

Michael Kieran Harvey Collection

New music for piano

broadway boogie

move

Premiere recordings
by Michael Kieran
Harvey

This assemblage of recent Australian piano music has been selected for its allusions – sometimes extremely tenuous – to New York. A major international centre of ideas and creativity, this city maintains a galvanizing effect on Australian intellectual life in a way that, say, Washington never could.

Andrew Ford's *Broadway Boogie Woogie* finds musical parallels to Mondrian's famous painting, the epitome of non-symmetrical balance, and itself a paean to New York's artistic diversity.

Andrew Byrne, a resident of New York, has written an unsentimental exploration of the surreal sounds of chaos and succour after the destruction of the Twin Towers.

Byrne's mentor, John McCaughey, possibly the most self-effacing and reluctant Australian composer, yet one of Australia's busiest and most original musicians, gives us a glimpse into the multi-layered nature of his thinking with *Toccata de Nielico*.

Nigel Westlake's brilliant (if brief!) follow-up to the magnificent first sonata contrasts ethereal improvisations with driving rhythms which would not sound out of place in downtown Manhattan.

Mark Pollard's homage to Euclid shows his fascination with post-minimalism (a New York hallmark) and the re-emergence of emotion, and finds fresh stimulus in the nostalgic language of Chopin.

My own sonata is offered in gratitude to Saxby Pridmore, who in turn owes his inspiration to the great New York Stoic psychologist Albert Ellis.

Michael Kieran Harvey

Andrew Ford (b. 1957)

Broadway Boogie-Woogie (2005)

for solo piano

When the Dutch pianist Marcel Worms asked me for a piece for his ‘blues project’, I immediately heard a rather implacable sort of music, consisting of assorted off-beat stabs, which, when strung together, turned into something more continuous. The general character of the piece was far closer to the boogie-woogie rhythms of Pinetop Smith and Albert Ammons than to the blues piano styles of, say, Roosevelt Sykes or Little Brother Montgomery, and so I began to think more along these lines. Then I remembered the late New York paintings of the great Dutch artist Piet Mondrian, and especially the one entitled ‘Broadway Boogie-Woogie’. Accordingly, the various elements in my piece, like the elements in the painting, are fixed in space (and time), each chord appearing always in the same register, and always on the same part of the same beat. A chord might disappear for a few bars, but it never shifts position.

Broadway Boogie-Woogie was composed in January 2005, funded by a fellowship from the Music Board of the Australia Council for the Arts. It was first performed by Marcel Worms on 15 October that same year, at Amsterdam’s Stedelijk Museum, home to several good Mondrians.

© *Andrew Ford*

Andrew Byrne (b. 1966)

Six Dances (2002-2004)

Based entirely on overlays of a single motive from West African drumming music, the *Six Dances* make formidable rhythmic demands on the performer. Within the dense post-minimalist textures, each piece explores a particular keyboard register and has its own distinctive character.

- In the first dance, a call-and-response design is used, with a lyrical solo alternating with a chorus.

- In the second, an expansive and lyrical music is created by superimposing four contrasting musical themes in various configurations.

- In the third, a theme gradually emerges from a repeating bass rhythmic pattern.

- The fourth dance presents a soft and wistful melody with a jangly accompaniment, reminiscent of a saloon piano.

- The fifth is a manic dance with crosscuts of many variations of the same theme.

- The sixth gradually ascends to the highest register of the piano

Six Dances is dedicated to Michael Kieran Harvey.

Andrew Byrne

John McCaughey (b. 1946)

Toccata da Nielico (1999)

Toccata da Nielico was written in 1999 for the composer’s nephew Daniel (hence the title) – as a small exercise in a fluid continuum of sound.

The toccata works with the piano’s special ability to form repetitive ripples of notes, within which a variety of shapes and motives can be heard that carry the music forward.

Ideally the listener might discern different possible melodic components on repeated hearings.

