



THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

**ANU School of Music**

**Orchestral  
Encounters<sup>3</sup>**



**ANU School of Music Symphony Orchestra**

Solo piano **Michael Kieran Harvey**

Conducted by **Nigel Westlake**

playing an all-Westlake program

Llewellyn Hall

Saturday 16 October 2004



## **Introduction**

This evening's concert is a fairly representative cross-section of activities undertaken during my tenure as the HC Coombs Creative Arts Fellow for 2004.

It has been a privilege for me to work so closely with the students at the School of Music, many of whom I hope are destined to be absorbed into the cultural fabric of Australian music making in future years. Their commitment & dedication to this program of unusual & challenging music has been an inspiration & gives one great hope for the future of the composer / performer relationship & the notion of music as a living, breathing art form that resonates with the times in which we live.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each & every one of the students participating in tonight's concert & to wish them all the very best in their careers. Also thanks to the staff at the ANU School of Music for their continuing support over the last six months, in particular Gary France, Tor Fromyhr, David Pereira, David Nuttall, Dominique Harvey, Tim Kain, Jennie Murray, Jan Jennings, & many others that have contributed towards the preparation of tonight's performance. I would also like to extend a sincere thanks to guest soloist Michael Kieran Harvey for his generous contribution towards tonight's performance.

*Nigel Westlake*

## **Kalabash (2004)**

*Kalabash* for four percussionists, was composed as part of the HC Coombs Creative Arts Fellowship for the ANU School of Music's percussion ensemble "DRUMatiX" & was premiered by them at the National Art Gallery in July 2004.

Two marimbas & a selection of splash cymbals & log drums are shared amongst the four players who engage in a virtuosic interplay reminiscent of the balofon music of West Africa.

The balofon is the forerunner of the modern marimba & shares many physical characteristics with its modern counterpart, the main difference being that the wooden bars (or notes) are suspended above a collection of different sized kalabash gourds instead of aluminium resonators. In some instances these gourds have spiderwebs stretched over their openings which create a fantastic buzzing resonance when the bars are hit with mallets.

The traditional music of West Africa frequently features the balofon & there are many accomplished exponents of dazzling virtuosity amongst the tribes of Northern Ghana.

It is the musical gestures & celebratory nature of this folk music which in some ways informs the language of *Kalabash* & though there is no direct borrowing of musical themes or techniques, this exotic sound world has become a departure point for the compositional process.

### **Out of the Blue (1994)**

*Out of the Blue...* was composed when I was emerging from a "blue" period in my life brought on by a car accident. Whole days spent composing left me with nothing but blank pages. It took months for the stream of ideas to re-establish their flow.

*Out of the Blue...* was the result.

The single movement work draws on the rhythmic unity of a tightly knit small ensemble featuring from time to time solo violin & solo viola. & an emphasis on rhythmic & textural effects.

It was commissioned by The Adelaide Chamber Orchestra in 1993 & received it's premier at the Adelaide Festival the following year. The work has recently been re-released on ABC Classics on a disc by the same name performed by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

### **Shadow Dances (2004)**

for guitar & chamber orchestra.

Soloist: Harold Gretton

*Shadow Dances* is the most recent of a number of works commissioned by Timothy Kain, head of guitar at the ANU School of Music. Originally called "Images", it was premiered by him in 2000 with the "Academy of Melbourne".

The HC Coombs fellowship at ANU has provided me with the opportunity to revisit the piece & rework many aspects of the form & orchestration, hence the new title.

The guitar writing in *Shadow Dances* has been very much informed by my long association with Tim Kain, who has been guiding me through the labyrinth of mysteries surrounding guitar composition since 1989 & the commissioning of "Winter in the Forgotten Valley" for his award winning ensemble "GuitarTrek".

His ongoing support for my work in the form of frequent performances, recordings & ongoing commissions has since resulted in a total of seven pieces either featuring or including guitar.

*Shadow Dances* opens with an abrupt explosion that immediately settles into a fluid texture of sustained dissonance. Fragments of colour & melody evolve & build towards the first guitar entry.

In a gentle exploration of polychromatic lyricism, the orchestra resonates & responds to the gestures of the guitar, creating an intimate dialogue between soloist & ensemble.

An extended free-form cadenza forms a bridge to the "dance", a pulsating, high energy sequence of rhythmic invention based on repetition & variation.

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## INTERVAL

### **Piano Concerto (2000)**

Soloist: Michael Kieran Harvey

*Piano Concerto* is testament to my ongoing association with one of this country's leading exponents of contemporary keyboard music, Michael Kieran Harvey.

Commissioned by Symphony Australia for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra & Michael Kieran Harvey & premiered at the Melbourne concert hall in 2000, the piano concerto has undergone a major revision over the last couple of months in preparation for tonight's concert.

