



Michael Kieran Harvey Collection

Sonata #7
Four Ballades
Lawyers
Death Cap Mushroom

The Sparrow and the Mead Hall

These works are composed and (mostly) performed by Michael Kieran Harvey. They range in style from the extended techniques and rarefied atmosphere of *Piano Sonata #7* to the more traditional romanticism of Liszt and Busoni in the *Four Ballades*, to the entertaining bebop language of *Lawyers...* and the strident metal-influenced satire of *Death Cap Mushroom*.

Four Ballades for Piano (2021) (34'25")

- 1 Stark** 10'25"
- 2 Implacable** 8'09"
- 3 Quasi fantasia** 8'43"
- 4 Fast** 5'58"

Piano Sonata #7: "The Sparrow and the Mead Hall" (2021) (26'20")

- 5 I. Non fui (Misterioso)** 11'13"
- 6 II. Fui (Ansioso)** 5'13"
- 7 III. Non sum (Free, atmospheric)** 5'12"
- 8 IV. Non curo (Distaccato)** 3'51"

9 Lawyers Are Lovely Misunderstood People and We Should All Be Much Kinder to Them for Piano (2021) 5'23"

10 Death Cap Mushroom (2021) an anti-opera for piano, toy piano, extended rock kit, vocal/guitar playback. Performed by Theodore Pike and Alex Bull for The ANAM Set 2021 7'08"

These recent works owe their existence to some very generous commissioners: *Four Ballades* commissioned by artist Graeme Lee; *Piano Sonata #7*: "The Sparrow and the Mead Hall" by the late artist Mary Pridmore; lawyer Craig Mackie; and the ANAM Set 2021. All works were written and performed during the Covid pandemic.

Front cover: Epicurus BCE 341-270
Painting: Graeme Lee 2020
"142 Roseneath Street"

Tracks **1** to **9** recorded at Move Records studio. Recording and mastering: Martin Wright.
Editing: Vaughan McAlley

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Composer/pianist Michael Kieran Harvey, photo Peter Mathew 2020



Four Ballades for Piano (2021)

- 1** Stark
- 2** Implacable
- 3** Quasi fantasia
- 4** Fast

In the interests of cohesion the Ballades have opening notes that are a transposition of J.S.Bach's famous spiral musical signature (B.A.C.H.), and are all based on a freely harmonised twelve-tone row stated in octaves at the opening of the first Ballade. This row generates a prime number obsession throughout the set. There is also a tight narrative through each ballade that suggests a literary journey, but there are no specific programs despite the contrasting characters of each work.

Commissioned by Graeme Lee, dedicated to Jenny Lee.
Premiered at Hobart Town Hall on 6 Dec 2022.

Piano Sonata #7: "The Sparrow and the Mead Hall" (2021)

- 5** I. Non fui (Misterioso)
- 6** II. Fui (Ansioso)
- 7** III. Non sum (Free, atmospheric)
- 8** IV. Non curo (Distaccato)

Non fui, fui, non sum, non curo (I was not, I was, I am not, I care not), Epicurus BCE 341-270. This maxim forms the structure and materials of the sonata. No more sensible reasoning towards the fear of death has ever been articulated. The maxim has been likened to the allegory of the sparrow flying into a noisy, brightly-lit mead hall at night and out the other side. Commissioned by Mary Pridmore, dedicated to Mary Pridmore. Premiered at the Nolan Gallery, MONA on 7 Jul 2021.

9 Lawyers Are Lovely Misunderstood People and We Should All Be Much Kinder to Them for Piano (2021)

Craig Mackie is a refugee advocate, barrister and solicitor based in Hobart who confounds the stereotypical image of the mercenary lawyer. After years spent tussling with a particularly gnarly legal issue for my wife and I, Craig jokingly asked for a piece of music with this title as payment and this is the result. I am so grateful to him for his expert, wise counsel over the years and for his quirky humour. Commissioned by and dedicated to Craig Mackie. Premiered 10 Feb 2023 in Church of All Nations, Carlton.

10 Death Cap Mushroom (2021) an anti-opera for piano, toy piano, extended rock kit, vocal/guitar playback.

The Death Cap Mushroom is a deadly poisonous mushroom often mistaken for ordinary funghi (pron. FunGuy). It has taken out at least one Roman Emperor and one Holy Roman Emperor. It won't go away, and it seems to be spreading, even to Australia, where it is concentrated near Parliament House, Canberra. On the surface it seems quite a reasonable mushroom but once it gets inside a human death follows swiftly. Though looking the same as other mushrooms it regards itself as superior and chosen. It holds gatherings in national parks where it glories in its white European roots. It is closely associated with the orange fat-headed American poisonous mushroom, Fly Agaric, that returns every four years.

The prime sequence to 17 is used throughout the piece (17 is the sum of primes 2,3,5,7). Prime = supremacy. Toy piano = white privilege. The satirical text of Death Cap Mushroom, written by Arjun von Caemmerer, refers to the George Floyd incident, which sparked the Black Lives Matter movement, a reaction to white privilege and systemic racism.

Commissioned as part of the ANAM Set (2021). Dedicated to Theo Pike. Premiered by Theo Pike (piano, toy piano) and Alex Bull (kit) with Benjamin Cannings (backing vocals/guitar), 26 Oct 2021. Recording: Duncan Yardley, producer; Russell Thomson, sound engineer. Recorded in: Elisabeth Murdoch Hall, Melbourne Recital Centre. The ANAM Set is supported by the Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund.

Post-production at Move Records studio.

Dark Row, Death Row Dark Grown, Death Groan

[i.m. George Floyd, Ms Dhu, & Co.]

Death Caps are Fun Guys!
Death Caps are Fun Gals!
Fun Guys mate Fun Guys!
Fun Guys date Fun Gals!

Death Caps are Fun Guys!
Death Cops are Fun Guys!
Death Cops are Top Cops!
Death Cops are Gun Cops!

Breath Stamp goes Top Cop!
Breath Stomp goes Gun Cop!
Breath Stamp goes Fun Guy!
Breath Stomp goes Fun Guy!

Fun Guy sees Breath Stop.
Fun Gal sees Breath Stop.

The Top Cop's a Fun Guy!
The Gun Cop's a Fun Guy!
The Fun Guy's a Top Gun!
The Fun Guy's a Top Mate!

Fun Guys	Fun Gals
4	
Fun Guys	Ever!