

dda 25017



allen
werder
le gallienne
dargaville
bertram

piano music
from
australia



blue wrens

trevor barnard (pianoforte)

TREVOR BARNARD

"Blue Wrens" Contemporary Piano Music from Australia

Geoffrey Allen (b.1927):

Three Piano Pieces, op.23

1	For the Parson's Pleasure	(op.23 no.1)	[3:59]
2	D'Alliance française	(op.23 no.2)	[3:16]
3	Blue Wrens at Amberley	(op.23 no.3)	[3:59]
4	Sonata no. 4, op.29		[10:24]

Felix Werder (b.1922):

Monograph

5	Movement I		[3:10]
6	Movement II		[2:38]
7	Movement III		[1:08]

Dorian Le Gallienne (1915-1963):

Sonata for Piano

8	Allegro Moderato		[6:16]
9	Presto (alla marcia)		[4:46]
10	Molto Lento		[6:20]

Tim Dargaville (b.1962):

Night Song

11			[4:45]
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Michael Bertram (b.1935):

Sonatina (1977)

12	Movement I		[3:16]
13	Movement II		[2:32]
14	Movement III		[2:11]

Five Pieces for Piano (1984)

15	Rumelia		[4:34]
16	Ingenu		[2:27]
17	Kinetic		[4:29]
18	Violet		[1:36]
19	Iconoclast		[2:40]

Total playing time:

[74:26]

Geoffrey Allen:
Sonata and Three Piano Pieces

The Three Piano Pieces, Opus 23, were written in 1993/94. *For the parson's pleasure* was a contribution to the 70th birthday celebrations at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, for the Rev. Graham Midgeley who had been a fellow student of mine. The title notes the dedicatee's status in holy orders, but also refers to that place on the river at Oxford where in years gone by young clerical gentlemen were wont to disport themselves in summer. The title of *D'Alliance française*, while linguistically illegitimate, is intended to suggest music that flirts with the French style, particularly that of Poulenc and contemporaries. In the final bars, if the listener is quick, the briefest references to *La Marseillaise* and *Waltzing Matilda* may be detected. The final piece, *Blue Wrens at Amberley* was written after a visit to the Amberley Estate Vineyard at Margaret River, W.A. There is a tenuous link between this Amberley and the village in Sussex featured in Ireland's Amberley Wild Brooks. However the focus of this piece is the Splendid Blue Wrens (*malurus splendens*) which are much in evidence at the vineyard. These jewels of the Australian bush are not great songsters, but for all that are a delight to behold. The *Three Pieces* were first performed in public

by Trevor Barnard at a Camberwell Music Society concert in April 1999.

The Piano Sonata no.4 is the only one of my seven (so far) piano sonatas that is in one movement. This sequence of piano sonatas began in 1960 when I wrote one and a bit movements which then languished in the drawer for thirty years. A visit to Spain in 1989 stimulated the composition of *Sonata Espanola* (now styled piano sonata no.2), which came to the notice of British pianist Peter Seivewright who visited Perth in 1995 and gave the first performance. This encouragement brought the earlier effort out of the drawer, and sonata no.1 was completed, to be followed immediately by sonata no.3, dedicated to Seivewright. These first three sonatas are all extended works in three of four movements, and the composition of sonata no.4 involved a conscious effort to write in a more concentrated and concise manner.

While work on this sonata was progressing, I visited the Faculty of Music at The University of Melbourne where I met Trevor Barnard. The part-complete score was examined, and Trevor Barnard expressed an interest which earned him the dedication.

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Geoffrey Allen was born in NE London in 1927, and grew up in Brentwood, Essex. From the age of six until he was eighteen he learned the piano, but having achieved only a modest competency he went up to Oxford in 1945 to read chemistry! Subsequently, following two years' military service, he transferred to geography and graduated in 1951. Almost immediately he married and emigrated to Sydney, Australia, where, in 1953 he embarked on a career in librarianship. He moved to Perth in 1961, to the University of WA, and in 1967 he became the foundation librarian of Curtin University of Technology from where he retired in 1992. In 1989 he founded the Keys Press to publish his own and other Australian music, and in his retirement this has become a major activity.