I first met Michael in the early 1970's. It was the first day back at the N.S.W. Conservatorium High School after the summer holidays. From the room down the hall, where the new year-seven kids had just arrived for the start of the school year, I could hear the sounds of some very impressive piano playing. I, along with the rest of the school was drawn towards it like a moth to light.

The entrance to the room was packed with students, all jostling to get a peek at the source of the music. I manoeuvred myself into position, where I could see at the piano, a small boy with red hair & freckles playing a Beethoven sonata at lightning speed from memory. He looked to be all of 10 years old, his feet could hardly reach the pedals.

He performed like a "demon possessed" & one could not help but wonder at the great things in store for such a young musician, already so accomplished. At the conclusion of this impromptu recital, the students picked up their collective jaws off the floor & erupted into spontaneous rapturous applause. This is my first memory of Michael.

The power & passion of his playing have since become the inspiration for numerous additions to the contemporary piano repertoire.  
This concerto is dedicated to Michael & is the third piece I have written for him.

In a single movement, the work is constructed from a series of episodes that range in character from introspective reflection to aggressive & rhythmically driven motoric music.

The opening solo piano introduction establishes focus on the soloist, which is maintained for the whole work & rather than developing into a musical dialogue between orchestra & piano, the orchestra becomes an extension of the piano colour & textures.

## **Moving Pictures**

1. "The Raiders"  
- from "Babe - Pig in the City"
2. "The Nugget"  
- from "The Nugget"  
(piano solo : Lara Dodds Eden)
3. "The Evil Empire"  
- from "Children of the Revolution"
4. "Lament"  
- from "Children of the Revolution"
5. "Hells Bells"  
- from "A little bit of Soul"
6. "A Noble Heart" (Saint - Saens arranged Westlake)  
- from "Babe, Pig in the City"
7. "Penguin Ballet"  
- from "Antarctica"  
(guitar solo : Gregory O'Rourke)
8. "Scott's Theme"  
- from "Antarctica"  
(cello solo : Esther Lee)
9. "The Sheep pig"  
- from "Babe"
10. "The Age of Reason"  
- from "Solarmax"
11. "The Hogget Polka"  
- from "Babe - Pig in the City"

From "blockbusters" to obscure "art-house", *Moving Pictures* is a suite in eleven movements assembled from filmscores I have composed over the last decade.

Arranged & re-orchestrated specifically for this concert as part of the HC Coombs creative arts fellowship, this suite embraces a wide range of genres including comedy, drama, documentary, mockumentary & Imax. Composing the scores for these pictures provided me with the opportunity to collaborate with some of Australia's most fascinating & inspiring filmmakers.

1. "The Raiders"

(from "Babe, Pig in the City" directed by George Miller 1997.)

The sequel to "Babe" finds the pig stranded in the city at the Flealands hotel, home of the eccentric Fugly Floom & his performing animal circus. A series of disasters culminate in a raid by the city authorities who impound all the animals.

This music was composed to accompany the dramatic images of the hotel raid, however was deemed to be too threatening in character & was never included in the finished film. This is the first time it has been heard in public.

2. "The Nugget"

- from "The Nugget" directed by Bill Bennett, 2002.

Eric Bana features as a member of the "Black Tar Gang" - three road workers who stumble upon the world's biggest gold nugget and become instant millionaires, although they soon discover that being rich isn't all its cracked up to be.

Director Bill Bennett wanted the music to evoke a fairy tale atmosphere for this endearing & laconic fable.

3. "The Evil Empire"

4. "Lament"

(from "Children of the Revolution" directed by Peter Duncan, 1996)

Peter Duncan's debut feature tells the story of a young passionate leftist, Joan Fraser (Judy Davis), whose work for world revolution in the late 1940s in Australia was the unrivaled focus of her life. Her stream of letters to Joseph Stalin (F. Murray Abraham) leads to a meeting with him at the Kremlin, resulting in the birth of their love child Joe Welch, who later becomes the leader of the most powerful law-enforcement union in Australia and ends up pushing the nation to the verge of civil war.

Bristling with satire, "The Evil Empire" is stylistically akin to the sort of music you might hear performed by the Red Army Choir & sets the tone for the film's location in the Kremlin & the hilarious portrayal of Joseph Stalin & the three stooges Khrushchev, Beria and Molenkov.

"Lament" deals with issues of unrequited love & lost opportunities that pervade the lives of a number of key characters within the story.

5. "Hells Bells"

- from "A little bit of Soul", directed by Peter Duncan, 1997.

Geoffrey Rush is the devil-worshipping Australian Finance Minister who's greedy pursuit for the elixir of everlasting youth becomes his undoing.

This Faustian comedy of epic proportions required a score to match its high energy with overtones of satanic ritual & manic devil worship.

6. "A Noble Heart" (Saint - Saens arranged Westlake)  
- from "Babe, Pig in the City" directed by George Miller 1997.

