

biography



BRETT DEAN
COMPOSER - CONDUCTOR - VIOLA

Australian composer and viola player Brett Dean studied in Brisbane before moving to Germany in 1984 where he was a permanent member of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra for fourteen years. Dean returned to Australia in 2000 to concentrate on his growing compositional activities, and his works now attract considerable attention, championed by conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle, Markus Stenz, Andrey Boreyko and Daniel Harding. One of the most internationally performed composers of his generation, much of Dean's work draws from literary, political or visual stimuli, including a number of compositions inspired by paintings of his wife Heather Betts.

Brett Dean began composing in 1988, initially working on experimental film and radio projects and as an improvising performer. He became established as a composer in his own right through works such his clarinet concerto *Ariel's Music* (1995), which won an award from the UNESCO International Rostrum of Composers. and *Carlo* (1997) for strings, sampler and tape, inspired by the music of Carlo Gesualdo. He has since been commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, Concertgebouw Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Proms, Lucerne Festival, Stockholm Philharmonic, Cologne Philharmonie, BBC Symphony, Melbourne Symphony and Sydney Symphony Orchestras among others.

Currently engaged in writing his first opera *Bliss* (libretto by Amanda Holden after the novel by Peter Carey) to be premiered by Opera Australia in 2010, Dean has enjoyed a number of highly successful premieres in recent months. These have included the world premiere of *Songs of Joy* – three arias from *Bliss* – performed by Sir Simon Rattle and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic with baritone Peter Coleman-Wright. “*On the evidence of this taster, the opera of which these songs form part should be extraordinary when it opens in Sydney in 2010*” (The Observer, October 2008). Other recent premieres include a Lucerne Festival commission *Polysomnography*, a chamber work for piano and wind quintet premiered in 2008 by Lars Vogt and the Ensemble Wien-Berlin; and a BBC Proms-Perth Festival commission premiered at the 2007 BBC Proms. Earlier in 2007, Dean's violin concerto *The Lost Art of Letter Writing*, co-commissioned by the Cologne Philharmonie and Stockholm Philharmonic, was premiered by Frank Peter Zimmermann and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Dean, and this work has recently won Dean the world's most prestigious composition prize, the 2009 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition.

Brett Dean is currently Artistic Director of the Australian National Academy of Music and continues a varied musical life as a performer alongside his composing, appearing widely as soloist, chamber musician and conductor. Since 2005 Dean has been performing his own Viola Concerto as soloist, notably with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Sydney Symphony, Orchestre National de Lyon, Hamburg Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, West Australian Symphony and Malaysian Philharmonic. Dean has performed numerous premieres of solo and chamber works by some of the leading composers of our time and has also appeared as concerto soloist with orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, RSO Frankfurt and Montreal Symphony.

Dean has also conducted a number of orchestras and ensembles, including the SWR Symphonieorchester Stuttgart as part of a 2007/8 season Artistic Residency, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Concertgebouw Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, West Australian Symphony and Netherlands Chamber Orchestra. Highlights of the 2008/09 season include conducting the Swedish Chamber Orchestra in a programme featuring the Swedish premiere of HK Gruber's *Busking* with soloist Håkan Hardenberger, and the European premiere of Dean's *Testament*. Dean also performs his Viola Concerto with the Dresden Philharmonic and is featured composer at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival.

Brett Dean's music has been recorded for BIS and ABC Classics, the most recent release being his Viola Concerto on BIS with the Sydney Symphony, with Dean reviewed as “*a formidable and musical player as well as an impressive composer...an excellent showcase of Dean's range as a composer*” (The Guardian).

Brett Dean is represented by Intermusica. www.intermusica.co.uk/dean.
The works of Brett Dean are published by Boosey & Hawkes. www.boosey.com/dean.

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