As a composer Geoffrey Allen is entirely self-taught, through a lifetime of listening, looking at scores, and writing. Although for much of his working life composition was a spasmodic and slow process, from his early sixties he has experienced both a resurgence in creative drive and a flowering of his skills.

His output has passed his opus 40, and includes seven piano sonatas, a quantity of shorter piano pieces, songs and several works for woodwinds in various

combinations. He acknowledges an early and continuing infatuation with the music of Delius, and a deep indebtedness to mid-20th century British and French composers as the enduring influences on his style.

Felix Werder: Monograph

Monograph is dedicated to Trevor Barnard and was specifically composed for this CD.

Over a long career Felix Werder has established himself as a composer of considerable international stature yet still achieving official recognition in his adopted country, Australia. There he was one of the first musicians to be honoured with the Order of Australia and, later, the highly prestigious Australia Council Composer's Fellowship.

Of Jewish origin, Felix Werder fled with his family, initially to London, following the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany and was subsequently deported to Australia as voyagers on the notorious refugee ship 'Dunera' in 1941. Arriving in Australia he was able to work as a composer and arranger during internship; after military service he was active as a carpenter, music arranger, teacher in schools and lecturer for the Council of Adult Education in Melbourne. He quickly became the most interdisciplinary literate of his generation.

With a large compositional output Werder has drawn on Jewish folk tradition and synagogue cantillation as well as embracing neo-romanticism, Hindemithian counterpoint, dodecaphony, serialism, pointillism, clusters, aleatory means, and the use of space. Much of his composing uses large forces; he has written several operas, symphonies and concertos as well as making significant contributions to the chamber and electronic music repertoires.

Not surprisingly, some of Werder's musical influences are integrated into his solo piano piece *Monograph*, though the feeling of dance is the main aim of the work. The most discernable aspect of this genre takes place in the 3rd movement, probably because of the more vigorous nature of the music. The other two movements are slower in pace yet show a significant improvisatory freedom of expression.

Dorian Le Gallienne: Sonata for Piano

One of the leading musical figures of his time in Australia, Dorian Le Gallienne had completed only a relatively small oeuvre at the time of his early death, due to a severely critical and sensitive approach to his art.

Le Gallienne, whose father was French and his mother Australian, was born in Melbourne and studied at the Melbourne

University Conservatorium and at the Royal College of Music, London (1938-9). In 1951, as a British Council Commonwealth Jubilee Music Scholar, he returned to England to study with Gordon Jacob.

During this latter period also early works started to emerge, the Piano Sonata being amongst these. Le Gallienne was under a number of musical influences at this time – the English lyrical style popular in Australian instrumental music of the 1930s, light French wit and buoyancy, and the bitonality of early Stravinsky and later Bartók. Such eclecticism reached full fruition with two major works, the *Sinfonietta* and *Symphony No. 1*, both composed during the 1950s. Le Gallienne also started work on a second symphony but was only able to complete the first movement, becoming known as a *Symphonic Study*. In the latter part of his short life, as the material in the *Symphonic Study* shows, he was developing a greater emphasis on sparse ascetic lines contrasted with sharp colour. As the *Piano Sonata* shows, there were hints of these characteristics ten years earlier.

Written during the latter part of 1950 and early 1951, there appears to be no doubt that at the time the composer planned the *Piano Sonata* to have four movements. Although Le Gallienne had not written a

finale he nevertheless permitted public performance of the completed movements as an unfinished sonata, the first taking place in Melbourne in July 1951. However, there is no evidence that the composer actually fulfilled his intention and no sketches could be found among the Mss. collected after his death. As it happens, the work stands very well without a fourth movement; the third movement *Molto Lento* serves as a serene, yet poignant epilogue to the composer's memory after the maintained, at times convulsive, energy of the first two movements.

