

An aerial satellite photograph of a city, likely New York City, showing a dense urban grid, a large body of water (the Hudson River) on the left, and a coastline with a harbor. The image is used as a background for the album cover.

SATELLITE MAPPING

STUART GREENBAUM
complete solo piano works (1989–2014)

Amir Farid, piano

move
2 CD set

STUART GREENBAUM (b. 1966)

disc 1

1 **Portrait and Blues Hymn** 1'51

Ice Man

- 2 I: Lost | The Moon |
Don't leave me here 9'17
- 3 II: Picture of an anorexic |
Dignity | The dream 12'17
- 4 III: They must have seen me |
Faint voices | Affinity 9'57

5 **Innocence (in Stillness)** 1'56

6 **Looking to the Future** 1'34

7 **But I Want the Harmonica** 8'39

8 **New Roads, Old Destinations** 6'55

9 **First Light** 6'25

10 **Fragments of Gratification** 2'50

disc 2

1 **Equator Loops** 7'00

Three Optical Allusions

- 2 I: Solar Eclipse 2'33
- 3 II: Time-lapse Photograph 3'12
- 4 III: Möbius Strip 1'08

Four Thoughts

- 5 I: The End of Winter 3'05
- 6 II: For Oliver 1'43
- 7 III: Spirals 2'27
- 8 IV: Bagatelle for Aksel 2'30

Matilda Deconstructions

- 9 I: Energised, elated 1'54
- 10 II: Freely 2'49

11 **The 4th Saturday in April** 2'20

12 **Evocation** 9'13

13 **Lavender for Hanna** 2'14

Allusion, Introspection and Ascension

- 14 I: Barcarole Allusion 2'05
- 15 II: Schubert: 1828, an introspection 5'18
- 16 III: The Petrarch Ascension 5'53

17 **Satellite Mapping** 4'32

18 **Fanfare for Elizabeth** 2'08

The piano is an instrument I grew up with. There were two pianos in the house and to sit at them and play was (and still is) as natural as sitting down to dinner. I was not a prodigy and struggled to sight-read music on two staves simultaneously. But the pure feel and sound of the piano is like a second language to me. Around half of the music on this two-disc release has previously been recorded (by many wonderful and talented pianists). But to comprehensively and chronologically present around a quarter of a century of writing for solo piano, recorded by a single artist on the

same piano in the same room is a unique undertaking – somewhat akin to publishing a diary. Some of the music is occasional (written for births, deaths, weddings and birthdays); some works were written in response to works of art or established repertoire (communing with the canon of Western Art Music); others were deliberately blank canvasses inviting more abstract development of musical language. Throughout this, the influence of minimalism, contemporary jazz, blues and rock can be found interwoven with the chromatic, tonal language of the classical repertoire. The piano is not only a beautiful instrument; for me it has been an important tool for musical thinking and for the development of my compositional language.

Portrait and Blues Hymn (1991) was written to celebrate the birthday of actor, Morna Seres, who I was working with on Stephen Sewell's play, *Sisters*. Published by Red House Editions, the premiere recording was released by Michael Kieran Harvey.

Ice Man (1993) was commissioned by the Dorian Le Galliene Composition Award and premiered by Glenn Riddle at a concert of the British Music Society of Victoria (now the Lyrebird Music Society). Published by Promethean Editions (NZ), this large-scale work for solo piano is based on the plight of James Scott, the Australian student who was lost in the Himalayan snow in December 1991 for 43 days before being rescued. His story was published shortly afterwards, and the three movements of this work depict selected excerpts:

I

My optimism had evaporated, and I was certain I was going to die that night. I took out a blue pen and a hardback notebook from my rucksack and wrote a letter to my family. "It is two days now and things have gone horribly wrong". I was afraid that my death was imminent. I wrote till it was dark. I did not sleep much during the nights, but I would watch the moon wax and wane. In the night the clouds would clear, so that when the sun came up I could see how white everything was and how complete the snowfall had been. On day 30 I heard my first helicopter. I bolted out to the clearing. I had not talked to myself or spoken out loud much until then, but now I shouted at the empty valley: "Don't leave me here!"

II

I was a lot thinner but I still had some energy. I had held in my mind a picture of an anorexic I had seen in a surgical textbook. It was just a skeleton draped in skin. I vowed that I would never allow myself to get like that, and that I would die with dignity. That night I slept and had the most vivid dream of my life. All my friends and family were there. I got up and made a speech and I talked for ages. The colours of the dream were intense. It absorbed all my senses.

III

When I woke up it was pitch black. I knew I had given up and I shouldn't have. But as I lay back in my sleeping bag, I heard the faint rhythm of a helicopter. I believed that the chopper would miss me as it had done before. But I thought about the dream and I struggled out of the

bag. I stood up and everything went bright white. It took 10 seconds before I got any vision back, and I was dizzy. I thought they must have seen me, but I was so cold. I crawled back to the rock. I do not remember much about that day. I slept a lot. When I first heard faint voices I thought I was getting hallucinations but they persisted. I shouted "Namaste! Hello!" and an echoing shout returned. They were two Nepalese. They said "Are you James Scott from Australia?" I said I was and for the first time since I had been lost I cried, and cried. I felt a sudden affinity for my rock, and a deep wonder at the landscape. I still thought that this must be one of the most beautiful places on earth.

