

Richard Peter Maddox

Australian Songs



Samantha Smith • soprano
Richard Peter Maddox • piano
Graham Maddox • oboe



Samantha Smith

Four Songs for Soprano

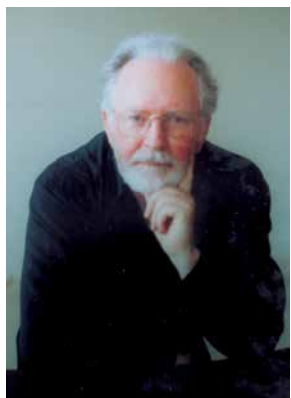
- 1** *The Pear Tree* 4'48"
- 2** *Bargain Basement* 3'32"
- 3** *Sleight-of-hand* 2'29"
- 4** *Sonnet XVIII* 2'47"

Four Archaic Songs

- 5** *In Praise Of Art* 2'13"
- 6** *To Saint Mary Magdalen* 2'43"
- 7** *A Prayer to the Holy Trinity* 1'52"
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Five Australian Songs

- 9** *Botany Bay* 2'54"
[the innocent youth is condemned to transportation]
- 10** *Moreton Bay* 3'11"
[he describes the horrors of the penal system]
- 11** *Click Go the Shears* 2'33"
[he survives to become an itinerant worker]
- 12** *The Streets of Forbes* 2'46"
[he loses all and becomes a bushranger]
- 13** *Waltzing Matilda* 3'36"
[under persecution he takes his own life]



Richard Peter Maddox

Letters from Armidale

- 14** *Lovely Day* 0'57"
- 15** *Figs* 0'53"
- 16** *Letters* 1'53"
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- 18** *Rain* 1'12"

The Stranger in My Skin *

- 19** *Stranger* 4'13"
- 20** *Looking Down From Bridges* 4'51"
- 21** *The Swimming-Pool* 1'51"
- 22** *Bedroom Conversations* 2'25"
- 23** *A Peasant Idyll* 2'46"



Graham Maddox

Richard Peter Maddox Australian Songs

Samantha Smith
soprano

Richard Peter Maddox
piano

Graham Maddox
*oboe **

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Auditorium, Australia.
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Four Songs for Soprano

1 *The Pear Tree* (Dame Mary Gilmore)

"What be you a-lookin' at, Emily Ann,
Starin' with your eyes all set?"

"I bin seein' a ghost, Amanda,
And I be a-seein' it yet."

"Where was it you seen it, Emily Ann?"

"It was hung on the big pear tree;
I seen a ghost, Amanda,
And the ghost it said it was me.

"Put your hand on my heart, Amanda,
Feel of the life of it there;
For the ghost was hung on the big pear
tree,
It had my eyes, and my hair."

"O moon that blanches the grass,
Why is the tree so white?"

There is a bird in the tree,
Was never a bird so white!

Was never a bird so white,
But its head bends over,
There, where it hangs in the tree,
Dead for a lover.

"O moonlight sheeting the grass,
What will cover her there?"

There will be frost on the tree,
And frost on her hair.

"O white moon turn from that tree,
Shine not so clear and high,

She was too young for frost on her hair,
She was too young to die!"

Fourteen Men, *Angus & Robertson*
1954, © ETT Imprint

2 *Bargain Basement* (Frederick T. Macartney)

Not there, my dear, not there;
this way—down the stair.
Have you a line of hillocks and some
white
absurd young lambs, all wool, and light
as leaping air?

No, sir—sorry!...

Alright, don't worry.

You keep, perhaps
some inexpensive scraps
of early green

springtime sateen,
with colour partly lost
in folds of frost,
prinked with those flowers that smell
so sweetly?—I know them well
but can't recall the name:
I saw them somewhere a month ago.

Unfortunately, madam, no...

Ah, what a shame!

I say, I'd like a length of thin
pale sea-water to wear next to the skin.
None? A creek, then?—with embroideries
of eucalypt trees,
the soldierly sort that gets
dignity from its golden epaulets.

No, sir, impossible....

