

Michael  
Kieran  
Harvey  
Collection

# elektra

Australian piano  
music by  
Helen Gifford  
Tony Gould  
Andrew Ford  
Julian Yu  
Michael  
Kieran  
Harvey

**Elektra** was an experiment in extending acoustic piano sound via computer, and was a collaboration with sound engineer Michael Hewes, who surfed the piano resonances in real time. This work, our first collaboration, grew out of my interest in dealing with the question of computer versus human performance – since Asimov’s vision of the revolution in robotics (and his memorable description of a future synthesised music recital in the Foundation series) and the preference of composers like Zappa for computers over live musicians – and led me to wonder what were the compelling aspects of the live performance versus the perfect execution achievable on the new computer instruments.

This conundrum has increased and will continue to do so with the prosthetic integration of robotics with biology (and humans). Indeed it is increasingly impossible to avoid chemical intervention within the human lifecycle, so enhancement is now a human evolutionary reality.

I had spent some time on earlier CDs exploring the intersection between what a composer hears, then realises on the computer, and then what is humanly possible in live performance. Ives, Nancarrow, Ferneyhough, Stockhausen, Boulez and others had been pushing these boundaries well before the rise of the PC but the ease and complexity of computer-generated music for the piano now begs the question: what is the performer for? If

the performer will only be able to execute the score with varying degrees of failure, what is the point in attempting it in the first place? Should the composer ignore his/her own creative desires and only write what is *comfortable* for the performer and audience?

It boils down to whether humans wish to listen to intelligent machines or other humans. The answer seems to be: it depends. The prosthetic integration of artificial intelligence with human intelligence is an increasing fact of life within art. One wonders though whether an intelligent machine would ever want to play or listen to music for its own satisfaction.

I came to realise that what I was looking for in live performance could be found in Australian improvising pianists like Grabowsky, Nock and Tony Gould. There is in Gould’s music – an experimentation and absorption in the moment; naturally a refreshing spontaneity but also a humility that is totally unlike the more painful histrionics of his overseas colleagues. The sense of playful irony is clearly evident in the music of Ford and Yu, where ancient forms are reinvigorated with the energy of popular music. The dark aspect of human technological advancement through human slaughter is mourned in the Gifford work *Menin Gate*.

Each of the works on this album I think strives to express the tension in music between formula and spontaneity.

*Michael Kieran Harvey*

## Tony Gould

### The Crossing (2007)

*The Crossing* piece was written especially for the brilliant Michael Kieran Harvey. We had talked for a few years about me writing something for him and I finally got around to it. I have always thought that Harvey can play anything, and although it seems most other people think the same, this piece was never intended to be virtuosic simply because the pianist playing it is a virtuoso. There are composers who take that approach but I’m not one of them.

True, there are some quite difficult bits in this work, made even more difficult the faster one plays them. The ferociousness with which Michael approaches them is astonishing, and I imagine few pianists in the world could match him.

The piece is in three movements, all interconnected by two main themes which permeate the piece, at times unrecognisable from their first appearance, but nonetheless there.

Influences? Corea, Jarrett, Ravel, Messiaen, Evans and Stravinsky. Although one can only hope in any attempt at writing an ‘original’ and honest composition, they are not patently obvious, but rather helped to develop a musical language which is at least to some degree ultimately personal to the composer.

■ Pianist, composer and educator Tony Gould has received many accolades for his

contribution to music In Australia, the most recent (2009) being the prestigious Don Banks Award from the Australia Council for the Arts. In 2008 he was awarded an Order of Australia (AM).

He has performed with and accompanied many internationally renowned artists including Clark Terry, Mark Murphy, Ernestine Anderson, Ronnie Scott, David Jones, Don Burrows, John Sangster, Graeme Lyall, John Hoffman and Bobby Shew. He has been guest artist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra and appeared as associate artist with the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Dave Brubeck, Sarah Vaughan, the LA Four and many others.

Among a long list of recordings (which include many of his own works from quartet to large orchestral pieces, embracing both classical music and African American genres) is an album of Australian poetry and music with the renowned Australian actor John Stanton. Gould also wrote the music for and collaborated with Stanton in a concert performance of Dylan Thomas' *Under Milkwood*. and most recently in 2009 the highly acclaimed theatre piece, *And When He Falls*. In April 1996 he released a CD trilogy of original music, compositions across a wide spectrum of musical genres, including works for concert and film.