John McCaughey

Nigel Westlake (b. 1958)

Piano Sonata II (2004)

In a single continuous movement, the *Piano Sonata II* is comprised of two clearly defined sections. It opens with a series of sustained and fluid gestures, somewhat introverted and contemplative in character, marked ‘very freely with expression’.

The second section is introduced by a ‘teasing’ of dissonant figures in the upper register, leading to highly virtuosic music driven by a powerful rhythmic impetus. Perhaps the antithesis of Debussy’s ‘piano without hammers’ where the ‘fingers should penetrate the notes’, the piano now becomes a mechanism for the exploration of agitated percussive textures and poly rhythms, incorporating vague references to jazz ‘stride’ and allusions to rock ‘n’ roll piano ‘licks’.

The sonata was composed for Michael Keiran Harvey under the auspices of the ANU as part of the HC Coombs creative arts fellowship.

Mark Clement Pollard
(b. 1957)

Piano Sonata No. 1 (2006)
the forty-seventh theorem

The brilliant pianist Michael Kieran Harvey commissioned this work with assistance from the Australia Council for the Arts. Michael requested a piano sonata that was in some way inspired by the history and context of the sonata.

This work draws on aspects of the Chopin Opus 35 sonata and uses a chain of reasoning to create three contrasting movements.

The first alters material from the third movement of the Chopin rhythmically and texturally through overlaying patterns to create a sound reminiscent of interlocking drum patterns.

The second contains chords and melodic fragments from the first and second movements of the Chopin. These are displaced in time to create a series of short dramatically contrasting sound images.

The final movement draws on the extremely fast final movement of the Chopin. In this case constantly changing scale like patterns move by at rapid speed creating fleeting moments of harmonic colour.

The subtitle *the forty-seventh theorem* refers to how the chain of reasoning leading to *the forty-seventh theorem* within Euclid's *The elements of Geometry* inspired Thomas Hobbes interest in philosophy.

Mark Clement Pollard

Michael Kieran Harvey
(b. 1961)

Piano Sonata (2006)

I - *Maestoso*

II - *mm60*

III - *Presto*

IV - *Epilogue*

In 2005, sick of watching the comedy bloodbath on TV and numbing myself with alcohol I decided to write a sonata inspired by reason and science. It is dedicated to the eminent psychiatrist and poet Professor Saxby Pridmore AM, who helped me overcome my addiction to alcohol, and to whom I am eternally grateful.

In the climate of the 'Danish cartoons' debacle, the sonata is prefaced by Voltaire's quote: "I do not agree with what you have to say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it".

I based the musical material on the name of the French libertine, soldier and satirical pornographer the Marquis de Sade (S(E flat)-A-D-E). An intelligent and despicable character, Sade was jailed and censored first by the Ancien Régime and then again after the 1789 revolution by the new Republican government. This ensured the success of his writings and philosophy.

After finishing the sonata and realizing with great embarrassment that I had got the row spectacularly wrong, I decided to leave it standing, as the result I found interesting and pathetically human in its failed genesis. Indeed I flatter myself that both Voltaire and Sade might have found this accidental result highly amusing (even if horribly discordant). The irony of cocking up so badly something

inspired by reason and science would not have been lost on them either.

The work begins and ends with the incorrect tone-row, and like a mutant virus, it creates its own parasitic world. Structurally there are three distinct sections with an epilogue. Scattered throughout are little homages to the great atheist composer Shostakovitch (his initials form the phrase D-Eflat-C-B). Despite his own 'conceptual emergency', severe alcoholism and acute suicidal episodes (due to the random pointlessness of the terror surrounding him), he nevertheless found a reason to continue living. That reason was art.



Andrew Ford is a composer, writer and broadcaster, and has won awards in all three capacities, including the prestigious Paul Lowin Prize for his song cycle, *Learning to Howl*. His music has been played throughout Australia and in more than 40 countries around the world. He was composer-in-residence with the Australian Chamber Orchestra (1992-1994), held the Peggy Glanville-Hicks Composer Fellowship from 1998 to 2000 and was awarded a two-year fellowship by the Music Board of the Australia Council for 2005-2006.

