

SONO  
LUMINUS



**Del Sol Quartet**  
Stephen Kent, Didjeridu

**SCULTHORPE**  
The Complete String Quartets with Didjeridu



**CD 1**

**1 String Quartet No. 12 "From Ubirr"** [12:22]

**String Quartet No. 14 "Quamby"**

2	I. Prelude	[3:24]
3	II. In the Valley	[3:49]
4	III. On High Hills	[4:45]
5	IV. At Quamby Bluff	[8:00]

**CD 2**

**String Quartet No. 16**

1 *(6)	I. Loneliness	[4:10]
2 *(7)	II. Anger	[3:58]
3 *(8)	III. Yearning	[5:49]
4 *(9)	IV. Trauma	[4:18]
5 *(10)	V. Freedom	[5:30]

**String Quartet No. 18**

6 *(11)	I. Prelude	[2:04]
7 *(12)	II. A Land Singing	[4:27]
8 *(13)	III. A Dying Land	[7:32]
9 *(14)	IV. A Lost Land	[6:43]
6 *(15)	V. Postlude	[5:20]

**Complete Program Time: 82:11**

\*(Blu-ray™ Tracks)

# SCULTHORPE

The Complete String Quartets with Didjeridu

*Amongst the amazing artistic collaborations that Del Sol has had in our 22-years of music making, playing Peter Sculthorpe's pieces with Stephen Kent (didjeridu) is both one of the most unusual and fulfilling. The breathtaking power and beauty of Peter's music is enhanced by the juxtaposition of these contrasting wooden instruments and traditions - the ones delicately carved by master craftsmen in Europe and the other naturally hollowed out by termites in Australia. Stephen's artistry envelops us in sonorities that border between the earth and the divine. These sonic waves lift the entire quartet, even changing the role of the cello from harmonic ground to the floor of an airship. We take flight together.*

*We have journeyed to places dark and wondrous during the process of learning these masterworks and hope you will join us there now.*

-Charlton Lee, Violist

## **PETER SCULTHORPE: String Quartets Nos. 12, 14, 16, and 18 with didjeridu**

Peter Joshua Sculthorpe was born in Launceston, Tasmania, Australia, on 29 April 1929. During his formative years his parents (mother Edna born in Yorkshire, England, father Joshua third-generation Tasmanian convict stock) were general storekeepers at the nearby rural township of St. Leonards. Cocooned in this small close-knit community from the worst effects of the international Great Depression, Sculthorpe enjoyed what he recalled was a solitary but otherwise idyllic childhood. The Tasmanian north later became one of the diverse sources of inspiration for the mature composer, in works including the **String Quartet No. 14** recorded here.

A capable but not brilliant pianist, he began composing precociously while still at school, winning a place at the Melbourne University's Conservatorium of Music, at just age 16 in 1946. It was during his five years at college on mainland Victoria that he composed his first four string quartets. On graduating, he returned to Tasmania and worked in the family sporting-goods business, while composing part-time for Launceston amateur theatrical productions. He also composed musicals for small companies in Canberra and Sydney, before winning a postgraduate scholarship in 1958



which took him to Oxford University in England. There he studied with composers Egon Wellesz and Edmund Rubbra, and formed a lifelong friendship with musicologist Wilfred Mellers. According to Mellers, it was at Oxford that the somewhat homesick young Tasmanian “*discovered his true identity, becoming the first composer to make a music distinctively Australian.*”

His earliest significant work was the **Sonatina for Piano**, composed in Launceston in 1954, and selected for performance at the 1955 ISCM Festival in Baden-Baden, Germany. Based on a retelling of an Indigenous Australian creation story, the music already contained germs of his mature style, notably the use of interlocking ostinatos, harmonic pedals, and hidden drones. It was also his first evocation of the Australian mainland Outback country. It was followed by a series of four works, all for string instruments, that he entitled **Irkanda**, an Indigenous word meaning “*scrub country.*” It was music that he further characterized as belonging to “*a remote and lonely place.*”

Sculthorpe never completely abandoned what he himself described as the “*straightforward ... austerely Australian*” lineaments of his *Irkanda* style. He used it in **Irkanda II (String Quartet No. 5)**, premiered while he was at Oxford in 1959 (which his tutor Egon Wellesz called the most original work he’d heard in years). Composed back in Tasmania in response to his father’s death in 1961, **Irkanda IV** is a sombre lament for solo violin and string orchestra. It became his first mature success and won him the attention of Australia’s musical leadership, leading to opera, ballet, symphony and chamber music commissions, and a place at the head of a new progressive cohort of young Australian composers that also included Nigel Butterley, Larry Sitsky, George Dreyfus, and the late Richard Meale.

