

Anthology of Australian Music on Disc

CSM:18

McSULLEA/HARVEY

MUSIC FOR FLUTE, PIANO AND
COMPUTER-GENERATED SOUNDS BY HUMBLE, POLLARD,
WALKER, YU, BANKS, WORRALL & BURT

CD913

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Mardi McSullea, flute
Michael Kieran Harvey, piano

1. Keith Humble, *Sonata for Flute and Piano*
2. Mark Pollard, *Under Simple Stars*
3. Allan Walker, *Six Scenes for Flute and Piano*
4. Julian Yu, *Scintillation III for Flute and Piano*
5. Don Banks, *Three Episodes for Flute and Piano*
6. David Worrall, *Air*
7. Warren Burt, *Remembering Griffes*

Canberra School of Music
Institute of the Arts
The Australian National University

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The Composers

Keith Humble

The foundation Professor of Music at La Trobe University, Keith Humble began his music career as a composer, pianist and jazz musician in Melbourne. After taking a Diploma at the Melbourne Conservatorium, he went to Europe, where he studied in London at the Royal Academy of Music and in Paris with Rene Leibowitz in composition and Alfred Cortot in piano. After much recital work throughout Europe, he formed Le Centre de Musique where he gave first performances of many notable compositions, and established an important forum for contemporary music in Paris. He also toured Europe with his ensemble, including in his programmes many first performances of works by young composers. In 1967, Humble returned to Melbourne as Senior Lecturer at the University of Melbourne, where he continued his work in contemporary music. He later taught at the University of California, San Diego, before founding the Department at La Trobe in Melbourne. He continues to make regular concert tours to the United States and Europe.

Mark Pollard

Mark Pollard is a widely-commissioned and acclaimed composer whose work is regularly broadcast and performed in Australia and overseas, including performances at the Warsaw Festival, Tokyo Music Today Festival and the Liverpool Festival. His awards include the Spivakovsky Competition Prize, the inaugural Jacobena Angliss Music Award, the Albert H. Maggs Composition Prize and the National Young Composers Orchestral Prize.

Allan Walker

Allan Walker began his professional career as a pianist. He studied composition with Keith Humble at La Trobe University in Melbourne, where he now teaches theory and composition.

Julian Yu

Julian Jing-Jun Yu was born in Beijing in 1959 and wrote his first composition at the age of twelve. He studied composition formally 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. In 1985 Julian settled in Australia. He has won numerous composition awards, including the Koussevitsky Tanglewood Composition Prize (1988), the inaugural and second Paul Lowin Orchestral Awards (1991, 1994), Vienna Modern Masters Award (1992), International New Music Composers' Competition (1987, 1988 and 1989/90), Japan Music Concours (1987), Albert H.

Maggs Award (1988) and the Adolf Spivakovsky Composition Prize (1993). In 1988 he was a Composition Fellow at Tanglewood where he studied under Hans Werner Henze and Oliver Knussen. His major orchestral works have been performed by the Tanglewood, BBC, Hiroshima, Sydney and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras.

Don Banks

Don Banks (1923-1980) came from a family environment full of music; his father was a professional jazz musician. With ready access to a variety of instruments, as a child he leaned trombone, guitar, piano, saxophone and violin. He studied composition at the Melbourne University Conservatorium with Dorian Le Gallienne and A.E.H. Nickson, and in the 1950s travelled to Europe, working with Matyas Sieber in London, Milton Babbitt in Salzburg, and Luigi Dallapiccola and Luigi Nono in Florence. He lived in London through the 1960s, returning to Australia to senior teaching positions in composition at the Canberra School of Music and the Sydney Conservatorium.

David Worrall

David Worrall studied music composition with Ross Edwards, Peter Sculthorpe, Richard Meale and Tristram Cary. Currently, he is Head of the Australian Centre for the Arts and Technology (ACAT) and Senior Lecturer in Composition at the Institute of the Arts, ANU. His areas of special interest include algorithmic composition, stochastic modelling, spatial manipulation of sound, and polymedia. He was Director of the electrospatial group *Floating Exceptions* (now *Polymedia Inc.*), which presents performances of sound and light compositions in its portable geodesic dome. Worrall has won several major composition awards, and his work has been supported by the Australia Council for whom he has acted as a panel member and adviser on music, the arts and new technology. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Australian Music Centre and the Music Council of Australia, and he plays an active role in the arts community as an advisor and adjudicator, and as a lecturer on composition and computer music.

