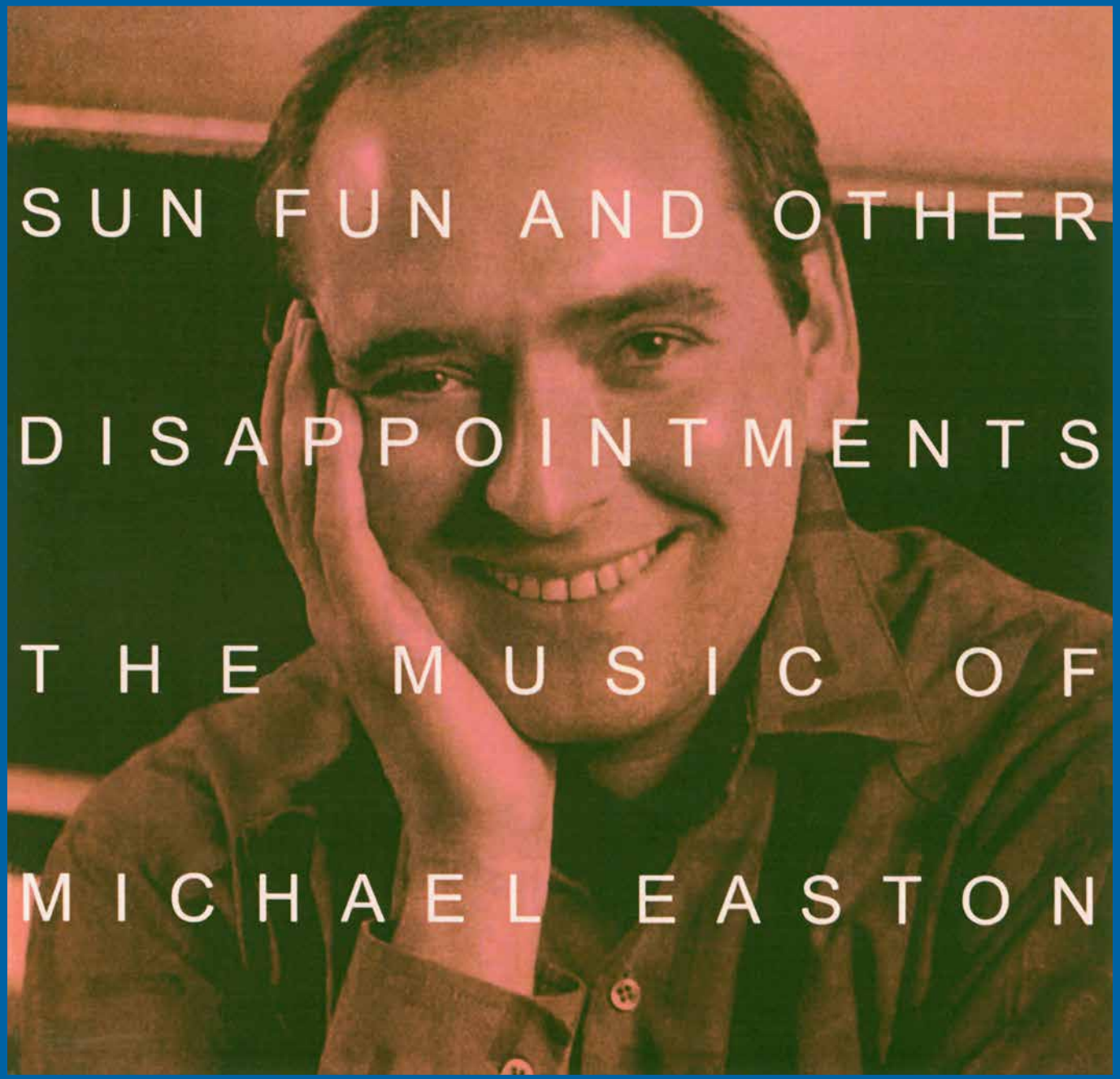
SUN FUN AND OTHER
DISAPPOINTMENTS
THE MUSIC OF
MICHAEL EASTON

SUN FUN AND OTHER DISAPPOINTMENTS THE MUSIC OF MICHAEL EASTON

Len Vorster *piano*

Kathleen Southall-Casey *soprano*

Michael Easton &
Len Vorster *two pianos*

Richard Thurlby *flute*

Ian Cousins *baritone*

Rebecca Chambers *piano* *

Frederick Shade *piccolo*

Brett Kelly *conductor*

Academy of Melbourne

Deidre Rubenstein *vocals*

MOODS FOR PIANO
- **1** In Reflective Mood *[2:01]*
- **2** High Spirits *[0:53]*
- **3** Alone and Lonely *[2:15]*
- **4** Practical Jokes *[1:10]*

