



John Carmichael : TOWARD THE LIGHT

Piano Concerto No. 2 | Piano Trio 'Toward the Light'

Aria | Contrasts | Short Cuts | On the Green

TOWARD THE LIGHT

John Carmichael

Piano Concerto No.2

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|----|--------------------------------|------|
| 1. | I. Allegro Moderato | 5:47 |
| 2. | II. Andante | 6:06 |
| 3. | III. Moderato ma molto ritmico | 5:16 |

Antony Gray - piano
St. Paul's Sinfonia
Andrew Morley - conductor

Piano Trio 'Toward the Light'

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|------|
| 4. | I. Moderato con moto | 5:45 |
| 5. | II. Andante | 4:24 |
| 6. | III. Moderato ma molto ritmico | 4:58 |

Members of the Primavera Ensemble -
Paul Manley - violin
Andrew Fuller - violincello
Michael Dussek - piano

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|------|
| 7. | Aria for viola & piano | 6:43 |
| | Morgan Goff - viola | |
| | Antony Gray - piano | |

Contrasts

- | | | |
|-----|---------------|------|
| 8. | 1 Zephyr | 2:20 |
| 9. | 2 Remembering | 4:56 |
| 10. | 3 Flamenco | 4:24 |

Morgan Goff - viola
Antony Gray - piano

Short Cuts - Divertimento for flute, oboe, clarinet & piano

11. 1 – Flute	0:58
12. 2 – Oboe	0:58
13. 3 – Clarinet	1:43
14. 4 – Flute & Clarinet	2:40
15. 5 – Flute & Oboe	1:56
16. 6 – Oboe & Clarinet	2:22
17. 7 – Piano	1:28
18. 8 – Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Piano	3:02

Susan Torke - flute

Claire Hoskins - oboe

Shelley Levy - clarinet

Antony Gray - piano

On the Green

19. I. Summer's Day on the Green	3:54
20. II. Nocturne	5:53
21. III. Funfair on the Green	3:43

oboe 1 - Rachel Harwood White

oboe 2 -Jeremy Foster

clarinet 1 - Peter Cigleris

clarinet 2 - Anna Hashimoto

horn 1 - Mark Smith

horn 2 - Sabrina Pullen

bassoon 1 - Michael Elderkin

bassoon 2 - Ashley Myall

contra bassoon - Laura Vincent

Total playing time 79:34

Conducted by Andrew Morley, St Paul's Sinfonia consists of experienced and dynamic orchestral players from across London. We perform monthly concerts at venues across south London. The Sinfonia draws its repertoire from a wide range of musical styles, from Baroque and Classical to Romantic and Modern, and aims to combine classics of the chamber orchestra repertoire with more unusual and challenging works.



Composer's Foreword

I confess to being a Romantic and this element is clearly reflected in my approach to writing music. There are, of course, other elements in the mix; a long term love of French music - Ravel, Debussy, Fauré, Poulenc, then Rachmaninoff and Prokofiev. Some years were spent as Music Director of a Spanish/Latin American dance company thus heightening an already existing love of this genre. Another element which impacted my style of writing was working in the very early days of Music Therapy; it encouraged an accessible and immediate style when improvising at the piano to better engage the groups, to responsive participation, in activities - percussion groups, story telling with music, etc.

Finding a melodic element or a motif which has the potential for development or variation is, for me, the start of the creative process; weaving these elements into a cohesive whole is the desired outcome.

Because it is quite accessible, my music is sometimes labelled 'light music'; I would simply like to quote Stravinsky - 'There is no such thing as light music - only good or bad music'.

A long-term collaboration with fellow Australian pianist Antony Gray, to whom the Piano Concerto No 2 is dedicated, has been an important factor in my work; to have such a fine pianist willing to comment and provide wise counsel and able to produce a complete recording of the piano solos is a boon to any composer.

John Carmichael



The Music

notes by John Carmichael

Piano Concerto No. 2 Allegro moderato; Andante; Allegro molto ritmico

The aim in writing this work was to recapture the way piano and orchestra, as two distinct entities, can converse, react against, even oppose one another in interesting and dramatic dialogue.

The piano writing is quite florid throughout. In the first movement the brusque statement of the initial motif by the orchestra is immediately contradicted in persuasive mode by the piano, and this tussle between these two entities continues on until a middle movement cadenza when a reversal of roles is initiated.

A quiet semi ostinato passage in triplets on the piano appears and reappears throughout the 2nd movement, Andante, rising finally to an impassioned climax, to be then followed in total contrast by the lilt of Latin American rhythms in the final Allegro supporting a playful piano leading to a cadenza recalling motifs from the earlier movements.

Piano Trio - 'Toward The Light' - Allegro: Andante; Con Anima

The title 'Toward The Light' came quite late in the process of writing this work. I realised that the first two movements ended on a quiet questioning note as if searching for something unreachable, and this gave me the key to where the work should go in its final movement.

The twirling triplet figure on the piano at the opening returns at certain key moments in the work and reappears as the final quiet question remaining at the end. In the 2nd movement, violin and cello solos and duets open and close the Andante movement, which again finishes on a tentative note.

Pizzicato passages and turbulence dominate the final movement until a short pause precedes the escape route toward something so far not found.

Aria for viola & piano

This is a transcription for viola of the 1st movement of the Aria & Finale for soprano saxophone. The viola lends a new, darker, and even mysterious colour to the long melodic lines of this piece.

Contrasts for viola & piano - Zephyr; Remembering; Flamenco

A gentle, playful breeze, the pain, but also the joy of remembering and an evocation of the varied moods of Flamenco - an opportunity to exploit the viola's wide range of tonal and expressive resources. The work was commissioned specifically for Morgan Goff by his family member Hilda Woolf.

