

“Birth” – The stories behind the music.

Kirsty

This tune is written for my wife who has been my greatest source of encouragement, strength and love. My journey to this album would not have been completed without her.

Albany Suite

Movement One – Great Expeditions

This movement is about my childhood and my time spent with my best friend, Ben, on his farm. Ben and I were great explorers and would journey out from his house and away into the fields for hours at a time. We truly felt like we were discovering new lands. We would make forts and cubby houses, climb trees and generally get into plenty of mischief.

Movement Two – Days on the Farm

This tune tries to capture the idyllic lifestyle growing up in Albany as a young boy. Wide open spaces, bushland, animals and plenty of time to do nothing. Those were the days!

Movement Three – The last Glance

This movement portrays the mixed feelings I had when we left Albany. I can still recall looking back at Mt Melville and thinking “we are really leaving”. There was the obvious sadness leaving my friends and everything I had ever known and then there was the excitement of what will be when we reach Perth. I have tried to paint all of this in the music.

In memory of a giant (In tribute to Alan Corbet 1964-2008)

This song is written as a tribute to the JAZZWA coordinator Alan Corbet who died way too early and who I worked with over a 4 year period. He was a great man, a great friend, a jazz advocate, and was instrumental in getting me the grant for my first album, which propelled my career. He is greatly missed.

The View from here – (Dedicated to Edward Weston)

This tune was written in 5 minutes following a documentary about the photographer Edward Weston. His last view was in his favourite chair, which he managed to get to from his bed. This image had a great impact on me, as did his amazing photos.

Birth

This song is reminiscent of White Silence from our 2004 self titled release in that it starts with an E pedal and also that it starts in A major, but that is where the similarities end. Birth is about the incredible feelings associated with the Birth of my two children Ben and Bella.

The feelings of anticipation, wonder, excitement, and awe are tempered by the feelings of the unknown and concern for my wife (what if something bad happens).

The piece starts with 3 notes and slowly moves outwards like cells dividing or like each contraction bringing the baby closer to the world. The trio enters and the music fans out as the thought of this new life becomes more and more a reality.

There is then a brief solo passage by the piano – reflecting how I felt when I realised that this child was in our care. It's not a sad time but a moment where you feel a sense of "how can we do this?" This is quickly overridden by the climax of full piano and cascading bass lines announcing the arrival and the pure joy and rapture this brings.

The music quietens again as we spend time with the new little person. This is a mixture of awe, wonder, love and complete devotion.

The solo section is based on the chord structure of the tune but with a few amendments for musical reasons.

Birth finishes with what sounds like an unresolved cadence that rises to the uppermost octaves of the piano. The sounds echo and meld and these are punctuated by a deep release chord in the bass of the piano. This gives a sense of the untapped potential inside all of us.

Song for Sam

This tune is written for Sam Anning (bassist). Sam and I used to hang out and jam and listen to music all day when I had my little apartment in Nedlands. Those were good days as were the days making the album. I wrote this tune just before he flew over to record with us. It features him and he makes this song his own.

Bellas' Smile

This tune is written with a picture of my daughter in mind and her wonderfully joyous and cheeky smile. I hope the music reflects this.

Era's End

All things have a season and all things must come to an end. Sometimes this ending is traumatic and hard to deal with. This music reflects an Era ending before you wanted it to.

PAX – Latin for Peace or Harmony in a musical context

Pax was written, like all of these pieces, in the solitude and quiet of New Norcia. Pax means peace, or harmony in a musical context, and this word is on all the plates, cups and on all the literature at the monastery.

Peace in today's world is extremely rare, in fact as I write this Ben is crying and Bella is banging the piano (all in a beautiful way of course).

The tune starts off in a searching feel, a holding pattern like the search for peace in an ever-moving world. It is serene but unsettled. The music moves in harmonic shifts between positive (happy) feelings to feelings of yearning after this peace. It ends still unsure of itself and leads into the search, which is the solo section.

The melody returns in a higher octave after the solos, and this lightens the music. Everything seems lighter and the music moves with a greater sense of purpose and ease through the many harmonic swirls and turns.

The coda mirrors the final musical fragment heard before the big searching section during the solos but this time peace has come to the music. It brings the pace down but deepens the harmony and stretches it in both directions creating deep resonating chords covering larger and larger expanses of the piano.

The piece finishes on a glittering chord covering the lowest note on the piano to the highest octave. Peace has been discovered musically.

Ben's Bounce (LIVE)

This is a fun tune written to imitate in music the way Ben (my son) moves to music. This tune took on a metamorphosis during the recorded gig at the Ellington. We have fun with the pulse/time and you can hear the fun we have in the audience reaction. Enjoy.

Hair of the Fonz (LIVE)

This piece is just a lot of fun. You will hear the crowd interaction, the laughs and the sheer fun. We have been friends and members of the trio since Army Band days (12 years ago) and love having a good time. Hope you have a good time listening.