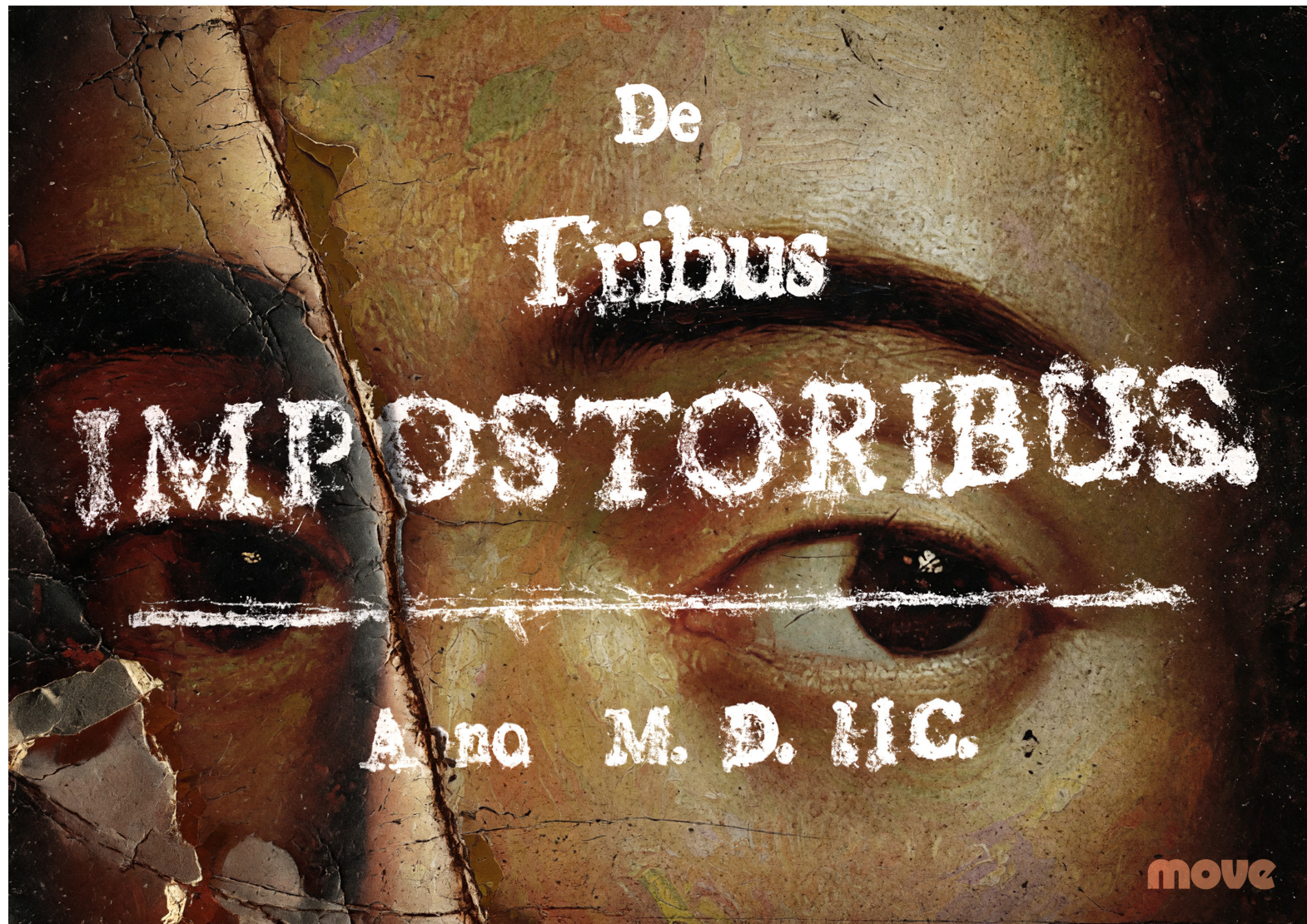
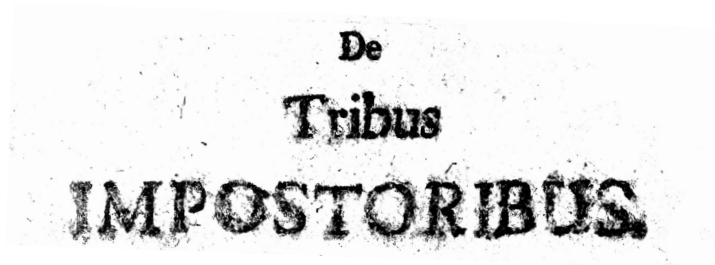


