

# THE CONVICT HARPSICHORDIST

WITH  
ELIZABETH  
ANDERSON

**move**

**J**ohn Grant, frustrated in love, shot a London lawyer in the buttock and was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey. Granted a reprieve, he arrived at Sydney Cove in 1804, bringing with him Australia's first harpsichord.

DOMENICO SCARLATTI

**1-2** Sonatas in F minor, K 386 and 387 5'17"

PIETRO DOMENICO PARADIES

**3-4** Sonata No 10 in D major 5'19"

J.S. BACH

**5** Prelude and Fugue No 24 in D major, BWV 893 5'16"

**6** Prelude and Fugue No 15 in G major, BWV 884 3'56"

GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL

**7-10** Suite No. 5 in E major 8'00"

DOMENICO SCARLATTI

**11-12** Sonatas in E major, K 380 and 381 5'53"

**13-14** Sonatas in D major, K 32 and 33 4'50"

PADRE ANTONIO SOLER

**15-16** Sonatas in C minor, R18 and 19 5'53"

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

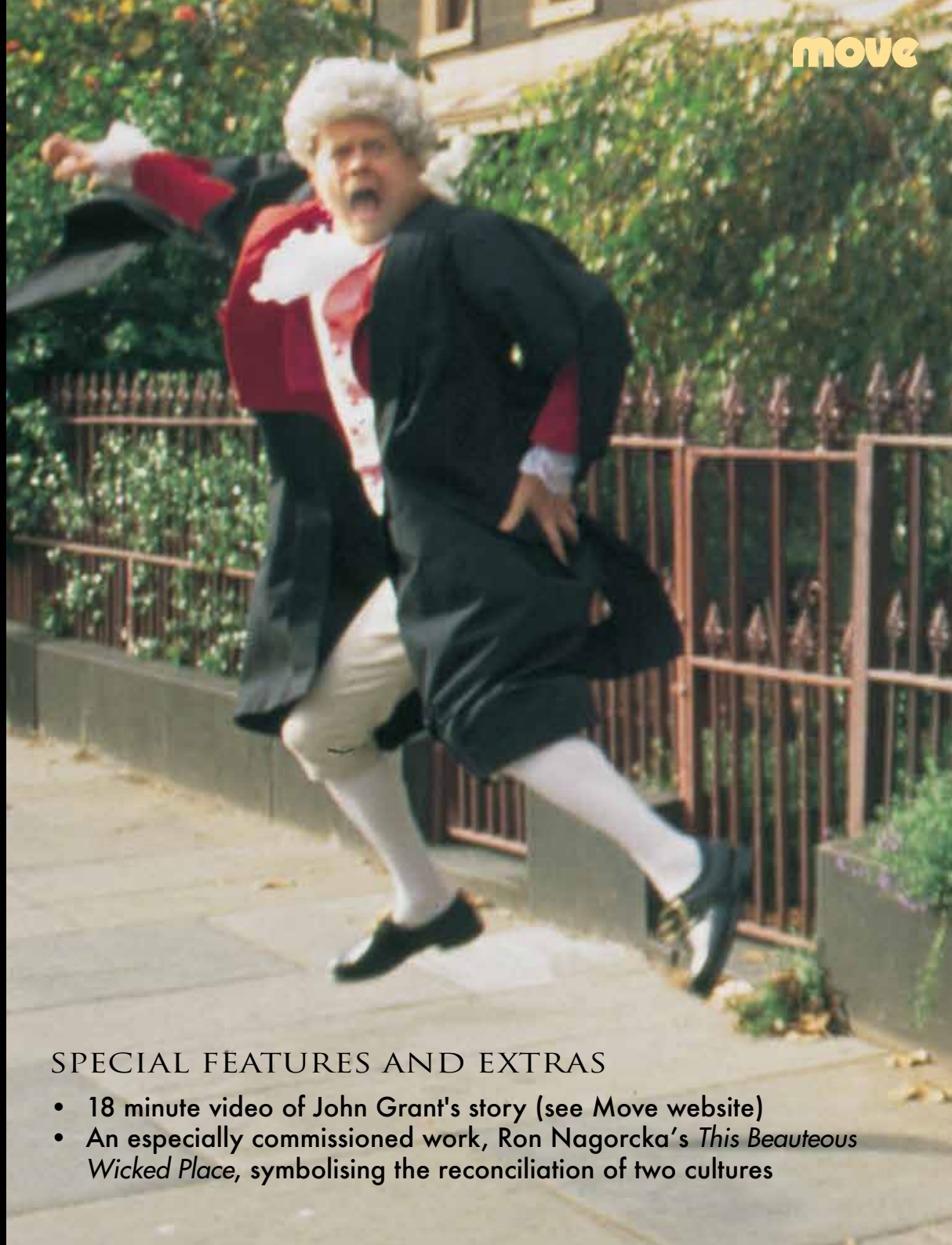
**17** Variations on 'Ah vous dirai-je Maman' (Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star), KV265 6'55"

RON NAGORCKA

**18** This Beauteous Wicked Place for harpsichord, didgeridu and Australian bush sounds 6'48"

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SPECIAL FEATURES AND EXTRAS

- 18 minute video of John Grant's story (see Move website)
- An especially commissioned work, Ron Nagorcka's *This Beauteous Wicked Place*, symbolising the reconciliation of two cultures

**J**ohn Grant, frustrated in love, shot a London lawyer in the buttock and was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey. Granted a reprieve, he arrived at Sydney Cove in 1804, bringing with him Australia's first harpsichord.

His was a crime of passion. Grant's relationship with Miss Anna Maria Ward had led him, an honourable man, to ask the young lady's guardian for a formal introduction. The guardian and family solicitor, Spencer Townsend was also an honourable man, loyal to Miss Ward's deceased father. He not only refused Grant access to his lover on any terms, but also arranged for her to become engaged to a more eligible gentleman.

One fine afternoon in April, 1803, Grant followed Townsend to his home in St. James' Place. On the steps outside the lawyer's door, Grant accosted him, offering one of a pair of pistols. Townsend, refusing the pistol, told him he was a foolish fellow, and bid him go about his business. There was a struggle, and as Townsend turned to run away, the flames of Grant's passion ignited his anger, and he pulled the trigger.