Oh, well—

Then, do you stock
that delicate sort of frock
now worn by blossoming orchards, thin,
wide and airy, like a crinoline?

No, madam, no; but I might find...

O, never mind.

Come on, my dear:
there's nothing for us here.
Thank goodness, we still have, in the Lay
By
(for what it's worth
when we two die)
that remnant double-width of damaged
earth.

Modern Australian Poetry ed. *H.M.*
Green, Melbourne University Press
1946, © J.M. Auld

3 *Sleight-of-hand* (Bruce Dawe)

Especially I like the bit where
they take the sun away
by sliding a cloud hinged to a hill
over it late in the day
—it is so nicely done, this part,
barely noticeable until
it is, well, *over*...

I like particularly
the humility in the skill
that would much rather dodge
the embarrassing applause,
and under the finger-tented
cloth gradually withdraws
until there is only the shadowy
stage, the hat, cloak, cane,
the tumbler of still water,
and last but not least, the plain
gesture of reversal even now
returning to scarves
of the most fluid silk the world's
pocketful of doves.

Sometimes Gladness, *Longman*
Cheshire 1978, © Addison Wesley
Longman

4 *Sonnet XVIII* (William Shakespeare)

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate;
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of
May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a
date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven
shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime
declines,
By chance or natures changing course
untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou
owest,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his
shade,
While in eternal lines thou growest;
So long as men can breathe,
or eyes can see,
So long lives this,
and this gives life to thee.
Complete Works, *Rex Library*, 1973

These were almost my first attempt at song-writing. They were not conceived as a cycle, but were grouped together for convenience. I subsequently learned that it was not necessary to make the music as florid as possible. They represent four experimental attempts to grapple with the problem of combining words and music. Each proposes a different solution, but common to them all is the notion that a

composer who adds music to an existing poem must pay a great deal of respect to the words which the poet has chosen and organised with such care. In some places I have tried for the Renaissance ideal of "word-painting"; in others I have been more concerned with overall mood-painting.

'The Pear Tree' is the simplest of the four, I suppose because the simplicity of the story did not call for over-elaboration. In 'Bargain Basement' the rich imagery of Macartney's poem seemed to demand a fairly rich setting. Bruce Dawe's 'Sleight-of-hand' was originally published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and I was again struck by the poet's imagery. To try and create a sense of mystery and disorientation I set this in a 7/4 time-signature. Unfortunately, the one who ended up being most disoriented was the pianist! Shakespeare's poetry has always fascinated me, and the sonnet 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day' virtually wrote itself as a song.

The following note to 'The Pear Tree' was written by Dame Mary Gilmore:

"When I was a child there was a young girl employed as kitchen help at Tenandra Park, then a station belonging to Edward Beveridge. Everyone liked this girl. She was about sixteen and was courted by a young man on the place. Suddenly the man disappeared, and though the girl

said nothing she was seen to droop. One night, to the surprise of the two elder women in the kitchen, it being the middle of the week and not Saturday, she took a bath "all over", and put on everything clean, even to a white frock and flounced petticoat she had saved for special occasions. In the morning, out in the frost, they found her hanged on the big pear-tree in the orchard. Then they knew why she had taken a bath, and why she had dressed in white. 'She wanted to go clean and all in white to her Maker', said the elder women.

"When the moon was full, the story was that her ghost could sometimes be seen between the trees, or where she had hanged herself. As a child, when staying at Tenandra, I used to peer out the window at night, looking for the ghost. I never saw the ghost, but the moonlight was so white it was terrifying."

