Southern Cross University
ePublications@SCU

School of Arts and Social Sciences

2007

# Preludes sonata (Michel Keiran Harvey)

Michael Francis Hannan
*Southern Cross University*

Publication details

Hannan, MF 2007, 'Preludes sonata (Michel Keiran Harvey)', *Music Forum*, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 68.
Published version reproduced in ePublications@scu with the kind permission of the publisher.

ePublications@SCU is an electronic repository administered by Southern Cross University Library. Its goal is to capture and preserve the intellectual output of Southern Cross University authors and researchers, and to increase visibility and impact through open access to researchers around the world. For further information please contact epubs@scu.edu.au.

*Preludes Sonata*
Michael Kieran Harvey (piano)
works by Shostakovich and Messiaen
Move Records MD 3308

This CD is promoted in the annotations as a celebration of the extraordinary music that is often written by very young composers. Both Messiaen's *Préludes* and Shostakovish's *Piano Sonata No 1* were written when the two composers were only twenty (in 1928 and 1926 respectively) and the slightly later *24 Preludes* were composed when Shostakovich was around 26. The *Sonata* is one of the most virtuosically wild piano works imaginable and is not often performed because it is so technically demanding. The *24 Preludes* are mostly very short and explore with a certain harmonic naïveté new directions in bitonality and atonality, although with impressive textural inventiveness. By contrast the musical language in Messiaen's eight *Préludes* is more harmonically sophisticated, but many of the elements of Messiaen's distinctive mature style, for example the use of complex metrical devices and birdsong transcriptions, are absent.

As we've come to expect, Michael Kieran Harvey's performances of all these works are astounding. The only quibble one might make is that the dynamic contrasts in the Messiaen movements could be better emphasised, although perhaps the directions in the score ranging from pppp to ffff are somewhat unrealistic considering the rapidity and complexity of many of the passages. Highly recommended.