

ESSENTIALLY AUSTRALIAN

Joan Chia
National Carillon Canberra

music for carillon with an
Australian connection



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A program of original compositions for carillon, as well as transcriptions and arrangements with an Australian connection.

Carillonneur: Joan Chia
National Carillon, Canberra



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1 A Little Fantasy and Fugue for Carillon (1935)

Hamilton Harty (1879-1941) 4'49"

2 Australian Medley 1 * 7'24"

- [1] Waltzing Matilda
- [2] Tie me kangaroo down, sport
- [3] Where the dog sits
on the tucker box
- [4] Botany Bay
- [5] Waltzing Matilda (Queensland)
- [6] The road to Gundagai

3 Lake Music for Carillon (1970)

Terry Vaughan (1915-1996) 3'36"

**Two pieces from
Five Little Piano Pieces** (1976)

Ross Edwards (b. 1943)

- 4 Allegretto** 2'44"
- 5 Andante con moto** 2'10"

**Three traditional
English melodies**

arr. John Gordon (1915-1991)

- 6** Early one morning 1'56"
- 7** Devil among the tailors 1'17"
- 8** Fantasy on The Bells of St Clements 2'29"

9 The Shearer's Dream

arr. Leen 't Hart (1920-1992) 3'43"

10 Suite on Moreton Bay

John Barrett (1915-1983) 4'29"

- [1] Theme
- [2] Minuet
- [3] Courante
- [4] Sarabande
- [5] Bourree
- [6] Gigue

**11 Medley of traditional Scottish
melodies** * 6'03"

- [1] My love she's but a lassie yet
- [2] My love is like a red red rose
- [3] The piper of Dundee
- [4] Horo, my nut brown maiden /
Health and joy be with you
- [5] Bonnie Dundee
(arr Ray Keldermans)

**12 Winter Afternoon
for Carillon** (1980)

John Gordon 3'15"

13 Summer Song for Carillon
(1989)

Terry Vaughan 3'39"

**14 Medley of traditional Irish
melodies** * 6'26"

- [1] St Patrick's Day
- [2] Cockles and Mussels
- [3] Killarney
- [4] The minstrel boy
- [5] The last rose of Summer

15 The Old Palmer Song * 3'14"

16 Australian Medley 2 * 4'56"

- [1] Click go the shears
- [2] I still call Australia home
- [3] Advance Australia fair

INDEX numbers [in brackets] indicate
the start of medley items

* Arranged by Joan Chia

Recorded by Terry McGee and Keef
Andrew (Canberra Stereo Public Radio)
16/17 October 1995

Post-production: Vaughan McAlley and
Martin Wright (Move Records)

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Capital Authority

Other photographs by John Tucker

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This recording contains original compositions, arrangements of traditional and popular songs and transcriptions from the piano repertoire. All have an Australian connection, some through historical circumstances, others through direct involvement with the National Carillon, Canberra and its sister instrument at the University of Sydney.

Composers

JOHN GORDON (1915-1991)

His distinctive carillon playing style delighted and gladdened the ears of generations of students and staff at Sydney University where he was University Carillonneur from 1944 until his death. He was also first Canberra Carillonneur from 1970 till 1988. He distinguished himself as teacher and author, while as composer and arranger, his output, especially for the carillon was quite prodigious.

The traditional English melodies are just three of many such arrangements of folk songs from different countries. Winter Afternoon written in August, 1980, started off as an improvisation in Canberra on a still, overcast, winter's day — the carillon tower in its grey landscape of lake, trees, parks and distant mountains: a vast area with not a soul in sight.

JOHN BARRETT (1915-1983)

A fine organist, pianist, teacher and choirmaster, he began his carillon activities in 1971 as assistant carillonneur at the Canberra Carillon, becoming deputy carillonneur in 1975. His performances were notable for his improvisatory skills.

The Moreton Bay Suite was written possibly during 1978 when he spent some study time at the Netherlands Carillon School in Amersfoort, Holland. The dedication reads: For Leen 't Hart —

in appreciation (Leen 't Hart was Director of the Carillon School).

HAMILTON HARTY (1879-1941)

An Irish pianist, conductor and composer, his most important appointment was conductor of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester, a position he held for 13 years. In 1934, he undertook an extensive tour in Australia. A Little Fantasy and Fugue was written in 1935 for the University of Sydney.