In 1963, he settled permanently on the Australian mainland in Sydney, New South Wales, joining the staff of the music department of the University of Sydney, where he was to remain for his whole working life. Shortly after the acclaimed Sydney premiere of his **String Quartet No. 6** (1964), he consciously began seeking compositional alternatives to inherited European classical idioms, looking to the music and mythologies of other Pacific Rim cultures – notably Japan and Aztec Mexico – as inspiration for a new series. International recognition came in 1965 when the Sydney Symphony, on its first overseas tour, premiered the first of this new series, **Sun Music I**, in London, and at the same time he was signed by the new London-based publisher, Faber Music, which began a lifelong association. Signalling his new aesthetic direction, he was quoted in a feature article in the London Times: “*Europe is the past; Australian, Indonesia, the South Pacific, the future.*”

He spent 1966 in the USA as a visiting fellow at Yale, finding a major new source of inspiration in Colin McPhee’s ground-breaking study, *Music in Bali* (1966), and adding three more numbers to his orchestral *Sun Music* series, before reworking them into the 45-minute Australian-themed modern dance symphony, **Sun Music**, performed over 100 times by the Australian Ballet around Australia and on tour in North America. A year after the Australian premiere of *Hair*, for the 1970 Bicentenary of Captain James Cook’s First Landing in Australia he contributed a classical-rock fusion oratorio, **Love 200**, featuring vocalist Jeannie Little, rock band Tully and the Sydney Symphony. This was followed by his controversial opera, **Rites of Passage** (1974). He made his first direct reference to an Indigenous Australian chant in his string orchestra work **Port Essington** (1977). It launched a lifelong series of works in which he has paid tribute to Indigenous Australians and challenged settler Australians to acknowledge and learn from their traditional culture.

Composing music for string ensembles was one of Sculthorpe’s early musical preferences, and his string works have often become personal stylistic manifestos. When he completed his **String Quartet No. 8** in 1969, inspired by Balinese percussion gamelan --and which he said he had tried “*to purge of conventional classical European gestures*”--it was greeted at its premiere in London’s Wigmore Hall by influential reviewer William Mann as “*unlike any music I know, and durably compulsive.*” And so it proved, when 15 years later, it delivered Sculthorpe a new global audience thanks to the advocacy in concert and commercial recordings of the San Francisco-based Kronos Quartet. Recalling Kronos’s 1985 recording of the Eighth Quartet, British writer Norman Lebrecht described Sculthorpe’s music as “[t]he most original sound to emerge from Australia since Nellie Melba and the first to show awareness of regional contexts; it established Sculthorpe as musical figurehead for the entire Pacific basin.” And in his inspiring book on 20th century music, *The Rest is Noise*, Alex Ross put Sculthorpe at the head of a list of composers whose work “*you can use ... to draw a map of the globe.*”

Starting in his native Tasmania, Sculthorpe has persistently looked beyond his immediate horizons, geographically and culturally, for musical inspiration. Although his music is most often connected with the Australian Outback, it has taken him to many other parts of continental and island Australia and beyond, into the Pacific Basin--what Felipe Fernández-Armesto has described as “*the new Mediterranean.*” He has accordingly won honors both at home and abroad. Notably, in 2002 he was made a life member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, joining the poet A. D. Hope, the painter Sidney Nolan and the novelist Christina Stead as the only Australians to be so honored.

Issues of Indigenous and refugee rights and cultural and environmental depredation are common threads running through the music of the later years of his enormously productive composing career, notably in the four string quartets recorded here.

