

# Mp3 Lauris Elms, Deborah De Graaff, David Miller - Rose Of The Bay



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Classical and jazz-influenced song cycle for contralto, clarinet, piano. Male composer's libretto recounts intense love affair in Sydney, Australia - from the female viewpoint. Places times evoke bittersweet moments. 9 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Contemporary, EASY LISTENING: Mature Details: "Rose Of The Bay" - a cycle of 9 songs about Sydney, for mezzo-soprano, clarinet and piano. Music libretto by Derek Strahan written in 1986/87, premiered in that year at the Sydney Opera, and recorded in studio by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, with whose kind permission this recording is released on the Revolve label. Composer's notes: The very welcome opportunity to write a song-cycle for the renown mezzo-soprano Lauris Elms brought with it some challenges. I wanted the cycle to have a dramatic unity in performance, making it closer in concept to a narrative from opera than to traditional lieder. The theme is: a subjective view of Sydney - the city seen through associations created by a close relationship, which was intense, but did not endure. Most people have had the experience of living in a place haunted by vivid memories, especially personal ones. Although the libretto is gender specific (female identity for female voice), the singer's memories show an awareness of the view point of "the other"; just as, in the relationship, each was aware of the other, sometimes with telepathic intensity. The implication of psychic awareness (untimebound) is one of the subtexts of the libretto, and it surfaces openly in the recurring notion of "forever". "Forever" is a comforting concept where lovers live happily ever after. It is far from reassuring when, even after an ending, the sensitivity persists! And so "forever", both as an idea and as a reality, keeps surfacing in this work. Sometimes it is seen as a threat, an inescapable fate. Sometimes it is viewed with irony, even with a sense of the absurd, as in Song 4 ("Threads"), where the singer parodies a famous popular song to dramatise indecision about romance: "Yes, we have no relationship..."

J.Albert Sons kindly gave permission for the appropriate musical quotation (from "Yes, we have no bananas"), and were also amused to learn that the first four notes of that song are identical to the first four notes of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" - a piece of music which decively celebrates the concept of "forever" in a religious sense. Naturally, therefore, the musical quotation becomes rather ambivalent! As psychoanalyst are fond of pointing out, quasi-religious expectations are an important part of western romantic love, which is probably the main reason why so many relationships fail to fulfill the hopes on which they are based! Romantic idealism and urban realism coexist uneasily in the libretto of this work. Another challenge lay in finding a musical style which would allow me to take the term "song" literally - that is, to write contemporary music which is also songful. My solution was to write tonally, and to use the rhythms extended harmonies of jazz as a musical expression of the urban setting. The music is not overtly jazz, but the jazz influence is always there, giving, I trust, energy and impulse to the music. Derek Strahan

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