DEUX CHANSONS POUR L'ARRIÈRE-SAISON
- **5** Colloque Sentimentale *[2:16]*
- **6** Dans le Bois *[0:51]*

COCKTAIL SUITE
- **7** Whisky Sour Waltz *[1:55]*
- **8** Martini Melody *[1:51]*
- **9** Schneider Cup Charleston *[1:45]*

SUN FUN AND OTHER DISAPPOINTMENTS
Words © John Murray [Publishers] Ltd.
- **10** Song of a Night-Club Proprietress *[2:20]*
- **11** Harvest Hymn *[2:32]*
- **12** In a Bath Tea-Shop *[2:08]*
- **13** How to Get On in Society *[1:21]*

FLUTE SONATA
- **14** Allegro Malizioso *[3:46]*
- **15** Nocturne: Andante Cantabile *[4:08]*
- **16** Finale: Presto *[1:58]*

HOW PLEASANT TO KNOW MR. LEAR
- **17** There was an Old Man who said Hush *[0:25]*
- **18** Old Man of the Hague *[0:40]*
- **19** Old Man of Whitehaven *[0:55]*
- **20** Mrs. Jaypher *[0:34]*
- **21** How Pleasant to Know Mr. Lear *[2:35]*

CONVERSATIONS FOR PIANO *
- **22** Conversations *[2:06]*

PICCOLO CONCERTO
- **23** Allegro *[4:44]*
- **24** Andante con moto *[3:42]*
- **25** Rondo *[4:15]*

DOROTHY PARKER SAYS
words © Viking Press New York
- **26** General Review *[1:39]*
- **27** Song of Perfect Propriety *[1:25]*
- **28** Fulfillment *[1:51]*
- **29** But Not Forgotten *[2:21]*

total playing time [61:27]

Re-issued by Move Records …
℗ 2024 Move Records … **move.com.au**

Anyone meeting Michael Easton for the first time will immediately be struck by his energy and enthusiasm. Closer acquaintance will then reveal of his versatility - not only a composer and pianist, he is also an impresario and a communicator. When it comes to matters musical, all you have to do is ask Michael to do it; and the irritating odds are that, even when he is forced to skate on rather thin ice, he will do it and do it well. Michael arrived in Australia in 1982 after a career in England that had seen him study at the Royal Academy of Music, a pupil of composer Sir Lennox Berkeley, and then experience the reality of music in the employment of two of London's most eminent publishers; J & W Chester, and Novello & Company, Limited. Though he had made a significant mark in England, Australia liberated his talents. From the very start it was clear that there was something about Australia and the Australians that fitted him like a glove. And so, after finding his feet in the employment of Allans Music, he was soon up and away - a fully-fledged composer, pianist, broadcaster, and instigator of every kind of exciting musical scheme - from the witty pre-concert talk or broadcast, to the founding and management of the now famous Port Fairy Spring Music Festival. As a composer Michael is thoroughly grounded in traditional techniques, favouring the wit and insouciance of such French composers as Poulenc, Satie, and Milhaud who, incidentally, had also influenced his mentor Lennox Berkeley. Since he is a fully paid-up optimist, it is impossible for him to write music that takes itself too seriously and merely adds to the world's gloom. But whoever said that gloom alone was proof of artistic significance? He is equally at home clothing other men's music with orchestral arrangements that contrive to be both suavely commercial and artistically subtle and imaginative. A similar light touch informs his skills as a pianist, especially when it comes to providing music for 'the cocktail hour', as witness the delicious score he contributed to 'Dorothy Parker Says' - a show he himself wove around the life and wit of that amusing American lady. And as an informative commentator on the great classics he can find a ray of hope in the music of even the most angst-ridden master. In short, Michael Easton is a life-enhancer - a man that music nowadays sorely needs.

MOODS FOR PIANO

composed 1981

I wrote these four pieces staying at my sister's home near Winchester in England. It is a particularly nice house with a splendid garden and I remember that the music was written under a large tree which shaded me from the sun and the rain.