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Innocence (in Stillness) (1995) was written to celebrate the birth of Olivia O'Brien. Designed for small hands, it was included in the AMEB's grade 2 syllabus.

Looking to the Future (1995) was written 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.

When I was about 7 years old, the school librarian came into our class. She asked us which item we would choose if stranded in a boat by ourselves: a fishing rod, a cake, a harmonica or a book? Most of the kids thought

cake would be excellent (it was getting close to morning recess) but she rightly pointed out that a cake can only be eaten once, whereas a book can be read over and over. But I wanted the harmonica and was not astute enough at the time to point out to her that not only could the harmonica be played over and over, but you could make the tunes up yourself. I can't remember the librarian's name but if you're out there, ***But I Want the Harmonica*** (1996) is dedicated to you.

New Roads, Old Destinations (1996) is inspired by M. C. Escher's famous 1960 lithograph, ***Ascending and Descending***, showing stairs which descend impossibly back to an upper starting point. Ambiguity is also at the heart of this piece. In ***New Roads, Old Destinations***, phrases descend further toward new roads, yet still arrive back at the same old destinations. This ambiguity is reinforced by chromatic descent into a harmonic labyrinth of tonal centres that prove elusive. The work is dedicated to my wife, Marianne Rothschild.

First Light (1997) presents a fusion of chromatic tonal harmony (such as that found in the works of Chopin) with the rhythms and chord voicing of contemporary American Jazz (notably Lyle Mays). Comping patterns found in modern pop also found a way in. This was less an experiment – more the result of allowing a synthesis (or at least co-existence) of multiple musical styles that I connect with. The work is dedicated to my mother, Elizabeth Scarlett, and the first performance given by Thomas Jude Sammut at the Malta International Arts Festival, 8 July 1997.

Fragments of Gratification (1999) was written on the final day of what is now the old millennium. It was written as a kind of millennial turning point. The music is introspective and perhaps melancholy. This idea grew into a collection of miniatures of the same name featuring 20 Australian composers, premiered by Adam Pinto and published through Reed Music.

The title **Equator Loops** (2000) refers to the use of contrary motion, which defines its thematic material. The loops gradually expand but always return to the 'equator' (the central note D). The title is also a reference to John Adams' **Shaker Loops**, which itself is a play on words. The harmonic alternation of major and minor modes is based on Arvo Pärt's **Te Deum** (which I analysed for my PhD thesis) and **Equator Loops** is accordingly dedicated to Pärt.

Three Optical Allusions (2001) presents rhythmic puzzles which 'allude' to corresponding visual 'illusions'. **Solar Eclipse** explores the ratio 3:4 – a vortex of rhythmic gravity within a harmonic structure that moves toward and then away from a perfect eclipse of the sun. In **Time-lapse Photograph**, a simple rising phrase repeats – each time a little longer – against a more fluid, blurred melodic line. Once the photograph is 'coloured in' it fades away. A **Möbius Strip** (as drawn by Escher) is a strip of paper looped and joined at the ends but with one end turned around 180 degrees. This creates an object with only one plane, since the front merges into the back. In this musical allusion, an opening 5-note cell loops seamlessly upon itself – expanding,

contracting, finally launching upwards into infinity.

Four Thoughts (2004) is a loose collection of miniatures first recorded by Patrick Lawrence. Dedicated to Flemish composer, Wim Mertens, **The End of Winter** depicts a quiet optimism. **For Oliver** was written to mark the birth of my nephew, Oliver Diplock. The simplest of the four, it was conceived to be playable by small hands. In **Spirals** (commissioned by David Cramond) a 5-note loop expands outward to more distant harmonies as increasing rhythmic detail implies the infinity captured in Escher's print of the same name. Escher produced the original wood engraving in December 1953, the birth year of Kerry Landman (for whose 50th birthday the piece is dedicated). Finally, **Bagatelle for Aksel** is a subtle variation on a well-known children's song that I sang to my son in the hospital nursery 20 minutes after he was born. Fragments of the song permeate the Bagatelle's structure, sometimes overtly, though never stated in full.

Matilda Deconstructions (2005) was commissioned by pianist, Elyane Laussade, to form a set of variations by Melbourne composers on the unofficial Australian anthem, **Waltzing Matilda**. Being a national theme, it has been subjected to many patriotic renditions. This commission, however, allowed me to consider the theme from a more neutral perspective. Featuring only selected notes and intervals, these two deconstructions take musical DNA from this well-known anthem into a different aesthetic.

William Hughes and I studied together at the University of Melbourne, both undertaking the PhD in Composition. Upon completing his studies, Will returned to Adelaide, met Catherine Chittleborough and got married. I was unable to attend in person, so decided to send this small offering to help celebrate **The 4th Saturday in April** (2006). After the reception, Will played to piece to Cathy and their friends on their new piano.