Four Archaic Songs

5 *In Praise Of Art* (Michelangelo Buonarotti, translated by Paul Stenhouse)

How is it, my love, that as we humans
know
By long experience, an image carved in
stone
Of mountain, hard as iron, survives alone
When craftsmen by age to ashes are
brought low?
Sculptor to sculpted rock must bow, and
go

Like Nature to Art, and as Victor it
enthrone.
The corruption of Time and Death when
sown
Bear little fruit where Art is King; for so
Can I give us both long life, not flesh and
bone
But faces carved in marble, or colour
bright.
Each of us will I save from everlasting
night,
So that a thousand years beyond it will be
known
How lovely was your face, how harrowed
mine,
How right my eyes from love of you to
shine.

translation © *Paul Stenhouse*

6 *To Saint Mary Magdalen*
(Henry Constable)

Blessed Offendour: who thyself hast try'd
How far a synner differs from a Saynt,
Joyne thy wet eyes with teares of my
complaint,
While I sighe for that grave for which thou
cry'd.
No longer let my synfull sowle abyde
In feaver of thy first desyres faynte:
But lett that love which last thy hart did
taynt
With pangs of thy repentance pierce my
syde.
So shall my sowle no foolish vyrgyn bee
With empty lampe, but lyke a Magdalen
Beare for oyntment box a breast with oyle
of grace:

And so the zeale, which then shall burne
in mee
May make my hart lyke to a lampe
appere,
And in my spouses pallace give me place.

7 *A Prayer to the Holy Trinity*
(Richard Stanyhurst)

Trinity blessed, deitee coequal,
Unitee sacred, God one eeke in essence,
Yeeld to thy servaunt, pitifully calling
Merciful heering.
Vertuous living did I long relinquish,
Thy wyl and precepts miserablye
scorning,
Graunt to mee, sinful pacient, repenting,
Helthful amendment.
Blessed I judge hym, that in hurt is healed:
Cursed I know hym, that in helth is
harmed:
Thy physick therefore toe me, wretch
unhappy,
Send, mye Redeemer.
Glorye too God the father, and his onlye
Son,
The protectoure of us earthlye sinners,
Thee sacred spirit, laborers refreshing,
Still be renowned. Amen.

8 *Blow, blow thou winter winde*
(William Shakespeare)

Blow, blow thou winter winde,
Thou art not so unkinde
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keene,

Because thou art not seene,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh ho, sing heigh ho unto the greene
holly,
Most friendship is fayning; most Loving
mere folly:
Then heigh ho the holly
This Life is most jolly.

Freize, freize thou bitter skie
That dost not bight so nigh,
As benefitts forgot:
Though thou the waters warpe,
Thy sting is not so sharpe,
As friend remembered not.
Heigh ho...

These songs were the result of a
commission from Naomi Senff, who
deluged me with a sheaf of poems from
various sources. I selected from the pile
the ones that appealed to me most, and
this set is the result.

In Praise of Art

This setting of Buonarotti's Rima no. 239
reflects my memory of the Michelangelo
sculptures in the Louvre, Paris,
collectively titled *The Prisoners*. I saw
the figures struggling to escape from the
stone in which they were held captive,
and this image suggested the capture of
the music by the pedal note D and the
struggling accompaniment figure which
runs through most of the song. In my
mind, this struggling reflected humanity's

(ultimately futile!) struggle against the ravages of time. In the last two lines of the song the escape is achieved.

To Saint Mary Magdalen

Once again, the poem recalled a visual image, this time a wooden sculpture of an emaciated Mary Magdalene returning after years in the wilderness, which I had seen in Florence. The opening gesture in the piano accompaniment suggests the idea of flagellation, which is gradually softened by the “pangs of repentance”.

A Prayer to the Holy Trinity

The energy of this poem seemed to require the sort of bouncy setting which can be heard here, and the short lines at the end of each stanza suggested a musical rhyme. The exuberance of the song is capped by the ecstatic repetition of the final “Amen”.

Blow, blow thou winter winde

I have tried to match the cynicism of Shakespeare’s well-known text (from *As You Like It*) with a setting which uses a sort of *moto perpetuo* in the accompaniment to suggest both the fierceness of the winter wind and the inevitability of human frailty. The *moto perpetuo* seems to be about to start a third round when the song suddenly ends with the shout of “jolly!”

Five Australian Songs

9 *Botany Bay*

Come all young men of learning good,
a warning take by me;
I’ll have you quit night-walking and shun
bad company;
I’ll have you quit night-walking, or else
you’ll rue the day,
And you will be transported and sent to
Botany Bay.