John Grant's much publicised trial took place at the Old Bailey on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 1803. In his defence, he stated:

Whatever I might have thought of Mr Townsend, I could not wish to take advantage of him. When I loaded the pistols, I declare before God, I did not apprehend any harm could come to either of us; for I knew the effect of pistols loaded with swan-shot and powder.

Baron Graham, the Judge declared Grant "Guilty, Death, aged 27" There was one remark in his summary that Grant swore not to forget: "I wonder how this young man can aspire to such a connection" mused the judge. "This remark cut me to the soul at such an awful moment" wrote Grant, "so false! So unjust! – if I wish'd to form a union with a monarch's daughter, and she was agreeable and willing ... no one has a right to oppose it". Grant was imprisoned at Newgate.

He was sufficiently well-connected to have a petition written on his behalf to King George III, signed by 38 important people of the city of London. As a result, 12 hours before the death sentence was due to be enforced, it was commuted to transportation for the term of his natural life to the penal settlement of New South Wales.

While detained on the transport, *Coromandel*, at Portsmouth, Grant began a correspondence with his mother that was to continue throughout his exile until his pardon in 1811. It is from one of his earliest letters, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1803 – that we learn of the contents of his luggage:

I had almost forgotten to say, the Screws to my Lock with Hinges on the Harpsichord box are too large for the holes, but we make them do; but three small screws are wanting to fasten the Hasp on the Lid and I cannot do without some. Pray send me a few of different sizes, some very small.

Grant was obviously keen to preserve his harpsichord in the best possible condition so that he might make good use of it during his time in the Colonies.

During his exile, keeping his diary and writing letters became Grant's *raison d'être*. While in New South Wales, he begged his mother to have some of his letters published in England "where thinking men dwell".

Above all, he wanted to expose the mistreatment of convicts and corruption that was rife in the penal colony. But Mrs Grant wisely consigned the letters to a banking friend. It was in a trunk in the vaults of a London bank that British historian, William Hill-Reid came across the papers in 1953. Hill-Reid's book *John Grant's Journey: A convict's story 1803-1811* (London: Heinemann, 1957) was published in 1957, and Grant's papers were donated to the Australian National Library.

The papers provide us with a unique glimpse of a convict's life. Following are a few selections from John Grant's experiences:

Soon after setting sail on the *Coromandel*, Grant was admitted to the Captain's quarters.

Captain Robinson and the ship's officers seem quite pleased for me to stay here, although it means doubling up in one cabin for two of the juniors.

Grant was given the responsibility of keeping the ship's logs, which he enjoyed, and in his spare time, he studied navigation.

On his arrival at Sydney Cove on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1804, Grant wrote:

If I am to be treated with civility, it could have begun by my being invited on shore a few hours prior to the 199 abominable

villains whom the British Government has given me as companions.

Once on shore, he was taken to the home of Judge Advocate Atkins, "who possesses a small house in the cottage style, near to Governor King's". Grant presented Atkins with a letter of introduction from the former Governor Hunter, who was a friend of his family in London, and was given an amicable welcome. He hoped to be employed as Atkins' secretary, and offered his services in several letters, but was never offered the post.

Soon Grant was told that he would be assigned to a Scottish farmer by the name of Williamson at Parramatta. He would be given food and lodging in return for farm work. On 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1804, Grant was taken by boat to Parramatta. He was happy to learn all he could of farm work, but had hopes that due to his education and social connections, he would be given freedom within the colony, followed by an early pardon.

Insufficiently stimulated by farm work, he sought to establish a school for boys, and later to establish a public library based on his initial donation of books. But his altruism was frustrated by Governor King's failure to respond.

In 1805, with the Williamsons' consent, Grant was re-assigned to Captain Bishop, who lived on a nearby property and had become a close friend. In February 1805, he finally received his Colonial Emancipation, which meant that he was free to move at will within the colony. Poor Bishop, probably suffering from advanced syphilis, lost his mind, and since there was no asylum in the Colony, was

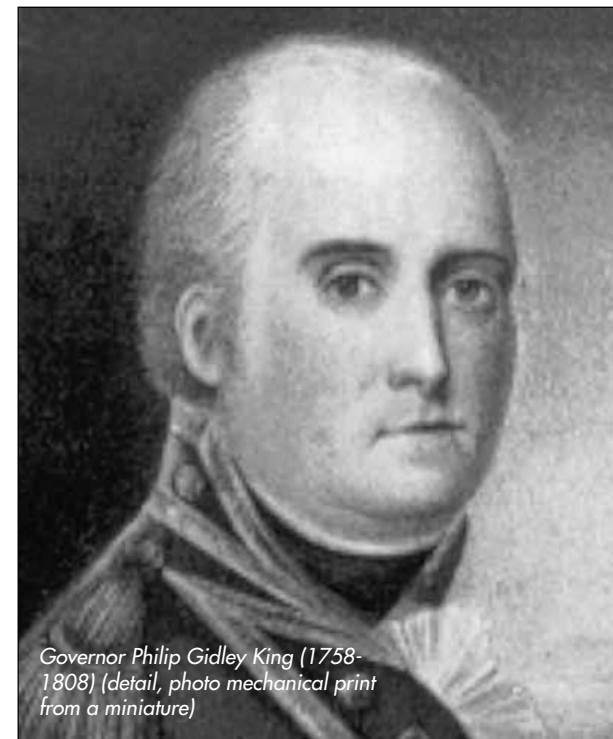
moved to Sydney Gaol six months later. Grant was given tenancy of the farm, but without the knowledge or finances necessary to run it, he was forced to vacate the property and return to the Williamsons.

This lack of finances frustrated Grant dreadfully, as he felt that it was due more to the state of corruption in the Colony than to a desire to deprive convicts of their basic rights. Well-informed as to the state of the rum trade in New South Wales, Grant had acquired Spanish dollars while still in London, which he had exchanged in transit in San Salvador for a barrel of Aqua-Dante, "excessive fiery in its nature". Grant knew that with the 60 gallons purchased, he would be able to buy sufficient livestock to support himself comfortably. Unfortunately, his rum was confiscated on arrival, and despite many letters to Governor King, he never saw it again.

