

Note for

*Glass Games*

by

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Duration: 12 minutes.

*Glass Games* (1981) for flute, clarinet, violin, 'cello, piano, percussion and 2 channel computer-generated tape.

Apart from the more obvious images of light playing on (coloured) glass, the title alludes to an aesthetic similar to that found in Hermann Hess's *The Glass Bead Game*. It was this novel more than any other piece of literature that influenced me in my student years at Sydney University.

The work has the following overall structure:

[1] Prologue: Instruments only: This section exposes the six chord structures on which the pitch material of the piece is based.

[2] Middle section: consisting of three parts, with tape throughout.

1. ensemble tutti.
2. piano and percussion improvisation.
3. ensemble tutti improvisation.

[3] Epilogue: a condensed form of the prologue: a close.

The tape part was composed on the Computer Music Project system at Melbourne University. All the sounds are made by direct digital synthesis using frequency modulation techniques. Both timbrally and harmonically the musical material on the tape reflects and refracts that heard in the ensemble, and so one hears ideas moving from the tape into the ensemble and vice-versa. *Glass Games* was commissioned by the Seymour Group and first performed by them on 3 May 1981 in Melba Hall at Melbourne University. It is the first Australian work to combine an instrumental ensemble with computer sounds made by software synthesis. The work is dedicated to Ross Edwards.