



Siva

Michael Kieran Harvey plays Australian masterworks for piano of the last fifty years

Raymond Hanson (1913-1976)

Piano Sonata Op. 12

– written 1938-1940, revised 1963

- 1** Allegro moderato 7'08"
- 2** Andante espressivo 5'15"
- 3** Allegretto - Meno mosso - Allegro maestoso 5'28"

Gordon Kerry (born 1961)

Piano Sonata –1997

in three movements

- 4** first movement 7'58"
- 5** second movement 6'23"
- 6** third movement 2'31"

7 Brendan Colbert (born 1956)

Quicksand – 2005 – for piano 9'35"

First performance by Michael Kieran Harvey at the Iwaki Auditorium, Melbourne on 21 August 2009

8 Helen Gifford (born 1935)

Siva – 2012 – for piano 7'01"

dedicated to Michael Kieran Harvey

First performance by Michael Kieran Harvey at the 2012 Peggy Glanville-Hicks address, BMW Edge, Federation Square, Melbourne on 2 November 2012

9 Neil Kelly (born 1962)

Untitled (Moths) – 2014 13'12"

dedicated to Michael Kieran Harvey

First performance by Michael Kieran Harvey at MonaFoma, Hobart, 16 January 2014

Recorded at Move Records studio,
8, 9 11 December 2014 by Vaughan McAlley
and Blake Stickland.
Editing by Vaughan McAlley.

Quicksand was recorded live in concert
21 August 2009

Gordon Kerry's **Piano Sonata** was recorded
live in concert on 6 June 2008

Mastering by Martin Wright

Cover painting: Neil Maizels: "Dante Down
Under" (mixed media on paper) (2015)

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This CD juxtaposes numerous currents and shockwaves emanating from Europe that have played out in Australian composition over the last sixty years or so. The search for a grand unifying structure seems to link all of these works, which are nevertheless diverse in compositional approach. All the works refer to a specific device or code that is reinterpreted and developed from an Australian perspective. The two sonatas take devices from contemporary European and American composition as initial paradigmatic templates for development within the structural trope of the three-movement piano sonata. *Siva* and *Moths* take mythical and fantasy themes to generate episodic structures that question traditional compositional development, while *Quicksand* is an exploration of the psychological state of contemporary alienation and bewilderment transferred to a constantly-shifting and claustrophobic sound-world of rotating pitches. A binding thematic link is that all the works appropriate recognisable styles as a departure point for highly individual and exciting re-imaginings of these styles, making for an exuberant kaleidoscope of sonic environments, despite the limitations of the acoustic piano. I am very grateful to Martin Wright and Dr Arjun von Caemmerer for their encouragement and support in the production of this CD.

Michael Kieran Harvey (June 2015)

Raymond Hanson
Piano Sonata (1938-1963)
in three movements
dedicated to Anne Spillane

Raymond Hanson was born in Sydney and began composing at the age of eight. He was largely self-taught and admired the techniques of Hindemith, especially his idea of Gebrauchsmusik. Hanson taught composition for many years at the Sydney Conservatorium where he was an influential mentor to Barry Conyngham, Don Burrows and Larry Sitsky amongst others. He composed more than 100 works, but his works were largely neglected during his lifetime, being considered too avant-garde in the 1940s and 1950s, and too old-fashioned in the 1960s. The *Piano Sonata* was written for his friend and great champion Igor Hmelnitsky. It was begun at a time when Hanson was deeply distressed by the devastation of World War II, but remained unfinished until the early 1960s, receiving its first performance in 1970. It was published on the day of his death in 1976. The sonata is now widely considered a masterpiece of mid-century Australian composition, internalizing in a unique style the characteristics of Hindemith, Britten, Shostakovich, Rachmaninoff, Skryabin, Sibelius, Bartok and Rabindranath Tagore.

Gordon Kerry
Piano Sonata (1997)
in three movements

“In 1997, I was commissioned by Ian Munro to write a substantial piece for piano and I felt that by then I was ready for a Sonata. Until then my piano works had tended to have some programmatic or poetic element, but a Sonata would make a slender claim to be considered alongside other works of that genre – which composers, like Beethoven for one, used to push the conventional shape as far as they could. Strangely enough though, when another prominent Australian pianist heard this piece he was blown away by what he heard as a spiritual element.