LEEN 'T HART (1920-1992)

A Dutch organist and carillonneur, he was also a prolific composer and arranger of music for the carillon. A renowned performer and teacher, he was responsible for founding and being the first director of the Netherlands Carillon School. His visit to Australia in 1980 was one of the first by a European carillonneur.

His arrangement of The Shearer's Dream is but one of many he made of folk and traditional songs from a wide range of countries.

TERRY VAUGHAN (1915-1996)

Born in New Zealand with piano student days at the Royal Academy of Music, London, he was both musician and man of the theatre, equally comfortable composing, arranging and conducting

music as he was directing a play or casting a musical.

In 1970, during his period as Director of the Canberra Theatre Centre, he was asked to write a piece for the inauguration of the Canberra Carillon. The result was *Lake Music* — “for a listener lazing on the shore, on a tranquil summer’s evening.” A revised version was made in 1986 but carillonists worldwide seemed to prefer the original.

With the composer’s permission, this recording is an amalgam of both versions. *Summer Song* was written in 1989. He spent his retirement in Perth, Western Australia, being actively involved in music and theatre until his death in April 1996. His autobiography was launched by Random House in New Zealand in November 1995.

ROSS EDWARDS **(born 1943)**

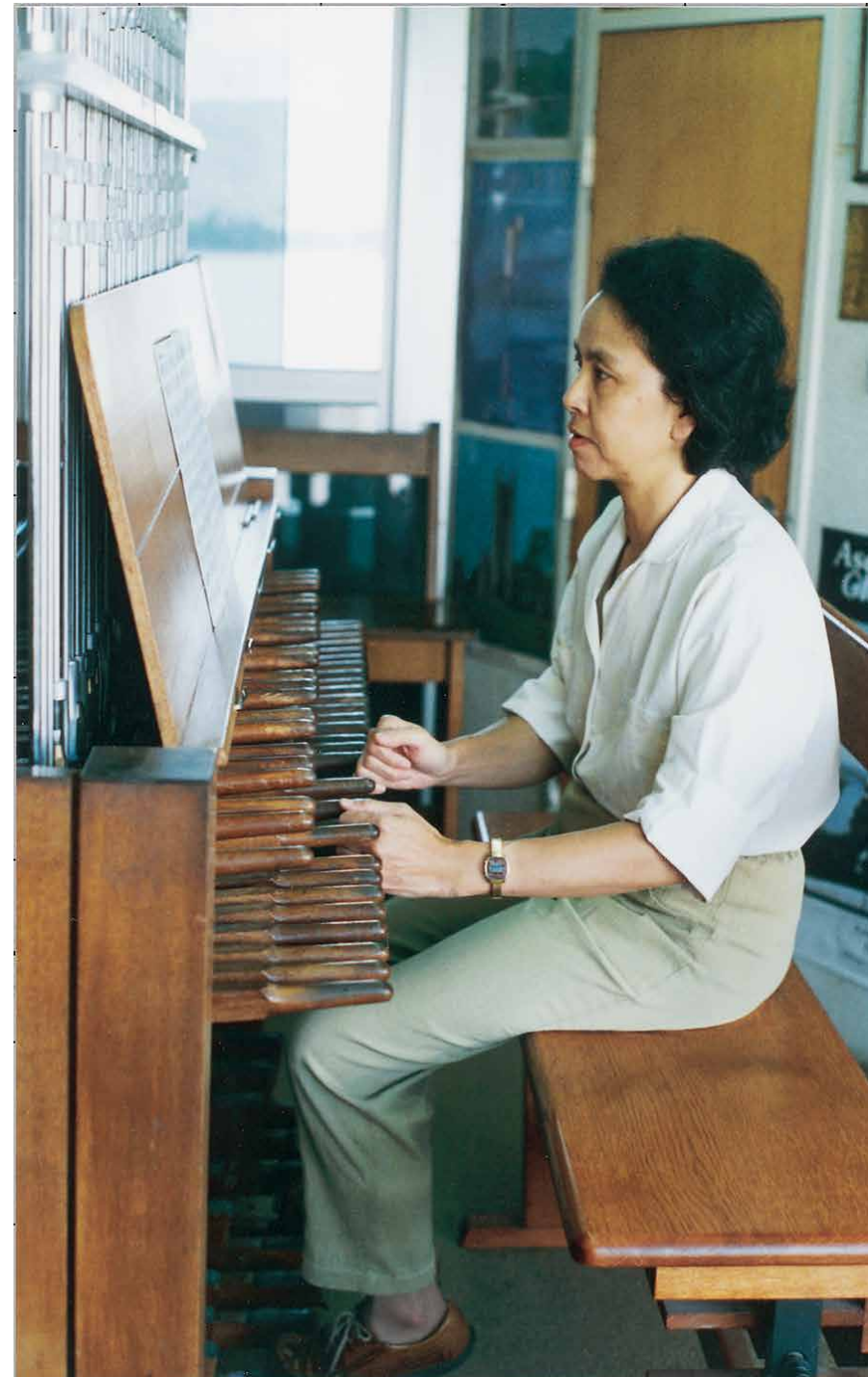
Born in Sydney, he has studied extensively in Australia and Europe and held teaching positions at Sydney University and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. He now works full-time as a composer, building an impressive catalogue of compositions that includes works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, orchestral instruments, keyboard, voice, choir and the stage.