## Sculthorpe and the didjeridu

Though respectful gestures to Indigenous Australian musical idioms are a defining element of his output, the issue of direct cultural appropriation of Indigenous musical materials by non-Indigenous composers like Sculthorpe can be a vexed issue. Although the Kronos Quartet had approached him in 1992 suggesting the idea of scoring a work for string quartet and didjeridu, he almost certainly never would have considered adding an actual Indigenous instrument to his scores, were it not that, in 2001 a young Indigenous musician asked him to. That year, William Barton, a 20-year-old didjeridu player belonging to the traditional Kalkadunga people of Queensland, gave the first public performance of the version of the **String Quartet No. 12** recorded here – the first time any Sculthorpe work was heard with added didjeridu. Later that year, Barton gave the first performances of Sculthorpe orchestral works with added didjeridu, with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and its then chief conductor, young American maestro Michael Christie, followed in 2003 by a disc of recordings. In 2004, Sculthorpe actually composed a part for Barton and the didjeridu in a major new original work, the **Requiem** (2004) for chorus, didjeridu and orchestra. Fittingly, this work was also a high-point in Sculthorpe's dedicated and ongoing personal attempt at a reconciliation of Australian Indigenous and settler cultures (and people), although Sculthorpe was careful to point out at the time that "*reconciliation*" was not his preferred word, "*since we were never 'conciled' in the first place!*" Since then, when commissioned to compose several new works without didjeridu, Sculthorpe has factored in the instrument's later addition, as in the **String Quartet No. 16** (2006) and **String Quartet No. 18** (2010) recorded here..

The didjeridu is Indigenous to the far north of Australia, where archaeological evidence suggests it has been used for at least 1000 years. It is essentially a large wooden drone pipe, made out of termite-hollowed branches of large Eucalyptus trees, most commonly 3 to 5 feet long. The outer and inner surfaces are further cut away until the tube is thin and produces a "light-sounding" drone, which is then varied by being overblown. According to Indigenous tradition, the instrument dates from the creation "Dreamtime." The Yolngu people called it *yidaki*, a name popularised by the Yolngu rock band Yothu Yindi. The name didjeridu (or didjerry), though it sounds Indigenous, -actually is probably an onomatopoeic settler invention, first recorded in print in the 1920s.

Sculthorpe's added parts for didjeridu typically require two or more instruments, each with a fundamental drone of a fixed pitch. Where the didjeridu plays with the strings, the parts are precisely coordinated. However, apart from drone notes, it would be impractical, if not impossible, to notate many of the more complex overblown didjeridu sounds conventionally. Many of these, derived from traditional practice, are imitations of natural sounds (animal growls, bird calls) or dance movements (kangaroo hop). Some of these characteristic sounds Sculthorpe cues verbally. Other semi-improvised, cadenza-like solo passages are also indicated verbally, to be added especially between sections or movements of the string-quartet originals.

## STRING QUARTET NO. 12 "FROM UBIRR"

(Completed: Sydney, 1994; with didjeridu: 2001)

Though the original string-only version of the single-movement **String Quartet No. 12 "From Ubirr"** was completed and first performed in 1994, it is essentially an arrangement, for a much reduced ensemble, of Sculthorpe's earlier orchestral work, **Earth Cry** (1986). When coming to compose the original, full-orchestra score, Sculthorpe at first had planned to write a piece of what he described as "*quick and joyous music.*" On recent travel abroad, he had been struck how the music of eastern European colleagues like Alfred Schnittke, Arvo Pärt and the late Henryk Górecki was colored overwhelmingly by sorrow and lamentation. Back in the relative comfort and freedom of home, he reflected that Australia, at least, still seemed to him then to be a place "*where one could honestly write joyous music.*"

However, as the 1980s progressed, he realized there were increasing signs that it would soon become "*dishonest of me to write music that is altogether quick and joyous. The lack of common cause and the self-interest of many have drained Australians of much of our energy. A bogus national identity and its commercialisation have obscured the true breadth of our culture. Most of the jubilation, I came to feel, awaits us in the future. Perhaps we need now to attune ourselves to this continent, to listen to the cry of the earth, as its Indigenous inhabitants have done for many thousands of years.*"

As a teenager, Sculthorpe discovered a book of verse, called *Earth Cry*, by a Tasmanian poet, Norma Davis. Davis's title poem written in 1943, while Australia was at war, was a heart-felt reflection on "horrors that would turn our sunshine dark," yet drew solace from the "unconquered land." Forty years later, coming to write his own *Earth Cry* in 1986, Sculthorpe felt that Australians seemed to be disrespecting the land, to the detriment of all its inhabitants, Indigenous and settlers alike.

