

Revolve RDS010

# CLARINET CONCERTO NO 1

**ALAN VIVIAN, CLARINET**  
 AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
 CONDUCTOR, PETER MOORE  
 and other works by Derek Strahan

Writing in The Canberra Times (17/04/02)  
 W.L.Hoffman commented:  
 "...the final movement is an aural  
 delight with its jazzy bounce and a  
 sparkling presto coda in which soloist  
 and orchestra are impelled to a  
 brilliant conclusion."



BENNY GOODMAN

ARTIE SHAW

WOODY HERMAN

**ESCORTS**  
 Trio for flute, alto saxophone & piano  
**FASHIONS**  
 Clarinet Quintet  
**A SAWDUST HEART**  
 Solo guitar  
**IRONICAL RONDO**  
 Piano  
**GENESIS OF A SUMMER THEME – 3 pieces**  
 "Et In Arcadia Ego" from "Atlantis"  
 for flute & piano  
 "Mezozoic Summer"  
 wind quintet & percussion  
 "At Milford Beach"  
 Improvisation on harmonium

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**ESCORTS** Trio for flute, alto saxophone & piano

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**A SAWDUST HEART** Solo guitar

**IRONICAL RONDO** Piano

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"At Milford Beach" Improvisation on harmonium

## **CLARINET CONCERTO NO 1 and other works by Derek Strahan**

### **ALAN VIVIAN**

Alan Vivian is one of Australia's highest profile musicians. He has held the long-term orchestral positions of Principal Clarinet with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra, and Canberra Symphony Orchestra. He has also performed as Guest Principal Clarinet with the BBC Symphony in London and with the Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera, as well as acting as Principal Clarinet with all of Australia's major symphony orchestras. As a chamber musician he has been a permanent member of the Australia Ensemble and of the Canberra Wind Soloists, performing the masterpieces of the chamber repertoire for clarinet throughout Europe, the USA, China and Australasia. As a concerto soloist and recitalist he has toured extensively to over 20 countries on 5 continents. He has recorded for the Sony, EMI, Polygram, ABC Classics and Revolve labels, and is a featured artist in Pamela Weston's book: "Clarinet Virtuosi of Today". Alan Vivian currently holds a senior teaching post at the School of Music, National Institute of the Arts at the Australian National University, having been a School of Music faculty member since 1985. He has presented master classes in Europe Asia and the USA. Former students are scattered around the globe, having been competition prize winners, recipients of international scholarships, and occupying permanent positions in Australia's orchestras.

<http://www.anu.edu.au/music/study/staff/avivian.php>

### **STRAHAN - CLARINET CONCERTO No. 1 - (2002)**

**ALAN VIVIAN - CLARINET - AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA - CONDUCTOR, PETER MOORE Recorded at Llewellyn Hall, Australian National University School of Music, 13/04/02, by School of Music theatre staff.**

Clarinet Concerto No. 1 was commissioned by the Canberra School of Music for performance by Alan Vivian, who is soloist in this performance with the Australian National University School of Music Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Peter Moore. It was premiered at the Llewellyn Hall on April 13 2002, programmed with Mozart's "Impresario" Overture, and Schubert's Symphony No., 9 in C, to an audience which included several banks of seats reserved for some of the School's foremost sponsors.

1st Movt. (evinced urban angst), The aggravated opening passage recurs to bridge successive episodes in which several themes are developed. The marimba is often heard in dialogue with the clarinet. A fugue precedes the penultimate episode which is a cadenza for four – clarinet, marimba and two saxophones.

2nd Movt. (in pastoral mode) Birds calls dominate the opening passages out of which two themes emerge: first, a chorale-like melody first submerged within forest-like tendrils of sound, then, towards the close, heard unadorned on cor anglais; second, a hunting call announced on clarinet, then echoed by horns. A ballad tune is heard twice, the second time with added filigree on flute. In between there is an episode dominated by a dance tune whose progress is aborted by the intrusion of some kind of monster. Calm is restored as the clarinet claims time for a cadenza, following which the ballad returns. A bridging passage modulates through key changes to close on a dominant that establishes a new key for the finale.

