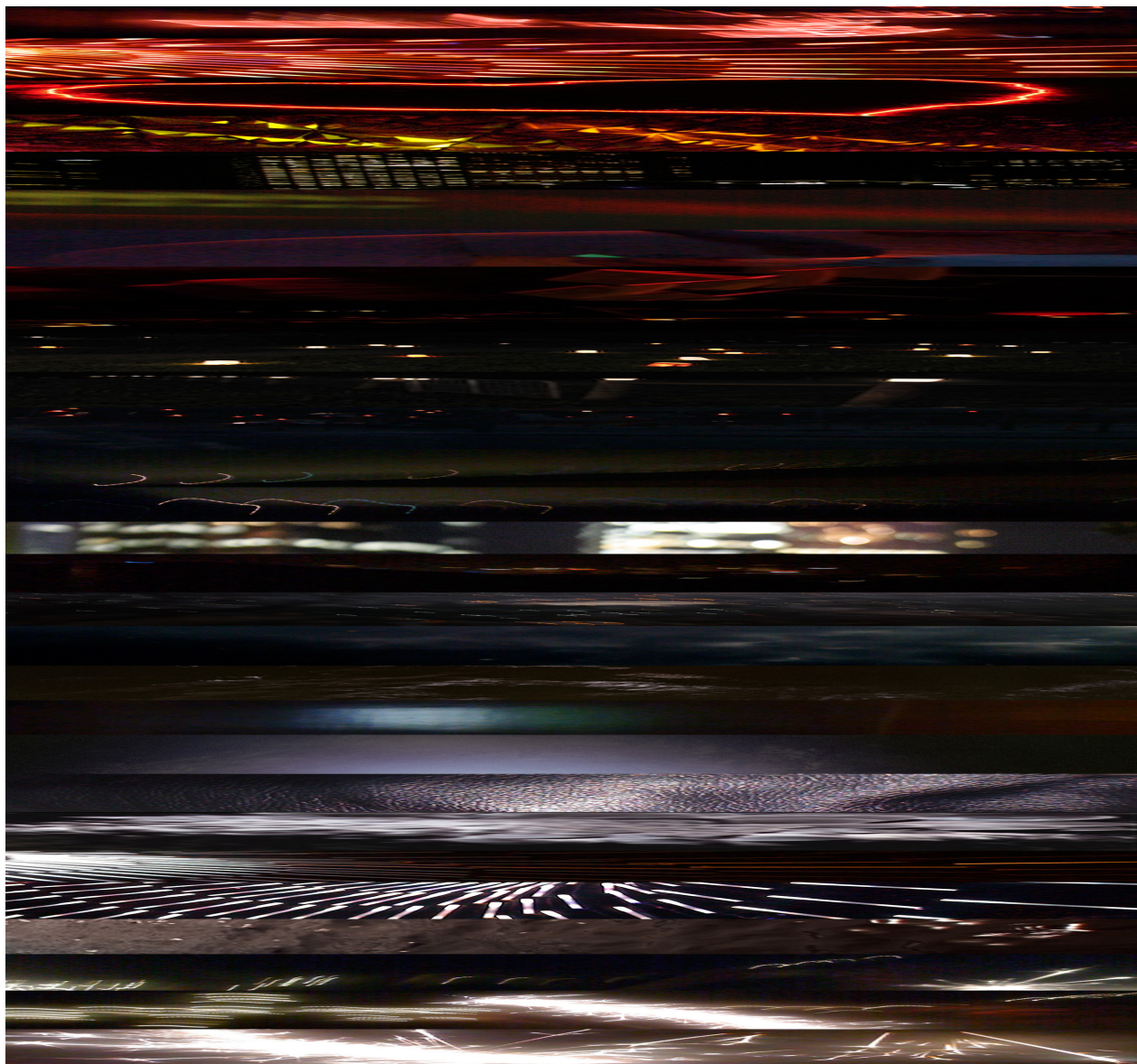


Light in dark

Tom Henry | works for solo piano



Jennifer Enchelmaier | piano

Light in dark

Tom Henry | works for solo piano

Ecstatic preludes (2005)