Originally, the 1994 quartet version was similarly and simply titled "Earth Cry for string quartet." But later, adding it to his official list of string quartets as Number 12, he gave it an independent subtitle, **From Ubirr**. Ubirr is the name of a group of rocky outcrops in the Kakadu National Park in the coastal north of Australia's Northern Territory. Overlooking floodplains, shelters in the rocks there have been used by the Indigenous owners over thousands of years as natural galleries for rock art paintings, depicting creation ancestors and animals such as wallabies, goannas, turtles, possums, and fish. For Sculthorpe, the rock paintings at Ubirr also symbolize "a caring relationship with the environment, and the Aboriginal belief that the land owns the people, not the people the land."

Sculthorpe himself describes this version with didjeridu in the simplest terms: "[t]he work is a straightforward and melodious one. Its four parts are made up of quick, ritualistic music framed by a slower music of supplicatory nature, and an extended coda. The slow music is accompanied by a didjeridu pitched to E, and the quick music by a second didjeridu pitched to C. The instrument represents the sound of nature, of the earth itself."

But the music, while "melodious" to a point, also sounds a note of genuine anger at the degradation of the land and the plight of its traditional Indigenous owners. There is menace in it from the slow introduction onward. For the long central section, Sculthorpe transforms a much earlier work, **The Song of Tailitnama** (1974), a vocal setting of words from an Arrunta traditional song cycle, to a tune that he himself newly composed at the time to imitate Indigenous chant. Didjeridu-like drones and pedals were latent in the 1974 setting from the first, enhanced in the 1994 quartet, and finally made explicit in the new version first tried out by William Barton in 2001. By presenting versions of the melody simultaneously, the music gradually builds to a shattering climax. A slower version of the melody, high in the violins, marks the end of this angry ascent, after which the texture thins and quiets down. A very slow, low-scored coda brings back the opening music again with the viola and cello.

## STRING QUARTET NO. 14 "QUAMBY"

(Composed: Sydney, February 1998; revised: September 2000; with didjeridu: 2004)

- 1 **Prelude (*Inquieto*)**
- 2 **In the Valley (*Solenne*)**
- 3 **On High Hills (*Con tenerezza – Calmo – Con tenerezza*)**
- 4 **At Quamby Bluff (*Inquieto – Come preghiera – Calmato*)**

The Fourteenth Quartet was one of a several scores Sculthorpe composed in the late 1990s and early 2000s, in which the elder composer revisited his Tasmanian youth and childhood. He was prompted by the task of writing a book of autobiographical memoirs that was published to coincide with his 70th birthday in 1999, under the title *Sun music: Journeys and reflections from a composer's life*. It included an especially moving account of his childhood, and the title of the first chapter, "My Country Childhood," also became the title of his orchestral work, **My Country Childhood** (1999). Composed a year earlier in 1998, while he was actually writing the book, the Fourteenth Quartet, as Sculthorpe has pointed out, was not only "concerned with my feelings about mountainous landscapes in northern Tasmania"; but also "in writing this work, I set out to compose the kind of string quartet that I longed to write in my youth." Thus, from the vantage point of a mature and successful composer, the work recaptures the mood of enthusiasms of his student days – for music like Delius's *Sea Drift*, and Mahler's *Der Abschied*. In a letter to a fellow college student written during a vacation spent back home in Tasmania at his family's Georgian homestead, "Mount Esk" in 1948, young Sculthorpe indicated he had adopted "a kind of Pantheism ... gradually, through my love of pastoral things, of old buildings, of country churches, of birds and trees ... Mount Esk is wonderful now ... Pastoral. Green, green ... green."