# Michael Kieran Harvey Collection

Original works for piano, duos and electronics





Composed and performed by Michael Kieran Harvey

**De Tribus Impostoribus** for solo piano (2024)

**1** first movement 5'53

**2** second movement 5'30

**3** third movement 4'40

**4** **'7'** for baritone sax and piano (2015) recorded live 17'09

**5** **Duo** for Viola and Piano (2019) 14'07

**6** **Rameaustein** for 2 iPads, iPhone and electric keyboard (2019) recorded live 9'21

**7** **Kazohinia** for French horn, piano, synthesizer and drumkit (1998) 5'48

**8** **N Chromium** for keyboards, violin/flute/erhu, electric guitar/clarinet/pipa, bass/shakuhachi, drums (2013) 3'35

**9** **Deaths Head Mandala** for piano, synthesizer, bass and drumkit (2014) 4'48

**10** **Homage to Liszt** for solo piano (2017) 8'10

Recording: Move Records studio

Editing: Vaughan McAlley

Mastering: Martin Wright

Booklet cover: Simon Wright

# De Tribus IMPOSTORIBUS

## De Tribus Impostoribus

for solo piano (2024)

*De Tribus Impostoribus* (The Three Imposters) is a 17th century book by an anonymous writer alleged to be Spinoza. The three sections of the book form the tripartite structure of this piano work, originally written for harp. Each movement is a character piece ruminating on the influence of the book's three mythical figures on peaceful human coexistence.

I am grateful to Dr Arjun von Caemmerer for alerting me to Eliot Weinberger's *19 Ways of Looking at Wang Wei*, in which the 19 translations of Wei's poem *Deer Park* transform the original Tang Dynasty Chinese into wildly differing versions more reflective of the different authors' psyches than fidelity to the original. *De Tribus Impostoribus* similarly "translates" or transforms the original text into musical materials and structures which then feed off their own constant reinterpretation.

Movement I begins tonally enough but ends in an atonal non sequitur through a process of constant interpretation of the original melodic row, a kind of musical

hermeneutics. This process is common in the study of ancient texts. Movement II continues this reinterpretation of materials, this time with extended techniques, abrupt arrests and polyrhythmic textures, a prime sequence applied to various chordal groups and a climactic chorale. Movement III explores an ostinato interpretation of the main theme from Movement I, which is modulated through various treatments, noise interruptions via palm clusters and reharmonisations, ending with passages of ecstatic palm clusters and glissandi. There is a further hermeneutical process in the transcription from harp to piano, where the original harp sound world is gesturally and timbrally reimaged on piano.

## '7'

for baritone sax and piano (2015)

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 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.

## Duo

for Viola and Piano (2019)

This duo is inspired both by the unique playing and virtuosity of Dr Phoebe Green, and the monumental architecture of MONA, Hobart. Beginning with a ripping of the sound-world of the two instruments, an implacable rhythmic dialogue is established based on an eleven note row. This reflects the multiple layers of sandstone and man-made scarring, buttressing, gouging and filling in the basement entrance to MONA. The music is similarly gouged, disrupted and discontinuous, with both instruments crashing together and splintering off as if in a violent relationship. There is a brief respite in the central section, where a more lyrical mood is explored by the viola against a sparse piano climate, before a return to the opening mood, and a coda that recalls the eleven note row in a resigned solo viola non sequitur. The work is dedicated to Dr Phoebe Green.

## **Rameaustein**

for 2 iPads, iPhone and electric keyboard  
(2019)

“The audio loop and the animated GIF are perhaps defining aspects of late 20th and early 21st century popular culture. Existential expressions of just how deeply embedded repetition is within our lives. Perhaps in the broadest possible cultural material terms the loop is a manifestation of theological concepts of resurrection and reincarnation.”  
Review of Adrian Corker’s ‘Music for Lock Grooves’, *The Wire*.

The huge ostentation of this review of a piece of banal automated dance music led me to fuse the idiom of the repetitious lock groove with the idioms of both contrapuntal Rameau and *Rammstein*’s stadium rock in the hope of producing a deformed sonic offspring that would take revenge on such pretentiousness. Both Rameau and Rammstein are inheritors of Enlightenment ideals, crusading through their music against superstition and the dark forces of nationalist romanticism in favour of a humanist and science-based ethos. *Rameaustein*, like *Frankenstein*’s daemon, is the result, and may live on, being a mongrel chimera of 20th/21st century popular culture and French rationalism, therefore (hopefully) made of sterner stuff than loops and gifs. Of course, there is every chance it is just as pretentious as that which it pillories, but there’s no harm in the attempt. It is the second of a series of works exploring the ostentatiousness generated by popular digital platforms,

which began with the soprano and percussion duo “Inside the World of the Digital Narcissist” (2019).

## **Kazohinia**

for French horn, piano, synthesizer and drumkit (1998)

This work refers to the science fiction book *Voyage to Kazohinia* by Hungarian Sándor Szathmári, written in 1941. It is a satire on fascism, like Huxley’s *Brave New World*, and with deep suspicion explores the concept of human perfectibility. The original concept for the piece was as an operatic 30-minute journey through John Howard’s dystopian Australia of the late 1990s, and incorporated visual imagery as well as poetry by La Mama’s Lloyd Jones. This version was premiered at the Sydney Town Hall as part of the Sydney Festival on 21 January 1998. Dominic Harvey performed on French horn and also sang heldentenor, Adrian Luca and Michael Kieran Harvey performed on various keyboards, including the Stuart and Sons piano, and Philip South provided drums via CD playback. The revised version was premiered at the Brisbane Powerhouse in the Slave Pianos production of *The Lepidoptera*, on 26 February 2016, with Dominic Harvey again on French horn and Michael Kieran Harvey on keyboards and CD playback. The midi realisation is by Neil Kelly.