The form of the first movement is loosely, yet imaginatively treated. With a tonal centre of G sharp, the use of Sonata Form as such is barely discernible yet structurally cohesive. The purposeful opening first subject introduces a melodic line stated in ascetic bare octaves and then proceeds to blossom forth into more contrapuntal lines. An 'ostinato' bass accompanies a more reflective second subject leading to substantial development of the material that even includes a 'fugato' section.

The second movement, this time with the enharmonic tonal centre of A flat, is in ternary form with the character of a scherzo. Hints of bitonality with contrasting passages

of sparse and chordal textures result in an exhilarating experience for both performer and listener. The succeeding third movement then serves as a reflective summation, with subtle referrals to the work's earlier material.

Tim Dargaville: Night Song

Night Song was commissioned in 1997 for the Kickhouse Theatre adaptation of Douglas Stewart's classic radio play about the Australian bushranger Ned Kelly. It was originally intended to be a musical depiction of Ned's last night in the Old Melbourne Gaol, awaiting execution. According to eyewitness accounts he was "calm and at peace with himself" and "contented himself with the singing of secular songs and ballads". Buried in this nocturnal atmosphere is a fragment from "The Wild Colonial Boy" - a well-known bush ballad that is in some ways a depiction of Ned Kelly's tragic life, and a symbolic remnant of the mythic place that Ned Kelly holds in the Australian psyche.

Night Song is the first in a series of short works for piano, and has been broadcast nationally on ABC radio by pianist Bernadette Harvey-Balkus.

© 2001 Tim Dargaville

Tim Dargaville is a composer, pianist, percussionist and teacher who is emerging as one of the most dynamic voices in recent Australian contemporary music. Using an eclectic range of styles and media and conveying a vibrant and innovative perspective, his music is a unique synthesis of divergent musical traditions. Born in Melbourne in 1962, he studied with Richard Meale at Adelaide and Keith Humble at La Trobe University, before undertaking further post-graduate training. He also applied himself to studying non-western rhythmic music cultures from both Africa and Asia.

The music of Tim Dargaville has reached international audiences with performances in Poland, England and the Netherlands, and also in India, when in 1996 he was awarded the Asialink Performing Artists Residency to give performances of Australian music at the East-West Music and Dance Encounter. During his stay he also collaborated with musicians at the Karnataka College of Percussion, appeared on Indian TV and made several concert appearances. In his home country he was awarded the prestigious Jean Bogan prize for composition in 1999. Tim is also in demand as a music educator, having held several posts at both secondary and tertiary level; he is currently co-ordinator of the secondary school music programme at Preshil.

Michael Bertram: Sonatina and Five Pieces

Both these pieces were composed many years ago and are in a style in which I no longer write. Nevertheless I retain a real affection for them both.

I was fortunate enough to have the *Sonatina* premièred in 1977 by Keith Humble, a leading figure in Australian contemporary music at that time. The work is in three short movements. The first is pointillistic and owes its inspiration to Webern; the second employs cluster broken chords superceded by a "music box" section, the melody evolving by degree, whilst the last movement is febrile. The concluding six notes of the *Sonatina* repeat those heard at the start of the work.

I wrote the *Five Pieces for Piano*, dedicated to Trevor Barnard, in 1984 during an intensive two weeks spent in isolation save for a piano. Whilst such a period spent writing a fifteen minute work would seem indulgent to many composers, for me it was remarkably rapid. The pieces are *Rumelia* – a mythical Balkan kingdom; *Ingenu* – a slightly knowing ingenuousness; *Kinetic* – a theoretically endless energy source; *Violet* – a formidable lady; and *Iconoclast* – the breaker of idols.

© 2001 Michael Bertram

Michael Bertram was born in England in 1935. His early musical education was gained as a choirboy at Lichfield Cathedral, in addition to studying the piano from the age of four. At thirteen he had qualified to enter the Royal Academy of Music on a piano scholarship.