Even as a teenager, however, Sculthorpe had become aware of two darker sides to his Tasmanian idyll. One was the island's early 19th century history as a British penal colony. (Sculthorpe only later would discover that his paternal great grandfather had arrived in Tasmania from England in 1842 as a 16-year-old convict). The other dark history was the "Black Wars" of the 1820s and 1830s, the last stand of the island's embattled Indigenous remnants, already systematically hounded off their traditional lands and devastated by imported European diseases.

The story told to settler children like Sculthorpe in the 1930s and 1940s was that Indigenous people had all “disappeared” early in colonial times, a few survivors being shipped “for protection” to Flinders Island, before dying of imported diseases. Time had veiled even outright acts of genocide in legend. On visits to Westbury, near Launceston, Sculthorpe’s father told him the legend of Quamby Bluff, where native inhabitants were said to have been hunted down and herded over a precipice by colonial troops. Their death cries, “Save me,” or “Quamby” in the local language (so the legend went), were supposed to have given the spot its name. It was a generic story, a vestige of colonial guilt at such brutality dressed up with a touch of sentimentality and perpetuated, paradoxically, by generations of the descendants of the first white settlers for home consumption as a “gothic” tale for children. While no documents actually record an historical massacre on that particular spot, the story bears a strikingly close resemblance to an attested massacre at Cape Grimm in 1828, while “Quamby” was reported elsewhere to be the name of an Indigenous warrior shot in 1832. The “legend” caught Sculthorpe’s interest as a child, and inspired his later attempts, as a young graduate in the 1950s, to collect every piece of information he could uncover about the “extinct” musical culture of the Tasmanian Indigenous tribes.

Sculthorpe chose to address these issues in this “Tasmanian” quartet, composed on commission from the Chamber Music Society of his home-town of Launceston. He later also adapted the Quartet as a work for chamber orchestra, entitled simply **Quamby** (2000). Later still, he reincorporated changes made for *Quamby* into the final revised version of **String Quartet No. 14**, dated September 2000.

The two outer movements are both marked *Inquieto* and characterized by what Sculthorpe described as the “*especially important*” questioning interval of a falling tritone. Only after completing this music, directly related in his mind to the massacre legend, did he realize that it reminded him of the famous question motive “Muss es sein?” (“*Must it be?*”) in the final movement of Beethoven’s last quartet (Op. 135), the very question that seemed to him to be raised by the Quamby legend: must such a tragedy really have befallen Indigenous Tasmanians at the hand of White settlers?

In the **Prelude**, the second violin introduces the “*Must it be?*” motif, above susurrating ostinatos and drones from the rest of the ensemble, the didgeridu gradually emerging toward the end and breaking into its characteristic, growling overtones.

The second movement, **In the Valley**, is left to the strings alone. It also opens with the tritone figure, but now slower, and more intense, its contrapuntal treatment solemnly portentous. Sculthorpe originally entitled the movement, *From Legges Tor*, after another natural mountainous spot in Tasmania, and as he pointed out, the music “*is sombre and somewhat threatening, like the rocky peak itself.*”

The third movement, **On High Hills** (recalling also the mountain township of White Hills, a virtual ghost town when Sculthorpe was a child) is a “*calm and lyrical,*” somewhat wistful, recollection of Sculthorpe’s own childhood, which he described in his 1999 memoir as being happy yet solitary. The introduction and coda include what Sculthorpe calls “seagull sounds,” produced by bowed harmonic glissandi, a personal trademark of his string works from the late 1960s onwards. The movement’s main melody, the original version of the tune he later also reused in the opening “Hills” movement of *My Country Childhood*. It is traceable to his adolescent association of the tune and mood of the song, “*Somewhere over the Rainbow*” from *The Wizard of Oz*, with the Tasmanian highlands.