Beyond composing, Ford has been an academic in the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong (1983-1995). He has written widely on all manner of music and published five books. He wrote, presented and co-produced the radio series *Illegal Harmonies*, *Dots on the Landscape* and *Music and Fashion*. For the past decade, he has presented *The Music Show* each Saturday morning on ABC Radio National.



Andrew Byrne is a New York-based composer, who has written works for film, dance, theater, and the concert hall. His music, which always betrays a fascination with polyrhythm, is influenced by American experimental music and non-Western music traditions.

Recent performances of his works include *Dragnet* at John Zorn's *The Stone* in New York; *Cradle Song* by Either/Or in New York, *Lines Towards a New Century* at Endgame Festival in Melbourne, *When Worlds Collide* by Lark Quartet and Ethos Percussion in New York. *[in]visible voices*, a documentary by filmmaker Gideon Boaz, for which Byrne wrote the soundtrack, is currently showing on Israeli cable television and has been screened at film festivals in Canada, US, and Brazil.

Upcoming projects include *Collaborations for a Dispersed Camp*, a piece for 25 percussionists; his multimedia/music theater piece *The Othersiders: New Australians in Paraguay* for three singers and samplers; as well as the recording project *Radiation Studies* for piano and percussion.

In addition, Byrne is heavily involved in concert programming. He presently works on the artistic programming staff at Carnegie Hall with particular responsibility for large-scale festivals. For more information, go to andrewbyrne.com.

John McCaughey has been musical director of Melbourne's Astra Concerts since 1978. For many years he was a member of staff in the former Department of Music at La Trobe University, and has taught at the Folkwang Musikhochschule in Essen, the University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts.

Numerous contemporary Australian works have been commissioned and performed under his direction, crossing boundaries between choral performance and other media. A former student of Wolfgang Hufschmidt in composition and Gerd Zacher in organ, he has had works recorded by pianists Larry Sitsky (Move) and Michael Kieran Harvey (Astra), and on a Cybele release of electro-acoustic music in Germany (2002).



Nigel Westlake commenced his career in music some 30 years ago as a freelance clarinetist, performing with numerous orchestras and chamber ensembles. In 1983 he studied contemporary music in Amsterdam, specializing in the bass clarinet with Harry Sparnaay. Between 1985 and 1992 he was part of The Australia Ensemble and toured extensively with them throughout Australia and the world. In 1992 he was invited to join guitarist John William's group Attacca as a writer and performer for tours of Australia and the UK.

As a composer he is largely self taught, having commenced writing for rock bands whilst still a teenager. He has been commissioned by many of Australia's leading orchestras, chamber ensembles and soloists and has successfully combined writing for the concert hall with his passion for film and theatre, having composed numerous TV and feature film scores, including the No. 1 box office hits around the world, *Babe* and the Imax film *Antarctica*.

He has won many awards for his compositions and in 2004 was awarded the HC Combs Creative Arts Fellowship from the Australian National University.

In 2006 he resided in London, writing & recording the score for the feature film *Miss Potter*, (about children's author Beatrix Potter).



Australian composer Mark Clement Pollard has an eclectic compositional style utilising such diverse materials as, Improvisation, Jazz, Pop and the indigenous music's of South East Asia. He has received over sixty commissions, including commissions from most of Australia's acclaimed soloists and groups.

His work has been released on nine compact discs including *A Handful of Rain* a collection of his ambient works. His music is broadcast and performed widely including performances by the San Francisco Guitar Orchestra and the premiere of his Double Guitar Concerto *The Distance to the Sun* at the 1999 Darwin International Guitar Festival. This included an orchestra floating on Lake Bennet and the conductor arriving by speedboat.

He has had several feature concerts and programs of his music broadcast on ABC Classic FM. Internationally his work has been included at many major festivals including the Warsaw Festival, the Tokyo Nova Festival, the Liverpool Festival and the Under Capricorn Festival (USA). In 2003 he completed a *Bass Clarinet Concerto* for the brilliant Dutch performer Harry Sparnaay and in 2006 the piano sonata for the virtuoso pianist Michael Kieran Harvey. He is currently (2007) working on an electric guitar quartet for Anthony Field and the Melbourne Guitar Quartet.

