

Michael Kieran Harvey Collection

The
**GREEN
BRAIN**
Cycle

Michael Kieran Harvey | composer and performer
Arjun von Caemmerer | concrete poetry and voice

move

Michael Kieran Harvey's 92 minute multi-instrument solo extravaganza inspired by Herbert's prescient novel about arthropod AI "The Green Brain", with amusing concrete poetry by Arjun von Caemmerer

The GREEN BRAIN

Cycle

INSTRUMENTS

Michael: Kawai MP8, Kawai ES7, Korg Krome synthesizer
Baldwin concert grand – **Arjun:** Mininova Novation synthesizer

Brigita Ozolins: set design for Mona Foma performance

Photos: Adam Callen, Brigita Ozolins

For fomenting Mona Foma: Brian Ritchie and Shelley McCuaig

Cover image: Simon Sprecher, Sprecher Lab, University of

Fribourg, Switzerland, for use of the Queen Ant brain image

Recording, mixing, mastering: Martin Wright

Editing: Vaughan McAlley

Interviews: Ben Ross

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CD one

- 1 **Ants** (to Richard Vella) 7'19"
- 2 **Cockroaches** 3'21"
- 3 **Grasshoppers** (to Saxby Pridmore) 3'26"
- 4 **Mantises** (to John McCaughey) 3'08"
- 5 **Scorpions** (to Brian Ritchie and Varuni Kulasekera) 5'21"
- 6 **Beetles** (to Nigel Westlake) 3'37"
- 7 **Flies** 8'26"
- 8 **Bees** (to Martin Friedel) 3'14"
- 9 **Wasps** 2'18"
- 10 **Butterflies** (to John and Maria Honey) 3'17"
- 11 **Moths** (to Gordon Marr) 9'34"
- 12 **Spiders** (to Tom Samek) 3'55"
- 13 **Fleas** 3'43"
- 14 **Ticks** 5'13"
- 15 **Lice** 3'25"
- 16 **Silverfish** (to Raymond Shon) 4'05"
- 17 **Earwigs** (to Gordon Rumson) 3'38"

CD two

- 1 **Slaters** 5'31"
- 2 **Aphids** (to Tom Vincent) 5'05"
- 3 **Mosquitos** (to Dr Arjun von Caemmerer) 4'38"
- 4 **Michael Kieran Harvey**
talks about composing The Green Brain 34'42"
- 5 **Arjun von Caemmerer**
talks about creating the concrete poetry 18'55"



The Green Brain Cycle is a 90 minute musical composition by Michael Kieran Harvey, in collaboration with Arjun von Caemmerer and Brigita Ozolins. The work takes inspiration from Frank Herbert's 1966 futuristic ecological novel *The Green Brain*, in which insect intelligence evolves leading to a resistance against the devastating impact of humans on the biosphere.

The performance is in 20 movements for keyboards and piano, each named after major insect genera, and is accompanied by a series of 'concrete' poems by poet Arjun von Caemmerer.

By including this narrative anchor and integrating key passages from the book, (spoken in a strange techno-insect voice), the work provides an entry point for listeners to engage with the intense and seemingly discordant music of Harvey. Indeed, the quick movements, sharp clangs and odd mix of electronic sounds prompted imaginative visions of insect movement and debate.

Brigita Ozolins worked collaboratively with Harvey and von Caemmerer to design the set for the

world premier performance of The Green Brain Cycle at Mona Foma.

It comprised poems in gold lettering on the walls, faux lawn, hundreds of small plastic insects, live plants and trees, shiny gold beanbags and a giant green glowing orb that was suspended almost threateningly over the grand piano. The set provided a good balance between

the familiar, futuristic and otherworldly, creating a comfortable dramatically lit jungle-like atmosphere, which helped the audience relax into the performance.

Adapted from an article by Svenja J. Kratz for The Conversation, Lecturer in Interdisciplinary Creative Practice, University of Tasmania





The Green Brain (1966), initially published as Greenslaves, is set in the not-so-distant future, where humankind has all but succeeded in controlling life on the planet and almost completely wiped out insect life.