After returning to the questioning music of the work’s opening, the final movement, **At Quamby Bluff**, includes at its center a more reflective episode (*Come preghiera*) with a hymn-like tune, also closely related in many of its features (including its 5/4 time) to the second movement of *My Country Childhood*. Sculthorpe intended the short coda to bring “*some resolution at the close.*”





## STRING QUARTET NO. 16

(Composed: Sydney, August 2005; revised: June 2006)

- 1 **Loneliness** (*Con tristezza*)
- 2 **Anger** (*Deciso - Feroce*)
- 3 **Yearning** (*Espressivo*)
- 4 **Trauma** (*Intenso – Piangendo – Intenso - Loquace*)
- 5 **Freedom** (*Con tristezza – Estatico*)

String Quartet No. 16, composed in 2005, was commissioned by a prominent Melbourne attorney, human rights advocate and chamber-music enthusiast, Julian Burnside. Neither Sculthorpe nor Burnside came to the commission agreement unprepared, having met previously, and knowing that they had interests and deep concerns in common. Sculthorpe has said, unequivocally, that the quartet was “*inspired by From **Nothing to Zero**,*” a book edited by Janet Austin with a forward by Burnside, consisting of extracts from letters written by asylum seekers in Australian immigration detention

centers. Darning of Australian government policies of that time (and no less so now), the letters offer, according to Sculthorpe, “*heart-rending testimony to the inhumane treatment of refugees, including children, in mandatory detention.*” Burnside argued that Australians “*diminish ourselves by the way we treat these people.*” Sculthorpe’s Sixteenth Quartet makes a similar appeal (for justice to refugees) to that which inspired his Fourteenth Quartet (justice to Indigenous Australians).

The 5-movement layout of the Sixteenth Quartet harks back to Sculthorpe’s first use of the same ground plan in the **String Quartet No. 8** (1969). Here, the first, third and fifth movements are related in mood and material, all freely based on a traditional love song from Central Afghanistan, original home of many of those seeking asylum in Australia. Sculthorpe found the song – or rather, it found him – while listening to a pile of CDs of Islamic music that he had asked a friend, Christopher Latham, to put together for him, thinking that it was about time he filled in this gap in his knowledge. To help unify the work, in the second and fourth movements, likewise related to each other, he also uses a similar Afghan scale, but different material, so that the whole quartet creates a 5-part form with alternating materials (A-B-A-B-A). Coincidentally, not only did the use of this material allow Sculthorpe to address a crisis of the present, it also allowed him for the first time to acknowledge the long historical presence of Afghani cameleers in the Australian Outback with which his music is so closely linked.

**Loneliness** – a theme in Sculthorpe’s own early, outback-inspired *Irkanda* works – is also a persistent theme in the *From Nothing to Zero* letters. Sculthorpe treats the emotion directly and succinctly in the first movement. The didjeridu, breaking into dance rhythms toward the end, further intensifies the Australian Outback allusions. The same basic mood and material is intensified in the third movement to form the emotional centerpiece of the work, a slow and gradually building song of **Yearning** (“*a response to letters of yearning for loved ones in distant places*”). Occasional bird-like sounds break in upon the work, since, as Sculthorpe explains, “*many of the asylum seekers write about birds being free to fly in and out of the ‘refugee zoos’.*”

The second and fourth movements, **Anger** and **Trauma**, are Sculthorpe’s personal responses “*to letters of considerable anguish.*” Although he claims, “[*anger is not an emotion I know very well,*” in these two movements he summons up some of the hardest, most dissonant music he has ever written. In the final movement, **Freedom**, “*the music sings of dreams of a free life beyond confined spaces and razor-wire fences.*” Beginning in sadness, Sculthorpe marks each successive section gradually from *Poco estatico* to *Molto estatico*.



## STRING QUARTET NO. 18

(Composed: Sydney, April 2010)

- 1 **Prelude (*Inquieto*)**
- 2 **A Land Singing (*Poco deciso*)**
- 3 **A Dying Land (*Come veduta a volo d'uccello*)**
- 4 **A Lost Land (*Desolato*)**
- 5 **Postlude (*Liberamente*)**

Sculthorpe completed the String Quartet No. 18 on 29 April 2010, his 81st birthday, for an Australian premiere in June that year by the Flinders Quartet, followed by an international premiere at the 2010 Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. The latest work on this recording, and to date Sculthorpe's last quartet, it returns to issues covered in the earliest, the Twelfth, in which the original version of the music dates from 1986, almost a quarter of a century earlier.

