

## **‘ALICE IN ANTARCTICA’**

**Alice Giles: Electro-Acoustic and Lever Harp, Spoken and Sung Voice**

**Featuring visual and audio material gathered by Alice Giles on her trip as an Australian Antarctic Division Arts Fellow to Davis and Mawson Stations on the Aurora Australis**

**The program was first performed at Mawson Station Red Shed, Antarctica, Monday February 28th 2011, to commemorate the Centenary of the First Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911 -1914**

**All spoken interludes are taken from the Note Book & Diary of Cecil Thomas Madigan (1889-1947), AAE Meteorologist**

*The program runs without applause or intermission*

**La Cinquataine  
Humoresque  
Annie Laurie**

**Gabriel Marie (arr A. Jonas)  
Antonin Dvorak (arr C. Salzedo)  
Traditional (arr C. Salzedo)**

**Lead kindly Light  
Abide with me  
Nearer my God**

**Purday / Newman  
Monk / Lyte  
Dykes / Adams (arr A. Giles)**

**A-Roving  
The Good Rhein Wine**

**Scottish Student's Songbook  
Scottish Student's Songbook**

**Billions of Penguins (2010)**

**Joshua McHugh**

**On Not Dancing with Penguins (2011)**

**Jim Cotter**

**Beneath the Midnight Sun  
(from the Imax film score ‘Antarctica’)**

**Nigel Westlake  
(arr for harp solo by A. Giles)**

**Southern Ocean Song (2011)**

**Alice Giles**

**Ice  
– filmed at Davis Station beach**

**Mary Doumany**

**Aurora Wynniss (2011)  
Text from the CT Madigan Diaries, and the poem "Ah Love, could thou and I with fate conspire ..." (quoted by Madigan), from the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**

**Martin Wesley-Smith**

**Wind Harp  
- filmed at Davis and Mawson Stations**

**Fantasia No. 16 (2010)  
- filmed at Davis and Mawson Stations**

**Larry Sitsky**

**Fantasia No. 17 (2010)**

**Larry Sitsky**

**Whirlwind**

**Carlos Salzedo**

**Additional Photos with thanks:**

**Iain Field, Barbara Wienecke, Ruth Wielinga, Madigan family archives, Frank Hurley photos held at the National Library of Australia and the State Library of NSW.**

*Alice's trip to Antarctica was supported by an Australian Antarctic Division Arts Fellowship, Camac Harps and Thom Harps*

### **Program Notes:**

The impulse and reason for my journey to Antarctica was to commemorate the voyage of my grandfather, Dr Cecil T. Madigan, who was meteorologist of the first Australasian Antarctic Expedition 1911-1914.

The voyage was one of the most successful scientific Antarctic expeditions in our history. However it came at a great cost. The site chosen, Commonwealth Bay in Adelie Land, turned out to be one of the windiest places on the continent. Two of the expedition members, Ninnis and Merz, who had become Madigan's closest friends during the long confined winter, died while on a sledging party with expedition leader Mawson. When Mawson did not return in time for the ship, which needed to leave the bay before the bay froze over for the winter, Madigan was asked to lead the party to stay behind and wait for him. Mawson returned the day after the ship had left, and while it was still in sight. The weather being too inclement and other expedition parties needing to be picked up, Madigan, Mawson and five others had to remain behind for yet another year. Waiting for Madigan in Adelaide was his fiancée Wynnis (later to become my grandmother).

When I discovered that my cousin Julia Butler was in the process of editing Madigan's expedition diaries it was natural to wish to incorporate excerpts from these in my program, especially those that mention the music he loved and experienced during his long stay in Antarctica. The program came about by pulling spoken and musical references together, along with the new works especially written by Australian composers for the occasion.

On my return to Australia I added film material I had recorded during the voyage, including film of the small harp outdoors and a song I composed on the ship, to create a complete audio-visual program.

