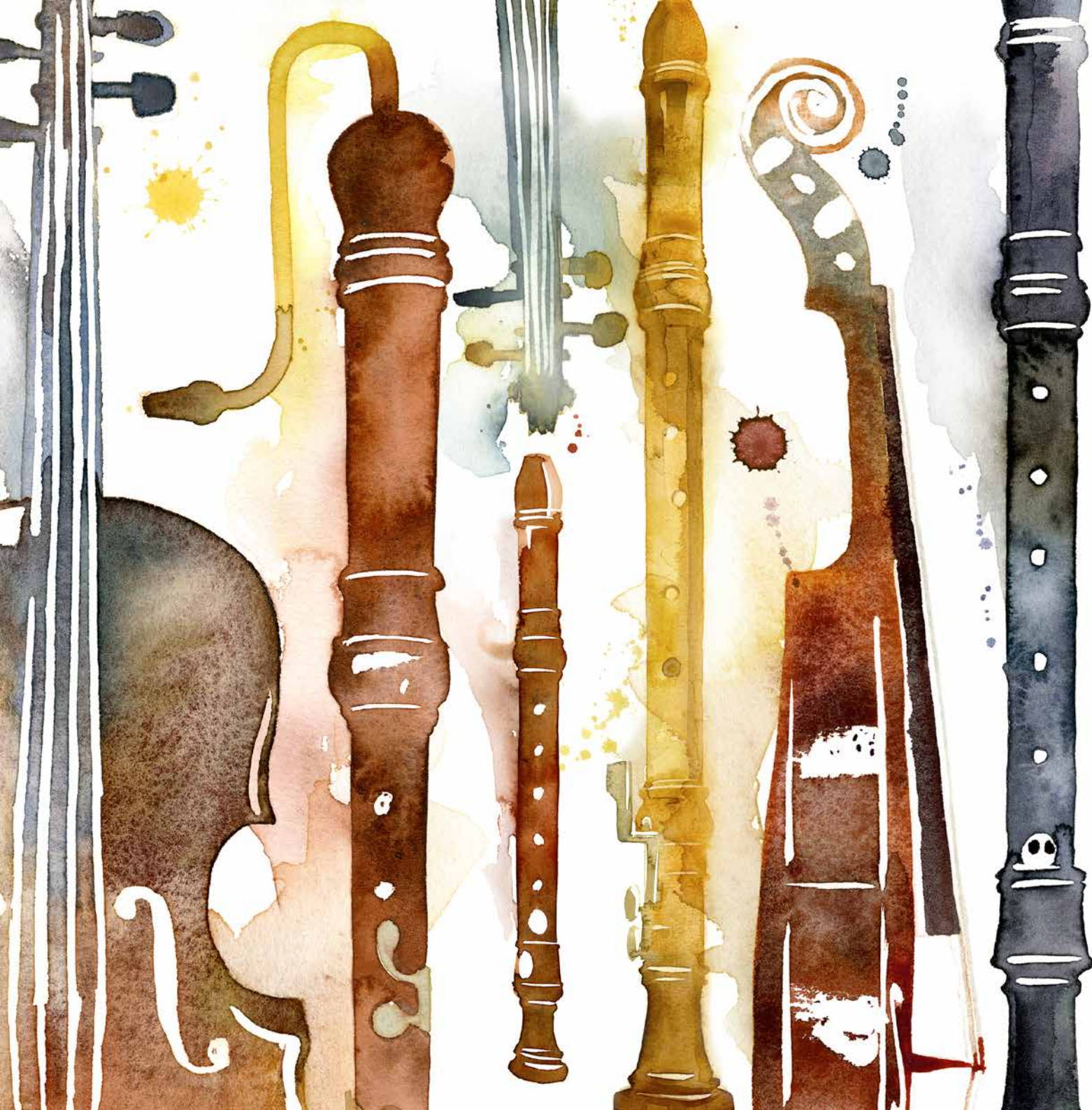




Muse

Alicia Crossley
Acacia Quartet



**“If there is such a thing
as a recorder rock star,
Crossley is that”
Fish Fine Music**

Alicia Crossley is one of Australia’s leading recorder players. She performs a wide variety of repertoire from renaissance dance tunes to contemporary electro-acoustic works with a particular interest in bass recorder repertoire.