According to the composer, it was intended as “a heart-felt expression of my concern about climate change, about the future of our fragile planet.” But, rather than attempt to address the plight of the planet itself, he chose “to use Australia as a metaphor for it”; thus, several of its key musical symbols are “specifically Australian.” Among them, again, are Sculthorpe's own characteristic, bird-sound episodes, notably those sounding like a flock of birds in flight (“*Come veduta a volo d'uccello*”) that open the third movement and immediately precede the very final notes of the entire work. Another Australian symbol, even in the original version for string quartet alone, are the cello's didjeridu-like sounds, which are of course amplified and intensified when, in this version, the didjeridu appears in its own right.

**Prelude** opens with a very brief but dramatic 8-measure introduction. It is based on one of Sculthorpe's favorite musical symbols, first used in his Ninth Quartet in 1975 and borrowed from Renaissance astronomer Johannes Kepler's *Music of the Spheres*, a rocking semitone oscillation between the notes G and A flat (heard from the viola), which Sculthorpe points out, “*Kepler believed to be the sound of Planet Earth.*”

The same oscillating pitches are also a key feature of the energetic main melody introduced by the first violin in **A Land Singing**, which is based on a mid-20th-century Indigenous song tune from the Kimberley region in the north of Western Australia, originally called *Windmill*. One of many contemporary Indigenous songs in traditional style that reflect on aspects of modern Westernized life (here, the steel windmills that pump drinking water from underground aquifers), it becomes for Sculthorpe a potent symbol of Indigenous culture's often unexpectedly optimistic, creative engagement with modernity.

Bird-calls open **A Dying Land**, leading to a melody for unaccompanied cello punctuated by more defined didjeridu-like patterns. This is followed by a section that charts a slow arc from a melancholy opening to an impassioned climax based upon the earlier cello music.

**A Lost Land** is the emotional heart of the work. Its desolate outer parts embrace a central part that recalls the melodic contours of a nostalgic song, *Waiye*, Indigenous to the Torres Strait Islands to the north of Queensland. There are no references to the didjeridu or to birds in this movement.

But, these do reappear briefly again in the short, final movement, **Postlude**, which is a treatment of the well-known 18th century hymn tune, *O, God, our help in ages past*, which was sung historically in both settler and Indigenous mission communities from colonial times. It is still used today in modern Australia's veteran commemorations, as Sculthorpe explains, offering “*comfort of hope for the future.*” The first of the two statements of the tune has a typically Sculthorpe-like free ostinato accompaniment; the second is similar but with more elaborate triplet counter melody from the second violin forming a second layer of reference to the famous obligato of Bach's *Jesu, joy of man's desiring*. Essentially optimistic, it returns to the first movement's defining drones on low C. As Sculthorpe has explained: “*[i]n my music a low 'C' always represents God, the God of all religious beliefs.*”

**Booklet essay by © Graeme Skinner 2014**



## DEL SOL STRING QUARTET

Kate Stenberg, violin

Rick Shinozaki, violin

Charlton Lee, viola

Kathryn Bates, cello

The San Francisco based Del Sol String Quartet, two-time winner of the top Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, commissions and performs outstanding new works from around the world, provides innovative educational programs, and has released six prior, critically acclaimed CDs since 2002. The group also collaborates with other artists in multi-media, dance, video and opera productions. Del Sol began in 1992 at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada. Its current members are violinists Kate Stenberg and Rick Shinozaki, violist Charlton Lee and cellist Kathryn Bates.

With the support of prestigious commissioning institutions (e.g., Koussevitzky, Fromm, Barlow, Chamber Music America and Canada Council for the Arts), Del Sol has commissioned and premiered pieces by composers such as Mason Bates, Kui Dong, Gabriela Lena Frank, Tania León, Keeril Makan, Hyo-shin Na, Ronald Bruce Smith, Chinary Ung and Reza Vali, among many others.