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------|------|
| 1 | Like an omen | 1'41 |
| 2 | Sensual and languid | 0'58 |
| 3 | Calm and flowing | 2'28 |

Studies for modern times (2005)

- | | | |
|----------|------------|------|
| 4 | Pop song | 2'19 |
| 5 | April 2005 | 3'09 |
| 6 | Film theme | 2'23 |

From 'Pieces for children' (2006)

- | | | |
|----------|-------------|------|
| 7 | A sad story | 2'39 |
| 8 | Barcarolle | 2'54 |

Songs without words (2003-2006)

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|------|
| 9 | Remembrance | 3'40 |
| 10 | Nocturne | 3'32 |
| 11 | New York | 3'23 |

Three short pieces for piano (2005)

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|------|
| 12 | Andante | 0'34 |
| 13 | Piu agitato | 0'35 |
| 14 | Molto allegro | 0'32 |

Piano Sonata No. 1 (2006, revised 2011)

- | | | |
|-----------|---|------|
| 15 | I: Theme | 1'20 |
| | <i>Quasi recitativo: molto drammatico, con rubato</i> | |
| 16 | II: Variations | 5'18 |
| | <i>Poco agitato; Molto tranquillo, con rubato;</i> | |
| | <i>Molto calmo e ritmato (quasi una Habanera);</i> | |
| | <i>Poco agitato; Quasi recitativo, con rubato;</i> | |
| | <i>Poco giocoso; Violento; Maestoso;</i> | |
| | <i>Poco giocoso – recitativo;</i> | |
| | <i>Martiale, molto ritmato – Recitativo</i> | |
| 17 | III: Moto perpetuo | 8'10 |

Three pieces for piano (2010)

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|------|
| 18 | Intermezzo | 2'55 |
| 19 | Light in dark | 5'31 |
| 20 | Toccata | 2'58 |

- | | | |
|-----------|---|-------|
| 21 | Piano Sonata No. 2
(‘on the name of Grevis Beard’) (2018) | 12'46 |
|-----------|---|-------|

Jennifer Enchelmaier | piano

All works © Tom Henry
Recorded at Move Records studio February 2022

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My first musical love was actually the flute. My father was an amateur flautist whose record collection included recordings of James Galway and Jean-Pierre Rampal. I loved its velvety, golden sound. However, at the age of 17 I also 'discovered' the piano. Hearing Chopin's first piano concerto performed live for the first time, I hastily took up piano lessons and have been inseparable from the instrument and its repertoire ever since. As a composer, the piano is also my working partner. And pianists, both jazz and classical, have influenced my writing almost as much as composers. It was therefore natural that the first works I wrote (in Banff, Canada, in late 2002) were for solo piano. Tracks 1-14 were all written from that time until 2006, and were first performed by Jennifer Enchelmaier in Melbourne in 2009.

1 - 3 Ecstatic Preludes (2005) The Prelude for keyboard has a rich tradition in Western music, the most notable being the 48 Preludes and Fugues of J.S. Bach. While Bach's Preludes 'set the mood' for the fugues that follow, Chopin's Preludes (and later, Scriabin's) are an end in themselves; they simply flow, one after another. Mine are in this later tradition.

Some time after writing the first of my Ecstatic Preludes (*Like an omen*), I came across the following passage from the ancient Chinese book, *The Tao de Ching*, by Lao Tzu. It seems to sum up the opening:

*Heaven and earth are not benevolent.
To them men are like straw dogs destined for sacrifice.*
(Richard Wilhelm edition, trans. H.G. Ostwald.
Arkan/Penguin Books, 1989)

The second *Prelude* is a short brooding rhapsody. The third comes from Bach.