1 In Reflective Mood
2 High Spirits
3 Alone and Lonely
4 Practical Jokes

Len Vorster *piano*

DEUX CHANSONS POUR L'ARRIÈRE-SAISON

composed 1987

These two songs were written for Melbourne soprano Loris Synan and they have since become my most performed 'serious' songs. The first song, to words by Verlaine, tells the sad tale of two erstwhile lovers who meet in a park. One questions the possibility of rekindling their affair; the answer is no. The second is a cheery tale by Gerard de Nerval describing the life cycle of birds in the bush. It has a lovely open-air quality. I remember writing these songs on a wet afternoon whilst staying at the Queenscliff Hotel. I had purchased a little book of French poems from a second-hand shop that day and whiled away the time between lunch and pre-dinner drinks composing!

5 Colloque Sentimentale
6 Dans le Bois

Kathleen Southall-Casey *soprano*
Len Vorster *piano*

COCKTAIL SUITE

composed 1981

This music was intended for a film set on a train. First I wrote songs but the singer could not look dignified dashing through the Kentish countryside at 100 miles per hour; the string quartet gave up at the first set of points and I finally settled on a piano duet. By that time the projected film had run out of money and so I wrote the music as a little suite of duet pieces each based on a favourite cocktail. Here Len Vorster and I play three of the set of five.

7 Whisky Sour Waltz
8 Martini Melody
9 Schneider Cup Charleston

Michael Easton &
Len Vorster *two pianos*

SUN FUN AND OTHER DISAPPOINTMENTS

composed 1991

Words © John Murray [Publishers] Ltd.

The sheer horror of a world full of appalling people is so beautifully captured by Betjeman. I thoroughly enjoyed writing these four settings.

10 Song of a Night-Club Proprietress
11 Harvest Hymn
12 In a Bath Tea-Shop
13 How to Get On in Society

Kathleen Southall-Casey *soprano*
Len Vorster *piano*

FLUTE SONATA

composed 1993

I first met Richard Thurlby through a friend while he was studying at the University of Melbourne. We became good friends [sharing a heightened

sense of the ridiculous] and I wrote this sonata for him on a Wednesday morning for an ABC recording, shortly before he left for the U.K.

14 Allegro Malizioso
15 Nocturne: Andante Cantabile
16 Finale: Presto

Richard Thurlby *flute*
Len Vorster *piano*

HOW PLEASANT TO KNOW MR. LEAR

composed 1985

Edward Lear was one of the great eccentrics; he was also incredibly gifted. Apart from his famous limericks he was also a superb painter and I am an avid collector of his portraits.

17 There was an Old Man who said Hush
18 Old Man of the Hague
19 Old Man of Whitehaven
20 Mrs. Jaypher
21 How Pleasant to Know Mr. Lear

Ian Cousins *baritone*
Len Vorster *piano*

CONVERSATIONS FOR PIANO

composed 1988

I wrote this work very late at night after dinner in a crowded restaurant where everybody else's conversations seemed so much more interesting than the one I was enduring. The piece attempts to conjure up the prattle of others and the odd snatch of half-comprehensible conversation.
This bagatelle was written for Ronald Farren-Price for a tour of Russia in 1988. One of Australia's most brilliant younger pianists, Rebecca Chambers, performs the work on this recording.

22 Conversations

Rebecca Chambers *piano*

PICCOLO CONCERTO

composed 1986

I first met Frederick Shade when we appeared together on "In Tempo", a live program that used to be broadcast from Melbourne. During the play-back of taped segments we discussed the concerto which has become somthing of a favourite of Frederick's [and, hopefully, the audience's too]. This performance was recorded live at the Port Fairy Spring Festival in 1992 in St. John's Anglican Church, one of Victoria's most attractive churches, with a superb acoustic.

23 Allegro
24 Andante con moto
25 Rondo

Frederick Shade *piccolo*
Brett Kelly *conductor*
Academy of Melbourne

DOROTHY PARKER SAYS

composed 1993

words © Viking Press New York

When I first visited New York in the late seventies I purchased the Portable Dorothy Parker to read on the plane. I was entranced, and spent much time seeking out her old haunts. Later I stayed in New York for a short time while working for the music publishing house Novello. For me it is still the most exciting city in the world, and Dorothy Parker captures its many moods brilliantly.
Dorothy Parker Says is a stage show written for actress Deidre Rubenstein and here are four songs from the show.

26 General Review
27 Song of Perfect Propriety
28 Fulfillment
29 But Not Forgotten

Deidre Rubenstein *vocals*
Michael Easton *piano*