I was brought up in London town, a place
I know full well,
Brought up by honest parents, the truth to
you I’ll tell,
Brought up by honest parents who loved
me tenderly,
Till I became a roving blade to prove my
destiny.

My character was taken and I was sent to
jail,
My parents tried to clear me but nothing
would prevail,
‘Twas at our Rutland sessions the judge to
me did say:
“The juries found you guilty, you must go
to Botany Bay.”

To see my poor old father, as he stood at
the bar,
Likewise my dear old mother, her old gray
locks she tore,
And in tearing of her old gray locks these
words to me she did say:

“O son! O son! What hast thou done?
Thou art bound for Botany Bay.”

10 *Moreton Bay*

One summer morning as I went walking
by Brisbane Waters I chanced to stray;
I heard a prisoner his fate bewailing, as on
the sunny river bank he lay:
I am a native of Erin’s island, and
banished now from my native shore;
They tore me from my aged parents, and
from the maiden that I do adore.

I’ve been a prisoner at Port Macquarie, at
Norfolk Island and Emu Plains,
At Castle Hill and at curst Toongabbie—
at all those settlements I’ve worked in
chains.
But of all the places of condemnation and
penal settlements of New South Wales,
To Moreton Bay I have found no equal,
excessive tyranny each day prevails.

For three long years I was beastly treated,
and heavy irons on my legs I wore;
My back from flogging was lacerated, and
oft-times painted with my crimson
gore!
And many a man, from downright
starvation lies mould’ring now
underneath the clay;
And Captain Logan, he had us mangled at
the triangles* of Moreton Bay.

Like the Egyptians and ancient Hebrews
we were oppressed under Logan’s
yoke,

Till a native black, lying there in ambush,
did deal this tyrant his mortal stroke!
My fellow prisoners, be exhilarated that
all such monsters such a death may find!
And when from bondage we're liberated,
our former sufferings shall fade from
mind.

* *Triangular wooden frames to which
offenders were tied to receive the lash*

11 *Click Go the Shears*

Down by the shed the old shearer stands,
Clutching his shears in his thin bony
hands,
Eagerly he watches the bare-bellied yo*,
Lordy if he gets her won't he make the
ringer** go!

Click go the shears, boys,
click, click, click,
Wide is his blow and his hands
move quick.
The ringer looks around and is
beaten by a blow
And curses the old snagger***
with the bare-bellied yo.
In the middle of the floor in his cane-
bottom chair
Sits the boss of the board with his eyes
everywhere,
Notes well each fleece as it comes to the
screen,
Paying strict attention that it's taken off
clean.
Click go the shears...

The tar-boy is there and a-waiting in
demand,
With his blackened tar-pot in his tarry
hand.
Sees one old sheep with a cut upon its
back—
Here is what he's waiting for, it's "Tar
here, Jack!"
Click go the shears...

Shearing is all over and we've all got our
cheques;
Roll up your swags, boys, we're off on the
tracks.
The first pub we come to, it's there we'll
have a spree,
And everyone that comes along, it's
"Come and drink with me!"
Click go the shears...

* *Ewe*
** *The champion shearer*
*** *The loafer of the shed*

12 *The Streets of Forbes*

Come all you Lachlan lads, and a
sorrowful tale I'll tell,
Concerning of a hero bold who through
misfortune fell.
His name it was Ben Hall, a man of good
renown,
Who was hunted from his station and like
a dog shot down.
Three years he roamed the roads, and he
showed the traps* some fun;

A thousand pound was on his head, with
Gilbert and John Dunn.
Ben parted from his comrades, the
outlaws did agree
To give away bush-ranging and to cross
the briny sea.

Ben went to Goobang Creek, found a
friend to help his need;
But this friend had read of the big reward,
and his sould was filled with greed.
'Twas early in the morning, upon the fifth
of May,
When the seven police surrounded him as
fast asleep he lay!

Bill Dargin** he was chosen to shoot the
outlaw dead;
The troopers then fired madly and filled
him full of lead!
They rolled him in a blanket and strapped
him to his prad***,
Then they led him through the streets of
Forbes, just to show the prize they had!