This composition for mixed keyboards and narrator is in twenty movements named after major

insect genera, each of which take characteristics of the particular insect morphology and behaviour to generate a musical portrait. Overall the binding idea in the cycle is the similarity of anatomy, which nevertheless, through evolutionary pressures, has resulted in infinite diversity amongst insects, and indeed amongst all of life on earth and perhaps elsewhere in the universe.

The cycle as a whole, though consisting of twenty separate pieces each based on a particular type of insect, is a contemplation on

the possibility of the spontaneous emergence of superior intelligence amongst insects when faced with the devastation unleashed on the biosphere by humans. The narrator recites the thoughts of the insect Brain, which act as a descriptive thread throughout the instrumental movements.

Each movement of the twenty-part cycle interprets the characteristics of a different kind of insect, which poet and narrator Arjun von Caemmerer reconstructed into a series of 'concrete' poems emblazoned on the walls of a jungle-like gallery space designed by installation artist Brigita Ozolins in this live recording from the original Mona Foma performance in Hobart in January 2018.

MKH

Recombinants, a series of 20 concrete poems, was written in response to Michael Kieran Harvey's **The Green Brain**, his keyboard opus inspired by the science fiction novel of the same name by Frank Herbert. Each of Harvey's 20 pieces are named after an arthropod.

All of the titles of the individual pieces of **Recombinants** derive from rearrangements of the letters of "The Green Brain". Similarly, the contents of the individual pieces are constituted entirely of re-combinations of the letters that spell the names of Harvey's selected bugs.

...ANTS ANTS ANTS ANTS ANTS ANTS ANTS ANTS ANTS ANTS...

BAIT (A Morality Play)

Act I

Satan sat.

'Satan Stan', a Tas ant, sat as "Santa".

Nat, a Tas ant, sat as "Santa" sat.

A Santa-Nat?

Na! A Nat/Stan-as-Satan...

SNAT!

Ta Ta Nat.

Nat's a Stat.

Act II

'Satan Stan', a Tas ant, sat as "Santa".

Asta, a Tas ant, sat as "Santa" sat.

An Asta-Santa?

Na! An Asta/Stan-as-Satan...

SNAT!

Ta Ta Asta.

Asta's a Stat.

Act III

'Satan Stan', a Tas ant, sat as Santa.

Satan (Satan!) sat as "Santa" sat.

Stan's an ass:

A Satan/Stan-as-Satan!

SNAT!

Ta Ta Stan.

Stan's a Stat.

(Curtains)

Satan sat as Satan.

...COCKROACHES COCKROACHES COCKROACHES COCKROACHES...

**THREE AGENTS
(A Movie Plot)**

A shocker! A scorcher!
A hacker erases a eurocache.

Chaos, as shock scares shares scarce.

Rake: Career Cop – he shares research areas; cracks cases; harasses crooks; karaokes hoarse.

A search: Rake crosses Esco.

Esco: Arch Crook – a shark: he cooks crack; hocks coke, hooch, hash; coerces; has a scar; races horses.
Rake, Esco: each chess the other.

A cash crop scorches. Ashes.

Rose: Rash Hooker – she caresses eros (Oohs! Aahs!); she scores; she errs (chooses coarse Esco, crosses crass Rake)
Her error: he, harsh, socks her, scares her. Her ear aches, hears echoes.

Rake reaches Rose. She re-chooses, crosses, aces Esco.

A car chase! A car race! A car crash!
Esco ceases, a carcass.

A hearse.

Shares soar!

Hoorahs! Cheers!

(Score: H. Shore)

...GRASSHOPPERS GRASSHOPPERS GRASSHOPPERS GRASSHOPPERS...

**RANT
(An Argument)**

He proposes progress. She hears rash hope.

He presses papers. She prepares her eraser.

He sees shares prosper. She sees sparse horrors.

He shapes sharp graphs. She sees gross errors.

He goes "Ergo". She hears ego.

He proposes. She opposes.

