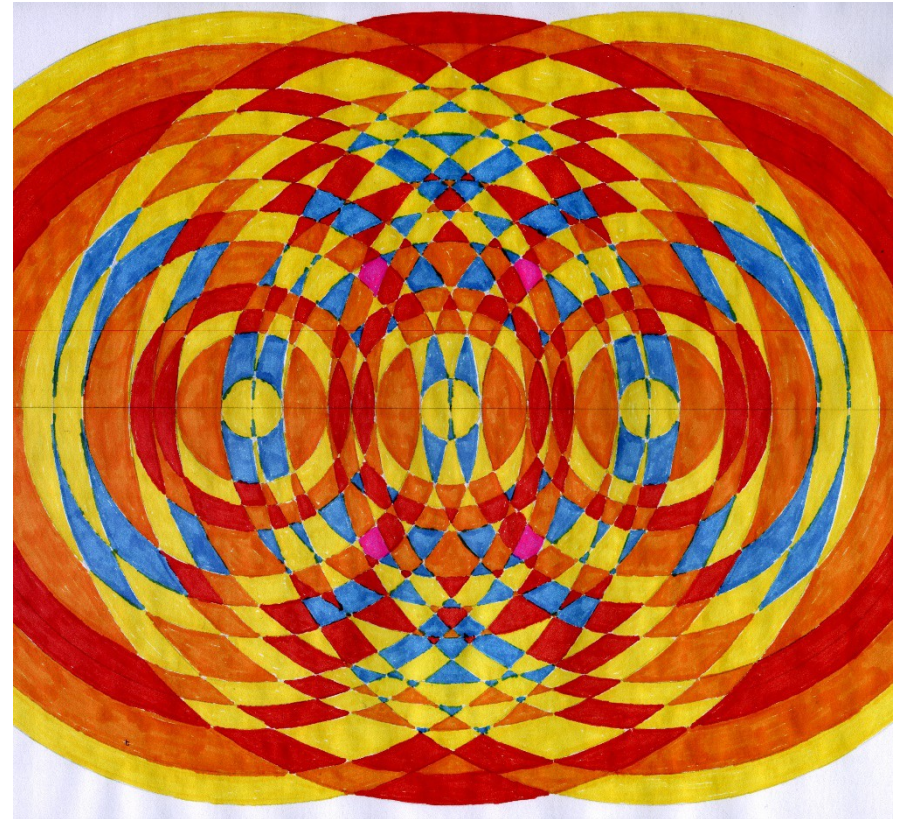




MEDITATION

NEW MUSIC BY:
DON KAY
M.K.HARVEY
SIMON BARBER
SIMON READE

PERFORMED BY:
MICHAEL KIERAN HARVEY
(PIANO)
BENJAMIN PRICE
(ALTO SAXOPHONE)



Gleichzeitigkeit (*Simultaneity*), private sketch as basis for the piano work *Meditation*, Simon Barber 2014/15

Programme of Works

Sonata no. 3 for Piano Solo – Michael Kieran Harvey

Triptych – Don Kay

1 – with a sense of urgency

2 – with quiet persistence

3 – resolute

Hommage – Simon Reade
(world premiere)

CUT – Simon Barber
(world premiere)

Interval – with refreshments

Meditation – Simon Barber
(world premiere)

Sonata no. 2, for Alto Saxophone and Piano – Simon Reade

I – ‘*Aubade*’ – 1977

II – *Fantasies symphoniques* (‘*the Mower*’ – 1979)

III – ‘*Morning at last...*’ – 1976

Dance Rituals – Don Kay

7 – Michael Kieran Harvey

Michael Kieran Harvey, Piano & Benjamin Price, Alto Saxophone

Program notes

Piano Sonata #3 “Aporia” (2016) – for solo Piano

This work was commissioned by Graeme Lee for his wife Margaret, and premiered as part of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra’s Metropolis series in 2016. Trams run outside the Lees’ home in central Melbourne where I lived for a while. The noise of the wheels formed terrifying harmonics and chaotic rhythms. The harmonic series and its inversion (stated at the beginning) form the basis of the work – all pitch and durational material is freely derived from this sequence. The central section (titled II) exploits overtones as part of the harmonic series as a kind of background “noise.” This “noise” acts as an “exciter” for various disparate interjections. Section three (III) integrates the harmonic series-derived pitch material of the first section with a twelve-tone row (stated at the outset of the section).

The sonata explores the concept of aporia, which is a state of bewilderment, of not being sure of the way forward. This is expressed in the sonata by the interplay between intuitive and systematized writing.

Triptych (2014) – for Alto Saxophone and Piano

My idea for this piece was to convey in sound the musical equivalent of three visual panels hanging side by side. Such works are often linked in some way to make a united whole. Although my work in three movements or ‘panels’ is abstract in nature, the linking feature is the appearance, in each movement, of the same unexpected idea; obtrusive by virtue of its quiet contrast to what has preceded and followed it, yet is, in retrospect, intended to be important to the whole.