His CD *River Story*, with guitarist Peter Petrucci, received an ARIA Award nomination as did his earlier concerto

for saxophones and orchestra titled *The Subtlety of Time*. Gould and Petrucci received a Playing Australia grant 2001 and have recorded a second CD titled *From Within*, and collaboration with the exceptional trumpeter Keith Hounslow *McJad Goes Organic* (Church Organ and Trumpet), two CDs with the brilliant young Australian singer, Emma Gilmartin, titled *Tomorrow Just You Wait and See* and *Home*, and as solo artist with John Hoffman's orchestra on the recording titled *Pianamente*.

His latest solo piano recording on ABC Classics titled *At the End of the Day* was released to critical acclaim in April 2005, and a recording with the noted New York saxophonist/flautist Andrew Serman (Phillip Glass Ensemble) is in production. A recording was released in 2008 with the eminent American composer/pianist David Ward-Steinman, with original works, and two major compositions for two pianos by John Lewis (Modern Jazz Quartet) and the French pianist/composer Martial Solal.

Tony performs and lectures at major universities in Australia, the Asia Pacific region, the United States and elsewhere on a wide range of topics.

He has the uncommon distinction of having degrees from three of Melbourne's most prestigious universities: a Bachelor of Music from the University of Melbourne, a Master of Arts from Monash University and a Doctor of Philosophy from La Trobe University. His career embraces performances of a wide cross-section

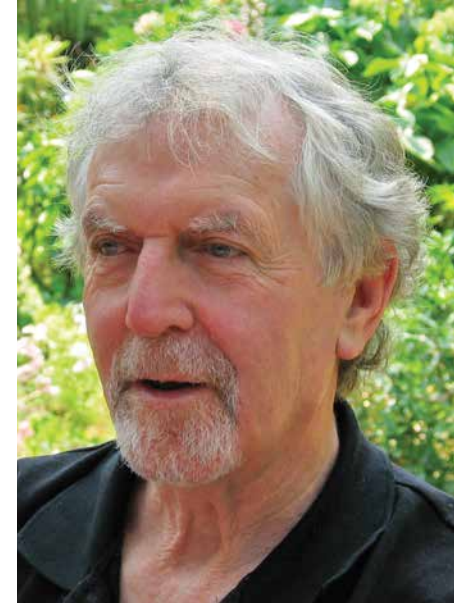
of music throughout Australia and the world as well as composition, arranging, conducting, teaching, music criticism, contributions to literature (Groves, Oxford Companion)

and adjudicating on international judging panels. He was chief music critic for the Herald Sun for 20 years. He has been Deputy Chair of the Music Board, Australia Council for the Arts, and deputy Chair of National Australia Council of Tertiary Music.

In early 2005 Tony resigned his position as Head (Dean) of and Associate Professor at the School of Music, Victorian College of the Arts to pursue his performance and composition career.

In 2006 he recorded for Move Records the two piano version of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, with Australian pianist Rosa Scaffidi, and a quartet recording with the distinguished American trumpet player John Hoffman.

He is currently making several new recordings, one with the saxophonist Robert Burke, one with guitarist Stephen Magnusson, one with cellist Imogen



Manins, and another with singer Rebecca Barnard.

He has just completed two books, as part of the commitment to a Fellowship awarded by the Australia Council for the *Arts: Essays on Music and Musicians in Australia*, and *The Art of Musical Improvisation: Thoughts and Ideas*.

