

A landscape photograph of a golden field under a blue sky with clouds. The field is filled with tall, golden grasses and wildflowers, stretching towards a line of trees in the distance. The sky is a deep blue with wispy white clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

Rhythms of Green & Gold

John Martin, piano

Australian piano works with a twist of jazz

1. Amanda Handel
Dreamboat Blues 1'52

2. Amanda Handel
Bootleg Blues 1'45

3. Amanda Handel
Blue Laze 4'44

4. Tom Anderson
A Walk Down Ragtime Lane 3'04

5. ElenaKats-Chernin
Nonchalance 6'50

6. Elena Kats-Chernin
Reflections 2'16

7. Matthew Dennett
Round Midday 4'42

8. Ross Edwards
Sassafras Gully Waltz 2'14

9. Ross Edwards
Sandy Stone's Waltz 3'04

10. Ross Edwards
Annandale Waltz 3'20

Rhythms of Green & Gold

John Martin

11. Rod Heard
Take Seven 2'53

12. Rod Heard
Summer Arrives 5'09

13. Rod Heard
Barbera Blues 4'24

14. Rod Heard
Rags to Riches 2'58

15. John Martin
The Everglades at Dawn 3'29

16. Stuart Greenbaum
Taurus 1'30

17. Stuart Greenbaum
Looking to the Future 1'46

18. May Howlett
The Baroqua Rag 2'03

19. Ann Carr-Boyd
The Solitary Rag 4'39

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Composers' program notes:

Amanda Handel (b. 1958)

1 Dreamboat Blues

Dreamboat Blues is dedicated to John Hishon who had the gentle spirit of a dreamer. He was a Sydney gigging jazz pianist who played and lived with great vitality and an easy energy. It was through John's encouragement that I started writing music. After some years we lost touch, then I received the sad news from his daughter, that John had lost his life to cancer. Strangely, this came just after I'd found the old pencilled sketch on a scrap of paper, and I had just completed fully notating the piece and refining details. John had given me this lovely melody. At his home in Newport he used to have a beloved old sailing boat dry-docked – in desperate need of repair. He was constantly working on it, with the dream to sail away into the blue one day: thus the title *Dreamboat Blues*.

2 Bootleg Blues

When the sale of alcohol was illegal in the 1920s United States' prohibition era, "bootlegging" was rife. The black market involved the manufacture, transport and sale of spirits, and was dubbed "bootleg" because the flasks of spirits were hidden in the side of the smuggler's boot under the trouser leg. Typically, jazz clubs and blues haunts attracted lots of bootleg activity. The music moves comically, like the unsteady gait of someone unsuccessfully trying to

walk in a straight line. It's as if they are always tripping-up and bumping into things, yet they continue on their merry way – possibly a bit tipsy. Ultimately it all comes to a definitive stop – perhaps in a police arrest or a face-flat fall.

3 Blue Laze

Remembering my dear departed father John White – who was never, ever lazy and never, ever stressed. He really enjoyed the Blues. The music emulates Dad's easy-going walk in life – at once relaxing, and yet exciting! When John Martin asked me for a Blues piece to include on this album, I was inspired! John is a pleasure to write for because he approaches playing in such a creative way. I love hearing his gorgeous renditions.

Tom Anderson (b. 1955)

4 A Walk Down Ragtime Lane

Rags don't always have to be joyful and played at fast tempos. Many of Scott Joplin's best rags are more thoughtful like "Bethena" and I have attempted to write a rag like that (a hard act to follow) expressing deeper emotion. Usually I work on fragments of ideas I have kept which could take weeks to complete but the last eight bars of the main theme came suddenly and the rest of the piece fell into place in a short period of time.

Elena Kats-Chernin (b. 1957)

5 Nonchalance (2004)

Originally for cello and piano, *Nonchalance* started off as a laid back piece, with a slight reminiscence of the suave characters in black and white movies. It gradually developed into something a little bit more intense with the harmonies sometimes resembling expressive romanticism of the past era.

6 Reflections (2003)

is based on a song *My Father's Eyes* from my earlier song cycle for baritone and ensemble called *Mr Barbeque*. It is a calmly lyrical piece starting in F major.

Matthew Dennett (b. 1991)

7 Round Middy

Round Middy is a jazz ballade I composed during my Bachelor of Music degree at Western Sydney in 2019 under the guidance of Brendan Smyly. The name pays homage to the famed *Round Midnight* by American jazz pianist Thelonious Monk. And while *Middy* is not as harmonically venturous, it's melody evokes a yearning which goes unresolved. John Martin brings this out beautifully in the first ever recording of *Round Middy*.

Ross Edwards (b. 1943)

Three Australian Waltzes for solo piano

I collected together these three light-hearted pieces in the hope that people might enjoy them in much the same spirit as they were composed.

8 Sassafras Gully Waltz (1997)

When my friend Nicholas Routley – pianist, conductor, composer and academic – turned 50 in 1997, this was my present to him. (Nicholas once lived on the edge of Sassafras Gully in the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney). The waltz is intended to reflect his enthusiasm and impetuosity as well as his predilection for 19th century Romantic piano music.