Soon after his arrival in the Colony, Grant met Sir Henry Browne Hayes, a charming and persuasive Irishman, a bon-vivant "with remarkable whiskers". Sir Henry was serving a life sentence for having kidnapped a young Quaker heiress, and forced her to marry him. His crime is recorded in a traditional Irish ballad:

*Sir Henry kiss'd behind the bush,  
Sir Henry kiss'd the Quaker*

Despite his status as an unemancipated convict, Sir Henry had bought property adjacent to Judge Atkins, and was building Vacluse House there. It was there that John Grant made his home on his frequent visits to Sydney from Parramatta. Sir Henry had surrounded the house with turf brought from Ireland, which



Governor Philip Gidley King (1758-1808) (detail, photo mechanical print from a miniature)

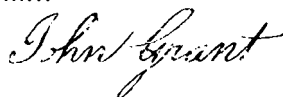
he believed to be blessed by St Patrick. He believed that this would repel the snakes that kept worrying his gardener.

Irate about his confiscated rum and the treatment of his poor friend Bishop, and no doubt encouraged by Sir Henry's rebellious attitude, Grant decided to approach Governor King personally: sailing toward the little promontory from Sydney Cove, it was clear that there was a private gathering underway on the lawns of Government House. No one questioned Grant as he walked up the lawn to the group where Governor King was standing. "I waited on him ... and announced my name." It was clear that he did not recognise Grant as a convict, "for he civilly touched his hat". As Grant reminded the governor of the letter that he had sent last week, King's

face betrayed a growing astonishment. "This Sir, is a most unwarranted intrusion," he said sharply. "This is no way to seek audience with me". At that moment, Grant was seized by the arm and coat collar. "Leave him go!" the Governor ordered, waving the soldier away. "Let him have his say, gentlemen. This is a free country surely." This remark caused a burst of laughter, due to which the Governor did not at first hear what it was that Grant requested. "Your Excellency, I request a reply to my letter. That is all I ask". Since Grant's most recent correspondence had been sent only a week earlier, the Governor quite fairly replied: "Mr Grant, I always like time to consider my replies." Making the most of his opportunity, Grant continued "I ask for freedom within the Colony sir, and I shall not rest until it is given to me!" At this the Governor cut him off: "That's enough Sir, I'll hear no more. ... Go sir ... I have had cause to remember your impertinence before. Go before I feel bound to bring further hardship upon you!" Grant slowly retired to his little boat. Surprisingly, Grant was punished neither for this particular episode nor for the angry letter that he wrote Governor King on his return to Parramatta:

*To His Excellency, The Governor.  
Prospect. 1st May, 1805*

... If I guess rightly, you have been instructed from home that it is your duty to give fair encouragement to agricultural pursuits. But not only have you declined in my case to do so, but on my arrival in this country, you violated the sacred right of private property by forcing from me the means I then possessed of settling upon Mr Williamson's farm...



More letters followed. He publicly denounced King, and distributed a leaflet criticising his administration. This vexatious behaviour inevitably led to a sedition trial.

The following is Grant's report of a preliminary examination, that took place in Atkins' office:

Mr Atkins, to whom I had carried letters of introduction from Governor Hunter, received me with an air of disquietude, saying to me that I was regardless of the orders of Governor King and that I should have to be examined before a body of magistrates, concerning the letters I wrote ... to the Governor and to his (Atkins') wife. I replied to him that if in their contents there was anything against the Constitution and the Laws of England, I was sorry: that the Governor's conduct had forced me to make remonstrances. And furthermore, the awful oppression amounting so unjustly against my friend, Sir Henry Hayes, was my apology for one of the letters; while the deplorable state of the wretched prisoners, and the manner in which the Governor acted towards them, was my apology for the others.

Grant had visited this room several times as a guest in Atkins' house, and had a sympathetic rapport with Mrs Atkins. Perhaps the judge would have preferred that Grant knew him a little less well:

He is so habituated to excessive drinking that it shocks me. I have remarked him forgetful of his important station, senseless, with his wife forced to lead him to bed vomiting.

Early next morning Grant was conducted by a gaoler to the makeshift court: a small low room. As was the custom in the Colony at that time, neither the judge nor any of his fellow magistrates wore anything but their usual clothes. There was no jury, and no defending counsel, not even a prosecuting one. All of the duties normally assigned to those officials, conflicting as they were, were undertaken by the Judge-Advocate himself. Grant remained standing, while Judge Atkins read from a communication signed by the governor. On production of the offending letters, he asked Grant whether the signatures affixed to them were his. Grant replied: "Certainly these letters were written by me, and consequently my signature was affixed to them". "What do you mean by writing such things?" Atkins asked. Grant replied:

I see nothing in these letters that was not just in their contents, according to the laws and constitution of England, that we are all born under the same Government; and that we all ought to know these laws.

Grant went on to suggest that the state of slavery to which the prisoners in New South Wales were subjected was cruel compared to the lot of prisoners in England. Then Atkins leaned forward, and in a confidential tone, asked: "... are you disposed to withdraw the contents?" Without hesitation Grant retorted: "Sir, I do not write on such important subjects without much thought and deliberation".

Then Dr. Harris, reading out those parts of my letters where I ask the Governor to recall the massacre of prisoners in March 1804 and the sight of the awful and horrible spectacle of their corpses

hanging on the trees, which struck my eyes when I first arrived in May '04 and made me exclaim; "Me thought I smelled the bones, and heard the groans of dying patriots and at your door lies all the blood spilt in struggles of half-starved men for personal liberty in this country". ...Harris ... turning pale ... said with a menacing tone "If you had been here and you had expressed such opinions during the rebellion, I would have had your head severed from your shoulders!"

Grant was amused by this undignified outburst, and could not help but smile as he picked up a pen from the desk: "Doctor, don't get angry: I'm not at all formidable. *This* is my only weapon!"