* *Police*
** *An Aboriginal tracker working for the police*
*** *Horse*

13 *Waltzing Matilda*

Once a jolly swagman* camped by a
billabong**
Under the shade of a coolibah tree,
And he sang as he watched and waited till
his billy*** boiled,
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with
me."

Waltzing Matilda, waltzing Matilda,
You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with
me.

Down came a jumbuck**** to drink at the
billabong,
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed
him with glee,
And he sang as he stowed that jumbuck in
his tucker-bag,
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with
me."
Waltzing Matilda...

Down came the squatter***** mounted on
his thoroughbred,
Up rode the troopers, one, two, three:
"Where's that jolly jumbuck you've got in
your tucker-bag?"
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with
me."
Waltzing Matilda...

Up jumped the swagman and sprang into
the billabong:
"You'll never take me alive", said he,
And his ghost may be heard as you pass
by that billabong,
"You'll come a-waltzing Matilda with
me."
Waltzing Matilda...

* *An itinerant rural worker*
** *A small water-course*
*** *Water can*
**** *Sheep*
***** *Land-owner*

This set arose from a commission from the
singer Dorothy Williams, then resident in
Belgium, for a setting of Waltzing Matilda
in (as she put it) "the style of Benjamin
Britten"(!) to be sung at a reception at
the Australian Ambassador's residence
in Brussels. After I had completed this
arrangement, it was suggested to me
by friends that I should make a set of
arrangements of Australian songs. 'Click
Go the Shears' was an obvious choice,
and so too was 'Moreton Bay', which
I have always thought had one of the
loveliest melodies of all folk-songs. I
found an unusual version of 'Botany Bay'
in Ron Edwards' collection of Australian
songs, *The Overlander Song Book*, where
it is included as 'Botany Bay 2', and my
brother Graham suggested 'The Streets of
Forbes'.

I have tried in these settings to reflect
the overall mood of the songs with
accompaniments that underline their
emotional content.

Letters from Armidale

14 *Lovely Day*

It's a beautiful day.
The cabbage moth is floating in the grass.
Eenie's* fertilizing the flowers.
The sun is reflected pale on the roof.
The gum-boots have heated up to twenty-
eight degrees in the shade on the foot!
Because they're black and soak up the sun.

And I can just see the shadow of a bee
Checking my head to see if there's pollen.
Lovely day!

* *One of the dogs*

15 *Figs*

The wattle-birds and silvereyes and
sparrows are having a ball,
an autumn final fling, in the ripening fig-
tree.
They are all quite polite and take the top-
most figs,
leaving the lower ones for us.
It's a particularly good crop this year.
Well, a bad year for cows, a good one for
figs.
C'est la vie.
The sun never sets on an artist's work.
Unlike other professions.

16 *Letters*

A letter has its charms.
It's one of the first things we learn to do
with our early writing skills—
send a letter to Granma,
write a letter to the neighbours—
so message sending goes back a long way.
Maybe a blanket and a good, smoky fire,
or one of those very long Swiss horns,
a conch, a cow-bell,
or a flaming arrow?
How would I send this letter?
Tightly folded up in a pearl of an oyster.

17 *News Flashes*

We're all fine.

Ellie's off to Trial Bay for the last week of school.

Star* got shaved yesterday, and obviously needs to go on a diet.

(Eenie** didn't recognize her!)

The horses are fat and friendly.

The cattle are fat, but not as friendly as the horses.

I'm still drawing!

* *One of the dogs*

** *The other dog*

18 *Rain*

Raving in light, quick whispers;

And drenching the already damp ground.

I pull in rain's kite to my empty heart,

Never forgetting it was you who brought the string!

These songs use for texts extracts from letters that my friend Mary Buck wrote to me while I was living in Sydney. The first and last were deliberately written as poems, while the other three are simply part of the exchange of information and comment that goes on between friends who correspond over a period. In each case I have tried to match the ideas of the text with music that will reflect or comment on them. 'Lovely Day' is set in a jaunty kind of rhythm and with a degree of dissonance that seems to suit

the extroverted nature of the words. 'Figs' called for a more fluid, flight-like setting. 'Letters' is set in a fairly remote way, to match the distance the letters had to cover. 'News Flashes' represents my homage to the Shostakovich of the *Satires* song-cycle: the piano accompaniment repeats the same ideas almost endlessly, just as family news (and for that matter, television news) endlessly repeats the same trivia. The last song is in a different, more serious vein, reflecting the changes in our relationship that were taking place in the middle of 1992.