Looking back, the first and third of my **Studies for modern times** (2005) **4 - 6** could be seen as a kind of purging of the pop culture influences of my youth. As a Gen X, the first and third of these, *Pop song* and *Film theme*, reference pastel jumpsuits, big hair, synthesizers (and quite possibly keytars) and the ubiquitous sax solo.

The second study, *April 2005*, couldn't be more different. It was written following the death of Pope John Paul II. As I am not formally religious, let alone Roman Catholic, I've often wondered why this event inspired me to write a piece. I think it was simply that during that month it seemed that for a brief moment the world was concerned with spiritual matters. Watching the TV news at the time - the sound of the bells of St Peters and the smoke signalling the election of a new Pope - I found all this very powerful and strange.

7 - 8 The two pieces from **Pieces for children** (2006) are in the long tradition of composers who have written pieces for children in a wide variety of moods, with reduced technical demands.

The title of **Songs without words** (2003-2006) **9 - 11** references the famous collection of piano pieces by Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) ('Lieder ohne Worte'). *Remembrance* is a gentle song in three beats. The title of the second, *Nocturne*, recalls Chopin. The third,

New York, was written following my visit to that city a few months after 9/11, and is a tribute to the music of Broadway.

Towards the end of this period of my early pieces, there was a turning point in my writing; my studies with Lawrence Whiffin (1930-2012), the late Australian composer. Laurie was a student of the composer and conductor, René Leibowitz, who was himself a student of the composer and teacher, Arnold Schoenberg. While my studies with him began with harmony and counterpoint, on completing my studies, I wrote several pieces that also reflected the more complex styles and techniques from the 20th century that I had learnt from him.

The first of these was **Three Short Pieces for Piano** (2005) **12- 14**, while the second was a much larger work, the **Piano Sonata No.1** (2006, revised 2011) **15- 17**.

Three Short Pieces for Piano are three miniatures, and were first performed by Jennifer Enchelmaier in Melbourne in 2009. *Sonata No. 1* was dedicated to Michael Kieran Harvey and first performed by him in 2011 for ASTRA Chamber Music Society. It was written during a short but creative period, the hot Melbourne summer of 2005-2006. While some of the other works begun during this period (a song cycle on poetry of Rilke and a work for strings) were lyrical and flowing, the Sonata emerged like black granite, full of a dark, painful tension. The three movements reflect a gradual release of this tension, eventually giving way to waves of emotion, like grief.

The entire work is derived from a small number of gestures, which can be heard in the opening movement, *Theme*.

The *Variations* that follow explore the musical possibilities implied by the opening material, creating an uneasy succession of musical landscapes or environments, in which stable harmonic ‘habitats’ are challenged by more foreign, dissonant tones.

While the first two movements have changing moods and tempi, the *Finale – Moto Perpetuo* flows on a continual stream of quavers. Tonal areas which were only dimly alluded to in the opening movements become prominent.

The two remaining works, *Three pieces for piano* and the *Piano Sonata No. 2*, while written several years apart, represent a more recent style. They were written during my studies with the composer Stuart Greenbaum.

18 - 20 *Three pieces for piano* (2010) was dedicated to Lawrence Whiffin on his 80th birthday. The first movement and its title, *Intermezzo*, references the solo piano works of the late 19th and early 20th century. The second movement, *Light in Dark*, is very different. A series of slow-moving chords, a kind of chorale, gradually unfolds and is embellished by different textures. The final movement, *Toccata*, shares its frenetic energy and virtuosity with other notable examples by composers of the past.

21 *Piano Sonata No. 2* (‘on the name of Grevis Beard’) (2018) was commissioned by Richard Knafelc, on the occasion of the 50th birthday of his husband, Grevis Beard. First performed by Christopher Nankervis, the

work is in one continuous movement. All of the musical material in the work is derived in different ways from a short theme that is a musical representation of the name of ‘Grevis Beard’ (G E Eb/D# B E A D):



This theme is heard at the start of the work, in a slow, stately tempo. In the middle part of the work, the tempo gains momentum and the theme is explored in different ways. When the theme returns in its original slow tempo near the end, I felt that the mood of

contemplation and stillness demanded a more overt expression or signal. In fact, during the writing of the work I heard in my inner ear the words ‘He-ja’ (or ‘He-ya’) sung on the first two notes of the theme (G and E). In the score I have therefore asked the pianist to gently sing these words. I tried to find out what these mysterious words or sounds meant, in any language and in this or other times... The best translation I could find is somewhere between ‘a call to the spirits or ancestors’ and the soothing song of a mother to her child.

