

GEORGE DREYFUS

—LIVE!



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|---|--|
| 1 Rush 2'50" | 9 Power Without Glory 1'55" |
| 2 Sebastian's Theme Song 0'46" | 10 Song of the Standard Lamp 3'10" |
| 3 Marion 1'12" | 11 Peace 1'05" |
| 4 Ballad for a Dead Guerrilla Leader 4'13" | |
| 5 Break of Day 2'00" | Three Ned Kelly Ballads |
| 6 Deep Throat 4'50" | 12 Man of Iron 1'34" |
| 7 Let the Balloon Go 3'02" | 13 Greta Lovesong 2'41" |
| 8 Das Knie 0'42" | 14 The Kellys, Byrne and Hart 2'18" |

George Dreyfus | bassoon, vocals and percussion
Paul Grabowski | electric piano and ARP synthesizer

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All music composed by George Dreyfus
Lyrics by Tim Burstall (tracks 2, 12, 13 and 14)
Lyrics by Lynne Strahan (track 4)
Lyrics by Christian Morgenstern (track 8)
Lyrics by Tim Robertson (track 10)
Originally released in 1978 on vinyl LP
Reissued in 2017 by Move Records on CD
move.com.au

George Dreyfus Live!

1. The theme music for the 1974 Goldrush television series *Rush* took off in its own right, making the pop-music charts that year, unheard of for a piece of serious music. The composer claims that the tune's upward sweep reflects the optimism of the Whitlam years. The Conservatives undermined the Labor Government from day one; they just can't get used to being out of power.

2. There's not a lot of Australian classical music left in the ABC Classics record catalogue, once the home of many Australian composers and performers, but the music that the composer wrote for the 1963 children's television series *The Adventures of Sebastian the Fox* is one of the survivors, the best thing that Tim Burstall ever made.

3. His bitter-sweet theme for the long-forgotten, little-rating 1973 mini-series *Marion* was the composer's entry into the then-successful, soon-to-be decommissioned Melbourne ABC television studio, for which he wrote some classic themes, which have also survived.

4. Opera Australia corrupted Dr. H.C. [Nugget] Coombs's dream for Australian-created opera right from the start, but the composer is a survivor. A last-minute escapee from Nazi Germany, he has no intention of letting Opera Australia, which in 1969 commissioned but never performed his opera *The Gilt Edged Kid*, off the hook, publishing books and pamphlets,

organising seminars and public rallies on behalf of his betrayed opera. 'The Ballad for a Dead Guerrilla Leader' is a seminal excerpt from the opera.

5. The composer's elegiac theme for the equally elegiac but little-known Australian feature film *Break of Day* at least has a solid bass line. Anton Bruckner would have accepted him into his composition class, that's for sure.

6. The composer does not take insults lightly. Taking the single-page, plus photo, dedicated to him in James Murdoch's piss-weak 1972 *Australian Composers* picture book, the composer penned a work in the style of Karl Heinz Stockhausen's solo piano compositions, plus foot notes, worthy of any PhD. Rife with studied insults too numerous to mention here, in the tradition of 17th-century revenge arias, the score of *Deep Throat* is eminently suitable for use as a 21st-century wall hanging.

7. The film's Hollywood distributor wanted to nominate the composer's score for *Let the Balloon Go* for the 1976 Best Music Oscar, but that idea never got anywhere, perhaps like Film Australia's children's feature film itself. It's just too harmless. After all, *The Omen* (Jerry Goldsmith), *Taxi Driver* (Bernard Herrmann) and *Voyage of the Damned* (Lalo Schifrin) were also in the running that year.

8. The greatest musical event since Johann Sebastian Bach's B Minor Mass, or Ludwig van Beethoven's Choral Symphony, the composer's performance of his setting of Christian Morgenstern's anti-First World War poem *Das Knie* has to be seen to be believed, for in it he plays bassoon, sings (*auf Deutsch*),

plays percussion AND dances, simultaneously, for a whole 42 seconds. A major contribution to music history indeed.

