



HUGH SHRAPNEL

PIANO WORKS

Ivory Duo Piano Ensemble

CONVIVIUM
RECORDS

TRACKLIST

PIANO WORKS

1	Piano Set No.1: i. Reminiscence	01.35	13*	Sonatina: ii. Chorale	02.42
2	Piano Set No.1: ii. Robin	00.43	14*	Sonatina: iii. Finale	01.16
3	Piano Set No.1: iii. Shade	01.51	15	Sphinxes	04.20
4	Piano Set No.1: iv. Flurry	01.21	16*	Love-Hate	04.25
5	Piano Set No.1: v. Wood at Night	02.33	17	Premonition	04.35
6	Piano Set No.1: vi. Jump	01.08	18	Le Temps Perdu: i.	03.32
7	Piano Set No.1: vii. Elegy	02.19	19*	Le Temps Perdu: ii.	03.24
8	Piano Set No.1: viii. Red Queen	00.51	20*	Le Temps Perdu: iii.	03.58
9	Piano Set No.1: ix. Small Hours	03.11	21*	Follow me up to Carlow	07.43
10	Piano Set No.1: x. Jugglers	02.06	22*	Esquisse mécanique	01.49
11	Longing	03.22	23	For Bob	03.46
12*	Sonatina: i. Toccata	01.27	24*	For an Alternative	03.06

All tracks composed by Hugh Shrapnel. Performed by Natalie Tsaldarakis, or by Panayotis Archontides where indicated with *, and by both where indicated with *

PROGRAMME NOTE

PIANO SET NO.1 (2000)

Piano Set No.1 is a collection of 10 short character pieces: *Reminiscence* – a brief glimpse of the past; *Robin* – a friendly visitor hops around in an urban garden; *Shade* – a precious moment of reflection and respite from inner city madness and frenzy; *Flurry* – the rapid movements of an unnamed creature; *Wood at Night* – a dark and mysterious picture inspired by Walter de la Mare; *Jump* – another fictitious creature; *Elegy* – a memorial tribute to the poet Olive Dove, the composer's late mother-in-law; *The Red Queen* – a description of the character from *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, a musical enactment of her dictum that 'it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place'; *Small Hours* – a domestic scene, the aftermath of a party once the guests have left; *Jugglers* – an Australian juggler performs amazingly deft and humorous manoeuvres in an Edinburgh street during the Festival.

LONGING (1998)

Longing stems from the work's opening chord, which I first viewed as being a

sonority in itself – it seemed to want to go somewhere, but I wasn't sure at first where to. The rather Schumanesque title begs the question: longing for what? The listener is free to choose.

SONATINA (2005)

Most of my music (including the pieces on this CD) is in some way descriptive but this work is more formal, like a classical sonata. The *Sonatina* is dedicated to the composer John White and is in three short movements. The first and last movements are in continuous flowing semiquavers characterised by abrupt harmonic shifts. The second movement, by contrast, is solemn in mood; I thought of it as a memorial to my father who had died in 2004.

SPHINXES (2004)

Sphinxes was written for British pianist John Tilbury, who requested a piece to be played at a Schumann festival in Dittersdorf, Germany. Being a Schumann enthusiast, I was happy to oblige. The piece is based on the silent pitches

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from Schumann's *Carnaval* and, within its very brief span, I attempted to capture the passion of the composer's Florestan character and the intimacy of his Eusebius.

LOVE-HATE (2007)

Love-Hate is an investigation of three, three-note chords. The title came after I finished the piece and seemed apt because of the quite violent mood swings of this brief work, perhaps a consequence of the harmonic implications of the musical material.

PREMONITION (2019)

This piece was inspired by a rather ominous gathering of many crows on a tree in a park near my home in April 2019. They all assembled, singing (crowing) a raucous, dark and sinister chorus, and then suddenly flew away en masse. They soon returned, but this time as a silent chorus, imparting a powerful sense of foreboding. Early the following year, the world was hit by the coronavirus pandemic and, on a personal note, the final illness and death

of my brother John, and for me, a sudden major cancer diagnosis and (successful) operation. The music, despite its atmosphere of foreboding, does have a quietly affirmative ending.

LE TEMPS PERDU (2012-21)

Le Temps Perdu is a triptych concerning the past (the title has no reference to Proust's novel). The first piece is about youth, mainly light and frolicsome, with allusions to a half-forgotten old popular song. The second piece is about bitter regrets. The third piece is about reconciliation.