Emigrating to Australia in 1952, he continued piano studies under Rex Hobcroft and Stephen Doman in Perth and, later, Roy Shepherd in Melbourne. He was twice a State Finalist in the ABC's Concerto and Vocal Competition (as it was then called) and broadcast for some years for the ABC in both Perth and Melbourne. In 1958 he was admitted a Licentiate in Music (LMusA).

His compositions include an early *Sonatina* (first performed by the late Keith Humble in 1977); *Aspects of Love* (1979); *Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis* (1982) written for the Choir of Ormond College; *Five Pieces for Piano* (1984); *Variations for Flute and Piano* premièred by Frederick Shade and Len Vorster at the Port Fairy Festival in 1991; two song cycles for soprano Margaret Haggart, *I will Write to You* (1982) and *The Green Castle* (1994); *Fantaisie-Sonata* (1999) premièred by Michael Kieran Harvey; and a recently completed string quartet entitled *SQ21* (2000)

Notes on Werder and Le Gallienne: ©2001
Trevor Barnard



Bibliography: The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (Macmillan)



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TREVOR BARNARD

British born Australian pianist, Trevor Barnard studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London at a very young age and then took several years of private tuition with Herbert Fryer, a student of Busoni. At the age of sixteen he was awarded the ARCM Diploma in Piano, and later won a full scholarship to the Royal College of Music, London.

Between 1967 and 1972 Trevor Barnard lived in the USA, where he was a faculty member of the New England Conservatory in Boston and Pianist-in-Residence to Boston

University Radio. He undertook many concert and TV engagements in Boston and New York City. He moved to Melbourne in 1972 and now lectures full-time in the Faculty of Music at The University of Melbourne. As a concert artist Trevor Barnard has appeared with several of the top British orchestras. In Australia he has toured and broadcast frequently.

His discography began with the Bliss Piano Concerto in 1962 (recently re-issued on Divine Art 2-4106), and a "best seller" solo album for the World Record Club *An Introduction To Piano Music*. American composer Richard St. Clair, and Australian composers Geoffrey Allen, Michael Bertram and Felix Werder, have written works especially for him. One Felix Werder work is featured on Trevor's recording of J.S. Bach transcriptions and modern Australian piano music, (Divine Art 2-5005). Also for Divine Art Trevor recorded the Bliss Piano Sonata (somewhat of a companion to the Concerto) and the 24 Preludes of Busoni (Divine Art 2-5011)

Trevor Barnard has published two books - *Peddling And Other Reflections On Piano Teaching*, and, *A Guide To The Study Of Solo Piano Repertoire At Tertiary Level*. He has also contributed several papers on neglected

areas of piano pedagogy to the leading U.S. keyboard journal *Clavier*.

Trevor is a regular reviewer for the *Australian Music Teacher* journal, an examiner for the Australian Music Examinations Board, and an adviser on the piano performance requirements for the Victorian Certificate of Education. He is also an experienced adjudicator, and, along with many eisteddfodau, has adjudicated the ABC Young Performers' and the Hephzibah Menuhin Memorial competitions on a number of occasions.

Blue Wrens was recorded at the Melba Hall, The University of Melbourne.

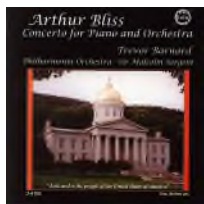
Tracks 1-4: 7/99; tracks 5-6, 11-13, 16, 18: 9/00

Track 7: 11/00; tracks 8-10, 14-15, 17, 19: 12/99

Piano: Model D Steinway (1988)

Recording engineer: Tonmeister Les Craythorn

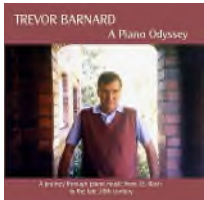
Cover picture: Blue Wrens at Amberley by Jude Taylor, by courtesy of Geoffrey Allen. Original limited edition of 40 linocuts (15"x16.5"). Available from the artist at Taylor Studios, Great Northern Highway, Middle Swan, Western Australia



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