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Flame

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Hannan, MF 2006, Flare, CD cover annotations for Zephyr commissioned by Origin Music Group, Sydney, NSW.
The creative force behind Zephyr is composer and performer Elizabeth Henshaw. She has combined her classical music background with an ambient/world/spiritual aesthetic to develop a sound which has been successful on the popular classics segments on ABC and BBC radio and other media. Although it is easy to critique Henshaw’s derivative approach to composition, some of her work has genuine inspirational appeal. ‘Peace Into Our Hands’, the opening track is the pick of the tracks on Flame. An ecstatic vocal melody is accompanied by a rich bed of modal harmonies and a moving cello solo. Henshaw has assembled a set of compositional procedures that are distinctive to her: textures of string pads, keyboard ostinati and light drum programming combine with hymn-like melodies that also have a Celtic lilt to them. The lyrics, some composed by Kate Henshaw and other collaborators, have a spiritual leaning and some are scriptural appropriations. In my view, the songs with drum programming are less artistically successful than the ones without.