Following the second trial, Grant was sentenced to "five years of hard labour for the Crown". The next day, Atkins, probably suffering from a degree of guilt on Grant's behalf, called the prisoner to his office. Grant wrote:

Undaunted by this decision of Governor King, I took advantage of the few moments I stayed alone with the judge to call to his mind his duty to king and country as guardian of the English law in New South Wales. I beseeched him to try to arrest the torrent of injustice and tyranny ... I mildly reproached him for drunkenness as being derogatory to his dignity, and finally I addressed him emphatically in roughly these words: Sir! Sir! You think I am acting wrongly in holding these opinions. You have only to convince me of that; only to prove to me that they are opposed to the ... principles

of the English constitution and very willingly I will publicly retract them. ... "Mr Grant", he replied, "you are acting so much against your own interests, that I can guess the cause only in supposing you MAD – for although your sentiments may be most righteous, why do you espouse in this way the cause of the prisoners: We have never treated you as a prisoner!!!"

### BENCH OF MAGISTRATES.

SATURDAY, MAY 18.

John Grant a Convict lately emancipated, appeared before the bench, and was called upon to avow or to disclaim several letters to which his signature was affixed, that had been addressed to HIS EXCELLENCY and the JUDGE ADVOCATE, the contents of which were highly seditious and inflammatory. The prisoner declared all the letters produced to have been written by himself, and should not therefore avail himself of the opportunity afforded him to retract from any particle of their contents. The Bench pathetically expressed their concern, that a man whose talents if properly applied might have obtained respect in society, should by so gross a misapplication reduce him to his present circumstances, which were still aggravated by his indecorous present conduct, that provoked the necessity of his being taken out of Court.

After examining the letters written by the prisoner, and how acknowledged to have been so, he was again called in, when the sentence of the Court was pronounced by the Judge Advocate, reproaching a conduct that was manifestly of tendency the most absurd but not less dangerous in civil society, and at the same time pointing out the necessity of repressing the breachings of a licentious spirit, when they become offensive to the Law: commanding, finally, that the prisoner be held to hard labour for the Crown during a term of five years.

Extract from *Sydney Gazette*, 19 May 1805

Grant, who must have felt rather like a martyr at this stage, wrote the following as the *Lady Nelson* set sail for Norfolk Island:

As I write we set sail, smoothly running out of Sydney Harbour. The beautiful house of stone being built by Sir Henry Hayes on his land ... overlooking the harbour, and his cattle peacefully grazing there struck me in the eye, and caused a momentary regret at the loss of his company. This feeling cost me many tears – little guessing that he would follow me there a short time later!

We were 24 days going from Port Jackson to the Isle of Norfolk, the first 14 of which my suffering was terrible, notwithstanding all the attention possible that was shown me by everyone on the vessel. ... I became so excessively sick ... on reaching the open sea that I threw myself semi-conscious on the deck. Owing to Symond's kindness, someone obtained for me an enormous *mardingote*, enveloped in which I lay on the deck for several days and nights, braving the stormy weather, and all the other inconveniences of my circumstances, rather than descend into the stench of the hold ... where, in fact, there was so little room, so much smoke from the galley and so much stuff stowed that it was shocking. And when at last a violent downpour forced me to go below, I recall that the point of a nail protruding through the deck cut my face and made the blood flow – so small and overcrowded was the place.

Presently the *Lady Nelson* ran into smoother

waters, and Grant wrote a poem entitled Ode on the King's Birthday, "written with my pen despite my weakness and the motion of the vessel". Grant sent the poem to the Captain, ever hopeful that such a contribution would one day earn him a pardon:

*Lines written on His Majesty's birthday,  
1805*

Tho' sickness and a second exile keep  
Restrain'd a Genius fluttering to soar;  
Tho' Memory, as on the briny Deep  
I toss, draws frequent pangs from England's  
Shore:  
Still shall a banished Man whose Life he  
saves  
Sing of the Monarch who there Rules the  
Waves.  
But in these Realms of His, who can rejoice?  
Is it his servant who the Law defies?  
Is it the supplicating convict's Voice?  
Or the brave Tar who for Promotion tries?  
Who tho' he sing: Britannia rules the  
Waves,  
Must he, alas! Confess: "fair Freedom's  
Sons are Slaves"!

Ye Captains to a Monarch, lov'd rever'd  
Draw on his Head and yours disgraces  
down  
The Magna Charta our Forefathers rear'd  
That brightest jewel in the British Crown  
Ye trample on: tho' Britons rule the Waves,  
Great George's subjects, Britons here are  
Slaves.

Country beauteous: Climate healthful, mild!  
George, unlike some Kings below'd, abus'd:  
People into slavery beguill'd:  
Rulers guilty of Pow'r misused!

When shall all cry: Britannia Rules the  
Waves,  
And free-born Britons are no longer Slaves?

Captain Symonds had been sympathetic to Grant throughout the voyage, sending him dinner from his table. During the last two days of the journey the prisoner was invited to stay in the captain's cabin. Grant explained that he was

deterred by fear from admitting me to the cabin for quite some time, as it might have reached the ears of Governor King ... and on the 4<sup>th</sup> June (1805), the King's Birthday, he confessed to me that he looked upon me as suffering innocently in a righteous cause, which I found exceedingly gratifying. ... for the last few days I found myself sufficiently recovered in health to even play my violin on the bridge in good weather.

No mention is made of the harpsichord, which seems to have been left at Williamsons' farm.

On Norfolk Island, Grant was assigned to John Foley and his family. Foley was owed a considerable sum of money by the Government for public buildings he had erected on the island, and Grant was able to draft letters to Governor King on his behalf. As well as working their tobacco and cotton fields, he also accepted responsibility for educating the Foleys' two sons. "I make efforts to insinuate just principles into their hearts, so that they may become good men".

It seemed that whenever Sir Henry Browne Hayes appeared, Grant was in trouble. This was the case when Sir Henry's ship dropped anchor at Norfolk Island en route to Van

Diemen's Land (Tasmania). Despite being forbidden to see Sir Henry, Grant met him each night in the woods. Caught on Sir Henry's last night, Grant was tried once more, and sent to four months' solitary confinement on Isle Phillip. This gruesome experience nearly killed John Grant, and it was Mrs Foley who nursed him back to health in the "sweet asylum" of Norfolk Island when he returned there in December 1806.