Mark is Head of Composition and Deputy Head of School at VCA Music, Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts, The University of Melbourne.



Australian-based pianist Michael Kieran Harvey was born in Sydney and studied piano in Canberra with Alan Jenkins, at the Sydney Conservatorium under Gordon Watson, and at the Liszt Academy, Budapest, under the Director, Professor Sándor Falvai.

His career has been notable for its diversity and wide repertoire. He regularly appears as soloist with all Australian Symphony orchestras.

Renowned for his performances of new music, Harvey has especially promoted the works of Australian composers, internationally and within Australia. He has premiered many new Australian concertos by composers such as Vine, Westlake, Grabowsky, Joseph and Conyngham. He has performed and recorded most of Messiaen's works involving piano to high critical acclaim, in 2005 releasing a live 3-CD recording of the Australian premiere of the entire *Catalogue d'oiseaux* on Move featuring Peter Cundall as narrator.

Michael Kieran Harvey's distinctive pianism has been recognised by numerous national and international awards, including the Grand Prix in the Ivo Pogorelich Piano Competition (Pasadena), the Debussy Medal (Paris), four consecutive Australian 'Mo' awards for best classical artist, the Australian government's Centenary Medal for services to Australian music, and most recently he has been twice nominated for the Helpmann Award.

His CDs appear, not only on the Move label, but also on Tall Poppies, ABC and New World Records.

In 2005 the estate of the late Susan Remington established the Michael Kieran Harvey Scholarship in honour of his contribution to Australian music, and to encourage future directions in keyboard art music.

He is currently Adjunct Professor at the Tasmanian Conservatorium, Visiting artist at the Victorian College of the Arts and Fellow of the Faculty of Music, Melbourne University.



1 Andrew Ford (b. 1957)
Broadway Boogie-Woogie (2'25")

Andrew Byrne (b. 1966)
Six Dances (19'10")
2 first dance 2'41"
3 second dance 4'05"
4 third dance 2'53"
5 fourth dance 2'09"
6 fifth dance 4'03"
7 sixth dance 3'16"

John McCaughey (b. 1946)
8 **Toccata da Nielico** (2'41")

Nigel Westlake (b. 1958)
Piano Sonata II (9'37")
9 first section 3'30"
10 second section 6'07"

Mark Clement Pollard (b. 1957)
Piano Sonata No. 1 (23'07")
the forty-seventh theorem

11 first movement 3'14"
12 second movement 11'53"
13 third movement 8'06"

Michael Kieran Harvey (b. 1961)
Piano Sonata, 2006 (20'38")

14 Maestoso 10'24"
15 mm60 3'26"
16 Presto 4'15"
17 Epilogue 2'32"

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by Michael Kieran Harvey, visit
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All works on this CD are premieres:

- Andrew Ford: 11/11/05 at Feast Festival, Adelaide (Australian premiere)
- Andrew Byrne: 25/7/04 at Federation Concert Hall, Hobart (world premiere)
- John McCaughey: world premiere on this recording
- Nigel Westlake: 1/8/05 at Festival Hall, Adelaide (world premiere)
- Mark Pollard: 16/6/06 at Federation Hall, VCA (world premiere)
- Michael Kieran Harvey: 8/10/06 at Port Fairy Festival, Victoria (world premiere)

Recording engineers |

Martin Wright | Vaughan McAlley

Editing | Vaughan McAlley

Mastering | Martin Wright

Recording venue | Move Records studio, 2006 and 2007, except for Michael Kieran Harvey's Sonata which was originally recorded at the Tasmanian Conservatorium in October 2006.

Scores for all pieces are available from the Australian Music Centre, except for Michael Kieran Harvey's Sonata which is available through Move Records



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Cover photograph |

Graeme Lee (15 April 2006, on a footpath in West 53rd Street just off Broadway, New York)