“The harmony is based on a series of chords and modes that each have a strong ‘flavour’ as the result of a restricted set of intervals – for instance a chord with lots of semitones will be more dissonant than one with lots of thirds or fourths, even if the chord contains more than the three or four pitches found in traditional harmony. But what I was really experimenting with here was manipulating the flow of time through rhythm and metre. One of the great piano sonatas of the 20th century is that of the late Elliott Carter, which is notable for the sophisticated use of tempo modulation, a technique with which I experiment here. Very simply, one establishes a pulse, and then adds a cross rhythm, but accents the cross rhythm so that it becomes the new pulse: 3 against 2, for instance gives a

simple mathematical ratio between speeds. This has two main effects: it makes the metre of the music very fluid, and avoids any sense of a regular downbeat. It also sends the pianist crazy.

“The piece is in three movements. The first moves frequently between passages of different speed and metre; the second begins with a kind of passacaglia – where the repeated bass line serves to support variations above it; the final movement is again more rhapsodic finally ‘freezing’ in a series of detached chords.”

Gordon Kerry © 2009

Gordon Kerry lives on a hill in north-eastern Victoria, Australia. Recent projects include a song-cycle to poetry of Jean Cocteau; an opera, *Snow White* and other Grimm Tales with poet John Kinsella for Opera Scholars Australia; a violin concerto, and new works for the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra with ANAM students, Plexus, Halcyon and Syzygy. Other recent pieces include a piano quintet *Aroona Dawning*, for the 2013 Huntington Estate Festival, the opera *Midnight Son* (with Louis Nowra) for Victorian Opera in 2012; a string quintet for *Musica Viva Australia* with whom he was Featured Composer in 2012; several works composed while holding the Ian Potter Established Composer Fellowship between 2009-2011, including a symphony for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and a flute concerto, *Captain Flinders’ Musick*, for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Alison Mitchell. He

studied at the University of Melbourne with Barry Conyngham. His book *New Classical Music: Composing Australia* was published by UNSW Press in 2009.

Brendan Colbert
Quicksand (2005) for piano

“...Quicksand years that whirl me I know not whither...”

*from Leaves of Grass by
Walt Whitman (1819-1892).*

“... I’m torn between the light and dark
Where others see their targets
Divine symmetry...”

“...I’m sinking in the quicksand of my
thought,
and I ain’t got the power anymore...”

from Quicksand by David Bowie

Brendan Colbert (born Ballarat, 1956) worked as keyboard player and songwriter with progressive-rock bands before pursuing private composition studies in the mid-1980s with Brenton Broadstock and Riccardo Formosa.

His output is substantial. Major commissions include *Sphinx* (for 10 players: for the ELISION Ensemble), *Like a Maelstrom* (double concerto for piano and trumpet: for Arcko Symphonic Ensemble), *Eirenicon* (for the West Australian Symphony Orchestra) and *Shades of Futures Past* (flute concerto: for US soloist Linda Wetherill). Many other first-rate orchestras, ensembles and soloists

have also given premieres of his works, with numerous performances throughout Australia, Europe and the USA.

Helen Gifford
Siva (2012)
dedicated to Michael Kieran
Harvey

Helen Gifford quotes the following passage from “Indian Sculpture: Masterpieces of Indian, Khmer and Cham Art” by M.M. Deneck, Spring Books, London 1962:

“Siva is known for his fearsome character. He is the destroyer, although he does not confine his manifestations to this terrifying aspect. His famous dance can destroy the world, but at the same time recreates it, and the virile, creative aspect of *Siva* is represented in his symbol the linga. Siva is also worshipped as the god of wisdom, the sciences and the arts. Hinduism acknowledges the supremacy of the three great gods - Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, the triad known as the Trimurti - over its whole pantheon of gods. Dravidian art of the Chola period (10th and 11th centuries) is famed for the grace and supple movement in stone carving, and above all in bronzes made by the *cirri perdue* (melted wax) method, which resulted in some of the most outstanding examples of Indian sculpture, perhaps the most renowned of these being the figures of Siva dancing, which have a perfect

balance, while giving complete expression to the rhythm of the creative dance of the god.”