Notes © Tom Henry, 2022



Jennifer Enchelmaier

Brisbane-based pianist Jennifer Enchelmaier is a sought-after collaborative pianist and in 2022 was appointed to the sessional staff at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music. Earlier in 2022 she performed at the Newcastle Festival with acclaimed violist Patricia Pollett. She first collaborated with composer Tom Henry in 2009, performing his song cycle ‘The Book of Images’ (after Rilke) with Tania Ferris, Mezzo-soprano, as well as his works for piano. She has since performed all of his piano works numerous times in recital.

Jennifer studied piano at the Tasmanian Conservatorium with Beryl Sedivka, as well as chamber music with Professor Jan Sedivka. Following further study in France with Cécile Ousset and Odile Poisson, she was awarded a Premier Prix with distinction

from the Conservatoire de Nice. Jennifer has been a finalist at the Premio Fausto Zadra international piano competition (Italy), performed and recorded new music for the University of Glasgow and was a tutor and staff accompanist at the Melbourne Conservatorium. Jennifer was a founding member of Melbourne new music ensemble Six Degrees.



Tom Henry

Tom Henry is an Australian composer whose works have been performed in Australia, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Canada.

Born in Melbourne, he began his musical career as a flautist. After graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts, he undertook a period of overseas study with the French virtuoso Patrick Gallois. After returning to Australia in 2002 he held a number of positions including Associate Principal Flute with Orchestra Victoria.

He completed his initial composition studies with the late Australian composer Lawrence Whiffin, then undertook further

studies with Julian Yu, Elliott Gyger and Stuart Greenbaum. In 2022 he completed a PhD in Composition at the University of Melbourne with Stuart Greenbaum.

His works for piano includes two Piano Sonatas. His first (2006, revised 2011) was dedicated to and first performed by Michael Kieran Harvey, and was a finalist in the 2011 American Liszt Society Bicentennial Composition Prize. A studio recording was released in 2012 on 'ASTRA 60', on Move Records.

His *Sonata for flute and piano* (2020) was first performed by Derek Jones and Jerry Wong in May 2022. A studio recording is available on MOVE Records as part of a CD of Australian works for flute, titled 'Flute Perspectives – Vol. 3'.

Tom has been commissioned by numerous Australian chamber ensembles, including the Huon Quartet (*Shelley on the Water* (2016)) and Syzygy Ensemble (*Towards Patmos – after Hölderlin* (2018), commissioned by Macedon Music). His first string quartet, *Scenes from a poet's life* (2015), was commissioned for the Flinders Quartet, and recorded for ABC Classics on 'The Offering'. His *Piano Trio* (2020), a second commission for the Firebird Trio, was first performed in December 2020 for Melbourne Digital Concert Hall. He has twice been commissioned by the Australian Chamber Choir to write major works for their European tours; *Kakadu Man* (2015) and *Uncertain Journeys* (2017).

His works for orchestra include *Variations for orchestra in three movements* (2009), which won the APRA Prize in the 2009 3MBS

National Composers Award, and *Ancestors for orchestra - Night Dances* (2011). His most recent work, *Visions from the interior – after Fred Williams* (2020), was commissioned by and first performed by the University of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in May 2022.

tomhenry.com.au

All works © Tom Henry

Scores and recordings of the composer can be ordered at the Australian Music Centre:
australianmusiccentre.com.au/artist/henry-tom

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Photo of Tom Henry and Jennifer Enchelmaier:
Vaughan McAlley
Photo of Tom Henry: Terry Lane

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