**Helen Gifford**

## Menin Gate (2005)

*Who will remember, passing through this Gate, The unheroic dead who fed the guns?*  
– Siegfried Sassoon

The memorial at Menin Gate in Belgium was the British tribute to the 350,000 dead of its armies, who had perished in the great battles fought at Ypres between 1914 and 1918. Ypres is the French name for the Belgian town also known by its Flemish name of Ieper, and Ypres was the name used by the allied forces in World War 1. Nearly 13,000 Australian troops gave their lives in the battlefields around Ieper, and almost half of these have no known grave. The names of these missing men are enshrined on the walls of Menin Gate, along with the other missing soldiers from the Dominions, from Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa, as well as England, Ireland and Scotland. They are listed unit by unit, the individual names carved on stone panels that cover the walls of the great arches nearly 15 metres high, stretching up two side stairwells to loggias

on either side of the great monument. The total number of the British forces who went missing in the surrounding area was over 56,000, including the more than 6,000 men from the 5 divisions of the First Australian Imperial Force, an entirely volunteer army. All 60 infantry battalions of the 1st AIF fought at Ieper, and all these units lost men there. Of the 330,000 Australians who fought in the 1914-18 War nearly 60,000 were killed and 174,000 wounded. In 1918 the population of Australia was 5 million. At the Australian War Memorial in Canberra there is an index to the Australian names on Menin Gate, arranged by locality, which shows that virtually every war memorial in Australia's rural districts, country towns and city suburbs, has the names of men who died in the battles in Belgium, and who are also recorded on Menin Gate.

Although completely devastated in World War I, the town of Ieper, in neutral Belgium, was never taken. The region around Ieper was known as the Ypres Salient, which projected into German lines. The mud in the low-lying Flanders countryside was often waist-deep, and the nearby Passchendaele marshes have been described as the most desolate and terrible of all battlefields. The fields of Flanders were originally below sea level, and the water table is so high that when heavy shelling destroyed the drainage dykes the area was reduced to a bog. Conditions were at their worst in 1917 when there was an abnormally heavy rainfall, the fighting intensified and gas was used again,

poisoning not only men but the earth, air and water.

The gateway to Menin was the chosen site for the memorial as it was the way through which all the allied armies marched from the old walled city, along Menin Road and out into the battlefields of Ypres. Two stone lions that dated from medieval times, had been situated either side of the gate. During the war they were stored in the great Cloth Hall, (Lakenhalle, ca. 1300), and symbolised Ieper's former prosperity. After being recovered from the ruins of the Lakenhalle, the lions were presented to the Australian War Memorial by the Burgomaster of Ieper, in gratitude for the part which Australian soldiers had played in the defence of that town.

The Australian artist Will Longstaff was at the unveiling of the memorial in 1927, and later, back in his London studio he was inspired to paint the celebrated 'Menin Gate at Midnight'. It was said that he painted while under the deep psychic influence of the horrendous death-toll at Ypres. The long years of war had left huge numbers of bereaved relatives and friends, many of whom sought solace in spiritualism, which remained a significant influence throughout the 1920s. The painting, 'Menin Gate at Midnight', seemed to make the dead more tangible to them. It was purchased by Lord Woolavington in 1928 for 2,000 guineas, and immediately presented to the Australian government. After being displayed at Buckingham Palace, then taken to Manchester and



Glasgow, it was sent to Australia and shown in several of the major cities, including a three-week long exhibition at the Melbourne Town Hall in February 1929, which was seen by thousands.

It now hangs in a room on its own in the Australian War Memorial. Reproductions of this painting were made and thousands of copies were sold throughout the country during the 1930s despite these being the years of the depression.

After the war the Ieper Police Chief suggested that the Last Post should be sounded at Menin Gate on every night at eight o'clock throughout the year. Since then there has only been one break in the tradition, between May 1940 and September 1944, when German armies occupied the town.

Longstaff's painting was in our home, and has been part of my life for as long as I remember. Menin Gate, the great monument to the dead, remains overwhelming in its ageless poignancy. HG

■ Helen Gifford is a Melbourne composer who has written in a wide range of

forms, developing a special interest in theatre music. For 12 years she regularly composed music for Melbourne Theatre Company productions, and later wrote two substantial music-theatre pieces: *Regarding Faustus* (1983), and *Iphigenia in Exile* (1985). In 1973 she received a Senior Composer's Fellowship, and in 1974 she became Composer-in-Residence to the Australian Opera. She has been commissioned by Astra, The Seymour Group, Elision, Sydney Alpha Ensemble and ABC Classic FM, and in 1995 she was granted a Composer Fellowship from the Australia Council, Music Board, and wrote *Point of Ignition*, for mezzo soprano and large orchestra, a setting of poems by the Australian poet Jessica Aldridge. Currently she is writing a work for Astra, for 2 speakers and choir: *The Tears of Things*.