The first song, 'Lovely Day' was written on 29 January 1993, during a visit to Armidale. The last, 'Rain' was written as a Christmas present, and completed on 24 December 1994. It was then that I decided to complete a group of songs, and numbers 2 ('Figs') and 4 ('News Flashes') were written between Christmas and 31 December 1994, with the third, 'Letters' being added on 31 January 1995.

The Stranger in My Skin

19 *Stranger*

"I had a dream that all those images that tell me what I am or what I should be (madonna, goddess, Barbie Doll,

Miss Pretty, *femme fatale*, and Eve, and little Eva, Barbarella, whore, and kitchen-maid) all fell away like so much morbid flesh,

and there I stood, for the first time:
taller, shorter,
broader, thinner, fairer, darker, intensely
other than
the me that posed forever in my life
(Decoré-blonded,
Berlei-moulded, Factor-ized, for sale).
I felt no guilt for being what I was,
no shame that I no longer fitted neatly
the Iron Maiden men had made for me.
It was as if I'd taken possession of
myself at last, the stranger in my skin,
and stood there in the dream-wind,
shivering, free."

20 *Looking Down From Bridges*

Looking down from bridges over main
roads
sometimes we still see troops of tiny
children
tentatively skipping blue-metal across
black water,
racing paddle-pop sticks through the
algae
or wrestling among aniseed bushes
—another kind to those neat T-shirted and
stubbied kids
we turn loose at appropriate restaurants
and parks
to ponder the silent semis and the pet
wallaby tethered
to a FREE BALLOONS sign. Looking
down we see
an earlier world living on in the interstices
of the present,
like green wheat in the gutters

of the bulk feed store or the odd shy
weatherboard
holding out between factories.

If we were to spit
from the rails of our world into theirs
the water would ripple, if we took off our
shoes and walked
in the uncut grass there would be cobbler-
pegs in our cuffs,
and if we sang to each other through the
silted-up culverts
there would be an echo of sorts, but what
broken-picketed fences
would we scramble through as these do,
dodging theraised
voice in the lowered evening, and what
other large distances
would we need to cross, we, us, and ours,
to be truly there, torn jumpers and tousled
hair,
on the old paths embedded with bits of
broken china?

21 *The Swimming-Pool*

Every summer we construct the sea
from rusting bits and pieces specially kept
under the house through three indifferent
seasons.

The floor of the back-yard ocean slopes
despite
excavations that gave us a nominal hill
converted to a rockery...

Each morning
we patrol its limits, scooping out
the overnight freight of soggy insects
(moths, midges, mosquitoes, beetles,

flying ants), puzzling over
the latest delinquency of the filter pump,
the first rumour of algae on the PVC...

Our dream:
the simple one of holding in one place
by nuts and bolts and galvabond and tape
10,000 litres of town water hydrophaned
as carefully as supreme incompetence
can hope to effectuate, and so sustain
within the compass of too brief a season
a Mediterranean of splashing laughter,
a mare nostrum of sleek happiness, a con
to cheat the years, to sucker the smug sun,
and give the forks to all necessity.

22 *Bedroom Conversations*

Young girls entering their
parents' bedroom eager for
conversation of the most cosmic
kind "Mum, I was wondering...", or
"Mum, remember how you said...?"
pause suddenly
as they pass before the mirror, their eyes
flicking like tiddlers into that
bland pool "just one flick and they're
gone"
finning busily in the depthless element
of their vanity, their restless
search for reassurance,
while parents,
in that other world beyond, scoop
patiently
at the surface, smilingly murmur: "Well,
go on...
you were wondering..." and: "As you
were saying..."