Short cuts - Divertimento for flute, oboe, clarinet & piano

Short Cuts was written for a concert to raise money for the Music Department of the Camden School for Girls in London for the purchase of new instruments; it was performed by the teachers of the department and consists of eight short movements - solos for each instrument, including piano, then duos in different combinations of the three wind instruments, finishing with a celebratory quartet. The title Short Cuts was selected as, due to lack of time, short cut options on the computer had to be used to produce the score

and parts on time for the concert. The work was also aimed at helping the students to learn more about the different characteristics and tone colours of the three wind instruments.

On The Green - Summer's Day on the Green; Nocturne; Funfair on the Green

This work was written for Peter Cigleris's wind group, Octanphonie, and was premiered by them at St Martin's in the Fields in 2007. The three movements reflect how the Green is enjoyed in so many different ways - open space and fresh air, open air concerts - quiet contemplation. At night it becomes slightly mysterious, with its own life of nocturnal creatures, singing its own song. But, with a Funfair, the Green lights up - Helter Skelter, Merry-go-Round, thrilling rides, in a celebration of fun and excitement.



Biographies

John Carmichael

Born 1930 in Melbourne, John studied piano and composition at the University Conservatorium, then spent two years studying piano in Paris at the Conservatoire National with Marcel Ciampi. Moving to London he studied composition with Arthur Benjamin and Anthony Milner. At the same time, he was engaged to review concerts and recordings for the magazines Music and Musicians and Records and Recordings. In 1956 he was engaged by the newly created Council for Music Therapy to develop music therapy programs at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, then later at Netherden Mental Home in Surrey and the 'Star and Garter' Home in Richmond for war veterans.

In 1959 he became Music Director of the Spanish Dance Company Eduardo Y Navarra, touring Britain for the Arts Council, and later on, abroad, including his native Australia where the Australian Broadcasting Corp. recorded their dance recital 'Fuego en la Sangre' for TV. In 1980 James Galway premiered his flute concerto 'Phoenix' at the Sydney Opera House with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra under Louis Fremaux, and it was later released on RCA's '60 Years of flute Masterpieces'. The complete piano music recorded by Antony Gray, and chamber works including the Piano Quartet - 'Sea Changes' have been released on the ABC Classics label. His Trumpet Concerto was recorded by John Wallace with the Scottish Symphony Orchestra in 2004 and released on the White Line label.

This year, 2023, his Piano Quartet - 'Sea Changes' was the featured work at the Gautier Capuçon Foundation concert at the Assemblée Nationale in Paris. In 2011 in the Queens' Birthday Honours he was awarded the OAM (Medal of the Order of Australia) 'for services as concert pianist and composer'

Antony Gray

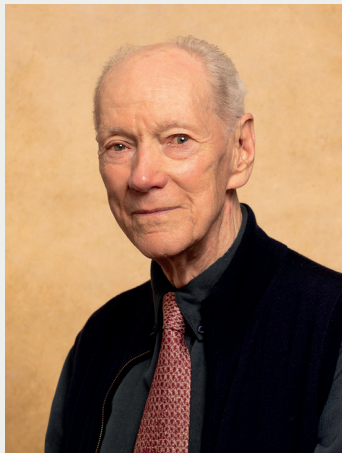
Australian pianist, Antony Gray was educated in Victoria, Australia. He graduated from the Victorian College of Arts where he studied with Roy Shepherd and Stephen McIntyre, winning several awards and prizes, including the Allans Keyboard Award two years running. In 1982 he received a scholarship from the Astra foundation to continue his studies in London with Joyce Rathbone and Geoffrey Parsons.

Based now in London, he has long been regarded as one of the most interesting and communicative performers of his generation. His career to date has encompassed solo and chamber music performances around the world, as well as regular recordings for CD and radio. He has been a (selective) champion of contemporary music and has premiered many pieces written for him. He has also championed many neglected composers such as George Enescu, Dussek and Martinu. From his time at College he has been a champion of many living composers, and his work with Australian composers Malcolm Williamson and John Carmichael has been particularly productive.

Antony Gray was one of ABC Classics' most prolific recording artists, having recorded fourteen discs of solo piano music for the label, as well as featuring on a recital disc for KNS Classical and a number of other recording projects. Recordings already released are the complete solo piano works of Eugene

Goossens, Malcolm Williamson (this recording has been included in a recent survey of 1001 recordings to hear before you die) and John Carmichael, as well as the late piano pieces of Johannes Brahms, a 3 disc set of Bach transcriptions, including several written specially for the recording, and a 5 disc set of the complete piano works of Francis Poulenc, including a number of works recorded for the first time, all on ABC Classics.

Antony Gray's recent Divine Art albums of piano works by Saint-Saëns and the triple album of works by Michael Blake Afrikosmos, have met with great success and glowing reviews.



John Carmichael



Antony Grey

Short Cuts recorded St. John's Smith Square, London 25th July 2017

Piano Concerto No. 2 recorded Wathen Hall, St Paul's School, Barnes, London 11th August 2018

Piano Trio recorded Yehudi Menuhin Hall, Stoke D'abernon, Cobham, Surrey 20th March 2022

Aria & Contrasts recorded Yehudi Menuhin Hall, Stoke D'abernon, Cobham, Surrey 21st March 2022

On the Green recorded Yehudi Menuhin Hall, Stoke D'abernon, Cobham, Surrey 28th September 2022

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cover image "The Garden" by Emilia Maggio



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