



THE DYING SUN

Madeleine Antoine
Setsu Masuda

VIOLIN
PIANO

R.E. SMITH

Rebecca Erin Smith is an award winning Australian composer who specialises in collaborative media and concert works. She works primarily with orchestra and large ensembles of acoustic instruments (at times electronically manipulated and set alight with found sounds) and the human voice, exploiting its full spectrum of sound from speech to song. A Fulbright Scholar and recent graduate of the Manhattan School of Music New York, Smith earned her Masters of Music under the tutelage of Dr Marjorie Merryman, upon commencement winning the Nicolas Flagello Composition Award for most outstanding composer. Most recently, her work has been internationally premiered in Japan and Singapore with the WA Youth Orchestra, Canada and the USA with new music exponents Phoenix Ensemble, and nationally at Perth Concert Hall with Edith Cowan University (ECU) and WAYO. Her recent collaborative efforts have been presented at the Columbia University Film Festival, Scifi London Film Festival, and Boston Science Fiction Film Festival (among others), and in a theatrical capacity at Schapiro Theatre, New York City. In an educational capacity, Smith lectures in composition and orchestration at ECU, and is regularly engaged as an adjudicator and guest lecturer both nationally and internationally.





Albany born Violinist **Madeleine Antoine** completed a Bachelor of Music at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 2010. She since studied at the Prague Conservatory of Music and at The University of Western Australia. Madeleine performs with the Perth Symphony Orchestra, as a soloist and with contemporary bands based in Boorloo (Perth). She has toured throughout Canada, China and Europe, and featured as soloist on tour with the WA Ballet.

Her practice spans many genres, including classical, pop and rock, as a member of the electric string quartet INNEKA, Selfless Orchestra, Babayaga, and Fieldsy. She has collaborated with Australian composers commissioning and recording modern compositions. Recording highlights include Arvo Pärt's 'Fratres', debut records with Selfless Orchestra and Babayaga, collaborating with songwriters and her own solo compositions. Madeleine has a keen interest in musical performance as a means by which to highlight issues of social and environmental justice.

“This composition reminds me optimistically that for every sunset there is a sunrise, not in a new world, it’s a very old and damaged world. But, maybe a new way of being in the world and interacting with it, through music and through other aesthetic experiences which are able to likewise re-frame a cultural narrative of systematic environment degradation.”

– Dr. Clare Davidson



Setsu Masuda started piano at the age of 5 in Japan and did training privately under late Professor Mr. Arai of Toho Gakuen School of Music in Tokyo. Since being awarded the Licentiate of Music Diploma in Australia under the guidance of Dr. Adam Pinto, she has enjoyed performing in a variety of chamber music contexts and toured in Japan, Singapore, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and WA. Her special interest to collaborate with artists from various disciplines saw her performing many collaborative concerts with a novelist, a visual artist, a flower artist, ballet dancers and a sommelier. Setsu is an artistic director of her own intimate chamber music series “Roses and Hearts” which has attracted many international, interstate and local musicians since 2012.

She released her first original composition album ‘Rondo’ in 2021.

Our sincere thanks to: Rebecca Erin Smith for composing this beautiful sonata; WAAPA for co-commissioning the creation of a new work; Dr. Stuart James for your expert audio engineering; Ken Nakagawa for your most generous support; Jo Darvall for allowing us to grace this album with the beautiful artwork inspired by the musical score “Salt”; Andrew J Clarke Photography for the stunning cover photograph of Sugarloaf Rock; Kelly Wong of Trifecta Creative Studio for the amazing album artwork; all of our close friends and family for your ongoing love and support.

“In wildness is the preservation of the world.”

– **Henry David Thoreau**

Composition – Rebecca Erin Smith

Violin – Madeleine Antoine

Piano – Setsu Masuda

Composers have long been inspired by the idea that we are not separate from nature but part of it and music can speak from that innate part of us. This composition is both a connection to and a reflection on natural landscapes.

The natural environment plays a large role in the lives and imaginations of Australians. From the Aboriginal people’s spiritual and reciprocal connection to the environment, European settlers fearful view of a ‘desolate’ and ‘harsh’ country to a modern appreciation of the environment as a necessary element to life. This societal shift towards embracing landscape as a nurturing tool - a place for renewal and inspiration was embraced by classical composers from the 1970’s onwards, including Peter Sculthorpe and Ross Edwards. However many view nature as a commodity to be exploited, and the Australian wilderness is diminishing, due to extraction and burning of fossil fuels and clearing of carbon-rich forests, leading towards irreversible climate change. Rebecca Erin Smith’s *The Dying Sun* was commissioned by Madeleine Antoine and the WA Academy of Performing Arts in 2017.

The piece depicts the natural environment as precious and rare. It is an homage to the land, made all the more important because of our knowledge of the frailty of wilderness and the rapidity with which the environment is diminishing.

The sonata depicts four unique West Australian wild areas: the remote Kimberly region, canola fields, the Milky Way constellation and Sugarloaf Rock in Cape Naturaliste. The four movements in the sonata are based loosely on photographs captured by landscape photographer Andrew J Clarke on their travels together, but moreso on the experience and feelings associated with these natural areas when the photos were taken.

The 1st movement Blood, meaning ‘lifeblood’, is in reference to the sun. The movement is mostly slow and gestural, and explores images of a wide expanse of land over the course of the day. The sun rises and the sun dies. The movement explores the detail which can be created out of a single note through the expression and texture. **The 2nd movement Milk** depicts the vast Milky Way constellation. **The 3rd, Nectar**, refers to the canola fields, the rustling harmonic sounds evoking the movement of wildflowers and insects. **The final movement Salt** explores the coastal area at Sugarloaf Rock - a large natural granite island rising dramatically out of the ocean near Cape Naturaliste in the south west.

THE DYING SUN

- I. Blood
- II. Milk
- III. Nectar
- IV. Salt



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