In addition to its Bay Area concerts, the Quartet has performed on prominent concert series nationwide, including the Kennedy Center, Library of Congress (premiering Ung's "Spiral X" on Stradivarius instruments from the Library's collection), National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian's Freer Gallery in Washington, DC; Symphony Space, New York City; Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, Santa Cruz; Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua, NY; Clefworks, Montgomery, AL; Colorado Music Festival, Boulder; Other Minds Festival, San Francisco; Santa Fe Opera; and internationally in Canada, Mexico, South Korea, Switzerland and China. Del Sol also has held residencies, led workshops, and performed at various educational institutions across the USA.

[www.delsolquartet.com](http://www.delsolquartet.com)



From Left to Right: Charlton Lee, Kathryn bates, Rick Shinozaki, Kate Stenberg



## STEPHEN KENT, DIDJERIDU

Multi-instrumentalist and composer Stephen Kent was born in Britain and spent his formative years in East Africa. Trained on the French horn, he adapted western brass instruments to didjeridu techniques while music director of Australia's *Circus Oz* (1981-83). This group's support for Aboriginal culture led him deeper into Aboriginal land and inspired his playing the didjeridu. Since the mid 1980's, he has pioneered the contemporary use of didjeridu in myriad collaborations with an extraordinary range of musicians, dancers and artists. He has performed all around the world and has released a catalog of over 20 recordings, including 6 solo works and others with group projects, including *Trance Mission*, *Lights in a Fat City* and *Baraka Moon*.

The didjeridu is played with the greatest respect for the Aboriginal Peoples of Australia and their struggle for rights in their homeland.

This package contains a **Pure Audio Blu-ray™** as well as a standard CD. The Pure Audio Blu-ray will play in any standard Blu-ray player and contains high resolution Surround Sound and Stereo versions of the program material. For more information about Pure audio Blu-ray, please visit [www.pureaudio-bluray.com](http://www.pureaudio-bluray.com)

## mShuttle

This **Pure Audio Blu-ray™** is equipped with the **mShuttle** application. Connecting the Blu-ray™ player to your home network will enable you to access digital copies of the songs residing on the disc. You may transfer the MP3s and FLAC files of your favorite tracks to your mobile player.

1. Make sure that your Blu-ray player is connected to your computer network.
2. Insert the Pure Audio Blu-ray Disc into your Blu-ray player and press the mShuttle button after the disc is loaded.
3. Open the Internet browser of your computer and type in the IP address of your Blu-ray player. You will find this address in the setup menu of your Blu-ray player.
4. Select audio files to download from the Blu-ray to your computer.

DSL-92181

Recorded at Sono Luminus, Boyce, Virginia  
Quartets Nos. 12 & 16 - June 24-25, 2013 | Quartets Nos. 14 & 18 - April 21-22, 2014

**Producer:** Dan Merceruio

**Recording, Mixing & Mastering Engineer:** Daniel Shores

**Editing:** Daniel Shores, Dan Merceruio, Adam Olson

**Session Photography:** Strider Jordan

Photos (pg. 1, interior flap): Jim Block

Photo of Peter Sculthorpe: Bridget Elliot

Photo of DSSQ (pg. 18): Michele Clement

Photo of Stephen Kent (pg. 19): Mitch Tobias

**Graphic Design:** Daniel Shores



Mixed and Mastered on  
Legacy Audio speakers  
[www.legacyaudio.com](http://www.legacyaudio.com)

### Recorded at 24bit, 192kHz in 7.1 Surround Sound

We would like to express our gratitude to Charles Amirkhanian for introducing Peter Sculthorpe to us and to Peter for his guidance and blessings. We would also like to thank Eda Maxym, Lucy Maxym, Stella Karuna Kent, and the tremendously supportive board of the Del Sol Performing Arts Organization.

- Del Sol String Quartet



© & © 2014 Sono Luminus LLC All Rights Reserved.  
P.O. Box 227, Boyce, VA 22620, USA

[www.SonoLuminus.com](http://www.SonoLuminus.com) • [Info@SonoLuminus.com](mailto:Info@SonoLuminus.com)  
WARNING: Unauthorized reproduction is prohibited by law and will result in criminal prosecution.