In 2010 Alicia completed her Masters of Music (Performance) at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music under the instruction of recorder virtuoso Hans-Dieter Michatz. Since then Alicia has won several competitions and awards including the Don Cowell Memorial Trust Recorder Competition (2011), the Australia Council’s ArtStart Grant for emerging artists (2013), and the Fine Music 102.5 Kruger Scholarship (2014). In 2011, Alicia released her debut solo CD *Addicted to Bass* featuring seven newly commissioned Australian works for bass recorder, followed by her second solo

CD *Alchemy* in 2015, which was nominated for Best Classical Music Album by AIR (Australian Independent Record Labels Association).

An experienced recorder player, Alicia regularly performs throughout Australia and has toured in the USA and New Zealand. She has also presented works at a number of festivals and conferences including Metropolis (Melbourne 2017), Aurora Festival (Sydney 2012, 2014), Vivid Festival (Sydney 2013), Australasian Computer Music Conference (Brisbane, 2012), Electronic Music Midwest (Chicago, 2012), and SEAMUS (Minnesota, 2013). Alicia has had broadcast with ABC Classic FM, Fine Music 102.5, 2GB and Radio New Zealand, and has performed with notable artists and ensembles such as Neal Peres da Costa (Harpsichord), Daniel Yeadon (cello/viola da gamba), Hans-



Dieter Michatz (recorder), Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Acacia Quartet, Salut! Baroque, The Sydney Consort, and The Marais Project. Alicia is also a member of the unique and vibrant ensemble Duo Blockstix.

Alicia is a passionate supporter of contemporary Australian recorder repertoire and has collaborated with a number of Australian composers, premiering works by Julian Day, Daniel Rojas, Damian Barbeler, Stephen Yates, Paul Cutlan, Elias Constantopedos, Hayden Woolf, Tristan Coelho, Mark Oliveiro, Andrew Batt-Rawden, Chris Williams, Paul Castles and Alex Pozniak.

aliciacrossley.com.au

“Acacia Quartet performed so well that at times they seem like only one instrument, such is their clarity and unison.”

In eight years Acacia Quartet has won great respect for their versatile and inventive programs.

Acacia has recorded six albums, with ‘Blue Silence’ earning a nomination for an APRA-AMCOS Art Music ‘Award for Excellence’.

Acacia is passionate about supporting Australian composers, working with young musicians, and sharing their love of music with audiences of all ages. Their

performances feature regularly on ABC Classic FM, Kulturradio Berlin, and other established radio stations around the world.

Acacia’s engagements in Australia include the Sydney Opera House, City Recital Hall Sydney, Melbourne Recital Hall, as well as extensive touring through regional NSW and Victoria.

Acacia had their international debut in Vancouver, Canada at the Roundhouse in June 2016. The following year, Acacia Quartet was invited by the Christine Raphael Foundation to give their European debut, where they performed concerts in Berlin and recorded a CD with three string quartets by Günter Raphael for the Genuin record label.

Lisa Stewart- violin
Myee Clohessy - violin
Stefan Duwe - viola
Anna Martin-Scrase - cello

acaciaquartet.com

LYLE CHAN

Three Bilitis Movements

(excerpt from Drama with Music)
For tenor recorder and string quartet

- I. The Dancers of Mytilene
- II. The Rains of Spring and Morning
- III. To invoke Pan, god of the summer wind

Like an eager sapling taking root, Three Bilitis Movements germinated from another commission I was fulfilling, to compose Debussy's three unwritten final Sonatas for his 2018 centenary. Immersed in Debussy's life I reacquainted myself with Pierre Louÿs, the friend Debussy said he loved the most. Debussy had written three sets of works based on Louÿs' poems. So I too wrote three movements based on Les Chansons de Bilitis. This is a magnificently fake translation (in other words, an original work by Louÿs) of over 160 poems forming the memoir of a Greek courtesan named Bilitis who fictitiously lived at the time of Sappho. It was an instant hit, its inherent literary merits buoyed by the prevailing French taste for antiquity and erotic art. Rather than choose whole poems, I made three centos from various poems on Les Chansons' themes of the female body and nature. The second movement has a direct quote from the first piece of Debussy's I ever played, the Sarabande of Pour le piano. Three Bilitis Movements was commissioned by Alicia Crossley.

