

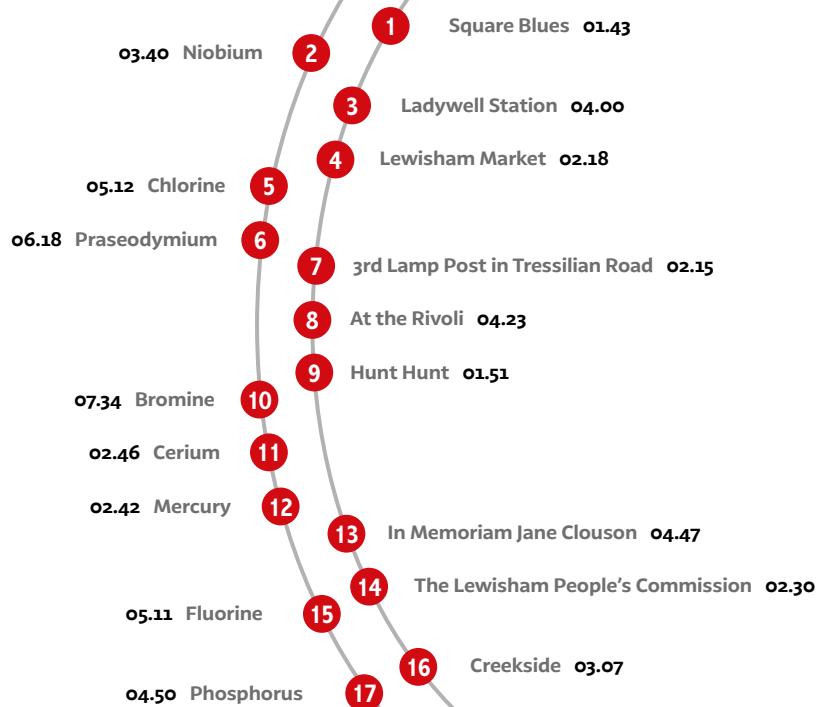
CONVIVIVUM  
RECORDS

# Elements of London

Ivory Duo Piano Ensemble

Composed by  
Hugh Shrapnel &  
John Lewis

## ELEMENTS OF LONDON



## INTRODUCTION

Having met through the Cornelius Cardew Scratch Orchestra, contemporary English composers Hugh Shrapnel and John Lewis continue their own trajectories using a kaleidoscopic variety of influences such as minimalism and jazz blues. Where Hugh tends to have his gaze fixed on history, London, and current affairs, John uses the chemical elements as a starting point to explore rhythms, jazz influences, and sounds used in an almost absolute, brutalist way.

We met Hugh over a decade ago through the concerts organised by the Cornelius Cardew Concerts Trust, performing many of his works for piano duet and two pianos. John Lewis first entrusted us with *Bromine*, featured in this CD, which we performed live on Resonance FM 104.4 in 2019, before he teamed up with Hugh to make this CD a reality. We hope you'll enjoy it as much as we do!

**Panayotis Archontides & Natalie Tsaldarakis**

### Elements by John Lewis

**2** Niobium (2014), **5** Chlorine (2012), **6** Praseodymium (2014), **10** Bromine (2012), **11** Cerium (2015), **12** Mercury (2014), **15** Fluorine (2014), **17** Phosphorus (2018)

### London by Hugh Shrapnel

**1** Square Blues (2015), **3** Ladywell Station (2013), **4** Lewisham Market (2012), **7** 3rd Lamp post in Tressilian Road (2017), **8** At the Rivoli (2014), **9** Hunt Hunt (2013), **13** In Memory of Jane Clouson (2014), **14** The Lewisham People's Commission (2013), **16** Creekside (2012)

## PROGRAMME NOTES

### 1 **Square Blues**

This is the first of a set of four duets written for the Shrapnel/Lewis Piano Duo. These pieces are a reflection of my love of jazz and, as befits a 'square' classical musician a more or less complete lack of 'swing'.