3rd Movt. (in festive mode): In this, three features of dance music are deployed: extended melodic line, “riff” figures, and sustained metric pulse – in this case a 12/8 jazz metre. This allows for accurately notated syncopation and for passages that evoke big band arrangements of the swing era, the style of which soloist Alan Vivian skillfully captures. The chorale melody from the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement undergoes a total metamorphosis by altering stress points to create a cheeky tune announced early on clarinet following passages built on a recurring bass line. This, as in a passacaglia, repeats under successive elaborations. A switch to faster tempo launches the prolonged flight to the coda.

As the applause indicates, the audience reception was enthusiastic. I hope this endorses my view that the synthesis of dance music elements within a contemporary symphonic structure is a direction which Australian composition can usefully embrace; since it can result in works which leave audiences feeling as rewarded as similar syntheses do in works of the baroque, classical and romantic eras. My grateful thanks to Alan Vivian and the Australian National University School of Music for supporting this work, in conception, composition and performance, and for permission to release this recording. Duration: 35'00”

**"ESCORTS", Trio for flute, alto saxophone and piano (1989)  
An Opera Without Words in 5 Acts. Duration 12'10".**

The flute is cast in the role of Ms. Treble Clef. The alto saxophone plays multiple roles: the Composer, and a series of males by whom Ms Clef is escorted. The work makes use of polyphonic and polymetric devices to tell a gender specific romantic story of heterosexual love lost and love regained. Flute and alto saxophone engage in recurring "dialogues" in which musical phrases mimic the inflexions and rhythms of speech. A recurring device is the use of tremolo piano chords to suggest a phone ringing. A staccato piano chord depicts the phone being slammed down by Ms. Clef to terminate each conversation. Phone conversations between the Composer and Ms Clef serve as linking episodes between each act. The Composer's theme is voiced by the saxophone in fragments during these conversations, and eventually emerges as a flowing melody in the Coda heard at the conclusion of The Reconciliation.

In **Act One** ("The Quarrel") the Composer quarrels with his girl, the flighty and unpredictable Ms Treble Clef. Fragments of themes and motivic ideas emerge and are thrown around in a maelstrom of nervous energy. Ms Clef leaves. The Composer regrets her departure and phones her. She immediately hangs up on hearing his voice.

In **Act Two**, ("Rough Trade") Ms Clef, determined not to be lonely, throws herself into a busy social life and soon meets another man. Revving riffs suggest a bikie who likes rock 'n' roll. His theme is heard to a 50s triple beat rock rhythm, firstly a blues tune voiced with diatonic confidence. The harmonic basis becomes much less secure when it tries to repeat itself, and a quarrelling dialogue is heard over the rock'n'roll beat. The music disintegrates. The Composer phones and tries to have a conversation with Ms Clef. As before she hangs up immediately on hearing his voice.

**Act Three** ("The Tourist") finds Ms Clef in the company of a tourist from another country, an Asian, whose manners and whose persona appeal - for a while. She is impressed by his tune - a muzak of hotels and expensive restaurants. To the bewilderment of the well-meaning tourist, however, Ms Clef's unpredictable temperament causes waves, and this relationship, too, ends in confusion. The Composer again phones Ms. Clef. This time a very short exchange is allowed, before she again hangs up on him.

**Act Four** (“The Chauvinist”) brings Ms Clef closer to permanence when she meets a traditional male chauvinist. His tune even works in counterpoint to the melody of Mendelssohn's Wedding March, but the accentuated flattened ninth at the beginning of the counterpoint spells doom, and, to the dismay of the intending groom, the march steps falter, stumble, and collapse in chaos, as a violent argument takes place, the notion of marriage being clearly rejected. The Composer phones again. She is more receptive, and we are permitted to hear a few more cadences of the composers theme, which are echoed, suggesting that a meeting will take place.

