

# APORIA



# Michael Kieran Harvey plays his third piano sonata plus compositions from four of his contemporaries

## Michael Kieran Harvey (b. 1961)

### Piano Sonata No.3 "Aporia" (2016)

- 1** I 9'24"
- 2** II 7'33"
- 3** III 3'46"

## David Harris (b. 1964)

- 4** *The Broken Dance* (2010) 10'05"
- 5** *The Unfinished Chorale* (2010) 6'52"

## Allan Walker (b. 1955)

### Homages (Book 1) (2015)

- 6** I) ...RC with HH in the background (*apologies GL*) 1'25"
- 7** II) ...DM 2'37"
- 8** III) ...MB and EC (*an imagined conversation*) 1'59"
- 9** IV) ...AB/BE 2'23"
- 10** V) ...AS 3'13"

## Paul Grabowsky (b. 1958)

- 11** *From the Depths* (2015) 7'54"

## Simon Barber (b. 1971)

- 12** *Meditation* (2016) — for solo piano 14'43"

Recorded at Move Records studio between 2015 and 2017

Editing: Vaughan McAlley  
Mastering: Martin Wright

**The Broken Dance** and **The Unfinished Chorale** recorded in 4 December 2012 by ABC Classic FM at Studio 520 Adelaide

**Meditation** recorded in 28 June 2016 by ABC Classic FM at the Tasmanian Conservatorium recital hall

Cover illustration: Graeme Lee

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## David Harris (b.1964)

### The Broken Dance / The Unfinished Chorale (2010)

These contrasting movements from an incomplete series for solo piano seeking to capture the sound of 'time's winged chariot hurrying near', a phrase famously penned by poet Andrew Marvell describing the inescapable tick of the mortal clock. The broken dance alludes to the steps which make up the day, a routine of interruptions and pursuits incomplete, amongst surges of momentum. The pace varies, and light, dark or indifferent in nature, we measure out the steps, until we don't.

*The Unfinished Chorale* offers a period of reflection, unsatisfactory in length, as is the nature of these moments, and such is length of a lifetime. Harmonically the piece never really resolves, instead growing and diminishing like waves on the shoreline.

DH

David Harris is a Melbourne-based composer and was a lecturer in composition at the Elder Conservatorium, University of Adelaide. Before joining the University Staff in 2002, he lectured in composition at the Flinders Street School of Music where over a ten-year period he developed composition studies to degree level.

As a composer David has been prolific (350 pieces since 1980) and varied, ranging stylistically from 'hardcore minimalism' (making a piano sound like an aeroplane)

to an expressive post-romanticism and many experimental shades in between. His interest in combing opposing materials has seen the development of his most recent style, the unlikely combination of chance, serialism and counterpoint. Recent pieces present chromatic, rhythmically disjointed episodes alongside warm seemingly tonally centred passages. These works form the Compossible Series, the first of which was written in 1994. This series is held together by the theme of its title which means 'able to co-exist with'. Works most concerned with this theme have been included in the series, which consist of 15 pieces for mixed ensemble to date.

David's music has been performed in France, USA, Canada, Poland and Australia by leading ensembles including Elision, the Adelaide Chamber Singers and the Grainger Quartet in festivals including the International Percussion Festival in Warsaw, the Darmstadt New Music Festival, the Adelaide Festival and Canberra International Chamber Festival. Compossible XIV for Natsuko Yoshimoto and James Cuddeford features on their recent Tall Poppies release, described as 'clever' by one reviewer and 'striking' by another.

## Michael Kieran Harvey (b. 1961)

### Piano Sonata No.3 "Aporia" (2016)

This work was commissioned by Graeme Lee for his wife Margaret. It was written with deepest gratitude for them from December 2015 until January 2016 and was premiered at the Melbourne Recital Centre on 20 May 2016. Trams run outside their home in central Melbourne. 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 sonata explores the concept of aporia, which is a state of bewilderment, of not being sure of the way forward. This is expressed by the interplay between intuitive and systematized writing.

MKH

## Allan Walker (b. 1955)

### Homages (Book 1) (2015)

Allan Walker marked his 60th year with four Homages that reflect on the multifaceted modernist tradition of which he is an expert scholar. The first piece of the current cycle (still ongoing in composition) acknowledges both Ruth Crawford and Herbie Hancock; further pieces relate to Donald Martino, Milton Babbitt and Arnold Schoenberg.

Each piece makes reference to a composer or pianist who has been significant in shaping my musical thinking. Although not my intention, the collection turned out to be a mostly American one – composers Milton Babbitt, Elliott Carter, Ruth Crawford, Donald Martino, and jazz pianists Bill Evans and Herbie Hancock. As for the Europeans in the set – Schoenberg, and Berg to a lesser degree, exerted a deep influence on these American composers and Schoenberg as the émigré living in Hollywood for 15 years maybe counts as part-American.