### 2 **Niobium**

Nb

Niobium is a 'steely' metal and the piece reflects this - brutal stamping chords and fanfares with many flattened fifths, and much use of the 'octatonic' scale. Irregular silences and briefer, quiet sections give contrast, but the threatening mood returns, until the very last inconsequential last chord.

### 3 **Ladywell Station**

SE13 7JA

The idea behind this piece was the observation by my friend, the late Georgie Wise, who once pointed out that this station has a delightfully old fashioned Edwardian look about it. With the woodland like view of the trees

in Ladywell Fields from the far platform of the old station building (built I believe in the 1860s), you could almost believe you had arrived at a country station circa 1908. With that in mind I wrote the piece, attempting to depict this atmosphere with sounds of twittering birds, old steam trains and train whistles. The piece is dedicated to Georgie.

### 4 **Lewisham Market**

SE13 6JG

*Lewisham Market* (2013) depicts this busy inner city market with its crowds of bustling shoppers, the calls of the stallholders, the chats, jokes and the occasional argument.

### 5 **Chlorine**

Cl

The left hand of the first bar was the initial inspiration for the whole piece, which has several distinct sections. The first is like a standard song, with a Latin inspired interlude, leading to a grandiose page or so. Then a longish more minimalist central section, which uses all major and minor chords. This dies out, hesitatingly returning

to the first song idea.

The piece concludes with a hectic coda, full of rushing scales between the players finishing with a mighty slam of a chord combining three major chords, F, F# and G.

### 6 **Praseodymium**

Pr

I chose a strangely named element to call this rather strange piece. Hugh asked me to write a slow non-jazzy piece for a change and this is the rather Gothic-sounding result, an exploration of two or more tonalities simultaneously with large arpeggios flowing between the players.

### 7 **3rd Lamp post in Tressillian Road**

SE41YE

Just off Hilly Fields in Brockley, South East London. Dedicated to John Lewis who suggested this title for another piece for *Tales of SE London*. The title inspired the music and it is left to the listener to supply the tale!

### 8 **At the Rivoli**

SE42BY

The Rivoli Ballroom in Brockley is the only intact 1950s ballroom in London and is notable for its 'eclectic mix of neo-classical, Deco and oriental motifs set

within an exotic and luxuriant decorative scheme'. The music, a lopsided waltz in 5/8 time, depicts the sometimes rather uncertain dancing steps of a devoted couple getting on in age and looking back to the time when they were young.

### 9 **Hunt Hunt**

SE136QW

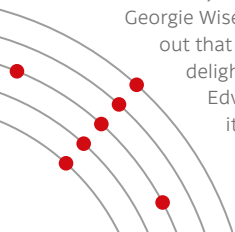
*Hunt Hunt* is dedicated to the Save the Lewisham Hospital Campaign which succeeded in defeating the previous Health Minister Jeremy Hunt from downgrading the Hospital in 2013, (he lost 2 court cases over the issue)!

The music quotes the *Dad's Army* theme which was made into a song in support of the campaign 'Who do you think you are kidding Mr Kershaw...!', 'Kershaw' being Matthew Kershaw, the government appointed ex-leader of the South London Healthcare Trust who drew up the original plan to downgrade Lewisham Hospital. The ending is partly inspired by the spirit of the song *Stand Up!*, written in support of the campaign by the rap group *Question*.

### 10 **Bromine**

Br

Bromine is one of only two elements



which are liquid at room temperature (well, a spoon of Gallium will melt if you stir hot tea with it). A flowing liquid piece was called for, initially high-register quintuplets over interlocked smoochy minor and major 7th quaver patterns.

However, remember Bromine is a foul-smelling dark red poison. The music becomes more menacing, and after initial climax followed by a sweet C major repose, the lower player plays the faster rhythms. Cross-rhythms are constant throughout, increasing in complexity and speed until they are playing 6 against 7, with increasing dissonance too.