I. The Dancers of Mytilene

They danced one in front of the other, with a quick and fleeting movement; they always seemed to want to embrace each other, and yet did not touch, except on the lips.

When they turned their backs while dancing, they looked at each other, their heads on their shoulders, and the sweat shone under their raised arms, and their fine hair passed in front of their breasts. The languor of their eyes, the fire of their cheeks, the gravity of their faces, were three ardent songs. Furtively they brushed against each other, bending their bodies at the hip.

Three dance the kordax with scarf and phallos. Nepheles with smooth armpits will mimic the love of the dove between her rose-coloured breasts.

A singer in embroidered peplos will sing songs of Rhodes, accompanied by two flautists who will have garlands of myrtle entwining their brown legs.

II. The Rains of Spring and Morning

The fine rain has moistened everything, very gently, and in silence. I venture out under the trees, barefoot, so as not to stain my shoes.

The spring rain is delicious. The branches

laden with wet flowers have a fragrance that makes me pause. The delicate skin of the barks shines in the sun.

Alas, flowers on the ground! Have pity on the fallen flowers. They must not be swept away and mixed with the mud; leave them for the bees.

In the morning rain, I write these verses on the sand. The leaves are laden with shiny water. The rain, dripping, makes holes in my song.

The youngest do not look at me; the older ones have forgotten me. It's all right. They will learn my verses, as will the children of their children.

III. To invoke Pan, god of the summer wind

We sing a pastoral song, to invoke Pan, god of the summer wind.

A hot air like human breath caresses my eyes and my cheeks. The wind that breathes is my breath.

For nothing is as divine on earth like the fragrance of roses in the night. How is it that when I was alone I did not feel intoxicated?

Poems adapted by Lyle Chan from Pierre Louÿs' French original

ANNE BOYD

Yuya

For tenor recorder and string quartet
It is spring. Yuya, mistress of Munemori, a prince of the Tairas, received word that her mother who lives in the East is seriously ill. She requests permission to visit her but this is denied and she is compelled instead to accompany Munemori to a flower viewing festival at Kiyomizu Temple. While Yuya is dancing under the cherry trees there is a sudden shower of rain. As the petals of cherry blossoms fall to the earth, she is inspired to compose a poem: “What can I do? Leaving the capital in spring is sad, but even sadder would be the loss of the flower I love in the east”. Munemori is so moved that he permits her to go to her mother.

This is the story of Yuya, a “woman play” within the Japanese noh tradition, the starting place for my work for tenor recorder and strings requested by John Turner for inclusion in a concert in Manchester to honour Tony Gilbert on the occasion of his 70th Birthday.

In my work, Yuya is portrayed by the tenor recorder and Munemori by the cello. The role given to the quartet is that of a chorus who comment upon the drama and provide an accompaniment to the central dance. The music is based upon

the Japanese hyojoshi mode spelled in this work as C-D flat-F-G-A flat.

CHRIS WILLIAMS

Pass to us the cups with which sorrow is forgotten

For bass recorder and string quartet

Pass to us the cups with which sorrow is forgotten is based entirely on the tune of a 12th century song, by the poet Ibn Baqi, beginning ‘pass to us the cups with which sorrow is forgotten and summon our companions since love is at an end’. I came across a transcription of this song at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C. and wanted to hear the music brought to life. Pass to us the cups with which sorrow is forgotten is simply a structuring of this initial impulse to hear the tune, imagined at different speeds, in different forms, contexts and through different harmonisations.