In 1808, Grant acted as lay preacher on Norfolk Island for a short time, before accompanying the island's inhabitants to Derwent, Van Diemen's Land. Grant's ambition was to secure a pardon, and return with Governor Bligh to England. But Bligh disappointed him, deciding to return instead to Sydney. Grant followed him there six months later, to take up Sir Henry's offer of a room at Vaucluse.

In September 1809, Grant was appointed lay clergyman to Coal River, the mining settlement near Newcastle

merely because the Sunday was totally neglected there ... but (with) regular bred Clergymen arriving now from England ... we suddenly have a super-abundance of parsons, thank God!

During a visit to England, the Reverend Marsden took the newly-appointed Governor Macquarie to visit old Mrs Grant and her daughter Matilda at their house in Sloane St. They took tea with the family, and were charmed by Mrs Grant's "beauteous Magdalen countenance ... admirable character and strong intellect". Heartened by this show of humanity, Grant wrote the following letter:

Parramatta. July 1810  
His Excellency  
Governor of New South Wales

Sir, not having the honour of a personal acquaintance with Your Excellency, I should feel extremely averse to intrude at this moment for any favour, did not the kind interference of the Reverend Marsden give me an occasion to remind Your Excellency of that gentleman's introduction to my aged parent in London. I respectfully solicit Your Excellency's humanity that you will be pleased to put an end to my long sufferings in exile arising out of a dispute wherein, notwithstanding, no one but myself has been injured either in pecuniary circumstances, in character, in person or in peace of mind. And your goodness shall ever be gratefully acknowledged.

By this time, Admiral Bligh had relinquished his position as Governor. Following the Rum Rebellion, he remained in exile on his ship, the *Hindostan*, pathetically still wearing his uniform of office, but unable to carry out any of the duties that went with it. Hill-Reid describes Grant's visit to the Admiral in *John Grant's Journey*:

The interview ... took place on the ... quarter-deck while the ship, still only half commissioned, was taking in stores for the long voyage home. Grant requested a certificate stating that his health justified a categorical declaration that he had quite recovered from his "mental uneasiness". Bligh was interested, and, turning to one of his officer escorts, demanded pen and ink and a table upon which to write. And when he had completed it – a laborious task, for Bligh was no penman

– he handed the certificate to his visitor with a courtesy that was unexpected ... , expressing a friendly wish that he would be successful in obtaining early freedom... Reluctant as he was to criticise the wording of the statement, Grant felt bound to make some comment.

"Your Excellency," he said after careful perusal, "I would express my humble gratitude for that part of the testimony which you express so kindly in my favour. But the remark hinting at my mental derangement, in so much as it supposes a loss of reason, is indeed incorrect." Bligh , now in jovial mood, ordered him to give ... back the paper, and, appreciating no doubt the importance of such an inflexion, altered the wording to "mental uneasiness", and, smiling once more, handed the certificate to the suppliant ... "This is to certify that Mr Grant is, from all I can learn, recovered from some mental Uneasiness arising from two causes; namely a disappointment in love and consequent exile and punishment for attacking the person who occasioned it, and the hardships he has endured by forcible convict labour in New South Wales. From my knowledge of him he has conducted himself in a mild and inoffensive manner and bears a morally good Character.

*Given under my hand this 6<sup>th</sup> May 1810 – Governor Bligh."*

Bligh had agreed to carry a number of Grant's letters and journals, which were to be delivered to Mr Sykes, his mother's banker friend in London. So it is that this story lives to be told.

On 26<sup>th</sup> November 1811, Grant sailed for home, carrying with him a letter written by the Reverend Samuel Marsden:

I had almost forgotten to mention the bearer of this letter, Mr. John Grant. He was transported to this country some years ago in consequence of firing at a gentleman whom he had challenged and who had refused to fight him. The difference originated about a young woman to whom he was attached. His case was always considered a hard one in the Colony.

More of John Grant's colourful story can be found in *This Beauteous, Wicked Place: Letters and Journals of John Grant, Gentleman Convict*, edited by Yvonne Cramer and published by the National Library of Australia, Canberra (2000).

## JOHN GRANT'S MUSIC LIBRARY

From Grant's letters to his mother, we learn the contents of his luggage for the voyage to Australia. As well as the harpsichord, there were a few items of sentimental value, including a silver cream jug and a spun watch pocket that his mother had sent him. Having made the decision to share his cabin with the precious harpsichord, Grant must have furnished himself with at least a few music books. But although one or two encyclopaedias are mentioned, there is no reference anywhere in the diaries to Grant's music collection. The possible contents of his music library must therefore be patched together from the information available on London publishing



houses and music shops and what they distributed.

In 1791, at the age of 15, John Grant was apprenticed to his uncle, Edward Grant for a seven-year term, to learn the art of clock making. The contract stated that

the said Master shall teach and instruct the same Art ...which he useth, finding unto his said Apprentice Meat, Drink, Apparel, Lodging and all other Necessaries according to the custom of the City of London.

If Grant did not yet possess the means to buy music books from the local merchants, then perhaps by 1796, when he was employed in the "accounting house" of David Duval, he would have begun to explore what the local music dealers had to offer. It seems unlikely that he would have purchased much after 1802. Due to his erratic behaviour during the relationship with Miss Ward, Grant was dismissed from Duval's services, and consequently tried to set up his own merchant trading business. Soon after he was declared bankrupt.

During the 1790s, the largest music shop in London was Longman and Broderip, which operated out of two premisses; at 13 The Haymarket and 26 Cheapside. In 1786, representatives were sent to Calcutta to open a branch there, and in 1789, an advertisement appeared to the effect that there would be outlets in Margate and BRIGHTHELMSTONE (Brighton) during the holiday season. The London shops ran a circulating library, as well as offering for sale all the latest Longman and Broderip editions and an extensive collection

of musical instruments. They marketed winged spinets and harpsichords by Culliford and Harris, which were similar to Kirkman and Shudi's models. Culliford's single manual was reported to be fitted with a "machine stop" that was more efficient than other instruments of its time: This was an inner lid that opened and closed by means of a pedal to give volume control. The firm advertised "upright harpsichords", square pianos and barrel organs. In 1789, amongst their extensive advertising could be found a notice concerning "portable clavecins ... agreeable for travelling with, as they may be conveyed and even performed on in a coach" (*Grove XI*, 220) Perhaps John Grant's eye was attracted by such an advertisement, and it was this model that he took to New South Wales.

