

Brett Dean



Brett Dean Photo © Cordula Groth

CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA

Bell and Anti-Bell

(From Parables, Lullabies and Secrets)

2001

14 min

for children's choir and small orchestra

Text: Michael Leunig (E); sound design by Paul Healy

perc(2): I=susp.cym/tam-t/vib/timp/hi-hat/SD/tom-t/chin.cym/crot/xylo/pedal
BD/tamb/bongos; II=glsp/t.bells/crot-2harp-strings-prerecorded CD-sampler

World Premiere: 07 Jul 2001

Concert Hall, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
Gondwana Voices, Australian Chamber Orchestra
Conductor: Lyn Williams

Vexations and Devotions

I. Watching Others; II. Bell and Anti-Bell; III. The Path to Your Door

2005

35 min

for SATB choir, children's choir and large orchestra

Text: Michael Leunig, Dorothy Porter; additional texts compiled by the composer (E)

2(II=af), picc(=af), 2.corA, 2.bcl.dbcl, 2.dbn-4, 3.2.btrbn, 1-timp(=1susp.chin.cym), perc(3):
I=vib/glsp/5t.bells/SD/hi-hat/pedal BD/2tom-t/1susp.chin.cym/tam-t/wdbl;
II=crot(2octaves)/gongspiel(1 octave:C3-C4)/BD/bongos/tamb/rainmaker/1susp.cym(sm
)flexatone; III=marimba/glsp/tom-t/susp.cym/mark tree/whip/flexatone-2harp-pft(=cel)
-MIDI kbd(+sound engineer)-strings(16.14.12.10.8; min.14.12.10.8.7); 2bn also play
mouth organs; members of the choirs also play 6 tuned bells, 4 water gongs and 5
alu-foils

"This three-movement work reflects the de-humanisation of contemporary life as exemplified by reality television, automated answering services and meaningless corporate jargon. A sense of restlessness, even anxiety, pervades the work from its extremely effective opening, where chaotic orchestral rumblings and murmuring voices lead to a plaintive enunciation of the word 'loneliness'. Dean's score is complex and multilayered, creating an imaginative array of textures while mostly avoiding any sense of narrative... The juxtaposition of the children's voices to represent innocence in contrast to the world-weary adult choir was especially moving at the end of the work, and the use of an old-fashioned telephone ring in the second movement created an ominous, Hitchcock-like dramatic effect. Dean's writing demands much of the orchestral musicians and WASO responded extremely well under the direction of Matthias Bamert." (Mark Coughlan, The Australian, 20 Feb 2006)

"The second movement in particular hit the proverbial nail on the head. I cannot imagine anyone in the audience who would not have identified with this movement... An abiding impression of this first performance is the seriousness of purpose that Dean has brought to bear on his writing for both orchestra and choir." (Neville Cohn, The West Australian, 20 Feb 2006)

World Premiere: 17 Feb 2006

Concert Hall, Perth, Australia
West Australian Symphony Orchestra / WASO Chorus / Gondwana Voices
Conductor: Matthias Bamert