Hommage (à Pierre Boulez) (2016) – for solo Piano

In 1997 I composed my first piano sonata (initially titled *Sonate*) under the sway of the late great French composer, Pierre Boulez. The work is rather eclectic - it would have found no favour with Boulez. In the last movement, however, I made reference to the first *Notation* for piano by Boulez as a mark of respect to the composer.

In January 2016, on hearing the news of the composer's death, I decided to revisit this last movement of my sonata and expand it *In Memoriam*. The first half of the movement was freely atonal and has now been expanded through the juxtaposition of the original simple motifs with a plain, almost minimalist presentation of the 12 note row from *Notation I*. The second half, which used elements of *Notation I* as a framework for my own 12 note row (used in composing my piano sonata), is expanded in the same way Boulez expanded his own orchestral *Notations*, a process he referred to as “proliferation”: flowering out in all directions harmonically, rhythmically and structurally. The orchestral *Notations* is a work close to my heart, not least because it was the one time I saw Boulez conduct live - in 2009 with the Berliner Philharmonie.

I hope by expanding this movement to have created an appropriate monument to Boulez – very much now in my own style, however with a sophistication I hope does some justice in fulfilling the need for such an auspicious *Hommage*.

CUT (2007, rev. 2014) – for Alto Saxophone and Piano

I have been interested in the sound world of quarter tones and multiphonics for some time.

As a consequence of concentrating more on sounds and less on harmonic systems, coupled with developing my intuitive counterpoint concerned with coincidence and intention, I have slowly been able to stumble closer towards the kind of music I have felt possible to write but for which there is no prescribed method of doing. CUT emerged from a desire to contribute to repertoire for bass clarinet and has attracted the attention of players such as Harry Sparnaay, Henri Bok and Derek Grice; the latter suggesting the addition of slur markings for clearer interpretation.

Tonight CUT receives its première in slightly re-worked form for alto saxophone thanks to Benjamin Price and Michael Kieran-Harvey. Benjamin drew my attention to the book

The Techniques of Saxophone Playing by Marcus Weiss and Giorgio Netti which provided the point of reference for saxophone multiphonics throughout the score. The equal-tempered sound world is

challenged by the irreverent movement of the saxophone playing sounds in between those of the piano. There are conflicts and misunderstandings as well as moments of co-operation and tenderness, predominantly in an atmosphere of free-floating fear, finding no definite resolution but rather presenting a redefinition of identities in transition within.

MEDITATION (2016) – for solo Piano

Caught in the mill of technological innovation for its own sake, the superlative will to change the one true truth, we see music consumed like pharmacological generics no longer subject to patents. The research having been completed in the 19th and early 20th centuries there is currently a great deal of music being generated, more than ever before, however with little new research taking place due to the market having no use for it. Thus we find music manufactured according to templates (genre, style, harmonic conventions) referring to a past when musical innovation was best practice and music still a living art.

The use of music as a soundtrack to itself signifies that nostalgia has become artificial and music nostalgia. Whereas the superlative will to change behind technological progress rendering humans appendages to convenience products could be and has been energetically critiqued under less brazenly mindless circumstances, now that we don't get our hands too dirty for too long means our tastes have changed fundamentally: we desire to become one with the trite monotonous mechanical beat of mass production taking synthetic stimulants to make it sound sublimely natural that we should ourselves become well-adjusted semi-autistic robotic beings realising our collective science fiction preprogrammed dreams as loyal disciples of progress.

Superficially and busily bored, the unending appetite for change for its own sake has become our epistemological orientation, our sleepless meditation. Knowledge brought to bear through the superlative will to change brings with it the demand for yet more change demanding yet more knowledge for effecting such within our reification mill. Our happiness and sadness is contingent upon external, impersonal processes; intrinsic certainty exchanged for extrinsic doubt. Whether there is a phenomenological solution to this dialectical riddle is systematically irrelevant: the comfort and convenience brought about by technological innovation is so superlatively true that critiquing such doesn't engender outrage due to perceived blasphemous affronts to the jealous god of progress, rather there simply exists a universal consensus of no reasonably denying the endless improvements in perfecting the eradication of terror by exercising it.

MEDITATION was written from a post-technological, fantastical perspective beyond the most monotheistic or monocultural absolutism and thus won't be easily digested by the music industry for sampling. Indeed, this music has no place in the aforementioned culture, does not exist within its terminology and makes only passing reference to templates, self-generated, which, if nothing else, penetrate to a state of being where the superlative will to change supersedes itself in perpetuum, unhesitatingly, ad infinitum, with the (renewed) autonomy of sound arising as an uncensored side-effect.

Sonata no. 2 (2009) – for Alto Saxophone and Piano

(Homage to Philip Larkin)

- Composed for Jabra Latham, alto saxophone.
- Inspired by the late poetry of the English poet Philip Larkin, amongst other things.