FOLLOW ME UP TO CARLOW (2016)

Follow me up to Carlow for two pianos was written for the Ivory Duo for a concert put on by the Cornelius Cardew Concerts Trust at Morley College in 2016. Like my previous piece for the duo, *For an Alternative* (also on this disc), this piece was inspired by the music and progressive spirit of Cornelius Cardew. Cornelius was a great supporter of Irish freedom and independence, and had a great love of Irish folk music as shown

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in *BooLavogue* and other works of his – a love which I have always shared. *Follow me up to Carlow* is based on this old Irish folk song which celebrates the defeat of an army of 3,000 English soldiers by Fiach Mac Aodh Ó Broin (anglicised Fiach McHugh O'Byrne) at the Battle of Glenmalure during the Second Desmond Rebellion in 1580. Unlike my piece for string quartet and folk violin *Easter Uprising 1916*, the music is not descriptive in a dramatic way but seeks to express the spirit of the Irish freedom fighters against the British occupiers.

ESQUISSE MÉCANIQUE (2019)

Esquisse mécanique was written for a volume of piano music inspired by French composer Charles-Valentin Alkan, published by the Alkan Society. *Esquisse mécanique* is not directly related to any music by Alkan but when composing I had his unique voice very much in mind. Certain Alkan characteristics I utilised included: an unusual time signature (5/8), pianistic gymnastics, humour, abrupt harmonic shifts and strong rhythmic profile. The *mécanique* of the title refers to the overall machine-like rhythm.

FOR BOB

This is a tribute to the sadly premature passing of my old musical collaborator and friend Robert Coleridge – a remarkable and versatile composer, pianist and organist, friend and colleague of many in new music circles who played a leading part in many memorable and historic performances of new music for many years. I gave the first performance at Robert's memorial service in Axminster in February 2019.

FOR AN ALTERNATIVE (2015)

For an Alternative was composed for the Ivory Duo for a concert put on by the Cornelius Cardew Concerts Trust at Morley College on 2 October 2015, celebrating the life and work of Cornelius Cardew. The piece is short, intense and seeks to express CC's fighting spirit. I called it 'a fighting piece' in a promotional video for the Ivory Duo. The opening bell-like theme, played by both pianos in unison and marked in the score as 'clamorous - like celebratory bells', was inspired and linked to the pentatonic figures sung by the voices in 'Paragraph 2' of CC's *The Great Learning*.

BIOGRAPHIES

HUGH SHRAPNEL

Hugh Shrapnel was born in 1947 in Birmingham. His father, Norman Shrapnel, the well-known journalist at *The Guardian*, was a keen amateur violinist, and Hugh's earliest childhood musical memories are of hearing him playing Bach. He also got to know the traditional classical repertoire through his grandfather's large collection of 78 records. Growing up in the '50s, Hugh listened to show music and jazz on the BBC Light Programme through his crystal set, an enthusiasm which has been a lasting influence on his music. Hugh took up the oboe aged 13, and soon after started to compose short pieces influenced by Stravinsky and Bartók. Hearing a broadcast of Schoenberg's *Serenade* on the radio fired his enthusiasm for new music. In his later teens, Hugh composed chamber music and songs in the vein of Schoenberg and Webern and had composition lessons with Elizabeth Lutyens. He studied composition at the Royal Academy of Music from 1966 to 1969 with Norman Demuth and Cornelius Cardew, winning the Lady Holland Prize for composition. His fellow composition students at

the Academy included Edward McGuire, Christopher Hobbs, Paul Patterson and Brian Ferneyhough, who together formed a new music ensemble performing their own music as well as works of established avant-garde composers such as Cage and Stockhausen.

In 1968, Hugh's work for chamber ensemble *Mobile* received a warmly reviewed performance at the Wigmore Hall, but Hugh was beginning to realise that the atonal/serial music tradition was not for him. Studying composition at the Royal Academy of Music with Cornelius Cardew opened up new doors for Hugh along with composers such as John White, Chris Hobbs, Howard Skempton, Michael Chant, Michael Parsons and Dave Smith. Through Cardew, Hugh became interested in experimental music, joining Cardew's experimental music class at Morley College and the Scratch Orchestra in 1969. In the same year, he formed the Promenade Theatre Orchestra with John White, Chris Hobbs and Alec Hill, with its pioneering British brand of minimalism. During this time, Hugh composed many experimental pieces, including the popular *Raindrops*.