9 Sandy Stone's Waltz (1997)

Barry Humphries asked me to provide music for his monologue *The Cries of Australia*, which he presented, in association with the cellist Steven Isserlis and the pianist Susan Tomes, during the 1997 Master Series in London's Wigmore Hall. Less celebrated than such other of Barry's theatrical creations as Dame Edna Everage and Sir Les Patterson, Sandy Stone has been described as "a decent, honest, kind-hearted, but deeply conventional man who takes life as it comes". This waltz, extracted from *The Cries of Australia*, is a gentle parody of the popular music of the 1920s, when Sandy was courting Beryl, his wife-to-be, in the "lovely Melbourne suburb" of Glen Iris.

10 Annandale Waltz (1998)

A third waltz being called for to round off the set, I decided to compose one as a Christmas present for my wife, Helen, who's a piano teacher. (Annandale is the lovely Sydney suburb where we lived at the time of composing). Helen said she thought it was a bit mushy and next time would I please write her a tango.

Rod Heard (b. 1954)

Rags to Riches Suite for piano

The compositional style of *Rags to Riches* references a number of jazz styles with which I am familiar as a performer. The jazz influences are blended into the fabric of the language of the composition to create a synthesis of styles.

11 Take 7

The title of the piece is an obvious nod to *Take 5*—which is in 5/4 time—written by alto saxophonist Paul Desmond and recorded by the Dave Brubeck Quartet of which Paul was a member. The recording became a massive hit and, according to Wikipedia, the largest selling jazz single of all time. The standard key for *Take 5* is Eb minor featuring the flat 7th (the natural minor form of the scale). *Take 7* is in 7/8 time with the meter usually divided 1,2,3,1,2,1,2. The tonality also features the flat 7th although not exclusively throughout

the piece, or even within phrases. The key of this piece is in the Major (G). The piece is intended to be light hearted, even humorous, and unashamedly includes a couple of gospel piano licks!

12 Summer Arrives

Melodic material in this piece is shared between right and left hands and overall takes inspiration from the blend of classical and jazz influences (particularly Baroque) made famous by The Modern Jazz Quartet and others. The middle section is reminiscent of the contrapuntal work of John Lewis and Milt Jackson in that quartet.

13 Barbera Blues

The structure and harmonic movement of this piece are solidly 12 bar blues. The outer A sections shift around a minor tonality and the inner B section shifts to the major. The piano writing also includes some reference to the 'stride' piano style and is indicated in the score. The title remembers the delicious structure of the Barbera grape variety, the third most planted variety in Italy, producing a deep red blue wine.

14 Rags to Riches

The final piece is a straightforward rag with a strong left hand 'vamp' typical of the style. The world of the famous rags of Scott Joplin (*The Entertainer*, *Maple Leaf Rag* etc)—amongst other immortals like Jelly Roll Morton—are never far from the sound world of this piece.

John Martin (b. 1954)

15 The Everglades at Dawn

The Everglades House and Gardens form a National Trust property of great beauty in the Blue Mountains village of Leura, and strolling through its parklands one can easily imagine the awe-inspiring mists of a mountain dawn rising from the nearby Jamison Valley.

Stuart Greenbaum (b. 1966)

16 Taurus (2017)

James Wade died unexpectedly at the age of 38 in June 2017. He was nearing the end of his PhD in Composition; I personally oversaw the final drafts of his folio over the Summer of 2016–2017. He was a BMus and MMus graduate from the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and thus known to many of us for some time, having entered the Con as a vocal major, moving to the Composition specialisation in 2003. While quietly spoken, James spoke articulately with a rich bass voice that was well-suited to working for radio. He was a regular broadcaster on 3MBS FM and also presented nationally on ABC Classic FM. He took a keen interest in photography, philosophy, all the arts and the environment. He was a regular at composition social events and well-known and liked in the composition community. He is a represented composer at the Australian Music Centre and his music will live on. But we will miss James, the person behind the music.

17 Looking to the Future (1995)

was written in 1995 as a theme song for the MTC production of *Aftershocks*, a play written to document the stories of the 1989 Newcastle earthquake. The Newcastle Workers Club was destroyed by the quake and nine people inside the club died. While this brief piano solo was not ultimately used in the production, the idea of looking to the future after devastation gave rise to the hopeful tone of the music.

May Howlett (b. 1931)

18 The Baroqua Rag

With a wink to JS Bach (the first jazz man), and the little orange pill that dissolves into a refreshing drink!. The *Baroqua Rag* constitutes a nod at some of the technical features of baroque composition, such as the pedal note, applied to the characteristic rhythmic patterns of the Rag, an early form of jazz. By using a well-known theme from Bach (arguably the greatest exponent of baroque music), a link is formed to the concept of Bach as in his use of free-ranging and inventive modulations based on chromaticism.

Ann Carr-Boyd (b. 1938)

19 The Solitary Rag

was composed in March 2020 and the title is a comment upon the new era we are experiencing at this time as the world battles the Coronavirus which has so

altered so quickly the way in which we live. The Ragtime sections hark back to a form of music so popular in the earlier part of the 20th century. The middle section is a reminder of the memorable occasions in which we gathered together and enjoyed the company of one another – all just memories at this time of writing.

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Damian de Boos-Smith and Maria Alfonsine

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