After the final massive chords, interlocking quavers return, this time meandering down the whole keyboard in a continual diminuendo, finally reaching the single bottom C sharp the piece started with.

### 11 Cerium Ce

I felt the need to write an easily playable and cheerful piece. A few simple motifs (dropping chromatic 5ths, repeated notes, little fanfares, etc.) are developed between the players, giving the piece a slightly Satie-like air.

### 12 Mercury Hg

Or the 'Winged Messenger', quicksilver, demands a fast tempo. The 12/8 metre exploits the many 'polyrhythms' available: 3x4, 4x3, 6x2 and larger groupings over several bars. This is why a lot of Reich's early music is in 12/8.

A brief coda with a few quintuplets and septuplets, and *Mercury* quickly and quietly disappears down the plughole.

### 13 In Memory of Jane Clouston SE96TA

This track is a tribute to this 16 year old girl who was brutally murdered in Kidbrooke Lane, Eltham in 1871. Her murderer, Edmund Pook, was acquitted after a contentious trial giving rise to huge anger and massive protests in her community with her murderer and his family being forced to flee the area. The haunting and beautiful statue of her at Ladywell and Brockley Cemetery was made through funds raised by the enraged neighbourhood and was the original inspiration for the piece. The opening is a lament for Jane's death, the folk-like tune in the middle depicts her youth and innocence and the music ends with a bell-like elegiac coda.

### 14 The Lewisham People's Commission SE64RU

This was commissioned by the Save the Lewisham Hospital Campaign as the theme music for Stuart Monro's video recording of the Lewisham People's Commission of Inquiry which was organised by the SLHC and took place at Lewisham Town Hall on 29th June 2013. It was chaired by the well known human rights lawyer, Michael Mansfield QC. The Enquiry heard evidence by patients, leading Lewisham Hospital Consultants and local GPs against the government plans to downgrade Lewisham Hospital.

### 15 Fluorine F

Being the most reactive element of all – it even attacks glass – Fluorine seems to demand an extremely violent piece, full of giant clustery chords, and savage rhythms, partly inspired by the piano music of those early American experimental pioneers Antheil and Ornstein, who by the way lived to the age of 107. A central section was more inspired by those 70s cop car chase movie soundtracks, with their deep stabbed-out piano bass notes with spikey higher note accompaniments.

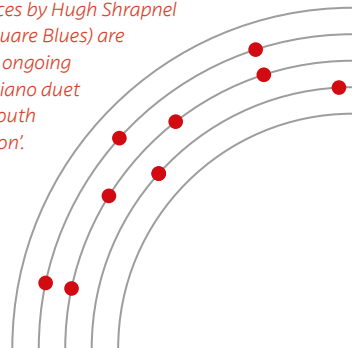
### 16 Creekside SE84RZ

Creekside is a street in Deptford and the piece was inspired by this lively and historic South East London area. I had in my mind the picture of a young local going for a stroll up Creekside pondering over his/her life and loves...

### 17 Phosphorus P

A cycle of sections in 7/8, 3/4, 5/8 and 4/4 repeats itself throughout the piece. Although both players are in the same meter, they are often playing in different rhythmic groups, e.g. in 7/8 one player might play in 3-2-2, while the other in 2-2-3, giving interlocking and overlapping patterns.

*All the pieces by Hugh Shrapnel (except Square Blues) are part of an ongoing work for piano duet 'Tales of South East London'.*