In **Act Five**, (“The Reconciliation”) the Composer and Ms Treble Clef meet again, and a reconciliation very quickly leads to a romantic duet, which in turns gives way to a passionate and pulsing Coda, involving rising swing music chords and a repeating triple figure over a rhythmic pedal bass.

**‘FASHIONS” (Excerpts) – A Dance Suite, for clarinet and string quartet (1965) Performance by The Auckland Players.** For “fashions” read “variations”: a theme assumes different guises to allow for dancers to engage in different choreographic styles in response to the changes in musical “fashions”.

**THEME FROM “A SAWDUST HEART” for solo guitar.**

**Sebastian Jorgensen, guitar.** In 1963 painter and cinematographer Daryl Hill made a fantasy documentary about a child’s fantasies on visiting Bullen Bros. Circus, for which he asked me to compose music, scored for an 8-piece “circus” band. For many years a 16mm print of this film was available on hire from the NSW Film Institute. I made this guitar arrangement of the main them, and a private tape recording was made at our Bondi Beach pad of “Seb” playing it.

**“IRONICAL RONDO” for piano, (1953/2003)**

**Derek Strahan, virtual piano 7’48”** Begun in 1953 when the composer was at school in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Laid aside to obey dictates to study languages for Cambridge Entrance, and finally revised and completed in 2003. It reflects Strahan’s interest then, as now, in using elements of jazz in a formal classical structure. In its final form it includes, as a contrasting episode, a short lyric piece written in London in 1958, titled “Birgitta”, after an attractive brunette. The boogie woogie Coda is a recent addition.

## **GENESIS OF A THEME FOR SUMMER**

### **“ET IN ARCADIA EGO” – Cantata from “Atlantis” for Flute & Piano (1990) Belinda Gough – Flute/Alto Flute; Josephine Allan – Piano. 4.13**

Diodorus Siculus, writing in 1 B.C. on the myth of the Atlantioi refers to a mountainous island of considerable size lying “in the deep off Libya” which contains a fertile plain “of surpassing beauty” traversed by rivers. He refers to “private villas of costly construction” and “banqueting houses in a setting of flowers”. This Cantata seeks to portray a lovers’ idyll on the balcony of a villa, overlooking the ocean, on a moonlit night in Atlantis. (Clearly the Cantata itself has not been written yet, but the naming of this piece as a Cantata anticipates its later emergence as a vocal work!) In the final moments a theme is heard named “Cleito’s Lament” (Cleito was Poseidon’s consort in Atlantis). It is derived from a theme for Summer, written in 1964 (see below Track 14). The complete chamber work “Atlantis” of which this piece is a part, has been released on REVOLVE CD “Voodoo Fire” RDS006. It was commissioned by MICHAEL SCOTT and was composed with the assistance of the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council. It is one of several works written to develop material intended for inclusion in a cycle of 4 operas on the topic of “Atlantis”. Live recording of Premier Performance at Ms. Gough’s Master’s Degree Recital, Joseph Post Auditorium, Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Recording made courtesy of her tutor, Michael Scott – 13/11/92. Sound engineer – Bob Scott.

### **‘MESOZOIC SUMMER’ – for Wind Quintet & double percussion (1972`) Neville Amadio, alto flute/Donald Westlake, bass clarinet/Guy Henderson, cor anglais/Clarence mellor, French horn/John Cran, bassoon/John Sangster, Derek Fairbrass, percussion.**

Written for Robert Raymond’s wild life documentary series shown on TV as “Shell’s Australia”, and originally titled “The Australian Ark”, the intent of this music is to convey the endless “summer” which prevailed on earth in a different geological age. This music is also derived from the same theme for Summer, written in 1964 (see below Track 14). The complete film music of “The Australian Ark” has been released on REVOLVE CD “The Australian Ark” RDS008. Recorded at Studio 301 and at 2MBS. Digital pre-mastering, Bob Scott.

