

Magnificent Seven (at the double)

The Magnificent Seven featuring Maximillian Rudd and Doug de Vries, Narana Aboriginal Cultural Centre, Saturday 15 October, 2022.

This concert was innovative programming by the Windfire Festival committee. It was a new venue for most who attended and that was a full house.

Doug de Vries began to play on the small but ideal performing stage, and was shortly joined by Max Rudd as they showcased their 7-string guitars.

The instruments were standard classical 6-string guitars with one additional bass string tuned to C (or sometimes to B, rarely to A), and the pieces chosen for this recital brought out these extra bass notes beautifully.

Doug first became enthused about the instrument in Brazil in 1990; audiences find the music written for 7 strings both unfamiliar and yet universally attractive.

The intertwining of parts from these two players was clearly demonstrated in *Visitando o Recife* (visit to the reef), which was followed by a *Suite for Two 7-String Guitars*, the first concerto written for the instrument, by Doug's friend and contemporary Mauricio Carrilho, arranged by the performers in frugal concerto-style with Max the soloist, Doug the orchestra as they "have neither the funds nor patience to play with an orchestra".

The second movement displayed shades of Villa-Lobos in describing Rio de Janeiro at night, and the final movement, with bass string tuned down to B, featured a beautiful, delicate solo.

The *choro* (Portuguese word meaning 'to cry') genre was prominent in *Choro Negro*, a piece by the master of the genre Paulinho da Viola who turns 80 this year.

Written for cavaquinho, Doug's own composition *Running the Scree* is a constantly-moving workout and challenge for the fingers, which he played with glee.

Three pieces forming *Music of 'Pixinguinha'*, regarded as the 'father of the choro', were in turn jazzy, improvisatory and full of syncopation, then much quieter and reflective, with the third notably livelier. Together they played a beautiful melody *Senhorinha* written by Guinga (a dentist in Rio) for his daughter.

A novelty piece by Honorino Lopes, adapted from piano repertoire of the Ragtime era, was suitably jaunty.

Doug then demonstrated his tenor guitar, much smaller and with only 4 strings, popular in Brazil as an alternative to the banjo or the mandolin. On this smaller instrument he played *Migalhas de Amor* (Crumbs of Love) and *Um Baile em Catumby*, a jaunty dance which finished in a really fast-paced, exuberant manner.

Raphael Rabello was one of the greatest players of choro style and wrote *Meu Avô* as his tribute to his grandfather, which followed.

Then it was back to the 7-stringed guitars for *Murmurando*, a tune which Doug proclaimed "has everything that opens and shuts", with both rhythmic and melodic interest.

They finished their recital with a samba encore composed by Max, a one-time student of Doug who now has a PhD in Music.

This was a superb concert, with splendid guitar playing which displayed brilliant technique, extraordinary improvisation and sensitive musicianship. It was a wonderful recital between these two friends and specialists in Brazilian seven-string guitar music.

Bravo!

– Marie Goldsworthy