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In 1970, Hugh's *Shrapnel Wood and Metal Band* made its debut at the historic 'Beethoven Today' concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. This band, with its performers drawn from the Scratch Orchestra, delighted in performing their somewhat raucous renderings of music hall songs, Edwardian parlour music and popular classics such as the *Liberty Bell March* and *It Had to Be You*. During the mid-'70s and '80s, Hugh played oboe in the folk/rock group People's Liberation Music – later becoming the Progressive Cultural Association (PCA) Band – alongside Cornelius Cardew and Laurie Baker. Along with other members of the band, Hugh wrote songs in support of working-class struggles of the time, including the miners' strike and against war. In the '90s, he formed long-standing musical partnerships with the pianist and BBC Radio 3 presenter Sarah Walker and the composer/pianist Robert Coleridge (who sadly died in January 2019) putting on many concerts at the British Institute of Contemporary Music in London. Since 2000, Hugh has written many wind pieces for London New Wind Festival concerts. During the last 10 years, he has composed many works for concerts put on

by the Cornelius Cardew Concerts Trust at Morley College in London, including works for two pianos for the Ivory Piano Duo Ensemble (included on this CD) and string quartets, piano quintets and solo violin and viola music for the violinist Leslie Larkum. In 2018, Morley College hosted a highly successful retrospective concert of Hugh's music called 'Alternative Worlds', organised by the Cornelius Cardew Concerts Trust. Recently, Hugh formed a piano duo with the composer and pianist John Lewis, the fruits of which can be heard on their album *Elements of London*, released on Convivium Records in 2020.

Over the years, Hugh's music has been performed 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 and the sound of bells), a deep identification and love of nature, and a strong feeling for place and community. Hugh is a member of the Ivors Academy, the Performing Rights Society and the Alkan Society. Hugh's music is published by The Experimental Music Catalogue, Scodo (Universal Edition) and Alea Music.

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DISCOGRAPHY

South of the River - CD of Shrapnel's music performed by Sarah Walker, Robert Coleridge and Francesca Hanley, released on Musicnow.

Promenade Theatre Orchestra at The Orangerie - Live recording of the classic final performance of the Promenade Theatre Orchestra in 1972, including Shrapnel's *Four Toy Pianos* and works by John White, Chris Hobbs and Alec Hill, released on the Experimental Music Catalogue.

Elements of London - Album of piano duets by Shrapnel and John Lewis, including Shrapnel's *Tales of South East London*, performed by the Ivory Duo Piano Ensemble, released on Convivium Records in 2020.

For more information about Hugh Shrapnel and his music, visit:

www.hughshrapnel.com, www.musicnow.co.uk, www.experimentalmusic.co.uk



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PANAYOTIS ARCHONTIDES

Panayotis is a Greek-Australian concert pianist and Convivium label artist. He debuted at Sydney Opera House at the age of 16. He graduated with an MMus in piano performance from Trinity Laban Conservatoire and was awarded the coveted Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians in 2007. He has worked with many well-known musicians, including James Judd, Crispian Steele-Perkins, Linda Hirst and George Hadjinikos. He also performed for the induction of the Olympic Flame ceremony at the Athens Olympics 2004.

NATALIE TSALDARAKIS

Natalie is a Greek concert pianist and Convivium label artist. She was elected to membership of the American National Music Honor Society Pi Kappa Lambda in recognition of excellence at the conclusion of her M.M. in piano performance studies (WCUPA, US, 1994). Natalie is a doctoral researcher at City, University of London focusing on British and European pianistic traditions in the early 20th century and is also a graduate of Royal Holloway (MMus, 2007).

IVORY DUO PIANO ENSEMBLE

Alongside their solo careers, Panayotis and Natalie perform together as the Ivory Duo Piano Ensemble. Based in London since 2005, they were previously Artist Teachers at the American College of Greece for a decade and have performed in venues such as Athens Concert Hall, Southbank Centre, Steinway Hall, Fairfield Halls, St John's Smith Square, St-Martin-in-the-Fields. In 2017, Yale University used their home recording of their edited manuscript of Black American composer Helen Eugenia Hagan in a commemorative video of her life and work. This recording also earned them an entry in the American Concerto Compendium (2018, 2nd ed.). In 2021, WQXR radio featured the same revival recording in its Hear Me Out series. Further broadcasts of their releases include BBC Radio 3, Scala Radio and National Greek Radio. Since 2020, their releases on Convivium include Elements of London (piano duets by Lewis and Shrapnel, 2020), Hugh Benham's *For Piano* (2021) and *Rooted Time* (music for piano solo and two pianos by Arthur and Osgood, 2022).

www.ivoryduopiano.com





PIANO WORKS

Artists

Composer: Hugh Shrapnel

Pianists: Ivory Duo Piano Ensemble
Panayotis Archontides & Natalie Tsaldarakis

Recording Venue

City, University of London: 11, 25 & 26 February 2023

Production

Producer & Engineering: James Unwin

Artwork: Mike Cooter

Executive Producer: Adrian Green

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