Siva's first performance was by Michael Kieran Harvey at the 2012 Peggy Glanville-Hicks address, BMW Edge, Federation Square, Melbourne on 2 November 2012.

Neil Kelly

Untitled (Moths) (2014)
dedicated to Michael Kieran Harvey

Neil Kelly has written many works for Harvey both solo and in ensembles. Harvey performed and recorded his Bicentennial work *Gamut* for the Red House Publication, Australian Piano Miniatures (1988). Their collaborative ‘semi-improvised’ work began in 1991, with Graeme Leak and Mardi McSullea (*The Playing Field*). Through Slave Pianos, Kelly and Harvey have developed a close working relationship in the making of 2 major works: *Penalogical Pianology* (Sydney Biennale, 2010) and *The Lepidopters* (Hobart, Yogyakarta, Melbourne, Darwin, 2014). They are currently working on a new production, an adaptation of Eroveef’s *Moscow Stations*.

Untitled (Moths) is extracted from the Slave Pianos multi-artform production, *The Lepidopters: A Science-Fiction Space-Opera* that nominally tells the story of an invasion of the Indonesian archipelago by alien

moths. However the text is also a cipher, correlating works by seminal American artist Robert Smithson with the work of Slave Pianos.

Untitled (Moths) takes its form from Smithson’s drawing of the same name and also draws on a range of European art-music sources ranging from Chopin and Ravel to Berg and Antheil. It is composed to accompany Tera Bajragosha’s video animation of *Lepidopters*, part 1.

Neil Kelly’s composition work includes the production of printed scores, public performances, radio broadcasts, commissions, arrangements, soundtracks, operas, publications and recordings. His output concentrates on both multi-spatial acoustic music and multi-artform activities, and includes works for string quartet, piano trio, theatre, choir and folk ensembles, as well as electro-acoustic and multimedia performances.

Kelly has wide experience as a conductor, bass player, record producer and musical director. Artists including Jane Manning, Keith Humble, Michael Kieran Harvey, Freshwater Trio, Peter Clinch Quartet, Speak Percussion, Graeme Leak, Arditti Quartet, Astra, Jauna Musika, Flux String Quartet, Blezdinga and Barney McAll have performed and recorded his music. The breath of empty space for choir, 3 solo sopranos, keyboards and instrumental ensemble was premiered by Astra Chamber Music in Melbourne in 2011. *Encore à cet escalier*, for prepared piano and electronics (with Michael Hewes) premiered at the

2014 Apra Awards.

Kelly was lecturer in composition and contemporary music theory at Latrobe University in 1990-2000. His research included a cross-disciplinary study of the music of Alban Berg and fin-de-siècle Vienna. In 1999 he co-founded the art music group Slave Pianos which has presented works across Europe, North America and Australasia. Their multi-artform trilogy, on the life and work of George Maçunias et al, was presented in Vilnius, Melbourne and Berlin (2004-2007). Kelly is currently co-operator of Run Stop Sound, a professional recording studio. He runs Neil Kelly Music from his home studio where he supervises and mentors composer/performers.

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 many CDs on various labels.

Harvey’s compositions have been performed in Europe, the UK, North and South America and Asia, in addition to major Australian festivals. His most recent work is *Patañjali*, a 50-minute ensemble piece premiered at Mona Foma 2015.

Harvey gave the 2012 Peggy Glanville-Hicks address on the state of contemporary Australian art music to acclaim and controversy. As a pianist Harvey's awards include the Grand Prix in the Ivo Pogorelich Piano Competition, USA (1993 – the world's richest at the time), the Debussy Medal, the Guilde Francaise Concours Paris (1986), the Australian Government's Centenary Medal (2002), and the 2009 APRA award for Distinguished Services to Australian Music.

Recent collaborations include the Chinese-Australian Typhoon ensemble with Brian Ritchie, the fluxus-influenced Slave Pianos and Indonesian punk outfit Punksila, James Hullick and JOLT, and Plexus piano trio.

The Michael Kieran Harvey Scholarship was established in 2006 to encourage future directions in Australian keyboard art music, and to date has launched the international professional careers of six exceptional Australian musicians.

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