But to no end—all conversations
sink under the weight of
abstraction, of wiggling dreams from
which,
only occasionally, they rise
with experimental eyebrows, lips still
framing
cutenesses in between answering:
"Mmmnn?...
What's that, Mum?... I didn't hear you?..."

23 *A Peasant Idyll*

Love, like trouble, steps out of the thick
forest
and stands in our presence, gentle and
trembling.
We were strolling along, our axe on our
shoulder,
grumbling the rough lyrics of peasantry,
the blade of the sun slicing the boughs,
the song of the birds like the song of small
thieves
who have absconded from the counting-
house
to tally henceforth only leaves.
In our nostrils the broth of air
was delightful, murmuring of home,
when there, in a sudden clearing, on the
soft grass,
you stood, your eyes as sweet as spring
water,
the birds fallen silent, the air still, only the
sunlight
bothering us with its wry syllables.

*Bruce Dawe, Towards Sunrise,
Longman Cheshire
1986, © Addison Wesley Longman*

This cycle was the result of a commission from Mary Buck. I had for some time been captivated by the poetry of Bruce Dawe, so it was natural that I went to his collection *Towards Sunrise*, which I had come across not long before. Mabs responded positively to my selection of five poems, and was especially pleased with 'Stranger', the poem which gave the song-cycle its title. In retrospect, I realised that there was a thread running through the five poems, in the form of the examination of various kinds of relationships. The first, 'Stranger', deals with the singer's relationship with herself; the second, 'Looking Down From Bridges', with a nostalgic relationship with the past (especially one's own childhood); the third, 'Bedroom Conversations', with the relationship with a growing daughter; the fourth, 'The Swimming Pool', with a family in the seasonal activity of reconstructing the backyard pool; and the last, 'A Peasant Idyll', with the coming of love.

The Performers

Samantha Smith was born in Sydney, and grew up in the Rocky River region near Armidale. She completed her Bachelor of Music Honours degree at the University of Newcastle in 1997, becoming the first music graduate in the University's history to be awarded a University Medal. She was also a part-time lecturer in Musicianship while completing her degree

with first class Honours.

Samantha has been a soloist under many conductors at the University of Newcastle Conservatorium, including the late Professor Michael Dudman, John O'Donnell, Christopher Allan, Philip Mathias, Robert Constable and Nigel Butterley. In 1996 Samantha performed the leading role of Nero in Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea*, directed by Yaron Lifschitz with musical direction by Robert Constable.

She has been the recipient of a number of scholarships during her years at the Conservatorium, including a *Vice-Chancellor's Honours Scholarship* in 1997, and is the current holder of the *Doris Smith Scholarship* for advanced vocal tuition. She is continuing her post-graduate studies in opera at the University of Newcastle, with vocal tuition from Christopher Allan and Ghillian Sullivan, and thesis supervision from Rosalind Halton.

Richard Peter Maddox was born in Apia, Western Samoa, and grew up in Sydney, NSW. He completed a Bachelor of Commerce degree at the University of New South Wales in 1962. Following a number of years working as a company accountant and controller, he decided to leave the world of commerce, taking a Bachelor of Music from the University of London by external study in 1973.

In 1977 he completed his MA in Music at the University of Sydney, and embarked for Los Angeles to study for the PhD in Music at the University of California, Los Angeles. In 1982 he returned to Australia to take up a lectureship at the University of New England in Armidale, NSW, and subsequently completed his PhD in 1987. In 1991 he retired from the University of New England to pursue his musical interests as performer and composer.

Graham Maddox was also born in Apia, Western Samoa, and grew up in Sydney. Besides pursuing a distinguished academic career (currently he is a Professor of Politics in the University of New England), he studied oboe on an orchestral scholarship with Ian Wilson at the Sydney Conservatorium, and with Neil Black, John Anderson and Evelyn Rothwell in London. He has performed widely, and has given many first performances of works by his brother.

Graham is also a talented conductor, and has directed many oratorio and other performances with the Armidale Choral Society, the New England Sinfonia, and the Armidale Symphony Orchestra.

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Rachel McSweeney (Richard Peter Maddox) and S. Smith (Graham Maddox).

Annotations by Richard Peter Maddox

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