

Four Miniatures (1992)

Richard Mills

“The opening gestures of this work contain all the elements of harmony and melody which form the textures of the later movements. Movements I and III are relatively darker in color than their counterparts and the formative gestures of the first miniature recur as a refrain in Miniature IV, whose more direct harmonies place them in a new context. Miniature II is toccata-like. Miniature III is an extended development of the material from Miniature I, the opening chord of which forms the climax point of Miniature III in an extended articulation across the range of the keyboard. Miniature IV is scherzando in quality and the piece concludes with a witty transformation of the opening gesture, ending with a wry comment from the piano. *Four Miniatures* was composed for the Verdehr Trio.”

—Richard Mills

The world premiere of *Four Miniatures* was on September 29, 1992 at MacArthur Hall, Flint School of Performing Arts, Flint, Michigan.

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.