Helen Gifford won the State Award for Victoria in the 2006 APRA classical music awards for her composition *Menin Gate* ... "a finely crafted composition that displays an original programmatic structure and successfully exploits the idiom of the piano".

### Andrew Ford

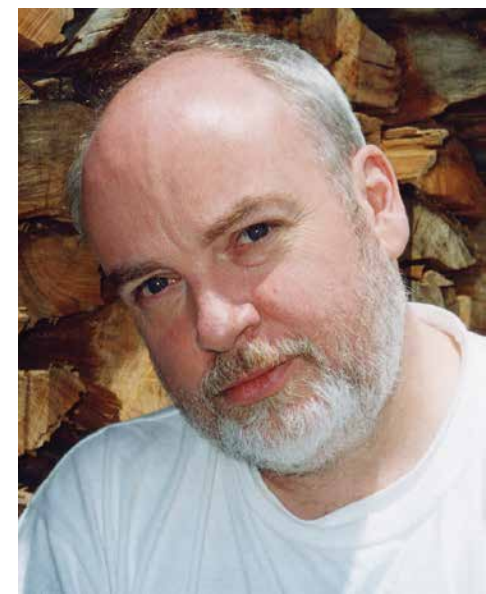
#### Folly (2006)

To compose some new variations on the 16th-century melody *La Folia*, could certainly seem like folly, given that the world already has more than 300 sets of variations on that tune. But Ford's piece

is also especially virtuosic (when Michael Kieran Harvey commissions a piece he likes to tell the composer, 'Make it really hard') so that anyone embarking upon learning this particular set of variations would need to be slightly crazy in the first place. *Folly* was composed for Harvey as part of a two-year fellowship from the Music Board of the Australia Council.

■ 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 (1992–94), held the Peggy Glanville-Hicks Composer Fellowship (1998–2000) and was awarded a two-year fellowship by the Music Board of the Australia Council (2005–2006). In 2009, he was Resident Composer at the Australian National Academy of Music.

Beyond composing, Ford has been an academic in the Faculty of Creative



Arts at the University of Wollongong (1983–95). He has written widely on all manner of music and published five books. He wrote, presented and co-produced the ABC radio series *Illegal Harmonies*, *Dots on the Landscape* and *Music and Fashion*. Since 1995, he has presented The Music Show each Saturday morning on ABC Radio National.

## Julian Yu

### Sonata for Piano (2005)

In 2002, Michael Harvey commissioned me to write a piano piece of at least 20 minutes' duration, consisting of just one movement without a pause. *Sonata for Piano* was written in 2002 and revised in 2005 ready for its first performance by Michael Harvey on 11th October 2007 at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music.

The single-movement sonata, which contracts three or more movements into one, is an important musical form. It enables composers to construct large pieces containing the variety of contrasting moods and tempos found in the traditional sonata form, but eliminating the unnecessary repetition and recapitulation so common in classical sonatas.

In this piece, the title *Sonata* refers only to the original meaning of the word: to sound, or to cause to sound. The piece is not in sonata form, nor is it a piece in three movements in the classical sense.

The inspiration and idea for the form of

this piece came from the great *Chaconne in D minor* by J.S Bach, and from the tradition of ornamentation used in Chinese folk music, in which new pieces always evolve out of existing ones through a process of decoration and embellishment.

■ Julian Yu was born in 1957 and studied composition at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, later joining the teaching staff there. From 1980 to 1982 he studied at the Tokyo College of Music under Joji Yuasa. He migrated to Australia in 1985. In 1988 he was selected for a Composition Fellowship at Tanglewood, where he studied under Hans Werner Henze, Oliver Knussen and Leonard Bernstein, and was awarded the Koussevitzky Tanglewood Composition Prize for that year.

He has written many works for orchestra, instrumental and choral groups, theatre and opera, commissioned and played by organisations such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), the BBC Proms, IRCAM / Ensemble InterContemporain, London Sinfonetta, the City of Munich, Australia Ensemble, Melbourne International Festival, Synergy Percussion and Chamber Made Opera. His music has also featured in



ISCM World Music Days in Switzerland, Mexico, Luxembourg and Hong Kong, as well as Gaudeamus and many Asian Composers' League festivals. In 2008 he was commissioned to write music for the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Beijing.