**We need stories and dreams powered by music to keep our attention and imagination engaged with the icy continent, since human activity - scientific and political - is going on there constantly.**

*(A. Giles)*

***Billions of Penguins:*** In the case of writing my first solo harp piece, I realised the name before composing the music. I envisioned the Antarctic landscape and its friendly inhabitants; this provided me with the inspiration I needed. The programmatic descriptions during this piece are self-explanatory:

*The Icy Landscape...Fast penguins gathering and grouping themselves...Penguins having difficulty organizing themselves...More organizing...Penguin's success...A rowdy party...A cold wind comes...The party is disturbed and the penguins huddle for warmth...Patiently waiting...Impatiently waiting...Stamping feet in frustration...The disturbance has cleared...Back to the rowdy party... Night falls... Time to sleep... (J. McHugh)*

***On Not Dancing with Penguins:*** This work was written for Alice Giles to perform in Antarctica. It was planned that I would also travel on this expedition but, for medical reasons, it was not possible for me to participate. 'On Not Dancing with Penguins' reflects both my sense of disappointment and my sense of wonder regarding this magical place. Like viewing the Antarctic landscape, the process of writing for the harp seduces you with its apparent simplicity, only to reveal its profound complexity, its peaks and its valleys when you are in the midst of composition. This is my fourth piece for harp(s) in the last few years, a fifth is in progress - and I am still an explorer in this sonically magical place. *(J. Cotter)*

***Beneath the Midnight Sun:*** *Antarctica* is a unique 40-minute Imax motion picture that portrays the history, science, delicate ecology and awesome beauty of the world's southernmost continent. It captures in giant screen format the mysterious icy expanse of the highest, driest and coldest continent and takes viewers to the home of penguins, seals and the other exotic life forms, as well as focusing on the activities conducted at many scientific research stations established by countries from around the world. This adaptation of *Scott's Theme* from the *Antarctica* film score uses the delicate timbres and sustaining power of the electro-acoustic harp to capture the haunting beauty of an Antarctic summer. *(N. Westlake)*

***Ice:*** Victorian harpist and composer Mary Doumany, adapted her pedal harp composition, "Ice" for Alice to play during her Antarctic sojourn, on a small lever instrument. It is a part of her collection of works entitled "Elemental: Impressions of the Natural World". The crystalline tone in the harp's upper register evokes the cold beauty of ice crystals, and the crunching sounds of ice crossing water in the footage, make the perfect ambient accompaniment. *(M. Doumany)*

***Aurora Wynniss:*** Alice Giles' grandfather, Cecil T. Madigan, who died before she was born, was the meteorologist on Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition from 1911 to 1913. His unpublished "Note Book & Diary" gives a fascinating account of daily life, with all its trials, tribulations and tragedies, at the base in Adélie Land (now known as Cape Denison), Antarctica. There were good times too, and comradeship and great beauty. Meanwhile, Cecil's fiancée, Wynniss, waited for his return. This piece draws on Cecil's writings to paint a picture of his life at the base and of his love for Wynniss. *(M. Wesley-Smith)*

***Fantasia No. 16 & Fantasia No. 17:*** My Fantasias for "small" harp (No. 16) and for electronic "blue" harp (no. 17) are among the first pieces professionally composed for professional performer to be performed in Antarctica, one in the open, and the other indoors.

These performances were carried out on the Antarctic continent by Alice Giles, during the summer of 2011. The Fantasia No. 17 is intended to sound like a voice in a huge cathedral and uses a loop effect, as well as other sound modifications. (*L. Sitsky*).

Fantasia No. 16 was also performed at Mawson Station 5<sup>th</sup> March 2011, for the interment ceremony of Nell and Phil Law.

### **Biographical notes:**

Geologist and explorer, **Cecil Thomas Madigan (1889 – 1947)** was born in Renmark, South Australia, and studied at the University of Adelaide and as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University (B.A., M.A., DSc.). Madigan was meteorologist on the first Australasian Antarctic Expedition, lead the eastern sledging party, and the group which stayed behind for Mawson's party. Madigan taught geology at Adelaide University. He wrote two books, *Crossing the Dead Heart* and *Central Australia*, as well as numerous published papers on his geological and geographic research of Central Australia and the arid regions of South Australia, and he crossed and named the Simpson Desert in 1939. <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A100367b.htm> (Australian Dictionary of Biography Online).

Expedition diaries: *Madigan's account: the Mawson expedition : the Antarctic Diaries of C.T. Madigan, 1911- 1914 / transcribed by J.W. Madigan* Wellington Bridge Press.

