

**RETURNING THE ANGLES By Hazel Smith and Roger Dean (1998)  
Programme Note for the audio recording and the recorded rendering  
of the 1998 multimedia version (note revised 2018)**

*Returning the Angles* is a techno-drama originally commissioned and broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio program 'The Listening Room', but presented on this website in two forms: as a work of text and sound, and as a pair of recordings of a version which includes animated visual images, one automatic (no user interaction), and one performed. The complete text is also made available here.

The sound aspect of the piece includes computer-generated music written in the MAX platform, and some ironic pastiche of baroque and commercial music, as well as digital manipulation of the spoken text. The animated visual images which run parallel to the sound and text were designed and manipulated by Roger Dean in VRML 2 (Virtual Reality Modelling Language). They involve real time transformation of the image so that the juxtapositions of text and image will always be different.

The text, written and mainly performed by Hazel Smith, is a hybrid of prose, poetry, satire, commentary, allegory, linguistic play and sonic improvisation. At the centre of the piece is the presence of Helen Simons who returns to England in 1996 — just before the election of New Labour — after living in Australia for many years. The piece is about Helen's perceptions of British society viewed now through the eyes of her Australian experience; her re-engagement with some aspects of her past; and her search for a hybrid identity, which will enable her to be 'an eternal migrant' who can wander freely between London and Sydney. Throughout, Helen's 'return' is intertwined with the contrasting cultures, histories and environments of London and Sydney. The piece is also a merciless satire about British society, politics and the media.

VRML 2 had a limited effective lifespan, and in 2018 is difficult to run in a web browser. Thus the present versions are video recordings of renderings of the VRML made in 2001, one automatic, one interactive. As in the original, limited by computational power, the frame rate of the videos is low, <5fps. VRML permitted algorithmic and stochastic processes, and this was used notably in the text generation for display.

The recording for Radio was produced by Andrew McLennan (ABC), who also performed parts of the text. Recorded by Philip Ullman.

Note by Hazel Smith and Roger Dean.