## **N Chromium**

for keyboards, violin/flute/erhu, electric guitar/clarinet/pipa, bass/shakuhachi, drums (2013).

The title of this piece is a corruption of the word “encomium”, the definition of which is a speech of praise. *N Chromium* suggests a heavy metallic element with a shiny, hard, shimmering exterior, and seems appropriate for the cross-genre group Typhoon for which it was written. This group consisted of Brian Ritchie, rock bassist and shakuhachi player, Xie Yu Dan, virtuoso pipa player, Ma Jia Jun, virtuoso erhu player and composer, and Michael Kieran Harvey. Typhoon toured China in December 2013 as a cross-cultural collaboration. Each instrument is featured as soloist in this brief work. The work however was premiered on 12 April 2014 as part of *The Lepidoptera*, a “space opera” by Slave Pianos. The brief was to write two retro progrock works for this project, and so *N Chromium* was adapted for acoustic instrumentation as a contrast to the other electronic progrock work by Harvey, *Deaths Head Mandala*. Once again the midi realisation is by Neil Kelly with solos by MKH.

## Deaths Head Mandala

for piano, synthesizer, bass and drumkit (2014).

The Deaths Head is a type of moth, and this work is a repurposing of the final movement Mandala of a previous work, *Patañjali*. The work was premiered on 12 April 2014 at North Melbourne Town Hall as part of The Lepidopters, a “space opera” by Slave Pianos (this science fiction work is about alien moth invasion of earth). The various solo lines were played by Harvey on synthesiser with an obbligato electric guitar solo by Rudi Atjeh, lead guitarist of the Indonesian rock group PUNKasila. The work takes its structure, rhythm and harmonic language from the number 5, a significant number in Hinduism and also in the structure of pentagram-based mandalas. Mandible, the mouth of a moth is closely related in sound though not etymology to mandala, and moths have traditionally been seen as thanatogenic. Midi realisation by Neil Kelly with solos by MKH.

## Homage to Liszt

for solo piano (2017)

Homage to Liszt was a work for percussion and piano I wrote for Eugene Ughetti and myself to perform in a concert at ANAM in 2011, the year of Liszt’s bicentennial, along with performances of Humphrey Searle’s 1951 *Sonata* (also a homage to Liszt and premiered at London’s Wigmore Hall by my teacher Gordon Watson in that same year) and Liszt’s favourite Beethoven sonata, the

so-called Hammerklavier opus 106. *Homage to Liszt* is in six sections, the musical material of which is in some way related to Liszt with the exceptions of the *Prologue* and *Epilogue*, which are jazz-derived bookends, as if looking back at Liszt from the 21st century. The work is scored deliberately for a combination Liszt would not have considered during his day – the anti-rubato nature of so much 21st century music would be a curious development for his sensibilities.

This *Homage* is a work of genuine admiration, gratitude, humour and barefaced plagiarism in memory of the great Ferenc Liszt. It is in four sections - *Ballade* (based on Liszt’s favourite interval, the diminished fifth, alternating with stacked fifth chords); *Waltz* (a re-imagining of his Transcendental etude no.11); *Csardas* (a frenetic Hungarian peasant workout); and *Consolation* (which in the melody uses a 12-tone serial note-row as did Liszt’s later work) – introduced by a be-bop-influenced *Prologue* (in a 7 across 8 beat “Gaussian clock” cycle).

The version for solo piano was presented at a concert in the Conservatory of the Hobart Botanical Gardens on 2nd April 2017 honouring the 90th birthday of the great environmentalist Peter Cundall, to whom this version of the work is dedicated.



**A**ustralian pianist and composer, Dr Michael Kieran Harvey FAHA, is one of the foremost interpreters of contemporary piano music of his generation. Released in 2009, his CD *Elektra* was described by Australian

critic Clive O’Connell as the product of an “indefatigable master-pianist ... pieces commissioned especially for his volcanic talent”. Harvey’s homage to Zappa *48 Fugues For Frank* was premiered at Mona Foma 2010 and won an AMC state award for best composition in 2011. Piano sonatas nos. 4-6 were released in 2019–2021. *Green Brain Cycle* (based on the eponymous Frank Herbert novel) was premiered at the Mona Foma Festival in 2018, a festival highlight.

Following this came the acclaimed *The Sparrow and the Mead Hall* CD, while a re-release of his 20th century CD *Threnody* reminded critics of his early championing of virtuoso Australian music, coupled with a CD of more recent Australian and Japanese chamber music entitled *Shichiseki*.

Harvey continues to produce monumental cyclical works including the APRA-nominated *War Sonatas* honouring Peter Singer and Harvey’s long-time collaborator Arjun von Caemmerer while also lamenting the prevalence of war and the rise of AI.