Liza Lim

Dianna (2020)
for solo horn
Liza Lim

Dianna (2020)
for solo horn

Commissioned by the Canberra Symphony Orchestra for Dianna Gaetjens as part of the ‘The Australian Miniseries’ curated by conductor Jessica Cottis and composer Matthew Hindson featuring musicians of the orchestra—music in a time of pandemic.

Duration: 2 minutes

Program note:
‘Dianna’ or Diana is the Roman name of the Goddess of the Hunt, identified with the Greek goddess Artemis. I had a wide-ranging conversation over Zoom with Dianna Gaetjens, principal horn in the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, in which she brought up so many things that inspired me and that are woven into this piece, despite its relative brevity. We spoke about the story of Diana from Ovid’s ‘Metamorphosis’, in which Actaeon spied on the naked bathing goddess who, in her fury, turned him into a deer to be torn apart by his own hunting dogs. This led into a conversation about the horn as an instrument indigenous to forest hunting cultures in Southern Germany and about some of her favourite repertoires: the Green Book of horn quartets which includes hunting tunes, the horn opening of Humperdinck’s opera ‘Hansel and Gretel’, and famous solos by Ravel and Messiaen, as well as her extraordinary career playing with the Berlin Philharmonic, her later incarnation as a diplomat in Tokyo, a stint in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in Canberra and current Masters studies in cybernetics and AI at the Australian National University for which she invented a ‘chord machine’ to test tuning—a horn player’s project if ever there was one. I mentioned the idea of potentially playing this solo outdoors and Dianna sent me some photos of a view of Mt Ainslie, of ‘gumtrees, cockatoos and magpies’, and a wetlands reserve near where she lives.

So…this little piece is a compressed portrait of Dianna that incorporates various resonances from the stories she told me – music evoking the mythical world of the horn given a bushland echo of the free-wheeling warble of Australian magpies.
Liza Lim
Dianna
for horn solo
to Dianna Gaetjens

\[ \text{\(\dot{b} = 50\) free wheeling, warbling like Australian magpies} \]

\(Bb-2\)
\(F-0\)
\(F-2\)
\(7\)
\(11\)
\(Bb-1\)
\(F-0\)
\(F-23\)
\(Bb-2\)
\(F-1\)
\(F-3\)
\(Bb-2\)
\(F-23\)
\(Bb-2\)
\(Bb-0\)

\(mp\)
\(pp\)
\(mp\)
\(f\)

* Emphasise naturally flat tunings of 7th & 11th partials.