9. It's nothing but trouble, but then what's the film industry for? The composer recorded a brilliant brass band theme for the 1976 television adaption of Frank Hardy's Australian classic *Power Without Glory*, predating the release of *Upstairs Downstairs* that uses a similar combination, but it was knocked back. (Just like the composer himself, too unconventional.) Overnight he concocted a full orchestra theme, in 7/8 time, full of drama, according to filmmaker Bruce Beresford.

10. They have remained life-long friends, the composer and lyricist Tim Robertson, deviser of the musical *The Lamentable Reign of Charles the Last* for the 1975 Adelaide Festival, of which 'The Song of the Standard Lamp' is the last man standing. But then that's better than nothing, and that's what friendship is for.

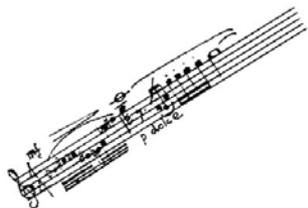
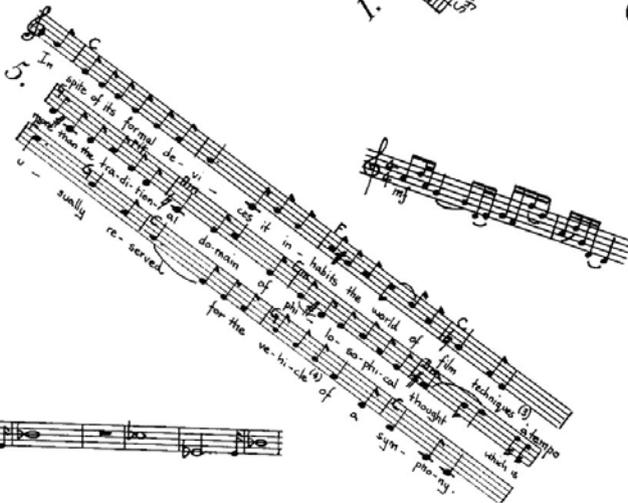
11. *Peace* is all that's left, *Gott sei Dank*, of Film Australia's 1969 black and white epic of Australia's fighting men's contribution to the Second World War. Nice music, a bit like Sergei Rachmaninov's *Vocalise*.

12. – 14. Tim Burstall's overpowering personality got the composer to set the film maker's homespun doggerel, mock-Australian folk poetry to music before the film was even shot. 'I need the Ballads to be sung live in the Glenrowan Pub sequence', he said. The film was never made. The *Three Ned Kelly Ballads*, in equally mock-Australian folk-song style are backed with Henry Mancini chords, now that takes talent.

DEEP THROAT

George Dreyfus

A song⁽¹⁾ to mark the simultaneous performances of George Dreyfus's 1st and 2nd Symphonies in Sydney in 1978, as performed by the composer at the Pram Factory, Carlton, in May of that year.



How to Play

Verses to be sung in any order⁽²⁾; chorus must follow each verse. The chorus is to be followed by a period of improvisation which may be based on the given symphonic material or on any other symphonic material of the player's own choice, as long as the improvisation conforms to teleological, diachronic, Marxist-Leninist principles⁽³⁾. Reticent players may contribute characteristic concert-noises: coughing, sneezing, applauding or booing, dropping Jaffas, rustling programmes or chocolate wrappers.

1. Text see Murdoch, J. Australia's Contemporary Composers. Melbourne, 1972. ISBN 0 333 13913 5. p. 82.
 2. Music Now, Vol 4 No 2, 1979, p. 26.
 3. A lower level of art (?) Murdoch, op cit.
 4. Floats on fluid.
 5. Summers sure warmer than.

6. Artscene USA. Acultural potpourri. D-5777-F-253.
 7. Phern: B'25'; Dreyfus: 25'49'. [Editor's note: Whatever can he be thinking of?]
 8. Poetic licence.

9. March 24, 1978 p. 45.
 10. Indecisive players may use dice to help them make their choices.
 11. Narmour, E. Beyond Schoenberg: The Need for Alternatives in Musical Analysis. Chicago 1976. ISBN 0-226-50847-4 p. 121 n. 20.

