

Media Quotes

Fine Blue Thread

Lopa Kothari BBC Radio3

Fine Blue Thread are an Australasian trio, comprising vocals, strings and tabla who compose music influenced and inspired by Indian, Javanese and western classical traditions. Their music is not about blurring boundaries but rather a snapshot of their local high street...an expression of the world we live in. Their musical prowess and passion for improvisation has produced a perfect backdrop for what is simply, really good music!

ABC Limelight Magazine, December 2009

This gorgeous new collaboration between three Melbourne-based musicians combines the talents of cellist Helen Mountfort (My Friend the Chocolate Cake), Indian-trained tabla player Sam Evans and Australian-Indonesian vocalist/violist Ria Soemardjo. Based in tradition but decidedly modern, their delicate mix of influences unfolds gently, revealing a rich collage of enchanting melodies and rhythmic nuances. Soemardjo's poetic lyrics are beautifully balanced by Mountfort's full harmonious lines and Evans's crisp percussive style. A marvellous debut, Red Mountain heralds the arrival of a fresh new Australian world music trio. It will be fascinating to watch their progress.

★★★★★ S.J.

Paul Petran - ABC Radio National

"Fine Blue Thread is a welcome addition to Australian music. Three very talented musicians creating a sublime, exquisite and dynamic musical world with voice, cello and tabla".

Roger Holdsworth - The Global Village (PBS-FM, Melbourne)

"In Red Mountain, Fine Blue Thread weaves enticing aural landscapes from voice, cello, percussion and silences. From the apparent simplicity of tones and words, they create complex visions that transport the listener to spaces and times that are both familiar and alien. New music or old music – there are elements of both combined in Fine Blue

Thread's new CD, and this creates a music form that is outside time and uniquely their own."

David Bridie - Internationally Acclaimed Musician

"Fine Blue Thread's debut CD shows a trio melding atmospheres, grooves and world music threads in a refreshingly unique way. The mixture of cello, tabla and voice is an interesting blend and it works. You hear melody, texture, rhythm and feel in ways that sound different from most music we get here these days and that in itself gives this CD a gold star. It is different and well crafted and I found myself returning to this CD again and again ,and for me that is a rarity these days. Having heard this trio live,they certainly match their recorded efforts live and makes you realise that that was how this recorded, livedown. Thoroughly recommended."

Seth Jordan - Music Journalist

"A gorgeous new collaboration between three innovative Melbourne-based musos, their mix of styles and influences unfolds gently, revealing a rich collage of enchanting melodies and rhythmic nuances. A marvellous recording debut."

Jessica Nicholas - The Age, Melbourne

October 18, 2007

(Please note: Fine Blue Thread was originally called one - two - three)

Pulsing Towards Serenity

Three musicians representing three different cultures coming together to perform in various combinations. It's a simple enough concept, though one that involved many months of work for the members of One, Two, Three.

Singer Ria Soemardjo, tabla player Sam Evans and cellist Helen Mountfort have trained in separate worlds (Indonesian, Indian and Western classical music) using different modes, languages and tuning systems. But all three have an ability to absorb ideas and influences from outside their chosen field, allowing them to create music that is as fresh as it is beguiling.

Tuesday's concert at the Spiegeltent opened with two solo pieces by Soemardjo, demonstrating the traditional Javanese vocal style that informs her work. Her beautifully pure-toned voice created a mood of instant serenity, even as a fierce wind made the tent's canvas roof billow and flap vigorously. Next, Mountfort performed two movements of a new suite for solo cello, her bow skimming across the strings in wonderfully deft arpeggios.

On the evening's first trio piece (Red Mountain), Soemardjo sang softly in English over a cello drone and a wash of cymbals from Evans - a contemporary take on the traditional Indian alaap - before the tablas entered to create a rolling momentum.

Evans used not two but four tablas, underlining the melodic possibilities of his instruments as tuned percussion. Mountfort and Soemardjo also explored ways of shifting or merging the roles of their instruments. Mountfort's bow would often bounce percussively to match Evans' snapping rhythms, or keep time while the tablas created expressive colour.

On the final piece of the evening (Fine Blue Thread) Soemardjo used a small Indonesian toy, adding the sound of pecking birds to her vocal slides.