

Reef Singing (2003)

Peter Sculthorpe/Verdehr Trio

“A number of years ago, Peter Sculthorpe wrote a short, three-minute piece for clarinet and piano, *Reef Singing*, which he dedicated to me. It was included in a book of short original pieces written by various composers for young players. We made a violin-clarinet-piano version of it for the Verdehr Trio after securing permission from Peter to do so. He was pleased that we made this arrangement, and we played it as an encore at the end of some of our concerts.”

—Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr

The world premiere of *Reef Singing* was on August 8, 2003 in a Clarinet/Violin Duo Concert at the Magic Quartet International Clarinet Festival, Taipei, Taiwan.

Peter Sculthorpe (1929–2014) was born in Launceston, Tasmania and educated at Launceston Church Grammar School, the University of Melbourne, and Wadham College, Oxford. He was composer-in-residence at Yale University while visiting the United States as a Harkness Fellow in 1966–1967, and Visiting Professor at the University of Sussex in 1972–1973. He received the degree of Honorary Doctor of Letters from both the University of Tasmania (1980) and the University of Sussex (1989), and that of Honorary Doctor of Music from the University of Melbourne (1989). Appointed Reader in Music at the University of Sydney in the late sixties, he became Professor in Musical Composition (Personal Chair) at that university.

Sculthorpe wrote in most musical forms, and his output, numbering over three hundred fifty compositions, relates easily to the unique social climate and physical characteristics of Australia. Furthermore, his country's geographical position caused him to be influenced by much of the music of Asia, especially that of Japan and Indonesia. In later years, his interests also included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island music and culture. Certainly he is Australia's best-known composer, and his works are regularly performed and recorded throughout the world.

He was the recipient of many awards and prizes for his music, including an Australian Film Industry Best Original Music Score Award for *Manganinnie* in 1980, and the Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA) Most Performed Australasian Serious Work Award for his *Piano Concerto* in 1985. Recordings of Sculthorpe's orchestral works and music for strings have won Australian Record Industry Awards (ARIA) for Best Classical Music Recording in 1996, 2006, and 2015.

Sculthorpe was made an Officer of the British Empire in 1977, and in the same year was awarded a Silver Jubilee Medal. He became an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1990, and the following year was elected Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. In 1994 he received the Sir Bernard Heinze Award for outstanding services to Australian music, and in 1998 was named one of Australia's Living National Treasures. In 2002 he was elected to Foreign Honorary Membership of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Sculthorpe's life and works are discussed in Michael Hannan, *Peter Sculthorpe: His Music and Ideas 1929–1979*; in Deborah Hayes, *Peter Sculthorpe, A Bio-Bibliography*; in Graeme Skinner, *Peter Sculthorpe: The Making of an Australian Composer*; and in John Peterson, *The Music of Peter Sculthorpe*. His personal memoirs are entitled *Sun Music: Journeys and Reflections from a Composer's Life*.

Additional information is available at Sculthorpe's archive at the National Library of Australia, Canberra: <http://www.nla.gov.au/selected-library-collections/sculthorpe-collection>.