Julian Yu's music has won numerous composition awards around the world including the Vienna Modern Masters, Irino, Trieste, Spivakovsky, Japan Music Concours and APRA Awards, and Zen-On Music's Piano2000 competition. In 1991 and 1994, an international jury unanimously selected his work for the triennial Paul Lowin Orchestral Prize.

He is currently a Fellow of the Faculty of Music, University of Melbourne.

## Michael Kieran Harvey

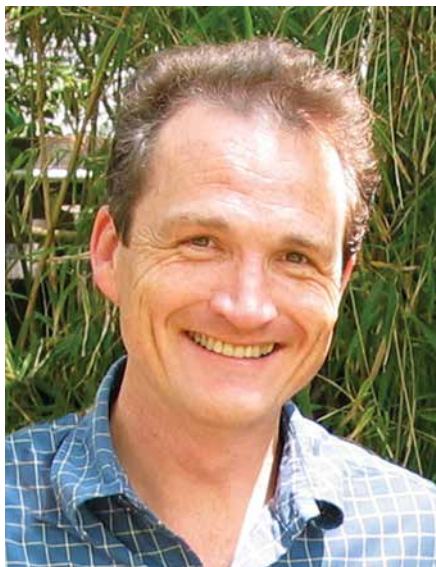
### Elektra (1992)

This live performance of *Elektra* was from an Astra concert in 1992. The original tape has been remastered for CD. The somewhat tired and emotional tuning of the piano (to say nothing of the playing!) is a result of a program consisting of Szymanowski's sonata #3, Berio's *Sequenza IV* and the premieres of Keith Humble's sonata #4 and Phil Treloar's *New Forms 2* directly preceding it. *Elektra* was inspired by a brief sojourn as musical performer with the Sydney Dance Company – playing Carl Vine's *Sonata #1* choreographed by

Graeme Murphy – in SDC's 1992 season.

The work consists of five main sections: *Introduction – Ostinati – Tranquillo – Improvisato – Finale*, and employs a five-note motive (heard at the outset) which generates much of the work's pitch material. The computer processing is an early attempt to morph overtones as a means of changing the nature of the piano sound, in much the same way as dance changes perception both for the onlooker and the dancer.

■ Michael Kieran Harvey was born in Sydney and studied piano with Alan Jenkins, Gordon Watson, and at the Liszt Academy, Budapest, under Sándor Falvai. His career has been notable for its diversity and wide repertoire. He has especially promoted the works of Australian and contemporary composers and recorded well over 30 solo CDs on various labels. Harvey's awards include the Grand Prix in the Ivo Pogorelich Competition, USA (1993), the Debussy Medal, Paris (1986) and the Australian government's Centenary Medal (2002). The Michael Kieran Harvey Scholarship was established in 2006 to encourage future directions in Australian keyboard art music. He is currently on staff at the Australian National Academy of Music and adjunct professor at the Tasmanian Conservatorium.



# elektra

Michael Kieran Harvey performs works by Australian composers (including himself). Influences, inspirations and obsessions include jazz, Bach, Chinese ornamentation, dance, folly and war.

Tony Gould

The Crossing (2007) 19'30"

1 first movement 7'14"

2 second movement 7'43"

3 third movement 4'31"

Helen Gifford

4 Menin Gate (2005) 8'42"

Andrew Ford

5 Folly (2006) 12'48"

Julian Yu

6 Sonata for Piano (2005) 24'18"

Michael Kieran Harvey

7 Elektra (1992) 8'56"

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for more information on other recordings by Michael Kieran Harvey: [www.move.com.au](http://www.move.com.au)

**Recording engineers** - Martin Wright | Vaughan McAlley

**Editing** - Vaughan McAlley

**Mastering** - Martin Wright

**Recording venue** - Move Records studio (2007-2009)

**Elektra recording** - Michael Hewes

(at North Melbourne Elm Street Hall - 1992)

**Cover artwork** - Benjamin Thomas (2009)