The *Five Little Piano Pieces* were written in 1976 after a visit to Japan. That country’s influence can be heard in the two works transcribed here for carillon.

JOAN CHIA came to Canberra in 1969 to join the Keyboard Department of the Canberra School of Music (now the Institute of the Arts in the Australian National University). Her musical activities included teaching piano, leading workshops for Piano teachers as well as performing with chamber ensembles and symphony orchestras.

Carillon lessons in 1979 with the first Canberra Carillonneur, John Gordon marked the beginning of her association with the instrument. In 1980, she was appointed an assistant carillonneur, and has since shared a roster of regular recitals with five other Canberra carillonists. Further carillon training took place in Indiana, USA, Wellington, New Zealand and most recently at the Netherlands Carillon School in Amersfoort. Recitals have included joint performances with brass ensembles and military bands.

The medleys of Australian, Scottish and Irish melodies have been arranged by the performer.





The instrument

The National Carillon, Canberra, stands on Aspen Island in Lake Burley Griffin, in Australia's National Capital. It was presented by the British Government to the city of Canberra to mark the 50th anniversary of its founding in 1913. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II officially accepted the gift on behalf of the Australian people on April 26, 1970 during the 1970 Royal Tour. The inaugural recital was presented by John Gordon.

The instrument comprises 53 bells, ranging over four and a half octaves, the largest bell (the bourdon) weighing 6 tonnes and the smallest, 7 kilos. The bells were cast in the foundry of John Taylor & Co (Bellfounders) of Loughborough, Leicestershire, England.

The playing console consists of a double row of 53 wooden levers (called bats or keys) that correspond to the black and white keys on the piano, and a pedal board which is coupled to the lowest two and a half octaves of hand levers. Each lever is connected by a wire to a clapper. The bells themselves are stationary, bolted to a steel frame, so that when the lever is activated by the player pushing it down with the side of a loosely closed hand, it pulls the clapper to the inside of the bell.

The action (the name given to the linkage from the playing console to the clappers), is entirely mechanical, thus allowing the player control over the

dynamic level of each note as well as the blend and balance of groups of notes, in the same way that pianists control volume contrasts and tonal shadings on the piano. Carillonists practise on an instrument that looks like the playing console, but which sounds small metal bars similar to those in a glockenspiel.

The tower housing the instrument was the winning design of a Western Australian firm of architects, Cameron, Chisholm and Nicol, and was the unanimous choice of the board of assessors from the submissions of 3 British and 3 Australian architects who had been invited to submit designs.

The cluster of three linked vertical shafts serve as a reminder of the close bonds between Britain and Australia. At the same time, they acknowledge the formal geometry of the plan of Canberra and the triangle of Parkes Way and the two bridges apexing at Capital Hill. Each of the towers is externally clad with ferro-cement panels finished with white quartz and opal glass chips. The three-towered structure supporting the carillon was erected by the firm of Dillingham Constructions Pty Ltd.

The setting is one of great tranquility and beauty, and is the envy of carillonists from around the world. Surrounded by large expanses of water and open parklands, it is the ideal site for such a fine concert instrument whose playing is intended for the enjoyment of all.

From 1970 to 1991, the National Carillon was managed by a variety of Government departments.