The early music chosen for this CD was all published in London between 1791, when Grant began his apprenticeship and 1803, when he was arrested.

**3-4 Pietro Domenico Paradies (1707-91):  
*Sonata no. 10 in D major* (Vicace, Presto)**

*Sonate di Gravicembalo, Longman & Broderip (London, c. 1791)*

If Grant had visited Longman and Broderip asking the proprietor's advice as to which music he should purchase, then he might well have been advised to buy their latest edition of Paradies' *Sonate* (3-4). Pietro Domenico Paradies, from Scarlatti's home town of Napoli, had lived in London for 24 years. In 1770, announcing his retirement, he sold his manuscript collection to the historian and collector Richard (later Viscount) Fitzwilliam and returned to Italy. When Paradies died in

1791, Longman and Broderip would have seen the commercial sense in quickly re-publishing the collected sonatas of London's most famous harpsichord teacher. Paradies had written several operas, instrumental works and a concerto for harpsichord and orchestra. He gained notoriety for the operas and fame for the harpsichord sonatas. Of his opera *Fetonte* (1747), music critic Charles Burney wrote that it was "ill-phrased" and lacking in "estro or grace". The *12 Sonate di gravicembalo*, by contrast were excellent works. First published in London by John Johnson (1754), and then re-published at regular intervals, these popular sonatas were often more progressive than those of the more famous Scarlatti.

As well as publishing the best that local composers had to offer, Longman and Broderip were well-known for importing editions of music from the continent, such as the works of Johann Sebastian Bach and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, which they often reprinted. They published Mozart's highly popular variations on the song *Lison Dormait* as early as 1790, and in the same year, produced the first serious collection of Mozart's keyboard works to be printed in England.

Grove suggests that Longman and Broderip's editions and reprints of keyboard music were so widely available as to have an important influence on what English harpsichordists played towards the end of the century. The firm was well known for its careful editing, and for the generous sums it paid composers for their work. This may have played a part in its eventual bankruptcy in 1798.

**5-6 J.S. Bach (1685-1750):**

***Prelude and Fugue No 24 in D major, BWV 893***

***Prelude and Fugue No 15 in G major, BWV 884***

*Preludes et fugues pour le forte-piano ou clavecin dédiés au Conservatoire de Musique par l'editeur, Broderip et Wilkinson (London c.1800)*

After the financial downfall, Francis Broderip maintained the business at The Haymarket in partnership with a Mr C. Wilkinson as Broderip and Wilkinson. The new partnership continued to take an interest in publishing new works by local and foreign composers, as well as reprinting the best of the old Longman and Broderip stock. Amongst the old stock was to be found the second book of Bach's *48 Preludes and Fugues* (5-6). The First volume of this collection was not published in England until Robert Birchall issued volumes one and two, edited by Samuel Wesley in 1810.

**7-10 George Frederick Handel (1685-1759):**  
***Suite No. V in E major***

(Allegro Moderato, Allemande, Courante, Air con Variazioni – *The Harmonious Blacksmith* variations)

*Suites de pieces de clavecin, First volume, Printed & sold by H. Wright (London, c. 1795)*

It was probably the same Mr Wilkinson, who from 1783-5 had run a music shop at 13 Catherine St, The Strand in partnership with Harman (or Hermond) Wright. From 1785 onwards, the firm was known simply as H.Wright. In this music shop it would have

been difficult to find the few volumes of serious keyboard music amongst the thousands of songs and arrangements from the most popular operas and oratorios by Handel and his contemporaries. Wright's publications were mostly reprints from plates that he had inherited from John Walsh. Let us surmise how it came to be that Handel's *Suites for Harpsichord* (7-10) could be found on the shelves in this establishment:

Handel arrived in London in the Autumn of 1710, commissioned to write the first Italian opera for the London stage. *Rinaldo* opened at London's opera house, the Queen's (later King's) Theatre in the Haymarket in February, 1711 and continued through to June of that year. The cast was an all-Italian company especially engaged for the season. With its elaborate scenic effects, brilliant harpsichord improvisations by the composer, and the Italian castrati so beloved of London audiences, *Rinaldo* was the sensation of the season, and Handel became the darling of London's theatregoers.

John Walsh was obviously in no doubt that collections of Handel's songs would sell well, and set about publishing as much of the vocal music as he could lay his hands on. Handel was new to the London scene, and his English was still rather basic. It would have been Charles Burney's opinion that the young German composer would have done well to find another publisher, as he wrote "Walsh never published anything that he did not steal". The relationship with Walsh continued, although it was obviously fraught with problems: In 1720, Handel heard that a pirated edition of his harpsichord suites, prepared by John Walsh, was to be published

by Jeanne Roger of Amsterdam. This prompted the composer to produce his own edition. In his preface, he explained that he had been "obliged to publish some of the following Lessons because surreptitious and incorrect copies of them had got abroad". The title page read

printed for the author, & are only to be had at Christopher Smith's in Coventry Street ... and by Richard Mear's Musical Instrument maker in St Paul's Church Yard.

Handel was clearly making sure that Walsh reaped none of the profits from the sale of this particular edition, which was in fact the only keyboard publication known to have been supervised by the composer himself.

The eight suites must have sold well, as Handel re-issued them three times that year, and again two years later. Walsh continued stubbornly to publish only vocal music, until in 1729, probably due to pressure from his son, John Walsh junior, he issued his first edition of Handel's instrumental music:

*A General Collection of Minuets made for the Balls at Court ... compos'd by Mr Handel ... All curiously fitted for the German Flute or Violin, etc. ...*

Since minuets were normally not difficult, the title had obviously been carefully devised to attract dilettantes, socialites and instrumentalists of all types – a highly commercial venture.