He regresses. He rages.

She ages.

...MANTISES MANTISES MANTISES MANTISES MANTISES MANTISES...

**EATEN
(A Prayer)**

in time's net

man eats
as
masses mate

in time's net

man sits
as
seas teem

in time's net

man nests
as
matins mass

in time's net

saints sin
as
stains set

in time's net

man mints
as
names mist

a man
I am

in time's net

amen

...SCORPIONS SCORPIONS SCORPIONS SCORPIONS SCORPIONS ...

**BITE
(A Tabloid Tale)**

**POISON POISSON! R.I.P. SIR CRISP
POISON CORN! R.I.P. SIR NORTON
POISON ONIONS! RIP SNR NORRIS
POISON SPOONS! R.I.P. SNRS PISONI, COPRINI, SOPORI**

POISON SCOOP! POISON IS PICRIC!

POISON CRISIS! COPS SNOOP ICONIC SCION

OPINION: SIR ROSINI'S PRIOR SINS...

COPS PIN SIR ROSINI!

SIR ROSINI IN IRONS!

SIR ROSINI IN PRISON

**NIP! SNIP! CROP!
SIR ROSSINI IN PRISON SCISSORS PICS!**

**SCORN!!
IN PRISON "COCOON"
SIR ROSINI SIPS PINO-NOIR**

POISON PINO! SIR ROSINI, R.I.P.

OOPS!!! COPS IN CRISIS

...BEETLES BEETLES BEETLES BEETLES BEETLES BEETLES BEETLES...

**HERITAGE
(A Sermon)**

Let Bells Tell:
Blest Be Beetles.

Let Beetles Settle,
Less Sleet-Beset.

Let Beetles Beetle
(Beetles Beetle Best).

Let Beetles Be:
See; Let Be.

Let Bells Tell:
Blest Be Bees.

Let Bees Settle –
Test Bees Less.

Let Bees Be
(Bees Be Best).

Let Bees Be:
See; Let Be.

Let Bells Tell:
Blest Be Eels.

Let Eels Settle,
Less Steel-Beset.

Let Eels Be
(Lest Eels Be Less).

Let Eels Be:
See; Let Be.

...FLIES FLIES FLIES FLIES FLIES FLIES FLIES FLIES FLIES FLIES...

I

(An Image)

**SELFIESELFIESELFIESELFIESELFIE
SELFIESELFIESELFIESELFIESELFIE
SELFIESELFIESELFIESELFIESELFIE
SELFIESELFIESELFIESELFIESELFIE**

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SELFIESELFIESELFIESELFIESELFIE
SELFIESELFIESELFIESELFIESELFIE**

...BEES BEES BEES BEES BEES BEES BEES BEES BEES BEES...

**HIT
(A Logo)**

for B.B. &

**B
A
B A Y E R
E
R**

**E
E B B
B**

...WASPS WASPS WASPS WASPS WASPS WASPS WASPS WASPS ...

HINGE
(A Greeting)

Paws

swaP

...**BUTTERFLIES** **BUTTERFLIES** **BUTTERFLIES** **BUTTERFLIES**...

EARRINGS
(Petite Pieces)

Still Life

Suburbs:
Life settles.
Rueful retirees rest.

Rebels

Refute fetters.
If elite brutes
Issue rules, refuse. Bristle.

Bites

Beer is bitter.
Lust is fleet.
Life is brief.

Trifles

Blissful be blueberries.
But is
Brulee better?

Beef

Suits? Futile!
Users sit stiff.
Testes suffer.

Librettist's Brief

Blurt little.
Blurb terse.
Utter relief.

Sillier still,
In stilts
Fillies teeter.

...**BUTTERFLIES BUTTERFLIES BUTTERFLIES BUTTERFLIES**...

EARRINGS
(Petite Pieces)

Fists

Tribes tussle;
Brutes bruise;
Subsets suffer.

Sureties

Fibs lie.
Bluster flies.
Libel fells.

Relief

Ureters:
Little tubes
Filter litres.

