

# MOTHERS' SUITE SWEET MOTHERS

10:00AM  
SUNDAY 16 OCTOBER 2022  
DRILL HALL



**Camille Barry Violin**  
**Dan Curro Cello**  
**Kellee Green Piano**

**THOMAS GREEN**

***So, I Am Shouting***

***The Curlew Cried***

***Mothers' Suite Sweet Mothers (World Premiere)***

***So, I Am Shouting*** — an ululation from the violin — is how we begin our concert, and is a work dedicated to small-statured women, so often passed over, whose passion and drive demands that they be heard. You'll hear extremes: range, dynamic, texture and emotion, and the work is constructed in a way that demands the performer to complete their own unique interpretation, so that no two performers will produce it the same way. This piece was commissioned by ANAM for the ANAM Set in 2021.

***The Curlew Cried*** is set to a poem by Oodgeroo Noonuccal. It is a poem about the death of a tribe member, and how the Curlew comes to guide their spirit away. Yet, so say the words, the tribe have nothing to fear. The message is one of grief and hope. Noonuccal was a political activist, artist and educator, best known for her poetry. This piece was originally commissioned by Katie Noonan, and appears first on her album with the Australian String Quartet, *The Glad Tomorrow*. Today, Daniel Curro performs the melody with cello.

## ***Mother's Suite, Sweet Mothers***

Extraordinary women are all around us. Our friends, our sisters, but most especially, our mothers. This music is, down to its very core, inspired by those extraordinary women, and is an homage to their strength, courage, wisdom, insight, gentleness and passion. Like the stories of the women it reflects, it isn't without its moments of frailty, challenge, confusion, guilt, anger and passion. Camille Barry and Kellee Green are both mothers who are musicians, and with composer Thomas Green were commissioned by the ABC to produce a work celebrating mothers. *Mother's Suite, Sweet Mothers* is in five movements, each movement representing an episode in the life mother and child:

***I. Overwhelmed*** — This is music for the very beginning of the journey. In the hospital, or maybe those first few hours at home, where this new person is here, suddenly. Utterly wonderful and utterly overwhelming all at once. The mum is brand new to this, and there is great joy, beauty but on the edge of her control, into a new world. You will hear, at the end, a statement of *the infant's theme*, which is the key to the whole work. It is a palindrome and represents *cycles*.

**II. Wonderland** – A little later on, the mum and child are beginning to venture out. Things are still capricious, with new experiences every day. The child notices things we have forgotten – tiny flowers, or seeing patterns in leaves. The baby likes to be silly but is always getting hurt (you can hear the baby fall over in this music!). The mum is there to comfort them, and shares in the child's heartfelt sorrow, but quickly we come back to calm thanks to the mum's graceful soothing. In this music, there is a figure in the violin which means "there, there," or the calming words of the mother, reassuring the child.

**III. Anger and Guilt** – Yet, we parents get it wrong, all the time. There are things we'd liked to have done differently. We'll never stop those emotions that flood back when we think about it. And also, there is frustration. Trying again and again to do something the "right" way. But even here, there is a kind of release, when we allow ourselves to let it go. Kellee and I, on a relaxed afternoon, listen to the magpie families. Right near the end of this movement, you'll hear the repeated call of a baby magpie as it again and again implores its parent for food.

**IV. Love** – There are many kinds of love, aren't there? This music is for the innermost. It's music for all mothers, all parents, but it is also an homage for parents who have lost a child, or suffered with a child. The kind of love that cannot be spoken of, a cosmic love, an unknowable intensity which is our reason for existing, and we hope the music can be where no words can be.

**V. Letting Go** – Camille has a young daughter (Remi, aged 4), and Kellee and Tom have older boys (Charlie and Toby, aged 18 and 16. So together we can see the span of the journey (well, the *first* journey)! At the end of this first journey, we look back across the years, and feel so grateful, yet melancholy, because this is the end of our road with *little* children. We have watched them grow, seen them grow into themselves, and now we know it's time for us to let them go, so they can continue to grow. Our music concludes with a restatement of the *infant's theme* (introduced in movement 1), and a bittersweet acknowledgment and inexpressible gratitude for our experiences with our children.

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Thomas Green has a reputation in Brisbane (Australia) as a versatile composer whose focus is finding a musical home between many and varied streams, often seamlessly melding classical and contemporary idioms. He is the recipient of various government grants, commissions and is a prize-winner in national composition competitions. He completed his PhD in 2016, and his music has premiered around Australia and internationally, with performances in Italy, France, the US, the UK, Croatia and China in recent years. In 2021 he has been commissioned for the renowned ANAM Set and most recently has been selected by the ABC's Fresh Start Fund to compose a suite of music for violinist Camille Barry. He has composed and arranged music for The Sydney Symphony (with Josh Pyke on his ARIA-winning album, *Josh Pyke Live* at the Sydney Opera House), The Australian String Quartet, Katie Noonan, Opera Qld, La Boite Theatre, Plexus (Melbourne), and the Brisbane-based organisations Collusion Music, Trichotomy, Trivium Ensemble, The Black Square Quartet and Argo. In 2017 he was commissioned by The Queensland Music Festival to write a concerto for Manu Delago and Queensland Youth Orchestra. In 2018 his original dance music for *Turbine*, a show by Collusion, was toured in Brisbane and Shanghai, and in 2019 his music was featured on Katie Noonan's AIR and ARIA-nominated album, *The Glad Tomorrow*. In 2021 he collaborated with Katie Noonan again, writing music for *AVÉ*. Thomas is an expert in electronic music production and is a founding member of the acoustic/electronic performance duo, Shugorei, with Nozomi Omote. Shugorei released its self-titled debut album in 2021. Thomas also produces experimental electronic music under the moniker Praxis Axis, which, while it is demonstrative of a considerable stylistic stretch away from contemporary art music, is at the same time simply another facet of his extraordinarily manifold musical language. He lectures in music theory at the Queensland Conservatorium.