From December 1991 to June 1995, the Canberra Institute of the Arts was responsible for the maintenance of the instrument and the development of its musical programs. Presently, it is under the administration of the National Capital Authority whose co-operation in the production of this recording is acknowledged with gratitude.

A Carillon

is a musical instrument (arguably the largest and most public of all musical instruments), consisting of at least 2 octaves of carillon bells tuned to the intervals of the chromatic scale, and played from a keyboard that allows control of expression through variation of touch.

Carillon bells differ from most other bells in two main ways. Firstly, carillon bells are made of bronze (an alloy of about 80% copper and 20% tin), while other bells can be comprised of silver, gold, wood, glass or clay. Secondly, carillon bells have many of their harmonics tuned. Even though the human ear can only discern five harmonics (or partials) in a bell, there are actually many more in the upper frequencies.

The five harmonics are called the hum tone, the strike tone (fundamental), minor third, fifth, and octave. The fundamental dominates, and is the partial we hear as the bell's note. The next most

prominent partial sounds a minor third above the strike tone, a relationship found in no other Western instrument. This minor third (called the tierce) gives bells their characteristically solemn sound, and provides composers of carillon music with rich possibilities. It also presents unique problems when creating music that is idiomatically effective. The partials in every bell must be in tune with each other, and each bell must be in tune with the others in the carillon.

The single most important determinant to the correct pitch of a bell is its profile, or exterior shape. This profile is part of a formula which has remained largely unchanged for over 300 years. When a bell is cast with the correct proportion of copper and tin heated to a temperature slightly above 2000 degrees F, and is poured into a mould reflecting the correct profile, its pitch has, to a great extent, already been determined because of its size and shape. When the metal has been poured and has cooled, the bell is removed from the mould. The bell is then tuned by turning it on a lathe while a chisel-like instrument grinds away small amounts of metal from precisely identified places on the interior surface until the correct tone, singular to that bell, has been achieved.

Traditionally, musical assessment is done by ear using extremely accurate tuning forks which, like the bells, are temperature dependent. These days, modern bellfounders use a range of electronic

devices enhanced with computers, to aid in the tuning process. Final approval is still largely a matter of how it sounds. The tuning takes place at the foundry, and is permanent.

When and where did carillons develop?

References to bells survive from earliest antiquity. The Chinese may have been the first to cast large bronze bells. Hammered metal, porcelain, and wood have also been used at various times and places. The profile of the modern carillon bell appeared in Europe in about the 13th century.

Clock-activated machinery for playing melodies automatically on bells was invented at least as early as the 14th century. Such machinery sometimes also operated large animated puppets holding hammers, which struck the bells in full view of delighted spectators.

By the 16th century in the Low Countries of northern Europe, rudimentary playing consoles had appeared, permitting live performances. By the middle of the 17th century, the carillon had developed from a simple grouping of a few bells hanging in a watch tower to an instrument of 3 octaves located in cathedrals and city halls.



Because of the sheer size of the carillon, its fortunes often were controlled by the economics of the cities or institutions responsible for the instrument. Since bell metal is so valuable, it historically has been confiscated by victorious armies as part of the spoils of war. However, it could be considered an axiom that where the carillon art has flourished for any length of time, political stability and a good economy have been the norm.

Through the 18th and 19th centuries, carillons continued to be important in Europe. At one time, there were some 40 carillons in Belgium, 60 in The Netherlands, 20 in France and England, with more throughout the rest of Europe. Many of the most beautiful of the European carillons were destroyed in World War I, and had completed rebuilding just as World War II devastated Europe again.

In America, carillons came late. The first carillon on the North American continent was in Toronto, Canada. The first in the US was hung in 1922 in Gloucester, Massachusetts. Today in North America, there are over 140 "singing towers" situated in churches, universities and specially designed parks and sanctuaries. Australia has 4 carillons, two that present live performances regularly in Canberra and at Sydney University, and the other two in

Bathurst and Perth which are activated electronically.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, most carillons were instruments of between 25 and 36 bells. The average size of modern carillons is about 50 bells, with a number having 60 and even 70 bells. But whatever the size or method of playing, the carillon's distinction lies in its music. The very public nature of the instrument demands that programs be eclectic and versatile. Under the control of a skilled player, it can be a concert instrument presenting suitably composed works, or it could be the musical focus for a wedding, a festival, ceremonial proceedings, special feast days, etc., or it could just enhance the environment in which it stands, and provide enjoyment for those who come to listen.