

1989

Maninya III for wind quintet (Ross Edwards)

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Publication details

Hannan, MF 1989, 'Maninya III (Ross Edwards)', in M Noone & R Parker (eds), *Anthology of Australian music on disc. Handbook*, Canberra School of Music, Canberra, ACT, pp. 68-71. ISBN: 1875161015

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Compact Disc 14 (CSM 14)

Ross Edwards

Maninya III (1985)

Maninya III for wind quintet is part of a series of five chamber works which are characterised by extreme use of repetitive processes. The stylistic and structural aspects of these works may be likened to those of the music of composers such as Steve Reich, Terry Riley, and many others who have been referred to as minimalists. Edwards has nonetheless created a set of compositional procedures which guarantees the individuality of the series and related works. The other works in the series are *Maninya I* for voice and cello (1981-85), *Maninya II* for string quartet (1982), *Maninya IV* for clarinet, trombone and marimba (1985-86) and *Maninya V* for voice and piano (1986). The genesis of the *Maninya* style can be traced to Edwards's reworking of a Madagascan folksong in the central section of *Laikan* for instrumental sextet (1979). In addition, much of Edwards's piano concerto (1982) and *Marimba Dances* (1982) is related to the idiom, as is the more recent *Flower Songs* (1986-87).

Edwards has written in detail of the significance of the title and of the influences he feels have informed the *Maninya* style:

In 1986 I completed a series of five instrumental and vocal pieces under the generic title *Maninya*. The title was extracted from the text of the first piece, *Maninya I* (1981), for voice and cello, in which randomly chosen phonetic units are grouped together to form rhythmic cells. As I proceeded with the series the 'word' *maninya*, meaningless at first, began to connote, for me at least, certain characteristics of the music I was writing: its

chant-like quality, resulting from the subtly varied repetition of material within a narrow range of limitations, its static harmonic basis; the general liveliness of its tempi; and so on.

The evolution of this '*maninya* style' may have been influenced by my sub-conscious absorption of a variety of non-western musics. My exposure to African *mbira* music, for example, may to some extent be responsible for the characteristic terseness and angularity of the melodic shapes, while the manner in which these are woven together sometimes recalls the texture of Indonesian gamelan music. Some listeners have detected Japanese, Indian and Indonesian scales; others have considered the repetitive processes to be similar to those used to induce heightened awareness in much of the world's functional religious music, e.g. Australian Aboriginal chant, Moroccan *Sufi* music etc.

Far more important an influence than any music, however, was the natural environment, a timeless continuum from which much of the structural material was distilled. For more than a decade I have found the ecstatic and mysterious sound-tapestry of the insect chorus in the heat of the Australian summer to be a particularly fertile source of inspiration, and this is manifest in the somewhat quirkish periodicity of my earlier music. Although in recent works its presence is felt at a more abstract level, it remains the supreme generative force behind everything I write.

A possible influence upon *Maninya I* is Sculthorpe's *The Song of Tailitnama* (1974), in its original version for voice, six cellos and percussion, which uses a phoneticised text from the central Australian Aranda language as well as a repetitive texture derived from a Groote Eylandt song.

Figure 92 (part A)

Figure 92 (part A) is a musical score for a wind quintet, featuring five staves: Flute (Fl), Oboe (Ob), Clarinet (Cl), Horn (Hn), and Bassoon (Bsn). The score includes tempo markings: $\text{♩} = c. 108$ and $\text{♩} = c. 72$. Above the staves, there are rhythmic patterns and multi-measure rests: $\frac{6}{16}$ 1,2,3 $\times 3$, 4,6 $\times 2$, 5,7 $\times 2$, 8, $\frac{3}{8}$ 9,11, 10,12 $\times 2$, 13, 14. Dynamic markings include *f* and *ff*. Below the staves, there are harmonic diagrams: D minor: $i\frac{9}{6} - 10-9$, $i\frac{9}{6} - 10-9$, $i\frac{9}{6} - 10-9$, $i\frac{9}{6} - 10-9-8$, $\nabla 4-3\#$ 7, 4-3#, 4-3# 7, 4-3# 7. A reference code I.M.1-14 is located at the bottom right.

Figure 92 (part B)

C minor:
 i^9 i^9 V^7 i^9 V^7 etc.

II, M.17-21

Maninya III is in two movements, the first quicker than the second. In a modal sense the first seems to centre on D minor, and the second on C minor. Although the composer denies the suggestion that the music is chordal, the textures created in the *Maninya* style appear to outline basic chord progressions (see Figure 92).

These excerpts are typical of the handling of tonality throughout the series, although it is perhaps better to describe their textures as being modal in construction. Even if Edwards does not think of the music as being harmonic, it is difficult for the listener trained in the Western tradition not to hear it as continuous variations on simple chord progressions. This perception, however, should not obscure the principal compositional interest of the series which, on a micro-structural level, lies in the contrapuntal interplay of short motivic fragments. These fragments are generally subjected to repetitive processes and are not intended to be heard collectively in a linear sense as melody. Even so, it would be difficult to deny the existence of a strong lyrical quality in some parts of the series, notably *Maninya II* for string quartet.