These homages don't seek to make any kind of obvious imitation of a composer's style; they are built upon more oblique references such as a compositional technique or gestural quality which I associate with the work of that particular figure. Sometimes two individuals are combined in the one piece (as in I, III and IV).

#### I) ...RC with HH in the background *[apologies GL]*

Herbie Hancock recalled that, as a member of Miles Davis' "second great quintet", the trumpeter asked him during a recording session to stop using his left hand. Taking his advice, Hancock relinquished the harmonic support and rhythmic punctuation typically provided by the left hand. This one-handed approach became one of Hancock's trademarks in this group especially in fast tempo pieces. This homage begins with this unaccompanied single line idea, becomes more complex and eventually returns to one line (but now doubled as an octave). The pitch material is drawn from the final movement of Ruth Crawford's 1931 string quartet and uses a rotational technique typical of her atonal music.

#### II) ...DM

Donald Martino fashioned a highly expressive 12-tone language characterised by a rich and clearly articulated harmony that underpins an often rapidly changing surface. I wrote this not long after my mother's death and somehow the muffled drums of a funeral march found their way into the piece.

#### III) ...MB and EC (*an imagined conversation*)

A long melodic line (Elliott Carter) surrounded by mercurial and animated figures (Milton Babbitt) governed by a slice of a Carter-esque large-scale polyrhythm.

#### IV) ...AB/BE

Alban Berg's music springs to mind when I hear some of Bill Evans' solo piano work especially in his last recordings. Evans was familiar with and enthusiastic about Berg's music and they share an essentially lyrical, romantic approach to the keyboard so it seemed natural to link them in this homage. An extra nod towards AB is made by making the last section a rhythmic and pitch palindrome of the first.

#### V) ...AS

A hint of a Viennese waltz and a re-imagining of the charged piano gestures of Schoenberg's op.23

The pieces were written for and dedicated to Michael Kieran Harvey, Australia's champion of new keyboard music. The first performance (I, II, III and V) was given by him on 11 September 2015 at the Arts House North Melbourne as part of the Astra Chamber Music Society concert series and the complete set at the Hobart Conservatorium on 19 November 2015.

**AW**

Allan Walker is a composer, music researcher, editor and educator. His music has been performed and commissioned by Australia's leading ensembles and performers, including the Astra Choir, Pipeline Contemporary Music Ensemble, Michael Kieran Harvey, Mardi McCullea, Miwako Abe, Daryl Pratt and Simone de Haan. Allan has been a lecturer in

composition and theory at La Trobe University, the Victorian College of the Arts and the Queensland Conservatorium. His most recent research is on the late music of Keith Humble and publications include an article in *Modernism in Australian Music, 1950-2000* and a new scholarly performance edition of Humble's *Trio no.2* published by Astra Publications.

### **Paul Grabowsky (b. 1958)**

#### **From the Depths (2015)**

A young man falls to his death on Sydney Harbour. His friends, in their grief, gather on the Balmain shore and create a mourning site, made of candles, flowers, memorabilia. A quiet pervades the scene, the gentle lapping of waves merging with hushed conversations. The life of the city continues into the dusk, the comings and goings of boats and ferries, the hum of a distant motorway. He has returned to the waters.

PG

Paul Grabowsky is a prominent figure in Australian music, as jazz pianist and composer, artistic director, and founder-conductor of the Australian Art Orchestra ...*Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu dir ... (Out of the Depths)* is the first of a set of pieces for Michael Kieran Harvey which have been under discussion for two decades, since the premiere of Grabowsky's *Piano Concerto* in 1996. The title refers to J.S. Bach's cantata based on the Hebrew Psalm 130, 'Out of the depths I cried'; the new work embracing both jazz-inflected arioso material and chorale-style fragments.

### **Simon Barber (b. 1971)**

#### **MEDITATION (2016)**

— for solo Piano

*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.

Tasmanian born composer Simon Barber studied composition with Don Kay in the mid to late 90s at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music in Hobart before relocating to Berlin in 2002.

Barber has maintained close contact with fellow composition student and long time friend Simon Reade who has consistently and generously made the Hobart Wind Symphony available for rehearsal and performance of various works over the years. In this context Barber's music has attracted the interest of eminent Hobart based pianist Michael Kieran Harvey who premiered Barber's piano concerto with the Hobart Wind Symphony conducted by Simon Reade to critical acclaim in February 2014.

Barber continues to write music for anyone interested whilst working as a freelance teacher of English in Berlin.

SB