

Reclaiming the Spirit (1993)

- For Solo Cello -

(Approximate duration 5½ minutes)

Sarah Hopkins

Reclaiming the Spirit was composed for cellist David Pereira following an invitation (from Belinda Webster) to write a new work to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the renaming of Uluru.

It is a lyrical and meditative piece which brings together the cello's rich tonal sonorities with a range of very contemporary and ancient sounds: musical bird calls, harmonic glissandi, deep earthy drones and didjeridu bowing.

The whole piece is played entirely on the D and G strings, with the open G string providing an earthy drone throughout most of the piece.

The open G drone is like the earth note: grounded, rich, full, life-giving - all else springs from it. The melody lines grow out of the earth note and fold back into it.

As the piece evolves the earth note gradually transforms into the didjeridu bowing rhythms. For me the sound of the didjeridu is akin to the sound of the earth.

NOTE: There is also a 14 minute ensemble version of *Reclaiming the Spirit* which was composed during 1993 for 'Perihelion'. It is scored for clarinet, viola (or violin), cello, soprano (or flute) and whirly instrument.

Recordings of this ensemble version appear on Sarah Hopkins' *Reclaiming the Spirit* CD and tape, released in 1994 on the New World Productions Label (Cat No. NWC/CD 777) and Perihelion's *Points of Departure* CD, released in 1994 on the Tall Poppies recording label.

BRIEF COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

Sarah Hopkins is a Brisbane-based freelance composer-performer with a background in classical and contemporary cello performance. She has been composing since 1976 in an expansive, pure musical style which resonates with the space and energy of the Australian landscape. Sarah composes solo, ensemble and choral music of a holistic nature which draws upon the natural beauty of the cello, voice, handbells and whirly instruments (plastic tubes which play harmonics when spiralled overhead).

Sarah tours both nationally and internationally performing her own original music and working as artist-in-residence. Over the last twelve years she has represented Australia at many prestigious events, notably the Paris Autumn Festival (1983) and the 1988 International Composers Symposium, Telluride, Colorado, USA.

Recently Sarah's *Sky Song* music, co-composed with Alan Lamb was featured on Australia's Olympic 2000 bid CD. Her other recordings include *Reclaiming the Spirit*, *Australia: Sound of the Earth*, *Austral Voices*, *Heart Song*, *Until I Saw* plus *Soundworks 1, 2 and 3*.

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REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE NOTES

Before beginning to play this piece centre yourself deeply so that the sound comes from that still point within. Breathe deeply and let your breath give life to the piece throughout.

Reclaiming the Spirit opens with a section of harmonic glissandi bird calls, creating an ethereal, other-worldly atmosphere. Phrase all these glissandi bird calls to create a satisfying-overall musical shape.

The whole piece is played on the D & G strings, with the open G string providing an earthy drone throughout most of the piece.

The open G drone is like the earth note; grounded, rich, full, life-giving - all else springs from it. The melody lines grow out of the earth note and fold back into it. The melody lines are to be played with great lyricism, supported strongly by the open G drone throughout.

As the piece evolves the earth note gradually transforms into the didjeridu bowing rhythms. For me the sound of the didjeridu is akin to the sound of the earth.

NOTATIONAL EXPLANATIONS



Harmonic glissandi bird calls, a beautiful ethereal sound To produce this sound place the left hand thumb and 3rd finger on the same string at the top end (pitchwise) of the fingerboard. With the hand in normal thumb position, press the string half way down to the fingerboard with the thumb and let the 3rd finger rest lightly on the string.

Whilst keeping this hand position constant, move the arm in slow sweeping downward (pitchwise) glissandi. At the end of each glissando lift your hand off the strings so as to avoid the sound of your fingers gliding on the strings as you return to the top end (pitchwise) of the fingerboard. During each glissando, the bow pressure needs to be fairly strong to give good projection to the sound and bowing fairly close to the bridge produces an additional range of higher harmonic bird calls.

Lighten the bow pressure towards the end of each bow stroke so as to avoid an undesirable explosion of sound at the end of each bow. Vary the speed of the glissandi to produce satisfying musical phrases. Avoid repetitive "Star Wars sirening"!



Harmonic glissando bird call followed by natural harmonic glissando within one bow stroke. To produce this sound simply follow the above procedure for the first part of the glissando and then lift your thumb off the string to access the natural harmonics for the rest of the glissando.

Phrase all the glissandi bird calls to create a beautiful and satisfying overall musical shape.

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In the opening section, the commas indicate phrasing points, not rests.

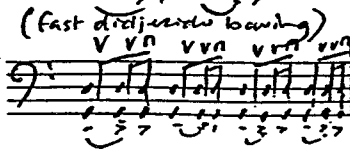
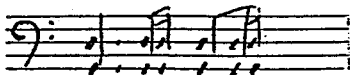


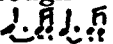
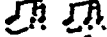
Natural harmonic glissando on the G string. Waterfall-like harmonic sweeps which gradually introduce the G drone - the earth note.



Deep inner energy pulsing on the 'V' bows. Playing the various rhythms notated with a feeling of subterranean energy. Keep the bow smoothly on the string(s) and let the rhythms emerge out of the drone. Don't rush or push the rhythms - take your time and let the rhythms be heard as deep inner pulsing.

(Slow didjeridu bowing)



Didjeridu bowing is a technique I have developed whereby one cellistically creates the sound of the didjeridu through pulsating the bow in the following "didjeridu" rhythms:  and . For me, the sound of the didjeridu is akin to the sound of the earth.

The following notes give a step by step description of didjeridu bowing:

Place the lower half of the bow on the 'G' string in normal playing position (not too close to the bridge). During the first 'V' bow move the bow slightly towards the bridge. This is followed by the second 'V' bow providing a rhythmic "kick" towards the heel of the bow. This is followed by a fast moving, slightly diagonal 'n' bow which returns one back to the correct position to begin the next 'V' bow.

Keep the bow in contact with the string(s) at all times. Don't over-exaggerate the bowing movements.

The didjeridu bowing sound should not be aggressive in any way - rather it expresses a deep rhythmic pulsating pattern which plays on forever in the dreamtime. We're just tuning into it and playing with it for a short time.

Reclaiming the Spirit

~ solo cello

Molto Rubato (♩ = c. 72)
 Freely + Lyrically.....

Sarah Hopkins
 (1993)

Freely & Lyrically

(slow didjeidu bowing x 4 bars)

(fast didjeidu bowing x 6 bars)

(fast didjeidu bowing on G' alone x 6 bars)

REPEAT X 16 BARS

GRADUAL DIMINUENDO TO NOTHING OVER THESE 16 BARS. LIGHTEN THE BOWING TO ALLOW THE NATURAL HARMONICS TO RING OUT FREELY TO THE END