## **“AT MILFORD BEACH” IMPROVISATION ON A THEME FOR SUMMER (1964)**

### **Derek Strahan, Pedal Harmonium.**

This was recorded on tape in Auckland, New Zealand, seated at my Harmonium in the front room of a waterfront house at Milford Beach, hence the background sound of surf. The theme emerged in response to a sense of the languor of summer suffused with a sense of melancholy, born of the awareness that summer is finite.

### **DEREK STRAHAN – BA CANTAB**

**Derek Strahan** was born in Penang, Malaysia on May 28th 1935, and spent his early childhood in colonial Malaya. He was evacuated with his mother and sister to Perth, W.A, when Singapore fell to the Japanese in February 1942. In 1946 the Strahans settled in Northern Ireland and Derek completed his schooling in Belfast. He obtained a scholarship to study at Cambridge University, where he graduated in 1954 with a BA Cantab (Modern Languages) (French and Spanish). At university, he maintained a commitment to music and also developed an interest in theatre and cinema, acting in a number of university productions. From 1954 to 1960 he worked in London as relief teacher, actor, singer-songwriter and assistant film director making commercials.

In 1961 he returned to Australia and settled in Sydney, where he combined composing film and concert music with work as film director, scriptwriter, actor, singer/songwriter, lecturer and, currently, script assessor for the Australian Writers' Guild. His compositions include music for over 30 film documentaries, 3 feature films, over 30 works of concert music encompassing solo, ensemble, vocal and orchestral pieces. Much of his film and concert music has been released on CD, and, since 1982, has been consistently broadcast on national radio. Strahan's music is melodic, making use of polyphony and polymetrics, and has attracted performance by distinguished artists, attracted performance by a number of distinguished artists, several of whom feature on this CD album. Derek Strahan is a represented composer with the Australian Music Centre (AMC): He can also be contacted through the AMC where his music scores, parts and recordings are merchandised.

<http://www.amcoz.com.au>

### **Would you like to support the arts? Would a tax deduction help?**

Derek Strahan is listed with the Australia Cultural Fund as a bona fide artist. The Australia Business Arts Foundation (AbaF) has confirmed that it is possible for Derek Strahan's supporters (in Australia) to make a tax-deductible donation to AbaF's Australia Cultural Fund, requesting that AbaF apply it to the Atlantis opera project, and other approved projects To find out more about this program and how you could help make new Australian music go to: <http://www.abaf.org.au/giving/acf.html>

### **PRODUCTION CREDITS:**

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Revolve CDs are produced in Australia by Derek Strahan.

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### **“CLARINET CONCERTO NO. 1”, REVOLVE RECORDINGS RDS 010**

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### **CLARINET CONCERTTO NO 1 (33.43)**

<b>1. Clarinet Concerto No. 1, 1<sup>st</sup> Movement</b>	<b>9.51</b>
<b>2. Clarinet Concerto No. 1, 2nd Movement</b>	<b>16.43</b>
<b>3. Clarinet Concerto No. 1, 3rd Movement</b>	<b>7.09</b>
<b>ESCORTS (12'10")</b>	
<b>4. The Quarrel</b>	<b>2.47</b>
<b>5. Rough Trade</b>	<b>2.35</b>
<b>6. The Tourist</b>	<b>1.56</b>
<b>7. The Chauvinist</b>	<b>2.03</b>
<b>8. The Reconciliation</b>	<b>2.30</b>

**OTHER WORKS****9. Fashions 3.03****10. A Sawdust Heart 2.22****11. Ironical Rondo 7.43****GENESIS OF A SUMMER THEME****12. Et In Arcadia Ego 4.13****13. Meozoic Summer 1.41****14. At Milford Beach 3.40**