Ivory Duo Piano Ensemble  
Panayotis Archontides &  
Natalie Tsaldarakis



## BIOGRAPHIES

### **Hugh Shrapnel**

Hugh Shrapnel was born in 1947 in Birmingham. His father Norman Shrapnel, the well known *Guardian* journalist, was a keen amateur violinist and Hugh's earliest childhood memories are of hearing him playing Bach. From the age of 13 he took up the oboe and soon after started to compose little pieces influenced by Stravinsky and Bartok. In his mid teens he became excited by modern music, initially by hearing a broadcast of Schoenberg's *Serenade* on the radio and through a local library which had a large selection of 20th century music LPs. In his later teens he composed chamber music and songs in the 12 note system influenced by Schoenberg and Webern. His work for chamber ensemble *Mobile* received a well-reviewed performance at the Wigmore Hall in 1968 but Hugh soon realised that 'modernistic' atonal music was not for him. Studying composition at the Royal Academy of Music with Cornelius Cardew opened up new doors for Hugh along with many



other composers at the time including Chris Hobbs, Howard Skempton, Michael Chant, Michael Parsons and Dave Smith. Through Cardew, Hugh got involved with experimental music and joined Cardew's *Scratch Orchestra* in 1969 and founded the *Promenade Theatre Orchestra* with John White, Chris Hobbs and Alec Hill with its pioneering British brand of minimalism. During this time he composed many experimental pieces, including the popular *Raindrops*. In 1970, his *Shrapnel Wood and Metal Band* made its debut at the historic *Beethoven Today* concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall which frequently performed in *Scratch Orchestra* concerts in riotous and raucous renderings of popular classics such as the *Liberty Bell March* and *It Had to Be You*.

Since the early 1970s Hugh has composed many pieces for piano, chamber music, vocal music and songs. He formed long standing musical partnerships with his friends the pianist and Radio 3 presenter Sarah Walker and the composer/pianist Robert Coleridge (who sadly died in January 2029). Over the years he has written many pieces for concerts by the London New

Wind Festival directed by oboist Catherine Ploygers. During the last 10 years Hugh has composed works for 2 pianos (performed by the *Ivory Duo*), also chamber and vocal works in a series of concerts at Morley College in London organised by the Cornelius Cardew Foundation Trust including a major work for solo violin *Climbing to Heights Hitherto Unknown* performed by Leslie Larkum. In recent years he formed a piano duet partnership with John Lewis, the fruits of which comprise this CD.

Over the years Hugh's music has been performed in many concerts in Britain, America, Germany and other countries. His music is characterised by its tunefulness, its wide range of musical influences including music hall, folk music, jazz, the sound of bells, a deep identification and love of nature, and, as shown by his pieces on this CD, a strong feeling of place.

[www.hughshrapnel.com](http://www.hughshrapnel.com)

### John Lewis

John Lewis (born 1947) was given a chemistry set at a young age and was soon experimenting with more dangerous substances obtained

by mail order in a less health-and-safety conscious era. He commandeered his parents garden shed, often alarming them with explosions and smells he made in there.

As a teenager he abandoned a career in the chemical industry as music took over. At 16 he played Brubeck and boogie-woogie to over 5000 people in the Royal Albert Hall in a youth club talent show, and developed a great love for the great jazz pianists of the time, and saw many of them live - Ellington, Garner, Monk, Bill Evans etc.

At the same time, he became fascinated with 20th Century classical music, particularly its more extreme pioneers.

He joined the *Scratch Orchestra*, and later with composer Dave Smith (an important influence) formed a duo to play the very early works of Glass, Reich and Riley, plus their own minimalist/systems music.

Charles Ives has always been a major love, and he gave two recitals of his music whilst living in Iceland in 1981-2, including the first performance in that country of the *Concord Sonata*.

He returned to Iceland with his family from 1991-3, living on an island off the mainland, teaching piano, and writing some pieces for the local brass band. In 1996 he

wrote a piece for the Reykjavik Big Band.

He wrote his first piece named after a chemical element in 1986, *Magnesium*, as one of a number of composers asked to write one minute pieces to celebrate John White's 50th birthday. Others followed over the years, some electronic, others intended for performance. The Dutch pianist Marcel Worms played *Manganese*, a boogie-woogie in 7/8 time in a number of countries worldwide, including Cuba, and recorded a second piece, *Molybdenum*, which he commissioned. About 50 of the elements have been written so far.