Evocation (2006) was commissioned by Marjorie Dunlop to commemorate the life of Daniel McCluskey, who died suddenly in January 2006. He was an accomplished law and music student at the University of Melbourne and an orchestration student of mine in 2004 – a subject for which he received first class honours. In that same year he included 'Evocation' (from Albéniz' cycle, **Iberia**) in his solo piano program and that piece provided a loose starting point for this one, with the idea that Daniel might have his own Evocation. It was premiered by Amir Farid – a colleague of Daniel's.

Hanna Greenbaum was born at 10:20am on 27 December 2007. As I did when her brother Aksel was born, I took her up to the hospital nursery and sang to her, the song in question this time being **Lavender's Blue**. **Lavender for Hanna** (2008) was written around a week after her birth and is a relatively free series of variations leading to a more overt blues-influenced statement of the theme.

Allusion, introspection and Ascension (2012) re-interprets harmonic progressions taken from great classics of 19th Century solo piano literature. The first, **Barcarole Allusion**, is based on 4 chromatic chords quietly hiding in the middle of Chopin's well-known work. It was written for Stephen McIntyre's 70th birthday concert at the Melbourne Recital Centre – premiered by Stefan Cassomenos. The second and third were written for Ian Holtham to be programmed alongside the originals in concert. **Schubert: 1828, an introspection** isolates selected chord progressions from the 4th movement of his final Sonata D960, arpeggiating them within a minimalist architecture. **The Petrarch Ascension** takes the second of Liszt's **Three Petrarch Sonnets** – No.104, and presents its rising melodic sequence in slow-motion leading to an ecstatic, compressed revelation. All 3 pieces are exclusively based on borrowed notes in the same keys in which they were originally composed.

In 2006 Google Earth was just a year or two old and provided an unprecedented ability to view the Earth as photographed from satellites in space on a home computer. One could view remote exotic locations as quickly as one's own residence. Zooming in, the image would be highly pixilated – but gradually filled in with detailed resolution. **Satellite Mapping** (2012) attempts to capture that process of detail gradually revealed. It is based on a fixed-register chord of 16 pitches and is exclusively limited to those pitches. In musical terms, this begins with spacious chords, gradually developing more detail until finally revealed

as an unbroken bit-stream of data flowing in rapid arpeggios across the full length of the keyboard. The piece was only half-finished in 2006, as I could only partially play what I could hear and notating the concept also proved elusive. Late in 2012, I came back to the piece and found a way through.

Fanfare for Elizabeth (2014) was written to celebrate the 80th birthday of my mother, Elizabeth Scarlett. It was written in a single morning (24 April) in advance of her actual birthday on the 1st of May 2014. A pianist herself, Betty worked as a Lecturer in Music at Burwood College (later Victoria College, then Deakin University). After retiring, she completed a PhD on the music of Poulenc. Her love of music and the theory of music is a topic we still discuss (having followed her into the same profession) and this fanfare is therefore written to celebrate her ebullient nature and musical excellence. The first performance was given by Glenn Riddle at Elizabeth's 80th birthday celebration at her home in Brighton.

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Amir Farid

Winner of the 2006 Australian National Piano Award, US born Iranian-Australian pianist Amir Farid is a graduate of the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, Royal College of Music London and Australian National

Academy of Music having studied with Ronald Farren-Price, Geoffrey Tozer, Rita Reichman and Timothy Young. Farid has performed concerti with major orchestras throughout Australia. Recital collaborators include Ian Bostridge, Claude Delangle, Arabella Steinbacher, Nikki Chooi, Mats Lidström, Alexander Baillie, Martin Loveday, Greta Bradman, Siobhan Stagg, and Philippe Cuper. Amir is also pianist of the Benaud Trio.

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Stuart Greenbaum

With a catalogue of over 185 works written for the concert stage, Stuart Greenbaum's music is heard regularly in Australia and abroad. Having studied composition with Broadstock and Conyngham at the University of

Melbourne, Greenbaum now holds a position in the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music as Professor and Head of Composition.

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disc 1

- 1 **Portrait and Blues Hymn** 1'51
- 2-4 **Ice Man** 31'31
- 5 **Innocence (in Stillness)** 1'56
- 6 **Looking to the Future** 1'34
- 7 **But I Want the Harmonica** 8'39
- 8 **New Roads, Old Destinations** 6'55
- 9 **First Light** 6'25
- 10 **Fragments of Gratification** 2'50

Total playing time 62'32

disc 2

- 1 **Equator Loops** 7'00
- 2-4 **Three Optical Allusions** 6'53
- 5-8 **Four Thoughts** 9'43
- 9-10 **Matilda Deconstructions** 4'40
- 11 **The 4th Saturday in April** 2'20
- 12 **Evocation** 9'13
- 13 **Lavender for Hanna** 2'14
- 14-16 **Allusion, Introspection and Ascension** 13'17
- 17 **Satellite Mapping** 4'32
- 18 **Fanfare for Elizabeth** 2'08

Total playing time 68'14

