

Brett Dean



Brett Dean Photo © Cordula Groth

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Carlo

1997

21 min

Music for strings and sampler

strings(8.0.3.3.1)-sampler (also: version for strings and live chorus)

"... a mesmeric score that shows again why Dean is perhaps the most significant of all Australian composers. It stands out as one of an increasingly small number of pieces that successfully mix live and electronic performance. The music, at once haunted and haunting, opens with taped Gesualdo and expands in every direction with strings that are by turns wispy and scorching." (John Allison, The Times, 31 Oct 2001)

"Dean's treatment [of Gesualdan motifs] is brilliantly imaginative, the splintering of vocal harmony into the screams and moans of Gesualdo's victims forming a particularly graphic climax." (The Times, May 1998)

"The best piece was Carlo...The strings mimic, fuse with and distort Gesualdo's gestures. A strange 20th century beauty emerges." (Evening Standard, May 1998)
9790202530405 (Full score)

World Premiere: 05 Dec 1997

Huntington Winery, Mudgee, Australia
Australian Chamber Orchestra
Conductor: Brett Dean

Etüdenfest

2000

10 min

for strings and piano

pft-strings(9.0.3.3.1)

"Etüdenfest takes as its starting point a series of the simplest technical exercises that young string players learn. Imaginatively varied and built upon, these little studies are given incarnations that are as intriguing and tricky as the originals are tedious..." (Neville Cohn, West Australian, 17 Nov 2000)

"There was ecstasy and dread... It all adds up to a chilling experience, a kind of spiritual tremble, something of a shadow across a grave." (John Carmody, Sun Herald, 26 Nov 2000)

World Premiere: 10 Nov 2000

Concert Hall, Brisbane, Australia
Australian Chamber Orchestra
Conductor: Richard Tognetti

Game over

2000

13 min

for instrumental soloists, string orchestra and electronics

cl(=bcl)-elec.gtr-perc(1):suspcym/tom-t/chin.cym/2tam-t/SD/hi-hat/pedal
BD-pft-elec.vln.vlc.db-strings(min.4.4.3.3.1)-multi track tape-CD player

"Game Over is the composer's musical treatise against that most vacuous of television culture's genres, the game show... [and] stood out for the finely wrought complexity of its orchestral textures." (Metropolitan)

World Premiere: 08 Apr 2000

University of Iowa, Hansher Auditorium, Iowa City, United States
Bang on a Can; Australian Chamber Orchestra
Conductor: Brett Dean

Pastoral Symphony

2000

17 min

for chamber orchestra

1(=picc).1.2(I=Ebcl,bcl,II=bcl).1(=dbn,flexatone)-2.2(I=picc
tp).1(=flexatone).1(=flexatone)-perc(2):I=4tom-t/4susp.cym/SD/pedal
BD/2bongos/2roto-toms/crot/marimba/tgl/tam-t; II=vib/xyl/glsp/crot/sm
chin.cym/BD/alu-foil/thundersheet-pft-kbd sampler-strings(3.3.3.1)-CD player

"Pastoral Symphony begins with birdsong, moves into mechanized madness and ends with a sorrowing viola, like a prayer beside a grave, only this grave contains the entire planet and everything on it." (Robert Jones, The Post and Courier, 28 May 2002)

9790202521526 **Orchestra (full score)**

World Premiere: 09 Feb 2001

Maison de Radio France, Paris, France

Ensemble Modern

Conductor: Stefan Asbury

Shadow Music

2002

21 min

for small orchestra

2(I,II=af,II=picc).2(II=corA).2(I,II=bcl).2-2.2.btrbn.0-timp(=tamb/chin.cym/tp.l/bl/BD).perc
(1):vib/tom-t/tgl/wdbl/SD/talking
dr/BD/susp.cym/chin.cym/tam-t/maracas/whip/glsp/crot-harp-strings(min.10.8.6.4.2;
3vlnII also play water gongs and susp.cym; 2vlnII also play bowed crot)

"An orchestral soundscape in three movements, Shadow Music finds Dean in increasingly confident voice. There's nothing identifiably Antipodean about the accent, but his balance of form and content shows that 15 years as a violist with the Berlin Philharmonic were not wasted. The title suggests an indeterminate, often dark atmosphere, which the music amply embroiders. In 'Prelude'staccato rumblings cast long, shadowy lines that coalesce in an abrupt crescendo. 'Forgotten garden' is a dense hothouse of sound, full of ideas that sustain and renew themselves. 'Voices and Shadows' begins with atmospheric bowed crotales, before following trombone and contrabassoon into the bowels of the orchestra. Dean knows how to lead the ear..." (Andrew Clark, Financial Times, 09 Jul 2003)

"... a substantial, three-movement work, full of sombre sonorities, which gradually gains in musical weight." (The Guardian, 07 Jul 2003)

World Premiere: 13 Jun 2002

Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Markus Stenz

Short Stories

2005

12 min

Five interludes for string orchestra

"Interwoven between, and sometimes within, the [Vivaldi Flute] concertos was the world premiere of Brett Dean's Short Stories. Cleverly utilising a range of effects, including pizzicatti, glissandi and whispering harmonics, these evocative, tightly structured miniatures are, for the most part, brooding and unsettling, dominated by a threatening, nervous energy that occasionally swells up into frenzied outbursts. Only the elegiac, Arvo Pärt-like finale, Arietta, offers any sense of relief, albeit fleeting and unresolved. Once again, Dean proves that he is a composer with a distinctive voice and singular vision." (Murray Black, The Australian, 04 Jul 2005)

"[Dean's] miniature stories are a rich amalgam of images and sonorities. His string essays proceeded in stealthy fashion. The plucked strings seemed to conspire in whispers before converging onto a meshed canvas of solo melodies and glissandi, the sounds made by sliding a finger along a string. The celestial mood eventually succumbed to combative episodes. This is a finely crafted work." (Xenia Hanusiak, Herald Sun, 06 Jul 2005)

9790202531891 **String Orchestra (Full score)**

World Premiere: 02 Jul 2005

City Recital Hall, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Australian Chamber Orchestra

Conductor: Richard Tognetti

Testament

2008

14 min

Music for orchestra, after 'Testament: Music for twelve violas' (2002)

2(I,II=picc).2.2.2-2.2.0.0-timp(=lg susp.cym)-strings (All string players require an additional bow without any traces of rosin on the hairs.)

World Premiere: 07 Mar 2008

Federation Concert Hall, Hobart, Australia

Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Sebastian Lang-Lessing