

HIGH SPIRITS 2

THE MUSIC OF MARK WALTON

The first music I wrote was **Bobby the Musical**, a show for children to get them excited and engaged with music. The music was frivolous but very popular with children and I should have stopped there but I didn't.

I then wrote **Wonky** for my wife Jo at a time when she wasn't feeling well and it made her laugh. Since then Jo has enjoyed excellent health. This prompted me to write more pieces so on this CD are miniatures written on planes, buses, trains and at airports. **Snakes Alive** is a piece I often play in the Outback of Australia to keep the snakes at bay.

Capturing two days' warmth in the tropics in the middle of winter is exquisite but like **Winter in the Tropics** it is over before you know it. **Late Arrival into Cairns** was written as an alternative to sleep whilst **Termites** was a collaboration between New Zealanders Michael Bell, Brett Painter and myself and I am glad my bass clarinet is made out of plastic otherwise there would have been nothing left of it by the end of this recording.

Saxophone Spaghetti and **Chilling Out** demonstrate the chameleon nature of the saxophone and **Barock**, based on a piece by Rameau, acknowledges the classical saxophone tradition of playing baroque transcriptions - however in this case with quite a difference.

I wrote **Paint the Town Red** for Helen Clark, Prime Minister of New Zealand, and she was at the first performance. As the piece progresses the NZ National Anthem appears in a healthily irreverent form. **Quirky** was written on Christmas morning 2008 whilst **Celebration** demonstrates what a lot of fun five clarinetists can have together - but in this case it was just me and Michael Bell. Christchurch Central MP, Tim Barnett and his partner, Ramon Maniapoto, asked me to play something on saxophone at their South Island Civil Union celebration. Tim wanted something lyrical, sonorous and meaningful so **1 + 1 = 1** is what transpired.

Five is a nothing more than a cheerful exchange of pleasantries between friends. **Rigaudon** for clarinet and bassoon, like Barock, is based on a piece by Rameau but again there is a contemporary twist. **Bonhomie** was written on a flight to London and it came as a nasty shock to me when I found there were no bassoonists on the flight prepared to run through it with me.

Pinot Noir was written for my friend, bassoonist Gordon Skinner, who has a devout appreciation of this fine grape variety. **Pinot Noir** is programmatic, starting off in a terribly congenial fashion but by the second and third glass disorder rules. In the final section great remorse is shown.

Fidget is written in a forever changing metre. I hope that Martini, the composer of **Plaisir d'Amour**, would have approved of my **Fantasia** as I have endeavoured not to lose the soothing tenderness of this beautiful melody.

I wrote **Footsteps in the Sand** in memory of my good friend Bill Lockley, the inspirational founder of Camp Creative in Australia. Bill modestly referred to his extraordinary life as simply "footsteps in the sand".

MW 2008

THE PERFORMERS ON THIS CD

Mark Walton OAM is a highly respected and popular figure in the Australian and New Zealand musical scene and widely acknowledged as a leading clarinet and saxophone performer, inspiring teacher and charismatic musician. After nearly 20 years teaching at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Mark now shares his time, musical talents and energy between Australia and New Zealand. He travels continuously, building strong community music programmes in regional and outback Australia, while at the same time he is the Musical Director of the Christchurch School of Music in New Zealand and on staff at a number of musical institutions. Mark has written over 200 music publications, recorded many albums and in recent times has become a popular composer. In 2005 Mark was awarded the Order of Australia medal for his contribution to Music Education in Australia, for the use of video-conferencing facilities and for nurturing the talents of students in regional areas. "Footsteps in the Sand" is the first CD of Mark's own compositions and was recorded on both sides of the Tasman during 2008.

Iola Shelley has an extensive repertoire and an international reputation as a chamber-music pianist and accompanist. Born in Wales, Iola is one of New Zealand's foremost accompanists and has performed and recorded together with Mark for more than three decades. Iola is on staff at the University of Canterbury.

David Miller AM, one of Australia's leading accompanists and chamber musicians, has been on staff at Sydney Conservatorium of Music since 1980 and in 1995 was appointed the first chair of the Ensemble Studies Unit with responsibility for Chamber Music and Keyboard Accompaniment tuition. David was awarded the Order of Australia medal in 1995 for his services to music.

Gordon Skinner, legendary bassoonist, was Principal in the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra for 12 years, Lecturer at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music for 16 years and a member of the Sydney Wind Quintet. He has worked with all the major orchestras and chamber groups on either side of the Tasman. In 2005 he moved to Dunedin to play with the Southern Sinfonia.

Brett Painter is the founder of the world percussion group Pandemonium and principal percussionist with the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. As an educator, Brett runs the

percussion department at the CSM, a private teaching practice and the Pandemonium Charitable Trust to support promising percussionists