I find something uniquely powerful about the long and unlikely chain of events that must have carried this tune from 12th Century Spain (Al-Andalus) to a recorded re-imagining today. The style of Baqi’s song comes from a musical tradition that flourished through the collaboration of Islamic, Christian and Jewish musicians,

a shared musical tradition. I hope that something of this spirit of collaboration and goodwill still lives in the tune, and that Pass to us the cups with which sorrow is forgotten offers a new life and new identity within the tune’s many histories written, performed and sung.

STEPHEN YATES

Bat-Music

For alto recorder and string quartet
Recently a friend asked me what the title was all about, to which I replied, rather blankly that I really didn’t know. I did however, let on that I had used in the writing of the piece a song I had written many years ago entitled, “Bat.” In the last two lines of the text we have the poet* asking the reader to consider, stating somewhat enigmatically, “This is just a simple Bat. Really nothing to laugh at”. Which is a little bewildering considering this the first and last mention of the animal he is supposed to be writing about! Though he does describe amongst other things namely a mouse, a louse, a conjuror and indeed a pair performing snails! But what does it all mean I hear you thinking.

Well...perhaps Christopher Isherwood is saying, that all of us are capable, by the very act of trying to describe SOMETHING...ANYTHING for that

matter...of getting it wrong at times, and are tempted to deride something unkindly rather really see what is before us truly, just like the Bat in the poem... or perhaps it's only a metaphor for the phenomena we call music. I don't know.

*Christopher Isherwood – “People one ought to know” 1922

JESSICA WILLS

Copenhagen Christmas

For recorder and string quartet

Nisse

The first movement depicts the mischievous Danish gnomes that play pranks on people around Christmas time. The Nisse wear grey woollen clothes and red pointy hats, red stockings and white clogs. On Christmas Eve many Danish families will leave some rice pudding out for them to eat, so that they behave!

Hygge

Pronounced “Hoo-ga” this word is synonymous with “cosy and content”, warming yourself indoors with lots of candles for atmosphere, snuggling up with a loved one or sitting around chatting with friends and family, out of the cold. In this piece the long held notes are

symbolic of the candle-light, smooth but with little flickers disrupting the flow. The texture of candles gives way to a haunting melody on the recorder, then joined by the string quartet in a free-flowing minor harmony, reflecting on my winter walks through Copenhagen amongst the old buildings and churches and the 17th Century astronomy “round tower” where Tycho Brahe would contemplate the stars.

SALLY WHITWELL

Three by three

For recorder and string quartet

“What a curious feeling!” said Alice, “I must be shutting up like a telescope!” And so she was! — from Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll.

I've always had a bit of a thing about Alice in Wonderland. The contradictions, the metaphors, the weirdness. This commission from Alicia Crossley and the Acacia Quartet was loosely structurally inspired by it.

I knew from the outset that I wanted to use several different sized recorders, so I set about researching them from the teeniest tiniest sopraninos which you can slip into your pocket pretty easily, right through to the massive box-like subcontrabass recorders manufactured

by Paetzold which look for all the world like a piece of kit furniture from IKEA. As I read about them, I had this odd mental image of the largest recorder morphing slowly through all the sizes until it became the smallest. It rather reminded me of Alice in Wonderland after she'd sipped from the bottle marked Drink Me. This formed the inspiration for my work Three by three.

It's in three short movements. The first starts with the warm tones of the bass recorder, matched by strings playing softly over the fingerboard, the second moves into the higher and more sharply focused sound of the alto recorder with pizzicato strings to give the dance a little extra cut, the third is performed on soprano with strings playing brighter sounds closer to the bridge.

Each of the movements has three beats in a bar, which metrically modulate in a strictly mathematical way. It is also monothematic in terms of a set of pitches, because my favoured modus operandi is to work with one idea and manipulate it to within an inch of its life. Have fun picking out the theme!

Program notes by the composers.

CD Design: victor.com.au

Illustrations: Clémentine Campardou @ Blule

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