Warren Burt

Warren Burt attended the State University of New York, Albany, and the University of California, San Diego, before moving to Australia in 1975. He has since worked in academia (La Trobe, NSW Conservatorium, Victorian College of the Arts), education and radio, and as a composer, film maker, video artist and community arts organiser. His works have been performed and shown in the USA, Australia, Europe and Japan, and he has received several grants from the Australia Council and Victorian Ministry of the Arts, as well as being Artist-in-Residence with such

organisations as the CSIRO, the Los Angeles-based art/science think-tank International Synergy, and the Broadcast Music Department of ABC Radio. His work in electronic and computer music is recognised internationally, including 1989 performances at Arts Electronica, Linz, and Steirischer Herbst, Graz. In 1991 and 1992, he received Composer Fellowships for his work in computer music. His book, *Writings From a Scarlet Aardvark: 15 Articles on Music and Art, 1981-93,* was published in 1993 by Frog Peak Music, USA.

The Performers

Mardi McSullea

Mardi McSullea studied flute with Margaret Crawford and Victor McMahon in Sydney before continuing her studies in New York with Thomas Nyfenger. She received her Master's degree from Queens College, City University of New York, where she later taught. While in the United States, she also had lessons with Marcel Moyse, Robert Dick and Michael Parloff.

In New York, McSullea performed as soloist with the Brandenberg Orchestra, and frequently performed with the Jupiter Symphony, Naumberg Orchestra and New York Pops Orchestra. She became active in new music through her association with the New Jersey Percussion Ensemble and the Twentieth Century Music Group.

Mardi McSullea is currently Lecturer of Woodwind in the Faculty of Music, University of Melbourne, and performs regularly for the Astra Chamber Society and for ABC Radio.

Michael Kieran Harvey

Michael Kieran Harvey was a pupil of Alan Jenkins and Gordon Watson in Sydney, and of Sandor Falvai at the Franz Liszt academy. His prizes include the Debussy Medal (1985), Fourth Prize in the inaugural Liszt Competition in Utrecht (1986), and, more recently, the Grand-Prix in the 1993 Ivo Pogorelich International Solo Piano competition in Pasadena, California.

Harvey enjoys a busy international touring and recording schedule, appearing at major festivals in Germany, Poland, Spain and the USA. In Australia, he resides in Melbourne where he is Head of Piano Studies at the Victorian College of the Arts.

While his repertoire encompasses the gamut of the pianistic œuvre, Harvey is a champion of contemporary music, in particular that of Australian composers from whom he regularly commissions new works. He has already released two compact disc recordings: *Michael Kieran Harvey* and *Inspired 20th Century Piano Music.*

1. *Sonata for Flute and Piano* **Keith Humble**

The *Sonata*, commissioned by 2MBS-FM in Sydney, is dedicated to the expatriate Australian flautist John Wion. Mardi McSullea gave the first performance of the *Sonata* at the Canberra School of Music in 1992. The *Sonata* displays a continuation of musical processes that I first exploited in my string quartet, *Four All Seasons,* and is in four movements, the third concluding with an extended cadenza. Companion compositions include my fourth *Piano Sonata*, the *Sonata for Trombone and Piano* and the *Eight Bagatelles for Piano.* *Keith Humble*

7. *Under Simple Stars for Amplified Alto Flute* **Mark Pollard**

This work was commissioned by Mardi McSullea in 1989 with assistance from the Australia Council. The title was inspired by star-gazing, and for the composer seems to describe aptly the fascinating interaction of complexity and beauty that exists in natural phenomena. *Under Simple Stars* attempts to capture aspects of this interaction through an exploration of musical abstractions and the natural beauty of the alto flute. The opening evocative breath and bent sounds gradually move to definite notes, and then a melody. Performance enhancement is used through the addition of digital reverb to provide a constant sense of 'depth'. Performer and technology interact to form a soundscape. *Mark Pollard*