John Walsh junior took over from his father soon after this, and it seems likely that the younger man was responsible for a volume of miscellaneous harpsichord suites not included

in the 1720 edition, which were released in 1730. When John Walsh junior finally published Handel's harpsichord suites in two volumes in 1735, they were so popular that they each required two reprints within the year. The harpsichord or organ concertos (Opus 4) were published in 1738, and a new collection or a reprint of these was released every two or three years until the end of the century. Handel granted Walsh junior a monopoly to print his music for 14 years from 1739. So famous was Handel for his keyboard performance and composition that these works continued to be reprinted after his death in 1759 and after Walsh's death in 1766.

On his death, Walsh's business passed to the family of his partner and cousin, Peter Randall, and it was sold by Elizabeth Randall to Wright and Wilkinson in 1783. Wright and Wilkinson, who advertised themselves as "successors to Mr. Walsh" were chiefly concerned with the re-issue of Handel's works from the Walsh plates. Amongst these were the two volumes of harpsichord suites, reprinted from the 1735 editions, and issued in 1795. So it is that John Grant, visiting H. Wrights, as the business was then called, might have discovered a fine collection of harpsichord pieces by the late Mr Handel.

**Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757):**  
**Sonatas in E major**  
K 380 (Andante commodo) and 381 (Allegro)

*SCARLATTI'S Chefs-d'oeuvre, for the Harpsichord or Piano-Forte; Selected from an Elegant collection of Manuscripts, in the Possession of MUZIO CLEMENTI.*

*LONDON: Printed for the Editor Muzio Clementi, & to be had at Mr. Broadwood's Harpsichord Maker, in Great Pulteney Street, Golden Square (1791)*

Anyone interested in keyboard music in the London of the 1790s would have known of Muzio Clementi. Born in Rome in 1752, Clementi, a child prodigy of 13 years, was "bought off his father for seven years" by English traveller, Peter Beckford, and taken to live in Dorset. From 1780-5 Clementi embarked upon a lengthy European concert tour, and on his return to London in 1785, was in great demand as a concert pianist.

During the 1790s, due to Haydn's popularity, Clementi's career turned from performing to teaching and piano manufacture. As the teacher of such professional musicians as John Field, Cramer and Bertini, he was able to charge the considerable sum of one guinea per lesson to anyone who could afford it. In 1791 he produced a volume of Scarlatti's Sonatas from manuscripts that he had apparently acquired during his travels in the 1780s. This edition, entitled *Scarlatti's Chefs-d'oeuvre, for the Harpsichord or Piano-Forte* was sold at Mr Broadwood's Harpsichord shop in Great Pulteney Street. The edition contained 10 sonatas by Scarlatti (including **11** and **12**), as well as one by Soler and two by Clementi's famous student, Czerny.

**13-14 Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757):**  
**Sonatas in D major**, K 32 (Aria) and K 33

*Two Favorite Sonatas by Scarlatti: London. Printed and Sold by J. Cooper. No. 39. Whitcomb Street, near Coventry Street (ca. 1792)*

Clementi was not the only person in England dedicated to the publication of Scarlatti's work. In fact it was primarily due to the publication of his sonatas in England that Scarlatti became known as a composer throughout Europe. None of his music was published in Italy or Spain, although the Italian musical cognoscenti certainly knew about him. Roman collector, Abbé Santini acquired copies of hundreds of the sonatas, and introduced such famous pianists as Cramer and Liszt to them. So it is that Italian composers such as Rossini and Verdi referred to Scarlatti in their writings. The earliest publication of Scarlatti's sonatas took place in Paris, where his *Pièces choisies pour le clavecin ou l'orgue* were released by Madame Boivin in 1738. There is no information as to how the French public reacted to Scarlatti. By contrast, in England, Roseingrave's 1739 edition of *Forty-two suits of lessons for the harpsichord* began something which Newton later described as "the English cult of Domenico Scarlatti". Five separate publications of Scarlatti's sonatas were issued in London during the composer's lifetime. Following Scarlatti's death a further five publications were issued up until the end of the century.

One of these was an edition published in 1792 by J. Cooper, who ran a business at 39 Whitcomb St, near Coventry St. Interestingly, this single pair of sonatas demonstrates

Scarlatti's writing both at its tame and wildest. The *Aria* K 32 **13**, one of only a handful of slower pieces, provides a rare glimpse of Scarlatti in repose. By contrast, the flamenco-influenced K 33 **14** is incandescent with energy, and bursts out of its 3/8 time signature into wild passages of repeated arpeggios and Italianate trills.

**1-2 Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757):**

***Sonatas in F minor***

K 386 (Presto) and 387 (Veloce e fugato)

*Thirty Sonatas, for the Harpsichord or Pianoforte; Publish'd from Manuscripts in the Possession of Lord Viscount Fitzwilliam, Composed by Sigr. Domenico Scarlatti. Price 15/8*

*LONDON: Printed for Rt. Birchall at his Musical Circulating Library 133 New Bond Street Of whom may be had Soler's 27 Lessons - 15/0*

A picture of the London musical scene of the 1790s is not complete without a visit to the music shop of Robert Birchall, instrument dealer, music seller and publisher at 133 New Bond St. Birchall had been apprenticed to William and Elizabeth Randall, who ran Walsh's Old Shop at 13 Catherine St. He went into his own publishing business, initially as Beardmore & Birchall in 1783, and continued until his death in 1819. In the 1790s, the shop also included a musical circulating library. His first goal was to produce a complete re-issue of Handel's works in 80 folio volumes, a proposal that never eventuated. But he did succeed in publishing many important works,

amongst them, the first complete English edition of Bach's *48 Preludes and Fugues* and works by Handel, Scarlatti, Soler, Mozart and Beethoven. Robert Birchall was responsible for London's annual series of Ancient Concerts, as well as for most of the benefit concerts. These were one-off performances, mostly for the "benefit" of the performer himself.

In 1796, John Grant would have found on the shelves at Birchall's Music Shop, a collection of sonatas by Scarlatti. Both the Scarlatti edition, and the Soler advertised on its title page (as detailed in the box above) were the fruits of Birchall's collaboration with manuscript collector, Lord Viscount Richard Fitzwilliam. The new collection of Scarlatti sonatas **(1-2)** would have been particularly prized, due to the fact that none of its thirty movements had previously been published in England.