In 2010 he became a close neighbour of old *Scratch* colleague Hugh Shrapnel, and they began writing duets for each other, with some concerts, memorably one in a mortuary chapel. But now a big step forward has been with this excellent recording of a selection of these duets by the wonderful *Ivory Duo*.

### Ivory Duo Piano Ensemble

Panayotis Archontides & Natalie Tsaldarakis are the Greek pianists behind the highly successful husband-and-wife *Ivory Duo Piano Ensemble*. Their engaging and highly communicative approach to perfor-

mance for piano four-hands and for two pianos "*reveals extraordinary interpretative powers carried with conviction and authority*" (Athens News).

Between 2007 and 2011, Natalie and Panayotis toured the UK performing the complete Mozart works for piano duet and two-pianos (St John's Smith Square, Jaqueline du Pré concert hall, St-Martin-in-the-Fields, St-James Piccadilly and Winchester Cathedral). Although they maintain an eclectic approach to repertoire, they are especially known for their championing of contemporary classical composers, many of whom have written specifically for the duo, such as Lola Perrin, Michael Travlos, Hugh Shrapnel, Nikos Drelas, Thomi Baltsavia, Elif Karlidag, Douglas Finch, and others. Panayotis is also a published arranger who produces the film scores heard in their concerts.

In 1994 Natalie was invited to membership by the American National Music Honour Society *Pi Kappa Lambda* for excellence in performance. In 2007, Panayotis, then Music Scholar at Trinity Laban Conservatoire, received the coveted Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians again for excellence in performance. Both pianists have been the recipients of numerous

awards and prizes, including first and second place winners in piano competitions in the US, Greece, UK and Australia. Natalie was also selected to compete at the Vienna-Beethoven International Competition and the Gina Bachauer International Competition, experiences which inform her delivery of a range of educational outreach activities, along with her current PhD research on Gordon Green and the *Manchester School of Pianism* at City, University of London under Professor Ian Pace.

Between 1995 and 2005, the pianists were artist teachers in residence at the American College of Greece as well as piano professors of the Nakas and later of the National Conservatory of Greece. Since 2005 they have been based in London.

The duo has performed extensively at various venues and festivals in the UK and abroad. In March 2013, the duo had its debut performance at Southbank (Women of the World Festival). Other distinguished venues include Steinway Hall (London), Glasgow City Halls Sibelius Academy, Athens Concert Hall, Conway Hall, Blackheath Halls, Fairfield Halls. The pianists



panayotis Archontides

Natalie Tsaldarakis

have collaborated with conductors of national and international significance such as James Judd (Age of Anxiety, Trinity Laban SO, Blackheath Halls 2007, P. Archontides, soloist), Jose Cura for the Athens Olympics 2004, and Prof. George Hadjinikos at the American College of Greece.

The Ivory Duo Piano Ensemble has recorded for the National Greek Radio (ERA-1, ERA-3), and has appeared on Greek television, and UK's Resonance FM 104.4. Their CD *Romantic Dance Music for Piano Duet* was requested by the Archive for Greek Music and Musicians (Lilian Voudouris Library, Athens Concert Hall) and hailed as an important musical event of international standing by the Greek specialist press. In 2017, their home recording of Helen Hagan's *Piano Concerto*, which survives in manuscript in its two-piano version only, was used in the Yale University's documentary *Yale Goes to War: Helen Hagan* which subsequently earned them an entry in the American Piano Concerto Compendium by W. Phemister (published 2018).

[www.ivoryduopiano.com](http://www.ivoryduopiano.com)



## CREDITS

# Elements of London

Ivory Duo Piano Ensemble

*The music was composed by*

**Hugh Shrapnel and John Lewis and**

*performed by Ivory Duo Piano Ensemble*

**(Natalie Tsaldarakis & Panayotis Archontides).**

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**Adrian Green** *is the executive producer.*

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