

NEW LAMPS FOR OLD

an offbeat Instrumental album

This project began originally from an interest in looking back at previous themes, created over many years. These had not been put out to the public before. However, I did not wish just to make re-creations of the original styles. What I have done here is to create new arrangements and settings, in the light of the musical experience I have had since the originals were written (hence new lamps for old).

I also decided to give new titles to the pieces – before some were context specific (Blues for Anne) and others were merely working titles (February 12). At this point I decided to give the album shape and a perspective by picking up an approach from the albums of Soundblocks (<https://www.instagram.com/soundblocks.music/?hl=en>). I therefore related them to the locations where the original pieces were inspired or to “landscapes” – the feelings I felt in certain locations.

I came to the phrase “new lamps for old”, from the folktale Aladdin. In the story the wicked uncle tries to trick Aladdin with an apparently impossible bargain. In the album there is no trickery, but I hope something of the evocative or even magical element may be found in the settings. The new lamps are the arrangement, sounds and dance-inspired rhythm. The old lamps are the themes and structures which clearly relate to earlier phases of my musical life, particularly the jazz influence.

The tracks

EP1 New Lamps for Old – places

Coffee Bar Waitress This was the original title and is the earliest composition on the album. It refers to a location in the 50s, when I was playing in a band in a very popular Nottingham coffee bar. I was struck by a particular waitress, who sped around to meet the many demands of the customers. No original of this exists, but a re-creation closer to the original interpretation can be heard at <http://www.elmvillagearts.co.uk/free-downloads/suburban-jazz-1.php>

Goldsmiths' College The title comes from the fact that there was a period in the 80s and 90s when I was teaching guitar at the famous London institution. I also used the college practice rooms to go and play the piano, the instrument on which I created this piece.

Love in a haystack The haystack in question was near Carlton, Nottingham (famously home of Ned Ludd, the first Luddite) The lady was the coffee bar waitress mentioned above, so the title was *Blues for Anne*. I remember that my mother was amazed and suspicious when I returned after dawn. A version closer to the original interpretation can be heard at <http://www.elmvillagearts.co.uk/free-downloads/suburban-jazz-2.php>

EP2 New Lamps for Old – spaces

Jesus Green, Cambridge So entitled because this was a spot which was very familiar to me when I was living in Cambridge around the time of my divorce. The original piece was a song I wrote (never performed) entitled “There is a loneliness I feel”.

Santi Apostoli, Roma Originally *Mysterious Journey*, this is a good illustration of how easy it is for projects to remain unfinished for years. It was intended to be in ambitious composition to celebrate my daughter’s 10th wedding anniversary. I had written music for the wedding which was held in the church of Santi Apostoli in Rome.

On that occasion I met and immediately had to collaborate with my future daughter in law Clara in a dramatic shared performance on the organ.

The church is so-called because two of Jesus’ disciples are buried in the basement.

The first section was influenced by free jazz and the second half could be a loosely symphonic example of Italian popular music. It is meant to suggest the many disappointments and upsets which happened before finally Sarah and Antonio met and found happiness.

Radcliffe Square This is the much photographed square in Oxford which contains the main entrance to Brasenose College, where I studied. It was created originally as a song with lyrics by the later famous popular and blues singer, Paul Jones.

For me this piece has always presented a challenge. I have still never fully explored the possibilities of development that it offers, especially on the piano.

The title comes from a foreign girlfriend of Paul’s who was so moved by the season that she exclaimed “it is so much spring this year!”

On this occasion, instead of the much more quietly lyrical versions I have performed in the past, I have created the sense of overwhelming uplift which young love can give.). A version closer to the original interpretation can be heard at <http://www.elmvillagearts.co.uk/free-downloads/suburban-jazz-1.php>