**Alice Giles** is celebrated as one of the world's leading harpists. She has performed extensively as a soloist world-wide and was the First Prize-winner of the Eighth Israel International Harp Contest. Regarded by Luciano Berio as the foremost interpreter of his *Sequenza II*, solo recital highlights include London's Wigmore Hall, New York's 92nd Street 'Y' and Merkin Hall and the Frankfurt Alte Oper. A guest artist at numerous festivals, including Marlboro Music, Scotia Festival, Schleswig-Holstein and Insel Hombroich Festivals in Germany, Bath Mozartfest, Australian Festival of Chamber Music, and the Adelaide, Huntington, Barossa and Sydney Festivals. She has commissioned a complete program of works for the electro-acoustic harp, and is Director of the Seven Harp Ensemble (SHE), which has commissioned many new works by Australian composers. Alice was the Local Artistic Director of the 2014 World Harp Congress in Sydney. Her discography includes several solo harp discs, a concerto disc with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, and many chamber music discs, for the Tall Poppies, Musikado, ABC Classics, CDI, and Marlboro Recording Society labels. From 1990 to 1998 she taught at the Hochschule für Musik in Frankfurt and now teaches at the University of Sydney and Australian National Academy of Music.

## Song Texts:

**Lead kindly Light**, amid the  
encircling gloom,  
Lead Thou me on;  
The night is dark, and I am far from  
home,  
Lead Thou me on.  
Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see  
The distant scene; one step enough for  
me.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure  
it still  
Will lead me on,  
O'er moon and fen, o'er crag and  
torrent, till  
The night is gone;  
And with the morn, those angel faces  
smile,  
Which I have loved long since, and  
lost awhile.

**Abide with me**; fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens; Lord with me  
abide;  
When other helpers fail, and comforts  
flee,  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing  
hour;  
What but Thy grace can foil the  
tempter's power?  
Who like Thyself my guide and stay  
can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord  
abide with me.

## A-Roving

At number three old England Square,  
(Mark well what I do say);  
At number three old England Square,  
My Nancy Dawson she lived there:  
And I'll go no more a-roving  
With you fair maid!

*Chorus*: A-roving! A-roving! Since  
roving's been my ru-i-n,  
I'll go no more a-roving with you fair  
maid!

My Nancy Dawson she lived there,  
(Mark well what I do say);  
She was a lass surpassing fair,  
With bright blue eyes and golden hair:  
And I'll go no more a-roving  
With you fair maid!

*Chorus*

I met her first when home from sea,  
(Mark well what I do say);  
Home from the coast of Afrikee,  
With pockets lined with good monie;  
And I'll go no more a-roving  
With you fair maid!

*Chorus*

Oh! didn't I tell her stories true,  
(Mark well what I do say);  
And didn't I tell her whoppers too!  
Of the gold we found in Timbuctoo;  
And I'll go no more a-roving  
With you fair maid!

*Chorus*

But when we'd spent my blooming  
'screw',  
(Mark well what I do say);  
And all of the gold from Timbuctoo,  
She cut her stick and vanished too;  
And I'll go no more a-roving  
With you fair maid!

*Chorus*

\*screw = wages

## The Good Rhein Wine

Pour out the Rhein wine! Let it flow  
Like a free and bounding river;  
Till sadness sinks and ev'ry woe  
Lies drown'd beneath its waves for  
ever.  
For naught can cheer the hearts that  
pine

Like a deep, deep draught of the good  
Rhein wine,  
Like a deep, deep draught,  
Like a deep deep draught of the good  
Rhein wine,  
Like a deep, deep draught,  
Like a deep deep draught of the good  
Rhein wine.

Pour out the Rhein wine! When each  
hand  
Doth grasp a brimming measure;  
The pledge shall be "Our Fatherland",  
And Freedom, Friendship, Love and  
Pleasure.  
Then Hurrah! For the land of the  
purple vine,  
And a deep, deep draught of the good  
Rhein wine,  
*Etc.*

### **Southern Ocean Song**

My soul lies deep in the sea below,  
My soul soars high like a bird on the  
wind,  
My soul is the ship that is rocked  
between:

I am one.

My soul rests grey in the infinite sky,  
My soul is steel like the sea that  
reflects,  
My soul is soft in her mother's arms:

I am home.

And yet, all this vastness is empty  
indeed,  
Without that which I seek above all:  
Oh Love is the need which fills my  
soul:

Love is all.