



K O U V A R A S

Piano Works

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The Ormond Collection (1998~1999)

- 1 City Views from the Sixth Floor, McCaughey Court (3'37")
- 2 *postlude* (1'10")
- 3 Tower (5'49")
- 4 *postlude* (2'17")
- 5 Chapel (5'42")
- 6 *postlude* (1'33")
- 7 The Yearning (4'57")
- 8 *postlude* (2'20")

Three St Kilda Sketches (1994~1997)

- 9 I (3'22")
- 10 II (3'04")
- 11 III (4'31")

Bundanon Suite for Piano (1999)

- 12 Secrets of the Amphitheatre (4'49")
- 13 Shimmering Haze on the Shoalhaven (5'32")
- 14 Lament for Helen (4'17")
- 12 Haunted Point (5'17")
- 13 Bundanon Rhapsody (3'05")
- 14 Old Forest Growth (2'26")

Total 63'58"

Piano: Linda Kouvaras

Recording and editing by Jim Atkins
at ABC Studios, Southbank
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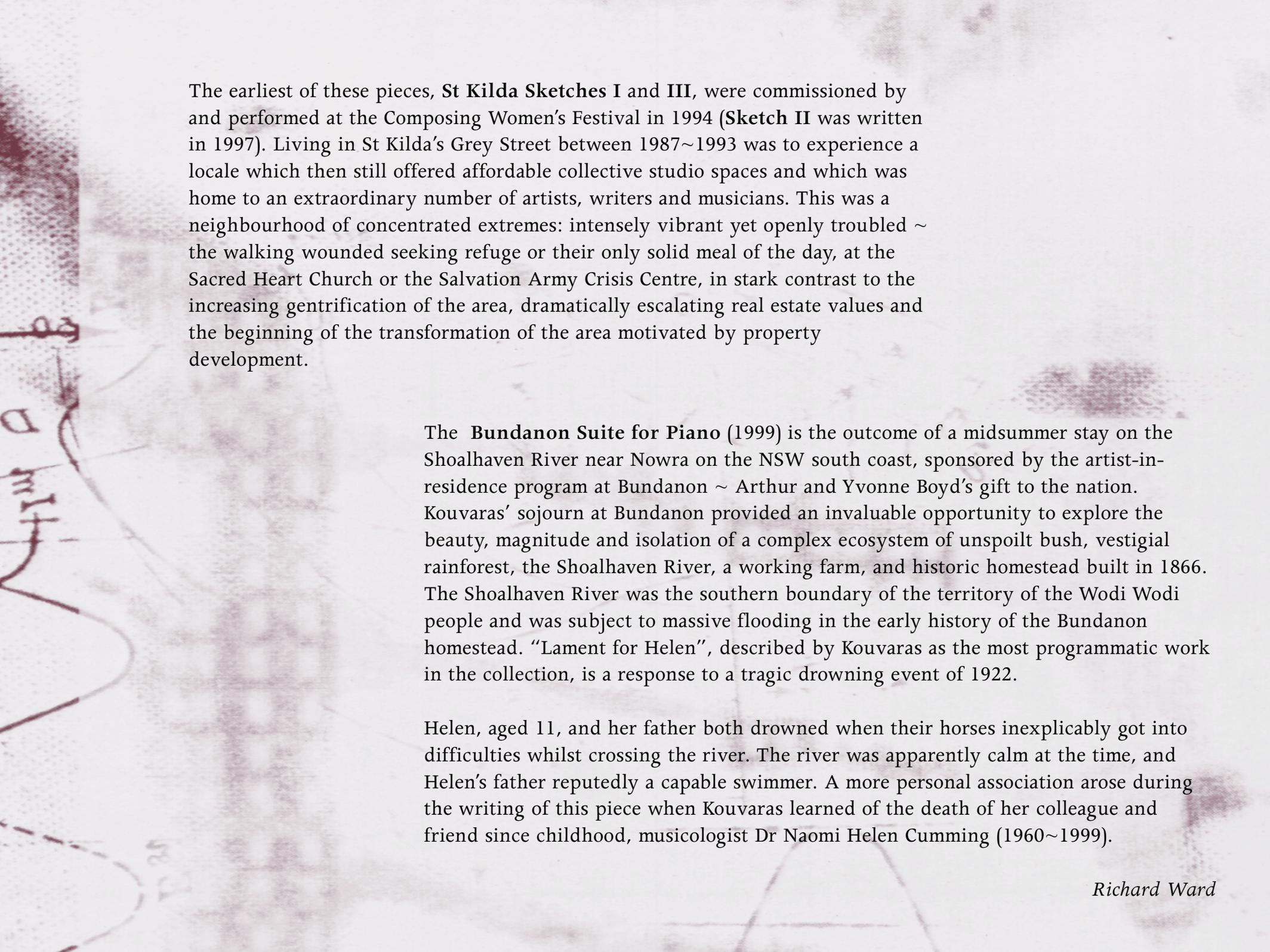


These works for piano were written in response to specific locations ~ as a reflection on the lived experience of three distinctly different sites: a residential college at Melbourne University, the inner Melbourne bayside suburb of St Kilda, and a working farm and historic homestead situated on the Shoalhaven River in NSW.

