter tonguing, multiple trilling and harmonics – techniques rarely employed in other *honkyoku*. The “Priests of Nothingness” who played these *honkyoku* walked across Japan from temple to temple, village to village and through wilderness areas. This is a contemplation on cranes, their habitat and our connection to the natural world. It begins in darkness as the world awakens with the sun. Cranes have been used as symbols of long life and happiness and are now also the symbol for environmental protection and the reclamation of wetlands in Japan.

**ANNE NORMAN *Brolga Dawn* (2020)**

choir & field recordings

Close your eyes and find yourself within a wetland at dawn, waiting for the brolgas to arrive. Stuck at home with all my touring cancelled, I finally composed a work about brolgas that’s been waiting years for me to get it onto paper. A huge thanks to the Eel Festival of Lake Bolac & the Gunditjmara people for their encouragement over the years; to farmers, naturalists & conservation groups across the Western District for access to brolga sites; Andrew Skeoch of Listening Earth for his magnificent field recordings; the City of Melbourne for a Quick Response Arts Grant (COVID-19); three friends who recorded the nine wordless vocal parts in isolation during lockdown; Michael Fulcher for taking an interest in my mix of these tracks; and the Port Fairy Spring Music Festival & Polyphonic Voices for this premiere performance.

**ANNE NORMAN *Whispered Shadows* (2014)**

1.8 shakuhachi & voice

Begun in 2012 in an 11th century stone chapel within an encroaching forest in Provence, this episodic composition was completed in 2014 amidst mountain woodlands and windswept beaches on Flinders Island, Bass Strait. It departs from traditional shakuhachi performance practice and was my first foray into singing while blowing shakuhachi. Its premiere performance in Japan inspired Japanese lyrics to be added. It has also been performed in German, Swiss German & Spanish. This is a selection of episodes.

**CLAUDE DEBUSSY *Syrinx* (1913)**

1.8 shakuhachi

Composed for a play entitled *Psyche* which never reached production, this little piece went rogue as the first significant solo for the modern Boehm flute. The title refers to the Greek myth of a beautiful young nympho named Syrinx, hotly pursued by the randy satyr, Pan. To escape certain rape, Syrinx begs the goddesses to turn her into reeds as she throws herself into a waterway. Pan immediately cuts the hollow reeds, makes a flute and blows across his new “Panpipes”. Not an innocent pastoral image... So... *who* is singing this song? Is this the song of Syrinx longing for her former life as a carefree Nymph; the song of Pan longing for the one who got away; or as the poet Rumi suggests, perhaps it's the song of the flute itself, longing to return to the reed bed ... or bamboo grove.

**HILDEGARD / NORMAN *Wherever They Go* (2019)**

2.5 shakuhachi &amp; voice

An arranged of *Unde quocumque* by Hildegard von Bingen (1098 – 1179) – a remarkable mystic and Abbess who composed songs for her nuns as well as writing on the vitality of divine nature, diseases and herbal cures, and letters to the popes and monarchs of Europe. In an age when instruments were not performed in church and even singing was declared sinful by some, Hildegard wrote: “God must be praised with all musical instruments that the gifted and ingenious have invented... music is diffused through all the actions of our life ... every pulsation of our veins is related by musical rhythms to the powers of harmony.”

**STEPHEN LEEK *Kondalilla* (2010)**

SATB a cappella voices

Kondalilla is the name of a waterfall in a small remaining pocket of rainforest in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, Queensland. In the indigenous Dreamtime Stories of the area, Kondalilla is the spirit of the waterfall and Ouyen is the spirit of the still water. The piece is largely improvisational in character, highly effective evocation of the Australian bushland, with singers evoking native birdsong and weather effects.

**ANNE NORMAN *Evening Cantillations* (2014/16)**

field recording, poem, 1.3 shakuhachi

A poem written during a residency on Flinders Island, Bass Strait, inspired by voices at sunset.

**ANNE NORMAN *Moon in Water* (2018)**

2.1 shakuhachi &amp; voice

Composed after reading an evocative haiku by Chōshū 上田聴秋 (1852-1932) from the end of the Edo period. 砕けても、砕けてもあり、水の月 *broken, and broken again, the moon in water*

**TRAD / ANNE NORMAN *Heart Moon* (2018/22)**

2.1 shakuhachi &amp; SATB voices

*Shingetsu* 心月 is a 300-year-old Zen meditation for solo shakuhachi which Anne has modified and added four vocal lines with lyrics inspired by the juxtaposition of ideograms for Heart and Moon. Shakuhachi *honkyoku* is not metred music, but a series of gestures based on breath arcs in a tradition known as *suizen*, “blowing Zen.”

*Heart Moon; peaceful silvery light touching all who live on earth and all who have lived.  
Moon that first shone on formless swirls of murky gases; moon-light on shallows  
of slowly forming thrombolites; moon-shadow of stalking thylacine.  
On a night of full moon-light corals spawn, tides turn, dingoes howl, whales breach.  
Moon of compassion, kissing upturned faces fleeing across stormy seas.  
Heart Moon, light my uncertain path. Heart Moon, light my way.*