4. *Six Scenes for Flute and Piano* **Allan Walker**

The origin of *Six Scenes* is a collection of pieces for clarinet and piano. This new form for flute and piano invited changes to the original pieces, so some were extended, and most demanded substantial recomposition in order to maintain convincing harmonies, melodic shapes and a balanced sound. The pieces are very simple – essentially composition studies – each briefly exploring a different musical idea. The common thread is the same source pitch material (an ordered twelve-tone collection) which tends to create recurring melodic and harmonic patterns. The Scenes are: i) a recitative; ii) an embellished, shared line; iii) an aphorism; iv) gradually changing pitch fields defined by notes in fixed registers; v) a texture of four elements: staccato chords, rapid ornamentation, and two melodies; and vi) a dance which vaporises. *Allan Walker*

2. *Scintillation III for Flute and Piano* **Julian Yu**

Scintillation is a series of three pieces written in 1987. The first is for solo piano, the second for piano and metallic percussion, and this, the third, is for flute and piano, with the flute developing the melodic aspects of the work. The music is based on a mode characterised by perfect-fourth and minor-second intervals, which are responsible for the strong pentatonic flavour. The title refers to the brightness of the metallic instruments for which the piece was originally conceived, and also to the flowery nature of the music. The chinese character for 'scintillation' is made up of two parts, themselves meaning 'fire' and 'joy' (or 'music'). *Julian Yu*

6. *Three Episodes for Flute and Piano* **Don Banks**

These pieces were written in London for the Australian expatriate flautist Douglas Whittiker. The writing in each of the Episodes is highly gestural, with small rhythmically-charged motives shifting between the two players. The challenges of working independently-motivated freedoms and intricate ensemble co-ordination runs through the three pieces. The influence of jazz, Banks's own latent humour and imagination (particularly for colour) and the focussed play of rhythmic elements makes for chamber music of power and subtlety. *Mardi McSullea*

3. *Air for Flute and Computer-Controlled Electronics* **David Worrall**

Air was commissioned by Mardi McSullea with assistance from the Australia Council. The piece is in two movements, opening with an *Alap*, a 'prelude' movement for solo flute in which the musical materials (from key-clicks and other noises to multiphonics) of the work are gradually exposed. It is played with a sense of drama and intensity. The flute is amplified with some reverberation. The second movement is an improvisation for live flute and computer-controlled streams of sampled and transformed flute sounds. In preparation for performance, the flautist and electronicist plan the improvisation within the guidelines given. They select one or more subsets of samples, and prepare separate disks accordingly. *David Worrall*

5. *Remembering Griffes for Flute and Live Computer* **Warren Burt**

Late in 1989, I made some sounds on my synthesiser that played two tones at a time, tuned to the pure intervals of the harmonic series. I then began to experiment with playing these two tones in different scales. I got the best results – lots of interesting microtonal intervals and beating sounds – when I used a scale of 17 tones per octave. At this point, I imagined a flute over these sounds. My fascination with the music of the pioneer American modernist composer Charles Tomlinson Griffes (1884-1920) led me to wonder how his type of melodies would go with my microtonal sounds. Using the computer, I made a tape of my sounds. Eventually, I improvised a flute part that used and varied both original materials and the opening theme from Griffes' *Poem for Flute and Orchestra*, which I then notated. In performance, the flautist plays the notated part, while I play the computer. The two parts, flute and computer, have different characteristics, are in different tunings, and progress at different speeds; I think they sit well together. *Warren Burt*

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This disc is part of the second series of the Anthology. Each disc is issued with a booklet of notes. The current titles in the second series are:

CSM 16: **PIANO MUSIC OF MIRIAM HYDE**
CSM 17: **HERSCOVITCH/SCHNEIDER** CSM 18: **HARVEY/McSULLEA**
CSM 19: **PIANO MUSIC OF ROY AGNEW**
CSM 20: **ELECTROACOUSTIC MUSIC** CSM 21: **SITSKY AT SIXTY**

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For orders and more information, please write to:
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Recorded in the Llewellyn Hall, Canberra School of Music in March 1992.
Producer: Mardi McSullea Booklet Editor: Peter Campbell
Edited by: Michael Grafton-Greene Layout/Design: Peter Campbell
Recorded by: John Davies Project Co-ordinator: Margaret Ziersch

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