Liner notes from the original vinyl LP

If you have really *lived* in Melbourne, and not merely existed there from day to day, you will have come to know the various characters who, over the years, have given this city an eccentric stamp. For instance, have you listened to people talking about **The Scribe**? (He's still about!) Do you remember **The Orange Lady**? How about **The Marcher** and **The Dog Man**? Well, if you don't notice people of this ilk, or worse, don't *wish* to notice them, your mind is closed.

Who are these people? They are the eccentrics — those who add an element of the bizarre to the all too severe mundanities of any big city. They add a touch of whimsy to the prosaic, absurdity to the solemn and humour to a city which wears such a frown on its face.

Enter George Dreyfus. Eccentric, but in deadly earnest. In his own words, he "works hard at being interesting", and succeeds so well in this that he brings a fresh air of the ridiculous to any proceedings.

Any conversation which includes George is, at best, a difficult exercise. If you can finally dissuade him from pounding your furniture to death in theatrical emphasis, you will still be left with ears crumpled by his acrimony, dogma and downright unacceptability. There is no option but to *like* the man. I do, he has become part of my Melbourne, and I commend his delicious nonsense to you. When you have absorbed it, perhaps you will find time to consider his music!

Here's how **the critics** viewed his **One Man Show**, the musical component of which is captured on this record:

"... he dives head-over-heels into a rigmarole..."

Fred Blanks – The Sydney Morning Herald

"... varies from the elegant and sophisticated through satire to the theatre of the absurd."

Al Watson – The Age

"... humility is not one of his strengths."

Mark Lawrence – The Age

"He is a contemporary musician in the true sense of the word."

Tony Gould – The Sun

"George Dreyfus has become an after dinner attraction."

Carol George – Progress Press

"... if he had no musical ability, (he) could easily have made a living as a stand-up comic."

Ian Robinson – The National Times

"... does a few neat pirouettes and tells the story of his life."

Margaret Geddes – The Age

The instrumental items provide an excellent vehicle for the sensual and demanding tones of the bassoon.

They range from George's 'hit' single *Rush*, from the ABC television series, through music from the films *Break of Day* and *Let The Balloon Go* to the theme from *Power Without Glory*, another TV epic. *Marion* is from a further television series.

George writes well for the bassoon, exploiting the full range. He will vibrate your diaphragm, but never compromise the peculiar charm of the instrument. The songs, on the other hand, are delivered in heroic style by an amazing voice. (I've heard it many times, and I'm still amazed!)

Sebastian's Theme Song relates to the hero of the children's TV series, *Sebastian The Fox*. *Ballad for A Dead Guerilla* is from a satirical full-length opera — *The Gilt Edged Kid*, and *Das Knie* is from a song cycle *Galgenlieder*. The words detail the misfortunes of a knee!

Standard Lamp is sung by George whilst disguised as a standard lamp — I leave you to ponder the lyrics. This 'song' will be featured in a forthcoming musical, written in association with Tim Robertson, and based on *Coles Funny Picture Book*.

Ned Kelly is the hero of *Three Ballads*, and I can only say that, as a hero, he is eclipsed totally by George — it takes real guts to sing so badly with such confidence!

The three songs, from a film which was never made, are: *Man In Iron*, *Greta Lovesong* and *The Kellys, Byrne and Hart*.

Finally, *Deep Throat* collects the scattered wit of a critic of George's First Symphony and sets it in a lyric mould. This must be the first track in recorded history which required over-dubbed coughing! Just before the live performance of this masterpiece, George hands each member of the audience a heavily interpolated libretto. The first footnote invites the reader to consult page 84 of James Murdoch's book *Australia's Contemporary Composers*, where the words of the piece are presented a little more clearly.

Paul Grabowski is a young man seated at an electric piano somewhere near George. Paul is 21, with a fine grasp of music, not the stuff that's on the rack in the supermarket, but real music — made by people. As a person he spends his time working as a jazz musician, composer and keyboard foil for George. They have a rapport which is a pleasure to witness. Paul, deadpan, adds musical emphasis to the lines George delivers to the audience of his One Man Show, and then, when a wrong note slips out of the bassoon, he carefully repeats it on piano with a sly smile.

I insist that you will enjoy this record!

Bill Hawtin 1978