What might be described as the psychological landscape of the eponymously named Ormond College is to some indefinable degree underscored by the resonances of its outstanding architectural vocabulary, treed and verdant lawns, delightfully florescent gardens, and visible traces of the lives and presence of past generations.

The built structures of the formal environment could be said to correspond to, or impose the development of, certain social structures and ways of living and thinking. Yet some individuals have the irrepressible capacity to develop counter-itineraries and alternative strategies. To live and work at Ormond College is to participate in the complexity of a dynamic and culturally diverse community which honours tradition but also supports innovation and achievement. Ormond has experienced many changes throughout its history, and perhaps the most crucial occurred in 1973 with the admission of women students into residence on the same basis as men for the first time. Considering the absolutely vital contribution the women of Ormond bring to all aspects of College and University life, it is hard to imagine and reconcile the singularly male ethos of the College that opened in 1881. This was coincidentally the first year of the admission of women to Melbourne University. Non-resident women were admitted to Ormond's tutorial programme from 1885.

The Ormond Collection (1998~1999) was catalysed by Linda Kouvaras' experiences as a member of the Ormond College community for the past seven years, and in its own way is an affirmation of Francis Ormond's generosity and his belief in the intrinsic value of education.



The earliest of these pieces, **St Kilda Sketches I and III**, were commissioned by and performed at the Composing Women's Festival in 1994 (**Sketch II** was written in 1997). Living in St Kilda's Grey Street between 1987~1993 was to experience a locale which then still offered affordable collective studio spaces and which was home to an extraordinary number of artists, writers and musicians. This was a neighbourhood of concentrated extremes: intensely vibrant yet openly troubled ~ the walking wounded seeking refuge or their only solid meal of the day, at the Sacred Heart Church or the Salvation Army Crisis Centre, in stark contrast to the increasing gentrification of the area, dramatically escalating real estate values and the beginning of the transformation of the area motivated by property development.

The **Bundanon Suite for Piano** (1999) is the outcome of a midsummer stay on the Shoalhaven River near Nowra on the NSW south coast, sponsored by the artist-in-residence program at Bundanon ~ Arthur and Yvonne Boyd's gift to the nation. Kouvaras' sojourn at Bundanon provided an invaluable opportunity to explore the beauty, magnitude and isolation of a complex ecosystem of unspoilt bush, vestigial rainforest, the Shoalhaven River, a working farm, and historic homestead built in 1866. The Shoalhaven River was the southern boundary of the territory of the Wodi Wodi people and was subject to massive flooding in the early history of the Bundanon homestead. "Lament for Helen", described by Kouvaras as the most programmatic work in the collection, is a response to a tragic drowning event of 1922.

Helen, aged 11, and her father both drowned when their horses inexplicably got into difficulties whilst crossing the river. The river was apparently calm at the time, and Helen's father reputedly a capable swimmer. A more personal association arose during the writing of this piece when Kouvaras learned of the death of her colleague and friend since childhood, musicologist Dr Naomi Helen Cumming (1960~1999).

Richard Ward

Linda Kouvaras is a composer, pianist and musicologist, and a lecturer at Melbourne University's Faculty of Music. After studying piano in the UK and at Melbourne University, she was awarded a Masters degree in piano in 1991 and a PhD in musicology in 1996. Kouvaras' piano recordings are released on Move and ABC audio, and include "In the Silence of the Night" (by Brenton Broadstock) which Kouvaras commissioned. Linda Thompson (soprano) and Deviani Segal (piano) have recorded Kouvaras' "Distant Lullaby" on their CD **Repose** (Move label). Linda Kouvaras has been granted numerous scholarships and prizes for piano performance and musicological research and has published widely on Australian music. She was artist-in-residence at Bundanon, the Arthur and Yvonne Boyd estate in NSW, in 1999 and 2000.



Photograph: Ponch Hawkes



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Dedicated to the memory of Naomi Cumming (1960~1999) and Peter Orr 1958~1998).

