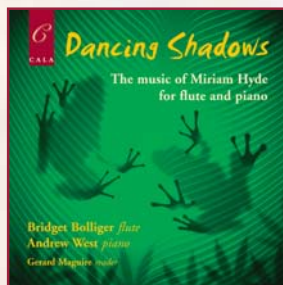


# Reviews of *Dancing Shadows*

Bridget Bolliger *flute*, Andrew West *piano*

CACD77019



While some might have heard of Miriam Hyde, few would intimately know her work. Australian born and trained, Hyde travelled to London's Royal College of Music in 1932. While overseas, she performed as a pianist and composed for the LSO, LPO and BBC Symphony. Upon her return to Australia in 1936 she commenced a successful career as pianist, composer, teacher and writer.

With such an outstanding pedigree it's a crime Hyde's music is not more widely championed. *Dancing Shadows* is a collection of Hyde's chamber music for flute and piano. Swiss-Australian flautist Bridget Bolliger and pianist Andrew West are wonderful advocates for this repertoire.

The title recording has Bolliger doing just that, as the flautist dances up and down the entire range of the instrument. The following *Five Solos for Flute and Piano* are evocative miniatures of pastoral scenes. One can hear the influence of Debussy in the modal harmonies and expansive rhythms.

For an example of Hyde's longer-form compositions this recording offers her *Flute Sonata*. It's a lovely piece and demonstrates the impressive musicianship of Bolliger and West. Bolliger's ravishing upper register shines in the *Andante pastorale* and West is a generous and skilful accompanist.

The recording should perhaps have concluded there, but instead finishes with five readings of Hyde's poetry with actor Gerard Maguire.

Sascha Kelly, *Limelight Magazine*

A celebration of the lyrical and colourful music of Miriam Hyde (1913-2005). The disc features sparkling performances from Bridget Bolliger and Andrew West, plus readings of the composer's poetry. \*\*\*\*

Kate Wakeling, *BBC Music Magazine April 2015*

If you haven't heard of Miriam Hyde, you're missing a big chunk of Australian musical history. One of the most successful Australian female composers of the 20th Century, she premiered with the London Symphony Orchestra at the ripe old age of 21, featuring as soloist in her own *Piano Concerto No. 1*.

Although she has produced a large body of work over her almost 92 years, her music is often relegated to the AMEB exam books for children or left to languish in the libraries. With this stunning new album, Australian-Swiss flautist Bridget Bolliger is working hard to change people's perceptions and bring Hyde's music back into the limelight. From the very first notes you will be blown away, both by Bolliger's glorious sound and West's expert handling of the accompaniment. However, what makes this album shine are the alternatively sweet, stormy and overall delightful notes of Miriam Hyde's composition.

I've had this recording on repeat for a week now and I'm still finding more to discover with each listening. On the surface, the music seems simple with clear melodic lines and understated harmonic ideas. But with each return to the works I find there's a hitch in the melody that makes it interesting, an odd seventh chord that defies the harmonic progression. You can really hear Hyde's melding of the worlds of Romanticism, Impressionism and a good dollop of Modernism in a way that is unique and impressive. Bolliger's clear musical intentions have made Hyde's music come alive for me in a way I've never heard before. I haven't even had a chance to get to the reading of Hyde's poetry at the end of the CD, but I'm very much looking forward to it. This album was a surprise and an absolute delight to discover.

Kate Rockstrom, *readings.com.au*

## Reviews of *Dancing Shadows*

Miriam Hyde (1913-2005) was an Australian pianist, composer, writer and educator of rare talent, steeped in Germanic Romanticism and French Impressionism yet writing music wholly her own.

*Dancing Shadows* contains some frankly ravishing music, delicate and finely wrought, continually pulling free of its descriptive moorings to be carried off by darker undercurrents. One couldn't hope for better advocates for this music than flautist Bridget Bolliger and pianist Andrew West.

As a bonus, Gerard Maguire reads 10 of Hyde's own poems, which contain their own fragrant, evocative music.

William Yeoman, *Gramophone*

All my experiences of Miriam Hyde's music have been positive. Her excellent piano concertos were recorded back in 1975 but her 2005 death prompted ABC to reissue them, and their unforced romanticism is fresh and exciting. Though she is best remembered for her piano music, Cala has now produced an album devoted to her works for flute and piano which, more than most of her compositions, take nature as a guiding light, as the descriptive titles show.

*Dancing Shadows* is a delightfully aerial piece and well deserves its status as the album title. Showing strong reminiscences of Debussy—she was nothing if not a romanticist-post impressionist, if the phrase means much—its touching terpsichorean elements are balanced by the fluidity of Hyde's melodic conception.

The *Five Solos for Flute and Piano* come from different periods in her life, the earliest from 1936 and the last from 1962. This might imply rather a disjunctive collection but actually the pieces are very much complementary.

The bell chimes in *Wedding Morn* are initially pensive—perhaps appropriately—but gradually become more open-hearted whilst *The Little Juggler* is a taut character study and very witty. Hyde's own favourite was *Marsh Birds*—there's a skylark evocation audible—and one can understand why, given its rarefied and rather beautiful texture.

The *Flute Sonata* was written between 1961 and 1962, mostly in trains, the notes relate, as she travelled between appointments as a music examiner. There's nothing at all pretentious here, rather the music is piquant, engaging and somewhat Gallic. With a genial Pastorale and a rustic-sounding spirited finale it makes for a charming listen.

The remainder of the programme is given over to nature scenes, all pretty short, that vary from autumnal to spry—the *Dryad's Dance* is one of the liveliest pieces in this set. They are all graced by her inventive warmth and expert balance of material between the two instruments

The music here lasts 47 minutes and the remainder of the disc is taken up with Hyde's poetry, read very sensitively by Gerard Maguire. Like her music, the poetry takes nature scenes—seasonal, scenic, as a principal focus. It's an unusual way to end the recital but expands one's appreciation for the breadth of her artistic inspiration.

Flautist Bridget Bolliger has all the ingredients necessary, tonally, technically and expressively, to convey the music's attractive mood setting and Andrew West lives up to his reputation as an outstandingly sympathetic accompanist and colleague. Attractively recorded and annotated, too.

Jonathan Woolf, *Musicweb International*

Miriam Hyde is the one of the biggest names of Australian music history who was not only a composer but a teacher, performer, recitalist, lecturer and examiner for AMEB (Australian Music Examinations Board). *Dancing Shadows* captures her poetic vision and her ability to create almost tangible settings in the listener's mind. This album is unquestioningly magical; there is always something new to discover each time it is heard. It almost feels like Hyde had the intention to share personal memories with the audience, particularly in *Wedding Morn*, which opens with sweetness and simplicity and gradually moves into an array of darker notes. Perhaps it depicts her loneliness during the separation when her husband became a prisoner of war during World War II.

Bolliger plays with such clarity and exquisiteness, she captures the tiniest details that Hyde herself embedded in the pastoral-like pieces. The playfulness, lively and sweet romantic tunes of the flute are accompanied by the subtle presence of West's piano. If you love Debussy or Ravel you won't be disappointed with this album. Although passion is not a key point, the impressionistic and dream-like style of the pieces compromises for its lack thereof. As a listener you can feel even from the first note that Hyde had a deep appreciation of the natural environment and the beauty of life's simplest gifts.

This album has done Hyde great justice with elevating the rich harmonies and every nuance in the melody. It is a work of pure storytelling.

Leslie Khang *finemusicfm*