

## *Duo Concertante* (2002)

Richard Mills

“This work was commissioned by Walter and Elsa Verdehr and is dedicated to them as a testament of my esteem for their artistry, for their great generosity of vision in commissioning so many compositions to create a literature for both the Verdehr Trio and for their violin and clarinet duo. This piece is my way of celebrating their profound contribution as teachers—who in leading others to discover, are always on a journey of discovery themselves, providing a wonderful example to their students by their own dedicated and inspired practice of their art.

The *Duo* is a continuous, evolving story based on the music of the opening bars—the intervals of the violin’s music (inspired by the call of the Australian Magpie) contrasting in tension with compressed twelve-note scales for the clarinet. Important contributions from the orchestra are made by the piano, percussion, and harp, but the essential musical argument is concentrated in the gestures of the solo violin and clarinet who explore the potentialities of the opening music through a many faceted, interdependent relationship.

This piece is appropriately placed in a concert of classical music. The composer has been inspired by the dramaturgy of classical forms and has endeavored to incorporate their clarity and logic into his own musical language.”

—Richard Mills

The world premiere of *Duo Concertante* was on June 21, 2004 in Taipei, Taiwan with the composer conducting.

Richard Mills (born 1949, Toowoomba, Queensland) is one of Australia's most frequently commissioned and performed composers and a frequent guest conductor of Australia's leading orchestras. He went to Nudgee College in Brisbane and studied in London at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He worked as a percussionist in England and with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

Mills’ compositions range from major orchestral and choral works to ballet music. He has been commissioned to write for the Victorian State Opera, Opera Australia, the Sydney Symphony, the Chicago Chamber Musicians Brass, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Perth International Festival, the Commonwealth Games, the Olympic Games, and the Australian Bicentenary.

In 1989–1990, Mills was Artist-in-Residence for the Australian Broadcasting Company. As part of the residency he wrote a flute concerto for James Galway, which was given its world premiere in 1990 with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and a cello concerto for Raphael Wallfisch, who gave its first performance during a 1990 ABC tour.

The ABC residency also saw Mills conducting concerts and making recordings. His CD *Richard Mills Orchestral Works* with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra has become a best-seller on the ABC Classic label. He made his conducting debut in the United States with the Albany Symphony Orchestra in March 1989.

Mills has won the Albert H. Maggs Composition Award, the Ian Potter Foundation Award for Established Composers and he was twice recognized with a Green Room Award. He received the Helpmann Award on three occasions: once for his opera *Batavia*, again for his conducting of Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*, and once more for Best Musical Direction of his opera *The Love of the Nightingale*. In 2008, he was the featured composer in *Musica Viva Australia*. His three volume CD of the film music of Franz Waxman was awarded a *Deutsche Schallplatten Kritiks Preis*.

Mills has held the positions of Lecturer in Composition and Conducting at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music in Brisbane, Artistic Consultant to both the Queensland Symphony

Orchestra and Orchestra Victoria, Artistic Director of the West Australian Opera, and Artist and Artistic Director of the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra. From 1987–1989 he was a member of the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council, and in 1991 he was appointed a member of the Order of Australia. He is currently Artistic Director of the West Australian Opera, Artistic Consultant with Orchestra Victoria, Director of the Australian Music Project for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and Senior Fellow at the University of Melbourne.

Additional information is available at [www.richardmills.net.au](http://www.richardmills.net.au).