Rubbers

Lust rises
(Stiff tissue)
Users rut.

Bible Belt

Tireless testifiers.
Futurists.
True lifers.

Brute

Belief
Ties
Liberties.

Fife

Rutter's flute
Flutters, trills;
Flurries rills; rests still.

...MOTHS MOTHS MOTHS MOTHS MOTHS MOTHS MOTHS MOTHS MOTHS...

TRIBE
(An Epigram)

To Tom S., host so smooth

So-so hot-shots (too sot to moot)

Shoot tosh mots to "Ho Ho!" hoots

...SPIDERS SPIDERS SPIDERS SPIDERS SPIDERS SPIDERS SPIDERS...

**HEAT
(A Fantasy)**

Pierre's desire is ripe
Pierre's desire is dire

Pierre spies dresses ride
Pierre's red pride rises

Pierre spies dresses rise
Pierre's red pride spires

Pierre sees dresses rip

Pierre prises
Pierre presses

Pierre speeds

Pierre dies; drips seed...

Pierre's desire dries
Pierre's desire is rid

...FLEAS FLEAS FLEAS FLEAS FLEAS FLEAS FLEAS FLEAS FLEAS...

BEING
(A Buddhist Canon)

“Alas! : All flees; All falls”

Assess all – Flea, Leaf, Sea : a self?
All: selfless.

A “Self” = False!
Esse as Selflessness.

Feel ease –
Fall as a leaf falls

See:

...TICKS TICKS TICKS TICKS TICKS TICKS TICKS TICKS TICKS TICKS...

REGENERATE (A Timepiece)

It

Ticks...

Sticks?

It

Sit.

Kiss:

I

I

Kick

Tsk!).

It!

(Tsk-

...LICE LICE LICE LICE LICE LICE LICE LICE LICE LICE LICE LICE LICE LICE...

**AGREE?/NEGATE?
(A Paradox)**

"I lie."

...SILVERFISH SILVERFISH SILVERFISH SILVERFISH SILVERFISH...

NITE RITE
(An Arabian Nights Story)

The heiress lifts her sheer veil.

Elvish silver, her vessel.
He fills.
She refreshes herself.

She relishes vivre.
She seeks fever.
He serves her.

Her flesh fires.
(Hell shivers!)
Virile, he rises.

She hires; she fires:
She flies; he lies.

She fills herself –
Iris es revel.

She vies; she shies;
She verses; she reverses.

She shrives; she revives;
She lives; she veers

Free.

...EARWIGS EARWIGS EARWIGS EARWIGS EARWIGS EARWIGS ...

REGRET
(A Lament)

I rage.

We wage war.
We sew ire.

We erase air.
We see seas rise.
We sear.

We aggress.
We regress.
We swagger; we swig; we swear.

We weary.

Risis, sages, seers – wise, aware – all agree:
We wager ages.

We wager eras.

...SLATERS SLATERS SLATERS SLATERS SLATERS SLATERS ...

TERRAIN
(An Advertisement)

All Star Sellers "Stellar Real Estate!"

Alert! Alert! Alert!

All Star Sellers Latest Release

Sale! Sale! Sale!

"Settlers Retreat"
Rare East Earl Street Asset!
Rest; Stare at Sea; Taste Salt

Tessellate-slate rear area
Strata set (lesser rates!)
A Steal!

All Star Sellers "Stellar Real Estate!"

...APHIDS APHIDS APHIDS APHIDS APHIDS APHIDS APHIDS APHIDS...

**ERRING
(A Cycle)**

"Hi!" I said

(Ah !!!
A dish!
His apish id!
His PhD!
His hip, hip hips...
His ass!)

A sip.

Dash, dash, dash!

A dap pad!
(A hid spa!!)

Pash, pash, pash!!!

I paid – his id had a dais.

Ash-sad, I ship.

...MOSQUITOS MOSQUITOS MOSQUITOS MOSQUITOS ...

REHAB
(Absolutisms)

oust

musts!

toss out

I must:

omit

isms!

quit