As with the sacred series of works, represented in this series of recordings by *Etymalong* and *Reflections*, Edwards employs an intricate scheme of repetition and variation on a macro-structural level. Table 1 is intended to expose in detail the extent of the repetitive nature of the organisation of the first movement of *Maninya III*.²¹ Table 2 deals with the second movement.

Bar number	Relationship to other bars
1-8	new material
2,3,5,7	same as 1
6	same as 4
8	almost same as 4
9-16	new material
11	same as 9
12	same as 10
15	rescoring of 14
16	begins like 14
(16) 17-20	new material (related to 1-8)
19	almost same as 17
21-6	same as 9-14
27-8	same as 25-6
29-32	same as 13-16
(32) 33	rescoring of (16) 17
34	same as 19
35	same as 1
36	same as 4
37-40	almost same as 33-6
41	same as 19
42	same as 33
43-4	same as 19-20
45	almost same as 21
46	almost same as 21
47	same as 45

21. Repeated bars are included in the bar numbering scheme. For example, the second bar of the score is numbered 4 because the first bar is played thrice.

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48	same as 46
49-60	Section (21-32) repeated
61-5	new material
63	same as 61
64	almost same as 62
65	almost same as 63
66-83	material developed from 9-10
70	same as 67
71	same as 66
72-3	rescoring of 68-9
74	same as 68
75	same as 69
76-83	developed from 68-9
84-8	developed from 61-5
89-98	new material
91	same as 89
92	same as 90
93	same as 89
94	almost same as 90
95	same as 90
96	same as 89
97	same as 94
98	almost same as 90
99-102	new material
103-6	same as 99-102
107-14	material developed from 9-10
109	same as 107
110	almost same as 108
111	same as 107
112	rescoring of 14
113	rescoring of 14
114	begins as 16
115-68	large section (61-114) repeated
(168) 169-184	section {(32) 33-48} repeated
185-8	material developed from 9-10
188	same as 46
189-92	same as 185-8
193, 195	almost same as 185
194, 196	same as 188 (& 46)
197-204	section (107-14) repeated
(204) 205-20	section {(32) 33-48} repeated
221-32	section (185-96) repeated
233-44	further variation from 9-10
235	same as 233
236	same as 234
239	same as 237
240	same as 238
241-2	combination of 107-8 with 238
243-4	almost same as 241-2
245-8	same as 111-14
249-302	large section (61-114) repeated
(302) 303-14	section {(32) 33-44} repeated
315, 317	same as 185
316, 318	same as 188 (& 46)
319-27	section (233-41) repeated
328-33	coda developed from 20 and 107

Table 2
Organisation of second movement of Maninya III

Bar number	Relationship to other bars
1-13	new material
4-5	same as 1-2
(6) 7-10	same as (2) 3-6
11,12,13	same as 10
14-17	new material
15,16,17	same as 14
18-21	new material
20	almost same as 18
21	same as 19
22-5	new material
26-9	same as 22-5
30-3	same as 18-21
34-41	same as 22-9
42-7	new material
44	same as 42
45	same as 43
46	same as 44
47	developed from 43
48-51	new material
50	almost same as 48
51	same as 49
52-5	variation of 18-21
56-9	new material
60-3	rescoring of 56-9
64-7	new material
66	same as 64
68-71	same as 56-9
72-5	same as 64-7
76-9	new material
77, 78, 79	same as 76
80-7	same as 52-9
88-91	same as 64-7
92-5	same as 66-9
96-114	new material derived from opening of movement
115-78	large section (14-77) repeated
179-87	coda developed from 177-8
180	almost same as 179
183	same as 181
185, 186	same as 184

Maninya III is mostly divided into clearly defined sections of eight bars or less (four and five bar sections are common). Within these sections there is invariably repetition and/or close variation of patterns as short as one bar. The opening sixty bars of the work, for example, contain only seven truly unique one-bar patterns. These are organised in a variety of linear combinations. Repetition on a more expansive scale is less prominent. In the first movement, a large segment of fifty-four bars appears thrice (bars 61-114, bars 115-68 and bars 249-

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302) and there are a few other segments of twelve and sixteen bars which are repeated. In the second movement, one large segment of sixty-four bars is repeated (bars 14-77 and bars 115-78) but the largest repeated segment besides this is of eight bars length and most are of four.

Although the *Maninya* style involves an insistent pulse which is maintained throughout regardless of metrical changes, the patterns of repetition seem as unpredictable as those in the sacred music series. The composer seems to have transferred his concept of planned randomness to this quicker idiom. Although he claims that the *Maninya* style involves a musical abstraction of the sounds of the bush rather than an attempt to portray them realistically, the music does seem to capture an impression of the arbitrarily intersecting and interlocking rhythms of an incessant insect chorus.

Michael Hannan