**15-16 Padre Antonio Soler (1729-83):**

***Two Sonatas in c minor***

R18 (Cantabile) and R19 (Allegro moderato)

*XXVII Sonatas Para Clave Por el Padre Fray Antonio Soler, Que ha impresso Robert Birchall, No 133 New Bond St (1796)*

Fitzwilliam visited Spain in 1772, and at the Monastery at El Escorial met Padre Antonio Soler. Soler at this stage had not published any of his keyboard music, and was known primarily for his treatise on modulation and canon of 1762. His ground-breaking theories were the subject of much controversy, and it was probably due to this that he had become known as "a devil dressed as a monk". Although the modulations in the young Soler's sonatas are more daring than Scarlatti's, the

older composer was more "devilish" in his invention. Soler was familiar with the work of Scarlatti, and described himself as one of his disciples. But Soler's modesty aside, it is debatable whether Scarlatti could have written a more poignant slow movement than Soler's *Cantabile* in C minor (track **15**). This piece, along with its companion (track **16**) were among the 27 pieces given to Fitzwilliam by Soler, and subsequently published by Birchall.

**17 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91):**

***Ah vous dirai-je Maman* (KV265)**

*Air with Variations for the piano forte or harpsichord, R Birchall (London, c.1795)*

Birchall also published Mozart's *Ah vous dirai-je Maman* variations, KV265 (**17**), probably in 1795. The work is based on the famous French nursery tune also known as *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*.

A NEW WORK

**18 Ron Nagorcka (1948- ):**

***This Beauteous Wicked Place***

for harpsichord, didjeridu and Australian bush sounds composed for Elizabeth Anderson (2000)

(Fantailed Cuckoo, Magpie fugue, Devil Dance – Tasmanian Devil, Butcher's Lullaby – Pied Butcherbird, Lapwing's Last Word – Masked Lapwing)

*(This particular work has been assisted by the Federal Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.)*



A beautiful wicked place: Francis Dukes' *A view of Sydney Cove, 1804*, hand coloured aquatint.

**T**his *Beautiful Wicked Place* (18) is the response of Australian composer Ron Nagorcka to John Grant's story. By combining the harpsichord with a strongly rhythmic didgeridu part and the sounds of the Australian bush – presented "live" from an Ensoniq ASR-10 keyboard sampler – he sets out to celebrate the rich natural heritage of Australia, and to pay homage to the indigenous people whose intricate knowledge of their country contrasts so starkly with the attitudes toward it revealed in the writings of Grant and other witnesses of the first European settlements.

A more subtle influence of traditional aboriginal music is heard in the microtonal harmonies also played on the keyboard sampler – using a 24 note/octave just intonation scale, which the harpsichord is specially tuned to match.

## ABOUT ELIZABETH ANDERSON

**T**he *Convict Harpsichordist* programme was premiered by **Elizabeth Anderson** in June 2001 at the City of London Festival. It was presented as a theatre piece, with Samuel West, as John Grant, reading extracts from the diaries, in alternation with short works for harpsichord. This was the only musical event ever to be staged in London's Old Bailey. The show took place in the entrance hallway to Central Court. It was on this very site that Grant was imprisoned in a cell of the former Newgate prison, after being sentenced to death.

In recent years, Anderson has become known as an exponent of the major concertos for harpsichord, as well as of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. She has appeared as a concerto soloist in the capital cities of every state



in Australia as well as in Poland and Italy. She has played the *Goldberg Variations* in major international concert series, including the Sorø International Festival, Denmark, Printemps Carougeoise, Switzerland, Schloss Friedrichsfeld, Berlin, Limburg Cathedral, Germany, Castlemaine State Festival, Victoria and the Melbourne Bach Week.

Anderson's concert career has taken in performances in Nagoya, Osaka, Hong Kong and Singapore, as well as numerous cities in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, The Netherlands, Britain and Ireland. As well as solo harpsichord recitals, she has given four-hands organ recitals with husband, Douglas Lawrence in most of the above countries, as well as in Poland.

This is Elizabeth Anderson's eighth CD recording. Other recordings have won awards from *Gramophone*, *The Age* newspaper and *Soundscape*s (*Goldberg Variations*), and her crossover CD, entitled *Bizarre or baRock* has been a bestseller on the Move label.

She currently lives in Melbourne, Australia, and teaches harpsichord at the University of Melbourne. Her website address is: [www.elizabethanderson.org](http://www.elizabethanderson.org).



## ABOUT RON NAGORCKA

Composer, performer, and naturalist **Ron Nagorcka** spent much of his childhood exploring both music and the natural world on a sheep farm in Western Victoria. He went on to study history, pipe organ, harpsichord, and composition at Melbourne University and then composition and electronic music at the University of California, San Diego.

Since 1988 Nagorcka has been living and working in a remote forest in northern Tasmania, where he has built his own house and solar-powered studio, and from where he records the sounds of the natural world which surround him.

With the aid of sampling technology he builds music from these recorded sounds – the

melodies, rhythms, even the instrumental quality of the music are all generated by painstaking listening and analysis of natural Australian soundscapes.

This technology also enables him to explore a long held interest in the tuning known as “just intonation”. He prefers to design a specific scale in just intonation for each piece and then explores its peculiar melodic and harmonic possibilities, but he also writes for conventional instruments using equal temperament.

He also makes and plays his own didjeridus, and has incorporated this instrument into his music since 1974.

## EXTRAS

Relive the exploits of John Grant on an 18 minute video (see Move website). Featuring actor James Benedict, maps of Grant’s London, a dramatised courtroom sequence (with a script adapted from court transcripts and Grant’s papers), you’ll experience a special condensed version of Elizabeth Anderson’s live London show.

## RECORDING CREDITS

*Harpsichord:*  
Alastair McAllister, after Taskin (Hubbard)

*Recording engineer/video production:*  
Martin Wright

*Digital editing and mastering:* Thomas Grubb

*Recording venue:*  
Move Records, Eaglemont, Australia

*Concept, research and notes:* Elizabeth Anderson

*Photography:* Howard Bernstil

*Graphic design:* Alessandro Servadei

*Actor in bonus video:* James Benedict

*CD Title:* Alan Horsfall

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