Dance Rituals (1996) – for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Dance Rituals, composed at the invitation of Geoffrey Lancaster, can be performed either on the fortepiano (for which it was conceived) or on the pianoforte. It was imagined as several groups of dancers circling around the viewer, perhaps as in a dream of some long ago time. Eventually, the first group reappears to complete the formal circling of contrasting dances, in adherence to some enigmatic ritual.

7 (2016) – for Sax and Piano

Written for the virtuoso reeds composer/performer Adam Simmons in 2015, this work was commissioned for his epic 100:25:1 project, where he collaborated with 100 musicians across 25 consecutive nights in November 2015 to draw attention to the web of connections between members of the Melbourne new music fraternity. The work was originally for baritone sax and piano and explores the number 7, a mystical number since the dawn of humanity, and my own lucky number, being born on the 7/7/1961, though now also remembered as the date of the infamous London bombings in 2005. There are 7 sections and the work explores the nature of prime number proportions as a metaphor for musical interactions between the instruments. The Western scale for example consists of seven

notes, and primes are heavily represented in Pythagorean tuning relationships, very important for non-keyboard instruments. The landscape of the work evokes the ghost of acid jazz haunting the wasteland of the avant-garde, as humans desperately seek solace in nostalgia.

Biographies

Michael Kieran Harvey was born in Sydney and studied piano with Alan Jenkins, Gordon Watson, and at the Liszt Academy, Budapest, under Sándor Falvai. His career has been notable for its diversity and wide repertoire. He has especially promoted the works of Australian and contemporary composers and recorded over 40 solo CDs on various labels. He has premiered many new Australian and international concertos with all Australian symphony orchestras.

Harvey's compositions have been performed in Europe, the UK, North and South America and Asia, in addition to major Australian festivals. He concentrates on non-standard formats, often humorously questioning classical music and embracing diverse influences.

His hour-long multi-keyboard homage to Zappa *48 Fugues For Frank* was premiered at Mona Foma in 2010 and received the AMC Tasmanian state award for composition in 2011. His *Psychosonata* (piano sonata #2) was presented at MONA in their 2012 Synaesthesia festival. Respected musicologist, composer and performer Michael Hannan wrote of Harvey's 2014 *Psychosonata* CD (Move MD 3368): "like many a virtuoso performer turned composer, Harvey's music often stretches the boundaries of performance technique...The Psychosonata CD is an enjoyable and often dazzling listening experience." Harvey's trio *Deus est Fabula* was premiered by *Plexus* at the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's 2014 Metropolis series at the Melbourne Recital Centre. A live CD/DVD recording of his epic Iyengar yoga and ensemble work *Patañjali* (2015) was released on the Move label and nominated for the AMC awards this year. Piano sonata #3 "Aporia" was premiered at the MSO's 2016 Metropolis series. His 90-minute *Green Brain* electronics cycle (based on the eponymous Frank Herbert novel) is due for its premiere in 2017.

Harvey gave the 2012 Peggy Glanville-Hicks address on the state of contemporary Australian artmusic to acclaim and controversy.

As a pianist Harvey's awards include the Grand Prix in the Ivo Pogorelich Piano Competition, USA (1993 - the world's richest at the time), the Debussy Medal (the Guilde Francaise Concours Paris 1986), the Australian Government's Centenary Medal (2002), the 2009 APRA award for Distinguished Services to Australian Music, and the 2014 AMC state award for best classical performance (Gyger's *Inferno*).

Recent improvisation collaborations include the Chinese-Australian *Typhoon* ensemble with *Violent Femmes* bassist Brian Ritchie, the fluxus-influenced *Slave Pianos* and Indonesian punk outfit *Punkasila*, James Hullick's piano concerto with *JOLT* ensemble, saxophonist Adam Simmons' jazz/rock piano concerto, and Martin Friedel's *Dance of the Bee* with Astra.

The Michael Kieran Harvey Scholarship was established in 2006 to encourage future directions in Australian keyboard art music, and to date has launched the international professional careers of six exceptional Australian musicians. Harvey is based in Tasmania, where he supports many environmental causes, most recently the 6th Green Oration.

Benjamin Price was born in Hobart and completed a Bachelor of Music with First Class Honours from the University of Tasmania in 2014, under the tutelage of Jabra Latham.

In 2015 Benjamin was invited to undergo an intensive private mentorship with renowned saxophonist and educator Carina Raschèr in Baden-Württemberg, Germany.

While in Europe Benjamin also received tuition from Elliot Riley, Kenneth Coon, Andreas van Zoelen and Christine Rall at the Raschèr Akademie's annual course in Rendsburg, and with Harry Kinross White at the Musikschule Konservatorium in Zürich.

Benjamin has performed as soloist with the Tasmanian Discovery Orchestra and Hobart Wind Symphony and within the ORSO Philharmoniker Freiburg, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and AISOI Orchestra. As a freelance artist Benjamin has been involved in Next Wave Festival, MONA FOMA, Kaltenbach Stiftung & Halle 9 Lörrach, Opus House and performed/presented in the U.K., Germany, Switzerland and across Australia.

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