In this set of variations of the glorious theme from Saint Saen's third symphony (incorporated at the request of the director), Babe performs an act of heroic bravery, proving once again that an unprejudiced heart can change the established order.

7. "Penguin Ballet"

8. "Scott's Theme"

- from "Antarctica" directed by John Weiley.

The camera crew frequently risked their lives in the making of this Imax documentary, braving below freezing temperatures in order to capture never before seen footage of penguins performing an exquisite underwater ballet below the ice cap.

The film tracks the path of the early Antarctic explorers, "Scotts theme" being a poignant tribute to the bravery & tragic outcome of British explorer Robert Falcon Scott's bid for the south pole.

The original soundtrack featured performances by two of Australia's most prominent soloists, guitarist Tim Kain & cellist David Periera, both currently on staff at the ANU School of Music .

Twelve years after its release this film is still shown regularly at Imax cinemas & is reputedly the 3rd most successful Australian film ever made.

9. "The Sheep pig"

- from "Babe" directed by Chris Noonan, 1995.

Farmer Hoggett (James Cromwell) is seen teaching his pig how to herd sheep. Needless to say Mrs Hoggett (Magda Szubanski) is somewhat concerned for her husbands state of mind.

10. "The Age of Reason"

- from "Solarmax" directed by John Weiley, 2000.

Released in Australian Imax cinemas earlier this year, "Solarmax" is an exploration of mankind's relationship with the sun from scientific, historical & religious perspectives.

In a series of spectacular shots downloaded from the SOHO telescope positioned in space a million miles from earth, the sun's turbulent surface is revealed for the first time in staggering detail. "The Age of Reason" is a kind of Hymn to science.

11. "The Hoggett Polka"

- from "Babe - Pig in the City" directed by George Miller, 1997.

In the process of gate crashing the salubrious hospital fundraising ball, Mrs Hoggett is finally reunited with her precious pig in a slapstick sequence of mayhem & disaster, bringing the formal proceedings to a crashing halt with much swinging from chandeliers, pie throwing & general buffoonery.



## ANU DRUMatIX

Chi Lisa Lai  
Adam Dickson

Adam Jeffrey  
Jessica Dai

## ANU Chamber Orchestra

Violin 1  
Max Holzner  
Samantha Boston  
Siu Hay Yip  
Tim Wickham

Chris Stone  
Caroline Fairgrieve  
Andrea White

Cello  
Shahn Patterson  
Patrick Suthers

Violin 2  
Michelle Zarb

Violas  
Charlotte Burbrook de Vere  
Michael Patrick  
Jeremy Yapp

Bass  
Nathaniel Johnstone

## ANU School of Music Symphony Orchestra

Violin 1  
Marianne Broadfoot  
Michelle Zarb  
Siu Hay Yip  
Chris Stone  
Charlotte Burbrook de Vere  
Erin Patrick  
Hai Bei Feng

Sarah Lindsay  
Katherine Keeley  
  
Flute  
Dominique Chaseling  
Paul Danieleto  
Adrian Failla  
Nicholas Reither  
Katie Zagorski

Trumpet  
Mark Bain  
Matthew Currell  
Dayne Grindley  
Helen Lawrence

Violin 2  
Bronwyn Priestley  
Samantha Boston  
Caroline Fairgrieve  
Andrea White  
Tim Wickham  
Emma Kelly  
Lucy Carrigy-Ryan  
Lachlan Bramble

Oboe  
Kirsty Raffan  
James Milligan  
Cor Anglais  
David Nuttall

Trombone  
Xin Wei  
Michael Bailey  
Lachlan Knowles,  
bass

Violas  
Jeremy Yapp  
Michael Patrick  
Valerie Morgan-Pertus  
Matthew Smith

Clarinet  
Claire Janiec  
Jamie Williams  
Brett Janiec  
Yoo Jin Kim

Tuba  
Mac Fish  
Koh Sato

Cello  
Esther Lee  
Patrick Suthers  
Shahn Patterson  
Eryn Koch  
Teresa Neeman  
Sebastian Lyndon Gee

Bassoon  
Kristen Scholes  
Will Fitzgibbon  
Robert Clayton  
Matthew Toffolon

Timpani  
Jessica Dai  
Adam Dickson

Bass  
Nathaniel Johnstone  
Paul Camillieri  
Holly Downes  
Joel Westlake

Tenor Sax  
Jack Beeche

Percussion  
Adam Dickson  
Adam Jeffrey  
Michael Stevens  
Veronica Walshaw  
Ben Willson  
Jessica Dai

Horn  
Dominic Harvey  
Elizabeth Gorrige,  
Megan Knowles  
Julia MacDonell  
Luke Midena  
Fiona Williams

Harp  
Laura Tanata  
Tegan Peemoeller  
Hannah Bendell

Piano/Synthesiser  
Lara Dodds Eden

Harpsichord/Celeste  
Anna Ransom